

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AMONG THAI, JAPANESE, AND AMERICAN MANAGER ACCORDING TO THAI SUBORDINATES VIEW POINTS

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ABSTRACT

Because of the global business management, The foreign direct investment from Japan, and America have been increased in Thailand among the past decade. Those heavily investments have supported Thai economic and make Thai government increase the supporting of the foreign direct investment into Thailand. This is an indicator of the multicultural workforce in Thailand. Then, the purpose of this research is to study the leadership style that will be appropriate to Thai subordinates according to transformational leadership framework. This research investigated Thai subordinates' value of their managers' leadership style. Those managers were divided into three groups: Thai managers, Japanese managers, and American managers. The "Transformational Leadership by Subordinates Rating" was specifically designed for investigating the Thai subjects. The results from multiple comparison statistical analysis generate the similarity of transformational leadership style of those managers in general. In particular dimensions of the transformational framework, the result found difference for inspirational, charismatic, individual, but no difference for intellectual dimension. The general linear model analysis generates result for the comparison between each country. The results are the significant difference occur when compare the opinion of the Thai subject on Thai managers with American Managers. On the contrary, when compare the opinion of the Thai subjects on Japanese managers with American managers, and Japanese managers with Thai managers, the result found no significant difference concerning inspirational and charismatic. For the intellectual dimension, the result found no difference for all comparison. The last dimension, the result found significant difference. In considering the demographic variables that may have an impact on value of transformational style, the result found educational level, work experience, marital status, and age do not have any significant difference, but marital status have significant difference on intellectual and individual.

From the implication for practice, Thai managers should improve their visions, work ability, and ability to create team work, and be aware of performing better ability, and advance ideas. They should improve the ability in making urgent resolution, dare to face with problem, and the ability to take the organizations into new innovation. On the contrary, American managers should be aware of emotional control when working with the Thai subordinates. Furthermore, American managers that work in Thailand should increase their

social awareness if they want to manage smoothly with Thai subordinates. They should offer some more help or even ask some question about the other problem if they can help or not. In addition, the result indicates that American managers have lowest mean scores in understanding Thai subordinates. Then, they should improve their ability of understanding Thai employees. The understanding should include employees' belief, value, behavior, and how they think in any matters.

According to the increasing of the interconnected of the world market, many multinational companies are looking forward to the global customers. However, the competitive environment generates the problem in marketing their product to various customers from different culture. The most important strategy for the resolution is low cost strategy. The cost leadership will be an advantage to the companies that achieving low cost operation. Currently, the countries in Asia are important for both global market and the land of investment. Because the large number of population is indicator of the market, and will support foreign investment. Thailand is well known for the land of investment by multinational firms. The investments by foreign multinational firms become rapid growth. The Thai governments, then, has policy of supporting the multinational companies for their investment in Thailand in any ways they can do. Consequently, the business firms from foreign countries will increase their foreign direct investment in Thailand. The important is that it is an indicator of multicultural in Thai's work force.

However, the study of leadership style has been dramatically changed for a decade. The transformational leadership style is crucial for many researchers on leadership style. Because the business organizations in the competitive environment today are too complicate to use the traditional leadership styles. The complexity of worldwide operation, the advance technology, and the multicultural societies generate the need new leadership style to manage the multinational companies. Transformational leadership is the leadership style that generate the important behaviors to the subordinates such as vision, share value, and bring about the inside potential of the people at work. Then, this study is focused on study the subordinates' opinions on difference leadership style between managers from those three countries, by using transformational leadership style as a framework.

Transformational Leadership:

