

PORTUGUESE CULTURAL STANDARDS
FROM THAI PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Organizations are driven to globalization across different countries and system with ever increasing difficulties of intercultural communication and negotiation.

The objective of this research is to identify the Portuguese cultural standards from the Thai perspective by avoiding the problems associated with cross-cultural differences between the Thai and Portuguese respectively.

This research is based on a qualitative method using the cultural standards to address differences in perception, norms of sensing, thinking, judging, and acting, all in which can cause critical incidents in cross-cultural encounters. This methodology is based on the technique of narrative interviews. Critical incidents have been analyzed by interviewing fifteen Thai people who live and have working experiences associated with Portuguese. The short stories about critical incidents that interviewees talk most were grouped and analyzed, with results of Portuguese cultural standards from Thai perspective distilled herewithin. Additionally, its cultural dimensions will be described to compare to the Portuguese culture that in which primarily relate to the classical national culture's research of Geert Hofstede.

The result of this research is to provide benefits for Thais to adapt and learn the Portuguese culture and to increase their awareness, guiding them to overcoming the considerable difficulties that arise when negotiating and doing business in Portugal.

Keywords: Cross-Cultural Management, Cultural Standards, Portugal, Thailand

JEL classification:

F23 – Multinational Firms; International Business

L2 – Firm Objectives; Organization and Behavior

M14 – Corporate Culture; Social Responsibility

RESUMO

As organizações de hoje em dia, são orientadas para a globalização, tendo de atuar em diferentes países com diferentes sistemas económicos e com isto enfrentam grandes dificuldades culturais de comunicação e negociação.

O objetivo desta pesquisa é identificar o padrão cultural Português sob perspectiva de um Tailandês. A chave é evitar os problemas criados pelo cruzamento de tão diferentes culturas como a Tailandesa e Portuguesa.

Esta pesquisa é baseada numa análise qualitativa. É usado o método de padrões culturais para negócios, avaliando as diferenças nos tipos de percepção, normas sensoriais, modos de pensar, julgar e agir que podem causar incidentes críticos nos encontros interculturais. Esta metodologia baseia-se na técnica de entrevistas narrativas, para recolha de incidentes relevantes a serem analisados, através de entrevistas a quinze tailandeses que vivem em Portugal e têm experiências de trabalho associados a Portugueses. As curtas histórias sobre incidentes críticos que os entrevistados relatam, serão agrupadas e analisadas enquanto resultado de padrões culturais portugueses a partir da perspectiva Tailandesa. Dimensões culturais serão descritas para comparar os padrões culturais portugueses, principalmente com relação à pesquisa da cultura nacional clássica de Geert Hofstede.

O resultado desta pesquisa é fornecer benefícios para o Tailandeses se melhor se adaptarem e apreenderem a cultura Portuguesa permitindo uma melhor consciencialização que os auxilie a uma melhor orientação e superação perante as dificuldades consideráveis que surgem nas negociação e nos negócios em Portugal.

Palavras Chave: Gestão intercultural, Padrões Culturais, Portugal – Tailândia

Classificação JEL:

F23 – Empresas Multinacionais; Negócios Internacionais

L2 – Objetivos Empresariais; Organização e Comportamento

M14 – Cultura Corporativa; Responsabilidade Social

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this research is to identify the Thai perspective on the Portuguese culture, to find cultural differences between Portuguese and Thai that will be pointed to the relative character of Portuguese cultural standards.

Portuguese cultural standards will be identified thru an innovative methodology of “narrative interviews” it is the most suitable method for this research first developed by Alexander Thomas (1996; 2003). The method is a kind of in-depth interview with specific features. The aim is to collect short stories about critical incidents from interviewees in intercultural interaction in management and business. Evidence illustrates the perspective of the interviewees that reveal from their storytelling will be an accurate, manageable, and comprehensive approach to identify of Portuguese cultural standards.

In order to obtain useful results the author has followed the five stages of the narrative interview’s procedure (Lamnek, 1995). First, *the explanatory stage*: creating good atmosphere for the interview. Second, *the introductory stage*: guideline the purpose and topic to interviewees. Third, *the narrative stage*: controlling the communication without interruption and intervention. Fourth, *the investigative stage*: additional information for more storytelling. Fifth, *the assessment stage*: assessing and interpreting the narrative sequences.

The interviews were conducting through fifteen Thai people who live and work in Portugal. The interview partners are identified as manager, business owner, students and Embassy officers who live in Portugal for a minimum of two years with an average of age between 30 to 60 years old, divided to four men and eleven women who personally experience unfamiliar and critical situations which have both positive and negative experiences in a cross-cultural context.

After having the useful results from the narrative interview, the author has included post-interview stages including *the transcription and a qualitative content analysis* stages. The important contents (critical incidents and short storytelling) were compared, grouped and analyzed. Then feedback interviews from the interviewees and the culture experts were given to define the underlying cultural standards. The results from the perspective of these differences can be defined as *Portuguese cultural standards* on the Portuguese norms of behavior on management interactions.

The most critical incidents related to fifteen Thai interviewees’ perspective are defined as five unique and individual Portuguese cultural standards.

1. *Unfocused time management* – Vast majority of interviewees reveal that Portuguese have no conscious control over the amount of time spent on specific activities, especially to increase productivity within the boundary conditions of limited time or lack of concentration on time schedule.
2. *Bureaucracy and slow decision making* – Portuguese bureaucratic organizational structure generally appears in the following: adherence to the regulation and standards; essential rules that lack flexibility; prolonged period for documents submitted; and requirement of extensive documentation. These operational processes are rigidly controlled with best-practices methodologies and close supervision so that decision-making commonly taking a long time.
3. *Inefficient communication and emotional expression* – Portuguese communication between sender (especially officeholder) and receiver (customer) are found inefficient as it is difficult to have a clear message communicated from and between both parties. Moreover, Portuguese seem to use indirect language in order to avoid conflict and confrontation. Nevertheless, the (Thai) interviewees perceived most of Portuguese express their emotions freely, no matter what the consequences but did not usually signify anger or displeasure.
4. *Strong commitment to quality of life* – All of interviewees concurred that quality of life is important for Portuguese culture, engaging in joint activities with family members and friends. Moreover, interviewees found that Portuguese's society is equality-based, relaxed attitude and the importance of rights being protected, thus they will typically prefer additional time off for superior performance instead of additional income.
5. *The importances of the social relationship* – In Portugal, having good connections toward powerful networks are beneficially to conduct business with greater effectiveness. The interviewees affirmed that knowing the right person and having the right contacts can accomplish your goal and definitely is also advantageous for employee selection.

The result of this empirical research evidently demonstrates the similarity between Portuguese and Thai cultures while some manifests dissimilarity. However, the comparison between Portuguese cultural standards and four of Geert Hofstede cultural dimensions were discussed at the end of the research. Finally, the “mirror studies” suggested for the consideration of reality and to reduce the cultural bias may reflect both cultures significantly.

SUMÁRIO EXECUTIVO

O Propósito desta pesquisa é identificar a perspectiva de um tailandês relativamente à cultura Portuguesa, de modo a enquadrar as diferenças culturais entre Portugueses e Tailandeses identificando as características principais dos padrões culturais Portugueses.

Para identificar o padrão cultural português, a metodologia inovadora da “entrevista narrativa” constitui-se como o método mais apropriado para o propósito desta pesquisa (esta pesquisa de padrão cultural foi desenvolvida por Alexander Thomas entre 1996 e 2003). O método é um tipo de entrevista em profundidade com características específicas. O objetivo é coletar histórias curtas sobre incidentes críticos de entrevistados, na interação intercultural no domínio da gestão e dos negócios. Evidencia-se que da sua perspectiva os entrevistados revelam a partir de sua narrativa elementos importantes para a identificação de padrões culturais portugueses.

A fim de obter resultados úteis, o autor seguiu as cinco etapas do processo da “entrevista narrativa” (Lamnek, 1995). Em primeiro lugar, *a fase explicativa*: a criação de uma boa atmosfera para a entrevista. Em segundo lugar, *a fase introdutória*: a orientação do propósito e tema dos entrevistados. Em terceiro lugar, *a fase de narrativa*: controlar a comunicação sem interrupção e intervenção. Em quarto lugar, *a fase de instrução*: informações adicionais para mais histórias. Em quinto lugar, *a fase de avaliação*: avaliação e interpretação das sequências narrativas.

As entrevistas foram conduzidas com quinze Tailandeses que vivem e trabalham em Portugal. Os entrevistados são identificados como gerente, proprietário de empresa, alunos e funcionários da Embaixada Tailandesa. Todos vivem em Portugal há pelo menos dois anos, com idades compreendidas entre os 30 a 60 anos, divididos em 4 homens e 11 mulheres, que viveram diversas situações desconhecidas e críticas, quer no sentido positivo como negativo.

Depois de recolher os resultados úteis da entrevista narrativa, o autor prosseguiu para as etapas seguintes, a transcrição e análise de conteúdo qualitativa das entrevistas. Os conteúdos selecionados (incidentes críticos e narrativas curtas) foram comparados, agrupados e analisados. De seguida o feedback das entrevistas e a opinião dos especialistas, juntos contribuiram para definir os padrões culturais subjacentes. Deste modo, os resultados a partir da perspectiva das diferenças culturais podem ser definidos como padrões culturais portugueses relativamente às normas portuguesas de comportamento em interações de gestão.

Os cinco incidentes mais críticos sob a perspectiva dos quinze entrevistados tailandeses podem ser definidos como cinco padrões culturais portugueses.

1. *Gestão do tempo sem foco* – A grande maioria dos entrevistados revelam que o Português não tem controlo consciente sobre o tempo gastado em atividades específicas, especialmente para aumentar a produtividade dentro determinados parâmetros quantitativos de tempo, e não controlam o horário.
2. *Burocracia e tomada de decisão lenta* – estrutura organizacional burocrática Portuguesa em geral parecem ser: adesão à regulamentação e normas, as regras são essenciais e sem flexibilidade, período prolongado de apresentação dos documentos, necessária uma extensa documentação, onde os processos operacionais são rigidamente controlados com melhores práticas, metodologias e supervisão rigorosa que habitualmente levam muito tempo.
3. *Comunicação Ineficiente e expressão emocional* – A comunicação entre o emissor (especialmente funcionário público) e o recetor (cliente) são pouco eficientes, o esclarecimento é difícil, sendo fácil existir más interpretações como muitas vezes foi comprovado. Além disso, os Portugueses diversas vezes esquivam-se a usar uma linguagem direta, a fim de evitar conflitos e confrontos. No entanto, os entrevistados declararam que a maioria dos Portugueses expressam suas emoções livremente, não importando as consequências, mas tal situação não costuma significar raiva ou desagrado.
4. *Forte compromisso com a qualidade de vida* – Todos os entrevistados concordaram que a qualidade de vida é importante para a cultura Portuguesa, valorizando-se as atividades conjuntas com familiares e amigos. Além disso, os entrevistados consideram que a sociedade de Portuguesa rege-se pela igualdade, uma atitude descontraída e proteção dos seus direitos, assim, os Portugueses normalmente preferem tempo disponível a trabalho extra devidamente
5. *Importância das relações sociais* – Em Portugal, o valor de uma boa relação com redes de poder são muito benéficas para uma maior eficácia do negócio. Os entrevistados consideram que conhecer a pessoa certa e ter os contatos certos garante o objetivo e, definitivamente, também é vantajoso para uma seleção de emprego.

O resultado dessa pesquisa empírica demonstra evidentemente a semelhança entre as culturas portuguesa e tailandesa, enquanto alguns manifestam diferenças. No entanto, a comparação entre os padrões culturais portugueses e as quatro dimensões culturais de Geert Hofstede foi

discutida no final da pesquisa. Por último, os "estudos espelhados" são sugeridos para consideração da realidade e para reduzir o viés cultural que se pode refletir em ambas as culturas.

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Author

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1. INTRODUCTION

As market globalize, the need for standardization in organizational design, systems and procedures increases. Yet the international manager increasingly needs interactive skills of dealing with people from other national cultures, most of them are under pressure to adapt their organization to the local characteristics of the market, the legislation, the fiscal regime, the socio-political system and the cultural system. Therefore, cross-cultural misunderstanding is a much-underestimated cause of cultural conflict. That needs to be aware of mutual differences, knowledge of basic cultural variables and skills to communicate effectively across boundaries.

Hence, this research intends to stimulate and enrich Thai awareness and capacity to overcome the misunderstanding of different societies in work-related values, attitudes, and behavior that might influence their lives. As Hofstede (1991) mentioned that the main cultural difference among nations lies in values. Systematic differences exist with regard to values about power and inequality, with regard to the relationship between the individual and the group, with regard to the social roles expected from men or women, with respect to ways of dealing with the uncertainties in life, and with respect to whether one is mainly preoccupied with the future or with the past and present.

This research is based on a qualitative method using the cultural standards to address differences in perception, norms of sensing, thinking, judging, and acting, all in which can cause critical incidents in cross-cultural encounters. This methodology is based on the technique of narrative interviews. Critical incidents have been analyzed by interviewing fifteen Thai people who live and have working experiences associated with Portuguese. The short stories about critical incidents that interviewees talk most were grouped and analyzed, with results of Portuguese cultural standards from Thai perspective distilled herewithin.

The research consists of seven chapters. *Chapter 1* lays the foundation for a good understanding of “culture”, following onion diagram and the layers of culture. Then in *Chapter 2* the researches of comparing cultures will be presented which the search usually favor to similarities or difference between national cultures. Focusing on cross-cultural management, cultural dimensions and cultural standards as well as comparing each cultural standard with cultural dimensions will be discussed. The description of dimensions that were used to explain differences across nations will be presented by the researches of Hofstede’s five dimensions, Trompenaars’s seven dimensions, and four patterns from Gestland. The

chapter concludes with the comparison between the cultural dimensions. *Chapter 3* reviews the historical countries' background of Portugal and Thailand following their strength and weakness to identify cultural difference. The Hofstede model has been chosen on the basis of each respective country's scores. *Chapter 4* explains the definition and characteristic of cultural standards which are used to set standards, limits and to measure behavior including the categorization process. The cultural standard methodology is based on qualitative research and uses the technique of a narrative interview to produce results of this empirical research. Applying cultural standards methodology will further be described in Chapter 5. *Chapter 5* begins with an overview of sample group conducting by fifteen Thai interviewees who live in Portugal with different carriers and experiences. A narrative interview methodology has been applied and a qualitative content analysis of the interviews was undertaken to help to identify cultural standards. Next, the results from the empirical research are explored as the outcome of Portuguese cultural standards from Thai perspective carries over five categories. Then, additional interviewees and culture experts' feedback are discussed. Cultural standards and Hofstede's dimensions are compared as the end of this chapter. Finally, *Chapter 6* concludes with a summary of the research and findings.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Culture

The Meaning of Culture

This chapter described the common meaning of culture and how culture presents itself in many different ways. One well-known anthropological consensus defines culture as:

Patterned ways of thinking, feeling and reacting, acquired and transmitted mainly by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values (Kluckhohn, 1951, cited in Hofstede, 2001:9).

As business and its workforce become ever-more global and diverse, the issue of “culture” becomes increasingly important for leaders, managers and their organizations (Trompenaars & Woolliams (2003:3). Moreover, Trompenaars (1993) discussed that *culture is the way in which a group of people solves problems*. Groups of people organize themselves in such a way that they increase the effectiveness of their problem-solving processes. Furthermore, cultures can be distinguished from each other by the differences in shared meanings (*man-made*) they expect and attribute to their environment.

In social anthropology, “culture” is a catchword for various patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting. Culture should be distinguished from human nature (human being) on one side and from an individual’s personality (based on traits as well as unique personal experiences) on the other.

Culture dictates what we pay attention, how we act and what we value. Culture organizes such values into what Geert Hofstede calls “*mental programs*” or as “*software of the mind*”. Kluckhohn (1951, 1967) defines values as “a conception, *explicit or implicit*, distinctive of an individual or characteristic of a group, of the desirable which influences the selection from available modes, means, and ends of actions”. The behavior of people within organizations is an enactment of such programs. Mental programs vary as much as the social environments in which they were acquired (Hofstede, 2001:5).

In addition, Hofstede mentions the cultural differences manifest themselves in several ways following four concepts: symbols, heroes, rituals, and values. In Figure 1, these concepts are

illustrated as the skins of an onion metaphor that represents the most superficial and values the deepest manifestations of culture, with heroes and rituals in-between.

- *Symbols*: words, gestures, pictures or objects that carry a particular meaning which is only recognized by those who share the culture;
- *Heroes*: persons, alive or dead, real or imaginary, whom possess characteristics which are highly prized in a culture, and who thus serve as models for behavior;
- *Rituals*: collective activities (sharing with people who live within the same environment) that are technically unnecessary to the achievement of desired ends, but that within a culture are considered socially essential for, such as ways of greeting and paying respect to others, both in social and religious ceremonies.

Symbols, heroes, and rituals in Figure 1 have been subsumed under the term “practices”. For instance, they are visible to an outside observer but on the other hand they are interpreted by the insiders.

