The preferred style of managers: An empirical study of Australian and Thai employees

THE PREFERRED STYLE OF MANAGERS: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF AUSTRALIAN AND THAI EMPLOYEES

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SUMMARY

The study examined the preferred and perceived style of managers among employees in Australia and Thailand using a questionnaire survey. The correlation analysis and analysis of variance techniques were employed to investigate the relationship between preferred style of managers and perceived influence in decision-making, utilisation of skills, satisfaction with participation and job satisfaction. The results indicated that the most preferred style of managers among Australian employees was a participative manager, followed by a consultative, and a paternalistic manager. Surprisingly, nearly one third of Australian employees perceived their managers to be autocratic. Thai employees' preferred style of manager was the consultative manager, followed by participative, and paternalistic, while a large proportion of employees perceived they worked under a consultative manager. For both nation samples, employees who perceived their managers to be more democratic, also reported a higher degree skill utilisation, satisfaction with participation, and job satisfaction. In addition, Thai employees reported a greater degree of influence in decision-making when the manager was perceived to be more democratic.

INTRODUCTION

Power has been identified as an important element of interpersonal behaviour (Adamopoulos, 1982, Wish, Deutsch, & Kaplan, 1976). Research examining cultural values (e.g., Hofstede, 1980; Schwartz, 1994) suggests that the extent to which inequality in power is accepted varies from culture to culture. Inequality in power occurs in all societies, but according to Hofstede (1980), what differentiates one culture from another is the degree of tolerance for or acceptance of unequal relationships that exist. The objective of the present study is to examine the concept of power distance in the organisational setting, in particular, with respect to the management style preferred by Australian and Thai employees. The study also examines the effect of perceived style of managers on employees' reported level of influence in decision making, utilisation of skills, satisfaction with the opportunity to participate in decisions, and overall job satisfaction.

Hofstede conducted a 50-country study of IBM employees (Hofstede, 1980, 1983) and found differences between countries in relation to employees' preference for an autocratic (tells), paternalistic/persuasive (sells), consultative (consults), or participative (consensus) manager (a detailed description of each type of manager is given in the methodology section). Hofstede (1980) found that in countries in which few employees are afraid to disagree with their managers (e.g., low power distance countries, such as Australia), a larger proportion of employees preferred a consultative manager. Other studies (Clark and McCabe, 1970; Stening and Wong, 1983) found that Australian managers favoured more democratic managerial values. On the other hand, in countries in which many employees are afraid to disagree with their managers (e.g., high power distance countries, such as Thailand), subordinates' preference for managers was spread across the autocratic, paternalistic, or a majority vote type of manager (Hofstede replaced this type of manager with a *participative manager* in a later survey in 1971-1973), but not the consultative style (Hofstede, 1980). Redding and Casey (1975) found that Thai managers favoured an autocratic rather than a democratic style of leadership, while Deyo (1978) reported that Thai workers preferred close supervision rather than general supervision.

Drawing on the existing research evidence, it is predicted that a larger proportion of Australian employees will prefer a consultative manager.

Thai employees will prefer either an autocratic or a paternalistic manager, while only a few employees will favour a consultative manager.

> *Hypothesis 1: A larger proportion of Australian employees will prefer a consultative manager.*
>
> *Hypothesis 2: A larger proportion of Thai employees will prefer either an autocratic or paternalistic to a participative or consultative manager.*

Differences in values is another individual difference factor which may influence employees' response to participation (Hulin, 1971; Singer, 1974). Morse and Lorsch (1970) found that some individuals working under a formal structure with little participation can be highly motivated and satisfied, while some individuals working under a high degree of participation can be demotivated and dissatisfied. Abdel-Halim (1983), Abdel-Halim and Rowland (1976), and Vroom (1960) found that some subordinates preferred authoritarian leadership and were likely to reject participative leadership. Gouldner (1954), Harnquist (1956), Baumgartel (1957) and Ziller (1957) found that employees who perceived their managers to be more democratic were more satisfied than employees who perceived their managers to be autocratic. Thus, it is hypothesised that:

