Soaring Towards Positive Change:
Reflection on an Action Research Case in
Double Loop Learning Process

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Abstract

This "SOARING Towards Positive Change: Reflection on an Action Research case study in Double Loop Learning Process" assesses the willingness of Thailand and Indonesia management to assimilate and apply Western-style OD - SOAR to help them manage the strategic planning and problem-solving in the context of their institutions. The following research questions were posed: Are Thailand and Indonesia managers willing to apply OD (SOAR)? From these managers perception, how would (OD) SOAR be adapted and implemented as managers' theory-in-use? The author used Hofstede's cultural dimension values survey and Likert profile organization characteristics survey to diagnose managers' willingness to change during contextual shifts: (a) to describe the current organizational climate; (b) to discern how managers perceive an ideal organizational climate and the ideal culture from which it derives; and (c) to identify how SOAR can be applied within an organization and how it can improve strategic planning. The Likert profile of organization characteristics was selected for ease of use and appropriateness for Thailand and Indonesia culture. This study references institutional theory, SOAR Profile Pilot Survey, Hofstede's cultural dimension values survey, and Double loop learning to illustrate how managers institutionalize strategic planning when facing the ambiguities of learning and applying Western management through SOAR processes to reach Double loop learning. Three groups of Ph. D. students (managers) were selected for this case study: One (Indonesia group) from the Academic sector, the other two (Thailand groups) from private firms in various industrial sectors. Survey results showed all groups have similar perceptions regarding current and future organizational characteristics, but individuals who received institutionalized, overseas training improved more during training in perceiving ideal future organizational characteristics. This study concludes that Thailand and Indonesia managers are willing to apply OD (SOAR) for change, but their perceptions can be changed more effectively through strategically institutionalized learning processes than by simple association. Through OD classes, all three groups are conducting Action research at target organization with SOAR strategic planning; process of these case studies could bring positive change through double loop learning.

Keywords: SOAR, positive change, double loop learning

Introduction

This study of Thai and Indonesian management's willingness to import Western OD practices is set against the backdrop of Thailand and Indonesia's current cultural context. This session draws observation and interactive activities from a cohort of Ph. D. classes to describe this backdrop within which to frame several key questions: Are Thai and Indonesian managers willing to apply OD (SOAR)? Will Western-style OD (SOAR) help or hinder Thai and Indonesian management as they strive to improve their strategy of theories-in-use?

Changing Thailand and Indonesia

Obviously, the fast economic growth and the approach to ASEAN 2015 has alerted Thai and Indonesian management to the urgency of focusing on the strategies to remain competetive. Change occurs in response to both expected and unexpected consequences and forces. Thailand and Indonesia's joining ASEAN were the expected external forces that have caused internal political and legal reform, generating both opportunities and threats to Thai and Indonesian management. The leaders and managers can cope with both opportunities and threats by means of planned changes through explicit structure, system and strategy, but unexpected external forces in Thailand and Indonesia institutional context could drive government policy changes radically when necessary.

The implication for OD scholarship is that, in Thailand and Indonesia, managers focus on what government policy is so that they can react to it strategically. They need to keep attuned to every political breeze that blows across their economic landscape or they will be left behind. This research focuses on the management's responses to the potential role of OD and its (SOAR) use for strategic planning.

Culture, according to Worley et al. (1996, p. 39), is a set of values and basic assumptions about how to solve problems that work well enough to be taught to others. Thai and Indonesian management shapes culture by mandating values and approaches to problem solving. To illustrate this deliberate shaping of culture, they have been taking courses offered by Western institutes—a process of acquiring culture by *catalysis*—and to experience Western systems by staying in Western societies for up to weeks at a time—enabling the process of *contagion*. This newly experienced knowledge and exposure becomes embedded and affect attitudes and behavior. This cultural familiarity allows organizations to rely on bi-cultural managers to carry out an organization's hard policy and regulations in a manner influenced by Western values.

The questions remain, what are the effects on Thai and Indonesian culture and enterprise of this strategic trans-cultural association; what is the role of OD in this strategy; and can Thai and Indonesian managers align with responsive strategies while developing their organizations? The following discussion broaches each in turn.

Group Moderation of Individual Behavior

The forces modifying what a Thai and Indonesian manager would do individually are not just the macro cultural context but individual behavior in a group. The Hawthorne experiment demonstrated that individuals under group pressure conformed to group norms (Roethlisberger 1939); Lewin (1948) showed that groups could have a substantial effect on individual judgments and attitudes. Group members normally take ownership of and adhere to group values.

In an organizational setting, the structure and system have a framework to restrict nonconforming behavior within that organization. Strategy also contributes to curbing or even stifling individual influence by guiding activities within the organization, which are

aimed at achieving, defined standards of performance and effectiveness. Additionally, coercive institutions help to align and frame implicit norms into explicit rules and policies. The organization must have explicit rules and policies to reduce ambiguity and to predict behavior. Coercive management is required at some stage during an organization's development to frame employees' perceptions and align their responsibilities to leave no doubt about expectations and standards of behavior.

Currently, both Western OD scholars and experts and Thai and Indonesian managers are facing the challenges of understanding how to apply Western OD in a non-Western culture. The role of the experienced OD scholar and practitioner is to characterize the state of OD in South Asia so that appropriate OD interventions can maximize the efficacy of Thai and Indonesian management.

