

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES IN THAIS AND AMERICANS  
AND THE EFFECT OF ACCULTURATION

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By

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**ABSTRACT**

**CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES**

**IN THAIS AND AMERICANS AND THE EFFECT OF ACCULTURATION**

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This thesis investigated conflict management styles of two different cultures, Thailand and the United States. It also examined the impact of acculturation on the conflict styles. The Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II was used to collect data on the conflict management styles of avoiding, integrating, dominating, and compromising. The Acculturation Index was used to measure the degree of acculturation of participants in this study. Thai students living in the United States and American teachers living in Thailand were the subject of this study ( $N = 103$ ). The study used t-test and the multiple factor ANOVA to analyze the data. The results indicated that Thais employed avoiding style more than Americans, and American employed integrating style more than Thais. Acculturation had an impact on Thai subjects but not on Americans.

Thais who were acculturated into American culture used integrating style more than Thais who were less acculturated. The post hoc analysis investigating the effect of culture of origin and 4 classifications of acculturation (marginalization, separation, assimilation, and integration) revealed similar results. The implications of the findings and directions for future research conclude this thesis.



## INTRODUCTION

Conflict is an interaction of interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals and interference from each other in accomplishing those goals (Wilmot & Hocker, 2000). It is inevitable. It can happen at any level and in various situations.

Conflict involves different styles of interchange. Conflict styles are behavioral orientations individuals can take toward conflict (Thomas, 1975). Conflict management styles are patterned responses, or a characteristic mode, of handling conflict across various situations (Ting-Toomey et al, 1991). Each conflicting party has his/her own style in managing or resolving a conflict across situations.

Conflict styles not only apply to an individual, but also to a culture as a whole. Culture is a system of symbols, meanings and norms that is transmitted through the course of history (Collier, 1997). Hofstede (1997) defined culture as the collective programming of mind that differentiates the members of one group of people from another. Conflict styles are a product of a culture (Ting-Toomey, 1988). In the conflict management process, culture shapes not only people's perception of themselves and of others but also the style people use in handling conflicts. Culture defines the values and interests at the core of each conflict (Rabie, 1994). People from one culture may have a tendency to employ one conflict style over the others, while people from another culture may prefer different approaches.

One important category that is used to describe cultures is individualism-

collectivism. Individualism is a cultural tendency to favor individual identity, rights, and needs more than those of groups. On the contrary, collectivism is a tendency for a culture to be more concerned about group identity, rights and needs than individual rights and needs (Ting-Toomey, 1999). Many studies have reported that members of individualistic culture such as those in the United States, Canada, and Australia often used a conflict style that places higher concern on individual needs and goals than those of other parties. On the other hand, cultures that preferred conflict styles that reflect low concern for the outcomes of self and high concern for outcomes of others were collectivistic cultures such as China, Taiwan, and Middle Eastern countries.

The transition from one culture to another and the absorption of another culture might also influence conflict styles. Acculturation is a long-term socialization and adjustment to a host culture (Dodd, 1998). When a person moves from one culture to another for an extended period of time, that person might absorb values and behaviors of that new culture and disregard his/her previous beliefs. Thus, the absorption of the new culture might affect the conflict style of individuals.

This thesis examines the relationship between acculturation and conflict styles of collectivistic and individualistic participants. Although, there are a large number of studies on conflict styles and culture, acculturation has not received much attention. Most of the earlier studies on acculturation have been conducted in various disciplines such as second language learning and psychology (Leong & Tata, 1990; Unger, 1997). Few empirical studies investigated the relationship between acculturation and conflict management style. Most studies that compared conflict style of two cultures employed citizens of the host cultures as subjects of the study. Hence, acculturation was not

accounted for in those studies. In the present study, Americans who reside in Thailand and Thais who live in the United States for an extended period of time will be used as participants in order to investigate how acculturation might affect conflict management styles.

The purposes of the present study was to answer the following questions: (1) What are differences in conflict management styles between members of an individualistic culture (Americans) and members of a collectivistic culture (Thais). (2) What are the effects of acculturation on conflict management styles? On one hand, this study used Ting-Toomey's face-negotiation theory and findings from previous studies which stated that members of collectivistic culture used more of avoiding and obliging conflict styles, while members of individualistic culture used integrating, dominating, and compromising conflict styles. On the other hand, the present study attempted to find more explanations for the inconsistency of the findings of past research on some of the conflict styles in relation to culture. Moreover, this study intended to investigate the influence of acculturation on conflict management styles of individuals. Members of collectivistic and individualistic cultures who reside in different cultures other than their own are included in this study in order to see if the degree of acculturation affects their conflict styles.

#### Significance of the Study

This study is important for several reasons. The first reason for examining the relationship between conflict management styles and individualism-collectivism is to replicate previous studies and also to test face-negotiation theory (Ting-Toomey, 1988). The findings of this study can either confirm or challenge the results from previous studies and the existing theory. Moreover, this study also challenged the categorization of

cultures. According to a previous study (Hofstede, 1997), Thailand is a collectivistic culture, and the United States is individualistic culture. Therefore, conflict behaviors of members of both countries should be consistent with other individualistic and collectivistic cultures. However, if the results showed that their conflict styles deviated from the others in the same category, the categorization of culture should be questioned.

The second reason addresses the use of Thailand as a representative of collectivistic cultures. Using Thai participants allows us to learn more about cultures. Most of the studies on conflict management style and culture used countries such as Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, China, Mexico, and India as a representative of collectivistic culture, while the United States, Canada, and Australia were used as a representative of individualistic culture. In the present study, Thailand was selected as a representative of collectivistic countries. Although it was included in the collectivistic category as Japan, Taiwan, China, etc, according to Hofstede (1997), Thailand is different from those countries in other cultural dimensions. Each cultural dimension has its own characteristics that affect communication styles including conflict styles. For example, in Japan, a masculine culture, the gender roles are clearly defined, whereas in Thailand, a feminine culture, gender roles overlap. Also, Thailand tends to accept change more than Japan.

Furthermore, an outsider might perceive Thailand as a collectivistic society. However, if one looks beneath the collectivist image of Thailand, one will discover distinct characteristics of the Thais that are highly individualistic in nature (Roongrengsuke & Chansuthus, 1998). Therefore, in this study, employing Thailand, a collectivistic country but different from the other collectivistic countries in other cultural

dimensions, may confirm results from previous studies and may also explain the inconsistent results from some of the previous experiments.

The third reason for the present study stems from the inconsistency in the findings of prior studies. A number of experimental studies investigated different conflict styles in terms of individualism-collectivism. Most studies revealed that people in individualistic cultures tended to use conflict styles that emphasized higher concern for individuals' interests, while people in collectivistic cultures were more likely to employ conflict styles that emphasized the interests of others than those of themselves (Boonsathorn, 1999; Ting-Toomey, Trubisky, & Nishida, 1989). However, some studies revealed results that were not consistent with other studies and the existing theory (Gire & Carment, 1993; Trubisky, Ting-Toomey, & Lin, 1991). Findings from those previous studies showed that members of individualistic cultures did not use a dominating style more than those of collectivistic cultures. Those studies argued that cultures that belong in the same cultural category do not have to possess the same conflict styles. Moreover, unlike what face-negotiation theory predicted, some countries in the collectivistic category employed more of a compromising style than their individualistic counterparts. As a result of the inconsistent findings, the present study attempted to investigate the inconsistency of the findings on the conflict styles of two different cultures, which fall into the individualistic dimension (American) and collectivistic dimension (Thai). The present study might support or disconfirm the results of earlier studies. Moreover, this study may also yield more explanation on the inconsistent results that permits the researchers to explain why different results have occurred.

Theoretical controversies were not the only reasons the researcher was interested

in this particular study. The final reason for this study was its practicality. The 1990 U.S. population census reported 922,819 United States citizens living abroad (U.S. Census Bureau, 1993). This figure included military personnel, federal civilian employees and their dependents. It did not include people in the business sectors who were working abroad. At present, the number of U.S. citizens living abroad could go even higher than the figure in 1990 because of the merger of U.S. based companies and other companies around the world, especially in Asia where the economic downturn has occurred.

Looking back to the United States, each year millions of immigrants and refugees from all over the world came to start their new life here. The U.S. Census Bureau (1999) reported that there were 26.4 million foreign-born people resided in the United States. This number represented 9.7 percent of the U.S. population. This factor has created diversity in the United States society. Although conflict occurs in any culture, conflict between people from different cultures may be even more difficult to manage because different cultures take different approaches to resolve conflict. Therefore, those people who must have contact with others from different cultural backgrounds might benefit from this study. People from different cultures have different beliefs, visions, norms, and worldviews that may shape their conflict behaviors in one way or the others. The knowledge of conflict management style of different cultures might help promote better relationships and productive outcomes.

Moreover, in the 21st century, there is no limitation for people around the world to communicate with each other because of the advancement in communication technology. English has become an international language. However, there are still barriers that prevent people from different cultures to communicate effectively. Problems

in intercultural relations may originate from the differences in conflict management styles of different cultures. A conflict style that is preferred by members of one culture may be viewed as undesirable in another culture. Thus, a conflict is not effectively resolved. In order to cope with intercultural conflict, we need to understand how people from different cultures handle conflicts.

### Method

To establish a background for the current study, this thesis includes literature in several areas of study. It consists of literature about conflict and conflict styles, literature about cultures, and literature about acculturation.

In order to investigate the effect of acculturation on the conflict styles, the present study employed participants from Thailand living in the United States and participants from the United States living in Thailand. The independent variables investigated in this study were culture (individualism and collectivism) and acculturation (low and high acculturated). The dependent variable that was measured was the conflict management styles of the participants.

The measurements that were used in this study were the Acculturation Index and the ROCI-II. The Acculturation Index designed by Ward and Rana-Deuba (1999) was used to determine if the participants acculturated into the new culture or not. The Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II) (Rahim, 1983) was used to measure their conflict styles. In terms of a statistical procedure, the multiple factor ANOVA and t-test were used to analyze the data.

## Chapter Preview

The first chapter reviews past research on conflict management styles including different typologies of conflict styles, culture and its relationship with conflict management styles, and literature on acculturation in other disciplines such as psychology and TESOL. It also explains the relationship between acculturation and conflict management styles. The second chapter presents the method, procedure, design and statistical procedure that were used in this research. The third chapter presents the result of the study. Finally, Chapter four explains the results and offers the conclusions and the implications of the study.



## CHAPTER 1

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Introduction discussed the purpose and the significant of the study. The important variables that were used in the study were briefly presented and discussed as a background to the study. The present chapter reviews three domains of literature. The first section concerns conflict management styles. The second section explores cultural dimensions and their relationships with conflict styles. Finally, the third section investigates acculturation.

#### Conflict and Conflict Management Styles

Conflict is a perceived or actual incompatibility of goals or needs between two interdependent parties over task-related and/or affective issues (Ting-Toomey et al., 1991; Wilmot & Hocker, 2000). A number of communication researchers have been interested in conflict because it is a communication-based phenomenon (Folger, Poole, & Stutman, 1993). Conflict is based on interaction. When people interact, it is likely that conflict occurs as a by-product of the interaction. Communication contributes to the forming of contradictory issues, organizing perceptions of conflict, translating emotions and perceptions into conflict behaviors, and setting the stage for future conflict (Putnam

& Poole, 1987). Moreover, communication also shapes and maintains the perceptions that direct conflict behavior (Folger, Poole, & Stutman, 1993).

Conflict is a normal phenomenon. Organizational conflict management includes a diagnosis and intervention of conflict at the individual, group, and intergroup level in order to maintain a moderate amount of conflict in the organization (Rahim & Bonoma 1979). Organizations that show no sign of conflict may not thrive. Organizations need moderate amounts of conflict in order to reach optimum effectiveness. The moderate amount of conflict helps organizational members learn the various conflict management styles in order to handle conflict in all kind of situations. Groups that appear to have no conflict might suffer from symptoms called “groupthink” (Beebe & Masterson, 1999; Janis, 1971). It occurs when the group is too cohesive or when members of the group are pressured to conform to the majority decision without critically analyzing it in order to minimize the amount of conflict. Although it involves incompatible goals of two parties, conflict can have positive consequences if it is managed well.

However, conflict management is different from conflict resolution. The term, conflict resolution, suggests the reduction or elimination of conflict, while conflict management does not mean so (Rahim, 1985). Conflict management simply means a way people deal with conflict, and it includes styles, tactics and strategies that people employ in handling conflict (Putnam & Wilson, 1982; Salem, 1998). It does not always imply the reduction in the amount of conflict.