> *Hypothesis 3: Employees who perceive their managers to be democratic will report a greater degree of satisfaction with participation, job satisfaction and a higher degree of perceived influence in decision making.*

METHODOLOGY

Survey Instrument

Perceived influence in decision making is a measure derived from the decision list from the industrial democracy in Europe 12-country study (IDE, 1981). These decisions include those dealing with personnel functions (e.g., appointment of an immediate supervisor), the work itself (e.g., work group expenditures), working conditions (e.g., improvement in work conditions), and company policies (e.g., whether the company should make a new product). The degree of influence is measured on a six-point scale, from "no information is made available to me" (coded 1), to "I/group make(s) the final decision" (coded 6). High scores represent high levels of perceived influence. Reliability analysis of the scores on the 16 items showed acceptable Cronbach's alpha coefficients of .92 and .88 for the Australian and Thai samples, respectively.

Skill utilisation, satisfaction with participation, and job satisfaction are based on a number of items. The responses to the questions range from *strongly disagree* (coded 1), *disagree* (2), *neither disagree or agree* (3), *agree* (4) to *strongly agree* (5).

Skill utilisation is based on four items that assess the extent to which jobs give employees the opportunity to use their ideas, initiative, and decisiveness in their work. The set of questions is derived from Heller, Drenth, Koopman, and Rus (1988). The scale reliability was acceptable for both nation samples (Australia = .90; Thailand = .81).

Satisfaction with participation. The measure for satisfaction with the opportunity for participation is based on five items, which ask respondents about their level of satisfaction with opportunities to give advice, to participate in work-related decisions, and to take on responsibility. This measure has also been used in a study conducted in the Netherlands (Zanders, Buchem & Berkel, 1977). High scores represent high levels of

satisfaction with participation. The scale reliability was found to be acceptable (.85 and .71 for Australia and Thailand, respectively).

Job satisfaction is measured by six items. The questions ask about different aspects of work satisfaction, such as satisfaction with the supervisor, job, organisation, progress, pay, and promotional opportunities. Heller, Drenth, Koopman, and Rus (1988) adapted the scale from an inventory developed by Taylor and Bowers (1972). High scores indicate high levels of satisfaction with the organisation and work performed. The reliability coefficients (Australia = .77; Thailand = .83) were found to be satisfactory.

Preferred and Perceived Styles of Managers

A description of four different types of managers is given in the questionnaire. Hofstede (1980: 406) defined an autocratic manager (coded 1) as someone who "usually makes his/her decisions promptly and communicates them to his/her subordinates clearly and firmly." A paternalistic or persuasive manager (coded 2) "usually makes his/her decisions promptly, but, before going ahead, tries to explain them fully to his/her subordinates." A consultative manager (coded 3) "usually consults with his/her subordinates before he/she reaches his/her decisions." A participative manager (coded 4) "usually calls a meeting of his/her subordinates when there is an important decision to be made" and "puts the problem before the group and tries to obtain consensus." The first item asks respondents about their preferred type of manager, while the second item about their perceptions of their own superiors' style. The third item asks employees the extent to which they perceive employees are afraid to disagree with their managers. The question is answered on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree (coded 5), to strongly agree (coded 1). This item was reverse scored to be consistent with Hofstede's method of scoring.

For exploratory purposes, the power distance index was also computed using the following formula (Hofstede, 1980):

PDI = 135 - 25 (mean score of the five-point scale question)
+ (% perceived manager 1 + 2)
- (% preferred manager 3)

The power distance index can range from 0 (small power distance) to 100 (large power distance). The theoretical range of the index is from -90 (no one afraid, no manager 1+2, everyone prefers 3) to +210 (everyone afraid, all managers 1+2, no one prefers 3) (Hofstede, 1980: 103).

