



A STUDY ON BARRIERS OF CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION:  
A CASE OF MULTINATIONAL COMPANY



By  
Miss Wanida Brahamaweera

An Independent Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Business Administration Program in International Business  
International Program  
Graduate School, Silpakorn University  
Academic Year 2016  
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The Graduate School, Silpakorn University has approved and accredited the Independent Study title of “A Study on Barriers of Cross-Cultural Communication: A Case of Multinational Company” submitted by Ms. Wanida Brahamaweera as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration Program in International Business.

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International business brings a number of benefits to a country. Nevertheless, different nationalities, languages and non-verbal languages may cause problems for cross-cultural teams working in a multinational company. The diversity of nationalities may lead to misunderstanding among organizational members, which can be considered as a barrier in communication. Moreover, it should be noted that English proficiency and non-verbal languages are likely to reflect communication barriers especially in the multinational company where English is an international medium of communication. Therefore, this study aims to understand how team members communicate with the cross-cultural teams in order to explore the communication problems faced by the cross-cultural teams focusing on nationalities, English proficiency and non-verbal languages. The paper also endeavors to understand how to create effective communication for cross-cultural team. Qualitative method was conducted to collect the data from 10 supervisors and managers who have been working in the multinational company more than 8 years. Analysis of the data showed that the differences in nationalities, level of English proficiency and non-verbal language are considered as barriers of cross-cultural communication in the multinational company.

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Wanida Brahamaweera



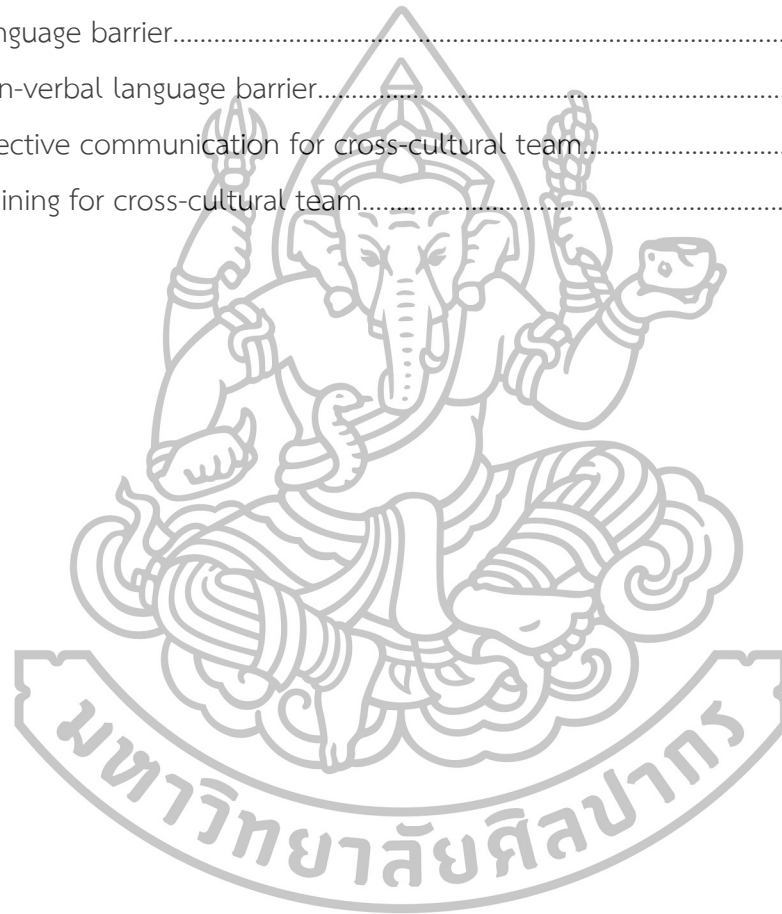
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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Introduction**

Firm strategy in today's global business requires an understanding of the business environment, international political and economic, international competition so many organizations are facing with an increasing of complex in business environment. (Joynt and Warner, 1996) Appropriateness and effectiveness of managerial practices and organizational processes are required to be considered in cultural settings other than their own. According to numerous studies of cross-cultural and approaches differ across cultures (Hofstede, 1983), effective communication in cross-cultural organizations is needed in order to avoid conflicts for example misinterpretation or misunderstanding. If the conflicts are not counted, cultural diversity can bring advantages to the team and company.

#### **Research background**

The expansion of international businesses today is growing. The business environment expands to various countries so companies are hiring skilled workforce from those countries to work with. These people have different background, religion, culture and ways of communication. People from different culture react differently which lead to the differences in business practice. (Nicholson and Stepina, 1998) found that the multinational companies need to understand and work successfully within and across different cultures. (Hooker, 2008) also supported that business practices are formed by cultural attitudes toward work, trust, attitude, wealth and communication. To run business smoothly in global companies, effective cross-cultural communication is required. Managers and supervisors would encounter with problems and conflicts to deal with their employees who came from the different cultures and background. Cross-cultural communication is an important component of manager's ability to deal with the performance challenges.

## Problem statement

The potential misunderstanding is likely to happen when the cultural is different between communicators and it may lead to conflicts. Misinterpretation can be occurred when the communication is not worked effectively. To communicate effectively, it is involved with an appropriate use of language simply and clearly. Good communication is a key feature of successful (Dainty et al., 2006). Avoid something unclear to minimize confusion and misunderstanding.

Cross-cultural communication has become key component to the companies due to growth of global business and technology. Managers and supervisors must learn how cross-cultural differences can create potential issues within organization in order to avoid misunderstanding and knowing better on some aspects of different cultures. Lack of cultural knowledge can create a barrier for business success.

In this study is to find out what are the barriers of cross-cultural communication caused by cultural differences and what are the impacts on employees in cross-cultural communication organization so we can create awareness within organization that cultural differences can affect the effectiveness of communication on their management. By investigating barriers in cross-cultural communication, we can find identify the exact problems in the workplace.

The Hofstede's model (Hofstede, 1983) will be included in this study. The model suggested five dimensions of cultural differences, these being power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism & collectivism, masculinity & femininity and the long & short-term orientation. Managers might encounter with problems and conflicts to handle employees coming from different cultures. For employees who came from the different cultures and social background, managers can improve their ability to supervise employees effectively by developing understanding of the cultural dimensions.

Language is one of the barriers (Penn, 1981; Swarthout, 2016; Rosenthal, 2012) that lead to misunderstanding or miscommunication among employees and the workplace. Misunderstanding occurs when communicators do not speak in the same language. Miscommunication may lead to conflicts that can affect the company's

performance. Cross cultural communication can also be an issue for native English speaker so effective cross cultural communication is a must in the global business.

Nonverbal communication is a flowing rapidly back-and-forth process requiring full concentration and attention (Jeanne et al, 2016). Nonverbal communication is the way to communicate without wording for example facial expression or tone of voice. The message receiver needs to understand the emotions behind the nonverbal message in order to react or understand the message from sender. Nonverbal communication can create misunderstanding because people from across culture may react differently.

### **Research objectives**

The purposes of this study are

- To study how team members communicate with the cross-cultural teams.
- To explore the communication problems faced by cross-cultural teams.
- To understand how to create effective communication for cross-cultural team.

### **Contributions**

To summarize the contributions of this paper, the multinational company can create awareness, explore the problem and understand how to communicate among cross-cultural team to success in business and able to be guideline for workforce to adjust themselves to work well across culture. Including cross-cultural organizations to manage and initiate new processes to deal with diverse workforce.

### **Conclusion**

Effective cross cultural communication is the key to success in today's globalization. Businesses and managements need to engage with partners and customers in global business and skills to manage intercultural context is required. To succeed in cross-cultural environments, leaders need to understand and evaluate the major challenges to ensure the businesses stay in the competitive environment.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEWS

#### Introduction

In the global business workplace, there are many issues of cross-cultural barriers in communication. Workforce who come from different cultures, different countries, different background are working under the same organization or the same team so they may express emotions and behaviors differently. The differences on cultures and practices that followed in each countries effect on the businesses. People from one country entered to another country must adjust himself to culture of another country. (Groeschl, 2003) culture is an important factor influencing the understanding and interpretation of the appraisal process, its development, implementation, and other appraisal related aspects. (Nicholson and Stepina, 1998) found that the multinational companies need to understand and work successfully within and across different cultures. The ability to manage cross-culturally is an important factor for multinational corporate survival and success. (Hooker, 2008) also supported that business practices are formed by cultural attitudes toward work, trust, attitude, wealth and communication. (Pheng and Yuguan, 2002) explained that ignoring and mishandling can cause an inability to retain and motivate employees. According to (Evans et al, 1991) cross-cultural studies are concerned the differences in factors such as educational background, economics, law.

To explore the barriers of cross-cultural communication, language is one of the cross-cultural communication barriers (Penn, 1981; Swarthout, 2016; Rosenthal, 2012). The global business creates opportunities for business development but ineffective cross-cultural communication can create conflicts or issues so it is important to understand the barriers to cross-cultural communication to be able to handle and manage the potential issues that can be happened.

English is the common international language in global business. To communicate between people who speaking the different languages is not easy because of an equal of English proficiency. Employees may have more difficult when communicating in English. Misunderstanding and lost in translation can be occurred when English is not your own language. The meaning of the same word can be the different meaning to people from different cultures so the potential for misunderstandings would be increased so that may check for real understanding by asking others to summarize what they just heard you say.

Non-verbal communication is also important in business communication because people try to understand when non-verbal language is involved. The differences in cultures regulate the display of emotion differently. Some cultures have the way to express their emotions and other feelings openly while some cultures try to hide their emotions. The differences in the understanding of non-verbal communication can contribute to misunderstanding, while differences in interpretation, may lead to conflicts or escalating existing conflicts (LeBaron, 2003) or you may damage your professional relationship. It is important to understand these differences to show the respect for other cultural when communicating with professionals from other cultures.

All of these differences can lead to communication problems. If you are to work effectively with people who are difference in culture, you need to become aware of your own culture and how that impacts on others. (Hooker, 2008) explained that communication is the basic in business, because business is a collaborative activity. Goods and services are done and exchanged through the coordination from many persons, sometimes within small market and sometimes across global market.

In business, cross cultural communication plays a critical role in global market. When the communication is done effectively, people benefit from an increasing of institutional knowledge and competitive advantage. However, ineffective communication can confuse others which could lead to conflict and broken relationship with customers, partners, vendors, and employees.

## Dimensions of National Culture

(Hofstede, 1991) developed five dimensions of culture based on a survey conducted among IBM managers in over 50 countries for work usefulness and later developed those dimensions of culture cooperative in a sense to work in the cross-cultural business.

Hofstede's model has five dimensions.