A number of scholars have investigated the conflict management style of individuals in relational and organizational settings. Among those researchers, Putnam and Wilson (1982) grouped conflict management styles into three categories:

nonconfrontational style, solution-orientation, and control style. Nonconfrontational styles involve indirect strategies for handling a conflict, avoidance or withdrawal from disagreement. Behaviors that are included in this style are silence, glossing over differences, and hiding ill feelings. Solution-orientation or cooperative style involves behaviors that aim to seek a solution to a problem, to integrate the needs of both sides, and to compromise on issues. Open and direct communication is prominent for this style. Control style involves direct confrontation about the incompatibility. Common behaviors for this style are arguing persistently for one's position, taking control of the interaction, and backing one's position.

Another group of researchers clustered conflict management styles into five categories based on the degree of concern for self and the degree of concern for others. Blake and Mouton (1964) were the first to propose the conceptual framework that categorized conflict styles into five types: problem-solving, smoothing, forcing, withdrawal, and sharing. Their work has been reinterpreted by Thomas (1976) and again by Rahim (1983).

Rahim (1983) reconceptualized Blake and Mouton's styles of conflict management into five other constructs: integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding, and compromising. Integrating is associated with high concern for both self and other parties. This style involves openness, attempts to exchange information, and a desire to collaborate to reach an acceptable solution to both sides. Obliging involves low level of concern for self and high level of concern for other parties. Individuals who employ this style will try to minimize conflict and to accommodate the needs of the other parties in many ways, such as downplaying the differences and maximizing similarities.

Dominating reflects high concern for self and low concern for others. A person, who prefers this style, uses forcing behaviors to win his or her goals, thus he or she overlooks the needs of the other parties. Avoiding involves a low level of concern for both self and others. It is a passive approach to manage conflict. This style is associated with behaviors such as withdrawing from the disagreement, dodging responsibility, and sidestepping. Compromising reflects moderate concern for self and for other parties in conflict. This style involves a give-and-take approach, seeking a middle ground solution.

The five styles of conflict management developed by Rahim (1983) will be used in this study. Ting-Toomey and her colleagues argued that a model with three conflict styles may ignore some style differences both within and between cultures (Ting-Toomey et al, 1991). The five conflict styles model is more powerful than the three conflict styles one because the five styles capture the diversity of cultural styles of conflict management. Different cultures differ in terms of their conflict behaviors; thus the three conflict styles model might not include all of the conflict behaviors of various cultures. Furthermore, unlike the three conflict styles model, the Rahim typology is based on the dual-concern model (Blake & Mouton, 1964), which stated that individuals' concern for their own outcomes and their concerns for the outcome of the other determine their conflict styles. The five conflict styles model better reflects the cultural styles of conflict management. This last point will be illustrated in the following section.

### Culture and Cultural Dimensions

Culture is another crucial variable in the study of communication. Culture is a system of symbols, meaning, and norms that were transmitted through the course of history (Collier 1997). Ting-Toomey (1999) explained that culture is “a complex frame

of reference that consists of patterns of traditions, beliefs, values, norms, symbols, and meaning that are shared to varying degrees by interacting members of a community” (p. 10). Communication plays an important role in the cultural process. At the same time, culture dictates how people communicate with each other as well as the communicative styles they use to send a message and respond to the message.

There are several underlying dimensions of culture. Hofstede (1984, 1997) did a large-scale study with employees of a multinational corporation (IBM) in fifty countries. The study intended to investigate the differences between cultures. The IBM employees were asked to respond to a series of question reflecting the cultural dimensions. From the study, he discovered five cultural dimensions: individualism-collectivism, power distance, masculinity-femininity, uncertainty avoidance, and Confucian dynamism. However, there are still some controversies over this study. Some said that the IBM employees used in the study might not be the best representative of each country’s population since people working in a multinational corporation like IBM were largely male and possessed characteristics that were different from employees of other local companies.

The first dimension is individualism-collectivism. It has been a center of attention of researchers since 1980. Researchers who pioneered research on individualism-collectivism are Hofstede, Triandis, Ting-Toomey, Gudykunst, and many others. Individualism refers to societies that pay attention to personal achievement and emphasize individual identity, rights, and needs over those of groups (Ting-Toomey, 1999). Collectivism, on the other hand, refers to societies that emphasized the importance of community, groupness, and face-saving value. There are differences in communication

styles of members of individualistic and collectivistic cultures (Kim, Sharkey, & Singelis, 1992). Individualists emphasize concern for clarity and directness, truth telling and straight talk, personal needs and goals, and independence. They tend to use the pronoun “I” more than “we”. Contrary to individualists, collectivists emphasize indirect communication, concern for others’ feeling, face saving, avoidance of negative evaluation from a listener, and interdependence. In collectivistic cultures, direct confrontation should be avoided.

In North America, argument and direct communication is often used when dealing with conflict (Ting-Toomey, 1999). However, in Thailand, assertive behavior is considered as aggressive (Komin, 1995). Thais, on the other hand, prefer a soft and polite approach to managing conflict. Komin (1990) conducted two nation-wide surveys, which took place in 1978 and 1981. More than 2,000 Thai participants from different geographical regions, professions, and educational backgrounds participated in both surveys. The results revealed nine Thai cultural and work-related values. The third value, smooth interpersonal relationship orientation, suggested that Thais place a high value on surface harmony. This value is reflected in personalities of Thai people, which are polite, humble, and non-assertive in order to maintain a smooth and conflict-free interpersonal relationship.

Power distance refers to how the power is distributed in the society (Hofstede, 1983, 1997). In high power distance countries, people accept that power has been distributed unequally. In the family, children cannot contradict their parents. In the organization, high power distance means centralization and privileges for superiors. Low power distance countries, on the other hand, emphasize the minimization of inequalities.

Parents treat their children as equals. Organizations in low power distance cultures value decentralization of power.

According to Hofstede (1997), the United States is a low power distance culture. The United States is a democratic country, which values equality among people and individual rights, and power in the society is more likely to be distributed evenly. At work, the idea of involving employees in decision-making processes is more pervasive. At school, students are able to disagree with their teachers, and express their ideas. At home, children are able to contradict their parents.

Although Thailand is also a democratic country, the long history of absolute monarchy and an enduring patron-client system pushed the country to a higher power distance than the United States (Roongrensuke & Chansuthus, 1998). At work, subordinates expect to be told what to do. At home or school, children must treat their parents and teachers with respect. They are not allowed to contradict either their parents or teachers. Foreign managers from low power distance culture who expected that their employees would participate in meetings were disappointed in the behaviors of Thai employees (Komin, 1995). For Thai people, it is difficult to disagree with those who have higher status.

The next dimension is masculinity-femininity. Masculine cultures focus on work, strength, material success, assertiveness, and competitiveness, as well as a clear separation of social gender roles. Feminine cultures, on the other hand, embrace flexible gender roles, compassion, affection, nurturing, and interpersonal relationship. In terms of communication styles, masculine cultures prefer more aggressive styles. In managing conflict, they would employ techniques such as centering around bottom-line issues and

asking for information. However, feminine cultures tend to be better in reading nonverbal cues and dealing with ambiguity (Hofstede, 1991).

In a masculine culture such as Japan and the United States, gender roles are clearly defined. Men and women are supposed to do certain things. Men should be assertive, ambitious, and tough while women should be tender and concerned about relationship issues. Since childhood years, boys are taught to fight and not to cry, while girls are told that it is acceptable to cry and it is not appropriate to fight. At home, father is a breadwinner and mother takes care of the children.

Gender roles in feminine culture such as Thailand and Scandinavian countries, on the contrary, are more fluid. Both men and women are expected to be modest. Both boys and girls are allowed to cry. Unlike masculine cultures that emphasize achievement and success, feminine cultures focus on feeling and quality of life (Hofstede, 1997).

The fourth dimension, uncertainty avoidance, refers to the degree to which the members of a culture can tolerate uncertain or unknown situations (Hofstede, 1997). Members of high uncertainty avoidance cultures feel threatened when they encounter unknown or new situations. They need clear and formal guidelines and procedures. However, those of low uncertainty avoidance cultures are more willing to deal with ambiguity. They are more likely to take risks or follow informal guidelines. In Thailand, a high uncertainty avoidance culture, employees in an organization are more likely to wait for an order from their supervisors or follow procedure or rules than to take risks in areas where they are less certain. Oftentimes, high uncertainty avoidance organizations regard conflict as a threat to organizational effectiveness (Ting-Toomey, 1999). In low uncertainty avoidance cultures such as the United States, people are more likely to accept



the uncertainty in life and follow informal rules. They are more comfortable in dealing with uncertainty (Hofstede, 1997).

The last dimension, Confucian dynamism, refers to a long-term versus short-term orientation in life (Hofstede, 1997). It is derived from a Chinese philosophy that reflects an unequal relationship between people in the society and the importance of family, benevolence, moderation and hard work. Long-term orientation cultures value social order, hierarchical respect, collective face-saving, long-term planning, thrift, and long-term outcomes. On the contrary, those that are in a short-term culture focus on personal security, personal dignity, individual face-saving, short- to medium-term planning, spending, and short- to medium-term outcomes. Confucian dynamism also suggests collectivism and high power distance (Ting-Toomey, 1999).

Thailand and the United States are among fifty countries in Hofstede's study. The results of this study indicated that the two countries were different in all five dimensions. On the power distance index, Thailand had moderate but higher power distance than did the United States. For individualism-collectivism dimension, the United States ranked number one with a score of ninety-one on an individualism index, while Thailand ranked number thirty-nine to forty-one with a score of twenty. This indicated that the United States was a high individualistic culture, however, Thailand was more of a collectivistic culture. Thailand is a feminine culture, but the United States is a masculine culture. Thailand had moderate but more uncertainty avoidance than the United States. Thailand scored high on the long-term orientation index while the United States scored low on the same index.

## Culture and Conflict Styles

Individualism-collectivism is the dimension that has received most attention from researchers. Findings from a number of empirical studies suggested that individualism-collectivism is one of the most important cultural dimensions that differentiated clusters of cultures (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988; Ting-Toomey & Cocroft, 1994).

Theoretical and empirical evidence showed that individualism and collectivism orientation were prevalent in many different cultures. Furthermore, this dimension of culture has been used to examine different conflict management styles of many countries around the world.

Ting-Toomey's (1988) face-negotiation theory helped explain how members of individualistic cultures and collectivistic cultures handle conflict. She defined "face" as a perceived image of one's self in a relationship (Ting-Toomey, 1988). Facework is interaction strategies that people use to save their own and/or others' face (Ting-Toomey, 1999). Her theory contended that in a conflict situation, there are two dimensions of facework management: (1) self- and mutual-face concern, which refers to the individual's concern for self-face protection versus other-face protection, and (2) negative- and positive-face maintenance. Negative-face refers to the individual's need for autonomy or dissociation while positive-face is a need for inclusion or association. The theory further assumed that the cultural dimension of individualism-collectivism would influence individuals' selection of one set of conflict styles over others.

Ting-Toomey (1988) explains that individualists express more self-face maintenance than collectivists. Collectivists, on the other hand, show more mutual- and other-face maintenance than individualists. As a result, individualistic cultures tend to use

dominating, integrating, and compromising styles more than collectivists. The latter were more likely to use avoiding and obliging styles.

Ting-Toomey, Trubisky, and Nishida (1989) confirmed Ting-Toomey's face-negotiation theory by conducting an experiment on conflict management style using American and Japanese participants. The results of the study revealed that Americans (individualism) reported using more dominating, integrating, and compromising styles than did Japanese (collectivism). They also discovered that Japanese reported using more avoiding style than did Americans. Another study by Trubisky, Ting-Toomey, and Lin (1991) investigated conflict management styles of Taiwanese (collectivism) and Americans (individualism). The researchers asked Anglo-American and Taiwanese college students to respond to a set of questionnaires measuring their conflict styles. The data showed that Taiwanese used conflict management styles of avoiding and obliging more than their United States counterparts. However, inconsistent with the assumption from the face-negotiation theory, Taiwanese subjects employed more integrating and compromising styles than did the Americans. The researchers used Confucian principles of task completion and hard work that were pervasive in Chinese cultures to explain the inconsistent results of the study.

Another study by Ohbuchi, Fukushima, and Tedeschi (1999) examined conflict styles of the United States and Japan using a different category of conflict behaviors created by Ohbuchi and Tedeschi (1997). Their conflict styles consist of conciliation, assertion, avoidance, and third-party intervention. Conciliation includes integration, appeasement, and indirect communication. Assertion involves contention, aggression, and coercion. Avoidance includes passive tactics that keep the person away from direct

confrontation. Third-party intervention is seeking advice from a third party in order to resolve conflict. The participants in this study were Japanese and American university students. The results revealed that the Japanese subjects strongly used avoidance tactics in managing conflict, and the American subjects strongly used assertive tactics such as direct communication, criticism, and arguing for one's position. The researchers explained that collectivists were motivated by relationship goals while individualists were motivated by justice and resource goals.