Data were collected using a questionnaire survey of a sample of employees in three manufacturing firms in Australia and three in Thailand. In each organisation, employees participated in different forms of formal participation programs, such as quality circles, quality improvement teams, and cross-functional teams. Data collection employed stratified random sampling in which the workforce sample in each company was divided into two strata - operators and professional staff. The Australian sample consisted of 145 respondents (57% response rate), 55 of whom were professional staff and 90 were operators. A total of 546 usable questionnaires were returned for the Thai sample (68%

response rate), which consisted of 221 operators and 325 professional staff. Data were analysed using crosstabulation, correlation analysis and analysis of variance techniques.

RESULTS

Employees were asked about their preferred and actual type of manager (viz., autocratic-1, paternalistic/persuasive-2, consultative-3, participative-4) and whether employees were afraid to express disagreement with their managers/supervisors. The frequencies for preferred and actual types of managers are given in Tables 1 - 2.

Table 1 Percentage responses for preferred and perceived (actual) manager: Australian sample

	Manager 1 Autocratic		Manager 2 Paternalistic		Manager 3 Consultative		Manager 4 Participative	
	Preferred	Actual	Preferred	Actual	Preferred	Actual	Preferred	Actual
Operator	6 (5%)	34 (30%)	25 (22%)	33 (30%)	26 (23%)	30 (27%)	58 (50%)	15 (13%)
Professional.	3 (5%)	16 (29%)	7 (12%)	15 (27%)	20 (33%)	17 (31%)	30 (50%)	7 (13%)
Total	9 (5%)	50 (30%)	32 (18%)	48 (29%)	46 (27%)	47 (28%)	88 (50%)	22 (13%)

The most preferred manager by Australian employees was a participative manager (50%). A smaller proportion preferred to work under a consultative manager (27%) and a paternalistic/persuasive manager (18%). The least preferred manager was an autocratic manager (5%). Surprisingly, a substantial proportion of the Australian employees perceived that they worked under an autocratic manager (30%). A similar proportion of employees perceived they worked for a paternalistic manager (29%), or a consultative manager (28%), while the smallest proportion (13%) perceived they worked for a participative manager. A breakdown by job level indicated that there was not much difference between operators and professional staff in their *preferred* type of manager. An equal proportion of both groups (50%) indicated that they preferred to work under a participative manager, while a lower proportion of operators (23%) than professional staff (33%) preferred a consultative manager. However, nearly twice the proportion of operators (22%), compared with professional staff (12%), preferred a paternalistic/persuasive type of manager, while an equal proportion of both groups (5%) preferred an autocratic manager. There were some differences between operators and professional staff in their *perception* of their managers. Thus, hypothesis 1, which predicts that Australian employees will prefer to work for a consultative manager is not supported regardless of job level.

With respect to "perceived manager", a breakdown by job level indicated that an equal proportion of operators perceived their managers to be autocratic (30%) and paternalistic/persuasive (30%). Twice as many operators thought their managers were consultative (27%) rather than participative (13%). On the other hand, 31% of professional staff perceived their managers to be consultative, while a slightly lower

proportion (29%) felt that their managers were autocratic. Over twice as many professional staff (27%) perceived their managers to be paternalistic/persuasive rather than participative (13%). It should be noted that operators and professional staff may not be reporting perceptions of the same people (i.e., different managers).

Table 2 Percentage responses for preferred and perceived (actual) manager: Thai sample

	Manager 1 Autocratic		Manager 2 Paternalistic		Manager 3 Consultative		Manager 4 Participative	
	Preferred	Actual	Preferred	Actual	Preferred	Actual	Preferred	Actual
Operator	5 (2%)	43 (20%)	22 (10%)	66 (30%)	95 (43%)	88 (40%)	99 (45%)	24 (10%)
Professional	1 (1%)	47 (14%)	30 (9%)	81 (25%)	164 (50%)	151 (47%)	130 (40%)	44 (14%)
Total	6 (1%)	90 (17%)	52 (10%)	147 (27%)	259 (47%)	239 (44%)	229 (42%)	68 (13%)

For the Thai sample, the most *preferred* type of manager was a consultative manager (47%), followed by participative (42%), paternalistic (10%), and an autocratic manager (1%). The results fail to support hypothesis 2 which predicted that a larger proportion of Thai employees will prefer either an autocratic or paternalistic to a participative or consultative manager.

