

Generation Z in Thailand

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Abstract

Generation Z has been said to have more in common with their global generational cohort than they do with their parents. The 24/7 access to information, through increasingly ubiquitous Internet access, has been credited as the facilitator of the spread of generational values and characteristics. While this may apply to Generation Z in many developed countries, does it apply in developing nations such as Thailand? For example, by the year 2015, only 40 percent of the Thai population had access to the Internet. Thus, this study attempts to understand to what extent proclaimed Generation Z characteristics and values ring true for a segment of Thai youth with the necessary access to and corresponding usage of connected technology. A literature review was conducted of both English and Thai language literature. Thai Generation Z university students were surveyed, and the results were analyzed using structural equation modeling. On the one hand, the results did support an affinity toward technology, on the other hand, it suggested that Thai youth valued and used the technology differently than their generational cohort in the west, especially concerning content creation. Furthermore, they differed from their global cohort in their preference for collectivism. They also differed from national cultural expectations as they showed tendencies toward low power distance. Finally, work values were largely consistent with international generational expectations in that they showed the strongest preference toward intrinsic and altruistic rewards. It will be essential for Human Resources (HR) to communicate these rewards to attract and retain this next generation of employees. This article contributes to the greater cross-cultural management scholarship by filling a gap in understanding the cultural and work values of a generational cohort in Thailand. It does this by highlighting the institutional and cultural setting this cohort came of age in and surveys cohort members to understand their values and preferences.

Keywords

Cultural values, Generation Z, Thai culture, Thailand

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Introduction

As the Millennial generation becomes established in the workforce, the focus for many researchers and practitioners has started to shift toward the implications of Generation Z entering the workforce. The Generation Z demographic consists of individuals born sometime between the early to mid-1990s through 2000s. This generation is still growing into its own and yet it has a plethora of names ranging from the Google Generation to “The Post Millennials, The New Silent Generation, Digital Natives, Generation M, and The Net Generation” (Bassiouni and Hackley, 2014: 116).

Research regarding generational difference has shown that differences in work values exist in western countries like the United States (Twenge et al., 2010) and Canada (Lyons et al., 2016) and in Asian countries such as China (Chen and Lian, 2016) and Thailand (Kuenwan et al., 2019). Similarly, research has shown work values also differ between espoused national cultural values (Hofstede, 1984; House et al., 2004; Schwartz, 1992; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012). For example, Thai cultural values influence Thai management style and the corresponding preference for focusing more on collectivism, harmony, and consideration for others (Zhu et al., 2007).

Recently, however, it has been suggested that generational values may have a greater impact on Generation Z around the world than the corresponding national cultures do. A Ford Trends Report (2015) suggested that this is the first global generation and that members of this generation will “have more in common with their global peers than they do with adults in their own country” (p. 7). Given that Thailand is still a developing country and that many would not have had access to technology through their formative years, to what extent can it be expected that Thai’s have been impacted by this global trend?

Understanding the generational values is important for Thai and International companies to attract, retain, and motivate talent (Kapoor and Solomon, 2011). Accordingly, the objective of this study is to gain insight into Thai Generation Z cultural, technological, and work values; to explore the possibility that this generation of Thai’s could be part of a global generation. To accomplish this, the study first conceptually integrates Thai geography, history, and institutions with cross-cultural theory to analyze Thai culture. Then second, it empirically looks at work values, cultural values, and technology usage to gain deeper insight into Generation Z in Thailand.

This study draws upon well-established cross-cultural theory based on the works of Hofstede (1983). It also incorporates the work values framework from the heavily cited work of Twenge et al. (2010). Finally, due to the strong technology influence cited as a main facilitator of the global generation, it incorporates the technology utilization framework from Rosen et al. (2013). Accordingly, this study contributes to the field of cross-cultural management by attempting to fill this research gap and understand to what extent Thai Generation Z work values and technology usage preferences are convergent with their international generational cohort.