- **Power distance** describes how people view power relationship, it's the degree that people not in power accept that power is distributed unequally. High power distance is very respectful to figures of authority accept the unequal power. In countries or organizations of high power distance, people do not question the decisions made by their leader and relationship between them are not close. The leaders are expecting to be respected. In low power distance organizations, the subordinates are considered as equal or nearly equal. The leaders are willing to trust their subordinates with the important jobs or project and willing to share the responsibility when problems are occurred.
- **Uncertainty avoidance** is the degree to which individuals prefer in behaviors to stay in comfortable situations. Uncertainty is the unpredictable outcomes or conditions. The low degree of uncertainty avoidance indicates that people in countries or organizations are more likely to take risk and more comfortable with ambiguity while countries or organizations with high degree of uncertainty avoidance are less comfortable to take risks and more structured in rules and social norms.
- **Individualism (in-group collectivism)**, individualism refers to the identity of self as based and independence and believe that they are able to succeed by themselves while collectivism depends on group harmony. In countries or organizations of individualist cultures are sensitive to loneliness while people in collectivist cultures can have fear of rejection.
- **Masculinity and Femininity**, in masculine cultures, men are supposed to be focused on success. For feminine cultures, women are supposed to be more tender and focus on quality of life. In the workplace of countries or

organizations of masculinity, employees admire to achieve their work as they believe that money and things are important while feminine organizations consider working is basically to earn money but helping each other is more important.

- **Long-term and short-term orientation**, long term orientation is people who focus on future for preparation while short-term orientation focus on the present or past more important than the future. In countries or organizations of long-term orientation, people value perseverance and persistence while the countries or organizations of short-term orientation concern efforts on matters related to short-term.

His work was validated by (Hoppe, 1990; Smith, 1994) who accepted the overall implication of Hofstede's cultural model that influence in global scale. (Amba-Rao, 1993) explained that global organizations clearly build corporate responsibility by emphasize values into business strategies. The global organizations operate in many different countries, where cross-cultural practices are to maintain the business process.

(Novinger, 2008) cultural barriers are greater than language barrier. The reaction can be both negative and emotional. Cultural diversity can create difficulty in communication because of the differences in mindset of people, languages and cultures. Different cultures can have different meaning of words and behaviors. Culture shapes the way people think and behave. These factors can become barriers in communication. (Lachman, 2009) communication difficulty can be raised when people speak English as a second language or try to use it beyond their ability. The listener may agree with something being said but they may just being polite while they have no clue from what you are saying.

### **Cross-cultural team**

As the global businesses are expanding, cross cultural team is going to increase. Cross cultural teamwork is people from diverse backgrounds interact and work together as a team. Many of large companies have people who work across multiple countries and they are looking for integrated global solutions. The cross cultural team has advantages to be able to understand the needs of clients and

customers better. Focusing of the team objectives is the key to make the cross-cultural team work well. The objective is an output for the team and it is better when there is multi-experience among team members to create the innovative thinking and solutions. Cultural barriers also exist such as ignorance of cultural gathering, differences in status and differences in the definitions and expectations of friendship (Peltokorpi and Clausen, 2011). Cultures are based assumptions which created by shared experiences and events. When faces with the same situation, different cultures might react in different ways. The problems and conflicts would be occurred in cross cultural team so the targets are to try to build the strengths and minimize conflicts or miscommunication. Misconception can create interpersonal conflicts and inappropriate organizational behavior (Ting-Toomey, 1985)

### **Communication**

Communication is the way to transfer information or message from one to another. Communication can be sent by verbal, non-verbal language, written, images or tone of voice. To communicate information effectively, it is involved with an appropriate use of language simply and clearly. Good communication is a key feature of successful (Dainty et al., 2006). Avoid something unclear to minimize confusion and misunderstanding. It is important for the message sender seeks feedback to check that their message is clearly understand. The message receivers can also provide feedback on how the message is understood and attempt to correct it if misunderstanding or confusion is occurred. Good communication skill is necessary in every business to make sure that everyone both internal and external company is operating on the same thing. The communication degree will allow you to build awareness how to communicate information to diverse receiver effectively with the business goal.

The communication style is the way to share information with others by using language (Friesen, 2015). There are two types of communication style which are direct communication and indirect communication. The direct communication is to express the need or feeling of speaker by say it what they think or feel. The speaker is responsible for clear communication for direct communication (Cynthia, 2012). The risk of misunderstanding is lesser than indirect communication because the indirect



communication is happened in the opposite way. The indirect communication happened when the intentions of speaker are hidden because the questions or answers from speaker will not make direct statement (Friesen, 2015). The indirect speakers are more likely to say “should” or “maybe” while the true answer is “must” or “no”. The indirect communication is not just by using words but sometimes by non-verbal language also and it’s more difficult to understand or translate the meaning.

Effective communication is the ability to convince people among team and requires comprehensive, multi-dimensional strategy. Communication involves in understanding the need of the message sender to create team knowledge and if you are not a good communicator, confusion and conflict may occur. Open-mindedness norms, defined as beliefs reflecting a willingness to recognize the value of others’ knowledge and objectives (Tjosvold and Poon, 1998). Communication helps to organize, design and monitoring impact on cross-cultural team and create sense of partnership among team to become successful.

#### **Cross-cultural communication**

Cross cultural communication is not easy to make people from different background understand each other. Culture can influence how people approach the problems and how people participate in groups. The potential misunderstanding is likely to happen when the cultural is different between communicators and it may lead to conflict. Emotions from cross-cultural situation can create volatility in the chemistry project (Nicolini, 2002). Nonverbal communication is important when interact across cultures because sometimes the meaning of non-verbal message is unclear and we use different system to try to understand the messages so the meaning would be different depends on the receiver’s background.

#### **Language**

Language is one of the barriers (Penn, 1981; Swarthout, 2016; Rosenthal, 2012) that lead to misunderstanding or miscommunication among employees at the workplace. Misunderstanding occurs when communicators do not speak the same language. Miscommunication may lead to conflicts that can affect the company’s

performance. Cross cultural communication can also be an issue for native English speaker so effective cross cultural communication is a must in the global business.

English is the international language of business and it is considered as the universal language and it is used as second language by most people in daily life. More people are learning English because it is become necessary in impact to your career. To be an English proficient, people must be able to write, read and speak it so people is able to communicate with people from different cultures. At the education level, English language is treated as necessary tools in order to prepare the students in the global competitions. (WIL, 2015) Most multinational companies require a certain degree of English proficiency in order to get a position with a top company because English is not only important but the companies are choosing person who able to communicate at a global level includes communication via e-mails, phone conversation and speaking with clients and coworkers. Language is the greatest mediator that allows us to relate, communicate and understand each other (Imberti, 2007). The workforce who expecting to get promoted in the multinational company, they are required to have skill to understand English in business.

English proficiency is the level of how you understand English. But if workforce has unequal of English proficiency, misunderstanding or lost in translation can be occurred when English is not your own language. For workforce who came from different parts of the world, the meaning of the same word can be translated to the different meaning and it can lead to increasing of misunderstanding. Moreover, the most technologies are based on English words so workforce should be able to understand English so they can work well with technologies.

### **Non-verbal communication**

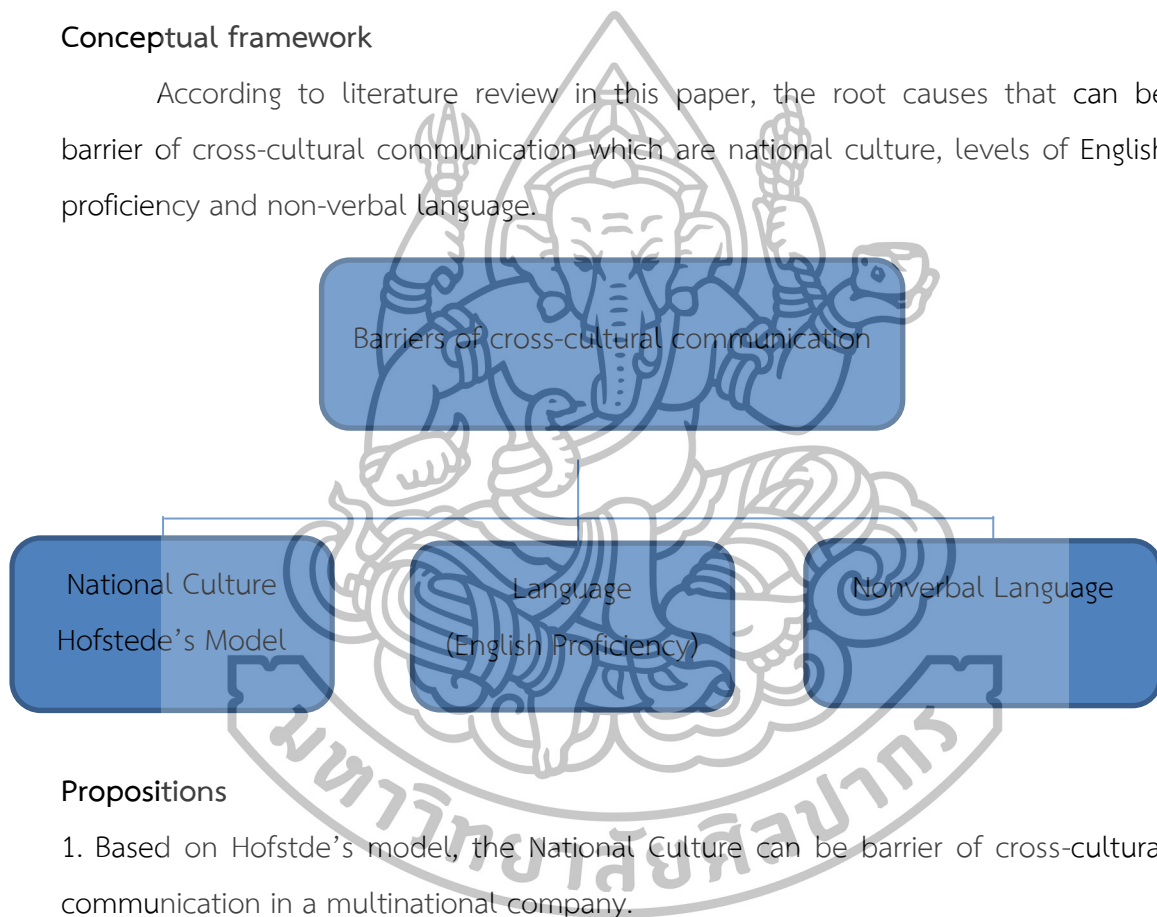
When interact with other, we sometimes received and replied the wordless signals like how much eye contact we have made, how loud we talk, the way we sit and the distance we stand. These body languages were treated as non-verbal language and people can feel and translate them into the different meanings.

Nonverbal communication is a flowing rapidly back-and-forth process requiring full concentration and attention (Jeanne et all, 2016). Nonverbal

communication is the way to communicate without wording for example facial expression or tone of voice. The message receiver needs to understand the emotions behind the nonverbal message in order to react or understand the message from sender. Nonverbal communication can create misunderstanding because people from across culture may react differently. (Jeanne et al, 2016), The communication from non-verbal language tells how others see, respect and trust in you.

