A CASE LESSON IN APPLYING TEAM LEARNING
IN A CROSS-CULTURAL WORKPLACE IN THAILAND

RAVEE PHOEWHAWM

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Title
A CASE LESSON IN APPLYING TEAM LEARNING
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By
RAVEE PHOEHWAM

APPROVED BY

Advisory Committee Chairperson

Advisory Committee Member

Advisory Committee Member

Program Chairperson in Doctor of Philosophy

CERTIFIED BY GRADUATE SCHOOL
Title: A Case Lesson in Applying Team Learning in a Cross-Cultural Workplace in Thailand

Author: Mr. Ravee Phoewhawin

Degree of: Doctor of Philosophy in Administrative Science

Advisory Committee Chairperson: Assistant Professor Dr. Pradana Yossuck

ABSTRACT

This study attempted to explore the cross-cultural differences among the managerial team members composing of two nationalities, namely Thai and German, at a manufacturing company based in Lamphun province of northern Thailand. With the application of Hofstede’s "Five Cultural Dimensions" in its traditional form and a reframed format, and the "7S McKinsey Framework", this part of the work presents a team that differed in the cultural relations between power distance, individualism, masculinity, and long-term orientation but shared the same belief for avoiding uncertainties, as well as being challenged to achieve its objectives in a working environment where the style of leadership was lacking, the structure is highly rigid to make an initiative. Besides, the system prevents them from receiving accurate information to perform as a cohesive unit. Also, the work applied the concept of "Hays Team Learning Pyramid" and the "Blame versus Gain Behavior" activity to alleviate the cross-cultural differences that were disrupting the managerial team members from trying to work and learn together as a collective unit by conducting sessions. This enabled them to reflect and review over the errors made for the purpose of being engaged in a dialogue for turning their misfortunes into a scheme for improving their team’s working performance. The results lead to a new work design that was named as a "team consensus". In this mode, the managerial team would communicate with each other based on facts and information before officially launching the work project. Meanwhile, the team takes on a collaborative learning about the situation to ensure that all members were aligned and know what action to take in order to attain the company’s philosophy and mission statement.

However, the new work design model was short-lived due to the managerial team being succumbed to the demanding pressures of the working environment. In the lessons learned, the research attests that the working process should be designed for configuring the attitude and
behavior among team members with cross-cultural differences to be engaged in reflective communication and solving problems.

The research provides recommendation that is directed towards the policy and practical level on mindfulness so that the Electro-Circuits Company's managing director, human resources manager, managerial team members, along with the Thai Chamber of Commerce, other companies/organizations, and practicing scholars or learners could gain a key insight of executing or conducting a study on how to make team learning conducive in a working environment that has cross-cultural differences.
บทคัดย่อ

การศึกษาที่ทำเพื่อศึกษาความแตกต่างทางด้านวัฒนธรรมที่สะท้อนในสมัยศิริพิมัน
บริหารซึ่งประกอบด้วย 2 ศิลปะคือ ไทยและมองมัน สองระบบผลลัพธ์ดังกล่าวที่ใช้ในความสูญ
ในเขตภาคเหนือของประเทศไทย โดยมีการประยุกต์ใช้วิธีของสหพัฒน์ “ศิลปะวัฒนธรรม R
ปรับปรุง” โปรแกรมทั้งหมดและนำมาปรับปรุงใหม่ และ “การลบก็ไม่สามารถจะมันสมัยที่ 78” งานวิจัยส่วน
นี้นำเสนอที่มีการแยกระดับด้านวัฒนธรรมประวัติของชนของถิ่น代谢 ความเป็นบุคคล
บุคคล ความเป็นบุคคล การให้ความสำคัญกับบุคคล แม้ว่าความเข้าใจเหมือนกันในการหลักสูตร
ความไม่แน่นอน รวมถึงความท้าทายที่จะทำให้บรรลุเป้าหมายตามที่กำหนดไว้ในกลุ่มหลักสูตร
ของการทำงานที่ขาดแคลนของความสามารถพื้นฐาน โครงสร้างไม่มีความเห็นพ้องต่อการสร้างสรรค์ที่
ใหม่ และระบบไม่เต็มถึงการกลับหรือการรับข้อมูลที่มีออกมาในการที่จะทำให้เหมือนกันเป็นที่ศิวะ
นอกจากนี้งานนี้เพื่อให้ผู้มีประสบการณ์ในการทำงานและเรียนรู้รวมกันเป็นกลุ่มตัวอย่างจัดการ
ประชุมที่สามารถทะลุออก และแนวทางให้ที่ข้อควรพิจารณาที่เกิดขึ้นเพื่อเพิ่มประสิทธิภาพของกลุ่มในการร่วม
ในการทุนเพื่อเปลี่ยนแปลงสรรพสิ่งต่างๆ ที่เกิดขึ้นให้กลับเป็นแผนงานในการพัฒนาบริการการ
ทางเป็นที่สุด ผลการศึกษาไม่สามารถไปสู่การออกแบบการทางไปใหม่ซึ่งได้รับการตั้งข้อว่า “ความเห็น
หลังของที่ศิวะ” รูปแบบการทางนี้ทำให้ที่มีการบริหารสำหรับเป็นระบบกลับไปตามหลักของ
ความเป็นจริง และการผ่าน จนกระทั่งทำให้สามารถ ในขณะเดียวกันมีการเรียนรู้ที่ทำกับ
สถานการณ์เพื่อให้ไม่ได้ถูกศิลปะที่มีแผนเพื่อทำและทราบว่าเป็นด้านการออกแบบอย่างไรเพื่อบรรลุถึง
หลักปฏิบัติทางธุรกิจและพัฒนาของบริษัท

อย่างไรก็ตามการถูกแยกทางทางไปใหม่ทำให้ไม่แน่นอน เนื่องจากที่มีการศึกษาไม่
สามารถทำให้ฝนตกของตารางแสดงของการทางแบบเดิม มีการได้เรียนรู้จากการวิจัยแสดง
ให้เห็นว่ากระบวนการที่งานควรได้รับการออกแบบเพื่อปรับทัศนคติและพฤติกรรมของสมาชิกในทีมเรื่องความแตกต่างทางวัฒนธรรมเพื่อสร้างการสื่อสารในทางกลับและการแก้ไขปัญหา

งานวิจัยได้ให้คำแนะนำที่มุ่งเน้นไปยังนโยบายและระดับของการปฏิบัติในเรื่องของความได้กับเพื่อให้การศึกษา ผู้อ่านและการจัดการ ผู้จัดการทรัพยากรบุคคล สมาชิกทีมบริหารร่วมกับการค้าไทย ห้างร้าน/องค์กรอื่นๆ และนักบริหารหรือนักศึกษาที่ปฏิบัติเป็น ได้มีความเข้าใจในเรื่องของการพัฒนาการหรือการศึกษาเกี่ยวกับความสำเร็จการเรียนรู้เป็นที่เกิดขึ้นในสถานการณ์ต่างๆของการที่ได้เห็นว่ามีความแตกต่างทางด้านวัฒนธรรม
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Ravee A. Phoewhawin
February, 2013
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background and Significance of the Study

Teams are a critical method for businesses to face the challenges of globalization, increased competition, and constant growth of technology. Teams succeed more in less time and with greater cohesiveness than having people work alone as individuals. Teams are mainly developed for the purpose of solving problems and ensuring that the organization becomes more flexible, effective, and competitive (Edmondson and Nembhard, 2010) (The Ken Blanchard Companies, 2006). To be able to carry out such tasks, there needs to be a philosophy that carries the team towards the destination. Such a thought can be team learning as the concept harps on the importance for teams to learn how to work together effectively and on being able to deal with external matters that are derived from a continuously changing environment (Decuyper, Dochy, and Van den Bossche, 2010).

As teams do their best to find solutions and helping their companies to strive, it is highly imperative that the team learn from the errors and mistakes that they have made as a collective unit while complying to an ever-changing global economy (Levin, 2011) (Tjosvold, Yu, and Hui, 2004). Since the survival of companies is dependent on how well they adapt to the changes in their environment (Drejer, 2008), there is a need for an intelligent process for teams to take a proactive stance in detecting, discussing, and analyzing from minor failures that have occurred (Woolley, Chabris, Pentland, Hashmi, and Malone, 2010) so that they are capable enough to learn how to overcome and remain on track to achieve their company’s expected and desired results of their companies (Cannon and Edmondson, 2004).

Team learning allows individual team members to reflect on his/her own work and to coordinate with other colleagues so that they can become intact with their organization to function effectively in a changing environment despite each member of the team having skills that are different in terms of task or composition (Bstieler and Hemmert, 2010) (Edmondson, 1999). A workplace that fosters team learning by reflecting allows the capacity of each person to
become a collective unit that is highly focused in obtaining the mission objectives. In addition, the concept of team learning motivates the team to apply their competencies in a concerted effort to endorse performance of working and learning together (Littlejohn, Milligan, and Margaryan, 2012) (Murray and Moses, 2005), as well as laying the foundation for lifelong learning to hone the workers' skills to become effective team players (Omerzel, Fister, & Sirca, 2008).

With a continuous stream and a healthy flow for the team to reflect and learn as a unit the members would be able to ask questions, share information, seek help, experiment with unproven actions, and seek for feedback. These team learning activities allow the group to become equipped in detecting changes in the circumstances, learning about customers' requirements, improving members' collective understanding of a situation, or discovering unexpected consequences of their previous actions (Edmondson and Singer, 2006). The more the learning activities become spontaneous the more effective it becomes in developing teamwork where the team capacity is aligned to not only reinforce each other as the basis for business performance but taking an initiative in gaining collaboration skills on their own (Sun & Chen, 2008).

However, when team learning is dealt in the issue of culture, it becomes a critical contextual element that can have an inhibiting effect on the learning process. This is due to people on not having a culture; instead they inhabit one, as they are never free agents and capable of transcending their situation (Yoon, Songb, Limc, and Jood, 2010) (Yorks, Marsick, Kasl, and Dechant, 2003). In this era of globalization, culture impacts the processes of learning at multiple levels. First, culture provides a taken-for-granted frame of reference that shapes which issues, occurrences, or artifacts that become problematic issues for discussion. Second, culture creates a channel or screens the type of inputs that are considered relevant to those issues that become a predicament. Third, embedded in culture are processes of power that both impact the search for meaning and define the range of acceptable solutions. Each of these effects are intensified under team and organizational learning as culture shapes the patterns of communication, influence, and other forms of interaction as well as the orientation toward the group process itself (Knapp, 2010) (Yorks, Marsick, Kasl, and Dechant, 2003).

In a cross-cultural context, team learning can be quite daunting to sustain when teams are under pressure to perform and to obtain results (Putkonen, 2009). Danger becomes
ominous as ignorance presides over correcting errors and mistakes. Two main historical events such as the “1996 Mount Everest Climbing Expedition” and the “Kursk Russian Submarine Accident” often serve as grim reminders that devastation can quickly strike when teams become dysfunctional towards reflecting on issues that are hindering performance towards the desired objective. Kayes (2008) analyzes three factors that caused learning to shudder in teams during their climb up to Mount Everest. The factors that inhibited learning were a narrowly defined purpose, directive leadership, and the failure to sense ill-defined problems. These factors accumulated to the deaths of some of the mountain climbing team who were made up of a diverse international group. Nohrstedt and Minaeva’s (2002) research on the disaster of the Russian submarine “Kursk” portrayed how a crisis can evolve into a big catastrophe. Rather than allowing experts to provide solutions in real time for rescuing the crew members, the administrative staff had to wait for the final orders from the top executives. Even with other countries offering assistance to help save the crew the administrative decision declined due to fear of a language barrier that could trigger the tension into mammoth proportion. The political barriers that these staff had to face minimized the opportunity to save lives. Such a barrier discourages teams from learning how to develop a solution during the actual situation.

Creating an opportunity for the team in being able to learn together by pondering on what has occurred, why is the situation happening this way, and searching for the best methods to accomplish the matter at hand rests with how the organization is able to design the process and practice that allow the cross-culture and the concept of team learning to be immersed simultaneously (Zellmer-Bruhn and Gibson, 2006). The cross-culture differences should be converted to a workplace culture that embraces learning from failures that are derived from accumulated mistakes and errors; such an approach provides the ample occasion of working and learning as a collective unit in dealing with shortcomings by constantly detecting, analyzing, and experimenting (Edmondson, 2011).
Statement of the Problem

Designing and creating a cross-cultural working environment that embraces a team learning philosophy takes time and commitment. There are certain issues that need to be addressed before the workplace can be conducive enough for people to work and learn together as a team. In other words, if the failures are to be reflected for the right course of action to take, then the team members should be allowed to detect, analyze, and experiment on circumstances that will allow them to become a full capacity unit that strives toward improvement and success. Below are the issues of the workplace learning, work perception, structure and design of the workplace, and the bureaucratic environment that are to be taken into consideration for establishing a cross-cultural working environment that fosters team learning:

1. Workplace Learning

On the topic of learning situation, Mounier and Tangchuan (2010) state that the learning process in the workplace is highly contextualized, and that the major output is on skills. The work perceives that whatever is accumulated in learning is solely for the individual job and immediate experience. The workplace is seldom considered as a specific learning situation. It is primarily a site of production, a complex setting with both material and non-material dimensions which together determine what each worker will learn by doing on the job. The authors believe that knowledge acquired in the workplace is mainly attached to the job performed and generally regarded as consisting of skills.

2. Work Perception

The perception of work is a job where one has to follow a set of tasks and have a relationship with the boss. Supporters of this theory, such as Frederick Taylor, believe that workers should ask themselves only two questions – “What is the name of the man I am now working for? What does this man want me to do, right?” In this case, the disassembly of work processes into tasks had to be administered in clear chains of command. The relationship of work to creating something, seeing the end results of one’s efforts in a finished product, or taking pride in one’s labor was lost. Work became something immediate, cut off from others, subject to the idiosyncrasies of supervisors who also did not understand the larger purposes of their efforts. Work became doing things, action without relationship to individual experience or collective aims (Briskin, 1998).
3. Workplace Structure and Design

The structure and design of the workplace can also contribute to a deficiency in learning as a team. Although organizations may experience an increase on quality improvement but when the staff does not learn about what caused the problem or why do errors occur then the point is hopeless. Accountability also comes into play when staff members don’t take time out to see if the decisions and actions they make might have been creating a conflict in the work environment. People assume the level of authority has the solution and answers to all forms of problems at hand (Edmondson, 2004).

4. Bureaucratic Environment

A bureaucratic structure functions effectively when the conditions are quite stable. With an emphasis on control and largely dependent on the standardization of work processes for organizational coordination, the bureaucratic concept is appropriate for conducting routine work efficiently on a large scale. However, bureaucratic control can come at the cost of hobbling individual initiative and can be extremely dysfunctional in periods of uncertain and rapid change. Bureaucracy can produce disruptive working conditions, such as intra-organizational resistance, red-tape, tension, shirking of responsibility, and sectionalism. Bureaucratic controls can also discourage motivation of working colleagues (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1997).

With a significance on developing a cross-cultural working environment that embraces a team learning, an exploration study on the effect of culture on team learning in culturally diverse teams, in South Africa, reveal that culture induces the conditions of learning and working together by influencing the flow of information, as well as on encouraging willingness to contribute ideas freely, and to experiment with new ideas. In order to make team learning viable, the study recommends recognizing the cultural differences at first and then facilitating the methods and practices that complement each other (Ndletyana, 2003).

The study offers an important lesson that can be served as a doctrine for implementing the philosophical concept. To enhance team learning in organizations one must be serious enough to understand the cultural dimensions of their team members. The path towards learning about culture starts with an open mind that acknowledges an existence of different cultures; each group members bring their own unique cultural preferences to help the team and they influence the way they think, work, and learn. Upon grasping a better understanding of the
team a shift in getting the team members to respect and value the cultural differences would enable them to understand their team uniqueness as a whole. In fostering the team to be a cohesive unit, inquiry based techniques such as collaborative inquiry and action learning can be applied to encourage team members to reflect critically on their own, their team’s behavior, their interactions with each other, and to challenge assumptions that are sometimes taken for granted in the workplace (Ndletyana, 2003).

Successful learning must consist of action – mental, physical, or both – in conjunction with an opportunity to reflect on, or process, the action and its outcome. People learn by doing and by then thinking about what they have done, thus allowing people to examine experiences, find meaning in them, and generate new insight and knowledge (Griep, Davis, Fowler, 2010).

This research is on a case of an international private company that depicts the scholarly issues mentioned above. The real life events combined with past relevant studies can serve as a conscience guideline of implementing team learning as teamwork in a cross-cultural workplace. In such a dynamic environment where change is forthcoming and sometimes unpredictable, teams of their respective companies will be put to the test to see if their philosophy of teamwork will bring them closer together or pull them apart. Or is it time to make some changes within the paradigm and process of their conceptual approach of working as a team? Oversights and missteps are a normal part of being under pressure to perform. However, when these errors occur so often, which tone of culture will dictate the team to rectify the action before it becomes beyond their control?

The Case of the Electro-Circuits Company

In this study, the name of the company shall be referred to as “Electro-Circuits” for the purpose of respecting top management’s integrity and reputation towards quality in such a competitive industry.

Based in the Lamphun province of northern Thailand, Electro-Circuits is a manufacturing company that specializes in producing electrical components, relies on their managerial staff composing of Thai and German nationals to work as a team in order to fulfill two objectives – “the company’s philosophy of delivering quality and the mission statement of attaining the highest benefit for the customers”. Established in 1999, the company set the
standard for work practice and customer service in its early years. However, coming towards 2008 the team started to experience some problems in functioning as a team. While the problems were mounting the motivation to work as a truly defined team started to wane. It can be compared to a pile of sand held in one’s hand and being blown away into tiny fragments of dust particles from a strong wind. The company’s top manager and human resources manager, who were both German, claim that the philosophy and mission of the corporation could be attained if the managers were able to work as a complete team. But rather than forming their fingers to become a fist (standing as a strong unit) some team members opted not to fully get involved for fear of repercussion; there was a lack of support for the concept. Some of the (Thai) members stood by the sidelines and cast out a feeling of hope for a change while leaving the vocal (German) team members to make a spontaneous contribution. Nevertheless, it resulted into a mental strain and physical anguish for those who really believed in having the change. The courage and commitment as a team to change things for the better by searching for an appropriate solution did not fully materialized enough to allow the proposed modern work flow to be incorporated. This led to a lost opportunity for those individual team members who truly wanted to see colleagues work closely together. The problems that kept on spiraling made it difficult for the team to fulfill the company’s philosophy and mission.

Problem Definition

The interview began with the top manager of the Electro-Circuits company. He portrayed a feeling that there were many problems among the middle managers in working as a team. He felt that there were dysfunctional working relations as individual team members focused more on who was at fault rather than finding a solution. He also perceived that they were not complying with the company’s foundation by being careless in delivering finished goods that did not fit with the customers’ order. In addition, the top manager stated that the team was lacking a collaborative behavior in developing a better method for problem-solving. Furthermore, the top manager sensed that the team was not willing to share ideas, information, nor knowledge with each other despite asking each of them to do so when he had a meeting with them.
The next interview was conducted with each middle manager to hear their version of the real problem from their perspective. They provided further information by presenting workplace issues that they had to overcome with. First, they mentioned that they were unable to obtain accurate & confirmed information due to fellow team members not wanting to be held responsible for the negative outcome of the product. Second, they experienced in not having enough time for agreeing on an exact schedule to finish the project because of hidden tasks that required prompt completion. Third, they sometimes had to compromise quality in order to meet with the pressures of demand from their customers who urged for a quick delivery.

However, based on an observation at one of the middle managers’ team meeting, the issue of a hasty (rushing) work procedure forced the managers to get their assignments finished before a hectic clockwork schedule. By rushing the process, the products that they produced came back as below quality and heavily criticized by the receiving customers.

![Diagram showing the relationship between goal, job rush, and top management view versus middle management condition.]

**Figure 1** Rushing to Produce the Output While Sacrificing the Goal of Working

According to this figure above, the real reason why top management sees middle management under performing as a team and that middle management are performing below satisfaction towards teamwork is due to the work environment being pressured (or rushed) to meet the deadline. As a result, “rushing to beat the schedule results in poor quality or output”.

From the reports gathered based on the interviews with the top manager and the middle managerial team, as well as from observation on one of the managerial team meeting, this work attests that people are most likely to work and learn together as a team in a cross-cultural workplace when there are certain factors removed from the workplace. It all begins with a working environment that instigates blaming one another and obsessed with speculating on an individual’s failure. This type of environment destroys collaboration and cooperation. The next
factor is the hope that another colleague discovers the problem on a second-hand notice and solves it. Such a behavior destroys morale in developing teamwork. Then there is the physical infrastructure of the workplace that deceives the behavior for communicating, teamwork, sharing ideas and information with each other. Functioning in this system does not encourage team members to take an initiative in improving working relations. In addition, when the team executes work to meet with the schedule rather than the corporate philosophy and mission they lower the standards for producing quality as well as cheating the customers in gaining good service. Finally, when the managerial role stays idle in improving the work situation it signifies that no one is being accountable for their action. It seems here that the work skills of the team should only be applied for the operational task instead of strengthening the team.

As the subject area is a phenomenon, this research looks at the factors, at Electro-Circuits Company, to be considered when applying team learning, the extent of the staff working as a team, the challenges of working together, the importance of team learning, and the cross-cultural differences of the team members. Upon creating and maintaining teamwork in an organization with cross-cultural difference, this work raises the following research questions:

Q. 1 – What are the cross-cultural differences at the workplace of “Electro-Circuits”?  
Q. 2 – How should “Team Learning” be applied to minimize the cross-cultural differences at the Electro-Circuits Company?  
Q. 3 – What is the lesson learned from applying team learning?

Objectives of the Study

The main objective is to describe the effects that the challenges have on applying team learning as teamwork in a cross-cultural workplace. The specific objectives are the following:

1. To explore the cross-cultural differences at Electro-Circuits Company which have obstructed the process of working and learning as a team.

2. To investigate the changes from implementing “Team Learning” at the Electro-Circuits Company and to determine whether the method reduced the cross-cultural differences and allowed for improvement towards working together.
3. To analyze the form of lessons learned in applying team learning at Electro-Circuits Company.

Scope and Limitation of the Study

The location of the study was at a German owned manufacturing company based in the Lamphun province of northern Thailand. The target group is the eighteen middle managers that were comprised of a team, composing of two national cultures: German and Thai. The German nationals assumed the managerial position in SAP & IT, warehouse, IT & network, project administration, research & development engineering, and supply chain. The Thai nationals held the managerial position in the area of production, cable & CNC, production engineering, operations, purchasing, strategic purchasing, exporting, financing, accounting, key accounting, quality assurance, and production & planning. Six German managers and twelve Thai managers made up the unit for the target group. The limitations of this study were on two issues: 1. There was a strict procedure for obtaining full information of the strategy, structure, and system of the company. 2. The cooperativeness in allowing time and being direct about the problems at work among some of the managerial team that took part in the study could not be fully complied due to high orders.

Expected Results of the Study

To hopefully provide groundbreaking thoughts in team learning practice and procedures in a cross cultural workplace for the following individuals:

1. Foreign company executives who have a keen in interest on developing team learning as teamwork among Thai staff and non-Thai staff in their organization that is based in Thailand.

2. Human resources professionals who are in charge of developing teamwork at their company and creating a modern policy on enhancing teamwork at a workplace composing of two different cultures.

3. Independent or commercial research institutions that would like to know how much of an impact that team learning has in a cross-cultural workplace located in Thailand.
4. Scholars and students, in the field of business administration, that would like to make a thorough research on team learning in a manufacturing workplace that has a cross-cultural working environment.

**Operational Definition of Terms**

The study is conducted through the following operational terms. The definition of each term will allocate a sense of comprehension to the research’s lesson on applying team learning in a cross-cultural workplace.

**Applying Team Learning**

"Applying team learning" is defined as the concept for team members to exchange ideas, search for many possible answers to a specific question, and creating working conditions that allow teamwork to thrive.

**Team**

The study utilizes the word "team" as composing of two or more people that have a collective responsibility for work tasks and active co-operation within the team; each team member carries a sense of self-responsibility and self-authorization for planning, executing and evaluating the results of the team’s work.

**Teamwork**

"Teamwork" is referred to as the philosophical fortitude in which the team is committed and determined of achieving the desired goal.

**Team Learning**

"Team learning" is defined as the initiative standpoint on accomplishing the mission through a collective harmony for adapting to the circumstances. It’s also about the connection that conveys a sense of clarity and anticipation for action; even in the presence of conflict. Furthermore, there is accountability which acts as the code for constant probing to utilize one’s talent, skills, ability in reinforcing the process of this approach as teamwork. Accountability, in
the context of team learning, is about demonstrating balance through reflecting on matters pertaining to work performance so that the strength or the advantage that a team has becomes enlarged and the recognized areas for improvement are compensated for. All is done for the purpose of the mission or desired outcome.

Cross-cultural Differences

“Cross-cultural differences” is referred to being involved in a highly dynamic and complex working environment with a host of variables and forces that influence social interaction patterns, and shape performance and productivity. For example, individual team members bring their own set of cultural beliefs and values that guide them to think and do on what is right and wrong.

Lessons Learned

“Lessons learned” is defined as evaluating the extent of the effectiveness from the application, and to offer an elaboration and an analysis. The term also sets forth an account from the work and setting out an action plan for the future.

Workplace Culture

“Workplace culture” is described as the behavior that the company expects for their employees to follow, act, and think in an appropriate way. For example, in being concerned with the quality of the outcome, a meeting is raised to have an interchange of ideas with fellow team members to make sure that quality is produced in the right way. The wrong way would be to raise the meeting and to start pointing out who is at fault and harshly criticize them for not being focused on the quality of the outcome.

Working Behavior

“Working behavior” is defined as the behavior that one uses in employment and is normally more formal than other types of human behavior. For example, completing the tasks with relevance to a demanding schedule is considered formal as compared to finishing the tasks that is based on the energetic mood (informal).
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

For this study, the literature review has been constructed into two sections that address the issue of "applying team learning" in a cross-cultural workplace. Section one involves the following issue for analysis - team, teamwork, the difference between team and teamwork, the models for assessing team effectiveness, team learning (its modern meaning, methods, and concepts applied). Section two pertains to the subject of a cross-cultural workplace. Under this area of interest, the work reviews the following area - definition and characteristics, social background of Thais and German, the challenges in the workplace, impact on teamwork, designing the workplace to overcome cross-cultural adversities.

The literature review strives to obtain a firm development on a theoretical and conceptual framework that will provide a sound understanding on applying team learning, as teamwork, in a cross-cultural workplace.

1. What is a Team?

In the human resources management field, teams are groups of employees who assume a greater role in the production or service process; a forum is provided which allows employees to contribute their ideas about daily operations or identify and solve organizational problems (Boon, Den Harlog, Boselie, and Paauwe, 2011) (Sherman, Bohlander, and Snell, 2000).

From the discipline of organizational theory and design, a team is a unit of two or more people who interact and coordinate their work to accomplish a shared goal or purpose (Foss, and Lindenberg, 2011) (Daft, 2007).

A team, defined in the human resources development field, is a group of individuals who see themselves and who are seen by others as a social entity, who are embedded in one or more larger social systems (eg., communities, organizations), and who perform tasks that affect others (such as customers or coworkers) (pg. 301 - Werner and DeSimone, 2009).

According to Moorehead and Griffen (2010), some have evolved naturally out of the organizational context while others have been established out of modern management. The best
ways to classify teams are on what they do; they make or do things, provide guidance, and/or being engaged with the operation. In the field of organizational behavior, they attest that there are different types of teams:

- **management teams** consist of managers from various areas; they coordinate work teams.  
- **problem-solving teams** are temporary teams established to attack specific problems in the workplace.
- **product development teams** are combinations of work teams and problem-solving teams that create new designs for products or services that will satisfy customer needs.  
- **quality circles** are small groups of employees from the same work area who regularly meet to discuss and recommend solutions to workplace problems.
- **virtual teams** are teams that work together by computer and other electronic communication utilities; members move in and out of meetings and the team itself as the situation dictates.
- **work teams** include all the people working in an area, are relatively permanent, and do the daily work, making decisions regarding how the work of the team is done.

There are at least two sets of skills that are team-related - task skills and process skills. Task skills are necessary for accomplishing the work that is assigned to the group. In this set, while employees likely possess the appropriate task-related skills and knowledge they must also be able to apply those skills in a group setting. This requires cross-training in skills with other team members in order to perform together in group tasks. Process skills deal with working together as a team and maintaining the relationships that are essential for teamwork. Interpersonal skills that are deemed important to the process are being able to communicate better, improve problem-solving capabilities, and making better decisions.

According to Katzenbach and Smith (2003), a **team** is a **small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, set of performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable.** In addition to their study, the best teams invest a tremendous amount of time and effort exploring, shaping, and agreeing on a purpose that belongs to them both collectively and individually. Furthermore, there work shows that there is also a difference between a team and one that just works as a group (impostor team). Figure 2 below demonstrates the differences between a working group and a team.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Working Group</th>
<th>Team</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Strong, clearly focused leader</td>
<td>• Shared leadership roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Individual accountability</td>
<td>• Individual and mutual accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The group’s purpose is the same as the broader organizational mission</td>
<td>• Specific team purpose that the team itself delivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Individual work-products</td>
<td>• Collective work-products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Runs efficient meetings</td>
<td>• Encourages open-ended discussion and active problem-solving meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Measures its effectiveness indirectly by its influence on others (e.g., Financial performances of the business)</td>
<td>• Measures performance directly by assessing collective work-products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Discuss, decides, and delegates</td>
<td>• Discusses, decides, and does real work together</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2 Working Group vs. Team

1.1 Conclusion

Based on the researcher’s perspective, in order to make people truly work and learn together as a collective unit, the inevitable approach is to have people function as a team rather than a group. Also, working as a group may be exposed to a risk in working less effectively as a cohesive unit. In addition, with a team objectives have been firmly established. This signifies that people have a mutual agreement on knowing what is needed to be done and how to obtain the outcome.

2. What is teamwork?

Based on the discipline of human resources development, teamwork is considered one of the factors that can exert a strong influence on an employee’s behavior. As a concept, teamwork strengthens the importance of coworkers’ influences on individual behavior and brings other dynamics to the forefront. Teamwork is based on trust and cohesiveness. Trust is the expectations that another person (or a group of people) will demonstrate kindness when interacting with you. However, research has revealed that there are strong links between interpersonal trust and employee performance (including citizenship behaviors), problem solving, and cooperation. Cohesiveness is where the members have a sense of being together and willing
to remain part of the group. Team members with a high level of interdependence must learn to trust one another and feel a sense of cohesiveness if the team is to work together and be successful (Werner and DeSimone, 2009). Lafasto and Larson (2001) describes teamwork where people, with different views and perspectives come together, put aside their narrow self-interests and discuss issues openly and supportively in an attempt to solve a larger problem or achieve a broader goal. Teamwork is not the same as working in groups (LaFasto, 2001). To transform a group of people into a team they should have:

- **a common purpose**: every team member is working towards the same goal, for the same reason. The focus lies on doing in together.

- **team identity**: every individual team member should feel as he belongs to the team.

- **interdependent functions**: the goal cannot be reached without one of the team members

- **agreed norms or values**: each team member knows how to behave himself and understands the input of others.

In his book “The Performance Factor”, MacMillan (2001) distinguishes the difference between teamwork and team. The former is an organizational philosophy or value system, whereas the latter is specific and composed of discrete organizational units. The misunderstanding can be attributed in the perception of teams as the end versus the means to the end. Teams are a means of achieving goals that require an enormous amount of individual efforts. The task or purpose of the assignment defines the team. A clear task is what allows a team to exist from the beginning, the task of the team is the critical ingredient which solidifies the team. Regardless of whether the life of the team is temporary or ongoing, it exists to fulfill a particular purpose. Katzenbach and Smith (2008) perceives teamwork representing a set of values that encourage behaviors such as listening and constructively responding to points of view expressed by others, giving others the benefit of the doubt, providing support to those who need it, and recognizing the interests and achievements of others.

As a philosophy, teamwork is best described through the Chinese word of “Gong He” (合作) which translates as “working together” or “working in harmony”. It is a philosophy that acts as sustenance. Methods of deploying meetings, acting, activities, entertainment, and demonstrating examples are for teaching members the principles of honesty, humility and cooperation. Members are leaders when there is a demonstration of convincing proof in the ability
to lead, making decisions that are correct and swift, displaying courage, and a willingness to share everything with fellow colleagues; this enables the leader to earn respect from others. Upon engaging in any form of operation, a meeting is held with other members to provide the rationale for the engagement and tactics that will be used in the assignment. Once the assignment has been completed another meeting is held for the purpose of reviewing over any mistakes made and to seek for improvement (Gomrick, 1999). The original noun sense was 'a spirit of teamwork, courage, and wholehearted dedication'. The adjective means 'exemplifying this spirit', but has spread beyond the military and its main current sense is the broad 'very eager or enthusiastic; exceptionally zealous'. Ken Blanchard incorporates the term as a change in culture. The idea of the process is to assist organizations in letting go of behaviors, systems, processes, and policies that no longer support the new vision and direction. Gung Ho, as a training and development framework, is used for helping organizations to create a culture of excellence that is supported by passionate and energized people that love what they do. The three principles of Gung Ho are worthwhile work, in control of achieving the goal, and cheering each other on (Gomrick, 1999). Worthwhile work is about focusing on how people's job fits into the big picture, how it is important and adds value, and not simply on units produced. Being in control of achieving the goal is about having leaders establish a framework by setting the key goals and values. Through the frame, the work procedures are defined, the rules are to be followed, and the positions are accounted for. From there, the workers are to adhere by this framework once the operation is underway. The workers have to know that as long as they follow the rules they can go anywhere within the lines. They have to know that as long as the operation is under process, they will be entrusted to complete the work without any micromanaging. Cheering each other on is about complimenting and celebrating accomplishments on an ongoing basis, not just on the major ones, but also on the minor ones as well. The point is to also create enthusiasm in the working environment.

Teamwork is synonymous to the terms of team spirit or morale. According to Leighton (Wikipedia, 2010), morale is the capacity of a group of people to pull together persistently and consistently in pursuit of a common purpose.

A study by the Ken Blanchard Companies demonstrates morale to be highly effective when the work itself stimulates a gratifying sense of esteem and actualization towards the
employees. The term is called "work passion" which can be described as an individual’s persistent, emotionally positive, meaning-based state of well-being stemming from continuous, reoccurring cognitive and affective appraisals of various job and organizational situations, which results in consistent, constructive work intentions and behaviors. In addition, the work indicates that job commitment and organizational commitment have an effect in developing the individual’s work passion, as does an individual’s appraisal process in regard to certain organizational and job factors (Ken Blanchard Companies, 2009). The authors of the research have revised an earlier model (Employee Passion) to present the form as simultaneous and an ongoing process as well as considering the role of antecedents. Below is a figure of the “Work Passion Model”:

![Figure 3 Work Passion Model](image)

The study points out that in order to fully understand how ‘Work Passion’ occurs, one must first understand the appraisal process that individuals use to:

1. Come to conclusions about the environment (or in this case the organization), and
2. Determine how they are going to behave as a result of their perceptions.

An individual’s choices are driven by his or her understanding of how the experience or event being appraised impacts his or her well-being. Since all people are meaning-oriented and meaning-creating, they are constantly evaluating the environment from the standpoint of their own well-being and reacting rationally (cognition) and emotionally (affect) to
those evaluations. Cognition and affect go hand in hand, happening almost simultaneously, over and over, as individuals make sense of a situation to reach their conclusions about what is happening, what it means to them, how it will affect them, how they feel about that, what they intend to do, and finally, what they actually do, all filtered through the lens of who they are.

No matter if the background is an organization, corporation, or an institution, the system of that environment acts as a catalyst for behaviors to become interdependent. What you are able to accomplish, choose to do, and perform in work is not solely under your individual control. Rather, your behavior and performance will be under the influence of other people's actions, attitudes, and behaviors in the immediate surroundings. Teamwork is no exception to this environment. Organizations can't simply function well without the full cooperation of their people. When efforts are synchronized around the common objectives, people can achieve more with effectiveness and efficiency. People who work together are an organization's greatest resource because, as a unit, they can execute tasks, think, manage capital, serve customers, and ensure success (Stowell and Mead, 2007).

2.1 Conclusion

From the researcher's point of view, to get members working and maintain their function as a team there is a need for teamwork to be apparent. With a philosophical guidance that assures the path towards the objective, team members are able to develop a sense of trust and cohesion with each other. The presence of teamwork provides a sense that people are truly working as a unit and not breaking off to form another group just because reliance with one another is low.

3. Difference between Team and Teamwork

From an ideal perspective, the concept of a team and teamwork lies in the form of its location. Naturally, every organization, institution, and companies especially want their people to obtain the goals and objectives. However, it's a matter of “what and how” that is to be applied to the purpose of achieving the aims. As mentioned earlier, teams are a means of achieving goals that require an enormous amount of individual efforts. It is the task or purpose of the assignment that defines the team. Teamwork is the philosophy or value system. It acts as the compass for bringing out the moral capability and capacity of each individual so that the team as
a whole strives toward improvement (MacMillan, 2001). To borrow from Katzenbach and Smith's assertion of a team (2008: p.7) a model is presented below to demonstrate the constituents that act as the tool for groups to come together as a team.

- **Shared leadership roles**
- **Individual and mutual accountability**
- **Specific team purpose that the team itself delivers**
- **Collective work-products**
- **Encourages open-ended discussion and active problem-solving meetings**
- **Measures performance directly by assessing collective work-products**
- **Discusses, decides, and does real work together**

*Figure 4 Constituents that Act as the Tool for Groups to Come Together as a Team*

Performing as a team, these individuals exert their effort into achieving a goal by sharing their roles in leadership, having accountability, creating specific team purpose, establishing collective work-products, encouraging open-ended discussion and problem-solving, measuring performance, and discussing, deciding and doing real work together.

Applying Blanchard's Gung Ho theory of worthwhile work (2009: p.4), in control of achieving the goal, and cheering others on would set the factors for teamwork. The diagram below depicts the conditions for creating teamwork where the team principles are solidified and focused on achieving the goal regardless of the challenges or obstacles presented along the path.
Figure 5 Conditions for Creating Teamwork

3.1 Conclusion

Based on the review, the researcher states that in order for learning to occur among team members, there needs to be a clear understanding of what team and teamwork is. Moreover, it would be a mistake to assume that by having a team it automatically equates to achieving objectives and becoming successful. Therefore, conditions must be set if the philosophy for teams to learn is to be made possible. The conditions themselves enable the team to learn and work together in a concerted effort.

4. Assessment Models for Team Effectiveness

There have been a number of models developed for the purpose of creating team effectiveness. These models have been used to provide empirical support and critical analysis of team development. The study provides a chronological list of the paradigms.
A. The GRPI Model of Team Effectiveness

This is a model designed by Rubin, Plovnick, and Fry which is one of the oldest models of team effectiveness. The authors present their model in terms of a pyramid similar to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs Theory. The only exception is that the model starts at the top of the pyramid. Based on this model, the team always starts with the goal. Once the goal is defined, the roles and responsibilities of each team member will become much clearer. As individuals work together (processes), they will see that goals and responsibilities often are not sufficiently clear.

To avoid the confusion, members of the team will have to make the time to redefine them. That redefinition enables them to adjust and readjust team processes, such as decision making, conflict resolution, and work flow. Upon doing all that, they will be developing the interpersonal relationships needed to relate to other team members as well as to the team leader (Korn/Ferry Institute, 2009).
B. Focusing on Team Basic Model

Katzenbach and Smith assert that most people realize the capabilities of teams. However, there tends to be some resistance to moving beyond individual roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities. Their model perceives individuals as not easily accepting responsibility for the performance of others, or welcoming others in taking on the responsibility for them to perform.

To overcome the resistance team members are required to understand, accept, and apply the basics of teamwork. The team basics are represented in a triangular form. There are three overarching goals in the Katzenbach and Smith model: (a) Collective Work Products, (b) Personal Growth, and (c) Performance Results. These outcomes are presented in the vertices of the triangle and indicate what teams can deliver. In contrast, the sides and center of the triangle describe the team elements required to make it happen – Commitment, Skills, and Accountability (Korn/Ferry Institute, ibid, 2009).
C. The T7 Model

Designed in 1995, the T7 Model represented the key facets that influence the performance of work teams. The model was developed by Michael Lombardo and Robert Eichinger for the purpose of attempting to understand how teams work. Extensive research through the literatures led them to identify five factors inside the team and two factors outside the team which impact team effectiveness. Each one of the factors was named to begin with the letter “T.” Hence, the name “T7 Model”.

![T7 Model diagram](Image)

**Figure 8** The T7 Model of Team Effectiveness
Lombardo & Eichinger (Korn/Ferry Institute, ibid, 2009)

The five internal team factors include:

- **Thrust** – a common purpose about what needs to be accomplished or team goal(s)
- **Trust** – in each other as teammates
- **Talent** – the collective skills of the team members to get the job done
- **Teaming Skills** – operating effectively and efficiently as a team
- **Task Skills** – executing successfully or getting the job done

The two external team factors are:

- **Team-Leader Fit** – the degree to which the team leader satisfies the needs of the team members
- **Team Support from the Organization** – the extent to which the leadership of the organization enables the team to perform

Each of the factors inside the team can be delineated into sub-factors or dimensions. For example, “thrust” refers to agreed upon vision, mission, values, and goals among members...
within a team. Moreover, members employ a common strategy and tactics to accomplish goals. Specifically, thrust consists of the following three behavioral dimensions: (a) thrust management, (b) thrust clarity, and (c) thrust commitment. In contrast, “trust” includes the following dimensions: (a) trust in truthful communication, (b) trust in actions, and (c) trust inside the team. In total, the five internal factors consist of 18 dimensions of team effectiveness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal Factor</th>
<th>Dimension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thrust</td>
<td>• Thrust Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Thrust Clarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Thrust Commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>• Trust in Truthful Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Trust in Actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Trust Inside the Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talent</td>
<td>• Talent Acquisition and Enhancement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Talent Allocation and Deployment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaming Skills</td>
<td>• Resource Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Team Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Decision Making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Conflict Resolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Team Atmosphere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Managing Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Skills</td>
<td>• Focusing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Assignment Flexibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Measurement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Delivering the Goods</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 9** Inside the Team Factors and Dimensions Model

All five internal factors have to be present for teams to be high performing. However, teams cannot be high performing unless the necessary organizational and leadership support also are provided. It does not matter how good a team is on thrust, trust, talent, teaming
skills, and task skills, it must have the support from the organization and the leadership fit to be effective (Korn/Ferry Institute, ibid, 2009).

D. The McKinsey 7S Framework

The McKinsey 7S framework addresses the issue of the process on analyzing how well the organization is positioned to achieve its intended objective. It is presumed in this model that some approaches are taken by looking at the internal factors, while others look at external ones. Also, in some cases, the internal and external are combined to get a better perspective on the matter. Furthermore, another method is looking for the congruence between various aspects of the organization being studied. Ultimately, the issue comes down to which factors to study.

While some models of organizational effectiveness go in and out of fashion, one that has persisted is the “McKinsey 7S Framework”. The framework was developed in the early 1980s by Tom Peters and Robert Waterman, who are working as consultants at the McKinsey & Company consulting firm. The basic argument of the model is that there are seven internal aspects of an organization that need to be aligned if it is to be successful. The 7S model can be used in a wide variety of situations where an alignment perspective is useful so that it can assist in improving the performance of a company, examining the likely effects of future changes within a company, aligning departments and processes during a merger or acquisition, and determining how best to implement a proposed strategy. The McKinsey 7S model involves seven interdependent factors which are categorized as either "hard" or "soft" elements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hard Elements</th>
<th>Soft Elements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Shared Values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems</td>
<td>Style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 10** McKinsey’s Hard and Soft Elements

"Hard" elements are easier to define or identify and management can directly influence them; These are strategy statements; organization charts and reporting lines; and formal processes and IT systems. "Soft" elements, on the other hand, can be more difficult to describe, and are less tangible and more influenced by culture. However, these soft elements are as
important as the hard elements if the organization is going to be successful. The elements are described as followed:

- **Strategy**: the plan devised to maintain and build competitive advantage over the competition.

- **Structure**: the way the organization is structured and who reports to whom.

- **Systems**: the daily activities and procedures that staff members engage in to get the job done.

- **Shared Values**: called "super-ordinate goals" when the model was first developed, these are the core values of the company that are evidenced in the corporate culture and the general work ethic.

- **Style**: the style of leadership adopted.

- **Staff**: the employees and their general capabilities.

- **Skills**: the actual skills and competencies of the employees working for the company.

The model is based on the theory that, for an organization to perform well, these seven elements need to be aligned and mutually reinforcing. So, the model can be used to help identify what needs to be realigned to improve performance, or to maintain alignment (and performance) during other types of change. The model, presented in Figure 11 below, depicts the interdependency of the elements and indicates how a change in one affects all the others.

![Figure 11 The McKinsey 7S Model](mindtools.com)
Placing Shared Values in the middle of the model emphasizes that these values are central to the development of all the other critical elements. The company’s structure, strategy, systems, style, staff and skills all stem from why the organization was originally created, and what it stands for. The original vision of the company was formed from the values of the creators. As the values change, so do all the other elements. Whatever the type of change – restructuring, new processes, organizational merger, new systems, change of leadership, and so on – the model can be used to understand how the organizational elements are interrelated, and so ensure that the wider impact of changes made in one area is taken into consideration (mindtools.com).

D.1 7S McKinsey applied in a cross-cultural workplace

The 7S McKinsey model can be used to address the issue on the forces of globalization and internet technology that is driving the need for cultural understanding on a broader, and macro scale. The model can be utilized as part of a holistic approach in trying to discover the shared values at the individual and organizational levels. The practices of cultural and innovative conglomerates such as IBM’s application of the Cultural Orientation’s model and Apple’s strong innovation corporate culture allow the 7S McKinsey model to be the guide for proper working relations. Staff hailing from a foreign country can adjust his/her behavior that would comply with other staff that are culturally different from them (Beardsell, 2009). Another way the 7S McKinsey model can be used is to apply it as an apparatus to determine if the relationship of the organizational culture and national culture are becoming a “family company”. Thus, the concept of a family company entails that the company has a competitive advantage in working as a unit and taking on the challenges of a global economy that is constantly changing. The 7S McKinsey model can assist in pinpointing to see how much or how little the organizations’ core competences, or the “soft factors”, have evolved. For example, if the culture of the organization is determined as these following two components:

1. Organizational Culture - the dominant values and beliefs, and norms, which develop over time and become the relatively enduring features of organizational life.

2. Management Style - more a matter of what managers do than what they say; How do company’s managers spend their time? What are they focusing attention on?
3. Symbolism – the creation and maintenance (or sometimes deconstruction) of meaning is a fundamental responsibility of managers.

Then this can assure the top executives that the workplace will be operated in a smooth and harmonious fashion where people understand what needs to be done regardless of cross-cultural differences (Rethi, 2009).

4.1 Conclusion

The researcher asserts that in order to evaluate on the team’s effectiveness in working and learning together or to explore where there is a need to improve effectiveness, these models can be used to pinpoint areas for decision and action to be taken. In the case of learning as a team, models can be applied as a tool to diagnose for developing interpersonal relationships needed to relate to other team members as well as to the team leader. Also, it can be used as information for allowing the team members to understand, accept, and apply the basics of teamwork, or on what support is strongly required from the organization and the leadership fit to be effective, or to make people understand what needs to be done regardless of cross-cultural differences.

5. What is Team Learning?

Due to ongoing research to grab the essence of team learning, the definition has not been unanimously agreed upon to provide an agreed working definition. Many scholars have been conducting the works of team learning and have often updated the meaning of the term and concept.

5.1 Modern Meaning

Team learning is an on-going, dynamic process through which teams adapt their behavior to better exploit their current circumstances or in response to or in anticipation of changes in their internal or external environment (Hays, 2006). A table is offered below to provide some scholarly work (Kayes, 2006) on the definition of team learning.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Interpretation of Team Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Van der Vegt &amp; Bunderson (2005)</td>
<td>Activities by which team members seek to acquire, share, refine, or combine task-relevant knowledge through interaction with one another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tjosvold, Yu, &amp; Hui (2004)</td>
<td>Recognizing that unexpected, undesired effects have occurred and reflecting on these experiences to reduce the probability of their future occurrence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edmonson (2003)</td>
<td>A tightly coupled, recurring steps of enrollment of carefully selected team members by the leader, followed by pre-trial team preparation, and then by multiple iterations of trial and reflection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gibson &amp; Vermueulen (2003)</td>
<td>Behaviors, including the exploration of knowledge through experimentation, the combination of insights through reflective communication, and the explication and specification of what has been learned through codification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellis et al. (2003)</td>
<td>A relatively permanent change in the team’s collective level of knowledge and skill produced by the shared experience of the team members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edmonson (2002)</td>
<td>An iterative action – reflection process that serves either an incremental or radical learning goal for the organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sole &amp; Edmonson (2002)</td>
<td>Acquisition and application of knowledge that enables a team to address team tasks and issues for which solutions were not previously obvious.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sole &amp; Edmonson (2002b)</td>
<td>Seeking information, experimentation, reflection, and salvaging insights from apparent failures.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 12** Scholarly Work on the Meaning of Team Learning

The latest description from Marquardt (2011) perceives team learning as the process of aligning and developing the group’s capacity to create the desired learning and results for its members; thus working collectively to achieve common objectives in a group (Wikipedia, 2010). In the Learning Organization context, team members tend to share knowledge and commend each other skills.

Team learning is one of the core disciplines in the blueprint for developing a learning organization. It is a process that involves asking questions, seeking feedback, discussing mistakes, evaluating results and using this information to explore and experiment with new ways of organizing and working on an ongoing basis. Team learning aligns and develops the capacity of a team to achieve the desired objective. In the organization, there are three important dimensions for team learning:
1. Learning how to connect the minds of individuals to become one whole intellectual frame.

2. Maintaining trust where each team member remains mindful of the other and are expected to perform in ways that complement each others’ actions.

3. Influencing the ideal practice of a team through other teams so that learning becomes widen throughout the organization.

As a discipline, it involves individual skills and areas of understanding to be done as a collective unit. Whatever the training or development that one goes through to be equipped the purpose is to ask oneself on “how will this allow me to help my team to be more successful and competitive” with a less emphasis on self desire. Individuals upholding the theory of team learning should be proficient in carrying out dialogues and discussions with other people. There is also a call for being creative in having a dialogue and discussion when there are obstacles and challenges presented in the working environment (Senge, p. 236-43). To illustrate this issue, sometimes alignment can breakdown in a team. Rather than having cohesiveness which sets the direction for the team you have a collection of individuals with their own different agendas asserting their energy for individual gain. Here is what it would like when alignment becomes fragile:

Figure 13 A Fragile Alignment in a Learning Organization

It’s obvious that when there is a lack of alignment individuals will cater to their own interest and agenda over the team.

In order for team learning to be taken into effect, there are some recommendations given as a foundation in order for the idea to take its course:
1. **Psychological safety** (Edmondson, 1999) -- a shared belief that the team is safe for interpersonal risk taking; a sense of confidence that the team will not embarrass, reject or punish someone for voicing their opinion. The confidence stems from mutual respect and trust among team members.

2. **Sub-group strength** (Gibson & Vermueulen, 2003) -- subgroups may benefit a team because they provide for a cohort: a group of people who share a similar perspective. Such a cohort enables individuals to bring their unique viewpoints to the table and be heard. For optimal learning behavior to occur, both differences and similarities need to be present in a team. Similarities within subgroups (i.e., cohorts) enable information and insights to surface, while differences across subgroups ensure that a diversity of insights is considered. Hence, teams only benefit from differences between team members if there are also similarities present in the form of subgroups.

3. **Cooperative goals** (Tjosvold, Yu, & Hui, 2004) -- cooperative goals can promote the discussion of problem solving that can help teams and organizations to learn from the mistakes made. Training for errors can explicitly include developing the cooperative goals that appear to be a foundation for learning from mistakes; common tasks and shared rewards can help team members believe that their goals are cooperative. Norms can encourage group members to dig into issues by expressing their opinions and inviting others to discuss theirs. They recognize the common value of discussing problems. They seek to understand each other, recognize that they want to resolve the issue so they can make a mutually advantageous decision and accomplish common tasks, and create new, useful solutions to do so.

4. **Cognitive ability** (Ellis, Hellenback, Ilgen, Porter, West, and Moon, 2003) -- if the organization is interested in increasing learning within project teams, it would be most beneficial for the teams that have individual members who are high in cognitive ability. Should team learning be the primary goal then there should be an opportunity for individuals to question the assertion rather than always being submissive to agree on every topic; doing so would preclude critical analysis and foster premature consensus. The wish to strengthen the relationship between personal characteristics within the team should be on the focus of building a learning environment that is properly aligned to facilitate the process.
5.2 Team Learning Methods

Garvin’s book “Learning in Action” pointed out three types of learning that would enable a learning organization to be effective (Garvin, p. 48, 2000). The three means are intelligence, experience, and experimentation.

Garvin interprets intelligence as the primary goal in securing current information about the environment. The ways for gathering data are through search, inquiry, or observation. Search can be made through journals, literature, company websites, or through expert analysis. Inquiries can be in the form of a survey, questionnaires, or through a focus group. Observation can be made by allowing the natural process in the workplace or marketplace to run its course.

Experience is learned in two distinct ways: repetition and exposure. Repetition solidifies that the similar tasks are efficiently performed over the course of time. Exposure makes certain that a new set of talents is developed. For experience to be enhanced organizations can choose the following concept for action to be taken:

- implement a learning curve to assess the learning progress of the staff.
- coordinate a reflection and review process by having personnel examine cases in a single or comparison form; reviews can also be in the form of focusing on individuals, groups, or organizations,
- conduct experiential learning for work groups to grab the real moment of learning by allowing the task to focus on problems, or designing a program that develops their skills for being equipped for problem-solving.

Experiments are constructed for the purpose of verifying the fact or gaining closeness to the truth. Experiments that have a primary interest to managers are exploratory and hypothesis-testing. Experiment through exploration is for the purpose of seeing what exists, to collect impressions and develop an intricate view of the surrounding environment. As for the latter, hypothesis-testing is designed to discriminate among alternative explanations and to either support or reject the prevailing views. The proof is the desired end rather than the discovery.

In the context of team learning, Bang (2008) puts forward four types of team learning methods that are conducive to the external and internal environment. According to Bang, the external environments are made up of customers and competitors as the main
components, while internal environments are composed of top management and sub units (divisions, departments etc.).

