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Editorial

Dear Readers,

Welcome to Volume 7, Number 2 of the ASEAN Journal of Management and Innovation (AJMI). As the pandemic relentlessly continues to impact communities all over the world, AJMI Editorial Board would like to offer once again its heartfelt good wishes to all those who have been directly affected by Covid-19.

The end of the year is nearing and with it comes the ritualistic plunge into the past twelve months in search of the defining moments in our lives and some of the milestones that will shape our future. Whilst each year invariably stages landmark events and brings its share of challenges and achievements, 2020 is dominated by the once-in-a-lifetime pandemic crisis and the extraordinary and unprecedented upheavals it has caused the world over. In Thailand, one change epitomizes the Covid-19 carnage. This year, instead of being greeted by Santa Claus-costumed sales staff, shoppers face thermal scanners and placards reminding them to wear a mask and maintain a safe distance from others to avoid contamination.

Will Santa Claus be greeting us next year? As a stricken world is preparing to celebrate New Year and a second wave of infection is tearing its way through populations, businesses, and economies with seemingly no end in sight, one question on everybody's mind is "when will things be back to 'normal'?" People are also wondering what the world will look like after the dust from the pandemic settles.

Take shopping malls in the region. While they are likely to maintain their traffic-drawing capacity as air-conditioned *de facto* public parks, retailers are forced to reinvent themselves as more consumers are falling in love with online shopping – and foreign products. As **Yolamas Jeerasantikul** reports in *Influence of Cultural Differences and Interest Level in Thai Culture on the Online Shopping Behavior of Chinese Consumers*, thanks to the favorable perception of Thai culture in China, Thai products enjoy a positive image among online Chinese shoppers. Given the vast reservoir of Chinese consumers of Thai goods, developing a solid understanding of their online shopping behavior towards Thai products may prove a lucrative move.

Embracing digitization was already well under way before the onset of the pandemic but with Covid-19 it has leapfrogged years ahead as it has made acceptable practices that consumers were slow or reluctant to endorse. For many businesses, the old playbook is therefore unlikely to be relevant in the future; hence the need for them to enter into new territory and quickly learn adaptability. Organizational creativity and innovation is precisely the topic tackled by **Suwan Wangcharoendate** in *Organizational Creativity, Innovation, and Firm Success: An Empirical study of the Thai Electronic and Electrical Appliance Sector*. As determined in this study, valuable practice development, new process improvement, and proactive operational

competency are strongly related to a firm's innovation ideas enhancement, modern management technological focus, and dynamic business strategy capabilities.

For many people, the sanitary crisis has been a time of self-introspection. This makes *Eudaimonic and Hedonic Wellbeing among Bangkokians: A Qualitative Study of Maslow's Needs, Intrinsic and Extrinsic Values*, **Diana Martinez'** contribution, especially relevant. Focusing on Bangkokians living in low- and middle-income neighborhoods, this paper offers valuable insights into the factors most strongly influencing one's subjective wellbeing and can help managers and policy makers develop group strategies.

Economic disruptions and job losses have been particularly severe in the travel and tourism sectors as prolonged outbursts delay their recovery. It may take another year before passengers return. All hopes are now pinned on vaccines. When travel restrictions are lifted and international flights resume, people will be on the move again as there is much pent-up leisure demand. This means that millions of Chinese will again vacation in Thailand. As explained by **Korawan Sangkakorn, Pachernwaat Srichai, and Ravee Phoewhawm** in *Competing Internationally for the Chinese Tourist Market with Consideration for Local Thai Residents*, while a windfall, the massive arrival of Chinese tourists is also becoming an increasing source of tensions with local residents, who fear for the preservation of their environment and lifestyle. The exhaustive recommendations these three contributors make towards reconciling both sides should therefore be carefully considered.

For airlines, among other consequences, the pandemic means more safety measures to enforce. Coming in addition to all the time-honored protocols in place and in need of constant reevaluation and overhaul, they require extra cabin crew training. As stressed by **Thatri Kwansang and Pimurai Limpapath** in *Enhancing Onboard Safety: Planning for the Non-Technical Skills Training of the Cabin Crews of an International Airline*, non-technical skills educational training, though, is critical for crew member cooperation on board and passenger safety.

Finally, this issue includes three contributions on higher education. In *An Analysis of the Factors Affecting Intention to Use Artificial Intelligence Technology in Learning: A Case Study of Hanoi Students*, **Hien Le Dang** reports that perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness significantly affect the usage intention of AI technology among Hanoi college students. In *Designing an Action Learning Course for an MBA Program: A Qualitative Evaluation*, **Martin Goerlich** suggests that it is time to be bold enough to honestly ask what MBA courses should look like and decide what should be redesigned. In the third contribution, *An Educational Management Approach in Total Support for Thai Undergraduates' Learning and Performance Behavior*, **Chetthapoom Wannapaisan, Pritsana Koonnala, and Ravee Phoewhawm** offer constructive criticism of Thailand's higher education and on how to make students more assertive, more confident in their skills, and better equipped to meet the needs of the industry.

Jean-Marc Dautrey, JD
Editor-in-Chief
ASEAN Journal of Management and Innovation

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An Analysis of the Factors Affecting Intention to Use Artificial Intelligence Technology in Learning: A Case Study of Hanoi Students

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Abstract

In light of several widely adopted factors impacting the adoption of new technology, this study aims to determine college students' intention to use artificial intelligence (AI) in their learning. The factors considered in this study include optimism, innovativeness, discomfort, perceived usefulness, and perceived ease of use. An online survey was conducted among students from eight universities in Hanoi, Vietnam, with a major in business who either are currently studying or recently graduated. A total of 192 questionnaires were validated and analyzed, applying a regression analysis. The results indicate that perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness significantly affect the usage intention of AI technology among college students. No difference was found based on the number of years of studies. The technology innovativeness dimension, however, failed to have a positive effect on college students' perception of the usefulness of AI technology. This finding is inconsistent with previous studies and highlights the idiosyncrasies of Vietnamese students regarding perceived AI usefulness.

Key words: Artificial Intelligence, Usage Intention, Student Learning, TR, TAM, Vietnam.

1. Introduction

This study focuses on Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the context of higher education. Until recently, students and lecturers followed traditional learning and teaching methods. Students could only have access to knowledge through paper documents, hardcopy reference books, and the material provided by professors in the classroom. Typically, those who wanted to search for documents had to go to the library and manually looked up for the relevant information. Likewise, a professor who, for some particular reasons could not come to university to teach, had to reschedule his/her classes. In addition, if students had questions, they could only make an appointment with teachers or tutors at a specific time of the day for meeting and discussion. However, with the introduction of AI technology and recent breakthroughs in this field, all this has changed.

Students' learning experience is now increasingly supported by AI. This is the case for example with the search for material and self-learning. Today, when looking for materials, students have a variety of method, such as Google Scholar search engine or the search for e-books on online libraries using advanced filters to speed the task. To improve the mastery of the material covered in class, students can also choose to engage in self-learning with virtual tutors, which can provide answers and make suggestions instantly. Moreover, these virtual tutors not only provide support in problem solving for many students, they are also available for unlimited time around the clock (Tuomi, 2018). As to lecturers, those who were unable to be physically present on campus can now teach online, a trend which the current COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated as students have been forced to attend classes online. While the fact

that teachers do not have to be in the classroom may only be temporary, online teaching offers new possibilities for students and lecturers alike that are bound to be more generalized in the future. AI technology also helps teachers arrange classes, class hours and grading (Marr, 2018). Many repetitive tasks that took up a lot of time in the past are now implemented synchronously and quickly by AI, creating time for more rewarding endeavors such as research.

The AI technology targeted in this study pertains to these various AI-induced changes in students' ways of learning. Obviously, to learn or to conduct research from home requires students to embrace this new technology, which raises among others the question of what factors affect students' intention to use AI technology. This study aims to address this query in the context of Vietnam. Specifically, it surveys college students enrolled at eight universities in Hanoi, Vietnam, as business majors (as mandated by the Ministry of Education there is a business school in every university, regardless of its core specialty). Understanding the technology usage motivations of this group of students is especially important as, unlike science or engineering students, they may be less inclined to endorse new technology and therefore less enthusiastic adopting AI technology in learning.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

- *Artificial Intelligence*

As a concept, AI has been around for centuries. Initially, as illustrated by Shelley's (1818) famous novel, *Frankenstein*, it was discussed solely as a fiction and a source of great fear; something threatening that would destroy humanity. Obviously, the perception of AI has drastically changed since. Today, rather than a danger, it is increasingly seen as a way of enhancing the human experience and assisting in daily chores as Industrial Revolution 4.0 is causing the fusion of digitalization with traditional industry processes. The main purpose of AI technology is to support people (Anderson & Rainie, 2018). AI assists people by performing repetitive tasks, which all used to be painstakingly done by human beings in the past, instantly and by delivering accurate results to users (Goh et al., 2019). AI technology has been embraced by researchers and the public at large as a form of progress and has been gradually infiltrating our lives. The development of AI technology has made major advances possible in almost every sector, including education (Kirkland, 2018). It now pertains to almost every aspect of our existence; a trend which the Covid-19 pandemic is accelerating.

In the field of education, AI technology benefits students and teachers alike. For instance, it supports research, helps to store information, and provides search suggestions (George, 2020). Moreover, with the ability to convert images and voices into digital signals, the concepts of "voice recognition", "face recognition", "fingerprint recognition" are shifting industries into a new era and opening new doors for education. With regard to higher education, AI can help students better understand the material taught via enhancing the quality of lectures with additional documents (Li, 2020). AI technologies also facilitates teamwork and gives students more flexibility regarding the space and time of meetings as online meetings and conferences enable them to discuss projects with smart support through virtual tutors. This ensures assignment completion on time. In addition, AI facilitates the future orientation of students as it can suggest suitable learning paths and identify the appropriate subjects and activities in line with their future goals (Ayoub, 2020).

With the COVID-19 epidemic raging everywhere and the world struggling to control it, online arrangements and selection of classes, teamwork and learning process, which allow students to work from home, are more critical than ever. All that said, using AI technology improperly or overusing it can lead to unavoidable failures along one's educational path (Kharkovyna, 2018).

- *Intention to Use Technology*

The concept of 'intention' was first introduced by Fishbein and Ajzen in 1975 as part of their study of one's behavior towards one's intention to use technology and as part of the development of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). According to this theory, intention to use technology increases the likelihood that one will implement one's actions, i.e., use technology. Thirty-five years later, Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) updated the TRA to further emphasize that the intention use factor is the best single factor that can be used to predict an object's behavior. Intention is a mental state that shows the certainty that a future behavior will be implemented (Bratman, 1987). The mental activities involved include planning and forethoughts of the intended behavior. In 1989, Davis developed a technology acceptance model (TAM model) based on Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) conceptual grounding and introduced the concepts of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. As stated in the model, one's attitude towards usage intention is impacted by both perceptions. Davis and Venkatesh (1996) updated the model and removed the 'attitude' factor due to its weak impact as a mediator, focusing instead on the direct impact of usage intention on perceived usefulness. The TAM model has since become the most widely used model to predict acceptance of a technology target group (Legris, Ingham, & Collerette, 2003). A number of studies have borrowed Davis' theory and applied the TAM model to different subjects (e.g. Aypay, Celik, & Sever, 2012; Shroff, Deneen, & Ng, 2011; Park, 2009). These studies show statistically significant impact results.

- *Technology Readiness*

A Technology Readiness (TR) model was introduced by Parasuraman in 2000. Using an index, it measures a person's adaptability when he/she comes into contact with new technology (Parasuraman, 2000). The index comes as additional support to the TAM model. However, it only assesses the readiness of a subject for technology in general. The TR model includes four factors: optimism, innovativeness, discomfort and insecurity. The first two factors are identified as contributor factors and the other two as inhibitor factors. The validity of this model has been tested in a number of regions and in regard to various technologies (Jaafar et al, 2007; Mishra, Maheswarappa, & Colby 2018; Vaitinen & Martinsuo, 2019). Lee and Jun (2007) suggested that in using the TR model it is necessary to study other external factors that may affect both perceived factors (usefulness and ease of use) and therefore affect intention to use a particular technology. Consequently, subsequent research combined factors from the TR model and the TAM model into the Technology Readiness and Acceptance Model (TRAM model) (Damerji, 2019; Buyle et al., 2018). Although some of the factors differ, this model aims to determine the impact of intention to use on actual technology usage.

Since there is ample evidence of the weak effect of the 'attitude' factor, this study will ignore the attitude dimension as well. Consequently, based on the TAM and TR models and Lee and Jun's (2007) modified TR model, five of the factors affecting one's intention to use

technology will be used in this research study to determine students' intention to use AI technology. They include three factors from the TR and TRAM models – optimism, innovativeness, and discomfort, which will be used as independent variables, and two factors from the TAM model – perceived ease of use (PEOU) and perceived usefulness (PU), to be used as dependent variables. Each of these independent variables will now be briefly discussed, starting with perceived ease of use.

- Perceived Ease of Use

Perceived ease of use is the perception that one can easily use technology without investing too much in-depth research time (Davis, 1986; Davis, 1989). According to Davis (1989), one's ability to accept technology will be higher if the subject perceives that technology is easy to use. The impact of perceived ease of use on intention was confirmed by Wu et al. (2008) and Smit, Roberts-Lombard, and Mpinganjira (2018). It was also validated by Damerji's (2019) research. In addition, after evaluating the correlation between perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness and target groups' intention to use technology, Davis (1989) found that perceived ease of use had a strong influence on perceived usefulness. Specifically, he determined that the effect of ease of use on usage intention has decreased by 91 percent after controlling perceived usefulness.

Various studies have found that perceived ease of use has a strong impact on intention to use AI technology (e.g. Lule, Omwansa, & Waema, 2012; Aypay et al., 2012; Park, 2009). Moreover, in their research study on the acceptance of a clinical information system by 604 medical staff members at 14 hospitals in Greece, Melas et al. (2011) found that the impact of perceived ease of use on technology adoption was stronger than the impact of perceived usefulness on one's intent to use technology. Shroff et al. (2011) confirmed this finding. Focusing on accounting students in the US, a recent study by Damerji (2019) concluded that perceived ease of use had a positive effect on these students' intention to use technology. However, research by Park (2009) showed a different outcome. The survey of Korean bachelor students revealed no direct impact between easy-to-use awareness and the intention to use online learning technology. Another study conducted by Lee, Hsieh, and Hsu (2011) in Taiwan also indicated that for employees of companies using online training systems, perceived ease of use had no impact on usage intention. Thus, based on the above literature, the following hypothesis can be proposed:

H1: *Perceived ease of use of AI technology has a positive effect on college students' intention to use this technology*

- Perceived Usefulness

Perceived usefulness can be defined as one's perception that one will work more effectively if one uses technology (Davis, 1986; Davis, 1989). According to Davis (1989), the higher the level of usefulness perceived by the subject, the higher the likelihood of technology adoption. Later research confirmed this finding (e.g. Bagozzi, Davis, & Warshaw, 1992; Adams, Nelson, & Todd, 1992; Larasati, Widyawan, & Santosa, 2017; Nugroho & Fajar, 2017). This effect was also significant in Damerji's (2019) applied research as was also the case in Smit et al's (2018) study.

In their study on the effect of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use on the acceptance of a word processing program, WriteOne, among MBA students at the University of Michigan, Davis, Bagozzi, and Warshaw (1989) determined that perceived usefulness had a strong impact on one's intention to use technology. This determination was also made in subsequent studies (e.g. Park, 2009; Lee et al., 2011; Lule et al., 2012). Focusing on the impact of these two perception factors on NFC mobile payment acceptance among South Korean college students, Shin and Lee (2014) concluded that perceived usefulness positively affected their intention to use technology. Their perception that the payment program was easy to use, however, had little impact on their usage intention. Moreover, in their study of bachelor students in Hong Kong, Shroff et al. (2011) found that perceived usefulness did not affect students' intention to use technology, here, e-portfolio learning system. Accordingly, the following hypothesis has been developed:

H2: *Perceived usefulness of AI technology has a positive effect on college students' intention to use this technology*

- Technology Optimism

As one of the elements of the TR model discussed above, technology optimism is used by many researchers to analyze the impact on the intention to use technology (e.g. Panday & Rachmat, 2019; Buyle et al., 2018; Nugroho & Fajar, 2017). Technology optimism can be defined as the positive perception of technology. In the case of AI technology, it indicates that technology can support people to work more autonomously, effectively and flexibly (Parasuraman, 2000). According to Parasuraman and Colby (2001), perceived optimism promotes the feeling that technology is good and human-friendly. This in turn has an impact on perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness. Larasati et al. (2017) and Damerji (2019) have determined that optimism influences students' intention to use AI technology in relation to learning. The technology optimism rhetoric usually refers to its positive aspects, which are often related to its usefulness, performance (contiguous with high accuracy) and whether it can be easily managed with only a small number of employees. It can also pertain to the contribution of AI technology in improving the quality of life, living standards and work performance (Parasuraman & Colby, 2001).

One of the first studies to use this factor looked at it in the context of employees' technology adoption at a Belgian multi-site financial service provider (Walczuch, Lemmink, & Streukens, 2007). Participants were asked to select the software application they used most and then to fill out a questionnaire about their feelings on that application. The results showed that technology optimism has a positive effect on both perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness of that technology. Erdoğmuş and Esen (2011) surveyed HR managers at private companies in Turkey and determined that these two perceptions had a positive impact of optimism. However, targeting a more general audience of small and medium enterprises in Indonesia, Larasati et al. (2017) came up with different results. Optimism about technology only affected perceived ease of use. Buyle et al. (2018) studied private and public company employees in Belgium and concluded that optimism about technology does not have a statistically significant effect on the perception that technology is easy to use and useful. Based on these various findings, the following hypotheses have been developed:

H3: *Optimism about AI technology has a positive effect on college students' perception of the ease of use of this technology.*

H4: *Optimism about AI technology has a positive effect on college students' perception of the usefulness of this technology.*

- Innovativeness

Another element of the TR model used in this study is innovativeness. It has been defined as the perception that an organization with state-of-the-art technology will be considered a leader in that particular technological field (Parasuraman, 2000). Innovativeness accounts for the perception of an organization as a technology pioneer or a thought leader. It acts as a motivation factor and enhances a person's readiness for technology (Parasuraman & Colby, 2001). The impact of the innovativeness of technology on perceived usefulness and ease of use has been extensively researched. In a recent study by Buyle et al. (2018), innovativeness was shown to have a considerable impact on both perception factors. Earlier, Erdoğmuş and Esen (2011) had reached a similar conclusion. Shin and Lee (2014) studied Korean students' intention to use AI technology (NFC mobile payment) and confirmed the positive effect of innovativeness on perceived ease of use. In 2019, Panday and Rachmat conducted a study on employee technology readiness and acceptance at a company located in Indonesia and also found that innovativeness had a positive effect on perceived ease of use. Larasati et al. (2017) studied small and medium-sized companies in Indonesia and concluded that innovativeness had a positive impact on perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness. Based on the above, the following hypotheses will be used:

H5: *AI technology innovativeness has a positive effect on college students' perception of the ease of use of this technology.*

H6: *AI technology innovativeness has a positive effect on college students' perception of the usefulness of this technology.*

- Discomfort

As explained earlier, discomfort is the third element of the TR model used in this study. It represents a sense of uncertainty and difficulty controlling the technology used. One may even feel overwhelmed by the technology (Parasuraman, 2000). According to Parasuraman and Colby (2001), this factor will give one a sense that the new technology does not seem suitable for a 'normal' person with a medium level of knowledge in technology. That person may end up feeling that technology is too complicated for him or her. Therefore, a higher level of technological knowledge is required to understand new technology and be able to use it. Technology discomfort has been shown by many scholars to have an impact on perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness (e.g. Buyle et al., 2018; Purba, 2015; Godoe & Johansen, 2012). This finding was verified in a recent study by Panday and Rachmat (2019), who conducted research on employees of an Indonesian company. Based on the above, the following hypotheses can thus be proposed:

H7: *Discomfort with AI technology has a negative effect on college students' perception of the ease of use of this technology.*

H8: *Discomfort with AI technology has a negative effect on college students' perception of the usefulness of this technology.*

3. Methodology

This study uses a quantitative approach to analyze and test the eight hypotheses articulated for this research based on the three independent variables and two dependent variables discussed above. The scale for measuring the questionnaires is adopted from previous studies, most notably Damerji's (2019). Data is collected using an online survey questionnaire. The data collected and the hypotheses are then tested with the SPSS 22.0 and AMOS 22.0 software. Data was collected from college students from the following universities in Hanoi: National Economics University, Foreign Trade University, Banking Academy, Academy of Finance, Vietnam University of Commerce, Thang Long University, Hanoi University of Mining and Geology, and Vietnam National University of Agriculture (as mentioned earlier, in Vietnam, there is a business school in almost every university, regardless of the name and core specialty of the university).

This study focuses on students with business major, who form a fairly large and coherent group in every of these universities. To generalize the result across the population, the sample size was determined based on the following formula: $n = 5 * m$, where m is the number of observed variables (Comrey & Lee, 2013; Worthington & Whittaker, 2006). In this study, the number of observed items is 23. Therefore, the minimum sample size must be 115. However, since participants were selected by using the convenient sampling method, the number of questionnaires collected was less than expected as some students failed to fully and truthfully respond to the questionnaire. As a result, the sample size of this study was 230 students. This meets the minimum sample size requirement. Participants were asked to give their opinions on questions related to their feeling about AI technology in the field of education by filling out an online survey questionnaire. The first ten participants who completed the survey were contacted via mobile phone audio calls to give them feedback on the questionnaire, which was recorded and then analyzed to improve the survey instrument.

A total of 204 fully answered online questionnaires were collected. After checking for inappropriate answers, 12 invalid questionnaires were removed, bringing the total number of valid questionnaires down to 192. The data shows that most of the respondents are currently in the third year of their bachelor's degree (64.6%). Only 2.1% of them had already graduated. One of the reasons for this low figure is that since after they graduate students often change their contact numbers, few could be contacted. Among the universities surveyed, students from National Economics University and Banking Academy account for 88.6% of the respondents. Part of the reasons is the larger number of students enrolled in those universities. Another is that the author being at NEU, it was easier to ensure that students would fill out the questionnaires. All the items in the questionnaire (except for the questions about demographics) were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1, "Extremely disagree", to 5, "Extremely agree". The scales in the research model were adopted from previous studies (Parasuraman & Colby, 2001; Panday & Rachmat, 2019; Damerji, 2019).

4. Research Findings and Discussion

- *Reliability Tests*

Since this study uses a Structural Equation Model (SEM) to analyze the impact of the factors described above, an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted to test the data

reliability, using the Promax rotation method. After conducting the EFA test three times, three items were removed and one item moved from perceived usefulness to intention. Another index used in this study is the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) index. At 0.863 and Sig. < 0.001, it confirms the goodness of the EFA results. Both are considered good data set as determined by Hair et al. (2013). As indicated in Table 1, the data explains 59.436% of the real effects in real life.

Table 1: Data Reliability Test Result: EFA Approach

	1st Test	2nd Test	3rd Test
KMO	0.882	0.861	0.863
Sig.	0.000	0.000	0.000
Total variance explained	58.256	58.71	59.436
Number of factors	6	6	6
Number of original items	23	21	20
Number of remaining items	21	20	20

Source: Data analysis compiled by authors

The Cronbach's Alpha test for reliability shows that all the items and data are reliable since all Cronbach's alpha index are above 0.7 as per the criteria suggested by Peterson (1994). In addition, the average level of agreement with regard to perceived usefulness and intention to use AI technology in learning is more than 4 on the 5-point scale. This indicates that students in Hanoi (at least those tested, all of them business majors) feel that AI technology is very useful and are willing to apply it to their learning process. The technology optimism factor also received a high average answer, which shows that students have positive thoughts about AI technology.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistic of Variables

Variables	Mean	Cronbach's Alpha	Standard Deviation
Technology optimism	4.031	0.802	0.642
Innovativeness	3.216	0.734	0.881
Discomfort	2.944	0.706	0.651
Perceived ease of use	3.570	0.885	0.886
Perceived usefulness	4.090	0.822	0.592
Intention to use AI technology in learning	4.094	0.834	0.602

Source: Data analysis compiled by authors

- Impact on Intention Analysis

According to Hair et al. (2013), in the present of the three types of variables, namely, independent, moderate, and dependent variables, the Structural Equation Model (SEM) should be used. Since the PEOU and PU are both moderate and dependent variables, this study therefore applied the SEM model to the theoretical model to analyze impact. The model used is shown below.

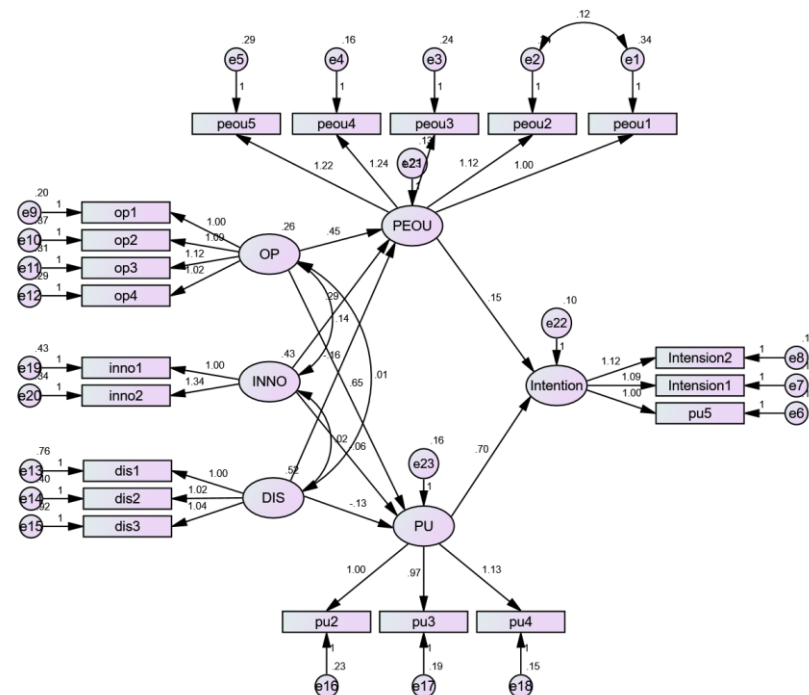


Figure 1: Theoretical Model Analysis: SEM Approach
Source: Data analysis results compiled by authors

Based on the criteria developed by Hair et al. (2013), the results of the Theoretical Model Analysis show that the model of this study is suitable for analysis. With a $CMIN/df = 1,584 < 2$, the Chi-square test index is acceptable. The GFI index is $0.882 > 0.8$, which is also acceptable. This is also the case of the CFI index, which equals $0.945 > 0.9$. The RMSEA index = $0.055 < 0.8$ therefore qualifies.

- Hypotheses Testing

As the results of the SEM analysis in Table 3 indicate, both perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use have a statistically significant positive impact on students' intention to use AI technology in learning as both p-values are below 0.05. Hence hypothesis H1 and H2 are accepted. These findings are in-keeping with those determined by Damerji (2019) and Nugroho and Fajar (2017) on the same sample of university students. However, with a coefficient $\beta = 0.696$ ($Se = 0.096$; $p < 0.05$), compared to $\beta = 0.146$ ($Se = 0.071$; $p < 0.05$) for perceived ease of use, the impact of perceived usefulness on usage intention is significantly stronger. This proves that in deciding to adopt a new AI technology in learning, students (at least those majoring in business) are more concerned with its usefulness than whether or not it is easy to use.

Table 3: Hypothesis Test Result and Coefficients of Impacts

	β	Standard Error	P	Hypotheses
PEOU $\rightarrow$ Intension	0.146	0.071	0.040	H1: Accepted
PU $\rightarrow$ Intension	0.696	0.096	***	H2: Accepted
OP $\rightarrow$ PEOU	0.448	0.095	***	H3: Accepted
OP $\rightarrow$ PU	0.652	0.110	***	H4: Accepted
INNO $\rightarrow$ PEOU	0.293	0.704	***	H5: Accepted
INNO $\rightarrow$ PU	- 0.055	0.072	0.443	H6: Rejected

DIS → PEOU	- 0.159	0.057	0.005	H7: Accepted
DIS → PU	- 0.128	0.059	0.030	H8: Accepted

Source: Compiled by author

With p-values below 0,001 in both cases, technology optimism has a positive impact on the two moderate independent variables, perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness, thus confirming hypothesis H3 and H4. The level of optimism of student about AI technology in education is high (the average is superior to 4 on a 5-point scale) and is similar regardless of the years of study. There is, however, a slight difference among universities. The level of optimism among students from Foreign Trade University and Academy of Finance is lower than that of other universities. This could be due to the different level of application of AI technology to university activities. This could also be a result of the dissemination by other universities of positive information about AI technology, which would contribute to an optimistic feeling toward it.

Innovativeness positively affects students' perceived ease of use. With p-value lower than 0.001, Hypothesis H5 is accepted. However, while it is positive, its impact on perceived usefulness is not statistically significant ($p\text{-value} = 0.443 > 0.05$), which means that hypotheses H6 is rejected. Regarding the various universities involved in this study, students across the board feel innovative about AI technology at the same level, just more than 3 in 5-point Likert scale (medium level). This result disaffirms the conclusions of previous studies by Buyle et al. (2018) and Erdoğan and Esen (2011). Whereas the feeling of innovativeness about AI technology impacts students' perception of ease of use of new technology, it does not change students' perceived usefulness.

By contrast, the discomfort factor has a statistically significant negative impact on the two perception variables. Therefore, hypotheses H7 and H8 are accepted. This finding is inconsistent with several previous studies that focus on different research subjects and circumstances as explained in the literature review section (Damerji, 2019; Erdoğan & Esen, 2011; Walczuch et al., 2007). This could be due to cultural differences. Vietnamese students' cautiousness comes from the fact that generally they tend to prioritize efficiency in learning and if they feel that using AI technology may be uncomfortable, it will affect their performance. Thus, any hard-to-use AI technology in learning will not be deemed useful in learning.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

This research aimed to assess AI technology usage intention in learning among college students majoring in business at various universities in Hanoi. Based on the results discussed above, the following conclusions can be drawn.

Firstly, at 4.094 on 5-point scale, students' intention to use AI technology in learning is relatively high, which means that a majority of students are eager to embrace existing AI intelligence technology – and most likely any new future developments – and integrate it as part of their learning tools. For example, if, and when, new virtual teaching assistants are introduced, students with a business major (i.e., those surveyed in this research study) are likely to accept it and readily use it. Customer acceptance though is always an issue when product or

service innovation makes its way into markets, especially technology-pushed innovation, which, as opposed to market-led technology, does not respond to a demand but does create a need. A case in point is driverless cars. Market research indicates that the public is not ready yet to hop in a car and read a book or take a nap while being driven around. Car manufacturers are aware of this and are dealing with this obstacle by integrating ever more AI technology into new cars so as to get consumers accustomed to it. As this study shows, however, AI technology in learning is widely accepted by students, regardless of the year of study. This augurs well for the AI industry focusing on this sector and for future innovation. A rejection of radical innovation can never be fully discarded though.

The results indicate that there are slight differences in the level of application of AI technology from one institution of higher learning to another. A closer look at the universities surveyed reveals that the Academy of Finance has less changes in terms of learning software and websites compared to the other universities considered in this research. This may be due to differences in university policies regarding the promotion of the use of AI technology in learning. This may also be due to budgetary constraints or to a diverging philosophy regarding new AI technology, but without any further investigation this is difficult to ascertain.

Secondly, the technology optimism dimension shows that when students feel optimistic about new AI technology, they are more likely to use it. Students' positive perception of technology is essentially linked to its ease of use and – to a lesser degree – to its usefulness. It is also inversely proportional to the discomfort dimension. The more students develop a sense of uncertainty and difficulty controlling AI technology in learning, the higher their level of discomfort with AI technology is likely to be and the lower their level of technology optimism and therefore the lower their intention to adopt AI technology. When students feel that that technology is less efficient and more difficult to use, a reduction in their tendency to apply it to learning occurs. This shows that innovativeness may not just be achieved at the expense of ease of use as the lack thereof tends to generate a sense of discomfort and adversely impacts the optimism dimension. The findings in this study are at odds with previous research studies. While they found that technological discomfort affected technological ease of use, many of them concluded that it was not statistically significant and thus rejecting the impact of discomfort on perceived ease of use (Panday & Rachmat, 2019; Buyle et al, 2018; Purba, 2015; Godoe & Johansen, 2012).

Since these studies were conducted in countries other than Vietnam, their findings are not necessarily applicable to Vietnamese students. This research study simply demonstrates that Hanoi, students' sense of comfort towards technology has a stronger impact on perceived ease of use compared to users in other regions. This may be due to less emphasis on technology at Vietnamese universities and the relatively lower access to IT compared to those the countries in these studies, which are all at higher level of economic development. Technological discomfort was also determined in previous studies to have no impact on perceived usefulness (e.g. Nugroho & Fajar, 2017; Larasati et al., 2017; Kuo, Liu, & Ma, 2013). Yet, it has a negative impact in this study. Again, Hanoi students' views about discomfort in technology differ from those of Koreans, Indonesians and Taiwanese much for the same reasons mentioned above. Another key factor in the case of usefulness is Vietnamese students' concern about the fact that they could easily end up misusing AI technology in learning and jeopardizing their studies by getting into activities, which, while attractive and playful, may not necessarily be useful or

relevant to their studies. This is also related to the amount of outside information that students receive each day. It is well-known that news with negative content attracts Vietnamese, especially with regard to technology (e.g. cybercrimes), and contributes to instilling a pessimistic mindset about new technology. Students should assess the pros and cons of technology optimistically and objectively and leave aside any preconceived ideas.

Thirdly, in line with the above remarks, while students believe that innovativeness make their use of AI technology easier, they do not necessarily see it as enhancing its usefulness. This finding debunks the commonplace idea that the more features AI technology brings to markets, including to students, the more useful it appears to be. In the eyes of Vietnamese students, innovativeness does not necessarily equate with usefulness, let alone the fact that it may compromise ease of use.

- Recommendations to Students

While student should take advantage of AI technology to enhance their learning experience, they should also make sure that they do not become dependent on AI technology. Therefore, they should always actively combine its use with traditional learning methods. Second, it is important for students to develop a positive attitude towards technology and continue to explore new technologies in learning with an open and constructively critical mind. The leading power of mastering new AI technology that enhances their learning experience cannot be discarded as it can provide students with a sustainable competitive advantage not only while learning at university but also in their future careers as it is quite probable, that given the fast pace of innovation, they will have to learn, adopt, and adapt to various new technologies, including radical innovation, in the course of their professional lives. They should thus remain more open-minded and confident to learn from others, including those who might be younger but nonetheless well-versed in AI technology.

- Recommendations to Universities

Given that students are ready to embrace AI technology in learning, universities should offer them support and encourage those still hesitant to adopt it. They should help them further develop their knowledge of AI and promote the formation of support groups on social networks, which could significantly contribute to enhance their confidence using this technology in learning. In addition, they should keep updating information about innovations and upgrade the level of mastery of AI technology of lecturers. Since innovativeness can substantially impact student intention, universities could organize activities to make students see the benefits of being pioneers in using AI technology. This could be done in collaboration with and under the sponsorship of key players in the industry. Lecturers should encourage students to use AI technology as part of their assignments and recognize those resorting to unique applications. In order to reduce pressure, drills requiring the use of AI technology could become part of the curricula and be scored as basic assessments of how students fare. Finally, ethical issues involved in the use of AI technology should be discussed and publicized.

- Limitations and Future Research Directions

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this study only used a quantitative approach (a survey) to collecting data from a number of universities located in Hanoi. Yet, the author' initial intention was to complement the online survey questionnaires with some deep face-to-face semi-structured interviews with some of the participants so as to obtain more feedback from them; something which obviously was not possible because of the lockdown imposed by Hanoi as a

preventive measure. Since semi-structured interviews by definition involve a high level of spontaneity and improvisation as well as observation of the interviewees, it would not have been realistic to conduct them online. Next studies on this topic should therefore use a mixed methodology.

Also due to the coronavirus pandemic, the author had no option but to conduct the survey completely online. Since students generally postpone completing surveys – and in many cases never get to them as a result, the author intended to distribute the questionnaires and collect them in person so as to increase the sample size. If the distribution could have been done face-to-face, a bigger sample could have been obtained, something which would have increased its validity. Further research should therefore include a broader sample; one that also better balances the number of first-year, second-year, third-year, and fourth-year students as well as the proportion of students among the universities targeted. Finally, this study solely explored the impact of various factors on the intention to use AI technology. Future studies could develop a model that would explore use intention and the actual use of AI technology and its direct and indirect effects on future use intention.

In addition, this study solely focused on students majoring in business in Hanoi. The results might have been different in other areas and with students with different majors. In future studies, researchers could therefore choose to have a more general sample of respondents to increase the validity of the findings. They could also aim for a research focus on survey respondents with different physical and psychological backgrounds.

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Eudaimonic and Hedonic Wellbeing Among Bangkokians: A Qualitative Study of Maslow's Needs, Intrinsic and Extrinsic Values

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Abstract

What contributes to a person's wellbeing varies from culture to culture and from individual to individual. Some determinants of happiness, though, seem to be similar among certain groups of people. Focusing on Bangkokians living in low- and middle-income neighborhoods, this qualitative study seeks to (i) discuss which levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs are most influential for eudaimonic and hedonic wellbeing, and (ii) determine whether intrinsic values are more prominent than extrinsic values for happiness. The interviews indicate that the first three levels of Maslow's pyramid were mostly met, thus creating the conditions for the participants to focus on esteem and self-actualization needs. Families' quality of life seems to have the strongest influence on individual subjective wellbeing, which is rooted in Asian philosophies and collectivism. It is also a strong predictor of short- and long-term happiness since the aspirations of most interviewees were related to their family's wellbeing and personal growth. Moreover, intrinsic values focusing on family, relationships, and career development proved to be more prominent than extrinsic values to achieve happiness. These results can help managers and policy makers focus on group strategies and enhance family support in Thailand.

Keywords: Happiness, Eudaimonic Wellbeing, Maslow, Intrinsic Motivation, Thailand

1. Introduction

Generally, people who are happy seem to be healthier (De Neve et al., 2013; Kaliterna-Lipovčan & Prizmić-Larsen, 2016), live longer (Danner, Snowdon, & Friesen, 2001; Stavrova, 2019), have more meaningful relationships (Stavrova, 2019; Stavrova & Luhmann, 2016) and do better in their careers (Cropanzano & Wright, 1999; Stavrova, 2019). What makes people happy depends on a number of factors. Variances in the number and the nature of factors that affect happiness have been studied philosophically since ancient times (Stavrova, 2019) and scientifically since the twentieth century (Stavrova, 2019). Happiness and wellbeing also vary from culture to culture, a field that has attracted great interest among researchers in the last decades (Stavrova, 2019). Living in a happy and harmonious place benefits the individual, society, and its economy (West, 2018). It should be noted that since happiness, wellbeing and quality of life are often used interchangeably in the relevant body of literature due to their close similarity of meaning, this will also be the case in this research. The focus in this study is on these concepts in the context of Bangkok, Thailand. Based on the findings of previous studies on this issue, its aim is to understand what the main determinants of eudaimonic and hedonic wellbeing are for working-class Bangkokians living in low- and middle-income

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neighborhoods. More specifically, this study seeks to address the following research questions (RQ1 and RQ2) and verify the two hypotheses (H1 and H2) articulated.

