# A Perspective on the Impact of the Thai Cultural Structure on Organizational Management Functions

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## Abstract

This paper attempts to provide an explanation on why the Thai culture has an impact on the organizational management functions with regards to the Thai cultural structure of nationality, social setting, and Buddhist religious belief. Organizations in Thailand could not exist on its own as they have to realize that in order for them to carry out their goal and mission perspectives, they need to be part of structure that expects them to operate in an industrial environment that accepts outside influence and making some indirect accommodation to meet those expectations. Organizational management functions with the procedures in planning, controlling, organizing, and leading are emphasized in the prism of the cultural forces that working individuals live alongside which becomes part of their everyday life and living. Planning, organizing, leading, and controlling are not just about supporting the strategy in which the organization is committed to reaching its goal. For Thai management, the important thing is to have the values asserted from lives outside of the workplace be a part of how the organization functions. While updated organizational management theories are interesting to study about, the reality of managerial practice in Thailand is to ensure that the cultural structure is visible and accepted by the Thai workers. In this way, no one feels alienated and the practical theories are doing more good than harm for the organization to keep growing forward.

**Keywords:** Leadership, Management Functions, Organizing, Planning, Thai Culture

## Introduction

The theoretical studies of an organizational culture from a managerial perspective in Thai and Western are highly contrasting when compared to the principles and practice of how organizations are managed and lead with regards to their industrial field. The Western style of management has been promoting and pushing for new ideas to support practices that give their organizations an edge in the competition with the market economy. But in comparison to the Thai style of management the first and overall priority is to ensure that cultural traditions and beliefs are highly reinforced and maintained throughout the years in operation. Countless works throughout by scholars within the local regions applying Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions theory have shown evidence in numerical figures and stats that the Thai way of managing tends to be high in power distance, masculinity, being collective, risk avoidance, and short-term orientation. Implications from these studies have proposed modern managerial concepts to assist in either making some positive changes or apply practices that would eventually make the culture of Thai organizations become contemporary in nature that has some western ideas. While all the results upon evaluation are provided as facts and leading up to insightful notions for organizational cultural practices there is still a lack of explanation on the cause that is occurring with this phenomenon despite literary works and scholars mentioning of modern style of management theories that are coping with the changes in the economic and technological landscape. This paper attempts to provide an explanation on why the Thai culture has an impact on the organizational management functions with companies based in Thailand. The work points out to the Thai cultural structure of nationality, social setting, and Buddhist religious belief having an impact on managerial planning, organizing, leading, and controlling as the sounding argument for the thesis.

The format of this study is the following: 1. The Thai cultural structure of nationalism, society, and Buddhist belief. 2. The cultural structure impact on managerial planning. 3. The cultural structure impact on organizing. 4. The cultural impact on leading.

5. The cultural impact on controlling.  6. A theoretical discussion on the impact of the Thai cultural structure on the organizational management functions.  7. Conclusion.

## 1.  Thai Cultural Structure of Nationalism, Society, and Buddhist Belief

Thai cultural structure is deeply entrenched with nationalism, its social community, and on the Buddhism.  Culture is identified by its history, and Thai history has plenty of documented activities which have been selected and propagated to give an impression of strong standing free nation for the citizens to be proud of.  Throughout the nation, there are monuments of historical figures written with high praises of their deeds erected in key landmark places to remind people of the glorious achievements in battle with war elephants against foreign invasion and conflict during ancient time, as well as a reminder from the past on how the nation was guided to keep everyone moving in the same cultural direction. Thai historians have exemplified their acts in the theme of upholding unity, making sacrifices, and caring for one another to keep citizens be proud of their nation and to keep working together for the greater good over themselves (Vella, 2019). Since the beginning of the Cold War, the national anthem is played twice on a weekly basis from the time of 8am and 6pm in public places and media broadcasting which has made a psychological touch in the minds of people on being expected to stand still and let the anthem be played out in its entirety.  It is the type of philosophy not to be questioned nor debated but to have one's behavior be in compliance with the ritual traditions and customs that have been practiced by the ancestors from the past time. For ordinary people who do not possess much of a power in any institutions or organizations they are asked to obey others who are in a higher position of authority and to refrain from challenging that person because doing so would not be considered as the norm (Pimpa, 2012). Any questions by outsiders with regards to how policies are being exercised without giving much weight to praising are deemed by policymakers as not knowing full well on how things are ought to be run and most of the times dismissed as being misinformed or lacking the understanding of how things work in their country: simply put it's a rapid response in saying mind your own business this is not your country.  In such cases, it's about avoid getting into a heated debate

or being engaged on issues that may create a confrontation of values while hoping to get relationships back to respect and having trust with those who are in charge of authority (Selvarajah, Meyer & Donovan, 2013), while hoping that things will get back to normal.