- “*Values*” in the core of culture are invisible until they become evident in behavior. Values are feelings with an arrow to the negative and positive side. Symbols, heroes, and rituals are consisted of values.

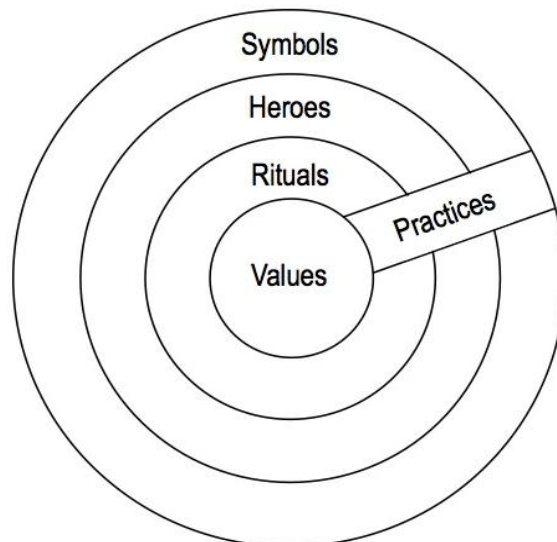


Figure 1: The “Onion Diagram”: Manifestations of culture at different levels of depth

(Source: Hofstede 1991:9)

Hofstede (1991: 10) further explains “*the layers of culture*” as almost everyone belongs to a number of different groups and categories of people and how they correspond to different levels of cultural are largely dependent on a number of external variables. These variables include a person(s), country national level, a regional/ethnic/religious and/or linguistic affiliation within genders, the generational level, a social class level, and finally for those who are employed in an organizational or corporate level.

Culture can be best expressed in the complex interactions of values, attitudes, and behavioral assumptions of a society. However, for culture to be a useful concept in management studies, we must be able to unpack the culture concept (Schwartz, 1994).

National Cultures & Organizational Culture

National cultures is the set of norms, behaviors, beliefs and customs that exist within the population of a sovereign nation. International companies develop management and other practices in accordance with the national culture they are operating in. Eventhough organizational “culture” is a phenomenon *per se* it is, different in many respects from national cultures (Hofstede, 1991:18). Often the primary indicator includes the managers and employees who bring their cultural background and ethnicity to the workplace. Hofstede found striking cultural differences within a single multinational corporation. In his study, national culture explained 50 percent of the differences in employees’ attitudes and behaviors. National culture explained more of the differences than did professional role, age, gender, or race.

Laurent assumed that managers working for the same multinational corporation would behave more similarly than their domestically employed colleagues (Adler, 2002). Understanding culture in organizations defines culture as a series of rules and method which an organization has evolved to adapt with a variety of challenges in the workplace. Organizations face tension-related dilemmas between the existing set of values and the desired ones – or between partners of a merger or strategic alliance (Trompenaars & Woolliams, 2003:103). Differences between national cultures help determine the “types” of corporate culture “chosen” with four types including *the family, the Eiffel tower, the guided missile, and the incubator* (Trompenaars, 1993:139).

2.2 Cross-Cultural research

Because of the increasingly of large numbers of international joint ventures and multinational mergers and acquisitions, managers have had to learn culturally appropriate approaches to managing people in each country they operated (Adler, 2002:9). Furthermore, Hofstede (1991:15) refers that “cultural differences according to region, religion, gender, generation and class”.

The first cross-cultural study was published in 1889 by Edward B. Tylor. In his study, Tylor attempted to relate marital residence and the reckoning of kinship to other customs such as joking and avoidance relationships. Since then, cross-cultural research became more popular in the 1930s and 1940s at the Institute of Human Relations at Yale by anthropologist George Peter Murdock (1897-1985). The aim was to foster comparative research on humans in all their variety so that explanations of human behavior wouldn't be culture bound and then develop a classification system that would organizes the descriptive information on different cultures (Bernard, 2000:651).

Methodological Issues in Cross-Cultural Research

Geert Hofstede states that most researches of comparing cultures (cross-national) base on quantified data that have to be statistically treated, which collected from individual within cultures, such as responses on questionnaires and interviews. Nevertheless, research designs usually favor either the search for similarities or the search for differences. Thus, the studies that involve two or more cultures share several common methodological issues that are not present in purely domestic research (Thomas, 2008:22). These are discussed under the broad headings of equivalence, sampling, and data collection.

- *Equivalence*: means that culturally different participants understand equally the concept and its relationship to other concepts in the study.
- *Sampling*: the goal of sampling is to conduct research with a small number of participants who accurately represent the population about which we want to make conclusions, involving samples of individuals who are readily available, seem intelligent, and are willing to respond (Brislin, Lonner, & Thorndike, 1973).
- *Data Collection*: the most common qualitative methods of data collection in cross-cultural research are questionnaires, followed by interviews (Peng, Peterson, & Shyi, 1991).

Bernard (2000:681) has given the conclusion of cross-cultural research as the researchers focus on the uniqueness of particular culture in a different way as well as focusing on qualities or quantities that vary along some specified dimensions. These variables do not capture everything about cultural attitudes, beliefs, values, or behaviors but they do exhibit some distinguishable similarities and differences — focusing on dimensions of variation; so is learning how to frame a meaningful and answerable question.

2.2.1 Cross-Cultural Dimensions research

“The most critical dimension of culture concerns itself with people’s assumptions about life” (Cushner & Brislin 1996).

Many authors in the second half of the 20th century speculated about the nature of the basic problems of societies that present distinct dimensions of culture. For example, Edward T. Hall (1976:91) divided cultures according to their ways of communicating into high and low contexts. Hall states, *“a high-context (HC) communication or message is one in which most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message. A low-context (LC) communication is just the opposite: i.e., the mass of the information is vested in the implicit code”*.

The GLOBE study, the most recent one of cultural differences in value orientations was undertaken as a part of the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) program (House *et al.*, 2004). GLOBE involved 170 researchers working in 62 different societies and collected data from approximately 17,000 middle managers in 951 organizations. One of the outcomes of the GLOBE research was the construction of nine dimensions of cultural variation. The first four of these dimensions are described as direct extensions of Hofstede’s (1980) work with the exception that factor analysis revealed two dimensions of collectivism: *institutional collectivism, in-group collectivism, and power distance, uncertainty avoidance, gender egalitarianism, assertiveness, humane orientation, future orientation, and performance orientation*.

Another dimension of culture was proposed by U.S. anthropologists Florence Kluckhohn and Fred Strodtbeck (1961:12) on the basis of a field study in five small communities with geographically-similar attributes in the southwestern United States (U.S.): Mormons, Spanish Americans, Texans, Navaho Indians, and Zuni Indians. They distinguished the communities on the following value orientations: (1) *an evaluation of human nature* (evil/mixed/good), (2) *the relationship of man to the surrounding natural environment* (subjugation/harmony/mastery), (3) *the orientation in time* (toward past/present/future), (4)

the orientation toward activity (being/being in becoming/doing), (5) *relationships among people* (linearity [i.e., hierarchically ordered positions]/collaterality [i.e., group relationships]/individualism).

In order to define cultural dimensions at the level of national culture, Schwartz and colleagues (Sagiv & Schwartz, 1995; Schwartz, 1992, 1994; Schwartz & Bilsky, 1990) performed a multidimensional scaling analysis on the correlations between the average ratings of the 45 universal values in a number of different samples in 63 countries (Sagiv & Schwartz, 2000). This analysis yielded seven value types: *Egalitarianism* (recognition of people as moral equals), *Harmony* (fitting in with the environment), *Embeddedness* (people as embedded in the collective), *Hierarchy* (legitimation of unequal distribution of power), *Mastery* (exploitation of the natural or social environment), *Affective autonomy* (pursuit of positive experiences), and *Intellectual autonomy* (independent pursuit of own ideas).

In the cases of Trompenaars' research (1992) has conducted in the course of about 900 cross-cultural training programs in 18 countries. Contributors to this research 30 companies, with departments spanning 50 different countries, apart from the training program material. The results illustrate a variety of solutions from different cultures identifying seven fundamental dimensions of culture: (1) *universalism vs. particularism*, (2) *individualism vs. collectivism*, (3) *neutral vs. emotional*, (4) *specific vs. diffuse*, (5) *achievement vs. ascription*, (6) *attitudes to time*, and (7) *attitudes to the environment* (will be discuss more on page 17). Additionally, his seven value dimensions were derived primarily from the prior work of North American sociologists and anthropologists (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961; Parsons & Shils, 1951).

In addition to Richard Gesteland, his dimensions/categories are based on his extensive experience as a manager in different countries and cultures: 30 years of hands-on global management experience with two international companies including eight expatriate assignments covering 26 years. He shows <<how to do>> and <<what to avoid>> and his work does not pretend to present quantitative data and conduct any statistical testing as proof of the dimensions which are presented (Robalo, 2004:47). These include: *Deal-focus vs. Relationship-focus*, *Informal vs. Formal cultures*, *Rigid-time vs. Fluid-time cultures*, and *Expressive vs. Reserved cultures* (See more detail on page 18).

Geert Hofstede's notable research of cultural dimension theory illustrates was extracted from an existing database, the database compiled paper-and-pencil survey results collected within subsidiaries of one large multinational business organization (IBM) in 72 countries and covering many questions about values. The survey was conducted twice, around 1968 and around 1972, producing a total of more than 116,000 questionnaires where respondents could

be matched by occupation, age, and gender. A dimension is an aspect of a culture that can be measured relative to other cultures. The basic problems correspond to “*power distance*” (from small to large), “*collectivism versus individualism*”, “*femininity versus masculinity*”, and “*uncertainty avoidance*” (from weak to strong). Recently, the fifth dimension was identified as “*a long-term orientation*” to “*a short-term orientation*” (further discuss on page 15).

[Overview of culture dimension research can be seen at Appendix 1, by Fink, Kolling and Neyer (2004)]

2.2.2 Cross-Cultural Management Research

Cross-cultural management describes organizational behavior within countries and cultures on the basis of “*comparing*” organizational behavior across countries and cultures that seek to understand and improve the “interaction” of co-workers, managers, executives, clients, suppliers, and alliance partners from countries and cultures around the world. The vast majority of management researches have focused on U.S. companies conducted by American researchers and management professors. The result of almost every reported study (96%) found that “culture had a significant impact on managerial styles and organizational success.” Cross-cultural management thus expands the scope of domestic management to encompass international and multicultural dynamics.

There are many of researchers whose study indicated to cross-cultural management research. For instance, the studies that review in the area of expatriate adjustment by David, 1971, 1972, 1976; Dinges, 1983; Guthrie, 1975, 1981; Bandura, 1977; Furnham and Bochner, 1982; and Black & Mendenhall, 1990 especially those in the field of human resource management and organizational behavior include Adler, 1983; Hofstede, 1991, 2001; Child, 1981; Robers and Boyacilliger, 1984; Steers, 1989; Triandis 1972, 1995; and Hall, 1992. Furthermore, cross-cultural influences on “personal values” are reviewed as related to work behavior and work motivation studies by Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961; Murry, 1938; Maslow, 1954; McClelland, 1961; and Hofstede, 1980b; not to mention the role of culture in the formulation of “job attitudes” can be seen for the studies of Allport, 1939; Triandis, 1971; Guth and Tagiuri, 1965; England, 1975; Davis and Rasool, 1988; and Steer *et al.* 1989. While another reviews on diversity across cultures focusing the importance of national cultural differences like Hofsteded, 1980a, 1991; Triandis 1972, 1995; and Smith and Schwartz, 1997. Extensive include, the extensive literature reviews on “cross-cultural communication” of interpersonal

across cultures studies by Hammer & Champy, 1993; Mead, 1998; and Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2004.

Nevertheless, cross-cultural management research conducted by André Laurent and colleagues shows attitude towards organizational power differing across cultures. Laurent, 1983 cited in Mead, 1994:61 examined the attitudes of managers in nine European countries (Switzerland, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, and France) and the United States. He focused on four parameters: perceptions of the organization *as political systems, authority systems, role formulation systems, and hierarchical relationship systems*. Laurent saw management as an implementation process by which managers expressed their culture values in explicit management decisions. Considerable variances were found across the different nation groups examined.

Types of Cross-Cultural Management Research

The types of studies have been categorized in a number of ways by different authors (i.e., Adler, 1983; Drenth & Wilpert, 1980; Earley & Singh, 1995; van de Vijver & Leung, 1997). This study refers to Nancy Adler reveals that types of research can be distinguished among the following: parochial, ethnocentric, polycentric, comparative, geocentric and synergistic. There are presented in Table 1.

As mentioned the overwhelming majority of studies and researches in the field of management is conducted by Americans and done in the United States, first in single culture studies (i.e., within a *parochial* line of research). The conclusions obtained are explicitly or (more frequently) implicitly considered universal, valid irrespective of country or other circumstances (one best way). Also quite common, the *ethnocentric* studies seek to extend the results obtained in one country to another, normally replication studies that try to validate in other countries the research done in the United States. The *polycentric* studies seek to examine the patterns of management in different countries using the culture of each of them as a reference. They exclude universality. The *comparative studies*, through the consideration and contrast of various cultures, try to identify similarities and differences finding out which theories hold across cultures and which do not. The *geocentric* studies have as objective of research the multinational organization operating in more than one culture and try to identify similarities among cultures in a way that those organizations could use models and techniques valid independently of the countries in which they operate. Finally, the last type of the studies, *synergistic or intercultural*; try to understand the new realities of intercultural groups and the contexts of interaction among elements of different cultures so as to find equilibrium among

transcultural forms, valid for all and at the same time maintain a certain level of a specificity for each culture (Robalo, 2004:27).

TITLE	* CULTURE * APPROACH TO SIMILARITY & DIFFERENCE	* APPROACH TO UNIVERSALITY * TYPE OF STUDY	PRIMARY QUESTION	MAIN METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES
<i>Parochial research</i>	* Single culture studies. * Assumed similarity.	* Assumed universality. * Domestic studies.	What is the behavior of people like in work organizations? Study is only applicable to one culture and yet it is assumed applicable to many cultures.	Traditional Methodologies. All of the traditional methodological issues concerning design, sampling, instrumentation, analysis and interpretation WITHOUT reference to culture.
<i>Ethnocentric research</i>	* Second culture studies. * Search for similarity	* Questioned universality. * Replication studies.	Can we use home country theories abroad? Can this theory which is applicable in Culture A be extended to Culture B?	Standardization and translation. How can research be standardized across cultures? How can instruments be LITERALLY translated? Replication should be identical to original study with the exception of language.
<i>Polycentric research</i>	* Studies in many cultures. * Search for difference.	* Denied universality. * Individual studies of foreign cultures.	How do managers manage and employees behave in country X? What is the pattern of relationships in country X?	Description. How can country X be studied without either using home country theories or models and without using obtrusive measures? Focus is on inductive methods and unobtrusive measures.
<i>Comparative research</i>	* Studies in many contrasting many cultures. * Search for both similarity and difference.	* Emergent universality. * Studies comparing many foreign cultures.	How are the management and employee styles similar and different across cultures? Which theories hold across cultures and which do not?	Equivalence. Is the methodology equivalent at each stage in the research process? Are the meanings of key concepts defined equivalently? Has the research been designed such that the samples, instrumentation, administration,

				analysis, and interpretation are equivalent with references to the cultures included?
<i>Geocentric studies</i>	* International business studies. * Search for similarity.	* Extended universality. * Studies of multinational organizations.	How do multinational organizations function?	<i>Geographical Dispersion.</i> All of the traditional methodological questions with the added complexity of geographical distance. Translation is often less of a problem since most MNOs have a common language across all countries in which they operate, The primary question is to develop an approach for studying the complexity of a large organization. Culture is frequently ignored.
<i>Synergistic studies</i>	* Intercultural management studies. * Use of similarities and differences as a resource.	* Created universality. * Studies of intercultural interaction within work settings.	How can the intercultural interaction within a domestic or international organization be managed? How can organizations create structures and processes which will be effective in working with members of all cultures?	<i>Interaction models and integrating processes.</i> What are effective ways to study cross-cultural interaction? How can universal and culturally specific patterns be distinguished? What is the appropriate balance between culturally specific and universal processes within one organization? How can the proactive use of cultural differences to create universally accepted patterns be studied?

Table 1: Types of Cross-Cultural Management Research

Source: Adler, 1984, cited in Robalo, 2004:28

2.2.3 Cultural Standards Research

Much research has been done in an effort to identify cultural standards (i.e., Tiandis 1995; Brislin et al. 1986; Landis and Bhagat 1996; Thomas 2000b) all of which attempted to analyze the so-called *critical incidents*. The goal was to identify those cultural differences and special characteristics that came into play during an intercultural encounter. The most practical and frequently used approach is to interview a large pool of candidates with experience in diverse encounter situations (further discuss will be found in chapter 4). The questions asked relate to the difficulties and problems they experienced repeatedly in dealing with foreign partners which different, unexpected and inexplicable reactions they typically encountered on a regular basis when dealing with their other-culture partners and what explanations they had for unfamiliar and unexpected behavior (Thomas & Kinast & Machl: 2010:25).