5.2.1 Team learning method 1 – Synergistic

Synergistic team learning occurs when a team creates new knowledge with maximum fit to the external and internal environments in carrying out its project. The highest aim of the team project is to obtain high evaluations from the key person; such as the customer. In order to achieve the accolades, the external environment must be fully researched and updated. Top priority is highly administrated to constantly collect, analyze, and utilize information on industrial trends; how the customer composition is changing; how customer values are transitioning; where the competitors in the same as well as other business domains are going; what kind of strategy a firm should make in this situation; and which benchmarking is available.

5.2.2 Team learning method 2 – Isolated

Isolated learning becomes experienced by the team when it emphasizes fit to the internal environment and pays insufficient attention to the external environment in the new knowledge creation project. In this event, the team regards the external environment as a given, and perceives the internal environment as an influential factor. As a result, the team exerts an effort on creating harmony with other sub-units for maximum positive effects on its project. Bang substantiates that the reason teams fall into the trap of isolated learning is due to the inability to scan the external environment or being insensitive to environmental scanning. Although there is a need for environmental scanning, the team cannot make an effort to investigate superficially when the method for information collection requires a lot of energy and time.

5.2.3 Team learning method 3 – Alienated

Alienated team learning is when a team innovate organizational knowledge with the ever-changing external environment that is taken into consideration, while at the same time there is little interaction done with other sub-units in the organization. It is assumed that when a team deals with outer-oriented projects or consists of outer-oriented members, it is more likely to fall into an alienated learning pattern. When the team pursues the project in a direction it becomes inconsistent with the interests of other sub-units and presents a risk of hindering projects to be completed on time. Opposition, interruption, and uncooperative attitudes of other sub-units may
cause the team to be out of alignment with the input needed for the completion of the project, and fall victim to departmentalization.

5.2.4 Team learning method 4 – Destructive

Destructive learning is done by teams that perform a project with contents and processes that are inconsistent to the external and the internal environments. When a team lacks the capability of sensing and scanning the environment as well as harmonizing with internal stakeholders, the new knowledge becomes lost in the sea. The actions of such a team can turn out to have a serious impact on the organization. This is where organizational effectiveness and the career development of team members become damaged. The main reason for destructive team learning may be in the way that the team is organized. In this situation, members may possess closed and shortsighted attributes while the methods of solving problems and building relationship suddenly become awkward for them. Below is a figure of Bang’s illustrative figure on the four learning types of team learning:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High</th>
<th>Alienate Team Learning</th>
<th>Synergic Team Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Destructive Team Learning</td>
<td>Isolated Team Learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 14** Bang’s Four Learning Types of Team Learning (Bang, 2008)
6. Models Relevant to Team Learning

6.1 Team Learning Pyramid

In his work on the team learning pyramid, Hays (2006) provides the model of team learning as a premise based on three meta-competencies - Dialogue, Reflection, and Mindfulness (DRM). Hays felt that the elements have been covered in the scientific literature to more or less of a degree, but generally treated separately in a form of study. While each aspect has been made known as positive impact indicators upon individual and group learning, effectiveness, performance, and change, the author wanted to unite the components of Dialogue, Reflection, and Mindfulness for the purpose of extracting more benefits out of each one. Hays preliminary research design using four case examples supplied some supporting facts that they can and do operate synergistically.

In elaboration, the team learning pyramid integrates the three meta-competencies related to learning, effectiveness, performance, and change. These meta-competences (dialogue, reflection, and mindfulness) are significant to teams and work groups across a range of enterprise as well as spanning different levels of authority and autonomy. They embody habits of mind and group process skills necessary in collaborative work involving complex problems and tough decisions, including and especially where learning and change are sought. In the idea of the team learning pyramid, DRM are particularly important when working in cross-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder collaborations, and when relationship-building and sustained performances are of concern. DRM comprise a crucial and widely-applicable set of collaborative and learning capacities.

Based on Hays concept of the team learning pyramid, figure 15 portrays Dialogue, Reflection, and Mindfulness as a unified whole in the pyramid. The top-down view of the three-sided pyramid depicts each element of the model as a plane, each dimension of equal importance. Although the elements are distinct and can operate individually, when there is group collaboration they act interdependently. The three meta-competencies are defined as the following:
Dialogue is the discussion between and amongst people to explore issues and solve problems. It is deliberate, purposeful, and sustained.

Reflection is the consideration of one's behavior upon one's own or a team's, and its consequences and implications. Such a behavior includes action and inaction, verbalization and censoring, and a raft of non-verbal communication.

Mindfulness is a state of full awareness and presence. It implies that the individual is acting with reason and understanding of the consequences of his or her behavior.

In theory, a group employing each element of the pyramid—Dialogue, Reflection, and Mindfulness—in a concerted way could reach the pinnacle of collaborative effectiveness, achieving and sustaining heights of performance that group members could not otherwise attain or maintain; each domain is its most concentrated at the apex where they converge. This is where interaction amongst the three elements is greatest and the fullest potential synergy might be realized.

In conclusion from the case examples, the Team Learning Pyramid integrates three meta-competencies related to learning, effectiveness, performance, and change. These meta-competencies are of relevance to teams and work groups across a range of endeavor and spanning different levels of authority and autonomy. They embody habits of mind and group process skills necessary in collaborative work involving complex problems and tough decisions, including and especially where learning and change are sought. DRM are particularly important when working in cross-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder (heterogeneous) collaborations, and when relationship-building and sustained performances are of concern. DRM comprise a crucial and widely-applicable set of collaborative and learning capacities.

6.2 Toyota - The Toyota Way

The concept is a set of principles and behaviors that underlie the Toyota Motor Corporation's managerial approach and production system (Liker, 2003). The principles are on continuous improvement and respect for people.

Continuous Improvement - The principles for continuous improvement include establishing a long-term vision, working on challenges, continual innovation, and going to the source of the issue or problem:
• **Challenges** - Form a long-term vision and meet challenges with courage and creativity.

• **Kaisen** (continuous improvement) - Improve business operations continuously, always driving for innovation and evolution.

• **Genchi Genbutsu** (go and see) - Go to the source to find the facts to make correct decisions, build consensus and achieve goals at the best speed.

• **Respect for People** - The principles relating to respect for people include ways of building respect and teamwork:

  • **Respect** - Respect others. Make every effort to understand each other, take responsibility and do your best to build mutual trust.

  • **Teamwork** - Stimulate personal and professional growth, share the opportunities of development and maximize individual and team performance.

6.3 **Motorola – Six Sigma** (Motorola, 2010)

The company applies the following principles to its concept of Six Sigma:

**Govern** - Defining the leadership roles and responsibilities. Developing an infrastructure that drives projects toward completion.

**Align** - At the leadership level, this principle is about connecting customer requirements to the business strategy and core business processes. This produces relevant improvement targets, stretch goals, and appropriate measures. The purpose is to provide results that are sustainable, measurable, and aligned to the business goals.

**Mobilize** - Customer-focused improvement teams move forward with clear charters, success criteria, and rigorous reviews. Teams receive just-in-time training and are empowered to act.

**Accelerate** - Providing structured education with real-time project work to quickly move the team from learning to doing.

6.4 **Harley Davidson – Product Development Leadership Learning Team**

This concept was originally designed to provide a therapeutic site for staff to voice their frustration and injustice that has occurred in the workplace. A facilitator was present to assist group members avoid unproductive language, cultivate new listening skills, improve
communication patterns, value the difference of others, and developed shared understanding through the use of systems maps to tease hidden mental models. Team members are required to collaborate willingly, be vulnerable, respect the opinion of others, and truly believe in the authenticity of all participants (Oosterwal, 2010).

6.5 Southwest Airlines – Team Delay

Southwest’s culture emphasizes teamwork over individual effort. Southwest uses a procedure called “team delay” which is a less precise reporting of the cause of delays with the goal of diffusing blame and encouraging learning. The team delay is used to point out problems between two or three different employee groups in working together. For example, if customers were still in the jetway at departure time, then the delay was declared a station delay. If customers were on-board at departure time, then it was a flight crew delay. During a team debriefing, all members of the crew would meet to determine the cause of the delay and learn how not to have it happen again. Southwest headquarters emphasizes the theme of “learning from mistakes.”(Leavenworth, 2006)

6.6 Department of Chemistry, West Virginia University – Peer-Led Team Learning

PLTL (Peer-Led Team Learning) is an innovative model in chemistry education. Small groups of students meet weekly for ninety-minute workshop sessions led by a Peer Leader. Together, the group works through challenging problem sets written by WVU chemistry faculty. Workshops are designed to encourage various problem solving strategies, alone, in pairs, and in groups. PLTL has proven to be an effective learning tool for many chemistry students here at WVU (http://pltl.wvu.edu/, 2010).

6.7 Sitting Bull – Team Learning from a Historical Perspective

On June 24, 1876, Sitting Bull led his war band of Sioux warriors to do battle with General Custard and his conscripts (soldiers). He questioned all established assumptions rather than to make contact with the enemy on his terms and in compliance to the traditional rules of engagement. Through a process of constant analysis and assessment, he nurtured the sort of
team learning culture that encourages people to create new ways to realize their potential. The Sioux needed to integrate the strategic thinking and benchmarking process on positive team reinforcement to be integrated into their daily lives. To achieve this aim, Sitting Bull built on the Sioux’s tradition of participative decision making, recognizing that solutions to new problems must come from those who had first-hand experience.

Morale for team learning by Sitting Bull (Murphy, 1993):

1. Developing a Team Learning Culture – participative process in tribal governance; individual involvement in team decision making, balancing the rights of individual expression with the responsibilities of group-living in a world that is difficult and dangerous.

2. Identifying Barriers to Team Learning – Eliminating the self-ego of pompous and arrogance, taking responsibility and follow up on errors that have occurred rather than pointing the finger for blame, preventing people from focusing on the causes of individual events rather than on the underlying processes that connects them, persistence of shared wisdom by learning from others who have encountered lessons learned or have unique practical methods for problem solving and solution finding instead of just relying on one’s own self-experience.

3. Develop a Team Learning Process – Learning need to progress from the bottom; the process relied on input from a wide variety of sources and was limited only by the quality and scope of the information gathered and by the commitment of council members to honor the ground rules of discussion.

7. Application of the Team Learning Concept

The theoretical concept of team learning has been defined as two forms of thought. Some researchers have emphasized it as the process of learning. Other researchers have stressed upon the outcomes (Savelbergh, Storm, Kuipers, 2008). This part of the study takes a look at two factors. The first deals with team learning under the theoretical concept of organizational learning and learning organization to cite any similarities or differences, the latter deals with how other scholars are applying the team learning concept from an internal, external, and facilitative view.
A. Team Learning Under the Theoretical Concept of Organizational Learning

A.1 Defining Organizational Learning

This work is based on Malhotra’s study of defining organizational learning. Malhotra cited the work of Argyris as the process of “detection and correction of errors.” In his view organizations learn through individuals acting as agents for them: “The individuals’ learning activities, in turn, are facilitated or inhibited by an ecological system of factors that may be called an organizational learning system” (Malhotra, 1996). Malhotra acquires Huber’s work as the consideration of four constructs that are integrally linked to organizational learning: knowledge acquisition, information distribution, information interpretation, and organizational memory. Malhotra documents Huber’s study of clarifying that learning does not have to be conscious or intentional; learning does not always increase the learner’s effectiveness, or even potential effectiveness; learning need not result in observable changes in behavior. From a behavioral perspective, Malhotra records Huber on asserting that an entity learns if, through its processing of information, the range of its potential behaviors is changed (Malhotra, 1996). Malhotra alludes to the work of Weick who argues that defining the property of learning is the combination of same stimulus and different responses. However it is rare in organizations; either organizations don’t learn or that organizations learn but in nontraditional ways. He further notes Weick’s statement as saying that “perhaps organizations are not built to learn”. Instead, they are patterns of means-ends relations deliberately designed to make the same routine response to different stimuli, a pattern which is antithetical to learning in the traditional sense” (Malhotra, 1996).

A.2 Team Learning and Organizational Learning

1) Favorable conditions for teams to learn

A longitudinal case study of three manufacturing companies in Sweden highlighted the impact of creating favorable learning conditions in a team-based work organization. In order for team to actually learn as a collaborative unit there has to be an objectives that is constructive and conditions that are subjective to learning; in a sense this condition has to allow the individual team member’s ability to utilize these types of surroundings. From the three case studies on the Swedish manufacturing companies, it is apparent that the realization of a team organization in the sense of a learning organization is depended upon several important conditions; access to adequate challenging works tasks, team leadership, a supportive climate, an adequate team design
and access to learning support. Some companies reconcile learning by putting forward a team-based production group in order to meet with the increasing demands on an efficient production. Even the best intentions backfire when the idea becomes more time-consuming rather than being resourceful. Therefore, to truly encourage learning as a team management may have to alleviate the constraints that inhibit the opportunity for development. The challenge in creating favorable conditions for learning in intensive production systems, is to set aside certain indispensable resources for learning (including time and learning support) and to argue that the gains from the economization of the production should be reinvested in forms supportive of learning and competence development (Kock, 2007).

2) Policies and procedures for teams to learn

While the approach to learning is different for each person, their behaviors can be moderated to the desired outcome through the institutional routine of that organization. In the view of organizational learning, the organization does not really learn but rather produce an irrigational flow for learning that represents intuitiveness, experimentation, and experience to become the code of business to reflect on the organizational strategy. Teams are asked to learn to discover innovative or effective practical methods that will assist the organization in reducing expenses, improving quality of products and services, and increasing customer satisfaction. Organizations that set the policies and procedures also dictate the condition for learning to be encouraged at the individual level. It is at this level that the learning process will be influenced by the predisposition to a particular worldview and learning style. When the organization fosters team to learn and allocates the precedent to learn, the outcome becomes a group of individual workers who are willing to make a positive contribution to learning with other team members and the organization at large. The individuals become learners who are (1) continuously improving their work skills, (2) motivated to learn job-relevant skills, and (3) willing to invest in self-improvement (Lim, Laosirihongthong, and Chan, 2006). Such procedures make learning on part of the individual to contribute to the team, which in turn contributes to the organization. Individuals not only learn by themselves, but they also learn by the patterns of behavior established in the organization, at the organizational level (Murray and Moses, 2005).
B. Team Learning Under the Theoretical Concept of Learning Organization

B.1 Defining the Learning Organization

Malhotra quotes Senge in defining the Learning Organization as the organization "in which you cannot not learn because learning is so insinuated into the fabric of life." Also, it is defined as "a group of people continually enhancing their capacity to create what they want to create." For Malhotra, Senge views the theory as an "Organization with an ingrained philosophy for anticipating, reacting and responding to change, complexity and uncertainty." The concept of Learning Organization is increasingly relevant given the increasing complexity and uncertainty of the organizational environment. Malhotra reports Senge's remark as stating that "The rate at which organizations learn may become the only sustainable source of competitive advantage" (Malhotra, 1996). Malhotra mentions McGill who defines the Learning Organization as "a company that can respond to new information by altering the very "programming" by which information is processed and evaluated."

B.2 Team Learning and the Learning Organization

Due to operational factors that have become increasingly complex, teams that are under the guidance of a learning organization are encouraged to take an initiative on mastering their capability and capacity for learning. Such a learning organization is asking teams to have the ability to think, create, and learn as a unit. They are requesting that the teams learn how to be better at creating and capturing what they have learned. Team learning under this theory is emphasized on self-managing of learning and on stimulating the free flow of ideas and creativity. Success is brought about in the learning system of the team when the teams share their experience, both negative and positive, with other groups in the organization and promote vigorous corporate intellectual growth. There is an ability on part of the teams to generate knowledge through an analysis of complex issues, innovative action, and collective problem solving. Learning is about improving the performance from experience and historical events. Any new project to be encountered must be allowed the opportunity to experiment in the most rapid and efficient fashion thus allowing for the knowledge to be transferred between team members and to the rest of the organization (Marquardt, 1999).

Team learning operates as an overlap between organizational learning and individual learning. In this theory the teams function and provide the benefits of the learning
organization. The utilization of the combined resources and energies of individuals, teams, and the organization is what constitutes the learning organization (Watkins and Marsick, 1993). Watkins and Marsick (1996) proposed a model of a learning organization where the first component represents people who comprise an organization, and the second component represents the structures and culture created by the social institution of the organization. Theories of learning organization have emphasized that the organization needs to work with people at the individual and group levels first. People also need to be empowered to take learning initiatives. "In other words, individuals learn first as individuals, but as they join together in organizational change, they learn as clusters, teams, networks, and increasingly larger units" (Watkins and Marsick, 1996). A learning organization is about seeking to create a full range of teams, including continuous improvement upon teams, cross-functional teams, quality management teams, and even organizational learning teams. These types of teams take time for reflection and for action learning. They play the role in being the catalyst for causing fundamental organizational change and renewal. Not only is problem solving encouraged on teams for taking action but also on generating a fundamental new understanding of the business through the process of collective learning (Marquardt, 1999).

C. Knowledge and Learning Tools for Team/Teamwork

C.1 U.S. Army's Opposing Force

The United State Army's Opposing Force is a military organization that always seems to have to challenge itself on having to work with a minimal amount of technological equipment, and on reducing manpower and resources to prevent a budget deficit. Despite the hurdles that the organization has to go through they still manage to stay highly competitive. Nevertheless, the United State Army's Opposing Force (OPFOR) remains firmly committed in preparing soldiers for combat by having their units-in-training to be engaged in a variety of mock campaigns under a wide range of conditions. Just about every month soldiers are dispatched into the training arena to take part in tactics of fighting the enemy or playing the role of the adversary so that other fellow soldiers can learn how to hone their tactics of defense. These soldiers assume the roles of a hostile army or insurgents, paramilitary units, or terrorists. The two sides battle on foot, in tanks, and in helicopters dodging artillery, land mines, and chemical weapons. OPFOR's
consistent success can be attributed to its utilization of the *After-Action Review*. AAR (*After-Action Review*) is a tool designed for extracting lessons from one event or project and applying them to others (Darling, Parry, and Moore, 2005).

OPFOR treats every action as an opportunity for learning; action is reviewed as what to do as well as how to think. Rather than producing static “knowledge assets” to file away in a management report or repository, OPFOR’s AARs generate raw material that the brigade feeds back into the execution cycle. While these reviews generate numerous lessons, nothing is really considered a significance until these lessons are successfully applied and validated. It is the action that follows from the idea that becomes a genuine learning experience. Each unit within OPFOR has established a clear understanding of what it intends to do and how it plans to do it and has shared that understanding with all other units. The units have individually and collectively made predictions about what will occur, identified challenges that may arise, and built into their plans ways to address those challenges. Therefore, when OPFOR takes action it will be executing a plan but also observing and testing that plan. The early meetings and rehearsals produce a testable hypothesis – “In this situation, given this mission, if we take this action, we will accomplish that outcome”. OPFOR is thus able to select the crucial lessons it wants to learn from each action and focus soldier’s attention on them in advance. One of the objectives of the AAR is to determine what worked and what didn’t for the purpose of enabling OPFOR to refine its ability to predict what will work and what won’t work in the future. The philosophy is the notion that it is important to correct things but it is highly important for correct thinking; OPFOR has determined that flawed assumptions are the most common cause of flawed execution. While technical corrections affect only the problem that is fixed, it is the thought-process correction (learning) which affects the unit’s ability to plan, adapt, and succeed in future battles (Darling, Parry, and Moore, 2005).

**C.2 General Electric – Action Learning**

General Electric is highly successful due to its management initiative in ensuring that the teams are prepared to become leaders for change. The company knows that change is the key not only to survival but also to longevity in success. GE assists their management team by providing training that allowed the managers an opportunity to reach consensus on the barriers to
change and how best to overcome them. The training also encouraged them to consider both the hard barriers to change which are considered as the organizational structure, capabilities, and resources, and on the soft which are the issues of how members of the leadership team individually and collectively behave and spend their time. In addition, the eternal management challenge of balancing the short term and the long term were explicitly addressed. Furthermore, beyond providing concepts that would make people look at their businesses and themselves differently, the training developed a form of communication that allowed the team to raise the awareness inside and across GE’s business for change (Prokesh, 2009).

The company promotes the concept of action learning which is a theoretical method that centers around a problem, a project, a challenge, an issue, or a task - the resolution of which is of high importance to an individual, a team, or the organization. Action Learning is an educational process whereby the participant studies their own actions and experience in order to improve performance. The concept is relevant to learning-by-doing and teaching through examples and repetitions (Wiki, 2010). Since 1986, GE has been using action learning for its leadership programs when it moved away from a more lecture-based approach and from expensive training. GE’s action learning teams focus on GE’s specific problems, risks, and challenges, all of which require that decisions are made in short spans of time. The action learning teams normally consist of five to seven people who come from diverse functions to find strategies and implement actions in order to solve the issues. By implementing action learning, GE has obtained advantages such as increasing performance and developing employees. In specific, action learning contributed to GE’s corporate culture and performance. In regards of GE’s culture, action learning led to more open dialogue and increased trust. Employees also became more involved, and their overall morale improved. Action learning helped to remove boundaries, thereby allowing employees to work more easily across departments through hierarchies (The Knowledge Lens, 2010). In action learning, the core entity is the action learning group which is ideally composed of people with diverse backgrounds and experiences. Those differences will enable the group to see the problem or task from a variety of perspectives, and thus be able to offer fresh and innovative viewpoints. Depending on the action learning problem, groups may be volunteers or be appointed, may be from various functions or departments, may include individuals from other organizations or professions, and may involve suppliers as well as
customers. General Electric has remained dedicated in supporting action learning for their teams to become an effective learning unit for raising the profile of the company's past accomplishments. In addition to solving problems that have increased sales and decreased costs by billions of dollars, action learning has enabled GE people to learn and apply new skills while working on real tasks of the company—skills in such areas as teambuilding, problem solving, change management, conflict resolution, communications, coaching, and facilitation (Marquardt, 2004). During the past 10 years, GE has achieved the following results through its action learning groups - boundaryless behavior, in which employees work more easily across borders and business units, greater speed in decision making and implementation, accountability occurring at more appropriate levels with less controlling leadership, involvement of employees, resulting in improved morale, a management willing to take more risks, reduction of analysis-paralysis, more open dialogue and increased trust among staff, and reduced impact of the burdens of hierarchy.

In order to optimize the success of action learning at GE, the following criteria have been established - each action learning project needs to have consistent high level champions, each action learning group should have a real business problem or opportunity that's well defined and scoped, quality planning time is critical to final outcome and success of each action learning group, there must be a strong commitment for action learning from GE leaders and action learning members, follow-up is critical throughout the action learning project, it is important to keep employees involved in implementation, and there needs to be an established process with checkpoints, leaders must ensure that employees have the support needed to implement the action plans, participants must ensure there's no overlap or duplication with other ongoing work in the organization, sponsors must respond positively to the recommendations made by the action learning group unless it's illegal, unethical, or out of bounds, in which case the sponsors should modify the recommendations, there should be clear boundaries on what's open to change and what's not (financial, headcount, technology enhancements, customers), and top management should have a clear understanding and orientation on how action learning works (Marquardt, 2004).
C.3 Communities of Practice

Communities of Practice are groups of people informally bound together by shared expertise and passion for a joint enterprise. For example, these practicing communities can be engineers who are engaged in deep water drilling, consultants who specialize in strategic marketing, or frontline managers in charge of check processing at a large commercial bank. Communities of Practice can be dated back to ancient Greece where corporations of metal workers, potters, masons, and other craftsmen had both a social purpose and business function. In theory, Communities of Practice can drive strategy, generate new lines of business, solve problems, promote the spread of best practices, develop people's professional skills, and help companies recruit and retain talent. In addition to the concept, the procedures for implementation are rather informal; teams organize themselves as well as setting their own agendas and establishing their own leadership. Membership in a Community of Practice is self-selected. This translates as people tending to know when and if they should join. They know if they have something to give and whether they are likely to take something away. The following are cases using Community of Practice in true action form. At the Hill's Pet Nutrition facility in Richmond, Indiana, line technicians gather for a weekly meeting to discuss about recent successes and frustrations as well as on the challenges that are looming ahead. Their purpose of having a Community of Practice was on learning how such groups could help the company develop and retain technical expertise. They would select a “mayor” that has been chosen by his peers to arrange issues on track on a weekly basis and to ensure that people with relevant expertise are present when needed. In this case, the team wants to know if it is possible to substitute pneumatic tubes for a balky conveyer belt that carried the pet food kibbles to the packaging bin. The proposal had been met with some questions of concern as they believed that the conveyer system would work just fine if people took careful measures in operating it. Doubts fell on the issue of being difficult to incorporate with the plant's current technology. As the team deliberated they allowed one of the members to present evidence that the technology was reliable and would be compatible with the existing equipment. The decision was given the permission to allow it the chance to work. As a result, the decision to implement obtained a significant reduction in downtime and wasted pet food related to packaging. In addition to benefitting the company in this way, the community provides important benefits for members - it provides them
opportunities to solve irritating problems and hone their ability to operate the plant effectively (Wenger and Snyder, 2000). In another case, a Hewlett-Packard team wanted to learn more about devising a software product that can minimize computer downtime for customers they can establish a monthly conference with teams from other departments. The team benefitted by discovering that they have problems that are common with each other and were able to learn with a great deal from one another. At times, the issue of wanting others to know about experiences with a major customer on installing a product can be seen as difficult when other community members constantly interrupts with questions and examples from their own experiences. But in contrast they can become antecedents to assist in understanding how to work more effectively with clients. As the meeting boiled down to the source of the problem, other members of the team offered to take the matter up for experimentation and to see if other healthy alternatives can be pursued upon that will grant customer satisfaction. The Hewlett-Packard participants were able to learn together as a cohesive troop by focusing on problems that were directly related to their work. In the short term, it helped build both their communities and their shared practices—thus enabling the development of capabilities that are critical for continuing the success of the organizations (Wenger and Snyder, 2000).

C.4 Challenge Session

The rationale is that groups and individuals think by recognizing and reacting to patterns, with most reactions emerging as a result of building on past experiences in a logical and linear fashion, the underlying assumption is that the future will correlate with the past. While it is a necessity to have such in certain situations, often at times these individuals and groups become trapped in such modes of thinking. Also, there is a lack of attempt to think beyond the situation. When a different or new challenge is posed, the manner in which people are conditioned to think means it is difficult to adjust.

The "Challenge Session" was created to address the application for understanding in a simple and systematic manner. This instrument is a structured problem-solving framework which aims to create changes in the way that groups or individuals think about and solve problems. The roots of the approach are in the work of a Russian patent officer Genrich Altshuller, who undertook a study of 200,000 patents to look for the basic principles and patterns
in the world’s most innovative products. He found that each of the most successful patents primarily solved an ‘inventive problem’, defined as those made up of conflicting requirements, or challenges. This idea was taken and expanded by de Bono, who made it famous in his lateral thinking techniques. The process of the “Challenge Session” is to generate a series of challenge statements, which are defined as deliberately provocative statements about a particular situation. These are usually generated by taking accepted wisdoms - things which are taken for granted about a particular situation - and treating them as if they were untrue. This initially calls for a suspension of judgment, and the uncritical use of specific challenge statements to generate ideas about solving the problem. This logical ‘reversal’ helps individuals and groups escape from a conservative paradigm. In addition, the idea provides a starting point thinking that is original and creative. The process for a challenge session is as followed - identify the problem, brainstorm a series of challenge statements, use the challenge statements to generate new ideas, prioritize the best ideas, and use pilots to test them out in the live environment, and rollout more widely. (http://www.odi.org.uk/rapid/tools/toolkits/KM/Challenge_sessions.html)

C.5 Blame vs. Gain Behaviors:

The “Blame vs. Gain Behaviors” is considered as a very simple tool for assisting managers to reflect on their own attitudes and responses to the errors and mistakes that have been made. According to the “Active Learning Network for Accountability” and “Performance in Humanitarian Action 2002 Annual Review”: ‘Defensive reasoning’ is one that may have particular relevance to the Humanitarian Sector, with its vocational nature and high levels of personal and professional commitment. For many years, Argyris’s work has demonstrated that individuals develop defensive routines to protect themselves from threatening situations, such as ‘critically examining their own role in the organization’. These routines limit their ability to discover ‘how the very way they go about defining and solving problems can be a source of problem in its own right’. In short they block the ability to learn to see or do things differently…

- The culture of an organization can serve to reinforce ‘defensive routines’ and inhibit learning. To quote Argyris (1991) directly: ‘... if learning is to persist, managers and employees must also look inward. They need to reflect critically on their own behavior, identify
the ways they often inadvertently contribute to the organization’s problems, and then change how
they act.’

- Argyris demonstrated that skilled professionals were particularly good at using
defensive reasoning because they had never learned how to learn from failure. At the point that
mistakes happen, such people become defensive, screen out criticism, and put the ‘blame’ on
anyone and everyone but themselves. This stands in clear opposition to the need for openness and
self-critical analysis that is required for effective learning.

Detailed description of the process

Step 1: Use a flipchart or projector to show the Blame vs. Gain Behaviors to the
assembled group. Read out each “Blame” behavior and the corresponding Gain behavior, and ask
for comments on each one as they are read out.

Step 2: Ask participants to volunteer examples of when they had been on the
receiving end of blame behaviors or gain behaviors, and ask for their reasoning as to why this
happened and with what consequences. Capture the points on flipchart sheets. Don’t worry if
things build slowly - this is an inherently uncomfortable subject!

Step 3: Repeat Step 2 for when the participants had demonstrated blame or gain
behaviors. Ask for reasons.

Step 4: Get the group to reflect collectively on whether blame behaviors are always
unjustified, or if gain behaviors are always appropriate. Try and get a shared idea on what an
appropriate balance would be.

Step 5: Brainstorm ideas for taking a more balanced approach to dealing with
mistakes across the organization. Consider using Force Field Analysis (Tool 11) to reflect on the
forces for and against the required changes.


Below is an example of how the tool is used:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blame behaviors</th>
<th>Gain behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Judging</strong></td>
<td><strong>Exploring</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;You were wrong.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;What happened?&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Showing emotion</strong></td>
<td><strong>Remaining calm</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I'm furious with you.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Try not to worry about it.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reacting to what you think happened</strong></td>
<td><strong>Finding out exactly what happened</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;You should have...&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Let's take this one step at a time.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Blaming people for getting it wrong</strong></td>
<td><strong>Focusing on the process that allowed</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;You should never have let this happen.&quot;</td>
<td>the mistake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Finding fault</strong></td>
<td><strong>Providing support</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;You only have yourself to blame&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;This must be difficult for you but don't forget this has happened to us all.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assuming the person should feel guilty/be</strong></td>
<td><strong>Assuming the person wants to learn</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>guilty/be contrite</td>
<td>&quot;What are the main lessons for us?&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;You really only have yourself to blame.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Seeing mistakes as something must be avoided</strong></td>
<td><strong>Seeing mistakes as part of a learning</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;This must never happen again.&quot;</td>
<td>process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;We can learn a lot from this.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 16**  Sample of Blame vs. Gain Behaviors Tool (http://www.odi.org.uk/rapid/tools/Toolkits/KM/Blame_vs_Gain.html)

The reframing matrix, as a knowledge and learning tool, is a simple technique that helps you to look at organizational problems from a number of different viewpoints, and expands the range of creative solutions that you can generate. The basic approach relies on the fact that different people with different experiences approach problems in different ways. This technique helps groups to put themselves into the mindsets of different people and imagine the solutions, or problems, they would come up with regards to a key question or problem.

The argument is that perspective is a mental view, an ingrained way of perceiving the world. Different people have different experiences and see things in different ways: understanding how they do expand the range of solutions that one might devise to address a question or problem.

**Detailed description of the process**

First, put the question to be asked in the middle of a grid. Use boxes around the grid for the different perspectives. This is simply an easy way of laying out the problem. Two different approaches to the reframing matrix are demonstrated here, but it is important to note that many different techniques can be utilized. The first approach, which is called the Four Ps, relies on looking at a problem by following the different perspectives that may exist within a development or humanitarian organization: Program perspective: Are there any issues with the program or
service we are delivering? Planning perspective: Are our business or communications plans appropriate? Potential perspective: Is it scalable and replicable? People perspective: What do the different people involved think? An example of this approach is shown in the figure (below), as applied to the problem of a new program which has not been fundraising effectively.

![Figure 17 Sample of Reframing Matrix](http://www.odi.org.uk/rapid/tools/toolkits/KM/Reframing_matrix.html)

The second approach to using a reframing matrix is to look at the problem from the viewpoints of different specialists. The way that a doctor, for example, looks at a problem would be different from the approach a water engineer would use, which would be different from a fundraiser’s perspective. In humanitarian and development work, it may be useful think through the potential perspectives of different internal and external stakeholders (http://www.odi.org.uk/rapid/tools/toolkits/KM/Reframing_matrix.html).

In a case example that is relevant to the idea of applying the reframing matrix, former Chairman of Coca-Cola, Roberto Goizueta asked a group of his senior management team about the direction of company sales. “What is our market share?” “45% they confidently responded.” “How many ounces of liquid does a human being need to drink a day?” Goizueta inquired. “64 ounces a day,” came the puzzled reply. “On average, how many ounces of all of our products does a person drink per day?” Goizueta asked. “2 ounces,” was the reply. “What’s our market share?” came his final query. According to this report from Paladion Associates, with one big idea, based on a change in perspective, Roberto Goizueta changed the future of one of the greatest institutions in the world. Coca-Cola’s managerial team saw the traditional soft drink markets as
saturated. Their company’s growth had reached its peak, and the only alternative was to look elsewhere for growth. With a change in perspective they discovered the competition was not just Pepsi, but was in fact a whole range of beverage alternatives. Goizueta’s perspective shift set the management team of Coke on a search for growth opportunities elsewhere in the world. This shift continues to make Coca-Cola one of the most recognized and valuable companies in the world (Paladin, 2010).

D. Team Learning as an Internal Concept

1) Edmondson (1999) - Psychological Safety and Learning Behavior in Work Teams

Edmondson is one of the leading researchers on team learning who has pioneered in extracting the critical points for developing team learning as a process. Her work has been cited by many scholars coming across the study of team learning. In one of her earliest works she presents a model of team learning and puts it to the test in a multi-method field study. Edmondson’s study was conducted under the revisions of work teams in a variety of organizational settings which have shown that team effectiveness was enabled by structural features. These features were a well-designed team task, appropriate team composition, and a context that ensures the availability of information, resources, and rewards. She refers to other scholars’ conclusion that the structure and design, including equipment, materials, physical environment, and pay systems are to be deemed as highly important variables for improving work-team performance. From this point, Edmondson crossed upon the field of organizational learning for which ignited her research to take on a more holistic view of team learning. Her work highlighted organization learning as emphasizing cognitive and interpersonal factors to explain effectiveness, demonstrating that individuals’ tacit beliefs about interpersonal interaction inhibit learning behavior and giving rise to ineffectiveness in organizations. She underwent a different approach to understanding learning in organizations by examining to what extent and under what conditions learning occurs naturally in organizational work groups. Edmonson felt that to understand learning behavior in teams, it was necessary to examine the team structures and shared beliefs in a joint manner by applying both quantitative and qualitative methods. Her work constructed the following hypothesis for assessment:
1. Learning behavior in teams is positively associated with team performance.

2. Team psychological safety is positively associated with learning behavior in organizational work teams.

3. Team learning behavior mediates between team psychological safety and team performance.

4. Team efficacy is positively associated with team learning behavior.

5. Team efficacy is positively associated with team learning behavior, controlling for the effects of team psychological safety.

6. Team leader coaching and context support are positively associated with team psychological safety.

7. Team psychological safety mediates between the antecedents of team leader coaching and context support and the outcome of team learning behavior.

8. Team efficacy mediates between the antecedents of team leader coaching and context support and the outcome of team learning behavior.

Real work teams in an organization were selected as samples and were preliminary observed and interviewed to confirm that their activities produced team learning behavior; according to Edmondson, the research site was a good site for exploring into the phenomenon and to investigate factors associated with team learning. Based on her findings, the results showed that psychological safety is a mechanism that helps explain how previously studied structural factors, such as context support and team leader coaching, influence behavioral and performance outcomes. Psychological safety affects learning behavior and in its presence affects the performance of a team.

2) Edmondson (2003) - Framing for Learning

Edmondson discusses the issue of how sometimes anxiety can overwhelm individuals, such as a project that implements technology. People start to interpret ambiguous cues and draw conclusions about the meaning of what is around them. When this occurs such conclusions drawn can be taken for granted, thus becoming rarely spontaneously re-evaluated or checked for correctness. This can often lead to shared assumptions and beliefs that are beyond reality. Edmondson exploration on the effects of shared frames in the technology implementation was a study to find an appropriate method for team leaders to reframe an implementation project
to increase the chances of successful outcomes. She notes that the frame of a person’s mind could either create meanings that can display a cognitive behavior that becomes passive and unconscious or active and conscious toward the fact. **Edmondson’s approach demonstrates the impact that teams need to strive on to learn a lot from each other and the circumstances in order for the team to implement the right course for action.** Her case studies based on reframing at four hospitals revealed that some have made the effort to do so while others don’t. The three dimensions that emerged as characterizing differences in how technology implementation was framed were the project purpose, the leader’s role, and the team’s role. These dimensions consisted of a learning oriented approach competing against a coping approach. The effort that allowed achievement was a practice of aspirational aims and coaching-oriented leadership. The subjects of the study were inspired by the challenge of learning something new while helping people. The teams explicitly communicated their interdependence with fellow colleagues; they emphasize their own fallibility and need for others’ input for the technology program to work. No one was seen as having an authority over each other. Instead everyone displayed a role as a working partner. While the ones that had a coping approach displayed a defensive attitude and a technically oriented leadership. This made the team members viewed the technology as a necessary burden to be endured. These teams were driven by concerns about competition and by a sense of the necessity of coping with the inevitable and sometimes oppressive force of technological change. In order for the team learning to be in its full process there must be an opportunity to go beyond just getting the job done right on the first try. This approach enables the workers to learn more in the process and ultimately treats the task as performing with effectiveness and standard. The process of trial and reflection is most successful when the participants are open to change, eager to find the best fit, and recognize that other people may have different frames—observing or interpreting something in a different way or may have different information at the outset.

3) **Edmondson (2002) - Managing the Risk of Learning**

Edmondson’s work attempts to address the issue of when the times of significant organizational or environmental start to change the potential for anxiety becomes increased because people are forced to take action with a lack of conscience on whether the procedures done will lead to the expected outcome. Even the organizational culture comes short in relieving
the stress and uncertainty that accompany novel behaviors or activities. For the purpose of moderating the positive relationship between a compelling goal and team learning, Edmondson puts forward the concept of psychological safety. Her premise of team learning is that it requires coordination and some degree of structure; this ensures that insights are gained from members’ collective experience and also used to guide subsequent action. As teams are made up of individuals, Edmondson points out that the learning by individuals is also an iterative process in which actions are taken, reflected upon, and modified in an ongoing method. When teams are engaged in learning the process consists of iterative cycles of action, reflection, and adjustment. Therefore, what is being learned, made more effective, or disseminated are routines for conducting work that accomplishes goals. The idea for team learning is that the presence of psychological safety can enhance not only on the motivating effects of goals on behavior but allowing groups to set high goals and work towards them through cycles of learning and collaboration. Furthermore, the concept moderates the relationship between a compelling team goal and a team learning process which enhances or inhibits the effect of goals on team learning.

E. Team Learning as an External Concept

1. Hays (2006) - The Team Learning Pyramid

“Hays Team Learning Pyramid” is a model of team learning premised on three meta-competencies, Dialogue, Reflection, and Mindfulness (DRM). The elements within the model have been covered in the scientific literature to more or less of a degree, but generally treated separately. According to Hays, each element (on its own) has made a positive impact upon individual and group learning, effectiveness, performance, and change. The approach of uniting Dialogue, Reflection, and Mindfulness is an attempt to gain even more out of each element. One case example reveals the model can and do operate synergistically on teamwork and team building. Below is a detailed case example of teamwork and team-Building applied with the team learning pyramid.

In an opportunity to build teamwork skills and create a more collaborative and effective work culture in a government department, multiple teams were assembled from diverse corporate functions. As part of the team-building process, teams undertook training together in various aspects of team theory and principles. Separately, they were each assigned a corporate
project to work on that drew on their diverse skills and positions. This was their first chance to apply what they were learning (Period 1). The work that they did (or attempted to do) was the subject of on-going workshop Dialogue. Each team was exposed to the experiences, successes and failures, learning, and reflections of others. They could solve problems together, leverage initiatives, and learn collectively from individual experiences. At the completion of P1, each teams had to present a reflective retrospective and lessons learnt to their peers. This included commitments that they would take into the next project cycle (P2), along with why they were making those particular commitments.

As with P1, teams had on-going collective sessions to explore progress and compare and contrast it with theory and “best practice” in P2. They had to report on how they were working differently and better than they had in P1, and discuss the nuances and deeper realizations they were having regarding team work and their individual contributions to its effectiveness (successes and problems they were experiencing). Workshop activities were designed to work through issues as a larger group where respective teams were “stuck,” either in terms of their project (the task) or their working relationships and effectiveness (the process). Team members came to see that both task and process effectiveness is critical to sustainable high-performance. Realizing that they were succeeding corporately at great cost to individual health and team effectiveness and stability, they returned to their own areas with new insights and values regarding team health and function. Moreover, they returned with a heightened consciousness about teamwork and collaboration, and their own role and behavior and their interaction with and impact upon team mates or individuals in the teams they led (Mindfulness). They began positively changing the organization as they worked hard to change themselves.

2) Edmondson and Cannon (2004) Failing to Learn and Learning to Fail (Intelligently)

Provides insight into what makes learning from failure so difficult to put into practice – question is posed as why organizations fail to learn from failure. The question also is addressed in the form of a strategy to promote innovation and improvement. To conduct their study in providing the answers the authors applied a deliberate experimentation by clarifying the key processes through which learning can be attained through failure. The experiment was seen as a method for accelerating the organization’s learning. An illustration has been provided to
state the importance of understanding and practicing three specific learning processes, and describe ways of anticipating and removing barriers to engaging them. They suggested that organizational learning from failure is feasible but involves skillful management of three distinct but interrelated processes: identifying failure, analyzing and discussing failure, and experimentation. The study raises the awareness that few organizations make effective use of failures for learning because of the barriers that present themselves as formidable and deep-rooted. The support to this assumption comes from the properties of the technical systems combined with properties of social systems in most organizations to make failures' lessons especially difficult to assemble. Those organizations that are able to learn from their failures treat them as if they were research.

F. Team Learning as a Facilitative Concept

1) Kayes (2008) - The 1996 Mount Everest Climbing Disaster

The study by Kayes utilizes team learning as a theoretical analysis to demonstrate how learning breaks down in a team when coming across a changing environment. The events reviewed at the 1996 Mount Everest climbing expedition provide the basis for a process theory of team breakdown and disclose some significant variables that have aroused to the disintegration. With Kayes' implication on a course of action for why team learning goes wrong, the analysis provides the center for a better understanding on the limits of how organizations learn and adapt to the environments that are constantly changing. Kayes' research offers insight into learning in short term project teams, common organizational disaster and the relationship between learning and leadership. The article contributes in developing a sound reason to the importance of team-level learning and its impact on organizational learning. This is done by concentrating on the process (rather than the variance) factors that are associated with the collapse of team learning.

2) Ndletyana (2003) - The Impact of Culture on Team Learning in a South African Context

Ndletyana's article pinpoints on the issue of how the effects of globalization, increased competition, rapid changes in the market economy, and accelerated technological advances and its effect on how businesses do their work have called on for the increase use of teams in organization. She views team learning as a framework for improving teams to become
more effective. Her work argues that culture has a significant effect on learning because of its influence on interpersonal relationships and group conditions and how these enhance or inhibit the ability of team members to contribute fully to creating knowledge in teams. A pilot study was explored to see the effect of culture on team learning in culturally diverse teams. Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions were applied to provide the groundwork for detecting the factors that can contribute to the significance of establishing team learning in a South African context. Based on her conclusions, Ndletyana offers an interesting policy for human resources development professionals that have the intention of facilitating team learning. Recommendation was based on historical events, which continues to have an influence in the presence, as a way for understanding how the culture took its form and then educate the team members to be fully aware of the intangible issues that can either strengthen or undermine the emotions of the workers.


Varma-Nelson and Coppola’s study is rationalized through the issue that progress in understanding designs for teaching and learning is following a parallel path to research, and in response to the same pressure, that is, increased sophistication and the need to do better with more demands within the constraints of finite time and limited resources. The authors work attest that team learning prepares students to work effectively with people, including those who are different from themselves, by generally reliance on, and trust and respect for the perspectives and work of others. The work feels that there is a strong focus on process as well as product that ensures good students to benefit from learning and appreciating diverse approaches. In particular, explanatory and sense-making skills derived from discussion, critique, and other aspects of reflective practice, such as effective revision and editing others’ work and ideas. Their study refers to the simplest proposition of giving students the opportunity to express what they know by participating in a team, and in doing so, learning gains should be reflected in traditional measures, such as test scores. The model known as “Peer-Led-Team Learning” (PLTL) was applied in the learning session. It is a weekly 1.5-hour peer-led workshop, where students interact to solve carefully structured problems under the guidance of a peer leader. Six to eight students work as a team to solve problems. The Peer leader clarifies goals, ensures that team members engage with the materials and with each other, builds commitment and confidence, and encourages debate and discussion. Based on their analysis, Varma-Nelson and Coppola outlined six critical components
for successful integration of the PLTL model into a course. These components have been repeatedly found to contribute to successful student performance, while their absence has led to problems in implementation and lack of gains in student performance and retention. The components were identified as followed:

1. The workshops are integral to the course, not an optional add-on.
2. The workshop materials are challenging, intended to encourage active learning and to work with groups.
3. The workshop leaders are well trained and closely supervised, with attention to knowledge of chemistry and teaching/learning techniques.
4. The faculty teaching the course was closely involved with the workshops and the workshop leaders.
5. The organizational arrangements including the size of the group, space, time, and noise level, were structured to promote learning.
6. Workshops are supported by the department and institution.

It was also discovered in this study that the students who took part in the PLTL workshops earned better grades than those who did not participated.

7.1 Conclusion

Team learning is the philosophy that enables team members to work in a collective unit. When the members’ capacity is aligned they reveal more to be a functional cohesive troop. The conditions of team learning transform the state of group learning to go beyond understanding the need for learning together to accomplish a goal, being responsible for making a contribution to achieving goals, reflecting on collaborative efforts and deciding on ways to improve effectiveness, and developing interpersonal skills. The team becomes immersed with solving problems and always seeking for better improvement. Team learning allows the team to become highly effective in rising to unexpected challenges and tackling adversity with current resources at hand.
8. Cross-cultural Differences

1. Definition and characteristics

Akteos, a cross-cultural management company based in France, defines cross-cultural as taking into account the interaction between people of different cultures when making arrangements, mixes between various cultural contributions to overcome differences that may be an impediment to communication (http://www.akteos.com/index.php?id=66&L=3).

It is proclaimed that in many parts of the world, society is always composed of a dynamic and complex environment with a host of variables and forces at work that influence social interaction patterns and resultant levels of performance and productivity. However, in a workplace with cross-cultural differences there is an even higher level of dynamic complexity because of culture-shaped institutional structures and norms interacting with people of different cultures. In many cases institutions have been shaped by several cultures during the colonial and post-colonial periods and they are sometimes a competing mix of value, practice and belief patterns. With cross-cultural differences, you have people of different cultures with different culturally molded personalities and motives interacting with each other. It can be exciting, dynamic, creative and productive, but it can also be stressful, confusing, frustrating and nonproductive. You can have a combination of aggressive, non-aggressive and passive-aggressive people all thrown into the mix. We can see the chaos theory at work in any organization or institutional setting and sometimes we can really see it at work in the cross-cultural setting (http://www.comfsm.fm/soccie/crosscult.htm).

2. Work Culture – It’s implication in the study

Work culture is a combination of qualities in an organization and its employees that arise from what is generally regarded as appropriate ways to think and act. It is deemed important due to the following assertions:

1. It is the vehicle through which individuals coordinate their activities to achieve common goals and expectations.

2. It helps individuals understand how their roles fit within the larger picture. Cultural defines the norms of acceptable conduct.
3. Culture develops consistent interpretations of behaviors throughout the organization.

4. The well-managed culture can improve performance significantly while the unmanaged culture will impede even the best-intentioned change effort.

The "work culture" of an organization is a product of its history, traditions, values, and vision. It is a pattern of basic group assumptions that has worked well enough to be considered valid. Therefore, it is taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel. Desirable work culture includes shared institutional values, priorities, rewards and other practices which foster inclusion, high performance, and commitment, while still allowing diversity in thought and action (Roberts and Rollins, 1998).

3. Work Behavior – It’s implication in the study

Work behavior is a term used to describe the behavior that one uses in employment and is normally more formal than other types of human behavior. The terminology refers to the ‘do’ (action) part of the work. It relates to how the person is doing his/her work and how this person is getting the work done. Work behavior can be seen through the physical movements and expression. It is the actual work. Results of the work behavior can be seen such as a report or a finished good. Colleagues or team members can see it and make the judgment as either acceptable or requires further improvement on the part of their fellow co-worker. It is the action that is being noticed (Riklan and Riklan, 2011).

4. Work Culture and Work Behavior – The Differences

The cultural aspect of the work is the ‘belief that guides the person to perform at his or her work’. Culture drives the thinking or the rational that sets the tone for work. It is like a hidden code that is usually a ‘subconscious’ transfer of feelings to how one approaches to a specific task or assignment. The work culture can be assessed as what is causing the person to do or not do the things that they are required to execute. In contrast to the behavioral part, action sets the pace for determining the results. Work behavior is referred to as the ‘doing’ part of the work; it is considered as the tangible part of the labor that can be viewed and determined on the
concrete form of movement. The inquiry is to seek out the action on how they are carrying out the performance to complete the assigned tasks (Riklan and Riklan, 2011).

4.1 A Viewpoint on the Thai and German Social Background

All thoughts, actions, and reactions are the behaviors that are intertwined from a process being stimulated from another force of energy. This force of energy can be in the form of politics, economics, society, or technology. From a Marxist’s point of view each of these elements can be regarded as man’s activity in production (Zizek, 2007). This theory enables groundbreaking reflection in seeing that man’s knowledge depends mainly on his activity in material production, through which he comes gradually to understand the phenomena, the properties and the laws of nature, and the relations between himself and nature. It is through his activity in production which allows viewer to see that he also gradually comes to understand, in varying degrees, certain relations that exist between man and man. So it is in this paper a person born in a country becomes nationalized through the workings from those who were previously born before him/her. The culture, norms, and what outlook to have in mind is from the ongoing process of the hands that exert the power through the infrastructures of the institution. These institutions, the forces in the form of politics, economics, society, and technology play a heavy role in shaping the way people rationalize, make decisions, as well as behave in their surrounding environment. This part of the study takes a look at the social background of the Thais and German. The background aims to focus on the following issues – social system, cultural dimensions, and a case analysis of working relations between Thais and Germans.

A. Thai & German Social System

A.1 Religion

From the Sukhothai era and onwards to the current period Buddhism has been a great deal of influence in the Thai culture. Buddhism has been considered the national religion and has been depicted in the Thai national flag in white. 95% of the Thai population is Buddhists. The religion has been incorporated into the primary teachings of ethics and morality to the young students. For those families who cannot afford schooling an alternative is to send their child to a monastery to learn the practical teachings of the Buddha; it is hope that they will
grow up to conduct their life with righteousness along the path to full adulthood. In the social aspects, monks perform rituals for deceased family members at a funeral and give blessings for those who make merits or have open a new building for commercial operations. Amulets that take the form of Buddhist figure are worn around the neck or kept in the household for the purpose of warding off evil spirits. According to Article 9 of the Constitution of the Thai Kingdom the King must be Buddhist and must act as a royal supporter to religion while Article 73 requires government to support Buddhism and other religions (Joungtrakul, 2003). Buddhist philosophies exert a strong influence on Thai society for example, the Sappurisa Dhamma: (1) Dhammanutta: knowing principles, knowing causes; (2) Atthannuta: knowing objectives, knowing results; (3) Attannuta: knowing oneself; (4) Mattanutta: knowing moderation; (5) Kalannuta: knowing occasion; (6) Parisannuta: knowing company; (7) Puggalannuta: knowing persons. These philosophies have allowed the formation of planning for conducting business affairs, governing a nation, developing teaching and lesson plans for adult education, and exchange practical thoughts and ideas through the media for passive listeners (Payutto, 2000).

In Germany, religion is seen as a concept in which the ideals of the nation are reflected. There is no single religion in Germany and thus people belonging to many religious beliefs exist in perfect harmony. The German Laws give people the freedom to choose their faith and religion in Germany. Germany does not possess a state church and the state does not wield control over the churches. Various religious communities in Germany are free to profess their faith. Christianity is a prominent religion in Germany, which is followed by over 55 million people, accounting for 67% of the entire population. However 50% of them are Protestants and the other half is Roman Catholics. A minority falls under other Christian denominations. Religion in Germany is given a great deal of importance and the liberal outlook of the nation is commendable (germanynapxl.com, 2010). Religious freedom in Germany allows the nation to support a vast array of religious followings including Catholicism, Protestantism, Judaism, and Islam. German citizens donate to their respective churches through their income taxes. If an individual chooses to do so, a part of the individual's income tax is collected and given to the church the taxpayer belongs to. This money collected through income taxes allows the churches of Germany to work harmoniously with the government and assist in bettering public life through
their work in public hospitals, community centers, and schools (International Business Wiki, 2019).