With heavy beliefs in magical charms, symbolic signs from events, looking at how the stars and moons are set up on a specific calendar, and defaulting to have one's palm read to determine their future, Thai society is said to be highly superstitious. Sometimes in their social life Thais often feel that their lives are disrupted by hostile forces that are beyond control. With this feeling they look to the Buddha images or amulets in helping restore a sense of self-assurance and being at peace due to the belief that there are sacred powers within (Srichampa, 2014). It takes a lot of hard science to showcase the fact that will change one's mind to understand what is reality and what is a bunch of smoke with too many mirrors disguised as the truth. No matter how ridiculous it may sound to certain Thais about the rituals that take place amongst their colleagues, there is a sense of peer pressure to take part in the event as a means of socializing with others in order to get to know each other better than feeling like an outcast in one's community (Pusaksrikit et al., 2018). Spirit houses are there to accommodate the wailing souls of relatives that have ceased and to make their journey traveling in the human realm to be convenient. Shrines are place in front of commercial buildings or alongside tourist and eating spots for those holding a deep faith of belief that the deities from the Hindu religion will alter the forces in life to provide the worshipper with good fortunes in health, security, happiness, and mainly wealth. Members within a social community don't put too much emphasis on how smart or talented other individuals may be over others but setting the vibes to make the gifted ones come back down to earth and follow the social order of things by respecting and honoring the senior figures who placate themselves as the caretaker of things that are culturally appropriate and appeasing in image (Young, 2021).

Buddhist monks in Thailand are revered for their teaching in morality and ethics to the young generation in helping them lead a decent life, and their philosophical narratives in thinking help decision-makers set the course for how an institution or an organization should carry out its policies (Phathong & Serirangsan, 2018). With a pure mind and a holy

virtual character, they are asked to preside over a ceremony in home building or office refurbishing by making ritual blessings that ward off evil spirits that can do harm to one's health and happiness. This is a must for individuals to gain a sense of assured feeling that they will be protected and prevented from being injured when performing their duties. Asides teaching the fundamental principles of Buddhist philosophies, monks in Thailand are held in high esteem as possessing divine incarnation that gives hope and a sense that the outcome will be more positive for people to carry on with their daily lives (Boonim, 2018). For those who feel confused about their fortunes or feeling that their lives are getting worse, Buddhist monks are one of the people that a Thai individual can go to and discuss about their problems (Suwan, 2020): most cases, it's to ask for the monk to foresee the person's future by reading their palms or being engaged in other traditions to analyze the facts.

All those things seen from outside the organization or surrounding the organization's external environment are part of the norm that goes along with the managerial functions which presents an image of being part of the national culture and all the beliefs and ideas that flow through them. Organizations in Thailand could not exist on its own as they have to realize that in order for them to carry out their goal and mission perspectives, they need to be part of structure that expects them to operate in an industrial environment that accepts outside influence and making some indirect accommodation to meet those expectations. Instead of learning from situations that are impeding progress the Thais take them as critical notes to avoid any conflicts should one tends to promote any changes within the structural framework or order.


## 2.  The Impact of Cultural Structure on Managerial Planning

Planning is about supporting the strategy in which the organization is committed to on reaching its goal. Upon understanding what the mission objectives are, the plan is carried out with adequate resources that are utilized to the competence and capabilities of strength within each individual or to the team. The execution of the plan is completed when the managerial structure anticipates in hindsight on things that can reinforce the staff 's effectiveness in doing their work and making some necessary changes to adapt on circumstances that may make things efficiently difficult to achieve (King et al., 2020).