The Role of Organization Development (OD)

Sorensen et al. (1993) suggest that paradigm development of cross-cultural OD must be culture conscious: "The first step is to highlight the importance of culture as a factor in Organization Development interventions, and create awareness in the practitioner of his/her own cultural biases and ethnocentrism" (p. 346).

Thai and Indonesian managers were asked during class discussion, "How can we improve the relationship among people to build trust, inspire cohesiveness? How can we strengthen people's responsibility and sense of ownership? How do we inspire the desire to learn and to practice what we learn?" This author offers SOAR, which combines appreciative inquiry and strategic planning approaches that hope it could be applied in the context of Thailand and Indonesia.

The SOAR process gets stakeholders involved in the 5 "I" (Initiate, Inquire, Imagine, Innovate and Inspire to implement) stage-by-stage process. Starvros & Hinrichs (2009) indicates that "SOAR engages the stakeholders directly in a series of conversations to identify and analyze strengths and opportunities, in order to create shared aspirations, goals, strategies, and commitment to achieving results." (p. 4). This author further argues that management in an organization should be aware of these fundamental questions and adopt the openness to ask them because it is so crucial in an organization's long-term effectiveness and performance.

OD has long recognized which changes in human values are essential to the survival of organizations (Bennis, 1966). The argument follows that the agents of change and resource development, and the interpreters—if not actual champions of—the values driving change make a strategic investment in an organization's survival. Personal professional skills and personal behaviors, especially of managers, embody an organization's values and influence an organization's business strategy and its characteristics.

To answer the question, "Are Thai and Indonesian managers willing to apply OD (SOAR)?" we must look to its culture for evidence that South Asia as a culture would accept OD principles and practice. The previous discussion established the need for OD intervention, given the rate and magnitude of change facing Thai and Indonesian management. The next section of this session addresses the potential receptivity of South Asia to OD, given its rich and ancient culture.

South Asia now faces the powerful potential of tapping the best from its past, awakening national consciousness to act on gaining back what was best in its history and culture and marrying it with new knowledge offered from Western traditions. Educators, scholars, and OD practitioners can step up to this opportunity. For Western culture,

positive change intervention such as SOAR could offer another instrument to ignite willingness to participate in searching for good experiences from the past and projecting them into the future.

The OD practitioner using SOAR would need to understand that, fruitful as such an approach could be. It may run counter to Thai and Indonesian cultural norms. Thai and Indonesian people do not promote themselves publicly. OD practitioners would need to prepare and educate people on SOAR and its benefits before attempting to employ it.

Institutional Theory Applied to Thailand and Indonesia

Given the levels of rapid growing in the Thai and Indonesian transition economy, gaining control over the environment is a concern for firms. According to Hatch (1997), there are three theories in particular that explain the organization-environment relationship: *institutional theory* (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983); *resource dependency theory* (Pfeffer & Salanick, 1978); and *population ecology theory* (Hannan & Freeman 1977).

The purpose of this overview is not to discuss the differences and their applicability to Thailand and Indonesia; that discussion will be part of a later study. The author would like to suggest, however, that the institutional theory applies to South Asia today. There are many perspectives of institutional theory, but this author choose DiMaggio and Powell's *isomorphism* to better illustrate the Thailand and Indonesia context in this study. It advocates the intervention within an institutional controlled context, which has the authority to relocate resources to organizations. Resource dependence theory reflects perceptions of organization's top management looking outward and sensing scarce resources, and trying to create counter-dependence.

The questions remain whether Thai and Indonesian management are willing to adapt OD to that end and how they perceive SOAR as a theory-in-use to be effective under the current institutional controlled context.

Closing the Gap: A Paradigm Shift

A new paradigm shift always starts from perception changes. This author contends that South Asia is experiencing such a shift and is in a state that managers perceive and interpreting phenomena such as economic growth intertwined with government policy. They adapt new knowledge through learning and observation. Their learning is the antecedent to behavior change. Their willingness to effect positive changes will begin a chain of iterative events that will bridge the gap between different cultures.

This author has illustrated the institutional context in which Thailand and Indonesia management is affected, and this rapidly changing economic development will influence political, legal, social and cultural changes continuously. Most OD scholars and practitioners speculate about what kind of OD instruments can be more effectively applied in such a cross-culture context, and how they will work in that context.

This author suggests that examining the willingness of Thai and Indonesian managers to adapt as well as apply OD should be the first important step before anyone should offer any tools or instruments and try to solve issues and problems that Thai and Indonesian managers are encountering. This study addresses those questions and offers a roadmap for Thai and Indonesian management in more effectively closing the gap between what they need to acquire from Western management and OD experience and what they have. If time allowed, relevant research topics in South Asia; studies and publications in how OD can be applied or evaluated in cross-culture contexts such as South Asia should be reviewed.

This author proposes a three-pronged approach as the appropriate method to exam the willingness of Thai and Indonesian management to adapt Western OD to the current context. The institutional theory perspective becomes the context for this research. Articles related to institutional theory are examined as well as cited in this session. The methods design of this article explains why instruments like the Likert profile of organizational characteristics survey, Hofstede's cultural dimension values survey and SOAR profile were chosen and how these instruments were applied to help to frame the perceptions of management in Thailand and Indonesia and provide answers to the questions we have asked.

