

วัฒนธรรม เพศ และรูปแบบการจัดการกับความขัดแย้ง:  
การเปรียบเทียบระหว่างนิสิตนักศึกษาไทยและอเมริกัน



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วิทยานิพนธ์นี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตรปริญญาศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต

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ปีการศึกษา 2549

ลิขสิทธิ์ของจุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

CULTURE, GENDER, AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES: COMPARISONS  
BETWEEN THAI AND AMERICAN STUDENTS



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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Arts Program in Social Psychology

Faculty of Psychology

Chulalongkorn University

Academic Year 2006

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นางสาวภิสสร อุมะวิชนี: วัฒนธรรม เพศ และรูปแบบการจัดการกับความขัดแย้ง: การเปรียบเทียบระหว่างนิสิตนักศึกษาไทยและอเมริกัน. (CULTURE, GENDER, AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES: COMPARISONS BETWEEN THAI AND AMERICAN STUDENTS) อ.ที่ปรึกษา: รศ.ดร. ชีระพร อุวรรณโณ, 126 หน้า.

การวิจัยในครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาการเลือกรูปแบบการจัดการกับความขัดแย้งของนิสิตไทย และนักศึกษอเมริกัน และของผู้ชายกับผู้หญิง กลุ่มตัวอย่างชาวไทยเป็นนิสิตระดับชั้นปริญญาตรีและระดับบัณฑิตศึกษาในหลักสูตรนานาชาติ จากจุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย จำนวน 245 คน และกลุ่มตัวอย่างนักศึกษอเมริกันระดับปริญญาตรีและระดับบัณฑิตศึกษา จำนวน 330 คน กลุ่มตัวอย่างตอบมาตราวัด 2 มาตร คือ มาตรวัดรูปแบบการจัดการกับความขัดแย้งของ Rahim (1983) และมาตราวัดปัจเจกนิยม-คตินิยมของ Hui (1988) ภาษาที่ใช้ในเครื่องมือวิจัยทั้งหมดเป็นภาษาอังกฤษ

ผลการวิจัยพบว่า

1. วัฒนธรรมและเพศมีผลหลักอย่างมีนัยสำคัญต่อค่านิยมแบบรวมหมู่และแบบปัจเจกนิยม ( $p < .01$ )
2. คนไทยมีค่านิยมคตินิยม (collectivistic value) แตกต่างอย่างมีนัยสำคัญจากคนอเมริกันที่มีค่านิยมปัจเจกนิยม (individualistic value) ( $p < .001$ )
3. ผู้หญิงมีค่านิยมคตินิยมมากกว่าผู้ชาย ( $p < .001$ )
4. คนไทยใช้รูปแบบการจัดการกับความขัดแย้งแบบหลีกเลี่ยงปัญหา และยอมตามมากกว่าคนอเมริกัน ( $p$  ทั้งสองค่า  $< .001$ )
5. คนอเมริกันใช้รูปแบบการจัดการกับความขัดแย้งแบบบูรณาการใช้อำนาจ และประนีประนอมมากกว่าคนไทย ( $p$  ทั้งสามค่า  $< .001$ )
6. ผู้หญิงใช้รูปแบบการจัดการกับความขัดแย้งแบบยอมตาม หลีกเลี่ยง และประนีประนอมมากกว่าผู้ชาย ( $p$  ทั้งสามค่า  $< .001$ )
7. ผู้ชายมีรูปแบบการจัดการกับความขัดแย้งแบบใช้อำนาจมากกว่าผู้หญิง ( $p < .001$ )

สาขาวิชา.....จิตวิทยาสังคม.....ลายมือชื่อนิสิต..... นส. ภิสสร อุมะวิชนี  
ปีการศึกษา.....2549.....ลายมือชื่ออาจารย์ที่ปรึกษา.....

## 4878119938 : MAJOR SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

KEYWORD: SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY/ THEORY OF CONFLICTS/ CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES/ PROBLEM SOLVING STYLES/ GENDER DIFFERENCES/ INDIVIDUALISTIC-COLLECTIVISTIC DIFFERENCES/ INTERCULTURAL NEGOTIATION/INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION/

PISSARA UMAVIJANI: CULTURE, GENDER, AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES: COMPARISONS BETWEEN THAI AND AMERICAN STUDENTS

THESIS ADVISOR: ASSOC. PROF. THEERAPORN UWANNO, Ph. D., 126 pp.

This study was designed to explore the preferences for conflict management styles by Thai and American students and also by men and women. Thai participants were 245 undergraduate and graduate students who enrolled in international programs from Chulalongkorn University. American participants were 330 undergraduate and graduate students. Two measures, Rahim's Organizational Conflict Management Styles (Rahim, 1983) and Individualism-Collectivism Orientation (Hui, 1988), were used. The language in all instruments was English.

The results are as follow:

1. There are significant main effects of gender and culture on individualistic-collectivistic orientation ( $p < .001$ ).
2. Thais, who hold collectivistic values, differ significantly from Americans, who hold individualistic values ( $p < .001$ ).
3. Women have more collectivistic values than men ( $p < .001$ ).
4. Thais prefer using avoiding and obliging conflict management styles more than Americans do (both  $ps < .001$ ).
5. Americans prefer using integrating, dominating, and compromising conflict management styles more than Thais do (all  $ps < .001$ ).
6. Women prefer using avoiding, obliging, and compromising conflict management styles more than men do (all  $ps < .001$ ).
7. Men prefer using dominating conflict management style more than women do ( $p < .001$ ).

Field of Study ...SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY.....Student's signature.....

Academic Year .....2006..... Advisor's signature.....

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the process of completing my degree, many people participated in my academic experience, and I am greatly indebted to them. First, I would like to express my gratitude to Chulalongkorn University Graduate School who has provided me with financial support and a great opportunity to further my research and my data collection aboard.

First of all, I would like to express my deepest appreciation to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Theeraporn Uwanno, my thesis advisor. This thesis could not have been completed without his devotion of enormous amount of time in shaping and editing the content. His invaluable insights, high standard of excellence, immaculate editing skills, and immediate responses, have led to a substantially higher degree of the final product.

I am also very grateful to Asst. Prof. Dr. Kakanang Maneesri, Ajarn Jarungkul Burapavong, Ajarn Dr. Apitchaya Chaiwitikomwanich, and Ajarn Thipnapa Huansuriya, who played a great role in assisting me with their expertise and improving all thesis contents. Despite their busy schedules, they showed constant willingness and had unselfishly devoted hours of providing valuable advice and encouragement throughout the process. I also owe much to Ryan Mann and Prof. Sarah Sutro from Lesley University whose professional recommendations concerning intercultural matter substantially benefited the study. Their insightful comments and warm personality contributed greatly in the formation and analysis procedure of my thesis. I would like to thank Prof. Sylvia Cowan and Sharlene Cochrane from Lesley University, Hector Benevides, and Todd Hanson from University of California at Los Angeles, James Sriboonreung, and Leonard M. Silverman from University of Southern California, Asst. Prof. Andrew T. Ainsworth, Prof. Laurence S. Caretto, and Melvin Epstein from California State University at Northridge. Their professional guidance, expertise, and willingness in serving in data collection procedure for my thesis are matters of profound appreciation. I am greatly indebted to Singhapreecha family who have accommodated me and provided a great support for my data collection in the United States. Their dedication, time, psychological support, and insightful responses were of immeasurable values. Their kind hospitality enhanced the study, as well as enlightens me throughout the process. I express my heartfelt appreciation to the members of my family in Thailand who have been the greatest support and source of motivation for me throughout my graduate student career and my life. I further thank my mother, Assoc. Prof. Chutatip Umavijani for being my inspiration and my best friend. I would like to thank my aunts for always given me tremendous support. Many of my social psychology classmates in Thailand who have been a great source of emotional, as well as technical support, throughout my academic life, deserve my sincere thanks. Especially, Pomphan Sigkhaman, Panetha Silapanaporn, and *Sukhonta Mahaarcha*, who has always believed in me and has been of great help in so many facets of life.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

Conflicts are a major part of our lives. To have a relationship is to be in conflict. Conflict is a vital subject that needs to be explored. Conflict is one of the most frequently researched and discussed topics in the area of social psychology and organizational behavior (Putnam & Poole, 1992).

Conflict is defined from a social psychology perspective as the perceived incompatibilities by parties of the views, wishes, and desires that each holds (De Dreu, Harinck, & Van Vianen, 1999). Often, conflict occurs as an interpersonal phenomenon between two interdependent parties engaged in a joint activity. Being involved in an interpersonal conflict with similar others can prove to be uncomfortable and requires a great deal of energy to resolve; conflict between people with distinct perceptions and styles may arise even more easily and be more difficult to manage. This is especially true when differences are intercultural in nature. Because of the global market and the multiple benefits and gains from international trade, working in culturally diverse groups and multinational organizations is more common.

People's perceptions of conflicts are shaped by concepts already established in their minds. Therefore, it is important to understand the concept of culture that shapes people's thoughts. Numerous cross cultural studies have demonstrated how people's communication styles in conflict situations are influenced by their cultural expectations (Cushman & King, 1985). Managing conflict in a culturally sensitive manner can help the organization to make the best use of its diversity (Oetzel, Ting-Toomey, Yokochi, Masumoto, & Takai, 2000).

In the world of globalization, people from different cultural backgrounds increasingly have more chances to come into contact and work collaboratively. It is not surprising that conflict occasionally occurs when there is interaction. Interpersonal conflict is a symbolic product of human communication. It is a process of interaction between two or more interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources, and interference in achieving the goals (Donohue & Kolt, 1992; Folger & Poole, 1984, Hocker & Wilmot, 1985).

Intercultural conflict is a unique and interesting phenomenon that can facilitate group decision-making, lead to effective decisions, and greatly benefit an organization if managed constructively (Putnam & Poole, 1992). Other than speaking different languages and having different beliefs and values, people from different cultures also often have different approaches to and perceptions of conflict, which can affect their ability to achieve resolution.

On the other hand, conflict can be a destructive force if the organizational members fail to deal with it properly. While it is part of any culture, the way it is expressed, perceived, and dealt with varies from culture to culture. Implicit cultural norms guide people's behavior in conflict situations, and how effectively and appropriately they communicate shapes the perceptions of communication competence in the respective cultures.

### Theoretical Perspective

#### Definitions of Conflict

Conflict is one of the most frequently researched and discussed topics in the area of organizational behavior (Putnam & Poole, 1992). A conflict can be as small as disagreement or as large as a war. When picturing a conflict, people have traditionally

conjured such images as warfare, death, attack, destruction, and other form of uncontrollable fury.

Early definitions of conflict have focused on a wide variety of different phenomena. For example, Pondy (1969) has sorted these definitions into several categories: antecedent conditions, emotions, perceptions and behavior. Coser (1967) defines conflict as a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power, and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure, or eliminate the rivals. This definition was influenced by the cold war between the United States and the former Soviet Union. Conflict was viewed as a win-lose situation. Probably the most influential definition is that of Deutsch (1973), who states that a conflict exists whenever incompatible activity, an activity that may originate in one person, between two or more people, or between two or more groups, occurs. Moreover, Mack and Snyder (1973) suggest that two parties must be present, along with position scarcity or resource scarcity, in addition to behaviors that destroy, injure, thwart, or otherwise control another party or parties, one in which the parties can gain relatively only at each other's expense. Early social science definitions helped to distinguish conflict from simple "strain", "disagreement", or "controversy" (Schmidt, 1974). Interdependence was focused widely instead of opposition for contemporary definitions.

Jordan and Troth (2004) state that conflict arises when a difference between two or more people necessitates changes, in order for their engagement to continue and develop. The differences can not coexist without some adjustment. Parties are presented as inherently interdependent. Additionally, at least one person may need to change his or her perception of the situation.

Conflict is, sometimes, but not always, accompanied by anger or strong emotion. Seen as a perceived incompatibility of interests, conflict is often caused by a

misalignment of goals, motivations, or actions between two parties that can be real or only perceived to exist (Taylor & Moghaddam, 1994).

Moore (1986) shows that conflict ranges from avoidance to violence. Choices range from low coercion to increased coercion of the other party. For the purpose of this research, conflict is defined in Hocker and Wilmot (1997) as follows: Conflict is an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources, and interference from others in achieving their goals.

Conflict may be viewed as a feeling, a disagreement, a real or perceived incapability of interests, inconsistent worldviews, or a set of behaviors. Also, conflict can be viewed as occurring along cognitive (perception), emotional (feeling), and behavioral (action) dimensions.

#### Conflict as Perception

Conflict is a belief or understanding that one's own needs, interests, wants, or values are incompatible with someone else's set of perceptions. There are both objective and subjective elements to this cognitive dimension.

#### Conflict as Feeling

An emotional reaction to a situation or interaction that signals a disagreement of some kind is a conflict. The emotions felt might be fear, sadness, bitterness, anger, or hopelessness, or some amalgam of these. Often a conflict exists because one person feels in conflict with another, even though those feelings are not reciprocated by or even known to the other person. The behavioral component may be minimal, but the conflict is still very real to the person experiencing the feeling.

## Conflict as Action

Conflict also consists of the actions one takes to express feelings, articulate perceptions, and get needs met in a way that has the potential for interfering with someone else's ability to get his or her needs met. Conflict behavior may involve a direct attempt to make something happen at someone else's expense. The purpose of conflict behavior is either to express the conflict or to get one's needs met.

Alas, none of these dimensions are static. People can go in and out of conflict, and the strength or character of conflict along each dimension can change quickly and frequently. A change in the level of conflict in one dimension does not necessarily cause a similar change in the other dimensions. Sometimes an increase in one dimension is associated with a decrease in another dimension.

## Levels of Conflict

Conflict arises when people try to coordinate actions and activities with one another. According to Braiker and Kelly (1979) conflict exists at different levels of interdependence. Identifying where problems arise reveals the following three different levels of conflict:

- Level 1 conflict refers to problems involved in coordinating specific behaviors which refer to disputes over things.
- Level 2 conflict concerns coordination of relational norms and roles. This level entails disagreements about relational rules.
- Level 3 conflict regards personal characteristic and attitudes. These conflicts concern problems with personality, motives, qualities, faults, and beliefs.



In addition to having different levels, interpersonal conflict varies to the extent that it concerns actual differences or perceived differences. Conflicts can arise from real incompatibilities or from incompatibilities that are largely imagined (Deutsch, 1973).

### Interpersonal Conflict

The definition of interpersonal conflict varies on two features: behavior and episode (Canary, Capach, & Messman, 1995). These characteristics lead to four definitional approaches, each of which indicates properties of interpersonal conflict.

Table 1

*Prototypical Definitions of Interpersonal Conflict*

Approach	Definition and Example
1	Interpersonal conflict concerns any incompatibility between people that can be manifested in any behavior in any situation.
2	Interpersonal conflict refers to behaviors that explicitly show a disagreement between two people, for example, two consecutive oppositions.
3	Interpersonal conflict refers to situations that involve feelings of hostility between people.
4	Interpersonal conflict refers to behaviors that explicitly show a disagreement between two people involved in situations marked by feelings of hostility.

*Note.* Adapted from Canary, Cupach, and Messman (1995).

### **Approach 1: Interpersonal Conflict as Pervasive**

This approach views that conflict can be manifested in all behaviors, regardless of situational factors. According to this definition, people can convey disagreements with each other using a plethora of behaviors. This definition does not limit conflict to a particular kind of interaction.

### **Approach 2: Interpersonal Conflict as Explicit Disagreement**

Interpersonal conflict occurs in behavior but is not limited to a particular kind of situation. It occurs whenever people disagree with each other in a behavioral way, regardless of their emotional responses. Many scholars have examined different behaviors that can be the cause of conflict, according to this definition. For example, Vuchinich (1990) defined verbal conflict as a “distinctive speech activities...In verbal conflict, participants oppose the utterances, actions, or selves of one another in successive turns at talk. Linguistic, paralinguistic, or kinetics devices can be used to express opposition directly or indirectly”.

### **Approach 3: Interpersonal Conflict as a Hostile Episode**

Research shows that people can easily identify conflict episodes. Episodes are situations that have a recognizable beginning and end, which can vary widely in the minds of different people (Pearce, 1976). People often identify conflict episodes by referring to their own feelings- hostility, depression, or some other emotion that causes them to recognize a situation as conflict. This definition centers on the individual's experience more than other definitions.

#### Approach 4: Interpersonal Conflict as Disagreement in Particular Episodes

As stated on p. 4, Hocker and Wilmot (1995, p. 21) offer this approach to interpersonal conflict: “an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources, and interference from the other party in achieving their goals”. This definition specifies conflict in terms of behavior (expressed struggle) and episode (perception of incompatible goals, scarce resources, and interference). It implies that people use particular behaviors when faced with incompatibility. This approach emphasizes conflict as something that is communicated; the disagreement must be expressed with someone to have an interpersonal conflict.

### History of Conflict Handling Styles Philosophies

#### Conflict Tactics, Strategies, and Styles

Much research that has been conducted to study style preferences over a person's lifetime based on genetic predispositions and life experiences, such as introversion/extroversion, family background, and sex. Constructive conflict management depends on the ability to choose from a wide repertoire of styles and tactics to support a specific desired outcome. The notion that “striking together” isn't always negative is not new. Primitive humanity discovered that by striking iron against flint and catching the resultant sparks in a nest of dry, loosely woven fibers, they could kindle the fire to warm themselves. In 1964, management and social science theorists began to document potential positives in conflict that was controlled and guided.

The history of conflict philosophies and definitions started in the 1940s. Traditionalist philosophy sees conflict as destructive and, therefore, to be eliminated. Conflict resolution, defined as “the process used by parties in conflict to reach a settlement” (Sweeney & Carruthers, 1996, p. 328), first gained professional interest in the 1960s due to seminal research conducted by Blake and Mouton (1964).