Planning in a Thai organization is usually done by individuals in the higher position of authority or executives who oversee all operations. Plans are bureaucratically thought out and designed in a centralized manner as a mandated by the organization and to let those positioned in the lower position to acknowledge the power of authority developing the policies (Al Farooque, Buachoom & Sun, 2020). One of the criticism that is part of the Thai managerial planning style is the tendency to insert in unexpected operational issues or surprises, due to a lack of clarity with the policy statement (Taweesaengsakulthai et al., 2019), that are sometimes not relevant with the content of the current task assignment, thus causing proficiencies for handling an abstract working issue to become unresolved by the staff and wasting the opportunity to learn from this case as the focus is on making sure that the financial needs have been fulfilled (Na-Nan, Chaiprasit & Pukkeeree, 2017). What is to be focused upon can become easily distracted when management indirectly forces on the staff to look after an assignment while being in the middle of the previous task from the beginning. Without any regards for the workers' wellbeing in getting the work done on schedule assignments become prone to constant interruptions with other orders that are placed in the middle of the operation. With the Thai workers being pressured to get things done simultaneously due to management's expectations, they do an acting job of putting up a false character that everything is satisfied in the workplace to impress management but eventually succumb to the burnout (Khetjenkarn & Agmapisarn, 2020). Why can't the workers compromise in setting an appropriate time and space for this extra work? Nationalistic behavior takes precedent in the working environment whereas workers have to carry out an assignment without questioning the arrangement even if it's inconvenient for those who want to do work with an output that is branded with integrity and dignity of one's skill and ability. It is the power of authority that management has over the workers, and for the workers themselves who mostly accept that power in the working environment they have to comply to it or face some disciplinary actions (Areemit et al., 2021). Therefore, the consequences are high if a worker does not cooperate as he/she could face some severe financial measurements of being punished. Management stresses a "do your best" message to the workers instead of being a bit flexible due to the demand and

expectation of customers/clients. The workers put on the effort to get both jobs done on time while the results received by the recipients are credited to the managing side of the organization.

Plans that are made by management are emphasized on the relationship side that are mainly involved with the key clients or consumers (Kitchot, Siengthai & Sukhotu, 2021). Therefore, the working relationships in the organization are also expected to serve this purpose whereas workers are sometimes asked to go beyond their task boundaries to fulfill roles that accommodate and entertain the interests of the business partners which gives off the aura of trust within the commercial dealings. However, certain roles taken up by the Thai employees aren't exactly their acumen in dealing with things, such as communicating in the English language that calls for market analysis or operation details. Plans made separately for its own personal interests and then inserted into the original scheme of the strategy are often the norm for management who make use of their authority but to also evaluate employees to determine who is truly loyal to the cause and praised for their initiative with some informal rewards (Na-Nan, et al., 2022).

The style of Thai management in an organization would look to the principles of Buddhism to be incorporated into their plans as a reminder for their staff and employees to work together with benevolence and self-less acts that are in harmony with their external working environment (Rittichainuwat et al., 2020). However, this form of idea doesn't always hold water when dealing with the reality of the market competition and economic constraints. Buddhist values that act as the direction and guidance for how one should behave when working are often in conflict with other companies that are doing something that is more scientific and business moderated in gaining the customer share which can sometimes question the methods of implementing the business plan. At times, feelings of guilt are perturbed in the mind and soul when Buddhist principles become compromised for the sake of obtaining a healthy financial statement so that the business can survive for a longer term. Management can arrange for an excursion or hold a ceremony with Buddhist rituals as a form of cleansing the sins and wrongs in failing to uphold the teachings for the organization to stay on the righteous path (Song, 2020).

In the planning style of Thai organizational management, there is little interest in getting the internal and external stakeholders involved as those who are in executive positions feel that they are already granted with the power to oversee things. This in turns make the individuals in the lower level of position not expecting to be asked for their inputs as they wait for orders to be followed upon. They put their trust into management despite some knowing that the plans will not come short in achieving the objectives.

## 3. The Impact of Cultural Structure on Organizing

Allocation of resources through the means of a stakeholders' survey, a healthy financial budget, and capabilities of human resources are taken into consideration when being organized. Organizing is a concept that synergizes the attributes within the organization to best meet the needs and challenges in attaining the objectives and goal (Miceli et al., 2021). Organizations in Thailand have been faced with economic turbulences that forced them to rethink and relearn their own framework to become more resilient in the future when issues like anti-government protests, labor shortages, natural disasters, and the spread of a deadly pandemic occurs. Despite being aware that situations like these call for being more agile and flexible in the organizational structure, there is an entrenched habit in organizing in a paternalistic mode whereas everyone is considered to treat each other like a close relative. Most Thai citizens have grown up in a social environment that encourages people to be friendly towards one another on a daily basis to the point that it develops into a much friendlier relationship that makes individuals welcome the other person as his/her relative (Katewongsa et al., 2020). They have been educated through the schooling system, they've encountered this with their parents who keep in touch with their old friends and addressing them as either their elder or younger sibling, and have experienced how their nation is governed with a paternalistic approach in administrating the affairs which have given them the mental direction on how to conduct oneself as a person when meeting others in a public or private setting. This belief goes in hand with a Thai led organization that truly believes that if everyone sees each other as a family member then the organization will become stronger than it is (Suriyankietkaew et al., 2022). With everyone accepting each other in their paternal role at the workplace it gives way for a hierarchy to be established that makes

everyone know their rank, comply without much questioning, and being limited to participation. No matter the differences in age or background the important thing is to follow the order givens. Those who are younger may feel slighted by management who overlook their insights for making contributions to quality (Chansatitporn, Pobkeeree, Na Nongkhai & Sangkijporn, 2019) but it's the cultural behavior acting in that makes individuals in the higher rank positions to believe in the power that they have in pushing their authority for actions to be taken (Guang & Charoensukmongkol 2019).