Cultural standards are based on an applied approach aimed at identifying the characteristic guidelines relevant for cross-cultural interactions. Alexander Thomas defines cultural standards as follows:

Cultural standards combine all forms of perception, thinking, judgment and behavior which people sharing a common cultural background rate as normal, self-evident, typical and binding for themselves and for others. Thus, cultural standards determine the way we interpret our own behavior as well as the behavior of others. They are considered “basic”, if they apply to a variety of situations and determine most of a group’s perception, thinking, judgment and behavior, they are highly significant for perception, judgment and behavior mechanisms between individuals (Thomas, 1993:381, cited by Brueck & Kainzbauer, 2002).

Additionally, Cultural Standards as Orientation System serves for perception, thought and behavior. It provides a form of orientation to guide us though the process of deciding which mode of behavior is normal, typical, and acceptable and conversely, which mode of behavior is unacceptable. Cultural standards function as implicit theories or rules and are internalized by the individual during the process of socialization (Sylvia, 2005).

An interesting aspect of cultural standards is that they can only be identified in a cross-cultural context. But will be occurred when we come into contact with people from a different culture area, whose behavior is based on a different set of cultural standards and we are able to consciously experience their existence (Brueck & Kainzbauer, 2002).

Limitations of cultural standards can be found as follow (Sylvia, 2005, cited by Zhang & Hangzhou, 2010):

- It is the interplay between cultural identity and individual personality that defines the spectrum of available adaptation processes and possibilities for change within a culture.
- The use of cultural standards is just on the way of preparing, planning and analyzing certain situations in which the cultural factors can be recognized and labeled.
- All individuals involved as well as the respective situations are also major contributing factors to the success

2.2.4 Comparing Cultural Standards Method and Cultural Dimensions

To be understood about comparison between cultural standard and cultural dimensions, there are two major strands in cross-cultural research literature (Fink & Kolling & Neyer, 2005:5):

1. In a general sense cultures and differences among cultures can be described and measured along culture dimensions (i.e. Hall/Hall 1990, 2000; Hofstede 1980, 1993, 2000; House & Hanges & Javidan & Dorfman & Gupta, 2004; Kluckhohn & Strodbeck, 1961; Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 1992; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997).
2. In more detail and more descriptively the cultural standard method is a perfect tool as it deals with differences in perception, norms of sensing, thinking, judging, and acting, that can cause critical incidents in cross-cultural encounters (Thomas, 1996; Fink & Meierewert, 2001).

Therefore, the main factor distinguishing the cultural standards method from other cultural comparisons like for example the comprehensive work developed by Hofstede (1984) is a much greater differentiation of cultural differences. His work has drawn the notion of the existence of universal models of management (Robalo, 2004). Yet according to similarities on certain cultural dimensions it appears that countries can be clustered (Ronen, 1986). However, the cultural standards model is valid only in the comparison of two cultures. In this instance, the cultural dimensions are found to be applied to the description of cultural differences between several countries (Brueck & Kainzbauer, 2002).

Although, Hofstede's four (five respectively) cultural dimensions provide a simple basis for the description of more than 40 countries, but they do not give a lot of evidence of differences between two neighbor/countries. For a comparison of the two cultures, the cultural standards model that which is based on a qualitative research approach provides a better tool for identifying cultural differences.

2.3 Cultural Dimensions

The concept of dimensions of culture is introduced through an inquiry into the philosophical opposition between the specific and the general, the different and the similar (Hofstede, 2001:1). Moreover, “*international dimensions*” is guiding us for modifying our attitudes and expanding our understanding of people’s behavior and the diversity and complexity of today’s global environment (Adler, 2002). In this section Geert Hofstede, Fons Trompenaars and Richard R. Gesteland’s cultural dimensions will be discussed.

2.3.1 Geert Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions

Hofstede’s dimensions of cultures were formed by the empirical results of IBM data. A dimension is an aspect of a culture that can be measured relative to other cultures and together a number of phenomena in a society which were empirically found to occur in combination. The basic problem areas correspond to a four-dimensional (4-D) model of differences among national cultures that are characterized by a score on each of the four dimensions. More recently a fifth dimension was identified as “*a long-term orientation*” to “*a short-term orientation*” (1991:14).

1. **Power Distance** (Inequality in society)

This dimension defines the basic problem involved is the degree of human inequality that underlies the functioning of each particular society. The way of power is distributed to “*large and small*” power distance. In countries in which employees are not seen as very afraid and superiors are not often autocratic or paternalistic, employees express a preference for a consultative style of decision making. These refer to small power distance. On the contrary, in large power distance countries there is considerable dependence of subordinates under superiors. This hierarchical system of superiors and subordinates consider each other as existentially unequal. Therefore power distance can be defined as the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally.

2. **Collectivism versus Individualism** (The relationship between individual and society)

Individualism relates to societies in which the ties between individuals are “loose.” Everyone is expected to look after him or herself and his or her immediate (nuclear) families only with their own interests prevail over the

interests of the group. Also called an “*individualist*”, this is where the counterpart characteristics are self-respect, privacy, freedom and think in terms of “I”. Collectivism in these societies act as a cohesive in-group where these societies call “*collectivist*” where the interest of the group prevails over the interest of the individual as its identity is based in the social network and think in term of “we” and the relationship of the employer-employee is perceived in moral terms like a family link. This is called the “collectivist.”

3. Femininity versus Masculinity (Modesty versus assertiveness)

This dimension describes the distribution of emotional roles between the genders to which a range of solutions are found. It opposes the “*tough*” masculine to “*tender*” feminine societies. In masculine societies, men are supposed to be assertive, ambitious and tough, resolution of conflicts by fighting them out while woman are supposed to be tender and to take care of relationships. In contrast, feminine societies translated to warm relationships and modest.

4. Uncertainty Avoidance (The control of uncertainty situations and the expression of emotions.)

Uncertainty avoidance can be defined as the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations. This feeling among other things is expressed through nervous stress and in a need for predictability together with a need for written and unwritten rules. The basic problem involved is the degree to which a society tries to control the uncontrollable. In countries with strong uncertainty avoidance people come across as busy, impatient, emotional, aggressive and active. In countries with weak uncertainty avoidance people give the impression of being quiet, low stress, easy-going, controlled and lazy. They are comfortable in ambiguous situations and with unfamiliar risks likewise they are supposed to be tolerance.

5. Long-term versus Short-term Orientation (Confucian dynamism)

The fifth dimension refers to the extent to which a culture programs its members to accept delayed gratification of their material, social, and emotional needs. This new dimension also known as “*Confucian dynamism*” which refers to pragmatic rules for daily life derived from the lessons of Chinese history. There are separated into two poles, one could be labeled “long-term orientation” which values to long-term benefits with the key elements of

persistence, thrift and saving, and traditions that can be adapted to a modern context as past and future generations are important. On another pole called “short-term orientation” which values “saving face” in the key elements of respect for tradition, personal steadiness and stability, responsiveness to social demands of greetings, favors, and gifts. They are more oriented towards the past and present.

2.3.2 Fons Trompenaars’s Cultural Dimensions

Trompenaars (1993) described the basis of cultural differences as “*every culture distinguishes itself from others by the specific solutions it chooses to certain problems*”. His research examined cultures within these three categories:

- those which arise from our relationships with other people;
- those which come from the passage of time;
- those which relate to the environment;

Trompenaars identified seven fundamental dimensions of culture that covering the ways in which human beings deal with each other and also based on societies’ differing solutions to relationships with other people, time and nature.

1. **Universalism versus Particularism** (rules versus relationships).

The first dimension defines how we judge other people’s behavior. Universalist or rule-based behavior tends to be abstract. It also tends to imply equality in the sense that all persons falling under the rule should be treated the same, rarely used to the exclusion. Particularist, rather that it forms the first principle in the process of moral reasoning. Judgments focus on the exceptional nature of present circumstances “no matter what the rules say.” This is based on logic of the heart and human friendships.

2. **Collectivism versus Individualism** (the group versus the individual).

The second dimension covers how people relate to other people. Individualism or self-orientation concern what each person wants for individual excellence or a reward. Once fulfillment is found in service to the group, group goals are of demonstrable value to an individual.

3. **Neutral versus Emotional / Affective** (the range of feelings expressed).

The third dimension refers to relationships between people with reason and emotions both playing integral roles. Members of cultures that are affectively neutral do not express their feelings but keep them carefully controlled and

subdued. In contrast, in cultures high on affectivity people show their feelings plainly by laughing, smiling, grimacing, scowling and gesturing; they attempt to find immediate outlets for their feelings.

4. Specific versus Diffuse (the range of involvement).

The fourth dimension concerns the degree of involvement in relationships with active engagement of others in specific areas of “*life spaces*”. Specific cultures look at the “*objective*” and “*straight to the point*” rather than sharing a private space. On the other hand, diffuse cultures look for relationships and connections before considering all the business interactions.

Specific and diffuse cultures are sometimes called **low** and **high** context.

5. Achievement versus ascription (how status is accorded)

The fifth dimension describes the societies’ status to people on the basis of their personal achievement. Achieved status refers to “*doing*” and ascribed status refers to “*being*”. Achievement cultures justified their authority by skills and knowledge that benefits the organization whereas ascription cultures justified their authority by power over people, older people, males and/or highly qualified by their background such as educational record.

6. Attitudes to Time (the way societies look at time)

The sixth dimension refers to different cultures approach time differently, which relates to past, present and future. Time can be perceived as a line of sequence to a series of passing events. A “*sequential*” person only does one activity at-a-time, keeping appointments strictly and on-time. In contrast, people who do more than one activity at-a-time are called, synchronic or polychronic. These people tend to “*give time*” to others.

7. Attitudes to the Environment (Internal versus external control)

The last dimension of culture concerns the role people assign to their natural environment. In some cultures, people who believe that man can dominate nature will become “*other directed*” in order to survive; their focus is on the environment rather than themselves, this is known as an external control. Conversely, people who believe that man is part of nature and must go along with its laws, directions, and forces. This is described as “*inner-directed*” or internal control.

These seven fundamental dimensions influence our ways of doing business and managing as well as our responses in the face of moral dilemmas. It guides our beliefs and actions through life.

2.3.3 Richard R. Gesteland's Cultural Dimensions

Gesteland has given two “*Iron Rules*” of International Business. The first, *the seller is expected to adapt to the buyer*; and the second, *the visitor is expected to observe local customs* (1999:15). These expectations determine the actions of companies operating in different cultural conditions and an international transaction. Furthermore, Gesteland has proposed the four patterns of Cross-Cultural Business Behavior.

1. Deal-Focus vs. Relationship-Focus

The difference of deal-focused (DF) and relationship-focused (RF) is the “Great Divide” between the world’s cultures that affects the way we conduct business. Because of the key cultural value, RF people prefer to deal with family, friends and persons or groups well known to them – building relationship build and approaching indirectly. They are uncomfortable doing business with strangers. In contrast, strong DF cultures are found to be relatively open to doing business with strangers; directness and frankness are equated with honesty and sincerity but for RF people find DF types pushy, aggressive and offensively blunt. In return, DF people consider their RF counterparts dilatory, vague and inscrutable.

2. Informal vs. Formal Cultures

Formal cultures tend to be organized in steep hierarchies that reflect major differences in status and power. In contrast, informal cultures value more egalitarian organizations with smaller differences in status and power. Ignorance of this distinction can cause serious conflict. Business people from formal, hierarchical cultures may be offended by the breezy familiarity of counterparts from informal, relatively egalitarian societies. On the other hand, those from informal cultures may see their formal counterparts as stuffy, distant, pompous or arrogant.

3. Rigid-Time vs. Fluid-Time Cultures

People look at time and scheduling differently thus contrasting conceptions of time and scheduling may cause conflicts. In rigid-time societies, punctuality is critical and schedules are set in concrete, agendas are fixed and business

meetings are rarely interrupted as clock-obsessed or schedule-worshipping cultures. In contrast, fluid-time people have less emphasis on strict punctuality and are not obsessed with deadlines. They tend to be flexible, stretchable with meeting times, schedules and agendas. In contrast societies, they regard their fluid-time as lazy, undisciplined and rude while the latter often regard the former as arrogant, martinets enslaved by arbitrary deadlines.

4. Expressive vs. Reserved Cultures

People of other cultures misunderstand our body language just as they may misinterpret the words we speak or write. There are three types of interpersonal communication: *Verbal* (with words), *Paraverbal* (silence or conversation overlap) and *Nonverbal* (body language). Expressive people communicate in radically different ways from their more reserved counterparts. For example, expressive people tend to be uncomfortable with more than a second or two of silence during a conversation. In contrast, people from reserved cultures feel at ease with much longer silences. While expressive people regard interruptions as a normal part of conversation, overlapping is considered extremely rude by people from reserved societies.

2.3.4 Comparing the Cultural Dimensions

In general terms, cultures can be compared along distinct dimensions and comparative dimensions can be applied to cross-cultural management.

This section describes the comparison between three models (Hofstede, Trompenaar, and Gesteland). Their models on cultures share a number of similarities and differences in the variables used for their dimensions and how they are measured.

To begin with Gesteland, his categories develop mainly differently from another. His work is developed on previous works on the subject and through observation and experience in a qualitative form and does not use measurements and the attribution of scores to characterize and classify the countries. On the other hand, his categories are useful at an immediate level when giving advice about the most adequate behavior in intercultural personal and business relations. They are less appropriate to explain the reasons for the variation of organizational forms among different cultures/countries (Robalo, 2004:51).

Next, Trompenaars' dimensions model of national culture differences is particularly relevant to the conduct of international business. His seven value dimensions were derived primarily from the prior work of Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck (1961) and Parson & Shils (1951). The first

five of his dimensions concern relationships between people, the final two dimensions are about orientations toward time and the environment (Thomas, 2008). In addition, Hofstede (Int. J. Intercultural Rel. Vol 20. No.2, 1996) claims that Individualism/Achievement and Universalism/Diffuse both are correlated with his Individualism dimension. Moreover, Hofstede argues that the theory in Trompenaars' book is not either supported by the database or the evident lack of content validity of the instrument used. For instance, the database used in the 1993 book is based on the same questionnaire (or a revised version of it), but with a much larger group of respondents. The answers are not summarized into country scores on the seven dimensions; however, it is not clear where exactly a country is not supposed to be positioned on a dimension nor country scores on the dimensions validated against measurements independent of the research. In the contrast, Charles Hampden-Turner and Fons Trompenaars (Int. J. Intercultural Rel. Vol. 21 No. 1, 1997) argue that there are major differences between Geert Hofstede's approach and their works that can be summarized under four heads:

1. *Are cultural categories linear and exclusive?*

Hofstede's work uses Aristotelian categories of A and not-A, it points that if you are individualist you cannot be collectivist. But for Humpden-Turner and Trompenaars, these categories are mutually exclusive or at least mutually subtractive.

2. *Can culture be best expressed in mathematical language?*

In the view of Humpden-Turner and Trompenaars; cultures are self-organizing systems of values that have joined together in different ways in different countries and in different times. On another hand, the statistical procedures Hofstede uses are vital in aspects of the mechanical engineering in which he was trained. While Humpde-Turner and Trompenaars think that these are not useful to culture, it is useful to see how cultural elements cluster.

3. *Is Hofstede's research more empirical?*

Hofstede clustered the questions into subscales and was able to contrast scores for many of the different nations in which IBM was located, which he suggests that these came "from an open-ended inventory of issues that were on the minds of respondents around the world". The questions made up by unknown members of IBM's personnel department almost certainly had their origins in academic research. As for Hofstede's labels Power

Distance and Masculinity-Femininity, these occur by the same names (*or* very similar) in *The Authoritarian Personality* (Adorno, *et al.* (1950) theorized about a personality type that involved the “potentially fascistic individual”).

4. *Are there pointers to successful business practice?*

Humpde-Turner and Trompenaars argue that Hofstede has a good spread of national cultures reveal to successful and unsuccessful economies. But it seems to be puzzled when Hofstede states that lower Power Distance (PDI) scores like Scandinavia for example correlated to rich countries while Scandinavia also has lowest scores on Geert Hofstede’s Masculinity which could be indicated to unsuccessful economic country.

In Hofstede’s dimensions, his model has found favor with management researchers and has led to numerous studies explaining observed differences across nations. There are some numbers of management researchers criticize on Hofstede’s work, both theoretical and empirical grounds concerning the characteristics of various cultures which we had already demonstrated from Humpden-Turner and Trompenaars. Now we will go through one more criticism. Mead (1994:75) argues that the importance of Hofstede’s work is relating different cultures and applying cultural analysis to practical management problems. For example:

- The choice of informant population poses some problems in generalizing to other occupational groups within the target populations but it also offers a significant advantage;
- The dimensions of power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, masculinity, tap into deep cultural values and allow significant comparisons to be made between national cultures;
- The questions asked of the informants express issues of immediate concern to the cross-cultural manager;
- No other study compares so many other national cultures in so much detail;
- Hofstede’s work provides the manager with a framework of guidelines and hypotheses against which to measure his/her own analysis.