- **RQ1:** Which levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs are most influential for hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing among Bangkokians living in low- and middle-income neighborhoods?

H1: *Love/affection/belonging needs are the most influential ones for eudaimonic and hedonic wellbeing among Bangkokians living in low- and middle-income neighborhoods.*

- **RQ2:** Are intrinsic values more prominent than extrinsic values for happiness among Bangkokians living in low- and middle-income neighborhoods?

H2: *Intrinsic motivation is more prominent than extrinsic motivation in reaching higher levels of happiness among Bangkokians living in low- and middle-income neighborhoods.*

This study begins with a review of the relevant existing literature. Figure 1 shows the organization of the topics discussed in the literature review section. First, general issues such as the origins, definitions, theories and the main determinants affecting wellbeing around the world are reviewed. Attention then turns to subjective wellbeing in the context of Bangkok, Thailand.



Figure 1: Organization of Topics in the Literature Review
(Created by the Author for the Study)

The methodology utilized in this qualitative study is considered next, beginning with the evaluative, hedonic, and eudemonic criteria (Jawad & Scott-Jackson, 2016) used to measure subjective wellbeing. The way participants assessed their overall happiness and life satisfaction is then explained (Kaliterna-Lipovčan & Prizmić-Larsen, 2016). Figure 2 shows the conceptual framework of the study. This is followed by a discussion of the answers collected in the semi-structured in-depth interviews and analyzed through content analysis and descriptive exploratory methodology (Jongudomkarn & Camfield, 2006) based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943), and intrinsic and extrinsic goals and values (Kasser & Ryan, 1993,

1996, 2001; Rijavec, Brdar, & Miljkovic, 2006). As explained in the conclusion, family, close relationships, and financial stability are among the top determinants of wellbeing once basic needs are met. Moreover, Asian philosophies like Buddhism, as well as the collective nature of the Thai society, influence how they behave and what they find important to reach happiness.

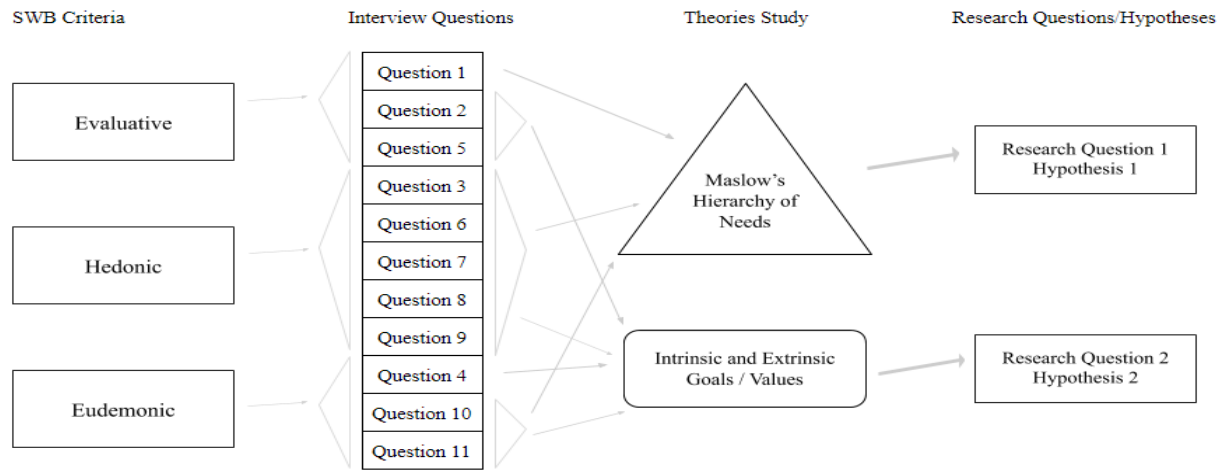


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework
(Created by the Author for the Study)

2. Literature Review

- *Eudaimonia and Hedonia*

How to live life in the best possible way (Aristotle, 1941; Byers, 2020) is a question that has been analyzed since olden days (Stavrova, 2019). Around 2,400 years ago, the Greek philosopher Aristotle determined that in order to reach profound happiness - or eudaimonia (Byers, 2020; Thinley & Hartz-Karp, 2019), a person should focus on those actions which unleash his/her full potential, acting ethically and in accordance with all levels of excellence (Nussbaum, 2012). “The mean and the good is feeling or acting at the right time, about the right things in relation to the right people and for the right reason” (Bergsma & Samuel, 2010, p. 659). Aristotle was not the only great thinker who tried to decipher this enigma. Philosophers in Asia articulated their own ways of living happily. According to the 14th Dalai Lama, everybody’s ultimate goal is to find happiness (Yiengprugsawan, Seubsman, & Sleight, 2014). For Confucius, it is essential to focus on others’ happiness, known as ‘Jen’, which means “to love fellow men” (Zhang & Veenhoven, 2008, p. 427). In Taoism, following the laws of nature is believed to help us reach the state of happiness (Zhang & Veenhoven, 2008) and in Buddhism, one is focused on the idea that everything is temporary and interconnected - thus, suffering is inevitable, centering our actions on the reduction of pain (Nitnitiphрут, 2007; Nussbaum, 2012; Zhang & Veenhoven, 2008).

More recently, Jigme Singye Wangchuck, the former king of Bhutan, a country perched in the Himalayas, decided to use a new measurement to determine his country’s wealth. In 1972, after a careful analysis of his nation, he introduced the concept of Gross National Happiness (GNH) (Thinley & Hartz-Karp, 2019; Yiengprugsawan et al., 2014). This unprecedented measurement technique is rooted in Buddhism (Yiengprugsawan et al., 2012) and its goal similar to Aristotle’s; happiness and the preservation of cultural and spiritual richness (Thinley & Hartz-Karp, 2019). GNH measures Bhutanese wellbeing in nine domains: “living standard, health, education, ecological diversity and resilience, cultural diversity and resilience, community vitality, time use, psychological wellbeing, and good governance” (Thinley &

Hartz-Karp, 2019, p. 3), through a combination of methods balancing body and mind (Thinley & Hartz-Karp, 2019). Concerns with what makes citizens happy, however, is not just limited to Bhutan. Its causes have been analyzed in other places as well. Happiness has been found to be a combination of two perspectives: eudaimonia and hedonia (Cummins, 2000; Diener et al., 1985; Diener & Shu, 2000; Veenhoven 1988/2002; Yiengprugsawan et al., 2014).

Table 1: Characteristics of Eudaimonia and Hedonia

Eudaimonia	Hedonia
Person's full potential (Gui & Stanca, 2010), self-actualization and functioning well (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Delle Fave et al., 2011; Rijavec et al., 2006; Ryan & Deci, 2001).	Momentaneous pleasure and avoiding pain - feeling well (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Delle Fave et al., 2011; Rijavec et al., 2006; Ryan & Deci, 2001).
Long-term wellbeing (LTWB) - Life as a cautious reasoned story, thriving in time (Byers, 2020).	Short-term wellbeing (STWB) - satisfaction for a short period of time - recollective in nature: overall evaluation of a person's life (Byers, 2020).
Happiness as a journey (person's self-realization and fully functioning) (Byers, 2020).	Happiness as a duty (factors: relationships and financial gain) (Bergsma, 2008; Ott, 2017).
Objective approach (McMahan & Estes, 2011) to measure wellbeing: ethics, self-control, contribution to the greater good and understanding along with life meaning, personal growth and development (psychological approach) (Huta, 2015; Pritchard et al., 2020; Ryff, 1989; Stavrova, 2019).	Subjective approach to measure wellbeing (experiences of joy and pleasure) (McMahan & Estes, 2011) - Subjective wellbeing (SWB). (Fredrickson, 2000; Redelmeier & Kahneman, 1996; Stavrova, 2019) - Memory influences one's perception of life satisfaction and affect (cognitive and affective approach) (Gui & Stanca, 2010; Ott, 2017).
Based on Aristotle (Camfield et al., 2007; Pritchard et al., 2020; Stavrova, 2019; Waterman, 2008).	Based on Aristippus (Pritchard et al., 2020; Venhoeven, Bolderdijk, & Steg, 2013), Epicurus and Bentham (Camfield et al., 2007).

Source: Created by the Author for the Study

As noted in the introduction, the relevant literature contains many terms that seem to be either similar or related to happiness, such as wellbeing, quality of life, life satisfaction, etc. (Ye, Ng, & Lian, 2015). Notwithstanding these similarities, to better understand the determinants of living a happy and leading a high-quality life, it is critical to comprehend what each term entails. A review of various research studies in the field indicates that happiness, wellbeing and quality of life are sometimes used interchangeably or with a very similar meaning, even though researchers have diverse approaches (Krys et al., 2019; Ott, 2011; Veenhoven, 2000b). For readers' easier comprehension, Figure 3 provides a visual representation of where each term stands in the literature.

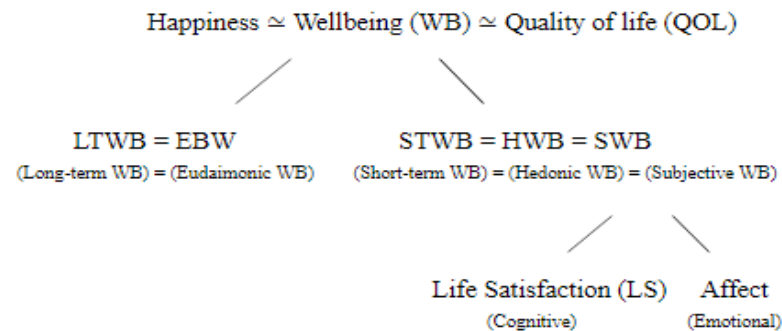


Figure 3: Happiness, Wellbeing and Quality of Life in the Relevant Literature
(Created by the Author for the Study)

- *Happiness*

Happiness can be defined as an individual overall appreciation and evaluation of one's life (Oishi et al., 2013; Spruk & Kešeljević, 2016; Veenhoven, 2001), joyful and satisfying moments, and contentment with everything around and the life quality achieved by fulfilling one's potential. Happiness can be measured objectively and/or subjectively (Frey & Stutzer, 2002; Nitnitiphрут, 2007). "Aspiration, adaptation and social comparison" are part of the psychological evaluation that affects a person's happiness (Nitnitiphрут, 2007, p. 332).

- *Quality of Life*

Similarly, quality of life (QOL) refers to how a person perceives his/her own life taking into consideration expectations, objectives, cultural life, and social standards, to name a few (Iwasaki, 2007; World Health Organization, 1997). QOL is affected by our psychological and physical states, level of independence, and relationships with others and with the environment (Iwasaki, 2007). Veenhoven (2000b) has identified four kinds of qualities of life: "live-ability, life-ability, usefulness of life and satisfaction with life" (Jawad & Scott-Jackson, 2016, p. 15).

- *Wellbeing*

Consistent with the two terms discussed above, wellbeing (WB) refers to the diverse ways we feel content, happy, satisfied, and in harmony with the life we have (Jawad & Scott-Jackson, 2016; Taylor, 2015). "In 2011, the UN recognized wellbeing as a fundamental human goal and a universal human aspiration" (Krys et al., 2019, p. 1). Individual wellbeing is strongly influenced by the conditions a person lives in. Therefore, it is necessary to distinguish between several wellbeing categories: eudaimonic (EWB) and hedonic wellbeing (HWB), long-term (LTWB) and short-term wellbeing (STWB) (Byers, 2020), individual and community wellbeing (Sirgy, 2018) and objective and subjective wellbeing (SWB) (Diener et al., 1999).

Subjective wellbeing (SWB) is a term coined by Diener in the 1980s who stated that this is "a general area of scientific interest rather than a single specific construct" (Diener et al., 1999, p. 277; Stavrova, 2019, p. 431) formed by two components: life satisfaction (LS) and affect. Life satisfaction refers to the control an individual has over his/her life (Spruk & Kešeljević, 2016; Veenhoven, 1996). This cognitive side of subjective wellbeing compares a person's achievements to their aspirations (Diener, 1984; Kahneman & Angus, 2010; Niedźwiedź et al., 2012; Stavrova, 2019). The other side of subjective wellbeing consists of affect, the emotional component, which measures the intensity and frequency of the sentiments and emotions involved in the experiences that form a person's life (Diener, 1984; Kahneman & Angus, 2010; Stavrova, 2019). An individual's own perception of his/her life is often determined by factors such as living standards, financial resources, psychological and physical conditions, the natural environment, relationship with others, education, etc. (Diener, 1984; Jawad & Scott-Jackson,

2016). These indicators are usually evaluated in a subjective way in a brief span of time trying to find the balance between negative and positive outcomes (Keyes, Shmotkin, & Ryff, 2002; Niedźwiedź et al., 2012).

Some SWB predictors seem to have a stronger influence than others. Family, social relationships, economic situation, faith/religion, leisure, and politics have both a direct and indirect robust effect on how people subjectively assess their lives (Krys et al., 2019; World Values Survey, 2016). A number of studies have shown that family is the most important indicator in personal wellbeing (e.g. Cousins, 1989; Krys et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2012), affecting individuals both positively and negatively, depending on the circumstances under which they find themselves (Krys et al., 2019; Stavrova, 2019). Luhmann et al. (2012) explored the differences between family members – parents who had children versus parents who did not – and determined that parents who were childless reported higher SWB, possibly because they had fewer worries than people with children (Luhmann et al., 2012; Stavrova, 2019).

The degree of influence of social relationships on SWB is very close to that of families. Individuals who have close relationships with others rate their SWB much higher (Becchetti, Pelloni, & Rossetti, 2008; Biswas-Diener & Diener, 2006; Diener & Seligman, 2002; Gui & Stanca, 2010) since they feel loved and cared for, among many other positive outcomes thus reducing stress, improving their overall health, and encouraging them to do good for others (Helliwell & Putnam, 2004; Kawachi et al., 1999; Reeskens & Vandecasteele, 2017). The life of virtue that Aristotle and Plato studied was one that encompassed social bonding, altruism and volunteer activities that contributed to the wellbeing of others (Kaliterna-Lipovčan & Prizmić-Larsen, 2016; Stavrova, Thomas, & Detlef, 2013; Stavrova, 2019; Thoits & Hewitt, 2001). The same desire is instilled by religion and faith, which suggests that this determinant is also very influential in terms of happiness levels (Kaliterna-Lipovčan & Prizmić-Larsen, 2016). Being part of a group is related to the concept of leisure, another important SWB indicator (DeLeire & Kalil, 2010; Gui & Stanca, 2010). Cultural traditions and celebrations in China, for example, are relevant factors for happiness and health (Iwasaki, 2007; Wang & Stringer, 2000). One reason for it is food consumption as meals are also a strong SWB indicator (Iwasaki, 2007; Nagla, 2005). Investment in leisure is the only factor that is positively correlated to wellbeing, as opposed to spending money on other material possessions (DeLeire & Kalil, 2010; Gui & Stanca, 2010).

- The Easterlin Paradox

The Easterlin paradox - can money buy happiness? - has become very popular in research in the 21st century (Ferrer-i-Carbonell, 2005; Reeskens & Vandecasteele, 2017). Studies indicate that the relationship between the two is not linear (Clark, Frijters, & Shields, 2008; Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2002; Diener & Oishi, 2000; Reeskens & Vandecasteele, 2017). Instead, past a certain amount – USD75,000 annually as determined by Kahneman and Angus (2010) – higher annual incomes do not translate into correlated growth rate in terms of happiness level (Spruk & Kešeljević, 2016). Nevertheless, economic freedom, monetary saturation, and financial security have been shown to be positive SWB factors (Reeskens & Vandecasteele, 2017; Spruk & Kešeljević, 2016; Welzel & Inglehart, 2010; Wolbring, Keuschnigg, & Negele, 2013). One reason is the capacity to meet basic needs (Ferrer-i-Carbonell, 2005; Reeskens & Vandecasteele, 2017). Once these have been satisfied, the ending point of a parallel growth between income and happiness – a point known as satiation – cannot be found (Grant, 2014). This raises two key issues: Do people want more the more they have? What is the right amount of money and material goods to ensure a good quality of life? Poverty is negatively associated with SWB. Even though the theory of adaptation suggests that people are able to adapt to the circumstances under which they find themselves (Biswas-Diener & Diener, 2006; Frederick &

Loewenstein, 1999), not being able to satisfy one's own survival needs and those of loved ones decreases wellbeing profoundly (Diener et al., 1999; Gudmundsdottir, 2013; Hagerty, 2000; Reeskens & Vandecasteele, 2017). Inaba's (2009) study on the relationship between economic situation and happiness, however, reveals that in some developing countries, income inequality between social classes actually builds hope in people. Known as the 'tunnel effect' theory, this finding surmises that people in these countries perceive this inequality as an incentive to keep on working and believe in the possibility of change in the near future (Hirschman & Rothschild, 1973; Ngamaba, Panagioti, & Armitage, 2018; Tomes, 1986). People differ in what they find important in life, which influences what the best possible life entails. Some individuals are more drawn to experiences, ideas, and things that are driven by inner motivation (intrinsic goals/values) while others pay more attention to those that have an outer reason (external goals/values) (Kasser & Ryan, 1993, 1996, 2001; Rijavec et al., 2006). Table 2 summarizes this dichotomy.

Table 2: Characteristics of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Goals and Values

Intrinsic Goals/Values	Extrinsic Goals/Values
Personal growth, relationships, and volunteering (Kasser & Ryan, 1993, 1996, 2001; Rijavec et al., 2006).	Status, physical beauty, and financial outcomes (Kasser & Ryan, 1993, 1996, 2001; Rijavec et al., 2006).
Influenced by knowledge and social bonding - more connected to natural needs (Rijavec et al., 2006).	Influenced by external circumstances such as culture, societal expectations, etc. (Rijavec et al., 2006; Sheldon et al., 2004).
Positively associated with wellbeing (Rijavec et al., 2006). They contribute to reaching happiness to a greater extent (Rijavec et al., 2006; Sheldon et al., 2004; Sheldon & Kasser, 1998; Stavrova, 2019).	Indirectly related to wellbeing (Rijavec et al., 2006). They need to be balanced with intrinsic goals to affect WB positively (Rijavec et al., 2006; Sheldon et al., 2004; Sheldon & Kasser, 1998; Stavrova, 2019).

Source: Created by the Author for the Study

Many researchers have focused on happiness/wellbeing/quality of life and developed various theories to assess the factors that affect it. They include among others the QOL indicator projects (Sirgy, 2011), the happiness pie (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, & Schkade, 2005), the self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2001), the QOL classification (Veenhoven, 2000a, 2000b), the social production function theory (Ormel et al., 1999), the quest for meaningful life (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002), the wellbeing scale/Ryff's psychological model (Ryff, 1989), general human needs (typology of motivation) (Wentholt, 1980), and the theory of human motivation (Maslow, 1943). Table 3 in Appendix 1 summarizes the main characteristics of each of these theories. According to Maslow (1943), living a good life is synonymous with satisfying certain needs and attaining goals that positively contribute to individual wellbeing (Ye et al., 2015). Needs and goals 'hold hands' since people not only focus on meeting their needs, but also on the outcomes that come with them (Scheffer & Heckhausen, 2018). Maslow's hierarchy of needs follows a specific order according to which lower needs should be satisfied first in order to subsequently meet others (Biswas-Diener & Diener, 2006; Maslow, 1943; Niedźwiedz et al., 2012; Sirgy, 2018). Based on the theory of human motivation, Maslow (1943) identified five kinds of needs by which humans are driven (Abulof, 2017). The first are *survival needs*, also known as physiological needs, such as food, water, sleep, excretion, etc. It is believed that the satisfaction associated with these needs is not limitless; once they are met, the individual must then satisfy other needs to feel content (Ye et al., 2015).

The second level of needs pertains to *safety* in all its forms; physical, financial, resources and the safety of loved ones, etc. (Maslow, 1943; Ye et al., 2015). Next are the *needs to belong*, i.e., love and affection. Here relationships play a key role (Maslow, 1943; Ye et al., 2015). The closer and more trustworthy these are, the more positively they contribute to subjective wellbeing (Gui & Stanca, 2010). The fourth type is *esteem needs*; feeling respected, acknowledged, and cared for by others, mainly by those who are part of the same group but also those outside (Gui & Stanca, 2010). Individuals tend to compare themselves to others – an action that has great influence on how a person perceives his/her own life (Nitnitiphrut, 2007). Finally, standing at the top of the pyramid are *self-actualization needs* (Maslow, 1943; Welzel & Inglehart, 2010), or needs for fulfillment, for achieving one's aspirations. Once achieved, people are among others characterized by deeper human connections, richer emotional attitudes, more problem-solving skills, greater creativity, and acceptance of one-self (Scheffer & Heckhausen, 2018). It has often been argued that once this last need is met, happiness is reached (e.g. Bergsma & Samuel, 2010).

Some authors disagree with the importance given to self-actualization since it is usually at the expense of basic needs, which many people around the world are not able to meet (e.g. Abulof, 2017). Nevertheless, the pyramid of needs coined by Maslow has been extensively analyzed and confirmed as a universal human developmental model (Maslow, 1943; Stavrova, 2019). What usually differs across communities are the material needs people have versus spiritual needs, the former being the same around the globe and the latter being different from culture to culture (Ye et al., 2015). For instance, in Asian cultures, level three in Maslow's hierarchy of needs has great importance for subjective wellbeing (Awanis, Schlegelmilch, & Cui, 2017; Scheffer & Heckhausen, 2018; Schwartz, 1990). Since these cultures are socially oriented, group needs have a higher priority than individual ones (Scheffer & Heckhausen, 2018; Triandis, 1997). In these cultures, self-actualization is reached through satisfaction of the rest of the in-group necessities (Triandis, 1997; Scheffer & Heckhausen, 2018). Still, even though high levels of collectivism are usually positively associated with subjective wellbeing (Ye et al., 2015), some members of individualistic societies scored higher in life satisfaction than those in collective ones (e.g. Stavrova, 2019). The cultural dimension of collectivism in Asian countries is often rooted in Asian philosophies such as Buddhism and Daoism, which emphasize harmony among members of a group and respect of social norms (Schimmack, Oishi, & Diener, 2002; Ye et al., 2015). Thailand is a country mostly grounded in Buddhism and sharing some Confucian traditions (Awanis et al., 2017; Pace, 2013). Both promote behaviors that involve compassion, love, and kindness in interpersonal relationships (Awanis et al., 2017; Schwartz, 1990). Thailand ranks high in several happiness indices. According to a Gallup poll, when asked if they had experienced positive emotions the day before, Thai people ranked 14th in the world (West, 2018). In another study, 56.7 percent of the people surveyed reported being happy most of or all the time (Yiengprugsawan et al., 2012). In the list of Happiness in nations between 2010 and 2018 released by the World Database on Happiness, Thailand scores 7.3 out of 10 (Veenhoven, 2013-2020).

- ***The Green and Happiness Index***

The Thai National Economic and Social Development Council (the Council) published the Green and Happiness Index (GHI) between 2007 and 2018; the index main components are "health, a strong and equitable economy, a balanced environment and ecosystem, a democratic society with good governance and a just society and inequality reduction" (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council, 2007–2018, p. 1). The Council also issued the Twelfth National Economic and Social Development Plan 2017-2021 with several strategies for development (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, 2017-2021). The following excerpt outlines some key aspects of the strategy:

“Human society should be developed in such a way as to achieve wellbeing in all age groups and to have the capacity to cope adequately with daily life changes through the leverage provided by quality education, learning and skills enhancement, and through quality public health services in all areas, and by promoting the role of social institutions to imbue good, disciplined people with strong values and social responsibility. [...] Thai people’s attitudes must be changed to be virtuous, disciplined, accountable, and ready to adapt to changes in accordance with the principle of protecting the common interest. [...] ‘People-Centered Development’ seeks to create quality of life and healthy conditions for Thais. It aims to develop quality citizens who are disciplined, receptive to learning, knowledgeable, skillful, and creative. They should also have good attitudes, social responsibility, morality, and ethics.” (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, 2017-2021, p. 2-5).

Family, community, health, and economic equity are described as key wellbeing determinants among the Thai population (Guillen-Royo et al., 2013; Yiengprugsawan et al., 2012). Family appears to be the most important factor affecting wellbeing among Thais for public policy makers and people who have a job (Senasu & Singhapakdi, 2014). Furthermore, this indicator seems to be the only one that acts as an accurate predictor for present and future wellbeing (Guillen-Royo et al., 2013; Senasu & Singhapakdi, 2014). Along with family relations, other social relationships greatly matter to Thais, especially those that deal with neighbors, social behavior, and children’s conduct (Camfield et al., 2007; Yiengprugsawan et al., 2010, Yiengprugsawan et al., 2012). Religion also plays an important role in Thai society and is a strong determinant and moderator of wellbeing. Several studies have evidenced the positive correlation between being affiliated to a religious group, being happier and having better mental health (e.g. Ellison, 1991; Nelson, 2009; Yiengprugsawan et al., 2012). In addition, the concept of karma - “we reap what we have sown” (Thijssen & Loy, 2016, p. 162) has been shown to strongly influence people’s behavior and decision-making and help them find happiness in adverse circumstances (Thijssen & Loy, 2016; Yiengprugsawan, Seubsman & Sleight, 2010; Yiengprugsawan et al., 2012).

Finally, wealth and income are powerful determinants of people’s happiness and wellbeing as well in this country (Guillen-Royo et al., 2013). The first reason is to cover their basic needs. A second one is that ownership and interaction with material things (materialism) is believed to be a means to attain happiness (Watchravesringkan, 2012). In general, having a stable income and money along with being satisfied in the workplace highly and positively affect wellbeing (Senasu & Singhapakdi, 2018). While the general happiness and wellbeing parameters discussed above apply to the country as a whole, they remain similar for Bangkok, Thailand’s capital. Bangkokians reported 3.72 out of 5 in life satisfaction, a 74.4 percent rate (Nitnitiphrut, 2007). Health and basic needs, family and social relationships seem to be the most important indicators of wellbeing in the city. Sacrifice is believed to be the foundation of human relationships as it decreases one’s level of selfishness and contributes to building a more peaceful society (Nitnitiphrut, 2007).

3. Methodology

In this qualitative research, subjective wellbeing is evaluated by the individual and is highly dependent on affect and recency (Jawad & Scott-Jackson, 2016). This means that the observers in this study seek to find patterns and similarities in the responses given by the participants and draw conclusions from them.

- **Criteria**

Four types of criteria can be used to measure SWB (Jawad & Scott-Jackson, 2016). They include:

(i) *Evaluative Criteria*: Questions such as “how satisfied / happy are you with your life?” are used for a cognitive assessment of the objective factors that affect one’s life (Jawad & Scott-Jackson, 2016).

(ii) *Hedonic Criteria*: This type of criteria measures how the experiences a person goes through affect him/her in a positive or negative way over a short period of time (Jawad & Scott-Jackson, 2016; Ott, 2017; Stavrova, 2019).

(iii) *Eudemonic Criteria*: Based on Maslow’s self-actualization need, they reflect the long-term effect of factors such as relationships, personal growth, purpose in life, etc. (Jawad & Scott-Jackson, 2016; Ryff, 1989; Stavrova, 2019).

(iv) *Comparative Evaluation*: This type of evaluation occurs when several groups’ subjective wellbeing rates are compared (Jawad & Scott-Jackson, 2016).

Since the participants were asked to assess their own lives and the short-term and long-term factors that affect their happiness and wellbeing, this study uses the first three criteria, i.e., evaluative, hedonic and eudemonic criteria (Byers, 2020).

- **Common Measures**

Common measures of SWB include:

(i) *Single-Item Measures*: For these measures, a single-item scale ranging from 0 to 10 is often used, where 0 represents the worst life and 10 means the best life possible (Jawad & Scott-Jackson, 2016). This scale encourages respondents to assess determinants such as family, relationships, work, environment, etc. and determines whether they are content with them (Kaliterna-Lipovčan & Prizmić-Larsen, 2016). Although answers can be influenced by participants’ mood, the words used in the questions, the organization of the questions, and so on, they nevertheless have good external validity since they help to gain information on what individuals find important, draw conclusions from comparisons between various participants, and attempt to increase wellbeing by contributing to decision-making and policy making (Diener, 2013; Jawad & Scott-Jackson, 2016). Examples of this kind of scales are the ten-point Likert scales used to measure life satisfaction in different countries (Stavrova, 2019; Thinley & Hartz-Karp, 2019) and the ladder of life scale (Jawad & Scott-Jackson, 2016) which measures the cognitive dimension of happiness shown as contentment in the World Database of Happiness (Ott, 2011).

(ii) *Life Satisfaction Measures*: Scales ranging from 0 to 10 are usually used for these measures. Typically, questions such as “All things considered, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole?”/ “In general, how happy do you feel?” are asked (Huppert et al., 2009; Kaliterna-Lipovčan & Prizmić-Larsen, 2016). The scale measurement is followed by the Personal Wellbeing Index (PWI) (Cummins, 2002), which measures life satisfaction in seven different domains: “material status, personal health status, achievement in life, relationships with family and friends, feelings of physical safety, acceptance by the community and future security” (Kaliterna-Lipovčan & Prizmić-Larsen, 2016, p. 4).

(iii) *Overall Happiness Measures*: Scales ranging from 1-4 are sometimes used, where they ask the respondents to answer the query “How happy are you?” by choosing one of four responses: “very happy,” “rather happy,” “not very happy,” and “not happy at all.” This question has been used by the World Values Survey and European Values Study (Yiengprugsawan et al., 2014). This study uses a mix of the three aforementioned techniques by measuring satisfaction according to Maslow’s five levels of needs, including intrinsic and extrinsic goals and values.

- Interviewees

The researcher conducted fifty face-to-face interviews with local citizens around Bangkok. The target group was working-class adults and families who live in low- and middle-income neighborhoods in Bangkok and volunteered to participate in the study. The sample size was determined following previous studies and theoretical saturation. Fugard and Potts (2015) suggested that “to have 80% power to detect two instances of a theme with a 10% prevalence in a population, 29 participants would be required” using a random sample (Fugard & Potts, 2015, p. 669). The size also depends on the homogeneity of the sample. For example, in a very homogeneous sample, twelve interviews were proposed (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). Since the participants of this study differ in terms of field of employment, age, and gender, the researcher decided to increase the sample size to fifty. Furthermore, previous studies conducted by, for example, Francis et al. (2010), Guest et al. (2006), Isman, Ekéus, and Berggren (2013), and Morse (2000) suggest that theoretical saturation might be achieved between the first six and thirty interviews (Fugard & Potts, 2015; Vasileiou et al., 2018). In this research, the main themes were suggested in the first ten to fifteen interviews.

- Interviews

As noted earlier, a qualitative approach is better suited to study wellbeing and happiness as it is believed to capture deeper insight from the participants (Jongudomkarn & Camfield, 2006). This qualitative study used several techniques that include structured and semi-structured in-depth interviews, content analysis, and a descriptive exploratory methodology (Gill et al., 2008; Jongudomkarn & Camfield, 2006). Each interview lasted approximately between 30 and 40 minutes. The author and her assistant took notes of all the ideas discussed with the interviewees both during and after every interview in order to capture as much information as possible. The data were subsequently analyzed in an Excel document and assessed using descriptive exploratory methodology (Research Methodology, 2019) and content analysis; two general approaches that have been shown to be very accurate for qualitative research (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Hagedoorn et. al., 2017; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Sandelowski, 2000). The steps taken to analyze the data/content in each interview followed a systematic approach. First major common themes were sought following each of the questions asked and subthemes and correlations between patterns in participants’ answers identified next (Ponterotto, 2006; Sandelowski & Barroso, 2002). The relevant body of literature provides both major topics and subtopics in the field of happiness, wellbeing and quality of life. These were evaluated in the responses of the interviewees, connecting eudaimonic and hedonic wellbeing with Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, and intrinsic and extrinsic values and goals, as shown in the conceptual framework.

The interview questions aimed at understanding the factors affecting participants’ wellbeing and identifying which ones have the strongest influence. Some argue that it is not possible to arrive at credible answers by simply using a scale, while others defend this method. In this research study, the methodology started with single-item measurements and scales (e.g. Diener, 2013; Diener et al., 2010; Hone et al., 2014; Jawad & Scott-Jackson, 2016). It then allowed the interviewees to explain their feelings and what they find important in terms of quality of life. The qualitative approach based on semi-structured in-depth interviews considers both cognitive and affective aspects of subjective wellbeing (Biswas-Diener & Diener, 2006). Special attention was given to the wording used in the questions (Etzioni, 2017), providing clarifications as much as needed, with the aim of promoting accuracy in the answers received.

4. Analysis of Findings and Discussion

This section reports the findings of the interviews which were analyzed in light of the relevant previous literature discussed above. The findings and analysis pertaining to each semi-

structured question will be presented individually and the major themes and subthemes summarized next. The order of the questions was important and reviewed by the researcher and her assistant with the objective of inviting the interviewees to think about their overall wellbeing and the factors affecting it. Based on the responses to the structured questions at the beginning of each interview, the participants' demographics can be summarized as follows: 62 percent of them were females and 38 percent males; ages ranged between 18 and 65 years old, with 24 percent of them aged 18-29, 32 percent 30-39, 24 percent 40-49, 16 percent 50-59, and 4 percent 60-70. In terms of occupations, they worked in the administration, transportation industry, food and service sectors, humanitarian field, and freelance, to name a few. The following paragraphs show the findings of the questions related to eudaimonic and hedonic wellbeing.

- Question 1 (see Figures 4 and 5 in Appendix 2)

After completing the demographic questions, meant to ensure that the participants fitted the target group, the first query related to participants' happiness ('What makes you happy?'). Interviewees discussed the first things that came to their mind when thinking of happiness. Most participants used hedonic criteria describing short-term to mid-term happiness. 60 percent of the participants claimed that 'family' was what made them happy. Having and being part of a family was very important to them since they not only felt loved and cared for, but also felt other people needed them to be happy. Family was followed by 'income': 16 percent of the responses related to either having more money and being self-sufficient, increasing the sales of their businesses, or paying off their debts.

Using content analysis (Jongudomkarn & Camfield, 2006), answers to the first question were classified according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs so as to find out which need the participants most associated with happiness. Some participants mentioned ideas that belonged to more than one type of need. This was taken into account when grouping them. Most of the answers (88%) were directly or indirectly related to the third level of needs: love, belonging and affection. Family, children, friends, romantic partners, having people to love and helping other people, were some of the responses that fit this category. The next highest types of need that this group of Bangkokians associated with their happiness were Level 2 (safety) and level 5 (self-actualization), standing for 30 percent and 24 percent of the target group, respectively.

- Question 2 (see Figure 6 in Appendix 2)

After interviewees had been given time to think about the factors that influenced their happiness, they were asked to rate their overall happiness/wellbeing – 'How happy are you?' – on a 11-point scale, ranging from 0 to 10, (Jawad & Scott-Jackson, 2016). 22 percent of them claimed to be utterly happy, not needing or lacking anything at that moment; 52 percent stated that they were very happy (rating their happiness levels between 7 and 9); 24 percent mentioned that they were only in the middle, being happy sometimes, while 2 per cent claimed to be extremely sad. To explain why they were feeling a particular way, respondents used evaluative criteria to rate their overall happiness and life satisfaction, and a mix of eudemonic and hedonic criteria (Jawad & Scott-Jackson, 2016). The reasons given by those who rated themselves as either completely or very happy (7-10 on the scale), related to family relationships, having fun, and financial stability. Those who rated themselves in the middle (5-6 and a few that chose 7), mentioned stress, not being close to family, not performing well at school, a bad economic situation, and not having enough money for things they needed as the main reasons for their unhappiness. The participant who claimed to be extremely sad explained that the main reason for it was because of family issues. The average score by participants (7-8/10) shows strong similarity with the score of 7.3/10 shown on the World Database on Happiness with regard to Thailand (Veenhoven, 2013-2020) and the score of 74 percent in Bangkok (Nitnitiphrut, 2007).

When analyzing why Bangkokians reported high levels of happiness, family, leisure, and economic stability were among the top reasons. As shown in the relevant literature, these reasons are also the root cause of wellbeing in previous studies (e.g. Guillen-Royo et al., 2013; Yiengprugsawan et al., 2012). Family relations and social interconnectedness are two clear intrinsic values (Kasser & Ryan, 1993, 1996, 2001; Rijavec et al., 2006). Economic stability, however, can be both intrinsic and extrinsic. As indicated by interviewees in their responses, when income is not capable of providing for physiological/basic needs and family wellbeing and health, it contributes negatively to SWB and therefore affects intrinsic goals. When discussing income and their financial situation, all the participants who elaborated on their answers made it clear that they wanted more money not for status but to help their families.

- Question 3 (see Figure 7 in Appendix 2)

The third question - ‘Can you please tell us about your daily life?’ - took a hedonic approach since the interviewers wanted to understand how the experiences which the participants had on a daily basis might influence their life satisfaction and affect. 94 percent of the respondents said that they followed a routine of going to work, then going back home, doing domestic chores, sports, meditation, meeting friends, and so on; 10 percent of them actually claimed to have two jobs at the same time. Only one participant was fully focused on training and studying and also on having a routine. Another was in a period of neither working nor studying and was even homeless at times. Work satisfaction and financial stability are SWB determinants discussed in the literature. Most participants claimed to be working in one place and two places in a few cases. They described their daily life in a routinely way, discussing what they did in the morning, afternoon, and evening, on weekdays and on weekends. As argued by Heybroek, Haynes, and Baxter (2015), having a daily routine contributes to overall happiness since it usually encourages responsible and healthy habits that promote emotional and financial stability (Amorim, França, & Valentini, 2018). Having a job has been shown to contribute to higher levels of happiness since it relates to less economic burdens. If in addition to that, the person is happy in his/her job, that level is even higher. Performing well at their job and/or getting a better job were among the interviewees’ aspirations (see findings for questions 4 and 11). These objectives were thus analyzed as potential positive predictors for future subjective wellbeing. The analysis of this question was, to some extent, similar to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943), whereby once physiological, safety (here, in financial terms), and love needs are met, individuals focus on their higher needs (esteem and self-actualization, especially regarding career development).

- Question 4 (see Figures 8 and 9 in Appendix 2)

The previous question was followed by a more eudaimonic query as participants were asked the following: ‘What are your aspirations for the future?’. When reflecting on their long-term happiness, more than half of the interviewees (56%) saw taking care of their family as the first priority, followed by performing better at their jobs, getting their dream job, and personal and professional growth (20%). To assess whether their goals came from inner or outer motivation, aspirations were divided between the two kinds: 84 percent of the respondents were more focused on intrinsic goals, totally or partially, such as family, personal growth (education, job, religion), helping others and accepting life the way it is. These findings are consistent with those discussed in the literature review: family, social relations and helping others (e.g. Camfield et al., 2007; Yiengprugsawan, et al., 2010; Yiengprugsawan et al., 2012); religion affiliation and faith (e.g. Ellison, 1991; Nelson, 2009; Yiengprugsawan et al., 2012). Goals that came from external motivation were mentioned by 18 percent of the participants, including gaining more money or getting a better job as previously found by Watchravesringkan (2012). These results will be further analyzed in question 11 (‘What would you like to accomplish in the future?’) to compare similarities and differences.