Conflict styles have been researched more than any other topics in interpersonal conflict management. A variety of ways to classify styles has been developed. The classification ranges from the two-style approach to the five-style approach:

- Two styles: Cooperation and competition (Deutsch, 1949; Tjosvold, 1990)
- Three styles: Nonconfrontation, solution orientation, and control (Putnam & Wilson, 1982)
- Four styles: Yielding, problem solving, inaction, and contending (Pruitt 1983); accommodating/harmonizing, analyzing/preserving, achieving/directing, and affiliating/perfecting (Gilmore & Fraleigh, 1992); aggressive/confrontive, assertive/persuasive, observant/introspective, avoiding/reactive. (Robert 1982)
- Five styles: Integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding, and compromising (Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Magner 1995); collaboration, accommodation, competition, avoidance, and compromise (Thomas 1976; Kilman & Thomas 1975)

Table 2

*Psychometric Properties of Conflict Measurements: The Brief Description of the Taxonomies of Conflict Styles*

Number of Styles	Researcher(s)	Year	Taxonomy
Two	Deutsch	1949, 1990	Cooperation and Competition
Two	Tjosvold	1990	Cooperation and Competition
Three	Follett	1926, 1940	Dominating (forcing), Compromise, Integration
Three	Putnam and Wilson	1982	Non confrontation, Solution Orientation, Control
Three	Hocker and Wilmot	1991	Avoidance, Competitive(distributive), collaborative (integrative)
Four	Pruitt	1983	Yielding, Problem Solving, Inaction, Contending
Five	Blake and Mouton	1964	Integrating (collaborating), Obliging (accommodating), Compromising, Dominating (forcing), Avoiding
Five	Thomas	1976	Integrating (collaborating), Obliging (accommodating), Compromising, Dominating (forcing), Avoiding
Five	Rahim and Banoma	1979	Integrating (collaborating), Obliging (accommodating), Compromising, Dominating (forcing), Avoiding

Blake and Mouton (1964) have developed the managerial grid, a five-category scheme for classifying behavioral styles or modes of handling social conflict, in which various management styles are represented. They proposed that the styles varied on two dimensions, the concern for people and the concern for production.

The five-style approach is widely popular among conflict researchers and trainers nowadays. Kilman and Thomas (1975) most clearly defined five styles when they are graphically located according to two dimensions: (1) concern for the self and (2) concern for the other. By mapping these two concerns on the "Managerial Grid," five discrete styles for resolving conflict resulted: smoothing (high concern for people and low concern for production); withdrawing (low concern for both people and production); compromising (medium concern for production and people); problem solving (high concern for production and people); and forcing (high concern for production versus low concern for people). For example, an individual who is ultimately concerned with meeting production goals, and is willing to sacrifice the desires of others (relationships) to reach these goals would fall under the forcing style of conflict resolution. At the opposite end of the grid, someone who is far more concerned with preserving the goodwill of others may choose not to press their particular goals in a conflict, resulting in the style of smoothing. Another person might feel both relationships and production are equally high in importance, exhibiting the style of problem-solving, in which win-win solutions are generated. On the other hand, for someone who dislikes conflict of any kind, neither meeting production goals nor retaining relationships may be important enough to risk engaging; the style of withdrawing would then be a probable choice. Finally, for someone who is willing to give up some of both goals and relationship in order to resolve conflict, there is a style in the middle referred to as compromising. When these basic styles are understood, one can predict for each how a man operating under that style is likely to handle conflict (Blake & Mouton, 1970).

<b>ASSERTIVENESS</b> Concerns for self	Dominating/Competing		Integrating/Collaborating
		Compromising	
	Avoiding/Withdrawing		Obliging/Accommodating
	<b>COOPERATIVENESS</b> Concerns for other		

*Figure 1*

Theoretical interrelations among five styles of conflict management in terms of two dimensions (*Adapted from Rahim 1983*).

The theoretical distances among the five behavioral styles are specifiable geometrically. Figure 1 presents the conflict management grid as a square matrix, compromising at its midpoint. There are four distances: avoiding to accommodating, accommodating to collaborating, collaborating to competing, and competing to avoiding, with the same theoretical distance in each case.

Thomas and Kilmann (1987) assume negotiation styles are independent of a particular context, and that individual negotiation behaviors can therefore be assessed across situations. Negotiation styles are also relatively stable, personality-driven clusters of behaviors and reactions that arise in negotiation encounters. Although the labels for the styles differ from one author to another, the terms used here are drawn from Rahim (1983), who has constructed a self-report instrument to measure people's conflict

handling style in the workplace. His measure has been successfully used in more informal contexts as well. The five styles are as follows:

1. Integrating (similar to integration strategy mentioned earlier) this personality is both assertive and cooperative-the opposite of the avoider. Collaborators attempt to work with the other person to find some solution which fully satisfies the concerns of both persons. They dig into an issue to identify the underlying concerns of the two conflicting individuals and try to find an alternative which meets both sets of concerns.

Collaborating between the parties might take the form of exploring a disagreement to learn from each other's insights, concluding to resolve some condition which would otherwise have them competing for resources, or confronting and trying to find a creative solution to an interpersonal problem. Collaborators are "win-win" negotiators who believe that "two heads are better than one".

2. Avoidance reflects a low level of concern with both one's goals and other's goals. Avoidance is always possible as no-win solution. The negotiator withdraws from the conflict and forgoes an agreement. In this he is serving neither his own interests nor those of his opponent. Avoiders are unassertive and uncooperative. They do not immediately pursue their own concerns or those of others. The conflict is never addressed by avoiders. Their avoidance may take the form of diplomatically sidestepping an issue, postponing the issue until a later or better time, or, ostrich-like, completely withdrawing from the threatening situation. Avoiders tend to "leave well enough alone".

3. Dominating or Competing: This personality is assertive and uncooperative. Such power-oriented behaviors use all available means to attain their sought after goals, persuasive powers, pulling rank, or quite simply stronger economic position. They pursue their own concerns at the other person's expense. They use whatever powers seem appropriate to win their position-including their ability to argue or their rank.



4. Obliging or Accommodating: It is the opposite side of competing. This individual is unassertive and cooperative-the opposite of the competitor. Accommodators often neglect their own concerns in order to satisfy the concerns of others. Accommodators may be self-sacrificing "martyrs". Accommodating may take the form of selfless generosity or charity, obeying another person's orders even when they would prefer not to, or yielding to another's point of view. The stereotypical, doting mother typifies the accommodating personality. Accommodators prefer to "kill their enemies with kindness".

5. Compromising: On the negotiating continuum, this personality lies somewhere between assertiveness and cooperativeness. The goal of the compromiser is to find an expedient, mutually acceptable solution which partially satisfies both parties. The compromiser is in the middle ground between the competitor and the avoider. The compromiser gives up more than the competitor, but less than the accommodator. The compromiser addresses an issue more directly than the avoider, but does not explore it in as much depth or detail as the collaborator. Compromising might mean exchanging concessions or seeking a quick, middle-ground position. The compromiser lives by the phrase "let's split the difference".

These styles are related to the conflict handling strategies previously discussed. The difference is simply that a conflict strategy represents a general approach within a particular episode of conflict, whereas conflict style depicts tendencies and preferences for handling all conflict. Integrating and compromising styles are similar to the integrative strategy, although pushing for premature compromise could be considered a distributive strategy. Avoiding and obliging styles are similar to avoidance strategy, and the dominating style resembles the distributive strategy. Although people all have preferable ways of managing disagreements, they do not always behave accordingly. A supervisor, for example, may usually show an integrating style when managing conflict with subordinates. When faced with a specific of a noncompliant or belligerent subordinate, however, the supervisor may shift to a more coercive, distributive strategy (Conrad, 1991).

Table 3

*Conflict Management Strategies and Outcomes*

Conflict Management Strategies	Conflict Outcomes
<b><u>Avoiding</u></b>	
Definition: One party does not pursue own concerns or those of other party; withdrawal and suppression	Lose - lose Unassertive, uncooperative
Uses: As a cool down mechanism when confronting issues so damaging as to outweigh benefits; need for information; for trivial issues; when no chance to satisfy concerns; when other party more powerful	Short-term resolution
<b><u>Compromising</u></b>	
Definition: One party gives up something to satisfy both parties; middle position	No win - no lose
Uses: "Quick fix" for temporary settlement of complex issues; for inconsequential issues; when goals important but not worth major disruption; backup when collaboration and competition fail	Moderately assertive, cooperative Short-term resolution
<b><u>Collaborating</u></b>	
Definition: One party works with other party to find solution that satisfies both parties, cooperative, confronting issues	Win - win Fully assertive, cooperative
Uses: Merge insights from different perspectives for crucial issues; gain understanding; gain commitment to change; solve disruptive emotional issues; spread responsibility and risk taking	Long-term resolution
<b><u>Accommodating</u></b>	
Definition: One party neglects own concerns to satisfy concerns of others; emphasizes similarities, minimizes differences, self-sacrificing	Lose - win Unassertive, cooperative
Uses: For routine issues; when one is wrong; when issue more important to other party; when outmatched; to build credits for later use; to preserve harmony; to teach others	Short-term resolution
<b><u>Competing</u></b>	
Definition: One party wins, one party loses; power oriented; high concern for self, low concern for others	Win - lose Assertive, uncooperative
Uses: Quick decisions; unpopular causes; issues vital to organization; defense against people who exploit noncompetitive behaviors; knowledgeable person able to make decision	Short-term resolution

*Note.* From Thomas & Kilmann, 1974.

## Conceptions of Culture

"Culture is more often a source of conflict than of synergy. Cultural differences are a nuisance at best and often a disaster" (Hofstede, 1980).

The term culture first appeared in an English dictionary in the 1920s (Kroeber, 1949). It has a number of other meanings, all deriving from its original Latin meaning: the cultivation of soil. The first use in an anthropological work was by Tylor (1871), who defined culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." Two widely used definitions were later proposed: Linton (1936) suggested that culture means "the total social heredity of mankind" and Herskovits (1948) emphasized that "Culture is the man-made part of the human environment."

In contrast to these brief definitions, Wissler (1923) has lengthy listings of what composed culture: speech, material traits, art, knowledge, religion, society, property, government, and war. Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) conducted a classic survey of culture in many definitions and suggested that six major classes of definition of culture were to be found in the anthropological literature:

1. Descriptive definitions are those that attempt to list any and all aspects of human life and activity thought by the writer to be an example of what is meant by "culture". To Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952), descriptive definitions tend to emphasize the view of "culture as a comprehensive totality".
2. Historical definitions, as in Linton's (1936), tend to emphasize the accumulation of tradition over time, rather than enumerating the totality or range of cultural phenomena. The term "heritage" and "heredity" are frequently used in these definitions, but the context clearly indicates that no biological factors are thought to be involved in the accumulation.

3. Normative definitions emphasize the shared rules which govern the activity of a group of people. Normative definitions require us to dig into the overt activity and try to discover what lies behind it, unlike the descriptive and historical definitions, where the cultural life being referred to is clearly observable.
4. Psychological definitions included notions such as adjustment, problem-solving, learning, and habits. It is believed that culture is learned, and the result of this learning is the establishment of habits in a particular group. This includes both implied (e.g. attitudes) and observable (e.g. habits) cultural phenomena. Some cross-cultural psychologists assert that cultures can be studied and described on the basis of psychological data collected from samples of individuals, and then aggregated to the level of their group. The most explicit statement of this belief has been by Triandis (1996), who uses the notion of cultural syndrome to refer to “a pattern of shared attitudes, beliefs, categorizations, self-definitions, norms, role definition and values that is organized around a theme” (p. 407). He argues that cultures can be studied and understood using both anthropological methods at the cultural level, and we can also use data from the individual level. The cultural and individual difference analyses are complementary and allow us to describe cultures.
5. Structural definitions emphasize the pattern or organization of culture. This view is related to descriptive category. The central view is that culture forms an integrated pattern of interrelated features.

Scholars defined culture in many ways. The anthropological consensus definition that will be used in this research is:

Culture consists in patterned ways of thinking, feeling, and reacting, acquired and transmitted mainly by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture

consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values (Kluckhohn, 1951, p. 389).

Hofstede (1980) treated culture as the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another. It implied Kluckhohn's more extensive definition which included values; systems of values are core element of culture. (Hofstede, 1980) Also, he succinctly explained the trait of culture in his article, "culture doesn't exist" (Hofstede, 2002). He explained that it doesn't exist in the same way values and dimensions don't exist because they are constructs, which have to prove their usefulness by the ability to explain and predict behavior. When economic, political or institutional factors provide no better explanations, the construct of culture is needed. The word culture is usually reserved for societies because they are the most "complete" human groups that exist; a society is a social system characterized by the highest level of self-sufficiency in relation to its environments (Parsons, 1977).

#### Aspects of Life Touched by Culture

The word culture is used in many different ways because it touches so many aspects of life. In an early work, Murdock, Ford, and Hudson (1971) described 79 different aspects of life that culture had something to do with. Barry (1980) rearranged this list into eight broad categories, which were also reported by Berry et al. (1992):

- General characteristics
- Food and clothing
- Housing and technology
- Economy and transportation
- Individual and family activities
- Community and government

- Welfare, religion, and science
- Sex and the life cycle

Societal norms are the mechanisms in societies that permit the maintenance of stability in culture patterns. They consist of value systems (the mental software) shared by a major groups in population. The societal norms have led to the development and pattern maintenance of institutions in society with particular structures and ways of functioning. These include the family, education systems, political systems, and legislation (Hofstede, 1980).

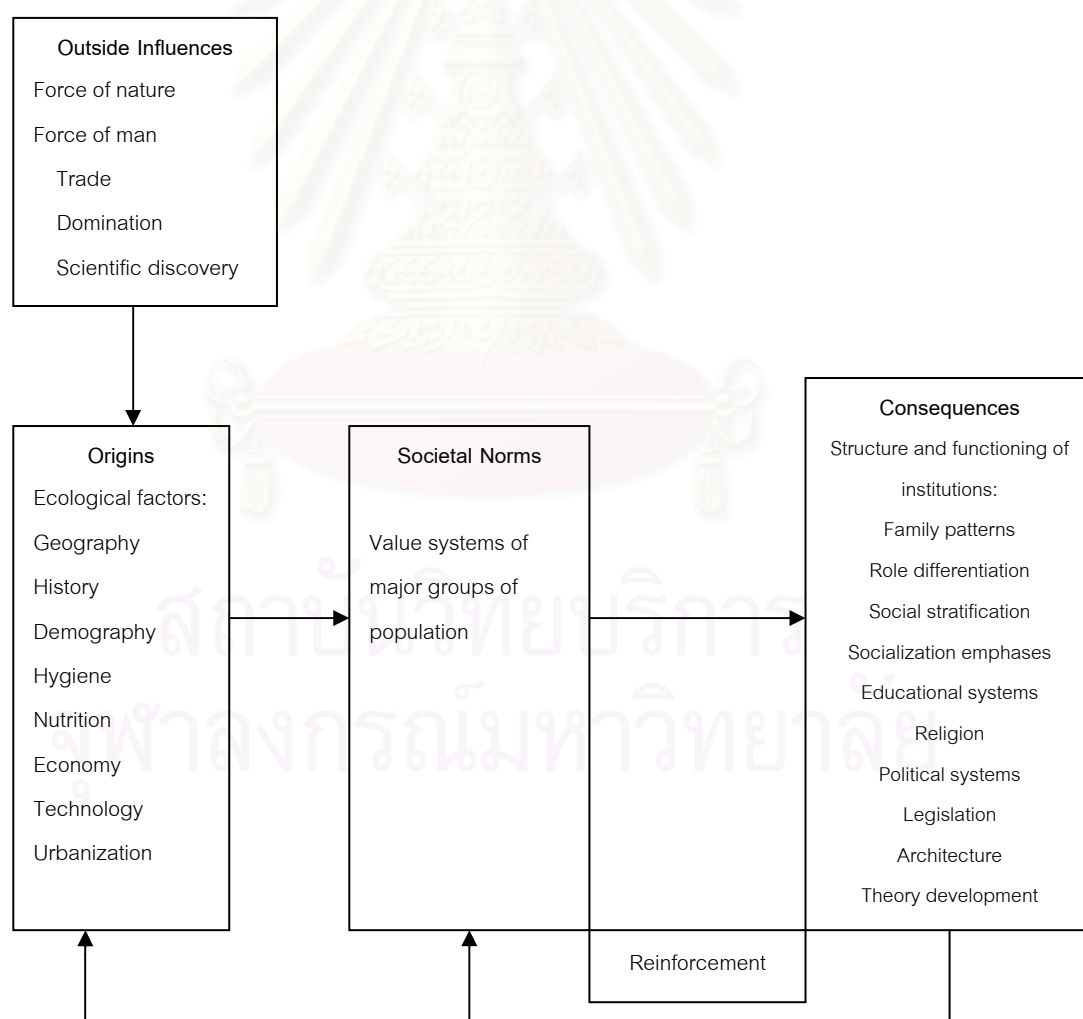


Figure 2 The stabilizing of culture patterns (Hofstede, 1980, p. 12).

The homeostatic (self-regulating) model demonstrated culture as mental programming. In order to understand cultural differences, one needs to do a comparative study of history. Changes supposedly come mainly from the outside, either through forces of nature or the influence of human beings. Norm changes occur through shifts in ecological conditions and will be gradual unless the outside influences are particularly violent. One of the most effective ways of changing mental programs of individuals is to change behavior first (Hofstede, 1980).

### Dimensions of Culture

During 1978-1983, Geert Hofstede conducted detailed interviews with hundreds of IBM employees in 53 countries. Through standard statistical analysis of fairly large data sets, he was able to determine patterns of similarities and differences among the replies. From this data analysis, he formulated his theory that world cultures vary along consistent, fundamental dimensions.

In the 1990s, Hofstede published a more accessible version of his research publication in *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind* (1991). His focus was not on defining culture as refinement of the mind (or “highly civilized” attitudes and behavior) but rather on highlighting essential patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting that are well established by late childhood. Hofstede identified five independent dimensions and rated 53 countries on indices for each dimension, normalized to values of 0 to 100. Each was rooted in a basic problem with which all societies have to cope. His five dimensions of culture are the followings;

- Power-distance
- Collectivism vs. individualism
- Femininity vs. masculinity

- Uncertainty avoidance
- Long- vs. short-term orientation

In this research the dimension of individualism vs. collectivism will be explored closely because it can reflect conflict handling behaviors of people.