A.2 Philosophy

Depending on the location of one’s presence, the Thais have a code of conduct that is enlisted in their DNA when they take part in a social interaction with others. The Thais have a social circle that governs their behavior. To the recipient of this behavior it could send a message that is deemed either highly acceptable or downright offensive. But for others who are entrenched in the way things move around the senses may display a paradigm on stating that you cannot change Thailand it will change you instead. The theory in way of living is composed of three circles. The first is called the family circle. In this circle, the individual is tightly connected with the affluence of other family relatives. Ranks, as well as guidelines about mutual rights, duties and respect are displayed and accepted in the natural form. However, there is also a degree of alleviation and a free flow of communication. Any mistakes or errors made are most likely to be forgiven by the family member. The second is the cautious circle. In this circle the family like atmosphere evaporates. The climate that one enters in reveals a sense to display the behavior in an official stature. In other words the area that he or she is in calls for the action to be in a formal role. When this person is taking on a work assignment handed from the employer, entering the medical room, visiting the school, doing official business at a store, or purchasing items at the local market, there is a call to behave in an upright manner that exerts discipline on being courteous, cautious, deferential, and friendly. This circle is crucial for preserving as it has an impact for day-to-day survival. It is believed that the frequency of contact will produce a leveraging effect on the other person that has been in contact with. With the aim of maintaining a smooth functional relationship the outcome is that there is benefit to be gained from both sides. The third is what is termed the selfish circle. This is considered as the outside world. This circle operates under the premise that one’s high standing in the community goes unrecognized; nobody really cares. In this so-called selfishness the rules of conduct, the social principles, expectation of fairness and equality, and consideration for a fellow being make others feel that it’s a dog-eat-dog world. In this realm, everyone is considered anonymous and that there is no point for receiving any special treatment. Therefore, it’s every man, woman, and child for themselves and the best thing to do is to survive by any means necessary (Holmes and Tangtongtany 1996).
The historic blend of the arts, culture, politics, and economy provided the Germans with a diverse perception of life. Up until the time of Napoleon, the beginning of the nineteenth century, present-day Germany was a patchwork of over a hundred small states. Therefore, the paradigm was that whatever your status was, peasant or noble person, you accept it as fate, you kept it, and you have to do a psychological engineering of yourself to make it a part of your daily life – whether you like it or not. Germany only became unified in 1871, and after a more than forty year period of stability and prosperity, Germany entered the First World War. With it began a period of extreme turmoil and instability, ending only some 35 years later with the founding of the present Federal Republic. What this left was a people highly marked by a profound need for stability - for Ordnung.

The result of this history was a shared sense that only a clearly defined society with clearly-defined state powers and individual liberties could ensure survival and well-being. The institutions with its defined rationale have set the course for German citizens to live. Left intact also was a need for clear occupational positions in society, gained by meeting clearly-set educational standards. Reliability, discipline at school and at work, and respect for recognized authorities earned you secure status, secure income, secure health care, and, at least up until recently, secure retirement.

In business life, this has resulted in a tradition-minded, expert-elitist culture. You earn a position in this business culture by achievement in school, certification, lengthy high quality training, and resulting expertise. Once a member of the expert-elite, you have gained a place at or near the top of the social hierarchy. Traditionally, it is believed that you have a very secure position, work hard from eight to five, and then lock the door, go home, and forget about what occurred until the next workday. There is a clear separation of professional and private life, with a clear idea of which persons belong to which area of life. One says "Sie" to their business associates, tell them the things necessary for conducting business, and not much about private life. One says "Da" to their friends, and place great value on lengthy, deep-going discussions with them, telling them as much as humanly possible about themselves and the rest of the universe. Being a German is having to accept the fact that both circle of business associates and circle of intimate friends are, relatively small and stable (Parks, 2010).
B. Thai & German Cultural Dimensions based on Hofstede's Theory

The studies deriving from the field of organizational behavior have firmly posited that a mismanagement of cultural differences can lead to negative effects in the workplace. However, if the cultural differences can be successfully managed, they can lead to great benefits such as in having an innovative business practices, faster and better learning within organizations, and sustainable sources of competitive advantage (Pheng & Yuquan, 2002). The work conducted by Geert Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions have been found by researchers to be useful when exploring the influence of national cultural differences on perceptions dealing with the importance of the learning organization model in generating effective work outcomes. It has been noted that American management practices may not be appropriate or successful when implemented in societies with cultural values that differ from those held in the United States. Hofstede argues that people carry 'mental programs' that are developed and reinforced through their experience, and that these 'mental programs' contain a component of national culture (Coldwell, Williamson, and Cameron, 2007). Hofstede identified four value dimensions to depict characteristics of national cultures:

Power distance is defined as: "the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organisations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally" (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005: 46).

Individualism is: 'a cultural dimension that pertains to society in which the ties between individuals are loose'. This implies that everyone is expected to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family. Collectivism on the other hand pertains to societies in which people from birth onward are integrated into strong, cohesive groups which throughout their lives continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005: 76).

A masculine society is defined as a society where emotional gender roles are clearly distinct. This implies that men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success. Women, however, are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life. It is noted that in a feminine society, there is an overlap in emotional gender roles. This implies that both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005: 120).
Uncertainty avoidance is defined as to the extent in which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations’ (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005: 167).

Long-term orientation is defined as the how much society values long-standing – as opposed to short term – traditions and values. This dimension was added in the 1990s after Hofstede discovered that Asian countries with a strong link to Confucian philosophy acted differently from western cultures. In countries with a high LTO score, delivering on social obligations and avoiding “loss of face” are considered very important (Hofstede, 2010).

B.1 Thai Cultural Dimensions

The dimensions analyze the Thai background as followed:

![Thai Cultural Dimensions](image)

**Figure 18** Thai Cultural Dimensions

The high Power Distance (PDI) is indicative of a high level of inequality of power and wealth within the society. This condition is not necessarily forced upon the population, but rather accepted by the society as a part of their cultural heritage.

Thailand’s lowest Dimension is Individualism (IDV) at 20. A low score, as Thailand has, indicates the society is Collectivist as compared to Individualist. This is manifest in a close long-term commitment to the member ‘group’, is that a family, extended family, or extended relationships. Loyalty in a collectivist culture is paramount, and over-rides most other societal rules and regulations. The society fosters strong relationships where everyone takes responsibility for fellow members of their group. Thailand has the lowest Masculinity ranking among the Asian countries listed at 34, compared to the Asian average of 53 and the World average of 50. This lower level is indicative of a society with less assertiveness and competitiveness, as compared to one where these values are considered more important and significant. This situation also
reinforces more traditional male and female roles within the population. The equally high Hofstede Dimension ranking of Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI) indicates the society’s low level of tolerance for uncertainty. In an effort 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. At the score of 50, Thailand’s Long-Term Orientation tends to fall short as the behavior tends to coincide with short-term orientation. The people highly endorse a respect for traditions, individuals to fulfill their social obligations, and protecting one’s reputation (face-saving).

B.2 German Cultural Dimensions

The dimensions analyze the German background as followed:

![German Cultural Dimensions](image)

**Figure 19** German Cultural Dimensions

The Geert Hofstede analysis for Germany shows their emphasis on individualism, masculinity, and uncertainty avoidance. Power distance and long-term orientation are both ranked considerably lower than the others. This illustrates Germany’s belief in equality and opportunity for each citizen, as well as its ability to change and adapt rapidly. As for the working behavior, the German thought process is extremely thorough, with each aspect of a project being examined in great detail. This process is often times very time-intensive. However, once the planning is over, a project will move very quickly and deadlines are expected to be honored. Germans do not like surprises. Sudden changes in business transactions, even if they may improve the outcome, are unwelcome. German citizens do not need or expect to be complimented. In Germany, it is
assumed that everything is satisfactory unless the person hears otherwise. Punctuality is necessity in Germany. Arrive on time for every appointment, whether for business or social. Being late, even if it is only by a few minutes, is very insulting to a German executive (http://www.cyborlink.com/besite/germany.htm).

C. Thai & German Working Relations

C.1 Thai Working Relations

I. Working Infrastructure & Communication

Focus on the process

The working infrastructure that the Thais are mostly familiar with is on an institutional format. When things are arranged in a mechanized form it emits a sense of clarity in working roles, assuming responsibilities, and handling work procedures on the part of the workers. A well structured and integrated system that pertains to the rules, policies, and operation processes hypothetically contributes to the reduction of confusion and communication errors in the working processes. But most importantly, it allows the managers to constantly monitor and follow up their staff's working progress (Srismith, 2005).

Leadership

When the structures are organized the communication style of leadership paves the way for an exchange of support among the staff members. Such a climate allows communication facilities to be provided and well-structured communication process and system to be organized. In addition, leadership is demonstrated in an attitude and character that is open-minded, trustworthy, and respectful to other ideas. Also, there is financial support for working projects as well as employee’s incentives, rewards, and recognition program. Furthermore, staff becomes empowered through workshops and training programs; this sparks enthusiasm in the workplace (Srismith, 2005).

Problem Solving & Teamwork

A strong working infrastructure enables staff from various working levels and units to come together in an attempt to find solutions to the problem. When the concept or the ideal is highly agreed upon among the staff working in teams become an important method for completing the task assignments. A workplace that places great emphasis on solving problems
will bring about a working attitude that promotes effective communication at meetings and group discussions. Teamwork becomes reinforced as the work system generates the following impact - (1) quickness in the working processes (2) better solutions through multi-disciplinary team effort (3) a flow of communication in all directions (4) staff being allowed to work in the same direction and in a collaborative manner and; (5) better interpersonal relationships. This latter element is seen as the key to accomplishing tasks because it not only brings a thorough understanding in the working relations but also making colleagues gradually prepared to compromise with each other (Srismith, 2005).

2. Applying Management Theories

Western management theories that are applied in Thailand is usually done in a radical way and wholesale in nature. Such a reason can be based on the fact that most management education and training are conducted through the theories and practice from a Western management discipline. In addition, the application of Western theories in Thailand tends to be made on a piece meal basis without any proper planning and implementation. When application is applied it is mostly concentrated only on parts of structures which normally stress on the vision, mission, objectives and strategy. The procedure or processes are not established with a strong focus for people to follow in achieving the objectives. Upon heading to the road of disaster, the behavioral change activities are not performed and the people were not fully equipped to follow the processes in achieving the objectives. Decisions are usually made in a radical way and mostly without making any real commitment to the structure, vision, mission, objective, strategy, process, action plan, policy, procedures, behavior, behavior change, training, education, and objective of application. The adjustments are made to coincide with the Thai cultural environments. In addition it was usually done on a piece meal basis without accurate planning for implementation according to the proper implementation process (Joungtrakul, 2003).

3. Working Behavior

The modern age of technological advancements and globalization has brought development and the creation of modern infrastructure and industries. Many developing countries are faced with the problems brought on by the changes of their community’s agricultural lifestyle.
Many developing countries such as Thailand have adopted western development plans and promoted industrial and agricultural developments on large scales. The change from a peaceful agricultural lifestyle has been changed by the chaos of urban and industrial lifestyles (Panichkul, Talsirikongkhon, Naowan, 2009). From the period of 1850’s an onward, the gradual expansion of Thailand’s economy can be on gaining a competitive advantage in exporting rice (Mulder, 2000). The Thai economy has traditionally relied upon the export of agricultural products as its chief means of support, particularly rice. Rice or ‘Khao’ plays an important role of being the staple food of the Thai people. Rice has been a way of life for the people living in Thailand. It has also been engaged in several solemn rituals in the Thai culture; it is gratefully referred to and respected as “Mae Phosop” or rice goddess. Approximately 60 per cent of Thailand population is engaged in rice farming, and their living standard depends much on the annual crop production (Palaysoot, 2009). This dependence upon one product caused Thailand great variations in prosperity due to the change in world rice prices and fluctuations in harvest amounts (asiainfo.org, 2010). And of course, rice production for export would not be possible if there were able-bodied hands and mind of the Thai farmers. They come from communities that are very close-knit where everyone helps one another. If a family organizes a ceremony, either an auspicious, merit-making event or a more solemn occasion, others will collaborate to make the event very unique. The farmer’s fellow neighbors will be given bowls of special soup or curry (Sukphist, 2011).

In developing countries such as Thailand, agriculture has always been seen more than just a way of earning income from farm production. Not only considered as a major source of goods and foreign exchange, agriculture is a fundamental way of life for the majority of the population who live in a rural society. Agriculture provides an occupation, culture, traditions and values for the rural people, who have long existed in harmony with nature. Agriculture is also part of the natural capital of the country, in terms of natural resources, biodiversity and the environment. Whatever changes occur in the agricultural sector, in one way or another will also lead to a chain reaction to the rest of the country. The presence of having agriculture provide benefits such as food security, household employment, rural community support and various environmental benefits, which become highly important during the times of economical difficulty (Jitsangguan, 2009).
But behind the fields these farmers experience some hardships that come to them without warning, namely flood, ravishing insects, unpredictable climate and weather, and political decisions that can have a negative effect on their selling price. When the situation does not look promising these farmers migrate from the rural plains to the urban plateau in search of work. They are just one of the many groups who settle in the concrete jungle with hopes of obtaining some hard earned cash from working in the factory and then to travel back home to tend their fields, or just to improve on their income-earning capacity. According to a survey conducted two years ago by the National Statistics Office it was found that almost 80 percent of farmers are heavily in debt, with little possibility of them being able to pay back. Up to 60 percent, especially those in the northern and central regions, work on rented land. According to the National Economic and Social Advisory Council, about 90 percent of farmers have an average acreage of only one rai per person, and there are approximately 1.5 trillion farming families that either are landless or have insufficient land to feed their members (in addition to about 600,000 families of slum dwellers). Although the state promotes industrial or service sectors to help these farmers find extra income they only travel to work as “seasonal farmers” in the cities but would return to their family farms every now and then during harvesting periods (bangkokpost.com, 2010). They would not really migrate unless their hometown is full of economic prosperity or offers some sort of employment opportunity (Anantarangsi and Walsh, 2009). Working behind the wheels or the machines is only a temporary thing for these farmers who trade in their know-how of harvesting and rearing live stocks for long hours of heavy labor; the reward comes in the number that is not so much but means a lot for the future. The farmers turned factory workers are just waiting for the right time to return to the field where they can become master of their own craftsmanship. But in the factory they become humble and obedient which is the right behavior for living for another day to go by until the time is right to leave (Kulick & Wilson, 1996).

It is expected on the part of the Thai workers to accept inequality between themselves and their bosses. This belief displays a conduct that tends to avoid changes during process development. They prefer being referred to as a team, rather than as individuals, while in many situations the workers have a propensity to avoid personal problems and did not want to have face-to-face confrontations with their colleagues. Their working style resides on being focused on the short-term benefits rather than on the long-term ones. Thus, Thai culture could be
formed by High Power Distance, High Uncertainty Avoidance, Collectivism, Femininity, and Short Term Orientation (Prativedwannakij, 2009).

It is very important to have a good comprehension of the Thai work practices, especially with the value of face. Without regards and acknowledgement to the Thai cultural practice, western systems developers can damage the relationship with their superiors by correcting their superiors' opinions. Such an action can generate conflict and create situations where the superior can 'lose face' or respect; this can produce a feeling of humiliation and anger. Thus it is important for western systems developers to resolve conflict and engage their clients' opinions outside of meetings and at a personal level. There must be a strong awareness that the decision-making process in Thai business is very hierarchical, iterative and convoluted. Most Thai middle managers prefer not to make any decisions during the requirements in the gathering process. Vigilant searching up through the hierarchy of Thai business will enable better and more accurate requirements gathering. Time and patience are essential skills in the Thai requirements gathering process (Thanasankit, T. and Corbitt, B. 2002).

C.2 German Working Relations

When working with the Germans one should expect to see that the workplace is composed of a significantly higher degree of autonomy in the relationship between managers and subordinates. The Germans put a lot of emphasis on the administrative quality of a leader, but less focus on the ability of team integration. The degree of employee participation is low especially with relations to the more informal participation and influence on individual tasks and range of responsibility. The tradition for being innovative is rather low. Germans make an effort to avert any signs of risk. When communicating with the Germans there is a strong preference for it to be in a non-verbal (written) format; this can be seen as relevant with the strong aversion against risk. Germans prefer a more formal way of communication. The best example is the use of a formal language when communicating with unknown people or people older on a different hierarchical layer in the organization.

1. Working Infrastructure & Communication

A typical German organizational climate is one that has an emphasis on roles, positions and autonomy in a hierarchical setting, specified tasks, low degree of individual
freedom, formal communication along well defined communication channels, focus on administrative correctness and medium perception of team integration as an important manager quality. Both German individuals and German companies follow a very secure strategy when going abroad. A thorough research is carried out in advance and great resources are spent, both financial, but also in terms of time. “Germans believe in preparation, thoroughness and structure. Working with the Germans means having to adjust yourself in accepting and getting used to the formal “you” (Sie) as a form of workplace communication. It can be quite challenging when the formal “Sie” is used even when the Germans were strongly arguing with each other. However, the Germans naturally did not find the use of “Sie” problematic at all. What many of them focused on, in order to explain the advantages with “Sie”, was that this was a way of keeping a certain distance to the people they were not particular interested in having a close relationship with. The awareness that the formal “you” is just a polite manner being used but also expresses a certain interpersonal distance between the workers. When the Germans express criticism it may be perceived by a non-German to be very direct and often rude when providing feedback or participating in discussions. On the contrast, the Germans have a different opinion of this matter. To the Germans they emphasized that it is about giving their clear opinion, but that there is a strong distinction between the persons involved and the topic they are discussing. In regards to communication written communication is highly preferred. German written communication is always formal and they tend to be expressed in great details (germanculture.com, 2010).

2. Applying Management Theories

In the early 20th century most German intellectuals were convinced that there was a special German philosophy of society, and management scholars equally assumed a special German approach to management. There was a keen interest among the scholars of treating organizational questions in standard text on business economics. Thus the term “mechanistic paradigm” evolved to speculate that certainly a clearly formulated or self-evident goals or tasks existed for every individual organization and that these can be taken for granted. The scholars during that period talked constantly about the goals, and defined an organization as a “task community”. Organizational tasks were considered not as a result of certain particular decisions but as derivable from individual biological needs or from the needs of the total community.
Within this framework the question focused on how can main tasks be divided into sub-tasks or in other words, how can they be specialized? The inquiry was to further lead on to see how these sub-tasks are coordinated and planned, how people can be assigned to do the different sub-tasks, and finally how can these people be remunerated and controlled. Organizations were perceived as the rules where by the goal or tasks are achieved. The purpose of the organizing activity and of organizational theory is envisaged as fulfilling the tasks as efficiently and harmoniously as possible (Larsen, 2003).

The German manager concentrates intensely on two objectives: product quality and product service. He wants his company to be the best, and he wants it to have the best products. The manager and his entire team are strongly product oriented, confident that a good product will sell itself. But the manager also places a high premium on customer satisfaction, and Germans are ready to style a product to suit a customer's wishes. The watchwords for most German managers and companies are quality, responsiveness, dedication, and follow-up.

Product orientation usually also means production orientation. Most German managers, even at senior levels, know their production lines. They follow production methods closely and know their shop floors intimately. A German manager believes deeply that a good-quality production line and a good-quality product will do more for the bottom line than anything else. Relations between German managers and workers are often close, because they believe that they are working together to create a good product. German industry works closely with government. German management is sensitive to government standards, government policies, and government regulations. Virtually all German products are subject to norms—the German Industrial Norms (Deutsche Industrie Normen—DIN)—established through consultation between industry and government but with strong inputs from the management associations, chambers of commerce, and trade unions. As a result of these practices, the concept of private initiative operating within a public framework lies firmly imbedded in the consciousness of German managers (germanculture.com 2010).

3. Working Behavior

The Germans perceive networks that were created during studies or in other types of educational workshop as something structured and of high importance. Also, the German
respondents confirmed that networks are of high importance and should only consist of members who have been selected based on the same criteria. Networks are in Germany seldom based on coincidences, but should always be rooted in traditions and strict entry requirements. All the German, referred to this tradition as “Studenteverbindungen”. This is a particular type of network, with traditions back to the time around year 1800. Today, these “Verbindungen” are to a large degree organized as they were about 200 years ago. Members become members if they fulfill certain criteria, the most crucial criterion is often that your father (or mother), is a member. These networks enable a good flow of communication across generations, since the relationship to the older members is well maintained. According to the German working style, they are extremely correct and classy in the way they dress during daytime and in formal settings. Germans are also perceived as very formal and with a strong preference for hierarchies and layers that express a certain difference in importance within the association or company. This can sometimes eschew an opportunity for good working relations in the eyes of non-Germans. Moreover, non-German workers may have difficulties in accepting distanced relationship across layers of organization and also the lack of respect for individuals who are staffed at the lower level in the organization. On the other hand, Germans don’t find this behavior unnatural and they support such a system. It is the German belief that managers are there to “guide the employees in an efficient way, and not to function as a social worker”. Germans hold that the distanced relationship to persons with more autonomy or in a higher position is something they have been used to since they were young. They state that the issue of having different layers was a natural consequence of an early distinction of pupils between those who should pursue a university degree and those who had to choose more practical paths of education. This translates into an accepted diversification at an early age which leads to a greater acceptance for hierarchical differences (Borgund, 2008).

9. The Challenges in a Workplace with Cross-Cultural Differences

A. Learning as a habit

Hallinger and Kantamara explored the cultural context of educational change in Asia with a specific focus on the Thai society. Their work presided under the premise that strategies for changing educational practice in Asian nations will be both similar and different from those that they have reviewed in the Western literature. The purpose of the work is to assist
policymakers and practitioners rethink their roles in bringing about change in Thai schools. The authors begin with an analysis of the cultural norms in which leaders work to get a better understanding of how the change process functions in a Thai school. Their exploratory analysis, drew upon two sources – 1. Hofstede’s cultural maps of different nations, and 2. then elaborating on the framework by incorporating specific norms acknowledged as central to the Thai culture. Based on their findings, the work attests that the cultural norms of a nation represent both strengths and weaknesses when applied to the process of change. An example pointed out is on high power distance where it can be a strength and weakness in the situation for change. This distance can provide a potential advantage through which Thai principals can gain staff attention and even initial compliance with orders. However, this apparent strength can quickly evolve into a limitation if the leader fails to take the necessary time to “make the case” for change. The authors state that the staff’s cultural-determined tendency to politely comply with an administrative decree simultaneously drives overt resistance to change underground. This may make the leaders to proceed without realizing the extent of non-compliance or the nature of the real implementation problems (Hallinger and Kantamara, 2000).

An examination on the relationships between individual, team and organizational learning of 1103 workers from a Thai manufacturing organization was constructed for the purpose of investigating whether there is the following: (1) the relationship between individual learning and team learning, (2) the relationship between individual learning and organizational learning, and (3) the relationship between team learning and organizational learning. Based on the work by Lim, Laosirihongthong, and Chan, their findings provided support that learning occurs and interacts at the individual, team and organizational levels. Their study suggests the relevance of individual learning in fostering team learning and organizational learning. The finding implies three classified types of individuals are more likely to contribute positively to the learning of other team members and the organization at large. They are those (1) who are continuously improving their work skills, (2) who are motivated to learn job-relevant skills, and (3) who are willing to invest in self-improvement. In addition, the results offer support for the hypothesized relationship between team learning and organizational learning. The work recommends a need to improve team learning capabilities which include learning within teams as
well as cross-functional team learning to encourage learning at the organizational level (Lim, Laosirihongthong, Chan, 2006).

B. Thinking skills

Chareonwongsak (2010), the executive director for the Institute of Future Studies for Development, asserts that Thais generally lack sufficient thinking skills in the general populace and among social leaders. Wrong decisions are made due to not being critically analytical and comparative between related advantages and disadvantages. There is a tendency to focus on the immediate advantages with biased and unbalanced thinking. The infamous 1997 economic crisis serves as an example of not being able to solve one’s own problem. Rather than finding appropriate solutions, there was a heavy reliance on the IMF committee members to offer a cut and paste answer to a short-term solution.

C. Behavior towards learning

It could be asserted that the educational environment has played its part in shaping the behavior of the workers when they were students. Based on a study conducted by Thongprasert (2009) knowledge sharing, communication, and learning are profoundly influenced by cultural values. With regards to the first value, power distance stimulates the way students share information and knowledge with each other. The attitude towards hierarchy and rank programs the students’ perception of their lecturers to be high in status and qualifications; this leads to the view of their lecturers as being an expert and having all the answers. The work believes that this type of thinking would more likely accept a teacher-centered style that would complement their learning style. The method relieves the students from having to be placed in an awkward position of having to ask questions or presenting ideas. The second value, uncertainty avoidance conceives the students as reserving their actions to prevent any forms of arguments or disagreements when communicating with another individual or group. The idea is to maintain modesty and not to be exposed to a situation where it humiliates one’s personal pride. The students would seek a form of informal communication to avoid the negative consequences. The third value, collectivism/individualism elaborates that the students tend to prefer working as a group rather than as individuals. In a collective environment the students maintain relationships
among friends and to stay accord with each other as much as possible. From their experience in the classroom they carried this notion to the workplace as well.

In a study conducted on how Thais learn in the workplace, Mounier and Tangchuang (2010) attest that the learning process is highly contextualized, and its major output is skills. What is learnt is a narrow range of practical knowledge confined to individual jobs and immediate experiences. Learning in the workplace and in the school is viewed as separate entities rather than as a continuation of learning itself. Learning in the classroom is just for developing cognitive skills, while the workplace concentrates on promoting good behavioral and technical skills. Therefore, the workplace is to be considered as a site of production and operation; a complex setting with both material and non-material dimensions which together determine what each worker will learn by doing on the job. If there is actually learning it is geared towards efficiency. The worker must be able to handle the technology and mechanical process to ensure that there is no wastage of time and resources. The worker sees his work and himself as a piece of cog in the machine to be manipulated by the hierarchy and accept it as fate.

D. Administration

Human resources development programs are an invisible factor when assuming the role of being an instrument for change in companies; they provide no direct relation to improving productivity nor in supporting the introduction of workplace learning. In the manufacturing sector, the management of human resources was not incorporated into a workplace policy or a workplace management system; managers simply tried to assure that employees followed the rules in force at their place of work. Workforce training is under the authority of the Department of Skill Development (DSD) at the Thai Ministry of Labour. The department is responsible for skill training, retraining, and upgrading skills of the workforce to meet the national qualification standards. The DSD acts as a lead institution in establishing a network of skill development institutions, which is seen in relation to job creation strategies. The training system is based on practical experience where 20% of training time is spent on theory, while 80% is used for practice. Courses are offered for technical and non-technical training, services and commerce, including development of basic and soft skills such as leadership, problem solving, communication, decision-making and teamwork, with the aim of promoting employability though
lifelong learning as continuing training. Generally offered in training institutes and similar establishments, these training courses can last between two and ten months and on successful completion participants receive certificated status as basic skilled workers. Although the companies do make incentives to provide training for their staff, the concept of workplace learning in Thailand is currently considered non-sustainable. Entrepreneurs find training and re-training, yielding poor rates of return or even a waste of investment, especially on the issue for formal training courses. However, since the introduction of policy measures to extend tax deduction for the cost of training up to twice the level of its cost to the employer and the implementation of compulsory measures related to employee training, company participation levels are rising (Wongboonsin and Rojvithee, 2006).

The workplace itself becomes a suspect itself in inhibiting team learning when they discourage learning in the workplace. Wongboonsin and Rojvithee (ibid, 2006) identify a range of factors that explain the non-sustainability of workplace learning in Thailand. First, the authors revealed that the workplaces are inclined to recruit a large number of workers into a training program in order to decrease the costs of training. This is particularly the case for skill-upgrading programs that rely on external trainers. But it is well-known in professional training circles that this is a waste of time and money: training programs require clear objectives and target groups, and each training course should serve a maximum of 25 participants. Furthermore, effective training programs require

1. appropriately qualified and experienced trainers;
2. background information about training needs and problems;
3. long-term planning horizons which are not dependent on short-term budgets;
4. continuous and not one-off or crisis-related training processes;
5. tailor-made dedicated programs rather than imitations of competitors’ programs;
6. assessment of learning outcomes that do not rely solely on written examination;
7. comprehensive training strategies that include all levels of company staff in all departments so that all can move forward together in a coordinated manner;
8. holistic training strategies that bind technical, reflective and perceptive skills together.
Their work asserts that Thai business also faces a cultural dilemma in tackling human resources development, in that traditional norms informing teaching and learning relations may hinder the sustainability of workplace learning. There tends to be a hierarchical relationship between teachers and learners which turns trainees into passive recipients of knowledge. To question the Ajarn (teacher/instructor), or in this case the supervisor or trainer, may be considered impolite or inappropriate. Such cultural norms can influence organizational culture and are said to hinder a constructive dialogue between the trainer or the supervisor and the trainee.

10. Impact on Teamwork

A. Dilemma of moral ethics

The National Educational Policy Act stresses on cognitive skills and basic quality acts for primary and second learners to be in the form of 1) “knowing, understanding and exhibiting responsibility as a member of society”; 2) knowing and processing rational skills thinking in making decisions using the scientific process and moral ethics considerations in solving social, economic, and technological problems”; and 3) “living on the basis of moral ethics”. Moral ethics is highly encouraged to be applied over critical thinking. The upbringing of Thai students through the educational system does not foster skills in the area of critical thinking, decision making, and problem solving. The outcome results in a lack of ability to develop the competencies of handling crucial business issues on customer complaints, offering solutions, or becoming innovative (Sangzoni, Whungsuriya, and Gray, 2008). With moral ethics being a passive state of condition the workers have to be closely monitored on what they are doing and to provide task assistance for the purpose of eliminating errors rather than learning on the job. This not only slows the down the effectiveness of working as a team but creating a pessimism on developing teamwork.

B. Conflict among generation

About twenty years ago, the Thai labor force was made up of a younger group of people that were poorly educated. These group were at the starting ages of fifteen, or even younger, that sought employment as the means for making a living. Any pay or salary received was considered a blessing among these groups as they remained in the labor force for up to fifty
years. In 2008, many of those who were poorly educated joined the workforce at the end of the 1970’s; they will be there until 2015 – 2020. As the era comes and move along, these poorly educated workers will have to allow the better educated generation to take over. It is believed that the presence in the workplace of generations with widely different educational levels may be a ticking time-bomb that could bring about a conflict that becomes beyond control. The better educated, who are a lot younger than their peers, sees the job as an opportunity to develop their career as well as a process for seeking higher wages. This perception of a job by the better educated is in contrast to the poorly educated. On the issue of working as a team, regardless of educational status, the more experienced but less educated worker have to put aside their views to cooperate and collaborate with the better educated young workers (Oudin, 2010). Maintaining teamwork becomes difficult when the social hierarchy belief is encoded into the workplace. While seniority puts things in order and emits respect the highly educated young workers may question such a belief that they feel is outdated in modern times.

11. Designing the Workplace to Overcome Cross-Cultural Adversities

A. Building leadership

One of the critical components of sustaining teamwork is on the ability of applying leadership. The leadership has to be a factor in creating and upholding the condition for people to keep on working together. In a study on investigating whether subordinates’ demographic variables such as gender and age influence the perceptions of their organization as a learning organization, Pimapunrski used a survey questionnaire to answer the following questions: “To what degree do hotel subordinates’ perceptions of their hotels as learning organizations?” & “What are the differences in subordinates’ perception of managers’ leadership style based on gender and age?” For the former question, the author discovered that there were differences found in some dimensions of learning organization. The results indicated shown that male respondents’ perceptions of their hotel as a learning organization were higher than female respondents, in the four dimensions of learning organization of continuous learning, promote inquiry and dialogue, system connection, and strategic leadership. There were significant differences in subordinates’ perceptions of their hotel as a learning organization and subordinates’ age. As for the latter question, the results indicate that there are significant differences in
subordinates' perception of managers' leadership style. The male respondents rated higher in both transformational and transactional leadership styles. Subordinates' age differences demonstrated no differences in their perceptions of their managers' leadership style (Pimapunrs, 2008). To have a learning organization where people work and learn together, it's crucial that there is leadership presence in order to raise the morale and direction. Without such leadership, learning becomes a fad itself and teams would function in a general manner rather than in an initiative mode.

B. Transitioning the behavior

On conducting the results of a study on how a Thai manufacturing company implemented its change process through learning and development activities, Utshahjit's case study reveals that before change can take place people in the organization have to first perceive change. The attitude toward change on part of the staff must be positive and must recognize that change is good, essential and attainable, first and foremost. When they become open to change and feel prepared, they can be put into work groups and the process for team building can start from there. This sets the stage for the workers to become ready to learn and develop. In the researcher's view, people behave and act with trust. They feel comfortable admitting their ignorance, reflecting and sharing their knowledge and feelings. This allows the change practice to be realized. Improvements are then felt and seen around the plant. Utshahjit's work asserts that the pressure to change assumes the need to learn, because this change practice is not going to be realized by wishful thinking; it can only come about by people learning how to behave differently. The author sees more importantly that organizational survival depends on the ability to learn from work. The case study on the Kaeng Khoi Cement Plant highlighted on the success in implementing change practice through learning and development activities. Based on the report, the company turned a rather static and idle workforce group of into an energetic and ready-for-change work team. Employee perception was the initial main focus of this change practice, with the objectives of opening up the employees' mind and aligning employee perception toward changes in the organization. Team development was then emphasized after most employees became ready to collaborate. They share and learn together, and change has become an attractive challenge for them. Finally, they felt good about change and are ready to
take on new challenges from receiving the right motivation. All this happens in a loop of successful behavioral transition (Utsahajit, 2009).

C. Treating colleagues as relatives

Burapharat (2009) posed the question on how an organization in Thailand can create a working environment to stimulate and sustain sharing and learning abilities. In the aspect of a team, the idea is not just on arranging a group of people who are working together to achieve the group’s goals and objectives or produce high-quality work. Instead the ideal place is to start the stimulation of learning for both individuals and organizations. Her work recommends methods to support the collectivistic nature of Thai society using team techniques. Many collective mechanisms are arranged such as the roles of peer support in the form of the informal third person and pseudo-sibling relationships. Complementing Thai cultural behavior will help people feel more able to express themselves. Burapharat refers to Hofstede’s work on Thai’s collective nature. Upon examination in the workplace in the areas of cultural and behavioral mechanisms her work concluded that the urban settings both support and obstruct collective procedures. Extended investigation of Thai relationships in urban enterprises reveals that the nature of collectivism and value functioned quite differently from Western individualistic behavior. Furthermore, the work illustrates the importance of kinship in the workplace. The brother/sisterhood relationship creates an atmosphere that allows people to be open to each other and communicate what’s on their mind. This brings about a sense of trust when working together as a team; the working climate creates a sense of being safe and secured. Thus a relationship is developed in the tune of being compassionate and thoughtful to each other. Burapharat concludes that the fundamental nature of being a Thai supports working together and is worth taking advantage of to create a positive team environment at work. In practice, management needs to be cautious in designing to complement the best of the team members’ nature, while being aware of many national cultural traits that can obstruct the transfer of information. For the purpose of encouraging team learning, her study proposed a workshop that is implemented with respect to the cultural style, enhancing dialogue during collective behavior, allowing participants to be surrounded in an authentic atmosphere to exchange information and learn from one another.
Overall, the Thai sibling style stresses the importance of building informal relationships as the gateway to having trust in each other.

**Theoretical Framework**

Learning as a team requires that members apply the following principles — they understand that learning together is the key to accomplish goals, they hold themselves responsible for their contribution to achieving the goals, they interact closely with each other, they reflect on their collaborative efforts and decide on ways to improve effectiveness, and they develop interpersonal skills by giving constructive feedback, reaching a consensus, and involving every member (Johnson and Johnson, 1999). However, this form of learning does have some drawbacks. For example, cooperation may not be forthcoming due to the feeling that it will be a waste of time or being afraid of taking part in the session. In other cases, members can become reluctant in making personal commitment to the required exercise because there is a feeling of lacking necessary skills and not wanting to ‘show themselves up’ in front of their peers (Ellington and Earl, 2009).

With rapid changes in the global economy, organizations want their teams to avoid ‘groupthink’ just for the sake of harmony and cohesion. To eliminate ‘groupthink’, a ‘learning organization’ would be an ideal approach as it allows people to be engaged in identifying and solving problems, enabling the organization to continuously experiment, and improving and increasing their capabilities (Daft, 1998). As the essential value of the learning organization is problem solving, organizations can design a workplace that is conducive for teams to learn as a collective unit. The establishment of team learning would make members take on a proactive stance to find solutions and best methods for their teams to become effective and perform strongly.

In a workplace with cross-cultural differences, the art of obtaining the capacity of each team member to be aligned does have its challenges as the cultural dimensions dictate what can or cannot be done. However, the key is on transitioning the behavior. People have to see that change is something positive and must recognize that change is good, essential and attainable, first and foremost. Becoming open to change and feeling prepared, will set the process for being ready to learn and becoming developed as a team (Utsahajit, 2009). Team learning would
generate the condition for the cross-cultural team to align their capacity to have a dialogue by probing through the meaning of the mission. The philosophy would also allow the team to reflect on matters at hand by dealing with complex problems. Furthermore, the team would adopt mindfulness to be aware of the impact that their behaviors and action may have on fellow team members. Team learning becomes the ethos that unites members to reason and perform as a single entity while putting aside their cross-cultural differences.

The theoretical framework is derived from the study of Hays “Team Learning Pyramid”. The idea of Hays model is to unite the Dialogue, Reflection, and Mindfulness as an attempt to gain even more out of each element. The model has made a positive impact upon individual and group learning, effectiveness, performance, and change. According to Hays, these meta-competences are of relevance to teams and work groups across a range of endeavor and spanning different levels of authority and autonomy. They embody habits of mind and group process skills necessary in collaborative work involving complex problems and tough decisions, including and especially where learning and change are sought. Hays “Team Learning Pyramid” is particularly useful when working in cross-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder (heterogeneous) collaborations, and when relationship-building and sustained performances are of concern (Hays, 2006). The model has been applied at a government institution to build teamwork skills and creating a more collaborative and effective work culture. Each team was exposed to the experiences, successes and failures, learning, and reflections of the others. They could solve-problems together, leverage initiatives, and learn collectively from individual experiences. The result was a raise level of consciousness about teamwork and collaboration. They were also aware of their own role and behavior with each other. In addition, their interaction and impact upon fellow team members provided a better sense of conscience in striving towards positive work behavior changes among themselves (Hays, 2006:15).

The essence of a team is in being diligent with their time and effort to explore, shape, and agreeing on a purpose that belongs to them both collectively and individually (Katzenbach and Smith, 2002). To enable the team go about this kind of positive working behavior there must be a philosophical condition (process) that promotes the action as teamwork (MacMillan, 2001). Working and learning together as a team requires a process that ensures the individual team members are motivated to do so. Thus, team learning is the philosophy that sets
the pace for collaboration and discovering as a unit in the workplace. To complement Hays’s “Team Learning Pyramid”, the issues of framing to learn, learning to fail with intelligence, the impact of culture, and tools for learning as a team are represented as proponents of the theoretical framework.

1. Framing to Learn

Edmondson (2003) draws out the issue of how anxiety can overwhelm individuals. Such a state of condition makes people start to interpret ambiguous cues and draw conclusions about the meaning of what is around them. As a result, conclusions drawn can be taken for granted, thus becoming rarely spontaneously re-evaluated or checked for correctness. Edmondson notes that the frame of a person’s mind could either create meanings that can display a cognitive behavior that become either passive and unconscious or active and conscious toward the fact. Her work demonstrates the impact that teams need to strive on to learn a lot from each other and the circumstances in order for the team to implement the right course for action. Her case study reveals that the process of trial and reflection is most successful when the participants are open to change, eager to find the best fit, and recognize that other people may have different frames – observing or interpreting something in a different way may have different information at the outset (Edmondson, 2003).

2. Learning to Fail with Intelligence

In order to promote innovation and improvement, teams need to understand why the process and executing methods have come short in obtaining the results. Edmondson and Cannon’s (2004) experiment revealed a process where the organization’s learning can be accelerated through the attainment of failure. Suggestion by the authors portray that organizational learning from failure is feasible but involves skillful management of three distinct but interrelated processes; identifying failure, analyzing and discussing failure, and experimentation. Therefore, to make effective use of failures for learning, organizations have to break down the barriers that prevent teams from being able to probe into the factors that are presented as obstacles to their mission objectives. An ideal method would be to configure the properties of the technical systems combined with properties of social systems in most organizations to make failures’ lessons especially conducive for studying. The authors also assert
that those organizations that are able to learn from their failures treat them as if they were research (Edmondson and Cannon’s, 2004).

3. The Impact of Culture on Team Learning

With the effects of globalization, increased competition, rapid changes in the market economy, and accelerated technological advances, there is a call for the increase use of teams in organization. In a cross-cultural workplace, team learning can be viewed as a framework for improving teams to become more effective (Ndlelyana, 2003). Ndlelyana argues that culture has a significant effect on learning because of its influence on interpersonal relationships and group conditions and how these enhance or inhibit the ability of team members to contribute fully to creating knowledge in teams. Her pilot study was explored to see the effect of culture on team learning in culturally diverse teams with the application of Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions. Based on her conclusions, Ndlelyana proposes a review on the events and understanding how culture can be seen as a form for understanding the intangible issues that can either strengthen or undermine the emotions of the workers.

4. Tools for Learning as a Team

Errors and mistakes are inevitable. But at the same time they are just messages that are implying that more effort and a revised approach are strongly required. Teams can cover the shortcomings by applying the “Blame vs. Gain Behaviors” to reflect on their own attitudes and responses to the errors and mistakes that have been made. This can help individual team members to overcome developing defensive routines and discover ways in defining and solving problems especially when the culture in the workplace stimulates thinking and behavior that sometimes clash with each other (ODI, 2006). Another method for assisting team members to look at organizational problems from a number of different viewpoints, and expand the range of creative solutions is the “Reframing Matrix”. The rationale is that different people with different experiences approach problems in different ways. The “Reframing Matrix” tool helps the groups to put themselves into the mindsets of different people and imagine the solutions, or problems, they would come up with regards to a key question or problem (ODI, 2006).

5. Assessing Team Learning in a Workplace with Cross-Cultural Differences

The 7S McKinsey model can discover the shared values at the individual and organizational levels. IBM’s application of the Cultural Orientation’s model and Apple’s strong
innovation corporate culture applied the 7S McKinsey model as the guide for proper working relations. It helps staff, hailing from a foreign country, to adjust his/her behavior that would comply with other staff that are culturally different from them (Beardsell, 2009) so that working and learning together as a team becomes imperative.

**Conceptual Framework**

Teams operating in a workplace with cross-cultural differences, such as the Electro-Circuits company, demonstrate that they will come across failures on many occasions. The issue is not to panic but to ponder as a team to see what went wrong and what can be done to make it right for now and the next time. As the company’s aim is on delivering quality and attaining the highest benefit for the customers, the main thing is that the team is able to reflect on the matters that have arisen. By reflecting, the Electro-Circuits’ team will be able to handle the failures and convert them to be lessons learned for improvement. The team become masters in not only handling the challenges that are presented and to produce the desired outcome, but also to come as a collective unit to constantly learn for better and improve ways to obtain the company’s mission objectives. Knowing how to produce quality so that the company’s customers are highly satisfied is the approach that will require the team to contemplate over work issues that are either benefitting or derailing the team’s performance. If it’s the issue of work policy, learning about The United States Army’s Opposing Force “After Action Review” can act like the doctrine that allows personnel to extract lessons from one event or project and apply them to others (Darling, Parry, and Moore, 2005). If the issue is based on the work culture the team can research about action learning which contributed to GE’s corporate culture and performance. Allowing action learning led to more open dialogue and increased trust. Action learning fostered a work culture where people became more involved, and had their morale improved. The adoption of action learning helped to remove boundaries, thereby allowing employees to work more easily across departments through hierarchies (The Knowledge Lens, 2010). If the team believes that the training and development procedures of human resources management is not really meeting their demands, then they can opt for establishing “Communities of Practice” where teams can find innovative solutions from external teams that had experienced problems that are similar to theirs. They stand to gain a great deal information and knowledge by obtaining live demonstrations and
being able to discuss about matters that are sometimes too sensitive to talk about. Team members can receive innovative techniques in handling tasks that are deemed important to be completed while at the same time crucial for developing teamwork. In a “Community of Practice”, team members can get a grasp on knowing that the assumptions that they have applied at work can be refined or revised through experimentation. The learning outcome gives them a better sense of what right action to take back at their workplace (Wenger and Snyder, 2000). In order for the team to intelligently learn from their mistakes, there are three issues that must be addressed upon.

First, although the team is operating in a workplace with cross-cultural differences there is a need to realize on whether their cultural differences are holding back the team’s performance or stimulating a sense of urgency to accomplish the mission. Being aware and having respect on each other’s cultural difference is very important. But if the cultural differences do not allow the team to work as a collective unit and instigate conflict then some changes will need to be made. Ndeltyna’s work does point out that culture has a significant effect on learning because of its influence on interpersonal relationships and group conditions (Ndeltyna, 2003). But in the case of teamwork, the team members do need to take an initiative on coming with a method that will lead to results. Otherwise, the cross-cultural differences in the workplace will be exploited upon to justify one’s stance of deciding to take such action or not.

Second, the study shows that the desired outcome has already been established by the company. This is a matter of process on ensuring that the results are met with the standards and that the customers are satisfied in receiving the goods. Even with the design of the workplace and the high tech equipments in place the team was having trouble carrying out the mission. With mistakes piling up by the week, the team didn’t have time to identify why the problems were occurring. Instead, the team displayed a sense of disappointment on each other which made working relations to become dismal. Edmondson and Cannon (2004) stressed the idea that the workplace and the design of the working environment should be a place for experimentation and that all relevant participants are part of the event that is taking place. Therefore, the work design has to be centered around the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the team so that there is a chance to have a dialogue on circumstances that may be of concern. In addition, the work design should create a flow where team members are connected with a sense of clarity and anticipation for action.
Third, as teams are made up of individuals, each individual member must display a working behavior that coincides with the set values of the team. As a metaphor, the set values are like the cold-freezing temperature that keeps the iceberg solid and floating over the ocean. But under a warm temperature the iceberg steadily melts away and becomes no more. Therefore, when one takes part in the philosophy of team learning, they should realize that the process itself does not last forever. The energy and commitment to enable team learning by reflecting also wanes as team members sometime get caught up issues that can undermine their work performance. The frame of a person's mind could either create meanings that can display a cognitive behavior that become either passive and unconscious or active and conscious toward the fact (Edmondson, 2003). Whether the actions lead to a positive or negative feedback, team learning is going to require that individuals take accountability by utilizing one's talent, skills, ability to reinforce the process as teamwork.

A conceptual framework figure has been drawn to illustrate the approach for managing the three issues with an explanation provided.

**Figure 20** Conceptual Framework for Applying Team Learning to Reduce the Cross-Cultural Differences
The first box represents the exploration approach by applying a reframed “Hofstede’s Five Cultural Dimensions” that is depicted through ECC’s human resources management policy. The exploration is conducted to determine the extent of the cross-cultural differences between the Thai and German team members based on the power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term orientation. The study asserts that the team member’s cross-cultural differences are rooted in the complex elements which are hindering the team from working together effectively. Further exploration is carried out with the ‘McKinsey 7S Framework’ which is implemented to find out about the company’s shared values, skills, style, staff, strategy, structure, and systems in order to provide an in-depth detail about cross-cultural differences between the managerial team members.

The second box represents the method for reducing the gap of cross-cultural differences. In this box, the premise is that if the managerial team is enabled to have the following in their working relations - entrusting each other; showing an initiative to solve problems; having the ability to communicate, work together, and share ideas and information with each other; focusing on the corporate philosophy and mission; improving methods for work situation, then the team members would be able to perform together effectively, due to the cross-cultural differences being moderated to help the team attain the tasks of the philosophy and mission statement. The pointer placed above the second box represents the application to reduce the cross-cultural differences among team members. The application is a combination of the “Hays Team Learning Pyramid and the Blame vs. Gain Behaviors” activity. The team learning pyramid views the extent of the managerial team engaging in a concerted form of dialogue, reflection, and mindfulness that would enable them to reach the pinnacle of collaborative effectiveness, achieving and sustaining heights of performance that group members could not otherwise obtain. The theory is used as a method for assessing the managerial team’s concerted effort to have a dialogue, to reflect on their work performance, and being mindful of each other’s action in working relations. The “blame vs. gain behaviors” is a knowledge and learning tool that is designed to offer a good comprehension of the cause, as well as being aware of the factors that were preventing the managerial team from attaining its mission. Also, this tool will be set as a workshop for the managerial team to configure the lessons learned from the shortcomings and to break a new path towards designing a better working solution for the team’s performance to
thrive. The information will allow the managerial team to seek for a better work design to improve their working relations with each other while averting the cross-cultural differences to interfere with the team’s performance.

The third box represents the outcome in the form of lessons learned from applying team learning to reduce the cross-culture differences, as well as for discussion and conclusion for creating a proposal for team learning in a cross-cultural workplace. The former is on the lesson that provides a report on what was either done successfully or to seek out for improvement. The latter seeks out to give the whole conclusion of the study, discussion on the theoretical and practical implications, recommendations and future research recommendation.
CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section provides the layout of the research methodology. It resumes with some general information of the study location. From there, the research method will be discussed in intricate details to obtain data.

I. Location of the study

The site of the research was taken at the Electro-Circuits company in Lamphun. Electro-Circuits was founded in 1999 in Lamphun, near Chiang Mai, Thailand. It is a medium-sized business with 100% German stake and under the direction of top German management. In translation, this means that all planning and decisions to determine the longevity and achievement of the company will be entrusted in the hand of German ownership. The company is supported by the Thailand Board of Investment. Company management not only feels obliged towards their capital providers but also towards their employees and the whole business environment. As a manufacturer of customer-specific circuit boards and LCD (Liquid Crystal Display) modules they have been growing constantly in the electronics supplier industry (since October 2006).

Electro-Circuits is driven by the philosophy of quality; management defines quality as an essential factor for the success of a company. With this statement, the company emphasizes on long-term business relations in order to guarantee success sustainably. According to Electro-Circuits' principle for operation, the most important thing is that each customer is satisfied with the company, products, and service. The company achieves this by producing high-quality products, with a lean and customer-oriented management. With customer relations, Electro-Circuits consolidates contact with the customers based on the reason that intense communication is the basis for all customer relations. Thus, different methods are applied to exchange information and find out more about the customers; they are other companies or organizations (domestic and overseas) that are in the business of residential development (homes, apartments, condos), hospitality (hotels, resorts & spas, conferences & seminar complexes), commercial and exhibition (offices, seminar & conference rooms auditoriums).

In terms of service, Electro-Circuits is a quality Printed Circuit Board (PCB) assembling manufacturer using state-of-the-art equipment. The company serves a market niche
for small and medium lot sizes. The production lines are set up several times per day if required. Besides PCB assembly, Electro-Circuits has its own department for hard and software development. With a total of 14 engineers, the company develops its own products in the field of display modules, touch terminals, and industrial control units.

Electro-Circuits had been certified by Bureau Veritas to proclaim ISO 9001:2000 for October 2003 and ISO 14001:2004 for November 2008. The certification emboldens the status of the company’s management system; it is in standard condition in designing and manufacturing of custom-specified LCD module, touch screen panel, printed circuit board, configurable network computing, and cable assembly. The ISO is an acronym for ‘International Organization of Standards’ which is a non-governmental organization that forms a bridge between the public and private sectors.

The company was not only chosen for the study due to the cross-cultural working environment that it has between Thais and German, but from an urgent request made by the human resources manager who wanted to have an acting agent (the researcher) assisting in solving the teamwork problem of the managerial team. The researcher was keen on discovering to see if the application of team learning can lead to the company’s desired results when two different cultural dimensions set the tone on the ways of working in a collective unit. Because the company has set the bold standards through the guidance of the philosophy on quality, the researcher was intrigued to see what happens when the path to quality becomes disruptive or destructive to the work flow and operation. In other words, will the cultural difference between the Thais and German become resilient to work together or abusive to the point that it tears away the working relations?

II. Data Sources

The data sources were gathered in the form of an open interview and field observation with the middle management team. In an open interview, the process is to allow the respondent to speak in a flexible manner about the issue. As for field observation, it aims on describing the behavior of the respondents that is part of the objectives in the study (Calkins, 2007). The researcher conducted an open interview with the top manager and human resources manager in a separate manner so that the work can obtain an idea of what was desired to get the
managerial team back on track of working together as a team. The open interview was utilized by
the researcher as original data for conducting an interview with the managerial team to obtain a
vivid description of the challenges that they were facing as a team in the workplace. In addition,
the researcher carried out a field observation with the managerial team that was done in two
forms. First, the researcher interviewed each team member on a private basis to see their reaction
as they each provided their version of the issue. By proceeding in this format, the researcher
allowed each individual to state what they really think has occurred and why. Second, the
researcher took the form of direct participation which is implied as “proximity without
interaction”. While the researcher was observing how the managerial team was communicating
and interacting with each other for information, they were simultaneously aware of being
observed but carried out the work procedures and displayed their normal working behaviors in the
workplace.

III. Research Methods

The research method was in the mode of an action research which incorporates the
form of participatory and non-participatory. Participatory research is a self-conscious way of
empowering people to take effective action toward improving conditions in their lives (Park,
1993). It is a systematic investigation that actively involves people in a mutual learning process.
Non-participatory research is a research technique whereby the researcher watches the subjects of
his or her study, with their knowledge, but without taking an active part in the situation under
scrutiny (Marshall, 1998). The method of this study was conducted by the following:

1. The researcher arranged an interview and inquired with the key participants (top
executive, human resources management, and members of the managerial team) in allowing them
to provide their view of what the problem was and why did it happen so frequently.

2. The researcher carried out the study by facilitating a seminar for the managerial
team for the purpose of having a discussion about the issues dealing with working relations and
performance as well as observing them in coming upon a decision for the best course of action to
take. For each seminar held, the researcher recorded information that pertains to the team
learning pyramid theory and impact of the blame vs. gain behaviors activity.
This research has three objectives. The first is to explore and analyze the cross-cultural workplace at Electro-Circuits Company. The second is to test that team learning creates a sense of working together with different work cultures. The third is to provide results in evaluating the outcome and the lessons learned in applying team learning. Upon completion of meeting these objectives, the work discusses and provides a conclusion for creating a proposal for team learning in a cross-cultural workplace. The following entails information on how each of the objectives will be attained with its own tools and techniques utilized in this research. From there, it offers a detailed outline for the discussion and conclusion.


The researcher begins the work by providing a background on the general details, hierarchical structure, work flow, and operation system of the targeted study. From there, the research goes into the finding the differences between Thai and German working behavior, and the company's workplace culture. The specific details are provided below.

A) Differences Between Thai and German Working Behavior

The aim of finding the difference between the two national working behavior was analyzed through the creation of a reframing matrix depicting Hofstede's cultural dimensions with the performance criteria established by the company's human resources policy, thus resulting in a "Behavior Criteria for Teamwork". A standard list was created by investigating the criteria for the desired working behavior at the Electro-Circuits Company. Investigation was made by describing the inter-action events among the managerial team members. Below is an example that displays how the reframing matrix tool is to be utilized with Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions theory. The exhibit provides an analysis on the working behavior differences between the Thais and Germans based on the topic of displaying the roles as a team player, a leader, and integrity with fellow colleagues.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reframing Topic</th>
<th>Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Power Distance</strong></td>
<td>Individualism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Masculinity</strong></td>
<td>Uncertainty Avoidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Long-Term Orientation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Displaying the roles as a team player, a leader, integrity with fellow colleagues</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 21. Thai and German Working Behavior Differences in the topic of “Displaying the roles as a team player, a leader, integrity with fellow colleagues”.