In the results session, findings are presented from this three-pronged approach. The Likert profile of organizational characteristics survey data should be analyzed by SPSS through 95% confidence interval; instead we count the number of informants who chose the same answer. Findings are presented in tables as well as figures. Hofstede's cultural dimension values are presented in a figure, which shows the movement of Thai and Indonesian management's perception in those five cultural values (i.e., power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, long-term orientation). This author discusses implications and limitations of this study, and future research suggested by this study.

Review of Literature

During the last 10 years, many studies have explored Thai and Indonesian OD and management. Thai and Indonesian managers and scholars are still adjusting to the evolving transition to a free market economy. Researches on Thailand and Indonesia economic transition illustrate how South Asia is changing. Articles published in Assumption University's dissertation and thesis collection between 2007 5and 2013, told

the story of Thai and Indonesian organizational change due to environment impacts and OD Interventions.

This author was inspired to fill part of the gap that exists on research about South Asia and its current challenges by conducting a study using qualitative methodology to understand implicitly the willingness of Thai and Indonesian managers to embrace OD change and to understand explicitly how managers adjust to cope with the heterogeneous cultures found in Thailand and Indonesia. Most OD interventions are based on two techniques: laboratory training and survey feedback and choosing the wrong method can cause inaccurate results.

Hofstede (1980) proposed that the way to measure differences in national cultures is to identify and isolate the four values of revealed common problems: *power distance; collectivism* versus individualism; *femininity* versus masculinity; and *uncertainty avoidance*. In 1992, Hofstede proposed the fifth dimension, namely, the *long-term orientation*, as opposed to short-term orientation. Cultural dimension scores are given for three countries of Thailand, Indonesia and USA, which is shown in Table 1 as follow for comparison.

Table 1.

A Selected Listing of Hofstede's Culture Dimensions

	PD	ID	MA	UA	LT
USA	40	91	62	46	29
Thailand	64	20	34	64	56
Indonesia	78	14	46	48	?

Key: Countries and regions for the first four dimensions (among 53); 23 countries and regions for the fifth dimensions. ?= no information; PD= Power Distance; ID= Individualism; MA= Masculinity; UA= Uncertainty Avoidance; LT= Long-Term Orientation

Institutional Theory and Change

The success of OD in settings outside the United States depends on two key contingencies: cultural context and economic development.   (Cummings & Worley, 2001, p. 556)

Individual members within an organization sense environmental stress differently. Without proper guidance from communication within an organization, it will be hard to form a cohesive interpretation scheme. We might say that chaos results from un-institutionalized schema initiatives, whereas order results from imposing standards and a concept of strategy on the organization. Ven De Van (1986) proposed that the strategic problem for institutional leaders is one of creating an infrastructure that is conducive to innovation and organizational learning. He offered three cybernetic principles to develop this infrastructure: (a) the principle of negative feedback; (b) double-loop learning; and (c) embracing uncertainty that can be achieved at the macro level through the principles of requisite variety and redundancy of functions.

Organization change is often induced from external forces; when the forces increasingly pressure the organization, the organizational managers sense the need to make changes and their adaptability will be the key to making organizations fit their environments.

Change is status between the present state and a future state. The challenge for firms, however, is to be successful in adapting to a dynamic environment. The means by which they will do so include coordination and communication in which employees share information.

Single loop learning and double loop learning

Agrisy (1976) claimed that unilateral control in the single loop learning process will decrease valid information and feedback, hindered free and informed choices, thus eliminates internal commitments from participants in the group. Whereas, double loop learning promotes willingness to express true feelings without fear of confrontation, different ideas and thoughts are welcome to be illustrated and discussed, inevitably debating is allowed, and at the end of the learning loop, there should be a consensus of understanding and individual's perception may be altered rationally towards the collective group norm.

This author suggests that this juncture of organization control and individual response be addressed through the development of a new OD concept (SOAR) to help understand how to reach the desired outcome. As broader Westernized management and technology is brought deeper into Thailand and Indonesia, it influences Thai and Indonesian organizational culture as well. Hofstede's five cultural dimensions offers the simplest ways to evaluate the value differences among cultures within a reasonable time in order to compile a better idea about cultural settings. From this evaluation, a backdrop can be developed against which to study Thai and Indonesian managers' responses to questions concerning their willingness to adapt Western OD practices to their situations.

OD itself is a reflective learning process, where participants' perception and behavior experienced in either "single loop learning" or "double loop learning" process, will be intervened. Unlike Western philosophers focusing on the search for truth, Eastern philosophy seeks the balance and stability of relationships. Eastern philosophy views codes of proper conduct and sets balances within a social structure. Institutional settings help individuals maintain their boundaries and manage others' perceptions of them within

the society to which they belong. This philosophy reinforces the emphasis on state over individual, and of control over natural organic evolution within organizations.