### Individualism vs. Collectivism

This dimension reflected the way people live together and it has many implications for values and behavior. Individualism in cultures implies loose ties; everyone is expected to look after one's self or immediate family but no one else. Collectivism implies that people are integrated from birth into strong, cohesive groups that protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty. Hofstede (1980) found that individualistic cultures value personal time, freedom, challenge, and such extrinsic motivators as material rewards at work. In family relations, they value honesty and truth, talking things out, using guilt to achieve behavioral goals, and maintaining self-respect. Their societies and governments place individual social-economic interests over the group, maintain strong rights to privacy, nurture strong private opinions, restrain the power of the state in the economy, emphasize the political power of voters, maintain strong freedom of the press, and profess the ideologies of self-actualization, self-realization, self-government, and freedom. The government in collectivistic society may invade private life and regulate opinions, favor laws and rights for groups over individuals, dominate the economy, control the press, and profess the ideologies of harmony, consensus, and equality. Based on this definition, individualism and collectivism may influence the following aspects that have an impact on conflict management styles:



- Motivation based on personal achievement: maximized (expect the extraordinary) for individualist cultures vs. underplayed (in favor of group achievement) for collectivist cultures.
- Images of success: demonstrated through materialism and consumerism vs. achievement of social-political agendas.
- Rhetorical style: controversial/argumentative speech and tolerance or encouragement of extreme claims vs. official slogans and subdued hyperbole and controversy.
- Importance given individuals vs. products shown by themselves or with groups.
- Underlying sense of social morality: emphasis on truth vs. relationships.
- Emphasis on change: new and unique vs. tradition and history.
- Willingness to provide personal information vs. protection of personal data differentiating the individual from the group.

Hofstede (1980) notes that some cultural relativism is necessary: it is difficult to establish absolute criteria for what is noble and what is disgusting. There is no escaping bias; all people develop cultural values based on their environment and early training as children. Not everyone in a society fits the cultural pattern precisely, but there is enough statistical regularity to identify trends and tendencies. These trends and tendencies should not be treated as defective or used to create negative stereotypes but recognized as different patterns of values and thought. In a multi-cultural world, it is necessary to cooperate to achieve practical goals without requiring everyone to think, act, and believe identically.

Although there are many potential dimensions in which cultures differ, one dimension that receives consistent attention from intercultural researchers around the world is individualism/collectivism. Of Hofstede's (1980) four dimensions, individualism and collectivism are undoubtedly the most investigated cultural syndromes (Triandis, 1995).

Individualism and collectivism refer to the degree to which a culture encourages, fosters, and facilitates the needs, wishes, desires, and values of an autonomous and unique self over those of a group. Individualism and collectivism refer to the nature of the relationship between the individual and the group or the difference between self-actualization and collectivity (Parsons, 1949). In the individualism dimension, sociologist contrasts the community-focused (*Gemeinschaft*: low individualism) relationships of small villages with the association-based (*Gesellschaft*: high individualism) relationships of urban societies.

#### Individualism

Hofstede (1980) defined individualism as a focus on rights above duties, a concern for oneself and immediate family, an emphasis on personal autonomy and self-fulfillment, and the basing of one's identity on one's personal accomplishments. The core element of individualism is the assumption that individuals are independent of one another. From this core, a number of plausible consequences or implications of individualism can be discerned. Schwartz (1990) defined individualistic societies as fundamentally contractual, consisting of narrow primary groups and negotiated social relations, with specific obligations and expectations focusing on achieving status. Individualism refers to the broad value tendencies of people in a culture to emphasize individual identity over group identity, individual rights over group obligations, and individual achievements over group concerns. In individualistic culture, personal needs and goals take precedence over the needs of others. Members of these cultures see themselves as separate and autonomous individuals (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Individualism is expressed in interpersonal conflict through the strong assertion of personal opinions, the revealing of personal emotions, and personal accountability for any conflict problem or mistake. The self in individualist cultures has been described as self-contained, isolated, independent, and clearly bounded (Markus & Kitayama; Sampson, 1989; Shweder & Bourne, 1984), suggesting a greater degree of social separation and autonomy. Waterman (1984) defined normative individualism as a focus

on personal responsibility and freedom of choice, living up to one's potential, and respecting the integrity of others.

### Collectivism

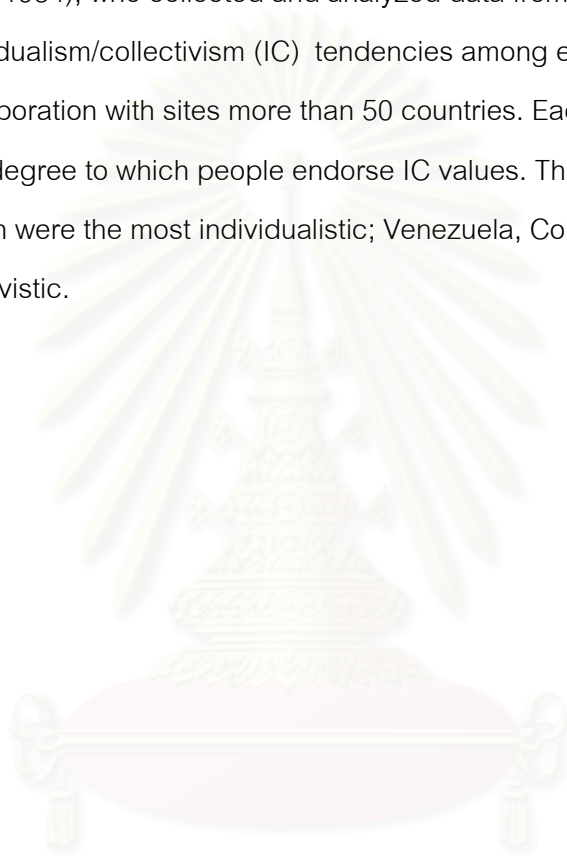
Collectivism refers to broad value tendencies of people in a culture to emphasizing group identity over individual identity, group obligations over individual rights, and group-oriented concerns over individual wants and desires. (Hofstede, 1980, 1991; Triandis, 1995). Individual needs are sacrificed to satisfy the group. The primacy of social identity for collectivist self-understanding entails a commitment to fulfilling ingroup expectations. Self-acceptance is largely a reflection of social acceptance, and is therefore heavily dependent on fidelity to normative prescriptions and proscriptions for personal behavior. Accordingly, collectivist enculturation promotes enhanced sensitivity to social evaluation (Okazaki, 1997). Heightened evaluative sensitivity enables the collectivist to be responsive to shifting social demands and to rapidly correct for any inadvertent deviations or transgressions that threaten to produce discord and friction (Kitayama, Markus, & Lieberman, 1995; Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, & Norasakkunkit, 1997). Collectivism is manifested in interpersonal conflict through the representation of collective opinions or ideas, the restraint of personal emotional expressions, and group accountability, if possible, for the conflict problem. The self in collectivist cultures has been characterized as enmeshed, ensemble, interdependent, and contextualized, emphasizing its socially contingent nature.

#### Theoretical work on individualism-collectivism

A considerable body of literature demonstrates the theoretical relevance and empirical utility of individualism/collectivism. These cultural dimensions are advantageous to theory and research because they can be used to predict and interpret cultural differences without relying on stereotypes, personal anecdotes, or impressions.

Moreover, there is congruence in the conceptual understanding among cross-cultural researchers around the world (Hui & Triandis, 1986).

Individualism and collectivism received renewed attention through the work of Hofstede (1980, 1984), who collected and analyzed data from a questionnaire assessing individualism/collectivism (IC) tendencies among employees in an international corporation with sites more than 50 countries. Each country was rank-ordered by the degree to which people endorse IC values. The United States, Australia, and Great Britain were the most individualistic; Venezuela, Columbia, and Pakistan were the most collectivistic.



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Table 4

*Country Individualism Index (IDV) Values Based on the Factor Scores of the First Factor Found in a 14-Work Goals in Hofstede's (2001) Study*

Country	Country Individualism Index		M	SD
	(IDV)			
	Actual	Predicted		
U.S.A.	91	95	93.00	2.82
Australia	90	62	76.00	19.79
Great Britain	89	74	81.50	10.60
India	48	34	41.00	9.89
Japan	46	60	53.00	9.89
Argentina	46	47	46.50	0.70
Philippines	32	23	27.5	6.36
Singapore	20	25	22.5	3.53
Thailand	20	19	19.5	0.70
Taiwan	17	27	22.00	7.07
Mean of 39 countries	51	50	50.5	0.70

Work goal scores were computed for a stratified sample of seven occupations at two points in time. Actual values and values predicted on the basis of multiple regression on wealth, latitude, and organization size.

### Measuring Individualism/Collectivism

One of the best-known attempt to measure IC comes from Hofstede's (1980, 1984) previously mentioned study. His survey consisted of 126 questions clustered around four major themes: satisfaction, perception, personal goals and beliefs, and demographics. However, Hofstede's measurement method was not designed to generate scores for individuals; rather, the unit of analysis was country.

Triandis (1995) reviewed 20 studies that designed and tested different scales to measure IC on the individual level. Triandis, McCusker, and Hui (1990) used a multimethod approach to measuring IC that represented an evolution not only in method but also in thinking. They viewed IC as a cultural syndrome that includes values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. They treated the various psychological domains of subjective culture as an entire collective rather than as separate aspects of culture. Their multimethod approach included ratings of the social content of the self, perceptions of homogeneity of ingroups and outgroups, attitudes and values ratings, and perceptions of social behavior as a function of social distance. Participants were classified as either individualist or collectivist on the basis of their scores on each method. On the individual level, Triandis refers to individualism and collectivism as idiocentrism and allocentrism, respectively (Triandis et al., 1986).

## The Definition of Intercultural Conflict

Intercultural conflict is defined as the perceived incompatibility of values, norms, processes, or goals between a minimum of two cultural parties over identity, relational, and substantive issues.

Intercultural conflict often starts off with different expectations concerning appropriate or inappropriate behavior in an interaction episode. Violations of expectation, in turn, often influence the effectiveness of how members in two cultures negotiate their interests or goals in the interaction. If inappropriate or ineffective negotiation behavior continues, the miscommunication can very easily spiral into a complex, polarized conflict.

Not all intercultural conflicts are caused by miscommunication or misunderstanding. Some intercultural conflicts arise because of deep-seated hatred, centuries of antagonism, and clear understanding. However, most everyday intercultural conflicts that we encounter can be traced to cultural miscommunication or ignorance. As cultural beings, we are socialized or “programmed” by the values and norms of our culture to think and behave in certain ways. Our family, peer groups, educational institutions, mass media system, political system, and religious institutions are some of the forces that shape and mold our cultural and personal values. Our learned values and norms are, in turn, expressed through the way we communicate.

### Culture Variability Perspective

Culture refers to a group-level construct that embodies a distinctive system of traditions, beliefs, values, norms, rituals, symbols, and meanings that is shared by majority of interacting individuals in a community. Although there are many potential dimensions in which cultures differ, a dimension that receives consistent attention from

intercultural researchers around the world is individualism/collectivism.

Individualism/collectivism explains group-level differences between cultures. Research in different regions of the world indicates that individualism/collectivism is particularly relevant to explaining conflict interactions across various cultures (Leung, 1987, 1988; Ting-Toomey et al., 1991; Triandis, 1995). This value-based dimension can provide with a more in-depth understanding of why members of two contrasting cultures approach conflict differently.

#### Western Individualism

Individualism was first used to describe the negative influence of individual rights on the well-being of the commonwealth. The rising tide of the individual rights movement was feared; it was thought that individualism would soon make community “crumble away, be disconnected into the dust and powder of individuality”. In this usage, *individualism* describes a worldview antagonistic to community and collective social structure.

#### Thai Style of Managing Conflict: Psychology of Thai People

##### Understanding Thai People

In order to understand Thai style of conflict management, the factors that shaped Thai personality must be explored. Behavior patterns of Thai people are the reflection of attitude and values.



### Factors that Shaped Thai People

- Religion
- Cosmological and astrological beliefs
- Concepts of Supernatural Power

These factors dictate the concept and form of the government structure, rituals, and affect the timing of most human activities. Religion is a factor that shaped Thai people. The Thai value system is inseparable from the Thai localization of Theravada Buddhism (Mole, 1973). The cycle of life throughout every level of Thai society revolves directly and indirectly around activities associated with Buddhism. The value system tends to center around personal values rather than national or political values.

### Religion

Mole (1973) stated in his work that any meaningful discussion of Thai values and behavior patterns demands knowledge of Buddhism by Theravada adherents in Thailand. Most Thais cannot give logical explanations for their cultural patterns. Nevertheless, they are so acculturated by these that certain modes of thinking and acting have become as natural as breathing to them. Therefore, for a more in-depth understanding of Thai behavior patterns, there are some terms that need to be explained;

### The Law of Kamma/Karma

Kamma or Karma means action. It is the law of causality in the ethical sphere. Also, it is another way of saying that every action has a reaction with the doer reaping the benefits, whether they are good or bad. Good actions earn merit while immoral or ignorant actions accrue demerit.

## Karma and its effect on Conflict Management Style

The concern of Karma effected Thai people in perceiving conflict. Although Thais do not expect an immediate Nirvana (the highest state of being Void or beyond all sensation) but they do seem to expect more concrete rewards from their actions. If this expectation can not be fulfilled, Thais can perceive confusion as a conflict.

Karma has another effect on Thai perception of problems. It can increase the 'avoiding' tendency because they believe that a person who causes conflict will be subject to the laws of Karma themselves. Therefore they find no need to interfere with problems. This detachment can create the unwanted outcome of NIMBY (Not in My Back Yard) when people ignore their civic responsibilities. In terms of justice and equality, if one holds a higher status within Thai society, people often interpret that their karma is better and they earned merit (and therefore earned their societal status) in previous existences. People seem to ignore the validity of the selecting procedure which can be corrupted and cause detriment to the society in the long run.

## Thai Social Stratification

Thailand has a well defined social stratification with little social equality demonstrated or expected. Thais have the need to clearly identify the proper role of one another. Almost everyone is older or younger, superior or subordinate. These are so fixed that few Thai have an equal status. The respect in superior-subordinate roles which is reinforced by cultural training reflects the problem solving style in Thai people. They tend to avoid direct criticism and constructive argument in order to preserve a good relationship. This can prevent the collaborative approach of conflict management when two parties communicate directly to find the best solutions.

## Thai Individualism

The main difference of individualism between Americans and Thais lies in their self-image. Americans view themselves as unique individuals who stand on their own feet, fighting their own battles and winning against overwhelming odds. The Thai individual role in society, even when factors of Buddhism are considered, seems to be different from other Asian countries which seem to be more family-oriented.

Thai social structure appears to be predicated primarily upon the individual. Embree (1950) declared that Thai society is divergent from all other Asian societies and designated it as a “loosely-structured social system”. A Thai folk-saying expresses the same thought by declaring, “One who can do as one likes is a genuine Thai”.

Phillips (1965) in his excellent study, *Thai Peasant Psychology*, explained that the Thai quality of individuality in the Thai social system is based upon the theme that “relations between people should be friendly, genial and correct, but need little personal commitment or involvement”. Thai people have the readiness to face all face-to-face encounters in social rituals, but when problems arise, they tend to have little or no commitment based on Embree’s (1950) terminology “loosely-structured social system”. They tend to consider interpersonal frustrations unbearable. Also, they try to hesitate or avoid negative emotional expression toward events or people. Phillips also pointed out that the result of this is that most Thai rarely live at, or even reach, a high emotional pitch. Relationships with other people are characterized by a large measure of reciprocity.

## Thai Individualism and Conflict Management

When Thais do something for each other, they expect the other to do something in return. If their expectation is unmet, they no longer feel any obligation to execute what they were expected to do. Such patterns of high cooperativeness can lead to non-constructive problem solving because Thai people are prone to preserve the interpersonal relationship by using avoiding, accommodating, or compromising style.

Meanwhile, the avoiding style of conflict handling can be reached if one party cannot fulfill the other's expectations, but without communicating directly, Thais tend to avoid problems, and, if possible, leave without explaining the situation to the other party. However, there are ways that lead to a constructive approach if only Thais can communicate with each other clearly and directly when conflict arises. Therefore, the conflict handling styles can be varied depend on the individual's background, perception, and roles in Thai society.

#### Attitude and Behavior toward Authority

Unlike Americans, Thais seemed to accept authority with less obvious tension. The wisdom or competence and efficiency of the authority figure are not too openly questioned. Passiveness to authority seems to be an acceptable solution to Thais who accept the concept of power as a by-product of virtue, or Buddhist merit. However, if the authority figure does not honor the accepted reciprocal relationships or behave in a proper way, the oppressed individual may quietly cease to follow. This usually will be done without rudeness, discourteousness or any public display of indignation. Even when misuse of power occurs, Thai faith in cosmic retribution remains undisturbed. Thais seem to expect their leaders to be benevolent regardless of rank or distance whether in the government, military, or social life. Normally, Thais are culturally pressured to leave things as they are and refrain from speech or action that may imply criticism. This same social pressure is exerted to keep one on his level and not attempt to assume authority on a higher social, government, or military level.

#### Thai Characteristic

Chai yen or "cool heart" describes an ideal character of the Thai. To have a cool heart is to be uninvolved, not annoyed and to remain in control of one's emotional self. One avoids unhappy situations and takes whatever pleasure is available from each

circumstance or situation. One of the basic rules of Thai behavior is to avoid face-to-face conflicts. Being cool does not imply that life has no threat, anxiety, temptation or difficulty. Instead it marks a posture by which one conveys the impression of his capacity to be at ease and serene in spite of these problems. Coolness is a visible attitude expressing freedom from agitation, denoting one's capacity to transcend temptations of conflict, aggression, greed, outbursts of enthusiasm or discouragement.

Kreng Chai means respect for superiors with humility and obedience to authority. It is the limitation of action that one sets for ones-self which is aimed at not interfering with others' personal freedom. This trait is important in the Thai value system. It goes along with the Buddhist thought and tends to discourage criticism while also working against social mobility. Moreover, this trait discourages negotiation between socially distant individuals. Also, it blocks any direct communication or criticism. As a result, this trait prevents Thai people from approaching constructive conflict management and leads to the style of compromising and avoiding instead.

#### Thai Style of Problem Solving

The characteristics that Americans like to attribute to themselves are a desire to attain a greater professional skill, technical proficiency, to improve oneself, and enjoy the benefits thereof. They acquired a reputation of setting and following a fast and continuous work pace which is frequently criticized by others. Americans approach most problems as impersonal and technical. However, Thais seem to look at the problems as the manipulation of personal relationships rather than upon the execution of sheer professional competence. While Americans are motivated by self-improvement and are achievement-oriented, the Thais are a personally oriented society which is outweighed by many other factors. To many Americans, "A problem identified is a problem half-solved". This logic system is aimed to create a pragmatic approach to problem solving. But in Thailand, identification of a problem is by no means any indication that a solution will be formulated and executed. When problems arise, Thais

seem to ignore the cause of inefficiency. Things are sometimes left undone completely which can lead to frustration for non-Thai workers. Moreover, Thai culture encourages the idea that successes and failures are the result of karmic law rather than skillful or unskillful actions. They have a descriptive phrase which is heard very frequently, “Mai Pen Rai” or “It doesn’t matter”. It may be interpreted as Thai politeness, reduction of interpersonal stress, or an acceptance to Karmic law. In the context of problem-solving, it can convey ignorance and irresponsibility to the conflict, which leads to the avoiding style and unsuccessful resolution.