To determine this comparison, it can be seen that the Gesteland’s categories and their associated characteristics could be the most useful to prepare for direct contact or negotiation with foreign partners. In contrast, if to investigate the reasons for differences in incentive and remuneration systems across different countries, Hofstede’s dimensions would be more

appropriate than the categories of Trompenaar. Because his categories are less useful than that of Gesteland where practical advice is required; it is more adequate for a more specific audience of managers needing to gain awareness and sensibility to the importance of the differences in organizational behavior in different cultures (Robalo, 2004:51).

In sum, those dimensions are very useful to identify similarities and differences between cultures (Robalo, 2004) that help us explain and forecast behavior and organizational arrangements in a comparative way, not to mention, those dimensions suggest the importance for organizations to understand the impact culture has on employee and manager interactions as well as operating in a multicultural environment (Parrott, 2013).

3. CROSS CULTURAL COMPARISON

3.1 Historical Background

This research will focus on the Portuguese cultural standard from the perspective of Thai, which is involved the similarity and dissimilarity between two cultures. Therefore, in order to understand their culturally-based differences underlying their culture values, norms custom, rules of conduct and characteristic behavior that represent the basic level of daily work and private life, as such historical country background of both Portugal and Thailand are necessary to be comprehended.

According to Ronen and Kraut (cited in Hodgetts *et al.*, 2005: 107-109) who have clustered countries into more or less homogeneous groups based on inter-correlations of standards scores obtained for each country by using a technique of nonparametric multivariate analysis, know as *Small Space Analysis (SSA)*. Each country that has been placed in a cluster is culturally similar to the other in that cluster. But in our case, Thailand is placed in the cluster of *Far Eastern* along with Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Philippines, Indonesia and Taiwan while Portugal appears in *Latin European* cluster together with France, Belgium, Spain and Italy. Thus, both Portugal and Thailand followed by Ronen and Kraut are identified the differences in country background such as religion, language, climate, geography, economics etc.

Commenting on the overall value of their research, Ronen and Kraut concluded:

“...knowledge of relative similarities among countries can guide the smooth placement of international assignees and the establishment of compatible regional units, and predict the ease of implementing various policies and practices across national boundaries.”

[The synthesis of entire country clusters by Simcha Ronen and Odede Shenkar (1985) can be seen at Appendix 2]

3.1.1 Portugal

Portugal, officially calls the “Portuguese Republic”, is a unitary semi-presidential republic. It is locate in South-Western Europe on the Iberian Peninsula and it is the western most country of mainland Europe being bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the west and south by Spain to the north and east. Aside from continental Portugal holds sovereignty of Azores and Madeira Islands, which are autonomous regions of Portugal (Wikipedia: Portugal). Their language is

Portuguese. Portugal is defined as a Mediterranean climate. It had 10,572,721 habitants in 2010 and most populations are Roman Catholic.

The name of Portugal derives from the Roman name “Portus Cale”. The region was settled by Celts, Romans, followed by the Visigothic, Suebion and the Moorish invaders. Portugal by 1139 established itself as an independent kingdom from Galicia. In the 15th and 16th centuries, during these periods is the “Age of Discover” where Portugal expanded western influence and established the first global empire becoming one of the world’s major economic, political and military powers (Wikipedia: Portugal). The government system is parliamentary democracy republic. The chief of state is the President and the head of government is the Prime Minister. Portugal has a service-based mixed economy in which the government has privatized many state controlled firms and liberalized (GlobalEDGE: Portugal).

Portugal joined the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1986 that later became the European Union (EU). As one of member states of the euro zone Portuguese currency “Escudo” was replaced to the “Euro” (€). Most industries business and financial institutions are concentrated in the Lisbon and Porto metropolitan area. Portugal has the lowest GDP per capital in Western Europe and is one of the lowest among the EU’s member states (Wikipedia: Portugal).

As from the history of Portugal, the results of a complex flow of different civilizations during the past millennia all have made an imprint on Portuguese culture. Later Portugal has developed a specific culture such as architecture, cinema, literature, cuisine, music, sport and visual arts (Wikipedia: Culture of Portugal).

According to GlobalEDGE website by Michigan State University indicates that Portugal reveals as a good business environment and corporate financial information is reliable. Debt collection is reasonably efficient. Institutions generally perform efficiently. Intercompany transactions usually run smoothly in the relatively stable environment of business climate rating A2. But the political and economic appear uncertainties and an occasionally difficult business environment can affect corporate payment behavior noted country rating B.

Portugal: Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths

- Good logistics and communications infrastructure
- Attractive tourist destination
- Geographic diversification, rapid development of the food-processing industry

- Absence of a property bubble
- Fall in unit labor costs and reform effort

Weaknesses

- Limited size of manufacturing industry, specialization in low value-added sectors exposed to strong international competition
- Inadequate innovation efforts and lack of skilled labor
- Heavy dependence on the European economic situation
- High level of private and public debt
- Banks strongly exposed to sovereign risk

3.1.2 Thailand

Thailand, officially calls “The Kingdom of Thailand” or known as “Siam” is a country located at the centre of the Indochina peninsula in Southeast Asia. It is bordered to the north by Burma and Laos, to the east by Laos and Cambodia, to the south by the Gulf of Thailand and Malaysia, and to the west by the Andaman Sea and the southern extremity of Burma. Thailand is the world’s 51th largest country with a total area of approximately 513,000 km² (198,000 sq. mi) with around 65 million people while Thais with part-Chinese ancestry comprise up to 40% of the population. The country’s official language is Thai and the primary religion is Buddhism by 95%.

Thailand is a parliamentary democracy with a constitutional monarchy currently headed by King Rama IX, the ninth King of the house “Chakri”, who has reigned since 1946 — serving current head of state and the country’s longest-reigning monarch. The politics of Thailand whereby the prime minister is the head of government and a hereditary monarch is head of state. The judiciary is independent of the executive and the legislative branches (Wikipedia: Thailand).

Thailand has a mixed economic system in which there is a variety of private freedom, combined with centralized economic planning and government regulation (GlobalEDGE: Thailand). The currency of Thailand is “Baht”. Thailand experienced rapid economic growth between 1985 and 1996, becoming a newly industrialized country and a major exporter for 60% of GDP and manufacturing. Agriculture is the backbone of the Thai economy where labor force is involved not to mention tourism is also one of the leading sectors of the economy. Thailand participates fully in international and regional organizations. The country remains an active member to ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) and APEC

(Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation). Among the ten ASEAN countries, Thailand ranked second in the best quality of life in ASEAN.

Thai culture has been shaped by many influences including Indian, Lao, Burmese, Cambodian, and Chinese. Thailand's national religion Theravada Buddhism is important to modern Thai identity. Thai Chinese business prospers as part of the larger bamboo network, operating in the markets of Southeast Asia that share common family and cultural ties (Wikipedia: Thailand).

For Thailand GlobalEDGE website has revealed that the changes in Thailand generally good but somewhat volatile political and economic environment can affect corporate payment behavior. A basically secure business environment and corporate default probability is quite acceptable on average of A3 for the country rating. As well as A3 for the business climate rating shows that Thailand business environment is relatively good. Corporate financial information is usually reliable, debt collection and the institutional framework may have some shortcomings. Intercompany transactions may run into occasional difficulties.

Thailand: Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths

- Diversified and high-performance production in agriculture and industry
- Move up-market in manufactured products
- Regional hub open to its dynamic neighbors
- Strengthened banking system

Weaknesses

- Thai foreign trade subject to China's competition
- Inadequate structural reform
- Business climate marked by persistent links between the private sector and political circles.
- Recurrent political instability since 2006

3.2 Cross Cultural Comparison based on Hofstede's Dimensions

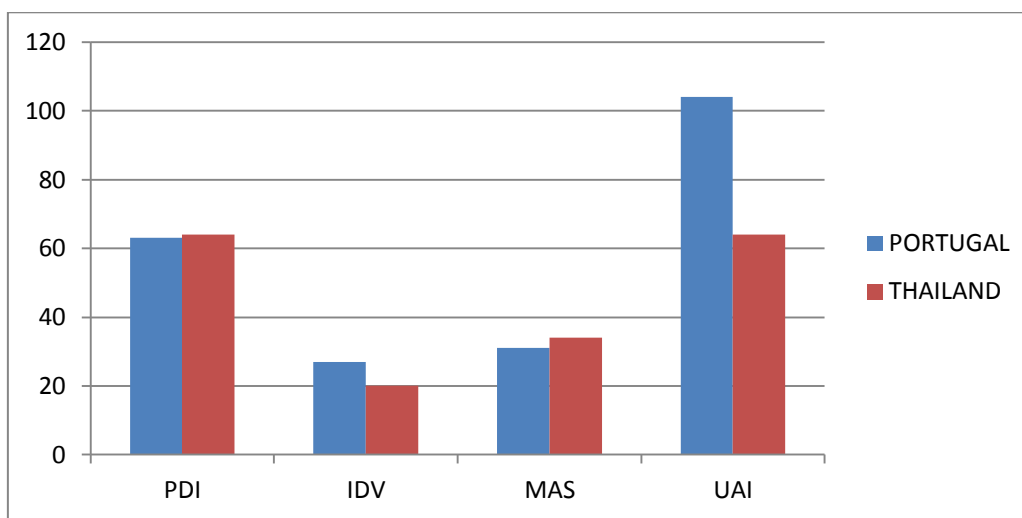
"Culture can be only used meaningfully by comparison" www.geert-hofstede.com

In this section the comparison of cultural differences between Portugal and Thailand will be discussed. Geert Hofstede's dimensions of national culture have been chosen as his research is helpful to describe and identify the characteristics between two nations. Only his research

has clearly shown the comparison value scores of Portugal and Thailand while the other does not. His first four and later five main dimensions on which country cultures differ were revealed through theoretical reasoning and statistical analysis that focused on the country scores.

To compare Portuguese to Thai cultures, four dimensions of national culture will be applied; power distance (PDI), individualism – collectivism (IDV), masculinity – femininity (MAS), and uncertainty avoidance (UAI). In Figure 2 provides an example of the comparison value scores between Portugal and Thailand.

Figure 2: Comparison based on Hofstede’s Dimensions between Portugal and Thailand



Source: Adapted from Geert Hofstede “*Cultural tools: Country comparison*”,

<http://geert-hofstede.com/countries.html>

Surprisingly, as we have known that Portugal and Thailand are in the different country clusters as Thailand is in Far Eastern cluster whereas Portugal appears in Latin European cluster not to mention both countries have approximately 6,634.96 miles of distance. But in the Figure 2, the graph shows that the scores of Portugal and Thailand are very closely for PDI, IDV and MAS scores, in contrast the scores for UAI are quite different.

3.2.1 Power distance (PDI)

Power distance is defined as the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally.

Portugal’s score on this dimension (63) reflects that hierarchical distance is accepted and those holding the most powerful positions are admitted to have privileges for their position. For example, management controls is an example where the superior requires information

from his subordinates and these expect their boss to control them. Negative feedback is very distressed for the employee. The superior needs to be conscious of this difficulty and search for little signals in order to discover the real problems. Meanwhile, Thailand scores very closely to Portugal (64) on PDI index, slightly lower than the average Asian countries. It is a society in which inequalities are accepted; a strict chain of command and protocol are observed. Each rank has its privileges and employees show loyalty, respect and deference for their superiors in return for protection and guidance. This in result may lead to paternalistic management and the attitudes toward managers are more formal and the information flow is hierarchical and controlled.

3.2.2 Individualism

The fundamental issue addressed by this dimension *is the degree of interdependence a society maintains among its members*. It has to do with whether people's self-image is defined in terms of "I" or "We". In Individualist societies people are supposed to look after themselves and their direct family only. In Collectivist society's people belong to 'in groups' that take care of them in exchange for loyalty.

Portugal in this dimension scores 27 as well as Thailand scores nearly at 20, both are highly collectivist country. This is manifest in a close long-term commitment to the member 'group'. Loyalty in a collectivist culture is paramount, more than rules and regulations. The society fosters strong relationships where everyone takes responsibility for fellow members of their group. In collectivist societies offence leads to shame and loss of face, employer/employee relationships are perceived in moral terms like a family link, hiring and promotion decisions take account of the employee's in-group, management is the management of groups. Anyhow, in order to preserve the in-group, Thai are not confrontational and in their communication a "Yes" may not mean an acceptance or agreement as they are very sensitive and afraid to loss face.

3.2.3 Masculinity / Femininity

A high score (masculine) on this dimension indicates that the society will be driven by competition, achievement and success, with success being defined by the winner – best in field / a value system that starts in school and continues throughout organizational behavior. A low score (feminine) on the dimension means that the dominant values in society are caring for others and quality of life. A feminine society is one where quality of life is the sign of

success and standing out from the crowd is not admirable. *The fundamental issue here is what motivates people, wanting to be the best (masculine) or liking what you do (feminine).*

Portugal scores 31 while Thailand scores 34, on this dimension, thus both considered a feminine societies and are a country where the key word is consensus. In feminine countries the focus is on “working in order to live”, managers strive for consensus and people value equality, solidarity and quality in their working lives. Conflicts are resolved by compromise and negotiation. Incentives such as free time and flexibility are favored. An effective manager is a supportive one and decision making is achieved through involvement.

3.2.4 Uncertainty avoidance

The dimension Uncertainty Avoidance has to do with the way that a society deals with the fact that the future can never be known: *The extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations and have created beliefs and institutions that try to avoid these.*

Portugal scores very clearly on this dimension (104) and that reveals a high preference for avoiding uncertainty. In these cultures there is an emotional need for rules (even if the rules never seem to work) and where time is money; people have an inner urge to be busy and work hard, precision and punctuality are the norm, innovation may be resisted, security is an important element in individual motivation.

Interestingly, on this dimension scores of Thailand’s 64 comparing to Portugal 104, but does not mean that Portugal is Uncertainty Avoidance culture while Thailand is not. These manifest that Portugal has higher preference for avoiding uncertainty (as mentioned earlier) than Thailand. In order for Thai to minimize or reduce this level of uncertainty, strict rules, laws, policies, and regulations are adopted and implemented. The ultimate goal of this population is to control everything in order to eliminate or avoid the unexpected. As a result of this high Uncertainty Avoidance characteristic, the society does not readily accept change and is very risk adverse. Change has to be seen for the greater good of the group.

4. CULTURAL STANDARDS

One innovative way of researching cultural differences is the Cultural Standard Method. It is based on a qualitative research approach and provides a tool for identifying cultural differences on a subtle level (Brueck & Kainzbauer: 2002).

4.1 Definition and Characteristics of Cultural Standards

“Cultural standards can be seen as the socially shared and accepted norms and values that are used by the individuals living within a particular culture to evaluate the behavior of each other” (Thomas, 1999). Cultural standards are used to set standards, limits and to establish a frame of reference against which to measure behavior. They are the types of perceptions, thoughts, values, and behaviors, which are treated as normal, typical, and obligatory by the majority of the members of certain culture (Thomas, 2005). Additionally, Thomas (1991) indicates that *cultural standards are extremely difficult, because they seem to automatically determine our perception, judgment and behavior*. Thus the personal involvement in particular situations, the confusing behavior of others and the insecurity regarded as critical and caused by a confrontations with unfamiliar cultural orientations systems are recorded in *narrative interviews* and so-called *critical incidents*. *Critical* in this context merely means not compatible with our own familiar orientations system. Unexpected positive experiences can also be considered critical incidents and are just as valuable for the identification of cultural standards. Usually, researchers interview persons with experience of critical contact situations (i.e. Germans in China or vice versa). An analysis of these critical incidents consequently enables us to identify the corresponding cultural standards (Brueck & Kainzbauer: 2002).

Characteristics of Cultural Standards

Cultural standards are not static, but dynamic. They are constantly undergoing change where existing cultural standards can be gradually and incompletely repressed and replaced by more recent developments. This only occurs when elements prove unsuitable and restrictive in the present context (Dinzelbacher, 1993). However, “mentality” is what changes the slowest (Le Goff, 1987) measured in generations and centuries, cultural standards thus does not have the same strength in each member of a society or culture (Sylvia, 2005, cited in Zhang & Hangzhou, 2010).

Cultural standards reflect the relationship of the two cultures in question. However, they are only relative values that do not necessarily apply to a third culture (Bruck & Kainzbauer, 2000) or used in comparing one particular culture area to a variety of others. Therefore, the relative character makes cultural standards cultural standard so tremendously valuable for cross-cultural training programs, whereas the most problematic aspects help to determine the relationship between two particular cultures (Brueck & Kainzbauer: 2002).

4.2 Distribution of Cultural Standards

There are variations and divergences within individual cultural standards. They should not be seen as rigid behavior regulations that are binding for all representatives of a specific culture area. As Figure 3 below demonstrates how cultural standards are shared by the majority (but not necessarily all) of the representatives of a particular culture. As with many other socio-cultural phenomena, cultural standards can also be represented in the form of a normal distribution.

