Thai Working Women’s Communication Competence
in the U.S. Multinational Companies

Chanjira Arpaket
Faculty of Communication Arts, Chulalongkorn University

ABSTRACT

The purposes of this survey research were to investigate the acceptance of Thai women’s work roles and status, the factors affecting the acceptance of their work competence, and the characteristics of communicatively competent and incompetent Thai working women in the U.S. multinational companies in Thailand. Questionnaire data were collected from 198 members of 12 companies from 6 industries; IT/Computer industry, Hotel and Travel, Media, Finance and Insurance, Food and Beverage, and Consumer Products, of the U.S. multinational companies in Bangkok and 5 in-depth interviews of the expatriates who worked in these companies were also conducted.

Results of the study indicated that:

1. Today, Thai women who worked in the U.S. multinational companies in Thailand gained more acceptances in work competence.

2. The factors, which affected the acceptance of Thai women’s work roles and status were age, marital status, work experience, work positions, educational background, and the levels of English competency and computer literacy.

3. The communicatively competent Thai working women were found to possess good personalities, work morals, and organizational knowledge. They were also found to be open-minded, to be self-confident, to be assertive not aggressive in giving their opinions and ideas. Furthermore, the characteristics of communicatively competent Thai working women had to do with possessing appropriate communication styles, leadership skills, giving instructions/orders skills, listening skills, networking skills and teamworking skills.

4. The communicatively incompetent Thai working women were found to show inactive, stressful, tactful, and immature personalities and mannerism. The study results also indicated that they had no work morals; lacked organizational knowledge and ability to control self-emotion. They also used inappropriate communication styles such as talked behind other’s back, and had inadequate leadership skills and seeking information skills.

Ms. Chanjira Arpaket had graduated from Faculty of Science, Chulalongkorn University and received master's degree from Faculty of Communication Arts, Majoring in Speech Communication, Chulalongkorn University. After that she had worked as Multifunctional Trainee at Bangkok International Trade and Exhibition Center (BITEC) for 2 years. And then she lefted for finding new experience at Kin-Duem Tosit Co., Ltd. While working there, she had attended and completed Modern Manager Program at Faculty of Commerce and Accountancy, Chulalongkorn University. She also interested in International Communications and Communications in Service Industry.
INTRODUCTION

Due to economic and social conditions changes had influenced women's work roles and status and also values towards women. Women had not been only stayed behind men's success but they had walked together with organization's successes and lots of them were in management level (ASIAWEEK; July 13, 2001: 9)

Also in Thailand, since Thai law had forced social to give awareness to women's right together with higher education so Thai women were able to gain more opportunities to show their competence that had made social to realize their capabilities and give more acceptance to them and lots of them were the executive in organizations (Thomson, S., & Bhonsvej, M., 1996)

Furthermore, from globalization and free trade policies, many multinational companies invested in Thailand. From Thai National Bank statistic in 1999 stated that U.S.A. was the greatest investors in Thailand. Since the U.S. national culture that would focus on “Equality” and all would earn equal opportunity to grow up in their career path moreover they were evaluated employees by work performance (Samovar, Porter & Stefani, 1998). This was the interesting point that “how was the acceptance of Thai women's work roles and status?” and “how could they succeed and earn the acceptance in the U.S. multinational companies in Thailand?”

"Communication Competence" has been the significant factor, one who had more communication competence trended to receive greater success in their work. (Luthans, 1998, Chaney & Martin, 2000) However, communication competence had the specific characters, the characteristics of communication competence in each culture were different. (Cooley & Roach, 1984 reference from Sriussadaporn-Chareonngam, N., 1998)

So this research was to study the characteristics of communicatively competent and incompetent Thai working women the acceptance of Thai women's work roles and status, the factors affecting the acceptance of their work competence, in the U.S. multinational companies in Thailand and had studied following research questions;

RQ1 : How is the acceptance of Thai women's work roles and status in the U.S. multinational companies in Thailand?

RQ2 : What are the factors affecting the acceptance of Thai women’s work competence in the U.S. multinational companies in Thailand?

RQ3 : How are the characteristics of communicatively competent Thai working women in the U.S. multinational companies in Thailand?

RQ4 : How are the characteristics of communicatively competent incompetent Thai working women in the U.S. multinational companies in Thailand?

Review of Literature

Culture and Communication Pattern in the U.S. Multinational Companies

Hofstede (1995 referred in Triandis & Albert, 1989) contributed that organization culture reflected from regional culture and mother country's culture. Organization had to develop their own culture which had been the hybrid between regional culture and mother country's culture and that would also influence organization communication patterns.