This author reviewed articles in four relevant sectors—(a) institutional theory (b) Hofstede's culture dimension values; (c) cross-cultural studies; and (d) international OD—as a frame of reference for this study, he came to the opinion that many OD interventions can be modified for use in Thailand and Indonesia, among them, SOAR is one to be applied in this study, as could some that are not culturally bonded. The practitioner can intervene and the scholar can do research, but the most important question emerging from this literature review process is, how do we know whether the managers are willing to apply OD (SOAR) in their context? Unless we can determine the willingness of managers to apply OD (SOAR) to their management, no litany of practices and theories will advance the state of OD in Thailand and Indonesia. The key question of the research is: "How willing are Thai and Indonesian managers to accommodate cultural differences and to employ a Western-style of OD (SOAR) as a tool for change and to improve strategic planning?"

This author found strong reasons to conduct this study: (a) cross-cultural impact of the West on Thai and Indonesian management is critically important and must be understood; and (b) Thai and Indonesian managers' willingness to adapt Western-style OD is the key to successful OD intervention. This author proposes the following research questions: (1) Are Thai and Indonesian managers willing to apply OD (SOAR)? (2) How might OD (SOAR) function in institutional environments such as those found in Thailand and Indonesia?

In the next section, this author will describe the methodology utilized for this study.

Methods

Rapid Economic growth transitioned Thai and Indonesian management from a regional economy into global economy. The question remains whether Western OD can be accepted in this cross-culture context. This author points out that the key to determining whether OD can be adapted or not is the willingness of Thai and Indonesian management to change and the readiness of the cultural context for new values and practices.

Research questions identified from literature research session are :

(1) Are Thai and Indonesian managers, willing to apply OD (SOAR)? (2) How might OD (SOAR) function in an institutional-control environment such as Thailand and Indonesia? These two questions can be answered by pragmatically mixing methods in a three-pronged approach, using (a) Hofstede cultural dimension values; (b) the Likert profile of organization characteristics survey and (c) SOAR Strategic planning method.

This author believes that the Ph. D. students who represent Thai and Indonesian managers are suitable subjects to be studied. Two general methods are helpful in conducting studies and collecting data: (a) direct observation of artifacts and symbols and the uses to which members of a culture put them; and (b) surveys and interviews with cultural members focused on discovering their ways of experiencing and interpreting their world. With the three-pronged design approach, the observation and unobtrusive data take less aggressive roles in this study. The pragmatism paradigm-mixed method is described by Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998):

> Pragmatism paradigm is quantitative plus qualitative in methods; deductive plus inductive in logic reasoning; both objective and subjective points of view in Epistemology; values play a large role in interpreting results in Axiology; accept external reality. Choose explanations that best

produce desired outcomes in Ontology; there may be causal relationships, but we will never be able to pin them down as causal linkages. (p. 23)

This author advocates this pragmatic approach to identifying cultural dynamics as an ongoing change process to determine the possible success of applying Western OD theories and intervention tools to organizations in Thailand and Indonesia. Three group managers of a total of 14 students were chosen. One group represented Indonesian management, and the other two groups represented Thai management.

Sample Selection

This research design involved a dual context: Thailand and Indonesia. Due to the time and geographical restriction, random selection samples did not fit the research purpose. Instead, Ph. D. students attending the same course in a University were selected. These formed three student groups—i.e., private manager and academic manager groups—were selected as follows: (a) Two groups were formed by the Thai managers who worked in Thailand but some were taking master degree program classes at Western universities; and (b) the Academic manager group was comprised of the manager who worked in Indonesia that were familiar with managerial practices. These three groups were selected through the following process: the student group picked target firms to conduct the SOAR strategic planning process, each group had less or equal than 5 members. Each student group conducted the survey and the OD Interventions which they themselves deigsned and implemented,

Introduction of the Likert Profile of Organization Characteristics

Rensis Likert has verified four main management styles among various types of management. He has claimed that only the optimum use of human assets in organizations would achieve a maximum performance and effectiveness.

French and Bell (1999, p. 205) describe Likert's *System 1* as "exploitive authoritative," where decisions are imposed on subordinates, threats are used to motivate workers, and there is no teamwork and very little communication. This is because the responsibility is at the top level of management. *System 2* as "benevolent authoritative" is slightly more participative; decision making is still heavily located at the top level of management and some confidence is shown in subordinates; however, it is of a condescending nature. *System 3* as "consultative," leadership is led by superiors who have some faith in their subordinates, but do not trust them completely, leading moderate amounts of team work. *System 4* as a "participative group" is a highly group-oriented process, people at all levels are responsible, and group interaction is facilitated by superiors who are the lynch pins between workgroups and task forces.

Likert's management typology is based on a measurement of leadership, decisions, motivation, goal setting, communication, and control. This typology illustrates managers' perceptions about an organization's climate and leadership, comparing past and current internal context change. This author chose the Likert profile of organization characteristics survey for reasons: It is technical and user friendly and a simple quantitative approach that can collect and analyze empirical data easily. This author chose Hofstede's cultural dimension values survey for government group interviews include the following: Validity, Reliability, Generality and Simplicity and Easy to present.

Data Collection

Likert Profile of Organization Characteristics Survey

This author used the Likert profile of organization characteristics survey to examine manager's organizational climate and cultural values to assess manager's willingness to change. The survey was anonymous. By giving it to all students in three groups, the Thai and Indonesian managers, then displayed similarities and differences in

individuals' perceptions on the board in the class, and the author was able to identify management focus and weakness. One Likert survey form was designed to ask how the managers perceived leadership, decisions, goals, motivation, communication, and control within his or her organization "now," and were asked how he or she perceived the leadership, decisions, goals, motivation, communication, and control should be within his or her organization in the "future."