### Conceptual framework

According to literature review in this paper, the root causes that can be barrier of cross-cultural communication which are national culture, levels of English proficiency and non-verbal language.



### Propositions

1. Based on Hofstede's model, the National Culture can be barrier of cross-cultural communication in a multinational company.
2. Different levels of English proficiency can be barrier of cross-cultural communication in a multinational company.
3. Non- verbal language can be barrier of cross-cultural communication in a multinational company.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the cross-cultural differences have an impact on communication among people who come from different cultures. Since the global companies have to expand and operate their businesses in many counties of the world, the workforce are expected to play role for successfully business outcome.

Many barriers would be occurred so we need to understand and study on the root cause to resolve the conflict. The best preparation is to learn cultural information and other cultures (Hughes-Wiener, 1995). To learn and understand the new culture, we can easily deal with both internal and external company to gain the positive outcome.



## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

This section is about methodology used to conduct this research. The strength of qualitative research is the ability to provide overview of reason, description of how people experience, opinions, emotions and relationships for better understanding of given situation. Researcher decided to use qualitative method because we need the interviewees to share their experience so interviewees are free to respond in their own words and have opportunity to respond more in detail than forcing them to choose from fixed responses.

This part of the research contains the description of research design and method selection. There are four sections which are research design, data collection, data analysis, validity and reliability.

#### Research Design

There were two research strategies which called quantitative and qualitative. The differences between them are described as follows: quantitative research (Babbie, Muijs (2010) is to determine the relationship between one thing (called an independent variable) and another (called a dependent variable) within a population. (Babbie, Muijs (2010), Quantitative research deals in numbers, measurement and statistics. It's about numeric and unchanged data. On the other hand, according to (Patton, 2002), the qualitative research is characterized by research's aims which related to understanding the experiences and attitude of supervisor and managers in a multinational company. For this research, the interview questions that need to answer questions about How, Why, What in order to link to the research objectives to see the barriers of cross-cultural communication in a multinational company so the qualitative method can be addressed in this research.

This research is designed to use qualitative method to seek perspectives and opinions from interviewees. Qualitative research method is the way to be able to get

description, explanation and unexpected events. To answer the “Why” and “How” questions, the qualitative research is the proper method to get answer from these questions (Sauro, 2015). For this research, the qualitative method can help to understand the values, feelings and perceptions that influence behavior and including general idea to be used for improvements and develop people in the organization.

The data was collected from managers and supervisors who are working in multinational company A. With the long term working years with company, researcher expected to be shared and helps to develop ideas by their experiences.

### Data Collection

The 10 managers and supervisors were selected bases on service years with the company and positions in the 4 different departments. Author sent e-mails to interviewees and asked for the available date and time to schedule one on one meeting to each interviewee. The answers were recorded in the voice clips. The duration for all interviewees, 10 managers and supervisors took around 3 weeks because someone were on business trip and the interview questions were in form of paper distributed to all interviewees before the scheduled time.

**Table1: Selection of Interviewees**

The 10 managers and supervisors were selected from the 4 different departments which are human resources department, information technology department, payables department and procurement department. These interviewees have been working with the company for at least 8 service years.

Interviewees	Age	Gender	Position	Department	Working experience (Years)	Time Spent (Mins)
Mr. A	35	Male	Buying center supervisor	Procurement	8	25
Ms. B	42	Female	Procurement manager	Procurement	16	25
Mr. C	40	Male	Payables manager	Payables	12	20

Interviewees	Age	Gender	Position	Department	Working experience (Years)	Time Spent (Mins)
Ms. E	36	Female	Payables supervisor	Payables	9	25
Mr. F	38	Male	Operation supervisor	Payables	10	20
Mrs. G	38	Female	Project manager	Information Technology	15	20
Mrs. H	35	Female	Project manager	Information Technology	15	25
Mr. I	37	Male	Payroll supervisor	Human resource	12	25
Ms. J	39	Female	Payroll manager	Human resource	14	25

The duration to data collect data for all of the 10 interviewees took 3 weeks because of the differences on working hours. The e-mails were sent out to interviewees to confirm back with their available time period. All of the interview questions were in Thai.

In this research, academic books and interview information are the counted as sources of data collection. Documents and the academic books are treated as secondary sources while the interviews are the primary source. Primary data for qualitative research, interviews are applied in data collection. Since the research area is in the specific situation in cross-cultural communication organization in a multinational company, a focused interview was selected as this research method.

Secondary source, secondary data is benefit and fulfill our knowledge within the research areas. The secondary sources used in this research are published articles in academic journals and published related books. The search engine "Google" has been used for this research also and the key words used in searching are

cross-culture, culture conflicts, cross-cultural communication, culture, English proficiency and non-verbal language etc.

### **Choice of interviewees**

The criterion to select participants for this research was considered as followed; employees in management level who have been working in cross-cultural communication organization in multinational company A at least 8 year experiences. These supervisors and managers are supposed to have deep understanding in cross-cultural communication with their long-term of experience will contribute to this research purposes.

In total, 10 supervisors and managers from 4 different departments were interviewed. The cross-cultural communication experiences on each individual are in their daily operation and all have more than 8 year experiences of working closely with diverse workforce. The targeted interviewees' ages vary from 35 to 42 years old. To avoid any issues, the name of interviewees were removed from this research and replaced by letter A-J.

Mr. A; 35 years old with 8 years experiences with the Multinational company A, currently working as buying center supervisor in procurement department. His work is to deal with price bidding for vendors located in Canada and North America.

Ms. B; 42 years old with 16 years experiences with the Multinational company A, currently working as procurement manager in Procurement department. Her work is to taking care of all teams related to buyers for all regions which are Asia Pacific, Papua New Guinea, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and North America countries.

Mr. C; 40 years old with 12 years experiences with the Multinational company A, currently working as payables manager in payables department. His work is to taking care of all teams related to payment release, invoice processing, invoice scanning for clients in Asia pacific countries.

Mrs. D; 40 years old with 12 years experiences with the Multinational company A, currently working as payables manager in payables department. His work is to taking care of all teams related to payment release, invoice processing, invoice scanning for clients in Canada and North America.



Ms. E; 36 years old with 9 years experiences with the Multinational company A, currently working as payables supervisor in payables department. Her work is to handle payment release for clients in Canada and North America.

Mr. F; 38 years old with 10 years experiences with the Multinational company A, currently working as operation supervisor in payables department. His work is to handle payment processing and invoice scanning for clients in Asia pacific countries.

Mrs. G; 38 years old with 15 years experiences with the Multinational company A, currently working as project manager in information technology department. Her work is to handle the new projects in India and Singapore.

Mrs. H; 35 years old with 15 years experiences with the Multinational company A, currently working as project manager in information technology department. Her work is to handle the new projects in Prague and Asia pacific countries.

Mr. I; 37 years old with 12 years experiences with the Multinational company A, currently working as payroll supervisor in human resource department. His work is to taking care of all teams related to payroll to employees in Asia Pacific countries including Australia and New Zealand.

Ms. J; 39 years old with 12 years experiences with the Multinational company A, currently working as payroll supervisor in human resource department. His work is to taking care of all teams related to payroll to employees in Canada and North America.

#### **Interview questions**

1. What is your criterion to choose workforce when cross-cultural team has to work together and how did you assign work to them?
2. Refer to question 1, if you assigned project/job to one person but he/she does not want to do, how did you deal with this problem?
3. When we work or meeting with the virtual team in the different time zones, how did you deal with both sides about the time differences.
4. When the person in your team has workload and need someone to share his/her work, how did you discuss on both sides?

5. How do think about impacts of the diverse workforce in the organization? (Shachaf, 2008)
6. English language may not be the mother language for some members of your team, can the difference levels of English proficiency affect to your organization? If yes, how would you solve that problem? (Kvantaliani & Klimina, 2011)
7. For non-verbal communication, people from one culture may react differently from people from another culture. Do you think that the non-verbal communication can lead to miscommunication or not? If yes, how? (Shachaf, 2008)
8. What did you do in order to create effective communication for the non-native speakers? (Kvantaliani & Klimina, 2011)
9. When the conflict on both personal and working issues are occurred among team, how did you manage this kind of issue?
10. When miscommunication happened, how did you solve the problem?
11. The members in cross cultural team came from difference background and have unequal of knowledge base. Have you conducted the training for them in order to increase efficiency?
12. With the difference of nature for example, Thai people always stick with the Thai in group outside working hours. What are the activities for cross-cultural team to maintain relationship among team?
13. How did you prepare yourself (managers) or your cross-cultural team?
14. How did you motivate or encourage your cross-cultural team to get the expected results?

### **Data analysis**

The data analysis is based from research questions which questioned on “how” and “why. In the part of data analysis, the analysis starts with a research objectives and proposition. According to the theory of cultural dimensions, the differences between behaviors and what are the causes will be analyzed.

### **Validity and reliability**

Validity and reliability are an important part of the research. According to (Brink, 1993) validity and reliability can make the difference between poor research and good research. Validity refers to the degree of accuracy of research to

reflect the results of research are believable and credible. Reliability refers the repeated findings or having the same results from more than one interviewee, the research design is reliable.

The qualitative research is about experience, opinion and perspective of the people. The validity in qualitative research is argued that the validity is not applied to qualitative research but the qualitative researchers realized that they need some tools to measure their research (Golafshani, 2003). The qualitative researchers can develop their own concepts to measure the research validity (Seale, 1999).

The reliability in qualitative research is used for evaluating the research. (Heale & Twycross, 2015) Reliability relates to consistency of research measure. If more than one interviewee has the same responses, the interviewer should agree on what is being told in order to confirm that the data are reliable.

### **Validity**

To increase validity of this research, the research strategies were selected from the study of (Shenton, 2004)

- Multi-method strategies; the interview sessions were conducted as one on one meeting and some of supervisor and managers provided answers by replying e-mail.
- Participant language verbatim accounts; the interview questions were sent out to supervisors and managers via e-mail before the scheduled session and some of them replied their answers back to interviewer via e-mail.
- Mechanically recorded data; use of voice recorder during the one of one meeting.
- Member checking; asked for more details from interviewees after the one on one meeting.

### **Reliability**

According to study of (Shenton, 2004), this research was followed the section A and B to make readers have clearly understanding of the method. The section A is research design and implementation, this research describes the plans and performs the strategic level. The section B is the operational detail of data gathering is to go to the detail of what was done in the field;

## Conclusion

Qualitative method is the way to get more information about experiences, opinions and the way they solved problems when work and manage the cross-cultural team.



## CHAPTER 4

### RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION

#### **Introduction**

In this chapter, the collected data from the interviews will be analyzed in order to answer the research objectives and questions. This chapter contains research finding which are the guideline to analyze data, discussion part is to tell effect of all barriers from cross-cultural communication.