B) The Workplace Culture

B.1 Interviewing & Documentary Observation

Information was gathered from the site’s manuscript which entails the vision, mission, historical establishment, occupational description, and work flow diagram. Interviews were conducted with the managing director and middle managers to obtain a gist of the extraordinary working process as well as how the operation is conducted. The purpose was to receive a basic idea of what the workplace culture is like.

B.2 McKinsey 7S Framework

After the exploration was made through interviewing and observing the documents, the results based on the facts were further explored with the McKinsey 7S Framework to get an in-depth information on the cross-cultural differences. The researcher’s aim was to use this framework to see how the hard and soft factors in this company perform in alignment and to identify the areas for improving team performance.

The McKinsey 7S Framework asserts that there are seven internal aspects of an organization that need to be aligned if it is to be successful. The model involves seven interdependent factors which are categorized as either "hard" or "soft" elements:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hard Elements</th>
<th>Soft Elements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Shared Values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems</td>
<td>Style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The "Hard" elements are easier to define or identify and management can directly influence them: These are strategy statements; organization charts and reporting lines; and formal processes and IT systems.

The "Soft" elements are difficult to describe; as they are less tangible and more influenced by culture. However, these soft elements are as important as the hard elements if the organization is going to be successful. These elements are specifically defined as followed:

1. **Strategy**: the plan devised to maintain and build competitive advantage over the competition.

2. **Structure**: the way the organization is structured and who reports to whom.

3. **Systems**: the daily activities and procedures that staff members engage in to get the job done.

4. **Shared Values**: called "super-ordinate goals" when the model was first developed, these are the core values of the company that are evidenced in the corporate culture and the general work ethic.

5. **Style**: the style of leadership adopted.

6. **Staff**: the employees and their general capabilities.

7. **Skills**: the actual skills and competencies of the employees working for the company.

The model is based on the theory that, for an organization to perform well, these seven elements need to be aligned and mutually reinforcing. So, the model can be used to help identify what needs to be realigned to improve performance, or to maintain alignment (and performance) during other types of change (mindtools.com).
Objective 2. – Testing the Assumption that Team Learning Creates a Sense of Working Together with Different Work Cultures.

The second objective is on raising the assumption that “Team Learning Creates a Sense of Working Together with Different Work Cultures”. This conjecture will be assessed through the researcher’s working definition for team learning. Therefore, the factors will cover the following:

- Taking an initiative standpoint on accomplishing the mission through a collective harmony for adapting to the circumstances.
- Making the connection that conveys a sense of clarity and anticipation for action; even in the presence of conflict.
- Displaying a sense of accountability which acts as the code for constant probing to utilize one’s talent, skills, ability in reinforcing the process of this approach as teamwork.

The information will be reviewed out of the interviews with the key managerial staff and observing documents by the researcher with the application of Hays Team Learning Pyramid and the “Blame vs. Gain Behaviors” activities as the tools for reducing the cross-cultural differences.

A) Hays Team Learning Pyramid

Hays Team Learning Pyramid is the theoretical tool utilized by the researcher for reducing the gap of cross-cultural differences between the team members. The model was constructed as a method for teams that have certain tasks and assignments that must be accomplished, governed by their purpose and objectives, and by performance or targets. Hays attest that some people, including members of the team as well as others outside the team (other teams, customers, suppliers, managers to whom they report), see this latter category as the work of the team. Hay feels that this is a deceptively simplistic view of the team’s work and that such narrow views lead to confusion, focus on symptoms instead of root causes, and insidious complications. He gives an example where misplaced responses (interventions) to team failures, breakdowns, and other problems may actually make matters worse, instead of producing the expected improvements. Hays states that narrow views also fail to fully explain extraordinary team performance. Teams often excel beyond expectations and despite limiting conditions (such
as lack of training or inadequate tools or other resources). Team problems and successes are often the result of a complex of factors above and beyond the work of the team. Hays' work stresses that "The Team Learning Pyramid" accounts for performance—exceptional and mediocre—not otherwise explained and holds promise for improving teamwork and collaboration (Hays, ibid 2006). The application of the team learning pyramid as a tool for reducing the cross-cultural differences was through the concepts of dialogue, reflection, and mindfulness. The criteria assessed for each of these concepts are as followed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hays Team Learning Pyramid Criteria for Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Communicating at an equal level with fellow colleagues to explore issues and solve problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Open to new ideas and allow learning to be exchanged with each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Seeking to uncover truths or facts that remain hidden or untested.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Aiming to learn, improve upon, develop the profession, and building capacity become effective in dealing with complex problems or dilemmas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mindfulness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Acting with reason and understanding the consequences of behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Allowing colleagues to see, hear, and feel things that they would otherwise miss.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Taking action with quality in the process.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from the Hays Team Learning Pyramid (Hays, 2006)

B) Blame vs. Gain Behaviors

In addition, the knowledge and learning tool "blame vs. gain behaviors" was implemented to construct a path that helped the team overcome their cross-cultural differences and to move forward in finding a better working method to improve their team's performance toward obtaining the company's philosophy and mission statement. The "Blame vs. Gain Behaviors" is considered as a very simple tool for assisting managers to reflect on their own attitudes and responses to the errors and mistakes that have been made. The problems that the team has been challenged were addressed upon so that they were able to come up with a solution
to turnaround the events. The researcher attested that the tool converted all the negative experience that they have been encountering into a much more confident process that helped them start to gain a lot more success. The details from the assessment made by the researcher demonstrated the extent of the managerial team in learning how to create an effective workplace that upholds the values of working together as a collective unit.

Objective 3. – Evaluating the Actual Outcome and Lessons Learned in Applying Team Learning.

This part of the objective by the researcher evaluated the actual outcome and output of team learning. The implementation of the lessons learned was through the method of an “After Action Review”, which is for reviewing what has been achieved (success) and what areas are targeted for improvement (failures) (Darling, Parry, and Moore, 2005). The following example below is a method for “evaluating the actual outcome and lessons learned in applying team learning”:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>After Action Review Questions for Evaluating the Actual Outcome and Lessons Learned in Applying Team Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  - Did the application of team learning create an effective workplace with different working behavior?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What actually happened?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Why did it occur?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  - What were the positive and negative results in applying team learning to create an effective workplace with different working behavior?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Why did the results become positive/negative?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  - What future action would be taken differently in applying team learning to create an effective workplace with different working behavior?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from the Overseas Development Institute (Ramalingam, 2006)

The outline of the evaluation in the lessons learned is in two forms – the first part addressed the lessons learned by the team (*due to time constraint and convenience, the researcher only managed to obtain an interview with the quality assurance manager who was kind
enough to offer information on his team’s working performance), the second part addressed the lessons learned by the researcher’s experience in applying the theoretical application and providing a future action plan.

The researcher’s purpose of conducting this “After Action Review” was to see if there was a maximum or minimum change based on the factors of McKinsey’s 7S - structure, system, strategy, style, staff, skill, and shared value. An explanation for each factor was given on the results. The evaluation, in this the study, was to see if team learning, as teamwork, can really create an effective workplace with different working behavior. The first and second part of the ‘After Action Review’ addressed McKinsey’s 7S for the purpose of seeing how much or little has the changes occur in the structure, system, strategy, style, staff, skill, and shared value. For the second part, information based on the intervention results of the conceptual framework was provided as well. The third part provided some information on the lessons learned from implementing team learning to create an effective workplace with different working behavior.

Providing Discussion and Conclusion for Creating a Proposal for Team Learning in a Cross-Cultural Workplace.

The researcher provided some conclusive thoughts and suggestions on a strategic proposal that represents an administrative policy to the discipline and improvement of applying team learning, as teamwork, in a cross-cultural workplace. This section provided the whole conclusion of the study by reviewing the issues and factors that constructed the main point of the work. Also, discussion was made by the researcher on the theoretical and practical implications by drawing out the researcher’s own experience upon conducting the study. Furthermore, recommendations and future research recommendation were provided for the purpose of serving as a guideline for future scholars or practitioners who are expressing an interest in studying the application of team learning.
IV. Data Analysis

The researcher had analyzed the data in the form of a content analysis. This tool was applied to determine the work behaviors and performances taken in the workplace that either exemplified or contrasted the definition of team learning. In other words, the researcher’s analysis was to see if exertion in the workplace signified toward making an initiative standpoint on accomplishing the mission through a collective harmony for adapting to the circumstances, performing connection that conveys a sense of clarity and anticipation for action; even in the presence of conflict, and to take accountability as the code for constant probing to utilize one’s talent, skills, ability in reinforcing the process of this approach as teamwork.

V. Data Verification

The researcher had applied two methods for verifying the data – “weighting the evidence” and “triangulation”. Weighting of evidence is interpreted as the importance on how pieces of evidence fit together, complement one another, and create a picture larger than themselves (Schrager, 2011). Triangulation is a method of cross-checking data from multiple sources to search for regularities in the research data (O’Donoghue and Punch, 2003). The scheme gives a more detailed and balanced picture of the situation (Altrichter et al. 2008). The first verification method, weighting the evidence, was utilized by the researcher to determine the extent of the data’s strength gathered in the first and second objective of the study. The second verification method, triangulation, was applied in a methodological format (observation, interview, documents). The attempt on part of the researcher was to increase the credibility and validity of the results of the first and second objective of the study. These two data verification techniques are presented separately with their own conclusive summary. From there, the researcher has reported on both processes provided to draw on any similarities and unique findings.
CHAPTER 4

THE CROSS-CULTURAL WORKPLACE
IN ELECTRO-CIRCUITS COMPANY

This part of the study undertakes the first research question constructed from chapter one. It attempts to answer the main question, “What is the cross-cultural workplace at the Electro-Circuits Company” (ECC), by analyzing the following two constructed inquiries:

Q. 1 – What is the cross-cultural workplace at “Electro-Circuits Company”?  
1.1 What are the differences between the Thai and German working behavior?  
1.2 What is the Electro-Circuits Company’s workplace culture?

The researcher attempts to answer the question raised by performing the following actions:


2. Investigating the differences between the Thai and German working behavior based on Hofstede’s Cultural Dimension.

3. Exploring this company’s workplace culture through a reframed “Hofstede’s Five Cultural Dimensions” that is depicted through the company’s human resources management policy and with the application of McKinsey’s 7S Framework.

As the reader reads along, information based on the purpose and concept of methodology will be provided to obtain a better understanding of the research. The researcher of this work has compiled the information from the observation and interview to be reported in a ‘storytelling’ format. The findings of the work are narrated as an outsider’s point of view so that the reader can obtain the gist of the study.

4.1 Background of the Electro-Circuits Company

The purpose of providing the company’s background is to present a vivid information of the nature of its business, how the hierarchical structure operates, how the managerial team copes with the work flow as well as maintaining quality within the operational system. Information based on the company’s background was made possible through the
cooperation with the human resources manager and the project manager by offering documents and verbal information about the activities occurring at the Electro-Circuits Company.

In this period of constant changes in the political, economic, social, and technological realm, the one true test for a company to succeed is on how they adapt and overcome to adversity. For this company (known as the Electro-Circuits Company), has the smarts, the skills, the finest pieces of modern equipment, cutting edge designing tools, a foundation to conduct the business affairs, and listed as a company with international standards. But for some strange reason, the accolades that have made this company what it is was just not robust enough to make the managerial team take on the challenges that they were facing when working as a team. Before the account can be given further details it is necessary to get an overall profile of the company called ‘Electro-Circuits’.

Electro-Circuits is a manufacturing company that specializes in producing electrical components. This company was established in 1999; it is located in the Lamphun province, near Chiang Mai, Thailand, occupying approximately 6.5 acres of land (13 rai). The company’s operation commenced in 2000 dealing with sub-contract manufacturing ‘Printed Circuit Board’ (PCB) assembly & ‘Liquid Crystal Display’ (LCD) module assembly, and electronic manufacturing services. The Electro-Circuits Company is a medium-sized business comprising of 500 workers with a 100% German stake and German management. It is supported by the Thailand Board of Investment. The company’s main building site receives orders from the customers and administrates production. This place holds some state of the art equipment to ensure that all finished goods are attached with the highest standard of quality. At this facility, the main floor is composed of a work site that is separated into a division for each unique operation to become as the ideal place for customers and clients to do business with. The second floor is where business matters are held and where the managing director oversees the whole operational system. It is also where the managerial team of the company interacts with each other by holding a meeting to discuss about project planning or any important issues regarding to the process. The figure below depicts the physical arrangement of the company’s main building.
Figure 22  Image of the Electro-Circuits Company’s Physical Arrangements
The company’s structure is depicted with the managing director (or top manager) to oversee the daily general operation, especially financing, supplying of resources, and project outcome. The top manager relies on the managerial staff to work as a team in order to fulfill two objectives – 1. The company’s philosophy of delivering quality and, 2. The mission statement of attaining the highest benefit for the customers *(source was obtained from the corporate website; due to strict confidentiality, the research cannot disclose any further information)*. The managing director and the managerial team set the standard for work practice and customer service in its early years. The managing director would gather all the critical sources from the customers and clients in liaison with the project manager. From there, the project manager forwards all the information to the production manager who arranges a meeting with other functional managers to administrate the project. The human resources manager has a supporting role in identifying the gaps of team performance and to develop a management team training seminar for the future. This figure below demonstrates the hierarchy functional structure of the EEC between the managing director and the managerial team.

**Figure 23** Hierarchy Functional Structure of the Managerial Team’s Work Flow Interaction at the Electro-Circuits Company: *With courtesy from the files of human resources management.*
When the orders are confirmed each member of the managerial team carries out their duty and responsibilities to ensure that his/her staff is working to meet with the operating schedule. The work provides a background on the nationality and gender of the managing director and each managerial team member:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managing Director</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources Manager</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Manager</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Manager</td>
<td>Thai</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Engineering Manager</td>
<td>Thai</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality Assurance Manager</td>
<td>Thai</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operation Manager</td>
<td>Thai</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAP &amp; IT Manager</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research &amp; Development Manager</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchasing Manager</td>
<td>Thai</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Purchasing Manager</td>
<td>Thai</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supply Chain Manager</td>
<td>Thai</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Planning Manager</td>
<td>Thai</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warehouse Manager</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cable &amp; CNC Manager</td>
<td>Thai</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At one of the managerial meeting held, the current ‘work flow’ operation was inserted for the purpose of analyzing the managerial team’s performance. Upon inquiry with the project manager about the nature of the work flow, he described the model as the following: “It is a strategic plan to meet with company’s philosophy and mission… the work flow is the scheme to support the company’s competitive advantage in manufacturing flexibility and installing a ‘Start-to-Finish design and engineering solutions’ that permits the company to give their customers a faster time to the market” (Interview conducted on Apr/2009). His view is thus considered as an imperative factor in a fast paced world of the electronic industry. When the inquiry was shifted to the production manager, she stated that the following: “The work flow was adapted from the
hierarchical organization thus leading the work to operate in a crew formation where each departmental unit awaits for action from other units who provide them with the information to do so. In addition, the work flow maintains an orderly system to get the production finished on the confirmed schedule” (Interview conducted on Apr/2009). The work flow interaction among the managerial team, in carrying out the customers’ orders of the Electro-Circuits Company is presented as followed:

![Flowchart](image)

**Figure 24** Work Flow Interaction: *With cooperation from the project manager.*

Not only is it highly crucial to make sure that the outcome is finished on time but maintaining the overall production to be flourishing with quality is given great importance. Figure 25 below shows that each step of the production is managed with great care. Quality begins and ends with the way each managerial team members applies the EEC’s philosophy and mission statement into the operational system.
This company is not solely out to make a profit on every endeavor that is encountered. It also has an obligation towards looking after the health and well-being of its employees and the whole business environment. As a manufacturer of customer-specific circuit boards and LCD modules, it is constantly growing as an enterprise in the electronics supplier industry. There is an emphasis on long-term business relations in order to guarantee success at a sustainable rate. The most important thing that Electro-Circuits consider is that each of their customers are satisfied with the products and service that is being received. The achievement of high-quality products is on a lean and customer-oriented management. In the top manager's office, there is a plaque that proudly displays Electro-Circuits receiving accolades from the Bureau Veritas as an ISO 9001:2000 and ISO 14001:2004 corporation. This plaque serves to let customers and clients know that when they make business contact with the top manager they are guaranteed a standard quality of service.

The human resources manager has been very friendly and hospitable in providing insightful details about Electro-Circuits' reason for existence and progressing towards the future. The human resources (HR) manager states that the reason and progress are governed by three principles that the company has set for itself. She quotes: "First, is the mission, which is to achieve the highest benefit for its customers with a flexible, global, and full service in electronic product design & manufacturing solutions. In the mission, the company has a passion for individual custom solutions, based on its innovative technological strengths, commitment to manufacturing excellence, focus on delivery value and exceptional customer service. Also, it maintains integrity and fairness with its fellow workers, the customers and suppliers, the investors
and the community in which it lives and work, respecting fellow employees, the environment, and a healthy balance between work and family” (Interview conducted on April 2009). Based on the April, 2009 interview at the workplace, the HR manager quotes Electro-Circuits as “a company that remains curious, imaginative and courageous in challenging its current thinking, and growing its expertise by learning through teamwork and making continuous improvement a way of (working) life”. In addition, the HR manager mentions that “the company strives for excellence in all its efforts, and rewards its stakeholders with reasonable profits; as a result of exceeding the customers’ expectations”. The HR manager points out that the second principle is on the company’s goal which she said that it “aims to be the preferred long-term partner of small and medium-sized companies with outsourcing requirements in the field of electronic manufacturing. The company believes that the customers (not labor) come first and they are always willing to take an extra step to assist the customer in any way, and to provide optimal customer service”. The last principle mentioned by the HR manager is about the company’s philosophy that guides them along the course. According to the words of the HR manager “the philosophy is quality first. With great passion, Electro-Circuits holds the belief that ‘quality in everything is the key to a successful company’. The credo inside the workplace is that there is more to success and achievement than improving production statistics. The company takes the challenge to achieve its ‘Quality First’ (production) mission in the broadest sense. The application of the stated goal to every aspect of development and environmentally responsible production reveals the outcome of the company’s products, services, and corporate image”. Based on the view of the HR manager the philosophy enables that “the quality of the company’s various products results from the best of its technological advances, combined with close attention to customers’ suggestions and requests; the company’s highly qualified engineers turn these concepts into prototypes and finished products”. Further discussion with the HR manager on the third principle reveals that “Electro-Circuits’ values on ‘Quality First’ also encompasses improving quality of life – not only for its customers, suppliers, employees and their families, but for its neighborhood and wider community”. Based on this perspective, the HR manager believes that “the company dares to step out to challenge itself and to learn from mistakes made, to improve every day towards deepening & strengthening its commitment to the overall goal”.
Upon reviewing their everyday operational transaction, the company goes through a workflow that is conducive to sustaining competitiveness in the long run. As a living company that is aware of its surrounding environment, Electro-Circuits has to constantly keep abreast with the unexpected and abrupt changes into their working system. The strength of the company is in its proclaimed competitive advantages in possessing manufacturing flexibility, a start-to-finish design, and engineering solutions that allows the service in offering customers to a faster time to the market. Also, the strength lies in having a strict quality assurance and testing that avoids problems of defective products and sustaining company's credibility. Their customers and clients expect their service and product to be at top notch whenever an order is submitted. In return, the company strives for quality because it knows that it carries a currency towards being competitive and successful in the long term. However, it is not only important to have a strong belief in doing this kind of business that Electro-Circuits is involved in, but to also provide the outcome with the values incorporated. It is imperative that such a business gets a good number of repeat customers and loyal clients. Electro-Circuits fully realizes that where it has become today is attributed to the talent, skills, and abilities of their employees. Thus, the challenge for improvement that the company has been facing with is trying to maintain a consistency of delivering its adherence to the philosophy and mission. It takes a strong dedication and commitment from each and every person on the team to make it possible; but with the issue of cross-cultural differences among team members, the company can reach its limits. From the company's human resources manager perspective, the staff that makes the company attain "quality of outcome" is considered as the heart and soul of the business; making the company run with such prestige rests with the managerial team that goes through the daily function. The interview held on April 2009 with the human resources manager revealed a policy that had been created for the purpose of keeping the members of the managerial team aligned to achieve the company's objectives – this is the human resources policy displaying the roles as a team player, a leader, and integrity with fellow colleagues.
### 4.2 Differences Between Thai and German Working Behavior

This part of the study is aimed at finding the differences between the Thai and German working behavior. To accomplish this aim, the researcher did the following action:

1. Constructed a reframing terminology matrix with the application of Hofstede’s theory of cultural dimensions depicted through Electro-Circuits’ human resources policy to produce the criteria for behavior.

2. Applied the behavior criteria of the five cultural dimensions to describe the interaction events that had occurred among the managerial team.

3. Developed a standard list through an investigation on the criteria for the desired working behavior at the Electro-Circuits Company. Results of the standard list were based upon the investigation with the description of the interaction events among the managerial team members.

#### 4.2.1 Construction of the Reframing Matrix with Hofstede’s 5 Cultural Dimensions and ECC’s Human Resources Policy

This reframing matrix was created by putting Hofstede’s five cultural dimension theories under the view of Electro-Circuits’ human resources policy. The results are the behavior criteria for teamwork which are used as a supporting tool for finding the differences between the Thai and German working behavior.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hofstede’s Cultural Dimension Theories</th>
<th>Behavior Criteria for Teamwork</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Power distance</strong></td>
<td>Accepting that power is distributed unequally in displaying the role as a team player, a leader, and integrity with fellow colleagues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individualism</strong></td>
<td>Relationship among members is making a strong effort in displaying the role as a team player, a leader, and integrity with fellow colleagues while there is expectation that everyone is looking after his or her own interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Masculinity</strong></td>
<td>Being assertive, tough, and focusing on material success even when displaying the role as a team player, a leader, and integrity with fellow colleagues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Uncertainty avoidance</strong></td>
<td>Members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations as they display the role as a team player, a leader, and integrity with fellow colleagues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Long-Term Orientation</strong></td>
<td>Preferring tradition and values in the long term rather than the short term while displaying the role as a team player, a leader, and integrity with fellow colleagues.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 26** Reframing Terminology Matrix Explained for Hofstede’s Cultural Dimension Theories
Each of the five cultural dimensions with its new terminologies has been applied to provide a descriptive analysis of the events (managerial team meetings, work operation, and interview sessions) that have occurred among the thirteen managerial team members who respectively represented their position of project, production, production engineering, quality assurance, operation, SAP & IT, research & development, purchasing, strategic purchasing, supply chain, production planning, warehouse, and cable & CNC. The application provides a better understanding to see how the two national working behaviors co-exist.

4.2.2.4 Power Distance: The power distance between the Thais and Germans are in contrast. While the Thais believe that those who do not possess the greatest amount of power to accept themselves at an inferior level, the Germans consider that all people, regardless of the power status, should be treated as equal. In one of the managerial team meetings, the Thai team members allowed those with seniority at the workplace to do most of the discussion about the problems that were occurring at the workplace. Those with the least amount of years worked at the company tended to oblige with the issue being presented and reserved any comments to avoid the seniority figures from losing face. In contrast to the German side, they tended to ask questions and seek the facts without regards to the years of seniority of their colleagues. They felt that it was the right to know so they can formulate a future plan for action. This was the case where both sides recognized the authority position of the operation manager. For the managerial team on the Thai side, there was no need to provide much input on working issues. They just provided a brief detail of the situation and expected the operational manager to be the person in charge of doing a systematic approach in assuring that the outcome of the finished goods are met with quality standard. As for the managerial team on the German side, they expected their operation manager to perform at a level of discipline that benefits the whole entire company. In their view, the extent of fairness on part of the authorized person has to prevent personal and emotional feelings from being involved when dealing with technicality issues. It also meant on taking a tough stance against workers who are not performing to their ability and causing a delay to the committed work schedule. Any problems were to be provided with immediate practical solutions for helping the work to be done on time; otherwise it would be seen as unfair to others who are working hard. The German team felt that the operation manager should not be too
lenient with colleagues who were not making any improvements; doing so would be considered as a lack of focus on the process and not being serious with the company's mission.

In conclusion, the behavioral differences between the Thai and German managerial team members, with regards to power distance, are as followed:

- The Thai team members allowed those with seniority at the workplace to do most of the discussion about the problems that were occurring at the workplace, therefore allowing the seniority figure to preserve the role as a leader and maintain integrity among team members.
- The German team members raised inquiries without regards to individuals who hold a seniority level, thus challenging the role of others as a leader and making them prove that they are displaying integrity within the team.

4.2.2.B Individualism: Individualism between the two nationals is at the opposite end. When problems occur at Electro-Circuits, the Thais prefer to address the issue as a collective group while the Germans favor on being entitled to having time and space to perform alone in thinking things through in a meticulous manner. This is where the working behaviors clash between the two cultures. The Thais consider loyalty to be paramount and prevailing over other societal rules and regulations, while the Germans felt that it is not necessary to have so. Upon review from the situation that had taken place, the Thais were trying to preserve a close-working relationship where team members can still address each other as if they are good friends and family members. When the Thais held a meeting that only consisted of their peers they spoke freely in their language and style that invited others to share empathy with one another. By seeing things through other colleagues’ point of view it was a good way of raising sentimental feelings among peers. Therefore, in the future, if another Thai team member was to go through difficulties at work their fellow national would reciprocate the same manner, thus allowing their members to become a part of the team as players, leaders, and to foster integrity in the group. The Germans thought that it is also good to have working relationships but sometimes the truth or facts need to be expressed in a direct manner even if it becomes a bit rough to handle. When there was a meeting gathered among all team members, they spoke with details and analysis. The Germans wanted to be assured that when information is given from the first point everyone
should be firmly aware of what is happening and to decide for the next course of action. In a
sense, they were sticking to the point without giving any weight for how others might feel.
According to the German team members, they don't want to take up a lot of time talking and
discussing. They felt that the meeting should be a place for making decisions. With a behavior
that is contrasting to the Thais, the role of being a team player, a leader, and displaying integrity
was not a privilege but a discipline in an individualistic dimension. The cross-cultural lessons on
individualism, at Electro-circuits, provide the following information for establishing teamwork.

In conclusion, the behavioral differences between the Thai and German managerial
team members, with regards to individualism, are as followed:

- The Thai team members worked mostly as a collective group by preserving a
close-working relationship so that members can still address each other as if they are good friends
and family members; this preserves the role of a team player, leader, and showing integrity.

- The German team members only wanted to receive accurate information for the
purpose of being responsible for their own work and that other members will carry out their own
duties with liability; this makes other having to earn the right to be noticed as a team player,
leader, and someone who has integrity.

4.2.2.C Masculinity: In retrospect of the events that occurred, the Thai managerial
team members fostered a working behavior with less assertiveness and competitiveness, because
doing so would not be deemed as a true team player. When one of the Thai team members was
asked by the top manager to take the lead in carrying out a special operation, the person did not
take on the role due to principles of the hierarchy role. For this person, taking on such a role
would signify that he was in charge of the operation and that others would have to be under his
command which would compromise the integrity of the designated person in charge of the
operation. To avoid any confusion on who has the right authority over the team, a written
message was delivered to the operation manager about the request. The act by this person was to
prevent suspicion of seizing an opportunity to be the new team leader. The German team
members carried out a working behavior that declares itself to getting the project done once the
planning is over. From their perspective, the project needed to be attended to as quickly as
possible and the schedule has to be obliged to without any interruptions. Demands have to be
made to assure that work is being proceeded upon with professionalism. The German managerial team felt that people should take proactive measures for the work that they do and not just sit around to be told what to do next; this type of behavior does not translate as being a team player in their minds nor being a leader. In one case, the Germans felt disappointed that some of their fellow (Thai) colleagues were aware that a problem was occurring and did not make an effort on their own to fix the situation. When the behaviors are displayed by both national team members, the Germans are seen as being aggressive from the Thai side while the Thais are seen as lacking in responsibility from the German side; thus viewing them to be lacking integrity at work. These are the cross-cultural lessons for developing assertiveness and competitiveness.

In conclusion, the behavioral differences between the Thai and German managerial team members, with regards to masculinity, are as followed:

- The Thai team members did not want to take any action at work that would disrupt the hierarchy of authority. They would carry out the orders only if the person in charge of power gives the instruction to do so. Following orders are the best way for preserving one’s role to be seen as a team player, leader, and having integrity.

- The German team members worked towards getting the project done. With an emphasis on the scheduled outline of the project they display an aggressive behavior to ensure that the work is done on time without any excuses. People who could not carry out such a performance would not be recognized as a team player, leader, and having integrity.

4.2.2.D Uncertainty Avoidance: At Electro-Circuits, the managerial team was aware that the current working conditions were creating difficulties in achieving the company’s mission. Despite failing to constantly meet with the quality policy the team remained working in a condition that was demoralizing teamwork. The team felt that things were already in place and that to change things would make matters become beyond their control. It was a case of not wanting to grasp something new because doing so would bring consequences that are too foreign to comprehend; such as being chastised heavily for being unable to improve under an altered working system. Both cultures agreed that the issue of uncertainty, such as changes in the customer’s requirements, making contacts with a new supplier, having to attend non-appointed meetings, and adjusting to a compressed working schedule was not a positive feeling in the
workplace. The Thai team members avoided these examples of uncertainty by letting one person be in charge of gathering the information and make decisions toward the circumstances that are in their area of duty. They felt that if the unexpected occur in an area where that person is working then he/she should be responsible to come up with a method to minimize it. This way, members can still function as a team player, accept others as a leader, and display integrity without having an anxiety over the unpredictable. The problem here is that when the action taken to reduce the problem is in the form of a policy it tends to clash with the working procedures of others. For example, the purchasing manager wanted to have time in getting the best bargain for buying the right items for operation so that money can be well spent for the company. However, it would interfere with the agreed date for delivery that was made to the customer by the sales department. The German team members did not appreciate in having to discover things that undermined their working performance. They felt that if information was given for them to carry out the work then it is assumed that all things are correct from the very beginning. But when they found out that there were changes made in the middle of the operation it caused them to be in anxiety. With other matters to attend to they felt like their work will never get done on time nor being given the chance to assume the full role of being a team player, a leader, or demonstrating integrity with fellow colleagues. They mentioned that it was all right to be challenged. However, with situations like these it became more of a distraction and requested that the top authorities to take action on their behalf to rectify the working system.

In conclusion, the behavioral differences between the Thai and German managerial team members, with regards to uncertainty avoidance, are as followed:

- The Thai team members avoided uncertainty by letting one person be in charge of gathering information and making decisions toward the circumstances that are in their area of duty.

- The German team members were open to challenges that are presented in an uncertainty. However, they disregard in having to learn about issues that are undermining their working performance.
4.2.2.6 Long-Term Orientation: The working behavior between the two cultures differs in terms of the development of virtues. The Thais highly endorse a respect for traditions, individuals to fulfill their social obligations, and protecting one’s reputation (face-saving). This is where the behavior tends to avoid any confrontation among colleagues even if the operation is failing to meet quality standard. If bad feelings prevail in the workplace then there is a belief that the any reconciliation to keeping with the standard will be lost all together, especially viewing others as team players or being a leader. This was evident where the Thai managerial team members force themselves not to present a lot of inquiries during an urgent meeting but to quickly jump into the next task. Avoiding the questions would prevent any chances for an argument to occur or having one’s dignity smeared in front of their colleagues. They mostly sat and listen with their eyes. When they were asked for an opinion they made it brief without going into many details for the purpose of preventing their integrity from being criticized. But when they were required to give further details one of their fellow Thai colleagues took on the role as an interpreter to disseminate critical information that would help the team’s performance and operation. In contrast to the German managerial team, they wanted to find out why the problems kept occurring by constantly asking their fellow Thai colleagues. They needed to know if there was any action for improvement to be taken so that they don’t have to keep coming back to the same situation. In their view, it was all right to display a behavior of being direct when the procedures are not meeting the standards. They weren’t looking to be praised at work. They just wanted to get the work done on time and expected everyone in the workplace to carry out the duties that they were assigned to; which is what being a team player was all about to them. When the managing director made a comment for improvement, the German team members took this information as an urgent need to respond and take care of the situation to the best of one’s ability; showing that there is leadership among members in the team. This translated into taking action with results. With results, the Germans felt that it needed to be displayed for discussion among the managerial team members. Unfortunately, they felt that their fellow Thai team members were not doing much on their part in coming up with the results; thus leading to question their integrity in helping the team to perform with exceptional results.

In conclusion, the behavioral differences between the Thai and German managerial team members, with regards to long-term orientation, are as followed:
• The Thai team members forced themselves not to present a lot of inquiries during an urgent meeting but would immediately jump into the next task. Questions would be avoided in order to prevent any chances for an argument to occur or having one’s dignity smeared in front of their colleagues; which could lead to being discredited as a team player, leader, an one with integrity.

• The German team members aimed at wanting to know why problems kept occurring by constantly asking their fellow Thai colleagues for their analysis. They also required details that involved any action for improvement so that they don’t the problems don’t keep on repeating in the workplace; which can help others to be recognized as a team player, leader, and showing some integrity in working as a team.

4.2.3 A Standard List for the Desired Working Behavior at the Electro-Circuits Company

The researcher set the standard list with the aim of developing the desired working behavior for the managerial team to implement at the Electro-Circuits Company. The results of the standard list were from investigating section 4.2.2 which had the description of the interaction events among the managerial team members. The standard list is presented in a table format showing the five cultural dimension theories on the left and the criterion to abide by on the right.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hofstede’s 5 Cultural Dimension Theories</th>
<th>Criteria for Desired Working Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Power distance</strong></td>
<td>- Being a team player means probing for what a fellow colleague does best that would help the team succeed. The team player works around the other member’s strength and propels it to become part of the team’s vital asset in execution. Where the team member may lack in strength, the team player may take on the role as a trainer or invite other fellow team members to take part in the training to nourish the required knowledge, skills, or abilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Being a leader is about treating the issue of equality as the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
moral grounds for the right behavior within the team. The question of power is not about the status or privilege that one holds with high esteem over others. Rather, power is about being responsible and taking accountability for what is best for the team.

- Displaying integrity towards equality is about setting the system that leads to tangible and intangible results. It’s important for team members to see and feel that equality is present in the workplace rather than just listening about equality being preached upon. For this to happen, integrity can be in the form of a team agreement that can either be written or kept as a working code among fellow members. What is written and where it is displayed to be seen conjure up vital signs that these are the guideline principles for action that the team wishes to abide by when they are interacting with each other or engaged in a conference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individualism</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Being a team player requires a delicate balance to ensure that two contrasting work style co-exist for the greater performance of the team. In a collective approach, the team could be asked by a team player to generate questions and seek feedback from each other so that ideas can be created for a desired work action to be set forth. The team player can take on the role as a facilitator who arranges the condition for team members to get an opportunity to have their views put forward or have a fellow colleague transmit the message for them in case they are a bit timid to speak up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Team members assuming the role of a leader have to assess how much impact will result when the team works as a collective group or allowing some free time for an individual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
team member to analyze things in a thoroughly manner. This approach is to assist the team in achieving the results. Problem solving is a critical event for one culture where it is best for people to come together and put their minds to remedy the situation. In this case, the leader can utilize this event as a way for fellow team members to gain some experience on becoming a team leader.

- With integrity, there must be a mechanism in place to assure that collectivism is encouraged when the meeting calls for ways to solve problems. While there is a flow of ideas being exchanged and probing for solutions, each team member is to make themselves feel connected to the process so that they know what action should be taken once the meeting concludes. Being connected also means keeping the process in mind when there is time and space for a team member to contemplate on the matter alone. Integrity is sustained when there is accountability from working in collective harmony or crafting up a scheme on one's own time that led to positive results for the team.

Masculinity

- Assertiveness and competitiveness are abilities that can be taught and learned. Electro-Circuits is a company that proclaims itself as remaining curious, imaginative and courageous in challenging their current thinking, and growing their expertise by learning through teamwork and making continuous improvement as a way of life. To think and act like a unit with this company, one has to install the capacity within and with others to be aligned. The team player can display best practical examples of being assertive and competitive for their fellow Thai colleagues to modify by. A dialogue can be
exchanged between the team player and the Thai managerial team to gather ideas and seek for ways to make the workplace a training ground for them to become assertive and competitive. The team player can ask for the assistance of the German managerial team to provide a peer review for the Thais on being assertive and competitive that pertains to solving problems, continuous improvement, innovation, and taking responsibility.

- The leader can ensure that the team members adopt the working behavior of being assertive and competitive by creating a practice field for developing these abilities. By having members learn the abilities through teamwork they not only understand why it is highly important to foster such behaviors but become more connected to the team. The leader can set up an after action review for team members to exchange ideas and look for other possible ways in being assertive and competitive in a professional manner. As each team member is diverse in their educational background there may be ways for them to be assertive and competitive that is more conducive to their own working style. The leader has to make sure that the opportunity for learning through teamwork is still evitable and not taken for granted.

- Demonstrating integrity under the context of assertiveness and competitiveness means that the mission is still accomplished through a collective harmony. Even if the working climate becomes turbulent and chaotic at times, the team will be able to adapt to the circumstances as long as team members are still assertive and competitive as a collective unit and not against each other. To show integrity is by holding oneself accountable towards being assertive and competitive so that the
team’s strength is present and able to strive towards accomplishing its objectives while being conditioned to become more innovative in handling the matter in the next operation in the future.

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| This presents a huge challenge for a team player, a leader, and the act of displaying integrity. Since uncertainty is already an unpleasant feeling for a cross-cultural workplace, any results that lead to a negative impact will exhibit a sense of recrimination of the changes from the first place. It would be seem as if someone has splash more oil to a house that is already up in flames. The role as a team player and leader, and the act of integrity needs to be executed in synchronization for team members in learning how to anticipate for uncertainties and come up with solutions to the problems identified. In addition, it is about taking an innovative approach in converting the negatives into a positive, and being responsible for continuous improvement in teamwork. A dialogue session can be held where team members suspend strong assumptions to allow for participants to exchange ideas, search for many possible answers to a specific question, and establish working conditions that strengthens the pact of teamwork. As long as the reasoning are done for the purpose of the mission or desired outcome, the team can still assume a vigilant stance of preventing reducing uncertainty by establishing a security for teams to learn how to overcome any form of challenges.

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| Long-term orientation is a delicate issue in a cross-cultural workplace, especially in the Asian culture. A company such as Electro-Circuits would require the team to learn and work together that is in the best interest of the mission. Such action
interprets a code of work behavior that requires the individual’s culture to be aligned with the company’s culture. For Electro-Circuits, the company states that they maintain integrity and fairness with each other, with its customers and suppliers, with the investors and the community in which it lives and works, respecting fellow employees, its environment, and a healthy balance between work and family. Therefore, this situation requires the role as a team player and leader to be intertwined to achieve the maximum result in integrity with team learning. The role is having fellow team members acting as the eyes and ears to collect information that would be discussed on seeing if integrity is maintained. The team can evaluate with an exchange of ideas and search for solutions to see where integrity may be required for improvement or innovated upon for best results. Through a collective harmony, which is administered by the team player or leader, the team will be held accountable for sustaining the leadership and teamwork that focuses its energy in balancing the desired virtues derived from a long-term and short-term orientation. Integrity is also weighed to see if the results are replenishing the desired working behaviors (teamwork, problem solving, leadership, innovation, responsibility, and continuous improvement) that help the team to perform with great feat.

4.3 An Exploration of the Workplace Culture at Electro-Circuits Company

In this section of the study, the researcher makes an exploration of the company’s workplace culture with an attempt to answer the question of “what is the cross-cultural workplace at Electro-Circuits Company’s”.

In this work, the term ‘workplace culture’ has been described as what is regarded as an appropriate way to think and act. The information background of Electro-Circuits Company in
section 4.1 reveals a workplace culture that is guided by three principles. The first is a mission to achieve the highest benefit for its customers. The second is the company's goal which is aimed in being the preferred long-term partner of small and medium-sized companies with a belief that the customers come first and a will to take an extra step to assist the customer in any way, and providing optimal customer service. The third is the company’s philosophy which asserts that quality is first.

The three principles that govern the reason and progress of the company, as mentioned by the human resources manager, are discerned as the workplace culture where all workers (especially the managerial team) think and act toward a) achieving the highest benefit for its customers, b) being the preferred long-term partner of small and medium-sized companies with a belief that the customers come first, and c) maintaining the philosophy of quality first. Exploration is taken in the following steps:

1. A) Seeing how the functional roles of the managing director and the human resources manager create a workplace cultural impact on the managerial team by observing and inquiring about their relevant duties toward the team.

   B) Looking at how each managerial team members impact the workplace culture by observing and inquiring about their relevant duties toward their team.

2. Viewing the workplace culture through private interviews and taking observational notes about the team’s behavior during their managerial team meeting; the purpose is to see what they set out to do and what they actually do.

3. Obtaining in-depth information about the workplace culture is used with the tools of "McKinsey 7S Framework" and "Hays Team Learning Pyramid". Analysis is provided for each methodology upon the results of its application.


4.3.1 Managerial Team Members Functional Role with Impact to the Workplace Culture

In this section of the study, the format has been organized as follows - First, the functional roles of the managing director and the human resources manager have been analyzed
separately to determine their roles in making a workplace cultural impact on the performance of the managerial team. Second, the functional roles of each managerial team members have been viewed to determine how their working relationship creates an impact in the workplace culture. The criteria for supporting teamwork in their job descriptions and the actions that the managing director, human resources manager, and the managerial team perform have been observed and inquired through "Hofstede’s Five Cultural Dimension Theories". The purpose is to provide an insight of how the structure cooperates and collaborates in upholding the company’s philosophy and mission. The study deems the job descriptions as the necessary behaviors that are strongly required to get the team working as an effective unit to produce the desired outcome. Through the view of the cultural dimension theories, the objective is to see the extent of the managerial team members’ functional role in allowing them to think and act in ways that are supporting the company’s philosophy and mission. In addition, it is to see if these members can apply team learning towards achieving the philosophy and mission by taking an initiative standpoint on accomplishing the mission through a collective harmony, making the connection that conveys a sense of clarity and anticipation for action and displaying a sense of accountability.

Between the roles of the managing director/human resources manager and the managerial team their differences are in the working performance toward with regards to the workplace culture. The managing director and the human resources manager act as the eyes and ears to provide feedback and other important information to help the managerial team stay aligned while trying to reach the objectives of the company’s philosophy and mission. The managerial team acts as the heart and mind of the company in producing results with quality. The team has to keep itself disciplined and committed, as well as taking full responsibility to assure that the company’s philosophy and mission is done on a consistent basis.

The researcher would like to inform the reader that each managerial position held by the nationality of that person were hired based on the qualifications (work experience and expertise level) that the managing director felt was necessary to operate as a team.
4.3.1 A Functional Role of the 'German' Managing Director & 'German' Human Resources Manager towards the Managerial Team

I) Managing Director:

From the Managing Director’s viewpoint, the Electro-Circuits Company handles a lot of materials and resources, and operates with a lot of machinery. Therefore, it is imperative on his part to expect all staff to strictly comply with the company’s safety & environment policy. In addition, the managing director states that he wants the “managerial team to make considerations and approve on an objective for improving and developing their respective working area. Also, they have to uphold maintenance and meet with the regulations for safety and environmental issues. Furthermore they have to improve, review, and set an action plan for any problems that may be compromising on the subject of safety and environmentalism” (Interview conducted on Apr/2009). Based on the interview conducted from April 2009, to run such an operational system at a company that is committed to the standards, the managing director advocates that the managerial team demonstrate competence by displaying a collective set of proficiency:

1. Strong Leadership and a motivated personality.
2. Being kept informed of new production technologies and management practices.
3. Having an eager sense to enhance knowledge and skill through ongoing training.
4. Solve technical and organizational tasks in engineering area with suitable procedures in an efficient way.
5. Applying and advancing scientific discipline and paying attention to the economic aspects as well as to safety regulations.
7. Achieving customer satisfaction with high quality of products, processes and services.
8. Self motivated, well organized and able to work without supervision.
9. Displaying the roles as a team player, a leader, integrity with fellow colleagues.
10. Attaining business knowledge, self development.
11. Be seen as an integral part of the business.
12. Meeting with delivery targets.
13. Being well organized and able to work without supervision.
14. Understanding basic revenue models and cost-to-completion projections; making decisions according to event.

15. Understanding pricing model and billing procedures.

16. Willingness to innovate.

17. Understanding the business realities.

18. Creating practical & solution to advise on best practice.


20. Ability to constantly plan, organize, coordinate and control purchasing.


22. Ability to negotiate, renegotiate, and administer contracts with suppliers, vendors, and other representatives.

23. Ability to use logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems.

24. Ability to analyze price proposals, financial reports, and other data and information to determine reasonable prices.

25. Ability to consider the relative costs and benefits of potential actions.

These proficiencies are heavily required by the managing director because he needs time and focus on making future plans for the company to remain competitive. Thus his functional role towards the managerial team is to ensure that they perform collectively at the level of accomplishing the company's philosophy and mission. With regards to the cultural dimensions, the managing director quotes: "I want the members of the team to feel a sense of equality in the workplace when it comes to displaying the ability to plan, negotiate, use logic and reasoning, analyze, and make considerations for carrying out an efficient and effective work operation." (Interview conducted on Apr/2009). The managing director clearly wants the team to function as a synchronized unit by having members display the roles as a team player, a leader, and demonstrating integrity with their fellow colleagues. He likes to see the team members being assertive (masculine) in a form of strong leadership. He sets the tone for the managerial team to eliminate any uncertainties by letting the team know that it has to work with accuracy and being efficient in their operation as well as guaranteeing the delivery of goods at the requested time. The managing director knows that change is always occurring, therefore the long term perspective
is given way to the short term; he wants the team to apply decisions according to the event and try to understand the business realities that the team has to deal with. When things do not go as according to plan, he becomes quite agitated and immediately takes a ‘hands on’ approach to get the proper process back on track for producing standard quality. Based on an interview, the exertion of power on the managerial team is necessary due to expectations of the company’s standards – which is the workplace culture. According to the managing director, he said that “when desperate measures have to be taken to obtain the desired results I would display an emotional outburst to get the attention of the managerial team to work as a collective group under my authority” (Interview conducted on Apr/2009); the aggressive behavior on his part serves as a catalyst for team motivation. In one of the managerial team meeting that he attended to listen to the team about proposing a new work flow, he voiced his opinion in a dominating manner to make the team members be aware of the risks that they could be faced with. He told them that this risk could slow down the operation and would be prevented if they just performed with greater discipline as a team. Before he finally accepted the new work flow proposal he told the managerial team that they should expect changes to occur. At the end of the meeting, he stated to the team members: “I want to be clear to you all that it is your responsibility to do what is necessary to produce quality even if it means changing the new proposed work flow in the future if it’s not effective” (Interview conducted on Apr/2009).

II) Human Resources Manager:

With relevance to supporting the managerial team, the task of the human resources manager has to work closely with each team members and carry out the consultancy role for keeping them orientated about the company’s policies and procedures. Sources from the interview with the human resources manager reports that this type of working environment demands that the tasks are consistent and reliable in administrating human resource services, and to ensure that the business does not suffer a shortage of labor impact. As the human resources manager, she needs to be updated on the knowledge for understanding the business and the ability to apply leadership, which is a strong requirement. She has to come up with practical solutions that are creative and provide advice that leads to best practice.
In a further interview with the human resources manager to discuss about her working relations with the managerial team, it was revealed that she had allowed the Thai side of the managerial team to set up time on their own to discuss about issues for improvement. According to her quote: "I granted them the permission for a special arrangement because I understand the need for the team to gain a sense of still being able to work together (opposing individualism) in a time of struggling and that colleagues are still able to share his/her opinion of the problems that they were facing at work" (Interview conducted on Apr/2009) (femininity over masculinity). To bring about a sense to the managing director of controlling any form of undesired surprises (uncertainty) from getting out of hand, the human resources manager also relayed the information back to him on sources she heard that was making the managing team lose confidence in their performance. In this situation, she is able to discuss with the managing director, as well as with the project manager and the production manager of coming up with a plan that would help the team to regain their performance, thus putting in an effort to ensure that the team is aligned towards meeting the objectives of the company’s philosophy and mission. Despite her good intentions, the managerial team continued to have dysfunctional relations in working together. In the beginning, she thought that she could trust them as professional adults in allowing them to resolve the issues on their own. Her gamble on hoping that the problems could be solved on their own would be materialized (long term) took an unfortunate turn. Nevertheless, the problem started to spiral out of control and it was creating an impact on the managing director’s status; the human resources manager allowed the managing director to immediately inject himself into the situation and redirect things back in to order. Sadly, the human resources manager just stayed on her position until vacating it in October 2009. Her Thai assistant was already being developed for the role and took her position within that period.

4.3.1.B Functional Team Role Among the Managerial Team Members

1) Functional Team Role of the ‘German’ Project Manager

According to the job description document, the project manager has to make an effort in leading a proposal that includes the current project. Such a functional task has to be communicated in a written format and verbal discussion that effectively conveys crystal clear meaning to both customers and operation team. In the sector of communication itself, facilitation
has to be done effectively upon gathering the team and meeting with clients. As the project manager, his role is to coordinate a status meeting to ensure that everyone is on the same page. This is for the purpose of keeping the project team well informed of changes within the organization and general corporate news. If there is any relevant project, the project manager has to provide updated information to the superiors. The presentations that the project manager delivers must be in a manner that is engaging, informative, and well-organized. On dealing with resolves and escalated issues, the project manager must execute them in a timely fashion. He is given a display of ‘understanding the best method for communicating’ on subjects that are difficult and sensitive. Coming to this issue, the sector of leadership is a must for the project manager in taking on the challenges for developing other staff members as leaders while serving as a role model and mentor. In addition, the role of a leader on part of the project manager is to manage the development of the team by ensuring, when possible, that project tasks are in line with each innovator’s career interests. Also, inspiration is to be implemented to motivate coworkers to attain goals and pursue excellence. Furthermore, the project manager identifies opportunities for improvement and makes constructive suggestions for positive changes. Lastly, the project manager has to be aware that leadership is also about being able to manage effectively on the process of innovative change. Based on the company’s foundation, the clients are considered the most important part of the business process. Therefore, this sector strongly requires the following for the project manager to oblige by - a management of day-to-day client interaction, setting and managing client expectations, developing lasting relationships with client personnel that foster client ties, communicating effectively with clients to identify needs and evaluate alternative business solutions, and continually seeking opportunities to increase customer satisfaction and deepen client relationships. But deep down inside his feelings, the researcher’s interview with the project manager revealed his statement as followed: “I have to confess that my role is very challenging due to the stimulating anxiety of failing to meet with the expectations. I had some negative experience of not being able to control the events as the team expected me to exert some level of authority based on my position (power distance). In addition, I’ve taken a lot of criticism for not setting a clear direction for the team to operate with effectiveness and efficiency”; his fellow colleagues were critical of seeing a lack of maintaining team discipline on his part (the team valued collectivism over individualism). “I am being heavily pressured from
the managing director to make sure the project starts and finishes on schedule without any delay"; as the right hand of the managing director, the project manager was expected to assert himself to extinguish any forms of problem that were detrimental to teamwork (a question of masculinity). "However, there are complex issues that need to be truly addressed before the implementation of the project can take its course" (Interview conducted on May/2009); he cites accurate information and gaining full understanding and collaboration with the managerial team members as crucial for the operation (avoiding uncertainty). At the managerial meeting held to discuss about proposing and implementing a new work flow design, the project manager had some serious doubts about whether the idea would worked. He harped on the issue that it would create a negative impact in obtaining the desired results and that it would interfere with the managing director's span of control. To avoid any confusion or difficulties he proposed that the managing director be fully informed of the new work flow design and let him offer his opinion and advice to help the team overcome its problems (preserving long term).

II) Functional Team Role of the 'Thai' Production Manager

The writings on the job description expect the manager of production to be at full force in delivering high performance. The production manager has to diversify her skills to planning, preparing, issuing and controlling production schedules. She has to ensure that the material requirements are available in order to have a controlled flow of approved materials met on a timely schedule. It is her responsibility to make sure that the materials have to fulfill the production requirements and create customer satisfaction. Acting on up-to-date information, she advises managers of other departments on the status of work in progress, material availability and potential production problems to ensure that the personnel, equipment, material and services are provided as needed; there is a confirmation of material supply and demands; work order is prepared for the production schedule. The production manager makes coordination with other departments (Quality Assurance, Manufacturing, Purchasing, Engineering, Inventory Control, Traffic and Marketing) in order to ensure that the team is fully developed and prepared to administer the project with confidence. The production manager has to make a schedule and expedite the movement of parts or components by means of checking the order, stock transferring and requesting for shipping orders; these are done by analyzing inventory usage, and coordinating
with an appropriate action to be followed through. To help keep the company highly competitive in the long run, the production manager has to work with fellow managerial team members on the following issues:

1. Promoting initiative and involvement on the part of the team.
2. Guaranteeing that production is under a sufficient manpower to administer the operation and that the workers are motivated to complete work on schedule.
3. Strengthening the solidarity (team spirit) of the employees and the company as a whole.
4. Equipping the workplace to be modernized and highly appropriate to the guidelines of the safety requirements and ergonomic rules.
5. Informing the managing director about the state of affairs with several projects at any time, as well as reporting on any unusual occurrences.

Based on the interview with the production manager, she states the following: “My task is in dealing with arranging the hearts and mind of people to work as a team posed quite a challenge. Therefore, I must display the position as one of the leading manager (power of authority) to demand that colleagues perform the best of their ability to help each other, be a good example for others to follow, and updating members of their completed tasks so that the production is operated on a smooth basis” (Interview conducted on May/2009). However, she does see the difference between telling others to do something that is desired and showing them the best way of executing it. As it turned out, she sees the team members performing in different ways with each results being totally different from what is expected. She tried to create a balance in satisfying the working style of each managerial team member’s performance (allowing for individualism to be integrated with collectivism) but became quickly dismayed when problems started to occur sporadically. In her opinion, she quoted: “When individual team members don’t take their share of responsibility for helping the team to solve problems or come up with a solution, it truly makes it tough for me to get the team to work with full collaboration. Such a situation has put me in a predicament because I’m not use to the role of taking an assertive stance to get things back into order” (Interview conducted on May/2009) (feministic appeal over masculinity). While under the pressure of keeping the company competitive in the long run and finding a solution to get the managerial team’s performance back on track, she
strongly requested for the operation manager and production planning manager to document every details that are relevant to the operation schedule. Her method of micro-managing was to assure that the problems can be analyzed for inspection when she has a conference meeting with the managing director and the project manager (eliminating uncertainty that pertains to her duty); thus allowing a sign of confidence that team members were carrying out their duties of serving the customers need and that quality is heavily focused in the outcome. But for her, the best way of getting a solution in solving the team’s performance was to attribute the method based on the managing director’s protocol expectation which she believed was the key to get the team members to focus on their tasks (maintaining long term).