Individuals assuming the role in higher management or in an executive position try to look the part of someone that knows just about everything even if their level of degree is scant in an industrial area that may call for the expertise of a professional that is outside of one's authority. There is an expectation on part of the subordinates that management has to know everything otherwise he/she should not be in that position thus making the Thai manager to sometimes implement the procedures and process without a sound philosophy to persuade others why this is the better decision to go with or not, and hoping that the results come out good as if one is trying to take a shot in winning the lottery ticket (Schneider & Maxfield, 2018). The belief that management has to know everything from both sides further makes it even more minimal in participation for ordinary staff and employees to provide their ideas or input in making the organization of things to become more effective. One's reputation or image is considered to be very important in Thailand as the results of the action can be praised to make the person a hero in the eyes of colleagues in the workplace or make the person viewed as a loser not just from the co-workers but being discussed about over lunch in the public space and in the community to past the time. Accepting or making too many changes in the organizational structure would be considered as a sign of being weak and incompetent in one's managerial duties in organizing the affairs from their own peers. It's no wonder when organizing things in the workplace there is a tendency on part of Thai management to discourage workers in making critical comments about the short end results and micromanaging the performance of workers to ensure that mistakes and errors do not become catastrophic as it could reflect on how they are delegating the tasks to individuals (Chaoniruthisai, Punnakitikashem & Rajchamaha, 2018).

With the majority of the Thai population following the Buddhist religious teachings, Thai management try to practice good governance with the stakeholders by referring to the models of beliefs as a way of connecting with external partners who support their business and internal partners in remaining as loyal employees to the organization. The means of applying Buddhist principles in an organization is evaluated to determine who are the insiders and outsiders. The idea of having loyalty in a Thai organizational working environment is to get group members to share the same perspectives on a particular topic and communicate efficiently on a routine basis (Tepayakul & Rinthaisong, 2018). When a crisis occurs that threatens the organizations ideology the higher authorities will look to individuals who display their patronage loyalty to them as a sign of trust over thinking on what is best to keep the group or the organization firmly organized as a tight ship sailing on with its course. It's not a question of people being divided on the matter but more of who will side with management to help them overcome the crisis. This leads to the growth of individual bonds that distracts Thai management's focus on organizing the resources to enable the organization to reach its aims and goals, and brings about back door politics to curry favors and make informal promises all for the sake of obtaining one's loyalty to be confirmed when management needs someone to create an excuse for a failure. This gives an updated meaning of an organization being made up of individuals. In the Buddhist belief the older one gets with practice they begin to inherit an enlightenment which is highly revered by people who worship Buddhism. However, this becomes quite complicated in challenging thoughts or ideas that seem to be outdated with the modern time as the younger Thais do not want to display any sign of being inconsiderate towards those who have come before them and try to maneuver around any situations that might lead into an argument in rationality and making the senior figure "lose face" or be deemed less worthy in the organization (Sahban & Abbas, 2018). From a Western perspective, not being direct with contested issue would only make the attitude for changing become resistant or stubborn with trying to win the argument instead of maintaining the direction of the organization to keep moving forward (Haseeb et al., 2019). What you have is a method in organizing by

management that is stronger in hierarchy without paying any much attention to delegating tasks and ignorant to understand the necessity for changes as the economic or technological landscape have suddenly altered the way a business should be managed.

## 4. The Impact of Cultural Structure on Leading

There are many roles for leadership to be displayed in the industrial/business environment to get the people, personnel, and partnership motivated to collaborate in unison. Leading is asserted in managing the philosophical and reasoning aspects for making individuals be aware on the importance of the mission and being more proactive with the operation in hand (Breevaart and Zacher, 2019). Leaders are aware that not everyone is going to buy into the idea of doing things so they have to become more effective in getting into the minds of the people that they work with to get the results driven towards the goal. Leading that is done to make positive changes validates the person as a leader and more trustworthy in holding the leadership position (Islam, Furuoka & Idris, 2021).