On "perceived manager", the largest proportion of employees *perceived* their own manager/supervisor to be consultative (44%), while 27% perceived their manager to be paternalistic, 17% autocratic, and 13% participative. There were some differences between operators and professional staff in *preferred* type of manager. The most preferred type of manager for operators was a participative manager (45%), a similar proportion preferred a consultative manager (43%), but only 10% preferred a paternalistic manager, and very few preferred an autocratic manager (2%). Half of the professional staff preferred to work under a consultative manager, 40% preferred a participative manager, fewer than 10% preferred a paternalistic manager (9%), while very few favoured an autocratic manager (0.3%). There was a similar pattern for *perceived* type of manager for operators and professional staff. A substantial proportion of operators (40%) and professional staff (47%) thought their managers/supervisors were consultative. A slightly larger proportion of operators (30%) than professional staff (25%) perceived their managers to be paternalistic, autocratic (20% versus 14%), while a lower proportion of operators (10%) than professional staff (14%) perceived their managers to be participative. Therefore, the hypothesis which predicts that a larger proportion of employees will prefer either an autocratic, or paternalistic, to a participative or a consultative manager is not supported regardless of occupational level.

The third power distance item measured the extent to which employees report being afraid to express disagreement with their managers/supervisors. Sixty-two percent of Australian respondents agreed that employees were afraid to express disagreement, only 22% disagreed, while 16% were neutral. The mean score for the Australian sample was

2.45 (on a scale of 1 - strongly agree to 5 - strongly disagree). As noted earlier, this item was reverse scored, therefore, a lower score indicated that employees were more afraid to express disagreement. A slightly larger proportion of operators (66%), compared with 57% of professional staff, reported that they were afraid to disagree with their managers/supervisors. On the other hand, a substantial proportion of professional staff (30%) compared with operators (16%), reported not being afraid to express disagreement. This difference is reflected in a slightly higher average score for professional staff than operators (2.67 versus 2.34, $F_{1, 171} = 3.61$, $p = .06$).

For the Thai sample, responses to the third item - "employees afraid to disagree," indicated that 67% agreed that employees were afraid to express disagreement, only 19% disagreed, while 14% were neutral. The mean score was 2.33. A breakdown by job level indicated that a slightly larger proportion of operators (71%) than professional staff (64%) reported that they were afraid to disagree with their managers/supervisors, while a slightly lower proportion of operators (16%) than professional staff (21%) reported not being afraid to express disagreement. The mean score also indicated that operators (2.20) were significantly ($F_{1, 544} = 4.28$, $p < .05$) more afraid to disagree with their managers/supervisors than professional staff (2.41).

The question arises how preferred and reported types of managers might be related to perceived influence in decision making, and in particular, to satisfaction with participation and job satisfaction (Hypothesis 3). The correlations for the variables are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Correlations among power distance items and participation and associated variables

	Preferred manager		Perceived manager.		"Employees afraid"		Perceived influence		Skill utilisation		Satisfaction with participation		Job satisfaction	
	Aus	Thai	Aus	Thai	Aus	Thai	Aus	Thai	Aus	Thai	Aus	Thai	Aus	Thai
Preferred manager							-.11	-.01	-.05	.03	-.04	.12**	-.13	.02
Perceived manager	-.03	.16**					.12	.24**	.18*	.14**	.41**	.19**	.18*	.21**
Employees afraid[a]	-.15	-.01	.06	.23**			.07	.11**	.19*	.06	.23**	.15**	.11	.09*

Note: * significant at .05 level (two-tailed)
** significant at .01 level (two-tailed)
n = 143 for Australian sample
n = 536 for Thai sample
[a] item was reverse-scored

First, the zero-order correlations among the three power distance items are discussed. For the Australian sample, none of the three power distance items was significantly related to another. This is consistent with the lack of correspondence between preferred and perceived types of manager.