SOAR Profile

The students are asked to answer the SOAR Profile on line before the class began, during the week of April 26, 2013 and the same group of students were asked to answer the same questions on line during the week of November 20, 2013, 6 months apart.

Students were divided into two groups to exercise the strategic planning with SWOT analysis as well as SOAR strategic planning method in class.

Group Interview on Hofstede's Cultural Dimension Values

This author also conducted in-class group discussions with all three manager groups. Ten Thai and four Indonesian managers attending the same course in the University participated. The class discussion was conducted on April 28, 2013, with Thai and Indonesian manager groups in a class setting at Assumption University. The Ph. D. class was divided into three sub-groups; each sub-group had four to five students. Hofstede's cultural dimension values survey and definitions had been taught, and each sub-group discussed the topic for about an hour and got consensus. Then each sub-group turned in their collective results with scores for each value: power distance (PD), uncertainty avoidance (UA), individualism (ID), and long-term orientation (LT). This author uses individualism (ID) instead of individualism vs. collectivism and masculinity (MA) instead of masculinity vs. femininity to help managers focus.

This author requested that managers put the consensus answer to each value on a piece of paper in a chart format as provided. The author got the mean scores that were assigned to the relevant past, current, and future values of each category from each sub-group, later compose Figure 1.

This author also asked managers to assign scores from zero (low) to 100 (high) to each cultural dimensions value at each different state, i.e. past state, current state, and future state. All sub-groups discussed scores of each cultural dimension value.

This approach allowed each sub-group to draw collective scores of Hofstede cultural dimension values on a piece of paper in three different states (past, current, and future). When all sub-groups had turned in their answers, each sub-group sent a representative to draw the collaborative scores on the boards, which were their perceived measurements of the past, current, and future state of each cultural dimension value.

These scores represent managers' collective perceptions of Thai and Indonesian management's willingness to apply OD in some form to their context as well as their own willingness to apply OD. A discussion of Hofstede's cultural dimension values survey results brought managers perceptions out explicitly. Thus, this author was able to evaluate the moving trend of their perception to sense the readiness of their cultural context for change.

Data Analysis

To answer these questions, three main forms of data were analyzed in this study: (a) the Likert survey data; (b) data from Hofstede's cultural dimension values group interview; and (c) SOAR processing intervention.

1. <u>Likert Survey Data</u>: Statistical software was not used to provide the analysis due to small number of participants. The Likert survey data were collected and marked on the survey form. A numerical table of current perception values, of

each manager in the group, was marked for each of the 18 questions. In addition, this method analyzes data to answer research question number 1 on Thai and Indonesian manager's willingness to apply OD.

2. Hofstede's cultural dimension values: three sub-groups' scores on their perceptions of Hofstede's values are averaged in Figure 1. This analysis answers the research question numbers 1, whether Thai and Indonesian managers are willing to apply OD.

3. SOAR Processing intervention: SOAR's 5 "I" practices were engaged and applied to develop strategic planning, reflection on feedback were provided and discussed. This analysis applies to research question number 2, whether SOAR can be applied in such an institutional controlled environment.

We can say that this method logically can answer the research question (1) "Are Thai and Indonesian management willing to apply OD (SOAR)?" The SOAR Processing will answer the research question (2) "How might OD (SOAR) function in an institutional controlled management environment such as Thailand and Indonesia?"

In the next section, we will present and discuss the result/findings of the information on methodology given in Methods session.

Results and Discussion

1. Are Thai and Indonesian managers willing to apply OD- SOAR?

2. How might OD function (SOAR) in an Institutional controlled environment such as Thailand and Indonesia?

Data was collected from a three-pronged approach. This research applied Hofstede's cultural dimension values, the Likert profile of organization characteristics

survey, structural topical interview, and reflection of SOARING. The three-pronged approach validated the accuracy of the findings and legitimized them through a comparative and deductive process.

As described in Methods section, Hofstede's cultural dimension values were applied to a group interview and the quantitative method was applied by analyzing the Likert profile of the organization characteristics survey data. Finally, SOAR processing observation and data helped this author better interpret findings. Findings from this three-pronged approach were listed separately, and a summary is offered at the end of this section.

Hofstede's Cultural Dimension Values

Finding 1: Hofstede's cultural dimension values were discussed at a group-interview setting and showed that regional culture values (i.e., ID, PD, and UA) are moving toward US values, demonstrating the willingness of these managers to adapt changes in their approach to OD.

This group interview experience represents managers' perceptions of cultural dimension values in a large population, shown in Figure 1. This author sees that the perceived values are moving toward US values. In Figure 1, the lines show the direction of each cultural dimension value moving from a past state, to the current state, and finally to a future state. PD is becoming weaker; ID is growing stronger; MA is slowly moving stronger; UA appears to maintain a status quo in the middle range; and LT orientation is slowly lowering the score. All these value movements (changes) indicate the readiness and willingness of Thai and Indonesian regional cultures to move toward Western OD values.