III) Functional Team Role of the ‘Thai’ Production Engineering Manager

Upon observation of the job description, the production engineering manager’s collective role is to have a good personality and to be a team player. In this role, she has the duty of solving problems, supporting the purchasing manager with material sourcing, price negotiations and approvals, and provides support to the project manager in communicating with the customers when complaints or technical problems occur. Also, her skills are required when there is an introduction of new projects and to coordinate the team to carry out the task. She works closely with the research and development manager on project tests.

Based on the researcher’s observation with the production engineering manager, she has a sincere character and took on the role of relaying the messages to be translated into English from Thai to help get her Thai colleagues to state their cases when problems arise; she applied her position as a path to help others who were having difficulties in helping themselves (using power to help others). With kindness and humbleness displayed at one of the managerial meeting, she pointed out that some of her colleagues were trying to adjust to the problems that were occurring in the operation and were making their best effort to help each other find a solution. She said that “I make time to see how they take their action when working as a team” (Interview conducted on May/2009) (adhering to collectivism). Her fluency in the English language allows her to obtain a good rapport with her fellow German colleague who works as the research and development manager. This experience allowed her to understand how to cope with the two cultures thus allowing her to insert the role of being passionate in assisting others without having to
compromise her character (feminism sustained). When the researcher asked for her intake on
helping the team to uphold the company's philosophy and mission she stated: "one person cannot
solve the problem because the procedures are highly complex. I'm in agreement with the
research and development manager that it takes the collective effort of the team to gain the
expected results otherwise it is impossible to provide customer satisfaction when the results are
low in quality". In this interview, she indicated that "getting the accurate information was highly
crucial for the operation because without the right information I do not want to go against the
company's policy of quality as well as putting the team in disarray" (Interview conducted on
May/2009) (preventing uncertainty from happening). On the day of the meeting for the proposal
of the new work flow, the production manager acted as the liaison for getting other Thai
managers (operation, purchasing, and strategic purchasing) to speak their minds by providing
translating their native language into English so that the German managerial team members could
understand. Although the translation in the meeting was a little bit annoying to the Germans they
showed empathy with the production engineering manager about the situation at hand (presence
of long term orientation).

IV) Functional Team Role of the ‘Thai’ Quality Assurance Manager

The observation of the quality assurance manager’s job description depicts his team
role as the following for team members to be aware of and to acquire a sound understanding:

1. Being seen as an integral part of the business.
2. Keeping informed of quality assurance and QA tasks.
3. Communicating techniques and skills for administrating quality assurance.
4. Creating practical solutions and advice on best practice
5. Understanding business realities.
6. Providing leadership qualities and business knowledge.
7. Supporting willingness to innovate in the workplace.

Since the role of quality assurance is one of the critical areas in complying with the
company's philosophy and mission, the researcher of this study allowed the QA manager to
describe the importance of his role to the managerial team's performance. The QA managers
states that his line of work is in overseeing confirmation with the production manager, operation
manager, and the production planning manager that there is an incoming of quality assurance and an outgoing of quality control. He also works with managers of production engineering and research and development to ensure that quality is passed with the ‘testing for the optimization of reliability in the products’ and that evaluation of data have been done along with the investigation for any hidden errors. Standing by the principles of ‘quality assurance’ with the managers of purchasing and strategic purchasing, he described the concept as the following: “I have to choose suppliers that have the right qualifications and doing an audit to maintain positive business relationship. I understand that the company’s customers have to receive the best in quality service in order to build a long lasting and trustful business partnership when the competition becomes tough. Therefore, I have to constantly monitor over the corrective actions from suppliers and customers, otherwise I would get reprimanded by the managing director for not paying attention to the details. Furthermore, I work closely with the directing manager and the project manager in laying out the plan for keeping up to date with the latest trend in maintaining the status of ISO 9001” (Interview conducted on May/2009).

The interview with the quality manager reveals a side of concern among the relations between the Thai and German managerial team members. For himself, he’s able to work with anyone and share information on a need to know basis because his task within the team his highly dynamic (recognizing his level of power). However, his concern was the fact that there were errors mostly happening on the side of his fellow national colleagues and that they only wanted certain members of the team to know about. He states that it’s the way things work around here (displaying collectivism among national members). When asked why not let the whole team be aware of the nature of this problem his reply was that it’s something that people don’t feel so comfortable in exposing it for everyone to know. He quoted that “it’s best that the Thai managers decide for themselves on what action they should take without having to become pressured into it” (abiding by the side of feminism rather than masculinity). In one of the managerial meeting held to discuss about why a special order was not taken, he said: “I felt that the chain of command should be the ones taking immediate charge when they have received the information”: upon discussion, it was notified that the managing director wanted the quality assurance manager to take the leading role in directing the operation for the special order, however, he did not take up on the challenge, thus leaving the order to be delayed for three days. He quoted: “I felt that it
was not the place or position for someone to become the leader of the operation since the person in charge of the affairs had the authority to act out the orders" (Interview conducted on May/2009). In his view, to take such a role would make it confusing for those want to gain access to the right source of information (avoiding uncertainty) and would cause a friction among some managerial team members (preserving the long-term).

V) Functional Team Role of the ‘Thai’ Operation Manager

Based on the observation of the job description of the operation manager, her line of duty towards the performance with the team is to make sure that members are performing in concert to have the goods delivered on the targeted date. She has to have a close supervision on the issue of scheduling, establishing and maintaining productive working relationships with the entire team. It is her job that the goals are set and communicated to the team members so that work is coordinated in order for attainment to be possible. She is required to see that the management team demonstrates leadership as an example on a daily basis. Any possible future problems that she sees have to be monitored; she has to design methods to prevent problems from occurring again in the future. The company expects the operating manager to come up with a solution that is for the long term. In the interview, the most pressing experience that the operation manager has ever faced is in obtaining cooperation between the departments of Warehouse, Production Engineering, Purchasing, Production, Production Planning, and Strategic Purchasing, to be strongly aligned in order to meet with the company’s goals. She knows that without a true working relation among the departmental units, it would prevent the building of an efficient and effective structures, and processes that would strengthen the company’s growth. The operation manager has to corroborate to the production manager that the working procedures are running on schedule; so that sources can be affirmed that quality is being met and that customers can be confident of receiving their orders on the confirmed date. Based on the interview, she states the following: “I find myself being challenged in finding the proper reinforcement of building the bridge between different cultures within the company (complex of displaying power). I would hold try to get the Thai managers to come for a meeting to discuss about ways for improving their team performance rather than having them discuss about it by the cafeteria or water cooler”; but in the end her soft approach to this matter leads the Thai managerial team members into
constantly having informal discussions (displaying a feminist appeal). In addition, she stated: “I wanted the team to produce information for action (collectivism over individualism). Since the company’s reputation as an effective and modern business has to be protected and bolstered, I have to liaise with the managing director on informing him about the state of affairs with several projects at any time as well as about issues that could lead to a disruption in the operation” (Interview conducted on May/2009) (helping to avoid uncertainty). With health and safety as an issue to the workplace, she also has the responsibility in looking after the company’s safety and environment policy, as well as supervising, advising, and revising the regulations in order to allow continuous development of the organization. She comments that “it is a time-consuming but a very demanding job that ensures that the company is carrying out the company’s philosophy and mission” (Interview conducted on May/2009) (maintaining long term).

VI) Functional Team Role of the ‘German’ Systems, Applications, Procedures (SAP) & Information Technology (IT) Manager

With regards to the job description, the SAP & IT manager has to guarantee that there will be an uninterrupted flow of work of every managerial team’s personal division which is dependent on computer systems. Although his work skills are mainly in the field of information technology, the interview with the SAP & IT manager revealed him as being critical of his team’s performance. The results led him on being up-front (talking directly) with his colleagues in discussing about problematic issues that were preventing the team from meeting its objectives. Upon conducting an interview, he states the following: “I felt that problems in the workplace were caused by human errors and therefore they can be solved with reason and good judgment. I expect those with the level of authority to perform their part and to do it professionally otherwise they could be subject to scrutiny” (Interview conducted on May/2009) (respect for the right to have and manage power). At one of the first managerial team meetings held to discuss about the low performance of the team he provided a list of notes for improvement on working as a team and felt that one of the issues was to aware of your own actions and how to improve yourself in helping the team to solve the problems (promotes individualism as the means for teamwork). He quoted the following: “But how others approach on this matter is entirely up to them” (Interview conducted on May/2009); according to his opinion on the event that was occurring, the
managerial team was experiencing a downward spiral in delivering quality to their customers. He stated that "some of the (Thai) managerial team need to speak up at the meeting without feeling any sense of shame or fear for voicing their opinion" (Interview conducted on May/2009); according to him although it was all right to have the production engineer manager translate the information from Thai to English on part of her colleagues it was deemed critical for these team members to make a vigorous effort of disseminating any information that would help the team (demonstrating masculinity towards others). He agrees with his research and development manager colleague that accurate information is crucial to have in order to ensure that quality is to be attained at the outcome (removing uncertainty). In this meeting, the SAP & IT manager wanted his Thai colleagues to make a daring attempt to change the working system if they feel that it is not helping them to collaborate effectively with each other in achieving the company’s philosophy and mission. He also lets the project manager know that when one becomes too passive and hoping that the problems resolve itself it would only lead to further complications in the future for the managerial team to deliver quality within their performance of working together (challenging the long term).

VII) Functional Team Role of the ‘German’ Research & Development Manager

The observation of the team role of the research and development manager requires him to demonstrate the following in accordance to his fellow team members:

1. Working closely with the operation manager to assure delivery is set with the targeted date.

2. Applying leadership and business knowledge with the production engineering manager and production manager.

3. Maintaining integrity with the project manager to assure customer satisfaction.

4. Partnering with the quality assurance manager to promote a willingness to innovate in the workplace.

5. Studying along side the managing director and the project manager to obtain an understanding of the business realities.
The interview with the research and development manager reveals his work as being quite intensive. He said the following: “I believe that all members of the managerial team who are underneath the authority of the project manager and the production manager should have an open attitude for accepting the challenges at work” (Interview conducted on May/2009). In demonstrating his idea, the first managerial meeting held to discuss about the team’s low performance had him discussing about the challenges members have to take in order to build one’s character in kicking the habit of relying on orders from top authority just to perform their duties (wants power to be equally distributed). At this meeting, he states: “I want team members to realize that in order for the team to become successful one needs to carefully assess their personal performance and determine whether they are actually helping their team to work better or not” (Interview conducted on May/2009) (individualism with a sense of being responsible for the action). In a private interview, he discusses about how difficult it was to receive accurate information. He quoted: “In my line of work, if the information is not fully correct than all the time and painstaking work will amount to nothing at all because it cannot be passed over for quality assurance manager and operation manager to confirm for delivery” (Interview conducted on May/2009). He understands and agrees with the project manager that it is important to satisfy the customers. However, it’s important that he is being provided with the confirmed sources otherwise it will not be possible to deliver guaranteed satisfaction towards the customer (eliminating uncertainty at all costs) as well as abiding by the company’s philosophy of quality first. At the managerial team meeting on presenting the new work flow, he collaborated with the production engineering manager to construct and present the new concept of working together so that the team is able to produce the outcome with quality. However, he felt worried that the problems will continue on to exist if some people are careless to rectify the matter. Thus he let others know that they should be held responsible for their own action and learn how to improve on the situation (asserting masculinity). In addition, he wanted his fellow team members to be highly cooperative in helping to solve problems and not to worry about whether what one says or do in getting them to focus will make them despised for being too rough on the working relations (long term is not so important).
VIII) Functional Team Role of the ‘Thai’ Purchasing Manager

The observation of the job description of the purchasing manager requires a team role that performs the following function:

1. Working closely with the production manager, production planning manager, and operation manager to obtain confirmed information about purchasing the necessary items to support the operation plan.

2. Setting a guarantee delivery of goods at requested time with the production engineering manager and the research and development manager to commence their work.

3. Demonstrating leadership qualities and business knowledge with the production manager and project manager to control any unnecessary financial expense or waste.

According to the interview with the purchasing manager, she states the following: "The key point is to ensure that money is being well spent otherwise it would bring the company into a financial disorder. It is up to me to make sure that there is a good return for spending money so that there are resources available to support an operation that is directed towards delivering customer satisfaction through quality outcome" (Interview conducted on May/2009). She identifies the tactic in the form of having her staff provide information about situation of competition, supply source, new products and price developments, and analyzes them for the production manager, production planning manager, and operation manager to gain a great deal of information for solid planning (using level of power to assist others). In the interview, she confesses that "sometimes the tactic needs to be improved upon when it is to obtain several goods for the production engineering manager and research and development manager to do their work. In this situation, I want to plan the delivery dates, order, and define quantities by the right order dates, and carefully choose the suppliers and conduct the purchase negotiations with great efficiency" (Interview conducted on May/2009); such an action would ensure that operation is carried out in an efficient manner with no loss of integrity (stressing individualism in decision making). The purchasing manager feels that her work is about dealing with internal and external customers. She states: "I try to learn about their working habits in order to be in compliance with their needs rather than assuming what they need (feminism conscience at work) so that they get along as a team" (Interview conducted on May/2009). At the managerial meeting for introducing the new work flow design she agreed that sometimes information was not so accurate
which made her hesitant to carry out the purchasing orders. She also wants her team members to know that she is under orders to purchase and invest in materials with sound reason since money used for buying items have to be written in details (avoiding uncertainty). She also wanted the team to know that she needs to maintain the credibility and trust with the project manager and production manager in demonstrating professionalism on negotiating contracts and formulating policies with supplier (sustaining long term).

VIV) Functional Team Role of the ‘Thai’ Strategic Purchasing Manager

The observation of the strategic purchasing manager’s job description pertains to her team role as working in coordination with the purchasing manager. With information received from the purchasing manager she is required to carry out tasks dealing with the developing sourcing strategies to guide appropriate supplier selection. In addition, she is expected to take action to reduce the costs on all products where appropriate, evaluate and select supplier’s portfolio, analyze material demands (by groups), and set up and negotiate from contracts with suppliers. In the interview with the strategic purchasing manager, she describes the following about her work: “I have to be a close working partner with the purchasing manager to ensure that the obligations are being fulfilled. The only difference where my working relations and that of the purchasing manager differ is on the issue of obtaining the source of information” (Interview conducted on May/2009); she felt that it is best to let the purchasing manager gather all the details from the production manager, production planning manager, and operation manager before she can finalize the transaction order (power acknowledged for protocol) otherwise there would be an overlap of information. According to her view, she states: “too much information could delay in setting out a scheme to help the team obtain the necessary materials and resources for operation” (Interview conducted on May/2009); thus not being unable to complete the results with quality nor guaranteeing delivery of customer satisfaction. During the managerial meeting to discuss about the team’s problem in working together, she mostly listened passively to others and would offer some advice through the production engineering manager for other managerial team members to help create a solution for better teamwork. As one of the Thai managerial team members who lacked the ability to communicate thoroughly in the English language she felt confident in providing input in the meeting when other fellow Thai nationals were present
(collectivism over individualism). When the meeting became a little bit intense among the German and Thai managerial team members over the issue of irresponsibility of team performance she remained silent but listened to the problems that were being addressed (staying with femininity over masculinity). The strategic purchasing manager’s working relations with her fellow colleagues is similar to that of the purchasing manager – the importance of obtaining orders to purchase and invest in materials with sound reason since money used for buying items have to be written in details (avoiding uncertainty). She is known to offer some advice in an informal way, such an example is at having lunch together or attending a banquet function so that the team can hopefully work more together effectively and demonstrate trust with each other rather than bring up issues for disputing the action of fellow team members (preserving the long-term).

X) Functional Team Role of the ‘Thai’ Supply Chain Manager

Based on the review of the job description the supply chain manager works in coordination with the purchasing manager and the strategic purchasing manager. To help maintain a strong alignment with these managers and deliver the expected results of available supplies, he has to multitask with the following agenda:

1. Being able to negotiate, renegotiate, and administer contracts with suppliers, vendors, and other representatives.

2. Thinking critically by using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems.

3. Analyzing price proposals, financial reports, and other data and information to determine reasonable prices.

4. Applying judgment and decision making to consider the relative costs and benefits of potential actions to choose the most appropriate one.

5. Organizing, planning, and prioritizing work to accomplish the work

Since his working relation is aligned with the duties of managers in purchasing and strategic purchasing, he said: “The two managers and I have to provide an open access to all information that they come across with. The key point is about sharing the information and that there is no act of domination over who has power to the information about the supplies that are
coming in or going out (power based on equality). However, it’s not as easy to keep sharing the information because at times the information can become inaccurate”; sometimes they have to give a quick answer to a demanding question such as “Why hasn’t the orders arrived yet?” He adds to the following: “In my mind, it’s hard to keep being honest about the facts when you feel that colleagues are considering that you are incompetent in your team role assignment” (Interview conducted on May/2009). Nevertheless, he supports whatever the decisions the purchasing manager and the strategic purchasing manager takes because their actions also affect his line of work (collectivism over individualism) in trying to make sure that materials and resources are available for making the operation towards delivering quality and satisfying the customers is executed without any disruptions. But even with some errors in analyzing, applying judgement, and organizing on the part of himself and his team mates, they make sure that there is a support for confidence and motivation (valuing long term working relations) as well as providing leadership that encourages them to prevent the mistakes from occurring in the future (feminism displayed over masculinity). At the meeting for proposing a new work design, he was one of team members that sat by and listened passively but without providing much input. When the questioned was raised by the managers of SAP & IT and research and development on wanting to know if this new work concept would be a problem for them to function as part of a team he simply answered that it would not. But in a meeting where the managing director voiced his concern of the problems with time in implementing the new work design and looked at the faces of other managerial team members to see if they disagreed he, as well as most of the Thai managerial team, nod their heads to acknowledge his views without raising any inquiries for giving a chance to test the new work design. This was an act of not going against the power of authority and avoiding any backlash for not being loyal (avoiding any extreme form of uncertainty at work).

XI) Functional Team Role of the ‘Thai’ Production Planning Manager

In an interview and observation on the job description with the production planning manager, his role is that of someone who orchestrates the flow of work to prevent things from running into chaos. In the team role, he is required to coordinate the interdepartmental activity of fellow team members in quality assurance, purchasing, supply chain, production, production
engineering, project and SAP & IT for the purpose of ensuring a schedule to meet with the target date for delivery and customer satisfaction.

The manager of production and planning describes his work as the following: “I’m mostly dealing with numerical figures and the behavior of the team. It’s a balance act where you are trying to get your colleagues to perform in a way that it is running on schedule while making sure that they are producing quality from the beginning and all the way towards the end. I encourage team members to do things better that would save time and money by giving them a fair share of time to demonstrate any innovative techniques and used this example as a lead for others to be aware of (applying power as equality for members). I want to make sure that the team understands that they don’t have a lot of time nor resources to make up from based on the result of action taken that has resulted as a loss. I really want the team to take an initiative in discovering effective ways of improving the team’s performance but I fully realized that my colleagues are too busy to have time for being innovative at work.” In his view, the team members that he is trying to coordinate with are desperately trying to complete their responsible quotas to meet with the deadline. He states that “as this happens, the team members become too concentrated in their own task without thinking about the consequences that it might have on their fellow colleagues (display of individualism) and are compromising the company’s philosophy and mission” (Interview conducted on May/2009). His effort in getting the members to focus their work on an interactive basis falls short due to a lack of will in becoming too aggressive on them in complying to his objectives (low masculinity). He quoted: “What I fear most is a breakdown in spirit and harmony of working together. To prevent the fear from occurring I resort in letting team members work according to their style and in return that it would improve morale and performance in the future” (Interview conducted on May/2009) (eliminating fear as an uncertainty and preserving the long term).

XII) Functional Team Role of the ‘German’ Warehouse Manager

The interview with the warehouse manager on his role as a team is defined as a lot of decisions to make when best results are strongly desired. He stated: “To get those results you have to have some control measures on what you are doing because if you don’t then the learning process becomes harder and more difficult. My role as part of the team is to work closely with
the supply chain manager in looking after the ordered goods being available at the requested day for production. At the same time I have to manage the control of inventory to assist with the purchasing of keeping expenses at a manageable level. In liaison with the project manager I have to confirm that availability of goods will assure that customers receive their orders on time and with satisfaction” (Interview conducted on May/2009).

Upon providing information about his role, he mentions that “there has to be a line where you are able to control the resources and working relations that are integrated with your work process. If you don’t have the ability of control then the work is going to bring some undesired remarks as people are depended upon you to support their objectives. You have to be on top of things with every ounce of determination, otherwise you can only blame yourself for letting the disaster erupt” (Interview conducted on May/2009) (avoiding uncertainty). He noticed that the team has been experiencing some dysfunctional working relations as a team and felt that if one was to accept the teachings of other on how to improve oneself rather than feeling that he/she is losing face, than the team can be improved in the long run. He stated that “even if you are a manager, mistakes and errors are still likely to be made but you have to learn from them and not be ashamed about your subordinates finding out that you don’t possess the super qualities of this position (power is not to be taken advantage of). Working with others as a team is quite a challenge when it comes to information” (Interview conducted on May/2009). The warehouse manager had his share of being questioned for providing data that does not seem to reconcile with the other manager’s aim. He discussed about the project manager having to come back and ask him to check on his data because it does not match with what was originally presented by the project manager when he had a meeting with the customers. But to his mind, this was an issue of making a hypothetical assumption without checking for the facts from the beginning. He state that “While I understand that it is important to make sure that the customer receives satisfaction I’m also aware that, in this type of business, the tangible received must have quality ensured all over it so that the customers trust you in the long run for repeated service” (Interview conducted on May/2009). In another case, he discussed about the purchasing manager mixing up the warehouse data with other figures and submitting it to finance for recording. When he realized about the misleading figures from the finance officer he took the initiative to correct the numbers. While he understands that teamwork is important, he believes that people who are
part of the team have to make it work otherwise it’s just a bunch of individuals trying to function as a group (some presence of individualism among team members). He expressed about taking a defensive stand when resources are not being used properly or when somebody is misrepresenting your figure calculation of stock supplies (showing masculinity) because some members are quick to blame about your competence (long term is not an important issue).

XIII) Functional Team Role of the ‘Thai’ Cable & CNC Manager

The Cable & CNC manager’s job description, in the role of a team, is to assist with the project manager in guaranteeing the delivery date with satisfaction to the customers, and that the managers of production and operation are assured that the flow of operation will run as according to schedule without any forms of interruption.

A private interview with the Cable & CNC manager presents himself as a person who is highly task-oriented in his role. He quoted: ‘I mostly see myself working with materials and tools with his my own staff and not really getting enough time to focus on the problems that are hindering the managerial team’s performance (working environment leads to individualism), therefore I’m not given the opportunity to display my role as a team player or providing leadership when the team is faced with a challenge. I want to help the best way I can but sometimes it is the question of time which would allow me to do so. I take part in the project manager’s commitment for delivering customer satisfaction and upholding a smooth operation schedule for the production manager and the operation manager has a chance to be part of the team, but it seems more just like complying with the orders without having much input to make any improvements” (Interview conducted on May/2009) (flowing along with the base of power).

Since his task is a time-consuming work with a focus on efficiency, he makes this as his priority in getting things done before attending to other matters. The only time when he feels in actually taking part of being a team is on the occasion of being called by the project manager, production manager, and the operation manager of giving them updated information of what they need to know so that they can be confident to proceed with their next course of plan (assuring long term).

When he attended the managerial meeting for proposing a new work design and in another meeting where the managing director arrived to offer his opinion of implementing the design, he didn’t really take part in offering any opinion or advice. Instead of debating about the new work
design's strengths and weakness with the German managerial team members, he sat quietly and listened to what was being discussed (low masculinity). The Cable & CNC manager also mentioned about his critical role in providing information to the managing director about the state of affairs with several projects at all time as well as reporting on unusual occurrences within his area of responsibility so that action can be taken immediately (avoiding uncertainty).

4.3.2 Viewing the Workplace Culture at Electro-Circuits Company

This part of the study takes a look at the company’s workplace culture. Private interviews and an observation of their behaviors during the managerial team meeting provided a glimpse of difference between what they set out to do and what they actually do. This section provides two reports – the first is a summary of the events that took place based on the interview and observations, the second takes a review through Hofstede's five cultural dimension theories.

In this study, the term “workplace culture” is what is regarded as an appropriate way to think and act. From the sources of section 4.3, the workplace culture at the Electro-Circuits Company is presided over by three principles that provided reason and progress for this enterprise. The principles are as followed:

1. A mission to achieve the highest benefit for its customers.

2. The goal of being the preferred long-term partner of small and medium-sized companies with a belief that the customers come first and a will to take an extra step to assist the customer in any way, and providing optimal customer service.

3. The philosophy of asserting that quality is first.

The three principles were translated as the workplace culture where all workers (especially the managerial team) think and act toward a) achieving the highest benefit for its customers, b) being the preferred long-term partner of small and medium-sized companies with a belief that the customers come first, and c) maintaining the philosophy of quality first.

1) Summary of Events

Under the auspices of the managing director, Electro-Circuits is aimed at being highly competitive through the skills and talents of their people working as a team; such a place is regarded as an appropriate way to think and act when performing as a team. For such a company
to be the best in its field, the managerial team is required to carry out operation with efficiency and effectiveness with the supervision of the managing director because he needs to ensure that the outcome is delivered towards customer satisfaction. Overall, the tasks that are implemented are to be aligned with the company's mission. Prior to the problems that were spiraling out of control with the managerial team, members were able to get a firm of grip on the operation by sharing information with each other through an informal meeting. "Some of us would get together for a few drinks and cigarettes at a local bar in the evening and just freely talk about how we can help each other", said the research & development engineer manager. "This helps us allow in becoming more direct with the facts without intimidating other fellow team members whenever we have an official meeting". The production manager and production engineering manager felt that having informal meetings were good for building rapport and understanding among fellow members. "Through leisure time after work, we get a chance to see how our fellow colleagues are coping with the work situation and offer some advice to become more efficient within the operational schedule", said the production manager. "It allows us to be informed of things that are important to maintain quality when members become a bit defensive in explaining why they become quite aggressive in assuming their position of authority", said the production engineering manager. "Everybody wants the team to succeed". To sustain ECC to be driven for long term success, the quality assurance manager had been sent overseas on numerous occasions for the purpose of learning about the best practices for delivering quality. From the last training acquired in Japan, the quality assurance manager delivered a workshop to equip the team's working performance and orientating production towards the company's philosophy and mission. For the past periods, the managerial team has been asked to gather intelligence on ways to improve the working environment in order to maintain discipline in being aware of the hazards that are detrimental to the physical health and well being of the labors as well as the community that ECC is engaged with. The managerial team divided the tasks among members to pinpoint issues from preventing accidents, motivating the labor from each departmental unit, complying with environmental policies, and meeting with the company stakeholders' expectations. As a collective unit, they were able to generate a lot of useful information to create a strategy in prolonging the company's competitiveness. The analysis of the managerial team has enabled the company to reach the accolades of being an international standard organization, thus receiving
praises from the managing director to let this team know that they are acting out ECC’s shared values of

1. Maintaining integrity and fairness among each other, their customers and suppliers, the investors and the community in which they live and work.

2. Respecting fellow employees and the environment.

3. And establishing a ‘Quality First’ philosophy that encompasses improving quality of life not only for their customers, but to the suppliers, employees and their families, as well as for their neighborhood and wider community.

Based on the information provided on April 2009 from the human resources manager, there are also challenges presented along the operational path. For example, “no matter how complex or big the challenges that the team may come up against they are required to sort out a way to overcome the situation at hand”. Because at the end, “the important thing is that the outcome is furnished with quality and ready to be delivered to the customers” (Interview conducted on Apr/2009).

While a working system is arranged to get the working behaviors to collaborate, the managerial team members have expressed angst in trying to complete their assigned tasks while having to do their utmost best in keeping with the team meeting out of courtesy. Based on the feedback from some individual team members, while the meetings were used to gather information and set an action plan, some team members felt that the meeting became too lengthy in terms of obtaining the facts and figures to get the operation done within an agreed schedule. In one of the meetings, the Thai side of the managerial team wanted their colleagues to know that they were having difficulties in gathering the necessary resources (documents, materials, and measurements) for executing their assigned operation. They made an indirect reference to a lack of cooperation in communicating with each other. However, some others were saying that if they don’t get the whole information or if the information itself is not quite clear then they do not want to disseminate the information for fear that it will derail the schedule and compromise the policy of ‘Quality First’. Simultaneously at this meeting, the German side of the managerial team felt that ‘if the person is not getting the urgent information needed to do the work then it’s best to go ask the team member rather than wait for that person to come and discuss’. They felt that it wasn’t necessary to be nice all the time with your fellow team members. According to their view,
"sometimes you have to show a little toughness to get what you needed because at the end you are responsible for your duty to be completed on time" (Interview conducted on May/2009). When having a private interview with one of the Thai managerial team members to reflect on this issue, the claim was that it was not an easy thing to do because they just don’t do things like that; people have to have a conscience of taking sensitivity into account. Based on the actions revealed from the Thai side of the team, the alternative method to keep the team intact was to conduct an all Thai national managerial team to discuss about the problems that were occurring in the workplace. In this meeting, composing of mainly Thai nationals, the team members were allowed to feel at ease with each other as they spoke in their own native language and able to express the things that they wanted to clarify for others to understand from their own cultural perspective. The quality assurance manager stated that with this kind of meeting, “they were comfortable discussing the matter with each other that had members addressing each other as siblings and being reciprocated with smiles for each topic of discussion” (Interview conducted on May/2009) (Interview conducted on May/2009). The act of maintaining integrity and fairness were conducted in ways that did not unify the team to achieve their objectives.

In an interview on April 2009 with the managing director, he showed a sign of frustration based on what the Thai managerial team was conducting. From his point of view, he felt that there was just too much talking without any concrete action plan from the Thai managerial team side. He thought that by allowing them to hold their own meeting, there would be some type of action taken to improve the overall performance of the team. But to his dismay, the same problems kept repeating themselves - not sharing ideas and information, as well as straying from the company’s foundation. The managing director stated that he had to take matters into his own hand by exerting himself in the middle of the operation to direct the tasks. With some verbal demands and jousting he was able to get the team to produce the desired outcome. However, he felt that it was becoming too ridiculous with the situation. He felt that his time should be spent on looking for new prospects and analyzing the market economy for the purpose of making the financial plans for the company. He already has a project manager assigned to be the leader of the operation and does not want to overstep the boundaries of this person’s profession. But if he detects any mistakes and errors accumulating that are at the brink of destroying the company’s credibility then he will step in to make sure that the operation is going
on the right track. An interview on April 2009 with the project manager, based on the actions taken by the managing director, discloses him as being quite submissive to this incident. Also, he has allowed the situation to occur often at times. However, this event made the managerial team quite confused over on who exactly has the legitimate role of power. From the reaction of the SAP & IT manager and quality assurance manager on May 2009, the team felt that if the authority rests within the project manager then things should become quite clear and there would be no distractions in carrying out the operation process. But when the managing director abruptly inserts himself to the meeting and gives direct orders to the team then it made them wonder about the true role of the project manager. The SAP & IT manager believed that the project manager needs to firmly assert himself by taking an initiative the situation in providing solutions. On the interview of May 2009, the engineering production manager states that it makes her team hesitant to carry out the instructions from the project manager due to changes that can come in any abrupt moment. The idea she was stating was that maybe it is best to wait out a while for the final decision to come forward so that the managerial team can agree on the right action to take.

II) Review through Hofstede’s Five Cultural Dimensions

The power distance between the Thais and German at Electro-Circuits showed two different forms. The Thai managerial team members were more conservative in preserving the level of authority by not questioning its approach in organizing the work flow but rather discuss among themselves to cope with the situation at hand. In contrast to the German managerial team members, if the holder of power is not producing expectation than this person needs to be questioned in order to get things running in full operation. With one of the company’s shared values as “maintaining integrity and fairness with each other, their customers and suppliers, the investors and the community in which they live and work”, the act of power distance between these two national cultures at work have them performing in opposite as a team. The issue of power distance has made it quite challenging for members to fulfill the role as a team player, demonstrate leadership, and especially upholding integrity as a team.

Individualism among the managerial team varies according to the situation. For the Thais, they display a sense of collectivism over individualism when similar problems are being faced among the team members. The best remedy in this circumstance is to talk together as a
group and to rejuvenate morale and discipline of working together as a team. However, when it comes to information some members take an individualism stance by not making much of an effort in interpersonal connection with others in providing accurate information which allows others to proceed with their plan of action. On the German side, it's not necessary to maintain the friendship at work when one knows that there is a strong deadline to meet. Therefore individualism is seen as a normal behavior to abide by in the company. But according to their action in the workplace, when the process calls for teamwork that is where they expect you to set your mind in doing your best at working in a collective effort instead of being alone in your own department and expecting people come to you for information. The issue of individualism is not much of a matter as long as it enables members to be a team player, provide leadership, and showing integrity with fellow colleagues.

Masculinity demonstrates a realistic role in the workplace. The Thai managerial team members have a very low masculinity behavior. They prefer to be more soft and gentler in their approach of trying to solve the problems. In the managerial meeting on discussing about the new work flow design they were mostly quiet and listened more often while one of their team members opted to help translate the views of others who could not effectively communicate in the English language. At this meeting, the production manager hardly made a discussion about the new work flow design when the German team members were asking on her opinions about the design’s advantages and disadvantages. Also, the production engineering manager had sympathy on her Thai colleagues who were having difficulties responding to a challenge in the English language. She sought to help one of them, namely the production planning manager, by asserting the role of a translator and trying to create a better understanding of the situation among fellow team members. In addition, the production planning manager admitted to his team members that his role as a leader is quite weak in trying to get team members in working together to achieve production. He stated that taking an aggressive demeanor was not his style of working with others even if there is pressure to meet with the operation schedule. Furthermore, while the German side of the team were challenging their Thai colleagues to provide some inputs for the proposed working design, the remaining Thai team members (quality assurance, operation, purchasing, strategic purchasing, and cable & CNC) sat idly by and listened without making
much of an effort to offer any insights or ideas for the proposal, although they were urgently informed that development has to be made from the meeting.

As for the German managerial team members they felt that it was sometimes necessary to be more assertive in voicing your opinions, especially in trying to get people to become a team player or to demonstrate leadership. They were more vocal in letting their colleagues know that their performance is not helping the team to reach its objectives. In one example, the project manager was questioned by his fellow German countrymen on failing to display a tough behavior against repeated mistakes; his colleagues felt that since he was in a very high position he should exercise his authority to prevent errors from occurring. Besides, the project manager was challenged by the SAP & IT manager and the research and development manager to discuss with the managing director for pushing the idea for a new work design so that it can help the team to perform better. These two managers also challenged the integrity of the project manager’s duty of satisfying the customer when he knows the current situation is not producing the desired outcome. In a meeting for discussing about the new work design, the German team members wanted their Thai colleagues to offer their views on the concept by communicating with hand gestures (hand-clasping, motioning with fist, and punching the hand) and staring directly into each of their faces. The reason for showing the toughness was that they became quite a bit iritated on part of their Thai members for being too reserved in helping to make progress in the meeting.

Uncertainty avoidance is quite high among managerial team. For the most part, the act of avoiding uncertainty on part of the Thai and German managerial team members has to do with doing their best to prevent the company from slipping from its standards. There is an urge for members to do their part as a team player, to assume a leadership role, and preserving integrity with each other so that errors and mistakes do not become a catastrophe in derailing the operation towards quality. Therefore, it’s imperative that information is to be freely flown to let the team members anticipate for the next step to take. But the team knows that when the worst grows bigger the managing director will assume all control in a quick flash to assure that the production deadline is met by any means necessary.

Long term orientation is viewed differently from the two national sides. The Thai managerial team members will go to great lengths to assure that no one harbors ill feeling or
despise each other based on their actions. Their meetings to discuss about problems at work provide a good example of this issue; although the meetings are long it makes their members gain a sense of harmony that their working relations as a team is still in tact. For the German managerial team, it’s okay to argue or be a bit pushy as long as it’s about finding the best method for helping the team reach their desired objectives. This was the case of stating that one should go find the information instead of waiting for the information come to them. As the two different cultures demonstrate their beliefs of the long term issue it allowed for members to contribute in being a team player while also demonstrating leadership to help the team regain its performance. However, when the issue of long term intertwines in their approach as a collective group the question of integrity rises to see if members are acting responsibly to help their team perform together effectively or is it just about safeguarding personal values in working relations.

The attitude of thinking and acting toward “achieving the highest benefit for its customers, being the preferred long-term partner of small and medium-sized companies with a belief that the customers come first, and maintaining the philosophy of quality first” were not fully performed by this team that was composed of two different cultures. The workplace culture of the Thai side of the managerial team was about preserving the level of authority, working together only when being faced similar problems, displaying a non-aggressive approach in trying to solve problems, letting the managing director take the realms in preventing chaos in the workplace, and assuring that no animosity is being developed in the working relations. The only similarity of the workplace culture that the Germans share with their Thai colleagues is allowing the managing director take control of a hectic situation. Other than that, their viewpoints differ from the Thais based on the issue of having to question a colleague for failing to meet with the expectation of his/her role. Also, there’s no need to maintain friendship at work when there is a strong deadline to meet. In addition, it can sometimes be a necessity for being more assertive in voicing opinions when getting members to perform. Finally, it’s understandable to have an argument when the subject is about finding the best way for helping the team reach its objectives.

4.3.3 An Analysis from Applying McKinsey 7S Framework

This section of the study extends with the results that are based on the facts from the previous exploration. The method applied in further exploration for obtaining an in-depth
information on the work-culture is the “McKinsey 7S Framework”. This framework addresses the issue of the process on analyzing how well the organization is positioned to achieve its intended objective. The aim of using the “McKinsey 7S Framework” is to see how the hard (strategy, structure, systems) and the soft (shared values, skills, style, staff) elements of the company perform in alignment and to identify the areas for improving team performance.

4.3.3. A McKinsey 7S Framework Analysis

The aim of this tool is to see how the company’s hard and soft elements perform in an alignment and identify the areas for improving team performance. The exploration is implemented with an observation of the company’s document policies and work procedures with an application of ‘McKinsey 7S Framework’. Analysis is provided in two forms – the first is an analysis for each element of the 7S framework, the second is an overall statement from applying the 7S framework.

1) Researcher’s Analysis on Strategy:

1. Electro-Circuits has established a competitive advantage in manufacturing flexibility and incorporating a “Start-to-Finish design and engineering solutions” that allows the company to offer their customers a ‘faster time to market’ – which is considered as a critical factor in today’s fast-paced electronics industry. Also, the practice of strict quality assurance and testing avoids the problems of defective products that could lead into widespread and expensive recalls, with consequent loss of reputation for customers. Electro-Circuits’ “Quality First” policy provides assurance to their customers’ business success.

2. To sustain this competitive advantage, the company is instilled with the mentality that each customer is satisfied with the products and service. A lean and customer-oriented management propel the effort in achieving high-quality products.

3. Even with state of the art equipment, the company maintains itself as an organic organization so that their competitive advantage becomes robust over the long term. With life, the organization promotes their workers to be self-motivated, well organized and able to work without supervision. Also, staff must have the willingness to innovate, understand the business realities, create practical solution to offer best practice, and working with accuracy, time
management, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness. In addition, it's important that the working behaviors are directed towards guaranteeing delivery of goods at requested time, as well as being able to negotiate, renegotiate, and administer contracts with suppliers, vendors, and other representatives. Furthermore, people should have the ability to use logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems.

4. With regards to the cultural dimensions, the strategy sets the managerial team to act with accordance to the managing director's expectations. Therefore, members of the team have to feel a sense of equality in the workplace when it comes to displaying the ability to plan, negotiate, use logic and reasoning, analyze, and make considerations for carrying out an efficient and effective work operation. Team members have to function as a synchronized unit by displaying roles as a team player, a leader, and demonstrating integrity with their fellow colleagues. Members within the team have to be assertive (masculine) by showing strong leadership with each other. Each of the team members are required to eliminate any uncertainties by knowing how to work with accuracy and being efficient in their operation as well as guaranteeing the delivery of goods at the requested time. With change as an inevitable constant, the long term perspective of the team gives way to the short term as decisions need to be applied according to the event and understanding the business realities that members have to deal with so that integrity is kept intact within the team.

II) Researcher's Analysis on Structure:

1. The organization of Electro-Circuits operates in a hierarchical manner with a crew formation. In this type of working process there is a chain of events that each managerial team has to take action in order to ensure a smooth operation. Each of the representatives from the department of marketing, production and planning, research & development, SAP & information technology, operation, purchasing, quality assurance, cable & CNC, finance, and warehouse have to report to the managing director on any issues that may affect the stability and performance of the company. Once a solution is provided, the manager of that department is expected to take care of the matter and report back to the managing director with a status.

2. During the actual operation of an order, the operation manager is solely responsible for taking a thorough approach in assuring that quality is embedded in the outcome of
the finished goods. The operation manager must have the confidence to confront the technicalities that are detrimental in derailing the committed work schedule and to offer any practical solutions that would assist in getting the work done on time. At this stage, the operation manager must research with fellow team colleagues to address any issues that may be seen as creating difficulties within the teamwork of management or the work flow process. Once the matters are being attended to, a report is submitted to the managing director for future action.

3. Hence, the cultural dimension with regards to power distance encourages those to be empowered to tackle their own problems and come up with the ideal solution instead of having top authority to come in for inspection. The structure enables individual members to demonstrate their expertise to allow fellow colleagues to see them as team players, and to assume a leadership role in tackling problems. Also, the structure allows for measurement of the member’s integrity that is being displayed to help the team’s performance.

III) Researcher's Analysis on Systems:

1. Top manager and sales has direct contact with the customers and clients; any information based on needs or customization of an order will be processed. Once the customer orders are finalized the managerial team composed of representatives from the department of marketing, production and planning, research and development, information technology, operation, purchasing, quality assurance, cable and CNC, finance, and warehouse gather for a meeting to discuss about plans for action as well as to filter out any concerns or hidden issues that might hinder the operational process.

2. Although each departmental unit is responsible for their own assignments they are required to communicate on any information that impact the work of others. Any problems deemed as a threat to the operation must be taken care of immediately so that outcome is delivered with utmost quality. Once the schedule has been finalized the managerial team has to make a concerted effort in finishing the work on time.

3. The team flows in the cultural dimension of working collectively, displaying assertiveness (masculinity), and eliminating uncertainties. The first dimension is displayed in the area of gathering for a meeting to discuss about plans for action. The second dimension can be seen where team members are urged to communicate any information that may have an impact on
the work of other colleagues. As for the third dimension, the team has to understand that any problems that are seen as a risk to the operation must be taken care of in a rapid manner so that quality will be the outcome. These three cultural dimensions allow members to address issues in the form of being a team player, a leader, and showing integrity towards fellow colleagues.

IV) Researcher’s Analysis on Shared Values:

1. The core values at Electro-Circuits are based on the following:
   - Maintaining integrity and fairness among each other, their customers and suppliers, the investors and the community in which they live and work.
   - Respecting fellow employees and the environment.
   - And establishing a ‘Quality First’ philosophy that encompasses improving quality of life not only for their customers, but to the suppliers, employees and their families, as well as for their neighborhood and wider community.

2. The stance in the workplace is about remaining curious, imaginative and courageous in challenging the current thinking, and growing expertise by learning through teamwork and making continuous improvement as a way of life.

3. The company strives for excellence in all its efforts, and reward stakeholders with reasonable profits as a result of exceeding the customers’ expectations. This is done by asking the employees to challenge themselves and to learn from the mistakes made in order to improve every day towards deepening and strengthening their commitment to their overall goal.

4. The mind-set is about always willing to go that extra step to assist the customer in any way, and to provide optimal customer service. Electro-Circuits focuses on helping its customers to become competitive in quality and price.

5. With the message of challenging the mindset, the cultural dimension of masculinity depicts the behavior of the team members to become focused on the core values, thus showing a sense of being a leader and having integrity in the working relations with others. Furthermore, the long term orientation is converted to the short term as team members display the gamut of being a team player, a leader, and showing integrity with fellow colleagues for the sake of learning from mistakes and seeking for improvement.
V) **Researcher’s Analysis on Style:**

1. The leadership style at Electro-Circuits has to be strong and to have a motivated personality. Leadership is about taking an initiative on being kept informed of new production technologies and management practices. There has to be a direction in achieving customer satisfaction with high quality of products, processes and services.

2. Through leadership, facilitation has to be done effectively upon gathering the team and meeting with clients. Status meetings have to be done to ensure everyone is on the same page. Project team must be well informed of changes within the organization and general corporate news.

3. The sector of leadership is a must for taking on the challenges for developing other staff members as leaders while serving as a role model and mentor. In addition, the role is about managing the development of the team by ensuring, when possible, that project tasks are in line with their fellow colleagues’ career interests. Also, inspiration is implemented to motivate coworkers to attain goals and pursue excellence. Furthermore, opportunities are identified for improvement and constructive suggestions are made for positive changes. Lastly, leadership is also about being able to manage effectively on the process of innovative change.

4. Problems and challenges are inevitable. Therefore, any specific management tasks and intercultural problems are to be solved in real time. Being the leader means having to make an agreement of quality, the strengthening of customer relations through exemplary service, and making an outreach to the community are to be guaranteed. The issue of scheduling, establishing and maintaining productive working relationships with the entire team has to be closely supervised. Goals are set and communicated to the entire team; work is coordinated in order for attainment to be possible.

5. Management team of operation must demonstrate leadership as an example on a daily basis. Any possible future problems have to be monitored; methods have to be crafted to prevent these problems from occurring again in the future. A long term solution should be provided. The cooperation and work flow between the departments of Warehouse, Production Engineering, Purchasing, Production, Production Planning, and Strategic Purchasing, have to be managed in order to meet with the company’s goals. The company’s growth has to be strengthened by building efficient and effective structures, and processes.
6. Management must provide the leadership in finding the proper reinforcement of building the bridge between different cultures within the company. The reputation of the company as an effective and modern business with the company’s employees and in public has to be protected and bolstered.

7. With regards to the five cultural dimensions in this section, there is a sense where team members have to be called upon to display leadership for the purpose of maintaining the overall goal of the company. Equality (power distance) is recognized in the area of taking an initiative in helping others develop professionally. Working out the problems is to be done as a collective unit (individualism) so that the outcome is made possible. Those displaying the role as a team player, as a leader, or demonstrating integrity will have to be highly focused (masculinity) on achieving success so that they have a better chance of getting their fellow team members aligned towards achieving the company’s goal. Uncertainties have to be avoided at all costs so that the leadership can assure that scheduling and maintaining productive working relationships will be run smoothly. The leader has to cope with changes that affect the performance of the team. It seems that the short term orientation (long term) is the necessary foresight for leaders in making others become the team player to work around the changes by constantly developing oneself. Also, they have to show integrity by changing methods that still produces customer satisfaction.

VI) Researcher’s Analysis on Staff:

1. The workers are adept in planning, calculating, installing, and arranging matters concerning ERP and IT. As safety is an important issue, there is a follow up in checking to see if line units are using electrical protective measures correctly. The workers have to assume responsibility for the completion of the IT process infrastructure in the company. IT projects and processes that are hedged to the particular project and process objectives are coordinated, controlled, and supported on part of the dependable worker.

2. The staff devises a strategic information system which is to be taken to further action. The budget, plans and controlling of the resources are taken with full responsibility. Attention is paid to the economic aspects as well as to safety regulations.
3. While solving specific R&D engineering tasks, the working behavior is geared towards achieving customer satisfaction with high quality of products, processes and services. The units are asked to take part in the following matter:

- Development of new technical procedures and processes as well as in redevelopments and advancements of assembly groups, devices, systems, machines and facilities.
- Fault clearance according to the feedback of the Quality Assurance department.

4. Supervision and inspection is carried out during the installation, modification, testing and operation of electrical and electronic systems, and equipment. Project engineers and technicians from other Engineering Departments are managed thoroughly.

5. With a lot of equipments being handled, the managerial team has to take on an assertive role (masculinity) to uphold the safety regulations so that accidents do not often occur. Careful measurements to prevent accidents or any work behavioral issues that can lead to potential injuries (uncertainty avoidance) are reinforced among members to become self-aware of their own actions at work.

VII) Researcher’s Analysis on Skills:

1. As quality assurance allows Electro-Circuits to maintain its competitive advantage, being part of the unit means that they have become diligent to absorb new conceptual ideas and concepts for development. The workers have to take part in the development of new technical procedures and processes as well as in learning about the redevelopments and advancements of assembly groups, devices, systems, machines and facilities. They have to keep up to date with the latest trend in maintaining the status of ISO 9001.

2. The workers have to have a good knowledge about the material and the manufacturing process so they can make a sound decision to buy the goods with credibility. They have to correspond with the business partners and deal with orders and proposals. Purchase negotiations have to be conducted through all communication channels. A review is made to see that the goods received are controlled by means of delivery notes and invoices are paid if any questions have occurred. The demand for the materials must be investigated. The group has to provide information about the situation of the competition, supply source, new products and price developments, and to make an analysis on all these matters.
3. Practical solutions are to be created and providing advice for best practice is to be exemplified. Due to a constant change in employee turnover, manpower has to be developed with full competency and be multi-skilled. Results of the work must be factually correct, in due time, with efficiency and cost-effective.

4. Although it has been mentioned that the team has to apply the short term foresight in order to cope with the changes in the market environment, the team is asked by the managing director to preserve the status (long term) of the company as being highly recognized as an enterprise that has ISO 9001 credentials. Therefore, the team carries out what needs to be done in the current settings for the purpose of letting customers know that they have international standards that are appealing to do business with.

VIII) Overall Statement Based on the Application of the McKinsey 7S Framework

The “McKinsey 7S Framework” entails that a company is successful when the seven internal aspects of an organization are aligned. The study shows that the workplace culture at Electro-Circuits is struggling to become successful due to the following factors that are affecting the managerial team’s performance:

1. Top management’s view of the problem in the workplace
   a. Dysfunctional working relations
   b. Straying from the foundation
   c. Lack of collaboration
   d. Not sharing ideas, information, nor knowledge

The assertion of these problems is attributed to a deficiency in the element of style. Upon reflection on the interview with top management, he had doubts about the leadership capabilities within the team. In addition, he felt that while the problems were occurring on a weekly basis the leadership was wasting too much time on allowing members of the team to discuss about the difficulties being experienced in the workplace. In his point of view, it’s good to have communication. However, if it doesn’t produce any action towards achieving the outcome of quality or making the customers satisfied then it is considered hopeless. In the top manager’s own description, when things were not leading to any results from having a meeting,
he would assert himself in the leading role and bark out the orders to be done. Although he doesn’t really want to get involved, he did it for the purpose of ensuring that the company stays competitive. The top manager sometimes had to tell those in the leadership position to be a bit more demanding, because at the end the results have to be met with standards. When the top manager sits in at the meeting to discuss eliminating problems he wonders if the team really understands that this is a big issue. He becomes very disappointed when receiving reports that certain members of the team are not providing any useful information to help the team perform better. He lets the team know that for every meeting that the team has it must lead to positive results. He felt that having these results were the key to leadership in a working environment like Electro-Circuits. He states that one mistake, whether it is inaccurate information or flaw in execution, can cause a huge delay in the operation process. Although the top manager doesn’t encourage the expression of emotion towards colleague, he doesn’t set the limits when there are situations that call for others to become more focused and vocal at times, in what they are doing. In the midst of the managerial team’s low performance, he wanted the team to get serious in solidifying collaboration with each other. He was particularly upset with the “hot and cold” action of the team members; one day the team worked well together and the next day they don’t function so well. This made him question whether the leadership within the team actually existed at all. The top manager pointed out to the carelessness on part of the team members in seeing the business operation as a whole. In his view, it seems that each individual team member is only concerned about their task assignments and less reluctant to help each other. He becomes furious when there is no sense of urgency in being committed to the schedule plan. He feels that if the scheduled is appointed then one has to comply with it and seek for innovation to ensure a smooth working process. The top manager does allow for leadership to be developed through situations that pose a challenge to the team’s working performance. But to his dismay, he gets the feeling that there were futile attempts and inexperienced methods in coming up with a resolution. He states that the same problems just kept on being constantly repeated. He feels that the leadership among the managerial team members has a long way to go in learning how to truly get the team to work together in an efficient and effective manner.

2. These were the working conditions described by the managerial team

   a. Unable to obtain accurate and confirmed information
b. No time for agreeing on an exact schedule to finish the project

c. Having to compromise quality to meet with pressures of demand

A discussion with each team member depicted the problems experienced being derived from the elemental design of the structure and systems. The analysis of the team members provides the following information:

Starting with **structure**, the team operates in a top down approach when commencing in operation. This means that when the operation begins, team members are obliged to follow the orders and requests given. The structure can sometimes become a disadvantage when it waits on an authoritative series of steps from each individual person to give permission in carrying out the operation. This was evident in one incident where the team stood idle for a couple of days to do a special order and then finally done the assignment when the top manager took over with an emotional outburst. According to the production planning manager, he stated that this type of working structure was necessary due to a lot of materials and machines being used in the process. In his belief, the current work structure was the best method for preventing any accidents on the job, avoiding confusion, and assures that the team members are responsible for their own assignments given. The work structure gives him a clear role of what he and others have to do. When asked if the current work structure was still benefitting the team he felt that some changes could be made but it was not for him to decide. He recommended that the person with the authority to change should start with obtaining accurate details and efficiently use time to test the facts before arriving to any conclusion for further action. It was clear that this working structure made people inept for any rising challenge. During the team management workshop, the German managerial team members, especially the SAP & IT manager and the research and development engineer manager, felt that the working structure needed to be improvised so that they can offer a full detailed description of the problems that were occurring based on their point of view. They agreed with their fellow Thai team members that conclusions should not be rushed into. They wanted their fellow colleagues to know that whatever information is provided for reporting it, should be thoroughly examined and to ensure that it is the truth of the matter rather than speculation floating in the air. In one of the seminars, the team was critical of getting everyone to come to an agreement with a work schedule. It seems that the past events of establishing one did not really make members become committed to the process. Team members
pointed out that although they understand that the customers come first they were under strain when they realized that their work performance could not go as according to the plan. The production planning manager had the courage to say that he was unable to complete his job because the materials were not enough. The production engineer manager said that she had her operation halted for measurement review because there was a change in the customer’s order. The strategic purchasing manager said that he was told to wait for further instructions but then discovered that he was told the day before to carry out the operation; in which he never received the message. The warehouse manager stated that if the order comes as is then it should be correct because the person who took the order is the one responsible for making sure that the information is accurate. This person further states that if the operation leads to a wrong order then we can fix it later, but it should not be a habit as expenses in time and operation diminish the profits earned.