From Hofstede’s study “Culture consequences: International differences at work-related value” demonstrated 4 cultural dimensions to explain differences of work values and attitudes in countries around the world which were 1) High – Low Individualism 2) High – Low Power Distance 3) High – Low Uncertainty Avoidance 4) High – Low Masculinity. Thai vs. American work values and communication pattern had shown in following:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>American</th>
<th>Thai</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cultural dimension/ Work values</strong></td>
<td><strong>Communication Pattern</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High - Low Individualism</td>
<td>High Individualism - Focus on individual right - Focus on individual work target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High - Low Power Distance</td>
<td>Low Power Distance - Equality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High - Low Uncertainty Avoidance</td>
<td>Low Uncertainty Avoidance - Flexible - High impression to success - Prefer to risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High - Low Masculinity</td>
<td>High Masculinity - Objection - Focus on individual right and success</td>
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Morosini, Shane & Singh (1998) found that behavior of members in multinational organization trended to follow the regional culture. Also Chitakornkijilp (1996) stated that organization culture of the U.S. multinational companies in Thailand had been mixed between U.S. (mother country) managerial culture (evaluation, work responsibilities and work system) and promotion criteria considered from seniority and loyalty to organization that have been received from Thai culture. So it could be indicate that communication pattern of the U.S. multinational companies in Thailand influenced from Thai and American culture or it could be explained that there were 2-way communication and face-to-face communication as American style, in the same time there were also formal communication pattern between superior and subordinate regards to “High power distance”, communication characteristic of Thai culture which has believed in “Face saving”, “krengjai” and “respect to superior” (Fleg, 1989)

**The acceptance of women’s work roles and status**

Komin (1991) found that Thai values towards Thai women emphasized on the role of housewives who had to look after the family, individualism and self esteem but not focused on the equity between genders and most Thai women had non-assertive character. Moreover, Thai social pay attention to women’s beauty. For Thai women’s rule, Thomson & Bhonsvej (1996) identified that, there was less number of women in management level in bureaucracy system comparing to men and lower number in higher evel. So it implied that the acceptance of Thai women’s work roles and status was quite less than men's.
In American, many researcher such as Adler (1992 referred in Axtell, Briggs, Corcoran & Lamb 1997), Kleiman (1998 referred in Herrick, 1999), Stapleton (2001), Youngman (2001) found higher number of women in management level and equal to men and also women’s work barrier had been decreased so many women had become to be the top management in many organizations. However, Lyness & Thompson (2000) stated that women had to face to lots of barrier in order to grow up to management due to social acceptance.

From above researches could imply that in American, there was better trend of the acceptance of women’s work roles and status than in Thailand. However it could not identified this issue in the U.S. multinational companies in Thailand, so this research had questioned that “How was the acceptance of Thai women’s work roles and status in the U.S. multinational companies in Thailand?

Factors affecting the acceptance of women’s work competence

In American, Buzzanell (1995) found that factors affecting the acceptance of women’s work competence and work progression were depends on work performance similar to the study of Lyness & Thompson (2000) which stated that women with good work history together with good work performance could get promotion and earn more acceptance.

For Thai social, Kongchan (1996), Prasertsuk (1999), Swasburi (2000) had studied about this topic in Thai organization and found 2 groups of factors that affecting the acceptance of women’s work competence:

1. Internal/personal factors that were work knowledge and competence, work experience, educational background, age/seniority and marital status

2. External factors that were management and male superior attitude, subordinate gender, and work environment.

Above studies could conclude that Factors in American and in Thai were different. American mostly concerned work performance while Thai would also considered internal/personal factors. So the question was “What were the factors affecting the acceptance of Thai women’s work competence in the U.S. multinational companies in Thailand?

Communication Competence in the U.S. multinational companies

Since the U.S. multinational companies had their own specific organization cultures, which were the hybrid of Thai and American culture. From studies of Funakawa (1997) and Sriussadaporn-Chareonnag & Jablin (1999) could conclude that communicative competent characters in each culture were different and they must be appropriated to situations and contexts.

In multinational companies context, Chapel (1997) suggested that we had to be aware of culture, stereotype, foreign expectation (from mother’s country) to people in each country (regional country) and also expectation from members in the same culture in order to consider the communication competence and act in appropriated way.

To understand communication competence in the U.S. multinational companies, we had reviewed communication competence concepts, which composed of 2 major components as in following:

1. Strategic Communication: Interpersonal Analysis.

This had been focused on a social cognitive perspective, to understand self and role responsibilities within organizations. In Thai context, Sriussadaporn-Chareonnag & Jablin (1993) found that Thais believed in “Boon” “Baramee” “Metta”. So communication competence was associated with knowing when, where and with whom to express respectful manner in organizations. Moreover, Wiwattananugul (1993) described that communication competence in Thai
context composed of “trust” and “openness”. Furthermore, Thais and American had interpreted the meaning of “quite” in different way. Thais defied it as a word which may imply to avoid the conflict while American explained it as the communication controller or enclosure or unknown.

Nana (1996) defied that one who worked in the U.S. multinational companies in Thailand should be assertive and be able to express his own idea due to the characteristics of American would pay attention to “equality”. Everyone had a right to show their opinions however they must realize to propriety and saved other face that influenced from hierarchical system in Thai culture.

2. Tactical Communication

This item had been focused on a skill or performance perspective. In Thai context, Sruussadaporn-Chareonnagam & Jablin (1993) found that the competent communicators must be possessing networking skills, giving advice/feedback skill, receiving & seeking information skill, writing, listening and persuading skill, interviewing skill, interchanging information skill, problem solving skill including other skills that fix to each organization moreover and they had to be friendly.