- Question 5 (see Figure 10 in Appendix 2)

The fifth question in the interview, using evaluative criteria, referred to the Easterlin paradox: ‘Do you believe money helps achieve/buy happiness?’ (Ferrer-i-Carbonell, 2005). Responses showed that 58 percent believed that it did. However, not all of them thought that everything that made them happy could be bought. Only 18 percent of those respondents said that it could thoroughly. The other 40 percent were of the opinion that money could only help them achieve a higher quality of life when spent, mainly, on physiological needs, health and education. Needs and goals go hand in hand: people are not only focused on meeting their needs, but on the outcomes that come with them (Scheffer & Heckhausen, 2018). In this paradox, money might be interpreted as a need/resource and happiness seen as an outcome. Money, though, cannot always be categorized as an extrinsic need translated into power or status. It can also be an intrinsic value/goal needed for personal growth and for helping others. Depending on why this resource is needed and/or what it is used for, it can generate one outcome or another. This paradox then leads to another: what is happiness?

As shown in the body of literature on this issue, this question has been analyzed since ancient times. There is not an absolute answer. What if some individuals see both - money and happiness - as outcomes, meaning that having money and being happy are two goals in life instead of the former helping the latter? When respondents in this study answered ‘yes’ or ‘no’, they explained their reasons, which allowed the researcher to understand this determinant (money) at a deeper level. Combining all responses, this group of Bangkokians did not see money as an outcome but instead as a resource needed to achieve the important determinants for their happiness. Once their physiological and safety needs – their own and those of their families – were met, their main focus was on the family wellbeing, personal growth and social relationships (see question 1 findings). A balance between intrinsic and extrinsic goals, needed for positive wellbeing, was found here (Rijavec et al., 2006; Sheldon et al., 2004; Sheldon & Kasser, 1998; Stavrova, 2019). None of the participants stated that they saw being rich and having power or status as an aspiration, which are usually extrinsic values associated with having more money (Kasser & Ryan, 1993, 1996, 2001; Rijavec et al., 2006).

- Question 6 (see Figure 11 in Appendix 2)

From the sixth question onwards, the analysis focused on each level of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, starting with ‘Are your basic needs to survive met on a daily basis?’ In their responses, 90 percent confirmed that physiological needs such as water, food, shelter, clothing, etc. were covered. For those who mentioned that sometimes they were not, shelter and money for medicine were among the needs missing. As noted earlier, living standards and health are two of the key components of Gross National Happiness, which measures Bhutan’s wealth (Thinley & Hartz-Karp, 2019) and are similar to those found in the Green and Happiness Index in Thailand (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, 2017-2021). The results analyzed in this question confirmed that the first level of needs is met for the most part. They also correlate with the responses given about future aspirations and accomplishments, where physiological needs were not present, assuming they had already been met.

- Question 7 (see Figure 12 in Appendix 2)

When asked about their safety needs and answering questions such as ‘Is your community safe?’, 76 percent of the participants responded that they felt safe in the area in which they lived. They also mentioned that they felt safe with the people around them, since they thought they could count on them if/when needed. Those who did not feel safe in their environment attributed this feeling, among other causes, to the possibility of something being stolen and too many people living together. Access to healthcare, education and public safety positively influenced the QOL affected by lower levels of income (Ott, 2010). The target groups of this

study were low- and middle-income neighborhoods around Bangkok. For the most part, the respondents felt safe where they were. Almost a quarter of them nevertheless reported some safety challenges that might have prevented them from satisfying Maslow's second level of needs at times.

- Questions 8 and 9 (see Figures 13 and 14 in Appendix 2)

Maslow's need for love, belonging and affection was addressed in two different questions: 'Are you part of a united family?' and 'Do you have someone to love/to be loved?' 90 percent of the participants felt they belonged to a united family and had close relationships with family members. And 92 percent of them also felt they had someone to love and felt loved by, especially within the family circle. Maslow's need for esteem was also discussed by the participants as they talked about feeling respected and felt that their lives had a meaning. The findings for these two questions confirmed the results of previous studies conducted in Thailand regarding collectivism and the priority of group wellbeing over individual wellbeing (Scheffer & Heckhausen, 2018; Triandis, 1997) and around the world in regard to the importance of close relationships (Helliwell & Putnam, 2004; Kawachi et al., 1999; Reeskens & Vandecasteele, 2017). Maslow's third level of needs and intrinsic factors such as relationships seem to be the greatest contributors to happiness and subjective wellbeing among this group of Bangkokians. These results can be correlated to the findings, representing a high score on the scale of happiness (7-8/10) (see Question 2).

- Question 10 (see Figure 15 in Appendix 2)

'Have you achieved your aspirations?' is a question that addresses Maslow's needs for both esteem and self-actualization. Recall from above that esteem is related to a sense of accomplishment and achievement of one's goals. It also helps with problem-solving, acceptance of facts and morality, which are present in the need for self-actualization (Scheffer & Heckhausen, 2018). As mentioned in the hierarchy of needs, there is an order whereby to accomplish a higher level, the level before should be met. Among the participants, 24 percent claimed to have achieved their aspirations completely while 52 percent of the total mentioned that they had accomplished some and were on their way to fulfilling the rest. Long-term wellbeing and seeing life as a journey are constructs associated with eudaimonia (Byers, 2020). Short-term satisfaction does not guarantee greater wellbeing, even though it contributes to it (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Delle Fave et al., 2011; Rijavec et al., 2006; Ryan & Deci, 2001). When asked about achieving the aspirations mentioned in question 4, more than half of the participants were optimistic about them as they combined short-term and long-term goals. By correlating the findings in this question with the findings in Question 4, it is possible to perceive an ascending journey in Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Physiological, safety and love/affection needs seemed to be met, and participants are on their way to achieve the last levels of the hierarchy: esteem (job satisfaction, family wellbeing and respect in the community) and self-actualization (personal growth, accepting life, finding their purpose in life and stronger interconnectedness with others) (see Question 11).

- Question 11 (see Figures 16 and 17 in Appendix 2)

The last question, using eudemonic criteria, encouraged the interviewees to think about their future – their long-term wellbeing – and discuss what they would like to achieve ('What would you like to accomplish in the future?'). This is basically the same query as Question 4 but with a different wording. The researcher wanted to pay special attention to the need for self-actualization and the eudaimonic approach to happiness. Most people (20%) wanted to make people around them happy (need for love; intrinsic value), 18 percent wished to have a stable income for themselves and to be able to provide for their family's wellbeing (need for safety and for love; intrinsic goal); and 16 percent aspired to perform better at their jobs (need for

esteem and self-actualization; intrinsic and extrinsic values). The analysis conducted in Question 4 was repeated in this question in order to compare intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Some participants were mainly focused on one or the other, whereas others had a combination of both. Taking all into account, 74 percent were focused on intrinsic goals either entirely or in part. Closer and more meaningful relationships, making others happy, and personal growth were the intrinsic goals Bangkokians focus on. As for extrinsic goals, their answers zeroed in on gaining more money and owning businesses and real estate, among others. By comparing both sets of results, it was possible to perceive a slight 10 percent decline in the focus on intrinsic goals (from 84% to 74%). As mentioned in the methodology, the interviews lasted between 30 and 40 minutes and the participants first analyzed their happiness and wellbeing as a whole.

From the opening of the interview to the last query, interviewees had time to individually evaluate several SWB determinants (following Maslow's hierarchy of needs) at a deeper level. It was the researcher's intention to ask this question twice (at the beginning and at the end of the interview) to compare results and see if they varied; indeed, they did. There are possible explanations for this variance. One could be the choice of words – '*aspirations*' can be viewed as conveying more freedom to discuss what a person could achieve even if they have a low chance of becoming a reality, while '*accomplishments*' seem to refer to goals that have a higher probability of being attained. Another explanation could be the time allocated to analyzing their contentment in life and overall happiness. Whereas at the beginning of the interview, participants share the first thing that came to their mind, they subsequently had the chance to mull over the determinants. These results also show the difference between using hedonic criteria (short-term effect analysis) versus eudemonic criteria (long-term effect analysis) when assessing subjective wellbeing (Jawad & Scott-Jackson, 2016; Ryff, 1989; Stavrova, 2019).

5. Summary, Conclusion, Recommendations, and Limitations

Answers to questions 1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 were analyzed based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs so as to assess which ones were satisfied and which ones contributed most to participants' eudaimonic and hedonic wellbeing and also to determine whether RQ1 was answered. Most interviewees stated that their physiological needs and love/belonging/affection were covered. Safety needs were mostly met, but the latter not for as many participants as the two former ones (safety being understood not only in terms of public safety but also in relation to financial stability). In respect of which needs contributed the most to their hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing, H1 was validated. The most influential level was the third one: love, belonging, affection, and family wellbeing were shown to be the main determinants for individual eudaimonic and hedonic wellbeing. These needs were followed by self-actualization needs and safety needs, which related to career and income stability. For the majority of the respondents, hedonic wellbeing meant the satisfaction of physiological needs (90%) and safety needs (76%), whereas eudaimonic wellbeing – fulfilling one's potential and functioning well – was represented by a combination of four Maslow levels (once basic survival needs were met).

Self-actualization was interpreted, first, as family wellbeing (level three), followed by financial security and good performance on the job (level two and four) and finding one's meaning (level five). Regarding intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, the responses to questions 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, and 11 answered RQ2. They suggested that intrinsic values and goals such as family and meaningful relationships, along with career development, were stronger factors in subjective wellbeing and eudaimonic wellbeing than extrinsic values and goals, thus validating H2. Individual self-actualization needs seemed to be strongly related to family quality of life. When asked about long-term wellbeing, most participants referred to their bonds to their family

members and to family happiness. By way of concluding, it can therefore be said that family wellbeing, meaningful relationships and financial stability seem to be the strongest determinants of subjective wellbeing among Bangkokians living in low- and middle-income neighborhoods. Family relationships are seen to have the most positive influence on both hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing; they also seem to be satisfied in Maslow's hierarchy of needs, along with physiological needs for most participants, contributing to their happiness levels. Following the pyramid's order of needs, esteem and self-actualization needs were not fully met yet but, for the majority of the respondents, they were on their way to achieving them and feeling optimistic about it. Among their aspirations, family wellbeing and personal growth were the most prominent, making intrinsic motivation more important than extrinsic ones for both their short- and long-term wellbeing. Their eudaimonic and hedonic wellbeing appeared to translate into family relations and intrinsic values and goals.

- Recommendations and Limitations

Societal wellbeing, individual and collective happiness, and high quality of life are priorities at local, regional, national, and organizational levels the world over (Jawad & Scott-Jackson, 2016; Thinley & Hartz-Karp, 2019). For these reasons, understanding, analyzing, and promoting what makes people happy and content with their lives in a healthy and ethical way continues to be investigated by policy makers, scientists, and managers (Niedzwiedz et al., 2012). Further research may not only identify the main determinants of happiness across nations but also encourage people to behave in ways that can help them achieve long-term wellbeing (Sirgy, 2018). This paper has shown the importance of family and group wellbeing for individual happiness among working-class Bangkokians in low- and middle-income neighborhoods. It can help to promote and multiply the domino effect that a relative might have on others to find ways for all members of a close family circle to be able to satisfy the first of Maslow's needs, at least. It is therefore recommended to develop policies and strategies that promote high QOL among citizens such as those adopted and those currently being considered by the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, 2017-2021). Another possibility is the creation of wellness programs for employees within social responsibility departments to enhance their QOL, which would later contribute to the wellbeing of their families and communities.

Evaluating other wellbeing theories besides Maslow's hierarchy of needs and intrinsic/extrinsic motivation (see Table 3 in Appendix 1) is encouraged in future studies to find similarities and differences that affect hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing. But not only should other theories be used, other regions in Thailand should also be explored. Moreover, other variables besides income and living areas should be studied. In addition, given the limited areas researched in this paper, a strong recommendation can be made for further research to compare and analyze the results of the present study to similar ones conducted in countries classified as individualistic. Such studies would among other merits make it possible to see how much this cultural dimension affects wellbeing (Stavrova, 2019). When analyzing diverse cultural groups, a strong command of the language and an in-depth knowledge of the roots of cultural traditions are essential to interpret results. To overcome those limitations, the author enrolled a local research assistant. These challenges come in addition to the fact that collecting and validating empirical data is more complicated when conducting qualitative as opposed to quantitative research (Jongudomkarn & Camfield, 2006). The key point here is that these various limitations can also become recommendations for future studies to compare the same variables through quantitative surveys and questionnaires.

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Appendix 1

Table 3: Other Theories Assessing Happiness, Wellbeing and/or Quality of Life

Theory and author	Explanation and factors
QOL indicator projects (Sirgy, 2011).	Six major theoretical concepts influencing QOL: “Socio-economic development, personal utility, just society, human development, sustainability and functioning” (Sirgy, 2011; Sirgy, 2018, p. 4).
The happiness pie (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005).	Happiness’ three main determinants: “genes (50%) + intentional activities (40%) + circumstances (10%)” (Brown & Rohrer, 2020, p. 1286; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005).
Self-determination theory/view (Ryan & Deci, 2001).	Achieving goals is the most important criterion for wellbeing. Three needs positively associated with SWB (intrinsic motivation) (Deci & Ryan, 1991; Rijavec et al., 2006; Ryan, 1995; Ryan & Deci, 2002; Wielers & van der Meer, 2020): • Autonomy (how a person chooses to behave) • Competence (ability and effectiveness) • Relatedness (harmonious relationships with others) Positive influences for SWB: self-direction, stimulation and achievement / Negative influences for SWB: conformity, security and tradition (Sagiv & Schwartz, 2000; Stavrova, 2019).
Quality of life classification (Veenhoven, 2000 a,b).	“Life chances and life results / Outer and inner QOL” (Spruk & Kešeljević, 2016, p. 662; Veenhoven, 2000 a,b). “Four qualities of life: Livability of the environment / Life ability of the individual / External utility of life / Inner appreciation of life” (Jawad & Scott-Jackson, 2016, pp. 14-16; Veenhoven, 2000a).
Social production function theory (Ormel et al., 1999).	SWB’s “five universal goals: stimulation, comfort, status, behavioral confirmation and affection” (Ormel et al., 1999; Stavrova, 2019, p. 436).
Quest for meaningful life (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002).	“Four main needs for meaning”: • “Need for purpose” (relation between the past and the future) • “Need for values” (positivity and kindness) • “Need for a sense of efficacy” (a person’s contribution) • “Need for a basis of self-worth” (seek confirmation a person is valuable)” (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002; Iwasaki, 2007, p. 254).
Wellbeing scale / Ryff’s psychological model (Ryff, 1989).	Six hedonic universal needs related to SWB: “autonomy, growth, relationships, purpose in life, environmental mastery and self-acceptance” (Ryff, 1989; Stavrova, 2019, p. 441). *Vitality (another need - eudaimonic) (Pritchard et al., 2020; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Zelenski & Nisbet, 2014).
General human needs (typology of motivation) (Wentholt, 1980).	“Motivation based on homeostatic regulation” (hunger, thirst, body temperature, sexuality and safety) “Motivation based on stimuli-seeking (intrinsic motivation and affection)” (Ott, 2017, p. 318; Wentholt, 1980). When assessing one’s happiness state, it is very important to “be aware of cognitive inconsistencies, moods and emotions, existential conditions and own identity” (Ott, 2017, p. 318; Wentholt, 1980).

A theory of human motivation (Maslow, 1943).

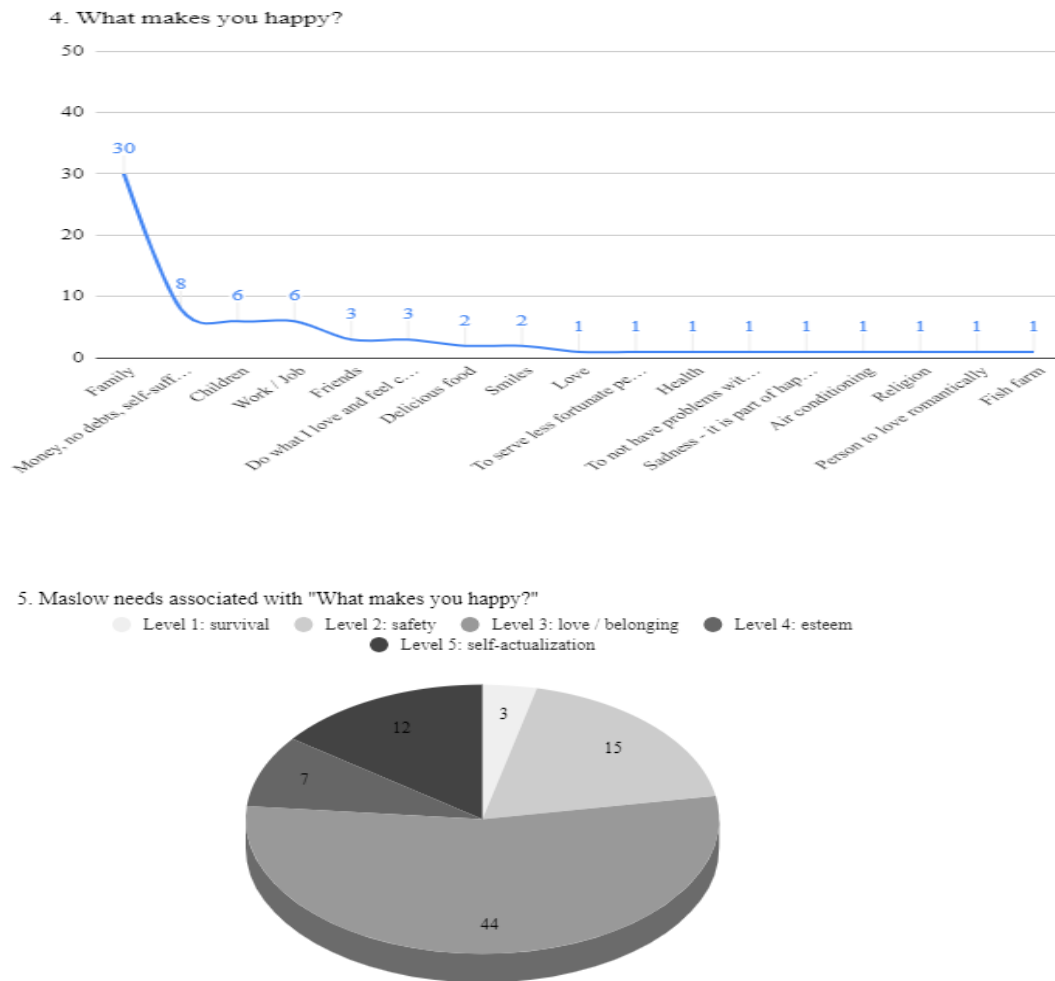
Five “innate needs”:

- Survival need
- Physiological and safety need
- Love, affection and belonging need
- Esteem, reputation and prestige need
- Self-actualization need

(Abulof, 2017, p. 508; Maslow, 1943; Ye et al., 2015)

Source: Created by the Author for the Study

Appendix 2: Graphs Showing the Summary of the Responses to Each Semi-structured Question



Figures 4 and 5: Responses to the Question ‘What makes you happy?’ and their Association to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs?’

6. On a scale from 0 to 10, how happy are you?

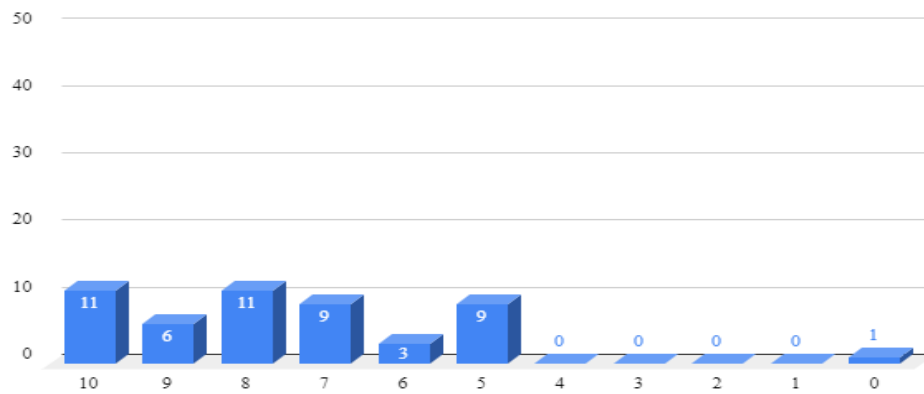


Figure 6: Response to the Question ‘On a scale from 0 to 10, how happy are you?’

7. Daily routine

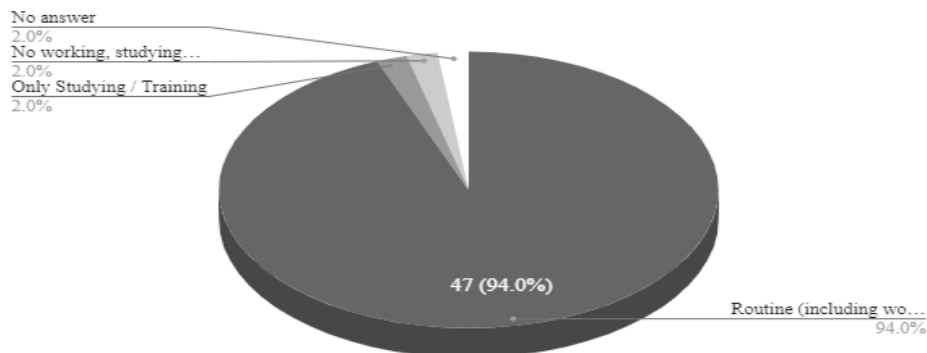
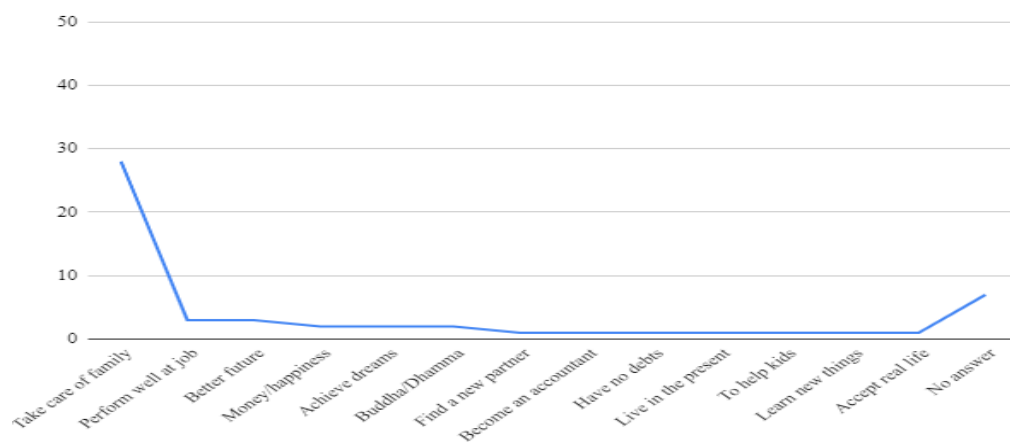
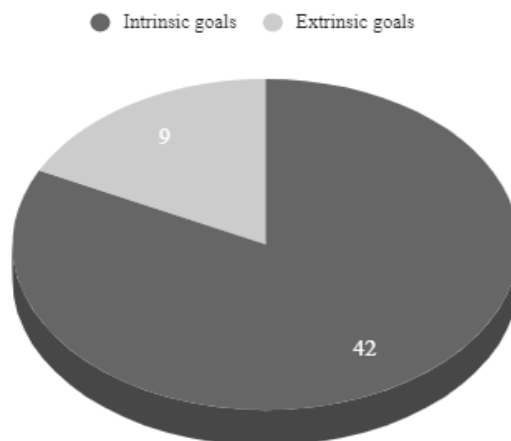


Figure 7: Response to the Question ‘Can you please tell us about your daily life?’

8. What are your aspirations for the future?



9. Aspirations: Intrinsic / extrinsic goals



Figures 8 and 9: Responses to the Question ‘What are your aspirations for the future?’ and their Respective Distinction between Intrinsic and Extrinsic Goals

10. Do you believe money can help you achieve/buy happiness?

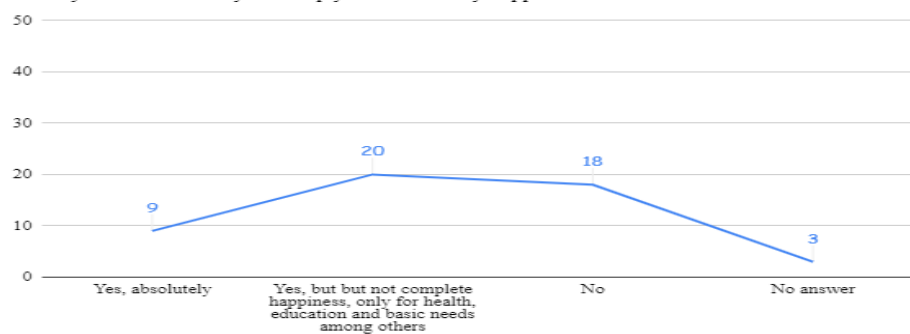


Figure 10: Responses to the Question ‘Do you believe money can help you achieve/buy happiness?’ and ‘Why?’

11. Basic needs met on a daily basis

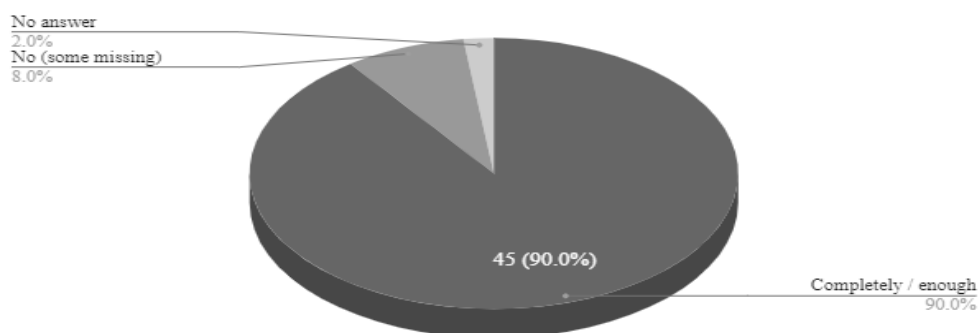


Figure 11: Response to the Question ‘Are your basic needs to survive met on a daily basis?’

12. Feeling safe in their community

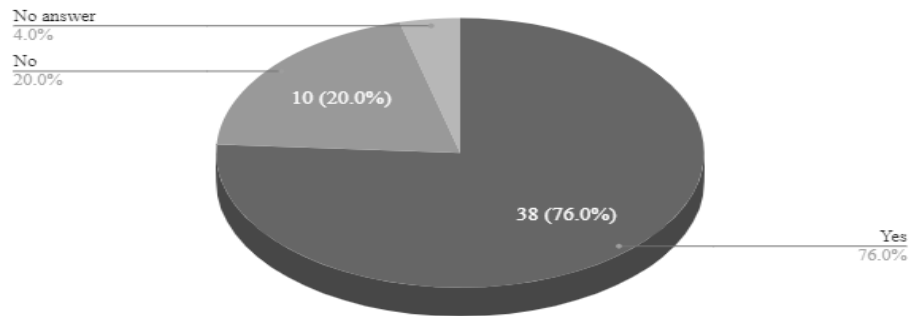
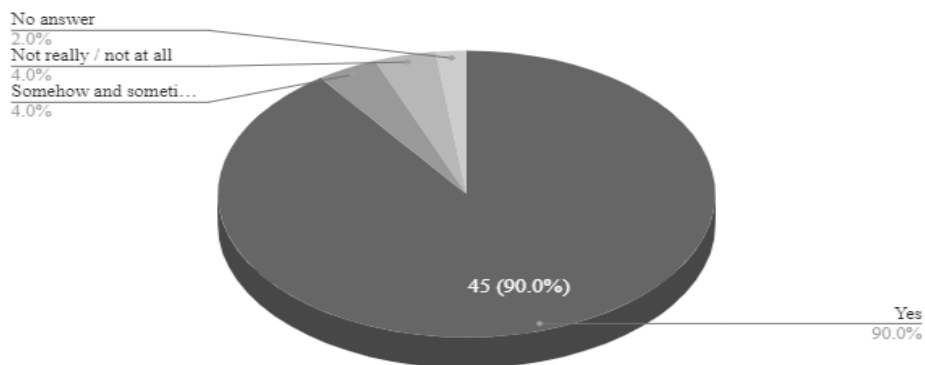
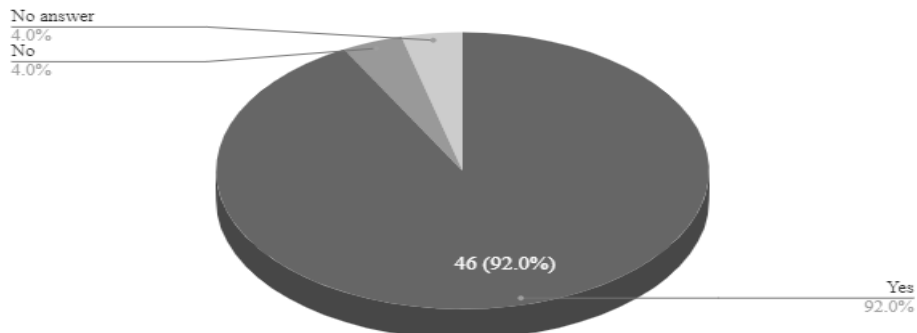


Figure 12: Responses to the Questions ‘Are your safety needs to survive met on a daily basis?’ and ‘Is Your Community Safe?’

13. Are you part of a united family?



14. Someone to love / to be loved by ?



Figures 13 and 14: Responses to the Questions: ‘Are you part of a united family?’ and ‘Do you have someone to love/to be loved?’

15. Have you achieved your aspirations?

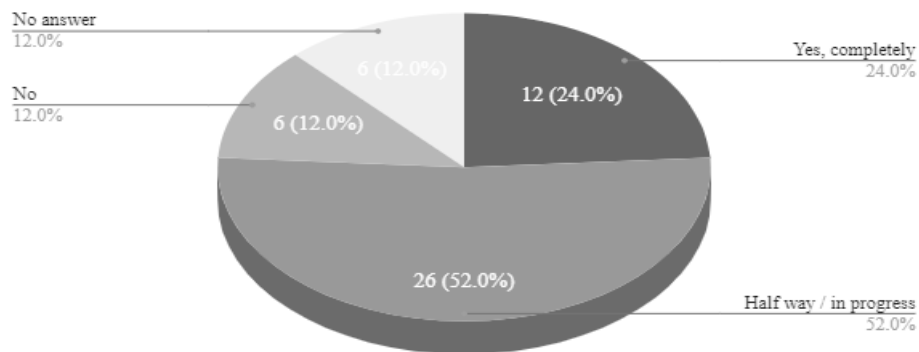
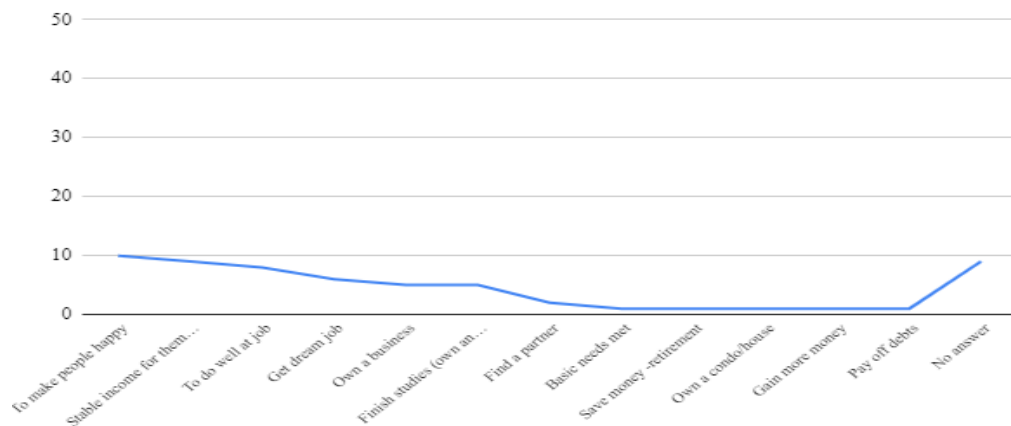
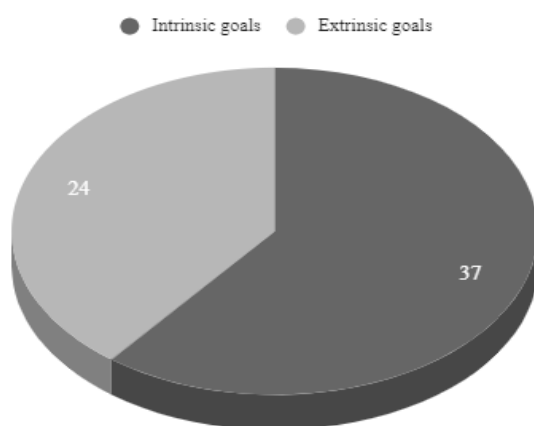


Figure 15: Responses to the Questions: 'Are your esteem needs met on a daily basis?' and 'Have you achieved your aspirations?'

16. What to accomplish in the future?



17. What to accomplish in the future? Extrinsic / Intrinsic



Figures 16 and 17: Responses to the Questions: 'What would you like to accomplish in the future?' and their Respective Distinction between Intrinsic and Extrinsic Goals

Competing Internationally for the Chinese Tourist Market with Consideration for Local Thai Residents

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Abstract

This study focuses on the economic, societal, social, and environmental impact of the behavior of Chinese tourists vacationing in four provinces in Northern Thailand on the local community as perceived by local residents. It aims to develop a solid understanding of the viewpoint of Thai locals, most notably their concerns about their own wellbeing and the preservation of their environment, and seeks to determine how the number of inbound tourists from China can be estimated effectively; a key issue to ensure proper planning amenable to all stakeholders. It also offers suggestions and a practical guideline for tour operators and agents to remain competitive in the Chinese tourist market. Data was collected from a survey questionnaire sent to local residents, open-ending interviews conducted with two representatives of the governmental tourism agencies and manager of local tour companies, and personal observations. The results of this qualitative research indicate that many aspects of tourism in Northern Thailand need to be further refined before the region is able to effectively and sustainably cope with a large number of Chinese tourists, maintain its beauty, and preserve the locals' way of life. Any plan to further develop the Thai tourist industry in Northern Thailand must aim for a more balanced approach that benefits all stakeholders involved. Only a joint effort from all those involved will assist in propelling the ideas within the guideline for tour operators and agents to remain truly competitive in the Chinese tourist market.

Keywords: Chinese Tourists, Cultural, Economic, Environmental, and Societal Impact, Practical Guideline

1. Introduction

Given the People's Republic of China's (China) fast-growing economy and huge population, an increasing number of Chinese citizens find themselves fortunate enough to have disposable income for traveling abroad. According to Kiatkawsin and Han (2017), many of these newly-prosperous Chinese want to travel to places with a rich history and culture, a lush natural environment, entertainment, and most of all, abundant shopping venues. With the influx of tourists from mainland and the depth of the Chinese market as a reservoir for potential outbound tourists, tour operators and agents the world over are eager to attract Chinese to popular destinations and ensure that they want to come back in the future (Ma et al., 2018).

One destination of choice for many Chinese is Thailand, which has one of the most developed tourism markets in Asia. Referred to as the ‘Land of Smiles’ for its fame hospitality, the country boasts beautiful beaches, historical places and eco-attractions (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2016). It also has affordable accommodation. For all these reasons, it is expected to remain one of the top tourist locations in the years to come and a prime destination for Chinese tourists. Thailand, though, is facing increasing competition from neighboring countries, Vietnam and Myanmar in particular. Among other measures, this is forcing the Thai government to improve land connection with China (Bangkok has been in dialogue with Beijing for the construction of a high-speed 873 km line through Laos). The high-speed line, which would transport Chinese tourists (and manufactured goods) to Thailand, is one of the many plans aimed at promoting Thailand as a ‘Preferred Destination’.

However, there have been growing concerns about the behavior of Chinese tourists whose routine habits can offend local residents. This has been the case in Thailand. In spite of the economic windfall which Chinese tourists provide in the form of investments and business and job opportunities, an increasing number of Thai locals feel that they are losing some of their traditional ways of life and are seeing a degradation of their environment. (Gong, Detchkhajornjaroensri, & Knight, 2018). Some view the lack of cultural awareness on the part of Chinese tourists as a source of tension and misunderstanding between them (Jing, Lei, & Thanalerdsopit, 2017). Such negative impacts have led to a backlash and the posting of online messages highlighting some unfavorable traits of Chinese tourists that give the impression that they are no longer welcome to Thailand (Malikhao, 2017). Given the proliferation of video clips on social media promoting negative stereotypes of Chinese tourists, tour operators and travel agents find themselves in a bind and struggling at times to persuade potential Chinese tourists that it is safe to have a vacation in Thailand.

This study focuses on Chinese tourists in Thailand and on the battle which Thai tour operators and agents are facing in the global competition for tourists from mainland. It aims to assist them in their effort to keep bringing Chinese tourists to Thailand and compete in the Chinese tourist market by developing a solid understanding of the viewpoint of local Thai residents, most notably their concerns about their own wellbeing. Specifically, focusing on four provinces in Northern Thailand highly sought by Chinese tourists who flocked there in high numbers year after year, it seeks to determine how Thai people living in those four provinces view the economic, social, cultural, and environmental impact of Chinese tourism on their wellbeing. Collecting and monitoring such feedback from locals will alert the industry to the adjustments needed and aid to implement them (Lee, Jeon, & Kim, 2011). It will also assist them in finding ways to lessen the negative impact felt by local residents and at the same time keep tourists satisfied enough while preventing any misbehavior that would offend locals (Li et al., 2010). Addressing these issues, however, requires reliable estimation on the volume of incoming visitors. To attain these objectives, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: What is the local Thai residents’ viewpoint on the economic, societal, cultural, and environmental impact of Chinese tourists’ behavior?

RQ2: How can the number of inbound tourists from China be estimated effectively?

RQ3: What should a practical guideline for tour operators and agents to remain competitive in the Chinese tourist market look like?

2. Literature Review

- *Economic Impact of Tourism*

Chinese tourists vacationing in Thailand generate substantial revenue for the local economy (Tourism Statistics, 2019). For the period 2017-2019, the Thai tourism industry contributed around 12.91 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) of Thailand, with a significant portion of it coming from international tourists (Statista Research Department, 2020). From this figure, it can reasonably be inferred that tourism equally contributes the local economy and that, as the largest group of foreign visitors to Thailand, Chinese tourists have been having a huge economic impact on these communities, providing, among other benefits, meaningful employment to locals (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2019). But the benefits of tourism do not evenly trickle down to all locals (Lyu et al., 2017). While it is imperative to hold onto a partnership with a nation, China, that brings large numbers of tourists, there also needs to be a strong awareness of the necessity for cultural and natural environmental sustainability (van Niekerk, 2014). This may require more investment in a variety of tourist attractions at different sites in order to spread visitors between them and avoid having them concentrated in overwhelming numbers at only a few attractions. Cities, towns, and rural areas that are able to attract the quality of tourists they want should be empowered by authorities to decide the best approach in providing hospitality to visitors and be involved in designing and planning the phases of such proposals (Andrades & Dimanche, 2017).