The Germans felt that the operation manager shouldn’t just be solely responsible for taking a thorough approach in assuring that quality is embedded in the outcome of the finished goods. According to them, everyone should have the courage and confidence to speak out on the difficulties that they are being face with and work together to come up with any practical solutions to keep the schedule moving on time. With this information supplied, the managerial team felt that if any study is going to be taken to address issues that are disrupting teamwork or the work flow process, they should make the time to understand and learn about their operation without feeling pressured to produce information. However, there was a concern of fear on part of the managers of operation, production, and engineering in producing wrong information based on not being sure of the right instrument to produce correct information.

With the issue of the system, the team felt that they could attain the mission a lot better if they were able to get a closer scope with customers’ demand. Based on their feedback, the working system did not give them the chance to obtain the right information. It just told them to get prepared in making sure the order is done without delay. Without knowing the details in specific terms, the team sometimes had to speculate on issues pertaining to their work. The speculation brings out a discovery that they have been taking the wrong measurements in delivering the outcome. According to the operation manager, the team was confined to just handle the administrative procedures for the project. The quality assurance manager felt that his team was not encouraged to go into any other details other than ensuring that the schedule is
being complied to. At the team managerial workshop, a new work design was proposed to allow the members to offer their input to ensure that performance will lead to the attainment of the company's philosophy and mission. There were discussions for the team to get an opportunity to liaise with the customers to ensure that the orders were absolutely accurate and correct. Members enlightened others to see how this new work design would be useful in getting everyone to come to an agreement for a working schedule, thus forming a commitment to get the job done with quality. However, some members were not sure if it can be done unless the policies allow them to do so. With encouragement from the SAP & IT manager, there were sound arguments on changing for the better. The research and development engineer manager pointed out to his team members that they needed to become more innovative to their approach at work before getting into the habit of just going along with the operation. The important thing mentioned by him was that if they are expected to produce quality and satisfy the customers then they need to be ensured that they have all the right information from the very beginning. The project manager was quite skeptical about the approach. Although he supported the rationale for changes, he wanted to make sure that the decision to take such action would be authorized from the very beginning. To play it on the safe side, the project manager required that the top manager comes in and sit to listen to the proposed model of the managerial team. From the project manager's viewpoint, he wanted the top manager to make the decision on the spot to see if the new work design would be incorporated into the current working system. On the day when the top manager sat with the managerial team to listen, there were sparks of debate made after the presentation ended. The top manager felt that if the working system is going to be approached in this manner then there would be more burden of responsibilities for them to carry out. He also made it known that the working system is already good and has its purpose. Making some changes would lead to more confusion and conflict. However, the German side of the managerial team took a rational reply in stating that the current working system is outdated and that the past productions in work were not up to standards. The reason was based on just carrying out the operation without a sense of conscience of what can be done to make sure if the work is being done with quality. At the same time, the Germans were talking about how the current working system was not helping people to work together as a team. Instead, it started to erode their performance as a team. Therefore, they were determined that this approach will not only get the outcome back to quality standard but also
enable teamwork to flourish. The top manager and the German team members were defending their grounds with determination. The top manager used the issue of time and responsibility as the principles for reconsidering in installing the new work design. The German managerial team members asserted on the fact of being committed to quality and that there is a need to rise to the challenge in a more adaptive manner. All the while, the Thai team members pretty much observe the event without taking part in the debate. Their eyes and ears were engaged with the verbal exchange but their soul was reluctant to take part in the debate. One can gain a sense that it was about respecting authority rather than challenging it. But it also goes back to the information given by the quality assurance manager from the interview: we are (his fellow Thai colleagues) not used to working in this type of situation. At the end of the discussion, the top manager decided to allow the managerial team to be given the opportunity to apply the new work design.

4.3.4 A Summary of Electro-Circuits’ Cross-Cultural Workplace

This is a cross-cultural workplace that has working behaviors that were non-linear with each other. In other words, what they believe that they are doing and what they actually do did not really defined them as a collective unit. In the case of team learning, the team members weren’t able to come together and exchange ideas and probe for solutions due to being bombarded with problems that hinder their performance to meet with the working schedule. Some members stayed silent about the problem issues and hoped that the matters would be resolved by somebody else. There was a sense of fear in providing the wrong information and being chastised for not giving accurate information. The teamwork, or morale of the team, could not flourish. The anticipation to enforce the values that the team wanted to happen was not strict enough. For example, the meaning of leadership was meant to be that one person is in charge of everybody’s affairs and coming up with a solution. The idea of having a consensus was not quite encouraged as some people felt that it was not their place to formulate the best decision for the team; that is done by the authorized person. Those that took proactive measures were deemed as too aggressive in the workplace. While those that took an assertive stance believed that it was best for the team to meet its objectives. During the presence of conflict, members did not really take any action as a collective group. Instead, they felt that if there were problems occurring in a particular division, then it’s best for that person to be responsible due to his/her knowledge of the
area. Accountability among team members was lacking in practice. The team only saw the trees as the forest rather than the forest for trees. In other words, they weren’t able to see the big picture of their total working operation. What they failed to realize was that the nature of their business began to change when their customers started making more intricate demands. Some members couldn’t convert the raw data of the customers’ demand as information to improve the team’s performance; as a result, the demand became an unexpected and undesirable force that disrupted their work performance as a team.
CHAPTER 5

TEAM LEARNING AS A TOOL FOR MODERATION

This part of the work is to investigate the changes from implementing the team learning tools at Electro-Circuits Company and to determine whether the method reduced the cross-cultural gap and allowed for improvement towards working together, which was raised as one of the research objectives in this study. The attempt is to address the second research question on can “team learning” create a sense of “working together” with different work cultures. The aim and the conjecture are assessed to determine whether the team learned together by doing the following concept:

- Taking an initiative standpoint on accomplishing the mission through a collective harmony for adapting to the circumstances.
- Making the connection that conveys a sense of clarity and anticipation for action; even in the presence of conflict.
- Displaying a sense of accountability which acts as the code for constant probing to utilize one’s talent, skills, ability in reinforcing the process of this approach as teamwork.

The information has been reviewed out of the interviews with the key managerial staff and observing the company’s documents. The information has been incorporated into an assessment with the “Hays Team Learning Pyramid” and the process of the “blame vs. gain behaviors” event. The former is to view the extent of the managerial team engaging in a concerted form of dialogue, reflection, and mindfulness that would enable them to reach the pinnacle of collaborative effectiveness, achieving and sustaining heights of performance that group members could not otherwise obtain. The latter is a knowledge and learning tool that is designed to offer a good comprehension of the cause, as well as being aware of the factors that were preventing the managerial team from attaining its mission (*this tool was originally designed by the “Overseas Development Institute” for helping team members to reflect on the process and exploring for solutions). The “blame vs. gain behaviors” tool is set as a workshop for the managerial team to configure the lessons learned from the shortcomings and to break a new path towards designing a better working solution for the team’s performance to thrive. The information will allow the managerial team to seek for a better work design to improve their
working relations with each other while averting the cross-cultural differences to interfere with the team's performance. The details from the assessment are illustrated in a narrative form to demonstrate the extent of 'team learning creating an effective workplace with different working behaviors'. This section of the study is divided into the following parts:


2. Analyzing the situation of the managerial team at the workplace.

3. Analyzing the problem statement with the application of “Hays Team Learning Pyramid and the Blame vs. Gain Behaviors” event.

4. Drawing the conclusion to see if team learning created a sense of working together with different work cultures; whereby the outcome has been induced from the application of “Hays Team Learning Pyramid and the Blame vs. Gain Behaviors” event.

5.1 Electro-Circuits – A Brief Report of the Company's Status

According to the documents of its official website, the Electro-Circuits Company is a highly competitive enterprise that values quality. By valuing quality, the company is seen as a leader in its field of providing the very best in service for its customers and stakeholders as well as being a key corporate citizen that upholds policies dealing with the environment and labor issues. This is a company that is truly focused on maintaining its success through the long-term in the services of electronic manufacturing. To be assured of its success, the philosophy and mission of Electro-Circuits serve as the company's guiding principle. One of the company's philosophical statements is to take a daring approach to challenge itself, to learn from its mistakes, to improve every day towards deepening & strengthening its commitment to its overall goal. In one of the company's mission statements, it claims on developing its expertise by learning through teamwork and making continuous improvement as a way of life. These two proclamations reveal Electro-Circuits as a company that carries a professional attitude in truly identifying itself as a master of its own craftsmanship. Upon learning as a team, the interview with members of the managerial team reveal a figure of higher authority to be in charge of arranging a meeting and raising inquiries for discussion as well as pointing out issues for concern. Should any problems exist, it was the official duty of the project manager and production
manager to keep the team abreast of the matter and make the right decision for action to be taken. Hence, the team acknowledges the hierarchical structure and learns together in a process where the legitimate figure directs them to do so as a team. This professionalism was put to the test when the company suddenly came to an abrupt funk with its operation as a team. The decree of the company’s philosophy and mission were also under the scope to see if what is preached is also really put into practice.

It was like a well-respected European football team that suddenly crashed down from its premier status. Every member of the staff was looking for solutions but rarely address about the problem and the main roots that were making the team lose its winning ways. What made the Electro-Circuits Company where it is today should’ve been its antidote for getting the enterprise back on track to assure that its quality first policy was emboldened. But for some strange reason the managerial team, which is the backbone of Electro-Circuits, were not able to display the desired working behavior that complied with the company’s philosophy and mission. To stop the bleeding from getting any worse a research was conducted to investigate why the problems were occurring and seek for a solution method that would help the team get the company back into its credible form.

5.2 An Analysis of the Managerial Team’s Situation at the Workplace

In order to get a clear definition of the problem, this part of the study constructed and implemented a situation analysis to extract the root cause of the problem that was making the Electro-Circuits managerial team not being able to apply the performance that would enable them to achieve its objective. The objective was the company’s philosophy of delivering quality and the mission statement of attaining the highest benefit for the customers. The company claims that the philosophy and mission of the corporation could be attained if the managers were able to work as a complete team. This research methodology was chosen to describe the events that have prevented the Electro-Circuits Corporation from reaching the objective and to identify the factors that were detracting the work performance. The middle managers were selected as the sample group due to their main role as the team in assisting the direction of the company. Overall, the research done at this corporation was utilized to generate primary data for enhancing and refining the disciplinary concept of team learning.
The situation analyses have been divided into three parts. Each segment had their own form in collecting data to describe what the problem really was.

1. Researcher’s Analysis for Situation 1:

   a) Data collection - April to May 2009

   The data was gathered through traditional means in April. First, an interview was conducted with human resources management to provide a general detail of the situation at hand. This was followed with grateful cooperation on the part of the human resources staff in providing documents on the work flow design and each managerial team’s job roles and responsibilities for observation and review. Second, the top manager was inquired to give his input on what he believes the problem was. Third, a workshop was conducted with the managerial team to provide their view of the obstacles that they saw as challenging to their work performance; by May, these managers were also interviewed separately for obtaining a richer detail of the situation.

   b) Report

   Human resources management felt that the middle managers were not taking their share of responsibility in working as a team. There was a sense that the managers were straying from the foundation (philosophy and mission) rather than making an effort to adhere to it even when working conditions were not favorable.

   The team operated in a hierarchical manner. The work flow design is constructed in a clockwork functional aspect. The operational course ran in a traditional factory style where input starts the signal for preparing the process and the outcome is expected to meet the standards.

   Top management believed that there was no need to purchase additional machines or rearrange the facilities to improve productivity. However, the work process still has a lot of mental errors being committed. For example, there are miscalculated figures in the ordering of supplies and data presentation, there is an inability to deliver the guaranteed order for customers. It seems that the behavioral performance is not on the right track. When work is urgently required to finish within the schedule, top management has to raise his voice to corral the team’s working behavior to get the job done. There were some occasions when it was necessary in expressing frustration (in colorful form) by top management in order to produce the outcome on schedule.
The managerial team had some cultural issue whereas the Thai managers were mostly silent at the meetings and don't want to display a sense of being inconsiderate towards their fellow colleagues. The Thai managers spoke about issues within their comfort zone. For their part, communicating in the English language with the western staff can sometimes arouse a negative emotional experience. They are not used to expressing their opinions in an emotional manner. The German managerial team felt that the operation needed to be completed or else feel the wrath of top management’s frustration. They consider that people who know their assigned roles should take responsibility in getting their work done and not having to be constantly supervised. In other words, if there is a problem or if something does not look right then one should take action to correct the matter. They believed that the team should have members taking the leadership by action rather than just talking about it. According to the management team (composing of Thai and German staff) the real issues were pointed out as followed:

1. Some team members don’t know what the problem is.
2. Some team members were not aware that this is a problem.
3. Execution of teamwork was lacking.
4. The organization's goal was ambiguous; right now the goal is to only make a profit and is constantly communicated.
5. There was no accountability when a mistake has occurred.
6. There was no full cooperation from other departments.

For the first three issues, it was revealed that the departments are working independently rather than interdependently. They were mostly performing in silos and hardly in unison. In order to find out the key factors that will direct the managerial team's working behavior towards the right track, they were asked about what their values and attitude towards work were. The team stated that they valued teamwork, problem-solving and taking action, leadership, innovation, responsibility, and continuous improvement. Their attitude towards a positive working behavior stems from being happy and having fun at work, receiving challenging tasks, being honest with each other and maintaining responsibilities in their functional role, having the opportunity for self-improvement, respecting fellow colleagues, obtaining job satisfaction, and holding a belief in teamwork.
Another round of interview was held with the managerial team in May, 2009. This time they were interviewed separately and asked to provide their own personal feedback of what they thought the cause of the problem really was. The aim of this personal interview was to shift the mindset of the managerial staff to be customer-minded. Each departmental manager had to position themselves as a private business unit within the Electro-Circuits Company. From there, the managerial team had to find out who their customers were and what each of them had to do in order to provide the best service for them. This approach was to see if they were aligned with the company’s philosophy of quality first and the mission of achieving the highest benefit for the customers. By theory, if the managers of each department treat each other as customers rather than just as working colleagues, then they will be able to not only function as a team but also highlight the values and attitude that they truly define in their organization. The managerial team was asked the following questions:

1. Who are your target customers?
2. What is your (working) relationship with them?
3. What are your customers’ values?
4. What is their business objective?
5. How will you help them achieve their objectives?
6. What do you need to improve in order to perform effectively to serve your customers?

Based on the information gathered with the interviews from the managers of project, research & development, engineering, production, planning, and quality assurance the issues became quite clear as to why there were some problems trying to reach their objectives. Nevertheless they are challenging issues that the HR division can take action upon. The aim of Electro-Circuits is to get the departments to work together as a team. However there were obstacles that needed to be cleared in order for teamwork to actually function.

In case #1, the three core units (project, R&D, and Engineering) are sometimes experiencing difficulties in obtain simultaneous information that is correct and confirmed. This presents some challenge in carrying out the proper action to meet with the project deadline as the proper channel for communication is not utilized. For example: Sometimes R&D receives information directly for an order from an alternative source and has to respond to it immediately
without having enough time to discuss with other key members on how to complete the project on time.

In case #2, the production unit is the last to know or not be involved with the original details, thus resulting in the lack of opportunity to have an input to confirm that the desired operational procedure can actually proceed with efficiency.

II. Researcher’s Analysis for Situation 2:

a) Data collection - June 2009

A challenge session was implemented at an urgent managerial team meeting to resolve an incident where no action was taken for a special order. The challenge session is a structured problem-solving framework which aims to create changes in the way that groups or individuals think about and solve problems. The basis of a challenge session is to generate a series of challenge statements. In practice, it will make the individuals and groups move away from the conventional way of thinking and into a creative way of thinking. The aim of the challenge session was to get the managers to find a proactive approach in handling urgent/special request orders in the future. According to the problem given, it was stated that “No action was taken from 5 to 8 Jun towards getting a special order done”. The objective was to get the special order done. The top manager became frustrated in the delay and had to take matters into his own hands. With a vocal and emotional personality injected into the event, he managed to complete the job in three hours on Tuesday (9 Jun).

b) Report

The Electro-Circuits managerial team identified the problem as followed:

1. There wasn’t any clear target, overview, or a clear plan.

2. There was no clear communication; the communication itself was not taken seriously.

3. There wasn’t a team member who was clearly appointed to be responsible.

4. There was a lack of leadership on the managerial level.

5. The time limit to get the special order done was non-existent; the team worked without a proper timeline.

6. Team members were not properly informed of the overview status and daily status; no follow-up on the progress.
7. Cooperation among team members need to be improved.

According to the challenge session, the problems that had occurred were mainly in the ability to work as a team. To get a special order done or any type of request that has been submitted takes a disciplinary crew to foster morale on part of the individuals to think about their team first. In this type of working environment, the thinking, breathing, moving, and reacting needs to be mobilize in a synchronized manner. The company’s managerial team is akin to the analogy of a mountain climbing expedition team that has tied a rope around each other’s waist to get to the summit. Disaster is most imminent when one of the team members shirks off his/her responsibility in functioning as a team. Such a negative behavior in slacking off triggers a domino effect towards other team member’s performance. With the Electro-Circuits case, the summit of the managerial team was to get the special order done. However, the order could not be done due to members of the team not quite grasping the capability to provide an overview, setting clear communication, assuming responsibility, providing the leadership, maintaining a proper timeline for operation, getting team members to be aligned with the process, and getting full cooperation from each other. The challenge session revealed that the managerial team has become a team that just works as a group. It was only when top management started to rant and roar that triggered urgency for the team to get the special order done and meet with the deadline. In a sense, the team worked together under the condition of being intimidated. However, in the case of carrying out the philosophy that points to having the courage to challenge themselves, learn from mistakes, and improving every day towards deepening & strengthening the commitment to becoming the preferred long-term partner of small and medium-sized companies with outsourcing requirements in the field of electronic manufacturing, the team was not taking the importance of these concepts seriously. As for adhering to the mission where growing their expertise by learning through teamwork and making continuous improvement as a way of life, the team seems to be moving in the opposite direction. Surely, the managerial team seems to be lacking the teamwork which is the philosophy or morale that motivates the performance to do what they are supposed to do as a team. Even in the most hardening times, the managerial team of Electro-Circuits should have carried out the working procedures of the special order rather than having to second guess each other.
The challenge session, as a team learning tool, did provide a sense that the team was lacking in their performance in upholding the company’s philosophy and mission as a collective unit. The managerial team reviewed through the factors to be deemed as critical to running a smooth operation and working together. Despite some cross-cultural working behavior that was present in the previous situations, the tool assisted the team in gaining a sense that they had to become more proactive in demonstrating leadership with each other and to establish mutual cooperation so that they can conduct the operation with harmony towards fellow team members. The teams felt that problems do occur but they can be handled with a team effort. Therefore, if the overview is still in a state of confusion, the team members will inquire about it until everyone is clear on what needs to be done and how to go about executing it. Since the timeline is very important in knowing what needs to be taken care of immediately, the questions shall be asked by each team member without feeling a sense of awkwardness until everyone knows their role for action. If it is still unclear or unsure of things then team members agree that it has to be absolutely clear to everyone before any further actions are to be taken. Team members felt that accountability should be taken to ensure that communication about the special order is to be taken with professional care; team members know the right method to take for producing the desired outcome. Each team member felt that fellow colleagues should appoint self-responsibility in obtaining information of knowing what to do in the process instead of having to be told about what they should know. For the sake of teamwork, team members were asked to use their skills and abilities that could help others to obtain proper information of the overview and daily status so that the team would be able to keep the special order work done within the timeline.

III. Researcher's Analysis for Situation 3:

a) Data collection - June 2009

An observation was done at an urgent meeting. The meeting dealt with a fault component returned from a customer. It turns out that there was a defect in the design of the circuit board and a back-housing GFO component that needed to be re-modified.

b) Report

Upon observation and passively listening to how the meeting conducted, the discovery was followed:
It's important to have a facilitator to dispense questions towards colleagues so that they can think more clearly and cautiously about the real type of solutions to be implemented before jumping into any conclusions. For the Thai managers, it was a proper technique for feeling at ease; as there are individuals who were not quite comfortable being placed in a situation where they might lose face in front of their colleagues. The third person took on the role as an interlocutor to provide anonymous details about the problems that occurred with a sense of security to the person who feel that he/she is at fault. The discussion mainly focused on the task not being able to produce the standard results. In this mode, the working character of the team member was prevented from being scrutinized.

The Electro-Circuits managerial team was working in an environment that had to meet with the pressures of keeping a deadline. The team members felt an intense pressure to come up with answers or actions that would lead to the desired outcome. This type of condition led the team to do a rush order. The consequences of doing a rush order tends to dilute the focus on quality. When the problem was pointed out, one of the team members was looking for a quick fix solution to propose. However, one of the team members had to ask him to analyze his thoughts carefully on the proposed solution to ensure that the solution itself is the right method to be taken and that it will not lead to other problems in the future. The team members realize that they were working in a hectic pace. While some members (Thais) were focusing only on their own tasks other members (Germans) wanted the situation to be handled as an intact group. It was felt that a lack of thoroughness to amend the crisis would only lead to more problems in the future. To prevent the problem from being a chaos, the best way that the managerial team conjured upon was to generate the right ethical and logical questions that would provide common sense in an etiquette form to the solution.

5.3 Analysis of the Problem Statement

In this section of the work, the three 'situation analysis' from 5.2 were compared to identify the factors that were preventing the managerial team from performing to their abilities in sustaining the company’s philosophy and mission. At first, the managing director felt that the problems among the managerial team were based on
1. Dysfunctional working relations.
2. Not complying with the company’s foundation.
3. Lacking a collaborative behavior, and.
4. Not willing to share ideas, information, nor knowledge with each other.

The managerial team provided further information as having to overcome the conduct of:
1. Being unable to obtain accurate & confirmed information.
2. Not having time for agreeing on an exact schedule to finish the project.
3. Having to compromise quality to meet with the pressures of demand.

However, with the issue of a hasty (rushing) work procedure, the managers were forced to get their assignments finished before a hectic clockwork schedule. By rushing the process, the products that they produced came back as below quality and heavily criticized by the receiving customers. Overall, the workplace accumulated a climate of having to speed up the operation; it was about being efficient to the maximum level.

Figure 27 Rushing to Produce the Output While Sacrificing the Goal of Working Together

The above diagram describes how the goal of getting the managers to perform as a team was unable to be attained due to the working environment being in a state of rush. The impulsive working condition led to a disappointing view by top management of seeing the middle managers as having dysfunctional working relations, not complying with the company’s foundation, being non-collaborative, and not communicating with each other. The working condition became a place where the middle managers were unable to get accurate and confirmed information for work. In addition, they had no time to meet for getting an agreed working schedule to finish the project. Furthermore, to their dismay they had to compromise quality in order to meet with the demanding pressure of time.
The staff did have a team but they were lacking teamwork. Challenges and problems were sometimes abandoned rather than having the strong will and effort to manage the situation. The team worked effectively when the conditions of fear and anger became the drivers of working together. The former made people scared of losing their job or being reprimanded while the latter was from the emotional frustration of top management. In the company, the teamwork approach among the staff was waxing and waning. Sometimes there will be a day when the Thai managerial staff would work together (and with their German colleagues) by sharing information and ideas on problem-solving or improving work operations as well as making decisions together. Then next time, these team members would split off on their own and not make any initiative to communicate with each other; at times they recognize that there was a problem but rather let somebody else detect it and solve it.

I. Results from Analyzing the Problem

At a managerial team meeting to focus on achieving quality, members of the team were asked to reflect on the current operation system that was to be complied. A roundtable discussion was established to get their insights on what is working and what is not working, as well as the reasons for each. Each team member was given a chance to express their own views of the operation system. Since there were evidence of not being able to obtain accurate and confirmed information, which led to some mistakes and errors, the aim was to get the managerial team thinking on how to serve their internal customers (fellow departmental colleagues) better so that everybody can work with a sense of professional dignity. It was proposed to the managers that they come up with an improved work design model that incorporates the philosophy of “quality is first” and that radiates the values of:

- Happiness
- Being challenged
- Honesty
- Responsibility
- Self-improvement
- Respect
- Job Satisfaction
- Teamwork
The concerning issue for some of the team members was having enough time to confirm that the project can be completed on time. Basically, there needs to be a session where everyone can come together and provide valuable inputs in ensuring that the project will be done with quality and on time. The managerial team felt that there should be a pre-assessment meeting to address the following questions: What are the technical issues? What are the procurement issues? What are the production issues? And what are the profit-margin issues?

The team had to come up with an ideal working system (model) that will allow all of them to obtain accurate information so they can perform with the best of their abilities to achieve the stated objective, for example: delivering on-time, with quality, enhanced satisfaction for the (internal/external) customers. This working system must comply towards the values of being in high spirits, challenging, honest, responsible, self-improvement, respect, job-satisfaction, and of course teamwork.

In order for them to achieve the outcome of quality they all agreed that they want to work in an environment where the work flow produces a positive currency of working relationship values. To assist them on improving the situation, a knowledge management tool called “Blame vs. Gain Behavior” was utilized to help the team members reflect on their own attitudes and responses to problems that were being currently experienced.

II. Applying “Hays Team Learning Pyramid” & “Blame vs. Gain Behaviors”

The aim is to view the extent of the managerial team engaging in a concerted form of dialogue, reflection, and mindfulness through an event that prevents them from becoming adopting a defensive behavior; thus enabling them to reach the pinnacle of collaborative effectiveness, achieving and sustaining heights of performance that group members could not otherwise attain. For this paper, the three components of the team learning pyramid are described as followed:

- **Dialogue** is the discussion between and amongst people to explore issues and solve problems.
- **Reflection** is the consideration of one’s behavior upon ones own or a team’s, and its consequences and implications.
- **Mindfulness** is a state of full awareness and presence.
Analysis will be provided in two forms – the first displays the three components of the “Team Learning Pyramid” where each features the report from the “blame vs. gain behaviors” event, and the second presents an overall analysis from applying these two tools.

The exploration (observation and interview) through the implementation of the ‘Hays Team Learning Pyramid’ criteria for assessment provides the following in-depth information on the work culture: “In the view of the researcher, based on the work policy and procedures of Electro-Circuits, the company has already anticipated the business environment that they have positioned itself in. The only true competition that the company has is on getting customers and keeping them. The policy of ‘Quality First’ gives the company a brand that their customers, partners, and employees can identify with. Basically, the machines in the workplace and the expertise of the managerial team and staff members move together in a coherent fashion to ensure that customers are getting the best in service and product received. With the top manager overseeing the day to day operation and the managerial team giving it all their best in difficult situations, the company is determined and committed to produce what they set out to do in their mission statement.”

The study asserts that the implementation of the team learning pyramid and the concept of the “blame vs. gain behaviors” will produce an analysis to assist the managerial team members in finding ways to discuss about the problems being experienced in the workplace, reflect on their own attitudes and responses to mistakes, and learn from them; this would allow the team to progress towards achieving the company’s mission while eventually reducing their cross-cultural differences. The methodological approach is to utilize the ‘team learning pyramid’ as the condition to get the team break off the tension and troubles that have been destroying their confidence and trust in working together as a collective unit. As for the “blame vs. gain behaviors” it will be configured as a process for getting the team members to think and take action on how to alleviate their cross-cultural differences and strongly focus on helping the team perform effectively towards achieving the company’s philosophy and mission statement.

1. Researcher’s Analysis on Dialogue

A) Communicating at an equal level with fellow colleagues to explore issues and solve problems:
Prior to challenges that the managerial team were facing, there was harmony among the colleagues to exchange information and ideas in the workplace. But once the challenges started to evolve in full force the team became apprehensive in gathering the principles for collaboration. It would have been a good academic text-book theory example of people coming together when problems come to pass. One would think that the company’s mission and infrastructure are good enough to foster a climate of mutual understanding that would help the team to tackle any type of problems at work. On the contrary, rather than forming their fingers to become a fist some team members opted not to fully get involved in communicating with one another to explore issues and solve problems for fear of repercussion. This feeling of fear created a lack of willingness to exchange thoughts or provide support in resolving difficulties among fellow colleagues. Some of the team members stood by the sidelines and cast out a feeling of hope for a change while leaving the vocal members to make a spontaneous contribution. The managerial team on the Thai side felt that all team and work relation issues is best left with the operation manager, since the person holding this position has the authority in filtering out the details to decide what is the best action to take. While the operation manager was also seen as the person to take the leading role in tackling problems that are deemed as a threat to the committed work schedule and to offer practical solutions, the team would not dare to demonstrate any behavior that may be seen as undermining the competency of the operation manager. They would offer some advice but wait for the next action given by the operation manager.

In this case, communicating at an equal level became a futile attempt within the team due to a fear of the unknown and undesirable that might occur in the short run when members bring out issues that may be deemed as damaging the professional credibility of others as well as oneself.

**B) Open to new ideas and allow learning to be exchanged with each other:**

Report from human resources management’s point of view felt that the middle managers were not taking their share of responsibility in working as a team. There was a sense that the managers were straying from the company’s foundation (philosophy and mission) rather than making an effort to adhere to it despite experiencing unfavorable working conditions. Concerns were particularly high as there were a lot of mental errors being committed in the work
process on a weekly basis. For example, there were miscalculated figures in the ordering of supplies and data presentation. Also, there was an inability to deliver the guaranteed order for customers. It seems that the behavioral performance for achieving the stated objectives in the mission was not on the right track.

There was a cultural issue to the managerial team's performance whereas the Thai managers were mostly silent at the meetings and don't want to display a sense of being inconsiderate towards their fellow colleagues. It seems that the Thai managers spoke about issues that are within their comfort zone; speaking in their native language provided a paternal sense of care and emotional security. The Thai managers requested permission to hold a private meeting with their fellow national colleagues to discuss about the performance problems that they are experiencing at work. For the Thai managers, communicating in the English language with the western staff under a tense working atmosphere can sometimes arouse an unpleasant feeling and experience. They are not used to expressing their opinions in a poignant manner.

According to the management team, the real issues that were most evident in their collaborative performance were attested as the following:

1. Some workers don't know what the problem is.
2. Some workers are not aware that this is a problem.
3. Execution of teamwork is lacking.
4. The organization's goal is ambiguous; right now the goal is to only make a profit and is constantly communicated.
5. There is no accountability when a mistake has occurred.
6. There is no full cooperation from other departments.

Being opened to new ideas and allowing learning to be exchanged with each other were not functional in this aspect. Some members on the team were not on the same page with what the company expected in the outcome. This led to a failure in understanding that some of the action taken or not taken, which did not comply with the company's foundation, eroded the performance of their team as a whole. Mistakes were being committed on a weekly basis rather than being incorporated for review to see where they can be corrected and done better in the future. It seems as if the errors committed by a team member are detected for rejection and revision instead of taking them as lessons learned with each other. These lessons can serve as
adjustments in the work procedures which would allow the member to perform much better, thus enhancing the team to produce the desired outcome.

There was a language barrier that undermined the opportunity for new ideas and learning to be exchanged. Based on the views of the production engineering manager and quality assurance manager, it was not so much about putting the sentences together or saying the right words. Instead, it was an issue of being assured that there was a mutual obligation to assist each other no matter what the predicament is. Private meetings composed of only Thai managers depicted a cultural code that radiated a sense of esteem on part of the team members. Although it boosted moral and confidence it failed to stimulate a sense of cohesiveness within the team as a whole. By leaving out their fellow German team members from this meeting, Thai managers were not given the opportunity to gain insightful inputs or suggestions from their non-Thai team members that would help each other learn as a whole unit. On the German members’ side, the managers of research and development engineer and SAP & IT felt a sense of the Thais being insignificant towards working together as a team.

B.1 The first recorded event of team learning in the “Blame vs. Gain Behaviors” seminar

This is a reported case of seeing how team learning evolved from the first implementation of the “blame vs. gain behaviors” event with the managerial team members. The workshop was held in June 2009 with the aim of getting the team members to mainly establish a dialogue with each other while reflecting on the past events and to see the extent of how much mindfulness they have as working colleagues. Based on this first event, the researcher would attest that not much of an effort can be put into being opened for any new ideas and exchanging learning with fellow team members when the working behaviors are in a derelict manner. As in the evidence pointed out in the event by the research and development engineer manager, “when some workers are unaware of the impact that it is causing and don’t seem to recognize the effects that it is having on the performance of the team, this leads to a situation where things only become worse than before”. Also, from the project manager’s point of view he states that “when the plans are set and clear but for somehow the implementation is quite meager, surely it doesn’t bode well when the time calls for an execution for obtaining new ideas and exchanging learning”. In addition, the project manager feels that the “motivation of team members to do the
latter becomes lost when the bottom line is about making sure that the profits are high”. Furthermore, from the SAP & IT manager’s perspective, “team member that do not make an effort to eliminate his own errors and mistakes causes a negative domino effect on other fellow team members to produce the outcome that does not meet with the quality standards”. The operation manager attests that a “lack of accountability on a part of a team member destroys trust in competence and capability in the eyes of other team members”. Finally, working together is about being thorough and systematic with the task assignments. Information or resources that is crucial to the operation, regardless if it’s big or small, should be accessed to all team members. Sadly, the team couldn’t get the collaboration to fully flow through the work process, as testified by the production engineering manager. Thus, the same can be said for being opened to ideas and exchanging learning; such a process requires full cooperation in which members of the team were struggling to do, as stated by the warehouse manager. On this event, the mood and tension of the team was assuaged from having the opportunity to communicate as a team on matters that were inhibiting the team’s performance. The dialogue allowed the team to realize that the problems that have occurred in the workplace can be maintained with a collective effort. This “blame vs. gain behaviors” event was to allow a dialogue based on ground truth so that team members can communicate by reflecting on what went wrong so that things can be corrected in the near future and being more mindful that their behaviors will need to improve in order to attain quality standards.

C) Seeking to uncover truths or facts that remain hidden or untested:

One of the ways to uncover the truths or facts is to provide support for vocal team members in making a spontaneous contribution that is helping the team to fulfill the company’s foundation. Not being ready to take on the role as a leader of the team is acceptable as long as one is willing to assert himself/herself as a supporter for change. Nevertheless, choosing to become idle and not taking any benefitting action for the team result into a mental strain and physical anguish for those who really believed in having the change, according to the opinion of the SAP & IT manager. To function as a team in a working environment such as Electro-Circuits, the team members must have the courage and commitment to reveal the truth or the facts. From the human resources manager’s perspective, “disclosing the reality has to be done as a team
otherwise ‘changing for the better’ cannot be fully materialized when the capacity of some team members are still nonchalant towards any new team proposal’. With concern for the managerial team on part of the human resources manager, she felt that this led to a lost opportunity for those individual team members who truly wanted to see colleagues work closely together by looking at the facts for improving team performance. She expressed her concern on seeing that there was a lack of stance towards important issues of working as a team which resulted in the managerial team to experience problems that kept on spiraling; thus making it difficult for the team to fulfill the company’s philosophy and mission.

The project manager attested that working together as a team, and examining the truth or facts, was met with some obstacles. He mentions that in one case, the three core units (marketing, R&D, and Engineering) were sometimes experiencing difficulties in obtaining simultaneous information that was correct and confirmed. In his mind, this presented some challenge in carrying out the proper action in meeting with the project deadline, as the proper channel for communication was not utilized. He provides one example: “Sometimes R&D received information directly for an order from an alternative source and had to respond to it immediately without having enough time to discuss with other key members on how to complete the project on time”. In another case provided by the project manager, the production unit was the last to know or not be involved with the original details, thus resulting in the lack of opportunity on having an input to confirm that the desired operational procedure can actually proceed with efficiency.

2. Researcher’s Analysis or Reflection

**Aiming to learn, improve upon, develop the profession, and building capacity become effective in dealing with complex problems or dilemmas.**

According to the quality assurance manager’s statement, “by not being able to work together as a collective unit, the managerial team suffered some setbacks in producing quality”; he felt that this event has led to the managerial team to gripe at each other on the lack of team performance. For the purpose of trying to find out the key factors that would allow members to direct their working behavior towards the right track, the session was constructed to inquire about their values and attitude towards working together. The analysis from the session revealed that
the Electro-Circuits managerial team valued teamwork, problem-solving, taking action, leadership, innovation, responsibility, and continuous improvement. Their attitude towards a positive working behavior stems from being happy and having fun at work, receiving challenging tasks, being honest with each other and maintaining responsibilities in their functional role, having the opportunity for self-improvement, respecting fellow colleagues, obtaining job satisfaction, and holding a belief in teamwork. In addition, another interview meeting was held with the managerial team. They were interviewed separately and asked to provide their own personal feedback of what they think was the cause of the real problem. In this interview, each member of the team was asked to shift the mindset to be customer-minded so that they can be in accordance to the company's mission. Each managerial team member had to position themselves as a private business unit within the Electro-Circuits organization. From there, the managers have to see who their customers really are and what must they do in order to provide the best service for the customers. By theory, if the managers of each department treated each other as customers, rather than working colleagues, they will be able to not only function as a team but also highlight the values and attitude that they truly defined in their organization. The managerial team was asked to provide details about their target customers, their working relationship with them, what their customers' values were, their business objectives, how to help them achieve their objectives, and what needs to be improved in order to perform effectively in serving their customers.

In this part of the analysis, the report stems from the second “blame vs. gain behaviors” event that was conducted with the managerial team in June 2009. The second event was for the team members to reflect on the errors, mistakes, and conflicts that have eroded their performance of working as a team. As the researcher was facilitating this workshop, members were divided into four groups and were asked to reflect on some of the issues that were causing problems for the team to be able to carry out the company's philosophy and mission statement. The groups were asked to be mindful of these issues and to seek for ways to improve the situation if they were deemed as very serious to the team's working performance. The reflected issues were brought up as a form of dialogue for other members to make comments or recommendations. Upon reflecting and constructing a dialogue with each other, the team provided further information as having to overcome the conduct of
1. Being unable to obtain accurate & confirmed information.

2. Not having time for agreeing on an exact schedule to finish the project.

3. Having to compromise quality to meet with the pressures of demand.

However, with the issue of a hasty (rushing) work procedure the managers were forced to get their assignments finished before a hectic clockwork schedule. By rushing the process, the products that they produced came back as below quality and heavily criticized by the receiving customers. Overall, the workplace accumulated a climate of having to rush their project operations; it was about being efficient to the maximum level. With the issue of a rushing work procedure the managers were forced to get their assignments finished before a tight operational timeline. This led to a disappointing view by top management; he saw the team as having dysfunctional working relations, not complying with the company's foundation, being non-collaborative, and not communicating with each other. The working condition became a place that was working against the managerial team; it took away the team's opportunity to obtain information that was as correct and verified for work. In addition, they couldn't work out a formal strategy as a team to ensure that the operation will be attained with quality. Furthermore, to their dismay, they were functioning in a precarious manner by disregarding the company's philosophy of 'quality first' and losing credibility in craftsmanship towards satisfying the customers. In this case, they were failing all together as a business unit by not being able to serve quality to their customers.

In this second event, the managers acknowledged that they did have a team but were lacking teamwork. The operation manager stated that the team had some challenges and problems, but sometimes had to be abandoned due to a lack of strong will and effort to manage the situation. The production engineer manager admitted that the team worked effectively together when the conditions of fear and anger (from higher authority) became the drivers of working as a team. She described the former as making people scared of losing their job or being reprimanded while the latter was avoiding the wrath from the emotional frustration of top management. In the company, the teamwork approach among the managerial team felt that it was always waxing and waning. As told by the top manager, "sometimes there will be a day when the Thai managerial staff would work together (and with their German colleagues) by sharing information and ideas on problem-solving or improving work operations, as well as
making decisions together. Then the next time, these team members would split off on their own and not make any initiative to communicate with each other; at times they recognize that there is a problem but let somebody else detect it and solve it.” (Interview conducted on Apri/2009).

At the meeting, the managerial team focused on achieving quality. Each team members from the departments of marketing, research & development, engineering, production, planning, and quality assurance, were asked to reflect on the current operation system that has been complied to. A roundtable discussion was established to get their insights on what was working and not meeting expectations, as well as the reasons for each. Each manager was given a chance to express their own views of the operation system. Since there were evidence of not being able to obtain accurate and confirmed information, which led to some mistakes and errors, the aim was to get the managers thinking how to serve their internal customers (fellow departmental colleagues) better so that everybody can work with a sense of professional dignity. It was proposed to the managers that they come up with an improved work design model that incorporates the philosophy of “quality is first” and that radiates the values of:

1. Happiness
2. Being challenged
3. Honesty
4. Responsibility
5. Self-improvement
6. Respect
7. Job Satisfaction
8. Teamwork

The concerning issue, on part of the project manager and production planning manager, was having enough time to confirm that the project can be completed on time. Basically, there needs to be a session where everyone can come together and provide valuable inputs in ensuring that the project will be done with quality and on time. As a team, the managers felt that there should be a pre-assessment meeting to address the questions of:

1. What are the technical issues?
2. What are the procurement issues?
3. What are the production issues?

4. And what are the profit-margin issues?

The team had to come up with an ideal working system (model) that will allow all of them to obtain accurate information so that they can perform with the best of their abilities to achieve the stated objective e.g., delivering on-time, with quality, enhanced satisfaction for the (internal/external) customers. This working system must comply towards the values of being in high spirits, challenging, honest, responsible, self-improvement, respect, job-satisfaction, and of course teamwork. In order for them to achieve the outcome of quality, they all agreed that they want to work in an environment where the work flow produces a positive currency of working relationship values. To assist them in improving the situation, a knowledge management tool called “blame vs. gain behaviors” was utilized to help the managers reflect on their own attitudes and responses to problems that were being currently experienced.

Such a workplace culture at Electro-Circuits that encourages teamwork needs to establish an infrastructure that acts as the security for team members to reflect on past performance and to see where they need to improve. Being compounded with a working environment that is always in a rush, not having the opportunity to come together to work, and learn as an effective unit will do little to ascertain teamwork in the long run.

3. **Researcher’s Analysis on Mindfulness**

   A) *Acting with reason and understanding the consequences of behavior:*

   In the third session of the “blame vs. gain behaviors” in June 2009, the event was utilized to help the managers reflect on their own attitudes and responses to problems that were being currently experienced in the workplace, they started to identify the needs for improvement as a team. By clearly defining the mission of the company, they saw how their work was relevant to each other’s task and duties. In order for the managerial team to fulfill the mission on “Achieving the Highest Benefit to the Customers” they had to become more rational in looking at the issues that were perceived as obstacles. These issues were examined through and converted to key enablers that would allow the managerial team to come up with a new approach in ensuring that they are meeting their mission in unison. In other words, the “blame vs. gain behaviors” workshop allowed the managers to take the lemons and turn them into lemonade. In a sense,
these managers became more mindful of working as a whole, as they were guided through on seeing what the negative situation was and happening on each current occasions. From there, the team was asked to turn these disapproving issues into positive ones for the future. The team felt that there were a lot of disruptions to the mission. The research and development engineer manager felt that the professional thing to do was to not only accept the fact that they are real but that they can also be changed because each member of the team has the power to do so. The warehouse manager and the SAP & IT manager believe that the knowledge for solving the problem was already there, all it needed was a change and a collective effort in the matter of approach. The problems facing the team were presented for them to reflect upon and to see what might be the right action to take to improve the situation, as well as helping the team to handle the situation that may look familiar in the future. This would help the team overcome the problem through a concerted effort in eliminating the crisis or to form a minor sub-unit task force that extricates the situation from becoming enormous to handle. Overall, the action taken is to demonstrate that fellow colleagues are thinking about the team first so that success is possible to achieve. The figure below presents the outcome from the meeting:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>These are the obstacles to our mission</th>
<th>The key enablers of delivering quality to our customers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dysfunctional working relations among the managerial staff</td>
<td>Focusing on making an effective working relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straying from foundation</td>
<td>Commitment to the foundation of the corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Collaboration</td>
<td>Fostering a team-working environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sharing ideas, information, nor knowledge</td>
<td>Promoting open communication based on respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to obtain accurate &amp; confirmed information</td>
<td>Friendly access to an accurate and confirmed information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No time for agreeing on exact schedule to finish the project</td>
<td>Meeting for a decisive plan for action to be taken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having to compromise quality to meet with pressures of demand</td>
<td>Exercising leadership</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 28 Results from the Application of “Blame vs. Gain Behaviors”
The team felt that they would be able to provide an outcome with quality towards their customers as long as the key enablers were present in the working environment. The path towards delivering quality to the customers is supported on the following pillars that were the basis of teamwork:

1. Effective working relationship
2. Commitment
3. Fostering collaboration
4. Open communication of trust
5. Accurate and confirmed information
6. Decisive action plan
7. Leadership

B) Allowing colleagues to see, hear, and feel things that they would otherwise miss:

The managerial team identified the situation on the modification process (hypothetical results) as followed:

Figure 29 Key Enablers for Achieving the Highest Benefit to the Customers

According to this figure presented above, these managers realized that in order for the key enablers to take their place, something had to be changed. The team communicated with one another and asked about each others’ view based on why they were not able to attain the company’s mission. Most of the issue that the members kept hearing and wanting to solve was the leadership within the team. Based on the view of the operation manager, if the team had leadership, then the behaviors would fall into place. However, the research and development engineer manager and the SAP & IT manager expressed that leadership should also be
accountable to all individuals and not just to be solely relied on one person to lead the way for everybody else. What they discovered that it wasn't much of a question based on the resources or policies but rather the way that work was designed. It seems that the old work flow design was completely exhausted and could not moderate itself with the changes in the way customers demanded for quality. Worse, the old work design did not provide the mental infrastructure for the team to enhance their teamwork, develop leadership, and allow time to analyze the root cause of the problems. The team believed that it was time to take control of the situation before the situation controls the team's performance. A working model was put forward as having a consensus stage to determine if this project can be managed and then an execution stage to come to an understanding as well as being committed to the project.

C) Taking action with quality in the process:

![Consensus Stage to an Execution Stage](image)

**Figure 30** Consensus Stage to an Execution Stage

The purpose of the **consensus stage** is to:

- Obtain information that is accurate and confirmed.
- Identify issues that are of concerned and rectify them as soon as possible.
- Set an agreed plan for action.

In this stage, quality is defined and drawn so that team members know the appropriate action to be taken. This would be the mission that is upheld from the very beginning.

The **execution stage** ensures that all involved members have made the commitment in finishing the project. This stage also allows the staff to address any rising and/or existing problems that must be taken care of so that the project will be completed on schedule.

The newly designed working model was not just for configuration of the duties and roles but was built for the purpose of integrating the positive elements of the working relationship. This work design model featured the following in the work flow:

1. Teamwork
2. Problem Solving
3. Leadership
4. Innovation

5. Responsibility

6. Continuous Improvement

In reality, this work design model was made for the managerial team to constantly move forward and always allowing the capacity to overcome difficult and challenging situations. At the same time, the model is for sustaining teamwork and having the behaviors aligned for producing the outcome with the company’s mission embedded into every piece of the finish detail. The managerial team agreed that the work being done, from start to finish, must meet with quality standard otherwise the work will be rejected.

III. Researcher’s Overall Analysis Based on Applying “Hays Team Learning Pyramid” and “Blame vs. Gain Behaviors”

1. Hays Team Learning Pyramid

The human resources manager truly believes that the Electro-Circuits company’s workplace culture is about having teamwork, finding ways to solve problems, having leadership, being innovative at work, taking responsibility, and applying methods for continuous improvement. While the beliefs are resonated through the each individual team members, she thinks the synergy that makes the team to actually perform with all these values are far from perfect. In her words, the mental aspects are positive; however the execution needs to be more disciplined in nature. The human resources manager wanted the values to be shared among each other and that their effort was made to ensure a protocol in working as a team. But in reality, the theory that was put into practice did not quite demonstrate that the team members were fully aligned in performance. The view from the top manager and with the managers of research and development engineer, and SAP & IT saw that the workplace culture had a team working with a different set of beliefs in mind. With relevance to team learning, some team members opted not to fully get involved in communicating with one another to explore issues and solve problems for fear of repercussion (as mentioned by the R&D engineer manager). The fear displayed was translated by other team members (managers of production engineer, quality assurance, and production planning) as not cooperating in being opened to new ideas and lacking responsibility to carry out his/her role. The information provided by the R&D engineering manager shows that quality was being compromised as the members rushed to get things done without having time to
reflect for team improvement. The production engineer manager adds on this predicament by asserting that members were put into a position where reasoning became a device to make fellow colleagues feel guilty for not meeting expectations.

2. Blame vs. Gain Behaviors

In reflection from the "blame vs. gain behaviors" workshop, the managerial team felt a sense of positivity that the team got a chance to identify the problems and being able to correct the manner as a collective unit. Although the Germans were the most vocal in the team, they took notice that some of their Thai colleagues were timid in speaking up. To provide support in a team learning atmosphere, the Germans asked a Thai interlocutor to represent the voices of others who were still uncomfortable giving their point of views. Those that were able to provide the discussion made the initiative to get others involved by citing the cases of other fellow team members’ difficulties that were being experienced in the workplace. The team members that were having problems in handling their tasks wanted other fellow members to show empathy as they were yet to learn on fulfilling the roles and expectations of contributing to teamwork, being able to solve problems, display leadership, implementing innovation, being obligated to responsibility, and being involved in continuous improvement. These team members felt that it was a daunting task rolled all together. But their fellow colleagues assured them that complying with these desired values would require a collective effort where members can provide advice on best practice from each other’s experience. The message was that no one is left on his/her own to do all of the things for helping the team. Everybody will do a share on their part in producing the positive elements of the working relationship. The conflict that was evident in damaging the teamwork was on the issue of operating in a extreme rushing working environment. Rushing the procedure made the teams uncomfortable in complying with the company’s philosophy and mission, as well as erecting an unsecured feeling of other member’s integrity for team performance. Some team members describe the rushing condition as a very unpleasant experience that demoralizes the spirit of working together. They would like to find a way to eliminate this problem in an urgent manner. As this description was placed for discussion, those that were passively participating (Thai members) all seem to have agreed with the issue by nodding their heads. They’ve also put in some few comments that the situation needed to be
taken care of immediately. It seems that the problem of the rushing condition also brought about unison among team members when they were addressing the situation. The team was supporting each other’s advice with some ideas of their own in rectifying the matter. The team as a whole became encouraged to find a solution that would benefit their performance. The workshop asked each team member to come up with an idea that would relieve the pain in their performance. Such a solution was a way for fostering the values of teamwork, problem solving, leadership, innovation, responsibility, and continuous improvement that would all become prevalent so that the team becomes ever closer to obtaining the mission. The team raised an important proclamation for each other to be aware of. They attested that if they are to work with these values then everyone has to be accountable to uphold these values, otherwise it would be a futile attempt in taking the critical action. They don’t want to be dismayed by the fact that not all of the team members were fully committed to the cause. Indeed, there was a serious call for team members to find ways of applying their talent, skills, and abilities to propel the team during some of the most challenging times. The aim can be reached if each team members took on a role of complementing each other’s strength and helping to overcome a weakness in helping the team. The message was that the team performance has to be in a concerted effort so that any behavior of shirking away from the problem would be considered unacceptable to the team.

5.4 Drawing the Conclusion to See if Team Learning Created a Sense of Working Together with Different Work Cultures.

This part of the section draws on the conclusion of the assumption that was applied with the “team learning pyramid” and “blame vs. gain behaviors”.

From the early years when the company was newly established, the managerial team of Electro-Circuits worked on a simple work design model. All of the intricacies of administrating the project were handled with ease and conducive for total completion.

The starting point of the project begins at the sales and order department. They checked to see if there is an availability of material. Once the availability is present the department proceeds with an order confirmation and then automatically contacts the plant and production department for doing the order. The plant department does a series of available checking on the production order until it finally becomes affirmative to release the production
order. The plan department also makes contact with the purchasing department where they develop a request for sourcing to the right companies that offers a reasonable quotation. Once the quotation figures are agreed upon the orders are made through and to be delivered as incoming materials for the operation point (production). The operation is also being assessed by the quality assurance department which ensures that all of the materials that are being produced meet the standards. When the finished goods pass inspection, they are sent to the packing department. This department sorts out the sales order and then files an invoice with the sales department. From there, the sales and order department will contact the customers on when the goods will be delivered and for complying with the invoice payment. Below is an example of the original working model at Electro-Circuits:

Figure 31 Electro-Circuits’ Original Work Flow Model

Based on the meeting, the original work flow has been exhausted and needed to be modernized for the purpose of carrying out the philosophy and mission of the company. Overall, there was a call for the work flow to build a working environment that sustained teamwork. The paradigm in the workplace that viewed the original work design as the means for working together has been shifted. With the joint application of using the “team learning pyramid” and “blame vs. gain behaviors”, it brought about a new way of thinking towards the original work flow; hence, it is merely just an execution stage where all of the tasks are carried out as normal
activities. The two tools provided a synergistic learning method that enabled the team members to focus more on finding better methods to improve their working relations and performance as a collective group while pushing aside their cross-cultural differences that was plaguing them before. The application allowed them to see and support for the positive things that can help their team instead of being dumbfounded with all the errors that they had faced during the hectic moments. Based on the new approach, before any production can be fully carried out the team should get together to have a covenant; this is an order of understanding where everyone is fully aware of what is occurring and what are the right actions to take for completing the project with standard quality. Thus, the administration of the consensus stage will be able to allow the team to discuss over any matters that are of concern or issues to be resolved before operation is to be fully implemented. The consensus stage is a philosophy itself which brings the knowledge and skills of others to be in unison for directing the project along the course of meeting the quality and standards of the company’s belief. The diagram below portrays the newly designed work flow composing of a consensus stage:
Figure 32 Newly Designed Working Model

The diagram depicts the consensus stage commencing at the point of sales and order. The stage gathers the managerial team on having a range of meeting to discuss about the selection, initiation, planning, and execution of research and development projects, to devising a plan gathered from information based on problems and the master data process for new projects, as well as pointing out issues of concern on completing the old projects that were analyzed from
the individual, production, procurement, and recourses perspective. The consensus stage scans out for any problems that are either about to occur, have been occurring, or occurring asymmetrically (on and off basis). This stage allows the managerial team to make an initiative in managing the problems so that they will be contained and/or eliminated from the operation. Team members are free to not only discuss about the issue at hand but are also encouraged to offer an investigative report on why these problems are happening. In addition the individual members on the team are asked to provide some sort of solution for resolving the matter. This gives the chance for the team to strive forward in improving the procurement operation and having the opportunity to come together as a team in completing a standard quality work. The consensus stage is an outcome from the application of “Hays Team Learning Pyramid” and the “Blame vs. Gain Behavior” event that was conducted with the managerial team. The consensus stage is a philosophical approach of team learning that is conducive to their working environment. Hence, it creates the conditions for team members to acquire the need for learning together to accomplish a goal, being responsible for making a contribution to achieving goals, reflecting on collaborative efforts, and deciding on ways to improve effectiveness and developing interpersonal skills. This operational framework is composed of three integrative phases before obtaining a final confirmation to enter the execution stage. The phases are in the following order:

Inquiry → Quotation → Order → Development → Approval

A descriptive view is presented below to provide in-depth details of the dimensions in the consensus stage.
Figure 33  First Phase - Inquiry to Quotation

The aim of the "inquiry phase" is to obtain an inquiry which would lead to getting customers’ information that would generate specification to their contact data. An experts meeting would be installed which would produce a protocol for naming a project manager, comply with the company goals, and obtain quotations. All the while it allows the managers to gain the right amount of information by constantly getting everyone involved.
The aim of the "order to order confirmation phase" is for the project manager to prepare the information about the project and assign the task to other members. A kick-off meeting is implemented to ensure that fellow staff members are fully informed about their scopes and duties. The project manager sets the plan and generates a time report that will allow the work to be finished on an agreed timeline. This is where the team members are held accountable for what they do and being aware of the dynamics that will come across their way.
Order Confirmation

Setup verification rules according to product specification

Acquire specific knowledge about the project

Design

Prototyping

Verification according to procedure documents

Design Verified?