### The Development of Hypotheses

Hypotheses have been created from the reviewed literature, theories, and relevant researches. The research framework for this study is cross-cultural comparative research. The importance of comparative research has long been recognized. Among other merits, the most important strength of comparative research is its ability to test the impact of society on individual or organizational behaviors. This conceptual framework provides a more holistic perspective to examine conflict management in a cross-cultural setting.

Conflict, as part of interpersonal interactions, occurs in specific cultural settings. Culture is a shared collective product that provides a repertoire of actions and a standard against which to evaluate people’s actions. Culture is often manifested in the shared symbols and rituals which invoke common responses in social situations within the cultural context. Studying how the perceived importance of the conversational constraints differs from culture to culture may help us to understand why communication in a conflict situation takes different forms. Collectivists, in contrast to individualists, tend to subordinate their individual goals to collective goals, possess a sense of harmony, interdependence, and concern for others (Hui & Triandis, 1986). One’s identity in collectivist cultures is based on the relations with the ingroups, thus, emphasizing a

strong “we” consciousness (Hofstede, 1980). Since collectivists generally dislike interpersonal competition within their group (Triandis et al, 1988) they tend to circumvent disagreement and avoid confrontation. Dependency upon the group offers them a sense of security and it does not serve as a drive to be personally assertive. Consequently, tentative styles of communication are preferred among collectivists due to the lack of initiative (Hofstede). Value placed upon harmony with others accounts for the collectivists’ styles of communication and for the absence of argumentation and debate in their daily life. Thus, the first research hypothesis is advanced. The essential difference between individualism and collectivism is with respect to the concept of self. In individualist cultures, the definition of the self is independent whereas in collectivist cultures, the definition of the self is interdependent (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1995). Individualism-collectivism scale (INDCOL) was developed to measure one’s individualism and collectivism orientation. It has been used increasingly to test complex cross-cultural hypotheses.

Table 5

*A Comparison of the Individualism-Collectivism Scale (INDCOL) Scores in Different Countries from Six Studies*

Researcher (s)	Ethnicity	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Rhee, Uleman, and Lee (1996)	Asian American	3.28	0.55	140
	European American	3.13	0.53	133
Hui and Yee (1999)	Chinese	14.04	2.00	139
Gushue and Constantine (2003)	African American	3.99	0.89	123
Bordia and Blau (2003)	Indian	4.98	0.56	139
Rini, Schetter, Hobel, Glynn, and Sandman (2006)	American	3.09	0.39	176
Probst and Lawler (2006)	American	3.72	1.17	138

## Gender

Socially appropriate behavior differs for females and males in many countries around the world; thus, it is probable to assume that females and males would prefer to resolve conflicts with different conflict style choices (Shockley-Zalabak, 1981). Deaux (1983) stated that males and females differ in their perceptions of and approaches to the management of organizational conflicts. These differences are likely to affect the way men and women respond to contradictory messages. According to Barry (1970) women and men learn to perceive acts differently. The perception of a problem that matters in a conflict situation, then the likelihood for conflict increases if two parties come to encounter with different ways of perceiving a particular event or situation. Research on gender differences in approaches to conflict management has shown that differences in orientations and normative expectations resulted in women and men perceiving and handling conflict differently. Women were more likely to help in expressive ways while men were more likely to use instrumental methods (Burke, Weir, & Duncan, 1976). Men tended to use social influence and persuasion while women preferred negotiation and mediation (Lind, Hou, & Tyler, 1994). Generally women were better able to empathize with the other's perspective.

Males, in the United States historically, have been socialized to communicate in direct, confrontational ways, assuming the dominant power position; females have been socialized to take care of others, and play a more receptive role. As Ting-Toomey (1983) states, "Males typically engage in more direct, 'up-front' strategies. Females typically engage in either indirect, 'smoothing' communication strategies to diffuse the conflict topic, or engage in avoidance or withdrawal strategies" (p. 316). Males tend to use more verbal aggression, more physical aggression (Sears, Maccoby, & Levin, 1957; Lefkowitz, Eron, Walder, & Huesmann, 1977), and more dominance in conversations (Zimmermann & West, 1975). These studies reveal that the males are more assertive than females.



Rossi and Todd-Mansillas (1990) indicated that men's tendency was to use power (competing) to resolve conflict with women.

Females, for whom relationships may be of greater importance, and for whom aggressive behavior is less condoned (Ting-Toomey, 1985), would seem more likely to prefer such styles as smoothing (high in relationships, low in production), withdrawing (low in production and relationships), and compromising (medium in production and relationships). This leads to the final hypothesis. Females, more than males, in managing conflicts tend to use more accommodative strategies (Frost & Wilmot, 1978), learn to avoid conflict situations (Bardwick, 1971), take on the peacekeeper role (Wilmot, 1975), learn to use more expressions of support and solidarity (Strodtbeck & Mann, 1956), and use more facilitative behaviors (Zimmermann & West). Females also report having compromising tendencies more than males, while males rate competitive tendencies higher than do females (Kilman & Thomas, 1975).

Hypothesis 1: Thais hold collectivistic values, whereas Americans hold individualistic values.

Hypothesis 2: Women have more collectivistic values than men.

Hypothesis 3: Thais prefer using avoiding conflict management style more than Americans do.

Hypothesis 4: Women prefer using avoiding conflict management style more than men do.

Hypothesis 5: Thais prefer using obliging conflict management style more than Americans do.

Hypothesis 6: Women prefer using obliging conflict management style more than men do.

Wolfson and Norden (1984) compared responses to filmed interpersonal conflict elicited from Chinese and North American participants. They found that the Chinese

used more passive strategies in handling conflict while North American subjects tended to use more active strategies in managing conflict. Nomura and Barnlund (1983) also found a similar difference between Japanese and Americans. Japanese participants more frequently employed passive and accommodating styles and Americans active and confrontational styles of communication when they were required to offer someone a criticism. Another cross-cultural study to compare people's conflict resolution styles was conducted by Cushman and King (1985). The Japanese participants were found to value the importance of maintaining public face in the conflict process and prefer the use of a collaborative style to resolve conflict. Their American counterparts valued the competitive norm in a conflict process, and likewise prefer a competitive style of conflict management. This leads to another set of hypotheses.

Hypothesis 7: Americans prefer using integrating conflict management style more than Thais do.

Hypothesis 8: Americans prefer using dominating conflict management style more than Thais do.

Hypothesis 9: Men prefer using dominating conflict management style more than women do.

Hypothesis 10: Americans prefer using compromising conflict management style more than Thais do.

Hypothesis 11: Women prefer using compromising conflict management style more than men do.

#### Rationale

Conflict is an important topic that needs to be explored. In fact, conflict is one of the most frequently researched and discussed topics in the area of organizational behavior (Putnam & Poole, 1992). Although conflict in organizational contexts has been of interest to researchers in the field for the several past decades, the intercultural

aspects of it have not attracted much attention until recently. In the discussion that follows, the attempt to establish why continued exploration is desirable and why the study reported herein, in particular, was useful to pursue.

The majority of the relevant research on styles of conflict management compares those of people at an intracultural level. In other words, the conflict episodes of interest have been ones participants experienced with people from the same culture.

Researchers then have contrasted the conflict management styles of the members of one culture with those of another culture of interest. For the present study, the conflict episodes investigated involved people from different national cultures. This departure had as an underlying intention providing the field with an enlarged perspective and helping to determine whether the preference for styles of conflict management of people from individualistic/collectivistic cultures are the same when they interact with people from the same and different cultures. Conflict behavior itself does not directly affect relationships, but the parties' evaluation of a conflict interaction is the important factor that determines the relational outcomes (Canary, Cupach, & Messman, 1995; Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998). Conflict styles have been investigated in terms of competence, however, studies in this area are still lacking in their intercultural applicability. The present study had as one purpose extending previous research in examining the perceived competence of conflict management styles from the perspective of the people from individualistic and collectivistic cultures who interact with one another. The major reason for doing intercultural studies is to help people from different cultures interact more competently and enhance their understanding of each other.

In addition, to determine whether factors other than national culture affect preferences for and perception styles of conflict management, gender was a variable in the investigation. Research in this area of gender and styles of conflict management to

date has been inconclusive. Some studies show that females use more obliging, avoiding, and collaborating conflict styles. Others show no differences in preferences (Ting-Toomey, Oetzel, & Yee-Jung, 2001), or preferences for conflict styles opposite of what one would expect on the basis of gender stereotypes (Ohbuchi & Yamamoto, 1990). A possibility accounting for such inconsistency is that gender interacts with culture. Therefore, further information concerning gender in relation to preferences for, as well as perceptions of, particular styles of conflict management is useful to acquire.

### Research Hypotheses

The independent variables in this framework are culture and gender. The dependent variables are individualistic-collectivistic orientations and conflict management styles, based on the five styles of conflict management framework by Rahim (1983), the following eleven hypotheses were developed to be tested:

Hypothesis 1: Thais hold collectivistic values, whereas Americans hold individualistic values.

Hypothesis 2: Women have more collectivistic values than men.

Hypothesis 3: Thais prefer using avoiding conflict management style more than Americans do.

Hypothesis 4: Women prefer using avoiding conflict management style more than men do.

Hypothesis 5: Thais prefer using obliging conflict management style more than Americans do.

Hypothesis 6: Women prefer using obliging conflict management style more than men do.

Hypothesis 7: Americans prefer using integrating conflict management style more than Thais do.

Hypothesis 8: Americans prefer using dominating conflict management style more than Thais do.

Hypothesis 9: Men prefer using dominating conflict management style more than women do.

Hypothesis 10: Americans prefer using compromising conflict management style more than Thais do.

Hypothesis 11: Women prefer using compromising conflict management style more than men do.



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จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

## Chapter 2

### Methods

This study was designed to explore the preferences for conflict management styles by Thai (collectivistic) and American (individualistic) students. Gender was also examined to determine how it might influence preferences for different conflict management styles. In addition, individualism and collectivism orientations have been assessed to assure that the participants from the selected cultures represented collectivists and individualists. This was important since the theoretical framework for most of the study assumed that collectivism/individualism, rather than nationality, was the critical variable.

#### Participants

The participants in this research were graduate students who enrolled in Sasin Graduate Institute of Business Administration (Sasin), undergraduate students who were enrolled in the international programs at Chulalongkorn University, undergraduate and graduate students at California State University at Northridge, Lesley University, University of California at Los Angeles, and University of Southern California. There are two steps for this research.

#### 1. Preliminary Study

1.1 Participants in the study were Sirindhorn International Institute of Technology (SIIT) students who entered the integrated humanities course. English speaking students were contacted and asked if they would volunteer to participate in a survey consisted of INDCOL scale and ROCI-II. There were one hundred and two respondents. One was from England and one was from South Korea. Since the study focused specifically on

people from the United States and Thailand, data for the participants who were not from the national cultures under investigation were discarded. In the end, data for one hundred Thai students were retained for further analyze.

2. Participants in the research: Thai participants ( $n = 245$ ) in the research are 22 graduate students from Sasin Graduate Institute of Business Administration (Sasin) and 223 undergraduate students from Chulalongkorn University who enrolled in the international programs at the Faculty of Communication Arts, Faculty of Commerce and Accountancy (BBA International Program), International School of Engineering (ISE), Faculty of Economics (EBA International Program), Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Medicine and, Faculty of Political Science (See table 6).

For American participants ( $n = 330$ ), there are 209 graduate and 121 undergraduate students from California State University at Northridge, Lesley University, University of California at Los Angeles, and University of Southern California.

### Instrumentation

#### Measurements for Quantitative Survey

Two measures (Rahim's Organizational Conflict Management Styles and Individualism-Collectivism Orientation) were used. One Set of Background Questions was included. Students needed to sign the informed consent form on the first page of the questionnaire. The language for all instruments was English. This assumed, of course, those Thai students who study in international program have sufficient knowledge of English to answer.

Table 6

*Study's Descriptive Statistics Involving Institutions, Sex, and Age of the Participants  
(N = 575)*

University	Frequency	Percent
Chulalongkorn University	245	42.61
California State University at Northridge	86	14.96
Lesley University	48	8.35
University of California at Los Angeles	132	22.96
University of Southern California	64	11.13

Country	Frequency	Percent
Thailand	330	57.40
USA	245	42.40
Total	575	100.00

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Males	297	51.70
Females	278	48.30
Total	575	100.00

#### Individualism-Collectivism Scale

The Individualism-Collectivism Scale (INDCOL) developed by Hui (1988) was employed. Moreover, depending on one's relationship with the persons with whom s/he is interacting, Hui contends that there are many types of collectivist tendencies. In the calculation, a transformation of scores for certain items was necessary for higher scores consistently to reflect a stronger orientation toward collectivism. The INDCOL, assessing



subjectively perceived dimensions of horizontal and vertical individualism and collectivism, consisted of 32 statements (Singelis et al., 1995) and was administered in written form to groups of participants. Each statement required an evaluation by means of a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). Higher scores consistently to reflect a stronger orientation toward collectivism and lower scores consistently to reflect a stronger orientation toward individualism. The summed score for was calculated to indicate whether Thais and Americans differed in their individualism-collectivism orientation as a function of the target groups.

#### Reliability and Validity of INDCOL

In a validation study (Singelis, Triandis, Bhawuk, & Gelfand, 1995) the INDCOL was shown to have good construct validity. Since INDCOL covers various beliefs, attitudes, behavioral intentions, and forms of behavior, that may have affected the reliability of the scale Triandis and Gelfand (1998) concluded that low to moderate reliability coefficients are normal for the vertical and horizontal dimensions of individualism and collectivism (Singelis et al.). Even though the reliability of the subscales was low (because of the limited number of items comprising each subscale), the overall value was at an acceptable level. Cronbach's Alpha for the entire scale was .61. The value of Cronbach's Alpha for the overall scale suggested that the reliability of the instrument used was at a moderately low to an acceptable level for social science (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Since a characterization of a society by the global dimensions of individualism and collectivism alone offers too little information about its nature, the use of the horizontal and vertical dimensions is to be preferred to any other solution (Triandis & Gelfand; Turiel & Neff, 2000).

INDCOL: Items that contains a stronger orientation toward individualism (require reverse scoring)

Item 1: If one is interested in a job about which the spouse is not very enthusiastic, one should apply for it anyway.

Item 2: It is better for a husband and wife to have their own bank accounts rather than to have a joint account.

Item 7: I would not share my ideas and newly acquired knowledge with my parents.

Item 9: Each family has its own problems unique to itself.

Item 11: I have never chatted with my neighbors about the political future of this state/country.

Item 13: I am not interested in knowing what my neighbors are really like.

Item 14: I would rather struggle a personal problem by myself than discuss it with my friends.

Item 15: I would not pay much attention to my close friends' views when deciding what kind of work to do.

Item 17: I have never loaned my camera/personal belongings to any friends.

Item 19: A group of people at the workplace decided to go to a recently opened restaurant even though one person discovered that the food there was not good at all. In this situation, the person's decision not to join the group is a better choice.

INDCOL: Items that contains a stronger orientation toward collectivism.

Item 3: The decision of where one is to work should be jointly made with one's spouse, if one is married.

Item 4: Young people should take into consideration their parents' advice when making education/career plans.

Item 5: It's reasonable for a child to continue her/his parents' business.

Item 6: I practice the religion of my parents.

Item 8: I would help, within my ability, if a relative told me that s/he is in financial difficulty.

Item 10: I can count on my relatives for help if I find myself in any kind of trouble.

Item 12: My neighbors always tell me interesting stories that have happened around them.

Item 16: My good friends and I agree on the best place to shop.

Item 18: I would help if a friend told me that s/he needed to pay money to pay utility bills

Table 7

*Cronbach's Alphas of INDCOL Based on the Three Studies*

Cronbach's Alpha for the Scale	Previous Research		From SIIT Preliminary Study ( <i>N</i> = 100) (one week interval)	
	Singelis, Triandis, Bhawuk, and Gelfand (1995) ( <i>N</i> = 150)	Hui & Villareal(1989) ( <i>N</i> = 200)	First test ( <i>N</i> = 100)	Second test ( <i>N</i> = 100)
INDCOL	.61	.71	.88	.89

Test-Retest Reliability of INDCOL conducted on Sirindhorn International Institute of Technology (SIIT) students (*N* = 100) is .98 ( $p < .001$ ).

### Conflict Management Styles

An adapted version of Rahim Organization Conflict Inventory (ROCI-II) (Rahim, 1983) was the measure of conflict management styles. ROCI-II consists of a series of 28 items having 5-point scales in the Likert format (5 = strongly agree, 4 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 2 = agree, and 1 = strongly disagree) that reflect conflict management styles based on individual dispositions. There are five subscales,

integrating, avoiding, dominating, obliging, and compromising. A high score in each subscale indicates greater reported identification of the conflict management style of interest.

The five conflict management styles reflect different combinations of “concern for self” and “concern for others” (dual-concern model). Originally, for each conflict management style, there were seven items corresponding to each conflict style. However, some of the items having low factor loadings were discarded. Therefore, the final version of questionnaire consisted of 28 items. The items used to indicate the preference for each conflict management style were as follows:

Integrating:

Item 1: I try carefully to examine a problem with others to find a solution acceptable to both of us.

Item 4: I try to incorporate my ideas with those of others to come up with a decision jointly.

Item 5: I try to work with others to find solutions to a problem which satisfy our expectations.

Item 12: I exchange accurate information with others to solve a problem together.

Item 22: I try to bring all our concerns out in the open so that the issues can be resolved in the best possible way.

Item 23: I collaborate with others to create decisions acceptable to everyone involved.

Item 28: I try to work with others to develop a proper understanding of a problem.

Avoiding:

Item 3: I try to keep my conflicts with others to myself because I want to avoid being in an embarrassing/difficult situation where I am forced to make important decisions in a small amount of time.

Item 6: I usually avoid open discussion of my differences with others.