- *Societal Impact of Tourism*

Thai locals who are part of the everyday tourism scene make up an intricate dynamic condition that can be seen as either welcoming to or hostile towards visitors from another country (Piuchan, Chan, & Kaale, 2018). Generally, they believe that they should be treated with courtesy and that any sign of deviancy from expected behaviors and the law and any lack of discipline will make things uncomfortable. They find it difficult to get acclimated to such situations. Some of them even resent any effort from government officials to promote tourism in their hometown (Gao, Zhang, & Huang, 2018). They also expect any government policies designed to help restoring amicable relationships between tourists and local residents to show positive results, otherwise the problems will be aggravated (Chen, Hsu, & Li, 2018). The well-being and welfare of the local community's natural habitat is thus vital for holding tourism infrastructures together. Conversely, people will be able to enjoy their travel experience as long as there is safety and security at all times and the social environment provides a warm welcome for all (Hatipoglu, Alvarez, & Ertuna, 2016). An agreement by all sides to respect the privacy and comfort of others is likely to uplift the spirits of all (Khodadadi, 2016). In short, a balance between the satisfaction of Chinese tourists and the need to maintain the lifestyles and safety of the local community members and provide meaningful employment has to be achieved (Lyu et al., 2017).

- *Cultural Impact of Tourism*

Culture holds people together, shapes their identity, and determines their behavior. It varies from one country to another and even within each country as several sub-cultures may often be found (e.g. the local culture in Northeast Thailand). So, when foreign tourists interfere with Thai locals, some of their behaviors may not align with their respective values or embrace their beliefs (Santa & Tiatco, 2019). When two or more different cultural groups meet without much information about each other, miscommunication may occur and mistakes can be made. When people cannot discern the minds of others who are culturally different from them, they may

judge them by their actions, often based on their customs and traditions in handling mundane affairs (Wen, Huang, & Ying, 2019). However, this does not give a license to anyone to try to change or correct things they see as not being their own culture. Instead, locals may want to build a bridge of understanding by making some changes in their traditional practices to put foreign visitors at ease (Tuzov, Ansah, & Boonnanant, 2020). The tradeoff is that tourists will be expected to reciprocate by displaying an interest in the local culture and being aware of at least some basic behaviors that are culturally proper (Lin et al., 2020).

- *Environmental Impact of Tourism*

One issue of growing concerns to Thai locals is the natural landscapes surrounding them which they feel entitled to enjoy and the sense that foreign tourists are not doing enough to preserve them as massive crowding spoils their beauty (Zou & Meng, 2020). Another challenging issue in tourism is having to deal with waste and pollution from sites catering to travelers that do not have a proper system to curb the rise of garbage from product consumption (Saqib et al., 2019). Moreover, locals not involved in the tourism industry often find themselves competing for space and safety on the road with convoys of vehicles overcrowding the lanes and rushing to get tourists to their scheduled visit sites, which leads to traffic congestion and frequent road accidents (Han, Lee, & Hwang, 2016). Making matters worse, when accidents occur, locals must often go through painful negotiations with foreign visitors on taking responsibility and paying for the damage caused (Lai et al., 2018).

- *Remaining Competitive in the Chinese Tourist Market*

In this era of social media, personal reviews by individuals who have actually been to tourist attractions and provide information on what to see, do, and especially buy, have risen to great and increasing levels of significance (Blichfeldt, Hird, & Kvistgaard, 2014). In order to generate a continuous positive buzz, feedback is required from all stakeholders to decide how the available resources should be utilized for promoting tourism events, activities, and interesting sites for the future. By posting accurate and relevant information on areas of interest, local authorities would be providing the means for potential visitors to visualize vacation plans in particular areas, thus reinforcing tour sites' visibility in tourists' eyes and extending the areas' sustainability as tourist attractions in the long term (Lia et al., 2017). To ensure that information is gathered with the intent of acting on it and that attention is paid to the intricate details and implicit messages from travelers' responses, an outside party should be involved in making the critical assessments on how each of the stakeholders is interacting with the infrastructures in place (Manthiou, Kang, & Schrier, 2014). Unbiased information can lead to greater understanding and a better vision that support quality and standard in traveling (Bogicevic et al., 2013). Feedback from tourists can be applied to challenge tour operators' established practices and improve approaches for providing services in their business (Farmaki, 2013).

- *Forecasting the Right Number of Inbound Tourists from China*

Forecasting the right number of Chinese tourists arriving every season requires the examination of the multiple factors that shape the decisions of Chinese travelers (Tsuar & Chen, 2017). A basic approach is to research the demographics of the targeted population. This includes the population size and the average discretionary income allotted for travel plans. Keeping abreast of the changing market environment, rechecking official public statistics on the expected number of potential visitors, and attending forums to learn about the latest

methodologies available to obtain accurate tourism data are also very helpful (Tsuar & Chen, 2017). China possesses a vast population with diverse social backgrounds, so acquiring data on this target market should start with a basic understanding of the economic climate and the market structure. Seasoned travelers, i.e., those who travel frequently, are an excellent source of information for promoting tours specifically tailored to accommodate a particular purpose, be culture or ecotourism. Useful information can only be collected when those involved are primarily concerned with what really matters to travelers and with helping them to have the best experiences as opposed to merely focusing on following procedures (Almeida, Costab, & da Silva, 2017). Information disseminated to other stakeholders in the network should be open for dialogue, allowing others to share their concerns and ideas on how to redesign tour programs. Workable ideas with clear benefits could be highlighted in marketing materials provided to future travelers in China who have not yet decided on their next vacation destination (Clayton & Boxil, 2012).

Knowing the number of Chinese tourists likely to visit the country would be helpful to making critical preparations to accommodate them in large numbers (Wu, Zeng, & Xie, 2017). In particular, the figures obtained would be most useful to recruit staff equipped with the skills that would positively impact the appeal of local attractions. The specific details that go into large-scale operations involving time, resources, and energy need to be carefully coordinated among tour operators (Lyu et al., 2017). Business owners, tour operators and community leaders will need to decide what inflow level of Chinese tourists is beneficial for the well-being and health of all stakeholders, and whether there should be a limit on the number of Chinese visitors despite the high demand for Thailand's attraction (Ryu, Lee, & Kim, 2012).

3. Methodology

To meet the objectives of this study and answer the three research questions, this study relied on a survey (RQ1), open-ended interviews (RQ2 and RQ3), and observations.

- Population Sample

This study focuses on the provinces of Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Lamphun, and Lampang, located in the northern region of Thailand. The targeted sample groups were tourism stakeholders and local Thai residents who have had ample interactions with tourists from China and have enjoyed access to the hospitality and transportation services provided by local entrepreneurs and business organizations on a daily basis. According to Yamanae (1973), with a sample size at 95% confidence level, the study sample should include 400 people. Accordingly, a total of 2,116 local Thai residents and tourism stakeholders took part in the survey. In order to obtain an accurate picture of the local perception of the issues raised, the population surveyed was split among the four provinces targeted. In addition, 20 people selected among tourism business operators, travel organization association personnel, and government personnel, were interviewed. Table 1 shows the breakdown by provinces of the stakeholders surveyed.

Table 1: Breakdown of Thai Stakeholders Surveyed

Province /Groups	Population	Yamanae's Suggestion	Studied Samples
Chiang Mai	1,779,254	400	896
Chiang Rai	1,282,544	400	400
Lampang	738,316	400	400
Lamphun	405,075	400	400
Tourism stakeholders	-	-	20
Total	4,205,189	-	2,116

Source: Compiled by the authors for this study

The sample population included a predominantly male population (70%). The age of those who took part in the study ranged from 22-30 years old (32%), 31-40 (34%), 41-50 (25%), 51-60 (7%), and 61 and over (2%). Most of them held an undergraduate (65%) or a postgraduate degree (25%). Only 10 percent ended their schooling with a high school diploma. As to their monthly revenue, 55 percent had an income of 20,000 Baht (USD670) or below, 25 percent an income ranging between 21,000-40,000 Baht (USD675-1,330), 15 percent an income ranging between 41,000-50,000 Baht (USD680-1,665), and only 5 percent an income between 51,000-60,000 Baht (USD685-2,000).

- **Data Collection**

- *Questionnaire*

The overall purpose of the questionnaire was to ask local Thai residents to provide their opinion on the impact of Chinese tourists on the local economy, society, culture, and the environment. Each section of the survey focused on one of these four specific impacts. The survey was conducted over three months. Participants were encouraged to provide detailed responses. The section on the economic impact investigated the desired attributes of the revenues generated by Chinese tourists, new business opportunities, employment, key tourism investments made by Chinese investors, and concerns about rising prices. The next section on the impact on society focused on Chinese visitors' behavior with respect to privacy, peace, manners, use of public facilities, personal safety, and property security. Local residents living in areas with high levels of tourist density were also asked if they were willing to adapt to tourists' behaviors and attitudes for the sake of income and to work with the public sector to promote tourism to generate greater numbers of Chinese tourists in the future. They were also asked about their confidence in the government's intention to implement a policy to alleviate some of the problems caused by Chinese tourists.

The following section on the cultural impact sought the views of Thai locals on how Chinese tourists behave towards local customs and traditions and on whether they were willing to adjust their traditional practices to meet the demands and expectations of Chinese tourists. Participant were also asked whether Chinese tourists were willing to understand the Lanna culture and if they thought Chinese tourists were willing to alter some of their behaviors to display more respect towards the Lanna culture.¹ Finally, in the section on the effects on the local environment, local residents were urged to express any concerns they may have about the waste and pollution generated by Chinese around tourist sites and the impact of Chinese visitors on traffic and the frequency of road accidents. One question specifically asked them

¹ The Lanna Kingdom began in the year of 1296 and ended in 1939. The name Lanna meant a million rice fields. The culture was built on craftsmanship trade in creating household items, agricultural tools, and weapons from silver, gold, and metal which featured artistic designs of life events, customs, religious ceremony, and community appreciation, thus identifying the Lanna cultural way of living (Lekuthai, 2008).

whether they felt stressed when trying to negotiate with Chinese on the liability they incurred. The issue of not taking enough action in protecting the natural landscape was also brought up.

- Open-Ended Interviews

For RQ2, two open-ended interviews were conducted with representatives of the TAT and the Sports and Tourism Ministry, respectively, to learn about their methods for estimating the incoming number of Chinese tourists. Due to their busy schedule and the limited staff, interviews were granted with only one person from each organization. For RQ3, ten open-ended interviews were conducted with managers of local tour companies (five in Chiang Mai, two in Chiang Rai, two in Lampang, and one in Lamphun). The main purpose was to discuss the practical guidelines that should be implemented to ensure that tour operators and agents remain competitive in the Chinese tourist market. Each local tour companies had a representative discuss the issue raised on behalf of his/her working colleagues who were busy with their work.

- Observations

Social media outlets such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and online traveling websites, were examined to further learn about the local residents' positive/negative viewpoints on Chinese tourists' traveling behavior in the four provinces targeted in this study. Because of the sense of freedom of speech generally associated with social media and the anonymity which they procure, these sources were quite helpful in developing a deeper understanding of local residents' views on the economic, social, cultural, and environmental impact of Chinese tourists on their provinces.

4. Results and Discussion

This section begins with RQ1 and a discussion of local Thai residents' viewpoint on the economic, societal, cultural, and environmental impact of Chinese tourists' behavior when vacationing in their community. It presents the results of the survey conducted in the four Northern provinces (as noted earlier, 2116 viable responses were collected). The responses showed that 635 local residents (30%) believed that the arrival of Chinese tourists has had an economic impact on the community. The other 70 percent (1481 people) did not think this was the case at all. Whilst 423 Thai locals (20%) felt that Chinese tourists' behavior has had a societal impact, 1693 of them (80%) thought the opposite. 593 of them (28%) believed that it has had an impact on Thai culture whereas 1524 (72%) didn't see any impact on the culture. Finally, on the issue of the environmental impact, 466 local residents (22%) thought there was an impact. The other 1651 respondents (78%) disagreed. The subsequent sub-sections provide a detailed report of each of the four impacting factors.

- Thai Residents' Viewpoint on the Economic Impact of Chinese Tourists' Behavior

Local Thai residents in the northern region hypothesize that if a large volume of tourists from mainland China consistently travel to their area, it will increase their chances of attracting tourists from other nations (Europe, North America, South Korea, and Japan in particular) who are categorized as quality travelers. This is a strategy believed to also be applicable when Thais draw more of their fellow citizens to a dining spot or an event; large crowds are expected to draw even more people to the attractions. Unsurprisingly, as Chart 1 shows, locals see the income generated by Chinese tourists' spending as the most impactful feature of tourism (35.1%). 36.2 percent of them noticed that their revenue has increased with the massive arrival of Chinese tourists in the region and 34.6 percent indicated that this has created new business opportunities for them. Some of the Thai residents surveyed also believed that this has had a

moderate impact on employment (35.6%) and on some key investments made by Chinese investors in the tourism sector (33.7%). However, 40.1 percent of them expressed concern over the slight increase in the price of food, beverages, and tourist goods and services. Meanwhile, there were also some apprehension about the fact that revenue from quality tourists seems to be decreasing (40%).

It is clear from these findings that tour operators and agents must recognize that whilst the rise of foreign visitors, Chinese tourists in particular, increases revenues, creates new business opportunities, enhances employment, and boosts investment, there is also an uneasiness about the resultant price increase, especially felt by those struggling to make both ends meet on a daily basis. If the wellbeing of the local residents who are not part of the tourism industry is to be genuinely taken into consideration, tour operators and agents should have a dialogue with these stakeholders to devise a way for them to purchase goods at an affordable price. Another way of looking after the wellbeing of all groups could be to determine how these locals could be provided with a commercial opportunity to offer unique services to Chinese tourists without being exposed to high financial risks. If such services met the needs of Chinese tourists, tour operators and agents could, for instance, assist those interested locals in obtaining a valid license to operate their businesses legally.

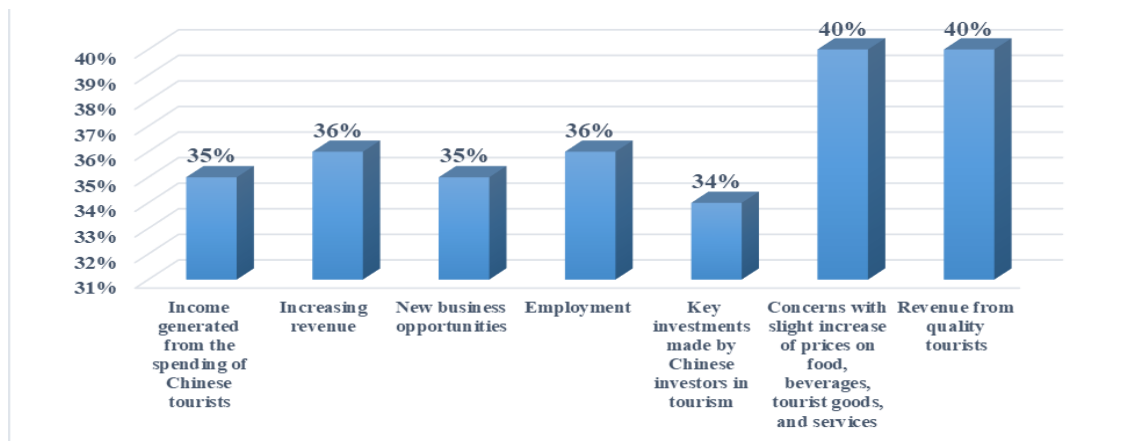


Chart 1: Local Residents' Viewpoint on Economic Impact of Chinese Tourists' Behavior
(Compiled by the authors for this study)

- Thai Residents' Viewpoint on the Societal Impact of Chinese Tourists' Behavior

Overall, the percentages shown in Chart 2 point to a moderate societal impact of Chinese tourists' presence on the local community. One thing that is clear from the survey, interviews, and observations, though, is that when Chinese tourists visit these northern provinces, a majority of the locals (51.7%) feel that there is a lack of privacy and peace around their homes as they are constantly exposed (and subjected) to the activities and events designed to attract tourists. They perceive it as a nuisance to the community. The noise, traffic and resulting pollution make tourist areas less comfortable for those who need to conduct their personal business in those places. 64.7 percent of the locals reported being shocked at the poor manners of Chinese tourists who, for instance, have no qualms, smoking in non-smoking areas, leaving a mess after completing their activities, spitting on sidewalks and roads, not putting waste in trash receptacles, and not complying with rules and procedures when visiting various sites, most notably temples. The biggest complaints (64.3%) relate to their lack of respect using university campuses and public areas to wash themselves or their clothes and their reckless handling of various modes of transportation (rented cars or motorcycles). In-keeping with these issues is the locals' feedback and concerns about their safety and the security of property

(34.5%). Yet, in spite of all these daily inconveniences, some local people, mindful that Chinese do bring much needed revenue to the four provinces, have adapted to the behavior and attitudes of Chinese tourists (37.5%) and are willing to work with the public sector to promote tourism to generate greater inflows of Chinese tourists in the future (36.1%). Some also think it is important to have a good impression of Chinese tourists (30%). A sizeable number of locals, however, have very little confidence in the government's intention, let alone its long-term commitment, to implement policies for alleviating some of the problems caused by Chinese tourists (27.1%).

Issues of manners, public facilities use, and verbal and visual communication need to be addressed in a timely manner by tour operators and agents in order to develop a sense of moral awareness that will help make Chinese tourists welcomed by the local community. Specifically, it should be made clear to them that certain comportments that are considered perfectly normal in China are simply not acceptable in Thailand as they clash with fundamental values which Thai people hold in high respect and in fact project a very negative image of China. Of course, this should be done in a sensitive way that shows a willingness on both sides to adapt and work with the public sector. Therefore, people in direct contact with Chinese tourists would be well advised to find a way of communicating that is both friendly and effective enough to convince them to behave in ways that will avoid irritating local people.

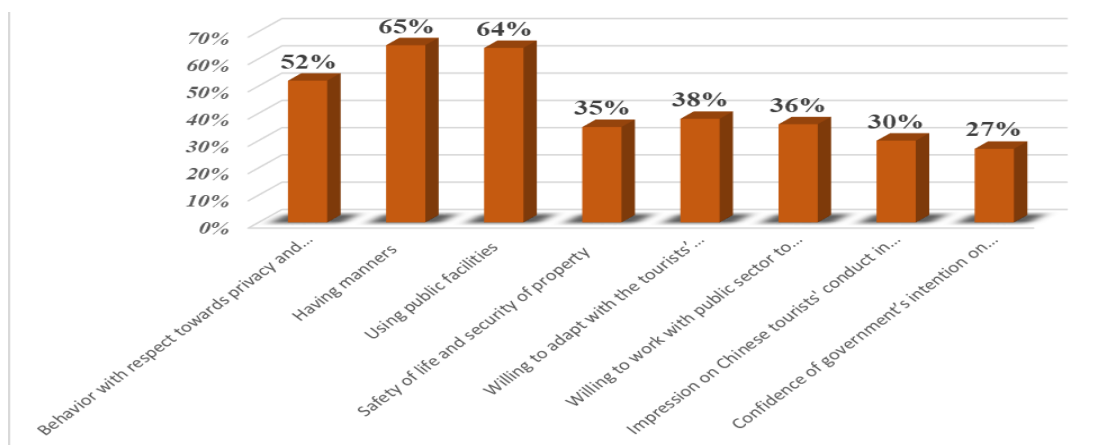


Chart 2: Local Residents' Viewpoint on the Societal Impact of Chinese Tourists' Behavior
(Compiled by the authors for this study)

- Thai Residents' Viewpoint on the Cultural Impact of Chinese Tourists' Behavior

Chart 3 makes it quite clear that the majority of respondents believe that if more Chinese tourists were to come to the upper northern region, they would most likely be disrespectful to the local customs and traditions such as funeral events. It is common for bereaved families and their relatives to host funerals that can take up time and space in public areas close to some of the favorite spots of Chinese tourists, whom some locals (31.1%) believe are not fond of ceremonies honoring the deceased. 36.1 percent of community residents, however, feel that their traditional practices should be adjusted to meet the needs of Chinese tourists. Provincial natives (46.0%) are also under the impression that Chinese tourists lack a great deal of understanding about the Lanna culture and are not willing to display an ounce of respect towards their culture (48.3%). Most locals are proud of their culture. Any sign of disrespect by foreigners is bound to make it difficult to gain a warm welcome or trust. In the eyes of locals, Chinese tourists do not really seem willing to show more respect of and interest in the Lanna culture, let alone learning much about it. They also feel that many of them are inconsiderate towards their customs and traditions, which makes most of them feel that it is therefore not

necessary for them to try to adjust to their way of living to accommodate visitors. Tour operators and agents will have to work closely with local residents servicing Chinese tourists and caution mainland visitors about displaying behaviors that may disrupt highly symbolic ceremonies should they decide to see them up close and personal.

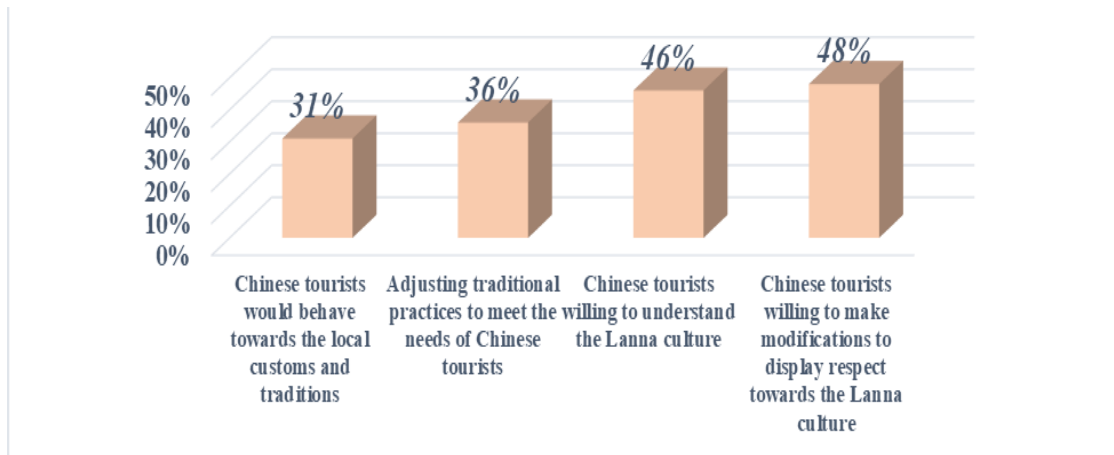


Chart 3: Local Residents' Viewpoint on the Cultural Impact of Chinese Tourists' Behavior
(Compiled by the authors for this study)

- Thai Residents' Viewpoint on the Environmental Impact of Chinese Tourists' Behavior

Chart 4 highlights a great deal of concern over the increase of waste and pollution around certain tourist sites that need to be closely monitored and taken care of in order to sustain the natural environment (45.1%). With 54.6 percent of the people feeling that traffic is highly congested when there is a large Chinese tourist presence in the area, the need for adequate measures is felt even more acutely (much of the impact on traffic is due to tourists either carelessly crossing the road or using transportation in large groups). Another pressing issue is road accidents involving Chinese tourists, who are generally unfamiliar with traffic lanes and direction (48.0%). As reported by locals, accidents cause them trauma and stress not only from being involved, but also from trying to negotiate with Chinese into having them take some responsibility for wreckages (55.1%). Locals (49.4%) are also disturbed by the apparent display of ignorance of Chinese tourists and their lack of concern about the protection of natural landscapes that attract large numbers of tourists from around the world as they also seem to be unconcerned about the damage they cause at the sites. Tourism authorities and operators should be mindful of the conditions of tourist attractions and ensure that they remain safe and clean as their safety and cleanliness are critical to the overall development of the Thai tourist industry (Bickle & Harrill, 2010). Investments may be required to restore and protect these areas that produce a holistic experience to foreign visitors. It should also be communicated to all the stakeholders that they are protected for long term enjoyment by all (Chang, Backman, & Huang, 2014).

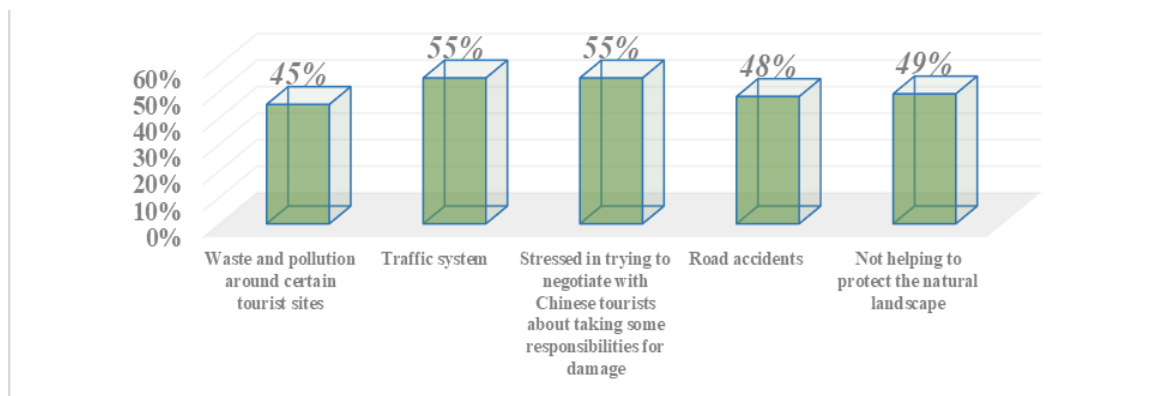


Chart 4: Local Residents' Viewpoint on the Environmental Impact of Chinese Tourists' Behavior
(Compiled by the authors for this study)

- RQ2: Efficient and Effective Tools for Estimating the Number of Inbound Tourists

This sub-section discusses the response to RQ2 (How can the number of inbound tourists from China be estimated effectively?). While the saying “two heads are better than one” is generally cause for expanding collaboration, this is not the case with the governance of Thai tourism, which is managed by two agencies. One, the TAT, is in charge of administering campaigns to attract travelers and visitors from other nations. The other, the Sports and Tourism Ministry, acts as the policy and law enforcer to the networks involved in the tourism industry and manages the internal functional affairs of the acting agents. While both organizations are heavily involved in the tourism industry, their roles differ. Whereas the TAT heavily concentrates on developing the marketing promotion that is supposed to grab the interest and attention of travel prospects, the Sports and Tourism Ministry acts as the proctor of operations and sees to it that organizations are complying with standards and regulations. There is currently no search for an efficient and effective common tool to forecast the number of inbound tourists from China. The two institutions therefore continue not to be aligned. This lack of coordination between them makes it quite difficult to plan the use of the resources available toward specific goals (Padin, 2012).

More staff and greater expertise are needed to perform an adequate job given the many issues involved in developing quality service and products in the tourist industry and the constant possibility that plans may need to be modified after being implemented (Font & McCabe, 2017). Estimating the number of inbound tourists is a task that involves many rounds of surveys questions. The collection of feedback that helps to determine whether a concept applied needs to be refined or entirely reformulated is also time consuming (Hörisch, 2015). However, no common effort is likely to happen as the Sports and Tourism Authority is overwhelmed with issuing licenses for tour guides and operators, inspecting tourism sites, and assisting more than seven foreign film productions annually. Additionally, the staff have never received formal training and development in the development of tourism. Improving this situation therefore will require some sacrifice and unlearning some of the ways work is performed. Management will have to likely improve the organizational culture as well as the basic concept of their organizational purpose (Neugebauer, Figge, & Hahn, 2016).

- RQ3: Practical Guideline for Tour Operators and Agents Marketing Thai Tourism to Chinese

RQ3 asked what a practical guideline for tour operators and agents to remain competitive in the Chinese tourist market should look like. It called for the development of a practical guideline as it is the view of the authors that there is no clear direction for industry development. Some tourist sites have grown too quickly and are in danger of becoming

unsustainable and the rapid increase of Chinese tourists is primarily being funneled only to the four Northern provinces. As we just saw, the high volume and density of tourist activity in these limited areas have taken a heavy toll on the wellbeing and welfare of the local community. There seems to be a growing consensus that to preserve the natural beauty of the area and the lifestyles of people foundations need to be laid with an emphasis on the preservation of the natural resources while generating stable and growing levels of income for the tourism industry and community members. As a contribution to attaining this end, the following practical guideline for tour operators and agents to remain competitive in the Chinese tourist market has been developed:

1. Promote an image of Thailand as a place to improve one's quality of life, where tourists can engage in leisure activities that nourish their spiritual and mental health.
2. Be open and receptive to remarks that call for improvement in tourism service and quality. Use the information to redefine or redesign the practical intentions of the vacation programs.
3. Make communication constantly clear and to the point on what is acceptable or not for Chinese tourists as they need to be made aware of these limitations so that tour operators and agents can take proactive measures to configure resources that prevent local residents from being put into a discomfortable situation.
4. Promote and support the establishment of a protocol for finding quality tourism operators in the tourism value chain who can serve as models for other operators. Incentives could be offered to tour operators and agents who come up with innovative methods and suggestions.
5. Strengthen the marketing skills and abilities of local communities by providing the know-how to practitioners to acquire marketing competencies by themselves and enhance the capabilities and capacity of local communities in protecting the environment while stressing accountability on both sides to conserve the natural landscape that is free from pollution or waste.
6. Promote the development of local products and services to meet the needs of the Chinese market. Tour operators and agents need to work more closely with the TAT to get the best of their expertise in developing marketing campaigns for the promotion of local specialties (products and services) for certain targeted demographic group in the Chinese tourist market.
7. Restructure some of the markets to take advantage of trends in health and wellness, business meetings and exhibitions, ecotourism, sports, and recreation, and provide marriage and honeymoon services for high end Chinese customers. Working with the Tourism Authority of Thailand, tour operators and agents could provide information that serve the interest and wellbeing of local residents in catering to the needs of Chinese tourists who want to be immersed in the local Thai culture and have a memorable learning experience.
8. Redesign facilities to serve individuals who travel to explore the history, culture, and modern life of local Thai communities. Tour operators and agents can liaise with the Ministry of Sports and Tourism to ensure that the standards and regulations are truly enforced and genuinely serve the needs of both local residents and Chinese tourists, as well as capitalizing on the feedback from them to revise the operations in order to ensure that quality is being upheld.
9. Develop new promising venues to showcase authentic local customs and traditions of the Thai culture. In promoting the culture, the tour operators and agents will have the support of the local residents.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

While the large number of Chinese tourists visiting Northern Thailand on a yearly basis is good for the local economy, the local community has to endure some social discomfort and disruption in its everyday life. Moreover, while locals feel that they should make some adjustments to their cultural functions, they also would like to see Chinese tourists take more initiatives to develop their understanding of the Thai culture as well. This dual approach of getting these two traditional and highly celebrated Asian cultures to better understand and value each other will be a challenge that goes far beyond the language communication barrier. Getting the right balance for all sides to be highly satisfied interacting with each other will among others require some societal measures that encourage both of them to promote more of the positives that keeps things sustainable for all to enjoy. At the same time, they will need to make a concerted effort to learn about the errors which have caused dissatisfaction in their respective expectations of good behavior. There are also concerns about the increasing amount of waste and pollution in the surrounding urban landscape.

A strategic framework needs to be established for all stakeholders to get involved so they have a role in moderating the impact of Chinese tourists; a balance of joy and pleasure with a degree of sincerity towards society, culture, and the environment would be ideal for tourist areas to grow for the benefit of all (Malik, Madappa, & Chitranshi, 2017). The lack of ability to coordinate efforts between the TAT and the Sports and Tourism Industry poses a major challenge for marketing improvement. It calls for a more effective and efficient way to forecast the number of Chinese tourists that will be visiting Thailand. The current lack of coordination has resulted in a lack of focus of resources and energy when laying the foundation for a program highlighting the health and wellbeing of the community and ensuring the sustainability of the natural environment. Without any form of authority or accountability any new methods for proper coordination in marketing improvement will not be sustainable as staff members tend to interpret any message of changes in the working structure as ambiguous in their normal operation and are unwilling to create a state of confusion that could lead to a disharmony in the workplace.

Indeed, in a working environment, where bureaucracy is highlighted as the working culture, it is difficult for certain members to share their ideas and knowledge for proposing and implementing ideas on marketing improvement. For one, those in power generally do not like to keep on having to make adjustments. For another, the results might lead to a damage in reputation if the outcome becomes lower than expected. If the level of uncertainty is quite high, the tendency is therefore to avoid events that would make one lose one's image. Consequently, coordination between the TAT and the Sports and Tourism Ministry has to be proactively undertaken by tourism operators and agents in a united effort to get these two institutions to work together. The idea would be to invite key representatives to a conference on laying out plans for tourism activities that promote a cordial and peaceful space for Chinese tourists and local residents to learn and understand each other while the former enjoys the events. The TAT and the Sports and Tourism Ministry would be asked to combine their resources in developing sustainable conditions with standard quality that maintains satisfaction for both Chinese tourists and Thai local residents to co-exist. As this study has made it abundantly clear, any plan to further develop the Thai tourist industry in Northern Thailand must aim for a more balanced approach which benefits all stakeholders involved. Development efforts should have an agreed upon shared set of values so that all sides are willing to cooperate in working towards the highest level of mutual benefit possible. As also emphasized throughout this discussion, marketing tourism towards Chinese tourists is an ongoing process and problems discovered by industry participants should be equally resolved in the best interest for all stakeholders without any biasness involved.

In summary, many aspects of tourism in Northern Thailand need to be further refined before the region is able to effectively and sustainably cope with a large number of Chinese tourists while maintaining its beauty and preserving the locals' way of life. Tourism marketing needs to develop a vision that looks after the wellbeing and welfare of all the stakeholders involved. This should be done not only by those who have the power and influence to make it happen, but also with the feedback of the Chinese tourists and the average Thai citizen (Baum, 2012). To be successful, all forms of tourism excursions will require strong collaboration and coordination to maintain values that keep everyone satisfied. A joint effort from all those involved would undoubtedly assist in the implementation of the guidelines and ensure that tour operators and agents remain truly competitive in the Chinese tourist market.

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Designing an Action Learning Course for an MBA Program: A Qualitative Evaluation

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Abstract

This research project aims to evaluate the design of an Action Learning (AL) introductory business course to be integrated into the Master of Business Administration (MBA) program of a Bangkok-based international business school. An 8-week course was designed applying the AL approach and an interpretive qualitative approach used to evaluate it. In addition to observations by the author, students in the class shared their experiences at various points in time (while taking this course, at the end of it, and one year after they completed their coursework). Moreover, learning reflections were assigned every two weeks, and a research focus group comprising some of the students in this class was formed for the purpose of assessing the course. Consistent with previous studies, the findings suggest that the AL approach has the potential to enhance a wide variety of skills. One of the most important skills they had to master was teamwork. While students acknowledged that it took time to learn, accept, and correctly implement the AL approach, the overall work efficiency of the teams improved dramatically past this point. The value of this particular course design evaluation lies in its contribution to practice and the research design.

Keywords: MBA, Action Learning, Course Design, Evaluation Research, Teamwork

1. Introduction

For most people, the feeling that the world forces us to change faster than ever is not just, as Colville (2016) points out, an abstract notion. For them, changes are real as companies and their employees are under enormous pressure to maintain their competitiveness (Colville, 2016). As early as 2000, Albert (2000) warned that to remain competitive companies needed more employees with higher education degrees, Masters of Business Administration (MBA) in particular. MBA graduates entering the job market have a key role to play in assisting firms to secure a competitive advantage in a region, the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), that is in the process of transforming itself into a single market and production base (Symonds, Schwartz, and Ferguson, 2011). As Kuratko (2003) points out, when properly designed and implemented, MBA programs can be expected to build the essential skills and knowledge required by organizations to be innovative and keep up with a fast-changing environment. According to Binks, Starkey, and Mahon (2006), this can only be done if, in addition to inculcating basic business knowledge and developing Interpersonal Skills (IPS), current MBA programs also build strong entrepreneurial skills. This should take place at an early stage of the MBA program (Bedwell, Fiore, and Salas, 2014).

Not all MBA programs, however, are similarly situated. Nagi (2016) determined that the integration of ASEAN ten member states into an ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) presented tremendous challenges to Thailand's higher education system as many MBA programs fail to meet the standards of neighbour countries, most notably Singapore. There is clearly an urge to improve these programs. As Hamel (2008, 2009) observed, many full-time MBA lecturers tend to be highly specialized in their respective management discipline and for

this reason generally favor a more ‘theoretical’ approach to management practice. The result is that many current MBA students feel frustrated and discouraged by the course content, which, in their view, often fails to develop the leadership skills needed in their future careers. In many ways, this is not a new issue. As early as 1995, Robotham argued that a teaching style tailored to learners’ needs could significantly enhance self-directed learning – recognized as an essential skill for any learner. It is well established that the national culture of participants has an impact on their preferred learning styles (Huijser, 2006; Vita, 2001; Winterlin, 2008). Whilst some cultures prefer to start with theory, others favor a more practical approach as their preferred learning style. Since today, many MBA schools include a sizeable number of international students with diverse cultural backgrounds, this is an important factor to take into account when designing courses (Goerlich, 2014, 2018). Research on the correlation between learning styles and learning success, however, is limited. There is therefore an increasing need to better understand the dynamics of learning and identify appropriate learning styles (Romanelli, Bird, and Ryan, 2009). One learning style that has been gaining currency lately is the Action Learning approach (AL). It is believed to have the capacity to open up new horizons and challenge traditional management education (M J Marquardt, 2011; M J Marquardt et al., 2009; Yorks, 1999). Still, while promising novel ways and an innovative learning model, it does not herald a seismic change.

This study focuses on the AL approach. Specifically, in light of an experimental (pilot) program tested in the classroom and evaluated by its participants, it seeks to determine what an AL course should look like and what particular issues are associated with it. The following research questions (RQ) and research objectives (RO) guide this study:

RQ1: What was the students’ experience with the pilot AL course?

RO1: To evaluate students’ experience with the pilot AL course (a) during the course, (b) directly after the course completion, and (c) one year later.

RQ2: What was the learning impact of this course design on skills development and knowledge mastery?

RO2: To evaluate the learning impact of this course design on (a) skills development and (b) knowledge mastery.

RQ3: What are the potential issues associated with an AL course design?

RO3: To evaluate potential issues regarding (a) the AL method and (b) learners.

2. Literature Review and Research Questions

As reflected by the large body of literature that has emerged over time, the conceptualization of learning and how learning takes place has traditionally been of high interest to academics (Romanelli et al., 2009; Nithya et al., 2019). With the dissemination of various theories of learning and learning styles, there has been a natural evolution of the approaches to learning, some relevant to this research (Rohrer & Pashler, 2012; Donggun & Martha, 2017), others of lesser pertinence. To provide background to this research study, help to put Action Learning into perspective and understand how teaching has evolved, it is therefore necessary first to briefly discuss the concept of traditional learning.