#### **Research findings**

From interviews with supervisors and managers, there were 3 main themes to be guideline to analyze data which are communication with the cross-cultural teams, communication problems faced by cross-cultural teams and effective communication for cross-cultural team. All of these are to answer the research objectives.

#### **Communication with the cross-cultural teams**

Cross-cultural communication has become key component to the companies due to growth of global business and technology. Managers and supervisors must learn how cross-cultural differences can cause potential issues within organization to avoid misunderstanding and to know more on some aspects of different cultures. Lack of cultural knowledge can create barrier for business success. Interviewees (D, G, I and J) indicated that good working environment can create good relationship among team while some of them (A, B, C, E, F and H) pointed out to the problem was staffs behaviors so role of supervisors and managers are to handle with potential issues that could be happened.

Table 2: Communication with the cross cultural team.

Topic	Interviewees	Evidence
Communication with the cross cultural team.	A	“It’s normal for Thai staffs, they prefer to be in group but supervisor and manager will have a way to assign them a job to join with the others.”
	B	<p>“Re-confirm to make sure that your understanding is correct then you go next step of your work process to avoid misunderstanding.”</p> <p>“Rotate them into mixed culture team so they can learn to work together and having good relationship.”</p>
	C	<p>“Just using the simple words clearly and sometimes you can ask back to make sure that the sent message is understood.”</p> <p>“The team members need to accept others and open mind then the working environment will be better.”</p>
	D	<p>“Someone fears to ask because they think that it could be treated as impolite but we have to teach them that if the message is understood incorrectly, it will affect the work because of the unclear message.”</p> <p>“Create good environment workplace then they can build good relationship among team.”</p>
	E	<p>“I always warn all of my staffs, if something is unclear, they have to ask immediately and supervisors and managers have to give them answer attentively.”</p> <p>“This is about the relationship among team, if they have good relationship, they would support each other”</p>

	F	<p>“You can check back to make sure that the receiver understand correctly.”</p> <p>“Give them freedom in order to share opinion then the team member will accept each other.”</p>
	G	<p>“Outside the working hours, we have to build relationship. We can hang out or have the team activities.”</p>
	H	<p>“If you are not very sure, you can send e-mail to summarize it into wording and send to message sender to confirm.”</p> <p>“Starting from work, we have to let them work as team. They will accept each other and listen to others also.”</p>
	I	<p>“You can just ask to make sure about something unclear.”</p> <p>“Build the relationship outside working hours. Having dinner on Friday night and make it informal and relax.”</p>
	J	<p>“Relax work environment not too serious so my staffs can work happily.”</p>

#### Communication problems faced by cross-cultural teams

Based on Hofstede’s model, the National Culture can be barrier of cross-cultural communication in a multinational company. All answers from interviewees (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I and J) shown that they are aware of the problem from cultural difference and they know how to handle it. The way to solve problems is depend on managing style. Some of interviewees (A, B, D, F and G) prefer to discuss with their staffs to adjust the difference while some of interviewees (H and J) prefer to wait for the right time to talk with their staffs. The interviewees (C, E, F and G) would like to prevent the potential problem by creating good relationship among cross-cultural team.

Table 3: Communication problem faced by cross-cultural team.

Topic	Interviewees	Evidence
Communication problem faced by cross-cultural teams.	A	<p>“We are aware of this problem, the cultural differences have to work together and bias can be happened or sometimes create miscommunication. Our company has “Harassment policy” to protect people from these kinds of problem and you can raise issue to manager or HR if you feel uncomfortable to work.”</p> <p>“Managers are aware of this issue and we’ve already prepared ourselves to manage this problem.”</p>
	B	<p>“People may not aware of cultural difference and sometimes can create problem. For example, American people dare to debate or raise question in the meeting while Thai people keep quite.”</p> <p>“Becoming supervisor and managers, we were trained to aware of the potential issues that can be happened.”</p>
	C	<p>“Conflict and culture shock can happen in the workplace when we have less knowledge of cultural differences.”</p> <p>“From my experiences, I know how to manage with the problem among team.”</p>
	D	<p>“Working in a multinational company, we have to aware of this problem. Miscommunication can happen but we have to teach my staff how to avoid the problem so the message sent out and receive won’t be missed.”</p> <p>“We are in the multinational company and we were trained to manage with this problem.”</p>



	E	<p>“The cultural difference can lead to misunderstanding and sometimes can bring to conflicts.”</p> <p>“It’s not only for the management level, the operation level need to aware of the potential problem also.”</p>
	F	<p>“We have to plan how to handle with the potential problem that can be happened. People who came from differences places, difference countries, it is sure that problem is always there.”</p> <p>“Give them freedom in order to share opinion then the team member will accept each other.”</p>
	G	<p>“We have to open to be able to pull out our knowledge to plan and aware of the potential problem and sometimes in unexpected situation.”</p>
	H	<p>Thai people sometime didn’t like to speak frankly so we need to find the way “to warn or to tell them. But for American, they prefer to be straight forward.”</p> <p>“Understand the differences of diverse workforce.”</p>
	I	<p>“First, language difference, some people came from countries that English is not their mother language so sometimes they translate wording into different meaning. Sometimes bias or racial segregation can be happened and conflict will be followed.”</p> <p>“We have to know and learn the cultural differences in all level of staffs.”</p>

	J	<p>“The effects can be founded in many cases from miscommunication. Someone is good in English and they may face less communication problem than others. But they may have problem in other side like attitude or teamwork.”</p> <p>“If the problem is happened, we have to support our people to deal with problem.”</p>
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For cross-cultural team, supervisors and managers are aware of problems or issues that may happen.

**Table 4: Manage conflict in the cross-cultural team.**

Topic	Interviewees	Evidence
Manage conflict in cross-cultural team	A	“Just ask them to adjust the differences or maybe you can check with related team members to see what happened and normally it’s not the big deal so we can just talk to them.”
	B	<p>“Asked to adjust the differences but it that problem can’t be solved, we have to separate them or move them to the other team.”</p> <p>“Rotate them into mixed culture team so they can learn to work together and having good relationship.”</p>
	C	<p>“To avoid this kind of problem, we have to build good relationship among team members. If the problem is happened, it won’t become worse.”</p> <p>“The team members need to accept others and open mind then the working environment will be better.”</p>

	D	<p>“Ask from each one to see what happened and listen to them attentively and if anything I can help, I would do my best.”</p> <p>“Create good environment workplace then they can build good relationship among team.”</p>
	E	<p>“If there was the personal issue and not effect with work, I won’t touch. But if that problem effect to work, I will have to talk to them.”</p> <p>“This is about the relationship among team, if they have good relationship, they would support each other”</p>
	F	<p>“Listen to them first and go for help if needed.”</p> <p>“This is about the relationship among team, if they have good relationship, they would support each other”</p>
	G	<p>“Asked them to adjust the differences and this problem should not effect to work.”</p> <p>“Outside the working hours, we have to build relationship. We can hang out or having the team activities.”</p>
	H	<p>“First, we have to wait for the right time to deal with this problem.”</p>
	I	<p>“The argument on difference in attitude should not become personal issue.”</p>
	J	<p>“Look back to see the root cause and fix on each them, give them a time, go to solve problem at the right time.”</p>

Language is one of the barriers (Penn, 1981; Swarthout, 2016; Rosenthal, 2012) that leads to misunderstanding or miscommunication among employees and the workplace.

The interviewees (A, B, G and I) stated that the company required the specific level of English proficiency test since the hiring process to make sure that they are having good skill and be able to communicate in English. The interviewees (C, D, E, F and I) believed that their staffs can develop themselves by practicing English including having chance from supervisors and managers.

**Table 5: Language barrier.**

Topic	Interviewees	Evidence
Language Barrier	A	“The hiring process of our company has the certain specific level of TOEIC English proficiency test. We need the people who meet our standard requirement to avoid communication problem when dealing with foreigners.”
	B	“Yes, but we don’t have to worry if our staff are good in English because they may have less chance for miscommunication.”
	C	“Comparing to the person who are not good in English but they may good in communication by using simple words, speak slowly and clearly to make the listener understand the message from sender. We don’t have to worry about the pronunciation.”
	D	“Sometimes we can’t choose or we may have no way to know that the person who going to join with our team is good in English or not. But the thing we have to do is, how can we know and prepare ourselves to solve problem.”

	E	“Some people don’t speak up because they fear to speak English among the native speaker. The supervisor role is to give them chance and encourage them to practice English. We will not lose their face when they speak wrongly.”
	F	“We have to let them practice themselves. If you are not good in English, I will assign them a project with the diverse staffs so they will have chance to practice English and increase confident.”
	G	“We started from the hiring process with the English proficiency testing score so I’m quite sure that our staffs are qualified.”
	H	“People can develop themselves but it depends on intention and attempt. Today. If you are not good in English, you can practice it, learn it.”
	I	“Some people are good in English but they are fear to speak up. Some people good in presentation skill in they have to communicate in Thai and sometimes they can’t be good in English because of they fear.”
	J	“If we have the native speaker in the same team, some of our staff may fear to speak up.”

Nonverbal communication is a flowing rapidly back-and-forth process requiring full concentration and attention (Jeanne et al, 2016). Nonverbal communication is the way to communicate without wording for example facial expression or tone of voice.

Interviewees (B, C and I) stated that if people can learn from their mistake and once they remember, the second time of the same mistake won't be happened. Interviewees (A, B, D, G and J) suggested to check back message from sender to make sure that the correct information or data is understood correctly.

**Table 6: Non-verbal language barrier.**

Topic	Interviewees	Evidence
Non-verbal language barrier	A	"This problem is always raised and hard to fix. The diverse workforce who came from different part of the world may have to different reaction so the best way you should check back message from sender for the correct meaning."
	B	"If we don't understand their culture before, the easy way is to ask for the real meaning. If it's not correct, please help to clarify and once we remember, we won't miss it for the second time."
	C	"With this kind of problem, we can learn from the first time then it won't happen again because we understand."
	D	"It is sure to be problem but we can just check back if we don't understand to avoid problem."
	E	"The expression of people from different countries would be different. So miscommunication can be occurred."
	F	"Having eye contact during the conversation in some countries is treated as impolite while avoiding eye contact is treated as insincere in some countries also. You have to learn to prepare yourself in order to deal with foreigners so you won't miss."

	G	“All of non-verbal message is sometimes hard to check back for example the body language; shrug one shoulder. We can’t check back for all movements.”
	H	“There’s always problem and some people came from the same country may not understand all of the non-verbal language.”
	I	“If we learn and remember the meaning of non-verbal language then we will understand and won’t miss again for the second time.”
	J	“People from the different countries may react differently but we have to check back for the message they sent to make sure that we understand correctly.”

#### Effective communication for cross-cultural team

To communicate effectively, it is involved with an appropriate use of language simply and clearly. Good communication is a key feature of successful (Dainty et al., 2006). Avoid something unclear to minimize confusion and misunderstanding.