True

Sample and report to customer for approval

Design Approved?

True

Approved Design

Figure 35 Third Phase - Order Confirmation to Approval Design

In this final phase, the verification rules that are relevant to the product specification have been arranged. This leads to utilizing knowledge base documents, implementing design documents, creating reports on the production of prototypes, and for approving sample reports and test results. When the results are successful then the samples and reports are dispatched to the customers for approval. Upon customer approval or recommended changes the work can be confirmed for operation. The objective is clear and the managerial team must coordinate their knowledge, skills, and abilities towards producing the product with absolute quality. This assignment would also reinforce the team to focus on being discipline and being committed in working as a team with standard profession.
CHAPTER 6

THE RESULTS FROM APPLYING TEAM LEARNING IN A CROSS-CULTURAL WORKPLACE

This part of the research is to comply with the objective for “analyzing the form of lessons learned in applying team learning at Electro-Circuits Company” and to address the third research question raised for this study, which is:

Q.3 - What is the lesson learned from applying team learning.

The method of an “After Action Review” has been implemented to evaluate the actual outcome and the output of team learning. The objective of this evaluation is to see if team learning can really create an effective workplace with different working behavior. The following inquiries are raised to obtain the objective in the evaluation:

1. Did the application of team learning create an effective workplace with different working behavior?
2. What actually happened?
3. Why did it occur?
4. What were the positive and negative results in applying team learning to create an effective workplace with different working behavior?
5. Why did the results become positive and negative?
6. What future action would be taken differently in applying team learning to create an effective workplace with different working behavior?

Upon finalizing the lessons learned from the application of team learning, the researcher offers his view on the shortcoming of team learning in creating a sense of working together with different work cultures and establishing a proposal for team learning to reducing cross-cultural differences among team members.
6.1 Lesson that Team Learned from Applying Team Learning

1. Did the application of team learning create an effective workplace with different working behavior?

The researcher concludes that the application of team learning did not achieve in creating an effective workplace with different working behavior. The application only went to the extent of allowing the cross-cultural team to propose some ideas and raise questions that were relevant to the work flow. The teams were given a chance to express their opinions of the working conditions and to offer some amendments for improvement.

The researcher felt that the idea of taking an initiative on accomplishing the mission through a collective harmony did not truly manifest in the long term. Based on the view of the quality assurance manager who is part of the managerial team, he states that: "There was not much a sense of connection among team members as they tried to fix their own problems that were occurring in their task assignments. With problems presented in the workplace, each individual team members adapted to the situation by treating the problems on their own to maintain their working responsibilities." Upon further elaboration, he felt that the members were mostly "dealing with the problems on their own rather as a team, which deviated the team members from taking accountability to apply their talent, skills, ability in strengthening teamwork." The cracks revealed that the team had resorted back to its previous working behavior, which was a predicament to the team’s performance.

Under the researcher’s view, the absence of a team learning approach became a gap in establishing an effective workplace. The strategy to obtain the practice of strict quality assurance and testing to avoid problems of defective products was put on hold. As a consequence, the mission of maintaining integrity and fairness with fellow workers, customers and suppliers, investors and the community, as well as respecting fellow employees, the environment, and having a healthy balance between work and family cannot be fully attained as a team. Therefore, the researcher felt that without team learning, there wasn’t much that allowed the team to come together to create a workplace for remaining curious, imaginative and courageous in challenging each others’ current thinking, and growing expertise by learning through teamwork and making continuous improvement a way of life.
The researcher felt that the application of team learning was not effective enough to get the different working behaviors within the team to be aligned as a collective unit. The cross-cultural team’s differences in values and beliefs for getting work to be done as a team functioned in a manner that was directed towards preserving one’s credibility and dignity. The act deflected any targets for criticism or being engaged in a debate of performance. According to the quality assurance manager, he offered his point of view by stating that: “The capacity of the working behaviors prevented the team from testing their limits to aim higher and allowed errors to accumulate without making priority to analyze the causes for improvement in team performance. The mistakes and errors made were solved with a short term solution; it installed a lack of discipline in getting fellow members to learn as a team in eliminating the mistakes in the long run”. As a result, the Electro-Circuits Company’s strategy became neglected as staff did not do their best in displaying a work behavior that showed willingness to innovate, understand the business realities, create practical solution to advise for best practice, and working with accuracy, time management, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness. Furthermore, the quality assurance manager stated that: “The working behavior as a team could not perform at its best in meeting with the importance in guaranteeing delivery of goods at requested time, as well as being able to negotiate, renegotiate, and administer contracts with suppliers, vendors, and other representatives. Also, members did not act as a team in demonstrating the ability to use logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems”.

2. What actually happened?

Upon speaking with the quality assurance manager, he informed the researcher that “the team did use the newly designed work flow as the concept for working and learning together as a team for a couple of months. But it actually waned off as the work orders came in with an urgent demand for delivery and repairing. The new work flow was never fully utilized in the workplace for allowing the team to develop their skills and abilities in a concerted effort. Some members in the team resorted back to getting their work done to beat the operation schedule without regards to communicating with each other about the quality of the finished items”. The researcher felt the impression that the team never really got a chance to learn about the errors and
mistakes made. Furthermore, the researcher was under the impression that the work that was completed was to be left for fellow team mates to detect and assist in correcting the situation; thus, team members tried to protect themselves from being subject to criticism by recording documents and outcomes of each other’s performance to build a case for not being at fault from the beginning. The quality assurance manager revealed that “some team members were not ready to change as they still favored the traditional working structure of the company. The team could not shed its functional aspect in working in a hierarchical fashion – the operation manager was seen as the sole person to assess the nature of the situation and come up with a plan for action”. Based on the researcher’s point of view, this top to bottom approach already provided a sense for the team to perform. All tasks and assignments were systematized to let team members know their proper role and procedures. Therefore, the operation manager is viewed as the only legitimate person to ensure that quality is met in the outcome of the finished goods. The team knows that the operation manager is the prime person to confront any technicalities that could put the committed work schedule in jeopardy and is the one to offer any practical solutions to complete the work on time. According to the quality assurance manager’s perception, “the team anticipates for the operation manager to provide direction or instructions and takes action only when they are given directly by the operation manager’s consent. Some members within the team were unsure if the new work design proposed would help the team without full support from top management. Just to make sure that the team is not putting the company’s operation at risk, they asked top management for his view and to provide the opportunity for the team to take this daring approach”. Nevertheless, they reverted to the old and traditional style of working, as the initiation to make the team progress with a better working format stalled in the process.

3. Why did it occur?

The researcher believes that with the orders creating a state of rush some team members felt that focusing on making the new work flow took up much of their time in getting other work that was deemed as highly important. The quality assurance manager stated that “the new work flow became more of an added extra assignment to handle instead of being perceived as the extension of the company’s philosophy of quality first. The new work flow was seen as a burden and an interruption to the familiar working style of some team members”. Another
reason on why team learning was not so conducive in establishing teamwork was that some team members dreaded in being scolded for making errors and mistakes. The researcher states that for them, it is an unpleasant experience to be lambasted with remarks that makes them feel incompetent and insecure in front of their team members. It creates a psychological impact in gaining the trust from others when one believes that he/she is putting in the best effort to help the team. This led to a survival mode where team members decided to look out for themselves rather than finding methods to help the team perform as a unit. Any mistakes or errors made were seen as a way to extricate one from the circumstances and to just provide proof that they performed to the best of their ability, but unfortunately there were things that were beyond their control from the very beginning.

The team could not shed its functional aspect in working with a rigid hierarchical manner because it was what most members were familiar and comfort with. The quality assurance manager provided information that “the team felt that whoever was the acting leader or head manager of the team then only that person should set the policies and procedures to allow the working process of the team to flow through. In this case, the operation manager’s orders should be heeded to do because of the authority that this person has. No one really dared to take action that is seen as for the sake of the team performance without gaining absolute approval from the operation manager because it would cause schism among working relations with each other”. The fear of being on the wrong terms with a fellow colleague, that is directly responsible in reporting to top management, overwhelmed the opportunity to take the necessary actions that would help the team’s performance.

Overall, the researcher’s belief was that some members within the team did not want to be overloaded with time in being thorough with the operational process. The quality assurance manager offered his view by stating that “a number of team members believed that the current system should not be compromised despite being exhausted from a rushed work condition. They felt that the system is still conducive to work on and that each individual team member is mature enough to handle their own responsibilities without being told what to do. The thinking was that no matter what happens, people should take care of their own mistakes immediately. The attitude among members was that if you still haven’t taken the time to improve your capabilities in working as a team then you should find another job”!
4. *What were the positive and negative results in applying team learning to create an effective workplace with different working behavior?*

Based on the researcher’s point of view, the application of team learning in a working environment at Electro-Circuits was an effective tool in helping the team to reflect on the core values of the company. As a method, team learning allowed team members to step back, take a breath, and see how they perform with each other in a holistic manner. Team learning allowed team members to break the silo mentality of functioning behind the walls and realized that their actions create a reaction on part of their working partners which may lead to the desired or unwelcomed results. The researcher felt that the learning tools of the “challenge session” and “blame vs. gain behaviors” provided the team to ruminate over the company’s shared values. The gathering allowed them to have time, as a team, to ask themselves if they were performing at their best to maintain integrity and fairness among each other, their customers and suppliers, and to the investors. And if they were failing to meet with retaining integrity and fairness they asked each other on “what can be done to do so”? The meetings gave them a chance to find out if their fellow workers were being respected. They allowed each individual to express their own viewpoints with the assistance of a team member to translate the experience due to some communication difficulties with the English language. At this moment, the researcher detected that teamwork started to become enlarged as members reached out and offered guidance and support to each other. The team spirit really began to grow as each member provided their own argument on what kind of necessary steps should be taken to ensure that the team is able to perform with excellence. There were debates, witnessed on part of the researcher, being thrown around and questions asked to each member in offering their own view of the advantages and disadvantages of the approach. The team was looking for some scheme that would enable them to overcome any problems or difficulties encountered in the long run. Although the German side of the team provided most of the discussion they utilized the expertise of one fellow Thai to act as the liaison to gather information from other Thai nationals to provide input to the meeting. Under the view of the researcher, this Thai person’s action demonstrates that the team is still willing to learn from their errors so that they can improve to meet with the company’s philosophy of quality first. With the information provided to let the German partners understand the situation the team understands the situation that it is faced with and seeks for solutions that would make them rise to
the challenge. In the “blame vs. gain behaviors” workshop that was facilitated by the researcher, the team got a chance to learn about the factors that were preventing them from attaining the mission. Upon careful analysis by the researcher, the team became more aware that they needed to challenge themselves if they wanted to prove that they are able in providing optimal customer service. The researcher saw a plan being drafted to allow team members to provide exceptional service to their customer while at the same time strengthen the capacity of their team to meet any problems head-on with a solution. When the plan was presented it incorporated a mindset that what the team does it is about aiming for the company’s philosophy and mission. The process was to become the insurance for the team on learning how to gain an edge over the customers’ demands as well as making the suppliers aligned with their concepts. The team was informed of the protocols that were to be followed whenever an order was to be submitted. The plan allows the team to check off for any items that are to be raised for ensuring a smooth operation and to examine the technicalities that are crucial for creating the results with quality standard. Overall, team learning provided a working environment that contributed in raising team morale. The concept allowed the team to see what was the ground truth inhibiting its performance and what kind of action can be taken to get the team back on track in upholding the company’s shared values (philosophy and mission).

Alas, the researcher also witnessed a setback of team learning which was stemmed from the ineffectiveness on learning and working together as a team in developing the leadership of all members. According to the researcher’s notion, the new plan proposed for working became merely a whim for a quick fix solution in solving the problems that the team was facing. While team learning stirred the battle cry for changes and improvement, the leadership style at Electro-Circuits was lacking in fortitude and hardly being motivated to take on the challenge. While meeting was done to see if there was adequate information to proceed with the daily operation, there was shallowness in serving as a good example for others to aspire in becoming leaders. The researcher felt that the team mainly focused on the efficiency of the operation and paid less attention on configuring the right methods that would help them become more effective as a strong unit. The concept of team learning was a method for identifying opportunities for improvement and constructive suggestions. Unfortunately, the initiative role on the part of leadership stumbled upon sustaining this approach for positive changes. Instead of allowing team
members to capitalize on this idea, so that they can utilize their talent and skills to strengthen the team’s performance, the team barely addressed the intercultural problems that crippled the morale. Despite the new work design being implemented for improvement and presented as a long term solution, the researcher felt that the team failed in maintaining the process as a way for learning from the mistakes made and to prevent the misfortunes from being repeated on general occasions. The abandoned new work design signified a futile attempt in transforming the cross-cultural workplace to become a working place where the team behaved as an army of one.

With regards to the conceptual framework, the researcher felt that the values of the managerial team’s independent variables were expressed as the desired state among members; they wanted these values to be constantly flowing as they interact with each other on the assigned task. Taking part in the seminar allowed each team member to share their ideas and solutions to help the team improve on performing as a collaborative unit, thus, leading to a newly designed work flow that incorporates the team’s values for positive working relations. The researcher allowed a four month trial period to obtain some feedback. Upon setting a private interview with the quality control manager, it was revealed that the drive towards team learning and improvement with the new work design fell short due to a lack of commitment among team members in making the idea work. Based on the feedback from the quality assurance manager, some people were unable to release their old working mentality and behavior which eroded the motivation for interacting in the new proposed work flow.

5. Why did the results become positive/negative?

There were certain keys, based on the researcher’s point of view, that allowed the application of team learning to be an effective tool for assisting the team to reflect on the core values of the company. One of the most evident was the attribute of being part of the team. Each individual within the team knew that the nature of the operation is run in a meticulous manner. The success and standard of the outcome is highly depended on each team members’ full effort and communication throughout the process. Although there were meetings held separately based on culture and comfort, the team still maintained contact with each other as a unit. The team members remained committed to a collective responsibility and displayed co-operation when the time called for it. Even with errors and mistakes made on a general basis, there was a sense of
self-responsibility and self-authorization to direct the results back to quality standard. Members performed as a team when they were asked to gather for a team learning meeting. With a cross-cultural blend from assertiveness to passiveness and from being reserved to expressive, the researcher believed that the “challenge session” and “blame vs. gain behaviors” workshop provided an opportunity for the team to reflect on the problems as a collective group. With time to reflect on the problems at hand, the team became more effective in exchanging ideas and information with each other. Members of the team presented a cohesive attitude in finding a solution that would help their performance attain the company’s philosophy and mission. Another fact was the anxiety at the workplace. With issues signaling that the team is underperforming, certain members realized that it was time for some changes to take place. This feeling of not being able to attain the company’s mission had some members eager for things to shape up so that they can get the operation to run its normal course. But the worse feeling, that the researcher deemed, was on being reprimanded by top management for failing as a team to get the outcome delivered to quality standard. For the team, this person would be the last person that they do not want to upset. When the team learning tools and approach was proposed, it offered an antidote for being relieved from the mental humiliation and acquiring the ability to improve the situation.

The negative result in the application of team learning, which was sensed by the researcher, was due to the lack of morale in maintaining the process of the company’s philosophy and mission. While the company harped on leadership as the key for creating effectiveness within the team, the responsibility of sustaining leadership was quite ineffective in motivating and aspiring people to work and learn together. In the challenge session, a lack of leadership was cited as failure in helping the team solve problems that were occurring at times. The same can be said for trying to keep the new work design utilized in the long term. According to the researcher’s thesis, team learning is a philosophical process. It is a method for creating working conditions that allow teamwork to thrive. With this process, there is accountability which entails in reflecting on issues dealing with work performance so that the strength of the team progresses. Team learning is oriented to the desired outcome. Unfortunately, the leadership that was required to stimulate the morale became invisible when the time called for action to take place. The problems that the team spoke of in the challenge session came back to strike them. This time, it
was not about a special order to get done but rather on making the new work flow design benefit the team’s performance. From the sources gathered on part of the researcher, the new work design did not last long due to lack of execution in teamwork; some members were not upholding accountability for correcting their mistakes, and not being able to obtain full cooperation from other team members to support the concept.

6. What future action would be taken differently in applying team learning to create an effective workplace with different working behavior?

The application of team learning at Electro-Circuits has been a true lesson in theoretical practice for the researcher. In order for team learning to spark an effective workplace with different working behavior, the learning has to start with the capacity of each team member. Capacity calls for people to be on the same page and to able to read off one another when action is being performed. No matter if the organization has the team performing as a crew, unit, or squad, the main thing is to be ensured that members are performing with cadence; each person knows when to exert their role in the action or assist others to achieve the results. With the philosophy and mission established, the researcher thinks that workers should be asked to see how their skills and abilities in planning, calculating, installing, and arranging matters concerning ERP and IT, as an example, are helping other fellow colleagues to learn and work together.

Another way is having the team act on a case scenario where the important issue of safety is being compromised. The team would be divided with members taking on the acting role while other members become the eyes and ears to assess whether there is a better method for improving safety. With the issue of assuming responsibility for the completion of projects, the researcher feels that team members can provide a cross-examination on fellow colleagues in being able to process the objectives with a coordinated and concerted effort. He or she will receive a peer rating score on being a dependable worker.

The researcher believes that a strategic information system should be devised to serve as a drill for the team to be engaged in a dialogue and to discuss about ideas to be taken for further action that are all based on facts at the workplace. The team would be given a challenge session to demonstrate the best practice of accountability that are related to the company’s business operation such as budgeting, planning and controlling of resources with full
responsibility. In addition, the session also seeks to see where accountability could be improved upon when the issue is dealt with the economic aspects and safety regulations. The researcher would call for one particular group within the team to be evaluated with the team learning pyramid theory and to provide results pertaining to what works best for them in working and learning together. The R&D engineering group can serve as a case study example to see what motions they go through in being geared towards achieving customer satisfaction with high quality of products, processes and services. While this unit takes part in developing new technical procedures and processes, as well as in redevelopments and advancements of assembly groups, devices, systems, machines and facilities, they can provide feedback to their fellow team members on what enabled them to work as a team or on things they feel can be done better to help them work as a team. With all of the drills that the team goes through to cover areas that are relevant to performance, the team would be able to utilize these concepts and translate them as the application for learning how to become an effective team that knows how to learn.

The researcher regards the skills of the team to be addressed in order to establish working conditions that allow team learning as teamwork to thrive. The approach taken would start from the quality assurance that allows the company to maintain its competitive advantage. The team would be asked to reflect on their methods that have made them become diligent to absorb new conceptual ideas and concepts for development. This reflection is to give them a chance to review the values that they share among each other and how it was able to help them hone their skills to make the ideas and concept become inevitable. The means of learning, improvement, professional development, and creating the capacity to become effective in dealing with complex problems can all be done through the company’s criteria of building their career skills. Just as team members are asked to take part in the development of new technical procedures and processes as well as in learning about the redevelopments and advancements of assembly groups, devices, systems, machines and facilities, they will be able to grasp the essence of team learning through this process.

The researcher believes that the team should be given the chance to have a dialogue session. The dialogue session would be incorporated with the team’s knowledge about the material and the manufacturing process which enable sound decision-making for buying goods with credibility. As the team correspond with the business partners and deal with orders and
proposals they would be given the opportunity to communicate with each other at an equal level that can lead to exploring issues and finding better ways to improve working relations. The task of purchase negotiations being conducted through all communication channels can also be utilized as a form for being open to new ideas and allow learning to be exchanged within the team. The researcher would make dialogues be practiced in the guise of reviewing to see if the goods received are controlled by means of delivery notes and invoices are paid if any question occurs. It is also in the form of investigating the demand for materials. Furthermore, dialogue is present when group has to provide information about situation of competition, supply source, new products and price developments and analyzing them. This would eventually create a conscience among team members to uncover truths or facts that have not yet been brought forward for discussion or to test its veracity.

To make the members appreciate the benefits of team learning and make it as a working lifestyle, the researcher deems that mindfulness would be instilled for every decisions made or action taken towards the company’s philosophy and mission. Practical solutions are to be created with a sense of reason and providing advice that would enlarge other team member’s confidence. This would be considered as an example of good practice. Despite a constant change in employee turnover, mindfulness is to be considered as one of the team learning tool that motivates from within so that the team think, do, and interact as one to make sure that the outcome of the work is factually correct, in due time, with efficiency and cost-effective.

With regards to team learning, the researcher would establish this concept as the act of replenishing the team to continuously foster their working skills in learning and working together to find ways for developing leadership, making continuous improvement, and anticipating to solve problems with ease. The approach, in view of the researcher, is getting the essentials of team learning to establish conditions for the team to become a collective unit of effective performers. Creating dialogues with each other, reflecting on work issues that are in the current moment or that have recently passed, and being mindful of the expected outcome all serve as enablers for the team to realize their potential. The new work design would be considered as an effective approach for assistance in achieving the mission and overlooking the duties that are to be obeyed.
6.2 The Shortcoming of Team Learning in Creating a Sense of Working Together with Different Work Cultures.

In this section of the work, the researcher offers his view on why team learning was not quite successful in creating a sense of working together with different work cultures. The response to this conjecture was made through the issue of – 1. Taking an initiative standpoint; 2. Making the connection; and 3. Displaying a sense of accountability. A retrospection is also provided to determine if the team had really learned together.

1. Taking an initiative standpoint on accomplishing the mission through a collective harmony for adapting to the circumstances.

Unfortunately, the teamwork approach among the managerial team dissolved rapidly without letting the values have an opportunity to fully take its course. Instead of the key enablers being formed as the strong pillars that uphold the bridge for the managerial team to carry out their mission, they vanished suddenly from the team’s grasp. As a metaphor, the researcher sees the mission as being compared with this picture of an iceberg below.

![Achieving the Highest Benefit to the Customers](image)

**Figure 36** Mission - Prior Being Dissolved

The researcher felt that had the key enablers been maintained, it would have kept the team intact to perform with absolute commitment in ‘achieving the highest benefit to the customers’. Achieving the highest benefit to the customers would result from a collaborative effort in

1. Entrusting each other.

2. Showing initiative to solve problem.
3. Ability to communicate, working together, and share ideas and information with each other.


5. Improving methods for work situation.

However, this could only be made possible if the environmental conditions of teamwork, problem solving, leadership, innovation, responsibility, and continuous improvement were present to allow the team to work and learn together as a collaborative unit. With the key enablers out of existence, the researcher regard it as becoming an evaporating climate condition that left a floating iceberg melting under the hot sun - or in this case, the pressure of the working environment. As the environmental conditions made it hard for the team to work together, they could not stand up to the challenge, thus resulting in a meltdown on the team’s performance to sustain the mission. The picture below illustrates an example of this case.

![Image of an iceberg with arrows刺穿](image)

**Figure 37** Mission Being Dissolved

The lack of morale in initiating team learning has resulted in a delay for the managerial team to entrust each other, show an initiative to solve problem, being able to communicate, work together, and share ideas and information with each other. Also, the team is set back in terms of focusing on the corporate philosophy and mission, as well as finding
improving methods for the work situation. In conclusion, the researcher felt that the tangibles that were supposed to allow the management team to fulfill the mission of delivering quality to the customers became impeded due to the lack of intangible proponents flowing away from providing support. In the eyes of the researcher, what was supposed to be the morale for upholding the individuals to work together suddenly became dispersed too quickly; there was not much of an effort applied to make the new approach beneficial.

2. **Making the connection that conveys a sense of clarity and anticipation for action; even in the presence of conflict.**

Based on the researcher’s analysis, this work attests that carrying out the plans for investing in training for staff development, acquiring high-tech equipments to be economically competitive, and installing a workplace system to meet with the corporate standard requirements, does not automatically guarantee employees will work as a team with high performance. Employees are most likely to achieve as a team when certain factors are removed from the workplace:

1. A working environment that instigates blaming one another and obsessed with speculating on an individual’s failure.

2. The hope that another colleague discovers the problem on a second-hand notice and solves it. Physical infrastructure of the workplace deceives the behavior for communicating, teamwork, sharing ideas and information with each other.

3. Executing work to meet with the schedule rather than the corporate philosophy and mission.

4. Managerial role stays idle in improving the work situation.

The researcher would have to say that it is an obstacle for an employee to make a team initiative in the workplace when there is a lack of collaboration among other workers. Working in a system where work is interdependent indicates that each employee fosters a mindset for being committed and focused on delivering high quality results. This mindset would not allow any interpersonal or bureaucratic barrier to become a hindrance towards setting a plan, communicating with colleagues, assuming responsibility and leadership, appointing a time schedule to finish a job, accessing information, and obtaining full cooperation among fellow staff
member. However, when the system is working in the opposite direction the researcher thinks that employees would channel their behavior towards being defensive and protecting their own interests. A lack of trust starts to accumulate towards the credibility and action of each other. The vision, mission, and corporate philosophy became lost in its meaning as employees struggle to survive day by day in their work. Instead of working together for the company’s long term goal, these employees were working against each other. Although there was awareness for an improvement in teamwork and collaboration, the behavior for positive change was short-lived as these workers went back to their cynical mode due to the expectancy that their fellow colleagues would start the initiative. Based on the researcher’s judgment, it clearly became evident that the working environment was not conducive enough to make the managerial team connect; thus lacking a sense of clarity and anticipation for action in the presence of conflict.

3. Displaying a sense of accountability which acts as the code for constant probing to utilize one’s talent, skills, ability in reinforcing the process of this approach as teamwork.

The researcher believed that the industrial market that Electro-Circuits is operating in started to change rapidly. With a chain of wholesalers and retailers having more power in demand, they forced this company to adapt or die. These companies that outsourced the job to Electro-Circuits were being highly competitive and felt that this company should oblige with their agenda. The approach of obtaining absolute quality with an immediate service produced a rippling effect that penetrated into the Electro-Circuits company’s work flow. Since the Electro-Circuits company’s working system did not make the initiative to cope with the changes in demand from their external customers they were unable to provide an expected standard of service. As a result, the researcher thinks that the traditional working system had been exhausted. In other words, what was thought to be the ideal way of meeting the customers’ demand and providing exceptional service had become a theory that has become outdated in modern times. When the working system had its moment, the team members were cooperating and supporting each other. But now that the system is failing, they started to work against each other. When the researcher was conducting the workshop, some have questioned the working system itself while others have questioned the capacity of each other in taking action to make this
current system work. This was a case where sometimes members of the team can become a victim of the system. The researcher would have to say that the working system itself is an artificial creation of mankind. It is in the mind where we determine and define what success is, what failure is, and what can we do to improve things. It was found that others were willing to make an initiative but felt a sense of awkwardness in whipping up the emotions of others to be progressive. For these team members, the energy that it takes to make their colleagues upbeat at all times can be mentally draining and morally irritating. Therefore, the displaying of accountability by some members of the managerial team could have been carried out had the system of the working environment (the policy of human resources management) provided details for reward and punishment based on their individual performance in supporting teamwork.

4. Retrospection

This case presented some interesting issues for the researcher to discuss upon. First, the job position/description at the managerial level required the individuals to work as a team. Second, the equipments and work design were all in order to allow operation to be efficient. In addition, communication was highly encouraged among the team as the aim is to produce quality work. Finally, it was a situation of a western and eastern culture (German and Thai) trying to work together based on their beliefs and values being applied to the workplace. Based on the researcher’s perception, it seems that the idea of working as a team is construed in its own meaning based on the Thai cultural content. While their foreign colleagues were boldly pointing out the situations that were deemed for improvement, the Thais used an indirect approach by dispensing the message of work improvement through others who acted as their representatives. The Thais would like to hold a closed meeting composing only of their own nationality to discuss on the methods for improving operation. They wanted to avoid conflict with each other by hoping that other members would take self-responsibility for their own action rather than offering constructive criticism to help the other member build a professional attitude on working as a team. Based on the study conducted by the researcher, there were incidents where the Thai colleagues from different departments documented their reports in order to prevent being blamed when the operation becomes delayed or derailed; this working conduct created suspicion in the
workplace rather than developing trust on the part of team members. Under the opinion of the researcher, what made the Thai members function as a team was on an emotionally irate top manager who wanted to have the project completed; his emotion triggered fear on the part of the managerial team to get the work done. Through the team models for effectiveness, it can be pointed out that the members were unable to contain the morale due to a lack of collaboration and a lack of trust. Mistakes and errors kept occurring without a sense of learning what happened, why it occurred, and how to prevent it from happening again. Meetings were held to discuss about the situation, however the next action to be taken became blurred as there weren’t any concrete measures for resolving the matter. People were aware that there were problems but failed to see how much of a negative impact it was causing to the standard of operation and towards customer service. But even if the intentions were to improve the situation while the Thai side didn’t put much of an effort to maintain the progress, does that mean it’s better off to install a sense of fear or intimidation in order to get the team working together? Or does this mean that whatever they learned in higher education could not be applied to a real life work setting? To obtain a better understanding of this phenomenon that is obscured to the western frame of mind, the next part of this study by the researcher offers a lesson learned in applying team learning as teamwork in a cross-cultural workplace in Thailand.

6.3 A Proposal for Team Learning in Reducing the Cross-Cultural Differences Among Team Members

The application of team learning in a cross-cultural workplace is highly complex. The researcher’s experience provides some unique lessons for future research scholars on how to implement its conceptual philosophy for the purpose of reducing the cross-cultural differences. From the start of the study and towards the end, there were some valuable lessons learned upon conducting this thesis. With that said, the researcher would like to utilize this chapter by analyzing information at the Electro-Circuits Company and present a strategic proposal for applying team learning to moderate the cross-cultural differences among team members of different nationalities. The aim is to offer a strategic proposal that represents an administrative policy to the discipline and improvement of applying team learning, as teamwork, in a cross-cultural workplace.
The art and practice for solving problem should become an experience for stimulating a cultural behavior that is accepted in the workplace, such as Electro-Circuits Company. Such a practice dissolves the notion of how one practice solving problem based on their national cultural background and forges a new mental state that adopts a company cultural approach to handling challenging issues. A workplace that designs the attitude and behavior of the company’s team members to be engaged in:

1. committed to the team and identifying challenges
2. reflection and conversation about the team’s experiences
3. critical thinking about how the team can work productively and coming up with new scheme for working together effectively
4. making decisions, taking action, and experimenting with various approaches and strategies for problem solving would lead to a cross-cultural learning organization that aims for achieving its objectives. The two different cultures between the Thai and German, for example, would evolve in becoming a cultural learning unit that thinks, behaves, and executes as a whole converting mistakes or failures to become vital lessons toward success as a team.

In a working environment with cross-cultural differences, the researcher’s conceptual suggestions for team learning are identified as the following:

1. Making individuals thinking together as one.
2. Developing trust among the team members.
3. Encouraging ideal practices of team learning.
4. Directing individual competencies towards aims and objectives.
5. Allowing dialogues and discussions to take on challenges.

*The researcher has developed the practical meaning of each concept (listed above) to be a bit more focused towards a modern idea of team learning in a cross-cultural workplace.

1. Connecting with the minds of other team members to become as one collective mind.

Based on the experience that the researcher encountered in this study, the Electro-Circuits Company provided a mandate for their managerial team to take any necessary actions to solve problems so that the team can perform effectively towards sustaining the mission. While
the physical infrastructure were in place, (example, meeting room, display board, product models, updated information for operation flow) the mental infrastructure were lacking to anticipate for any issues that might create a setback. Communication among team members did not truly flourished for all to incorporate the capacity to think as a unit. Information for decisions and actions went through the traditional channel of one department at a time. Even when some members tried to press for others to make an effort to become a part of the communication process there was an attitude towards only getting the information that correlates with their task assignments. Upon taking accountability, the managerial team did not have a concrete operational definition of the term. Some members failed to realize that their minimal effort to performance disturbs the harmony and balance of the team as a whole. For such a workplace with a cross-cultural working behavior, a company, such as Electro-Circuits, needs to enmesh the national cultures of Thai and German for the purpose of creating a team that follows one culture. The team would truly know itself best by harping on a belief that they hold as a value not only in having the ability to accomplish the mission but also on developing teamwork. Based on Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions Theory that the researcher has collected, the Thais and Germans score high on the category of ‘Uncertainty Avoidance’. Therefore, they could use this common ground as the code of working behavior for teamwork. This code would not only serve as the mantra for the team to create a strategy for operational performance that meets with the core values but to install a mindset that prevents any cross-cultural differences from interfering with the team’s working performance. In other words, the team will do its utmost best to eliminate any negative condition, such as a cross-cultural difference issue, that would put the following core values at risk:

1. Maintaining integrity and fairness among each other, their customers and suppliers, the investors and the community in which they live and work.
2. Respecting fellow employees and the environment.
3. And establishing a ‘Quality First’ philosophy that encompasses improving quality of life not only for their customers, but to the suppliers, employees and their families, as well as for their neighborhood and wider community.

By being connected with a similar frame of mind, the managerial team would allow themselves to be more highly engaged with remaining curious, imaginative and courageous in
challenging the current thinking, and growing expertise by learning through teamwork and making continuous improvement as a way of life.

As the team performs with a collective conscience, they become the backbone of the company that strives for excellence in all its efforts, and reward stakeholders with reasonable profits as a result of exceeding the customers’ expectations. The team challenges itself and learns from the mistakes made in order to improve every day towards deepening and strengthening their commitment to their overall goal, thus reinforcing the belief of uncertainty avoidance. With thoughts in unison the team would always be willing to go that extra step to assist the customers in any way, and to provide optimal customer service.

2. Trusting that the team members are working to complement each other.

From what the researcher had come into contact with, the workplace culture at Electro-Circuits is strongly focused in helping their customers become extremely competitive in quality and price. The managerial team is urged to do everything in their power to make the customers highly satisfied with the finished product and services. During the team’s struggle in performance, the trust factor that they had with each other was quite low; according to the researcher’s belief. Rather than making an initiative standpoint to complement each other, the researcher felt that some members kept a record of each other’s action for the purpose of justifying one’s innocence when the work flow operation began to breakdown. Communication was done in a discriminating manner; such as the case when the Thais held a meeting of their own without getting their fellow German colleagues involved. When some members displayed a lack of accountability for their actions it eroded the morale of the team. One of the factors that took the matter of trust for granted was in the cultural dimension of the long-term orientation. For the Thais, it was a matter of loyalty towards each other that had much more weight than trust. When team performance was seriously lacking to comply with the mission, the Thais felt that it was best to let those in the top ranking positions to take care of the matter. Whatever the decision is, the Thais will honor it; as long as it came from the top. This showed a sense of loyalty to those with authorized power. However, the Germans felt that questions needed to be addressed so that it could help those with the power of authority to make the rightful decisions to implement. Gaining a keen sense that all sides have been recognized by the top position would help the
Germans feel at ease and that the decision is being taken in the right direction. To make long-term orientation as a catalyst for trust and being an asset in making team members complement each other, there needs to be a live action work drill that allows the team to examine, assess, and review their performance. Under the researcher's point of view, the team can provide a rating scale of each other's performance on how much trust there is in complementing each other. For example, they can utilize the process of quality assurance as a form of test to analyze how much or how little trust there was. The team can assess to see if they were able to complement each other while working together in absorbing new conceptual ideas and concepts for development. Assessment also covers their work situations of taking part in the development of new technical procedures and processes, learning about the redevelopments and advancements of assembly groups, devices, systems, machines and facilities. The team can then review to see where they may need to improve in establishing trust to complement each other when they carry out the work performance as a team. As the team allows trust to be facilitated in testing, evaluating, and reflecting in their current day to day working operations, they become much more effective in working and learning together, as well as developing teamwork in the long run. With trust fostered in the workplace, it allows learning to be conducive in the form of long-term orientation for becoming evermore cohesive as a team.

3. Fostering ideal practices to other teams so that learning is widespread.

From the researcher's perspective, the Electro-Circuit's managerial team struggled to obtain the ideal practices among themselves. With this struggle, inertia overshadowed the team's competencies to stay focused on the 'Quality First' policy. The workplace featured two different cultures displaying the personality on being assertive. For the Thais, there was no sense of taking an initiative because there will be orders waiting to be assigned. It was best to follow what the crowd is doing; even if no action is being taken. However, during the workshops held for coming up with a solution, the Thais would communicate on the ideal practices as long as there was a facilitator ready to act as the person to convey the message for others to understand. Also, if there was a question asked that was not too complex or trivial they would be willing to offer their point of views. Overall, it was difficult to get the Thais to communicate in a unified chorus as they opted for passive participation by listening more than discussing. With a lack of
assertiveness on the Thai side, accountability was hardly installed in their duty. It's only when there were shouts and threats made from top management that they took a sense of accountability; just to complete the operation but not as a mean for development. In contrast to the German side, they were more direct with each other and in the work flow. During the workshop that was facilitated by the researcher, they were not timid to point out the flaws that were occurring in the team's performance. They took the initiative in being thorough to let others be aware of the failures that were often happening. They want this awareness to act as signal in getting the team as a whole to improve their performance. When revealing the new work flow design, the Germans were more vocal in getting their point across with their fellow colleagues. Communication was straightforward as every part of the details in the new work flow design. There were inquiries dealing with the logic and how it would impact the team's performance.

The Germans made the communication process a very serious matter to take because they wanted the information to be clear and understood on a first time basis. In terms of accountability, the Germans were confident that they could hold on their own. They perform to the best of their ability as long as the working environment allowed them to do so. But for them to have this type of working condition, they wanted to ensure that other people were asserting themselves to be accountable to the team. The researcher believes that fostering ideal practices to make learning expand to other teams would require a supporting work structure. Such a structure serves as a highway road that makes the team ride along the course to their destination and prevents the team straying away from the company's philosophy and mission; such an example would be letting their cross-cultural differences justify their behavior for taking action in a situation but is deemed as making other members displeased with the outcome. Since the organization of Electro-Circuits operated in a hierarchical/crew formation, exploitation should be made in this form of working process. As the chain of events is set in motion, each managerial team should be tasked with a duty in reasoning with the operational flow to see if there are any defects that could put the team's performance in jeopardy. Although the team members will work within their own department, they can take an initiative as a squadron role to do a reconnaissance so that action is taken throughout to ensure a smooth operation. What the researcher would do is to have each of the representatives from their respective functional department offer their analysis of the work design and provide a critical report to the managing director on any issues that may affect the stability
and performance of the company. Should a solution be provided, the manager of that department
has to present a method on how he/she came to that solution with fellow colleagues. With
solutions, each managerial team member will be held accountable towards obtaining the outcome.
If the outcome is not complying with the policy of "Quality First", then the researcher expects a
certain degree of accountability on part of the team members to be assumed and report back to the
managing director with a status for a suggested improvement. The operation manager, with the
assistance of human resources management, can design the actual operation flow to allow team
members to identify areas that can be secluded for fostering ideal practices in expanding learning.
In this concept, the team members are asked to take an initiative to learn how the means are held
together for taking a thorough approach in assuring that quality is embedded in the outcome of
the finished goods. The operation process also becomes a learning experience for teams to
communicate with each other by sharing ideas and suggesting best practices. The operation
manager can take cases where he/she had to confront the technicalities that are detrimental in
detailing the committed work schedule and utilize them as case lessons for the team. The team
brainstorms to offer any practical solutions that would assist in getting the work done on time.
Upon doing research with fellow team colleagues, the operation manager holds the team members
accountable to address any issues that may be seen as creating difficulties within the teamwork of
management or the work flow process. The matters are solved in a collective effort with a report
submitted to the managing director for future action that could enable the team to improve their
performance. From the researcher's perspective, the managerial team should be given the
initiative to have an informal contact with the company's customers and clients. This allows the
team to get a better sense of the operation as they obtain accurate information based on needs or
customization. As the customer orders are finalized, the managerial team not only gathers for a
meeting but also communicates with each other on setting a plan in establishing ideal practices
for learning - while simultaneously taking action to filter out any concerns or hidden issues that
might hinder the operational process. Should the hindrances be recognized, the team uses this as
a case study in learning how to minimize the impact towards team learning.

Based on the researcher's belief, each managerial team members are asked to hold
themselves accountable to seek for methods in gaining ideal practices to expand learning. At the
same time, they are also required to communicate on any information that impact the work of
others. Any problems that are deemed as a threat to the operation must be converted to a learning lesson for ideal practices; this would allow the outcome to be not only delivered with utmost quality but as imperative towards professional development. The more that these practices are conducted the more it suppresses the feeling that there are cross-cultural differences interfering with the team’s working performance.

4. Competencies of individuals are mainly for supporting the team’s objectives.

The researcher feels that the initiative standpoint was not effective enough to act as a support for the team’s objectives. Some team members were relying on others to come through with the details. Individual team members were saying that some of their colleagues were not comfortable in taking a proactive stance; doing so might lead to mistakes and errors in which they would have to be solely responsible for. Communication was hardly taken, thus holding back the team members to take any further action as they were anticipating for clear and accurate information. Certain team members felt uneasy talking to others about problems being experienced around their task assignments. Some felt that discussing about problems to other team members led to an exaggeration of being careless. Accountability was not a mandate for some members among the team. The structure of the workplace dictated the terms and the roles that each person has to fulfill. Individual members within the team felt as if they were subjugated to read the mind of their fellow team members just so they can be kept informed of the next action to take. From what the researcher’s data gathering, due to a small number of individual team members not making their competencies benefit the team’s performance, they spiraled down to failure as a collective group. Based on the researcher’s conduct of this work, the style of leadership at Electro-Circuits is one of the highly critical components for the team to work as an effective unit. Leadership should not be held to a chosen few or simply displaying a strong and motivated personality. Instead, leadership in Senge’s view is about cultivating individual members in the team to become designers, stewards, and teachers for their own competencies to support the team’s objectives.

With the researcher’s review of Senge’s thesis, being a designer is about configuring the working conditions that would allow individual competencies to flourish. As a designer, the initiative is on creating a learning environment that enables the person and his/her fellow team
members to be updated on new production technologies and management practices. The design moderates the team’s mentality to be highly focused in achieving customer satisfaction with high quality of products, processes and services. Like a colony of ants, members improvise a design that is effective upon gathering the team to communicate firmly with each other in learning more about their clients. Designs are also to ensure that fellow colleagues are moving in the same direction while being accountable in helping to eliminate any obstacles that could slow down the team’s performance. When the team has designers, the individual competencies become equipped in being a team to handle the changes that are within the organization and in the economic realm. Such a design would allow the cross-cultural differences to be converted into a platform of cross-cultural ideas among members for a better understanding of the working situation and how to make it more effective for the team to operate with ease as well as confidence. Stewards are committed to a call or a higher purpose. This type of leadership role sets out to develop individual competencies by adhering to the team’s objectives. Stewards drive a sense to other team members to take on the tasks for developing other staff members as leaders while serving as a mentor for others to be guided to the right path. The practice of stewardship also provides opportunity for team members to take an initiative in developing their career, as well as being inspired to attain goals and pursue excellence that would allow the team to perform with excellence. With stewardship, team members are given a chance to detect the working environment for improvement and communicate any findings to their team; they make constructive comments for positive changes and encourage innovation without becoming prone to cross-cultural differences that may exaggerate trivial matters into a serious issue. In addition, the individual competencies foster a harmonious relationship which makes the synergy of the mind and hands to collaborate in attaining the team’s objectives. Accountability will be taken with a sense of appreciation as they truly understand the importance of setting an agreement of quality and strengthening customer relations through exemplary service.

Leadership, in the pretext of a teacher, demonstrates the procedures for taking the initiative standpoint in helping the team to obtain its objectives. Team members that have the expertise in problem solving can become peer trainers in assisting colleagues on how to probe for problems and resolve them on the spot, such as pointing out the cross-cultural differences that may seem to be worthy of discussion for enhancing team improvement. As teachers, they allow
for open and honest communication in establishing cooperation among the work departments to flow. Inquiries, based on developing an efficient and effective process, are to be fully welcomed in finding the best way for the team to reach its objectives. Once the process is defined and agreed upon, the leadership works on developing colleagues to become accountable in finding the proper reinforcement of building the bridge between different cultures within the company. The team members become liable in upholding the reputation of the company as an effective and modern business organization.

With fellow workers adept in planning, calculating, installing, and arranging matters concerning ERP and IT, the researcher asserts that team members can take an initiative standpoint in utilizing this form of operation to support in the development of their individual competencies and on the team’s performance towards obtaining its objectives. The information can help the team to communicate with the facts and to analyze where they need to improve upon in their operation, as well as the kind of competencies that may be needed for development. To make sure that what they plan to do is sound proof, they are also fully informed about the budget plans and resources that are available on hand. This brings a sense of being accountable for one’s action. While the team members have to find a balance in complying with the economic aspects, safety regulations, and customer satisfaction, they also learn about their strengths and disadvantages in this typical work operation.

5. **Dialogues and discussions have to be effective especially in challenging situation.**

Upon reflection of the study, the researcher felt that the teams were able to have dialogues and discussions when they were gathered for finding ways to solve problems. Some members of the team were not timid in pointing out to the facts that they were not performing effectively and that it was time for changes to be made. There was a sense of equality and respect towards each other. If there were any disagreements with the way things happened with the team’s performance, they invited members to state their point of view. This was the moment where the hierarchical role was relinquished for the sake of the team to thrive on towards achieving the company’s mission. Communication was quite healthy as the team realized that the problems they were facing can be fixed. They discussed on ways in getting their performance
back on track by sticking with the facts and exposing the faults within the current working system. To allow others to have a say in the meeting, one team member took accountability by making sure that colleagues’ messages were being presented for awareness. From there, other team members brought the issue to further analysis so that fellow members can gain confidence in solving the problems on their own will.

To improve on the method of having a dialogue and discussion, the researcher asserts that situations should be revolved on issues that pertain to the team’s performance. The team can communicate about topics dealing with the practice of strict quality assurance so that they are able to provide a guarantee to their customers’ business success. They can probe around to see if the assertion of a lean and customer-oriented management is really boosting their team effort in achieving high-quality products. The dialogue and discussion technique would enable the team to see what can be done to have the company maintain itself as an organic organization so that the competitive advantage becomes robust over the long term. Even with the issue of cross-cultural differences the topic can be segmented for ways of finding the right solution or to resolve a particular issue: the team can raise the issue of cross-cultural differences as a way of voicing their concern for a dialogue and to ask for reasons that will supplant confidence to move forward together. As long as information is being exchanged with each other, team members will take the initiative standpoint to become innovate, understand the business realities, create practical solution for best practice, and work with accuracy, time management, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness. The main thing, under the researcher’s belief, is that the dialogue and discussion fosters accountability in stimulating the working behaviors to be directed towards guaranteeing delivery of goods at the requested time. More importantly, accountability calls for the team members to use logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions, or approaches to problems.
CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY, IMPLICATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this part of the chapter, the researcher will touch on upon three matters:

1. The summary of doing this research and its output.
2. Implication with regards to the work.
3. Recommendations for the policy and practical level.
4. Recommendations for further study.

Summary

This research points out to the importance of establishing and maintaining teams for the purpose of utilizing them as a collective unit for solving problems and to ensure that their working performance contributes to the overall success of their organization. In this current and ongoing period, working and learning together must be the ideal way for team's to be able to thrive towards seeking better methods and ensuring that members have the ability to achieve success. Nevertheless, mistakes, errors, and the occasional setbacks will occur in the workplace but members have to find a way to overcome such a situation. According to the literature of organizational learning and learning organization, one of the best concepts for a team to excel with high performance is on developing the concept of team learning (Marquardt, 2011). The idea is that if individual members on the team are allowed to reflect on their own work and coordinate with their colleagues' skills and abilities then they become highly intact with their organization to work effectively in an ever changing environment (Bstieler and Hemmert, 2010). The more there is of learning among team members, the more effective they become in developing teamwork where the team capacity is aligned to reinforce each other and take an initiation in gaining collaboration skills on their own (Sun & Chen, 2008).

With the issue of cross-cultural differences, this research sought out to see if the team learning philosophy can hold up to assist a team, composing of two nationalities, that has been encountering difficulties in trying to perform as a collective unit to obtain their company's philosophy and mission statement.
This study conducted a research on team learning at a private manufacturing company based in the Lamphun province of northern Thailand. The company specializes in producing electrical components, and relies heavily on their managerial staff, composing of Thai and German nationals, to work as a team in order to fulfill two objectives – “the company’s philosophy of delivering quality and the mission statement of attaining the highest benefit for the customers”. Established in 1999, the company set the standard for work practice and customer service in its early years. It had been highly successful and recognized in the world as an international standard organization. However, by the period of 2008, the managerial team started to experience some problems in functioning together as a collective unit. As the problems kept on mounting, the motivation on part of the team members started to become in state of flux. The company’s top manager and human resources manager, who were both German, claim that the philosophy and mission of the corporation could be attained if the managers were able to work as a complete team. But rather than standing together to face the odds, some team members chose not to fully get involved for fear of repercussion. Some of the (Thai) members stood by the sidelines and cast out a feeling of hope for a change while leaving the vocal (German) team members to make a spontaneous contribution. Nevertheless, the result of low outcome standards brought about a mental strain and physical anguish for those members who wanted to see some positive change with their team’s working performance. The problems kept on spiraling out of control, it made it quite difficult for the team as a whole to fulfill the company’s philosophy and mission.

To define the problem that the company’s managerial team was experiencing the researcher made an interview to find out exactly what the issue was. The interview began with the top manager of the Electro-Circuits company who asserted that there were many problems among the middle managers in working as a team. He felt that the working relations were in a dysfunctional manner by stating that these individual team members were more focused on who was at fault rather than finding a solution. The next interview was conducted with each managerial team members for the purpose of hearing their opinion on what the real problem was that is preventing them from functioning effectively together. They mentioned about the workplace issues that have posed a challenge to them in working collaboratively. However, one of the evidence that became highly clear on why they were having problems in performing as a
team was based on an observation at one of the meeting. The meeting was to discuss about the outcome of a product that did not meet the specification of the customer’s order. The cause of this unsatisfactory result was based on the issue of a rushing work procedure which forced each of the team members to get their assignments finished before a hectic clockwork schedule. Consequently, by rushing the process, the products that they produced came back as below quality and heavily criticized by the receiving customers.

Based on the reports that was gathered from the interviews with the top manager and the managerial team members, as well as from observation on one of the managerial team meeting, this work made the assumption that people are most likely to work and learn together as a team in a cross-cultural workplace when there are certain factors removed from the workplace.

With the subject area as a phenomenon, this work investigates the factors, at Electro-Circuits Company, to be considered when applying team learning, the extent of the staff working as a team, the challenges of working together, the importance of team learning, and the cross-cultural differences of the team members. Upon creating and maintaining team learning in an organization with cross-cultural difference, this work raises the following research questions:

Q. 1 – What are the cross-cultural differences at the workplace of “Electro-Circuits”?

Q. 2 – How should “Team Learning” be applied to minimize the cross-cultural differences at the Electro-Circuits Company?

Q. 3 – What is the lesson learned from applying team learning?

With the main objective in describing the effects that the challenges have on applying team learning as teamwork in a cross-cultural workplace, the specific objectives are stated as the following:

1. To explore the cross-cultural differences at Electro-Circuits Company which have obstructed the process of working and learning as a team.

2. To investigate the changes from implementing “Team Learning” at the Electro-

3. Circuits Company and to determine whether the method reduced the cross-cultural differences and allowed for improvement towards success.

4. To analyze the form of lessons learned in applying team learning at Electro-

Circuits Company.
For the literature review, the research constructed two sections that address the issue of “applying team learning” in a cross-cultural workplace. The first section covers the following issue for analysis - team, teamwork, the difference between team and teamwork, and the models for assessing team effectiveness, team learning (its modern meaning, methods, and concepts applied). As for the section two, it pertains to the subject of a cross-cultural workplace. Under this area of interest, the work reviews the following area - definition and characteristics, social background of Thais and German, the challenges in the workplace, impact on teamwork, the designing the workplace to overcome cross-cultural adversities).

The theoretical framework was drawn from idea that learning as a team requires members to apply the following principles - 1) understanding that learning together is the key to accomplish goals, 2) holding themselves responsible for their contribution to achieving the goals, 3) interacting closely with each other, 4) reflecting on their collaborative efforts and decide on ways to improve effectiveness, and they develop interpersonal skills by giving constructive feedback, 5) reaching a consensus, and involving every member (Johnson and Johnson, 1999). Nevertheless, this approach does not lead to a successful outcome due to the fact that cooperation is not always attainable because there is a feeling that there will be a waste of time or just being intimidated of taking part in the session. In other cases, there can be some reluctance on members to make personal commitment to the required exercise due to a feeling of lacking necessary skills and not wanting to look inferior in front of their colleagues (Ellington and Earl, 2009). The theoretical framework is derived from the study of Hays “Team Learning Pyramid”. The idea of Hays model is to unite the Dialogue, Reflection, and Mindfulness as an attempt to gain even more out of each element. The model has made a positive impact upon individual and group learning, effectiveness, performance, and change. According to Hays, these meta-competences are of relevance to teams and work groups across a range of endeavor and spanning different levels of authority and autonomy. They embody habits of mind and group process skills necessary in collaborative work involving complex problems and tough decisions, including and especially where learning and change are sought. Hays “Team Learning Pyramid” is particularly useful when working in cross-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder (heterogeneous) collaborations, and when relationship-building and sustained performances are of concern (Hays, 2006). The model has been applied at a government institution to build teamwork skills and creating a more
collaborative and effective work culture. Each team was exposed to the experiences, successes and failures, learning, and reflections of the others. They could solve-problems together, leverage initiatives, and learn collectively from individual experiences. The result was a raise level of consciousness about teamwork and collaboration. They were also aware of their own role and behavior with each other. In addition, their interaction and impact upon fellow team members provided a better sense of conscience in striving towards positive work behavior changes among themselves (Hays, 2006:15).