There are some empirical evidences that contradicted the existing theory and results of previous studies. Gabrielidis, Stephan, Ybarra, Pearson, and Viallareal (1997) conducted a study on conflict styles of Mexican and American participants based on the dual-concern model. The participants, who were Mexican and American students, were asked to complete a questionnaire designed to measure individualism-collectivism, masculinity-femininity, and conflict management styles. Consistent with prior assumptions, the results suggested that Mexican participants (collectivism) showed higher preference for accommodation and collaboration than the American counterparts (individualism). This indicated high concern for others because accommodation is described as high in concern for others and low in concern for self, and collaboration emphasizes concern for self and for others. The same study, however, revealed the unexpected finding that the United States (individualistic culture) did not tend to use more competitive styles when handling conflict. Those from Mexico (collectivistic culture), however, did not prefer avoidance as a conflict style, like those from Asia (also a collectivistic culture). The results showed that both Americans and Mexicans preferred collaboration and accommodation to avoidance and competition.

Previous research indicates Thailand, a collectivist culture, would have a preference for conflict avoidance behavior. Komin (1995) investigated Thais' attitude toward conflict. Eighty-six government officials and 138 middle managers participated in the study. The results revealed that Thais have a negative attitude toward conflict. The study asked if the participants agreed with the statement, "most organizations would be better off if conflict could be eliminated forever" (p. 21). Thai government officials reported a 96.4% agreement with the statement, and 85 % of Thai managers agreed with it. Komin compared her results with Laurent's (1983) study. Laurent examined the effect of cultural diversity on the Western concept of management. A total of 817 managers from Western countries including the United States who attended training program at INSEAD, a European management institute located in France, were asked to respond to a 56-item questionnaire. One item asked how much the participants agreed or disagreed with the same statement, which appeared in Komin's study. Only six percent of the respondents from the United States agreed with that statement. Moreover, a nation-wide survey on the Thai value system indicated that Thais placed "smooth interpersonal relationship," and "ego orientation," which included face-saving, criticism-avoidance and being considerate, among the most important cultural values (Komin, 1990). This suggested that Thais would rather avoid conflict, or handle it indirectly.

According to one study of conflict management in Thailand (Roongrengsuke & Chansuthus, 1998), the influence of Buddhist-based values such as Karma, Bunkhun, Katanyu Katawethi, Kreng Jai, and Jai Yen serve to maintain social harmony and equilibrium and to discourage open conflict of any kind. Bunkhun is a strong sense of moral obligation that supports close interpersonal relationship. Katanyu Katawethi means

gratitude for any merciful favor provided by others, and returning the favor. Kreng Jai is being considerate, reluctant to impose upon another person. Jai Yen means cool heart. In Thailand, public confrontation is frequently viewed as destructive. Therefore, like other collectivistic cultures, Thais tend to employ more avoiding style than individualistic culture.

Based on these finding, it is hypothesized:

H1: Thais participants will employ more of the avoiding style of conflict management than will American participants.

While the use of avoiding style was prominent in collectivistic cultures, individualistic cultures tended to use more of the other styles, such as integrating style. A study of conflict management styles in Thai culture revealed unexpected results (Komin, 1995). A short form of the ROCI-II (Rahim, 1983) scale was administered to sixty-nine Thai employees and government officials. The results indicated that Thais employed the integrating style the most, followed by compromising, avoiding, and dominating styles. None of the participants reported using obliging style. A cross-cultural study on business practices of Thais and Australians explored conflict styles of both cultures (Chau, 1991). Australian subjects reported using more of the integrating style than their Thai counterparts. Thai subjects reported using more of the avoiding and compromising styles than Australians. Like Australia, which is a high individualistic culture, those in the United States have a tendency to use an integrating style more than do Thais. In addition, Ting-Toomey's (1988) face negotiation theory also predicts a similar conflict style for individualistic cultures. Therefore, it is hypothesized:

H2: American participants will employ more of the integrating style than will Thai participants.

Members of an individualistic culture were not only more likely to use more of the integrating style, they also tended to use dominating style more than members of a collectivistic culture. According to the dual-concern model (Blake & Mouton, 1964), the United States (an individualistic culture) tends to have high concern for self and low concern for others, suggesting a dominating style of conflict management. Furthermore, empirical data supported that Americans used a more dominating style than their collectivistic counterparts (Ting-Toomey, Trubisky, & Nishida, 1989). On the other hand, Thailand, a collectivistic culture, is less likely to use a dominating style. In addition, Komin (1995) reported that dominating style was the least preferred conflict management style. Thus, it is hypothesized:

H3: American participants will employ more of the dominating style than will Thai participants.

Like dominating style, the face-negotiation theory posited that individualistic cultures were more likely to employ a compromising style than were collectivistic cultures. However, a number of studies revealed inconsistent results regarding compromising styles (Trubisky, Ting-Toomey, Lin, 1991). The inconsistency in the empirical findings was explained in terms of the Confucian ethics that prevailed in collectivistic cultures. Thailand embraced Confucian beliefs that came with the stream of Chinese immigrants. Therefore, Thai people are more likely to use a compromising style like people from other countries that were influenced by Chinese civilization.

Moreover, although Thais are collectivistic, they possess values such as self-reliance, a love of freedom and pragmatism that reflects individualism in the Buddhist teaching of self-cultivation (Roongrengsuke & Chansuthus, 1998). In addition, the Western influence that entered Thailand in the 19<sup>th</sup> century has changed the way the Thais look at the world. Higher education and new economic systems gradually changed the way of life. The new generation of Thais, a burgeoning middle class, who was exposed to Western business practices, is becoming more aggressive in upgrading their socio-economic status. Nevertheless, the traditional conflict avoidance values in Thai society are still prominent in the culture and are unlikely to be replaced by confrontational behavior (Roongrengsuke & Chansuthus, 1998). The influence of Confucian, Buddhism, and Western lifestyle make Thai people more concerned with their own individual benefits. Chau's (1991) study showed that Thais employed compromising styles much higher than their Australian counterparts. Therefore, it is hypothesized:

H4: Thai participants will employ more of the compromising styles than will American participants.

#### Acculturation and Conflict Styles

When people move from one culture to another cultures for an extended period of time, a new culture would exert some influences on the values and behaviors that those people possess. Acculturation is a process of learning and acquiring the elements of the host culture (Kim, 1988b). Acculturation occurs when newcomers identify with and internalize significant symbols of the host society (Kim, 1988a). The process occurs together with deculturation, or unlearning of some old cultural patterns. Acculturation is a



communication process because individuals acquire the host cultural patterns through communicating with someone from the host culture (Kim, 1988a).

However, acculturation of a new culture can be a stressful and frustrating process because newcomers encounter problems communicating with others in a new culture as well as problems adjusting to a new lifestyle. Sojourners in a new culture are more likely to suffer from culture shock or a stress associated with adapting to a new culture (Bennett, 1977). There are four stages of culture shock: honeymoon stage, crisis stage, adjustment stage, and biculturalism (Chen & Starosta, 1997).

During the honeymoon stage, sojourners feel that everything is wonderful in a new country. When entering the second stage, they no longer feel comfortable in the host culture. They often experience frustration, and a great amount of stress. During the adjustment phase, newcomers learn to handle problems they encountered in the crisis stage. They learn how to act appropriately in the host culture. The last stage happens when individuals identify themselves with both the old and new cultures.

Berry (1990) identified four modes or patterns of acculturation related to the degree of adoption of the host culture. His work is based on the extent to which the individual or group feels a sense of identification and relates to the host culture compared to the native culture. The four modes are integration, separation, assimilation, and marginalization. Integration occurs when the acculturating individual adopts some values and behavior patterns of the host culture while at the same time maintaining his or her own cultural patterns. Separation exists when the acculturating individual refuses to interact with the host culture while trying to maintain his or her culture of origin. Assimilation reflects the highest degree of acculturation. It occurs when the acculturating

individual adopts the new cultural identity while gradually abandoning his or her original culture. Marginalization happens when the individual feels rejected by the host culture but no longer wants to maintain his or her original culture.

Various disciplines have placed greater attention on the study of acculturation. According to an English as a Second Language study, acculturation plays a crucial role in this discipline. Several studies indicated a relationship between acculturation and second language acquisition. Boshier (1997) studied the relationship among acculturation, ethnic identity, second language acquisition, self-esteem, and the academic success of second-generation Hmong immigrants. One hundred and one Hmong students volunteered in this study. The study showed that the more acculturated Hmong were fluent in both English and Hmong language, while those who retain Hmong culture were proficient in only Hmong language. In other words, the more contact an individual had with Americans and the more he or she adopted American behavior, the more likely they would achieve greater fluency in written and spoken English.

Zhang and Carrasquillo (1996) investigated how cultural, linguistic and family factors influence the academic performance of Chinese students in the United States. Four eighth grade Chinese students, living in the United States from three to five years and speaking Mandarin as their first language, were interviewed and asked to complete a questionnaire. The researchers explained that a continuing use of Chinese language and practice of Chinese tradition, and a lack of support for acculturation, prevented students from performing well in school. The students felt that maintaining their native culture and tradition was a burden that prevented them from academic success.

Another study supported the relationship between second language acquisition and acculturation (Unger, 1997). The study investigated eighteen Asian students who enrolled in the English as a Second Language Program in a school in the northeastern part of the United States. The researcher discovered that ESL students acquired a broader understanding of American culture by making friends with English-speaking students, involving themselves more in extra curricular activities, and participating in activities with American families several times a year.

In psychology, Atkinson and Gim (1989) examined the relationship between Asian American's attitude toward mental health care and their level of acculturation. The subjects in their study were Asian-American university students. They were asked to complete two scales, measuring the degree of acculturation and the attitudes toward seeking professional mental health service. The results indicated a positive relationship between the degree of acculturation of Asian Americans and their attitudes toward seeking mental health care. In other words, the higher acculturated group was more likely than those in the less acculturated group to seek mental health care.

A different study by Tata and Leong (1994) examined the effect of acculturation, social networks, and individualistic and collectivistic values on the attitudes toward seeking professional mental health care services. The questionnaires were mailed to 640 students, of which 274 questionnaires were completed and returned to the researchers. Of the returned questionnaires, 217 of the respondents identified themselves as Chinese American. The researchers found that acculturation was one of the best predictors of attitudes toward seeking professional psychological help among Chinese Americans.

Those who were more acculturated had more positive attitudes about seeking psychological help.

Although other disciplines have extensively investigated the study of acculturation, few studies of communication have investigated the relationship between conflict and degree of acculturation. Kagan, Zahn, and Geasly's (1977) study focused on minority and conflict resolution, comparing Anglo-American and Mexican-American elementary school children on the degree of competitiveness and academic achievement. The results suggested that a greater degree of acculturation might increase the level of competitiveness of Mexican-American children in the United States. This study showed that acculturation could affect communication styles of individuals. Another study by Boonsathorn (1999) investigated the relationship between the degree of acculturation and conflict management styles of Asian students living in the United States. A total of 210 students (96 Americans and 114 Asians) at Pennsylvania State University were asked to respond to a set of questionnaires measuring their conflict styles, individualism-collectivism, and degree of acculturation. The study revealed positive relationships between the degree of acculturation of Asian participants and preference for integrating and dominating styles, and a negative relationship with obliging style. The same study also indicated that the length of stay in the United States had a significant positive relationship with dominating style. It indicated that the acculturation played a part in the change of conflict style for individuals entering new cultures.

Few studies have focused on American acculturation overseas. Taietz (1987) investigated the factors that influenced the sociocultural integration of older Americans into French culture. American residents in Paris who were 55 years old and over were the

targets of this study. They were interviewed in person or by phone. The interview consisted of 83 open-ended and structured questions. The results revealed that high levels of integration into French culture was associated with the length of their residency (more than 15 years), spouse's nationality, type of residences, friends, affiliation with institutions or organizations, language proficiency, frequency of language practices, and retirement plan. In this study, the researchers found ten variables in the questionnaire that were significantly associated to the level of sociocultural integration.

Due to the lack of fundamental theory to support the relationship between conflict management styles and acculturation, the present study follows the trend of past research based on the assumption that acculturation does occur at various degrees when individuals enter a new culture, and that acculturation affects personal values, norms, and communication behaviors, including conflict styles. Therefore, Thai people who live in overseas countries such as the United States, or in Europe, tend to adopt the cultural patterns of those countries in which they live. Also the American citizens who live overseas tend to integrate behavioral norms and beliefs of those countries. The following hypothesis were stated to test the impact of acculturation:

H5: Highly acculturated Americans into Thai culture will use more of the avoiding style than will newcomers.

H6: Highly acculturated Thais into American culture will use less of the avoiding style than will newcomers.

H7: Highly acculturated Thais into American culture will use more of the integrating style than will newcomers.

H8: Highly acculturated Americans into Thai culture will use less of the integrating style than will newcomers.

H9: Highly acculturated Thais into American culture will use more of the dominating style than will newcomers.