From answers from interviewees, all of answers were related to supervisors and managers role in order to create effective communication for cross-cultural team. Same as answers about need of training for cross-cultural team were all “YES” in order to increase efficiency to the team.

Table 7: Effective communication for cross-cultural team.

Topic	Interviewees	Evidence
Effective communication for cross-cultural team.	A	“If miscommunication happened, we have to tell my staffs on what we can do to avoid the same problem in the future and normally it won’t happen for second time.”
	B	“Choose the correct channel to communicate to suite the message receiver and need to think about the result.”
	C	“Fix it at the first level, reduce or remove the unnecessary information. When sending e-mail, you should send to the right person not send it to the whole group of your team because the unrelated staffs will always ignore your e-mail.”
	D	“To avoid this kind of problem, we have to point them to see the root cause and ask them to be more aware next time.”
	E	“Most people can remember their mistake and there will be less chance to happen again. Sometimes we have to tell them and point them to see the root cause.”
	F	“The manager’s role is to support them, when miscommunication happened, I have to help them and let them learn.”
	G	“If it happened and we can’t do anything, then we have to check back to see the root cause. Was it from the language? Or the way you used to communicate? All of these can be adjusted to avoid the problem.”



	H	“Working as a team and help to protect the problem because we have to listen to the team members.”
	I	“We have to follow up to make sure that the miscommunication is fixed. Is it better?”
	J	“Check back to see if there was any problem or issues from work or not. Sometimes if the differences in attitude happened among team, the miscommunication can be occurred.”

**Table 8: Training for cross-cultural team:**

Topic	Interviewees	Evidence
Training for cross-cultural team	A	“Yes, our company has many training sessions for all staffs to choose the training course they prefer. Or sometimes, managers can put their staff to the training sessions to match with the requirement.”
	B	“Yes, we have training among team. They can share knowledge and support each other among team or sometimes outside the team to expand knowledge.”
	C	“Yes, our staffs can join the training to develop their weak point.”
	D	“Yes, my staffs will need to evaluate themselves annually then discuss with manager to see the required training.”
	E	“Yes, the training is one of the most important activities for organization to develop our people.”

	F	“Yes, from annual review, we will see what need to be improved then we can assign them the proper training sessions.”
	G	“Yes, the training among team can create good relationship between them.”
	H	“Yes, the training is the top spending of the company in order to develop our people.”
	I	“Yes, but sometimes we have to see the detail of training. For example, the English session training course for my staff whose are not good in English won't be ok because they might not understand the details in English and it waste time. I'd better let them join the proper training sessions.”
	J	“Yes, it's important to develop our people but we have to choose the right training course for them.”

### Discussion

#### National culture

The impact of diverse workforce in organization can be one of barriers because of the differences. The workforce needs to have culture knowledge in order to work together in the same team or same organization. For example, American people always raise and show their own opinion to discuss in the meeting while Thai people may keep doubt in their mind. Sometimes, Thai people understand that brainstorming or discussing in the meeting could be treated as rude or impolite. If the culture knowledge among team is not good enough, conflict or culture shock could be happened. If the team member did something wrong, managers or supervisor may need to have the right way to warn or tell the team member. American people

always open and willing for criticism while managers and supervisor may need have other way to warn their Thai people.

The criterion to choose workforce when cross-cultural team has to be in the same team and the way that managers and supervisor assign work for them is depend on style of management. Some managers selected workforce by their skill. Manager assigned work to team member by their capability so the result at end step would be satisfied. On the other hand, managers and supervisors will assign work by weak point of their staffs. Check back to see their previous position, performance and experiences before making decision. But if that position does not fit to the team member, managers and supervisors have to be involved. They may need one on one meeting to discuss about the reason why they were assigned to the new career path. Sometimes they have to develop their weak skill to expand knowledge which is good for themselves. They need to open to change their attitude to learn new things. Workplace environment is also important when the workforce was asked to move to new position while they are unable to adjust themselves, managers and supervisors need to consider about this problem.

Working and meeting with virtual team across different time zone is one of the activities that can't be avoided in cross-cultural organization. Most of the time, they faced problems about the time difference. It could be during working hour for one side but out of office hour for the other side so the cross-cultural team may ask meeting attendees for survey about the time slot they prefer and minimize inconvenience. Sometimes based on number of attendees which side has the highest number of attendees will use that country's clock to schedule meeting.

Sharing workload among cross-cultural team is needed for sometimes in both short term and long term. Building the teamwork among cross-cultural team is necessary to create mindset to team member. Setting stand-in and back-up as needed to let them aware and ready to jump in to manage the workload problems.

Problems in the workplace for diverse workforce can happen like racism so there was a company policy to investigate and resolve issues of harassment called "harassment policy". It's the policy to build trust with employees, leaders and all

others in the company to control fairness and improper behaviors. Where the inappropriate behavior has occurred, the specific disciplinary actions will be applied.

### **English Proficiency**

English proficiency can be linked from cultural diversity because diverse workforce may not use English as their mother language. So an unequal level of English proficiency is also main part of barriers because when the workforce who came from different part of the world has to work together, English will be global language for communication among team. Conflict and miscommunication can be occurred when English become tool for sending message.

For multinational company, selecting workforce is started since hiring process. English proficiency testing score of employees has to meet the expected level of company. The English proficiency testing score may higher than normal for some specific positions because English will be main language to communicate both external and internal company. English proficiency of employees can be developed if managers and supervisors encourage their staffs, give them a chance to practice themselves. Assigned them the presentation part to let them prepare, practice their English and be more confident to reduce anxiety. Some staffs having good presentation skill in their mother language but not good in English. Managers and supervisor can also assign them a project to let them work closely with cross-cultural team member. The alternative way to be able to communicate in English clearly is to use simple word, speak clearly to reduce miscommunication.

### **Communication**

To create effective communication for non-native speaker is just check back to message sender to confirm or ask for more detail. Role of managers and supervisors is to communicate among team that if you are unsure or unclear with received message, you have to suddenly check back because if the message you received is unclear and you are quite not sure about it, conflict or mistake can be happened. The message sender should be able to explain and provide clarification when needed. Normally, human can learn from previous mistake and experience. Once they have learned, the same mistake or problem will not happen again. Considering the proper channel to communicate is another way to create effective

communication depending on objectives and proposes. Work as team is also help because the team members need to discuss and listen to each other.

### **Non-verbal language**

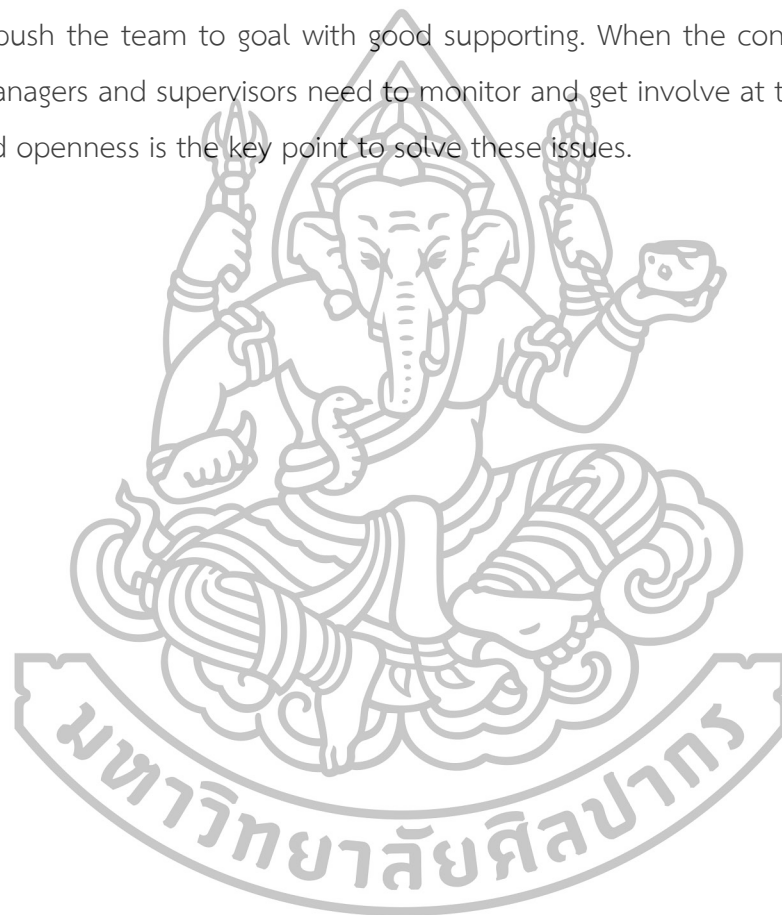
People from one culture may react differently from people from another culture. The non-verbal language can always lead to miscommunication. For example, the Indian head shake or wobble can create lots of confusion to person who come from different culture. The confusion can be increased then head shaking is in silent without speaking to give any clues to the message. Or having eye contact during conversation can be treated as impolite for some countries while avoiding eye contact is treated as insincere for some countries also. To translate the non-verbal language for cross-cultural team, culture knowledge base is needed in order to prepare their staffs and avoid miscommunication. The best way to deal with the unsure message of non-verbal language is to check back with message sender to make sure that you can understand the message so that you can take appropriate action further.

### **Roles of managers and supervisors**

Managers and supervisors have to prepare themselves and their cross-cultural team. Becoming management level, they were trained a lot to aware of problems and issues that could happen with cross-cultural team. The training was provided not only at management level but including operation levels. Managers and supervisors need to support and monitor their team in order to get involve at the right time when conflict is occurred.

Training is important tools to develop employees. It is one of the top spending from company budget to provide training to the workforce. Managers and supervisors need one on one meeting with their staff to discuss about strengths, weakness where the part which need to be developed, managers and supervisors will assign their staffs to attend the required training after discussing. The detail under training course has to be considered for example, the training will be conducted in English but your staff is not good in English so they may not able to cover the detail from what they should know.

Building and maintain relationship for cross-cultural team can be done both during working hours and outside working hours like celebrate birthday party or having team building activities. Creating good environment at workplace and encourage the team member to think positive, having good attitude with the job they are doing. Give them a chance to show the opinion and ideas. Good relationship among team and reduce chance to create conflict. Managers and supervisors can set target and push the team to goal with good supporting. When the conflict can't be avoided, managers and supervisors need to monitor and get involve at the right time. Fairness and openness is the key point to solve these issues.



## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Introduction

The last chapter for this research is conclusion and recommendations. From the answers of interview questions, we found that role of supervisors and managers have to deal with people issues and problems. This part of research will be separated into 3 parts which are final conclusion, limitation and suggestion and implication.

#### Cross-cultural communication

The cross-cultural team members communicate with the cross-cultural team by English and sometimes by non-verbal languages. Since the team member has unequal level of English proficiency and the cultural knowledge based, miscommunication and conflict can be occurred and supervisor and managers can get involve to support and solve problems.