The Thai and Indonesian government managers had gone through a group interview and group discussion on Hofstede's cultural dimension values and collected perceived average scores from this group interview of Hofstede cultural dimension values. The average scores appear in Figure 1 from all three sub-group cultural dimension values in the three states: past, current, and future.
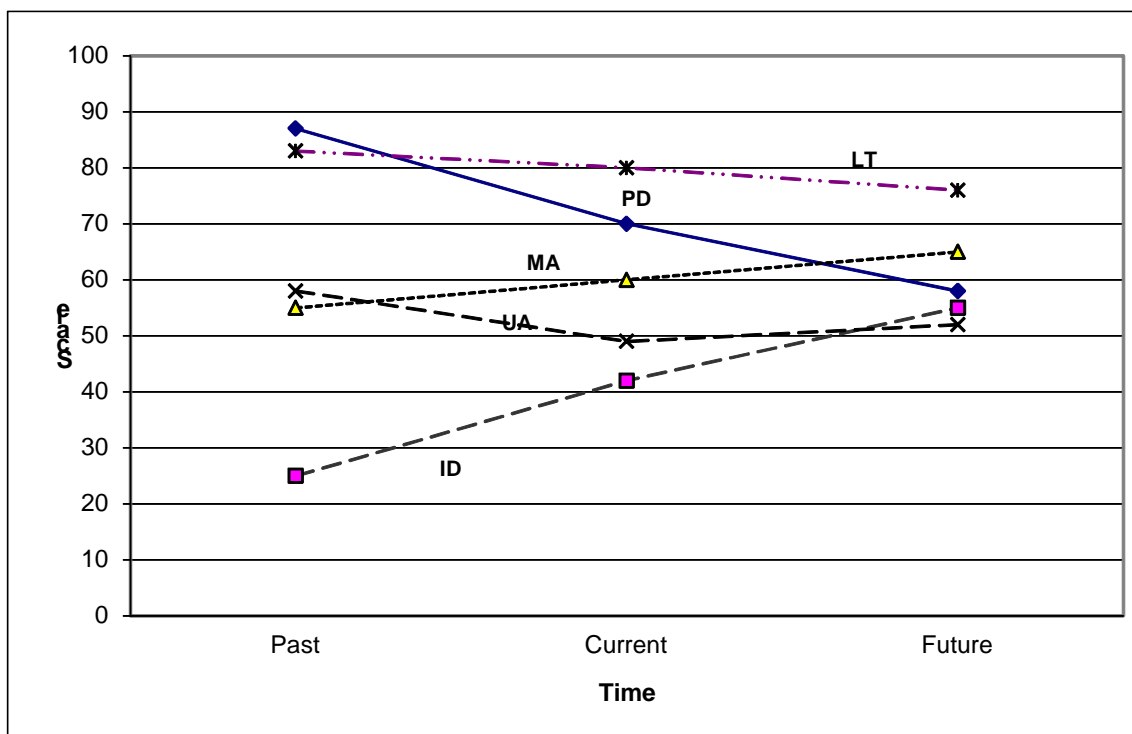
(PD: Power Distance, ID: Individualism, UA: Uncertainty avoidance, MA: Masculinity, L/T: Long-term orientation; past, current, future)

Figure 1. Group Interview on Hofstede's Cultural Dimension Values with Moving
        Trends

The manager's average perception scores are compared with Hofested's Country dimension values of Thailand, which is shown on Table 2 as follow. Values of Individualism and Long-term orientation dimensions are increased.

Table 2.

Hofstede's Cultural Dimension Values on Thailand

	Power Distance	Individualism	Masculinity	Uncertain Avoidance	Long-Term orientation
Hofstede's values	64	20	34	64	56
Group Interview estimated values	70	42	60	51	80

The group interview approach reflects a gestalt , a synergistic understanding from these managers' perceptions about these five cultural dimension values. This author uses standard 0 to 100 points as references for all five values, which verifies Hofstedes's estimation of Thai and Indonesian cultural dimension values.

Quantitative Methods

Likert Profile of Organization Characteristics Survey

Finding 1: Managers envision future organization characteristics at Likert's system 3 and system 4 and demonstrate their willingness to effect OD change.

Managers in all groups perceive that the ideal future state of organizational characteristics will shift from Likert "system 2 and system 3" to Likert "system 3 and system 4". French and Bell (1999) suggested,

> In general, managers and employees are likely to expect organizations to be able to be profitable and shift toward System 3 or System 4, which means trust between superiors and subordinates is substantial improved, motivation is geared to more rewards with less punishment, some

participation, and interaction become more frequent. ...Organization development, including survey feedback, is a way to getting there. (p. 208)

What we see here is a gradual shift of Thai and Indonesian manager's thinking toward that of their counterparts in the US. System 3 and system 4 represent the ideal management style and organization climate (culture). The Likert profile of organization characteristics is a good survey tool that can be used to examine organization climate and culture changes if we do a longitudinal survey at a slice of time.

Finding 3: Managers are skeptical about involving subordinates in decision-making and strategic planning (the trust issue; holding onto power to maintain power distance).