Item 11: I avoid meeting others who I have conflict with.

Item 16: I try to stay away from disagreement with others.

Item 26: I try to keep my disagreements with others to myself in order to avoid bad feelings between us.

Item 27: I try to avoid unpleasant conversations with others.

#### Dominating

Item 8: I use my influences to get my ideas accepted.

Item 9: I use my authority to make a decision that gives me an advantage.

Item 18: I use my knowledge and experience to reach decisions in my favor.

Item 21: I am generally firm in defending my side on an issue.

Item 25: I sometimes use my power to win in a competitive situation.

#### Obliging

Item 2: I generally try to satisfy the needs of others

Item 10: I usually follow the wishes of others.

Item 13: I usually let others get what they want.

Item 17: I surrender to the wishes of others.

Item 19: I often go along with the suggestions of others.

Item 24: I try to satisfy the expectations of others.

#### Compromising:

Item 7: I try to meet others halfway when solving a serious conflict.

Item 14: I usually propose a middle ground to end extreme situations.

Item 15: I negotiate with others so that a compromise can be reached.

Item 20: I use "give and take" so that a compromise can be made.

In principle, the measure indexes the relative prefer ability of each of the five conflict interaction styles noted from the point of view of the respondent. ROCI-II also served as a basis for constructing scenarios reflecting each of the five different conflict

management styles of conflict counterparts that the participants were to imagine (Appendix A, Section 2).

## Construct Validity of ROCI-II

### Exploratory Factor Analysis

The Rahim's Organizational Conflict Inventory II (ROCI-II) (Rahim, 1983) was designed on the basis of lengthy and repeated feedback from respondents and factor analyses of various sets of items with considerable attention. Each item was cast on a 5-point Likert scale (a higher value represented greater use of a conflict style. It was filled out by MBA students ( $n = 60$ ) and managers ( $n = 38$ ). After the subjects filled out the questionnaire, an item-by-item discussion was initiated by the researcher. Special attempts were made to make the items free from social desirability bias. Critiques of the instrument were also received from 4 management professors. The items that were reported to be difficult, ambiguous, or inconsistent were either replaced or revised. A new item was added to compensate the elimination of an item.

The 28 items for the final instrument were selected on the basis of a factor analysis of ratings of 35 items from the national sample of 1,219 managers (Rahim, 1983). The initial factors were derived through a principal-factors solution, and the terminal solution was reached through varimax rotation. The analysis extracted five factors. The selection of an item was based on the following criteria: factor loading  $\geq .40$ , eigenvalue  $\geq 1.00$ . The selected factors supported the dimensionality of the five styles of handling interpersonal conflict. Factor 1 through 5 was named as integrating, avoiding, dominating, obliging, and compromising styles. Ting-Toomey et al. (1991) in their study in five cultures reported similar exploratory factor analysis properties of the ROCI-II. A number of studies have supported the criterion validity of the instrument.

Based on the study of Gross and Guerrero (2000) ROCI-II has been used widely and has been shown to have an acceptable level of reliability and validity. Rahim (2000) computed the test-retest reliabilities from data of 119 part-time MBA and undergraduate students from Youngstown State University who filled out ROCI-II twice at an interval of one week, ranged between .60 and .83 ( $p < .0001$ ).

Table 8

*A Comparison of the Existing Conflict Instruments Reliability Based on the Research by Rahim and Magner (1995)*

Researcher(s)	Supported Theory	Reliabilities	Cronbach's Alpha
Blake and Mouton (1964)	Five Part Taxonomy (Blake and Mouton)	.14 - .57	Could not be computed  (it contained only one item for measuring each conflict mode)
Lawrence and Lorsch (1967)	Three Styles of Handling Conflicts (Putnam and Wilson, 1982)	.33 - .63	.37 - .59
Hall (1969)	Five Part Taxonomy (Blake and Mouton)	.41 - .66	.39 - .73
Thomas and Kilman (1974) (MODE Instrument)	Five Part Taxonomy (Blake and Mouton)	.61 - .68	.43 - .71
Rahim (1983) (Rahim's Organizational Conflict Inventory II, ROCI-II)	Five Part Taxonomy (Blake and Mouton)	.60 - .83	.72 - .76

Table 9 shows test-retest reliabilities computed with preliminary study data collected from Sirindhorn International Institute of Technology (SIIT) students ( $N = 100$ ) and the test-retest reliabilities conducted by Rahim (1983) at one week intervals.

Table 9

*Test-Retest Reliabilities of ROCI-II Subscales Based on the Two Studies*

ROCI-II Subscales of Conflict Handling Styles	Test-Retest Reliability	
	Rahim (2000) ( $N = 119$ , one week interval)	SIIT Preliminary Study ( $N = 100$ , one week interval)
Integrating	.83***	.81***
Obliging	.76***	.79***
Dominating	.60***	.95***
Avoiding	.94***	.98***
Compromising	.96***	.97***

\*\*\* $p < .001$ , one-tailed.

Table 10 compared Cronbach's alpha of ROCI-II subscales from the preliminary study data collected from Sirindhorn International Institute of Technology (SIIT) students ( $N = 100$ ) and the study of Gross and Guerrero (2000). The comparisons showed the great internal consistency of the subscales.



Table 10

*Cronbach's Alpha of ROCI-II Subscales Based on the Three Studies*

ROCI-II Subscales	Previous Research		SIIT Preliminary Study	
	Rahim (1983) (N = 119)	Gross and Guerrero (2000) (N = 200)	First test (N = 100)	Second test (N = 100)
Integrating	.77***	.86***	.75***	.71***
Obliging	.72***	.83***	.75***	.61***
Dominating	.72***	.77***	.94***	.92***
Avoiding	.75***	.84***	.74***	.69***
Compromising	.72***	.78***	.86***	.81***

\*\*\* $p < .001$ , one-tailed.

### Research Design and Data Collection Procedures

The first dependent variable in the study is the respondents' preferences for the five conflict management styles (ROCI-II): integrating, avoiding, dominating, obliging, and compromising. This dependent variable is assumed to be interval level data. A respondent's choices on 5-point continua indicates the extent to which s/he sees the particular conflict styles for the corresponding items reflected characteristic of her/himself.

The second dependent variable is individualism-collectivism orientation, as indexed by a modified version of INDCOL. For this study, it is necessary to confirm the assumption that Americans hold individualistic values, whereas Thais endorse

collectivistic values, if, indeed, the results of the analyses are to apply to culture rather than nationality only. The first independent variable for this study is culture and corresponded to the participants' native countries. Culture in this case is a nominal scale, consisting of two categories, Thai and American. The second independent variable, gender, represents a nominal measure, consisting of two categories: male and female. It is derived from the respondents' identification of their biological sex.

#### Data Collection Procedure

Data collection for this study took place in Chulalongkorn University in Thailand, California State University at Northridge, Lesley University, University of California at Los Angeles, and University of Southern California, in the United States. First, for Thai participants, the graduate and undergraduate students who majored in the international programs in Faculty of Communication Arts, Faculty of Commerce and Accountancy (BBA International Program), International School of Engineering (ISE), Faculty of Economics (EBA International Program), Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Political Science, and SASIN Graduate Institute of Business Administration (MBA Program) are randomly selected. After the selection, the researcher informed about the purpose and procedures of the study, assured of confidentiality, and appraised of the risks and/or inconveniences participants might experience, as well as the benefits they might realize.

For American participants, the researcher has composed the letter to ask the permission the Director for Division of Interdisciplinary Inquiry, California State University at Northridge, Lesley University, University of California at Los Angeles, and University of Southern California, in order to gain permissions to collect data from 330 American students. Several professors replied to the researcher that the questionnaires will be beneficial for the students to learn about their conflict management styles as well

as their cultural orientation. Professors are willing to cooperate with the data collection procedure of the researcher.

The participants first complete the first section of the questionnaires comprised of informed consent form and biographical data. The second section involved identifying their conflict management styles (Rahim, 1983). The third section, participants were asked to respond to the items on the modified version of INDCOL (Hui, 1988), that is used as a check on the extent to which assumptions concerning Thais as collectivists and Americans as individualists are warranted. After completing the questionnaires, the researcher thanks the participant and offers to provide a summary of the study upon completion of the study by e-mail if one is interested.

#### Statistical Analyses

Cronbach's alpha is computed to establish the reliability of the two dependent measures used in the study (ROCI-II and INDCOL). Tabulated data relating to the demographic items and utilize such descriptive statistics as are appropriate, including percentage by sex, ethnicity, and country of origin, and show the summary of data in regard to position will be presented.

One analysis serves as a check on the extent to which the assumptions that Thais are collectivists and Americans are individualists are warranted. Two way ANOVA is the test for this analysis. The INDCOL overall score serves as a dependent variable and culture as the independent variable.

Another analysis permits testing of Hypotheses 2 and 3, which posit that Thais prefer using avoiding and obliging conflict management styles more than do Americans, whereas Americans prefer using integrating, dominating, and compromising conflict management styles more than do Thais (Hypotheses 4, 5, and 6). In addition, the parts

of Hypotheses 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6 which focused on gender as another independent variable in respect to the preference for conflict management styles, are tested as well. To compare the reported conflict management styles of Thais and Americans and assess the effects of gender, two-way analysis of variance (two-way ANOVA) is the statistical tool. Preferences for each conflict management style (ROCI-II) serves as a separate dependent variable, while culture and gender serve as independent variables. The ANOVA for this set of hypotheses is based on a 2 x 2 factorial design (Culture X Gender), with the five conflict management styles as dependent variables.



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## Chapter 3

### Results

Results are presented in 4 sections divided by 2 independent variables (culture and gender) and statistical analyses. The hypotheses that have the same dependent variables and the same statistical methods will be displayed next to each other in order to simplify the information.

Section 1: Descriptive statistics of the participants

Section 2: Reliability analyses of the instruments (ROCI-II and INDCOL)

Section 3: ANOVAs for Hypothesis 1, comparing INDCOL's means of Thai and American students and differences of INDCOL scores in different genders. This analysis serves as a check on;

Hypothesis 1: The extent to which the assumptions that Thais are collectivists and Americans are individualists.

Hypothesis 2: Women have higher tendencies toward collectivism more than men.

Section 4: ANOVAs for preference for styles of conflict management by culture and gender allow for testing Hypotheses 3-11.

Section 1: Demographic Information

Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies and means, were calculated for demographic information gathered in Section 1 of the survey. The results are used to describe the general characteristics of the participants and background information for sex and country. The summary of other data in regard to the age of the participants, as well as the faculties to which the participants belonged appear in the tables 10-12.

There were a total of 575 respondents from the 5 universities participating in the study. Of those, 245 reported their native country as Thailand, 330 reported that they were from the United States. Four reported being Thai-American, nine reported being Korean, and seven reported being Chinese, since the study focused specifically on people from the United States and Thailand, data for the participants who were not from the national cultures under investigation were discarded. Even though some of the other national cultures can be categorized as individualistic or collectivistic, each national culture varies in types of face concerns (Oetzel et al., 2001), which could lead to national specific behavior or differences in conflict styles and perceptions of conflict styles. Data for the participants who indicated being Thai-American were discarded as well because of the mixed nature of the person's cultural background.

In the end, data for 575 participants were retained for further analyses. For the American participants, of those who reported their gender, there were 175 (53.0 %) males and 155 (47.0 %) females. Among the Thai participants, there were 122 (49.8 %) males (one participant reported his gender as gay and was put in the male category because the study focused on the biological sex), and 123 (50.2 %) were females. For the American participants, of those who reported their gender, there were 175 (53.0 %) males and 155 (47.0 %) females.

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Table 11

*Study's Descriptive Statistics of 2 Independent Variables (Culture and Gender)*

Country	Frequency ( <i>n</i> )	Percents	Age	
			<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Thailand				
- males	122	49.8	18.72	1.85
- females	123	50.2	19.25	2.27
Total	245	100	18.99	2.08
American				
- Males	175	53.0	29.06	9.91
- Females	155	47.0	28.32	7.87
Total	330	100	28.71	9.00
<b>All respondents</b>	<b>575</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>24.57</b>	<b>8.45</b>

Section 2: Cronbach's alphas for reliability analyses of the instruments (ROCI-II and INDCOL)

The first set of analyses involved the computation of Cronbach's alphas to assess the reliability of the instruments used in the study (ROCI-II and INDCOL).

Table 12

*Cronbach's Alphas of INDCOL and ROCI-II Based on the Study of Thai and American Students (N=575)*

Scale	Number of Items	Cronbach's alpha
INDCOL	19	.96
ROCI-II Subscale		
-Integrating	7	.81
-Avoiding	6	.88
-Dominating	5	.81
-Obliging	6	.84
-Compromising	4	.82

Section 3: ANOVAs comparing INDCOL's means of Thai and American students and difference of INDCOL scores in different genders.

The ANOVA for this set of hypotheses was based on a 2 x 2 factorial design (Culture X Gender), with the individualism-collectivism score (INDCOL) as dependent variables.

Hypothesis 1: Thais hold collectivistic values, whereas Americans hold individualistic values.

Hypothesis 2: Women have more collectivistic values than men.



Table 13 shows a significant interaction effect of culture and gender on individualistic-collectivistic orientation at  $p < .05$ , [ $F(1, 571) = 4.43, p < .05$ ].

There is also a significant main effect of culture on individualistic-collectivistic orientation at  $p < .001$ , [ $F(1, 571) = 786.42, p < .001$ ]. Thais ( $M = 64.39, SD = 9.98$ ) have more collectivistic manner than Americans ( $M = 45.46, SD = 14.43$ ). Hence, the hypothesis 1 which posits Thais have collectivistic values and Americans have individualistic values receives support (See Figure 3).

There is also a significant main effect of gender on individualistic-collectivistic orientation at  $p < .001$ , [ $F(1, 571) = 946.07, p < .001$ ] demonstrating that females ( $M = 64.27, SD = 12.56$ ) have more collectivistic values more than males ( $M = 43.47, SD = 11.25$ ). Hence, the hypothesis 2 which posits that women have collectivistic values more than men receives support (See Figure 4).



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Table 13

*Means and Standard Deviations of Individualism-Collectivism (INDCOL)*

Variables		<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Actual Scores		
					<i>min</i>	<i>max</i>	
Culture	Thai	245	64.39	9.98	51.00	79.00	
	American	330	45.46	14.43	30.00	79.00	
Gender	Male	297	43.47	11.25	30.00	73.00	
	Female	278	64.27	12.56	44.00	79.00	
Culture X Gender	Thai	Male	122	55.03	2.95	51.00	71.00
		Female	123	73.68	4.02	54.00	79.00
	American	Male	175	35.41	7.09	30.00	73.00
		Female	155	56.80	12.00	44.00	79.00
TOTAL		575	53.53	15.80	30.00	79.00	

*Note.* A higher score reflects a higher collectivistic orientation. Possible lowest score is 19.00 and possible highest score is 95.00.

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Table 14

*Analysis of Variance for Individualism-Collectivism Orientation (INDCOL Score)*

Source	df	F	p
Culture	1	786.42***	.000
Gender	1	946.07***	.000
Culture X Gender	1	4.43*	.036
Error	571	(263.19)	

Note. A value enclosed in parentheses represents a mean square error.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

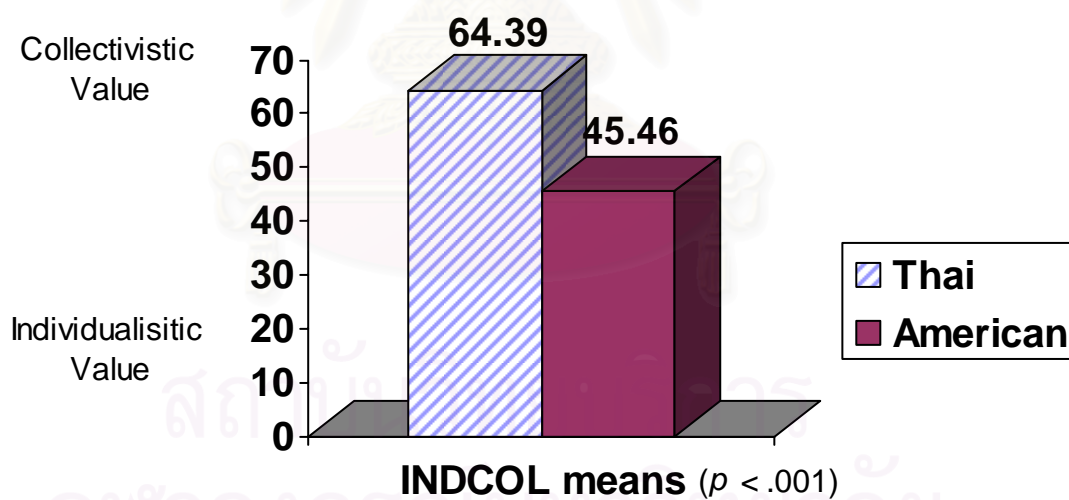


Figure 3. Mean INDCOL scores of Thai ( $n = 245$ ) and American students ( $n = 330$ ).

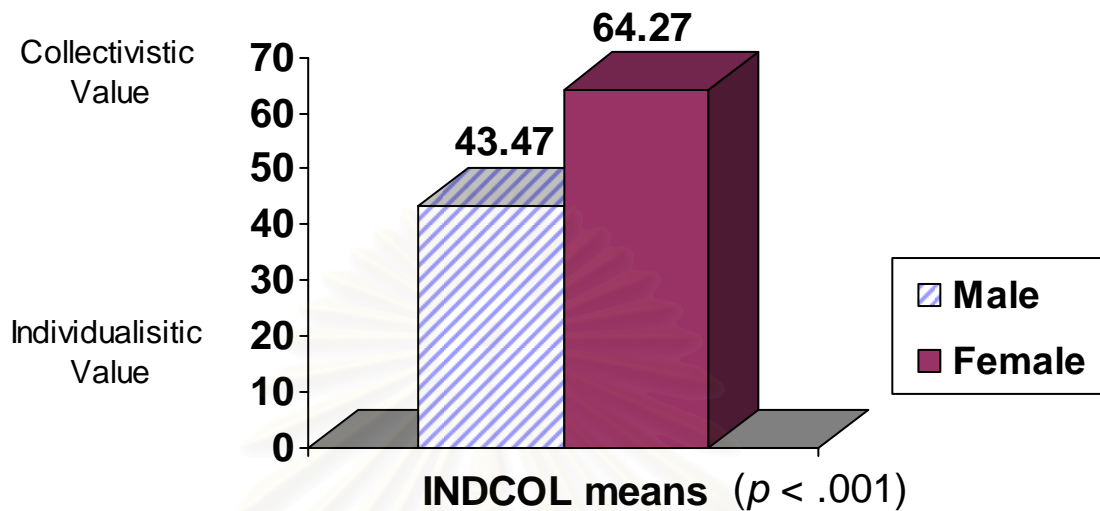


Figure 4. Mean INDCOL scores of male ( $n = 297$ ) and female ( $n = 278$ ) students.