Generation Z

In the west, the Silent Generation (born 1920s to early 1940s) has largely retired, and today’s workforce is comprised of Baby Boomers (born mid 1940s to mid 1960s), Generation X (mid 1960s to early 1980s), Generation Y (early 1980s to early 1990s) and just starting to enter the workforce is Generation Z (mid 1990s through mid-2000s). Many business are now trying to understand Generation Z better to be able to prepare for them in the workplace (Montana and Petit, 2008).

Research suggests that Generation Z places value on development, good relationships, and generous pay (Iorgulescu, 2016). Compared to Generation Y, Generation Z is said to place greater

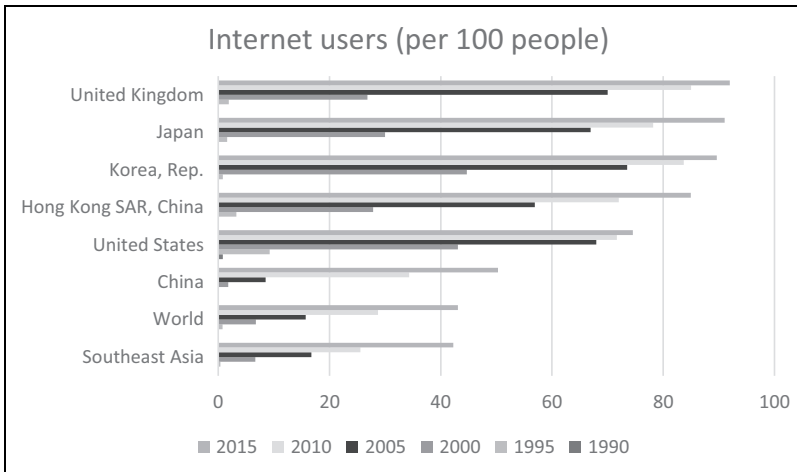


Figure 1. West versus East Internet penetration rates (World Bank, 2019).

emphasis on professional growth than financial stability (Adecco, 2015) and they are also said to be more entrepreneurial (Lanier, 2017).

One of the key elements defining this generation is the wide-scale access to digital communication technology. For example, Bassiouni and Hackley (2014) discuss a 2012–2013 study conducted in the United Kingdom on the media consumption of children between the ages of 5 and 16. The study showed that 69 percent of the youth owned a mobile phone, 73 percent had their own PC or laptop, 60 percent used computers to go online an average of 1.5 h per day, and 84 percent had gaming consoles with the majority playing an average of 1.4 h per day. Furthermore, given the prevalence of not only Wi-Fi but also mobile technology, Generation Z is perceived as viewing this constant connectivity more like a utility, like electricity, rather than a luxury (BAV Consulting, 2015).

Rowlands et al. (2008) reviewed claims that these digital natives are more competent and more demanding users of today’s technology than the older generations. While they did confirm that there is a difference between digital natives and digital immigrants, they also suggested that older generations are quickly blurring these distinguishing features. They did note that Generation Z does tend to differ in their relationship with technology. The authors also suggest that Generation Z prefers to not only consume media but also create media. Their evidence for this is that media such as television and newspapers, perceived as being one-sided pushers of content, are experiencing a decline with this age-group. Furthermore, members of this cohort are considered to be adept and self-directed researchers with 52 percent using “YouTube or Social Media for typical research assignments, 33% watching lessons online, 32% working with classmates online, and 20% reading textbooks on tablets” (BAV Consulting, 2015: 15).

Given the importance of the internet to this generation, differences in the ability to access this technology could affect how “generational cohorts” in different countries interact with it. In fact, as seen in Figure 1, according to data obtained from the World Bank (2016), most of China and Southeast Asia have been about 10 to 15 years behind western countries like the United States, United Kingdom, or Germany with regards to internet penetration.