Survey data shows on Table 3 that groups were in System 2 and 3 management style, but both groups wished managers' ideas could often be sought, a characteristic of system 3 and 4. According the Likert profile of organization characteristics, for high productivity, a manager should lean toward the system 4 management style. System 2 management style maintains a master/servant relationship in their mutual trust. Rewards and punishment are used for motivation; there is little interaction, always caution. This type of system 2 may be a social norm in Thailand and Indonesia, since managers relate that system 2 and 3 is the current situation.

Table 3.

Likert System 1-4 survey

Exploitive Authorization (Autocrat) System I				Benevolent Authoritative (parental) System II				Consultative System III				Participative System IV			
				1	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	1			1
						2	2	3	2	1	1	2			
				1	2		6	2			2				
			1		1	3				1	1		5	1	
	1			2		1	4			2		3			
					1	3		3		3	1	1		1	
						1	2	2		4	1	2	1		
				1			1	2		2	2	2	3		
							2	4		4	2	1			
					4		1	2	2	1	3				
	1	1	3	1		1	1	2		2	1				
				2	1		3	3		1	2	1			
				1		1	2	2	3	1	2	1			
				2	2	2		2			3	1	1		
					1	1	1	1		1	4	2	2		
			1	2	1		4	4			1				
						1	1	4	1	3		3			
						2	3	3		2	3				

What we learn from the Table 3 above is that the fully participative decision-making is not advocated for either the current or the future ideal state of organization characteristics. This consistent result becomes a general managing norm.

SOAR Processing and observation

While conducting the SOAR process in the class setting, managers were divided into two groups, both groups were assigned the same common interest topic to be

considered for a strategy and a table of attributes were scored from 1 to 5 to compare against a SWOT analysis method with the SOAR strategic planning in Table 4.

After conducting SOAR processing, some reflections focused on Single loop learning and some derived from Double loop learning. Here is one manager's reflection:

"I also had a meeting with my Managing Partner to talk about the company's problems. What usually happened in the past was that we ended up blaming each other rather than discussing anything constructive. For this meeting however, I managed to convince him that we had an urgent need to motivate our staff by reducing the negative criticism on their weaknesses and mistakes and try to say something positive in addition to all the partners to becoming a good role model . The meeting ended very well and I believe he started to understand what needs to be done. .. Perhaps the AI model might work well for my company."

Another manager stated:

"All comparison is alright but one comment on our SOAR chart that we should start our chart from 5 "I". We did not put the "I"- Initiative before going thru "I"- Inquire and "S"- Strength on SOAR. Professor has also given us the table to compare SWOT and SOAR. Mostly that SOAR get more point than SWOT."

The comparison table between SWOT and SOAR is listed as follow at Table 4.

Table 4.

SWOT vs. SOAR (score 1- 5)

SWOT Group 1	SWOT Group 2	SOAR Group 1	SOAR Group 2	Attribute
3	4	4	3	Energy level
3	3	5	4	Participative involvement
4	3	4	5	Idea generation
3	4	4	3	Competitive advantages (niche/cost leader/differentiation/response)
4	**4**	**3**	**3**	**Easy to apply (user friendly)**
3	3	4	4	Sustainable strategy
3	3	4	4	Effectiveness
4	3	3	4	Efficiency
4	3	3	4	Evaluation
3	2	4	4	Joyfulness
4	3	5	5	Harmony

Outcome and lessons learned

One of the manager's reflections illustrated the group's SOAR processing as follows:

> "Both teams forgot to apply the 5 I's approach to SOAR and perhaps missed the full flavor of AI. While both methods enabled us to come up with the strategies for improving the PhD OD program at ABAC, we tended to spend more time on the negative side i.e. weaknesses and threats than the positive strengths and opportunities. To complete the whole picture we also had to come up with vision prior to strategies and actually action plans. As for SOAR, the results required that we put something measurable and therefore reduce the time spent. With regards to results, SOAR also enabled us to think about how to enhance the strengths as well (such as proportion of international students to truly 'internationalize' our program) whereas SWOT focused on fixing the weaknesses and excuse ourselves on uncontrollable threats. In addition, the outcome could be biased because it asked for opinion of Batch 7 students who were only one type of stakeholders and ignoring the inputs from coordinator, students, lecturers, etc. The scoring result showed that SOAR was relatively better than SWOT. Despite the fact, SOAR ranked below SWOT in terms of Easy to Apply. This may be the result of the students getting used to SWOT and not SOAR. Furthermore we had no real facilitator to help conduct the exercise and guide us through the whole process. In my opinion, a video clip of how SOAR is conducted would provide us with an insight into the power of SOAR."

A phenomenon this author observed within the class context was the control mechanism, which is one of the important artifacts of an organization's strategic control to fit better in changing internal and external contexts. With an understanding that Thai and Indonesian culture is a collectivist society, this author observed that managers possess a greater power distance. Subordinates maintain extreme respectfulness when they talk to higher-ups, including the author as an instructor. Subordinates usually follow orders without questioning superiors and try very hard to accomplish the assignment (Single Loop learning). If problems happen, they seek solutions or a decision from

superiors instead of trying to solve them themselves. SOARING, with the 5 I's process, initiate inquires and cultivate Double loop learning process.

Thai and Indonesian management are facing the challenge when the external context is shifting from a steadily growing economy to a rapid ramping up economy, which promotes people's moving of their values from collectivism to individualism. The evidence is shown from data in Figure 1, which demonstrates movement in Thailand toward Western OD values.