The degree of acculturation into a new culture might influence the change in individuals' conflict styles. However, newcomers' acculturation into the host culture may not be as consistent as children's enculturation of their original cultures because those newcomers have internalized their original cultural identity and communication patterns during their childhood enculturation (Kim, 1988b). Thus, the degree of change in communication styles depends on the patterns of acculturation of individuals. All sojourners have different patterns of acculturation. Some adopt new cultural norms while maintaining their old cultural patterns. Some refuse to adopt new cultural patterns. Meanwhile, sojourners who are able to unlearn the old cultural patterns the most and adopt the new cultural patterns are more likely to come closest to the host culture's communication behaviors. In addition, there are other important characteristics that contribute to acculturation rate: similarity of the original culture to the host culture, age upon entering a new culture, educational background, and personality factors such as tolerance of ambiguity and open-mindedness (Kim, 1988a).

Highly acculturated individuals might change their conflict behaviors to be more like those of host cultures and less like their original cultures. However, those who are highly acculturated may or may not have significant differences between their conflict management styles and those of their host cultures since there are many factors that dictate the acculturation process. Collectivists who reside in individualistic cultures might

acquire conflict styles of individualist such as dominating and integrating. In much the same way, individualists in collectivistic cultures may acquire conflict styles such as avoiding and compromising that are prominent in those cultures. However, when they are compared to the hosts, it is not clear whether highly acculturated individuals will use the adopted conflict styles as much as those in the host cultures. In order to examine this relationship, the following research questions are posed:

RQ 1: What, if any, are the interaction effects of culture of subjects and acculturation on avoiding style?

RQ 2: What, if any, are the interaction effects of culture of subjects and acculturation on integrating style?

RQ 3: What, if any, are the interaction effects of culture of subjects and acculturation on dominating style?

RQ 4: What, if any, are the interaction effects of culture of subjects and acculturation on compromising style?

## CHAPTER 2

### METHOD

In the introduction, the key variables investigated in this analysis were introduced. The main purpose and the significant of the study were discussed and explained. The first chapter described the past research on conflict management styles, different dimensions of culture, and acculturation. This chapter focuses on the methodology of the study including measurement, subjects, procedure, design, and statistical procedure. The last part of this chapter describes the limitation of the methods.

#### Measurement

Many studies investigating conflict management styles have used the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II) (Rahim, 1983) (see Appendix). This instrument includes thirty-five items using a five-point Likert scale. The higher score means greater use of one type of conflict style. ROCI-II divided conflict management styles into five categories: integrating, avoiding, obliging, dominating, and collaborating. It was assumed that the variety of the conflict management styles on the ROCI-II measure would be a better index of the various conflict styles of different cultures than the three-style measurement or the Organizational Communication Conflict Instrument (OCCI) developed by Putnam and Wilson (1982). The three conflict styles model might not be as good in capturing the variety of conflict styles in different cultures as the five conflict styles model. In the present study, ROCI-II was modified from its original thirty-



five items to twenty-eight items. Seven items measuring obliging style were omitted because they were not related to the hypotheses in the present study. Rahim and Magner (1995) reported that the test-retest reliabilities for the subscales ranged from .60 to .83. For Cronbach's alpha, the subscales' score ranged from .72 to .76.

In terms of the degree of acculturation, many studies have used Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale (SL-ASIA) (Atkinson & Gim, 1989; Boonsathorn, 1999; Suinn, Rickard-Figueroa, Lew, & Virgil, 1987; Tata & Leong, 1994). This instrument was used to measure the degree of acculturation of Asian people living in Western countries and of Asian Americans. Because it is designed especially for Asian participants, it is not appropriate to administer this instrument to other Americans (e.g. Anglo-Americans, or African American) beside Asian Americans.

Instead of the SL-ASIA, this study employed the Acculturation Index (AI) to measure acculturation (Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999) (see Appendix). The AI consists of twenty-one items about cultural identity. The measurement presents two sets of these items. The first set asks about the degree to which subjects' current life style is similar to that of the host culture, and the second set asks about the degree to which their current life style is similar to that of co-nationals, fellow members from their culture of origin. The response option is a seven-point scale ranging from "not at all" (1) to "extremely" (7).

The Acculturation Index yields a score for host national identification and co-national identification. Splitting the identification scores produces two levels: high and low. Ward and Rana-Deuba (1999) suggested two methods: using the scalar midpoint or median score. Respondents who were high in both host national and co-national

categories were classified as integration. Those who were high in host national and low in co-national categories were classified as assimilation. Those who had low score in host national and high score in co-national categories were classified as separation. Those who had low score in both categories were classed as marginalization. Previous studies reported that the scales were highly reliable (Ward & Kennedy, 1994; Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999). Ward and Kennedy (1994) reported a Cronbach's alpha of .93 for the co-national identification scale and .96 for the host national identification scale.

The scores from the Acculturation Index were used to determine whether the participant acculturated or did not acculturate into a new culture. Participants who fell into the integration mode or assimilation mode indicated acculturation. Instead of including native Thais and Americans in the present study, individuals who fell into the separation mode were treated as natives because separation indicates the maintenance of their original culture and refusal to cultural adaptation (Berry, 1990). If they are not acculturated into a new culture, their conflict behaviors remain the same as those of natives.

The ROCI-II and the AI were used in the present study. The ROCI-II measured the conflict management styles of all participants. The AI measured the degree of acculturation of both Thai and American participants. This measurement was chosen to measure the acculturation rate of all participants because it can be used interchangeably across cultures. Moreover, the measurement required little alteration. Past research reported the reliability and validity of both measurements were good.

### Sample and Procedure

Most of the previous research used convenience samples. They were either college students or organizational members (Ohbuchi, Fukushima, & Tedeschi, 1999; Ting-Toomey, et al., 1991; Trubisky, Ting-Toomey, & Lin, 1991). Convenience sampling can be a time and cost saving method for the researchers because it allows researchers to use the sample to which they have access. However, the results of the studies using convenience samples have limited generalizability (Rubin, Rubin, & Piele, 1996).

In the present study, the convenience sampling method was used to select the sample. It is a non-probability sampling technique. While a probability sampling might be used, most experimental studies used non-random sampling method. The probability sampling is often used in a survey research in order to gain the generalizability to the entire population. On the other hand, the generalizability of experimental research comes from replications that employ participants from different populations (Sparks, 1995). In the present study, the participants were assigned to an acculturation condition according to their score on acculturation scale.

Participants in this study were approximately 40 Thai business people and students living in the United States, and approximately 40 American teachers and business people living in Thailand. Thai subjects were obtained from the network of people with whom the researcher is acquaintance. Thai student associations in several states such as Texas, and Florida were asked for assistance in order to get the contact list of Thai students. In terms of American participants in Thailand, the researcher contacted universities and organizations where American citizens are employed. They were asked

to participate in the present study. In this investigation, data were collected by means of questionnaires. They were distributed until the researcher received the desired number of participants. This thesis research received an approval from Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Southwest Texas State University.

The questionnaires were administered in three different ways: in person, by mail, and by e-mail. The questionnaires administered in person were returned to the researcher after completion. Those who received the questionnaire in their mail or e-mail were also asked to send the form back after the completion.

One potential problem in this study is that the mail-out or e-mail questionnaires do not guarantee a high response rate when compared to those administered in person. In order to increase the response rate in mail and e-mail surveys, the questions in the study were framed to be easy to read and unambiguous. The task requirements of the questionnaires were clear and easy to complete. In many studies, researchers increased the response rate by sending a reminder card and another set of questionnaires to the participants who have not responded (Fowler, 1988). In this study, another set of the same questionnaire was mailed or e-mailed to those who had not responded to the first set of questionnaires.

The questionnaires were distributed from November 1, 2000 to January 31, 2001. The researcher attached a letter of introduction that explained the reason for conducting this study. The letter indicated that all responses would remain anonymous. At the end, the letter thanked the subjects for their cooperation.

The questionnaire contained seventy-four items and was separated into three parts (see Appendix). The first part asked the participants about their demographic information including age, gender, country of origin, and the length of stay in the new country.

The second part, including item number 5 to number 32, measured four of the five styles of conflict management: avoiding, integrating, dominating, and compromising styles. This part asked the subjects to read statements about a conflict situation and asked them to indicate the degree to which they would respond to that situation. The responses were based on a five-point Likert type scale ranging from “never” (1) to “always” (5).

The third and forth parts of the questionnaire were from item number 33 to number 53 for the third part and from item number 54 to number 74 for the forth part. These two parts dealt with the degree of acculturation of the participants. The third part asked the participants to rate the degree of similarity of their behaviors and experiences to Thai culture. The forth part asked them the rate how similar their experiences and behaviors were to American culture. The participants responded to each item on seven-point rating scale with the end points labeled “not at all” (1) and “extremely” (7). The potential mid-point for each acculturation scale was 84.

After being completed and returned, the questionnaires were coded. For the demographic information, participants’ age and length of stay in the new country were recorded. The items on gender and country of origin were coded by numbering “male” as 1 and “female” as 2, and “Thailand” as 1 and “the United States” as 2.

The second part of the questionnaire asked the respondents about their conflict styles. Item numbers 5, 7, 9, 16, 26, 27, and 32 reflected integrating style. Items numbers 6, 10, 21, 22, 29, 30, and 31 represented avoiding style. Item numbers 8, 12, 15, 18, 19,

20, and 24 dealt with compromising style. Finally, items numbers 11, 13, 14, 17, 23, 25, and 28 represented dominating style. All items were coded by numbering the 5 possible answers from 1 to 5, with “never” being coded as 1, “rarely” as 2, “sometimes” as 3, “often” as 4, and “always” as 5. The scores were then summed.

The last two sections contained the Acculturation Index (Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999). For Thai participants, item numbers 33 to 53 measured their co-national identification and item numbers 54 to 74 measured their host national identification. For American participants, item numbers 33 to 53 reflected their host national identification and item numbers 54 to 74 measured their co-national identification. Their scores were calculated and then were classified into four modes of acculturation (integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization) using the median split method.

### Design

Many previous studies investigating conflict management and culture have employed a factorial design (e.g. 2 x 2 x3) (Gabrielidis et al., 1997; Leung, 1987, Ohbuchi et al., 1999). In these studies, the primary independent variable investigated is culture (individualistic culture and collectivistic culture). The present study employed t-test to examine Hypotheses 1-9, and multiple factor ANOVA for Research Questions 1-4, and the post hoc analysis. The first independent variable was culture (Thailand and the United States), and the second variable was acculturation (low acculturated and high acculturated). The dependent variable was four conflict management styles: integrating, avoiding, compromising, and dominating. The present study is an ex post facto design, which is a variation of an experimental research.

In the present study, the two independent variables, cultures and degree of acculturation, cannot be manipulated. Thus, the ex post facto design is more appropriate in this study. Unlike a true experiment, where the participants can be randomly assigned into different experimental condition, the researcher does not have the same degree of control. Hence, the study lacks the power to create the condition and randomly assign (Black, 1993).

According to Hofstede (1997), Thai participants represent collectivistic categories while American participants represent individualistic categories. In terms of acculturation, Thai subjects in the United States and American subject in Thailand were given an acculturation scale. The responses were calculated and the subjects were put in either low-accultured (marginalization) or high-accultured (integration and assimilation) categories based on the medium split.

#### Statistics

The statistical procedure frequently utilized in previous studies of this type is the multiple factor ANOVA (i.e. complex F test) (Gabrielidis et al., 1997; Leung, 1987, Ohbuchi et al., 1999). The multiple factor ANOVA is used when there are two or more independent variables with each variable having two levels or more. In many cases, post hoc analyses using t-tests and Scheffé tests are run to examine the interaction effect. The present study employed t-test to investigate the main effect hypotheses and the multiple factor ANOVA to test for the interaction effects.

#### Limitations

Although this study is carefully designed, there are many limitations. The sample is limited to a group of people to whom the researcher had access. In addition, the mail-in

and e-mail questionnaires might not produce as high a response rate as the self-administered questionnaire. The longer time to receive response was also a concern. Therefore, there might be some biases in terms of the distribution methods. Also, the researcher was able to explain to those participants who completed the questionnaire in person when they had any difficulty understanding the questions. Those respondents who received the questionnaire by mail or e-mail might also have encountered some problems regarding the instruction or some terms in the questionnaires, however they were unable to ask the researcher for assistance.

Furthermore, the use of self-report questionnaires might also have some effects on the outcome of the study. Participants might have reported the conflict styles they prefer but not the styles they use in everyday conflicts. The outcomes of the study might not reflect the actual conflict behaviors of the participants and thus result in inaccurate findings.

There are some strengths in the present study, however. First, the study uses the ANOVA and t-test as the statistical procedure. They are parametric statistics, which have more power to detect the significant differences than nonparametric statistics. Also, the measurement instruments used in this study have demonstrated good validity and reliability. In addition, the popularity of the ROCI-II and Acculturation Index (AI) among researchers has established their value in the research community.



## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESULTS**

The Introduction explained the main purpose and significance of the study. It defined important terms such as conflict, conflict styles, and culture, and it outlined the method and procedure used in the current study. Chapter One discussed the theoretical framework for the study. The chapter presented the review of literature on conflict management styles, cultural dimensions, and the relationship between cultures and conflict style. It concluded with nine hypotheses and four research questions. Chapter Two described the measurement, subjects, procedure, and design used in this study. The chapter further explained how the instruments were coded. The chapter ended with the limitation of the methods.

The present chapter presents the results of the research and examination of the hypotheses and research questions. The chapter begins with the data gathering procedure, explaining how the researcher obtained the data. The following section describes the reliability of the scales employed in the study. The last part of the chapter explains the results of the hypotheses, the research questions, and the post hoc analyses.

#### **Procedure**

Thai and American participants received questionnaires by e-mail, mail, and in person. The researcher sent out 15 questionnaires by e-mail, 60 mail-in questionnaires, and distributed 21 questionnaires in person. All respondents voluntarily participated in

the study. The majority of Thai participants were students. Some of them were working in the United States. The researcher sent a copy of the questionnaire via e-mail to Thai students and Thai Student Organizations in several universities in the United States, including University of Florida, University of Northern Colorado, University of Colorado, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Pennsylvania State University, University of Texas at Arlington, and Texas A & M University. Those who received the questionnaire forwarded it to others Thai students and their Thai acquaintances. The researcher received 43 questionnaires by e-mail. Eight participants returned the questionnaire to the researcher in person. Eleven participants returned their responses by mail.

Most of American participants were teachers working in language institutions or international schools in Thailand. A few of them were military officers and business executives. The researcher mailed out 60 questionnaires to American teachers working in other provinces (Chonburi, Chiang Mai, and Phuket) outside Bangkok. Subjects returned 20 mail-in questionnaires. The researcher left 25 questionnaires with an authority at the American University Alumni Language Center (A.U.A.). He then distributed them to 25 American teachers working at the language center. The researcher could collect only 11 of those questionnaires. Eighteen American teachers at several universities in Bangkok, such as Dhurakijpundit University, Rajabhat Institutes, Ramkhamhaeng University, Thammasat University, and University of the Thai Chamber of Commerces, were asked to complete the questionnaire and then return them to the researcher. Three participants returned the questionnaire by e-mail.

The researcher used two different sampling methods in obtaining the subjects. For Thai participants, the researcher used snowball sampling. The researcher primarily contacted Thai students in the United States and then asked this group of subject to pass out the questionnaire to other Thai students they knew. The advantage of this technique is that it led the researcher to Thais living in the United States, which is a hard-to-reach, interconnected population. The disadvantage of this sampling method is that the initial contact with subjects might limit the researcher to certain groups in the population. Since the first group of subjects the researcher contacted were students, a number of non-student subjects were low.

An availability sampling method was used to locate Americans. In this study, American teachers in Thailand were the main subjects because they were easy to find. However, an availability sample might not be representative of the target population. For American subjects, the researcher used mail-in questionnaires to obtain the data. Time and cost savings are the major advantages of mail questionnaires. However, the major drawback of this technique is response rate. Mail-in questionnaires usually receive a low response rate. In the present study, the researcher had to use follow-up mailings to the subjects after the initial mailing to increase the response rate. Three weeks after mailing the first set of the questionnaire, the follow-up mailings were sent.

A total of 114 questionnaires were returned. However, eleven of them were discarded. Two out of eleven were completed by Canadians. The last part of one questionnaire from an American participant was missing. Eight questionnaires from Thai participants were also incomplete. Therefore, the researcher received 103 usable

questionnaires ( $N=103$ ). However, 96 subjects completed all of the items and were the subjects for most of the analyses.

From the demographic information, 54 participants were Thais, and 49 participants were Americans. The average age of the participants was approximately 32 years old. Fifty-five participants were male (23 Thais and 32 Americans). Forty-eight were female (31 Thais and 17 Americans). The length of residence in the new culture ranged from 1 month to 17 years ( $M=39.6$  months). Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations of the demographic information.

Table 1

Sample Statistics

Variable	N	M	SD
Age	103	32.46	10.69
Length of stay (in months)	103	39.58	34.62

Measurement

Cronbach's alpha was used to check the reliability of the scales. This study employed four of five subscales of ROCI-II (Rahim, 1983): integrating, avoiding, compromising, and dominating. Cronbach's alpha score for the four subscales were: integrating = .84, avoiding = .85, compromising = .72, and dominating = .64. The next two scales were adapted from the Acculturation Index (Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999). The first scale was the identification with Thai culture scale. This scale had a Cronbach's alpha score of .92. The second scale was the identification with American culture scale. This scale received a Cronbach's alpha score of .93.

Table 2 shows the means, standard deviations, and the alpha reliability scores of each scale used in this study.

Table 2

The Means and Reliability of Conflict Style Scales and Acculturation Index Scales

Scales	N	M	Alpha
<u>Conflict style</u>			
Integrating	103	27.07	.84
Avoiding	103	21.97	.85
Compromising	101	25.84	.72
Dominating	101	20.35	.64
<u>Acculturation index</u>			
Identification with American	98	74.92	.93
Identification with Thai	98	98.99	.92

Statistically, an alpha score of .70 or higher indicates an acceptable level of reliability. The dominating style scale approached this level of reliability while the rest of the scales used in this study have reached acceptable levels of reliability.

The mean score of all participants for integrating style was 27.07, 21.97 for avoiding style, 25.84 for compromising, and 20.35 for dominating style. The mean for identification with Thai culture scale was 98.90. The mean for identification with American culture was 74.92.

Two approaches are typically used to split scores of the Acculturation Index. The first approach is the scalar midpoint split, and the second is the median score split.

However, Ward and Rana-Deuba (1999) found that the median split yielded a more meaningful result. Past research revealed that the mid-point split failed to produce four acculturation categories. Therefore, the present study employed the median split.

There are two dimensions for the Acculturation Index: host national identification, and co-national identification. Host national identification means identification with a new culture. It indicates the extent of acculturation. A high score in host national identification means that an individual has been acculturated into a new culture while a low score in this category means that the person has not been acculturated into a new culture. For Thais this would mean their identification with American culture. On the identification with American culture scale for Thai participants, the median score was 80. If a subject had a score of 80 or higher, they were coded as high. Those who have a score lower than 80 were coded as low.

For Americans, host national identification means their identification with Thai culture. On the identification with host culture scale for American participants, the median was 71. Subjects who had scores below 71 were coded as low while those who scored from 71 or higher were coded as high. The acculturation scale using the median split method was used to test 9 hypotheses and 4 research questions.

Co-national identification is identification with one's own culture. High scores meant that subjects were still attached to their original culture. Low scores meant they were less attached to their original cultural identity. For Thais, co-national identification is identification with Thai culture. On the Thai identification scale for Thai participants, the median score was 97. Subjects whose score were lower than 97 were coded as low. Those who have a score of 97 or higher were coded as high.

For Americans, co-national identification meant identification with American culture. On the co-national identification scale for American participants, the median was 98. Those who scored below 98 were coded as low. Those who had a score of 98 or higher were coded as high. Both co-national identification categories were used for post hoc analyses.

Although this current study used the median split, the potential mid-point of the acculturation scale was 94. Since there was a big difference between the mid-point of the scale and the median for co-national identification scale and for host-national scale, if the mid-point split had been used, it would have affected the categorization of acculturation among Thai and American participants. This would affect the analysis and the results of the hypotheses.

Post hoc analyses employed the 4 categories of acculturation from Ward and Rana-Deuba (1999). Participants who were low on both co-national identification and host national identification were categorized as marginalized. Those who were high on co-national identification, but low on host national identification, were classified as separated. Those who were low on co-national identification and high on host nation identification were classified as assimilated. Those who scored high on both co-national identification and host national identification were categorized as integration. After classifying all subjects, 23 were marginalized, 22 were separated, 22 were assimilated, and 30 were integrated. These four categories were not used in testing hypotheses in this study. However, they were used for further investigation of post hoc analyses.

### Test of Hypotheses

This study investigated 9 hypotheses and 4 research questions. To test the hypotheses, the data were analyzed using an independent t-test or a two-way analysis of variance (2 x 2). In each case, the independent variables were culture of origin (Thailand and United States) or level of acculturation (high and low). The dependent variable for the hypotheses and research questions were conflict management styles (avoiding, integrating, dominating, and compromising, respectively). Hypotheses 1, 5, 6, and Research Question 1 investigated avoiding style. Hypotheses 2, 7, and Research Question 2 investigated integrating style. Hypotheses 3, 8, and Research Question 3 dealt with dominating style. Finally, Hypotheses 4, 9, and Research Question 4 investigated compromising style. Tables will summarize results for each of the hypotheses.

#### Conflict Styles and Culture

The first four hypotheses investigated the differences between Thai and American cultures on four conflict management styles. Hypothesis 1 stated that Thai participants would employ more of the avoiding style of conflict management than would American participants. It predicted that there would be a significant main effect on the use of avoiding style between Thai and American participants. There was a significant main effect for country of origin on this style ( $t=2.39$ ,  $df=101$ ,  $p<.01$ ). Thai participants avoided more ( $M=23.00$ ) than American participants did ( $M=20.84$ ). Hypothesis 1 was confirmed.

Hypothesis 2 stated that American participants would use an integrating style more than would Thai participants. This hypothesis was confirmed ( $t=-1.93$ ,  $df=101$ ,  $p<.05$ ). The mean for integrating style of Thai participants was 26.39, and that of



American participants was 27.82. The results will be discussed in light of interaction results in a later section.

Hypothesis 3 stated that American participants would employ more of the dominating style than would Thai participants. Although, the data revealed that Americans ( $M = 20.68$ ) tended to use more of the dominating style than Thais ( $M = 20.06$ ), the difference was not significant ( $t = -.87$ ,  $df = 99$ ). Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was rejected.

Hypothesis 4 predicted that Thai participants would employ more of the compromising style than would American participants. The data, however, showed that Thai participants' mean on a compromising style (25.83) was not significantly different from that of American participants (25.85) ( $t = -.03$ ,  $df = 99$ ). Therefore, Hypothesis 4 was not confirmed.

The findings for the difference on conflict management styles between the two cultures revealed that Thais employed avoiding style more than did Americans, and Americans employed integrating styles more than Thais did. There was no significant difference between Thais and Americans on dominating and compromising styles.

#### Conflict Styles and Acculturation

Hypotheses 5-9 investigated the effects of acculturation on conflict styles of Thai and American participants. The researcher used t-tests to examine these five hypotheses.

Hypothesis 5 predicted that highly acculturated Americans into Thai culture would use more of the avoiding style than would newcomer Americans. The result was not significant, and the hypothesis was rejected ( $t = -.61$ ,  $df = 45$ ). The mean for avoiding

style of highly acculturated Americans was 21.50 while that of low acculturated Americans was 20.66.

Hypothesis 6 stated that highly acculturated Thais into American culture would use less of the avoiding style than would newcomer Thais. Highly acculturated Thai used slightly less avoiding style ( $M = 23.00$ ) than the low acculturated ones ( $M = 23.72$ ). The difference between these means was not significant ( $t = .55$ ,  $df = 49$ ). Therefore, Hypothesis 6 was not confirmed.

Hypothesis 7 predicted that highly acculturated Thais would use more of the integrating style than would newcomer Thais. Highly acculturated Thais used significantly more of integrating style than did the less acculturated Thais ( $t = -4.78$ ,  $df = 49$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The mean for integrating style of highly acculturated Thais (27.91) was higher than that of low acculturated Thais (23.06). Hypothesis 7 was confirmed.

Hypothesis 8 stated that highly acculturated Americans would use less of the integrating style than would newcomer Americans. There was no significant effect of acculturation on integrating style for Americans ( $t = .23$ ,  $df = 45$ ). Highly acculturated Americans did not use significantly less of the integrating style ( $M = 27.67$ ) than the less acculturated Americans ( $M = 27.90$ ). Hypothesis 8 was not confirmed.

Hypothesis 9 predicted that highly acculturated Thais would use more of the dominating style than would those who were less acculturated. Highly acculturated Thais did not employ significantly more of the dominating style ( $M = 19.73$ ) than did less acculturated Thais ( $M = 20.11$ ). These differences were not significant ( $t = .41$ ,  $df = 49$ ). The hypothesis was rejected.

### Interaction Effects and Post Hoc Analyses

Research Questions 1-4 investigated the interaction effects of acculturation and cultures on the conflict management styles. The post hoc analyses employed the four classifications of acculturation (marginalization, separation, assimilation, and integration) to investigate the differences in the use of conflict styles of Thais and Americans.

Research Question 1 investigated interaction effects of culture of subjects and acculturation on avoiding style. The significant main effect for culture of origin was consistent with the t-tests reported earlier. However, the statistical analysis found no significant interaction effect of culture of subjects and acculturation on avoiding style ( $F = .17$ ,  $df=1,94$ ). Table 3 provides the information for the analysis of variance for avoiding style.