The communication problems faced by cross cultural teams is always a problem. With the long-term experiences of supervisors and managers, they were trained a lot in order to aware of the potential problem that can be happened. The role of supervisors and managers is to check back to see root cause and find out the resolutions to solve problems and to avoid the repeated issues.

To create effective communication for cross-cultural team is to learn and remember from previous mistake by selecting proper communication channel in order to get to best result. Checking back to confirm with the message sender to make sure that they are on the same page.

#### Limitation

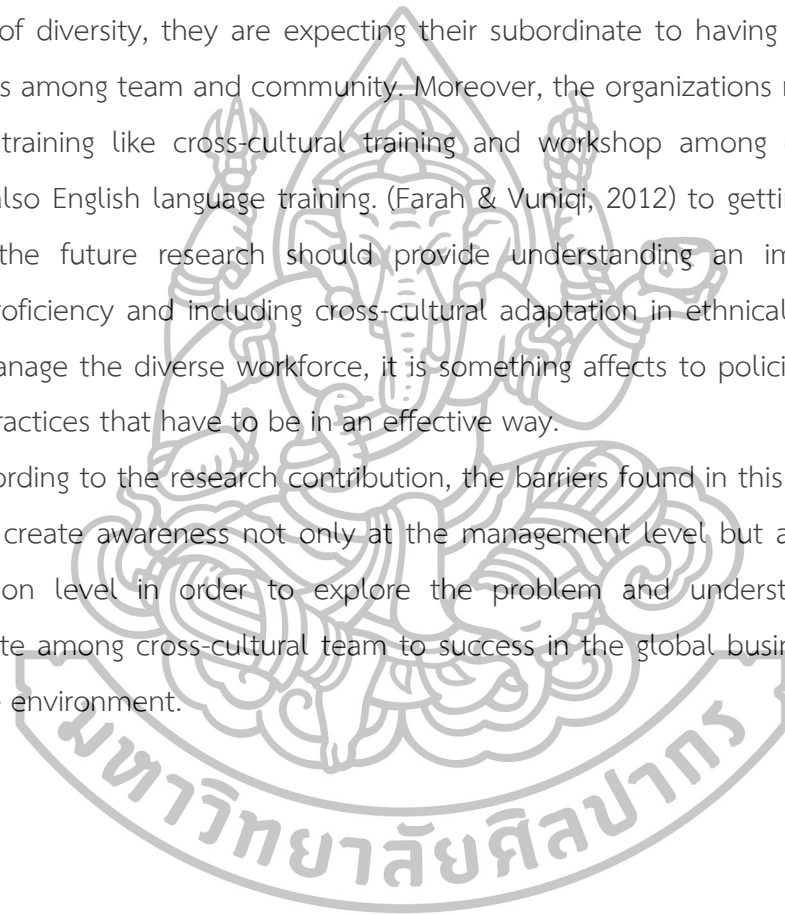
The limitation of this research is the small numbers of interviewees and all of the interviewees are working in the same company. The multinational company A is located in Bangkok, Thailand. However, if the interviewees from another multinational companies both inside and outside Thailand, the outcome would be

different. Moreover, the company privacy is limited. Some specific policy is protected and unable to be shared outside the company.

### **Suggestion and Implication**

The suggestion and implication of this study is that managers and supervisors could encourage the workforce to enhance their problem solving skill to increase the performance. Since supervisors and managers are having awareness of global issues and issues of diversity, they are expecting their subordinate to having skill to build relationships among team and community. Moreover, the organizations need to think about the training like cross-cultural training and workshop among cross-cultural team and also English language training. (Farah & Vunij, 2012) to getting broader in this field, the future research should provide understanding an importance of language proficiency and including cross-cultural adaptation in ethnically diverse. In order to manage the diverse workforce, it is something affects to policies, behaviors and work practices that have to be in an effective way.

According to the research contribution, the barriers found in this research will be able to create awareness not only at the management level but also including the operation level in order to explore the problem and understand how to communicate among cross-cultural team to success in the global business with the competitive environment.





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## APPENDIX

### Interview questions

**1. What is your criterion to choose workforce when cross-cultural team has to work together and how did you assign work to them?**

**A:** I selected my staff with their skills. For example, if there will be the new project, I would give them the project details and ask if they would like to be a part of the project team or not because I wanted to match them with their skill. They would be happy because the result will be satisfied.

**B:** I selected my staff with their skills. I can match them with my decision.

**C:** I prefer to select from the candidates and check their intention then I will assign the project to that person.

**D:** Someone is not good when working as a team. They prefer not to work as team but sometimes we have to ask them to be in team so that they can learn.

**E:** I always look back from their previous performance and see what are the things that they can do good then I will put them to the position that match with their skill.

**F:** My first priority is staff preference because I want them to work happily but sometimes I can't give them from what they need. I may need to put them to the position that I assigned.

**G:** I selected my staff from their skill. The good result would come from their skill. I don't want to waste time by put them to the wrong position.

**H:** I will ask my staff before assign work to them. They have proper skill and I will give them reason why I put them here. They will understand.

**I:** I will look back to see their performance and previous position and the education background then I will match them to the proper position.

**J:** Sometimes the education background can't show that my staff is good on the field they studied. But I prefer to ask them first then I can assign.

**2. Refer to question 1, if you assigned project/job to one person but he/she does not want to do, how did you deal with this problem?**

**A:** If they don't like it and ask to move to new position or new team, sometimes they have no choice. Something I can help or assist, I would do my best.

**B:** I have to talk to my staff. I have to explain and give reason why they were chosen to be here. What we can see from them and will encourage them with their good skills.

**C:** I always have my own reason when moving people, I can give them reason why and we can talk and discuss. I'm open to listen to them.

**D:** If they do not want to move to new position, sometime it's hard to take action immediately but we can switch role among team internally to make them feel better. We can try.

**E:** People issues is the big deal, it's affect with feelings and attitudes toward organization or leader. If we can't adjust, we have to change their mind, change their attitude. Let them learn how to fit themselves with the current position.

**F:** It's impossible when moving people to new career path and they will like it. I have to give them reason why.

**G:** We can't follow all requests from staffs but we can give them advice and encourage them to work and enjoy with their current position.

**H:** When moving my people to new position, it means all of the processes were approved at management level so they have to change themselves and adjust to stay with the new career path.

**I:** I would try my best to switch my people internally. But if it can't, we have to discuss in one on one meeting.

**J:** Sometimes they have no choice because the assigned position was discussed at the management level.

**3. When we work or meeting with the virtual team in the different time zone, how did you deal with both sides about the time differences.**

**A:** We have to check with the other time zone. If they are in the higher position, we have to follow their time zone. We can log in and call from home if the time is outside our working hours.

**B:** Share pain is fair enough.

**C:** We will follow time zone of the group who has higher number of attendees.

**D:** Follow by the highest number of attendees.

**E:** Follow time zone of the group who has higher position.

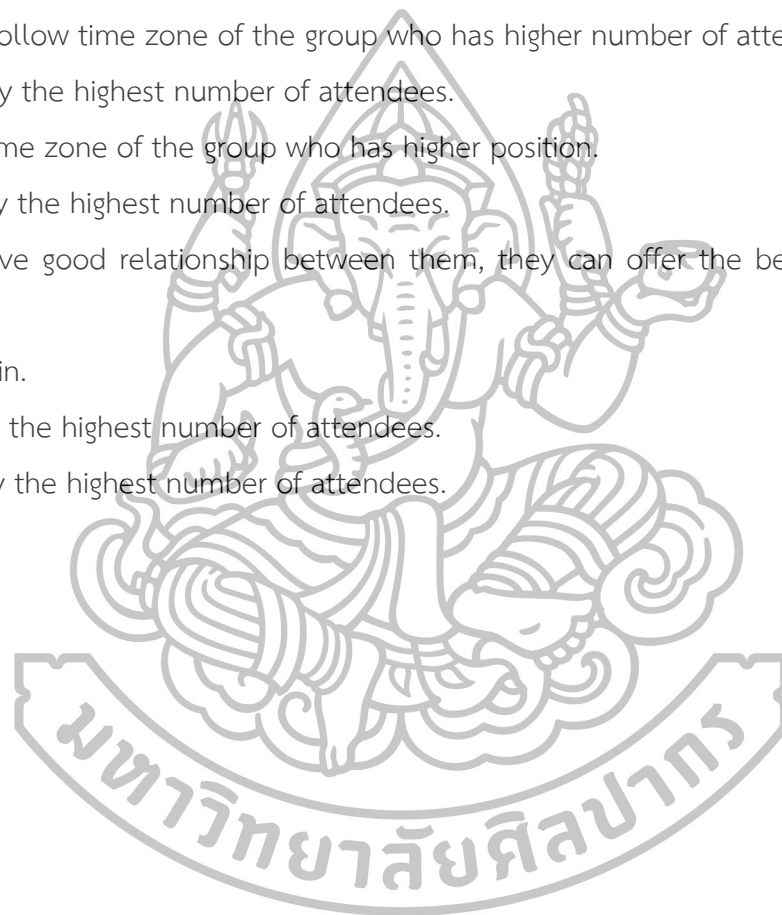
**F:** Follow by the highest number of attendees.

**G:** If we have good relationship between them, they can offer the best choice for both of us.

**H:** Share pain.

**I:** Follow by the highest number of attendees.

**J:** Follow by the highest number of attendees.



**4. When the person in your team has workload and need someone to share his/her work, how did you discuss on both sides?**

**A:** We have to go back and see the root cause, is it for short-term or long-term? What is needed to adjust? If need help from the team, we have to let them know and ask for help.

**B:** If they have teamwork mindset, we would do it and sometimes I don't have to ask.

**C:** If it's the peak period, they have to share.

**D:** Some tasks have to be on time and can't be late. They have to share among team to clear it timely.

**E:** My team has no problem with workload because they work as team.

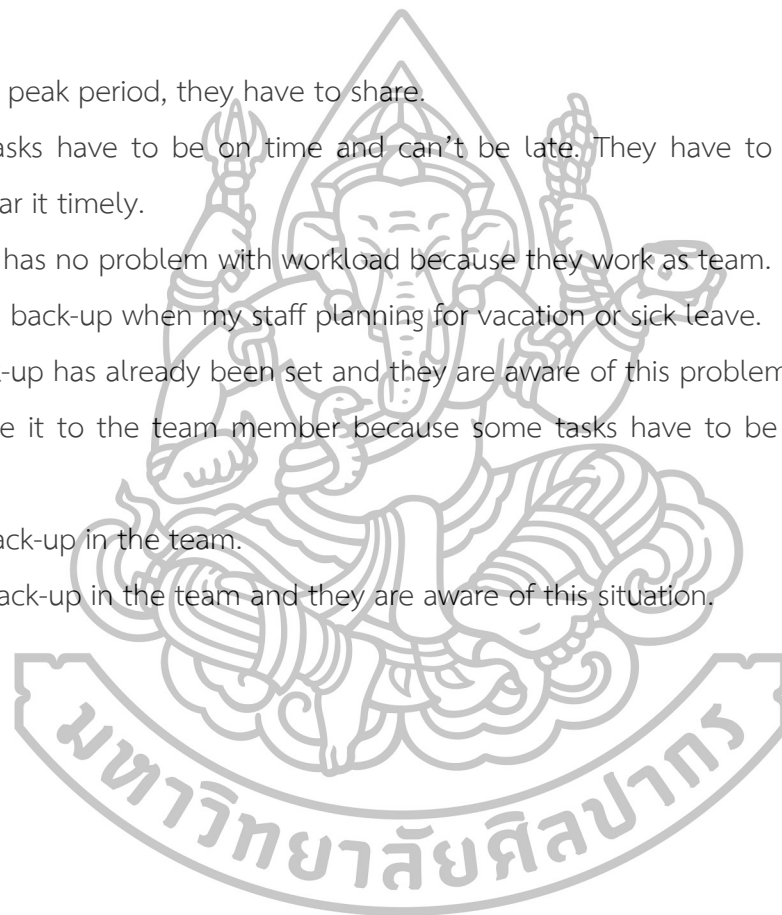
**F:** Place the back-up when my staff planning for vacation or sick leave.