In American organization, Komin (1990) had analyzed the characteristics of Americans that they were openness, assertive, be able to express their opinion and treat everybody in the same way at all level. Westmyer, DiCioccio & Rubin (1998) had indicated that communication competence was upon the communication channel that reflected to persuade the reactors. The most effective channel was face-to-face following by telephone, voice mail, e-mail, mail and fax respectively.

For multinational companies, Chapel (1997) had suggested that the competent communicators must have both verbal and nonverbal knowledge that mixed and be specific in multinational companies; furthermore, they had to open their minds to understand differences between cultures without prejudice.

Wiwattananugul (1996) found that the most important problem of multinational companies in Thailand was "English efficiency" both in interpretation and wrong pronunciation. Trompenauer (1994 referred in Smith 2000) had inferred that meeting was the main tool to share ideas and technology was also used for gathering data in American work culture. So competent communicators in the U.S. multinational companies were not only possess adaptation capability or understanding cultures but also had skills in English language, proposing idea, listening in meeting and technology usages.

Women’s Communication Competent Characteristics

In American social, Buzzanell (1995) found that the successful women had to act as a man that meant they must be assertive, courageous and resolute decision. However Herrick (1999) had shown that the accepted female superiors possessed the female characteristics such as gentle, polite and modest but had good knowledge both in responsible work and local culture. Moreover Regins, Townsend & Mattis (1998 referred in Smith 2000) indicated that the strategic for women success were communicative networking. They found that women who grew rapidly in organization must create strong network both in and out of their division. That would help them to seek more information, suggestions and supporting. Moreover supporting from their family and relations could effect to mental health and also to their performance.

For differences between Thai and American culture, Manusov, Winchatz & Manning (1997) had studied about the expectation to people from different culture and found that Americans expected that Asian people including Thai women would hold this kinds of characteristics that were shame, modest, avoid eye
contact, not prefer to start conversation. And the study also found that Americans had positive attitude to those who possesses the expected characteristics.

From above data could learn that characteristics of communication competence in Thai organization, The U.S. organization and multinational organization were different. But we could not define the characteristics of communicatively competent Thai working women in the U.S. multinational companies in Thailand. So this research would also study the characteristics of communicatively competent and incompetent Thai working women.

METHODOLOGY

This survey research using questionnaire to examine the acceptance of Thai women’s work roles and status, the factors affecting the acceptance of their work competence, and the characteristics of communicatively competent and incompetent Thai working women in the U.S. multinational companies in Thailand. Open-ended questionnaire was used to conduct the research questionnaire by interviewing 12 middle level managers who played as superior, sub-ordinate and co-worker in organizations. Pilot test was conducted by administering a preliminary questionnaire to 30 respondents in order to enhance clarity and consistency.

The size of sample was calculated from less than 3,000 populations which would be equal 158 samples at +/- 10% at +99% confidential levels (Calculating from \( n = \left( P(1-P)Z^2 \right) \); \( P = .50 \) \( D = .05 \) \( n_c = nN(N+n-1) \). So for more confidence, the size of sample was set at 180 samples rating by the number of employees of each organization of 12 companies from 6 major industries (2 companies from each industry: IT/Computer industry, Hotel and Travel, Media, Finance and Insurance, Food and Beverage, and Consumer Products) of the U.S. multinational companies in Thailand. However 198 usable data were collected And 5 expatriates were interviewed to fulfilling data.

The questionnaires were distributed into 3 versions: for superior, for sub-ordinate, and for peer. Each versions contained similar details but adapted to status of respondents. The questionnaires were divided into 4 major sections. The first section sought demographic information: gender, age, marital status, highest level of education, position, work experience and type of organization.

The second section consisted of opinions to Thai women’s work roles and status, chances for women to show their performance and the acceptance of Thai women’s work competence in the U.S. multinational companies in Thailand.

The third section was to investigate which factors: gender, age, marital status, job tenure, position, educational level, educational institute, Thai and abroad institute, English efficiency, computer literature, type of job, and salary, affecting the acceptance of Thai women’s work competence in the U.S. multinational companies in Thailand.

The last section composed of 174 items grouped into 3 sections; 20 items of personalities, 40 items of work characters, and 94 items of work behaviors in order to identify the characteristics of communicatively competent and incompetent Thai working women in the U.S. multinational companies in Thailand. All questionnaire subject were asked to indicate on four point, Likert-type scales (1.00 = strongly disagree, 4 = strongly agree)

Data Analysis

The researcher employed descriptive statistics to analyze demographic data and inferential statistics to examine research questions.

Non-parametric for 2 independent variables (Mann-Whitney U Test) was used to examine the differences of mean of levels of the acceptance of Thai women’s work roles and status between male and
female respondents, to explore mean and S.D to explain reasons of the acceptance of Thai women’s work roles and status. Moreover Kruskal – Wallis Test was conducted to examine the differences of mean of levels of the acceptance of Thai women’s work roles and status among status of respondents (superior, sub-ordinate, and co-worker).