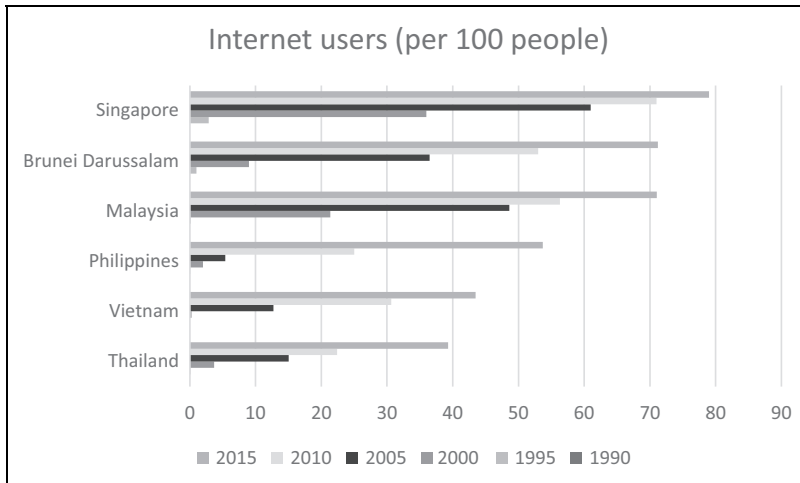


Figure 2. Southeast Asian internet penetration rates (World Bank, 2019). The remaining Southeast Asian nations had less than 30 per 100 in 2015.

Figure 2 further illustrates how even in Southeast Asia there are differences in the internet penetration rate; with the World Bank data indicating that in 2015 Singapore had reached over 80 percent while Thailand was around 40 percent. Given that much of Generation Z in Thailand did not have 24/7 access to technology during their formative years, how much can it be expected that this generation of Thai's remain consistent with their generational cohort, having similar values to their global peers as opposed to adults of their own culture?

It must be considered to what extent these differences in penetration rate affect the characteristics of Generation Z in Thailand. Furthermore, other factors, aside from penetration rate that could affect the generational values, need to be considered.

Thailand

Thailand is known around the world for its cuisine, temples, beaches, and of course its people. Known as the Land of Smiles, the Thai culture is known for its complexities (Pimpa, 2012). Accordingly, to understand the complexities it is important to understand what influences Thai cultural values.

Geography. One of the ways that geography can influence culture is the country's distance from the equator. Two espoused national cultural values that have been tied to a country's latitude are power distance (PD) and individualism versus collectivism (IDV). PD reflects the distance between those with most power and those with least power and IDV considers the extent to which people identify themselves as individuals or as part of a group. A country's tendency toward PD is inversely related to its distance from the equator. IDV on the other hand has a direct relationship distance from the equator. In other words, the closer a country is to the equator, the more the culture will tend toward group oriented (low IDV) and unequal distribution of power (high PD) (Dobson and Gelade, 2012). Given Thailand's location of 15.87° North of the equator, the abovementioned disposition toward higher PD and lower IDV can be expected.

Religion. With 93.6 percent of the population, Buddhism is the main religion of Thailand. The rest of the religions are in the minority with Muslims accounting for 4.9 percent and Christians accounting for 1.2 percent (CIA, 2016). In Thailand, Theravada Buddhism is practiced. It is the oldest school of Buddhism. Much of Buddhism focuses on mindfulness and doing things the right way, which changes according to the situation. On the one hand, Buddhism has been associated with a more egalitarian belief system (Singelis et al., 1995) while on the other hand, it supports the existence of and perpetuation of greater differences in power through the concept of karma. It is believed that those with power or status are entitled to this good fortune due to the accumulation of good karma through past lives (Lawrence, 2008).