Dawn and Pamela (1995) stated that transformational leadership was first suggested by Burns in 1978. It means the process of influencing major changes in the attitudes of employees concerning vision of the leader and the goal of the organization. To influencing subordinates, leaders have to engage the whole person of the follower by looking for individual motivations, appealing to the individual's values, and trying to satisfy higher needs. In addition, Faranda (1999) identified that transformational leader is a person who has high skill in think analytically, and operate emotionally to enthusiasm the best from people at all levels of an organization. In considering transactional leadership, Thill and Dovel (1993) defined transactional leadership as an approach in which managers motivate employees to perform by clarifying task requirements and by providing rewards in return of employee efforts to achieve the goals. For more information on the differences between transformational and transactional, Bass (1985) explained transformational leaders motivate the followers to perform over normal expectations by transforming their thoughts and attitudes. In contrast, transactional leadership is viewed as a leader who clarifies subordinates' role and task requirements, initiates structure, provides rewards, and displays consideration for subordinates (Daft, p.749). In addition, Gardner and Clevenger (1998) found that the study of Bass rests on a basis distinction between transactional and transformational as transformational leaders motivate follower by offering them rewards that are lower order material and psychic needs in exchange for their performance. On the contrary, transformational leaders communicate an idealized vision, and motivate followers to expend extraordinary levels of effort to perform beyond expectations. In considering the component of the transformational leadership, there are many researchers identified basic component of transformational leadership as; charismatic, inspirational or visionary, intellectual, and

individualized consideration (Bass and Avolio, 1994; Conger 1999; wofford, Whittington, and Goodwin, 2001). Bass and Avolio (1989) explained the charismatic leaders as a leader that provides vision and a sense of mission, increase optimism, and gains respect and trust. It is the influence based upon perception and behavior of the leader as charismatic. Furthermore, some behaviors such as persistence determination and risk-taking can influence the subordinates, and can be included as charismatic. Shankar and Kenneth (1997) defined the other dimension "inspiration". Inspiration is determined from some leaders that provide challenge and meaning for the subordinates in performing their jobs. These behaviors may be done by using simple language, and other symbols. They create attractive futures for their followers with high expectations. The third dimension that the researchers identified is individual consideration. Individual consideration is coaching and mentoring to provide continuous feedback and links individual's needs to the organization's mission (Bass & Avolio, 1990). The last dimension that was identified is intellectual stimulation. This dimension is a leader that provides subordinates with a flow of challenging new ideas that are supposed to stimulate rethinking of old ways of doing things. This will create awareness of problems by their own thoughts and imagination, and a recognition of their beliefs and values in subordinates (Deanne N DenHartog; Jaap J Van Muijen; Paul L Koopman, 1997). Yammario and Bass (1990) indicated that subordinates' conceptualization, comprehension, and analysis of the problems will be indicator of leaders' intellectual stimulation.

The reviewing of the research that focuses on organizational context-related issues found some results. Shankar and Eastman (1997) found that some researchers have provided lists of contextual factors that influence the form of organizational design parameters that were adopted with some degree of consistency. Furthermore, he indicated those researchers need a

specific set of contextual factors that influences transformational leadership. In addition, this set may not match with the one that has been introduced by other researchers, since the relevant contextual factors are likely to be determined by the phenomenon under particularly circumstances. Pettigrew et. al (1992) stated that context for study transformational leadership can be divided into the outer and inner context. Inner context includes organizational structure, culture, strategy, and related aspects. They also stated that the possible list of contextual factors should be coherent and not merely eclectic. This conclusion will be benefit for other researchers to identify framework for their study in transformational leadership. In considering other study by Hartog, Muijen, and Koopman (1997), they found that the two types of leadership that is transactional and transformational are not only empirically but also theoretically related. Because both of them are extremely passive in nature, and opposed to other measured dimensions that are active in nature. They also concluded that the well-known study of transformational leadership that belongs to Bass has produced an impressive array of finding. Obviously, transformational leadership has been an important part in many of the results that have been of interest to organizational researchers as well as practitioners. Furthermore, the result of their study concluded that Bass' framework distinguishing a transformational, a transactional and a laissez-fair factor is also through exploratory analysis on Dutch data set. However, for their research, they found that the internal consistency of two of the three scales of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) that belongs to Bass was not sufficient. They have to adapt instrument to covers the same domain with fewer items. Their study is useful for determining the instrument use for measuring transformational styles. Carless (1998) used MLQ for studying transformational leadership, and indicated that the most recent version of the MLQ does not measure

separate transformational leader behaviors, but assesses a justification interpretation of individual subscale scores. For the research on transformational leadership at the international level, Abshire (2001) study the comparative leaders from the United States and Japan, he stated that the leadership challenge for both the US and Japan is to develop a new wave of transformational leadership. Those two countries should develop transforming ways in which they can work together for global economic health and security. Although his study focuses on the country administrative person, but the result can also be an example for corporate leaders.