To investigate factors affecting the acceptance of Thai women’s work competence in the U.S. multinational companies in Thailand. Non-parametric for 2 independent variables (Mann-Whitney U Test) was used to examine the differences of mean of factors scales between male and female respondents, to explore mean and S.D to explain reasons. Furthermore, Kruskal – Wallis Test was conducted to examine the differences of mean of factors scales among status of respondents (superior, sub-ordinate, and co-worker).

The characteristics of communicatively competent and incompetent Thai working women in the U.S. multinational companies in Thailand were examined by non-parametric for 2 independent variables (Mann Whitney U Test) to explore the differences of mean of characteristics between male and female respondents, to find mean and S.D to explain reasons. Kruskal Wallis Test was also conducted to examine the differences of mean of characteristics scales among status of respondents (superior, subordinate, and co-worker).

Qualitative Analysis was also conducted in this research. We grouped and pointed essential data from additional interviewing in order to support and to clarify interpretation and analyzing.

**RESPONDENTS**

198 participants of this research, 65 superiors, 67 subordinates and 66 co-workers, of respondents worked in 27.8% worked in IT/Computer companies and Consumer products companies, 14.6% were employees of Food & Beverage companies, 14.1% worked in Travel & Hotel, 10.6% worked in Media, and 5.1% from Finance and Insurance. Approximately half of the respondents were female (58%) and half male (42%). The typical participants were bachelor and ranged in age from 31 – 40 (40%). More than 50% of respondents had 0 – 5 years of work experience. Regarding to educational background, number of members of samples who held graduate degrees was nearly to the number of postgraduate degrees.

**RESULTS**

*Research Question 1*

The Analysis of how the acceptance of Thai women’s work roles and status in the U.S. multinational companies in Thailand had showed that Thai women who worked in the U.S. multinational companies in Thailand had more work competence and be able to present their idea in workplace. Today, there were more number of Thai Women in management level and they were accepted that they had equal competent to men. For the openness to women, organizations gave opportunities to women to show their abilities due to organization culture that focus on “Equity” harmonious to expatriates’ opinions, which defied that this culture was transferred from American. Thai Women who were more assertive would gain more acceptances. The expatriates also supported that most of Thai women had more responsibility, toughness and that characteristics made them to earn more acceptance than men sometimes. However, some participants revealed that Thai women should gain better work status and the number of Thai women in the top management level is much smaller than men (around 30:70).

*Research Question 2*

This item was to investigate the factors affecting the acceptance of Thai women’s work competence in the U.S. multinational companies in Thailand. The
results showed that there were factors that directly affected to the acceptance; English efficiency, computer literature, and educational background. The study indicated that Bachelor’s degree was the lowest level to gain the acceptance. Low educational level was the barrier for work progression, however, the respondents disagreed that the higher educational level would indicate the wider vision and it was not the criteria for promotion consideration.

The analysis had shown that “work performance” was the most important factor that affecting the acceptance. Educational institute was another factor that affect to the acceptance, expatriates agreed that Thai women who were oversea graduated had more competence than one who graduated from Thai university. However Thai participants did not admit this point, they acknowledged Thai women who graduated in Thailand but had good English efficiency would hold equal competent to whom that graduated from oversea. So English skills was more important than location of institution. The study also indicated that gender and marital status were not considered to relate to the acceptance.

**Research Question 3**

To study the characteristics of communicatively competent Thai working women in the U.S. multinational companies in Thailand. We had revealed into 3 sections: superior, sub-ordinate and co-worker.

**The characteristics of communicatively competent Thai working women in superior level.**

The accepted superior was the good dressing person who dressed suitable to situation, clean, modern but appropriated to her work and age. Moreover, she must possess leadership personality, smart and flexible, high responsibility, assertive not aggressive, selfconfident, be able to travel alone. Moreover, she had to be possessing teamworking skills, information transferring skills, presentation skills, persuasion skills, knowing when, where and with whom to express respectful manners, able to socialize with people in all levels in organization, not shame to ask sub-ordinate when she did not understand, providing suggestion to sub-ordinates to create their own work, be willing to coordinate or contact by telephone, giving clear organizational information to other people, holding good meeting skills including open, run though and control meeting. However, competent superior had not possess these characteristics; speak out sub-ordinate’s mistake in public, not be honest and loyal to organization, not be responsible to her word and had bias and not be able to work as a team.

*The characteristics of communicatively competent Thai working women in sub-ordinate level.*

The characteristics of accepted sub-ordinate composed of good personality which was active working suitable dressing with clean and modern but appropriated to her work and age suit. Furthermore, she was responsible to her work, be sacrificed herself to work, be friendly, be optimistic, had good vision, be self-confident, be open-minded and listened to other opinions.