Politics: Political instability. Thailand has had a turbulent past with a score of military coups, both successful and unsuccessful, since 1932 when Thailand became a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary government. The 1990s started with a military coup but came to an end with a string of democratically elected governments. In 2001, Thai telecommunications magnate and head of the Thai Rak Thai (Thais love Thais, TRT) party, Thaksin Shinawatra was elected to government. Both the magnate and the party were “re-elected in a landslide election victory in February 2005” (Hewison, 2010: 119). Shortly thereafter, mounting opposition and charges of corruption led the People’s Alliance for Democracy (PAD) to begin, sometimes violent, demonstrations which ultimately ended in the September 2006 military coup. During Thaksin’s time in office, he had begun instituting more liberal policies striving for economic liberalization and privatization. However, many saw Thaksin’s policies as a threat to traditional Thai life, “running against their development vision of community-based subsistence, luring rural farmers toward commercialization and a culture of money” (Pitidol, 2016: 521–22). Many, ranging from urban intellectuals to mainstream media, criticized rural backing of Thaksin, citing the rural dweller’s ignorance and greed. Accordingly, many “Bangkok-based elite regarded rural folk as uneducated and uninformed, needing to be guided by the elite” (Phatharathananunth, 2016: 505). On the other hand, the rural inhabitants felt that with the more recent access to media and communication technology, they were well informed. At least, they felt they were informed enough to understand the discrepancy between urban and rural life and to know that they wanted to work toward a better standard of living. These supporters of Thaksin and his policies became known as the red shirts while the traditionalists, monarchists, and urban middle class became known as yellow shirts. Crackdown on the red shirts took place over the years following the 2006 military coup, with many injured and some killed, until in 2011 Thaksin’s sister Yingluck Shinawatra was elected to government (Hewison, 2012). However, by 2014, the social turbulence had again reached a point where a military coup ousted Yingluck with the notion of reestablishing stability. This transition also strengthened the debate regarding the merit of electoral democracy versus the concept of “communitarian democracy” (Pitidol, 2016: 527). The idea being that democratic elections were less about democracy and more about money and thus deemed lacking in morality. Pitidol further explained that communitarian democracy was consistent with the Thai form of democracy practiced prior to the implementation of the electoral system. In essence, the author suggested that in the past, smaller communities would come together to choose a morally superior leader, whose position within the community would lead him or her to take the best interests of the community into consideration. Pitidol elaborated that those “best interests” are often associated with sustainability and self-sufficiency.

Regardless of which side of the argument today’s youth comes down on, the instability this generation experienced will have a lasting impact on their values. For example, Batonda and Perry

(2003) indicate that political instability can yield a greater affinity toward networks and relationships. In other words, this would mean a greater inclination toward group orientation (low IDV).

History: Rapid shift away from agricultural base. According to Phatharathananunth (2016), through the large part of the 20th century, Thailand remained a largely agricultural-based economy. Even into the 1960s, many villages were still largely economically independent where villagers were self-sufficient, with extremely limited cash and limited access to the outside world. The study further indicated that during that time not only had electricity still not reached most of the villages but also that approximately 96 percent of rural households were living below the poverty line. Phatharathananunth pointed out what life in one such village was like. The article explains that they did “not own radios or lanterns; they had one or two sets of clothing per person...The schools provided education through the 4th grade only, and a few students left to continue their education elsewhere. Men visited the outside world once every month or so” (p. 507). Approximately 30 years later, this was no longer the case. Electricity had already reached over three-quarters of all households and most of the working age villagers had left the village seeking to earn an income, which they could send back to their family. They did so either periodically throughout the year, seeking work as seasonal labor, or more permanently, returning only periodically for special holidays. By 2015, the urban population had risen to 50.4 percent of the total population (CIA, 2016).

With regards to their access to technology, by 2002, almost all households had electricity and in the meantime the latest technologies such as the mobile phones and the internet had to varying degrees been incorporated into village life (Phatharathananunth, 2016). The number of rural households still living in poverty had fallen to around 10 percent by 2007, although Phatharathananunth suggests that this can be misleading as due to the increase in agricultural related debt, about 50 percent of all agricultural households could be considered poor. So while the rural youth of this generation were most certainly experiencing a rise in living standards, if and how they accessed technology during their formative years differed greatly from their generational cohort in the west.

Thailand has also seen a rise in those pursuing a tertiary education. As seen in Figure 3, in 1990, the enrollment rate was just under 16 percent, and by 2014, the enrollment rate had jumped to approximately 50 percent. While not all wealthy Thai's are educated, generally speaking, the more educated Thai's are better off from a financial perspective (Rigg et al., 2014).

Social values. According to data obtained from the World Values Survey (WVS) (Inglehart et al., 2014), values Thais want to teach their children changed between 2005 and 2014. The WVS questionnaire listed qualities that children can be encouraged to learn at home and asked respondents to select up to five most important qualities.