Leading is a celebrated and honoring role for Thai organizational managers due to the attributes that it encompasses in national stability, preserving order, and espousing the holy teachings that have been passed on from many generations through the religious beliefs. Being in a position to lead an organization that has over hundreds, thousands, or on a multinational basis is quite exhilarating and nerve wrecking due to many uncontrollable factors that may present itself as an unknown or unexpected which becomes something that is undesirable and unwanted. For the sake of maintaining stability within the organization, Thai managers would immediately take the leading position by displaying an autocratic manner (Rurkkhum, 2018) that configurates current policies and rules for people to fall in line. While this does lead to a conflict towards being creative, innovative, and imagining the possibilities during a crisis the Thai style of leadership feels that the risk of not ensuring any form of stability would be bring out great damages in their own hypothetical viewpoint (Jermsittiparsert, Namdej & Somjai, 2019). Despite facts from studies showing evidence that going against the odds will make the organization much more effective in the long-term Thai managers will hold on to leading by making sure no one is doing something that is against the procedures that have already implemented to uphold on

stability (Ditta-Apichai, Kattiyapornpong & Gretzel, 2020).   With studies already indicating that Thailand is highly ranked in power distance, collectivism, and avoiding uncertainty, the way of leading for Thai managers chooses to be a parental figure when making decisions and directing whereas the outcome is peace and harmony for all to enjoy (Vora & Kainzbauer, 2020).  It is the latter that the managerial actions of leadership, is measured upon by all stakeholders of the organization.  The Thai national culture places a high value of happiness or having minimal amount of stress as possible in life.  Being a leader through this prism is about aligning with that national cultural value of happiness and taking an approach that meets with the conservative values of the population, correcting the wrongs with ethical methods, and shaping attitudes that follow the teachings of being on a righteous path.  If these expectations are failing to meet these standards, then the leadership needs to be replaced with someone who is more professionally qualified to do so.

In the workplace, the Thais believe that work and social life is all part of an everyday routine in what they do.  For expatriate managers who try to set a working environment that only focuses on one's job role and responsibilities this will turn off most of the Thai workers as something foreign and cannot be adapted to.  The issue of working relationship is very important as there will be times when someone is not feeling confident or assured on what to do and may ask for the guidance of others to help in accomplishing the task assignment. But having a working relationship in the workplace doesn't just come freely like going into a software application on one's mobile phone.  The Thai management style of leading is also keen on preserving the social values in the community of ranking, status quo, obligation, seniority, and consideration in the workplace for the interest of individuals who still hold on to the conservative values that makes them feel comfortable to perform at work (Mandhachitara & Allapach, 2017).  A working environment that features some Thai way of belief and customs in a foreign owned business corporation or national organization with a distinct brand makes the workers themselves become at ease because they know that they don't have to face any situations that could be embarrassing or shy away from when their capabilities or capacity don't fit with the function.  As for leading, this makes it easy in for Thai managers to limit employee participation and having time and resources in their hands

to execute their decisions made. With the decisions that have already been decided the persuasion tactic comes in the form of a parental figure who knows what is best for their children and getting the staff to carry out the assignment from receiving acts of kindness and empathy, as well as addressing on the support needed to accommodate one's ranking position (Suwandej, 2015). As a leader, the Thai managers have to be clear with the rules and regulations to their employees in order for them to understand what they can do and what are their limitations. While the workers are accepting upon the fact that not everyone is equal with certain privileges or rights in the workplace, they do expect the leaders to enforce the rules to be done with fairness and what is right for the sake of management's credibility to lead, especially in the times weathering the crisis (Chaimongkonrojna & Steane, 2015). While simultaneously, the working climate has to be designed in a way that is fun, relaxing, and friendly to set off the balance from the strict authority applied to getting Thai workers feeling that it's okay to smile and laugh with their colleagues while doing their job (Laiprakobsup, 2018).

As a leader, Thai managers are aware that not everyone is educated equally to deliver a strong performance for getting the right results, nor competent in problem solving and finding the right solution. To show that a leader is compassionate and caring towards their fellow workers, Thai managers practice the art of forgiving as a symbolic gesture to give workers some hope that things will get resolved and become better as time goes along (Wattanacharoensil & Sakdiyakorn, 2016). The idea of being merciful has been outlined in the dhamma or the teachings of the Buddha as a way to be at peace with oneself and to take what life gives you without holding some sense of animosity towards those that have done something wrong; Buddhists believe that having a merciful mind or heart is spiritually healthy and promotes the idea to be practiced in the workplace where the nature of efficiency is a challenge for certain individuals who are lacking confidence to go through the process. Training and development program on Thai leadership will adhere to some parts of the Buddhist philosophy which often stress on being a leading with a moral character and ethical in wisdom. The Buddhist teachings don't guarantee that quality will be maintained nor that the goal will be reached by the organization, but the message for Thai leaders is to take into the fact that there are things beyond one's control and that

undesirable things will happen.  But most importantly, one should not get too attached on the matter (Mekhum, 2020).  Thus, the Thai style of managing in leading takes a "it's no big deal" approach to things when the organization encounters some misfortune, adversity, hardship, or failure that has disallowed them from fully attaining their aim and objectives (Moussa et al., 2022).  The reason for such a "no problem at all" attitude is to prevent the soul from being stuck in the misery of negativity and just hoping that the things will turn out alright in the near future while remaining therapeutically calm to collect one's thought to find some solutions.