For the Thai sample, there were modest but significant relationships between preferred manager and perceived manager (r = .16, p < .01) and "employees afraid" and perceived manager (r = .23, p < .01). The preferred type of manager tended to overlap with perceived manager, which supports the preliminary analysis. In addition, employees who perceived their managers to be autocratic or paternalistic reported feeling more afraid to express disagreement than those working under a more democratic manager. This finding is consistent with Hofstede's (1980) findings in the IBM study.

Preferred manager. A significant relationship between preferred manager and satisfaction with participation was found for the Thai sample. Employees who preferred democratic managers tended to be more satisfied with participation (r = .12, p < .01). The preferred manager variable was not significantly related to any other variables.

Perceived manager. For the Australian sample, perceived manager was significantly correlated with skill utilisation (r = .18, p < .05), satisfaction with participation (r = .41, p < .01), job satisfaction (r = .18, p < .05), but not with perceived influence in decision making. For Thai respondents, perceived manager was significantly related to perceived influence in decision making (r = .24, p < .01), skill utilisation (r = .14, p < .01), satisfaction with participation (r = .19, p < .01), and job satisfaction (r = .21, p < .01). Hence, for both nation samples, employees who perceived their managers/supervisors to be more democratic reported a greater degree of skill utilisation, satisfaction with participation, and job satisfaction. Thai employees also experienced a higher level of influence in decision making when they perceived they worked for a more democratic manager.

"Employees afraid." In the Australian sample, significant associations were found between "employees afraid" and skill utilisation (r = .19, p < .05), and satisfaction with participation (r = .23, p < .01). As "employees afraid" was reverse-scored, this meant that employees who were less afraid to express disagreement with their managers/supervisors also reported a higher level of skill utilisation and satisfaction with participation than those who were more afraid.

For Thai employees, significant correlations were found between "employees afraid" and perceived influence (r = .11, p < .01), satisfaction with participation (r = .15, p < .01), and job satisfaction (r = .09, p < .05). Employees who were less afraid to disagree, reported a higher level of influence in decision making, satisfaction with participation, and job satisfaction. In general, the results of the correlation analysis indicated that employees who perceived their managers to be more democratic were more satisfied than those working under an autocratic manager regardless of culture. The evidence lends support to hypothesis 3.

As noted previously, for exploratory analysis, the power distance indices for the Australian and Thai samples in the study were computed. Using Hofstede's (1980) formula, the power distance indices (PDI) for the Australian and Thai samples, operators, and professional staff were computed as follows:

Australian sample:

$PDI_{Australian\ sample}$ = 135 - 25 (mean score of the five-point scale question)
+ (% perceived manager 1 + 2)
- (% preferred manager 3)
= 135 - 25 (2.45) + (30 + 29) - (27)
= 105.75

$PDI_{operator}$ = 135 - 25 (2.34) + (30 + 30) - (23)
= 113.50

$PDI_{professional}$ = 135 - 25 (2.67) + (29 + 27) - (33)
= 91.25

For Australian employees, the power distance index for operators (113.50) was higher than for professional staff (91.25). Operators perceived a higher degree of inequality between superiors and subordinates than professional staff. The Australian average was 105.75.

Thai sample:

$PDI_{total\ sample}$ = 135 - 25 (2.33) + (17 + 27) - (47)
= 73.75

$PDI_{operator}$ = 135 - 25 (2.20) + (20 + 30) - (43)
= 87.00

$PDI_{professional}$ = 135 - 25 (2.41) + (14 + 25) - (50)
= 63.75

For the Thai sample, the power distance index for operators (87.00) was higher than for professional staff (63.75), indicating that operators perceived a higher degree of inequality between superiors and subordinates than professional staff. Hofstede (1980) also found lower power distance values for managers than for non-managers. The average score was 73.75 for the Thai sample.