As seen in Table 1, during that time, the qualities of independence, imagination, thrift saving money and things, and obedience became less of a priority, and per the corresponding *t*-test, these changes were significant. On the other hand, the qualities of hard work, feeling of responsibility, tolerance and respect for other people, determination perseverance, religious faith, and unselfishness became more important and these changes were statistically significant. As parenting styles are one of the major contributors to the formation of discernible generational attitudes and traits, it can be expected that this impacted the mind-set of this later generation (Hampton and Keys, 2017). Unfortunately, the WVS did not include Thailand in the first four waves, thus data prior to 2005 were not available.

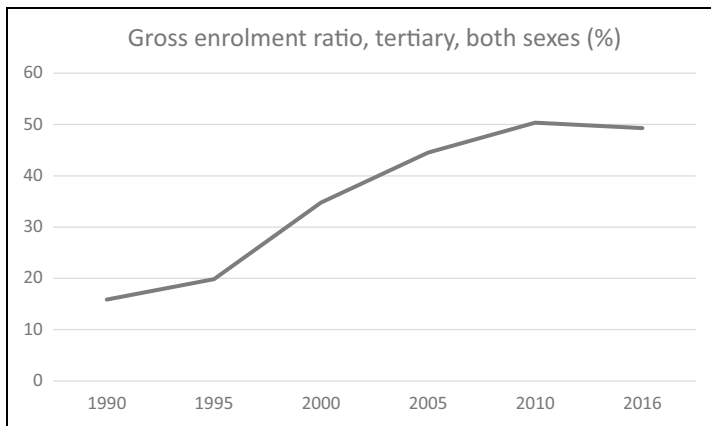


Figure 3. Gross enrollment in tertiary education in Thailand 1990–2016 (World Bank, 2018).

Table 1. Thai values: Important to teach children.

Important values	Significance	Wave	N	Mean	Std. dev.	Std. error mean
Independence	0.000	2005–2009	1534	0.48	0.500	0.013
		2010–2014	1200	0.36	0.480	0.014
Hard work	0.000	2005–2009	1534	0.23	0.420	0.011
		2010–2014	1200	0.78	0.413	0.012
Feeling of responsibility	0.006	2005–2009	1534	0.61	0.489	0.012
		2010–2014	1200	0.66	0.475	0.014
Imagination	0.002	2005–2009	1534	0.28	0.452	0.012
		2010–2014	1200	0.23	0.423	0.012
Tolerance and respect for other people	0.000	2005–2009	1534	0.58	0.494	0.013
		2010–2014	1200	0.65	0.478	0.014
Thrift saving money and things	0.015	2005–2009	1534	0.58	0.494	0.013
		2010–2014	1200	0.53	0.499	0.014
Determination perseverance	0.330	2005–2009	1534	0.46	0.499	0.013
		2010–2014	1200	0.50	0.500	0.014
Religious faith	0.004	2005–2009	1534	0.29	0.456	0.012
		2010–2014	1200	0.35	0.476	0.014
Unselfishness	0.000	2005–2009	1534	0.31	0.463	0.012
		2010–2014	1200	0.44	0.497	0.014
Obedience	0.000	2005–2009	1534	0.54	0.499	0.013
		2010–2014	1200	0.44	0.497	0.014

Espoused national cultural values. Generational values are a combination of values learned at home and at school, reactions to life-changing events and political ideology prevalent during their coming of age. Much of what is learnt from home, school, the media, and so on, with regards to values, are derived from but also perpetuate the espoused national culture.

When considering national-level culture, it is often useful to incorporate a framework to help understand trends in values orientations at the national level. The Hofstede framework is one of the

most cited frameworks. There are many competing frameworks but the Hofstede framework is one of the most heavily cited and with little exception, many of the dimensions within the competing frameworks overlap with the Hofstede values (Taras et al., 2009). Accordingly, the espoused national cultural dimensions will correspond to values from the Hofstede framework. The original four dimensions consisted of Power Distance (PD), individualism versus collectivism (IDV), masculinity versus femininity, and Uncertainty Avoidance (UA) (Hofstede, 1984). In a later study, the value of long-term versus short-term orientation was added to the framework (Hofstede et al., 2010). Some studies (Jung & Kellaris, 2001; Singelis et al., 1995) break up the value IDV to also focus separately on collectivism (COL). This study will focus on the three values of PD, COL and UA.