- *Traditional Learning*

Broadly speaking, traditional ways of learning can be defined as “changes in behavior that result from experience or mechanistically as changes in the organism that result from experience” (De Houwer, Barnes-Holmes, & Moors, 2013, p. 1). As determined by Bonesso, Gerli, and Pizzi (2015), there is strong evidence that with the more traditional ways of teaching (i.e., the lecture format), important competencies cannot be developed compared to an experience-based learning format, in which the emphasis is on the learner’s own experiences (learning by doing). According to Khalaf (2018) “traditional learning produces active and non-

active learners, a result of its conceptualization of the learning process. Traditional behavioral classes do not favor active engagement of learners in the learning process, but rather focus on the behavioral impacts of immediate context and the teacher's role on learners" (p. 546). The result often is an insufficient learning outcome. As Khalaf (2018) further points out, "the current technological revolution, investigations, and changes in curricula require significant reform in learning methods" (p. 561).

- **Learning Cycle Theory**

One highly influential theory, and one of great import to educators, especially those involved in designing courses, is Kolb's (1985) learning cycle theory. The following four elements are central to the theory:

- *Concrete Experience* – Someone experiences a situation for the first time
- *Reflective Observation of the New Experience* – What has someone experienced based on his/her own observations? What was noticeable, important or simply worth remembering?
- *Abstract Conceptualization* – When learning manifests itself into new ideas, this can then be conceptualized into something new, for example a new theory.
- *Active Experimentation* – When someone eventually applies the new ideas that have been conceptualized to the real world context and see what happens (Kolb, 1985).

As can be easily gathered from the above, Kolb's (1985) learning style theory enables educators to critically evaluate the impact of the learning style introduced as part of the course design and ultimately create more effective learning methods (McLeod, 2017). In their review of the various learning styles derived from Kolb's learning cycle theory, Dantasa and Cunhab (2020) argue that it would be unwise to choose a single learning style in a course/program as various students have various need of learning preferences. This suggests that, in addition to targeting particular learning styles, educators should also choose appropriate learning methods that combine those various learning styles.

- **Action Learning**

Could Action Learning (AL) be the appropriate learning method? Widely discussed in the relevant body of literature, the AL approach has been recognized as one of the more effective means of learning (Altrichter et al., 2002; Zuber-Skerritt, 2002; Kramer, 2008; Scott, 2017). Originally developed by Revans (1982), AL can be described as "a means of development, intellectual, emotional, or physical that requires its subjects, through responsible involvement in some real, complex and stressful problem, to achieve intended change to improve their observable behavior henceforth in the problem field" (Revans, 1982, p. 626-627). One core question is how AL differ from the learning styles discussed in the learning cycle theory. According to Revans (2011), AL is not a learning style or an approach to learning designed to solve simple or easy to solve puzzles but instead primarily a way to help to solve complex issues and accomplish challenging tasks. Pedler (1991) describes AL as "an approach to the development of people in organizations which takes the task as the vehicle for learning" (pp. xxii–xxiii).

AL is based on the following premise: "there is no learning without action and no sober and deliberate action without learning" (Pedler, 1991, p. xxii-xxiii). As a methodology, AL involves three main components: people, problems and colleagues. People take responsibility for taking actions on a particular issue and problems refer to the tasks that people set for themselves. As to colleagues, it typically takes a set of approximately six of them, who are expected to "support and challenge each other to make progress on problems" (Pedler, 1991, p. xxii-xxiii). Individuals thus have to somehow work together in a group or team setting with the goal to resolve and take action on "real problems in real time, and learning through questioning and reflection while doing so" (Marquardt and Waddill, 2004, p. 2). In this study,

AL will therefore be conceived as a learning process that engages learners in a ‘set’ or ‘group’ of people in order to draw on their own experiences, reflect on their own learning by asking questions around complex and difficult-to-solve challenges, and take action to implement and test possible solutions.

- Action Learning as Applied to MBA Programs

While there has been ample research on how AL can be applied to MBA programs (Pell, no date), none of it has specifically come out in outright support or rejection of AL, providing instead a more critically balanced approach. As early as 1987, Caie identified quite positive results from AL as applied to MBA programs and argued that AL demonstrated a clear contribution to theory and practice by exhibiting “immediate relevance to their needs [students] and its focus on application and implementation, as well as theory” (p. 1). Similar positive results were reported in a more recent study by Johnson and Spicer (2006) investigating MBA courses based on AL. According to them, managers who attended the program indicated that they could better reflect on the issues raised and bring to the table their own experiences, which helped them and other participants to develop a broader understanding and absorption of management practices. An even more recent study by Schaupp and Vitullo (2019) also shows the positive impact of AL on MBA student’s experiences. Focusing on a real consultancy project undergone as part of the MBA curriculum, it concludes that those who took part in the project will be able to use AL to facilitate the search for solutions in ‘real’ companies; a clear sign that the AL methodology applied for that project does promote deep understanding and learning. Belet (2019) reached a similar conclusion, arguing that “the mainstream management educational system based on the old MBA model has become obsolete and inadequate” (p. 10), mainly because it has failed to develop the necessary skills, particularly IPS. Belet’s study also points to the need for more MBA programs relying on AL to help to develop and prepare the “manager-leaders” of tomorrow, who will need to be equipped with much more adequate human management and leadership competences than the present graduates of most traditional business schools.

That said, the AL narrative has also generated skepticism among scholars, including when applied to MBA programs (Yeadon-Lee & Worsdale, 2012; Wikhamn, 2017). Critical views on MBA programs incorporating AL essentially focus on its relevance, or rather on the lack thereof. For example, Yeadon-Lee and Worsdale (2012) found that the AL benefits among the MBA students surveyed were rather mixed as some of the students reported experiencing ‘power play’ among them when conducting group work. The hierarchy that developed caused some students to be perceived as more powerful or influential than others. Those developments had a rather negative impact on some students learning abilities. Notwithstanding these shortcomings, Yeadon-Lee and Worsdale (2012) did not discard the fact that AL can be conducive to a positive learning environment if “a climate in which [learning] set members feel both emotionally and psychologically secure” is established (p. 18). According to them, if this can be achieved, then AL will have a very positive impact on the learning process. In light of the literature reviewed, it is easy to see why on balance a course designed with AL at its core can be a valuable addition to an MBA program following a more traditional methodology.

3. Methodology and Conceptual Framework

This study follows a qualitative methodology.

- Experimental Course Design

As we just saw, AL is a learning process that engages learners in a ‘set’ or ‘group’ of people in order to draw on their own experiences, reflect on their own learning by asking questions around complex and difficult-to-solve challenges, and take action to implement and test

possible solutions. As part of the process of incorporating AL into the course design, the following four issues need to be addressed first:

- (i) How should the course be designed? Given that each week, a new topic such as HR, marketing, or finance, etc, would be introduced to a group of new-to-the-program students, how could AL be used in an 8-week international MBA introduction class?
- (ii) How could skills be developed? Has AL the potential to effectively prepare students for the MBA program and at the same time build essential skills, including interpersonal skills, such as curiosity, analytical, teamwork etc, and technical skills?
- (iii) When would be the appropriate time to introduce AL to the course participants? According to Yeadon-Lee and Worsdale (2012), group work should be introduced at the start of a program when groups have not yet been formed.
- (iv) How should the course be evaluated? How could this class be researched?

Based on these key questions, the following framework was developed:

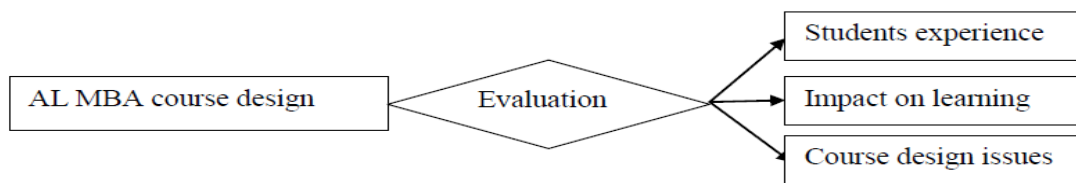


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework
(Compiled by the author for this research study)

A new experimental class had to be designed from scratch, applying the AL approach and its core principals. The next several paragraphs briefly outlined the process.

As a first step, learning outcomes fitting with the overall MBA learning outcomes were articulated. Since the course was designed as an introductory class to business, each learning outcome had to be connected to the topic introduced on a weekly basis (e.g. Week 3, Marketing, Week 4, HR, etc.). A series of questions was asked each week. For example, on Week 4, one of the queries was: What is the problem of the HR department and how is it affecting the company? Next, literature was reviewed and the AL approach considered the most relevant to that introductory class selected. At a later stage the course design was presented to all faculty members from whom feedback was gathered. The most functional approach to AL is the Marquardt approach introduced by Marquardt and Waddill (2004). This approach is an amalgam of the European and American AL types. It comprises the following six key elements (Marquardt, 2011): (i) a problem (a project, challenge, opportunity, issue or task); (ii) an action learning group or a team; (iii) a process that emphasizes insightful questioning and reflective listening; (iv) taking action on the problem; (v) a commitment to learning; and (vi) an action learning coach (Marquardt, 2004). As determined by Marquardt (2011), two rules must be followed: (i) statements can only be made in response to questions; and (ii) the action learning coach has the power to intervene whenever he/she sees an opportunity for learning.

A fictitious scenario involving a Thai-based insurance company currently facing a challenging situation was created for this class. When the founder and owner of the company passed away, he bequeathed the company to his sons and daughter, who do not have a business background. Soon, the once-successful company found itself in a difficult position due to the decisions they had made. Each class also included a made-up mini case study that introduced new, complex, and challenging issues around the topic of the week. Applying the AL approach, students, who were grouped in small teams representing a team of consultants hired by the company, were asked to identify the issues raised by the fictitious scenario and the weekly mini case and suggest possible solutions. Each team had to produce a PowerPoint presentation that

outlined the problems faced by the company and the appropriate solutions/remedies, relying on the relevant theoretical background (which they had to search by themselves as part of the application of the principles of learning by doing). The lecturer's role was essentially to introduce the AL approach, answer any questions in case something might be misunderstood, and ensure that the guidelines were applied (e.g. making sure that each group had a learning coach, statements were made only after questions, etc.). Since the lecturer did not otherwise interfere with the class or group dynamics, his/her role was more that of a facilitator than a lecturer. Between each class, students had access to an online learning platform (Blackboard Learn) that included the 8-week syllabus, a description of each assessment and the case study, multiple choice questionnaires (one each week), four learning reflections (one every other week), the group work's PowerPoint group work, and a final individual capstone project (consultancy progress report). The multiple-choice questionnaires covered the key theories/topics related to the previous class. Students could repeat the online questionnaires as many times as they wanted until they were satisfied with the results (each new attempt involved different random questions). The goal was to give students an opportunity to test their own understanding of the topics introduced with the case study. In addition, every two weeks, students had to write a learning reflection. 20% of the total grade covered online multiple-choices, 20% the learning reflections, 20% in class activities and 40% the individual capstone.

- Evaluation Research

Evaluation research is the main method used in this study. It can be defined as the systematic assessment of the operation and/or the outcome of [a class/program...] compared to a set of explicit or implicit standards" (Weiss 1998) and is regarded as a means of contributing to the improvement of a course or a program (Weiss, 1998). It can thus also be described as a particular research method directly linked to applied research without any attempt to develop new theories but rather to focus on practical implications (Hall & Hall, 2004). Evaluation research can be subdivided into formative and summative evaluation. Formative evaluation seeks to understand the processes within the program/class so as to improve them in the future. Summative evaluation determines the outcome against a benchmark or assess the overall results of the program/class like overall satisfaction of students (Hall & Hall, 2004). Both types of evaluation were applied to this research. The purpose is to understand how something is happening "rather than [coming] in addition to outputs and outcomes" (Patton, 2002 p.159). It is an analysis of the processes (Patton, 1987). This research used Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick's (2006) four levels of evaluation shown as a basis to evaluate students (see Table 1).

Table 1: Four Levels of Evaluation

Level	Basic Questions	Assessment Method
Reaction	What were students' initial reactions to the class and its design?	Observations, qualitative learning reflections, qualitative questionnaire and focus group
Learning	What did students learn in this class?	Observations, qualitative learning reflections, qualitative questionnaire and focus group
Behavior	Was there a change of behavior as a result of AL during and after the course was over?	Observations, qualitative learning reflections, qualitative questionnaire and focus group
Results	Overall, how do students consider this AL class in relation to their own learning and skills development and in terms of its appropriateness within the MBA program? Any other issues?	Observations, qualitative learning reflections, qualitative questionnaire and focus group

Source: Compiled by the author based on Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick (2006)

- **Data Collection**

To triangulate the results, different data collection methods are necessary. In this study, they included the following:

(i) *Observation*: According to White (2000), as an accurate record of what people do and say in real-life situations, observation is "the most obvious method of data collection" (p. 34). For one thing, in contrast to some other data-gathering technique, observations do not interfere with the research objects (Punch, 2005). For all these reasons, as the consequent reflection of the observed situations, observations are an essential aspect of this research projects. In this study, observations were mostly conducted in the classroom.

(ii) *Learning Reflection*: As an integral part of the evaluation process, students had to submit qualitative learning reflections every two weeks. Specifically, they were asked to reflect on their own learning, what they noticed, why this was important for them and, most importantly, had to describe in their own words what surprised or impressed them most. Learning reflections have been a valuable resource in this research as they provide a wealth of information about students' learning and experiences.

(iii) *Satisfaction Questionnaire*: At the end of the course, a standardised satisfaction questionnaire that included qualitative elements was distributed. It should be noted that it is used for all MBA courses to evaluate lecturers and not just for that class. Being used for all courses made it possible to compare students' comments in this class with other classes.

(iii) *Focus Group*: Exactly one year after the course was completed and almost at the end of the international MBA program, a focus group consisting of 9 randomly selected students who attended the introductory class was formed. Even though the class only had 31 students, the amount of information gathered was rich enough to make triangulation possible.

- **Data Analysis**

Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick's (2006) four-level evaluation approach was used in this study as the main analytical method. In addition, Miles and Hubermann's (1994) method was applied to structure and organize the large amount of qualitative data. As a first step, data was collected. Next, details of the interviews, focus group, observations, and learning reflections were carefully scanned and reduced into meaningful paragraphs. Conclusions were then drawn (Miles & Huberman, 1994) and a 'template analysis' designed to thematically organize and analyse textural data put together (King, 2004).

4. Findings

The following is an account of the observations and overall evaluation results by topic (research questions).

- **RQ1: What was Students' Experience with the AL Course?**

To address this question, three perspectives are considered; (a) during the class; (b) directly after the course completion; and (c) one year later (focus group).

a) During the Class

Almost all students had initial reservations about the concept of AL and its strong emphasis on teamwork, even though working as a team was not new to most of them. They soon realized, though, that teamwork was not only an important component of the course mechanism, but also a major source of satisfaction. The fact that, unlike in other courses, students were asked to work as teams right from the beginning was an important factor. As one student pointed out, it helped them "see how [they] could benefit from each other." Another student's previous experience with group work was rather negative as she had to do all the work but this changed during this AL class. As she explained, she didn't believe "this time would be different. I was so wrong. For the first time I see results from working with others [team]."

b) Directly After the Course Completion

Observations supported the findings from the focus group. Many students felt extremely tense when they started to work in teams. Many groups (not teams yet at this juncture in the course) did not talk much at first and nobody had any idea about what AL was and how it worked. But they quickly adapted and teams started to develop as they adhered to AL principles. Observations also confirmed that students asked a lot of question during their team sessions. A central aspect of the AL approach is to ask questions before a statement can be made. This seems to have helped some students to communicate better with one another. In one instance, for example, a student complained about another student who never said much. However, having no choice in her AL session, that student ended up having to ask questions, which changed her perception in the eyes of other students and gave her the confidence to keep talking.

(c) One Year Later

At the focus group, it was repeatedly confirmed that communication during teamwork improved a lot as a result of the AL. As one student noted, because they all had to use questions, they were often asked to further elaborate on their queries, with questions such as: “What do you mean by [...] or can you give me an example what you are referring to?” In their opinions, this helped them a lot in their subsequent courses as they realized that asking questions to confirm a point, restate an argument, or contrast ideas was very helpful indeed in mastering new concepts. Having to use questions before a statement could be made also had long-term benefits as it changed their perception of the learning process. Whereas they would generally assume that they understood the problem(s) well, once they started to ask questions, they realized this was often not the case. As they noted, once they came up with more questions, they really started to better understand the material discussed. Most students never experienced nor expected that no lecture would be given on the weekly topics. That they had to work collectively to find out together what the issues and the relevant theories were and had to learn by applying new knowledge by connecting theory with practice surprised them at first but turned out to a learning method of choice. Another long-term benefit of their AL experience is the ability to build trust among team members and develop self-confidence as the team members’ trust and openness were conducive to expressing oneself. Students now realize how important this is when working as a team.

- RQ2: What was the Learning Impact of this Course Design?

The impact of AL on skills development is discussed first and its effect on the mastery of knowledge considered next.

a) Impact on Skills Development

Since students had to do everything by themselves (unlike in more traditional courses where there would be a lecture would point out what would be the correct/best practice, etc), focus group members reported that they learned a lot of new things during the AL sessions and also subsequently in other courses as they applied the very same principles developed in this pilot class. Because nobody told them what the solution was, students had to try to identify, as a team, what they believed the issues were. The author’s observations also show that students were able to understand complex issues and applied theory correctly in the presentations. IPS, such as effective communication and leadership skills, to name a few, seem to have been developed during the course. Moreover, whereas there was not much talking among team members in the first two classes, that changed with time and many lively discussions took place in the later classes, indicating more comfort with teamwork and increased trust.

b) Impact on Knowledge Mastery

Students reported that many of them were sceptical at first because there was no lecture and no solution provided by the professor. But as they were asked to look for solutions by themselves

and not to rely on others [e.g. experts], they progressively saw the benefits of the approach. As one student stated. "I really appreciated that I was able to do more self-study and prepare myself. Now I feel I can find solutions myself too". Another student described AL as "an interesting way to learn something new." For some, AL confirmed that "education is far more than bookish knowledge" as "bookish solutions" may not work in the real world. The experience also made a number of them realize that they could trust themselves – and others – to come up with solutions, a valuable lesson indeed. One skill developed by students in this class is their enhanced ability to share work more effectively with others. For some of them this was not a given. One student who identified himself as "a kind of loner" who generally does not like to work with others admitted that being compelled to engage in teamwork taught him to plan his work better. Another merit of working as a group in the context of AL was that the team got the job done in a timely manner. Providing for better planning was also instrumental in the more structured way in which teams organized ourselves (e.g. who was doing what, research on what topic, etc). The role of the learning coach was recognized by students as essential for coordination and planning. Finally, learning coaches felt that they played a key role in motivating other students. As one student noted, "When asked to be the learning coach I struggled a bit, at first [...] but I'm glad I could motivate them [team members] to be part of the team."

- RQ3: What are the Potential Issues Associated with an AL Course Design?

Two main issues have been identified in relation to this research question: (a) the AL method itself and (b) learners

a) The AL Method

In addressing this issue, it is necessary to divide students into two groups: Asians and non-Asians. Arguably, students from ASEAN countries and from China found the format more challenging than was the case with their non-Asian counterparts. This may be due to the fact that no formal lecture was given – just a case study and instructions to analyze it. Students were not told what to do step by step. As one Chinese student explained, this was a completely new experience: "We were not sure what to do as nobody was telling us what we needed to do. This was very confusing for us in the beginning". For these students from cultures where the emphasis is on conformity with the ingroup and on strong guidelines, this clearly was a major change and somewhat of a shock. But as explained by those same students, their initial confusion turned into a positive experience. In particular, they appreciated the way the class started with questions (and not statements) to tackle the complexity of the issues discussed. For non-Asians, the AL class structure was less of a challenge. One positive aspect the AL approach repeatedly mentioned was that every student was given a chance to express his/her views, which did not have to be knowledge-based. As one student stated, "I have no business experience and didn't know how to contribute. I was surprised that they asked about my opinion. And actually they [the team members] took it seriously. I was really surprised and encouraged that I might be able to contribute".

(b) Learners

The comments taken from the qualitative section of the satisfaction questionnaire indicate that overall, the AL approach worked well for students. As pointed out by several of them, the AL sessions forced them to share their views with students from many diversified backgrounds and many different countries and to listen to their views as well. This of course assumes that the teams were multicultural, which was almost always the case. On the one occasion that one group was unequally mixed (it only had one foreign students), this resulted in the rest of the students in that group talking mostly in their mother tongue, precluding that one student from contributing. This particular session outlines the importance of having a diversified group of students in insuring the best possible outcome during action learning sessions.

5. Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

One key query in the satisfaction questionnaire was whether students were satisfied with the course ("I was satisfied with the course"). It received an average of 5.21 out of 6, a clear indication of a very high overall level of satisfaction with the course and its design. A very positive aspect of the course design was the course case study (the fictitious insurance company). It introduced a new topic every week. For example, on HR week, students had to deal with several HR issues the company was facing. This gave students an opportunity to explore a whole array of issues and work as if they were real consultants; an experience which they really enjoyed. This outcome is in line with the findings of Schaupp and Vitullo (2019) who effectively implemented a consultancy project as part of a pilot AL MBA course. The main difference, though, was that in their case, this was a real consultancy project. In their learning reflections and focus groups, students acknowledged that it takes time to learn, accept, and correctly implement the AL approach (at least 3 weeks in their own estimation). Past this point, the overall work efficiency of the teams improved dramatically and the pertinence and relevance of the solutions presented were notably higher. Goerlich et al. (2020) determined that if students are confronted with a completely new way of working, as compared, for example, to their undergraduate studies and the place where their previous education took place (e.g. in China, Vietnam, or Indonesia, where they typically had lectures), it will take time for them to adjust. Many students also felt that they had to work harder than in a lecture-based class setting, which caused some initial rejection of the AL class design.

Another very important aspect of the design of that class was the heavy emphasis on teamwork (the whole AL approach is based on this concept). It was, however, an initial great source of concerns among students. In the focus group, they all agreed that the most important skill they had to master was teamwork and also how to achieve positive outcomes. Some students went even as far as saying that the heavy teamwork aspect of the course was the most painful experience for them, particularly at the beginning of the class. These comments are in line with Yeadon-Lee & Worsdale (2012), who reported similar findings. Not everybody in their study appreciated teamwork. Similar findings were found in Johnson and Spicer's (2006) research study. But as was also the case in this AL course, in those two studies, at the same time, students also welcomed the opportunity to develop new valuable skills. Whilst this pilot course received essentially positive feedback from participants, who strongly approved of and supported its overall design and the AL approach, it was not warmly embraced by faculty members. In fact, the reticence to endorse it was such that it was ultimately replaced by an alternative class that followed a more traditional approach. This begs the question of why. For one thing, any change is generally likely to meet with resistance.

This course was no exception. Even before it was launched, there were prejudices against the AL concept itself. Some faculty members also did not think a change was warranted. This lack of openness to new didactic concepts and approaches to learning could be detrimental (or even fatal as this was the case here) to the introduction of new methodologies even though innovation in the classroom is necessary (as it is in any organization). As noted earlier, the introduction, companies are looking for MBA holders well prepared for the challenges ahead. Perhaps, one of the reasons for the lack of enthusiasm among some faculty members was the implication that in an AL course, there is no formal lecture – faculty members assist the learning groups/teams, they do not lecture per say. This may create anxiety among lecturers whose existence as experts would be perceived to be questioned. But this does not have to be. Expertise is still required even though it may manifest itself in a new format. The key point here is that any change is bound to face an uphill battle. Take online teaching. Before Covid-19, the idea of a virtual classroom met with much resistance. It is only when it became mandatory and the only viable option to no class that it gained some acceptance. This may well

be the case with AL courses. This author, along with many researchers, truly believe in the potential of this class design and agree with Belet (2019), who describes it as the most appropriate 'new' management education approach. That overall, the course went surprisingly smoothly augurs well for its future acceptance. This may take time, though. Pressure may come from students themselves, who highly rated this experimental course and may want it to be integrated into the MBA program.

- Recommendations and Limitations

Given that the course was designed and implemented in Thailand, where, as reported by Nagi (2016), many lecturers still believe in the concept of one-way lectures and are therefore perhaps more prone to reject a different teaching style. It is therefore recommended that in the future a lecturer from an ASEAN member country be involved in the designing or even co-teach the course. This would provide access to valuable resources and make the project more amenable to those reluctant to embrace new approaches. While such transnational collaboration may not be the norm in Asia, it is quite common in the Western world where interactive teaching styles are quite common. It is also the author's view that some MBA programs in Southeast Asia would benefit from such cooperation. The two main limitations of this study are the small group of students assessed and the sole use of a qualitative method (as opposed to a mixed methodology involving a quantitative analysis that could produce valuable data). Thus, due to these limitations, generalizations cannot be easily made as the results are somehow subjective. Further studies on this topic should therefore involve more participants and perhaps include a quantitative analysis as well.

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Appendix 1: Focus Group Sample Questions

Research Objectives	Sample Questions
To evaluate the AL course design from a user experience perspective - During the course - Directly after the course - At the end of the program, one year later	Please describe what you particularly observed during the course and the AL sessions for you and others? What is your overall judgment about the course design and AL approach? Compared to the rest of the MBA program, what was your experience in the AL class?
To evaluate the learning impact of the AL course design in terms of: - Skills - Knowledge	What skills in particular did you build or strengthen in your introductory class? What area of knowledge in particular did you build or strengthen in your introductory class?
To identify possible issues with the AL course design regarding: - The method - Learners	Have there been any issues or challenges with the course design and/or the AL method for you or your classmates? Have there been any issues or challenges for you personally in this class as compared to other MBA courses?

Source: Compiled by the author for this study

Enhancing Onboard Safety: Planning for the Non-Technical Skills Training of the Cabin Crews of an International Airline

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Abstract

The objective of this study was to identify the levels of Non-Technical Skills (NTS) of the cabin crews of an international airline in order to plan for safety-enhancing educational training. The following five NTS components were tested: communication and collaboration (CandC), workload with sign of stress and fatigue (WSSF), planning and coordinating resources (PandCR), error recognition and attitudes toward coworkers (ERAC), and teamwork and leadership (TandL). A survey questionnaire was used to collect data. 438 valid responses were returned. Descriptive statistics were utilized to describe frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. Inferential statistics were tested using multivariate analysis of variance: 2-Way MANOVA. The results reveal that cabin crew members with different demographics in terms of gender, education, position, and work experience exhibit different attitudes towards NTS required as part of their duties. However, only position has a significant impact on four of the five NTS components (CandC, WSSF, PandCR, and ERAC). This is reflected in the consecutive orders of NTS. CandC were perceived as the most prominent, followed by WSSF and PandCR, with ERAC further behind. It is clear from this study that incorporating NTS as part of the mandatory training and preparation of cabin crew members to enhance safety on board therefore has become a necessity for every airline.

Keywords: Non-Technical Skills, Enhanced Safety, Cabin Crew, Planning for Educational Training, International Airline

1. Introduction

Safety is regarded as crucial to any occupations, be it avoiding death, injury, illness, damage to, or loss of equipment, property, or the environment (Department of Defense-DOD, 2012; Ocampo & Klaus, 2016; Sojka, 2020). This is especially the case with public transportation, in particular aviation. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) (2013) defines safety as the state in which the possibility of harm to persons or of damage to property is reduced to and maintained at or below an acceptable level through a continuing process of hazard identification and safety risk management. In the case of commercial airlines, this means that a well-designed safety performance process and management must be implemented in a way that prevents all kinds of hazardous incidents and situations (Karatepe & Vatankhah, 2014; Van Waeyenberg & Decramer, 2018). Regarding cabin safety, obviously, the safety process must also effectively include both the physical and mental fitness of pilots, engineers, and cabin crew members, who are jointly responsible for the safe carriage of thousands of passengers each day (The British Psychological Society, 2017). Cabin crew members play a key role in providing excellent customer service and ensuring their safety.

The European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) (2014) defines cabin crews as appropriately qualified and skilled crew members assigned by an operator to perform duties relating to the safety of passengers and flight during operations. They include senior and junior cabin crew members, inflight supervisors, and chief pursers. As the front-line staff, they are directly responsible for the well-being of passengers. For all these reasons, they are expected to possess solid traits of character, all of which essential to the safety and well-being of those on board and to the provision of good services. These traits manifest themselves in their attitude, behavior, action, and efficiency (Matos, Simpson, & Simmons, 2017). Still, notwithstanding these expectations, it is not unusual for cabin crew members working on long-haul flights to encounter difficulties and experience both physical and emotional exhaustion as it is their responsibility to deal with passenger requests at any time (Appiah-Adu, Fyall, & Singh, 2000). While on duty, under the pilot-in-command, cabin crew members must be able to cope with both routine and uncommon situations so as to prevent to the extent possible any inflight problems that may occur and affect the safety and well-being of passengers (International Civil Aviation Organization-ICAO, 2014). It goes without saying that exhibiting and upholding physical and mental health during the flight is paramount to keeping both passengers and crew members safe from any unexpected incidents or potential threats, including terrorism (Salas, Rhodenizer, & Bowers, 2000; Salas et al., 2006).

In order to maintain job efficacy, it is therefore necessary for cabin crews to be extremely well trained and prepared. This is all the more necessary as around 80 percent of the uncommon situations and/or accidents that occur in the cabin and present risks to human beings are caused by human action rather than by technical glitches (Helmrich, 2000; International Air Transport Association-IATA, 2016; Reason, 1990). Since a high level of performance and physical and mental robustness is required to prevent hazards and accidents from occurring in the cabin, human factors training designed to enhance cabin safety is highly recommended (ICAO, 2013, 2014; IATA, 2015). This has led to a focus in the last two decades on human factors and on so-called non-technical skills (NTS). Given the amount of attention NTS have received, they have now been integrated into most aviation training curricula due to their recognized high impact in preventing and vindicating induced risks (Defence Flight Safety Bureau-DFSB, 2019). The main reason they are now part of most airlines' training programs is because NTS training programs cover essential aspects of the onboard performance of crew members, namely, skills used in human interaction, decision making, communication and collaboration, teamwork and leadership, workload with sign of stress and fatigue, planning and coordinating resources, and error recognition and attitudes towards coworkers (Civil Aviation Authority Safety-CASA, 2012, 2019; DFSB, 2019; Flin & Maran, 2015).

These dimensions positively impact the attitude and performance of cabin crews in that they help reduce the risks of accidents, injuries, as well as illnesses of all the parties involved (Cheyne et al., 1998; DFSB, 2019; Glendon & Stanton, 2000; Reiman & Oedewald, 2002; Sexton & Klinect, 2017; Williamson et al., 1997; Zohar, 1980). While the existing body of literature on NTS has made it abundantly clear that NTS do make a difference between acceptable and outstanding performances in terms of safety care and technical knowledge and skills (Civil Aviation Authority-CAA, 2006; Flin & Michell, 2008; Bonsall & Taylor, 2011; ICAO, 2014) empirical research on NTS training itself is scant (Rutherford, Flin, & Mitchell, 2012; Flin, O' Corner, & Crichton, 2008). This is precisely why research on this issue, especially with regard to cabin crew members, has been urged, among others, by Aviation Authorities and some academics in the field of aviation safety (CAA, 2006; Rutherford et al., 2015; Kanki, Helmreich, & Anca, 2010). Since cabin crews are the front-line cabin staff assigned to take care of the safety and well-being of passengers, research on the effects of NTS training and whether it generates and strengthens a positive attitude towards effective safety

skills and performance is considered crucial. This is precisely the reason why this study focuses on NTS safety training for cabin crews. In line with the recommendations made by various Aviation Authorities and researchers (CASA, 2012; Civil Aviation Authority-CAA, 2013; ICAO, 2014, CAA, 2006; Rutherford et al., 2015; Flin et al., 2008), it looks at the attitude of the cabin crew members of a Thai-based international airline towards NTS. Specifically, relying on the following demographic variables, gender, educational background, position, and work experience, it aims to identify the various attitudes of its cabin crew members towards NTS and, based on their NTS strengths and weaknesses, to determine the consecutive order in which the outcome variables (the skills required) could be accurately incorporated into the NTS training planning so as to develop more effective human factors for better in-flight services. To attain these objectives, the following research questions have been formulated:

1. Is the attitude of the cabin crew members of an international airline towards NTS significantly affected by their demographic variables?
2. What consecutive order in terms of NTS strengths and weaknesses can be derived from the identified attitudes of the cabin crew members of an international airline and be applied to their planned NTS training?

2. Review of Relevant Literature

The operative concepts in this study relate to safety on board planes and the acquisition of the necessary skills to ensure safe flights.

- Safety and Safety Culture

Safety has been defined in different ways depending on its function and circumstances (Antonsen, Nilsen, & Almklov, 2017; Berman et al., 2017; Pan & Hildre, 2017; Vilbrandt, 2017 et al.). Whereas the Oxford Online Dictionary (2017) defines safety as a condition of being protected from or unlikely to cause danger, risk, or injury, some researchers define it as the freedom from any conditions of death, injury, occupational illness, damage to or loss of equipment, property, and environment which helps avoid danger or harm of unexpected, unintended injury, or events as well as accident (e.g. Loimer & Guarnieri, 1996; DoD, 2012; Burke et al., 2006; Ocampo & Klaus, 2016; Silva, 2017; Sojka, 2020). In aviation, however, safety has been defined as a state in which a possibility of harm and/or damage can be handled, minimized, and managed to a minimum or at an acceptable level of no harm to any humans or properties (ICAO, 2013). In particular, in commercial airlines, safety is regarded as important not only to the policies, management, systems, and structures of the organizations (Blazsin & Guldenmund, 2015; Gergen, 2001; Silbey, 2009) but also to workers' attitudes and performance in that the more safety training they will have the more successful their work is likely to be (Choudhry, Fang, & Mohamed, 2007; Edwards, Davey, & Armstrong, 2013; Guldenmund, 2000; Haukelid, 2008; Hsieh, 2010; Levering, 2016; Nyarugwe, 2016; Pant & Alberti, 1997; Warrick, 2017; Warszawska & Kraslawski, 2016; Xie et al., 2017).

- Non-Technical Skills in Aviation and Cabin Safety

Non-technical skills (NTS) refer to cognitive and interpersonal skills that assist in effective leadership, communication, teamwork, status awareness, decision-making, and role-sharing skills among the members of a team in their daily routine and in uncommon situations (Flin & Maran, 2015). In the aviation field, Wiener and Nagel (1988) were the first to show the importance of NTS regarding cockpit organization, crew interaction, crew fitness and judgment, and automation. At the origin of the focus on NTS was the crash of Flight 410 in March 1988, shortly after its departure from a Colombian airport (there was no survivor). The fatal crash prompted a renewal of interest in pilots and those working in high-risk careers as well as in cabin crew members as candidates for NTS training. Given that cabin safety depends on in-flight practice involving pilots and other crew members, procedures, machine interface,

and experienced professionals, human interactions among crew members are essential to help decrease the probability of errors caused by human factors (Carayon, Murphy, & Robertson 2014; Moriarty, 2015). Thus, in order to overcome the obstacles that may arise in the cabin from human factors, cabin crews need to acquire effective NTS i.e., behaviors and performances apt to influence for the safety and well-being of passengers (ICAO, 2014). This includes their attitudes towards those skills (Flin et al., 2003; Flin, & Maran, 2015).

- NTS Components

As determined by Flin et al. (2003) and Flin et al. (2008), NTS include the following five components:

- (i) *Communication and Collaboration (CandC)*: This component refers to the exchange of information, feedback or response, ideas and feelings that provides knowledge, institutes relationships, and establishes predictable behavior patterns. As a management tool in promoting collaboration among the workers, it involves attention to the task.
- (ii) *Teamwork and Leadership (TandL)*: This second component involves leading the activities of team members, assessing performance, assigning tasks, developing team knowledge, skills, and abilities, establishing a positive team atmosphere, exchanging information, supporting others, and solving conflicts arising out any given situation as a team.
- (iii) *Workload with Sign of Stress and Fatigue (WSSF)*: This third component relates to coping with stress and fatigue – the state of tiredness associated with long hours of work, prolonged periods without sleep, and work at times that is supposed to be for sleeping – identifying symptoms of fatigue, recognizing effects of fatigue, and implementing coping strategies.
- (iv) *Planning and Coordinating Resources (PandCR)*: This fourth component pertains to planning and prioritizing to prevent workload peaks or depressions and organizing task sharing, cooperating, and delegation.
- (v) *Error Recognition and Attitudes towards Coworkers (ERAC)*: This fifth component includes automation management, contingency, environment, statements of plans and changes, problem identification, monitoring and cross-checking, recognizing and understanding others, and exercising vigilance.

- Planning of NTS Training for International Airlines' Cabin Crews

The main purpose of NTS training is to enhance safety, reduce the risk of accidents, and optimize safety performance by improving knowledge, skills and behaviors, strengthening teamwork, and outlining the need for a full integration of this non-technical training with existing technical training programs (Guldenmund, 2000; Haukelid, 2008; Hsieh, 2010; Levering, 2016; Nyarugwe, 2016). The ICAO (2014) requires high-skill level human factor training for pilots, cabin crews and other safety-critical personnel along with the acquisition of human factor theoretical concepts concerning errors and consequences (CASA, 2012). NTS training must include decision-making and social skills and maintaining situational awareness. It complements knowledge, technical skills, and abilities to help crew members to make things go right instead of focusing entirely on trying to eliminate the things that go wrong (DFSB, 2019; Paris, Salas, & Cannon-Bowers, 1999; CASA, 2012).

Other than that, each training session must be planned according to the theoretical and practical frameworks for preparing crews. This means that training should be objective rather than activity driven so that participants are taught the right skills and behavior and should cover the five NTS components so as to strengthen crew members' appropriate attitude and performance while on duty (CAA, 2013; ICAO, 2014). Also, of great import here, NTS training should be systematically assessed, especially by the airline providing it, in order to determine whether it has achieved its goals and reach the level of expectations targeted, most notably in terms of elevating safety performance (Cooper, White, & Lauber, 1980; Moriarty, 2015). Moreover, it is strongly recommended that before proceeding with the NTS training for the

crew staff, an analysis assessing the levels and orders of significance should be conducted and error management measures put in place. The groups or individuals to target and how this can be done should be clearly established (CASA, 2019). In this study, the planning of NTS training was conducted at the preliminary stage and the significant levels of NTS skills to be put into consecutive orders identified. Thus, by following the recommendations and guidelines of Aviation Authorities and those found in the relevant research body on the field of aviation safety, it is expected that in this study, findings on the significant levels of NTS will help place the right consecutive orders, which range from the weakest to the strongest skills, into educational training plans so as to ensure effective use of the human factors and enhance safety and in-flight services for all passengers.