Moreover, communicatively competent sub-ordinate had to do with possessing appropriate communication styles; asking supervisor to obtain enough information, talking clearly and directly to the point, talking with power, knowing how to select appropriated word approach to people in varying positions in different situations, holding good instruction receiving skills, creating informal relationship to superior such as asking about happiness and sufferings, following organization’s rule, policy and target, providing courage to co-worker when she/he was in trouble. According to the study, competent communicator did not have these behaviors; sneering and sarcastically talking, talking with impolite and insulting behavior.
The characteristics of communicatively competent Thai working women in co-worker level.

The communicatively competent co-worker characteristics possessed good personalities and good manner: modest, polite, and clam but also active and respectful. She always wore suitable dress, clean and modern but appropriated to her age and status. Furthermore, she usually intended to seek for knowledge, worked meticulously and systematically. She was able to travel alone and self-supporting, be frank and fair. Besides, she possessed to have teamwork skills, listening skill, be assertive but not aggressive, be capable to open, run though and conclude the meeting, transferred knowledge clearly and systematically, be open to other questions if the others was uncertain about works, principle talking, talking clearly and directly to the point, be able to present clearly and interesting.

From the study, competent co-worker did not possess these behaviors; sneering and sarcastically talking, talking with impolite and insulting manner, using superior’s power to protect herself, and humiliated co-working in public.

From expatriates’ view, the characteristics of communicatively competent Thai working women in the U.S. multinational companies were found to possess western characteristics. It could be explained that they were self-confident, assertive and decisive, and be able to communicate with expatriates. Moreover, she selected to use Face-to-face or 1 to 1 communication style as the main channel. This was also similar to Thais’ opinion. Besides, expatriates gave more information that the accepted communicator should be always “smiling” which represented Thai characteristics.

Research Question 4

This study had investigated the characteristics of communicatively competent Thai working women in the U.S. multinational companies in Thailand into 3 sections: superior, sub-ordinate and co-worker.

The characteristics of communicatively incompetent Thai working women in superior level.

The communicatively incompetent superior was found to show inactive, stressful, and impolite personalities. She also used too much make-up with messy hair. Moreover, she was untactful and never protected her sub-ordinate, be moody, lacked of discipline and work systematic, be jealous, be flattering, be competing for a better position, and too self-confident.

Furthermore, incompetent supervisor was not responsible for her word, expressed bad manner in communication, talked uncertainty and not ready to answer the question to sub-ordinate, too much ambition without morality, freely talked without regard to other feeling, talked with impolite and insulting manner, talked about other previous mistake, humiliated sub-ordinate in public, and expressed her power to intimidate other. Besides, she lacked of honest and loyalty to answer the question to sub-ordinate, too much ambition organization such as utilizing working hour for private business, assumed other word without reference, and lacked of persuasion skill to induce team to the target.

The characteristics of communicatively incompetent Thai working women in sub-ordinate level.

The accepted sub-ordinate was found to express inactive, stressful, and impolite personalities. She was also untactful, lacked of discipline and work systematic, too self-confident, irritated, be finicky and thought fastidiously, and also not be able to control her emotion.

Furthermore, incompetent sub-ordinate held behaviors: telephoned in the meeting, lacked of proficient in her choice of words approach when she is with people in varying organizational positions in different situations. She denied and avoided working, was not able to persuade other to believe in her capability, was not responsible for her word, talked uncertainly and not.
ready to answer the question to superior, discriminated and could not work as a team, talked only things that had benefit to herself, never cooperated or attended organization activity.

From the study, incompetent sub-ordinate did not have these behaviors: taking clearly and directly to the point, and powerful talking.

The characteristics of communicatively incompetent Thai working women in co-worker level.

The communicatively incompetent co-worker was discovered to have inactive, stressful, and impolite personalities. Moreover, she was insincere and never protected her colleagues, lacked of discipline and work systematic, be jealous, be flattering, lacked of reasons and not be able to classify personal business to the work and stole other achievement to be hers.

Furthermore, she could do everything to get what she wanted, could not persuade others to believe in her competence, talked behind others’ back, lacked of communication skill to make other to understand her idea, talked without caring other feeling, discriminated and could not work as a team, lacked of work competency.

The study had also shown that incompetent co-worker did not have these manners: powerful talking to receive respect from others, providing courage to others when facing working problems, answering question about work without impeding. Moreover she was not capable to be the leader in recreational activities and not able to persuade co-workers to team’s target.

From expatriates’ opinions, the characteristics of communicatively incompetent Thai working women in the U.S. multinational companies were lack self-confident, assertive and decisive skill, and be afraid to express their ideas. Furthermore, she never planed their works and could not transfer their view to others, could not talk to the point and talked behind others’ back.

DISCUSSION

The acceptance of Thai women’s work roles and status in the U.S. multinational companies

The results supported that Thai women had earned more work competence, people in organizations agreed that Thai women had more competent. We could see that there were more number of Thai Women in management level and they were more assertive but not aggressive to express their opinions matching to Adler (1992) and Kleiman et al (1998) studies which presented that number of women in management level were increased and were equal to the men. Organizations opened opportunities to Thai women to show their competence. That could be explained that organization culture had influenced from Low Power Distance values of American that emphasized on “Equity” and provided equal opportunities to every genders and ages. Moreover, individual work progression was up to individual work performance (Samovar, Porter & Stefani, 1998). Besides, the economic conditions that had more competitions made employees in organizations to have more capability without gender barriers as the notice of foreign respondent.