The conceptual framework is to be enacted for the managerial team to assist its company’s aim on delivering quality and attaining the highest benefit for the customers, the most important thing is that this team is able to reflect on the matters that have arisen. By reflecting, the company’s managerial team will be able to handle the failures and convert them to be lessons learned for improvement. The outline for the conceptual framework is as followed:

**Step 1.** The first step is upon exploring the cross-cultural differences by constructing and applying a reframed “Hofstede’s Five Cultural Dimensions” that is depicted through ECC’s human resources management policy. The exploration is conducted to determine the extent of the cross-cultural differences between the Thai and German team members based on the power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term orientation. The assertion of the work is that the team member’s cross-cultural differences are rooted in the complex elements which are hindering the team from working together effectively.

Exploration is extended with the implementation of the ‘McKinsey 7S Framework’ to find out about the company’s shared values, skills, style, staff, strategy, structure, and systems in order to provide an in-depth detail about cross-cultural differences between the managerial team members.

**Step 2.** The second step of the conceptual framework is on the method for reducing the gap of cross-cultural differences by applying “Hays Team Learning Pyramid” and the “Blame vs. Gain Behaviors” activity. In this phase, the assertion is that if the managerial team is enabled to entrust each other, show an initiative to solve problems, have the ability to communicate, work together, and share ideas and information with each other, focus on the corporate philosophy and mission, and improved methods for work situations, then they would be able to perform together effectively, due to the cross-cultural differences being moderated thus allowing the team to attain
the tasks of the philosophy and mission statement. In this stage, the applications applied for reducing the cross-cultural differences among team members are in the combination form of the "team learning pyramid and the blame vs. gain behaviors" activity.

**Step 3.** The third step represents the lessons learned from applying team learning to reduce the cross-culture differences by providing a report on what had been accomplished or requires the need for improvement, as well as the discussion and conclusion of the study. This stage provides a discussion about its work and implication, and on the recommendations and suggestion for future research.

The research method is in the mode of an action research which is taken in the form of participatory and non-participatory. The objectives of the research with their results are as followed:

1. To explore and analyze the cross-cultural workplace at Electro-Circuits Company.

   The workplace culture of the Thai side of the managerial team was about preserving the level of authority, working together only when being faced similar problems, displaying a non-aggressive approach in trying to solve problems, letting the managing director take the realms in preventing chaos in the workplace, and assure that no animosity is being developed in the working relations. The only similarity of the workplace culture that the Germans share with their Thai colleagues is allowing the managing director take control of a hectic situation. Other than that, their viewpoints differ from the Thais based on the issue of having to question a colleague for failing to meet with the expectation of his/her role.

   The style was in question as leadership was wasting too much time on allowing members of the team to discuss about the difficulties being experienced in the workplace. The structure can sometimes become a disadvantage when it waits on an authoritative series of steps from each individual person to give permission in carrying out the operation. The working system did not give them the chance to obtain the right information. It just told them to get prepared in making sure the order is done without delay. Without knowing the details in specific terms, the team sometimes had to speculate on issues pertaining to their work.

2. To test that team learning created a sense of working together with different work cultures.
A consensus stage was formed from the application of “Hays Team Learning Pyramid” and the “Blame vs. Gain Behaviors” event that was conducted with the managerial team. The consensus stage is a philosophical approach of team learning that is conducive to their working environment. Hence, it creates the conditions for team members to acquire the need for learning together to accomplish a goal, being responsible for making a contribution to achieving goals, reflecting on collaborative efforts, and deciding on ways to improve effectiveness and developing interpersonal skills.

3. To provide results in evaluating the outcome and the lessons learned in applying team learning.

The implementation of team learning to reduce the cross-cultural differences among the team members only went to the extent of allowing the team to propose some ideas and raise questions that were relevant to the work flow. The newly designed work flow as a concept for working and learning together as a team was used only for a couple of months. The new work flow became an added extra assignment as team members were coping with rushing working orders. The application of team learning was an effective tool for helping them to reflect on the core values of the company. The drawback in the application of team learning was on the lack of morale in maintaining the process of the company’s philosophy and mission. In the future, such a case details that learning has to start with the capacity of each team member.

The result of this study managed to gain the collaboration of the managerial team members by putting aside their cross-cultural differences and channel their energy towards designing and implementing a new work design flow. The new work design flow was administrated to assist them in to work and learn as a collective unit while upholding the company’s philosophy and mission. Unfortunately, the concept did not last long as expected due to pressuring circumstances which prevented the team from becoming fully cohesive in carrying out the ideal performance.
Implication

This part of the section is on discussing and providing a conclusion for creating a proposal for team learning in a cross-cultural workplace. The section touches upon the following issues from chapter one’s “expected results of the study” by providing the researcher’s analysis for each one:

1. **Foreign company executives who have a keen interest on developing team learning as teamwork among Thai staff and non-Thai staff in their organizations that is based in Thailand.**

   The researcher believes that the company executives have to analyze their own cultural working environment before arranging team learning as a software program being downloaded into a computer. Such a work culture has to immediately be defined from the very beginning on what is acceptable and what is least desirable. Without the proper conditions one will see the idea transformed into the metaphor of an iceberg where things start to evaporate due to a lack of condition for support. The researcher puts forth a paradigm for developing team learning is similar to sustaining teamwork or morale on part of the team members. Just like teamwork, team learning is a philosophy. There is no shape, color, scent, nor mystery to its meaning. It carries its own form of discipline to harness the energy and resources of team members to create the desired results that the company executives would like to see happen. For example, Southwest Airlines encourage their station team in the airport to detect for problems and discuss about ways to solve it. The airline company installed a learning system called “team delay” which is a concept that enables team members to point out any issues, such as what is causing a delay in loading suitcases onto a carrier or why aren’t the passengers checked into the aircraft to meet with the appointed time for departure. Mistakes are used as lessons for discussion and improvement in the future. When the support for the system is genuine then the behaviors will comply, regardless of the cross-cultural differences; providing that the outcome does not clash with any ethical, moral, or legitimate issues.
2. Human resources professionals who are in charge of developing teamwork at their company and creating a policy on enhancing teamwork at a workplace composing of two different cultures.

Since culture is a state of mind, the aim for the human resources professional is to find a method for minimizing the defensive mental aspects within the cultural dimensions and allow the thinking to flourish on what is best for the team’s performance (Adler, 2011). From the view of the researcher, the key issue is to keep the team members strongly aligned so that their effort does not produce wasted energy or lead to mounting frustration (Borredon, et. al, 2011). The proposal, by the researcher, is to ensure a "team learning consensus" so that each individual team member has put forward the ideal/philosophical goal upon their psyche ahead of all matters that will come about while reducing their cross-cultural differences for the sake of the goal. In the case of this international manufacturing company, the assertion for the human resources manager would be that the team has collectively brought about an agreement (consensus) to be highly focused on the company’s philosophy of delivering quality and the mission statement of attaining the highest benefit for the customers before carrying out all orders while not letting their cross-cultural differences become an obstacle to their performance. Instead of going through the routines, the policy is on devising the procedure that allows the team to reflect on how they are going to make this operation process elevate them to be more productive towards working and learning together in meeting the expected outcome (Parker, 2007). The researcher provides a model, shown below, to demonstrate the concept of applying a team learning consensus to reduce the eruption of cross-cultural differences among team members:
Figure 38 Reducing Cross-Cultural Differences through a Team Learning Consensus

According to the researcher’s assertion, the “team learning consensus” installs a code of behavior that initiates team members to strongly focus for the best method in obtaining the company’s philosophy and mission statement. Therefore, if the team is to perform collectively to ensure that the outcome is on “delivering quality and attaining the highest benefit for the customers”, then they stimulate learning how to reach this by creating a working environment with respect to:

A) the cultural style

B) enhancing dialogue during collective behavior

C) allowing participants to be surrounded in an authentic atmosphere to exchange information

D) and having members learn from one another.

All the while, their cross-cultural differences are kept from being positioned into the mindset when they are in the “team learning consensus” mode. So when there are unexpected changes or disruption in the work process the team member will respond in a more positive instead of allowing the factors of power distance, individualism, masculinity, unexpected avoidance, and long-term orientation derail the working harmony. In other words, the team learning consensus
makes the focus of the managerial team on the philosophy and the mission statement while simultaneously reducing the conditions of the cross-cultural differences from interfering with their teamwork.

3. Independent or commercial research institutions that would like to know how much of an impact that team learning has in a cross-cultural workplace located in Thailand.

The researcher concurs with Drucker (1998) based on the assertion that in order to remain competitive (or even survive) companies have to change old habits and acquire new ones; this statement is still highly supported by scholars from across the globe (Hackman, 2011). The original work flow had people confined in their own units thus making them fully concentrated on their functional roles. This made working and learning as a team to perform only when the task has been assigned rather than setting time to get holistic view of the operation. The researcher deems that companies have to realize that they are not a machine but a living organism. Such a living being needs to have a shared understanding of what the company stands for, where it is going, what kind of world it wants to live in, and (importantly) how to make that world a reality (Nonaka, 1991). Based on this study, the researcher would like to offer an important lesson that can serve as precept for those who would like to know about the consequences for a team that is unable to learn because of the following conditions:

1. A working environment that instigates blaming one another and obsessed with speculating on an individual’s failure.

2. The hope that another colleague discovers the problem on a second-hand notice and solves it.

3. The physical infrastructure of the workplace deceives the behavior for communicating, teamwork, sharing ideas and information with each other.

4. Executing work to meet with the schedule rather than the corporate philosophy and mission.

5. Managerial role stays idle in improving the work situation.

It is an obstacle for a team member to make an initiative in the workplace when there is a lack of collaboration among other workers. Working in a system where work is interdependent indicates that each employee fosters a mindset for being committed and focused
on delivering high quality results. This mindset would not allow any interpersonal or bureaucratic barrier to become a hindrance towards setting a plan, communicating with colleagues, assuming responsibility and leadership, appointing a time schedule to finish a job, accessing information, and obtaining full cooperation among fellow staff members. However, when the system is working in the opposite direction employees channel their behavior towards being defensive and protecting their own interests. A lack of trust starts to accumulate towards the credibility and action of each other. The vision, mission, and corporate philosophy became lost in its meaning as employees struggle to survive day by day in their work. Instead of working together for the company’s long-term goal these employees were working against each other. Although there was an awareness for an improvement in teamwork and collaboration, the behavior for positive change was short-lived as these workers went back to their cynical mode due to the expectancy that their fellow colleagues would start the initiative. It clearly became evident that “the working environment was not conducive to make employees initiative in the workplace”. The industrial market that Electro-Circuits Limited is in was starting to change rapidly. With a chain of wholesalers and retailers having more power in demand they force a company such as Electro-Circuits Limited to adapt or die. These companies that outsourced the job to Electro-Circuits Limited were being highly competitive and felt that this company should oblige with their agenda. The approach of obtaining absolute quality with an immediate service produced a rippling effect that penetrated into the Electro-Circuits Limited’s work flow. Since the company’s working system did not make the initiative to cope with the changes in demand from their external customers they were unable to provide an expected standard of service. As a result the traditional working system had been exhausted; in other words, what was thought to be the ideal way of meeting the customers’ demand and providing exceptional service had become a theory that is outdated in modern times. When the working system had its moment managers were cooperating and supporting, but now that the system is failing they work against each other. Some have questioned the working system itself while others have questioned the capacity of each other in taking action to make this current system work. This was a case where sometimes workers can become a victim of the system. The working system itself is an artificial creation of mankind. It is in the mind where we determine and define what success is, what failure is, and what can we do to improve things. It was found that others were willing to make an initiative but
felt a sense of awkwardness in whipping up the emotions of others to be progressive. For these managers the energy that it takes to make their colleagues upbeat at all times can be mentally draining and morally irritating. Therefore, the study concludes that the impact of having team learning would at least provide an opportunity for the company/organization to obtain their results. Getting members of the team to embrace learning together could be in the form of modifying their working environment to uphold opportunities for reflecting on obstacles as a way to overcome them and redirect their focus on the mission (O’Dell and Hubert, 2011). The researcher would like to state that it is far better of for constructing a learning system for a team than not doing anything to improve their ability to learn from mistakes or be given to chance to experiment on some ideas.

4. Scholars and students, with regards to all academic discipline, that would like to make a thorough research on team learning in a manufacturing workplace that has a cross-cultural working environment.

Since the corporate working environment operates at a faster pace than the educational environment, the researcher would proclaim that the best start between scholars and undergraduate students is to arrange a seminar (at the senior level) to prepare students to enter the workplace that requires workers to function as a team. With the results from implementing the ‘McKinsey 7S’ framework, scholars are provided with a breadth and depth of information to be incorporated into a course that prepares undergraduate business management majors for working and learning as a team in a cross-cultural working environment. Through the instructors’ guidance, Thai undergraduates of all academic majors can be highly trained in developing the fundamentals of becoming a team learner by gaining a keen sense on how an international company copes with maintaining its strategy, operating through its structure, upholding its system, reinforcing the shared values, modernizing the styles in working relations, supporting the competence of the staff, and constantly developing the skills of its employees. Also, the students will gain a better understanding of working in a cross-cultural workplace where the issue of keeping the team aligned can always become a challenge. With the factors of style, structure, and system being presented as an analysis, students obtain the foresight to solve a problem that they have already learned. According to the topic of style, students can be taught about acquiring
leadership that is aimed at obtaining results and learning from mistakes in order to enhance team performance. On the topic of structure, students explore methods in making the work flow and formation benefit their team members. And with the topic of system, students become aware of obstacles that need to be removed for having a better dialogue, thinking as a collective unit, and deferring from making a quick assumption to solve a problem.

The style, structure, and system were identified as the factors that inhibited the managerial team to perform effectively as a collaborative unit as well as working and learning together. With the essence of preserving alignment among team members, teachers can develop the mindset for students to become team learners to support the process of team learning in a cross-cultural working environment. These are the guides offered to cultivate the undergraduate students in being prepared to meet with the challenges of disruption in team learning.

Whereas team learning is a process, being a team learner is an initiative. It’s a code of behavior, like the Samurai’s Bushido concept, that utilizes the team learning discipline of dialogue, suspending assumptions, and thinking together to bring the mental focus of each team member towards realignment (Yeo, 2008). As a team learner, one is aware of the obstacles presented along the path but swiftly maneuvers around the situation to seek advantages or opportunities that will make the members among the team overcome their problems in working and learning together. With the idea of having team learners, there is a resonance where individuals think and act as if they were parts of a highly engineered automobile. In metaphoric terms, they serve as the wheels, motor engine, lights, steering wheel, and seating that function simultaneously in navigating under the command of safety and caution on the road while ensuring that the driver receives comfort and assurance towards his/her destination. Team learners are the preservers of alignment in team learning; doing what is necessary to keep the idea alive.

The conceptual framework for students to become team learners begins with understanding the philosophy and mission of the organization. Even with high-tech equipments and a modern facility, companies will not venture far into the future unless their team truly grasps the foundation which justifies their company’s existence. The case of Electro-Circuits Company demonstrated a breakdown in teamwork trying to function in a cross-cultural workplace. The work points out on the issue of style, structure, and system as the culprits that can prevent the
team to perform as a collective learning unit to “delivering quality and achieving the highest benefit to the customers”, students would have to raise inquiries that are relevant to the team learning disciplines for the purpose of maneuvering around the situation and exploring where the right target is to sustain alignment. Below is a figure that demonstrates an example:

![Diagram: Conceptual Framework for Students as Team Learners](image)

**Figure 39** Conceptual Framework for Students as Team Learners

Figure 39 represents the method for students as team learners to support the process of team learning by configuring the current situation and seeking for leverage to enhance team alignment. First, the team learner concentrates on the corporate philosophy and mission while asking questions on how the organization’s style, structure, and system could be managed in helping the team perform as a collective unit (Griep, et. al, 2010). The team learner can choose to apply one of the team learning disciplines to solve the problem or use a combination of disciplines that can generate a multitude of solutions. For example, in an effort to get the team in being firmly aligned towards Electro-Circuit’s philosophy of “delivering quality” and on the mission of achieving the “highest benefit to the customers”, the team learner inquires with other fellow team members through an effective dialogue on seeing how the organization’s style, structure, and system can be adjusted or altered to help the team deliver the desired results. In following the same approach with the former, the team learner congregates with his/her colleagues and calls for a panel action plan drawn up from a healthy dialogue, strictly suspending all assumptions, and constantly thinking together so that the organization’s style, structure, and
system can provide many channels of solutions to gain the maximum desired results (Heskett, 2010).

**Recommendations**

The researcher has scoped the recommendation approach of utilizing “mindfulness” towards two levels – policy and practical. The policy level includes the Electro-Circuits Company, and the Thai Chamber of Commerce. As for the practical level, this includes the human resources manager and the managerial team of the Electro-Circuits Company, other companies/organizations that may share a similar phenomenon with the Electro-Circuits Company.

*Policy Level – Electro-Circuits Company*

The researcher recommends that the company develops a working condition that alleviates any cross-cultural differences from eroding the morale of teamwork. Such a condition calls for individual team members to assert a sense of mindfulness while being engaged in the heat of the moment that is stemming off from a disagreement or challenge that is inhibiting the team’s performance. As the company is filled with accolades of high achievement with international standards, it also needs to maintain a working culture discipline where the mindset is highly focused for setting the precedent for everyone to follow. In this issue, the researcher deems that the managing director and the human resources manager become the leading catalyst in developing this working condition.

For the managing director, his role should be more of a mentor for those managerial team members who may want to ask for his advice on helping the team work together collectively and solve problems in unison. Therefore, he should set forth a career development policy for each of the managerial team members to come and discuss with him on a formal basis about building character, confidence, credibility, and leadership that would help synergize the team to become highly effective in working together.

As for the human resources manager, this person should liaise with the managing director and gather intelligence from him in constructing a policy to enhance each managerial team member’s career profession. This critical information would allow the human resources manager to set forth a design in creating an effective coaching program that can help each
managerial team members to be more tactical in responding to a troubling situation; while at the same time having a conscience that they are executing in a moral fashion by helping colleagues understand what can be improve for the next time.

_Policy Level – Thai Chamber of Commerce_

The researcher recommends for the Thai Chamber of Commerce to make a study on the systematic work flow of teams with different formation types in order to get a thorough understanding why some group operate in a certain way. For example, Edmondson (2011) and her associates mainly studied team learning on the health care industries. In the health care industry, the medical professionals work as a unit by working and learning in a simultaneous and coordinated fashion. They take their craft very seriously because if one mistake should occur then there would be a lawsuit or a legislative punishment that can affect the morale of the whole entire team. But in comparison to a fast food restaurant like McDonald’s, the team is assembled as a crew of kitchen and counter workers. In this working environment, the workers are stationed in their position and wait for an assignment that is being completed from another person. The crew that works in this type of restaurant could allow an occasional mistake to occur on a monthly basis because the company uses this as a learning experience for training (Arena, 2007). Where a team is formed as a squad, like a group of market researchers for example, each member applies their own individual expertise and knowledge to try and answer questions so that their colleagues can develop a better sense of understanding of their outcome (Charan, 2007). Such a formation expects members to apply self-development in order to install trust and credibility with others. Upon being familiar with each formation’s flow of work, the Thai Chamber of Commerce can take the next step in seeing how the application of mindfulness, with regards to the theory of cross-cultural behaviors or differences, can be examined upon to evaluate its impact on the way the team works and learn together. Therefore the Thai Chamber of Commerce’s role is to draw upon a partnership with scholars and other interested practitioners to let them do a thorough research of the working operation, patterns of communication, interaction, infrastructure for learning, and team design for the proper application of team learning. From there, members of the Thai Chamber of Commerce and research scholars can provide a brainstorm through the
analytical results to see where mindfulness can be the proper method in supporting the team’s performance as well as moderating their cross-cultural issues.

**Practical Level – Human Resources Manager & Managerial Team of Electro-Circuits Company**

The researcher believes that the implementation of mindfulness can be accomplished if the following was to be done on part the human resources manager and managerial team. For the human resources manager, the researcher has drawn upon the work by Edmondson (pp.229-234, 2012) who states that “while most organizations contain multiple work contexts in their operation there usually is one perspective that dominates the organizational culture and managerial approach and becomes taken for granted.” Therefore, the researcher advises the human resources manager to have a thoughtful diagnosis on each type of working operation so that it can be configured to a shifting environment instead of having team members being confined to their procedures. Also, the human resources manager should have an understanding on how the operational format by conducting an “After Action Review” so that it can provide a better insight on the challenges toward learning as a team and where the role of human resources manager can come in to assist team members in keeping the flow of reason and understanding streaming in the working environment.

With regards to the managerial team, the key to high performance does not reside in the content of a team’s discussions but in the manner in which it was communicating (Pentland, 2012). With reference to Pentland’s study done on building teams, the researcher supports the notion that the patterns of communication as being the most important predictor of a team’s success because it can stimulate a sense of awareness among the managerial team members on what kind of actions are to be taken after each operational series. The patterns of communication are significant in the mode of having individual intelligence, personality, skill, and substance of discussions combined as one. Furthermore, the best way for the Electro-Circuits Company’s managerial team to develop mindfulness within each other is to be engaged in learning how to further communicate towards shaping and guiding the team’s performance so that the team follows successful communication patterns, instead of selecting individuals for their smarts or accomplishments.
Practical Level – Other Companies/Organization

With regards to other companies/organizations that may be experiencing some similar situation that the Electro-Circuits have gone through, this case can be utilized in a manner for the human resources manager and the managerial team to incorporate mindfulness to propel the team’s performance. The researcher recommends that the human resources manager and the managerial team coordinate with each other to arrange the methods and working procedure to be coincided with the mission and objectives to be done. In addition, the formation has to allow for group members to have face-to-face interaction in real time. The right choice for implementing the team formation has to address the following issues that make them mindful of their action:

1. Will responsibility and accountability for the work lie primarily with the group as a whole, or with individual members?

2. Will members need to interact synchronously in real time, or can the work be accomplished by members working at their own paces and in their own places?

Furthermore, the researcher deems it imperative for the human resources manager and the managerial team to get together and address whether the working infrastructure supports the ability for the team members to learn or not. The researcher asserts this point, with reference to Garvin (2000), that teams need to be able to conduct a learning exploration without being exposed to the difficulties of a large, complex system; where its negative experiences, such as receiving unfamiliar or unintended feedback, forced into accepting unnecessary interaction of policies, obtaining inferential information, and lacking understanding of the situation due to pressure, can hinder the capacity of the team to make a discovery on refining solutions or methods to complete a project. In addition, the human resources manager should work closely with the team members to ensure that have the need to acquire an understanding of their competitors, customers, technologies, regulations, and social and demographic trends for making an effective decision or a strategy for the future.
Recommendations for Further Study

With the wisdom of the doctoral advisors, the researcher proclaims that the study of cross-cultural differences or behaviors will never provide a complete solution to a problem. The phenomenon is a theory to test our understanding as well as to make us humble and mindful that we still need to come together and communicate with each other closely while preventing the urge of letting technology being used as the instrument of obtaining the answer that is desperately craved for. With this said, the researcher would like to provide a learning point in mindfulness for practical scholars or learners who are expressing a fond interest of doing future research on this study. The late Peter Drucker saw the practice of building teams among industrial companies being quite mediocre. During his period, he saw companies pooling their resources and energy into building teams to design new models, replace traditional assembly line, and creating a new culture but only to withdraw from its commitment by being overwhelmed with problems, regressing back towards the original working system, and moving back to individual accountability as a work policy. Drucker asserted that the progress for teamwork becomes a failure due to executives having an all-but-universal belief that there is just one kind of team. He saw teams as tools where each team design has its own uses, its own characteristics, its own requirements, its own limitations. Drucker stated that team work is neither "good" nor "desirable" - it is a fact. Wherever people work together or play together they do so as a team. He points out that there are actually three type of teams and that each is different in its structure, in the behavior it demands from its members, in its strengths, its vulnerabilities, its limitations, its requirements, but above all, in what it can do and should be used for (Drucker, 1992). The three type of teams are as followed:

*Fixed Position Team* – In this form, the members work on the team; they do not work as a team. Members stay fixed to their working positions and never leave from it. The person works on their own tasks and assignment. For example, in the traditional automobile factory, the marketing staff would rarely get in contact with the design team. Designers did their work and passed it on to the development engineers, who in turn did their work and passed it on to manufacturing, which in turn did its work and passed it on to marketing. The fixed position team is considered to be inflexible. It works well when the work tasks have been executed many times and when the
sequence of its actions is thoroughly understood by everyone. That is what made this kind of team right for automobile factories in the past.

**Parallel Team** – Like the fixed position team, members remain fixed to their place and barely assist each other. However, in this form, team members work as a team, like a hospital health care unit that rallies together in providing ultimate care on a patient who had just gone into a state of shock at 3 a.m. The parallel team is a bit more flexible but needs to have stringent requirements in the process, such as a "standard operating procedure" for a given task or job to be done.

**Innovative Team** – In this type of team, members have a primary rather than a fixed position. They are supposed to "cover" their teammates, adjusting to their teammates' strengths and weaknesses and to the changing demands of the process or task. Arrangements for this kind of team should be kept to a minimal number, with five to seven members at the most. The members have to be trained together and must work together for quite some time before they can function as a team. There must be one clear goal for the entire team and yet considerable flexibility with respect to the individual member's work and performance. And in this kind of team, only the team "performs"; individual members "contribute."

Therefore, any interested scholars, practitioners, or doctoral prospects should analyze the following questions before constructing an appropriate research methodology:

1. To what extent do team members work in fixed positions, in a parallel process, and in being innovative?

2. Based on the above information, how do they learn as a collective group and where can improvements be made?

The first research question is to provide a sense of awareness of the working flow among team members. Constructing a survey or questionnaire would be an ideal approach to obtain the answer to this inquiry. This should also enable the researcher to get a gist of how team members actually function and communicate with each other as a team. The second question focuses on the analytics of learning as a team thus allowing the researcher to pinpoint out the areas where the work can be concentrated upon for an in-depth study. For example, the researcher believes that dialogue or communication needs to be addressed or that reflecting needs to be honed in order for the group members to move forward as a real learning team.
With concluding thoughts, the researcher hopes that the next future researcher will be encouraged to have a better approach in constructing a sound strategy for implementing team learning in a cross-cultural working environment or attempting to moderate the cross-cultural differences so that the organizations' teams can perform more effectively. The researcher would like to recommend for the next scholar to break down the paradigm in the application of team learning by questioning the approach to see whether it is an issue pertaining to a human resources work policy, or an organizational design proposal, or a method for enhancing and developing teamwork in the workplace, thus helping the person conducting the research to have a better sense of awareness as well as reason and understanding to find the right questions to answer. On the topic of cross-cultural differences, Hofstede tells us that his theoretical approach is not about offering a scientific panacea to eliminate the divergence among colleagues but rather to hold a dialogue and discuss about the phenomenon so that we could get closer to a better understanding of the situation (Powell, 2006). Therefore, learning as a team with team members who may have some cross-cultural differences is an on-going and evolving process. Team learning is an applied tool that can be utilized for supporting a current system or for refining an approach to help realize what could be done better. Such a study on team learning should be conducted through a gathering of intelligence of that particular policy, proposal, or method so that the philosophy can be conducive enough to meet with the real needs of that organization/company. In addition, it expands on the way for educators who want to provide a sound preparation course for their undergraduate students or in being an ideal human resources partner in assisting to restore the working team’s performance. Whatever the endeavor may bring in carrying out a team learning research, the author of this work hopes that the study conducted by the future researcher will become enlightened by his/her discoveries and make an extensive contribution towards the discipline of learning effectively as a team.
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APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

DATA INFORMATION
DATA INFORMATION WITH REGARDS TO THE LOCATION
CHOSEN FOR THE RESEARCH STUDY

1. Company Profile

The chosen pseudo name given to this company is “Electro-Circuits Company”. It is a manufacturing company that specializes in producing electrical components, relies on their managerial staff to work as a team in order to fulfill two objectives - the company’s philosophy of delivering quality and the mission statement of attaining the highest benefit for the customers. Established in 1999, the company set the standard for work practice and customer service in its early years. The company is a medium-sized business with 100% German stake and German management. It is supported by the Thailand Board of Investment which not only feel obliged towards the capital it provides but also towards its employees and the whole business environment. As a manufacturer of customer-specific circuit boards and LCD modules it is a constantly growing company in the electronics supplier industry. There is an emphasis on long-term business relations in order to guarantee success sustainably. The most important thing considered is that each customer is satisfied with the products and service. The achievement of high-quality products is on a lean and customer-oriented management. This company has received accolades from the Bureau Veritas as an ISO 9001:2000 and ISO 14001:2004 corporation.

2. Competency & Requirements on Part of the Managerial Team

As the corporation handles a lot of materials and resources, and operates with a lot of machinery, all staff are strictly required to follow the company safety & environment policy. In addition, the managerial team has to make consideration and approve on an objective for improving and developing their respective working area. Also, they have to uphold maintenance and meet with the regulations for safety and environmental issues. Furthermore they have to improve, review, and set an action plan for any problems that may be compromising on the subject of safety and environmentalism. To run such an operational system at a company that is committed to the standards, the company advocates that management demonstrates competence by displaying a collective set of proficiency:
1. Strong Leadership and a motivated personality
2. Being kept informed of new production technologies and management practices
3. Having an eager sense to enhance knowledge and skill through ongoing training
4. Solve technical and organizational tasks in engineering area with suitable procedures in an efficient way
5. Applying and advancing scientific discipline and paying attention to the economic aspects as well as to safety regulations.
6. Solving specific engineering tasks
7. Achieving customer satisfaction with high quality of products, processes and services
8. Self motivated, well organized and able to work without supervision
9. Displaying the roles as a team player, a leader, integrity with fellow colleagues
10. Attaining business knowledge, self development
11. Be seen as an integral part of the business
12. Meeting with delivery targets
13. Being well organized and able to work without supervision
14. Understanding basic revenue models and cost-to-completion projections; making decisions according to event
15. Understanding pricing model and billing procedures
16. Willingness to innovate
17. Understanding the business realities
18. Creating practical & solution to advise on best practice
19. Working with accuracy, time management, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness
20. Ability to constantly plan, organize, coordinate and control purchasing
21. Guarantee delivery of goods at requested time
22. Ability to negotiate, renegotiate, and administer contracts with suppliers, vendors, and other representatives
23. Ability to use logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems.
24. Ability to analyze price proposals, financial reports, and other data and information
to determine reasonable prices.

25. Ability to consider the relative costs and benefits of potential actions

3. The Work Flow Operation

In everyday operation the company goes through a set of motion that is conducive to sustain the competitiveness in the long run. As a living company that is aware of its surrounding environment, Electro-Circuits has to constantly keep abreast with the unexpected and abrupt changes into their working system. Their customers and clients expect their service and product to be at top notch whenever an order is submitted. In return, the company strives for quality because it knows that it carries a currency towards being competitive and successful in the long term. However, it is not only important to have a strong belief in doing this kind of business that Electro-Circuits is involved in but also to provide the outcome with the values incorporated. It is imperative that such a business get a good number of repeat customers and loyal clients. Electro-Circuits is fully realizes that it is the talent, skills, and abilities of their people that enable the entity to become where it is today and hopefully for always. The staff that makes the company attaining a quality of outcome is considered is the heart and soul of the business. To make the company run with such prestige rests with the managerial team that goes through the daily function.

4. The Occuring Events

Coming towards 2008 the team started to experience some problems in functioning as a team. While the problems were mounting the motivation to work as a truly defined team started to wane. It can be compared to a pile of sand held in one’s hand and being blown away into tiny fragments of dust particles from a strong wind. Rather than forming their fingers to become a fist some team members opted not to fully get involved for fear of repercussion; there was a lack of support for the concept. Some of the members stood by the sidelines and cast out a feeling of hope for a change while leaving the vocal team members to make a spontaneous contribution. Nevertheless, it resulted into a mental strain and physical anguish for those who really believed in having the change. The courage and commitment as a team to change things for the better did not fully materialized enough to allow the proposed modern work flow to be
incorporated. This led to a lost of opportunity for those individual team members who truly wanted to see colleagues work closely together. The problems that kept on spiraling made it difficult for the team to fulfill the company’s philosophy and mission. There were two separate views of how the problems were perceived.

In order to get a clear definition of the problem, a situation analysis was constructed and implemented to extract the root cause of the problem that is making the Electro-Circuits’ managers not being able to apply the performance that would enable them to achieve the objective. This objective is the company’s philosophy of delivering quality and the mission statement of attaining the highest benefit for the customers. The company claims that the philosophy and mission of the corporation could be attained if the managers were able to work as a complete team. This research methodology was chosen to describe the events that have prevented the corporation from reaching their objectives and to identify the factors that detract work performance. The managerial team members were selected as the sample group due to their main role in assisting the direction of the company. Overall, the action research study at this corporation was utilized to generate primary data for enhancing and refining the disciplinary concept of a learning organization.

The situation analysis had been divided into three parts. Each segment had their own form in collecting data to describe what the problem really was.

**Situation analysis 1:**

*Data collection – April to May 2009*

Interviews with human resources management, inquiring with the top manager, observing the work flow design, and constructing workshops with the middle managers to provide their view of the obstacles that they see challenging their work performance; these managers were also interviewed separately for obtaining a richer detail of the situation.

**Report**

Human resources management felt that the managerial team members were not taking their share of responsibility in working as a team. There was a sense that the managers were straying from the foundation (philosophy and mission) rather than making an effort to adhere to even when working conditions are not favorable.
The work flow design is constructed in a clockwork functional aspect. The operational course ran in a traditional factory style where input starts the signal for preparing the process and the outcome is expected to meet the standards.

Top management thinks there is no need to purchase additional machines or rearrange the facilities to improve productivity. However, the work process still has a lot of mental errors being committed. For example, there are miscalculated figures in the ordering of supplies and data presentation, there is an inability to deliver the guaranteed order for customers. It seems that the behavioral performance is not on the right track.

The management team had some cross-cultural issue whereas the Thai managers were mostly silent at the meetings and don’t want to display a sense of being inconsiderate towards their fellow colleagues. Thai managers speak about issues within their comfort zone. Communicating in the English language with the western staff can sometimes arouse a negative emotional experience. They are not used to expressing their opinions in an emotional manner. According to the management team (composing of Thai and German staff) the real issues are as followed:

- Some workers don’t know what the problem is.
- Some workers are not aware that this is a problem.
- Execution of teamwork is lacking.
- The organization’s goal is ambiguous; right now the goal is to only make a profit and is constantly communicated.
- There is no accountability when a mistake has occurred.
- There is no full cooperation from other departments.

*For the first three issues, it was revealed that the departments are working in independently rather than interdependently.

In order to find out the key factors that will direct middle management’s working behavior towards the right track, they were asked about what their values and attitude towards work were. They valued teamwork, problem-solving and taking action, leadership, innovation, responsibility, and continuous improvement.

Their attitude towards a positive working behavior stems from being happy and having fun at work, receiving challenging tasks, being honest with each other and maintaining
responsibilities in their functional role, having the opportunity for self-improvement, respecting fellow colleagues, obtaining job satisfaction, and holding a belief in teamwork.

Another round of interview was held with the main managers. This time they were interviewed separately and asked to provide their own personal feedback of what they think the cause of the problem really is.

The aim of this personal interview was to shift the mindset of the managerial team members to be customer-minded. Each departmental manager had to position themselves as a private business unit within the Electro-Circuits Company. From there, the managers have to find out who are their customers and what must they do in order to provide the best service for them. By theory, if the managers of each department treat each other as customers rather than working colleagues they would be able to not only function as a team but also highlight the values and attitude that they truly define in their organization. The managerial staff was asked the following questions:

- Who are your target customers?
- What is your (working) relationship with them?
- What are your customers' values?
- What is their business objective?
- How will you help them achieve their objectives?
- What do you need to improve in order to perform effectively to serve your customers?

Based on the information gathered with the interviews from the managers of marketing, research & development, engineering, production, planning, and quality assurance the issues became quite clear as to why there were some problems trying to reach their objectives. Nevertheless they are challenging issues that the HR division can take action upon.

The aim of Electro-Circuits is to get the departments to work together as a team. However there were obstacles that need to be cleared in order for teamwork to actually function. In case #1, the three core units (marketing, R&D, and Engineering) are sometimes experiencing difficulties in obtain simultaneous information that is correct and confirmed. This presents some challenge in carrying out the proper action to meet with the project deadline as the proper channel for communication is not utilized. For example: Sometimes R&D receives information directly
for an order from an alternative source and has to respond to it immediately without having enough time to discuss with other key members on how to complete the project on time.

In case #2, the production unit is the last to know or not involve with the original details, thus resulting in the lack of opportunity to have an input to confirm that the desired operational procedure can actually proceed with efficiency.

Situation analysis 2:

Data collection - June 2009

A challenge session was implemented at an urgent middle management meeting to resolve an incident where no action was taken for a special order. The challenge session is a structured problem-solving framework which aims to create changes in the way that groups or individuals think about and solve problems. The basis of a challenge session is to generate a series of challenge statements. In practice, it will make the individuals and groups move away from the conventional way of thinking and into a creative way of thinking. The aim of the challenge session was to get the managers to find a proactive approach in handling urgent/special request orders in the future. According to the problem given it was stated that “No action was taken from 5 to 8/Jun towards getting a special order done”. The objective was to get the special order done. The top manager had to take matters into his own hands and completed the job in three hours on Tuesday (9/Jun).

Report

The Electro-Circuit Company’s management team identified the problem as followed:

- There wasn’t any clear target, overview, nor a clear plan.
- There was no clear communication; the communication itself was not taken seriously.
- There wasn’t a person who was clearly appointed to be responsible.
- There was a lack of leadership on the managerial level.
- We didn’t have a time limit to get the special order done; people worked without a timeline.
- People were not properly informed of the overview status and daily status; no follow-up on the progress.
- Cooperation among staff needs to be improved.
Situation analysis 3:

Data collection - June 2009

An observation was done at an urgent meeting. The meeting dealt with a fault component returned from a customer. It turns out that there was a defect in the design of the circuit board and a back-housing GFO component that needed to be re-modified.

Report

Upon observation and passively listening to how the meeting conducted, the discovery was followed:

- It's important to have a facilitator to dispense questions towards colleagues so that they can think more clearly and cautiously about the real type of solutions to be implemented before jumping into any conclusions.

- Sometimes people are pressured to come up with answers or solutions. The managerial team was working in an environment that had to meet with the pressures of keeping a deadline. This type of condition led to the team members to do a rush order. The consequences of doing a rush order tends to dilute the focus on quality. When the problem was pointed out the staff was looking for something to put on as a band-aid solution. However, this would lead to more problems in the future. To prevent the problem from being a chaos the best way was to generate the right ethical and logical questions that will provide common sense to be the etiquette form of the answer/solution.

Problem Statement & Analysis

The three situations were compared to identify the factors that were preventing the managers from performing to their abilities in sustaining the company’s philosophy and mission. At first, the top manager felt that the problems among the managerial team members were based on

- Dysfunctional working relations.
- Not complying with the company’s foundation.
- Lacking a collaborative behavior.
- and not willing to share ideas, information, nor knowledge with each other.
The managerial team provided further information as having to overcome the conduct of

- Being unable to obtain accurate & confirmed information.
- Not having time for agreeing on an exact schedule to finish the project.
- Having to compromise quality to meet with the pressures of demand.

However with the issue of a hasty (rushing) work procedure the managers were forced to get their assignments finished before a hectic clockwork schedule. By rushing the process the products that they produced came back as below quality and heavily criticized by the receiving customers.

Overall, the workplace accumulated a climate of having to rush their project operations; it was about being efficient to the maximum level. With the issue of a hasty (rushing) work procedure the managers were forced to get their assignments finished before a hectic clockwork schedule. By rushing the process the products that they produced came back as below quality and heavily criticized by the receiving customers.

In general, the condition of rushing the work led to a disappointing view by top management of seeing the middle managers as having dysfunctional working relations, not complying with the company’s foundation, being non-collaborative, and not communicating with each other. The working condition became a place where the middle managers were unable to get accurate and confirmed information for work. In addition, they had no time to meet for getting an agreed working schedule to finish the project. Furthermore, to their dismay they had to compromise quality in order to meet with the demanding pressure of time.

The staff did have a team but they were lacking teamwork. Challenges and problems were sometimes abandoned rather than having the strong will and effort to manage the situation. The team worked effectively when the conditions of fear and anger became the drivers of working together. The former made people scared of losing their job or being reprimanded while the latter was from the emotional frustration of top management. In the company, the teamwork approach among the staff was waxing and waning. Sometimes there will be a day when the Thai managerial staff would work together (and with their German colleagues) by sharing information and ideas on problem-solving or improving work operations as well as making decisions together. Then the next time these team members would split off on their own and not make any initiative
to communicate with each other; at times they recognize that there is a problem but rather let somebody else detect it and solve it.

*Results*

At a managerial team meeting the situation was about focusing on achieving quality. The management team from the departments of marketing, research & development, engineering, production, planning, and quality assurance, were asked to reflect on the current operation system that has been complied to. A roundtable discussion was established to get their insights on what is working and what is not working as well as the reasons for each. Each manager was given a chance to express their own views of the operation system.

Since there were evidence of not being able to obtain accurate and confirmed information which led to some mistakes and errors, the aim was to get the managers thinking how to serve their internal customers (fellow departmental colleagues) better so that everybody can work with a sense of professional dignity. It was proposed to the managers that they come up with an improved work design model that incorporates the philosophy of “quality is first” and that radiates the values of:

- Happiness
- Being challenged
- Honesty
- Responsibility
- Self-improvement
- Respect
- Job Satisfaction
- Teamwork

The concerning issue for some of the managers was having enough time to confirm that the project can be completed on time. Basically, there needs to be a session where everyone can come together and provide valuable inputs in ensuring that the project will be done with quality and on time.

The managers felt that there should be a pre-assessment meeting to address the questions of:

- What are the technical issues?
- What are the procurement issues?
- What are the production issues?
- And what are the profit-margin issues?

The team had to come up with an ideal working system (model) that will allow all of them to obtain accurate information so that they can perform with the best of their abilities to achieve the stated objective e.g., delivering on-time, with quality, enhanced satisfaction for the (internal/external) customers. This working system must comply towards the values of being in high spirits, challenging, honest, responsible, self-improvement, respect, job satisfaction, and of course teamwork.
APPENDIX B

RESEARCH TOOLS
THE McKinsey 7S FRAMEWORK

The McKinsey 7S framework addresses the issue of the process on analyzing how well the organization is positioned to achieve its intended objective. It is presumed in this model that some approaches are taken by looking at the internal factors, while others look at external ones. Also, in some cases, the internal and external are combined to get a better perspective on the matter. Furthermore, another method is looking for the congruence between various aspects of the organization being studied. Ultimately, the issue comes down to which factors to study.

The basic argument of the model is that there are seven internal aspects of an organization that need to be aligned if it is to be successful. The 7S model can be used in a wide variety of situations where an alignment perspective is useful so that it can assist in the following:

- Improving the performance of a company.
- Examining the likely effects of future changes within a company.
- Aligning departments and processes during a merger or acquisition.
- Determining how best to implement a proposed strategy.

The McKinsey 7S model involves seven interdependent factors which are categorized as either "hard" or "soft" elements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hard Elements</th>
<th>Soft Elements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Shared Values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems</td>
<td>Style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"Hard" elements are easier to define or identify and management can directly influence them: These are strategy statements; organization charts and reporting lines; and formal processes and IT systems. "Soft" elements, on the other hand, can be more difficult to describe, and are less tangible and more influenced by culture. However, these soft elements are as important as the hard elements if the organization is going to be successful. The elements are described as followed:

- **Strategy**: the plan devised to maintain and build competitive advantage over the competition.
- **Structure**: the way the organization is structured and who reports to whom.
- **Systems**: the daily activities and procedures that staff members engage in to get the job done.
- **Shared Values**: called "super-ordinate goals" when the model was first developed, these are the core values of the company that are evidenced in the corporate culture and the general work ethic.
- **Style**: the style of leadership adopted.
- **Staff**: the employees and their general capabilities.
- **Skills**: the actual skills and competencies of the employees working for the company.

The model is based on the theory that, for an organization to perform well, these seven elements need to be aligned and mutually reinforcing. So, the model can be used to help identify what needs to be realigned to improve performance, or to maintain alignment (and performance) during other types of change.
THE TEAM LEARNING PYRAMID

According to Hays (2006), the team learning pyramid provides a premise based on three meta-competencies - Dialogue, Reflection, and Mindfulness (DRM). Hays felt that the elements have been covered in the scientific literature to more or less of a degree, but generally treated separately in a form of study. While each aspect has been made known as positive impact indicator upon individual and group learning, effectiveness, performance, and change, the author wanted to unite the components of Dialogue, Reflection, and Mindfulness for the purpose of extracting more benefits out of each one. Hays preliminary research design using four case examples supplied some supporting facts that they can and do operate synergistically.

In theory, a group employing each element of the pyramid—Dialogue, Reflection, and Mindfulness—in a concerted way could reach the pinnacle of collaborative effectiveness, achieving and sustaining heights of performance that group members could not otherwise attain or maintain; each domain is its most concentrated at the apex where they converge. This is where interaction amongst the three elements is greatest and the fullest potential synergy might be realized.

The Team Learning Pyramid integrates three meta-competencies related to learning, effectiveness, performance, and change. These meta-competences are of relevance to teams and work groups across a range of endeavor and spanning different levels of authority and autonomy. They embody habits of mind and group process skills necessary in collaborative work involving complex problems and tough decisions, including and especially where learning and change are sought. DRM are particularly important when working in cross-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder (heterogeneous) collaborations, and when relationship-building and sustained performances are of concern. DRM comprise a crucial and widely-applicable set of collaborative and learning capacities.
BLAME VS. GAIN BEHAVIORS

The “Blame vs. Gain Behaviors” is considered as a very simple tool for assisting managers to reflect on their own attitudes and responses to the errors and mistakes that have been made. According to the “Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action 2002 Annual Review”: ‘Defensive reasoning’ is one that may have particular relevance to the Humanitarian Sector, with its vocational nature and high levels of personal and professional commitment. For many years, Argyris’s work has demonstrated that individuals develop defensive routines to protect themselves from threatening situations, such as ‘critically examining their own role in the organization’. These routines limit their ability to discover ‘how the very way they go about defining and solving problems can be a source of problem in its own right’. In short they block the ability to learn to see or do things differently...

- The culture of an organization can serve to reinforce ‘defensive routines’ and inhibit learning. To quote Argyris (1991) directly: ‘... if learning is to persist, managers and employees must also look inward. They need to reflect critically on their own behavior, identify the ways they often inadvertently contribute to the organization’s problems, and then change how they act.’

- Argyris demonstrated that skilled professionals were particularly good at using defensive reasoning because they had never learned how to learn from failure. At the point that mistakes happen, such people become defensive, screen out criticism, and put the ‘blame’ on anyone and everyone but themselves. This stands in clear opposition to the need for openness and self-critical analysis that is required for effective learning.

Detailed description of the process

- Step 1: Use a flipchart or projector to show the Blame vs. Gain Behaviors to the assembled group. Read out each “Blame” behavior and the corresponding Gain behavior, and ask for comments on each one as they are read out.

- Step 2: Ask participants to volunteer examples of when they had been on the receiving end of blame behaviors or gain behaviors, and ask for their reasoning as to why this happened and with what consequences. Capture the points on flipchart sheets. Don’t worry if things build slowly - this is an inherently uncomfortable subject!
• Step 3: Repeat Step 2 for when the participants had demonstrated blame or gain behaviours. Ask for reasons.

• Step 4: Get the group to reflect collectively on whether blame behaviours are always unjustified, or if gain behaviors are always appropriate. Try and get a shared idea on what an appropriate balance would be.

• Step 5: Brainstorm ideas for taking a more balanced approach to dealing with mistakes across the organization. Consider using Force Field Analysis (Tool 11) to reflect on the forces for and against the required changes. (http://www.odi.org.uk/rapid/tools/Toolkits/KM/Blame_vs_Gain.html)

Below is an example of how the tool is used:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blame behaviours</th>
<th>Gain behaviours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Judging</td>
<td>Exploring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘You were wrong.’</td>
<td>‘What happened?’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing emotion</td>
<td>Remaining calm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I’m furious with you.’</td>
<td>‘Try not to worry about it.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reacting to what you think happened</td>
<td>Finding out exactly what happened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘You should have...’</td>
<td>‘Let’s take this one step at a time.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blaming people for getting it wrong</td>
<td>Focusing on the process that allowed the mistake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘You should never have let this happen.’</td>
<td>‘What could have been done differently?’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding fault</td>
<td>Providing support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘You only have yourself to blame.’</td>
<td>‘This must be difficult for you but don’t forget this has happened to us all.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focusing on effects</td>
<td>Focusing on causes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘This is going to cause enormous problems for me.’</td>
<td>‘What I want to focus on is all the things that enabled this to happen to us all.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assuming the person should feel guilty/be contrite</td>
<td>Assuming the person wants to learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘You really only have yourself to blame.’</td>
<td>‘What are the main lessons for us?’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeing mistakes as something that must be avoided</td>
<td>Seeing mistakes as part of a learning process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘This must never happen again.’</td>
<td>‘We can learn a lot from this.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

## PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name: RAVEE ART PHOEWHAWM  
Date of Birth: March 14, 1970  
Gender: Male  
Position: Academic Instructor  
Address: 174/215 Land & Houses Park, Nantana 2 Soi 2, Tambon Nonghan, Amphur. Sansai, Chiang Mai 50290

## EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
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<th>Year of Completion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D in Administrative Science, Concentration in Education for Human Resources Administration</td>
<td>Maejo University, Chiang Mai, Thailand</td>
<td>Oct 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive Marketing Award Certificate:</td>
<td>Multimedia Marketing, Manchester, UK</td>
<td>October 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and Organizational Development</td>
<td>New York University School of Continuing and Professional Studies</td>
<td>July 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters of Science:</td>
<td>Long Island University, Brooklyn, NY, USA</td>
<td>May 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources Management</td>
<td>Baruch College, CUNY, New York, NY, USA</td>
<td>Jun 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA: 3.75</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

Business Administration:

Human Resources Management
CAREER SUMMARY

IBM, Rajamangla University of Technology, Lanna

Instructor

Providing lecture and insight to the topic of cross border trade in the analysis of opportunities and potentials in trade, as well as elaborating and reflecting on its challenges and barriers. Facilitating an English language course for undergraduate students to build up confidence and capabilities of verbally communicating in different social settings.

Faculty of Economics, Chiang Mai University

May 12 to Sept 12

Instructor

Providing lecture and insight to the topic of economics of human resources in the analysis of the value of human life, investment process in education and welfare, human and physical capital, cost-benefit analysis of investment on education-welfare, returns from human and physical capital on economic development, and on population and manpower planning. Administering an English language workshop for undergraduate students to write an essay in the form of explaining, analyzing, describing, and arguing.

University Studies Abroad Consortium, Chiang Mai University

Mar 12 to Apr 12

Instructor

Conducted lessons on international business courses in the field of strategy, marketing, business management, and human resources management for students from the United States of America.

College of Arts, Media & Technology

Feb 08 to Oct 10

Instructor

Advised and mentored undergraduate students. Provided occupational development assistance for cooperative education program. Liaised and improvised grammatical structure on thesis work with researcher. Collecting and analyzing data for academic research. Presided over special English language skill courses in essay writing and career preparation for other faculties. Trained working personnel in business correspondence and managerial communication for task function.
London House School of English, Chiang Mai, Thailand  
**Mar 06 to Oct 06**

**Academic Manager**

Recruited and interviewed potential candidates for teaching position. Organized induction and workshop to help teachers become aware of the working environment. Designed internal/external exams for teachers to use. Mentored teachers on strategic lesson plans and teaching to students. Promoted educational training services to private schools.

Swissotel Le Concorde, Bangkok, Thailand  
**Nov 05 to Jan 06**

**Training Manager**

Negotiated with head managers and staff on arranging workshop. Monitored staff training program conducted by head supervisors and outsourced trainers. Coached front-line employees on the proper use of communicating in English to western residents and foreign directors. Delegated training needs analysis tasks to the training officer. Interviewed potential job candidates for certain employment positions.

The British Council, Chiang Mai, Thailand  
**May 01 to Aug 05**

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS (selected)**

- Successfully recruited a new teacher to fill a vacant role with a pressured deadline.
- Developed confidence of a new teacher on method of handling difficult students.
- Leading a team of examiners in testing a very large amount of students in one week.
- Pursued to arrange language testing at a private school for primary school despite encountering setbacks.
- Single-handedly arranged an event to showcase the art work project to entertain Director General of the British Council, UK with limited time.
- Participated in workshop seminars as guest speaker in presenting methods on developing English language skills at Far Eastern College and Payap University.

**PUBLICATION**

*Current work being reviewed for publication:*


Published papers:


• R. Phoewhawm, “Factors Preventing Human Resources Management from Developing Characteristics of being Customer-Focused”, 1st Annual National Academic Conference, Faculty of Business Administration, Maejo University, 2012

• R. Phoewhawm, Dr. Pradtana Yossuck, Dr. Jiraporn Tangkitt, “Moderating the Cross-Cultural Constraints of Team Learning: A Proposal for Two Nationals Working Together”, 1st Annual National Academic Conference, Faculty of Business Administration, Maejo University, 2012


• R. Phoewhawm, Dr. Pradtana Yossuck, Dr. Somkid Kaewhip, and Dr. Bongkoehmas Eklem, “A Case Lesson of Applying Team Learning in a Cross-Cultural Workplace”, International Journal of Innovation & Learning, 2011

• R. Phoewhawm, and Dr. P. Pichayakul, “Thai Undergraduate Students and Netiquette in the Age of Information Technology”, Business Management Research Conference, Faculty of Business Administration, Chiang Mai University, 2011

• R. Phoewhawm, “From the Classroom to the Workplace: A Cooperative Education Stratagem for Student Transitioning Skills”, International Journal of Innovation & Learning, 2010

• R. Phoewhawm, and Dr. P. Ratana, “Making the Knowledge Worker as a Lifestyle Learner”, International Journal of Innovation & Learning, 2010