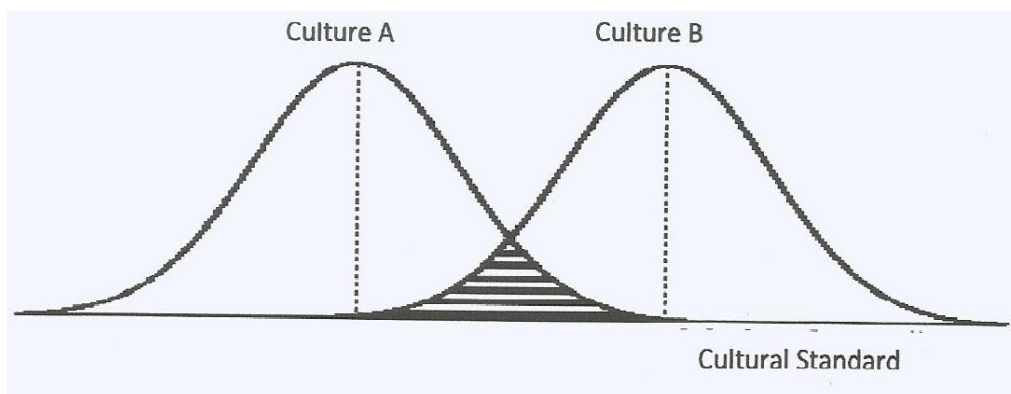


Figure 3: Distribution of cultural standards in two cultures

Source: Brueck & Kainzbauer, 2002:5

The statistical mean value shows that relatively most frequent manifestation of a cultural standard that could be called a prototype. However, there is the tendency in the behavior of the members of a group or culture to act according to this prototyped cultural standard (although different behavior is tolerated in that culture as well). As a consequence of socialization, these cultural standards are not apparent to the people sharing a common cultural background.

4.3 Cultural Standards Methodology

Following the methodology of action oriented cultural standard research, this section's narrative interview which considered the most suitable methodology for cultural standards will be mainly discussed then the categorization process.

4.3.1 The Narrative Interview and its Concept

There are vary versions of 'narratives' most writers have an analytic focus, stressing the structural characteristics and philosophical significance of narratives such as Kolher Riesman, 1993; Barthes, 1993; Mitchell, 1990; Johnson & Mandler, 1980; Kintsch W & VanDijk, 1978; Propp, 1928; Schuetze, 1977 and Bauer, 1986.

The narrative interview is classified among the qualitative research methods (Lamnek, 1989; Flick et al, 1991) to be considered a form of unstructured, in-depth interview with specific features. The technique of narrative interviews allows collecting information/data without restricting data collection by presuppositions (prejudices, previous restrictive assumptions). It is a hermeneutic method to be applied whenever we have inadequately detailed information insufficient for theory building or when we have doubts about assumptions made in already existing theories (Bewley, 2002).

The goal of collecting critical incidents is to collect information when different cultural standards, which regulate action and interaction of members of a society, lead to experiences that the customary problem solution mechanism does not work. Short stories about real incidents permit us to analyze the reported events and to convert collected experience of managers into knowledge (Fink, 2002: Fink, *el at.*, 2005). Furthermore, the narrative interview has the advantage of favoring the development of a subject-object-like relationship between the interviewer and the test persons. By avoiding the traditional question-and-answer-strategy and its implied disadvantages, the test persons are encouraged to control the interview and to regard the interviewer merely as an audience for their narration (Brueck & Kainzbauer: 2002).

Bauer (1996) has revealed the techniques that favor the narrative interview as the Question-Response-Schema. It is evidenced that **the perspective of the interviewee** is best revealed in stories where the informant is using his or her own **spontaneous language** in the narration of events. Narration follows a **self-generating schema**. *Whoever tells a good story complies with basic rules of storytelling.*

Storytelling: a universal competence which is an elementary form of communication of human experiences with some useful features. Members of social groups or subcultures tell

stories with words and meanings specific for a certain social group. It is assumed that narrations preserve a particular perspective in a more genuine form. Additionally, situation, goal-setting, planning, and evaluation of outcomes are constituents of human goal-directed actions. The narration reconstructs that action and its context in the most adequate way. It reveals place, time, motivation and the actor's symbolic system of orientations (Schuetze, 1977). Schuetze (1977) called story telling that guide the process of story production which the '**inherent demands of narration**' and other have called **story schema** or **narrative convention** that can be modeled as **story grammar** (Johnson & Mandler, 1980; Kintsch & vanDijk, 1978).

Narrative: a self-generating schema as the storytelling by three main characteristics, (1) *Detailed texture* – the narrator gives details of events in order to make the transition from one event to another where the story has to be reasonable. Storytelling is close to events. It will account for time, place, motives, points of orientation, plans, strategies and abilities. (2) *Relevance fixation* – the storyteller reports those features of the events which are relevant according to his perspective of the world. The account of events is selective and the relevance will be structured. (3) *Closing of the Gestalt* (frame) – an event mentioned in an interview has to be reported completely in the narration. A story has a beginning, middle, and an end where the end can be the present. This-threefold structure of a closure makes the story flow once it has started.

The Procedure of Narrative Interview

In order to obtain useful results from the literature narrative interviews Lamnek (1995) has identified the following five stages:

1. *The Explanatory Stage*: the interviewer tries to create an atmosphere that encourages a detailed narration and helps the test person to feel less awkward about the interviewer and the entire situation.
2. *The Introductory Stage*: Schutze (1977) recommends giving the interviewee a *harmless general* idea of the purpose of the interview — a vague guideline of the topic for instance.
3. *The Narrative Stage*: Led by the narrator's speaking, the main part of the narration. It should be told without any interruption or intervention. The narrator should be allowed to determine the line of events to be told, as well as to choose what he wants to relate or not, and where he may need to elaborate, according to the communication factors mentioned above from

Schutze (1977). The more detailed the individual events are presented, the better the results.

4. *The Investigative Stage*: after having listened to the narration, the interviewer can now try to get additional information from the narrator. However, the narrative character of the interview should not be altered.
5. *The Assessment Stage*: the actual narration or story should now be finished, since at this point it is impossible to go back to the narrative stage. The narrator and the interviewer should assess and interpret the narrative sequences (Lamnek, 1995).

4.3.2 The Categorization Process

After the interviews, short stories “critical incidents” are gathered, it needs to be examined. For this purpose a qualitative content analysis is used as described by Mayring (1996) and Oevermann (1997). During this qualitative analysis, categories which are derived from the interview texts are the basis for “*cultural standards*”. The results are then compared to similar situations and examples. Normally, the results needed to demonstrate typical cultural distinctions between two cultures and are not intended to merely describe personal experiences. Towards the end of the categorization process, some test persons are asked to assess the critical incidents described in the interviews in a group discussion in order to further confirm the results. The entire research process is illustrated in the following Figure 4 (Brueck & Kainzbauer: 2002):

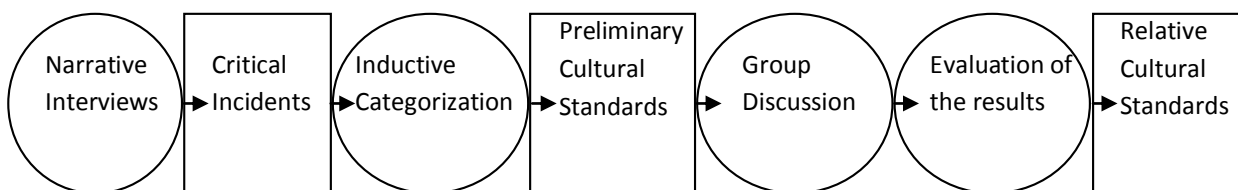


Figure 4: The identification process of cultural standards

Source: Brueck & Kainzbauer: 2002

5. RESULTS FROM THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

5.1 Identifying the sample interview partners

Of the Thai immigrants who arrive to Portugal, most of them experience “*stress*” related to anxiety, disappointment, embarrassment, frustration, identity confusion and impatience from different perceptions and ineffective interpretation in the new environment. Adaptation thus is something that we human beings strive for whenever challenged by unfamiliar forces operating in the environment (Landis *et al.* 2004; Kim). This phenomenon is referred to “*cross-cultural adaptation*” where the goal of achieving an overall person-environment “fit” between their internal conditions and the conditions of the new environment (Mechanic, 1974; Moos, 1976, 1986; Ward & Chang, 1997). In our case, most of Thai immigrants were attempting to understand the process of social skill acquisition within the new culture. After three to six months, most of Thai begin to adjust to the normal life abroad. They have learned Portuguese culture from the different between individual behaviors. Besides, they all tried to create solutions by themselves from everyday problems encountered. The results of such tension experiences have drawn valuable results for this research.

In addition, the interviewer and the interviewees belong to the same culture as Thai, importantly using our own Thai language for the interview that makes it very easy to understand the interviewees’ point of views, perspective and their way of thinking. The interviewees seem to be comfortable, in harmony and trustworthy. The context of the interview appears to be nice and smooth as the interviewer has a good relationship with the interviewees, short stories and stories telling came out fluently without bias.

5.1.1 Characteristics of the Interviewees

In Portugal, currently there are about 750 Thai people. Most are agricultural workers in the south of Portugal, the rest of people ((approximately 100) are housewives, owners of restaurants, mini-supermarket, spa and students especially, Master and PhD level (Royal Thai Embassy: 2012). The sample interview partners of this research are identified as manager, business owner, students and Embassy officers who live in Portugal for a minimum of two years. The numbers of the interviewees are 15 Thai for an age between 30 to 60 years old, divided to 4 men and 11 women. Their careers are separated into 5 groups, the first group consists of number 2, 3 and 4 work in the Thai Embassy, the second group comprises of number 1, 12 and 14 whose work related to restaurants business, the third group contains

number 9 and 15 who are business owners, the fourth group consists of number 7, 8 and 13 are identifies as Master and PhD students, finally the last group contains number 5, 6, 10 and 11 who referred to other types of career such as scientist, therapist, interpreter and hairdresser. Some interviewees have a managerial experience (according to the information from the Royal Thai Embassy mentioned earlier) but some do not have, even though all interviewees have adequately living and working experience in Portugal.

Interviewee No.	Gender	Age	Years in Portugal	Career
1	Male	52	10	Restaurant Manager
2	Female	26	5	Cultural Affairs/Thai Embassy
3	Male	34	3	First Secretary/Thai Embassy
4	Male	59	2	Third Secretary/Thai Embassy
5	Female	35	2	Scientist
6	Female	36	9	Hairdresser
7	Female	37	4	PHD Student
8	Female	43	2	PHD Student
9	Female	34	6	Business owner
10	Female	42	8	Therapist
11	Female	39	9	Interpreter
12	Female	30	6	Restaurant Manager
13	Female	32	6	Master Student
14	Female	32	5	Chef
15	Male	43	18	Restaurant Owener

Table 2: Interviewees' Characteristic



5.1.2 Transcription and Content Analysis

To move towards identifying cultural standards it is necessary to undertake a qualitative content analysis of the interviews and the reported critical incidents, culture related remarks, and stereotypes (Fink et al., 2005).

The interviewees live in different regions of Portugal: 9 from Lisbon, 2 from Cascais and 4 from Porto. Therefore, appointment is taken by phone and email, with the interviewer's personal introduction and a short guideline explaining: what is the topic, the purpose and the objective of this research, and what the author expecting from the interview partners. In addition, short stories to collect critical incidents in a positive and negative way were given as the samples during the interview discussion.

In the area of Lisbon and Cascais the interviewer conducts the interview by face-to-face, giving time for the conversation and discussion approximately 40 to 60 minutes per interviewee. All narrative interviews from these regions were taped. The rest of the interviewees who live quite far away like Porto, exchanged email are undertaken.

The process of data collection of this research started in December 2013 by searching and contacting possible interviewees. During the period of mid-December until April 2014, the interviews were conducted with 15 Thais, following the identification of critical incidents that was hold in March until May. On May and June were the period of discussion with experts and the last state of formulation of cultural standards were concluded in August 2014.

The content analysis procedure of this research begins after the reading and rereading the researcher together with checking individual interviews consistency, and then reducing told stories to the important content (critical incidents). Further comparative steps recommended include: (Fink *el at.* 2005). 1) Pair-wise comparisons: compare the first interview with the second, the second with the third interview, etc. Compare the critical incidents with diverse culture related remarks and stereotypes in interview one and interview two, respectively. 2) Compare short stories of interviews: Form the result of the first 7 interviews to the result of

the second 7 interviews. After the comparison of sub-series the conclusion can be drawn as the Portuguese cultural standard.

5.2 Portuguese Cultural Standards

Portugal and Thailand are in the different country cluster. Portugal belongs to Latin European in contrast Thailand is the member of Far Eastern (Ronen, 1986:262). Both countries differ in Language (Portugal: Portuguese language; Thailand: Thai language), Religion (most of Portuguese are Roman Catholic; most of Thai are Buddhist), Geography (Portugal: Mediterranean climate, hot and dry; Thailand: tropical monsoon climate), Area (Portugal: 35,672 sq. mi, Thailand: 197,260 sq. mi) and Population (Portugal: 10,753,425 (2014); Thailand: 67,108,507 (2014)). However, the result of this study reveals that there are some similarity and dissimilarity relationships between values in both countries.

From the interview, the majority of incidents are arranged according to what typically happens during extensive cross-cultural experiences which can be evaluated and analyzed on the basis of cause-and-effect in such difficult situations through the contexts of where and when it happened i.e., at work, public place, university or with family members. The results of this empirical research pointed to a large number of work behavior and performance relevant indicators. The most critical incidents that relate to fifteen Thai interviewees' perspective can be defined as five Portuguese cultural standards.

The five points of Portuguese cultural standards by Thai perspective explored as follows:

- 1. Unfocused time management**
- 2. Bureaucracy and slow decision making**
- 3. Inefficient communication and emotional expression**
- 4. Strong commitment to quality of life**
- 5. The importance of the social relationship**

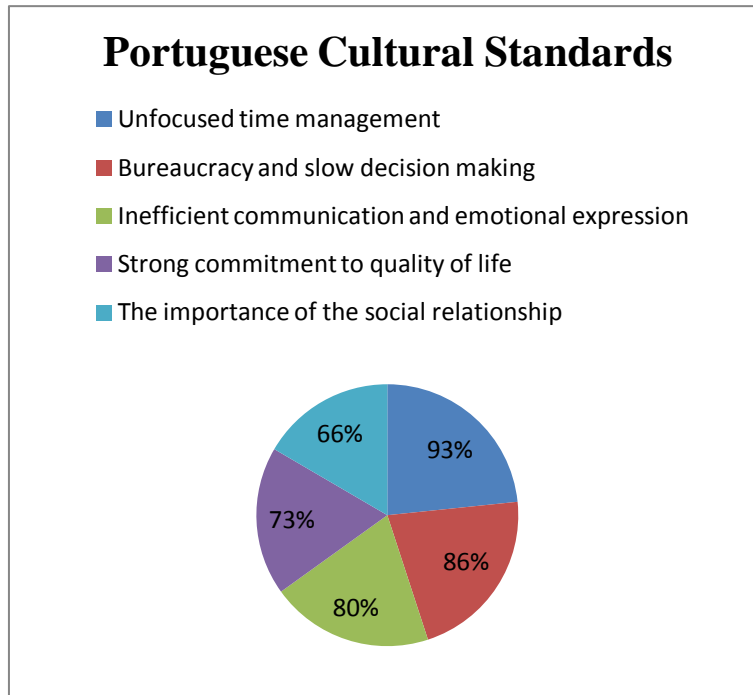


Figure 5: The Five Portuguese Cultural Standards

5.2.1 Unfocused Time Management

The strongest research result percentage of 93% which primarily focuses on interviews referring to *unfocused time management*. Most incidents reveal that Portuguese have no conscious control over the amount of time spent on specific activities, especially to increase productivity within the boundary condition of limited amount of time either do not concentrate on time schedule by keeping busy but achieve very little.

“I am not satisfied with time I spent in EDP, I went there approximately 2 p.m. which is an afternoon working hour for paying the bill. At 3 p.m. I still waiting, waiting for workers to return to counter service. There is only one worker at the counter with a long queue. What the patient? No one complain! Everybody just wait! In the morning is the same, I arrived at 9 a.m. but still see various workers smoking in front of the building. Not only here but can see a lot in many places. This is a disrespect of time that implicitly affects the quantity of work, with the limited morning time of 4 hours, 1 hour already lost for coffee, smoking, conversation etc. Certainly, will never meet the target and also impact on; less quantity of work, less productivity and unaccomplished goals”. Criticized by interviewee no.4

Added interviewee commentary no.1: *“I went to the bank to make deposit, there was a long queue and only one banker was attending client at the counter. I was waiting so long and start to feel irritated, so I went to ask the banker, the answer was “You have to wait!” anyhow, I looked around there were more four people working; one was on the phone and*

another three were working on their stuffs. How much time do I spent here and how much time could they satisfy one client? If every workers work as a team, coordinate with each other and managed better time attendance, the service would be more rapidly with all satisfaction”.