The expatriates’ view also agreed that most Thai women had higher responsibility and were tougher than men. So, Thai women were received more trust and acceptance from the expatriates.

However, the research found interested notice that the ratio of women to men in management level was 30:70. This indicated that number of Thai women were much less than men. But, it was not because of the differences of work competence between women and men but women’s work characteristics which were lack of self-confident and be shame to express their opinions in sometimes, and the nature of women was use their feeling and emotion to relate to their work. Furthermore, Thai culture gave important role to the men (Thomson, & Bhonsvej, 1995) and Thais believed
that Thai women should play as housewives who had to take care of their family (Komin, 1991). Lyness & Thompson (2000) study supported women had to face to lots of barrier in order to grow up to management due to social acceptation. And from result of this study also stated that Thai women were lack of abilities to share reasons, information and fact in expressing opinions that made them seemed to possess less competent than men.

So from slightly overview, women received equal acceptance of work roles and status to men but deeply study could be found that there were other factors as co-workers’ attitude, social context and organization culture which identified women’s work role in organizations. However from this study could not clear this point, so the further research should have been conducted.

Factors affecting the acceptance of women’s work competence in the U.S. multinational companies

From the analysis showed that gender was not the factor which affecting the acceptance of Thai women’s work competence in the U.S. multinational companies in Thailand. Men did not earn special privilege in promotion consideration or gain more organization’s information. This was affected from organization culture which gave equality to everybody and also examined people from their own performances as the notion in research question 1. Moreover, this was related to research result that age was not affect to the acceptance but up to competence and other components such as work experience. That could explain that the elder had more work experience which influenced him/her to hold better idea, have diversity of work methodology and be able to express suitable opinions when comparing to the younger person. Furthermore, longer work duration made one to learn how to work, to make decision, to solve problem, and also to expertise in his/her work. These factors could support him/her to have more ability to adjust him/her to gain more acceptances from colleagues and this would affect to promotion consideration. Besides, elder or expertise could accredit some kind of work, such as sociable work. This could be explained by Thai values which was relied on “Seniority” including work position that had effect to others, moreover higher position in work had also reflected to higher competence. The issue was similar to the U.S. expatriate’ view that to growing up to higher position, people had to show their performance and walked across the barriers to approve themselves.

Type of works was another important factor, the investigation showed that financial, accounting, secretarial and administrative work were suitable to women. The expatriates commented that this was affected from Thai values to women which influenced Thai women to prefer to study in field of accountant or financing and there were more female participants than male in those positions. So social realized that women were the experts in those works. However, the expatriates believed that women were capable to work in other types of works if they had abilities and appropriated qualifications.

For educational background, the lowest degree that would be accepted was bachelor’s degree as the interviewees agreed that low education was the barrier to the works. Moreover, Khongchan (1996) stated that the higher education supported occupational progression. Educational background was also the factor that used for screening participants, they were usually considered from graduated institute that was famous or the same institute as interviewer. However after that step the institute would have no effect.

To analysis location of institute: Thai and oversea, as the expatriates defied that Thai women who graduated from aboard had better International Communication Skills and better visions than one who studied in Thailand. So they would have more competence.
However Thai members did not agree, they indicated that English efficiency and appropriated work concept were more important than the location of institute. From this point, it could be interpreted that English efficiency was very important to work in the U.S. multinational companies because it was normal situation for deal with foreigners both inside and outside organizations. So the lack of English efficiency would be harmful to organization (Wiwattananugul, 1993)

Computer Literate was also the significant factor. From the pilot test found that nowadays, most organizations provided 1 computer to 1 employee so every employee needed to have computer’s basic knowledge such as MS Office.

Furthermore, work performance was the most important factor. Khongchan (1996) identified that good work performance brought better attitude and the acceptance from colleagues. It reflected to American work values; High Masculinity that focused on work succession and measuring people from work performance (Lyness & Thompson, 2000).

Furthermore, the analysis found that men quite paid more attention to the dressing and female physical while women would focus on personalities.

2. Work characters

The communicatively competent Thai working women had high responsibilities, provided themselves to works, attempted to seek for knowledge, and were charitable. The above characters represented characteristics of Low Masculinity which was compromise and also reflected characteristics of Low Individualism which was helpful and had harmony in group. So the competent women must always be willing to offer themselves to assist other colleagues. (Sriussadaporn Chareongam, 1998)

Moreover, the communicatively competent Thai working women were self-confident, decisive, enterprising, courageous and assertive but not aggressive. Those work characters related to Buzzanell’s study (1995) which stated that the accepted women acted as masculine: assertive, resolute, and venturesome. But that were opposite to American’s expectation to Thai women who must be shame and be avoid eye contact (Manusov, Winchatz & Manning, 1997). This would explain that the cultures in the U.S. multinational companies were affected from High Individualism characteristics of American (Assertive and self-confident), and in the same time, cultures had been mixed by High Uncertainty Avoidance characteristics of Thai (Modest and acting in polite way).