## 5.  The Impact of Cultural Structure on Controlling

The word controlling in the workplace may connotate a negative meaning such as a manipulation of the mind or inducing fear should one's performance behavior is not being productive.  That's why in practice the process is emphasized on being professionally orientated such as developing the psychological acumen in getting individuals motivated and aspired to be more focused in attaining the organization's goal (Kantabutra, 2014). Obtaining this positive working environment to make workers encouraged on a consistent basis will require on configuring the design of the working system that allows the controlling aspects to get staff members and workers performing towards the intended results that the organization wants (Sompong, Igel & Lawton Smith, 2014).  However, if the results are lacking in quality management goes further into control by making an assessment of the organization and evaluating on procedures to make the necessary changes to get the working performance back to standards (Mio, Costantini & Panfilo, 2022).

In Thailand, even national policies and procedures that are set don't always meet the standards that it should be trying to improve on.  What is best for all stakeholders takes a back seat to setting the proper calculations in minimizing any damages or losses that can occur which can put one into a stressful situation and constantly worrying about what other people are thinking in a negative way.  As the so-called national leaders build walls to fend off the criticism their actions are learned by other organizations as a form of normal behavior that is acceptable. Therefore, anything that can cause an embarrassment or to hurt

one's pride/ego are to be prioritized as avoiding the risk: studies have confirmed that Thais are very high in uncertainty avoidance and will take the necessary measures to prevent risks from happening, but at the cost of learning about the situation to prepare and plan for the future should the very same risk turns up again (Tran and Vo, 2018). With most of Thai organizations already operating and functioning in a hierarchical format, management takes the advantage of the mind of workers who have conditionally accepted on being a child that should listen and obey, and all direction and decisions should be entrusted to the managers who are seen as the parental figures that know best (Pengsuwan & Choonhaklai, 2019). Thai organizations mostly lean on a patronage style whereas individuals who don't have power accept on being treated unequally (Borisuth, 2019), however this doesn't mean that the Thai managerial style has a condescending approach towards their subordinates. Thais learn that controlling to get people inspired to do their best at work comes from a soft approach in communication and interaction as they do with their family, friends, and local neighbors in the community. In the Thai society one is admired for being more pleasing towards others, and having an interest on someone's livelihood and living to make the person feel at ease for some compassionate conversation about life (Leesmidt & Jarunratanakul, 2022). Getting people to cooperate on an idea, even if that idea may not reach the objectives nor make much of an impact with the results, is the key issue for controlling on the part of Thai managing in practice so that in the future should another project or event comes up the behaviors for cooperation will still be there. Such events may ask for the staff or hand selected personnel to perform a duty where they have no expertise or background in the authorized position. This could be the case of mismanagement in putting the right people in the wrong position or the wrong person for that job. Nevertheless, it's not so much about how highly talented or scholarly amazing another person is, it's more about the controlling part by management to ensure that their working performance and standard results reflect back on their name and reputation of being a manager despite falling short on meeting the objectives. It's about having that power to control matters that makes management believe that things were made possible due to their benevolence of allowing the actions to reap the rewards (Jitwasinkul, 2016). Another way of looking at it is by defining the intentions of taking away the limelight from highly capable performing individuals who are in the front line of action and transferring all the positive