In Hofstede's study of Hermes employees (Hofstede, 1980, 1983) the Australian score based on a sample of 805 (first survey, 1967-1969) and 1,114 (second survey, 1971-1973), defined it a low power distance country (PDI = 36), and the Thai score based on a sample of 80 (1971-1973), defined it a high power distance country (PDI = 64). However, contrary to Hofstede's findings, the Australian sample in the present study had a higher power distance index (105.75) than the Thai sample (73.75). It should be noted that the national PDI scores only describe differences between countries and their absolute value has no meaning (Hofstede, 1990). The PDI scores suggest that there is a higher degree of centralisation of power and autocratic leadership in the Australian sample than in the Thai sample. Some of the summary statistics support this statement. A substantial proportion of Australian employees perceived they had an autocratic

manager (30%) compared with 17% in the Thai sample. The data in the present study provide some support for Hofstede's (1980) findings about high and low power distance countries, although they contradict Hofstede's data for the Australia-Thailand comparison.

DISCUSSION

The power distance indices obtained in the study, although opposite to Hofstede's (1980) power distance scores, indicate differences in the degree of centralisation of power and autocratic leadership between the two nation samples. As discussed previously, support was not found for Hofstede's (1980) power distance index (PDI) scores for Australia and Thailand. Other studies by Westwood and Everett (1987), Chew and Putti (1995), Ashkanani (1984), and Seddon (1983), also failed to find evidence to support differences in power distance predicted by Hofstede (1980). Analysis of each power distance item reflects differences in preferred and reported types of managers between the two nation samples. In particular, the most preferred manager for Australian employees was a participative manager (50%), while Thai employees preferred a consultative manager (47%). Although no support was found for hypothesis 1, which predicts the most preferred manager for Australian employees is a consultative manager, the finding for the Australian sample is consistent with Clark and McCabe (1970) and Stening and Wong (1983), who found that Australian managers favoured more democratic managerial practices, such as the ability of subordinates to express initiative, the benefits of sharing information and the importance of individual-control. For the Thai sample, hypothesis 2 which predicts that Thai employees will prefer other types of managers except consultative is not supported. The finding for the Thai sample failed to support Deyo (1978), who found that Thai workers favoured close supervision rather than general supervision, and was inconsistent with Redding and Casey (1975), who reported that Thai managers preferred an autocratic style of leadership. It is possible that consultative decision making, as defined in the present study, leads to greater satisfaction because in high power distance cultures (i.e., Thailand), the act of asking for employees' opinions by a manager is a show of courtesy and is appreciated even though the final decision is made by the manager and not the employees. Another possible explanation relates to the participating organisations, which implement different team types as an integral part of quality management practices. The consultative style of manager may be more appropriate for the team environment and is therefore appreciated by Thai employees.

On "perceived manager", there was a larger proportion of employees in the Australian sample who perceived their managers to be autocratic (30%) compared with 17% of the Thai sample. It is possible that Australian employees perceived their managers/supervisors to be more autocratic because employees expected a higher degree of participation from their managers. With respect to the Thai sample, there is evidence suggesting that the Thai companies may be exceptional organisations as will be discussed later. For example, Fieg (1980) noted that the "traditional Thai pattern of decision-making, with its autocratic...overtones, would not typify certain modern, progressive Bangkok firms, which, like their Western counterparts, strive for participation" (p. 71).

With respect to the third power distance item, Australian operators were not significantly more afraid to express disagreement with their managers/supervisors, while Thai operators were more afraid than professional staff. This is consistent with Kumbanaruk (1987) and Tansuvan (1993), who claimed that Thai employees are used to following directions, while superiors are more accustomed to giving orders. It is possible that the type of organisations that participated in the study may partly contribute to the finding that a large proportion of Thai employees in the study preferred a consultative (47%), or a participative manager (42%) to other types of managers. The three organisations are reputable firms that are also well-known for their strong commitment toward promoting employee participation in decision making. As noted earlier, employees in these organisations implement different team types which provide avenues to influence decision making not only for professional staff, but also shopfloor employees who would normally have fewer opportunities to become involved in issues that affect their work area. Therefore, it is possible that employees' positive experience with quality circles and quality improvement teams may lead to a stronger preference toward relatively more democratic styles of management.