Section 3 ANOVAs for preference for styles of conflict management by culture and gender allow for testing for;

Hypothesis 3: Thais prefer using avoiding conflict management style more than Americans do.

Hypothesis 4: Women prefer using avoiding conflict management style more than men do.

Hypothesis 5: Thais prefer using obliging conflict management style more than Americans do.

Hypothesis 6: Women prefer using obliging conflict management style more than men do.

Hypothesis 7: Americans prefer using integrating conflict management style more than Thais do.

Hypothesis 8: Americans prefer using dominating conflict management style more than Thais do.

Hypothesis 9: Men prefer using dominating conflict management style more than women do.

Hypothesis 10: Americans prefer using compromising conflict management style more than Thais do.

Hypothesis 11: Women prefer using compromising conflict management style more than men do.

Table 16 shows no significant interaction effect of culture and gender on avoiding style of conflict management [ $F(1, 571) = 0.34, ns$ ].

There is a significant main effect of culture on avoiding conflict management style at  $p < .001$ , [ $F(1, 571) = 253.09, p < .001$ ]. Thais ( $M = 20.80, SD = 3.81$ ) prefer avoiding conflict management style more than Americans ( $M = 16.99, SD = 4.42$ ). Hence, the hypothesis 3 which posits Thais prefer using avoiding conflict management style more than Americans do receives support.

There is also a significant main effect of gender on avoiding conflict management style at  $p < .001$ , [ $F(1, 571) = 800.94, p < .001$ ] demonstrating that females ( $M = 21.97, SD = 2.54$ ) prefer using avoiding conflict management style more than males ( $M = 15.47, SD = 3.75$ ). Hence, the hypothesis 4 which posits that women prefer using avoiding conflict management style more than men receives support.

Table 15

*Means and Standard Deviations for Avoiding Style of Conflict Management*

Variables		<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Actual Scores		
					<i>min</i>	<i>max</i>	
Culture	Thai	245	20.80	3.81	14.00	26.00	
	American	330	16.99	4.42	7.00	24.00	
Gender	Male	297	15.47	3.75	7.00	24.00	
	Female	278	21.97	2.54	15.00	26.00	
Culture X Gender	Thai	Male	122	17.52	1.80	14.00	22.00
		Female	123	24.06	2.10	15.00	26.00
	American	Male	175	14.05	4.08	7.00	24.00
		Female	155	20.32	2.54	18.00	24.00
TOTAL		575	18.62	4.57	7.00	26.00	

*Note.* Possible lowest score is 6 and possible highest score is 30

Table 16

*Analysis of Variance for ROCI-II Avoiding Style of Conflict Management*

Source	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Culture	1	253.09***	.000
Gender	1	800.94***	.000
Culture X Gender	1	0.34	.561
Error	571	(7.20)	

*Note.* A value enclosed in parentheses represents a mean square error.

\*\*\**p* < .001.

Table 18 shows no significant interaction effect of culture and gender on obliging style of conflict management [ $F(1, 571) = 0.22, ns$ ].

There is a significant main effect of culture on obliging conflict management style at  $p < .001$ , [ $F(1, 571) = 391.87, p < .001$ ]. Thais ( $M = 21.12, SD = 2.75$ ) prefer obliging conflict management style more than Americans ( $M = 16.69, SD = 3.60$ ). Hence, the hypothesis 5 which posits Thais prefer using obliging conflict management style more than Americans do receives support.

There is also a significant main effect of gender on obliging conflict management style at  $p < .001$ , [ $F(1, 571) = 339.22, p < .001$ ] demonstrating that females ( $M = 20.73, SD = 2.83$ ) prefer using obliging conflict management style more than males ( $M = 16.57, SD = 3.75$ ). Hence, the hypothesis 6 which posits that women prefer using obliging conflict management style more than men receives support.

Table 17

*Means and Standard Deviations for Obliging Style of Conflict Management*

Variables		<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Actual Scores		
					<i>min</i>	<i>max</i>	
Culture:	Thai	245	21.12	2.75	12.00	26.00	
	American	330	16.69	3.60	8.00	24.00	
Gender:	Male	297	16.57	3.75	8.00	23.00	
	Female	278	20.72	2.83	12.00	26.00	
Culture X Gender	Thai	Male	122	19.16	1.97	14.00	22.00
		Female	123	23.07	1.90	12.00	26.00
	American	Male	175	16.57	3.75	8.00	23.00
		Female	155	20.72	2.83	15.00	24.00
TOTAL		575	18.58	3.93	8.00	26.00	

*Note.* Possible lowest score is 6 and possible highest score is 30.

Table 18

*Analysis of Variance for ROCI-II Obliging Style of Conflict Management*

Source	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Culture	1	391.87***	.000
Gender	1	339.22***	.000
Culture X Gender	1	0.22	.640
Error	571	(6.63)	

*Note.* A value enclosed in parentheses represents a mean square error.

\*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Table 20 shows a significant interaction effect of culture and gender on integrating style of conflict management at  $p < .05$ , [ $F(1, 571) = 4.60, p < .05$ ].

There is also a significant main effect of culture on integrating conflict management style at  $p < .001$ , [ $F(1, 571) = 676.23, p < .001$ ]. Americans ( $M = 24.90, SD = 2.83$ ) prefer integrating conflict management style more than Thais ( $M = 19.47, SD = 1.94$ ). Hence, the hypothesis 7 which posits Americans prefer using integrating conflict management style more than Thais do receives support.

There is no significant main effect of gender on integrating style of conflict management [ $F(1, 571) = 0.00, ns$ ].



Table 19

*Means and Standard Deviations for Integrating Style of Conflict Management*

Variables		<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Actual Scores		
					<i>min</i>	<i>max</i>	
Culture:	Thai	245	24.90	2.83	15.00	27.00	
	American	330	19.47	1.94	16.00	29.00	
Gender:	Male	297	22.64	3.54	15.00	29.00	
	Female	278	22.53	3.79	16.00	28.00	
Culture X Gender	Thai	Male	122	19.70	2.03	15.00	26.00
		Female	123	19.24	1.82	17.00	27.00
	American	Male	175	24.70	2.86	17.00	29.00
		Female	155	25.14	2.80	16.00	28.00
TOTAL		575	22.59	3.66	15.00	29.00	

*Note.* Possible lowest score is 7 and possible highest score is 35.

Table 20

*Analysis of Variance for ROCI-II Integrating Style of Conflict Management*

Source	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Culture	1	676.23***	.000
Gender	1	0.00	.957
Culture X Gender	1	4.60*	.032
Error	571	(6.17)	

*Note.* A value enclosed in parentheses represents a mean square error.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Table 22 shows that there is a significant interaction effect in gender and culture on dominating conflict management styles at  $p < .001$ , [ $F(1, 571) = 79.36, p < .001$ ].

There is a significant main effect of culture on dominating conflict management style at  $p < .001$ , [ $F(1, 571) = 278.78, p < .001$ ]. Americans ( $M = 19.31, SD = 2.99$ ) prefer using dominating conflict management style more than Thais ( $M = 15.71, SD = 3.39$ ). Hence, the hypothesis 8 which posits Americans prefer using dominating conflict management style more than Thais do receives support.

There is also a significant main effect of gender on dominating conflict management style at  $p < .001$ , [ $F(1, 571) = 302.15, p < .001$ ] demonstrating that males ( $M = 19.47, SD = 3.08$ ) prefer using dominating conflict management style more than females ( $M = 15.96, SD = 3.29$ ). Hence, the hypothesis 9 which posits that men prefer using dominating conflict management style more than women receives support.

Table 21

*Means and Standard Deviations for Dominating Style of Conflict Management*

Variables		<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Actual Scores		
					<i>min</i>	<i>max</i>	
Culture:	Thai	245	15.70	3.39	8.00	24.00	
	American	330	19.31	2.99	10.00	24.00	
Gender:	Male	297	19.47	3.08	10.00	24.00	
	Female	278	15.96	3.29	8.00	23.00	
Culture X Gender	Thai	Male	122	18.50	2.43	12.00	24.00
		Female	123	12.94	1.27	8.00	16.00
	American	Male	175	20.15	3.30	10.00	24.00
		Female	155	18.35	2.26	11.00	23.00
TOTAL		575	17.77	3.63	8.00	24.00	

*Note.* Possible lowest score is 5 and possible highest score is 25.

Table 22

*Analysis of Variance for Dominating Style of Conflict Management*

Source	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Culture	1	278.78***	.000
Gender	1	302.15***	.000
Culture X Gender	1	79.36***	.000
Error	571	(6.29)	

*Note.* A value enclosed in parenthesis represents a mean square error.

\*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Table 24 shows that there is no significant interaction effect in gender and culture on compromising conflict management styles [ $F(1, 571) = 0.02$ , *ns*].

There is a significant main effect of culture on compromising conflict management style at  $p < .001$ , [ $F(1, 571) = 23.58$ ,  $p < .001$ ]. Americans ( $M = 13.92$ ,  $SD = 3.64$ ) prefer using compromising conflict management style more than Thais ( $M = 13.15$ ,  $SD = 2.79$ ). Hence, the hypothesis 10 which posits Americans prefer using compromising conflict management style more than Thais do receives support.

There is also a significant main effect of gender on compromising conflict management style at  $p < .001$ , [ $F(1, 571) = 639.28$ ,  $p < .001$ ] demonstrating that females ( $M = 16.06$ ,  $SD = 2.16$ ) prefer using compromising conflict management style more than males ( $M = 11.27$ ,  $SD = 2.43$ ). Hence, the hypothesis 11 which posits that women prefer using compromising conflict management style more than men receives support.

Table 23

*Means and Standard Deviations for Compromising Style of Conflict Management*

Variables		<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Actual Scores		
					<i>min</i>	<i>max</i>	
Culture:	Thai	245	13.15	2.79	8.00	18.00	
	American	330	13.92	3.64	7.00	20.00	
Gender:	Male	297	11.27	2.43	7.00	20.00	
	Female	278	16.06	2.16	10.00	20.00	
Culture X Gender	Thai	Male	122	10.71	1.68	8.00	18.00
		Female	123	15.56	0.97	12.00	18.00
	American	Male	175	11.66	2.77	7.00	20.00
		Female	155	16.46	2.70	10.00	20.00
TOTAL		575	13.59	3.32	7.00	20.00	

Note. Possible lowest score is 4 and possible highest score is 20.

Table 24

*Analysis of Variance for Compromising Style of Conflict Management*

Source	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Culture	1	23.58***	.000
Gender	1	639.28***	.000
Culture X Gender	1	0.02	.904
Error	571	(5.11)	

Note. A value enclosed in parenthesis represents a mean square error.

\*\*\* $p < .001$ .

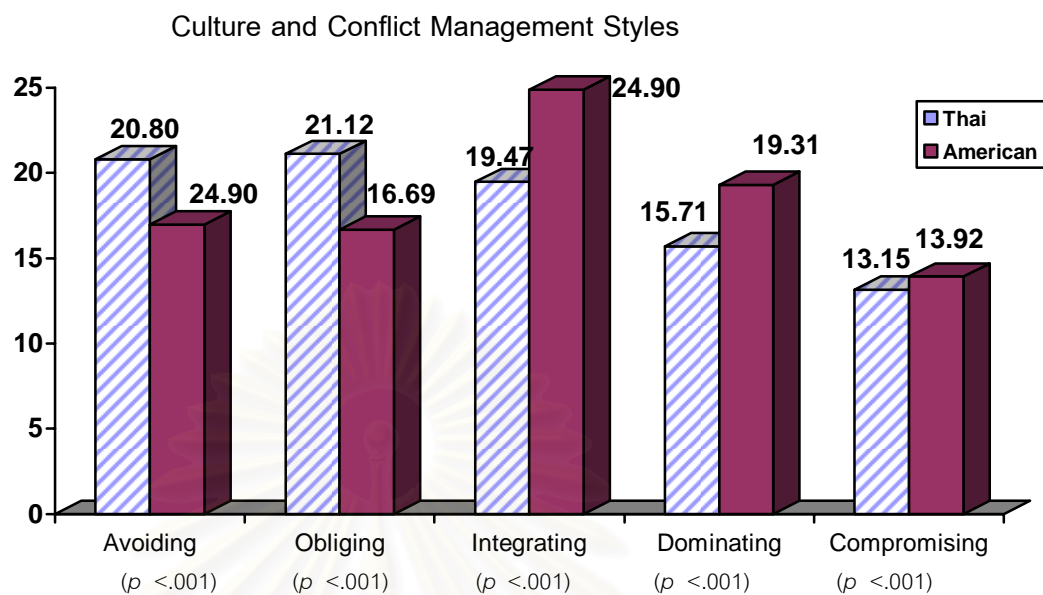


Figure 5. Mean scores of conflict management styles in Thai ( $n = 245$ ) and American ( $n = 330$ ) Students.

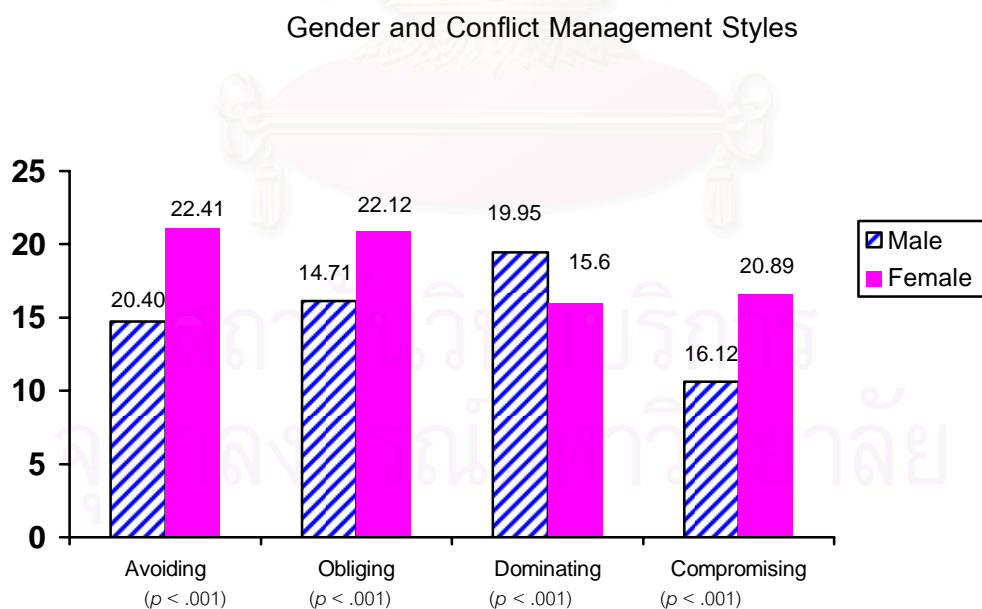


Figure 6. Mean scores of conflict management styles in males ( $n = 297$ ) and females ( $n = 278$ ) students.

## Results Summary

Table 25

*Summarized Results of Testing Hypotheses 3, 5, 7, 8, and 10 by Culture*

Hypothesis	Conflict Management Styles	Hypotheses		Results	
		Thai	American	Thai	American
3	Avoiding	>		>	
5	Obliging	>		>	
7	Integrating		<		<
8	Dominating		<		<
10	Compromising		<		<

Table 26

*Summarized Results of Testing Hypotheses 4, 6, 9, and 11 by Gender*

Hypothesis	Conflict Management Styles	Hypotheses		Results	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
4	Avoiding		<		<
6	Obliging		<		<
9	Dominating	>		>	
11	Compromising		<		<

## Chapter 4

### Discussion

From the statistical analysis of “Culture, Gender, and Conflict Management Styles: Comparisons between Thais and American students”, the important aspects of gender and culture on conflict management were examined. Consistent with the prior research, it was found that culture and gender played an important role in a person's choice of conflict management styles. The purpose of this study was to explore the preferences of styles of conflict management displayed by Thai and American students. In order to discuss the results of the research which have strongly supported the hypotheses, 2 section will be presented.

Section 1: The individualistic-collectivistic orientation

Section 2: Culture, gender, and conflict management styles

#### Section 1

Hypothesis 1: Thais, hold collectivistic values, differ significantly from Americans who hold individualistic values.

Thai participants ( $M = 64.40$ ,  $SD = 9.99$ ) reported being more collectivistic than did the American participants ( $M = 45.46$ ,  $SD = 14.43$ ), [ $F(1, 571) = 786.42$ ,  $p < .001$ ]. The reliability of the instrument might have contributed to the absence of more striking differences. Cronbach's alpha for the entire scale was .96, with the reliability values of the subscales ranging from .79 - .90. Although such values were generally in the acceptable range, they were not as high as those for other measures. Hofstede's (1980, 2001) study of work-related values in 50 countries showed that people from Thai culture were low in their individualistic

orientation, whereas those from American culture tended to be much higher in individualistic orientation. In fact, Hofstede's (2001) more recent study revealed that among 50 countries in the study, people from the United States ranked first in individualism, whereas people from Thailand ranked 44th. In addition, when exploring the influence of national culture and organizational culture on managerial values, attitudes, and performance, using 29 Thai owned and 13 American-owned companies in Thailand, Sorod (1991) reported that, in line with Hofstede's assumptions, those from Thai culture were low in individualism, low in masculinity, high in power distance, and high in uncertainty avoidance. Previous studies primarily have involved the participants in their own culture, also, the present study included American students in the United States and Thai students in international programs. One study involving participants of a similar nature yield the same sort of contradictory results.

#### The individualistic-collectivistic orientation and gender

##### Hypothesis 2: Women have more collectivistic values than men

The study also found that women have higher collectivistic orientation more than men [ $F(1, 571) = 946.07, p < .001$ ]. There are some evidences that support this finding. Watkins et al. (1998) conducted a study of cultural dimensions, gender, and the nature of self-concept in 14 countries and found that there is a strong cultural level interaction effect between gender and individualism-collectivism on the nature of self-conceptions. Women have more concerns toward their "family" and "social" aspects of self-concept which belong to collectivistic values.