credits to management for demonstrating professionalism in managing groups or team to be successful. Holiday or national events always feature a ceremony ritual event of Buddha's image and teaching to instill a sense of who Thais are first and foremost as they assume their working positions that are different in hierarchy ranking. Normally, the working rules should be followed so that no one creates a disturbance in the working atmosphere by putting their own self-interest first. However, with management controlling things to makes sure that no psychological harm is done to them there is a precedent to build upon allies to be their supporting shield that protects from losing face or have their reputation sullied from the criticism of rivals. Taking a page from Buddhism that teaches learners how to show mercy towards others in lesser status and power the attention is on developing informal relationships through acts of kindness or favor for individuals to feel that they can trust them (Sunindijo & Hadikusumo, 2014). A soft or cordial approach with subordinates is the belief that the person will not be pegged down by the regulations and rules of the organizational framework and find open channels to help management when there's a call for supporting an interest that is outside of the organization's ideology. This bode wells for some workers who are not quite confident in their original working position and hoping to score some admiration points with the top officials by riding on a project that showcases some of their talents and skills that lean more on the leisure and recreational side of their personal life, such as singing, dancing, acting, cooking, playing in a particular team sport, etc. The result of this behavior leads on to an abstract interest working on its own in hidden secret and not visible to examine if it's truly a benefit for the organization as a whole, while making things difficult to monitor for quality and standards in a formal setting (A. de Waal, Goedegebuure & Tan Akaraborworn, 2014). In addition, this makes the job performance evaluation of workers impossible to conduct on a fair basis. First, criticism will be taken too harshly by individuals who believe that the key is to develop a good working relationship with their superiors as they become blurred on moral and ethical issues of the informal way. Second, the performance criteria of what workers are to be measured on becomes in conflict with unceremonious duties that have been undertaken as time has already passed on by. Buddhist doctrines are applied in shaping the minds and behavior of the organizational workforce but could become to overzealously mistaken on what the organizational agendas should be when management is being confronted by regular staff

members on which direction to take with evidence contradicting the working philosophy (Kaewsaeng-on et al., 2021). To question the control by management is branded as being disrespectful and ungrateful to one's wisdom and hierarchical position in the organization (Ratasuk & Charoensukmongkol, 2019).

## 6. The Impact of Thai Cultural Structure on Organizational Management Functions

Organizational management functions with the procedures in planning, controlling, organizing, and leading are emphasized in the prism of the cultural forces that working individuals live alongside with which becomes part of their everyday life and living. Thai nationality is sustained through a conservative society with Buddhist beliefs being served as a symbolic character for one to behave as a Thai citizen. The people see and feel these customs and traditions being performed on a yearly basis, especially when the national holidays come around, which makes oblige to follow or be chastised as being unpatriotic (Wongsurawat, 2016). It's no wonder that the Thai managerial practices within the organization have to be the figurehead in carrying out the cultural convention in order to be recognized as legitimate with stakeholders who firmly believe that the cultural structure should take precedent over all other affairs so that harmony and balance remain firm throughout the years. While the theoretical practice of organization management has been updated through academic scholar research and with leading brand companies putting new ideas to adapt with the market economy, the Thai organizational managerial style is guided by cultural principles from influential groups and figures that provides a doctrine in administration. When having a ceremonial event or a business gathering, the Thai managers will know what is expected from them in order to stay with the organization for the long term (Chantranusorn, Jutawiriya & Mee-Udorn, 2014). The cultural structure and its impact in the organizational management functions is not a recipe for success nor does it guarantee that the organization will achieve its goal but is just there to remind and restore the mental nature of those with authority and leadership that by managing resources that

uphold the values of nationality, society, and Buddhis beliefs they have fulfilled an important duty that brings about great happiness and joy for all to live. While organizational failure is inevitable it's more critical for management to maintain the cultural essence that defines who they are. Instead of being highly focused on the organization's mission and objectives, management gives in to the external expectations from others to follow the examples on directing a working environment that encompasses on the cultural values (Prompayuk & Chairattananon, 2016). Workplace interaction amongst colleagues and staff, and other fellow managers with the managerial functions aren't always going to be directly related nor straight forward with the organizational mission statement when other duties are inserted in as a surprise event to attend on. Therefore, the Thai management's role is modeled in a way that functions to preserve this ethos in the organization.

In the position of authority, communication skills have to be effective in getting the plan to fit with subject matters that Thai workers can relate to and providing an opportunity for them to handle the tasks that are not too difficult. What is said and demonstrated by management has to show that there is a sense of sincerity and consideration that gives the workers and assurance that they will not be scolded should there be shortcoming in reaching the objectives (Jiradilok et al., 2014). Being more gracious over a western style of candor is more welcomed in a working atmosphere dominated by Thai nationals. Praising someone by touching his/her head is forbidden as Thais feel that this is one's dignity. Also, using the feet to point directions, move an object, or making it visible in front of others is considered as an insult due to the cultural belief that the feet is the dirtiest part of the body (Jaroenkajornkij, Lev-Wiesel & Binson, 2022).