The competent women must be fair, frank, friendly, good-humored, optimistic, opened-minded, disclosable,
and also listened to other opinions as Wiwattananugul (1993) defined that the effective communication in American organization composed of trust and openness. Moreover, subordinates were required to have vision, be gentle and be mature because high competitive in American organization pushed the subordinates who needed to progress in their work must have good vision and attempt to look for knowledge without any forcing or help.

Furthermore, from research found that most of member in superiors’ level and co-workers’ level in this study were in first line management and middle-management level which needed meticulous character, systematic working, and be able to travel alone. Because there were more travels both in and out of country when working in the higher positions in multinational companies and most travels were individually.

3. Work behaviors

Work behaviors of the competently communicative Thai working women could be separated into 8 items:

Item 1: Communicative methods and behaviors: proficiency in her choice of words and speaking approach when she was with people in vary organizational positions in different situations, talking clear, polite and gentle tone of voice, and direct to the point, giving respect to partner, speaking with sense of humor and creating relax atmosphere, never interrupting others when they were talking, never talking about other weakness behind their back. Moreover, know how to gently denying irresponsible work.

The research had shown that communicative methods and behaviors were related to timing, place, and people, this was because of Thai society was high context concerned and High Uncertainty Avoidance values. (Sriussadaporn-Chareongam & Jablin, 1999) Moreover, the competent women displayed behaviors consistent with soft outward, firm or hard inside: know how to communicate with gentle as a woman but having power as a man. (Komin, 1991)

Item 2: Instruction Skills: to have ability to transfer knowledge in systematically and clearly way, created precise and attractive work presentation. In the same time, to be not afraid to ask colleagues when need information. Moreover superior must have good instruction skills and be open to co-worker and subordinate to share idea before making decision because most communication in the U.S. company were focus on 2-way communication (Nana, 1994) and most accepted channel was face-2-face which was the suitable and effective channel for persuasion (Westmyer et al. 1998). This represented to Low Uncertainty Avoidance values as American and the respondents also identified that superiors should listen to subordinates’ opinions and not to show off power without reasons. That would make good attitude to superiors and they would receive cooperation

Item 3: Listening skills: superior and co-workers must listen to problem and opinions with understanding and not resist to subordinates when asking for any assistants while subordinates must have good listening to order skills.

Item 4: Networking skills: to create good relationship with co-worker such as asking about all happiness and sufferings, to connect and create network to all people in every level in organization equally as Regins et al (1998 referred in Smith, 2000) stated that networking would supported women to progress in their work rapidly because they could know whom they could find information, suggestion and cooperation.

Item 5: Leadership skills: competent women must be able to control meeting: open, run through and close the meeting, be able to clearly provide organizational information to other people, and be able to general talking to other people. Moreover, superior must have persuasion capabilities and be able to induce colleague to the team’s goal including to be the leader of extra
activities. The research showed that the accepted sub-ordinates brought their family to join organization activities, this behavior represented to incriminating and made sub-ordinates to admire their bosses that they would well manage both their works and families.

**Item 6**: Teamworking Skills; to be able to work as a team or work with other people, please to coordinate or follow up work by telephone, to open opportunities for other people to show fully their opinions and not to afraid to express view that was contrary to other views which may cause damage. Moreover, superior must be able to order or assign work exactly and delight to provide additional information or feedback to sub-ordinates. The interviewee said that the U.S. multinational companies preferred to work as a team and anyone who was not able to work with other people may be considered or self-realized to resign from work.

**Item 7**: Organizational knowledge; know and behave follow organizational roles, regulations, and policies and also to look after and follow up movement in organization.

**Item 8**: Work moralities; be able to answer questions about work without suppression and understand and be willing to solve problem, cheer up colleagues when facing problems, and remember their own words, superiors must keep eyes on their sub-ordinates, and asking with care and helpful if sub-ordinates seem to be in trouble. Furthermore, superior should warn their sub-ordinates personally when they made mistakes. Superior should give suggestions from real experience to sub-ordinates that they could be able to adapt to their own working methods. However sub-ordinate would not reject assigned work and willing to do it.

Besides, accepted sub-ordinates were required to have good reporting skills both by oral and writing, they would report job’s progression to their boss to know the status of job (Sriussadaporn-Chareonnagam & Jablin, 1999)

Moreover, from expatriates’ views the communicatively competent women in the U.S. multinational companies must have international skills or must be able to adapt to other national culture as Govindarajan & Gupta (2001) had explained that the competent communicators in multinational companies were easy going and understanding and getting use to other cultures. Furthermore, the expatriates also gave additional comments that Thai women should represent Thai culture, so they must “easy smiling” which also meant friendship as same as foreigners’ expectation.