3. Research Methodology

Convenient sampling and the stratified random sampling technique were applied to the 1123 cabin crew members of an international airline based at Don Mueang airport (DMK) in Bangkok, and at Chiang Mai (CNX) and Phuket (HKT) airports in Northern and Southern Thailand respectively. The sample size was determined based on Kanchanawasri, Pittayanon, and Srisukho's (2016) findings at the confidence level of 99 percent, with a margin error at ± 5 percent. The ideal sample size was 438. A 33-item survey questionnaire was used. It was adapted from: (i) the Cockpit Management Attitude Questionnaire-CMAQ (Gregorich & Wilhelm, 1993); (ii) Ship management Attitudes Questionnaire-SMAQ (Röttger, Vetter, & Kowalski, 2013); and (iii) Safety Attitudes Questionnaire-SAQ (Sexton, Helmreich, & Neilands, 2006). Five experts confirmed the content validity of the questionnaire at the level of 0.80. A pretest was conducted with 33 samples outside the sample analyzed using Cronbach Alpha Coefficient. It revealed a high reliability of 0.925.

Part One of the questionnaire pertains to the demographic variables of the respondents, (i.e., gender, levels of education, position, and work experience). Part Two includes 33 NTS-related items, ranked from Strongly Positive attitude = 5 to Strongly Negative Attitude = 1., and sub-grouped into the following 5 components: (i) Communication and Collaboration (CandC), items 1-8; (ii) Teamwork and Leadership (TandL), items 9-15; (iii) Workload with Sign of Stress and Fatigue (WSSF), items 16-23; (iv) Planning and Coordinating Resources (PandCR), items 24-29; and (v) Error recognition and Attitudes towards Coworkers (ERAC), items 30-33. A descriptive analysis that includes means, standard deviations, frequencies, percentages, correlations, and 2-Way MANOVA was run to analyze the data. The reason MANOVA was used in this study is because it was most appropriate for assessing group differences on the set of variables (Huberty & Olejnik, 2006). It is also useful for multiple responses to a single data point (e.g. males and females) and for testing the five NTS, i.e., CandC, TandL, WSSF, PandCR, and ERAC. Moreover, it could be used to examine how the groups differed on a linear combination of the different measures (Huang, 2019)

4. Research Findings and Discussion

Table 1 shows the demographics of the sampling, which consisted of 438 cabin crew members of an international airline. A majority of the respondents was female (68.50%). Almost all the respondents have a bachelor's degree (93.80%). Two-thirds of the staff members are cabin crew members (77.40%) and 22.60 percent are senior cabin crew members. In terms of working experience, more than half (59.80%) have been working for 1 to 5 years, 30.10 percent for 6 to 10 years and 10.10 percent for more than 10 years.

Table 1: Demographics of Respondents

(n=438)

Frequency and percentage of respondents			
Demographics of respondents		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	138	31.50
	Female	300	68.50
Degrees	Bachelor's Degree	411	93.80
	Above Bachelor	27	6.20
Position	Cabin Crew	339	77.40
	Senior Cabin Crew	99	22.60
Working Experiences	1-5 Years	262	59.80
Duration of work	6-10 Years	132	30.10
	More Than 10 Years	44	10.10

Source: created by the author of this study

Table 2 shows the means and standard deviations for the five measurements of cabin crew members' NTS. It indicates that the means were slightly high (ranging from 4.06 for ERAC to 4.52 for CandC) and the standard deviations rather low (ranging from 0.580 from CandC to 0.850 for ERAC). Given that NTS on the questionnaire range from 1.00-5.00, the 4.06-4.52 range implies that almost all cabin crew members in the sample had high average NTS scores. Moreover, with a high mean ($\bar{x} = 4.17$) and a low standard deviation (S.D. = 0.746), the variation analysis results were congruent with those of the whole sample. A MANOVA statistical analysis requires intercorrelation among all the dependent variables. When the dependent variables are at least moderately correlated, MANOVA will generally yield greater power in understanding outcome variables as a system rather than isolate measurement (Huberty & Morris, 1989). The intercorrelation among the 5 NTS components indicate that all of them were significantly correlated with Bartlett's Test Sphericity Chi-square = 771.331, $df = 10$, $p = 0.000$). Under the principle of statistical analysis, MANOVA requires a moderate intercorrelation among all dependent variables. Table 2 matrix shows that there were positive correlations among all 5 components ranging from 0.311- .632 with $p \leq .01$, and $n = 438$. WSSR and TandL were the most correlated at 0.632 and ERAC and Tand L at 0.311.

Table 2: Intercorrelation Matrix of all 5 NTS with Means and Standard Deviations

(n=438)

	CandC	TandL	WSSF	PandCR	ERAC	Mean	SD	Test of Normality	
								Statistic	Significance
CandC	1					4.52^{SPA}	0.580	0.907	0.000
TandL	.513**	1				4.15 ^{PA}	0.725	0.972	0.000
WSSF	.467**	.632**	1			4.17 ^{PA}	0.767	0.973	0.000
PandCR	.453**	.494**	.536**	1		4.06 ^{PA}	0.653	0.926	0.000
ERAC	.311**	.445**	.525**	.546**	1	4.06^{PA}	0.850	0.954	0.000
Total						4.17 ^{PA}	0.746		

Notes: 1. SPA = Strong positive attitude; PA = Positive attitude

3. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Chi-square = 771.331, $df = 10$, $p = 0.000$

Source: created by the author of this study

The 2 Way-MANOVA of the cabin crew members' NTS was used to determine whether there were differences in the 5 NTS components: CandC; TandL; WSSF; PandCR; and ERAC, due to the gender, education, and position variables and the level of work experience. The results shown in Table 3 indicate that position was the only background variable with a significant effect on four of the NTS components: CandC ($p = 0.019$); WSSF ($p = 0.039$); PandCR ($p = 0.041$); and ERAC ($p = 0.044$), respectively. There was no significant effect on TandL ($p = 0.158$).

Table 3: Two-Way Multivariate Analysis of Variance

(n=438)								
Source		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value	R Square	Adjusted R Square
Corrected Model	CandC	3.817	19	0.201	1.492	0.084	.064	.021
	TandL	4.316	19	0.227	1.161	0.288	.050	.007
	WSSF	4.696	19	0.247	1.122	0.325	.049	.005
	PandCR	5.399	19	0.284	1.349	0.149	.058	.015
	ERAC	7.219	19	0.380	1.000	0.460	.044	.000
Gender	CandC	0.039	1	0.039	.293	0.589		
	TandL	0.124	1	0.124	.635	0.426		
	WSSF	0.280	1	0.280	1.273	0.260		
	PandCR	0.213	1	0.213	1.010	0.315		
	ERAC	0.038	1	0.038	.100	0.752		
Education	CandC	0.294	1	0.294	2.186	0.140		
	TandL	0.086	1	0.086	.441	0.507		
	WSSF	0.318	1	0.318	1.444	0.230		
	PandCR	0.020	1	0.020	0.093	0.761		
	ERAC	0.110	1	0.110	0.290	0.590		
Position	CandC	0.743	1	0.743	5.515	0.019*		
	TandL	0.392	1	0.392	2.001	0.158		
	WSSF	0.942	1	0.942	4.279	0.039*		
	PandCR	0.883	1	0.883	4.189	0.041*		
	ERAC	1.547	1	1.547	4.069	.044*		
Work Experience	CandC	0.104	2	0.052	0.386	0.680		
	TandL	0.005	2	0.003	0.013	0.987		
	WSSF	0.424	2	0.212	0.964	0.382		

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value	R Square	Adjusted R Square
PandCR	0.002	2	0.001	0.004	0.996		
ERAC	0.252	2	0.126	0.332	0.718		
CandC	56.015	416	0.135				
TandL	81.384	416	0.196				
WSSF	91.601	416	0.220				
PandCR	87.638	416	0.211				
ERAC	158.109	416	0.380				
CandC	59.831	435					
TandL	85.701	435					
WSSF	96.297	435					
PandCR	93.037	435					
ERAC	165.328	435					

Note: 1. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy = 0.822

2. *($p < 0.050$), **($p < 0.010$), ***($p < 0.000$)

Source: created by the author of this study

The results reveal that cabin crew members with different demographics in terms of gender, education, position, and work experience exhibit different attitudes towards NTS required as part of their duties. However, only position has a significant impact on four of the five NTS components (CandC, WSSF, PandCR, and ERAC). The other demographic factors have a much more limited impact on a limited number of NTS components. These findings are consistent with the results of previous research on airline cabin services (e.g. Takanen, 2019). This is especially the case with regard to the ranking of positions in the line of duty of cabin crew members. On each flight, the majority of the cabin crew members was junior cabin crew members working under the leadership of their senior cabin crew members, namely Pilot-in-Control, Inflight Supervisor, Chief Purser. While the Pilot-in-Control handled the aircraft, the Inflight Supervisor planned and coordinated resources and implemented the performance management process. As to the Chief Purser, as an immediate supervisor during a flight, he/she took care of workloads and all related matters concerning both common and uncommon situations so as to prevent any problems under his/her control and command (Takanen, 2019).

Still, no matter what lines of duty they hold, both senior and junior cabin crew members must work together as effective teams and maintain status awareness in order to fulfill their tasks and, first and foremost, ensure their passengers' comfort and safety. Thus, all crew members must work up to the point of being able to maintain communication and collaborate with one another so that they can identify their workloads and recognize perceive signs of stress and fatigue, including technical errors that might occur during the flight as a result (Flin et al., 2008). These findings obviously largely reflect various attitudes towards NTS, particularly on the part of both senior and junior cabin crew members as hierarchical positions at both ends of the range play an important role in terms of what has to be done and how it has to be done. Since positions dictate who performs what duty and why, they influence the attitudes of cabin crew member towards NTS.

This can be seen in the consecutive orders of NTS in this study. CandC were perceived as the most prominent, followed by WSSF and PandCR, with ERAC further behind. As part of maintaining situational awareness and attention to the surrounding environment and decision making based on an effective relationship among crew members, ERAC, which as we know, is involved with looking out for error, threats, and undesired aircraft conditions might be overlooked, misinterpreted, or even confused with the technical skills (CASA, 2012). This could well explain all the above findings. Finally, although, insignificant, TandL could be due to a clear-cut ranks and positions perceived as integral parts of the line of duty.

5. Conclusion, Recommendations, and Limitations

Although to date, few research studies have focused on the contribution of NTS to aviation safety in relation to cabin crews, it is nevertheless clear that, as this study shows, their NTS training can significantly improve onboard safety. Incorporating NTS as part of the mandatory training and preparation of cabin crew members to enhance safety on board therefore has become a necessity for every airline. This is in keeping with the ICAO (2014) mandate. Different types of NTS training designed to support the development of the range of knowledge and skills required to deal with safety issues have been proposed. All of them aim to prevent human and technical errors and ensure optimum outcomes for passengers in the provision of cabin service, regardless of the type of airline activities (low-cost or full-service).

It is universally accepted that risk zero does not exist. But, whilst it is well understood that, in spite of all the efforts made to prevent human errors, the risk of an incident caused by a cabin crew member can never be entirely eliminated, every possible step should nevertheless be taken to minimize that risk and if an error occurs, everything possible should be done to mitigate the potential damage arising from it. One way to do this is to ensure that cabin crew members acquire the appropriate NTS to cope with the risks and demands inherent in the performance of their work (Flin et al., 2008; Flin & Maran, 2015; Moriarty, 2015; Carayon et al., 2014; Silva, 2017). Any behavioral skills development and attitude change resulting from NTS training for cabin safety are welcome and should be highly encouraged through the interaction of knowledge, ability, and attitudes (CAA, 2013; Roberson, Shaharyar, & Aneni, 2014).

When applying the suggestions of the ICAO (2014) and CASA (2012, 2019) for NTS training, it is recommended that all five skills be considered together and put into consecutive orders, ranging from the least observed (the weakest) to the most observed (the strongest). For obvious safety reasons, the weakest skills observed should be given priority. Based on the findings of this study, the consecutive order of the skills to be developed would therefore be as followed: (i) ERAC; (ii) PandCR, (iii) WSSF, (iv) CandC, and (v) TandL. The reason for this sequence is that while the weakest skills must be specifically strengthened, the rest of the skills must nonetheless be maintained and possibly enhanced if necessary up to the levels of appropriateness of the safety required. As has been strongly recommended, before embarking on the NTS training of crew members, a training-needs analysis of the levels and orders of significance should be conducted (CASA, 2012).

- Recommendations and Limitations

By following the recommendations and guidelines of Aviation Authorities and the conclusions of research studies conducted in the field of aviation safety, it is expected that the findings of the significant levels of NTS in this study will help to integrate the right consecutive orders from the weakest to the strongest skills into the training so as to establish effective human factors and enhance safety and better in-flight services for all the passengers. NTS training conducted as part of enhancing the safety of the work performed by the cabin crews of international airlines in particular should therefore include both the observed skills obtained, from this study and the main categories and elements of NTS provided by researchers and

aviation authorities in the field of NTS for aviation safety (Flin et al., 2003; Flin et al., 2008; CASA, 2012, 2019). EFA, CFA, and SEM were not employed in this study for several reasons. One was the need to explore multiple responses on a single data. The second was that the study aimed to understand outcome variables as a system on a linear combination of measurements so as to explain the attitudes and phenomena of the cabin crews at one point in time of the particular job duration. A third reason was that because of the moderate correlations of the outcome variables found, SEM was not recommended due to high correlations. The results in this study can nevertheless serve as guidelines for assessing the NTS of cabin crews with a view to educating them. Finally, for obvious reasons, this study was limited to one international airline. Future research should therefore, if possible, focus on a different type of airline (full service versus low cost) and/or on an alliance of international commercial airlines from various countries and include more variables and samplings. An exploratory and/or confirmatory factor analysis could also be performed to solidify the identification of NTS constructs and other areas of safety, using cognitive interviews, adverse event report analysis, and cabin crew observations.

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An Educational Management Approach in Total Support of Thai Undergraduates' Learning and Performance Behavior

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to study the factors influencing Thai undergraduates' learning and performance behavior and provide a total support framework for Thai educational management at the university level to assist undergraduates in making progress with their studies. The qualitative work was phenomenology designed with a questionnaire method gathering a sample of 1499 second-, third-, and fourth-year students from Chiang Mai University and Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna. The findings reveal that students do learn and perform better when they, their family, neighbors, classmates, teachers, and the course design make an academic contribution that help make things simple to understand, encourage them to find the answer, be humble, confident, responsible, assertive, and gain more knowledge. Educational management also needs provide total support. The framework equips students with practical foundations for a well-rounded educational experience.

Keywords: Classmates, Course Design, Encouraging, Family, Focusing, Humble, Learning, Performance, Responsibility, Understanding

1. Introduction

Over the last decades, the Thai government has allocated large budgets in support of the higher education system. The funds have been used to purchase office/teaching supplies and equipment, arrange training and development workshops for lecturers and employees, conduct field study trips, host cultural events, and renovate facilities (Fry, 2018). Has higher education been improving as a result? At a public forum held at Chulalongkorn University in 2017 on the topic of "Reforming Thailand's Education System", experts were asked where to begin with the reforms (Institute of Security and International Studies, 2017). The short answer was that the budget of the educational ministry, which represents about 20 percent of the national budget, has been increasing yearly but has made little difference in terms of helping students improve their educational testing performance. As one participant explained, one reason may be that, although universities are obsessed with the word 'quality', in the context of higher education, what 'quality' really refers to is 'quality indicators' as all universities are compelled to comply with the 134 indicators established by three different competing state agencies.

The result is that too much attention is given to policies and rules and the criteria in quality assurance and too little attention paid to discussing ways to improve the learning and performance behavior of students (Khoman, 2018). The forum brought into light key aspects of the Thai educational system. For one thing, as was mentioned then and as indicated by national test scores, there is a high level of inequality of student learning. Certain regions fail to receive the financial support necessary for the provincial administrations to maintain a proper education system and ensure that all players are cohesively involved in the development of the mind and well-being of learners. For another, it is well acknowledged that any change within the internal affairs of universities has to go through a burdensome bureaucratic process, which means that any reform takes a very long time to reach completion. Moreover, there is a lack of autonomy of universities due to the policy of their being tied to the state.

In a study on the reality of Thai undergraduates' learning and performance behavior, Phoewhawm (2019) determined that one salient characteristic of learners is that they are heavily bent on avoiding situations that may expose them to mistakes and failures or make their skills become less important. Phoewhawm (2019) refers to it as avoidance in mastery and performance. The study of student's behavior indicates that they are obsessively concerned with doing all they can to not be viewed in a negative way. Phoewhawm (2019) attributes the cause of this irrational attitude that inhibits their intellectual development to the negative emotions from having a hard time understanding, being afraid of asking questions (and too shy to do so), and being intent on protecting a positive image of themselves. Also identified as exacerbating this dismal conduct is the lack of support of families, neighbors, classmates, teachers, and course design (Noom-ura, 2013). In short, the learning environment makes it really challenging for students to make progress as they are easily discouraged to seek answers and often lack self-confidence. Many feel frustrated, unmotivated, and end up shirking their responsibilities and, when in the classroom, frequently let their minds wander elsewhere as a means of escaping reality; a clear illustration of the deficiencies of the learning system (Damnjanović, Proud, & Ruangwanit, 2016; Smithikrai, Homklin, & Pusapanich, 2018).

This study aims to investigate the factors influencing Thai undergraduates' learning and performance behavior. It also seeks to provide a total support framework for Thai educational management at the university level to assist undergraduates in making progress in their studies. The focus is on students, people inside and outside the classroom, and on the lack of proper support to simply, understand things, find the answer, be humble, show confidence, be responsible and assertive. Specifically, this paper addresses the following research question: If environmental factors such as themselves, family, neighbors, classmates, teachers, and course design helped to (a) make things simple to understand and encouraged students (b) to find the answer, (c) be humble, (d) be confident, (e) be responsible and assertive, and (f) gain more knowledge, would Thai undergraduates learn and perform better? To answer this question, this study surveyed undergraduate students from two universities in Chiang Mai, Thailand, on their outlook on learning and performing better if these environmental factors supporting them. The findings were used as input for creating a framework to equip students with practical foundations for a well-rounded educational experience.

2. Literature Review

- Role of the External and Internal Environment

The intention of students towards learning and performance is influenced by their external and internal environment which can either provide full support or fail to do so and therefore impede their progress. The diversity of expertise and knowledge that contribute to the

learning background of students and are affiliated with learners offer broad insights as well as a multitude of answers on the topic studies (Joo & Choi, 2015). In order to make the most of the diverse knowledge from other resources, there needs to be a mental balance within students on how they perceive things that are in their control and those that are beyond their limits. Some careful calculations need to be made by students on whether to be engaged with the events or avoid situations that may end up making them frustrated (Wang & Bai, 2016).

- *Family Members*: Members of students' families have a positive impact as they do a lot more than simply sharing knowledge from their experiences at work or providing guidance from when they were students. Their emotional support encourages them to do their best (Kinshuk, Cheng, & Chew, 2016). Siblings who have graduated and done really well, however, should not be considered as a benchmark for excellence but rather as mentors for current learners to be modest and develop self-confidence without feeling any pressure to meet all their expectations (Richardson, Maeda, & Caskurlu, 2017).

- *Classroom Instructors*: Teachers are generally considered to be the most important persons in terms of creating a positive attitude and influencing students (Thompson, 2015). Analytical techniques on the part of teachers looking for effective ways to help students are apt to ensure a better comprehensive knowledge of lessons. By teaching them to be more resilient when facing setbacks, they equip them with valuable traits for life after graduation (Lee & Sohn, 2017).

- *Neighbors*: Informal learning takes shape when neighbors show some good will and reach out to learners in need of some advice, setting a friendly atmosphere for them to discover their own ways of acquiring a great deal knowledge. This builds up their self-esteem and make them realize their own potential. It also holds them accountable for their own action (Ifinedo, Pyke, & Anwar, 2018).

- *Peer interaction*: Peer interaction is considered a factor for students to remain motivated and redouble their efforts to expand their ways of grasping key concepts (Spector, 2014). Sometimes students find their friends to be a great alternative for greater learning and performing as they share knowledge with and provide emotional support to one another, keeping their spirits uplifted for self-improvement (Riebe, Girardi, & Whitsed, 2016).

- *Course Design*: Courses designed to meet students' learning and performing abilities should allow for flexibility and make room for teachers to question and seek convenient applications that bring out self-assurance to work with lesson outlines and install a conscious habit of getting other classmates involved (Reychav & Wu, 2015). The key feature is for courses to be capable of making students appreciative of the class material newly introduced to them and not so much to burden them getting prepared to take exams (Fuller, 2016).

- Understanding Things Clearly for Learning and Performing

Over the course of their learning periods, students' beliefs in what they know will change as they encounter new theories that challenge them and change their way of thinking (Barger & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2017). This is especially the case if they are educated through their social environment and follow the requirements of an institution. While ideas firmly set can still be applied to determine whether they are still relevant to a contemporary environment, certain structures within the system may need to be rearranged in order to remain credible for practice (Bråten et al., 2014). In short, whatever had been learned can also be unlearned so as to change their mindset and prepare them for a better comprehension of essential principles (Lunn Brownlee, Ferguson, & Ryan, 2017).

- Self-Encouragement for Learning and Performing

Opportunities to perform down the learning path and tackle problem-solving tasks or project assignments while having the freedom to choose one of many possible solutions can make students more passionate in presenting favorable arguments (Baepler, Walker, & Driessen,

2014). Permitting those not involved in the classroom but with in-depth expertise on the subject lessons to be part of the learning experience is a good way to gather more information and determine what other data can be added to the lore of knowledge and make their work much more interesting and what ideas could be shared with their classmates (Landers, 2014). Individuals become more inspired to showcase their talents and skills at a high-quality level if the learning environment is stimulated by the hearts and minds of teachers and classroom peers (Dull, Schleifer, & McMillan, 2015).

- Humbleness for Learning and Performing

In the absence of pressure from the family, teachers, and peers, students may find their learning environment to be more appreciative and may therefore engage more willingly in lessons for the sake of learning instead of competing against one another (Yeou, 2016). A combination of classmates and teachers trying to help one another learn is more conducive to learning. Performing behaviors that are more respectful of others also make an ingenious contribution towards new knowledge and understanding (Ventura, Roca-Cuberes, & Corral-Rodríguez, 2018). Humble students will be more receptive to beliefs and ideas that may be a bit uncomfortable to learn. They may gradually develop respect for and awareness of otherness as they take the time to add them to their knowledge base (Xerri, Radford, & Shacklock, 2017).

- Self-Confidence for Learning and Performing

Students who are able to compare answers or get a chance to confirm their findings with their fellow peers and/or have a discussion with experts are likely to increase their confidence in what they are trying to achieve (Ahn, Bong, & Kim, 2017). Self-confidence is one of the key aspects needed to help students overcome any lingering fear or doubts in their psyche and ensure that they embrace a positive attitude towards learning and performing while at the same time also be able to function with other skilled people to complete a project (Paunesku et al., 2015). The development of self-confidence in students is much stronger when efforts in learning and performing are directed towards the benefits of life principles by those who uphold the values to do right, and be fair and honest with their fellow human beings (Testa & Egan, 2014).

- Responsibility and Assertiveness for Learning and Performing

For students to be responsible, account for their own action, and be assertive, learning institutions and their representatives must be aware that although sometimes their own working performance may not always be perfect, they always have an opportunity to showcase how to make things correct in the most professional manner (Dinham, 2013). Perceiving the difference between what students are taught and what they actually see may be quite challenging for academics, though, as it can be difficult for them as role models to instill a sense of responsibility learning and performing when they fail to practice what they preach (Biesta, Priestley, & Robinson, 2015). Students are put to the test at home and in their neighborhood when their practical ideas clash with some of the old traditional values or cultural beliefs. They need to be sensitive to those changes that are a reflection of modern times (Toom, Pyhältö, & Rust, 2015).

- Focusing on Gaining More Knowledge for Learning and Performing

Since not all courses should be considered the same as they focus on different material, the learning and performing approach in getting students to acquire more knowledge has to be designed for that particular subject (Wolff et al., 2016). Whereas the external social setting might not be able to offer them much in terms of insights, the classroom becomes the last resort for them to become engaged in a dialogue with their instructors that is conducive to their gaining more knowledge. This, however, largely depends on the level of each

instructor's acumen to guide student's learning and performance (Spruce & Bol, 2015). Learning together by way of an innovative and creative approach can help students get a better sense of how their answers may not necessarily be an effective solution and why exploring different ways of thinking can get better results (Muelas & Navarro, 2015).

3. Methodology

A survey questionnaire was sent out in an online format to the population sampled. It targeted second-, third-, and fourth- year undergraduates at Chiang Mai University and Rajamangala University of Technology, located in Chiang Mai province. The targeted group consisted of students from the following fields: education (70%), computer sciences (15%), business management (10%), and economics (5%). The aim was to use 1,500 participants. A total of 1,499 students completed the online questionnaire. The study used a convenient sampling approach. Because of time constraint and its ease of access, this is the method of choice, all the more as it is inexpensive and easy to manage compared to other sampling techniques (Ackoff, 1953). It followed Sim et al.'s (2018) guidelines on creating a sample size and presented an approximation of the numerical figure that provided a firm judgment on the results and on whether the methodological approach fitted with the purpose of the study.

Students were asked to fill out a questionnaire, using a five-point Likert scale, that ranged from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. In line with the research question, the questions pertained to themselves, family members, neighbors, classmates, teachers, and the course design; all environmental factors likely to make them perform better and impact their learning in terms of making things simple to understand, encouraging them to strive for the answers, being humble, confidence, responsible, assertive, and focusing on gaining more knowledge (see a sample of the questionnaire in Appendix 1).

The data obtained from the questionnaire was measured for reliability by going through a 'parallel forms' process and grouping the collected results from each factor and comparing them for high correlation while not expecting to see any systematic differences between the groups. An 'internal validity' test was applied to attain accuracy with the assertion that the 'results from the questionnaire were completed by the students with due clarity and understanding of each statement', thus making the analysis possible. The percentage for each category from the feedback were analyzed to get a feel for where the impact was the most significant in helping students to learn and perform better. The information was used to formulate a framework that would give education management a strategic edge in creating a supporting environment for students to make advancement in their learning.

4. Results and Discussion

The section discusses each of the environmental factors based on the results of the survey.

- *On Making Things Simple to Understand (see Chart 1 in Appendix 2)*

Chart 1 shows the results of the survey questionnaire with regard to the issue of making things simple to understand. Apart from family members, always part of a student's life, teachers' style of instruction and lectures can have a lasting impact on whether a student will muster enough encouragement to find the correct answer. But what if the answer is incorrect or irrelevant? That is precisely where the teacher's experience comes into play and where he/she engages with the student to maintain his/her discipline. If teachers and course designs operate in tandem to help students understand things, it will compel learners to perform at their best in the higher education environment. It is reassuring, though, to learn that there are students who do well on their own and take the initiative to break the lessons down by themselves in order to develop a better comprehension of the subject matter. Perhaps these respondents could hold an orientation on developing proper study habits for their peers. Still,

support from classmates is always welcome as it provides a friendly and bonding atmosphere imbued with trust. Outside the classroom, family members and neighbors are not seen by respondents as playing a highly significant role in making things simple for them to understand. Indeed, the scores on neutrality, disagreeing, and strongly disagreeing are quite low for all of the environmental factors considered, which indicate that all those involved matter and should be part of a plan to help students develop a good grasp of the material.

Educational administrators should make references to each of them when revising the curriculum or amending the vision and mission of their institutions. In addition, educational management must show a strong preference in nurturing the talent, skills and knowledge of teachers and implement courses that are designed to have them and students continuously work together for making things simple to understand.

- On Encouraging Oneself to Find the Answers (see Chart 2 in Appendix 3)

For most of their school lives, Thai students have been encouraged to learn by rote. The result of this focus on memorization is that they know the information but lack insights on their substance and meaning. Since hardly any emphasis is placed on critical thinking, students lacked the ability to perform critical analyzes. The result is that, in today's age of advanced digital technology and widespread social media, where one can find information almost instantly, a majority of the students is still dependent on their teachers as their guide in making things simple to understand. That said, as indicated in Chart 2, the commitment to encouraging oneself to find the answers is quite strong with some Thai students who set high expectations for themselves and their teachers, who dutifully make sure their students have a future beyond graduation. Also, the design of a course can motivate students to find answers to a particular question.

Clearly, the opportunity is ripe for educational management to explore and configure ways to provide proper support for students and ensure the collaboration of parents, siblings, or close relatives, thus making a unique contribution towards the students' learning and performing behavior.

- On Being Humble (see Chart 3 in Appendix 4)

The answers to the survey suggest that being humble brings a sense of happiness to students. As the results indicate, since humbleness is frequently treated as one the essential living principle of Thai culture, it is expected to be part of one's experience, whatever the circumstances; be it walking through the neighborhood, taking a refreshment break at a coffee shop, or buying items at a shopping center. Each situation offers a lesson on humbleness and on one's role in society. For Thai students, as an attitude conducive to learning and performing better, becoming humble happens when teachers prompt them. This often seems to be the main reason for their being humble. The role of teachers in this respect comes before their own and that of the family, neighbors, classmates, and course design.

With humbleness accepted as a desirable value to have, perhaps there is a way for higher educational institutions to integrate the positive attributes of being humble in an alternative format for assessing knowledge. Instead of making students sit for exams/tests, the educational administration could allow students to evaluate their learning and performing experience by determining whether their actions are helping classmates to learn and perform better with them and whether they enable teachers to develop innovative practical skills and creative abilities to conduct lessons that goad everyone to do their best.

- On Being Confident (see Chart 4 in Appendix 5)

As Chart 4 shows, students recognize that confidence begins with them. When focused on enhancing their learning and performance behavior to achieve higher academic standards, confidence give them the courage to do it and boost their determination despite their fear of

consequences. According to students, family, neighbors, teachers, and classmates play a key role. This is also the vase with a course design that makes the work of teachers much more manageable and creates a classroom atmosphere that sustain learners' confidence. Educational management staff will be delighted to know that classmates and family member do effectively contribute to developing student's confidence as they can collaborate with instructors to conduct case studies to know more about what work and turn those best practices into workshops for other teachers to learn how to help students develop confidence to learn and perform better.

- On Being Responsible and Assertive (see Chart 5 in Appendix 6)

Typically, being responsible and assertive conjures up images of students marching to their teachers' orders without questioning any instructions or being chastised for not complying. Some will not be surprised to learn that this behavior is similar to that in the workplace, where employees and staff almost invariably wait for orders on what to do from management and rarely never take initiatives on their own. This is one of the main challenges of the Thai culture learning system. By all students' account, trying to get them to assume an active role by taking responsibility and being assertive is a tall order. If the educational administration of a university miraculously decided that it is high time for students to become proactive with their learning and performance behavior, the way courses are designed and the teaching style would therefore have be fully overhauled in order to accommodate this new approach. The results of the survey indicate that students are open to the idea of becoming more assertive in and outside the classroom, provided they are given the opportunity.

For educational management, the key is to ride on this trend and examine how the issues of course design, teaching style, and classmates can be a positive integrative force that would sustain students' habit. Family members and neighbors also have a key role to play that prolongs that of the university and extends beyond the classroom and into their social environment. However, for students to be assertive and take responsibility, there needs to healthy and psychologically safe conditions, which it should be the task of educational management to establish.

- On Focusing in Gaining More Knowledge (see Chart 6 in Appendix 7)

Gaining knowledge is a desirable goal for many people in Thai society. But as the students surveyed acknowledge, gaining more knowledge requires discipline and sacrifices which some individuals are not ready to make. Increasing one's knowledge is obviously a central feature of Thai students' endeavors to become better learners and performers. However, as the survey results suggest, educational management should be aware that the level of commitment of students may waver. It is clear that students do want to learn and that some can do so on their own. It is equally clear that that commitment to learning may be inconsistent over time. The survey shows that lecturers are no longer at the forefront of the battle for students to learn. Times have changed and teachers are no longer regarded as the overall sole point of contact for knowledge gaining. Students work with other available resources, also positioned as benefactors of students' learning. The results from the investigation also indicate that teachers should take a more active role in supporting students' learning endeavors.

Within the course program, educational management should look at how course design and classmates could be strong benefactors for students to raise their learning and performing spirit. Moreover, students' family members and neighbors could assume a bigger role in helping students to gain more knowledge.

- *Developing a Total Educational Management Framework for Supporting Thai Undergraduate Students' Learning and Performance Behavior*

The framework for supporting Thai students' learning and performance behavior takes into account the fact that teachers are the most effective ways of helping students understand things in a simple manner and be humble. Although there is high percentage of favorable responses indicating that students themselves, family, neighbors, classmates, and course design also make a positive contribution, educational management must also be aware that the feelings of a majority of the learners can waver off if the commitment to helping them reach their goals falters. Therefore, this study proposes a charter that enables teachers and students to align their values and provides the energy to build a solid relationship in terms of learning and performance. It also empowers students with the capacity and capability to be self-motivated to make things easy to understand, find the answer, be humble, confident, responsible, assertive, and focus on gaining more knowledge as they interact with other people.



Figure 1: Students' Learning and Performance Behavior Framework
(Compiled by the authors for this study)

As can be seen in Figure 1, the framework requires teachers and students to work together on developing a strong character core, making things easy to understand and being humble about the course subjects. When these values are entwined, they allow students to keep moving forward as they are encouraged to find answers on their own. Furthermore, through comprehension and humbleness, students feel more confident, responsible, and assertive, and can therefore better focus on gaining more knowledge. While students' self-motivation to find answers, take full charge of their educational affairs, and stay focused on acquiring more knowledge is essentially their own responsibility, their families, neighbors, classmates and the course design should fully become part of the experience and students' endeavors. The framework is bound to face challenges as it moves closer to the anticipated outcomes. The internal and external dynamics of the social, political, economic, and technological environment can cause some disruption (or generate hidden benefits) as glitches cannot be ruled out. Moreover, the framework requires some time to be implemented. Students also need to become fully cognizant of the learning theme and gain a better sense of appreciation

of the new knowledge discovered on their own (Ballantine, Guo, & Larres, 2018). Going through the phases for sorting out information will encourage them to look for more answers and refrain from seeking easy solutions (Jorge and Peña, 2014). However, in the process of converting data into information, being confident is a must as it avoids getting into a self-doubt mindset or making second guesses. This takes time, though. So, allowance must be made for students to become self-assured (Demetriou, 2018). A eureka moment is for students to avoid the easy way, take initiatives, be assertive and in control of the learning outcomes (Dannels, 2015; Bharuthram, 2018). The framework also provides for the assistance of their surrounding environment and offers ways for strengthening collaboration. Cultural values, however, need to be configured in the performance procedures, which means that students may need to find the proper balance between their family wishes and expectations and their focus on their educational training targets (Ferris et al., 2018).

Neighbors and community's opinions and suggestions are sometimes used as the measuring stick for families to determine whether their child is successful or not at university (Farnese et al., 2011). But this can become stressfully intoxicating for some students who, having been raised in a collectivist culture, do not want to bring shame to their family's name. Therefore, the framework needs to have learning resources allocated to restore their confidence and sense of responsibility. As we saw earlier, classmates can either be a source of inspiration for students to do well or become a hindrance to their accomplishments when negative signs of jealousy and envy are felt as students work together on a group assignment (O'Fallon & Butterfield, 2012). Thus, students aiming to do well must trust that the framework is doing all it can to bring a sense of sanity and rationale among their classmates for them to be in alignment with one another and not against one another due to petty feelings (Beard, Humberstone, & Clayton, 2014). Students perform a lot better when their resiliency is set in action and the course provides the supporting channels for them to be ambitious, poised, have a sense of authority, and maintain concentration on building up expertise (Paciello, 2013). Courses designed to be more flexible and constantly adapting provide greater opportunity for students to perform at their best (Luttenberger et al., 2018).

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Overall, the results from the questionnaires reveal that students do learn and perform better when they, their family, neighbors, classmates, teachers, and the course design are making an academic contribution that helps make things simple to understand, encourage them to find the answer, be humble, confident, responsible, assertive, and gain more knowledge. For sure students will have a much stronger appetite for learning and performing better if teachers help them make things simple to understand and be humble. However, the ratings in terms of beliefs in teachers' ability to encourage students to find the answer, be confident, assertive, and gain more knowledge are a bit low. Moreover, data from the questionnaires show that students do not have a strong agreement with themselves, their families, neighbors, classmates, and course design in respect of the six environmental factors to truly proclaim that they learn and perform better. Fortunately, for educational management, the results of this study can be applied to help them develop a learning and performing framework to assist students in making academic progression through the semesters at their university.

In particular, administrators can approach the framework as an experiment to discover their own proper methods to help their students or distribute a survey or questionnaire to obtain feedback for improvement and changes. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Higher Education needs to be involved with the University's Administrators to revise the policies and procedures for making the idea legitimate in the course program. Aside from re-evaluating quality assurance criteria, the ministry can grant financial resources and support

for conducting research on the most efficient way of getting students to learn and perform better within the framework, and for promoting science and technology to enhance the model and get the best out of students' behavior. Regarding undergraduate students, they should be given the opportunity to express their opinions and ideas on getting the six environmental factors to produce an effective outcome that leads to the path of healthy wisdom and moral wellbeing instead of being a statistical number that feeds into a summary report trying to show facts and figures without adhering to the substance of learning and performance. Total support for Thai undergraduates' learning and performance behavior should be thoroughly assessed by educational management to determine which practical areas are truly helping both teachers and students to work in tandem.

With teachers at the forefront of students' progress, a mentoring and coaching group would be ideal to anticipate their feedback and hold a dialogue for helping teachers make some analysis of the situation and determine where the advantages and opportunities are in order to take action (Ajjawi & Boud, 2018). Educational management would also need to be clear on the cultural principles and values that guide the actions of teachers and students, which would have to be coordinated within these boundaries, fostering good intentions toward others and not exploiting family members, neighbors, classmates, teachers, and the course design. Mistakes and errors that may occur unexpectedly – or naturally – are to be accepted as part of getting everyone involved in the process and asking the right questions for formulating the correct solutions and making improvement (Bennet & Snyder, 2017). In a working culture, where the hierarchy is expected to be conspicuously acknowledged, the power of authority within the organization should allow for people to talk about “the elephant in the room” so the facts can be made aware of (Desai, 2016). Making people feel safe to express their opinions without feeling the consequences (i.e., creating a climate of trust, openness, and assertiveness) can get them to contribute more towards evaluating the strategic advantage and practical points for ideas to become more successful (Edmondson & Lei, 2014).