Purpose of the study:

The purposes of this study are to:

1. Study the subordinates' value of the transformational leadership style compare between managers from the three cultures; American, Japanese, and Thai according to transformational framework of leadership styles.
2. Study the relationship of some demographic variables of the subordinate to the four dimensions of transformational leadership style.
3. Investigate the relationship between the four dimensions of the transformational leadership styles.

Research Question and Hypotheses:

According to the problem background above and the purposes of the study, the research questions would be as follow:

1. Whether Thai subordinate rating difference in the four dimensions of transformational leadership style of their managers from American, Japan, and Thailand? If difference, what dimension,

and what particular important point of views that they place their opinion on?

2. Is there any relationship between demographic variables and the opinion on transformational leadership style?
3. What dimensions of transformational leadership style have relation to each other, and how it is?

To answer the above questions, the following hypotheses were instructed:

Hypothesis 1:

According to the transformational leadership framework, subordinates rate difference in transformational leadership style of the managers from Thailand, Japan, and America.

Hypothesis 1A:

According to the transformational leadership framework of inspirational dimension, subordinates rate difference in transformational leadership style of the managers from Thailand, Japan, and America.

Hypothesis 1B:

According to the transformational leadership framework of Charismatic, subordinates rate difference in transformational leadership style of the managers from Thailand, Japan, and America.

Hypothesis 1C:

According to the transformational leadership framework of Intellectual, subordinates rate difference in transformational leadership style of the managers from Thailand, Japan, and America.

Hypothesis 1D:

According to the transformational leadership framework of Individual consideration, subordinates rate difference in transformational leadership style of the managers from Thailand, Japan, and America.

Hypothesis 2A:

Across individual, demographic variables as education and work experience of subordinates have an impact on rating of their manager's transformational leadership style.

Hypothesis 2B:

Across individual, demographic variables as marriage, gender and age of subordinates have an impact on rating of their manager's transformational leadership style.

Hypothesis 3:

According to Transformational Leadership Dimensions, there is a relationship between each dimensions, those relationship occur in every group of subjects.

For the limitation of the research result, this study was conducted in Thailand, and subjects are the Thai employees. Then, the result of this study may not be appropriate for refer to employees from other nations. Furthermore, the study purposes to compare managers from three nations: American, Thai, and Japanese, then, the result may not be appropriate for refer to manager from other nations. Then, the user of this research should be aware of making decision from this finding when use the result for considering managers from other nations. The other limitation that should be addressed is that this study is concern with opinion of the subordinate on their manager's behaviors under transformational framework. Therefore, the fact can be changed overtime. Anyone that uses the result of this study should be aware of the social change over period of time. This means that in the future if the other researcher conducted this topic again the result may difference from this study.

Research Design:

Selection of the Subjects:

The subjects of this research are employees in private sectors. However, the subjects were divided into three groups as the employees in Thai, Japanese, and American companies. The subjects are the middle management to middle high management. Because the purpose of this research is to investigate the opinion of the subordinates on their manager from different countries. The subjects that have experience working with the expatriates or the top management should be from the middle manager to top management. The selection method is convenience, since the researcher does not know any of the subjects, this mean any bias from the researcher concerning relationship with the subjects will not be found. Total numbers of the subjects are 323 include 106 subjects from the Thai companies, 99 subjects from American companies, and 114 subjects from Japanese companies.

Instrumentation:

Although there is some instrument for surveying the transformational leadership known as "Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire" or "MLQ". However, the MLQ is appropriate for measuring transformational style of the leaders. On the contrary, this research is aim at investigate value of the Thai employees that may have on managers from different countries. The researcher, then, create a new instrument for surveying the Thai subordinates in Thai version. This instrument is "Transformational Leadership by Subordinate Rating" or "TLRSR". The instrument was specifically designed for Thai subjects on transformational survey. This instrument composed of 40 questions, the questions that investigate charismatic dimension are 10, inspirational 10, individual consideration 10, and intellectual 10. All those questions are mix up

in one section. The demographic items consisted of 6 questions; gender, age, marital status, educational level, major of graduation, and work experience of the subjects. Experts in leadership study conducted the validity of the instrument through panel discussion. The reliability testing was conducted through Cronbach Alpha, and the instrument was adjusted and retest until the reliability test found .9962 from the 40 items with 22 subjects.