Hofstede (1984, 1991) noted that demographic factors, such as educational level, occupation, age, gender, type of work organisation, social class as well as environmental factors during the period he conducted his research may have influenced responses given in the Values Survey Module (VSM), a questionnaire developed by Hofstede (1980) to measure the four cultural dimensions. It should be noted that Hofstede's data were collected 30 years ago in two rounds, between 1967-1969, and 1971-1973. Hofstede (1980) found that level of education was the most important factor that influenced PDI value scores and suggested that the value scores should be adjusted based on differences in educational level (Hofstede, 1980). Some of these demographic variables may have contributed to the rather different PDI value in this study. The Australian and Thai samples differed in demographic characteristics. The Australian sample had more operators (67%), employees with a lower level of education (30% above 12 years of education), an older workforce (75% above 31 years old), and a more diverse ethnic background (e.g., 19 different languages were reported). The Thai sample, a predominantly professional staff group (59%), consisted of employees who had achieved a higher level of education (71% above 12 years of education), were relatively younger (63% above 31 years old), and more homogeneous. Hofstede (1980) found PDI values to be influenced by occupational and educational level, the latter being the most important factor in his study. In fact, in order to ensure comparability in the original scores across the replication studies, Hofstede (1982) suggested a formula that controlled for occupational effect on the value scores and recommended that researchers adjust for occupational effect using educational level as an index (Bosland, 1985). Hofstede found that lower level of education and lower occupational level tended to be associated with higher PDI values, as was the case for the Australian sample, while higher level of education and higher occupational status, were associated with lower PDI values, as was the case for the Thai sample.

Bosland (1985) reviewed replication studies using Hofstede's VSM, and found that the value scores for power distance and uncertainty avoidance deviated considerably from

Hofstede's original scores. In particular, Bosland found respondents' educational level had an effect on the values scores for power distance and uncertainty avoidance and suggested adjusting scores to allow for the effect of years of education. In this study, a post hoc test was conducted on the three power distance items using ANCOVA and educational level as a covariate. The results of ANCOVA indicated significant differences between the Australian and Thai employees on *perceived manager* item ($F_{1,696} = 6.35$, $p < .05$) when the effect of educational level was controlled. The results support the large differences between the two nation samples on perceived manager as previously noted. Australian employees perceived their managers/supervisors to be more autocratic than Thai employees. Hence, for Australian employees, there might have been a greater discrepancy between *preferred manager* and perceived manager. However, there were no significant differences between the Australian and Thai samples on *preferred manager* and *employees afraid* items. The results also suggest that the differences in *perceived manager* are not due to differences in educational level, but may be real differences in employee perception of their managers.

Differences due to the type of business department and organisation included in the study may also have contributed to differences in PDI indices from those obtained by Hofstede. Hofstede's sample came largely from *marketing* and *service* units of IBM (Singh, 1990), while in this study, the Australian sample was drawn mainly from manufacturing units and the Thai sample from manufacturing, engineering, marketing, accounting and personnel departments of three separate *manufacturing* organisations. Westwood and Everett (1987) argued that because the IBM sample was drawn from the marketing and service units of the organisation, and not from manufacturing, the sample was limited to the "educated middle class."

Finally, Hofstede (1980) has recommended that researchers employing the VSM survey use an *a priori* matching of samples from different countries on demographic characteristics, such as age, gender, education, and proportion of higher management, except for nationality. After reviewing over 10 years of replication studies, Hofstede (1990) concluded that "replications only make sense if they are done on matched samples, similar in all these respects (e.g., age, gender, education, percentage of higher level management) except nationality" (cf., Huo & Randall, 1991: 160). Huo and Randall contended that this was not feasible in practice and was too limiting for cross-cultural research. Accordingly, as pre-matching of the Australian and Thai samples was not possible in this study, differences in the power distance index may have been due to differences in demographic characteristics of the sample rather than cultural differences. Finally, in his review of replication studies of Hofstede's IBM study, Sondergaard (1994) concluded that, in general, Hofstede's findings were confirmed allowing for demographic characteristics of the sample, and allowing for the environment at the time the original research was conducted in the 1970s.

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