In conclusion, the idea for educational management to provide total support for Thai undergraduates' learning and performance behavior can be integrated as an added value in the curriculum. The feedback from the survey questionnaire overwhelmingly shows that students, family, neighbors, classmates, teachers, and course design all contribute to helping students develop a positive behavior towards learning and performing. However, the educational management staff will need to take a proficient approach to ensure close collaboration between teachers and students for helping the latter develop the foundations for making things simple to understand and for being humble so that they are encouraged to find the answer, be confident, responsible, assertive, and focus on gaining more knowledge.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire for Thai Students' Learning and Performing Better Based on Environmental factors

Learning and performing better when making things simple to understand	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral (Neither agree nor disagree)	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I learn and perform better when I make things simple to understand.					
I learn and perform better when my family helps make things simple to understand.					
I learn and perform better when my neighbors help make things simple to understand.					
I learn and perform better when my classmates help make things simple to understand.					
I learn and perform better when my teachers help make things simple to understand.					
I learn and perform better when the course is designed to help make things simple to understand.					
Learning and performing better when encouraging oneself to find the answer	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral (Neither agree nor disagree)	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I learn and perform better when I encourage myself to find the answer.					
I learn and perform better when my family encourages me to find the answer.					
I learn and perform better when my neighbors encourage me to find the answer.					
I learn and perform better when my classmates encourage me to find the answer.					
I learn and perform better when my teachers encourage me to find the answer.					
I learn and perform better when the course is designed to encourage me to find the answer.					
Learning and performing better when being humble	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral (Neither agree nor disagree)	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I learn and perform better when I am humble.					
I learn and perform better when my family makes me be humble.					
I learn and perform better when my neighbors make me be humble.					
I learn and perform better when my classmates make me be humble.					
I learn and perform better when my teachers make me be humble.					
I learn and perform better when the course is designed to make me be humble.					
Learning and performing better when feeling confident	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral (Neither agree nor disagree)	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I learn and perform better when I feel confident.					
I learn and perform better when my family makes me feel confident.					
I learn and perform better when my neighbors make me feel confident.					
I learn and perform better when my classmates make me feel confident.					
I learn and perform better when my teachers make me feel confident.					
I learn and perform better when the course is designed to make me feel confident.					
Learning and performing better when responsible and assertive	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral (Neither agree nor disagree)	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I learn and perform better when I take responsibility and am assertive.					
I learn and perform better when my family makes me take responsibility and be assertive.					
I learn and perform better when my neighbors make me take responsibility and be assertive.					
I learn and perform better when my classmates make me take responsibility and be assertive.					
I learn and perform better when my teachers make me take responsibility and be assertive.					
I learn and perform better when the course is designed to make me take responsibility and be assertive.					
Learning and performing better when focusing on gaining more knowledge	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral (Neither agree nor disagree)	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I learn and perform better when I am focusing on gaining more knowledge.					
I learn and perform better when my family makes me focus on gaining					

more knowledge.					
I learn and perform better when my neighbors make me focus on gaining more knowledge.					
I learn and perform better when my classmates make me focus on gaining more knowledge.					
I learn and perform better when my teachers make me focus on gaining more knowledge.					
I learn and perform better when the course is designed to make me focus on gaining more knowledge.					

Appendix 2

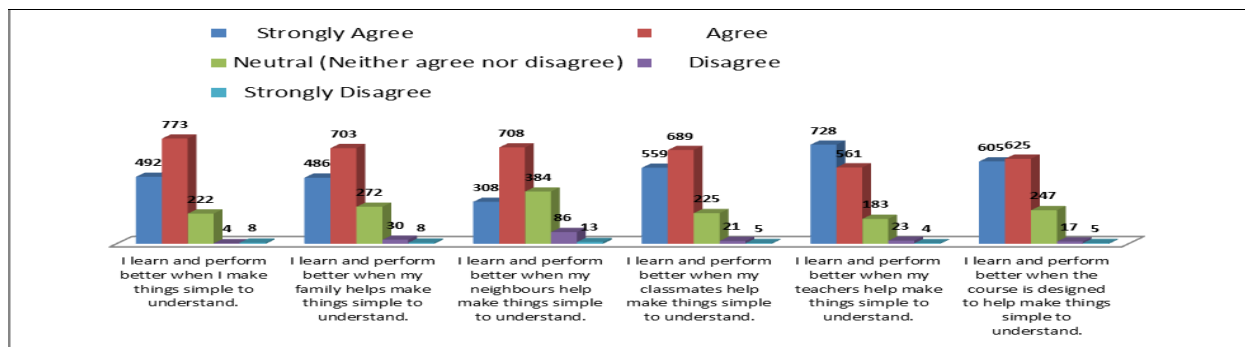


Chart 1: Students' Viewpoints on Making Things Simple to Understand
(Compiled by the authors for this study)

Appendix 3

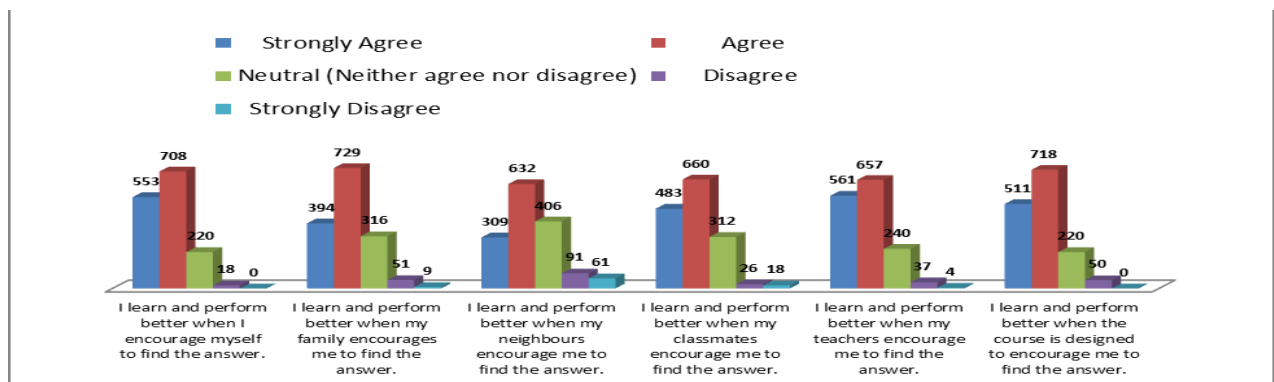


Chart 2: Students' Viewpoints on Encouraging Oneself to Find the Answer
(Compiled by the authors for this study)

Appendix 4

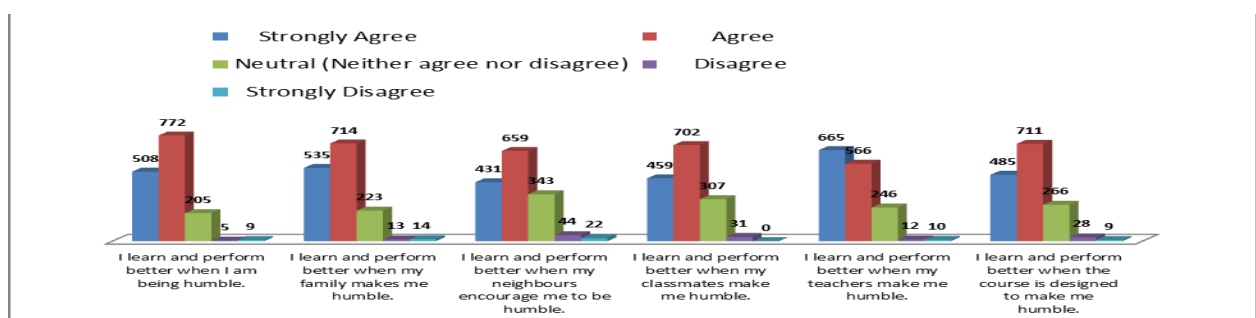


Figure 3: Students' Viewpoints on Being Humble
(Compiled by the authors for this study)

Appendix 5

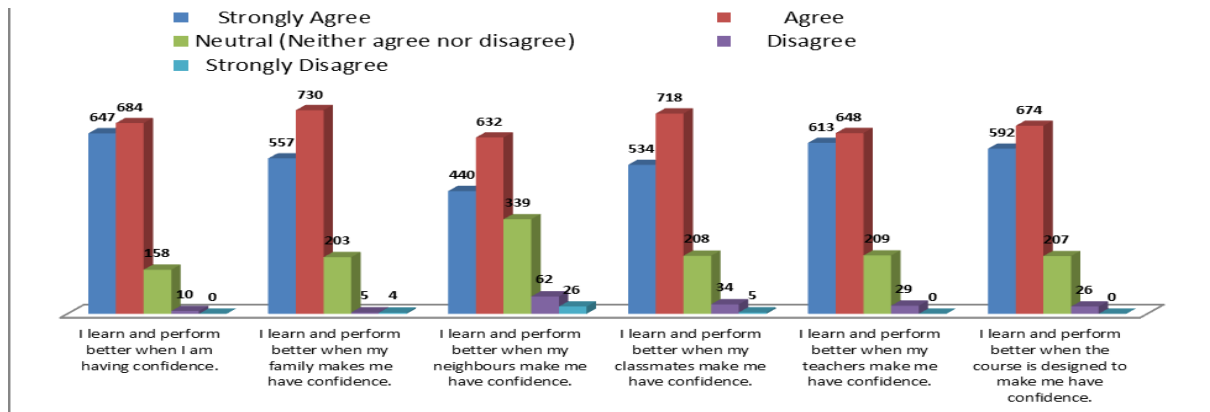


Chart 4: Students' Viewpoints on Being Confident
(Compiled by the authors for this study)

Appendix 6

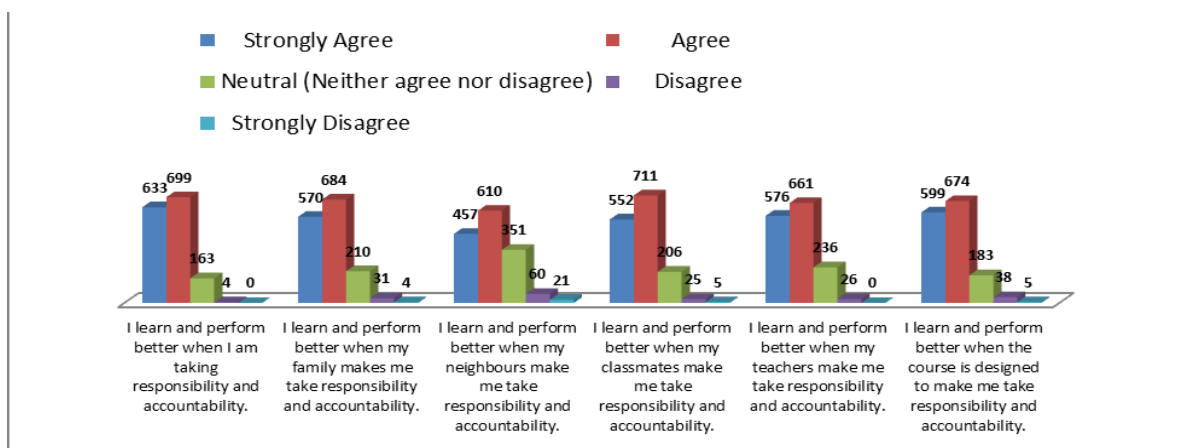


Chart 5: Students' Viewpoints on Being Responsible and Accountable
(Compiled by the authors for this study)

Appendix 7

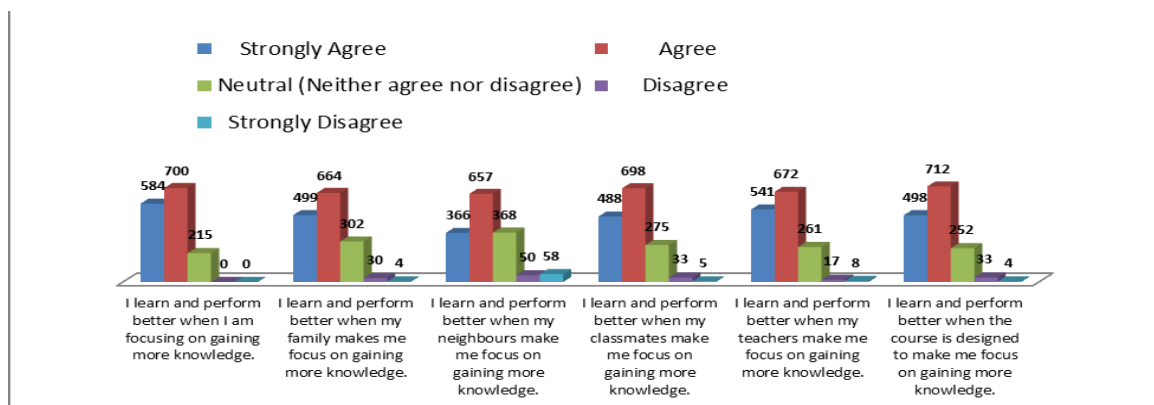


Chart 6: Students' Viewpoints on Gaining More Knowledge
(Compiled by the authors for this study)

Organizational Creativity, Innovation, and Firm Success: An Empirical Study of the Thai Electronic and Electrical Appliance Sector

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Abstract

This study attempts to investigate the relationships between organizational creativity and innovation and firm success via the impact of innovation ideas enhancement, modern management technological focus, and dynamic business strategy capability on valuable practice development, new process improvement, and proactive operational competency. A survey questionnaire was used to collect data and distributed to 159 managing directors or partners of firms in the Thai electronic and electrical appliance sector. To test the hypotheses, the study relied on an Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analysis. The results indicate a strong dependence as innovation ideas enhancement, modern management technological focus, and dynamic business strategy capability have a significant positive effect on valuable practice development, new process improvement, and proactive operational competency, which all impact firm success. Organizational creativity and innovation are vital for successful transformation and value creation and the diffusion of innovation. This research can help managers in the electronic and electrical appliance sector improve the innovativeness of their firms.

Keywords: Organizational Creativity and Innovation, Firm Success, Valuable Practice Development, New Process Improvement, Proactive Operational Competency

1. Introduction

In today's fiercely competitive environment, businesses need to keep re-inventing themselves and adapt to changing external parameters (Damanpour & Aravind, 2012). Consistently attaining a high-performance level requires firms to be flexible and prepared for changes. Moreover, companies must be alert and diligent so that they can manage strategic organizational innovation effectively ((Wong & Chin, 2007; Nalau & Handmer, 2015). Organizational creativity and innovation can be defined as the ability of a firm to adopt new systems, processes, and policies by acquiring new skills and working behavior (Skalik, 2016). Most innovation is incremental ('do it better') rather than incremental ('do it differently'). It also frequently involves open innovation as firms (including competitors) in search of innovative solutions collaborate and mutually benefit from their respective capabilities, notwithstanding the fact that issues of unwanted technology transfer may arise. This is especially the case when huge amounts of R&D funds are needed (Floyd & Lane, 2000).

Creativity and innovation, vital to the successful performance of any organization in ordinary times, are even more critical in today's extremely volatile climate. The current Covid-19-induced economic and sanitary crisis has indeed emphasized the necessity of running innovative businesses (Jiang & Wen, 2020). More than ever, organizations need to search for new ideas and come up with innovative products, services, or processes to succeed but, in some cases, just to simply survive. Innovation, however, is not just an important survival tool, it is also a source of lasting and effective competitive advantage (Dananpour, Sanchez, & Chin, 2018). It can significantly improve a firm's existing competitive advantage (Battisti & Stoneman, 2010). This includes both management and technical innovation (Tsai & Yang, 2013). Organizational creativity and innovation are not limited to large international conglomerates. Even though their access to new ideas is often limited by a lack of resources, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) also need to be innovative as their capacity to generate new ideas can greatly impact their sustainability (Lacity & Willcocks, 2014; Matinaro & Liu, 2017).

Organizational creativity and innovation demand a high level of managerial response (Matinaro and Liu, 2017). As a useful tool for long-term growth, innovation generally involves new management practices, a new organization across functions, and new corporate strategies (Zhou & Wu, 2010). However, organizational creativity and innovation remain significant challenges for many executives (Varadarajan, 2009, Lii & Kuo, 2016). One of the main reasons is that the creation of an effective innovative organization involves ambiguous managerial characteristics. Moreover, organizations must adapt to an environment that is more complicated than ever before as the speed of innovation has increased in the last decades, shortening the life cycle of products and increasing the need for rapid changes within companies. This paper explores some of these issues in light of the Thai electronic and electrical appliance industry, a highly competitive sector in need of constant adaptation in the face of rapid changes and therefore a fitting model for this research study. This sector is particularly useful for understanding how innovative technology can help to create a competitive advantage and increase the effectiveness of an organization. For one, it is one of the fastest growing industries in Thailand. For another, with more players entering the field, it is becoming ever more competitive, hence the need for constant innovation and for products whose features and performance meet customer needs. Because of its extensive supply chain network, it also involves companies of all sizes.

More specifically, since organizational creativity and innovation have been found to be associated with (i) innovation ideas enhancement, (ii) modern management technological focus, and (iii) dynamic business strategy capability (Panayides, 2006), this study seeks to investigate their relationships with firm success. In addition, it aims to assess the mediating effect of three mediators on these three dimensions with which they are hypothesized to be positively associated. The three mediators include: valuable practice development, new process improvement, and proactive operational competency. To attain these objectives the following research questions have been developed:

1. How do the three constructs causing mediation with (a) innovation ideas enhancement, (b) modern management technological focus, and (c) dynamic business strategy capability relate to them?
2. How do innovation ideas enhancement, modern management technological focus, and dynamic business strategy capability affect firm success?

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

The two theoretical foundations of this research are the diffusion of innovation theory and the dynamic capability theory. Both are briefly discussed next. Key operational concepts are then considered.

- *The Diffusion of Innovation Theory*

The diffusion of innovation theory (DOI) was developed by Rogers in 1962. As a social science theory, it seeks to explain how over time a new idea, behavior, or product gains momentum and spreads through a specific social system and how, as a result of the diffusion, people adopt them (Valente & Rogers, 1995). Diffusion here refers to the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system (Robertson, Swan, & Newell, 1996; Peres, 2010). The theory is premised on the assumption that if an organization is to rapidly have innovation adoption, it must thoroughly understand the needs of consumers before it is capable of offering the appropriate products or services in a form similar to or departing from that previously used by consumers (Feller, Finnegan, & Nilsson, 2011). The key to adoption is that people must perceive the innovation as new (Rogers, 2003). Subsequent researchers have found that adoption does not happen simultaneously in a social system (e.g. Denis et al., 2002; Greenhalgh et al., 2004; McCullen, 2013) and that early adopting people have characteristics that are different from people that adapt innovation later (Hochbaum, 2011).

- *The Dynamic Capabilities Theory*

The concept of dynamic capability first emerged in 1997 (Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997). It relates to a firm's ability to integrate, create, and reconfigure internal and external abilities to respond quickly to changing environments (Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997). The term 'capability' is often used in the plural as a way to emphasize that the timely reaction to external changes requires a combination of various capabilities. Dynamic capabilities are distinct from operational capabilities, which relate to the current operations of an organization (Helfat, 2007). By contrast, a dynamic capability is the capacity of an organization to purposefully extend or modify its resource base (Teece, 2007; Douma & Schreuder, 2013). It is a tool to propel the capabilities of a firm to develop in ways that bring about a competitive advantage in the long term. Zhou and Li (2010) argue that to do just that, firms must adapt, integrate, and reconfigure their resources and abilities continuously in reaction to the changing environments. Some competencies, however, need time to be developed. Managerial strategies can also play a crucial role in the improvement of new capabilities. While the theory remains helpful when dealing with how to respond to changing business environments, it has been criticized for failing to describe exactly how to respond (Qaiyum & Wang, 2018) and for the difficulty identifying or operationalizing the capabilities (Lawson, 2001).

- *Firm Success*

Firm success is the dependent variable in this research. It has been defined in many different ways that reflect the various perspectives from which it can be viewed. Some definitions may, for example, emphasize the firm's shared values, while others may stress the contribution to the community or the well-being of employees. For the purpose of this research paper, it refers to a firm's overall performance and ability to achieve the organizational goals efficiently and effectively (Cantne & Joel, 2011). Focusing on the role of process innovativeness in the development of environmental innovativeness capability, Rodriguez and Wiengarten (2017) suggested that organizational success relates to the innovativeness capabilities of the firm and its innovation resources, i.e., internal and external R&D, and the acquisition of machinery, hardware, software, patents, etc. The resource-based view of the firm (RBV), one of the most important areas of research content in the last

decades (Galbreath (2004), prescribes that competitive advantage stems from resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) (Barney, 1991). Such resources include managerial ability, customer relationships, brand reputation (Parung & Bititci, 2006). A firm's access to resources and its ability to mobilize and combine them in specific ways determine its competence in a given product or service.

- Organizational Creativity and Innovation

Organizational creativity can be defined as a firm's capability to change concepts and knowledge towards continually creating processes and systems that are useful for the organization and its interests (Battisti & Stoneman, 2010). It consists of innovation in organizational activity management, whether internal or external activities, and includes technical considerations and equipment used for operation (Panayides, 2006). It is the ability of a firm to adopt new systems, processes, and policies (Skalik, 2016). It is about bringing new concepts to the company whether in the forms of products, services, production processes or operations systems (Chung & Gibbons, 1997). Organizational creativity is a critical factor for survival and for maintaining a lasting and effective competitive advantage. It is a re-adjustment of the business model in order to produce improvement in the value to customers and growth for the company (Hurley & Hult, 1998). An innovative organization makes updates and changes its mental processes to create new things that are different and useful (Lacity & Willcodks, 2014; Weerawardena & Mavondo, 2011; Zhou & Wu, 2010). This involves changes in the structure and processes of the organization and a focus on new approaches for managing the organization as well as new strategies (Armbruster et al., 2008; Battisti & Stoneman, 2010). A firm's capability for change depends on the experience, expertise, and customer requirements information (Goretzki & Messner, 2016). It involves (i) re-adjusting the business model, (ii) finding new innovation gaps, and (iii) improving the level of satisfaction of customer needs (Tsai & Yang, 2018).

The following three dimensions are associated with organizational creativity and innovation: innovation ideas enhancement, modern management technological focus, and dynamic business strategy capability. They are discussed next.

(i) *Innovative Ideas Enhancement*: This dimension refers to a firm's effort to encourage the process of learning, being creative, and focusing on practical applications to get new ideas rolling continuously. Innovative ideas help the organization gain competitive advantages and achieve higher performance levels (Atuahenu-Gima, 2005). The following three hypotheses can be therefore be developed

H1a,b,c: *The greater innovation ideas enhancement, the more likely the organization is to (a) achieve higher valuable practice development, (b) make greater new process improvement, and (c) achieve higher proactive operational competency.*

(ii) *Modern Management Technological Focus*: Modern management technological focus refers to the creation or adoption of management processes, structures or techniques, and practices that are new to the organization and affect its performance in terms of innovation, productivity, and competitiveness. According to Wu (2010), this technological focus is crucial for sustainability as it provides a competitive advantage in exploiting and exploring new ways of conducting business and brings about new working methods. Hence, the following hypotheses:

H2a,b,c: *The greater the modern management technological focus, the more likely the organization is to (a) achieve higher valuable practice development, (b) make greater new process improvement, and (c) achieve higher proactive operational competency.*

(iii) *Dynamic Business Strategy Capability*: This dimension can be defined as the ability to set working procedures and directions by integrating operational tactics systematically to improve performance to be more effective. Pollard and Morales (2015) suggest that strategy should be regarded as a set of business plans to be applied consistently to ensure the success of the targeted performance. Based on this dimension, the following hypotheses have been articulated:

H3a,b,c: *The greater the dynamic business strategy capability, the more likely the organization is to (a) achieve higher valuable practice development, (b) make greater new process improvement, and (c) achieve higher proactive operational competency.*

- Mediating the Relationship with Organizational Creativity and Innovation

As shown in Figure 1, three mediators cause mediation with innovation ideas enhancement, modern management technological focus, and dynamic business strategy capability with which they are hypothesized to be positively associated, as also is the case with firm success. They include valuable practice development, new process improvement, and proactive operational competency.

(i) *Valuable Practice Development*: According to Mishra and Napier (2015), valuable practice development consists in the improvement of operational planning and the use of various techniques and procedures. Development activities must be connected to strategic goals throughout the whole organization, i.e., across boundaries and at all levels (Moradinaftchali, Song, & Wang, 2016). Hence, the following hypothesis:

H4: *The higher valuable practice development, the more likely the organization is to achieve greater firm success.*

(iii) *New Process Improvement*: The concept of new process improvement refers to the development of procedures, schemes, and operations, and involves using modern technology (Frishammar et al., 2013). Excellence in process development is enhanced by identifying, analyzing, and implementing ways of creating value and performance for stakeholders. The following hypothesis can therefore be formulated:

H5: *The higher new process improvement, the more likely the organization is to achieve greater firm success.*

(iii) *Proactive Operational Competency*: Golec (2015) defines proactive operational competency as having the ability to research and analyze competitive situation in the present and the future in order to set policies and working directions for a more efficient performance. A firm with proactive activities has an opportunity-seeking orientation and perspective foresight and takes first-mover initiatives (Matinaro & Liu, 2017; Mateljak & Mihanovic, 2016; Lapide, 2011). Based on this mediator, the following hypothesis has been developed:

H6: *The higher proactive operational competency, the more likely the organization is to achieve greater firm success.*

3. Research Methodology

Figure 1 shows the conceptual model of this study, which is based on the three dimensions associated with organizational creativity and the three mediators discussed above.

- Sample Selection and Data Collection Procedure

The sample in this study consists of 675 Thai electronic and electrical appliance businesses drawn from the database of the Department of Business Development Thailand (<http://www.dbd.go.th>). A survey questionnaire was used to collect data from these firms. The key participants were managing directors and managing partners of some of these firms. The valid mailing consisted of 675 surveys. 159 completed questionnaires were received.

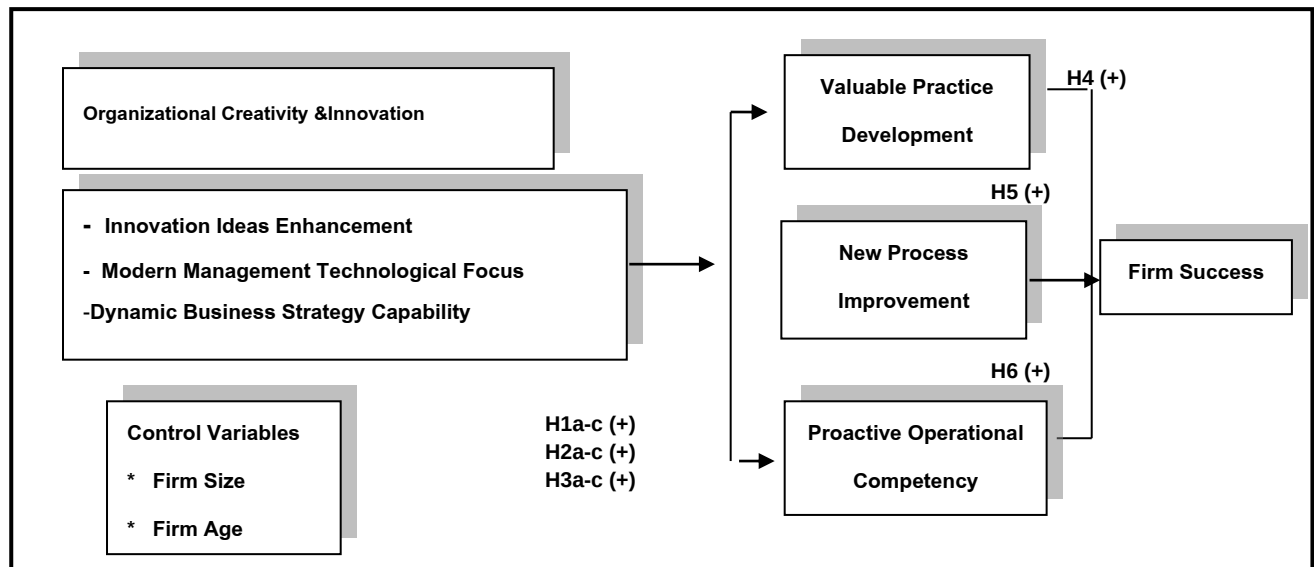


Figure 1: Conceptual Model of Organizational Creativity, Innovation and Firm Success (Created by the authors for this study)

- Questionnaire Development

Since most of the constructs in the conceptual model are newly developed a pre-test method was appropriately conducted to assert the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, which was also double-checked by experienced scholars. The questionnaire consists of five parts. Part one asks for personal information. Part two is about the general background information of the organization. Part three evaluates each construct in the conceptual model. The questions in the fourth part are designed to measure creativity organizational creativity and innovation, mediation, and firm success. Finally, an open-ended question is included in part fifth. In this conceptual model, all the variables are measured on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), excluding control variables.

- Validity and Reliability

Validity reflects the accuracy of the measurement. In order to verify the accuracy and validity of the research instruments, two types of validity were tested: content validity and construct validity. Content validity is a measure of the degree to which data is collected using a particular instrument representing a specific domain or content of a particular concept. As noted earlier, two academic experts in the field of organizational creativity ensured that the questionnaires were properly worded and covered all the constructs associated with the variables. Secondly, factor analysis was used to examine the construct validity of the data in the questionnaire. If the size of the factor loading is greater than the 0.40 cut-off, they are statistically significant (Nunnally and Berstein, 1994). All factors loading are greater than the 0.40 cut-off. Therefore, they are statistically significant.

As determined by Hair et al. (2010), reliability measures the stability and consistency of the respondent in answering items in the questionnaire about constructs that are part of the dimension of a variable. To test the reliability of the data in this research, the item-total correlation and the Cronbach's alpha test were used. As shown in Table 1, regarding the item-total correlation, each item score exceeded 0.3, which means each item did correlate very well with the overall scale (Hair et al. 2010). When evaluating the reliability of the measurements using Cronbach alpha coefficients, they were greater than 0.70 and produced internally consistent results. The questionnaires were thus valid and reliable.

Table 1: Results of Measure Validation

Variables	Factor Loadings	Item-total correlation	Cronbach's Alpha
Innovation Ideas Enhancement (IIE)	.719 - .759	0.727-0.825	.814
Modern Management Technological Focus (MMTF)	.716 - .824	0.762-0.839	.827
Dynamic Business Strategy Capability (DBSC)	.722 - .817	0.732-0.778	.795
Valuable Practice Development (VPD)	.738 - .795	0.747-0.761	.754
New Process Improvement (NPI)	.727 - .754	0.675-0.763	.729
Proactive Operational Competency (POC)	.732 - .787	0.673-0.726	.724
Firm Success (FS)	.734 - .763	0.657-0.687	.692

Source: created by the author of this study

- Statistical Techniques

The Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analysis was used to test and examine the hypotheses based on the conceptual model. Since the variables were neither nominal nor categorical data, OLS is an appropriate method for examining hypothesis relationships. The following are the equation models of the aforementioned relationships:

$$\text{Equation 1: } VPD = \alpha_1 + \beta_1 IIE + \beta_2 MMTF + \beta_3 DBSC + \beta_4 FS + \beta_5 FA + \varepsilon$$

$$\text{Equation 2: } NPI = \alpha_2 + \beta_6 IIE + \beta_7 MMTF + \beta_8 DBSC + \beta_9 FS + \beta_{10} FA + \varepsilon$$

$$\text{Equation 3: } POC = \alpha_3 + \beta_{11} IIE + \beta_{12} MMTF + \beta_{13} DBSC + \beta_{14} FS + \beta_{15} FA + \varepsilon$$

$$\text{Equation 4: } FS = \alpha_4 + \beta_{16} VPD + \beta_{17} NPI + \beta_{18} POC + \beta_{19} FS + \beta_{20} FA + \varepsilon$$

4. Results and Discussion

A bivariate correlation analysis of Pearson's correlation was employed to explore the relationships among variables and detect multicollinearity in the multiple regression assumption. Multicollinearity might occur when inter-correlation in each predict variable is more than 0.80, which is a high relationship (Hair et al., 2010) In this study, the bivariate correlation procedure was scaled to a two-tailed test of statistical significance at $p < 0.01$ and $p < 0.05$, of which the result is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Matrix

Variables	IIE	MMTF	DBSC	VPD	NPI	POC
Mean	4.106	4.258	4.182	3.738	3.704	3.629
SD	.416	.408	.437	.358	.368	.386
IIE	1					
MMTF	.571**	1				
DBSC	.416**	.683**	1			
VPD	.538**	.541***	.628**	1		
NPI	.674**	.564**	.541**	.656***	1	
POC	.443**	.571**	.575**	.538**	.573**	1

*** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed),

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Source: created by the author of this study

Table 3 presents the results of the OLS regression analysis pertaining to the dimensions of organizational creativity and innovation (the variables assessed in this study). The hypotheses predicted positive relationships. As can be seen in the table, variance inflation factors (VIF) were used to provide information on the extent to which the non-orthogonality among independent variables inflates standards errors. The VIFs, which range from 2.382 – 2.951, are well below the cut-off value of 10, which means that the independent variables are not correlated with each other. Therefore, no substantial multicollinearity was encountered in this study.

Table 3: Results of OLS Regression Analysis

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables			
	Equation 4: Firm Success	Equation 1: Valuable Practice Development	Equation 2: New Process Improvement	Equation 3: Proactive Operational Competency
Innovation Ideas Enhancement		.249** (.079)	.237** (.068)	.253** (.085)
Modern Management Technological Focus		.187** (.072)	.251** (.067)	.207** (.081)
Dynamic Business Strategy Capability		.182** (.081)	.173** (.074)	.074 (.064)
Valuable Practice Development	.274** (.062)			
New Process Improvement	.185** (.070)			
Proactive Operational Competency	.244** (.087)			
Firm Size	.005 (.093)	0.124 (.106)	0.117 (.123)	.131 (.106)
Firm Age	.100 (.094)	-0.11 (.016)	-0.172 (.012)	-0.151 (.106)
Adjusted R square	.301	.369	.384	.432
Maximum VIF	2.382	2.951	2.951	2.951

Note: The value of the beta coefficients is in the first row.

Below are the values of standard error in the parenthesis. ***p < 0.01 **p < 0.05

Source: created by the author of this study

The results show that innovation ideas enhancement has a positive significant impact on valuable practice development ($\beta_1 = 0.249$, $p < 0.05$), new process improvement ($\beta_6 = 0.237$, $p < 0.05$), and proactive operational competency ($\beta_{11} = 0.253$, $p < 0.05$). The results also indicate that innovation ideas are the initial element of firm competitiveness in the present situation. In order to develop products, processes and services, the organization need to be organized and managed sustainably (Damanpour & Schneider, 2006). This is consistent with prior research that found that when organizations develop their own organizational innovation mechanism, based on their own innovative capacities, they will gain a sustainable competitive advantage (D'Amato & Roome, 2009). Moreover, Mishra and Napier (2015) determined that process dynamic business strategy capability resulting from quality management innovation can reduce waste, which tends to reduce adverse environment effects while yielding other operational efficiencies. Hence, hypotheses 1a-1c were supported.

Modern management technological focus has a positive significant impact on valuable practice development ($\beta_2 = 0.187$, $p < 0.05$), new process improvement ($\beta_7 = 0.251$, $p < 0.05$), and proactive operational competency ($\beta_{12} = 0.207$, $p < 0.05$). Empirical studies support these results. Modern management technological focus improves the efficiency of the organization's internal administrative process (e.g. Walker, Damanpour, & Devece, 2011) and facilitates change, including technical innovation, improving organizational performance (Leong and Jarmoszko, 2010). Thus, hypotheses 2a-2c were supported. Dynamic business strategy capability has a positive significant impact on valuable practice development ($\beta_3 = 0.182$, $p < 0.05$), and new process improvement ($\beta_8 = 0.173$, $p < 0.05$). Strategy is the outcome of decisions made to lead an organization with respect to environment, structure and processes that affect its organizational performance and sustainability (Acquaah, 2013). Surprisingly, though, dynamic business strategy capability has no significant positive impact on proactive operational competency ($\beta_{13} = 0.074$, $p > 0.05$). Thus, hypotheses 3a-3b were supported. Chen (2009) found that dynamic business strategy capability is related to new process development. In addition, it focuses on heavy investments in development activities management and long-term change. Such investments aim to improve production. This is consistent with Golec's (2015) study in which it was determined that it is possible that too much rigidity in terms of rules administrative procedures; and employee job description will restrict some changes in the organization that could affect its operation. So, what are the consequences in terms of firm success?

The OLS regression analyses shown in Table 3 indicate that the three mediators have an effect on firm success. Specifically, valuable practice development has a significant positive influence on firm success ($\beta_{16} = 0.274$, $p < 0.05$) as do new process improvement ($\beta_{17} = 0.185$, $p < 0.05$) and proactive operational competency ($\beta_{18} = 0.244$, $p < 0.05$). Therefore, hypotheses H4-H6 were supported. To effectively control and improve new process development, firm must develop strong process efficiency capability and process optimization capability. This is in-keeping with Mishra and Napier's (2015) study which determined that valuable practice development was positively correlated with competitive advantage and firm success. As determined by Yang, Lee, and Cheng (2017), both operational performance and employee creativity can be improved through the adoption of relevant operational development practices and learning capability. Additionally, new process improvement are also pertinent to process or quality improvement; two practices that affect performance.

5. Conclusion

This study examined the influence of three dimensions associated with organizational creativity and innovation on firm success, namely, innovation ideas enhancement, modern management technological focus, and dynamic business strategy capability. It also investigated the mediating effect of valuable practice development, new process improvement, and proactive operational competency on these three dimensions and their relationship with firm success. It was determined that innovation ideas enhancement, modern management technological focuses, and dynamic business strategy capability had a significant positive effect on valuable practice development, new process improvement and proactive operational competency.

In today's highly volatile environment, a firm's capacity to innovate greatly influences the predictability of its surviving and maintaining sustainable growth. Many firms try to embrace appropriate management method to improve their operation creative practices. As determined by this research, managing directors or managing partners, including those interviewed as managers and partners of firms in the Thai electronic and electrical appliance sector, should encourage teamwork across functions in order to stimulate the exchange of

new knowledge and adopt new business practices conducive to innovation. Valuable practice development, new process improvement, and proactive operational competency contribute to innovative ideas enhancement, modern management technological focus, and dynamic business strategy capability. They also assist in selecting technology that match the characteristics and conditions of the business effectively. Thus, the concept of organizational creativity is a strategic concept for successful transformation and value creation. It also promotes the diffusion of innovation and strongly support the correlation between innovation and firm success

To study the hypotheses developed in this research, this paper surveyed managers employed in the Thai electronic and electrical appliance sector. The low effective response rate (23.56%), however, suggests that the results are not capable of generalization and cannot be assumed to represent the entire industry. To gain added credibility, future research should therefore either use another sampling population (a different sector altogether) or if it focuses on the same sector should ensure that the return rate is much higher. This would go a long way in securing the generalizability of the research. Further studies could also include additional moderating variables and antecedent variables. Moreover, since self-administration may lead to bias and a halo effect, other methods of analysis may be used in the future such as in-depth interviews, case studies, and mixed methodology.

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Influence of Cultural Differences and Interest Level in Thai Culture on the Online Shopping Behavior of Chinese Consumers

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Abstract

The past ten years have witnessed an exponential growth of cross-border e-commerce, which has become an important trade channel for small and large businesses worldwide. One factor affecting consumers' attitudes and transnational online shopping purchase decisions is cultural difference. This study focuses on the online shopping behavior of Chinese consumers towards Thai products. It aims to determine the extent to which cultural factors influence Chinese consumers' online shopping behavior and whether gender, age, and education have an impact on the level of influence of a different culture, in this case Thai culture. Data was collected via random sampling of Chinese consumers with experience shopping online for Thai products and analyzed using SPSS. Theories of culture and sub-culture as well as Hofstede's cultural dimensions were also relied upon to predict the probability of the influence of cultural difference on online shopping behavior. The Logit Regression model was used to verify the research hypotheses. The results reveal that the influence level of Thai culture on Chinese shopping behavior towards Thai products was small and was not significantly related to age. Gender and education level play a greater role in the perception of another culture and openness to purchasing foreign products.