## Section 2: Culture, gender, and conflict management styles

Conflict is inevitable in all phases of social and personal relationship development. From a Western cultural perspective, conflict is, in and of itself, not a negative phenomenon. It is how people resolve or manage conflict that will affect the quality of their relationships. However, from an Eastern or a Middle Eastern cultural perspective, the conflict is problematic and often perceived by people in many non-Western cultures as high-risk, costly relational phenomenon. For them, conflict is not necessarily “inevitable”, it can be proactively avoided or managed before it actually takes on the reality of conflict.

To understand differences and similarities in conflict across cultures, it is necessary first to have a perspective to explain why and how cultures vary on a continuum of variations in accordance to some basic dimensions or core value characteristics (Ting-Toomey, 1985). While there are many dimensions in which cultures differ, one dimension that has received consistent attention from both cross-cultural studies (Hofstede, 1980, 1991; Schwartz & Bilsky, 1990) provide theoretical and empirical evidence that the value orientations of individualism and collectivism are pervasive in a wide range of cultures. This value dimension can be used as a beginning point to understand some of the basic relational differences and similarities in individualistic-based or group-based cultures. Macro level factors such as ecology, affluence, social and geographic mobility, migration, cultural background of parents, socialization, rural/urban environment, mass media exposure, education, and social change have been identified by Triandis (1988, 1990) as some of the underlying factors that contribute to the development of individualistic and collectivistic value tendencies. The core building block of individualism-collectivism lies in its relative emphasis on the importance of the “independent self” or the “interdependence self” orientation. Thus, the identity locus of independent versus interdependent construal of self frames our existential and

affective experience and serves as an anchoring point in terms of how people view themselves in communicative actions.

Findings from cross-cultural comparisons of procedural norms reveal systematic differences between individualists and collectivists. Tinsley and Brett (2001) proposed that such differences in conflict styles may be the result of the different conflict frames that individualists and collectivists adopt when approaching a conflict. The result of this research on each conflict management style will be presented and analyzed in this section. Hypotheses 3-11 will be explained.

### **Conflict Management Style**

#### **Avoiding**

Hypothesis 3: Thais prefer using avoiding conflict management style more than Americans do.

This study found that Thais prefer using avoiding conflict management style more than Americans do [ $F(1, 571) = 800.94, p < .001$ ]. There are many evidences that support this finding. Since collectivists generally dislike interpersonal competition within their group (Triandis et al., 1988) they tend to circumvent disagreement and avoid confrontation. Dependency upon the group offers them a sense of security (Wagatsuma & Rosett, 1986) and it does not serve as a drive to be personally assertive. Consequently, tentative styles of communication are preferred among collectivists due to the lack of initiative (Hofstede, 1980; Okabe, 1983). Ting-Toomey (1985) speculated that in a high cultural demand/high cultural constraint system, preventive strategies would be typically used before the conflict has a chance to come to the surface. On the other hand, in a low cultural demand/low cultural constraint system like that of the U.S. overt confrontation of ideas and argumentation by reasoning would be viewed as the positive characteristics of an

open, democratic system. Individuals in a high context culture are more likely to assume a non-confrontational, indirect attitude toward conflicts. Withdrawing may also be employed in an effort to “save face,” rather than embarrass others (Ting-Toomey, 1988).

Avoiding would often be characteristic of an individual who can neither fulfill expectations for behavior nor obtain valued ends. From the traditional-oriented Asian perspective, avoiding styles do not necessarily convey the negative connotations of being passive or elusive. The empirical work of Ting-Toomey et al. (1991) and Trubisky et al. (1991) provided some evidence that Asian samples (i.e., Chinese and Taiwanese groups) tend to use higher degrees of obliging and avoiding conflict styles than European Americans in dealing with acquaintance conflicts. In addition, European Americans tend to use a higher degree of dominating conflict style than Asian samples. Leung et al.'s (1992) work also provided some evidence that Asians tend to use avoidance and third-party to deal with conflict issues, while European Americans tend to use upfront, solution-oriented style (i.e., integrating and compromising) in dealing with conflict problems. These researchers, however, had only examined cross-national differences of conflict styles, and did not deal with ethnic variation issues in conflict management behaviors.

Hypothesis 4: Women prefer using avoiding conflict management style more than men do.

The study found that women prefer using avoiding conflict management style [ $F(1, 571) = 800.94, p < .001$ ] more than men do. There are many previous studies that support this finding. Females, for whom relationships may be of greater importance, and for whom aggressive behavior is less condoned (Ting-Toomey,

1986), would seem more likely to prefer such styles as smoothing (high in relationships, low in production), withdrawing (low in production and relationships), and compromising (medium in production and relationships). Males typically engage in more direct, 'up-front' strategies. Females typically engage in either indirect, 'smoothing' communication strategies to diffuse the conflict topic, or engage in avoidance or withdrawal strategies (Ting-Toomey, 1986).

### Obliging

Hypothesis 5: Thais prefer using obliging conflict management style more than Americans do.

This study found that Thais prefer using obliging conflict management style more than Americans do [ $F(1,571) = 391.87, p < .001$ ]. The result support the previous findings that in collectivistic cultures such as China, Japan, Korea, the Middle East, and Mexico, the needs of one's group are considered more important than oneself (Hofstede, 1980, 1983), and conflict communication will reflect this. Styles high in relationship preservation, such as obliging and compromising, are thus hypothesized to be preferred over forcing (Elsayed-Ekhouly & Buda, 1996; Rahim, 1992; Rahim & Blum, 1994). Several research studies corroborate these hypotheses. For example, Kagan, Knight, and Martinez-Romero (1982) found that subjects from Mexico (collectivistic) reported using withdrawing and smoothing more than European American (individualistic) subjects, who preferred more active, confrontational strategies such as forcing and problem-solving. Pearson and Stephan (1998) found Brazilians (collectivistic) to be more likely to report the use of obliging and withdrawing with members of their in-group, while United States subjects reported treating out- and in-groups the same.

In particular, obliging and avoiding styles often take on a Western slant of being negatively disengaged (i.e., “placating” or “flight” from the conflict scene). However, obliging and avoiding conflict styles are not necessarily perceived as negative by many Asian and Latin ethnic groups. These two styles are typically employed by collectivists to maintain mutual-face interests (Ting-Toomey, 1988, 1999). Conformity may occur more frequently in collectivist cultures, when the norms are dear, and sanctions are likely to be imposed for deviant behavior. However, when the norms are unclear, and sanctions are unlikely to be imposed, we might observe anticonformity. This explains Frager's (1970) findings that Japanese subjects conformed less (25%) than did U.S. subjects (usually 33%) in Asch-type conformity experimental settings and showed unusually high levels (36%) of anticonformity (giving the wrong response during those trials when the majority gave the correct response). Obviously, there are few norms or sanctions in the social psychological laboratory.

Hypothesis 6: Women prefer using obliging conflict management style more than men do

The study found that women prefer using obliging conflict management style [ $F(1, 571) = 339.22, p < .001$ ] more than men do. There are many previous studies that support this finding. Consistent with this study, others have found women to be more compromising, accommodating, and less forcing than men (Kilmann & Thomans, 1975; Rahim, 1983). Renwick (1977), one of the first researchers who examined differences in conflict resolution styles between men and women, argued that women ought to be no less apt to choose aggressive styles than men. Her results indicated that men tended to rate obliging style lower than women. Mills and Chusmir (1988), studying managers in the United States, found similar results.

### Integrating

Hypothesis 7: Americans prefer using integrating conflict management style more than Thais do.

This study found that Americans prefer using integrating conflict management style more than Thais do [ $F(1, 571) = 676.23, p < .001$ ]. There are many researches that support this finding. According to Ting-Toomey (1988), members of individualistic cultures prefer direct and assertive methods when resolving conflict. Typically, when comparing communication styles inter-country, such countries as the United States, Canada, Germany, Australia, and England are considered individualistic (Elsayed-Ekhouly & Buda, 1996; Hofstede, 1980, 1983; Trubisky et al., 1991). Individualistic cultures, characterized as more concerned with self than others, are hypothesized to prefer the conflict styles of problem-solving, compromising and forcing. Such styles involve strong verbal communication, less emphasis on internal aspects of communication, and less concern with the needs of others (Hofstede, 1983; Rahim, 1992; Rahim & Blum, 1994).

Ting-Toomey (1984) speculated that in a high cultural demand/high cultural constraint system, strategies would be typically used before the conflict has a chance to come to the surface. On the other hand, in a low cultural demand: low cultural constraint system like that of the U.S.A., overt confrontation of ideas and argumentation by reasoning would be viewed as the positive characteristics of an open, democratic system. Individuals in a high context culture are more likely to assume a non-confrontational, indirect attitude toward conflicts. Individualistic cultures, characterized as more concerned with self than others, are hypothesized to prefer the conflict styles of problem-solving, compromising and forcing. Such styles involve strong verbal communication, less emphasis on internal aspects of

communication, and less concern with the needs of others (Hofstede, 1983; Rahim, 1992; Rahim & Blum, 1994).

### Dominating

Hypothesis 8: Americans prefer using dominating conflict management style more than Thais do.

This study found that Americans prefer using dominating conflict management style more than Thais do [ $F(1, 571) = 278.78, p < .001$ ]. There are numerous studies that support this result. Many researches conducted in North America in recent decades have demonstrated a robust and pervasive tendency to maintain and enhance an overall evaluation of the self-esteem (Gilovich, 1983; Greenwald, 1980; Solomon, Greenberg, & Pyszczynski, 1991). In causal attribution, for example, individuals from this cultural group tend to explain their own success in terms of their own internal and relatively stable attributes, such as ability or talent, while discounting their failure by attributing it to some external causes (e.g., blaming others) or internal but relatively unstable factors (e.g., lack of effort, Miller & Ross, 1975). Consider, as an alternative, a false uniqueness effect whereby individuals overestimate the uniqueness of their own positive attributes of the self.

In individualist cultures parallel phenomena may take place. Idiocentric persons in individualist cultures find it completely natural to "do their own thing" and to disregard the needs of communities, family, or work group. But allocentric persons feel concerned about their communities and ingroups. However, the social exchange appears fair to some individuals because such groups often provide social support, resources, and security. In individualistic cultures, the individual has many rights and few obligations in relation to ingroups, but ingroups also provide less social support, resources, or security to individuals (Triandis, 1995).

Hypothesis 9: Males prefer using dominating conflict management style more than females

This study found that males prefer using dominating style of conflict management more than females do [ $F(1, 571) = 302.15, p < .001$ ]. There are many previous researches that support this finding. Men appeared to be more directive, assertive, and forceful in organizational negotiations than women, whereas women appeared to be more oriented to communication and cooperation (Bernard, 1972; Rossi & Todd-Mancillas, 1987). In organizational conflict, there is some indication that men prefer forcing more than women do, whereas women have stronger tendencies toward compromising.

### Compromising

Hypothesis 10: Americans prefer using compromising conflict management style more than Thais do.

This study found that Americans preferred using compromising conflict management style more than Thais do [ $F(1, 571) = 23.58, p < .001$ ]. There are previous studies that supported this finding. Collectivists generally dislike interpersonal competition within their group, they tend to circumvent disagreement and avoid confrontation. Dependency upon the group offers them a sense of security and it does not serve as a drive to be personally assertive. Consequently, tentative styles of communication are preferred among collectivists due to the lack of initiative (Okabe, 1983). Illustrating the collectivists' reluctance to directly face interpersonal conflict, Hofstede (1980) wrote that in most collectivist cultures, the word "no" is seldom used, because saying no is a confrontation. "You may be right" or "we will think about it" are examples of polite ways of turning down a request. Similarly, the word "yes" should not necessarily be seen as an approval, but as



maintenance of the communication line. “Yes, I heard you”, is the meaning it has in Japan.

Compromise is common and useful solution for conflicts. Positional bargaining, as it is sometimes called, is just a back-and-forth negotiation in which the parties settle the issue by meeting somewhere in the middle. In linking Ting-Toomey's (1988) conflict face-negotiation theory with Rahim's (1992) styles of conflict management, certain observations can be made. Her theory proposes that members who subscribe to individualistic values tend to use direct modes of conflict management, such as integrating, compromising, and dominating/controlling styles. Comparatively, members who subscribe to collectivistic, group-based values tend to use indirect modes of conflict management, such as obliging/accommodating style and avoidance style. Compromise can be entirely free of face threat. Once the disputants show willingness to bargain, the focus will move to settlement, which can relieve potential face threats and even build face, as the parties seem empowered to reach an agreement. But compromise can involve face threat as well, especially, when parties watch something they really wanted melt away. Also, the process of compromise can involve face-threatening statements if the parties are unable to let go of their feelings of blame.

Hypothesis 11: Women prefer using compromising conflict management style more than men do.

The study found that Women prefer using compromising conflict management style [ $F(1, 571) = 639.28, p < .001$ ] more than men do. There are many previous studies that support this finding. Powell (1988) determined that women were significantly higher on smoothing, when asking United States politicians about their conflict styles. Female principals in the United States reported higher use of the compromising mode than male principals and females from a

Midwestern university population in the United States to report more use of withdrawing than males. Socially appropriate behavior differs for men and women in many countries around the world; thus, it is probable to assume that men and women would prefer to resolve conflicts with different conflict style choices (Shockley-Zalabak, 1981). In the United States, historically, men have been socialized to communicate in direct, confrontational ways, assuming the dominant power position; women have been socialized to take care of others, and play a more receptive role.

Bem (1993) proposed a macrostructural theory of female and male-gendered role development based on the assumption that men and women are placed markedly unequal positions in the U.S. societal structure, and that the andocentric social practices have privileged the male point of view. Gulligan (1982) attempted to present a more balanced approach in viewing of gendered "voices". According to Gulligan, two distinctive voices signal the differences in man and woman conceptualizations of moral issues in the United States.

In a cross-cultural personal relationship arena, VanYperen and Buunk (1991) found out that American women tend to consider strong-minded and getting along with in-laws as positive contributions, and inattentiveness and considered anti-sociability as negative contributions to an intimate relationship, more so than U.S. men. In another study, (Stimpson, Jensen, & Neff, 1992), results revealed that women in China, Korea, Thailand, and the United States prefer a more caring approach than men.

Conflict can be easily manage if both sexes realize that possible differences in viewing conflict negotiation patterns exist and both can widen their viewing conflict conceptualizations and repertoires through mindful observations focusing on gender polarities, both sexes need to realize that common grounds do exist

between the two gender groups. While culture influences expectations and behavior, the power of skillful interpersonal negotiation can help to transform societal constraints concerning intercultural and inter-gender polarization.



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## Chapter 5

### Conclusion and Suggestion for Further Research

#### Research Goals

This study was designed to explore the preferences for conflict management styles by Thais (collectivistic) and Americans (individualistic). The influence of gender is also used to examine the preferences for different conflict management styles. In addition, individualism and collectivism orientations are assessed to assure that the participants from the selected cultures represented collectivists and individualists as Hofstede (1980) has described them. This was important since the theoretical framework for most of the studies assumed that collectivism-individualism, rather than nationality, was the critical variable.

#### Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Thais hold collectivistic values, whereas Americans hold individualistic values.

Hypothesis 2: Women have more collectivistic values than men.

Hypothesis 3: Thais prefer using avoiding conflict management style more than Americans do.

Hypothesis 4: Women prefer using avoiding conflict management style more than men do.

Hypothesis 5: Thais prefer using obliging conflict management style more than Americans do.

Hypothesis 6: Women prefer using obliging conflict management style more than men do.

Hypothesis 7: Americans prefer using integrating conflict management style more than Thais do.

Hypothesis 8: Americans prefer using dominating conflict management style more than Thais do.

Hypothesis 9: Men prefer using dominating conflict management style more than women do.

Hypothesis 10: Americans prefer using compromising conflict management style more than Thais do.

Hypothesis 11: Women prefer using compromising conflict management style more than men do.

## Participants

### 1. Preliminary Study

1.1 Participants in the study were 100 students from SIIT (Sirindhorn International Institute of Technology). Data for one hundred participants were retained for further analyze.

2. Participants in the research: There were 575 participants from Thailand and the United States. Thai participants in the research were 22 graduate students from Sasin Graduate Institute of Business Administration (Sasin) and 223 undergraduate students from Chulalongkorn University who participated in the international programs from Faculty of Communication Arts (International Program), Faculty of Commerce and Accountancy (BBA, International Program), International School of Engineering (ISE), Faculty of Economics (EBA International Program) , Faculty of Arts (English majored students), Faculty of Medicine, and Faculty of Science (International Program)

For American participants, there were a total of 330 graduate and undergraduate students from California State University at Northridge, Lesley University, University of California at Los Angeles, and University of Southern California. They are both graduate ( $n = 209$ ) and undergraduate ( $n = 121$ ) students. Graduate students were

from Master of Business Administration Program (MBA), School of Engineering, and School of Science

Undergraduate students were from School of Engineering, School of Psychology, School of Sociology, School of Science, School of Economics, and School of Laws

### **Instruments**

Two measures, Rahim's Organizational Conflict Management Styles (Rahim, 1983) and Individualism-Collectivism Orientation (Hui, 1988), were used. One set of background questions was included. The language for all instruments was English.

### **Research Procedure**

First, the researcher informed the participants that the study aimed to identify the "Interpersonal Communication Styles".

The participants first complete the part of the questionnaire involving

1. A variety of biographical data questions.
2. The Rahim's Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II) (Rahim, 1983) developed under Blake and Mouton's (1983) five part taxonomy for handling interpersonal conflicts. They are avoiding, obliging, integrating, dominating, and compromising. There are two dimensions related to these styles: concern for production (productiveness) and concern for oneself (assertiveness). ROCI-II consisted of a series of 28 items having 5-point scales in the Likert format (5=strongly agree to 1=strongly disagree) that reflect conflict management styles based on individual dispositions. A high score indicates greater reported identification of the conflict management style of interest (Rahim, 1983).
3. The INDCOL, assessing subjectively perceived dimensions of individualism and collectivism, was administered in written form to groups of participants. Each statement required an evaluation by means of a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging (5=strongly agree to 1=strongly disagree). It is used as a check on the extent to

which assumptions concerning Thais as collectivists and Americans as individualists are warranted.

After completing the questionnaires, the researcher thanked the participant and offered to provide a summary of the study upon completion of the study if s/he is interested.