Table 3

#### Analysis of Variance for Avoiding Style

Source	SS	df	MS	F
Country of origin	126.70	1	126.70	6.00*
Acculturation	.23	1	.23	.01
C x A	3.56	1	3.56	.17
Residual	1984.88	94	21.12	
Total	2115.39	97	21.81	

\* $p < .05$

The examination of Research Question 2 revealed that there was a significant interaction effect for culture of subjects and acculturation on integrating style ( $F = 14.26$ ,  $df = 1,94$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Low acculturated Thais used less integrating style than any other

group. The significant main effect for culture of origin was also consistent with the results of the t-tests from the previous section. The statistical results for integrating style are displayed in Tables 4 and 5.

Table 4

Analysis of Variance for Integrating Style

Source	SS	df	MS	F
Country of origin	63.14	1	63.14	5.60*
Acculturation	130.76	1	130.76	11.60**
C x A	160.80	1	160.80	14.26**
Residual	1059.76	94	11.27	
Total	1414.91	97	14.59	

\* $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ .

Table 5

The Means for Integrating Conflict Style for Thais and U.S. Natives who are High or Low on Acculturation

Country of Origin	Acculturation	
	Low	High
Thai	23.67 ( $N = 24$ )	28.44 ( $N = 27$ )
US.	28.00 ( $N = 22$ )	27.64 ( $N = 25$ )

The analysis of Research Question 3 on dominating style did not produce a significant interaction effect for subject's culture and acculturation ( $F = .03$ ,  $df = 1, 92$ ). The data showed that no group used dominating style significantly more or less than others.

Research Question 4 investigated if there were any interaction effects for culture of subjects and acculturation on compromising style. The results show no significant interaction effect for this style ( $F = 1.42$ ,  $df = 1, 92$ ).

In this study, the post hoc analyses investigated the effect of four classifications of acculturation on conflict styles. The four classifications are marginalization, separation, assimilation, and integration. For avoiding style, the results showed no significant interaction effect between the country of origin and acculturation classification ( $F = 0.97$ ,  $df = 3, 89$ ). Thai participants used avoiding style more than did American participants ( $F = 6.86$ ,  $df = 1, 89$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The results are shown on Table 6.

Table 6

Analysis of Variance for Avoiding Style

Source	SS	df	MS	F
Country of origin	143.59	1	143.59	6.86*
Acculturation	48.42	3	16.14	.77
C x A	60.66	3	20.22	.97
Residual	1863.41	89	20.94	
Total	2088.45	96	21.76	

\* $p < .05$

For integrating style, there was a significant interaction effect between these four classifications and country of origin ( $F = 4.71$ ,  $df = 3, 89$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Table 7 presented the analysis of variance results for integrating style. The interaction effect mean scores of acculturation and country of origin on integrating style are displayed on Table 8.

Table 7

Analysis of Variance for Integrating Style

Source	SS	df	MS	F
Country of origin	74.42	1	74.42	6.63*
Acculturation	176.22	3	58.74	5.24*
C x A	158.66	3	52.89	4.71*
Residual	998.47	89	11.22	
Total	1389.34	96	14.47	

\* $p < .01$

Table 8

The Means of Acculturation Classification and Country of Origin for Interaction Effect on Integrating Style

Country of Origin	Classification of Acculturation			
	Marginal	Separate	Assimilate	Integrate
Thailand	22.44	24.40	28.93	27.83
	( $N = 9$ )	( $N = 15$ )	( $N = 15$ )	( $N = 12$ )
US.	27.21	29.00	27.71	27.61
	( $N = 14$ )	( $N = 7$ )	( $N = 7$ )	( $N = 18$ )

Table 8 shows that Thai participants who were either marginalized ( $M = 22.44$ ) or separated ( $M = 24.40$ ) used less of the integrating style than all other groups. The results from Thai participants followed the same direction found in Hypothesis 6. The highly acculturated Thais (integrated and assimilated) used more integrating style than those who were not acculturated (separated). When looking at United States participants, those participants varied very little in their use of integrating style. The means on integrating style for American participants are 27.21 for marginalized, 29.00 for separated, 27.71 for assimilated, and 27.61 for integrated subjects.

For dominating style, the statistical analysis found no significant main effect or interaction effect for country of origin and acculturation. There was not a significant difference between the culture of origin and the four acculturation classifications on dominating style ( $F = .47$ ,  $df = 3, 87$ ).

For compromising style, there was a significant main effect for acculturation ( $F = 2.80$ ,  $df = 3, 87$ ,  $p < .05$ ), but no significant interaction effect ( $F = 1.00$ ,  $df = 3, 87$ ). The data showed that subjects who were marginalized ( $M = 24.30$ ) or were integrating ( $M = 25.69$ ) used less of the compromising style than the other two groups. The means of those who were assimilated and separated were 26.86, and 26.39, respectively. Table 9 displays the analysis of variance for avoiding style.

Table 9

Analysis of Variance for Compromising Style

Source	SS	df	MS	F
Country of origin	9.52	1	9.52	.88
Acculturation	91.25	3	30.42	2.80*
C x A	32.67	3	10.89	1.00
Residual	946.56	87	10.88	
Total	1070.91	94	11.39	

\* $p < .05$ 

Table 10 presents the compromising style mean score for the four classifications of acculturation.

Table 10

The Means of Acculturation Classifications for Compromising Style

Acculturation			
Marginalization	Separation	Assimilation	Integration
24.30	26.36	26.86	25.69
( $N = 23$ )	( $N = 22$ )	( $N = 21$ )	( $N = 29$ )

For avoiding style, only the main effect on country of origin was confirmed. Thai participants used avoiding style significantly more than did American participants. There was no significant difference in terms of the interaction effect. The data revealed that both highly acculturated Thai and American participants had not employed avoiding style significantly more or significantly less than those who were not acculturated.



For integrating style, the statistical analysis revealed both a significant main effect and interaction effect. American participants used significantly more of the integrating style than did Thai participants. Thais with greater identification with American culture employed significantly more of the integrating style than did those with less identification with American culture. On the other hand, acculturation did not affect the use of integrating style for American participants.

The overall results for dominating style indicated that there was no significant difference in the main effects and the interaction effect. The results showed that Thai subjects did not use significantly less of this style than did American subjects. Acculturation had no effect on this conflict management style, and there was no interaction effect.

There were neither meaningful main effects nor interaction effects on compromising style. Thai participants did not use significantly less of the compromising style than American participants. Moreover, acculturation had no effect on compromising style. However, when using a four category system for acculturation, the analysis did suggest marginalized and integrated subjects were less likely to use compromising style than the others.

### Summary

This chapter presents the results of the research. Three hypotheses were confirmed, and 6 hypotheses were rejected. The statistical data showed a significant difference between Thai and American participants on avoiding and integrating styles (Hypothesis 1, 2). The researcher found no significant difference between Thais and Americans on dominating and compromising style. Moreover, the results showed that

highly acculturated Thais employed significantly more of the integrating style than did the less acculturated Thais (Hypothesis 7). However, data did not reveal significant differences for acculturation on the other three conflict styles.

For the research questions, the researcher found only one significant interaction effect between culture of origin and acculturation (Research Question 2). Low acculturated Thais reported using less of the integrating style than any other groups. There were no significant interaction effects for avoiding, dominating, and compromising styles.

The post hoc analyses revealed a significant interaction effect for acculturation and culture of origin on integrating style. Thai subjects who were either marginalized or separated used less of the integrating styles than did the subjects in other categories. A weak but significant main effect for acculturation on compromising styles was also found. Marginalized and integrated participants employed less of the compromising style than the other groups. The data reported no significant interaction effects for the 4 classifications on the other conflict styles.

The results of the study suggest that Thais used avoiding style more than did Americans while Americans used integrating styles more than did Thais. Both groups did not differ in the use of dominating and compromising styles. Furthermore, acculturation affected, for the most part, use of the integrating style, but not the use of other conflict styles. The following chapter will discuss these results in greater detail.

## CHAPTER 4

### DISCUSSION

The main purposes of this study were to investigate the conflict management style of members of an individualistic culture and collectivistic culture, and to examine the effects of acculturation on conflict management styles. Nine hypotheses and 4 research questions were tested. Three hypotheses were confirmed. There were four major findings of this study. First, Thais used avoiding style more than did Americans. Second, Americans used integrating styles more than Thais. Third, highly acculturated Thais used integrating style more than did the less acculturated ones. Forth, less acculturated Thais employed integrating style less than any other group.

The first part of the present chapter is about conflict management styles and culture. It contains explanations for the results of Hypotheses 1-4. The next part is about conflict styles and acculturation, and the results for Hypotheses 5-9. The third part explains the results of research questions 1-4 and the results of post hoc analyses. The research questions and post hoc analyses were about the interaction effects between culture and acculturation on the conflict management styles. Following the third part of the chapter is the section about limitations of this study. The last part of this chapter includes suggestions for future research, and a summary of this thesis research.

### Conflict Styles and Cultures

Hypotheses 1 to 4 predicted the effects of culture of origin on four conflict management styles. The results revealed significant main effects on avoiding and integrating styles. Hypotheses 1 and 2 were confirmed, and Hypotheses 3 and 4 were rejected. In conflict situations, Thai participants avoided more than did American participants. American participants employed an integrating style more than did Thai participants. However, there were no differences in the use of dominating and compromising styles between Thai and American participants. These results partially support the face-negotiation theory.

Face-negotiation theory is a theory that explains how people in individualistic and collectivistic culture negotiate face and deal with conflict (Ting-Toomey, 1988). The theory contends that individualistic cultures focus more on self-face maintenance than collectivistic cultures. Collectivistic cultures, on the other hand, express more concern on mutual-face and other-face maintenance than individualistic cultures. Moreover, individualistic cultures tend to use more of direct negotiation strategies while collectivistic cultures tend to use indirect strategies. Therefore, while members of individualistic cultures tend to use conflict styles such as integrating, compromising, and dominating, members of collectivistic cultures tend to use conflict styles such as avoiding, and obliging.

#### Avoiding and Integrating

The results of Hypothesis 1 were consistent with Ting-Toomey's (1988) face-negotiation theory which posits that people from collectivistic cultures, such as Thailand, are more likely to use avoiding style than people from individualistic cultures, such as the

United States. The results were also consistent similar with past research. Japanese participants used more of the avoiding style than did American participants (Ohbushi, Fukushima, & Tedeschi, 1999; Ting-Toomey, Trubisky, & Nishida, 1989). Taiwanese subjects used more avoiding style than did American subjects (Trubisky, Ting-Toomey, & Lin, 1991). In a study comparing Thais and Australians, Thais used more avoiding than did Australians (Chau, 1991).

The results of Hypothesis 2 also supported Ting-Toomey's face-negotiation theory, which predicts that members of individualistic cultures will use more of the integrating style than will the members of collectivistic cultures. In the present study, American participants reported using integrating style more than did Thai participants. The results were consistent with previous research. In Ting-Toomey, Trubisky, and Nishida's (1989) study, Americans used integrating style more than did Japanese. Chau's (1991) study on Thais and Australians also revealed that Australians, who are members of an individualistic culture, used more of the integrating style than did Thais.

The findings of the present study are consistent with existing theory and previous studies. Collectivistic cultures tend to use indirect conflict strategies, including avoidance, more than individualistic cultures. Individualistic cultures are more likely to use direct conflict strategies or solution-oriented strategies than are collectivistic cultures (Ting-Toomey, 1988). The use of an avoiding style is prominent in collectivistic cultures as is integrating style in individualistic cultures. Like the members of other collectivistic cultures, Thais employ more avoiding style than do Americans. Americans use more of the integrating style than do Thais.

Since Thai people value smooth interpersonal relationship, face-saving, and criticism-avoidance, they are more likely to use an avoiding style when dealing with conflict. Avoidance might help maintain interpersonal relationships because it suppresses open conflict (Gabrieldis et al., 1997). On the other hand, Americans, members of individualistic cultures, tend to have a high concern for themselves. They are more likely to use conflict styles such as integrating which have a high concern for self.

#### Dominating and Compromising

According to the face-negotiation and the dual-concern model (Blake & Mouton, 1964), members of individualistic cultures should tend to use a dominating style more than members of collectivistic cultures. However, the present study found no significant difference between Thai and American participants on dominating style. Hypothesis 3 was rejected. Unlike the present study, past research revealed that individualistic cultures, such as the United States, used more of the dominating styles than did collectivistic cultures (Ting-Toomey, Trubisky, & Nishida, 1989).

However one study investigating the conflict style of Americans and Mexicans showed that Americans, members of individualistic cultures, did not tend to use more of competitive or dominating style than did Mexicans, member of collectivistic cultures (Gabrielidis et al., 1997). This finding revealed the same results as the present study.