Keywords: Purchase Decision, Cultural Factor, Online Shopping, Consumer Attitude, Influence

1. Introduction

Cross-border e-commerce has been growing exponentially and has become an important communication tool for both small and large businesses worldwide. It is greatly influencing international trade and setting new societal trends. In China alone, international e-commerce has brought approximately 200 million shoppers online as Chinese customers' demand for foreign products is high, including for goods from Thailand (Statista, 2020). This is creating opportunities for Thai firms to enter the Chinese online shopping market. However, when it comes to international transactions, cultural differences cannot be ignored as they can affect cross-cultural consumer behavior. It is thus imperative for firms seeking to expand abroad via shopping websites to understand the impact of a different culture on the behavior of consumers in the targeted market (Soares, 2004). The recognition of and adaptation to cultural diversity can lead to high consumers' purchase intention of foreign products. When Thai or other foreign businesses decide to enter the Chinese market, they must compete with local products and therefore adjust to Chinese consumers' behavior and satisfaction, and to various other marketing aspects inherent in a different cultural environment.

Although China and Thailand and China share similar cultural aspects such as, for example, high context communication (Hall, 1966), an emphasis on the group (Triandis, 1995; Hofstede, 2001), and respect for elders (Bizumic, 2014), there exist several significant

differences. The literature, music, dance, art, fashion, and food, found in each country offer many contrasts. For instance, colors and numbers do not have the same symbolic value in each culture (Aslam, 2006). Yellow in Thailand represents nobility, whereas red in China is a symbol of happiness. Chinese people like number 6 and 8, which mean good fortune and prosperity but Thai people dislike number 6, which stands for failure, and like number 9, which signals development. The key point here is that, given the different cultural background of Chinese and Thai consumers, it can be assumed that their online shopping behavior is likely to differ as cultural factors strongly influence consumer behavior (Unsworth, Sears, & Pexman, 2005). Generally, an individual's purchase decisions are determined by his/her needs, desires, and preferences, all of which being closely related to the individual's cultural environment. Accordingly, direct experience with the foreign culture has a stronger effect on consumers' attitudes than indirect experience (Millar, 1996).

The demand for Thai products in China is growing. This is largely due to the fast-rising number of Chinese vacationing in Thailand (Tourism Authority of Thailand-TAT, 2019). In March 2015, the top three countries in terms of foreign tourists bound for Thailand were China (2,033,495), Malaysia (890,164) and South Korea (374,808) (TAT, 2019). From that year onwards, the arrival of Chinese tourists has been increasing at the approximate annual rate of 15-20%, making China by far the first source of foreign tourists in Thailand. Among other consequences, the influx of Chinese tourists has raised the brand awareness and value perception of Thai products. Chinese growing familiarity with Thai goods (at least those with travel experience in Thailand) has also affected their online shopping behavior towards products from 'the land of smile'. The increased interest of Chinese consumers in Thai products is also related to Thai movies.

This study focuses on the online shopping behavior of Chinese consumers of Thai products. It aims to answer the following research questions:

1. Do cultural factors influence Chinese consumers' online shopping behavior towards Thai products?
2. Does gender have an impact on the level of influence of a different culture?
3. Does age have an impact on the level of influence of a different culture?
4. Does education have an impact on the level of influence of a different culture?

To answer these questions, Chinese residing in five economically developed areas in China were surveyed and the relevant literature on attitude towards Thai culture explored. Some of the Chinese polled had travel experience in Thailand, others did not. However, they all had a minimum of one experience purchasing Thai products online. The role of cultural differences in purchasing behavior has been receiving much attention from scholars recently. This paper adds to the body of literature on this issue.

2. Review of Literature

This section explores the relevant operative concepts in this study. The culture and sub-culture construct is discussed first.

- *Culture and Sub-Culture*

Culture represents a set of values, ideas, beliefs, customs, habits, and attitudes that are accepted by a group of people and passed down to the next generations (Oyserman, 2011). It determines fashion style, eating habits, living conditions and travel destinations that are related to consumption behavior. Ting-Toomey (1999) stated that culture is an iceberg consisting of traditions, beliefs, and values that sit at deeper layers and are hidden from sight but affect behavior and the decision-making process. According to Harris and Robert (1987), culture includes the following characteristics: (i) culture is understood; (ii) culture can be learned; (iii) culture operates within a scope of acceptable behavior (for example, in

American society, people cannot walk naked on the beach); (iv) cultural standards are limited by conscious awareness; and (v) the evolution of cultures depends on the acceptance period. Culture involves different perceptions. People tend to perceive the person who is out of the group more than those in the group because within cultures, individuals often have clear differences (Unsworth et al., 2005). Culture is divided into subcultures and clusters based on geographic regions and human characteristics such as nationalities, religions, gender, age and ethnical backgrounds.

- Values

Values share five features: (i) they are few in numbers; (ii) they provide a guideline for culturally proper action; (iii) they are tied to particular things; (iv) they are difficult to change; and (v) they are widely accepted by group members (Harrison & Huntington, 2000). Values are not only a form of thoughts they also play an important role in choices that people make and are used as standards for evaluating good, bad, must, and should (Gupta, Dash, & Mishra, 2019). In addition, variations in cultural values affecting behavior through norms can be divided into three categories: (i) Other-oriented values such as individual/collective, youth/age, extended/limited family, masculine/feminine, competitive/cooperative and diversity/uniformity; (ii) Environmental-oriented values such as cleanliness, performance/status, tradition/change, risk taking/security, problem solving/ fatalistic and nature; and (iii) Self-oriented values such as active/passive, sensual gratification/abstinence, material/non material, hard work/leisure, postponed gratification/immediate gratification and religious/secular (Kawakami et al., 2018).

- Cultural Differences and Cross-Cultural Consumer Behavior Variations

Consumer cross-cultural differences refer to how individuals make decisions to consume based on different cultures (Bagozzi, 2000; Hall, 1990). In addition to differences in verbal communication, behavior is affected by nonverbal communication variables such as time, personal space, symbols, relationships, agreements and etiquette (Kragh & Malene, 2001). For instance, different countries have different preferences and taboos about colors; yellow in Thailand represents nobility whereas red in China is a symbol of happiness. One salient cultural dimension is the difference between high- and low-context cultures (Hall, 1959; Richardson & Smith, 2007). In low-context Western cultures, expressions of thought come out straightforward as opposed to high-context Asian cultures, where people do not express what they mean directly (Kim, 1998). When two cultures are fundamentally different, the risk of ethnocentrism is higher (Hammond & Axelrod, 2006). As a self-reference criterion, ethnocentrism refers to the practice of using the standard of one's own culture to evaluate others. As a learned behavior embedded into a variety of beliefs and values, it generally implies that one believes that one's own culture is superior to other cultures (Bizumic, 2014).

Many studies found that cultural differences have an effect on cross-cultural consumer behavior (Unsworth et al., 2005; Oyserman, 2011; Purwanto, 2013). It is therefore necessary to understand the impact of consumer behavior in different national and cultural settings (Soares, 2004). The recognition of different cultures can lead to high consumers' purchase intention of foreign products (Otnes & Zayer, 2012). For example, consumers will pursue the fashion of foreign cultures and try on different cultural experiences and lifestyles. They have a strong impact on purchase willingness of foreign products (Yakup, Mucahit, & Reyhan, 2011) and on consumer behavior (Yoldas, 2011). Cultural differences also play an important role in transnational e-commerce (Pavlou and Lin, 2002; Purwanto, 2013). Chinese consumers in particular are eager to learn about and buy foreign products (Hu, 2014). Responding to foreign demand requires to develop a strategy to market the goods sought after among consumers whose culture is different from that of the marketer's own culture (Watkins, 2010). According to Engelen and Brettel, (2011), to develop a cross-cultural marketing

strategy, marketers need to answer seven questions. Does the geographic area have homogeneous or heterogeneous culture? What needs can these goods satisfy in this culture? Can enough people afford the goods? What values are involved with the purchase and use of the goods? What is the distribution, political and legal structures for the goods? How can we communicate about the goods? What are the ethical implications of marketing these goods in this country?

- Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

Hofstede's (2001) stated that cultures are separated on the basis of five dimensions: (i) masculinity-femininity, (ii) individualism-collectivism, (iii) power distance, iv) uncertainty avoidance, and (v) long-term vs short-term orientation (of course, as we saw earlier, Hall's low- high-construct should also be included). The masculinity-femininity dichotomy distinguishes clearly the gender roles of society. In individualist or collectivist countries, people either focus on individual responsibilities or give priority to the ingroup. Power distance measures people's attitudes towards the distribution of power, most notably their level of acceptance of unequal power. Uncertainty avoidance refers to the tolerance of a given society for uncertainty and ambiguity and the level of comfort or the lack thereof in unstructured situations. In nations with long- or short-term orientations, people either focus on the near future and immediate success or wish to establish a long-term commitment (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, (2010). The implication is that when looking at countries' cultures, it is possible to classify them along Hofstede's (2001) axis, for instance, collectivist, masculine, and low power distance countries (de Mooij, Hofstede, & Hofstede, 2011). China and Thailand are collectivist societies in which the relationship between attitude and transaction intentions is significant. In other words, in both nations, people are more influenced by social norms than those in individualist societies (Pavlou & Lin, 2002). According to Hu (2014), cultural distance and trade flows are negatively correlated, but the differences in humanistic values have a positive effect only on the exportation of publications.

- Attitude

The concept of attitude in consumer behavior describes an individual's relatively consistent evaluations and feelings towards an object (Krasniqi & Krasniqi, 2014). Attitudes put people into a frame of mind for liking or disliking an object and wanting or not wanting it. Psychologists Rosenberg and Hovland (1960) determined that attitude is made up of three components: cognition, affect, and behavioral intentions. This tripartite view is quite common (Albarracín, Johnson, & Zanna, 2005). The cognitive component refers to one's beliefs, which can be positive, negative, or neutral, depending on the person or the situation, and not always accurate (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974). Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behavior links one's beliefs and behavior. According to this theory, attitude toward behavior and perceived behavioral control together shape an individual's behavioral intentions (Ajzen, 1991). The affective component of an attitude relates to some form of judgment or a positive/negative evaluation of the object or brand. The view can be positive or negative (Albarracín et al., 2005). Consumers have feelings toward brands or objects that may trigger behavioral intentions. The latter refer to what the consumer plans to do with respect to the object (Krasniqi, & Krasniqi, 2014). Attitudes have an impact on the reaction of consumers to objects because of beliefs and attitudes. Since they are buried in each person's mind and are part of one's personality, they are difficult to change (Wood, 2000). It is nevertheless possible to make consumers change their beliefs and affect (i.e., their feelings and affection toward an object) by matching products with a stimulus, for example, in this study, Thai products with a particular element of Thai culture dear to Chinese consumers.

- Demographic Factors

Demographic factors refer to age, gender, marital status, race, education, income, and occupation. All of them are used to segment consumers into smaller target markets. Suriyo (2005) found that the demographic background in aspect of gender, age, education, occupation, and income affect consumer purchase behavior. Demographic factors have also been determined to affect online shopping (Garbarino & Stranilevitz, 2004; Guo & Ismawati, 2011). This is especially the case in respect of gender (Ling & Yazdanifard 2014). Thus, to understand the purchase behavior of online consumers, it is not only necessary to understand the culture of buyers or sellers and cross-cultural marketing issues in general, it is also essential to develop a good grasp of the effects demographics factors can have on the purchase behavior of international online shoppers (Julamakron, 2012).

- Effects of the Differences between Thai and Chinese Cultures on Online Shopping

As explained earlier, cultures significantly impact the consumption behaviors of online shoppers as, for example, between online Thai and Chinese consumers. Table 1, compiled from several surveys, summarizes the different behavior and consumption patterns of Chinese and Thai online shoppers.

Table 1: Chinese and Thai Consumer Online Behavior

Consumption Patterns	Thai Online Shoppers	Chinese Online Shoppers
Consumption Behaviors	Similarity	Differences
Proportion in online shopping	2.9% Age <15, 64.4% age 15-34, 26.2% age 35-50, 6.5% age 51-69	8% age < 20, 74% age 20-40, 18% age >40
Top hit products	Fashion (clothes, shoes, etc) 42.6%, IT 27.5%, health and personal care product 24.4%, travel 23.2%, download 21%, entertainment 12%, home appliance 10.8%, investment 5.8%, jewelry 5.5%, infants and mothers 3.4%, others 13%	Apparel 27%, food and beverages 2%, publication 3%, consumer electronics 20%, cosmetics 5%, infants and mothers 5%, others 39%
Different preference demand	1. Any kind of convenience food 2. Personal care products (come third) 3. Healthy food and products favor western products 4. Auto products (high for decoration accessories) 5. Beer is a common drink for each generation; wine and carbonated drinks are served in banquets; farmers and laborers prefer local alcohol	1. Only Chinese convenience food 2. Personal care products (come last) 3. Most elderly and low income turn to natural treatment and Chinese herbal medicine, while younger and the rich often buy Western products 4. Auto products is low 5. Bai jiu is favored by young generation along with strong traditional drinks; the rich often drink wine, while people with lower income drink local beer.
Expenditure per shopping	Mostly < 200 RMB except IT, travel, invest >2,000 RMB	Mostly < 100 RMB and 100-500 RMB
Payment method	Mainly offline (Bank counter or ATM) more often than online (credit cards)	Mostly online (Alipay), less frequently credit cards and internet banking
Influence on purchase	Friends' advice 34%, advertisements 32.3%, top websites in search engine 31.5%, comments from Bloggers, Idols 20.8%	Comments from Bloggers 39%, friends and family's advice 34%, experience 27%

Reason for shopping online	Information from review of goods and users' comments 58.8%, web advertisement 50.2%	Easy, fast, cheap, comparable price, want to try new things and have various and modern products or services
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Source: <<https://www.it24hrs.com/2015/thailand-internet-user-profile-2015-2558>>
 <<http://www.wishopping24.com/index.php/blog/post/view/id/109/>>
 <<http://www.chinabusinessreview.com/understanding-chinese-consumers>>

3. Research Model and Methodology

- Hypothesis Development

A number of previous research studies focusing on the impact of cultural factors on consumer behavior are based on the theory of planned behavior (e.g. Aaker, Kumar, & Day, 2004; Abdullah, 2008; Yoldas, 2011). Recall from above that this theory links behavior to one's beliefs (as we also saw, the cognitive component is one of the three components of attitude, a key determinant of consumer behavior). The planned behavior theory is equally applicable to the proposed e-commerce adoption model and to cross-border e-commerce. In addition, it also fits well in a collectivist culture like China, where the relationship between attitude and transaction intentions is strongly influenced by social norms (Pavlou & Lin, 2002). Therefore, to explore the extent to which cultural factors influence the attitude of online shoppers towards Thai products this study devised a conceptual model that reflects the direct link between beliefs and behavior, in line with previous empirical research (see Figure 1). This investigation of the level of impact of various demographic factors on the consumption of products from another culture is based on Hofstede's cultural dimensions and on various other cultural differences between China and Thailand..

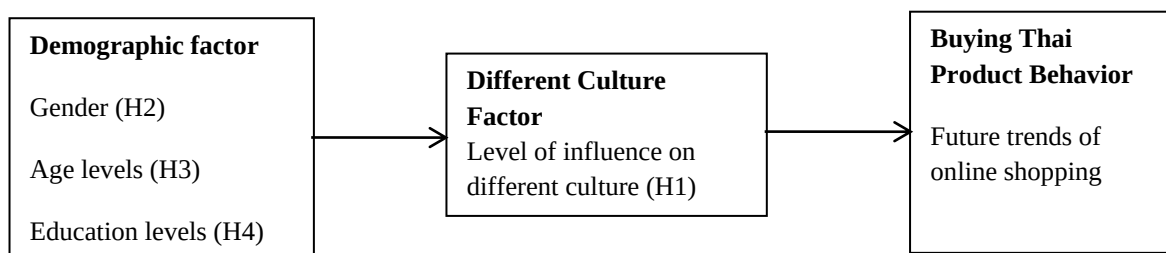


Figure 1: Research Framework (Created by the author for this study)

In light of this research framework, the following hypotheses have been developed:

- H1:** *The level of influence on a different culture has a significant positive impact on the online shopping behavior of Chinese consumers of Thai products.*
- H2:** *Gender is significantly related to the level of influence on a different culture.*
- H2a:** *Males and females have different effects on the level of influence on a different culture.*
- H3:** *Age is significantly related to the level of influence on a different culture.*
- H3a:** *Age levels have different effects on the level of influence on a different culture.*
- H4:** *Education is significantly related to the level of influence on a different culture.*
- H4a:** *Education levels have different effects on the level of influence on a different Culture.*

- Data Collection and Analysis

A survey questionnaire was used in this quantitative research study to collect data and statistics. The sample group consisted of 400 Chinese consumers, who had a minimum of one experience shopping for Thai products online (whether they had or never had travelled to Thailand was not relevant). A pre-test survey was conducted from March 3, 2016 to April 4,

2016. Data was then collected during the period May 2, 2016-June 2, 2016. Out of the 350 valid responses, 212 were usable for analysis (the 138 responses discarded involved non-online shoppers and incomplete answers). The total response rate was 60.57%. The questionnaire was based on prior relevant research studies (e.g. Hasan, 2010; Katawetawaraks & Wang, 2011). The questions related to cross-cultural online shopping and the impact of the Thai culture on those shoppers' purchase behavior. They specifically probed the respondents on the demographic factors influencing Chinese consumers' behavior and on their level of satisfaction with Thai products, asking them about personal attitude, brand awareness, and purchasing decisions. The data was analyzed through SPSS statistical software developing regression model and other methods.

- Measure Validation and Hypothesis Testing

The validation of the measure was preliminary examined for reliability. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was computed for each question. Since, as Table 2 indicates, Cronbach's alpha was over 0.7, which is above the cutoff value for acceptance, the reliability was acceptable.

Table 2: Reliability Statistics

S.No.	Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach Alpha
1	Cultural Factors and Purchasing decisions	10	0.981
2	Different culture	1	0.982
3	Online shopping trend	1	0.982

The Logit Regression was used to test the hypotheses and analyze the impact of gender, age, and education on the level of influence of a different culture on the purchase behavior towards buying Thai products.

4. Results

- Demographic Variables Analysis

A total of 212 valid questionnaires were collected for analysis. Table 1 shows that there were 74 male and 138 females respondents. 75 percent of them were aged between 21-30 and 16 percent of them were between 31-40 years old. The composition of the group in terms of age is consistent with a report by Shanghai-based iResearch, according to which out of the almost 300 million people who shop online in China most of them are between 18-35 years old. Moreover, 53.3 percent of the respondents held a bachelor degree and 31.1 percent a master degree. 42.5 percent of them were students or had part time job, 21.2 percent were working full-time and 20.8 percent were teachers. As to their income level, 23.6 percent of them had a monthly income of less than or equivalent to 1,000 RMB (USD), 21.7 percent an income of 1,000-3,000 RMB (USD) whereas the remaining 28.3%, 21.2% and 5.2% had a salary ranging from 3,000-5,000 RMB (USD460-770), 5,000 RMB (USD770) and above, and 10,000 RMB (USD1,530) and above respectively. 42.9% of them came from Chuanyu City group, 20.3 percent were out of five economic zones (i.e., from other cities and nearby economic zones), 15.6 percent came from Changjiang middle reaches megalopolis and the remaining come from the Delta area of Yangtze river city, Region over Bohai ring and Urban Agglomeration in the Pearl river (about 9%, 7.1% and 5.2% respectively).

Table 3: Parameter Estimates

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	d f	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	[ATTITUDE DIFC Extreme = 1]	-1.790	1.320	1.838	1	.175	-4.377	.798
	[ATTITUDE DIFC Strong = 2]	-.160	1.312	.015	1	.903	-2.731	2.411
	[ATTITUDE DIFC Normal = 3]	1.416	1.315	1.161	1	.281	-1.161	3.994
	[ATTITUDE DIFC Small = 4]	3.029	1.340	5.111	1	.024	.403	5.655
Location	[Male=1]	-.587	.274	4.600	1	.032	-1.123	-.051
	[Female=2]	0	.	.	0	.	.	.
	[AGE ≤ 20 =1]	.180	1.292	.019	1	.889	-2.352	2.712
	[AGE 21-30 =2]	.040	1.230	.001	1	.974	-2.371	2.451
	[AGE 31-40 =3]	-.044	1.240	.001	1	.972	-2.474	2.387
	[AGE 41-50 =4]	-.736	1.468	.252	1	.616	-3.613	2.140
	[AGE > 50 =5]	0	.	.	0	.	.	.
	[Primary =1]	2.565	1.388	3.417	1	.065	-.155	5.285
	[High School/voc. =2]	1.767	.760	5.403	1	.020	.277	3.258
	[Bachelor =3]	.275	.474	.338	1	.561	-.654	1.205
	[Master =4]	.179	.494	.131	1	.717	-.788	1.146
	[Doctor & above =5]	0	.	.	0	.	.	.
	[TREND to ONLINE Yes =0]	.196	.293	.450	1	.502	-.377	.770
	[TREND to ONLINE No =1]	0	.	.	0	.	.	.

Source: Compiled by this author for this study

Based on the parameter estimates shown in Table 3, the cumulative predicted probabilities from the Logit model were calculated as follows:

$$\text{Prob (DIFC score 4)} = 1 / (1 + e^{3.029}) = 0.046$$

Therefore, the probabilities for the small influence on a different culture towards buying Thai product were 0.046.

$$\text{Prob (Gender1 score 4)} = 1 / (1 + e^{3.029 - .587}) = 0.012$$

Hence, the probabilities for the small influence on different culture affecting buying Thai product were varied by gender of male significantly at 0.012.

$$\text{Prob (Education2 score4)} = 1 / (1 + e^{3.029 - 1.767}) = 0.22$$

Thus, the probabilities for the small influence on different culture affecting buying Thai product were varied by education level of High school/Vocational significantly at 0.22

The level of influence of a different culture on the purchasing behavior towards Thai products had probabilities of 0.046 for males and 0.012 and 0.22 for high school/vocational educational level but was not significantly related to age. Gender and education level thus play an important role in the perception of another culture and openness to the purchase of foreign products. However, a different culture has no impact on the online purchasing decision of Thai products. The null hypothesis is rejected as the observed significance level of both the location and scale parameters are 0, meaning that the variances are equal. Besides, males are less likely to assign higher ratings than females and people with less education are less likely to assign higher ratings than people with graduate education. Therefore, males and younger consumers have higher perception rates at knowing level, while females and older consumers have higher perception rates at identifying level and using levels (Chen, Yin, & Xu, 2015).

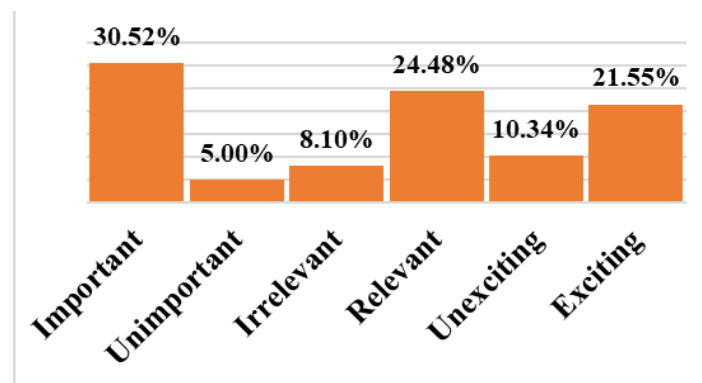


Chart 1: Interest level in Thai culture and Respondents' Attitudes
(Created by the author for this study)

As shown in Chart 1, the interest level in Thai culture is related to consumers' purchasing behavior and attitude towards Thai products. 30.52 percent of the respondents recognized that their purchase decisions are moderately related to their interest in Thai culture. 24.48 percent said that it was quite relevant. 21.55 percent acknowledged it get them exciting and provide an extra motivation. A few respondents, however, claimed to have no interest in the Thai culture and no desire to purchases Thai products. Thai culture has no bearing on them.

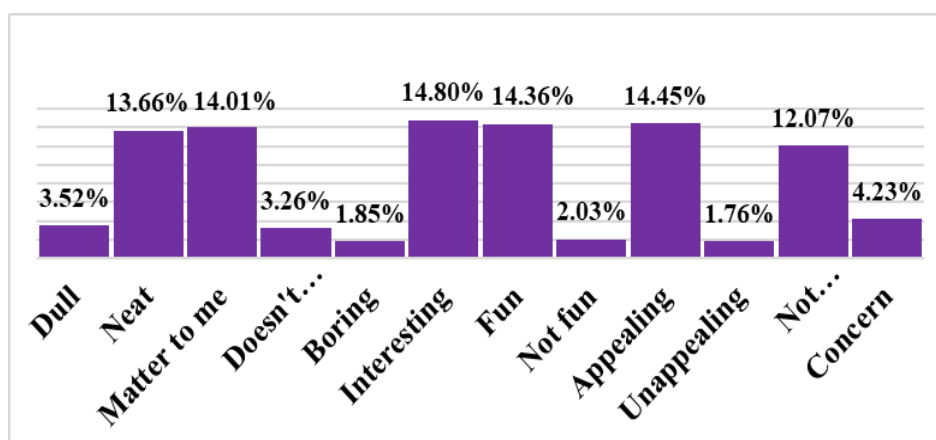


Chart 2: Attitude on Thai culture Affecting Buying Satisfaction Level
(Created by the author for this study)

Chart 2 shows that generally respondents have a positive attitude towards Thai culture, which they consider neat, interesting, fun, appealing, and easy-going. This provides them with a high level of satisfaction when buying Thai products. 14.8 percent of them identified it as interesting and a source of satisfaction buying Thai products. Overall Thai culture has a high positive effect on satisfaction level in buying Thai products.

As shown in Table 4, the scores of the cultural factors affecting satisfaction towards the decisions to purchase Thai products were over average except for items 8, 9, and 10, which had scores under 3.0, indicating that some aspects of Thai culture are perceived to be more enjoyable and Chinese ones. This is the case with Thai food and Thai drama, whose plots are quite different from Chinese ones. The overall results show that Thai products generally meet with a high level of satisfaction and that Thai culture plays a role in that perception. The appearance, variety, and quality of Thai products appeal to Chinese consumers and are compatible with their behavior. Combining with various features of Thai cultures found in Thai drama and with Thai cultural values, it creates enthusiasm to buy Thai products but this enthusiasm is still not very strong.

Table 4: Cultural Factors Affecting Thai Products' Purchasing Decisions

Cultural Factors and Purchasing decisions	Strongly disagree =1	Disagree = 2	Uncertain = 3	Agree = 4	Strongly agree = 5	Average Score
1. Cultural background motivates the need for products	3.3%	4.7%	22.2%	46.2%	23.6 %	3.82
	7	10	47	98	50	212
2. Thai products fit with your consuming habits	3.3%	9.4%	33%	36.3%	17.9%	3.56
	7	20	70	77	38	212
3. Products are designed with an eye on your cultural background	2.8%	10.8%	30.7%	38.7%	17%	3.56
	6	23	65	82	36	212
4. I would buy a product I need even if it did not adhere to the ideology/religion of my community	13.2%	12.7%	25.9%	33%	15.1%	3.24
	28	27	55	70	32	212
5. I would buy a product I need even if it did not adhere to the norm/values /customs of my community	14.6%	11.8%	25.5%	32.5%	15.6 %	3.23
	31	25	54	69	33	212
6. I would buy a product I need even if it did not adhere to my language	2.8%	5.2%	20.8%	45.3%	25.9 %	3.86
	6	11	44	96	55	212
7. I would buy something to assimilate with the community around me	3.8%	4.7%	23.1%	43.9%	24.5%	3.81
	8	10	49	93	52	212
8. I think Thai drama or movies are better than Chinese drama	22.6%	24.5%	29.7%	14.2%	9%	2.62
	48	52	63	30	19	212
9. I think Thai culture is more interesting than Chinese cultural values	14.6%	20.8%	30.7%	22.6%	11.3%	2.95
	31	44	65	48	24	212

	26	45	72	46	23	212
10. I feel it is more enjoyable to have Chinese foods than Thai foods	24.5%	25.5%	25%	15.1%	9.9%	2.60
	52	54	53	32	21	212
Total respondents: 212						

Source: Compiled by this author for this study

Table 5: Summary of Results

No.	Hypotheses	Findings
H1:	<i>The level of influence on a different culture has a significant positive impact on online shopping of Thai products in the future</i>	Unsupported
H2:	<i>Gender is significantly related to the level of influence on a different culture</i>	Partially Supported
H3:	<i>Age is significantly related to the level of influence on a different culture</i>	Unsupported
H4:	<i>Education is significantly related to the level of influence on a different culture</i>	Partially Supported

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The role of cultural difference in purchasing behavior has recently attracted the attention of researchers, including the author of this paper. The findings in this study, however, go against most of the previously constructed hypotheses. It should be noted first that cultural differences have no effect on Thai products purchasing decision. But Thai culture highly is highly correlated with satisfaction with Thai products and the decision to purchase them. Moreover, interest level in a different culture and buying satisfaction level affect one's intention to shop Thai products online. In the meantime, the influence level of a different culture towards buying Thai products is significantly related to males and high school or vocational education level, but not to age. The theoretical basis of masculinity versus femininity and ethnocentrism and self-reference criterion have little bearing. This is also the case with Hofstede's other cultural dimensions. This study provides further evidence that the impact of a difference culture on online shoppers' intention to purchase products from that culture is limited. By the same token it also shows that the perception of a different culture influences purchase satisfaction and brand awareness, which in turn affects the brand loyalty of foreign products. For young people, highly educated, prone to consumerism, and eager to follow fashion, it is easy to adopt new products.

This is all the more the case as they are widely open to learn about other cultures, which is vital to the intention to shop Thai products on line and for repurchase behavior. From a practical standpoint, because of cultural differences in terms of demographics, languages and values, marketing across cultural boundaries should not be globalized. Since attitudes toward multinational brands vary, communication and advertising messages should be adjusted to reflect the specific values of different cultures as well as the consumption patterns and lifestyles. Secondly, sellers should use social media, in particular the power of e-word-of-mouth, as a tool or a channel to communicate the values of Thai culture and the benefits of products to customers. This would go a long way in ensuring that consumers are provided with the correct information about products and in increasing the perception of Thai culture and the trust related to purchase behavior. Thirdly, marketers should focus on the group of

males with high school and vocational school level education to increase their interest in another culture towards turning them into potential customers of Thai products. Sellers should adjust competitive marketing mix strategy and develop products that fit the targeted customers abroad. Finally, since this study focused on a limited area of China that may not be representative of the attitude of online shoppers towards Thai products in other part of the country, further studies should concentrate on other areas or another population, for instance rural dwellers.

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Guideline for Authors

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- Acknowledgement of Sources:
 - Reviewers should identify any important relevant published work that was not cited by the authors as part of the references; and
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• RESEARCH COMPONENTS

The article should include the following components:

- An introduction
- A review of the relevant literature
- An outline of the research methodology/ research design
- Research findings
- A discussion of the results
- A conclusion and policy recommendations/ recommendations to managers

An emphasis should be placed on the discussion of the findings, the conclusion and policy recommendations/ recommendations to managers.

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All of the following requirements need to be met before an article can be sent to reviewers.

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1. Format

- Must be a Word-compatible document (not a .pdf) and use the American Psychological Association (APA) Referencing Style as shown below (see sub-sections 6 and 7).

2. Title Page

- Uploaded separately from the abstract and body.
- Manuscript title (not in all capital letters).
- Title, name, affiliation and email address of all authors.
- Indicate clearly who is the corresponding author for journal communication.

3. Abstract

- Not more than 250 words.
- Should not include any information that would identify the author(s).
- Bold, Times New Roman, 12 point, no indentation.

4. Keywords

- Three to six keywords are required at the time of submission.

5. *Body of the Paper*

- A4 page size.
- Margin of 1" (2.5cm) on all four sides.
- Title of Article: Times New Roman font, 20 point.
- Section Heading: First letter of each word in capitals, bold 14 point font.
- Body Text: Times New Roman font, 12 point, single space between sentences.

6. *In-Text Citations*

- All in-text citations included throughout the article must have a corresponding full reference at the end of the manuscript body.
- Only direct quotes need a page number (not paraphrases).
- Direct Quotes
 - *One Author*
 Author's Last name (Year) stated that "direct quote" (page number).
 Isenberg (2007) stated that "international dispersion is on the rise" (p. 56). **Or**
 "Direct quote" (Last name, Year, page number)
 "International dispersion is on the rise" (Isenberg, 2007, p. 56).
 - *Two Authors*
 First author's Last name and second author's Last name (Year, page number) mentioned that "direct quote" (page number).
 Isenberg and Kerr (2007) mentioned that "international dispersion is on the rise" (p. 56). **Or**
 "Direct quote" (first author's Last name & second author's Last name, Year, page number).
 "International dispersion is on the rise" (Isenberg & Kerr, 2007, p. 56).
- Block Quotes
 If a quote runs on for more than 40 words:
 - Start the direct quotation on a new line
 - Indent the text roughly half an inch from the left margin
 - Remove any quotation marks

Example:
 As Krugman (2019) stated:
 Maybe the larger point here is that there tends to be a certain amount of mysticism about trade policy, because the fact that it's global and touches on one of the most famous insights in economics, the theory of comparative advantage, gives it an amount of mind space somewhat disproportionate to its actual economic importance. (p. 3).
- Parenthetical Citing
 - *One Author*
 Author's Last name (Year) in-text parenthetical citation (paraphrase).
 Isenberg (2007) argues that cross-border migration is increasing. **Or**
 Paraphrase (Last name, Year)
 Cross-border migration is increasing (Isenberg, 2007).
 - *Two Authors*
 First author's Last name and second author's Last name (Year) paraphrase.
 Kerr and Isenberg (2007) argued that cross-border migration is increasing. **Or**
 Paraphrase (first author's Last name & second author's Last name, Year).
 Cross-border migration is on the rise (Isenberg & Kerr, 2007).

- Three to Five Authors

All authors' Last names (Year) paraphrase.

Kerr, Issenberg, and Steward (2007) argued that cross-border migration is increasing. **Or**
Paraphrase (all authors' Last names, Year).

Cross-border migration is increasing (Isenberg, Kerr, & Steward, 2007).

For all subsequent in-text paraphrases, first author's Last name followed by "et al." and the publication year.

Isenberg et al. (2007) found that the event resulted in thousands of people flocking to the border.

Or

The event resulted in thousands of people flocking to the border (Isenberg et al., 2007).

Full References

The following formatting rules apply:

- References appear at the end of the manuscript body in alphabetical order by the first word in the reference (usually the author's last name, sometimes the title).
- All References must have a corresponding in-text citation in the manuscript.
- If more than one work by an author is cited, list them by earliest publication date first.
- If the list contains more than one item published by the same author(s) in the same year, add lower case letters immediately after the year to distinguish them (e.g. 1983a).
- If there is no author, the title moves to the author position (filed under the first significant word of the title).
- Reference list entries should be indented half an inch or 12 mm (five to seven spaces) on the second and subsequent lines of the reference list for every entry - a hanging indent is the preferred style (i.e. entries should begin flush left, and the second and subsequent lines should be indented).
- Double-space all reference entries.

Follow APA Referencing Style format for each source type listed as shown below. For any source type not shown below, go to the APA website for references.

• Book

- One Author

Author, F. M. / Organization. (Year). *Topic Title*. City: Publisher.

Nagel, P. C. (1992). *The Lees of Virginia: Seven generations of an American family*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Two Authors

Author, F. M., & Author, F. M. (Year). *Topic Title*. City: Publisher.

Nagel, P. C., & Sampson, T. (1995). *Seven generations of an American family*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Three Authors

Author, F. M., Author, F. M., & Author, F. M. (Year). *Topic Title*. City: Publisher.

Nagel, P. C., Sampson, T., & Hubbard, A. J. (1992). *The Lees of Virginia: Seven generations of an American family*. New York: Oxford University Press.

• Journal

Author, F. M. (Year). Title of article. *Title of Journal*, vol. (issue), pp xxx-xxx.

Turner, R. A. (2007). Coaching and consulting in multicultural contexts. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 59(4), 241-243.

- Website
Author, F. M./ Organization. (Year of Publication). Web page title. Retrieved (Date) from URL Address.
Bogati, S. (2013, October 14). Hospitality Industry in Nepal. Retrieved November 3, 2018, from <http://hospitalityindustryinnepal.blogspot.com/>
- Newspaper
Author, F. M. / Organization (Year, month, day published). Title of article. *Title of newspaper*, page.
Parker, T. D. (2009, August 3). Getting rid of side stitches. *The Washington Post*, p. E1, E4.

7. Formatting Figures and Table

There are two different styles for graphics in APA format: **Figures** (charts, images, pictures) and **Tables**.

- Figures
 - The first graphic (chart, drawing, or image) will be labeled as Figure 1 and be the first one mentioned in the article.
 - Subsequent ones will follow in the appropriate numeral order in which they appear in the article.
 - Follow APA Referencing Style format for each source type listed as shown below. This means that both the Title and the Source are written below the Figure.

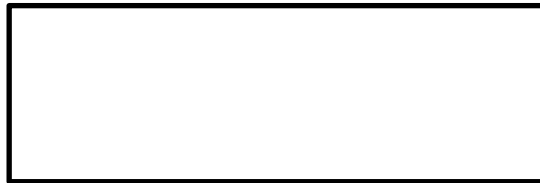


Figure 1: Name of Picture

Source: Author's Last name OR Organization's name (Year, Page number OR Online)
Khoman (2017, p. 137)

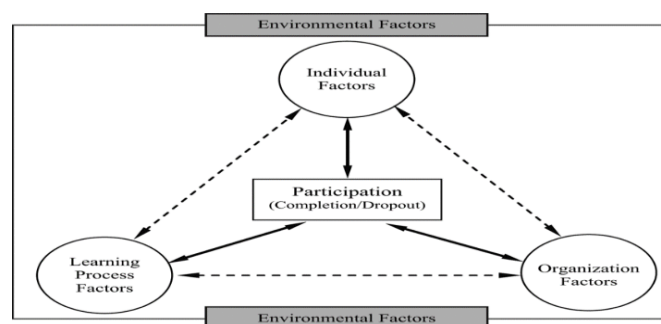


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Source: Author's Last name OR Organization's name (Year: Page number OR Online)
Wang (2019: p. 45)

- Tables

Tables are labelled separately to Figures and should follow the instructions below.

- The first Table will be labeled as Table 1 and be the first Table mentioned in the article.
- Subsequent ones will follow in the appropriate numeral order in which they appear in the article. This means that Tables are labelled separately to Figures.
- The APA Referencing Style format for a Table differs to that of a Figure. A Table has the Title above the Table, and the Source will be listed below.

Table 2: Domestic Tourism in Ayutthaya and Sukhothai in 2004

Type of Data (2004)	Ayutthaya	Sukhothai
Visitor Thai	3,023,933	1,915,975
Foreigners		1,107,958

Source: Author's Last name OR Organization's name (Year: Page number OR Online)
Tourism Authority of Thailand (2005: Online)

For any source type not shown above, go to the APA website for references.

References

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