**G:** The back-up has already been set and they are aware of this problem.

**H:** Distribute it to the team member because some tasks have to be on time and can't hold.

**I:** Set the back-up in the team.

**J:** Set the back-up in the team and they are aware of this situation.





**5. How do think about impacts of the diverse workforce in the organization?  
(Shachaf, 2008)**

**A:** We are aware of this problem, the cultural differences have to work together and bias can be happened or sometimes create miscommunication. Our company has “Harassment policy” to protect people from these kinds of problem and you can raise issue to manager or HR if you feel uncomfortable to work.

**B:** People may not aware of cultural difference and sometimes can create problem. For example, American people dare to debate or raise question in the meeting while Thai people keep quite.

**C:** Conflict and culture shock can happen in the workplace when we have less knowledge of cultural differences.

**D:** Working in a multinational company, we have to aware of this problem. Miscommunication can happen but we have to teach my staffs how to avoid the problem so the message sent out and receive won't be missed.

**E:** The cultural difference can lead to misunderstanding and sometimes can bring to conflicts.

**F:** We have to plan how to handle with the potential problem that can be happened. People who came from differences places, difference countries, it is sure that problem is always there.

**G:** We can learn from problem and adjust themselves adjust myself to fix the problem. Look back to see the root causes of problems. If the training is needed, we can ask them to attend the training sessions.

**H:** Thai people sometime didn't like to speak frankly, so we need to find the way to warn or to tell them. But for American, they prefer to be straight forward.

**I:** First, the language difference, some people came from countries that English is not their mother language so sometimes they translate wording into different meaning. Sometimes bias or racial segregation can be happened and conflict will be followed.

**J:** The effects can be founded in many cases from miscommunication. Someone is good in English and they may face less communication problem than others. But they may have problem in other side like attitude or teamwork.

6. English language may not be the mother language for some members of your team, can the difference levels of English proficiency affect to your organization? If yes, how would you solve that problem? (Kvantaliani & Klimina, 2011)

**A:** The hiring process of our company has the certain specific level of TOEIC English proficiency test. We need the people who meet our standard requirement to avoid communication problem when dealing with foreigners.

**B:** Yes, but we don't have to worry if our staffs are good in English because they may have less chance for miscommunication.

**C:** Comparing to the person who are not good in English but they might good in communication by using simple words, speak slowly and clearly to make the listener understand the message from sender. We don't have to worry about the pronunciation.

**D:** Sometimes we can't choose or we may have no way to know that the person who going to join with our team is good in English or not. But the thing we have to do is, how can we know and prepare ourselves to solve problem.

**E:** Some people don't speak up because they fear to speak English among the native speaker. The supervisor role is the give them chance and encourage them to practice English. We will not lose their face when they speak wrongly.

**F:** We have to let them practice themselves. For example, if you are not good in English, I will assign them a project with the diverse staff so they will have chance to practice English and to increase confident.

**G:** We started from the hiring process with the English proficiency testing score so I'm quite sure that our staffs are qualified.

**H:** People can develop themselves but it depends on intention and attempt. Today, if you are not good in English, you can practice it, learn it.

**I:** Some people are good in English but they are fear to speak up. Some people good in presentation skill in they have to communicate in Thai and sometimes they can't be good in English because of they fear.

**J:** If we have the native speaker in the same team, some of our staff may fear to speak up.

7. For non-verbal communication, people from one culture may react differently from people from another culture. Do you think that the non-verbal communication can lead to miscommunication or not? If yes, how? (Shachaf, 2008)

**A:** This problem is always raised and hard to fix. The diverse workforce who came from different part of the world may have to different reaction so the best way you should check back message from sender for the correct meaning.

**B:** If we don't understand their culture before, the easy way is just ask for the real meaning. If it's not correct, please help to clarify and once we remember, we won't miss it for the second time.

**C:** With this kind of problem, we can learn from the first time then it won't happen again because we understand.

**D:** It is sure to be problem but we can just check back if we don't understand to avoid problem.

**E:** The expression of people from different countries would be different so miscommunication can be occurred.

**F:** Having eye contact during the conversation in some countries is treated as impolite while avoiding eye contact is treated as insincere in some countries also. You have to learn to prepare yourself in order to deal with foreigners so you won't miss.

**G:** All of non-verbal message is sometimes hard to check back for example the body language; shrug one shoulder. We can't check back for all movements.

**H:** There always problems and some people came from the same countries may not understand all of the non-verbal language.

**I:** If we learn and remember the meaning of non-verbal language then we will understand and won't miss for the second time.

**J:** People from the different countries may react differently but we have to check back for the message they sent to make sure that we understand correctly.

**8. What did you do in order to create effective communication for the non-native speakers? (Kvantaliani & Klimina, 2011)**

**A:** The easiest way is just ask to confirm that your understanding is correct or not. If not, please explain or clarify. You should have the right way to check back message from sender politely.

**B:** Re-confirm to make sure that your understanding is correct then you go next step of your work process to avoid misunderstanding.

**C:** Just using the simple words clearly and sometimes you can check back to make sure that the sent message is understood.

**D:** Someone fear to ask because they think that it could be treated as impolite but we have to teach them that if the message is understood incorrectly, it will affect the work because of the unclear message.

**E:** I always warn to all of my staffs, if something is unclear, they have to ask immediately and supervisors and managers have to give them answer attentively.

**F:** You can check back to make sure that the message receiver understood correctly.

**G:** Asked to check back for something unsure.

**H:** If you are not very sure, you can send e-mail to summarize it into wording and send to message sender to confirm.

**I:** You can just ask to make sure about something unclear.

**J:** Just check back and avoid the unclear message that can be affected with works.

**9. When the conflict on both personal and working issues are occurred among team, how did you manage this kind of issue?**

**A:** Just ask them to adjust the differences or maybe you can just check with related team members to see what happened and normally it's not the big deal so we can just talk to them.

**B:** Asked to adjust the differences but if that problem can't be solved, we have to separate them or move them to the other team.

**C:** To avoid this kind of problem, we have to build good relationship among team members. If the problem is happened, it won't become worse.

**D:** Ask from each one to see what happened and listen to them attentively and if anything I can help, I would do my best.

**E:** If there was the personal issue and not effect with work, I won't touch. But if that problem effect to work, I will have to talk to them.

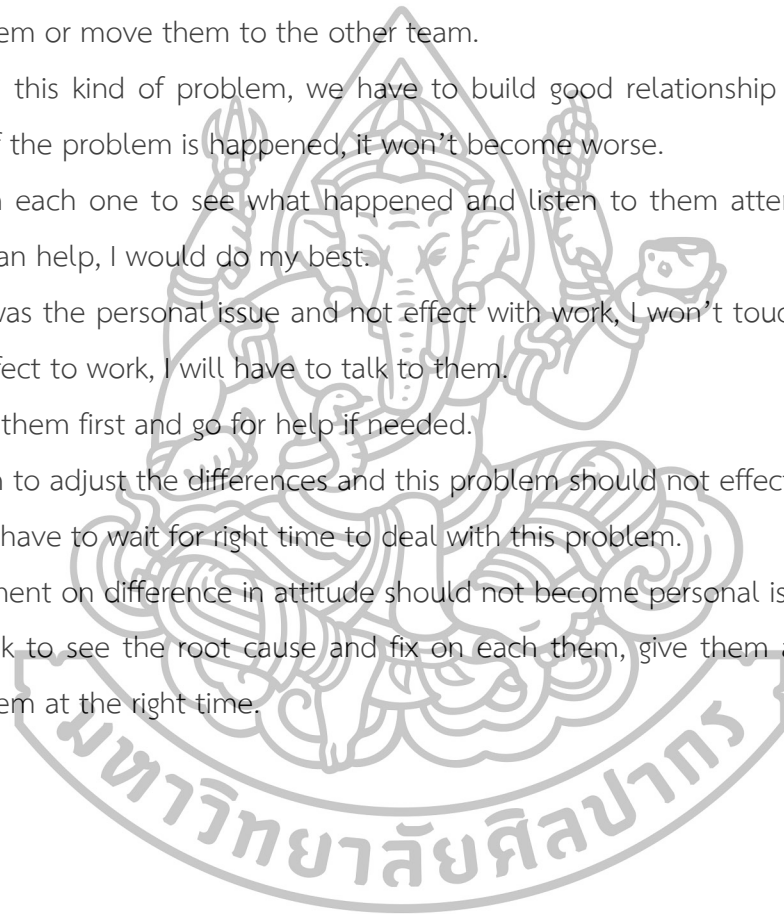
**F:** Listen to them first and go for help if needed.

**G:** Ask them to adjust the differences and this problem should not effect to work.

**H:** First, we have to wait for right time to deal with this problem.

**I:** The argument on difference in attitude should not become personal issue.

**J:** Look back to see the root cause and fix on each them, give them a time, go to solve problem at the right time.



**10. When miscommunication happened, how did you solve the problem?**

**A:** If miscommunication is happened, we have to tell my staffs on what we can do to avoid the same problem in the future and normally it won't happen for second time.

**B:** Choose the correct channel to communicate to suite the message receiver and need to think about the result.

**C:** Fix it at the first level, reduce or remove the unnecessary information. When sending e-mail, you should send to the right person not send it to the whole group of your team because the unrelated staffs will always ignore your e-mail.

**D:** To avoid this kind of problem, we have to point them to see the root cause and ask them to be more aware next time.

**E:** Most people can remember their mistake and there will be less chance to happen again. Sometimes we have to tell them and point them to see the root cause.

**F:** The manager's role is to support them, when miscommunication is happened, I have to help them and let them learn.

**G:** If it's happened and we can't do anything, then we have to see the root cause. Was it from the language? Or the way you used to communicate? All of these can be adjusted to avoid the problem.