However, even the planning is looked deficient and deadlines viewed with a very “relaxed” eye, but Portuguese business people are expert at dealing with the last minute crisis. Whatever is an imperfect solution or efficient but the solution will always be found and fixed. As from interviewee no.3 indicated:

“Portuguese is not so strict at the working plan that makes me feel stressed to work with, because I could not either make an advance plan for myself; as the stimulation is needed, appropriate time is required. For instance, when we coordinate with someone, the time you expected cannot be so early or too close, the appropriate time could be around 2 weeks before (but also depend on the matter). If it is so early, no one will pay an attention to, and it is no use because they will always do at the last minute. Since in the case of receiving the Thai royal family and ministries who coming to Portugal, plenty of information need to be confirmed, the Thai authorities were waiting for the confirmation as requested but we could not confirm anything because the alteration from Portuguese authorities were always vary. At the end, the Thai royal family reception went very well, the Portuguese authorities supported all the activities which more than we expected. Anyhow, what we need is just an effective planning and an effective timelines”.

Moreover, an appointment should be made in advance and confirmed, particularly by writing. Anyhow beware of the agreed actions that might not be taken. Additionally, interviewee no.3, 10 and 14:

“Once we had an event agreement with press when the day arrived that press did not show up, without warning or notification, immediately we contacted the press and there is no reason to response even the confirmation was taken in advance but there is still no guarantee”.

“According to booking time schedule, the customers usually arrive late 10 to 20 minutes but not for everybody. Therefore, we have to extend the booking time follow by the customer’s behavior; some people are on time and some people are always late. Since we know our customer’s behavior the time schedule will be easier calculate and manage”.

“Being late is so common in Portuguese culture yet it is affected directly to our work. When we have a full seats booked in the restaurant, tardiness and no-show are regularly occur which influence our time management to all; manager, chefs, waitress etc. Specially, for

group booking when they booked for 20 people, the calculation is just 12-15 people who will appear, worse than that the warning telephone or message will never be happened. Therefore, to prevent the confusion and profit lost, rapidly we have to remind and try to get a confirmation until last minute of the reservation since asking for some deposit is quite awkward for Portuguese”.

Attitude towards time

In Portugal, taking into account the worker is working very slowly, inaction and disrespect of time orientation, they view time as generational (Adler, 2002) and therefore they believe that planning schedule should allow for an extension. The projects often need a generation, or certainly a decade to achieve significant results. They do not push or rush things to achieve short-term results. By contrast, they pay a lot of attention at their work activities, patient, pace and organized carefully, with perfectly outcome, the interviewee no. 5 reviewed that

“Portuguese are no hurry for the time orientation, they spent plenty of time until they get a satisfy job, for example, the butcher gradually cutting the meat very carefully with unnecessary time spending but I notice that he is very happy with his work. At the same time, in the souvenirs shop, the employees often spend a lot of time wrapping goods sold yet the results may not be worth for the waiting customers. Moreover, in traditional road work in the footpath which calls “Calçada”, was repairing by applying the small square of rock one by one, there was just small space to repair but the work took as a decade”.

Another reviewed from interviewee no.1 *“In our team one employee always arrives late, of course trouble is caused. Anyhow, he could finish the task on time with satisfied results but needed to stimulate and activate all the time”.*

Language of time

As each culture has its own *language of time* (Hall E. & Hall M., 1990:18), to function effectively in Portugal, it is essential to acquaint ourselves with the local *language of time*. For instance, when Portuguese say more 5 minutes is mean more 15 minutes; 15 minutes is mean more 30 minutes; ½ hour is mean 1 more hour. It is important therefore to know how to read the messages associated with time and the use of appointment-schedule in Portuguese culture.

“Once I made an appointment for a small meeting with a new client at 14:30 p.m., I arrived at his place at 14:15 p.m. and waited until 14:40 p.m. he still did not appear so I decided to call him. Immediately he picked up the phone and say to me more 5 minutes he will be there.

After spoke to him I continue to wait for 20 minutes so he arrived at 15:00 p.m. When he arrived of course he apologized for being late and we began the meeting which took only 15 minutes. This incident is an insult! I felt very disappointed that I could do more things or visit another client while I was waiting for him, just a waste of time!” criticized by interviewee no.11.

To conduct business in an orderly manner in Portugal, it is essential to know how much or how little *lead time* is required for each activity or how far ahead to request an appointment or schedule meetings and vacations, and how much time to allow for the preparation of a major report. Again, meetings schedule should be at least one to two weeks in advance. Since the Portuguese want to know whom they will be meeting, provide details on titles, positions, and responsibilities of attendees ahead of time. While meetings often start late but the atmosphere usually is more relaxed, a sense of humor might be appear. Furthermore, the significance of different time segments must be considered (vacation, weekend, public holiday etc.). As reviewed by interviewee no.15;

“Here, the meeting should be scheduled for the certain time of the day and month, for example it shall be between 9:00 to 12:00 a.m. or in the afternoon between 14:00 to 17:00 p.m. out of these times the meeting will never be granted. Meeting lead time should be considered 15 to 20 minutes late, while the ending time is often protracted and lengthy, as the Portuguese pay great attention to detail, they are often long delays in concluding deals whereas deadlines are not taken seriously. In Portugal, there are times when business is not expected, such as national holiday, Easter, Christmas especially during the month of August”.

5.2.2 Bureaucracy and slow decision making

Bureaucracy

The second of most incidents which interviewees were discussed, 86% refer to bureaucracy and slow decision making. In a bureaucratic organizational structure in Portugal generally appears to be: adhered to the regulation and standards, rules are essential with no flexibility, prolonged period for documents submitted, required an extensive documentation, where operational processes are rigidly controlled with best-practices methodologies and close supervision. For these criticisms, the interviewee no. 4 and 15 had told us their incidents regarding documentation and regulation.

“For the government organization, if we do not have a complete document as they require, your document will be rejected and return to you. Only after you have all requirements you will be able to submit it again. It is a fixation rules that sometime we do not informed, instead

of receive the document then after we hand the missing one, but it doesn't work that way. You have to come back there, again waiting for the queue, follow the process and sometime the document is expired! This is no flexibility and wasting so much time”.

“3 months ago I almost died because I could not breathe. I didn't know what happen so I went to the nearest hospital. When I arrived there the security told me that I could not see the doctor, I have to make a patient card and fill the hospital form first. At that moment, I was dying. I could not breathe; my face turn green; my hand was cold and shaking. Suddenly, one person approached, tried to speak with security and dragged me to ICU room. This is an idiotic situation; the security didn't consider the facing situation but consider only his duties, rules and regulation”.

Following incidents above, the interviewee no. 5 and 13 also described their stories toward regulatory complexity. *“I bought an iPad, and have been used for 4 months then the battery is broken, I sent it to repair. It took so long for the repair, I went to the shop and ask when I can get my iPad back, the staff just said “I don't know, you have to wait” that answer made me frustrated. After 1 month my iPad is repaired, as 3 days has passed the iPad was broken again! I put again to repair and again I have to wait as the staff had said, I got mad with strongly protest to get my money back. Thereupon, he explained that “It is the policy of the shop, only after 3 times repaired you would be able to get the refund”. Alright! But perhaps if the shop would give me a second hand iPad or something while I was waiting that would be an excellent service”.*

“I went to SEF at Cascais to ask some information but when I arrived there, the security asked me immediately if I have a reservation? I answered that I just want to ask some information then he gave me contacts of email and telephone which provide information. Whatever, I was there but the rule is the rule! I knew this rule but the time I spent to reach SEF was less than the time spent on holding the phone line. In Thailand at the bureau or any government office we have a service care for people if we wait longer than 20 minutes we can write a complaint book”.

Interviewee no. 15 also discussed the same incident. *“From my experience, I would say it depends on the person you contact, if you meet a nice and simple staff probably your business would be done easily but if you meet the tough one it could be a trouble for you. Not to mention, you should do it by your own never make a contact for another. Like my story, I went to EDP to pay electric bill but I lost the bill, then I asked the staff to give me an amount so I could pay. But it is impossible! Have to be the houseowner only. Right away I had made an argument as “the system is terrible, too much strict, I am here to give your company money*

but you are not accepted, unlike the bank anyone can deposit for the same account but to withdraw have to be the account owner which I do agree but for your system I do not agree". If I don't pay the bill, the power at my house will be cut then I have to notify and pay for power connection again! It is a waste of time and money for both, unreasonable and inflexibility.

Moreover, interviewees also indicated that Portuguese will perform the duties without interference other co-workers or support other colleagues as they think that their duties are an individual responsibility. According to Weber (1947) has drawn attention to the fact that bureaucracy is rule-governed. *Job specifications* in the bureaucrat are expected to perform specified duties, and to refrain from interference in the duties allocated to others.

Hierarchy

When we discuss about bureaucracy obviously hierarchy of authority should be referred as it based on the characteristics of bureaucracy Weber (as cited in Cherrington, 1989:528). Some of interviewee mentioned that in Portugal the business culture is quite conservative and formal. Status and hierarchy are important and there is great deference to authority. The use of academic titles are important which you should address people as "Senhor" (Mr.) or "Senhora" (Mrs.) with their family name, or "Doutor" or "Doutora" if they have a university degree. Moreover, there is a good relationship between supervisor and subordinate as the way they showing the respect by call the supervisor as "patroa or patrão" (chief or boss), in accordance the roles of the organization are very well followed with loyalty and determination.

Slow decision making

As Ronen (1986) states that culture produces distinct decision-making styles. Yet, according to the bureaucratic structure, in Portugal the decisions are made according to a bottom-up procedure such that each subordinate authorizes a tentative solution or decision to some problem and proceeds to the superiors for adjusting the decision. Sometime reporting problems to superior, then superior is the one who make decision. However, most of interviewees indicated that Portuguese are good at impromptu problem solving that occurs daily under their responsibility. For the serious or unfamiliar problem, they are intended and attempted to solve the problem nevertheless take a long time to decide because depends too much on the rules and procedures.

“Certainly, decision-making in Portugal is usually concentrated at the highest level and often in a single individual.” Commented by interviewee no. 9, continues her story telling as follows;

“Not too long ago I and my partner agreed to launch a company which is limited company (Ltd.) we went to Conservatória do Registo Predial (Land Registry Office) in Odemira. We both have Thai nationality, I am able to speak, read and write Portuguese but my partner could not, thus the officer told us that we must have an interpreter who can translate Portuguese to Thai. We did understand the regulation but there is impossible to organize an interpreter in this region. After our frantic, the officer had recommended a solution. The solution was to make a power of attorney, in such a way that my partner authorized me to represent his will to open a company. That sound good to us, then we went to a lawyer to conduct a document. Now was only me that had to go back to the Conservatório, I handed the document with a male officer but, unfortunately the text message was incomplete. Never mind, I sent it back to the lawyer to correct the text message as a male officer was suggested. Another day, I went there again at this day was a women officer who reviewed my document. Unbelievable, she just said “the normal power of attorney is not enough, you must do the specific one call “Procuração para constituição de sociedade (Attorney for incorporation of a company)”, I felt angry and confused why don’t they told me before!. However, she took my document to consult with her director, soon she confirmed that the document was invalid. I had no patient at all, later on my lawyer suggested going to the other place. Next day, I went to Lagos and this is not my day, the same thing or even worse the director there rejected my document and said “you don’t need to do the “procuração para constituição de sociedade” you can use the normal “procuração” but what we need just more text message describe on who is nominated manager and the proportion of company. Yet, after we found that every offices have their own rules which particularly pronounced by the highest-level of its place. Well! We do realize that better we just follow the regulation, searching an interpreter”.

Uncertainly avoidance

Portuguese organizations are quite centralized and hierarchical. Thus, to make a decision that is not a simple of day-by-day decision; subordinates can be quite reluctant to accept responsibility. These factors demonstrate the sense of insecurity and a high need to avoid uncertainty.

The interviewee no. 14 and 10 were telling us incidents regarding uncertain avoidance. *“Most subordinates prefer to avoid uncertain issues which extent to work security. I had transferred*

money to Thailand, in the same day I noticed that my name spelled wrong. I went back to the bank and explained to the same banker. I asked her if person who I transferred money to will receive the money? And I also asked her to redo again. She just responded that the information was registered and not sure if it could redo. Immediately, she went to consult with her supervisor, came back to me and said "I think there is no problem". The answer looked unsure to me, and I didn't understand why took so long to respond which it seems to be a common problem".

"Yesterday the postman delivered an envelope to me and I have to sign to receive the envelope which was a registered letter. I signed and showed my resident card, he took the envelope back quickly and said to me "You are a foreigner, have to be a houseowner to sign or you can pick it at the post office". What? I had a serious discussion with him but he just said "My boss he is very strict, if I let this happen I would certainly have a trouble" and asked for my understanding and sympathy". I just said "Sorry, I do not really understand".

Criticized by interviewee no.10

5.2.3 Inefficient communication and emotional expression

Inefficient communication

The third highest percentage (80%) identified as 'Inefficient Communication and Emotional Expression'.

Communication is an attempt to share meaning through the transmission of messages (Ronen, 1986). Yet communication that is inefficient might be troubled in many ways and for many reasons. The majority of interviewees claimed that Portuguese communication between sender (especially officeholder) and receiver (customer) are inefficient as it is difficult to have a clarification message because misinterpretations are often found. For instance, the senders working in the same office provide different information than what the customer is asking by e-mail and furthermore, they will usually receives an answer differently asking by phone.

As a result, inefficient communication causes conflict, defensiveness, and worsens relationships with others creating negative impact in our lives. Such things include: a lacking of clarification, being overly critical or negative, prejudging someone based on personal bias, using poor or non-verbal communication or sarcasm, and being insincere. In our cases, rarely Thai who live in Portugal can speak and understand the Portuguese language well enough. Therefore language is also one of the factors for inefficient communication. In these cases the interviewee no.11 and 5 had explained to us their incidents.

“After I got married with my Portuguese husband, I immediately made a Portuguese passport then I have to make a citizen card, that how I met a trouble! For example my name is “Ann Danoi” (alias name) so I have to change my surname to “Luis” (alias name) to be “Ann Luis” which was recommended by Royal Thai Embassy. But when I went to make a citizen card the officer said to me “It could not be this way, your name must be “Ann Danoi Luis”, if not you have to present your birth certificate again”. That is impossible as passport it’s already done and I don’t want to reprocess again. Therefore, we went to other 2 offices where required a different document. I was outcry, asking what they want more from me as I already handed every requirement even paid already for 175€. The last time we met a nice officer, we explained what was happened, so she suggested to write a complain letter and wait. Eight months after that I had received my citizen card. My case is regularly occur in Portugal as different place-different requirement; different person-different procedure”.

“At CNAI-Porto (SEF) with a limit number of officer for attendance either fewer officers can speak English that have a big impact on the communication. As we are foreign student we noticed that when we try to ask for information about renewal a student visa there are always misinterpretations as once speak to one person will get information which is different from another so that made us feel uncomfortable to communicate at the same time afraid of unclear information”.

Moreover, inefficient communication may cost us time and money, according to stories of interviewee no. 2 and 6 who revealed that a significant amount of time is squandered during critical communication workflow, primarily due to the inefficiency of interaction between sender and receiver.

“In overall I thought renewal student visa is not complicated just follow the procedure. One month before the visa end, I booked the date for visa appointment and brought the entire document required by phone. As the procedure, has to arrive there 1 hour earlier exclude 3 hours in the process. At the end the officer refused the document because was missing some. Therefore, I have to go there again and wish to meet the same officer. It can be seen that inefficient communication within organization between telephone operator and officer cost me time and money as I have to absent from my job various time”.

“Both I and my husband had wasted so much time and money to convert my Thai driving license to Portuguese driving license as we both have to be absence from work not to mention the time we spent. Before we went there (Loja Cidadão) my husband called for the document’s information. But when we were there the officer informed us that missing the guarantee letter from the Thai Embassy and another paper as well. Then when we back there

again was another officer who attended us, of course there is another paper they require! So, we asked for the one who attended us last time and finally my document could be submitted because of that. It was not about misunderstanding because my husband is Portuguese so all the conversation was clear but it was only about the ineffective communication insider organization”.

Anyhow, to avoid the inefficient communication between sender and receiver we shall point to the communication messaging as well. As Portuguese like clear and detailed messages when communicating with Portuguese for example, writing a brief message for an advertising, brief email or a short text message all require sufficient details for better understanding. Such as the story telling form the interviewee no.10:

“Once I wrote a short text message for our massage promotion of the month as “1 hour for 2 discount 10€” which mean to have a massage for 2 persons (1 hour each one) normally cost 90€ for 2, but with this discount campaign will cost only 80€. I thought it was short and clear but for Portuguese is a meaningless message, some Portuguese understood that this message mean 1 massage of 1 hour is cost 10€ but have to come 2 persons to get this price!”