As defined by Hofstede, PD is the extent to which inequalities in society are expected and accepted by the less powerful versus the extent to which attempts are made to minimize such inequalities. Consistent with the high PD implications of Thailand's geographical location as well as the implications of status achieved through karma, Thailand would be considered a high power distant country with the corresponding unequal distribution of power. This is supported by past research (Hofstede et al., 2010: 59). Accordingly, it is expected that Generation Z, having also been exposed to the abovementioned influences, will continue to be prone toward high PD.

Hypothesis 1: Thai Generation Z will tend to show a preference toward high PD.

The espoused national cultural value of IDV / COL is concerned with how individuals identify themselves. Higher IDV / lower COL means individuals see themselves as an "I" with responsibility for themselves and their nuclear family. On the other hand, low IDV / high COL means individuals see themselves as part of a group or as "we," where members take care of each other and remain loyal to each other. If the implications of the Buddhist religion and geography are taken into consideration in conjunction with the abovementioned relationship with political instability and an increased affinity toward networks and relationships, it can be expected that Thai's will be more COL oriented. This is supported by past research indicating that Thailand tends more toward COL (Hofstede et al., 2010).

This element can be seen in the second and third most valued concepts identified by the Thai Values Survey (TVS) (Komin, 1990). According to the TVS, the second most important value was titled grateful relationship and it encompasses gratefully acknowledging the receipt of kindness and recognizing that maintaining relationships requires the appropriate reciprocal kindness. This is the basis of a very deep bond. Similarly, the third most important value, titled smooth interpersonal relationships, can also be seen as part of the collectivist values as it refers to the Thai's preference for a harmonious relationship, prizing those who are kind, caring, and considerate. It is expected that Thai Generation Z will remain consistent with past generations and tend toward the cultural value of collectivism.

Hypothesis 2: Thai Generation Z will be prone to high COL

The espoused national cultural value of UA is concerned with the extent to which society "feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations and create beliefs and institutions that try to avoid these" (Hofstede et al., 2010: 190). According to Hofstede, Thailand tends toward greater UA, and accordingly, utilizes rules, regulations, processes, and laws as a means of reducing potential uncertain outcomes. As Thai Generation Z would have been brought up in a high UA society,

Table 2. Thai results from the longitudinal World Values Survey.

	Significance	Wave	N	Mean	Std. dev.	Std. error mean
Importance in Life: Work	0.000	2005–2009	1523	1.51	0.668	0.017
		2010–2014	1191	1.42	0.684	0.02
Hard work brings success	0.000	2005–2009	1533	5.14	2.439	0.062
		2010–2014	1198	4.31	2.593	0.075

with the corresponding rules and the shame associated with non-compliance, it can be expected that they will show a preference for UA.

Hypothesis 3: Thai Generation Z will be prone to UA.

Work values. As Generation Z begins graduating from college and entering the workforce, it is expected that they “will have a strong work ethic similar to Baby Boomers and the responsibility and resiliency of their Generation X parents, and they may be even technologically savvy than the Millennials” (Hampton and Keys, 2017: 112).

As seen in Table 2, the Thai results from the longitudinal WVS questions on, “importance of hard work in life” and the “expectation that hard work will bring success” both became significantly more important. The value *Importance in life: Work* was measured using a 4-point scale with 1 being very important and 4 being very unimportant. The value of *Hard work brings success* was measured using a 10-point scale with 1 being hard work does bring success and 10 being hard work does not bring success. This combined with the fact that hard work sky-rocketed to become the most important quality to teach a child in the 2010–2014 WVS is a strong indication that Generation Z in Thailand will possess a strong work ethic.