**H:** Working as a team and help to protect the problem because we have to listen to the team members.

**I:** We have to follow up to make sure that the miscommunication is fixed. Is it better?

**J:** Check back to see if there was any problem or issues from work or not. Sometimes if the difference in attitude is happened among team, the miscommunication can be occurred.

**11. The members in cross cultural team came from difference background and have unequal of knowledge base. Have you conducted the training for them in order to increase efficiency?**

**A:** Yes, our company has many training sessions for all staffs and they can choose the training course they prefer. Or sometimes, managers can put their staff to the training sessions to match with the requirement.

**B:** Yes, we have training among team. They can share knowledge and support each other among team or sometimes outside the team to expand knowledge.

**C:** Yes, our staffs can join the training to develop their weak point.

**D:** Yes, my staffs will evaluate themselves annually then discuss with manager to see the required training.

**E:** Yes, the training is one of the most important activities for organization to develop our people.

**F:** Yes, from annual review, we will see what will need to be improved then we can assign them the proper training sessions.

**G:** Yes, the training among team can create good relationship between them.

**H:** Yes, the training is the top spending of the company in order to develop our people.

**I:** Yes, but sometimes we have to see the detail of that training. For example, the English training course for my staff who not good in English won't be ok because they might not understand the details in English and it's waste time. I'd better let them go to the proper training sessions.

**J:** Yes, it's important to develop our people but we have to choose the right training course for them.

**12. With the difference of nature for example, Thai people always stick with the Thai in group outside working hours. What are the activities for cross-cultural team to maintain relationship among team?**

**A:** It's normal for Thai staffs, they prefer to be in group but supervisor and manager will have a way to assign them a job to join with the others.

**B:** Rotate them into mixed culture team so they can learn to work together and having good relationship.

**C:** The team members need to accept others and open mind then the working environment will be better.

**D:** Create good environment workplace then they can build good relationship among team.

**E:** This is about the relationship among team. If they have good relationship, they would support each other.

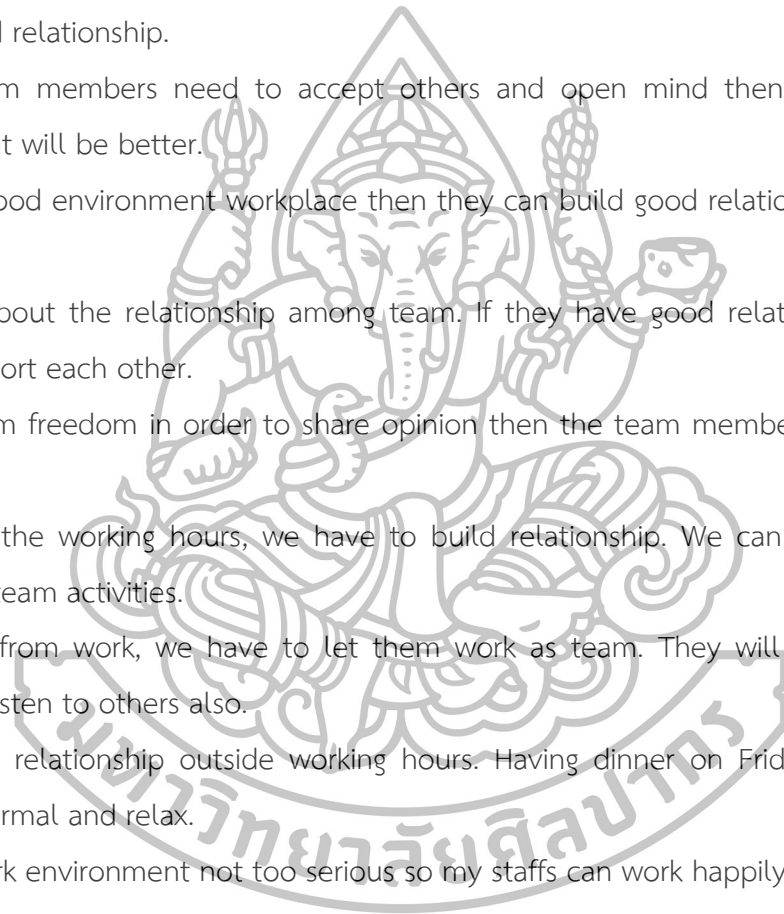
**F:** Give them freedom in order to share opinion then the team member will accept each other.

**G:** Outside the working hours, we have to build relationship. We can hang out or having the team activities.

**H:** Starting from work, we have to let them work as team. They will accept each other and listen to others also.

**I:** Build the relationship outside working hours. Having dinner on Friday night and make it informal and relax.

**J:** Relax work environment not too serious so my staffs can work happily.





**13. How did you prepare yourself (managers) or your cross-cultural team?**

**A:** Managers are aware of this issue, we've already prepared ourselves to manage this problem.

**B:** Becoming supervisor and managers, we were trained to aware of the potential issues that can be happened.

**C:** From my experiences, I know how to manage with the problem among team.

**D:** We are in the multinational company and we were trained to manage with this problem.

**E:** It's not only for the management level, the operation level need to aware of the potential problem also.

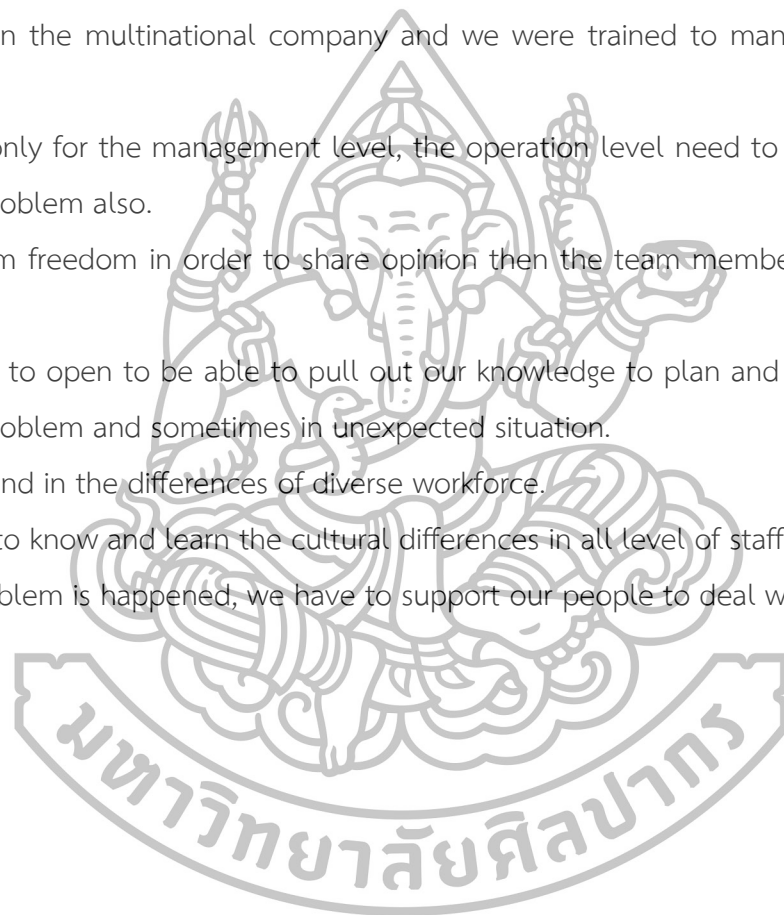
**F:** Give them freedom in order to share opinion then the team member will accept each other.

**G:** We have to open to be able to pull out our knowledge to plan and aware of the potential problem and sometimes in unexpected situation.

**H:** Understand in the differences of diverse workforce.

**I:** We have to know and learn the cultural differences in all level of staffs.

**J:** If the problem is happened, we have to support our people to deal with problem.



**14. How did you motivate or encourage your cross-cultural team to get the expected results?**

**A:** They need to have teamwork mindset then they can help each other including to the satisfied results.

**B:** They should have good attitude among team and work, I believe that if both things are good, the result would be good also.

**C:** Being reasonable and ready for help when they ask for support.

**D:** Being good supporter not only just ask for follow up.

**E:** Managers have to protect their staffs when work is not smooth. We have to listen and help them.

**F:** Create good relationship among team and if they need help, we have to ready.

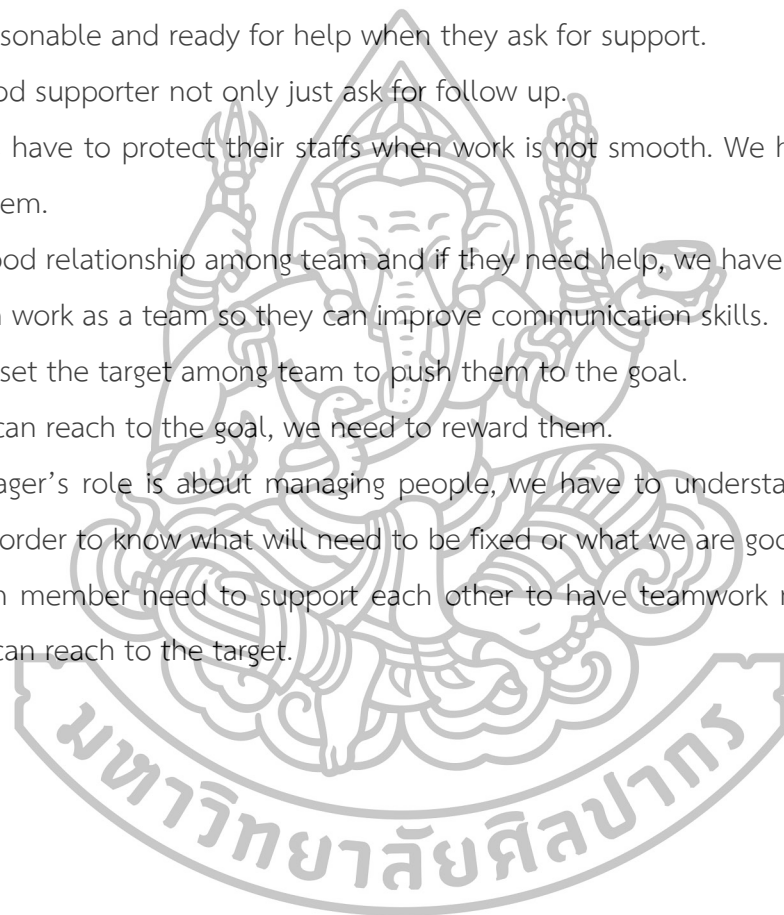
**G:** Let them work as a team so they can improve communication skills.

**H:** We may set the target among team to push them to the goal.

Once they can reach to the goal, we need to reward them.

**I:** The manager's role is about managing people, we have to understand the team member in order to know what will need to be fixed or what we are good.

**J:** The team member need to support each other to have teamwork mindset then they team can reach to the target.



## BIOGRAPHY

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