Hypothesis 4 predicted that Thai participants would use compromising style more than would American participants. This hypothesis did not follow the direction of Ting-Toomy's face-negotiation theory. The theory posited that individualistic cultures use more of compromising style than do collectivistic cultures.

The results from several other studies challenged the theory (Chau, 1991; Trubisky, Ting-Toomey, & Lin, 1991). In those studies, members of collectivistic cultures such as Thailand and Taiwan employed more of compromising style than did members of individualistic cultures, namely Australia and the United State. The researchers explained that Confucian belief was the main factor in the prominent use of compromising style in countries that were influenced by Chinese civilization. Nevertheless, the present study showed no difference in the use of this style between the individualistic and collectivistic cultures. Hypothesis 4 was rejected.

For dominating and compromising styles, the results showed no difference in the use of both styles between two cultures. Gabrieldis et al. (1997) offered one possible explanation for this finding. They believed that Americans were not competitive in interpersonal conflict, but were competitive in the other conflict situations, such as business negotiations.

Another explanation is the particular American subjects in this study. The majority of American subjects were language teachers. Although teachers may have higher status than students, teachers would be less likely to use a dominating style when dealing with students. Theoretically, a dominating style involves high concern for self and low concern for others. However, teachers should express high concern for their students in order to accommodate students' needs. Therefore, a dominating style might not be a primary choice of conflict styles among teachers.

A final explanation about dominating style concerns the subjects. The present study used participants who were residing in a new culture, and the subjects might feel powerless in the new culture. People of the host culture might not recognize the status

and power the subjects had in their own country. Using a dominating style might not help visitors gain their position in conflict situations in a new culture. Therefore, they had to change their conflict style.

Hypothesis 4, about compromising, was not confirmed. Thais did not use a compromising style more than did Americans. One plausible explanation for this finding is that Confucianism in Thailand is different from Confucianism in other East Asian countries. Confucian teaching started in China around 500 BC. It came to Thailand with a stream of Chinese immigrants during the last 200 years. The key principles of Confucianism are social stability, family harmony, human benevolence, hard working ethic and thrift (Hofstede, 1991). However, when mixed with Thai culture, the social harmony principle, not the working ethic, was emphasized. Things that might destroy social harmony or relationship should be avoided. Therefore, avoiding conflict style was used more than compromising style as a means to maintain social order (Roongrengsuke & Chansuthus, 1998).

### Conflict Styles and Acculturation

Hypotheses 5 to 9 examined the influence of acculturation on conflict management styles. Only one hypothesis was confirmed. Thai participants who were highly acculturated used significantly more of the integrating style than did the less acculturated Thais. The researcher found no significant difference on the other styles.

Acculturation is a process of learning and acquiring new ways of thinking, feeling, and acting from the host culture (Kim, 1988b). Acculturation takes place when sojourners identify with and internalize significant symbols of the host culture (Kim, 1988a). It involves the long-term conditioning process of newcomers integrating the



elements of their new culture, and developing new roles and skills to meet the demands of the new culture (Ting-Toomey, 1999).

This thesis research employed an individual's identification with a new culture as an indication of low or high acculturation. Berry (1990) identified four types of acculturation: marginalization, separation, assimilation, and integration. Individuals or groups are classified into one of the four categories based on two issues: (1) the extent to which individuals or groups feel a sense of identification with the culture of origin, and (2) the extent to which they feel a need to relate to a new culture. Marginalization means that individuals feel rejected by their host culture, and also do not want to maintain identification with their culture of origin. Separation occurs when individuals do not identify with their new culture but try to maintain identification with their culture of origin. Assimilation happens when individuals adopt a new culture and gradually forget their culture of origin. Integration means that individuals adopt a new culture and, at the same time, maintain a strong identification with their original culture. The researcher employed these four categories to do post hoc analyses. The four categories may help explain a variety of results.

#### Avoiding and Integrating

Boonsathorn's (1999) found that Asians with a higher degree of acculturation used less avoiding and obliging conflict styles. Moreover, the more they acculturated, the more they reported using integrating, dominating and compromising styles. Kagan, Zahn, and Geasly (1977) suggested that Mexican-American children who were highly acculturated become more competitive. The present study found that highly acculturated Thais used integrating style more than did less acculturated Thais. Highly acculturated

Americans were not different on integrating style than less acculturated Americans.

These thesis results are consistent with past research.

Unlike previous research, highly acculturated Americans did not use more of an avoiding style than did less acculturated Americans, and highly acculturated Thais did not employ less avoiding style than did the less acculturated one. The post hoc analyses using four categories of acculturation were consistent with the two category results for both avoiding and integrating.

A possible explanation for the findings is that individuals require more time for the acculturation process. Acculturation is more of a long-term process in adapting to a new culture. In this thesis, the average length of stay in a new culture is about 3 years compared to 5 years in previous research (Boonsathorn, 1999). Subjects in the present study might need a longer period of time integrating the new values and norms of the host culture.

Another explanation is that most of the subjects in this study were sojourners. Sojourners are individuals who have a transitional stay in a new culture as they strive to achieve their instrumental goals and/or socioemotional goals (Ting-Toomey, 1999). Unlike immigrants or refugees, sojourners such as businesspersons, international students, and military personnel, only seek temporary residence in a new culture. Ting-Toomey used the term “adjustment” to refer to intercultural adaptation of sojourners. At the end of their mission, sojourners would go back to their home country. They do not have to adjust their behavior to be like those of natives in order to fit into that culture.

Another possible explanation is cultural distance between Thai and American cultures. Cultural distance is the extent to which an individual needs to psychologically

adjust in order to connect the differences between the culture of origin and the new culture (Ward, 1996). It includes dissimilarities in cultural values, self-concepts, language and communication styles, religious beliefs, political ideologies, etc. Cultural distance affects the adaptation of the newcomers. It would be easier for individuals to adjust to a culture that is more similar to their culture of origin. Thailand and the United States have a great cultural distance since both countries are very different in terms of values, norms, language, religion, etc. The results of the present study did not reveal significant changes due to acculturation.

#### Dominating and Compromising

According to the face-negotiation theory, members of individualistic cultures prefer a dominating style more than members of collectivistic cultures. Previous studies indicated that individuals from collectivistic culture who were highly acculturated into individualistic culture were more likely to use more of the dominating and compromising styles than those who were less acculturated (Boonsathorn, 1999; Kagan, Zahn, & Geasly, 1977). In this thesis, the researcher did not find a significant difference between highly acculturated Thai subjects and less acculturated Thai subjects on dominating style. However, in the post hoc analyses, using the four categories of acculturation, there was a significant but weak main effect for a compromising style. Subjects who were marginalized or integrated were least likely to compromise.

The reasons that explain why both highly acculturated Thai participants did not use more dominating styles are similar to the explanation in the previous section. First, the acculturation process requires a long period of time. Individuals who make an entry to a new culture need an extended amount of time before they start adopting behavior,

values, and norms of the new culture. Second, the subjects of this study were sojourners who would leave the host culture upon the completion of their assignments. These people did not seek a permanent stay in the new culture. They may have adjusted their behavior only to fit that of the host, but they still hold on to their original behavior and beliefs. Third, there was a great distance between Thai and American cultures that would make it difficult for subjects to successfully adjust to the new culture.

Moreover, this group of Thai subjects might not have been exposed to hosts who used predominantly dominating style. Since Thai subjects in this study were students, they were more likely to contact host members who would use more of the integrating style, such as teachers, classmates, or friends. Therefore, they may have learned to use an integrating style more than a dominating style in dealing with conflict. In a professional setting, Thai subjects might encounter hosts who express competitive behavior, and who use more of a dominating style. In addition, the results of the present study showed that Americans did not use a dominating style more than did Thais. On the other hand, they used an integrating style more than did Thai subjects. These results imply that integrating might be the most often used conflict management style among Americans. Therefore, it was more likely that Thai subjects would catch up and learn to use this style quicker and easier than dominating style.

Earlier in this study, an examination of culture of origin on conflict styles revealed that there was no difference in the use of compromising style between Thais and Americans. However, it was surprising to find a significant main effect of acculturation on compromising style in the post hoc tests using four categories of acculturation.

Because compromising style is a middle ground approach to dealing with conflict, Thais as well as American may prefer using this style in some conflict situations.

Marginalized and integrated participants used less of the compromising styles than did separated and assimilated participants. For marginalized participant, they may have been less connected with both cultures, resulting in the decline in the use of this style. However, it is hard to explain why those who were integrated used the compromising style less. One plausible explanation is that integrated participants tended to use more of the other styles in dealing with conflict. The data from the study showed that those who were culturally integrated used more of the integrating style than the other styles. Thus, it may have led to a decrease in the use of other conflict styles.

#### Conflict Styles and Culture with Acculturation

Research Questions 1 to 4 investigated the interaction effect of acculturation and country of origin on conflict styles. The data revealed that Thai participants who were less acculturated used integrating style less than highly acculturated Thais, highly acculturated Americans, and less acculturated Americans. However, there were no significant interaction effects on avoiding, dominating, and compromising style.

Previous researchers on acculturation believed that the degree of acculturation affected individuals' attitudes, academic success, behaviors, and communication style (Atkinson & Gim, 1989; Boonsathorn, 1999; Kagan, Zahn, & Geasly, 1997; Tata & Leong, 1994; Zhang & Carrasquillo, 1996). Each individual had a different degree of acculturation which resulted in a different pattern of behaviors depending on how much each person identified with the host culture. Those who were more acculturated into a new culture were more likely to have more similar behaviors as individuals in the host

culture than those who were less acculturated. In the present study, the degree of acculturation did not interact with culture of origin to influence avoiding, dominating, or compromising conflict styles.

The first explanation for this finding is that identification with a new culture does not imply rejection of the culture of origin. Those subjects who were classified as highly acculturated could be either integrated or assimilated into a new culture. The integrated participants identified with a host culture, as well as with their original culture. They continued using the same behaviors they acquired from the culture of origin. This was the pattern in the post hoc analysis on acculturation. Thais who were integrated into American culture did not employ more of the compromising and dominating styles than Thais who were separated from American culture. Furthermore, Thais who were identified as integrated in the post hoc analysis did not report using less of the avoiding style than those who were not acculturated.

The second possible explanation is that this group of subjects did not seek a permanent residence in the new culture. The majority of Thai participants were students who would eventually go back to Thailand after graduating from colleges or universities. For American participants, most of them were teachers working on a contract with international schools or universities. At the end of each contract, they might decide to continue working in Thailand, to move to the new country, or to move back to their country of origin. Therefore, this group of subjects may not have discarded their native communication patterns, including conflict behaviors, and may not have fully adopted new patterns of communication.

The third explanation is that though the participants resided in a new culture, they still had frequent contacts with people from their own culture. Thai students usually were members of the Thai Student Association in each university they studied. Students who participated in activities organized by the Thai Student Association had a chance to make friends with other students. Like Thai participants, American participants also had close contact with people from their culture. International schools and universities usually hire a lot of American teachers or teachers from other English-speaking countries. Thus, American participants had to communicate with others from their culture on a regular basis. Moreover, there were several clubs and associations for Americans, such as Community Service of Bangkok and American Women Club.

For Hypothesis 7, highly acculturated Thai participants used integrating style more than did less acculturated Thais. The data for Research Question 2 found that low acculturated Thais used less integrating style than any other groups. The post hoc analysis demonstrated that Thai participants who were marginalized or separated used less of the integrating style than did all other groups.

A possible explanation for these findings was the combination of Thai individualism and Western individualism. Although Thailand is classified as a collectivistic country, Thai people have deeply-rooted individualistic values such as self-reliance and pragmatism. These values were hidden beneath the surface of group harmony (Roongrengsuke & Chansuthus, 1998). When Thai individuals acculturated into American culture, they are exposed to Western individualism, and thus, they become more individualistic than before. According to Ting-Toomey (1989), if they become members of individualistic cultures, they are more likely to use integrating style.

Furthermore, Thai subjects were students who had been exposed to Western education. They were encouraged to discuss course material with the entire class, work in small groups, and put their ideas out front. A Western style education promotes direct and competitive conflict management. However, traditional Thai values which reflect concern for others and social harmony may have been too strong to allow competitive behaviors. Therefore, it was more likely that highly acculturated Thais would favor an integrating style than a dominating one.

Why did marginalized and separated Thais use less of the integrating style than any other groups? Thais who were marginalized or separated were people who did not acculturate into American culture. Thus, they used less of the integrating style than did those who acculturated. Also, when compared to American participants, the means of marginalized and separated Thais were significantly different from all four groups of Americans. Acculturation did not affect the use of conflict styles among American participants. The use of integrating style between the four groups of Americans did not vary greatly, but it was significantly higher than those of marginalized and separated Thais.

The earlier interpretations for the findings on acculturation and culture may also explain the findings of the post hoc analyses. First, highly acculturated subjects continued using the behavior patterns of their original cultures. Second, subjects had no desire to permanently move into a new culture. Third, subjects had frequent contact with people from the same culture. These three factors may explain why this group of subjects did not report significant differences in the use of several conflict styles.