<div align="center">

Conclusions and Implications

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The research questions discussed in this section are as follows:

(1) Are Thai and Indonesian managers willing to apply OD (SOAR)? (2) How might OD (SOAR) function in an Institutional Controlled environment such as Thailand and Indonesia?

Conclusions

All managers perceived the current organizational characteristics in a widespread range from system 2 to system 3. This range of responses illustrates a variety of management perceptions. One reason for this variety is that different types of management are needed to deal with different kinds of working environments. Overall, managers' perceptions are moving toward participative OD values, a higher system of Likert profile of organization characteristics survey (e.g. from system 2 to system 3)—but not quite yet at the system 4.

Regardless of the shift in organization characteristics values from manager type system 2 to system 3 or system 4, the control over decision-making remains.

An experienced OD consultant, the catalyst, must recognize not only the regional culture of the external setting, but also the organizational culture of the internal managerial style when making plans for internal change. For example, a consultant will

look into characteristics such as collectivism vs. individualism or long-term orientation vs. short-term orientation in a country or region where regional cultures vary, reflecting Hofstede's cultural dimension value. Seeking support vs. intimidation in an organization alludes to internal culture differences, which were investigated with the Likert profile of organization characteristics survey. Because Thais and Indonesians focus on results more than process, the outcome-oriented philosophical focus often induces short-term thinking. It would be a fast way of approaching desired goals, but problematic in process.

The simplicity and uniqueness of this three-pronged research methodology allows us to overcome the above-mentioned concerns.

Individual managers applied the SOAR Profile on-line in April, the SOARING process induces double loop learning in groups in class setting in May, all of above processes prepared each manager to sign up for the next SOAR Profile on-line as well as for the SOARING workshop to experience perception change and change theories-in-use in November. Currently, all three manager groups carried out action research at their target organizations with SOAR strategic planning, as expected fully, the awaiting positive change results testified to the 5'Is continuity and connectivity throughout the process.

Based on the results and findings in discussion session, the research question 1 can be answered in the positive based on the results of applying Hofstede's cultural dimension values to group interviews of managers. The responses of Thai and Indonesian management to Hofstede's cultural dimension values shows a shifting toward US values (Figure 1). This author contends that this resemblance offers evidence that Thailand and Indonesia are ready for OD implementation, given Thailand and Indonesia institutionalized context. Thailand and Indonesia management faces the continuous

uncertainty and ambiguity of environmental pressures and shifts in staffing. One can see the trend toward OD as their means of addressing these threats and ambiguities.

By viewing mangers' reflections and comparisons of SWOT and SOAR strategic planning methods in Table 4. This author concluded that managers are willing to apply SOAR with its openness and positive change core attributes shown in Table 4, question 2 can be logically answered.

Implication of the Three-Pronged Methodology Developed from This Study

This author applied a three-pronged methodology—the Hofstede Cultural Dimension Values, the Likert Profile of Organization Characteristics, and reflection of SOAR strategic planning, plus observation—to the issue of willingness for OD change on the part of Thai and Indonesian management. This author derived two research questions from this issue. The methodology was successful in clearly identifying and verifying the direction and movement of Thai and Indonesian managers' perceptions, all evidence positively confirming that Thai and Indonesian mangers are willing to apply OD (SOAR). Thai and Indonesian managers are mostly result oriented; so they normally pay less attention to process.

This author claims that unless OD, SOAR in this study, can offer help about which Thai and Indonesian managers are still unaware, OD has no room to grow in South Asia because it requires management support. The research, however, offers evidence that OD is needed for Thai and Indonesian management; it can be modified and implemented in South Asia at different cultural stages. SOAR proliferates its knowledge in a positive evolving process. It will help Thai and Indonesian management better manage their organizations, improve manager's personal quality of life, positively affect members in the organization, as well as indirectly influence the community at large.

The important point is that the OD field needs to act, and we need the invitation to get into the field. The evidence of willingness of Thai and Indonesian management to apply SOAR, as indicated by this research, is an invitation from the context.

This research is an action research study in a class setting, and it was extended into action at three target organization through groups' action research project along with intervention instruments, and the SOAR strategic planning process. This study demonstrates the efficacy of its methodology, which successfully verified all the research questions: that Thai and Indonesian managers are willing to apply OD; and that SOAR can function in an Institutional controlled environment such as Thailand and Indonesia. This author will elaborate on ways of implementing this research, specifically addressing in detail how OD (SOAR) can function in Thailand and Indonesia Institutional controlled environment after a discussion of the Likert Profile of Organization Characteristics survey.

Limitations of This Study

The study was conducted at Assumption University in Bangkok, Thailand. Study groups were Thai and Indonesian managers. Because of the short timeframe of this study (three months), this author suggests that future study should draw random samples with larger size from the target sectors of South Asia for generalizing the research results. In addition, the group interviews based on the Hofstede's cultural dimension values survey served as a gestalt experiment and might contain biases affecting sub-group discussion.

Future research should be continued to keep track of manager's nationality to implement SOARING into their context. A longitudinal study would further expand the research and determine how best to apply SOAR strategic planning to be a theory-in-use to advance organizations' effectiveness and efficiency.

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