Being risk averse is not only the norm with Thai management but it's in establishing a controlled working environment for the aim of keeping harmony and balance coinciding to maintain peace in the organization. Managing conflict is controlling unwanted situations that could lead to "losing face" as Thais highly value their ego and having a strong working relationship with fellow colleagues which can be defined as workplace security. Some studies encourage conflict to open up a healthy discussion on challenging the working model or managerial practice for making changes (Hussein & Al-Mamary, 2019). However, a majority of Thais believe that it's best if the conditions stimulate a conflict

could be eliminated forever, thus always depending on management to quickly put out the fire so that everyone can feel relaxed and at peace while working. Should conflict occur in the organization it's usually handled informally so that the involving group members or individuals will find ways of preserving each other's reputation and to come up with some sort of cordial approach for people to resolve the matter (John-Eke & Akintokunbo, 2020).

With many working variables that are beyond one's control, the Thai style of management is organized around a strong hierarchy that assumes full authority on making decisions and solving problems without much consideration from the inputs of others (Limpitikranon, 2017). But one can also argue that the participants themselves expect those in the top positions to decide what is best for the organization because that is what they are paid to do, otherwise they shouldn't be in management from the very start. Empowerment to take matters into one's hand is not ideal for the subordinates because that is only reserved for those in the top positions, and if no action is taken by higher authority, then management is seen as inept and incapable the issue. While the decisions made may not lead to efficient results nor methods chosen for problem solving will provide an effective outcome, the process carried out is concerned more about radiating a sense of benevolence with the working colleagues' interests and wellbeing. Thais place an importance on charismatic people who are sincere towards each other for maintaining a healthy and happy working relationship (Kaeodumkoeng & Junhasobhaga, 2018). One can say that as long as the bond in the workplace are in good terms the ways of management control in the organization becomes easier to process.

When leading in the role in of management, the practice of developing a character of loyal workers who are committed in fulfilling the requested duties assigned to them is considered very important. In the Thai cultural context, employees are motivated in a working environment that features fellow workers and management displaying a sense of kindness, justice, compassion, or ethics when undergoing operation. Also, being a good role model for others to follow, giving sound advice, applying reason, praising in the moment for good results, and building on the reputation of the organization keep them not only motivated but being firmly loyal to the company (Suttikun, Chang & Bicksler, 2018).

There are challenges in establishing these utopian ideals in the workplace as Thai workers can also become easily demotivated when they experience a lack of trust from other members, being disrespected, working with incompetency, dealing with self-centered individuals, deprived of professional support from individuals who try to curry favors for their own interest or play the blame game often, don't want one's self-dignity to be tarnished in a patron-client relationship for an increase of salary/job promotion, and going through an awkward condition of vague policies that keeps changing for its own sake (Maneechaeye & Potipiroon, 2022). Thus, for good ideas or suggestions to come from Thai staff in the direct line of work establishing a genuine working relationship is key otherwise there will be a disconnect and discontent in attitude from feeling uncomfortable with that style of management.

From a non-Thai Buddhism perspective, a Hofstede's dimension of power theory explains that authority is meant to be obeyed and carried out from those who hold positions that symbolizes legitimacy and authority (Hofstede, 2011). To go against such a cultural structure would be viewed as inconsiderate and to go into behavioral reforming. From a simple cultural theory viewpoint, those who are not familiar on the way of working in this type of cultural structure will be constantly reminded through custom, events, and abstract policies that are implemented for everyone to maintain the current values while also thinking about refraining from actions that may offend others for the sake of working together in harmony (Serino et al., 2025). Although this cultural structure may seem to be oblivious towards changes around its external environment the agency within the organization asserts itself in maintaining the order of things by reframing situations for members to reflect back on the conservative nature of things, and participate with requests that are believed to be good for the organization (Brettell, 2002).

## 7. Conclusion

In the attempt to provide an explanation on why the Thai culture has an impact on the organizational management functions with companies based in Thailand, the work illustrated how nationality, society, and Buddhist beliefs have intertwined themselves to

make the Thai style of management approach things in its own way. Planning, organizing, leading, and controlling is not just about supporting the strategy in which the organization is committed to on reaching its goal. For Thai management, the important thing is to have the values asserted from lives outside of the workplace be a part of how the organization functions. A sense of belonging, or feeling connected with other workers around them makes the Thai workers feel safe, convenient, and comfortable to perform at their job. It's not just the Thai managers but also non-Thai managers who need to be intrigued by the theory of paternalistic leadership in order to implement the practice that aims toward making the workers gain a sense of the positive things they have experienced in their social environment to also be in their workplace. A managerial style that fails to incorporate the cultural elements that make up the Thai characteristics in needs or wants will have a very difficult time in winning the hearts of the workers in contributing valuable insights to help the organization grow. While updated organizational management theories are interesting to study about, the reality of managerial practice in Thailand is to ensure that the cultural structure is visible and felt for the Thai workers. In this way, no one feels alienated and the practical theories are doing more good than harm for the organization to keep growing forward.

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