Indirect Communication

Some interviewees indicate that communication in Portugal is rather indirect, not straightforward, subtle and more roundabout style which perhaps causes misunderstandings between two cultures because the two cultures expect quite different things from the communication process (Gesteland, 1999). It seems that Portuguese tend to use indirect language in order to avoid conflict and confrontation. The interviewee no. 4 described that

“When we want to ask questions to Portuguese we have to be very direct and straightforward, otherwise you will never meet your target. Portuguese like to explain a lot sometime is unnecessarily. Anyway, I noticed that they are willing and intend to answer but as I said it is too much explanation neither indirect answer”.

Furthermore with indirect communication we need more sensitivity to understand the true meaning of what has been said, for instance the interviewee no. 2 indicated her story when she was in the university.

“I am here in Portugal as a foreign student, I felt so difficult to be inside-group with my Portuguese friends, as they always in-group. I will be welcomed to join group only if that group desire foreign friend; which English speaking frequent use. Anyhow, they all nice and have good manners, often invited me like “let go to have a coffee someday” or “come over to

have lunch one day” that message made me feel good but after I realized that will never be happened, it is just a conversation etiquette that maintain a relationship!”.

Emotional expression

As mentioned earlier, one of the causes of inefficient communication is using poor or non-verbal communication or sarcasm that may lead to miscommunication across cultures. Yet, most of Portuguese express their emotions freely, no matter what the consequences. They express their doubts, concerns, and feelings openly. Besides this, they tend to speak quite fast and somewhat loudly, showing of emotion is quite common but does not usually signify anger or displeasure. As a result, it might be confused to Thai as Thai people will feel uncomfortable and try to control the expression of emotion not to mention expressing negative emotions will be rarely occurred as Thai afraid to “lose face”.

Somehow, interviewee no.10 had given her opinion as Portuguese often show the expression of unpleasant emotions in the presence of other people but normally to his/her subordinate, employee or someone who has a close relationship. Following her incident,

“My boss is very strict, the work has to be perfect if not she will shout and yell at us. For someone who does not understand her emotion, they will be gone. In the beginning, I asked my boss some document for renewal visa, at that moment she was busy she looked at me and shouting on me saying “don’t you realize I am working right now, I’m not sleeping” when I heard that I was frightened , keep quiet and return to my place. It was my fault! I should ask her if I could interrupt and because of language that the way I speak like I commanded her. Whereupon I got to know her better so I have learned how to approach and use the right words”.

Another prospective form no.8 *“Portuguese like to make commend and criticize especially the event news using the words irony and parody not to mention expresses emotion with a strong voice and face sometime I thought they are fighting. For instance in some TV program, the moderator and the guests having a conversion on-air, everybody express and speak out at the same time no one listen to others like they are fighting, sometime I do not understand the key issues that are controversial”.*

Nevertheless, Portuguese express emotion “on-face” whereas Thai people often control the expression of unpleasant emotions in the presence of other people, so as not to disturb the relationship. The story telling of no. 8 and 14 also tell us that Portuguese do not keep their emotions or feeling. After having an emotional discharge usually they will be more calm

down, not keeping it overnight unlike Thai, mostly will keep the mood to avoid conflict and so as not to hurt others.

“My supervisor is always showing his strong emotion throughout face, hand and shoulder. I do realize that many of Thai staffs especially women misunderstood and were downhearted, so they just quit the job. In my case, as I already know how the Portuguese is so that does not disturb me at all”.

“At that day I was attending customer in the restaurant and I was so embarrassed when I could not understand what my customer wants, as I could read from their face like turning purple and appear impatient that made me feel terrible, I do not understand how come their expression released so easily”.

Nonverbal Language

Portuguese like to use eye contact, body placement and gestures, for example the way they complement each other with small distance between bodies. A cheek kissing is used as part of greeting, in Portugal, a cheek kissing is a common gesture of greeting between women and women or man and women when recognize each other, affection, friendship and reverence while hand shaking and hug is more common between man to man.

Portuguese also have ways of saying “No” or “I don’t know” with body language. For example, they will raise both left and right hands together with lifting both shoulders at the same time make a contorted face. For another gesture, they will slap on the back of right hand and slap on the back of left hand alternated and of course with the contorted face. As interviewee no. 6, 12 and 14 discuss that if you ask something and Portuguese does not answer instead making those gestures above, it means “I don’t know” or “It is impossible” so that you do not need to ask them again.

5.2.4 Strong commitment to quality of life

Seventy-three percent of interviewees reveal that Portuguese are more likely to engage in joint activities with family members and friends. Loving family and sharing the warmth within families meet frequently for such important events as Easter, Christmas, long weekends, Father’s or Mother’s Day, and very strong relationships with family members. For the friends usually go for dinner, wine tasting, seeing sporting events, cocktail party, etc. The interviewee no.5 told her impression of Portuguese family relationship.

“Family is focused for Portuguese, they have a strong relationship between family members alike Thai as we can see that grandparents helping to take care grandchild and always

supported their children. In the important days as Mother day or Father day all family members will go for lunch or dinner and having a lovely activity together, especially in the Christmas time wherever you are you have to go back to your family spending a happy time with kinship as once I was invited to X'mas party of my friend, there are full of warmness and happiness specially the way they treat me as I am one of their kinship”.

Another interviewee no.13 commended her opinion on quality of life.

“When Portuguese work they work but when working time is off everybody just shut down the computer and leave the office immediately. The reason is for the “quality of life” they need time for themselves, time for family and friends. Sometime my teacher was absent from class with the family problem reason and person I know as well, thus the family reason is quite acceptable for work absence in Portugal”.

Employee preferences

Quality of life is important Portuguese will typically prefer additional time off for superior performance instead of additional income (due in part of high tax rates) for example as there are more vacations, holidays, or more personal time off. Given an opinion by interviewee no.14,

“My Portuguese colleagues never want to work an extra hour but if they did they will ask to shift overtime wage for more day off. I was wondering how! As they need to earn more to support their expenses, unlike Thai we always think that if we work hard and have an amount of saving money that we will be able to enjoy our live. Yet for Portuguese money is less important than their quality of life. As on their birthday or their kid’s birthday usually they will ask to be absence”.

Equality-based

Most of the interviewees agree that in Portugal women and men are treated the same. According to our 11 Thai interviewees, women living in Portugal for 2-9 years felt “equal” to men as referred to the interviewee no.8.

“In Portugal women and men have an equal right. Responsibility is divided as nowadays men and women both are working outside home and they divided their responsibilities of home works, children, cooking, cleaning etc. quite well. In the academic humilities jobs normally found women more than men, women got an executive positions for example at Instituto Camões, Fundação Oriente, Radio Station, Television Station, in the diplomatic not to mention women are member of a legislative assembly and make a good comment as men”.

Furthermore, women and men in Portugal have the same wage, income, remuneration and compensation even though some performances require a difficult task which is suited for men but women are accepted and get equal pay as well.

In addition, most of interviewee agrees that in Portugal, males and females have an “*equal opportunity*” as we can see from the job application in newspaper or on-line advertisement, most of company apply the jobs related to “males and females” (M/F) or using a “no gender language” on advertisement which is the same as Thailand.

Rights protected

In Portugal labor laws are very tough for employers as it is virtually impossible to fire someone with a permanent contract for poor performance. There is a culture of state involvement in business and collective labor agreements. Taking a vocation for Portuguese is a part of an inherent right to a healthy and a quality life. On another hand, if Portuguese worker cannot take a full vacation entitlement that might lead to a disappointment and conflict. Moreover, remuneration pay and allowances (including sick pay and pensions) are structured for all members of the organization according to their rank and duration of service, and the emoluments paid for any given job are typically detailed in the job specification. In this case interviewee no.4 had given us this comment.

“Portuguese are very concerned with their rights as can see from our local staffs. The rights particularly of 30 days holiday, the emoluments of working extra hours including working on day off and weekend not to mention subsidy Christmas and subsidy holiday which everybody have the same right to receive. It is a fixed rule that every organization must follow. Unlikely, Thai is very compromised such as 30 days holiday sometime we do not take all 30 days as we are more dedicated to work. In my case, I work for the government sometime I could not take holiday for the day I want but it does not matter. Well! We are more flexible as we always said “Mai Ben Rai” (never mind)”.

Another instance, when we have been co-operated work with someone and at that moment he/she is on the vacation, we must respect their joy time vacation and we have to be patient waiting for his/her return. Especially, we should make a schedule and plan for the breaking period of specifically in August, in order not to adversely affect work and timing project. As interviewee no. 14 and 4 said,

“Even we have an emergency work and at that time we could not find anybody, however, there is no use to contact our co-worker because we know her phone is turn off even we leave message she will not answer.”

“We have a consular services journey campaign where we offer consular services outside of the Embassy and that moment our driver is on his day off, so we need to hire another driver instead not to border his resting day which we understand it is his private right.”

Yet, Portuguese culture is quite “tight”, there are many rules, norms, and ideas about what is correct behavior in different kinds of situations, also people become quite upset when others do not follow the norms of the society. For example the incident of interviewee no.1,

“As a newcomer, I went to a supermarket then to pay my stuffs I went to queued up and there was a shopping basket in front of me. I thought someone just put on a wrong place so I just passed over that shopping basket to pay the bill, suddenly all the eyes were pointing at me with complaints’ voice chatting around me. It was an ashamed and guilty, immediately I ran away. That incident taught me to be more careful not to intrude on the rights of others”.

Relaxed Attitude

Portuguese are warm and friendly people. In the working context there is more of *flexible period* for instance coffee break in the morning, then lunch time, then coffee break in the afternoon with Portuguese called “lanchar” which is a time for chatting, smoking and having a cup of coffee. Thus, the working *core time* would be less as employees work only as much as needed to earn enough to live and enjoy the quality of life and attempt to live in harmony with nature.

However, there is a relaxed working atmosphere, good relationships and no stress. Here in Portugal workers begin and finish work more or less the same time for the average of 8 hours-a-day, but in Thailand workers would tend to take more time continue working as demonstrate that they are responsible and hard working which could be related to a promotion or bonus, instead Portuguese rather prefer a happy life.

5.2.5 The importance of the social relationship.

The importance of the social relationship is illustrated by 73% rating placing it fourth in the Portuguese cultural standards. The value of good connection towards powerful networks are beneficially allows you to conduct business with greater effectiveness.

“The social relationship such as the greeting likes “Bom dia” (good morning) or “Boa tarde” (good afternoon) are an important way of showing respect in Portugal. If you’re walking along the road and pass a group of five people, you are expected to greet every person individually, and they will also greet you back. Meanwhile, the hand checking

(man/man), kissing (man/woman; woman/woman) for the greeting; touching; eye contact and direction of gaze are common". Interviewee no. 15 mentioned,

Furthermore, the positive relationship at work in Portugal is emphasized. The relationships can occur in-groups, community, and organizational level where in Portugal people get things done through relatives, friends, contacts and connections. Certainly, knowing the right person and having the right contacts helps get things done meanwhile personal networks may open doors and solve problems. Interviewee no. 1 explained his incident.

"Long time ago I had renewed my resident card at immigration office in Porto. At the appointed time I went to pick up my card, but the officer informed me that my document was lost, so I need to apply again that mean I have to wait for more than 4 months to collect new document. Fortunately I found one person I know who works at the immigration office, she immediately take care for my situation, after 2 months I was able to get the card. As you can see, the connections can make a smooth transition!"

Added interviewee no.10, described her story regarding opening a massage tent on the beach in Algarve.

"To be able to open a massage tent on the beach in Algarve 7 years ago was complicated, because there was neither law nor license for this kind of activity. Unmistakably, I can accomplish my aim just because I know the right person! It is important to have connection, in my case I have a special relationship with a powerful person in Loulé and that person knows the president of Loulé. Here we come! The meeting was set up with an engineer and drawing plan, the discussion was very formal, shortly afterwards my business plan is reached".

Besides, Portuguese business relationships are built on trust among individuals, taking into account Portuguese usually want to do business only with those they know, so to establish a strong correlation need a plenty of time together socializing to build familiarity, so that powerful networks will be created.

Employee selection

Having a good connection can accomplish your goal and certainly is also advantageous for employee selection. According to Triandis and Vassiliou (1972) found that in collectivist cultures as Portugal, human resources practices are commonly selected on the basis of recommendation of in-group members. In Portugal the way they make employee decisions will give more weight to the recommendation of friends and relatives than the selection on the basis of test scores or unknown persons. Discussed by interviewee no. 7, 5 and 14,

“From my experience, the employee selection may divide into 2 manners. First, selected by the employee recruitment process, selected the one who suits the job based on curriculum vitae; education, skills and professional qualification. Second, selected from the family members, friends or the one who introduced by well know person. The second manners I can see, usually stay longer than the first manner, getting along well with colleagues, better incorporation and trustable. The first manner, however appear to be impatience with hard work either not stay long which could be the result of low wages, working long hours and no opportunity for advancement”.

“I used to work at the private university, senior employee usually comes from the personal kinship and the new employee comes from those who are competent for the job. But if someone has a connection or a reliable reference will be expected for the special considerations”.

“Job application as I know, the personal networks that are not necessarily related to their family but might be someone from camaraderie introduced, family introduced or relative introduced, I would call “insider” who will have a special job opportunity. For instance the company I work employed his grandchild who does not have knowledge associated to company anyway he is employed with another relative as well. The fact does not point to the effective work but points to the trust for monitoring the other employees as the company owner frequently visits aboard”.

The incidents above reveal the distrust of non-family members and family relationships determine how control is imposed, conflicts resolved and messages communicated. Portuguese prefer to deal with family, friends and persons or groups well known to them as they can be trusted. While the flexibility offered by family employment can give the company an advantage. Shared perceptions, experiences, and opportunities for informal meetings outside the work place help make communication fast and efficient. Long-lived relationship and loyalty is expected between family members.

Bear in mind, well-being for business dealing depends on fitting in and having good relationships with the in-group which requires close attention to the norms of the in-group (Gannon & Newman: 2002:24).

Supervisor-subordinate relations

Most of interviewees indicated that the relationship between supervisor and subordinate are very intimate and friendly. Respect is an important matter and subordinates always respect supervisors and give honor to his/her boss. The supervisor likewise gives a counsel,

suggestion and instruction of work together problem solving supported. In particular, subordinate has fully opportunity to participate, criticized and make a comment with no worry if the comment is mismatched with a supervisor. Anyhow, outside the workplace relationship continues by going out in the evening for dinner or drink, which becomes a frequent occurrence.

5.3 Feedback and Mirror Studies

Feedback

The aim of the feedback which comes from fifteen interviewees and cultural experts from home are to eliminate the cultural bias of the interviewer and to make the results interpersonally comparable. Feedbacks are undertaken by sending the results of empirical research by e-mail to the fifteen interviewees. Apart from this, two Thai persons' who do not participate on narrative interviews living and working in Portugal are identified to jointly discuss the interpretation of the critical incidents.

After the e-mail was sent, 8 have returned feedback to the interviewer. According to the inefficient communication subject matter, the interviewee no. 2 has added comments,

“According to SEF situations, I think not only inefficient communication can be defined but it can be identified as inefficient management and document complexity as well, which I agreed from the research results that sometime really depending on who was attended you, however, in some place I saw the complaint box which we can write a complaint letter or give any suggestion to improve their service which I think it's a good idea”.

Additionally comments from interviewee no.5 *“If about SEF I also see that it was non-organized and document complexity however some flexibility has been found. Some officer intended to help as I can see they brought another officer who is able to speak English from another section to communicate with me”.*

Unsurprisingly, most feedbacks referred to unfocused time management and mostly agreed that Portuguese have no conscious control over the amount of time neither spent on specific activities nor disrespected deadlines. However, interviewee no.10 and no.5 had given feedbacks indicated that,

“Focused time management or unfocused time management depends also on years of formal education and hierarchical level with the individual values. Portuguese with higher education seems to respect and focus more on time management; working longer hours, respected

deadline and intended to complete work as planned whereas people with lower education have more “relaxed” with time orientation”. Indicated by no.10

“Personally, time management also depends on carrier and responsibility as I am a scientist which scientist research requires specialized skills that have to be very well planned; effective lead time management and all the process have to be done very carefully, therefore most of my colleagues in the lab are very conscious and committed on their schedule so they would be able to succeed their research on time”. Indicated by no.5

Nevertheless, interviewee no.7 and 12 had given more opinion on “Customer Service” which has not been spoken in this research results.

“When we speak about bureaucratic structure in Portugal appeared to be very strict to the rules and regulation yet this I agreed completely but besides the rules employee or employer could consider their service. For example, the shop or store always open and close very on time, sometime customer was getting in the shop but the employee will deny and shut down the shop immediately, like once my family was waiting in front of one shop at the Av. Liberdade the business hours sign indicated open time at 10:00 o’clock we were there at 9:45 standing in front of shop and saw few employees were walking around the shop, surprisingly no one paid attention at us, only exact 10:00 o’clock the door was opened! This incident made me realized that the customer in Portugal is not a “KING”, so do not expect much for the impressive customer service here”. Interviewee no.7 continued giving us the incident about customer service. “Another incident that I remember took place at the Lisbon Airport, we all know that the airport is quite small and crowdies, long queue at every service sectors especially Customs (tax-refunds) sector. There was always a big queue with only one officer who attended the travelers but there was another officer sitting beside without doing anything just observing and watching us, my family was wondering why did not he attend us. At that moment, people in the queue start to be impatient and walk around. Right away, the officer came to us and said, “You have to be in the line O.K? Cannot cross this line, you can step up only when I call!” Well! We just look at each other that we might lose our airplane because of this mad. In Thailand the officers would not command us like that not even make a serious face, only us (travelers) can complain and claim for poor service but in Portugal is different we have to be aware of rules and regulation in order not to be disqualify”.