### **Statistical Analysis**

Cronbach's alpha is computed to establish the reliability of the two dependent measures used in the study (ROCI-II and INDCOL). Tabulated data relating to the demographic items and utilize such descriptive statistics as are appropriate, including percentage by sex, age, academic program, and country of origin, and show the summary of data in regard to position are presented.

One analysis serves as a check on the extent to which the hypothesis that Thais are collectivists and Americans are individualists are warranted. Two way ANOVA is the test for this analysis. The INDCOL overall score serves as a dependent variable and culture as the independent variable.

Another analysis permits testing of Hypotheses 3, 5, 7, 8, and 10, which posit that Thais prefer using avoiding and obliging conflict management styles more than do Americans, whereas Americans prefer using integrating, dominating, and compromising conflict management styles more than do Thais (Hypotheses 4, 5, and 6). In addition, the parts of Hypotheses 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6 which focused on gender as another independent variable in respect to the preference for conflict management styles, are tested as well. To compare the reported conflict management styles of Thais and Americans and assess the effects of gender, 2-way analysis of variance (2-Way ANOVA) is the statistical tool.

## Results

There is the main effect of culture and gender on individualistic-collectivistic orientation [ $F(1,571) = 4.43, p < .01$ ].

Hypothesis 1: Thais hold collectivistic values, whereas Americans hold individualistic values was significant [ $F(1, 571) = 786.42, p < .001$ ].

Hypothesis 2: Women have more collectivistic value than men [ $F(1, 571) = 946.07, p < .001$ ].

Results of hypothesis 3-11 are shown at the table 27-28.

Table 27

*Summarized hypotheses and results for preference of styles for conflict management by culture*

HO	Conflict Management Style	Culture	
		Thai	American
3	Avoiding [ $F(1, 571) = 253.09^{***}$ ]	$M = 20.80 >$ $SD = 3.81$	$M = 16.99$ $SD = 4.42$
5	Obliging [ $F(1, 571) = 391.87^{***}$ ]	$M = 21.12 >$ $SD = 2.75$	$M = 16.69$ $SD = 3.60$
7	Integrating [ $F(1, 571) = 676.23^{***}$ ]	$M = 19.47$ $SD = 1.94$	$< M = 24.90$ $SD = 2.83$
8	Dominating [ $F(1, 571) = 278.78^{***}$ ]	$M = 15.71$ $SD = 3.39$	$< M = 19.31$ $SD = 2.99$
10	Compromising [ $F(1, 571) = 23.58^{***}$ ]	$M = 13.15$ $SD = 2.79$	$< M = 13.92$ $SD = 2.79$

\*\*\* $p < .001$ .



Table 28

*Summarized hypotheses and results for preference of styles for conflict management by gender*

HO	Conflict Management Style	Gender	
		Male	Female
4	Avoiding [ $F(1, 571) = 800.94^{***}$ ]	$M = 15.47$ $SD = 3.75$	$< M = 21.97$ $SD = 2.54$
6	Obliging [ $F(1, 571) = 302.15^{***}$ ]	$M = 16.56$ $SD = 3.75$	$< M = 20.72$ $SD = 2.83$
9	Dominating [ $F(1, 571) = 339.22^{***}$ ]	$M = 19.47$ $SD = 3.08$	$> M = 15.96$ $SD = 3.29$
11	Compromising [ $F(1, 571) = 639.28^{***}$ ]	$M = 11.27$ $SD = 2.43$	$< M = 16.06$ $SD = 2.16$

$^{***}p < .001$ .

### Suggestion for Further Research

As the world is becoming a global village, it is common for people from different cultural backgrounds to come into contact with each other. Globalization of businesses has created many multicultural work groups. Cross-cultural negotiation has also become an essential practice in international business and political activities. By integrating the results of recent studies in social conflict, the future researchers will find a better approach to intercultural conflict management. Therefore, by realizing that much of human thinking is shaped by the groundbreaking theoretical work on culture and social behavior, the researcher such as Triandis (1972) aimed to address practical issues with solid basic research.

The functional role of competence in conflict management should be explored more too. It is relevance to the grid in two-dimensional model of conflict orientation (Blake & Mouton, 1964). Competing or distributive behavior is very similar to a

maximizing orientation, in which the finite interpersonal resources are sought regardless of the consequences to others. Conflict is not problematic because it is unpleasant, although it is also often unpleasant. It is problematic because conflict management is difficult to conduct competently. Specifically, parties in conflict may believe that the other person is pursuing a goal that frustrates their own. This simultaneously violates expectations regarding the interaction and reduces the likelihood of both parties achieving their valued personal objectives. Unless the parties understand that conflict episodes handicap the attainment of both appropriateness and effectiveness, then they may become perplexed in their experiences of conflict. But if one takes into account that being competent involves negotiating in such a way as to optimize both parties' appropriate and effective responses which conflict makes difficult, then understanding of conflict messages and productive outcomes may increase. Knowing how conflict and competence interrelate should also enable more productive management of conflict interactions.

Intercultural studies often focus on cultural adaptation and acculturation of sojourner into the new culture. Many aspects of culture have been investigated, but studies of adaptation to styles of managing conflict and attitudes toward these styles remain scarce. This study aimed at filling the gap.

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***APPENDIX***

สถาบันวิทยบริการ  
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

**Informed Consent Form for Social Psychological Research  
(For International Thai Students)**

**Title of Project:** A Study of Interpersonal Communication Style

**Principle Investigator:** Pissara Umavijani, Faculty of Psychology, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand  
[p.umavijani@gmail.com](mailto:p.umavijani@gmail.com)

**Purpose of Study:** The purpose of this study is to examine the differences in interpersonal communication styles among people from individualistic and collectivistic cultures.

**Procedure to be followed:** You will be asked to answer close ended questions on a survey. Two weeks later, you will be asked to answer another close ended questionnaire. (please contact K. Pissara if you will not attend in the following two weeks at 081-649-6512, [p.umavijani@gmail.com](mailto:p.umavijani@gmail.com))

**Discomforts and Risks:** There are no risks in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life. Some of the questions about conflict might cause discomfort and referring to conflict with colleagues might be concern about your security.

**Benefits:**

- a. You might learn more about yourself by participating in this study. You might have a chance to reflect on how you and others communicate as well as evaluate interaction in interpersonal communication.
- b. This research might provide a better understanding of how people manage and evaluate behavior.

**Duration:** It will take only 10-15 minutes in each section to complete the questions.

**Statement of Confidentiality:** Your name will be kept confidential to assure privacy.

The informed consent procedure has been followed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Investigator Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Your Signature

**Section 1: Biographical Data**

Instruction: Please complete the following section as accurately as possible.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: 1 \_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_

Are you studying in the international program?: Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Race/Ethnicity: \_\_\_ Asian \_\_\_ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Birthplace: \_\_\_\_\_

Length of time living in Thailand: Month(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Year(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Education: High school name \_\_\_\_\_

Are you from an international school?: Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Language spoken at home: English \_\_\_ Thai \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Language Skills:

	Thai	Good	Fair	Poor
Speaking				
Reading				
Writing				
<b>English</b>				
Speaking				
Reading				
Writing				

Have you lived in a country (countries) other than your home country?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

If yes, where? \_\_\_\_\_ How long? Year \_\_\_\_\_ Month \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 2

Instructions: Interpersonal conflict arises when there is a disagreement between two or more people that involves incompatible or opposing goals, needs, or viewpoints. **Recall** the situations when you have been involved in conflict with a person who worked with you (your friends who has a relatively equal position in the group). For such situations, indicate the extent to which you usually act by circling the appropriate number for each question below. (1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly agree)

No.	Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	I try carefully to examine a problem with others to find a solution acceptable to both of us.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I generally try to satisfy the needs of others.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I try to keep my conflicts with others to myself because I want to avoid being in an embarrassing/difficult situation where I am forced to make important decisions in a small amount of time.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I try to incorporate my ideas with those of others to come up with a decision jointly.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I try to work with others to find solutions to a problem which satisfy our expectations.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I usually avoid open discussion of my differences with others.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I try to meet others halfway when solving a serious conflict.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I use my influences to get my ideas accepted.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I use my authority to make a decision that gives me an advantage.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I usually follow the wishes of others.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	I avoid meeting others who I have conflict with.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I exchange accurate information with others to solve a problem together.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	I usually let others get what they want.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	I usually propose a middle ground to end extreme situations.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	I negotiate with others so that a compromise can be reached.	1	2	3	4	5

No.	Questions	Strongly Disagree	disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
16.	I try to stay away from disagreement with others.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	I surrender to the wishes of others.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	I use my knowledge and experience to reach decisions in my favor.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	I often go along with the suggestions of others.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	I use "give and take" so that a compromise can be made.	1	2	3	4	5
21.	I am generally firm in defending my side on an issue.	1	2	3	4	5
22.	I try to bring all our concerns out in the open so that the issues can be resolved in the best possible way.	1	2	3	4	5
23.	I collaborate with others to create decisions acceptable to everyone involved.	1	2	3	4	5
24.	I try to satisfy the expectations of others.	1	2	3	4	5
25.	I sometimes use my power to win in a competitive situation..	1	2	3	4	5
26.	I try to keep my disagreements with others to myself in order to avoid bad feelings between us.	1	2	3	4	5
27.	I try to avoid unpleasant conversations with others.	1	2	3	4	5
28.	I try to work with others to develop a proper understanding of a problem.	1	2	3	4	5



### **Section 3**

Instruction: In this part of the questionnaire, you will find statements about certain social behaviors and beliefs. For each statement, please circle the appropriate number that best applies to you. (1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Undecided, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly agree)

No.	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	If one is interested in a job about which the spouse is not very enthusiastic, one should apply for it anyway.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	It is better for a husband and wife to have their own bank accounts rather than to have a joint account.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	The decision of where one is to work should be jointly made with one's spouse, if one is married.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Young people should take into consideration their parents' advice when making education/career plans.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	It's reasonable for a child to continue her/his parents' business.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I practice the religion of my parents.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I would not share my ideas and newly acquired knowledge with my parents.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I would help, within my ability, if a relative told me that s/he is in financial difficulty.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Each family has its own problems unique to itself.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I can count on my relatives for help if I find myself in any kind of trouble.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	I have never chatted with my neighbors about the political future of this state/country.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	My neighbors always tell me interesting stories that have happened around them.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	I am not interested in knowing what my neighbors are really like.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	I would rather struggle a personal problem by myself than discuss it with my friends.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	I would not pay much attention to my close friends' views when deciding what kind of work to do.	1	2	3	4	5

No.	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
16.	My good friends and I agree on the best place to shop.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	I have never loaned my camera/personal belongings to any friends.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	I would help if a friend told me that s/he needed to pay money to pay utility bills.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	A group of people at the workplace decided to go to a recently opened restaurant even though one person discovered that the food there was not good at all. In this situation, the person's decision not to join the group is a better choice.	1	2	3	4	5

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สถาบันวิทยบริการ  
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

**Informed Consent Form for Social Psychological Research  
(For American Students)**

**Title of Project:** A Study of Interpersonal Communication Style

**Principle Investigator:** Pissara Umavijani, Faculty of Psychology, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand [p.umavijani@gmail.com](mailto:p.umavijani@gmail.com)

**Purpose of Study:** The purpose of this study is to examine the differences in interpersonal communication styles among people from individualistic and collectivistic cultures.

**Procedure to be followed:** You will be asked to answer close ended questions on a survey. Two weeks later, you will be asked to answer another close ended questionnaire. (please contact Miss. Pissara if you will not attend in the following two weeks at 081-649-6512, [p.umavijani@gmail.com](mailto:p.umavijani@gmail.com))

**Discomforts and Risks:** There are no risks in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life. Some of the questions about conflict might cause discomfort and referring to conflict with colleagues might be concern about your security.

**Benefits:**

- c. You might learn more about yourself by participating in this study. You might have a chance to reflect on how you and others communicate as well as evaluate interaction in interpersonal communication.
- d. This research might provide a better understanding of how people manage and evaluate behavior.

**Duration:** It will take only 10-15 minutes in each section to complete the questions.

**Statement of Confidentiality:** Your name will be kept confidential to assure privacy. The informed consent procedure has been followed.

\_\_\_\_\_

Investigator Signature

Your Signature

**Section 1: Biographical Data**

Instruction: Please complete the following section as accurately as possible.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty/Major: \_\_\_\_\_

Undergraduated student \_\_\_\_\_ Graduated student \_\_\_\_\_

Year: 1 \_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_

Race/Ethnicity: \_\_\_ Caucasian \_\_\_ African-American

\_\_\_ Asian \_\_\_ Hispanic

\_\_\_ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Have you lived in a country (countries) other than your home country?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, where? \_\_\_\_\_ How long? Year \_\_\_\_\_ Month \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 2

Instructions: Interpersonal conflict arises when there is a disagreement between two or more people that involves incompatible or opposing goals, needs, or viewpoints. **Recall** the situations when you have been involved in conflict with a person who worked with you (your friends who has a relatively equal position in the group). For such situations, indicate the extent to which you usually act by circling the appropriate number for each question below. (1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly agree)

No	Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	I try carefully to examine a problem with others to find a solution acceptable to both of us.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I generally try to satisfy the needs of others.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I try to keep my conflicts with others to myself because I want to avoid being in an embarrassing/difficult situation where I am forced to make important decisions in a small amount of time.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I try to incorporate my ideas with those of others to come up with a decision jointly.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I try to work with others to find solutions to a problem which satisfy our expectations.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I usually avoid open discussion of my differences with others.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I try to meet others halfway when solving a serious conflict.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I use my influences to get my ideas accepted.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I use my authority to make a decision that gives me an advantage.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I usually follow the wishes of others.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	I avoid meeting others who I have conflict with.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I exchange accurate information with others to solve a problem together.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	I usually let others get what they want.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	I usually propose a middle ground to end extreme situations.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	I negotiate with others so that a compromise can be reached.	1	2	3	4	5

No	Questions	Strongly disagree	disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
16.	I try to stay away from disagreement with others.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	I surrender to the wishes of others.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	I use my knowledge and experience to reach decisions in my favor.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	I often go along with the suggestions of others.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	I use "give and take" so that a compromise can be made.	1	2	3	4	5
21.	I am generally firm in defending my side on an issue.	1	2	3	4	5
22.	I try to bring all our concerns out in the open so that the issues can be resolved in the best possible way.	1	2	3	4	5
23.	I collaborate with others to create decisions acceptable to everyone involved.	1	2	3	4	5
24.	I try to satisfy the expectations of others.	1	2	3	4	5
25.	I sometimes use my power to win in a competitive situation..	1	2	3	4	5
26.	I try to keep my disagreements with others to myself in order to avoid bad feelings between us.	1	2	3	4	5
27.	I try to avoid unpleasant conversations with others.	1	2	3	4	5
28.	I try to work with others to develop a proper understanding of a problem.	1	2	3	4	5

### **Section 3**

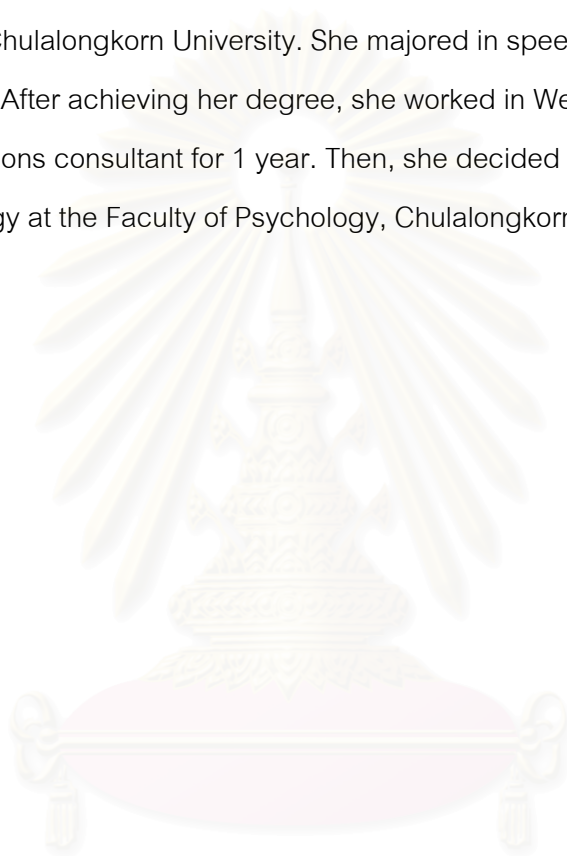
Instruction: In this part of the questionnaire, you will find statements about certain social behaviors and beliefs. For each statement, please circle the appropriate number that best applies to you. (1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Undecided, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly agree)

No.	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	If one is interested in a job about which the spouse is not very enthusiastic, one should apply for it anyway.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	It is better for a husband and wife to have their own bank accounts rather than to have a joint account.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	The decision of where one is to work should be jointly made with one's spouse, if one is married.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Young people should take into consideration their parents' advice when making education/career plans.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	It's reasonable for a child to continue her/his parents' business.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I practice the religion of my parents.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I would not share my ideas and newly acquired knowledge with my parents.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I would help, within my ability, if a relative told me that s/he is in financial difficulty.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Each family has its own problems unique to itself.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I can count on my relatives for help if I find myself in any kind of trouble.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	I have never chatted with my neighbors about the political future of this state/country.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	My neighbors always tell me interesting stories that have happened around them.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	I am not interested in knowing what my neighbors are really like.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	I would rather struggle a personal problem by myself than discuss it with my friends.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	I would not pay much attention to my close friends' views when deciding what kind of work to do.	1	2	3	4	5

No.	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
16.	My good friends and I agree on the best place to shop.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	I have never loaned my camera/personal belongings to any friends.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	I would help if a friend told me that s/he needed to pay money to pay utility bills.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	A group of people at the workplace decided to go to a recently opened restaurant even though one person discovered that the food there was not good at all. In this situation, the person's decision not to join the group is a better choice.	1	2	3	4	5

## BIOGRAPHY

Pissara Umavijani was born on September 3, 1981. She finished her high school at Northfield Mount Hermon School (Massachusetts, USA.) and Triam Udom Suksa School in 2000. In 2004, she graduated from the Faculty of Communication Arts (2nd class Honors), Chulalongkorn University. She majored in speech communication and performing arts. After achieving her degree, she worked in Weber Shandwick (Thailand) as a public relations consultant for 1 year. Then, she decided to continue her study in social psychology at the Faculty of Psychology, Chulalongkorn University.



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