As this generational cohort begins to enter the workforce, it is important to understand how to attract and retain them. Specifically, it is important to understand the underlying motivation and the expected outcome of time invested in work (Twenge et al., 2010). Many frameworks have been developed to understand work values and their corresponding influence on the workplace (Consiglio et al., 2017; England, 1991; Yang et al., 2018). One of the most cited of such works is Twenge et al. (2010), which draw values from a larger instrument that has been successfully utilized since 1976. The work values, which have been considered most relevant, are extrinsic rewards, intrinsic rewards, leisure rewards, altruistic rewards, and social rewards. Accordingly, the study will incorporate these values to try to understand what motivates Generation Z in Thailand.

Extrinsic rewards include work benefits such as pay or promotion. A preference for extrinsic rewards in the form of visible signs of status have been tied to high power distant cultures (Hofstede et al., 2010). Many Asian nations tend to be higher in PD and also display a strong link between job satisfaction and equal opportunity for job advancement (Andreassi et al., 2014). In Thailand, specifically, it has been suggested that Thai’s seek higher education less in pursuit of wisdom and more as a means to gain extrinsic rewards such as pay and status (Komin, 1990). Internationally, extrinsic rewards, such as pay, have been shown to be a major concern for college students. In fact, according to a study in Romania by Iorgulescu (2016), the top two values identified in the research were job advancement and pay. Assuming Generation Z in Thailand conforms with their international cohort, they too will be motivated by extrinsic rewards (Hampton

and Keys, 2017). Furthermore, it can be expected that, in accordance with past studies, there will be a tie between higher PD and the preference for extrinsic rewards.

Hypothesis 4: Thai Generation Z will positively perceive extrinsic rewards and there will be a corresponding positive relationship between PD and extrinsic rewards.

Intrinsic rewards include work benefits such as having an interesting job or a job that allows for creativity. It can be expected that these values will resonate strongly with Thai's due to their tie to Buddhism. According to the Buddhist belief, it is not in seeking wealth as the ultimate goal that will make people happy but rather by focusing on more intrinsic values (Boyce et al., 2009). Furthermore, greater COL has been tied to a greater preference for intrinsic rewards (Hagger et al., 2014). Accordingly,

Hypothesis 5: Thai Generation Z will positively perceive intrinsic rewards and there will be a corresponding positive relationship between COL and intrinsic rewards.

Leisure rewards include time off and the ability to work at a slow pace. On the one hand, the least desired value cited in the Romania study was leisure rewards (Iorgulescu, 2016). Furthermore, the WVS showed that the values of hard work and success through hard work had seen a strong increase in Thailand. On the other hand, the Thai value of *sanuk*, looking to enjoy life now (Komin, 1990), would make it a desired value. Accordingly, it can be expected that, these opposing forces will influence Thai Generation Z's expectation of leisure rewards.

Hypothesis 6: Thai Generation Z will positively perceive Leisure but less than other values.

Social rewards are the opportunity to make friends and work with people. More collectivist cultures place value on being members of in-groups where relationship is more important than task (Hofstede et al., 2010). On the other hands, internationally it has been suggested that Generation Z actually prefers working alone, rather than in groups, citing their potential lack of social skills from their extensive interaction in virtual environments rather than real environments (Iorgulescu, 2016). While this may apply to Thailand, it can be expected that the collective nature of the culture will to some extent overcome this so that social rewards will still have some importance.

Hypothesis 7: Thai Generation Z will positively perceive social rewards and there will be a corresponding positive relationship between COL and social rewards.

While in the US Generation Z has been noted to exhibit a greater entrepreneurial spirit than their generational predecessors (Adecco, 2015), in Romania this emphasis on the value of autonomy was not found (Iorgulescu, 2016). It has been suggested that stronger COL is tied to stronger entrepreneurial spirit (Zeffane, 2014). Findings in Thailand by Adecco (2016) suggested that while the entrepreneurial spirit is there and even though it is an important concern, Generation Z's place greater emphasis on other more extrinsic and social rewards.

Hypothesis 8: Thai Generation Z will positively perceive Autonomy and there will be a corresponding positive relationship between COL and Autonomy.