The Data Collection

The period of data gathering is during September 15, 2002 - December 25, 2002. The researcher prepared questionnaires separately for the respondent of Thai managers, Japanese managers, and American managers. The purposes are to distinguish the result from different culture and can be finally compared. The questionnaires were personally distributed with the cooperation of the MBA student from Sri Pratum university, Eastern Asia universities, and Assumption university. Those distributors distributed the questionnaires to their colleagues. Some work for Thai companies, some work for Japanese companies, and others work for American companies.

Data Processing and Analysis:

In the analysis of the data, two sections were classified for data processing and analysis. The first section was the analysis of the demographic data; the second section was the test of the hypotheses. In considering demographic data, Pearson Chi-squares were applied for analyzing the demographic variables that are nominal level of analysis. For the hypothesis testing, the five scales of the TLSR were analyzed in terms of the total scores and total score of each dimension. In addition, the scores were test of Homogeneity of variance by using levene's test. The comparison of the Thai subordinates and American subordinates were

compared through the use of ANOVA, Dunnett T3, Multiple Comparison, General Linear Model, and the Correlation. The test of the hypotheses was conducted at the two-tailed alpha set level of significance of .05.

Result:

From the gathering data, the researcher examined the demography if they are significant difference among the three groups. The purpose is to ensure that the demographic factors of the respondents would not intervene the result. The summarization is that the Chi-Square test of the respondents' demographic factors found no significant difference. The respondents are female more than male, age range from 20 - 65, but mostly between 20 -45. The marital status factors, that may have an impact on the consideration dimension, are single more than marriage almost 50%. The education levels of the respondents are mostly undergraduate, and graduate, with experience between 1-20 years. The testing score of the respondents were calculated by summation of the each group of questions that indicate inspirational, charismatic, intellectual, and individual. Those groups of testing score were tested for the homogeneity of variances to consider the normal distribution of the data, and found normal distribution of all dimensions (inspiration .292, charismatic .157, intellectual .222, individual .391, and total scores .277).

In considering the total scores from every dimensions of the test by hypothesis 1, Thais' subordinates rate no difference in transformational leadership styles of the managers from Thailand, Japan, and America. The researcher used multiple comparison analysis to determine the difference between each nation and found no difference. This result may come from the reason that the managers from each country work in the same position, they may have learned to adapt their leadership styles in the same direction, the subordinates' preferable practices. In considering inspirational of the managers

from the three nations (hypothesis 1 A), Thais' subordinates see difference between those managers for total scores. However, when use Dunnett T 3 multiple comparison test to finding out each country, the result found that there is no difference between Thai and Japanese managers, and Japanese and American managers, but for comparison between Thai and American Managers found difference (sig. .001). Since the inspirational factor indicates the leader capability to provide challenge to the subordinates in performing their jobs, the managers from Japan and America may have experience working abroad. They have been working with subordinates from other countries, and have to inspire the employees from difference cultures. They have to work hard, and have much experience in inspirational behaviors. On the contrary, Thais managers have been working in Thailand with Thais subordinates. They work together in the same culture, and the environment that they get use to all of their life. Then, they do not perform very much in inspirational factors. In addition, the Thai culture that focuses on peacefully, and enjoy life compare to American culture, which focus on achieving the job successfully. This may result in difference between Thai and American managers (sig. .001). In considering comparison between Japanese and American managers, even Japanese managers have similar culture with the Thais, however, in particular belief is difference. Japanese always focus on the successful of the organizations rather than working day by day without achieving the successfully. This is the reason that can support the result that there is no difference in inspirational between Japanese and American managers (sig. .094) even they come from the different cultures.

For the hypothesis 1B that indicates Thai' subordinates opinion on charismatic of the managers from those countries, the result also illustrated difference (sig. .002). However, Dunnett T3 multiple comparison illustrates difference only when compare between Thai and American

managers. This may be explained with the same reason as inspirational factor, which is culture and experience of working in different countries. However, even Japanese and American are no significant difference, but the result is .053 which is nearly difference. In considering comparison between Thai and Japanese managers, the significance is .485, which is far from .05. This may convince that culture is important for charismatic dimension in the transformational leadership framework.