“Portuguese don’t know what is the service quality not even how to treat customer, here in Portugal employee has a better working condition than Thailand. As a small example we can see in the supermarkets which have chairs for all employees in the counter payment, in Thailand all employees have to stand up during working time, keep smile up and compliments

to all customer in Thai way style (Wai). I think this is one of strategies for better sale not to mention to stand up may cause agility". Referred by no.12,

However, two Thai persons who do not participate on the narrative interview who lived and worked in Portugal are invited to a jointly discussion on this research results. One said that all the critical incidents that the fifteen interviewees had criticized capture almost all of Portuguese behaviors. However, he would like to give some feedback on "Portuguese Perception" which does not discussed in the research results.

"More than 10 years that I lived here I feel that Portuguese is quite undisclosed, traditional and conservative; adhered to the past glory of the 15th century. The Portuguese are not accepted easily the change and innovative. Taking time to adapt and to accept newcomer but after being accepted it will be last longer. For a small example of Japanese food, before Japanese food was not so common in Portugal, it was Chinese and Italian food because Portuguese people are not use to consume raw fish as may causes illness by parasite but then in the late of 2008 Japanese cuisine became very popular for sushi and sashimi. Nowadays, Japanese restaurants can be found at every corner; in the 5-star hotels or even a famous chef (Olivier da Costa) now working on Japanese fusion cuisine. Especially Portuguese women like Japanese food because of low fat and low calories. What I am trying to say is about "Open-Minded" as mentioned Portuguese seem unwilling to consider new ideas. In contrast, if they have a mind receptive to new ideas, views and arguments that would enhance its economy growth. Portuguese are very proud of their country regarding culture, gastronomy, architecture and etc. For instance, Asian especially Thai like to buy wholesale products at wholesale prices but beyond that another discount, giveaways or any kind of offers would be taking into account for greater business relationship. Once Thai company bought a big quantity of soap from a famous ancient Portuguese company in Porto what Thai company desire is a better price or any kind of offers but the soap company deny for neither a special discount nor any giveaways. Hence, there is no further business as Thai thought that company was too much proud of their reputation as since 1887 that company was established.

Another Thai who invited to give feedback on this research result demonstrated an enthusiasm on critical incidents discussion. As she said, she was surprised that most of Thai interviewees had a similarity views on Portuguese culture and behaviors. Moreover, she has additionally given comments on hierarchy, respect for rules and emotional expression.

"If we speak about hierarchy between Portugal and Thailand, Thai culture is characterized by a stronger emphasis on the hierarchy than Portugal. Respecting hierarchy society and business are highly stratified, even family structures also emphasizing on hierarchical

relationships. People respect authority and look to those above them for guidance and decision-making. For example, you have been promoted to higher position where your colleague who is older than you have not, in this case, your colleague as senior in rank must always be treated with respect". In addition she has giving us the incident that defines cultural clash.

*"Various time I had an unexpectedly experience of cultural clash. As I work for travel agency so I have to organize and manage the itinerary for Thai group traveling in Portugal. Once I took one group to dinner at the restaurant by the river, it was a sunset time and the face of the clients were facing the sun, the clients asked the waitress to close the curtains but he refused with a strong voice and solemn face, he said the curtains could not be closed because another client would think that the restaurant is closed and it was an order from his boss. My clients were forcing the waitress to close the curtains with the reason that they could not have dinner with the sun in the eyes, it was terribly uncomfortable! Anyhow the waitress refused 3 times, then one of the client got up and close the curtains, suddenly the waitress open it up again! At that moment every people in the group (22 people) got up and went away, they were very angry and upset, even the dinner was paid for 22 people but nobody care about it. The group gave me 3 reasons for this act, first; they were insupportable with the emotional expression of the waitress with the solemn face and spoke in a voice rough, they considered that was **rude and disrespected**; second, most of them are senior military commanders, this situation they also considered as an **insult**! Some of them said to me in Thailand they get what they want and their orders are very sacred; third, this situation reflected on **racism**, some of them thought that the waitress expressed himself like that because we are Asian and he is European so the way he treated us were different!"* Yet is a cultural difference where in Thailand the hierarchy is much stronger than Portugal not to mention to express an emotion so freely is unacceptable for Thai and no Thai will never understand when Portuguese said "we have to follow the rules" because that could not solve anything.

Towards this end, all interviewees agreed that Portuguese people are "*simpatico*" (likeable, agreeable, pleasant, and attractive), like Triandis, Marin, Lisansky and Betancourt (1984) define this kind of *simpatia* culture from Hispanic as a positive behavior in social situations. They have a good manners and courteous behavior as they are always greeting each other not only person well know but for everyone. Besides, they frequently use the word "obrigada/o" (thank you) and "por favor" (please), they are specific and dislike confrontation. Portuguese appear to be very helpful in mutual-aid style. Most of interviewees felt that Portuguese are not lazy or shiftless but they need an enthusiasm and motivation, as quality of life is an essential

but managing time orientation is also an important factor. Flexibility is required for an efficient bureaucracy and the decision-making process. Last but not least, Portuguese are heartwarming as all interviewees felt, they have a very good relationship with their family, friends, co-workers, supervisors etc.; they treat us as one of their family members and these make Portugal a livable country in the world.

Mirror Studies

Mirror Studies can be actualize by the same or preferably independent researchers. In order to improve comparability of the cultural differences between Portuguese and Thai, at the same time it may helps to overcome problems that are related to possible cultural bias and the sampling bias. Therefore, mirroring Thai cultural standards from a Portuguese perspective should be undertaken. Then there is a good chance that the cultural bias and the sampling bias has been overcome and the aggregate results of both studies can be considered as a reflection of reality while results are intercultural comparable (Fink *et al.*, 2005). However, incidents that do not find an appropriate reflection in a counterpart study need further inspection.

5.4 Comparing Cultural Standards with Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

In Chapter 3, the comparison of two cultural differences between Portugal and Thailand were discussed by applying four of Geert Hofstede dimensions to identify the characteristics between two nations. The comparison value scores between Portugal and Thailand have shown the similarity on *PDI*, *IDV* and *MAS* exceptionally on *UAI* scores that are varied. In a general sense cultures and differences among cultures can be described and measured along cultural dimensions while in more detail and more descriptively the cultural standard method deals with difference in the perception, norms of sensing, thinking, judging, and acting, which can cause critical incidents in cross cultural encounters.

In this section, the author briefly argues value dimensions of Geert Hofstede with Portuguese cultural standards from the result of this empirical research. In order to cope with various biased that might occur in this qualitative research.

The first dimension *Power Distance (PDI)*, Portugal scores on this dimension 63 whereas Thailand scores 64, however in the rank numbers of the countries from high to low (1 for the largest and 53 for the smallest power distance) Portugal and Thailand have ranked at 21-25 which accentuate both countries in the middle rank. This dimension reflects the hierarchical

distance of subordinates on supervisors, the emotional distance between them and the acceptance of power that distributed unequally. Accordingly to the Portuguese cultural standards from the research result, the 15 interviewees did not mention much about hierarchical system, thus the Power Distance dimension is non-parallel to the Portuguese cultural standards.

The second dimension *Individualism (IDV)*, Portugal scores 27 on this dimension while Thailand scores 20, this index again shows the similarity between two countries. The rank is between 1 to 53 Portugal and Thailand has rank at 33-41 which represents *collectivist* societies. The power of the group *collectivism* pertains to societies in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people's lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty. The matter of *Importance of the Social Relationship* from the Portuguese cultural standards can be recognized by collectivism dimension. Most of interviewees mentioned coincide with Hofstede that relationship employer-employee is perceived in moral terms, like a family link and the hiring process in a collectivist society always takes the in-group into account which normally preference is given to hiring relatives not to mention hiring persons from a family risks could be reduced including of protection in exchange for loyalty.

The third dimension referred to *Masculinity (MAS)* where Portugal scores 31 while Thailand scores 34, unsurprisingly, both countries have again identical score and rank. Portugal and Thailand represent on 44-45 rank as well as the lowest rank is 1 to the highest rank is 53. Therefore, Portugal and Thailand are correlated to *Femininity* as a dimension of societal culture. It can be seen that Portuguese cultural standard on the matter of *Strong Commitment to Quality of Life* is corresponding to Hofstede's feminine cultures that concern to the quality of life, tenderness and warm relationships are important. In feminine cultures both boys and girls learn to be non-ambitious and modest. Organizations in these societies are more likely to reward people on the basis of equality (as opposed to equity) and work in order to live. Nevertheless, *Inefficient Communication* can be also related to feminine cultures which for example a little message has to be said or written because most of the information is either in the physical environment or within the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit part of the message.

The last dimension related to *Uncertainly Avoidance (UAI)*, in this index Portugal scores 104 whereas Thailand scores 64. These scores appear to be significantly different, unlike the other previous three dimensions. Portugal has a very high scores (rank 2 from 1 to 53), Thailand is on medium scores (rank 30), this confirms that Portugal regards to the high avoidance of

uncertainty which can be defined as the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations, sentiment can be summarized by “What is different is dangerous”. Uncertainty avoidance therefore may express through nervous stress and anxiety—a state of being uneasy or worried about what may happen. The more anxious cultures tend to be the more expressive cultures as Portuguese they sometime talk with their hands, where it is socially acceptable to raise one’s voice, to show one’s emotions, this viewpoint is correlated to *Emotional Expression*. Furthermore, in uncertainty avoiding societies there are many formal laws and/or informal rules controlling the rights and duties of employers and employees this is very noticeable at the workplace since the emotional need for laws and rules often leads to nonsensical, inconsistent and/or dysfunctional; however, this is can be compatible with *Bureaucracy and Slow Decision-Making* of Portuguese cultural standards.

It can be seen lastly the Portuguese cultural standard of *Unfocused Time Management* does not correspond to the four of Greet Hofstede’s dimensions, while others four of Portuguese cultural standards are correlated to his value dimensions. These can be described that the method of cultural standard has approached predominant in the literature (i.e. norms of perceiving, thinking and acting from a different perspective than the cultural dimensions).

6. CONCLUSION

The objective of this research is to identify the Portuguese cultural standards from perspective of Thai. The key is to avoid the problem of cross-cultural differences between Thai and Portuguese together to enrich Thai awareness and capacity to overcome the misunderstanding of different societies in work-related values, attitudes, and behavior.

In this research, we have discussed the advanced methodology of researching cultural differences are the cultural standard method. It based on qualitative research that provides a tool for identifying cultural differences by comparing cultures of two nations: Portugal and Thailand. Since the cultural standards model is only valid in the comparison between two cultures this methodology is based on the technique of narrative interviews, collecting short stories or we called critical incident by interviewed 15 Thai who live and work in Portugal. The interview partners are identified as manager, business owner, students and Embassy officers who live in Portugal for a minimum of two years. The interview partners have an average of age between 30 to 60 years old, divided to 4 men and 11 women who personally experience unfamiliar and critical situations that were positive and negative stories. Then the incidents have been grouped by similarity and analyzed on the basis of cause-and-effect not to mention feedback interviews from the interviewees and the culture experts were helped to define the underlying cultural standards. Thus the results from the perspective of such culturally different can be defined as Portuguese cultural standards on the Portuguese norms of behavior on management interactions.

The most critical incidents related to fifteen Thai interviewees' perspective can be defined as five Portuguese cultural standards.

1. *Unfocused time management* – Vast majority of interviewees reveal that Portuguese have no conscious control over the amount of time spent on specific activities, especially to increase productivity within the boundary condition of limited amount of time either do not concentrate on time schedule, working slowly and inaction. Anyhow, Portuguese business people are expert at dealing with the last minute crisis.
2. *Bureaucracy and slow decision making* – Portuguese bureaucratic organizational structure generally appears to be: adhered to the regulation and standards, rules are essential with no flexibility, prolonged period for documents submitted, required an extensive documentation, where operational processes are rigidly controlled with best-practices methodologies and close supervision. Furthermore, the interviewees also

indicated that Portuguese decision-making style commonly taking a long time to solve an unfamiliar problem, in view of the fact that solutions have to proceed to the superior for adjusting the decisions.

3. *Inefficient communication and emotional expression* – Portuguese communication between sender (especially officeholder) and receiver (customer) are found inefficient as it is difficult to have a clarification message either misinterpretations often occurred. Moreover, Portuguese is rather indirect, not straightforward, subtle and more roundabout style which seems to use indirect language in order to avoid conflict and confrontation. Nevertheless, the interviewees claimed that most of Portuguese express their emotions freely, no matter what the consequences but does not usually signify anger or displeasure.
4. *Strong commitment to quality of life* – All of interviewees concurred that quality of life is important for Portuguese culture. They are more likely to engage in joint activities with family members and friends. Moreover, interviewees found that Portuguese's society is equality-based, relaxed attitude and the importance of right-protected, thus they will typically prefer additional time off for superior performance instead of additional income.
5. *The importance of the social relationship* – In Portugal the value of good connection towards powerful networks are beneficially conduct greater business effectiveness. The interviewees affirmed that knowing the right person and having the right contacts can accomplish your goal and definitely is also advantageous for employee selection.

Thai regards Portuguese's behavior as unfamiliar behavior and find it difficult to understand their reaction. However, most Thai are able to accomplish "cross-cultural adaptation" as some of Portuguese cultural standards demonstrated the similarity while another manifested dissimilarity. According to the comparison between Portuguese cultural standards and four of Geert Hofstede cultural dimensions, the comparison values have shown the correlation between *The importance of social relationship* and *Collectivism*, while *the strong commitment to quality of life* and *Inefficient communication* are related to *Femininity*, likewise *Bureaucracy*; *Slow decision-making* and *emotional expression* are correlated with *Uncertainty avoidance*. Only *Power distance* dimension that the interviewees talked less and did not point to an important issue that were considered non-parallel to the Portuguese cultural standards.

The author clearly concludes that cultural dimensions have limited predictive value to cope capabilities of individuals with difficulties in cross-cultural encounters. Hence, cultural

standards method is a perfect tool to identify valid norms of behavior and to generate actionable knowledge about the effects of differences in norms of behavior on management interaction. In order to improve comparability of the cultural differences between Portuguese and Thai that are related to possible cultural bias, the “mirror studies” are suggested for the consideration of reality that reflected on both cultures. Last but not least, the interviews mostly are based on connection available. So, they do not present a representative image of the whole population of Thai culture.

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APPENDIX 1: Overview of culture dimensions research

Researchers (Sources)	Dependent variable	Independent variables	Method	Sample - Context
Kluckhohn/ Strodtbeck (1961)	Human problem solutions	<i>Five Dimensions:</i> *Human Nature Orientation *Man Nature Orientation *Time Orientation *Activity Orientation *Relational Orientation	Quantitative questionnaire, qualitative report	106 persons: Navaho Indians, Pueblo Indians, Spanish American village, Texan and Oklahoman farming village and a Mormon village
Hall / Hall (1990)	Communication at work	<i>Four Dimensions:</i> *Fast and Slow Messages *High and Low Context *Space *Time	Quantitative open interviews	180 employees and managers in the field of economy
Hofstede (1980)	National cultural difference within one organization	<i>Four Dimensions:</i> *Power Distance *Individualism/Collectivism *Masculinity/Femininity *Uncertainty Avoidance	Quantitative questionnaire	Approximately 116,000 IBM employees
Trompenaars (1993)	Management relevant problem solutions	<i>Seven Dimensions:</i> *Time *Status Achievement/ Status Ascription *Individualism/Collectivism *Universalism/Particularism *Emotional/Neutral *Specific/Diffuse *Man Nature Relationship	Quantitative questionnaire with scales	15,000 employees in companies
Schwartz (1992)	Present and future in society	<i>Eleven Dimensions:</i> *Self-Direction	Quantitative questionnaire with	approximately 200 teachers and 200

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Stimulation *Hedonism *Achievement *Power *Security *Conformity *Tradition *Spirituality *Benevolence *Universalism 	9 point Likert scales	students per country, in 20 countries
GLOBE (2002)	Business leadership present and future	<i>Nine Dimensions:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Performance Orientation *Future Orientation *Assertiveness *Humane Orientation *Gender Egalitarianism *Power Distance *Institutional Collectivism *In-group Collectivism *Uncertainty Avoidance 	Quantitative questionnaire with 7 point scales and analysis of qualitative data with content analysis	17,000 middle managers in 61 countries

Source: Gerhard Fink, Marcus Kolling and Anne-Katrin Neyer, “The Cultural Standard Method”, *Working Papers*, January, 2005, p. 7-8.

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APPENDIX 2: The Synthesis of Country Clusters