*The characteristics of communicatively in competent Thai working women in the U.S. multinational companies*

This item had also grouped into 3 sections: Personalities, work characters, and work behaviors

1. **Personalities**

   The communicatively incompetent Thai working women were found to show inactive, stressful, untactful and immature personalities. There was notice that women with good dressing but held above personalities were not been accepted. And the research found that physical appearance had not affected to the acceptance that was contrast to Thai values which paid attention to women’s beauty (Komin, 1991).

2. **Work characters**

   From the research, the incompetent working women were lack of discipline and work system, lack of responsibility, indolence. So they would not gained trust from co-workers to work alone. Moreover they also found to have no friendship, nurse hatred, be revengeful, lack of ability to control self-emotion, be fussy, be too much unyieldingly, fawn over their master, and complete for better position. They could not separate personal issue from work which showed off their immaturity.

   Furthermore, they were selfish, too self-confident or lack of self-confidence, indecisive, narrow-minded,
and ungenerous. The respondents stated that those characters made women hard to approach, especially if they were too self-confident then they would never listen to other opinions, in contrast, if they were lack of self-confident, they would not able to show their view, be afraid to make decision or create any work. This point was related to research question 1 that women who were assertive to express their opinion would have more chance to grow up in their work. Moreover, stealing other job, the most unaccepted character, which represented to lacking of work morality, especially for subordinates' and co-workers'.

3. Work behaviors

The incompetently communicative Thai working women had work behaviors that could be separated into 7 items:

The communicatively incompetent Thai working women were found to show inactive, stressful, untactful and immature personalities and mannerism. The study results also indicated that they had no work moralities; lacked organizational knowledge and ability to control self-emotion. They also used inappropriate communication styles, talked behind other's back, and had inadequate leadership skills and seeking information skills.

**Item 1**: Communicative methods and behaviors; used unsuitable words and methods in inappropriate time, talked without regard to other feeling, talked with impolite and insulting manner, talked only things that had benefit to themselves. From these characteristics could be confirmed that the U.S. multinational companies had concerned about communicative proprieness, the respondents stated that unaccepted women always selected unsuitable pronoun, which researcher assumed that Thai language was the hierarchical language which differed from English language. So the proper behavior and words were very important issue to concern when communicating with people in different status and situation.

Moreover, the unaccepted women always talked unclearly and were not prepared to answer questions to co-workers, talked indirectly to the point and nonsensically. Those behaviors had showed the inefficient communication which made the error in meaning and understanding which brought the mistake to the work.

**Item 2**: Leadership skills; having no capability to persuade co-workers to believe in their competence and unable to make other to understand what they wanted to say this including the lack of English efficiency because the bilingual skills were required in the U.S. multinational company so the competent women must be able to communicate clearly to both Thai and expatriates.

**Item 3**: Information receiving skills; the communicatively incompetent women would not read the memo, never asked for colleagues' opinion, unaccepted the meeting's conclusion, resisted to the changes, delayed their unpleased work, expressed an emotion if other analyzed their works or opinions, denied their responsibility. Those characteristic had showed off the discrimination to communicate with colleagues which had not appropriated to the culture that focused on working as a team in the U.S. multinational companies.

**Item 4**: Emotional control behaviors; making the uproar without reasons, using emotion while communicated, express the unsuitable nonverbal manner when had assigned to not to gain the acceptance as the result of research question 1.

**Item 5**: Properness and etiquette in communications; telephoning in meeting, using organizational telephone for private business. Due to working culture that spent most time in meeting to gathering ideas, answering cell phone would interrupt other and the meeting would not as smooth as usual. Moreover, the unaccepted women always talked about other mistakes,
talked behind other’s backs. These referred to lack of etiquette and work morality and also insincere that may cause separation in organization.

**Item 6:** Organizational knowledge; lacked of understanding to organizational culture, lacked of westernize working skill which required the interaction communication, and lacked of organizational knowledge and work competence. This result related to research question 2 that performance had effect to the acceptance.

**Item 7:** Work morality; the incompetent women would not warn their superior or co-worker when they made mistake, were not willing to join organizational activities, lacked of honest and loyalty to organization such as utilizing working hour for private business, assumed other word without reference. Moreover subordinates had always followed the order, be afraid of their boss and flattered their superior. These were related to Sruissadaporn-Chareonngam & Jablin (1999) that these kinds of subordinates were not wanted anymore in organizations. However to express the different idea would concern about time and situation as research had commented that Thai culture was the hierarchical social and had ‘saving faces’ values.

From the analysis had shown that over the communicative method and teamworking, work morality was another important issue that had influence in the U.S. multinational companies as well as being used as the accepted index for individual employee or the lack of work morality workers would not gain any acceptance in the organizations.

**Note:** More than half of respondents in this research were female and most had received more than graduate degrees (89 %) which more than the average Thai citizen. And some samples gain degree from aboard which made them to have different idea from who that educated in Thailand. Moreover, most participants were in management levels which were the less number comparing to all employees in the organizations.

**REFERENCE**


Swasburi, O. 2000. *Subordinates' perceptions of Thai women leaders' communication competence and leadership effectiveness*. Ph.D. dissertation, Graduate School, Bangkok University, Bangkok.