For the leader that provides subordinates with a flow of challenging new ideas for a new innovation, and a resolution of problem that may occur, intellectual dimension (hypothesis 1C), the result found no difference of all managers from the three nations (sig. .223). This may be because anyone who is working in the manager's position has to cope with the problem and to create new ideas. Those managers, then, may have not much difference in intellectual dimension. In considering comparison of each country by Dunnett T3 multiple comparison, every pairs of comparison indicate no difference (sig. Thai-Japanese .952, Thai-American .279, and Japanese-American .490). However, the result also indicate most difference when compare between managers from Thailand and America (sig. .279), and the most similar is managers from Thailand and Japan (sig. .952).

Hypothesis 1D illustrates individual dimension compare between managers from those three nations by Thai subordinates view point, the result found significant difference (.036). The result indicates the same direction with other hypothesis, which is the significant difference by Dunnett T3 multiple comparison is between Thai and American (.039). On the contrary, there is no significant difference between managers from Thailand and Japan (.824), and between managers from Japan and America (.154). Although the comparison between Thai and American, and Japanese and American have both no significance difference, but the comparison

between Thai and Japanese indicates the result far from Japanese and American as the significance of .824, and .154 respectively. The conclusions of this hypothesis convince our belief in the important of culture that may have on people behaviors. since Thai and Japanese come from similar culture as collectivist indicates the result that very far from significant difference (.824), and Japanese and American come from different culture as collectivist and individual indicates almost significant difference (.154).

Hypothesis 2A purposes to finding out the relationship of some demographic variables such as education and experience of the subjects to the transformational leadership style of the managers. The researcher use Pillai's Trace, Wilks' Lambda, and Hotelling's Trace to investigate the relationship and found no effect by those variables. In addition, the researcher investigates the interaction between education and work experience that may have on the opinion concerning transformational leadership style. The result found no effect for all dimensions. This may be explained that education and work experience may not concern directly with the feeling of preferable transformational leadership style. However, the result that indicates no difference may be because the subjects have similar level of education. In considering the other demographic variable as marital status, gender, and age of the subjects (hypothesis 2B), the result illustrates that marital status, and age of the subordinates do not have significant difference to the opinion on transformational leadership style when considering the total score. The Marital status of the subordinates was found significant difference by both Pillai's Trace, Wilk's Lambda, and Hotelling's Trace (sig. .023 for all statistics). In analyzing the relationship of gender to the transformational leadership by particular dimension, the result found that inspiration and characteristic are no significant difference, but intellectual and individual are significant difference

(both sig.027). In addition, the researcher also investigates the interaction between gender and age with marital status as a covariate and found the significant difference on intellectual and individual. The explanation of this finding indicates that gender and age of the subordinate may has an impact on the opinion concerning intellectual and individual. Because when people get older the life experience may change their opinion, particular the opinion concerning intellectual, and individual. The hypothesis 3 indicates high relationship between inspiration and characteristic by the correlation of higher than .900 with significance at the .01 level for 2 tailed testing. Those results include total, data for Thai managers, Japanese managers, and American managers. Then, inspiration and charismatic may be the dimension that is close together.

Conclusion:

From the above results, the managers can apply those finding to their management function appropriately. Thai managers should improve their visions, work ability, and ability to create team work. In considering charismatic, Thai managers should be aware of performing better ability, and advance ideas. According to the intellectual dimension, the lowest score also belong to Thai managers. They should improve the ability in making urgent resolution, dare to face with problem, and the ability to take the organizations into new innovation. On the contrary, when consider individual consideration American managers should be aware of emotional control when working with the Thai subordinates. Because American and Thai may difference in their culture, particular the expression of emotion. Furthermore, American managers that work in Thailand should increase their social awareness if they want to manage smoothly with Thai subordinates. They should offer some more help or even ask some question about the other problem if they can help or not. In addition,

they should improve their ability of understanding Thai employees. The understanding should include employees' belief, behavior, and how they think in any matters.

For future research, the other researcher should contribute in dept to specific dimension, such as inspiration, characteristic, intellectual, and individual consideration. The research should investigate particularly to some dimension only. Because the result can be applied to the management of the business organizations. The researchers should use multi-variate to consider all concerning factors, and should control intervening variables appropriately. then, they will have some results that are benefit to the modern management technique, and fit the international management.

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