### Strengths and Limitations

Overall, there are several strengths and weaknesses in the present study. The first strength that contributed to the study was the sample. The sample was drawn from a population of Thais living in the United States and Americans living in Thailand. This allowed the researcher to investigate the use of their conflict styles in a cross-cultural situation and the effect of acculturation on conflict styles.

The second strength of this study was measurement. Rahim's ROCI-II and the Acculturation Index are frequently used by researchers. The scales are simple and easy to complete. Many studies, including the present one, have shown that both scales have high reliability.

Furthermore, the use of parametric statistics was also an advantage in this study. The researcher used the multiple factor ANOVA and t-test as the statistical procedure. Parametric statistics are preferred over nonparametric statistic because they have more power to detect significant differences (Salkind, 2000; Williams, 1999).

There were also some limitations to the study. The first limitation was the sampling technique. Snowball sampling and convenience sampling help researchers gain access to a hard-to-reach population and save time collecting data. However, homogeneity of the sample is a major drawback of these techniques. Snowball sampling might limit the researcher to only one or two groups in the entire population.

Another weakness of this study was the data-collecting technique. In this study, the researcher was unable to distribute questionnaires to every subject in person. Therefore, most subjects received questionnaires by mail or e-mail. A weak point of this

mail-in procedure was a low response rate. Moreover, if subjects encountered some problems in the questionnaire the researcher was not present to explain.

The next limitation of this study was the method used to block subjects into acculturation categories. There are two ways to split the acculturation scale: scalar midpoint split and median score split. The researcher followed the precedent of previous research and used the median split. However, if the scalar midpoint split of 94 was used, it would create different groups of subjects on acculturation, which, in turn, might create entirely different results for this study. For example, a median split of Thai subject identified 51% as highly acculturated, but a scalar midpoint split would have identified only 11.8% as highly acculturated. Ward and Rana-Deuba (1999) had co-national identification scores ranging from 35-116 and used a median of 83. In this thesis, co-national identification scores ranged from 49-147, and 98 was the median. Ward and Rana-Deuba had host national identification scores ranging from 2-75 and used a median of 37. Host national identification scores in this thesis ranged from 34-127, and 75 was the median.

### Future Research

The present study attempted to investigate the differences between collectivistic and individualistic cultures on conflict management styles and to assess the influence of acculturation on those styles. It was found that Thais, members of a collectivistic culture, employed more avoiding style than did Americans, members of an individualistic culture. In addition, Americans employed more of the integrating style than did Thais. The researcher found that highly acculturated Thais used more of the integrating styles than did less acculturated Thais. Moreover, when classified into four categories of

acculturation, Thai participants who were marginalized and separated used less of the integrating style than Thai and American participants in the other categories.

Overall, the results provide limited support for the face-negotiation theory. Individualistic cultures tend to use more of the integrating style while collectivistic cultures tend to use more of the avoiding style. For the finding on acculturation, it can be explained that because integrating style was widely used among Americans, it was more likely that Thai individuals who were identified with American culture would use more of the integrating style than those who were not identified with American culture.

The present study has created a background for the future research on acculturation and conflict management styles. There are few studies investigating the effects of acculturation and conflict style, and there is still controversy over the use of conflict styles in different cultures. Researchers have argued over the inconsistent use of conflict styles of collectivistic culture and individualistic cultures. Replication of the present study would test the results of past research and the theories on conflict and acculturation. In addition, further research on this area will help the growing number of Americans overseas as well as natives from other countries in the United States managing conflict with natives of each culture. Knowledge of conflict across cultures may also help promote better relationships in international business and diplomatic affairs. Thus, future study is needed to investigate this area of research in order to help both theorists and practitioners.

Future research should consider including other cultures. Adding a collectivistic culture other than Thailand or an individualistic culture other than the United States into a new study might help clarify the controversy over the culture and conflict styles. Each

culture has its unique characteristics that might affect the pattern of conflict styles in that culture. For example, although Thailand is a member of collectivistic cultures, it may not use the same conflict styles as other collectivistic cultures. Considering the other aspects of cultures beyond individualism-collectivism, researchers might discover new conclusions on conflict styles and cultures.

Other dimensions of culture such as femininity and masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, or high- and low-context cultures should be taken into account in future research. Although individualism and collectivism is the major dimension researchers use to categorize countries, other dimensions also have unique characteristics that contribute to conflict management styles. For example, masculine cultures tend to use confrontational conflict strategies while feminine cultures emphasize harmony-enhancing strategies (Hofstede, 1997). Low-context cultures use direct and active conflict styles while high-context cultures use indirect approaches to conflict. Some individualistic cultures, such as Sweden or the Netherlands, also are a feminine culture. Those countries have some characteristics that overlap with collectivistic cultures, and the overlap may result in different conflict styles than masculine, individualistic cultures. Future research is needed to examine the other cultural dimensions.

The present study is a cross-sectional study, investigating subjects' conflict behaviors and degree of acculturation at only one time. However, acculturation is an ongoing process which takes time. When subjects enter a new culture, researchers might consider using longitudinal study for future research. New studies should look at subjects' behavior over an extended period of time starting from the entry in a new culture.

In addition, the researcher investigated the general conflict styles used across situations. Future research should specify the context and target of the conflict situation. The results from different contexts and targets might create more meaningful findings than when looking at conflict styles used across situations.

Finally, the present study only included participants who were already sojourners in the new culture. Their behaviors might be different from those who remain in their original culture. In a future study, both sojourners in a new culture and natives of that culture should be included in the study.

### Summary

This thesis consists of an introduction and four chapters. In the Introduction, the researcher explained the purpose and significant of the study. Chapter One reviewed past research on conflict management style, culture and acculturation. Nine hypotheses and 4 research questions were included in the first chapter. Chapter Two described the sampling method, measurements, design, and procedure that were used in investigating this study. Chapter Three displayed the results of the hypotheses, research questions, and post hoc analyses. Finally, Chapter Four concluded and discussed the results presented in the previous chapter. The researcher provided explanations for the findings of hypotheses and research questions. The researcher ended the chapter with the limitations of the study and directions for future research.

## APPENDIX

J

01-025

SOUTHWEST TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
Application for the Review of a Project Involving Human Subjects

Check one:

☒ INTERNAL/INSTITUTIONAL FUNDED/NON-FUNDED

☐ FEDERAL and/or FUNDED NON-FEDERAL

REVIEWED-APPROVED  
by Departmental Committee

X \_\_\_\_\_  
IRB Chairman Date

Check Type: ☒ New ☐ Renewal/Continuation # \_\_\_\_\_

Project Title: Conflict Management Styles Between Thais and Americans and the Effect of Acculturation

Agency Proposed to: N/A

Proposed Period: 11/01/00-01/31/01

Principal Investigator(s): Dr. Philip J Salem  
Name

Speech Communications  
Department

In making this application, I certify that I have read and understand the guidelines and procedures developed by the University for the protection of human subjects, and that I fully intend to comply with the letter and spirit of the University's assurance and policies. I further acknowledge my responsibility to report any significant changes in the protocol and to obtain written approval for these changes, in accordance with the procedures, prior to making these changes.

PI name as signature authority: Dr. Philip J. Salem Date of electronic application submission: 10/20/00

Signature(s): Principal Investigator(s) Date signed

This proposal has been reviewed and approved by Southwest Texas State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Protection of Human Subjects in Research, Development, Clinical Investigations, Demonstrations or Other Activities/Projects, for compliance with DHHS/PHS-NRA, Public Law 93-348, as enunciated through Code of Federal Regulations 45 CFR 46, Protection of Human Subjects, and Revised as of March 8, 1983, and the University Guidelines.

Approved Signature: IRB Chairman or Acting Chairman

Approved date

Continuing Review Requirements: Departmental review, approval, and Continuing surveillance must be maintained for compliance with DHHS policies and the University Guidelines (copies have been provided and are available in the ORSP (JCK 489).

Notified:  
1. P.I.:  
2. IRB Chair:  
3. ORSP/IRB Files:

PI mailing address:

PI Phone Number: 245-2165

PI E-mail address: ps05@swt.edu

Application Prepared By: Philip Salem and Orwan Kuaratikan

Preparer's Mailing Address:

Preparer's Phone Number: 245-2165

Preparer's E-mail:

THIS FORM (with original signatures) TO BE RETURNED TO: Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, JCK Building, Room 489.

(Rev. 1/2000)

Approved signature 10/27/00

## **Communication & Culture survey**

Dear friends,

My name is Orawan Kruarattikan. I am a student at Southwest Texas State University. As part of my graduate work, I am conducting a communication survey. The purpose of this research is to describe some of the communication differences of Americans and Thais.

This research has been approved by Dr. Philip Salem, Professor, Department of Speech Communication. If this research is successful, it may be part of a journal publication or convention presentation.

Please do not sign anything. Your responses should remain anonymous. We are interested in overall communication patterns, not an individual's responses.

The survey should take only 10-15 minutes to complete. Please put all your answers on the enclosed form. Read the directions carefully.

The final goal of this project is to investigate the conflict styles of various cultures and the influence of acculturation. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Orawan Kruarattikan



## COMMUNICATION SURVEY

### Demographics

1. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Gender: Male / Female (circle one)
3. Nationality: Thai or American (circle one)
4. How long have you been in this country? \_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_ months

### Communication and Conflict

The statements below describe how people react to interpersonal conflict or disagreement. How do you deal with conflict? Read the statements carefully and indicate the degree to which you respond to a conflict situation. Use the following scale to respond.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always

For example, if you often avoid being put on the spot, you would fill in the blank next to item 6 with a "4".

- \_\_\_\_ 5. I try to investigate an issue with others to find a solution acceptable to us.
- \_\_\_\_ 6. I attempt to avoid being "put on the spot" and try to keep my conflict with others to myself.
- \_\_\_\_ 7. I try to integrate my ideas with those of others to come up with a decision jointly.
- \_\_\_\_ 8. I give some to get some.
- \_\_\_\_ 9. I try to work with others to find solutions to a problem which satisfy our expectations.
- \_\_\_\_ 10. I usually avoid open discussion of my differences with others
- \_\_\_\_ 11. I usually hold on to my solution to a problem
- \_\_\_\_ 12. I try to find a middle course to resolve a conflict.
- \_\_\_\_ 13. I use my influence to get my ideas accepted.
- \_\_\_\_ 14. I use my authority to make a decision in my favor.
- \_\_\_\_ 15. I win some and I lose some.
- \_\_\_\_ 16. I exchange accurate information with others to solve a problem together.

- \_\_\_ 17. I argue my case with others to show the merits of my position.
- \_\_\_ 18. I try to play down our differences to reach a compromise.
- \_\_\_ 19. I usually propose a middle ground for breaking deadlocks.
- \_\_\_ 20. I negotiate with others so that a compromise can be reached.
- \_\_\_ 21. I try to stay away with from disagreement with others
- \_\_\_ 22. I avoid an encounter with others
- \_\_\_ 23. I use my expertise to make a decision in my favor.
- \_\_\_ 24. I use "give and take" so that a compromise can be made.
- \_\_\_ 25. I am generally firm in pursuing my side of the issue.
- \_\_\_ 26. I try to bring all our concerns out in the open so that the issues can be resolved  
in the best possible way.
- \_\_\_ 27. I collaborate with others to come up with decisions acceptable to us.
- \_\_\_ 28. I sometimes use my power to win a competitive situation.
- \_\_\_ 29. I try to keep my disagreement with others to myself in order to avoid hard  
feelings
- \_\_\_ 30. I try to avoid unpleasant exchanges with others
- \_\_\_ 31. I generally avoid an argument with others
- \_\_\_ 32. I try to work with others for a proper understanding of a problem.

### American Culture

Listed below are a series of categories of culture. How similar are your experiences or behaviors to the American culture? Use the following scale to indicate how similar your experiences or behaviors to American culture.

Not at all    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Extremely

For example, if you currently dress in a manner very similar to American culture, you would put a “7” in the space next to number 54.

- \_\_\_ 54. Clothing
- \_\_\_ 55. Pace of life
- \_\_\_ 56. General knowledge
- \_\_\_ 57. Food
- \_\_\_ 58. Religious beliefs
- \_\_\_ 59. Material comfort
- \_\_\_ 60. Recreational activities
- \_\_\_ 61. Self-identity
- \_\_\_ 62. Family life
- \_\_\_ 63. Accommodation/residence
- \_\_\_ 64. Values
- \_\_\_ 65. Friendships
- \_\_\_ 66. Communication styles
- \_\_\_ 67. Cultural activities
- \_\_\_ 68. Language
- \_\_\_ 69. Employment activities
- \_\_\_ 70. Perceptions of Thais
- \_\_\_ 71. Perceptions of Americans
- \_\_\_ 72. Political ideology
- \_\_\_ 73. Worldview
- \_\_\_ 74. Social customs

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