Technology usage. Technology usage has been cited as a factor differentiating Generation Z from other generations due to the fact that internet connectivity has always been in their lives. They no

longer view it as a luxury but rather as a utility (BAV Consulting, 2015). Most importantly, it is this technology that would have afforded Generation Z the interconnectivity necessary to be a global cohort. Accordingly, to Rosen et al. (2013), technology usage today focuses on 11 distinct types of technology and their corresponding usage. Of those technologies, six were selected based on their suitability to the study at hand. They were smartphone usage, social media usage, internet searching, e-mailing, media sharing, and watching TV.

Although the internet penetration rate is lower than in most western countries, usage increased with education and income. Despite the fact that Generation Z in Thailand spends approximately 6 h less each week on the internet than their predecessor generations X and Y they still spend an average of 41.4 h each week (ETDA and ICT, 2016).

With regards to the smartphone penetration rate in Thailand, as of 2016, roughly 35 percent of the population aged 15 and over had smartphones. This was up from roughly 25 percent in 2013 (Statista, 2017). That being said of the internet users surveyed by ETDA and ICT (2016), Generations X, Y, and Z indicated preferring to use their smartphones for surfing the web with an average daily usage of 5.7 h per day. Of the top 5 things Thai's did on a mobile device 82 percent communicated via social media, 56 percent surfed the web, and only 32 percent communicated via e-mail. According to the Thai National Statistics Office (2016), 90 percent of internet users accessed it using their smartphone. PCs came in second place with only 50 percent of internet users utilizing PCs to access the internet.

Hypothesis 9: Thai Generation Z will show a strong preference for smartphone usage.

Hypothesis 10: Thai Generation Z will be least inclined to use e-mail.

Studies have shown that more collectivist cultures have a greater adoption of relationship building technology (Gaspay et al., 2008). This can be seen in Thailand as in 2015, the top reason Thais accessed the internet was to communicate through social network sites (ETDA and ICT, 2016). It is expected that this preference will continue with Thai Generation Z.

Hypothesis 11: Thai Generation Z will show a strong preference toward social media as a relationship building technology.

PD has also been linked to the usage of technology. For example, Abbas and Mesch (2015) indicate a positive correlation between PD and Social Media usage. As Thailand has been shown to be a high PD country (Hofstede et al., 2010), it can be expected that this will have an impact on social media usage in Thailand.

Hypothesis 12: There will be a positive correlation between PD and social media usage

Studies from the United States have indicated that TV viewing by Generation Z is on the decline (Cummings, 2016; Vision Critical, 2016), in favor of less passive media consumption (Rowlands et al., 2008). That may not be the case in Thailand. TV viewing has been seen favorably by Thai parents, believing that is beneficial for their children (Ruangdaraganon et al., 2009). Chanamporn and Taifahpoon (2015) suggest that due to the low Internet penetration rate, TV viewing will remain important to Generation Z. Furthermore, Nielson suggests that although content is being viewed on alternative devices such as computers and tablets, TVs are still the most favored device in Thailand (Kewaleewongsatorn, 2013).

Hypothesis 13: Thai Generation Z will still show a strong preference for TV viewing

Given that in the 1990s approximately one-quarter of rural villagers still did not have electricity, it cannot be expected that all Thai's in the Generation Z cohort could even potentially exhibit the traits of what is being seen globally. Thus, the aim of this study is to see if those Thais, who do have access to similar technology and education as the west, and fall in the Generation Z cohort, will display similar characteristics and values as their international counterparts.

Sample and data collection

As the usage of Internet and technology are important elements defining the cultural makeup of Generation Z, it is important to select a sample that would have had that access. As mentioned above, usage increases with education. Accordingly, college students were deemed those most likely to exhibit the global traits of generation Z. Respondents were all bachelor students enrolled at an international university in Thailand. Convenience sampling was used for sample selection.

To determine the minimum sample size needed for a statistically representative portion of the potential population, Yamane's formula of $n = N/(1 + N(e)^2)$ (Israel, 2009) was used. Calculating for a 95 percent confidence level, n is the sample size needed, N is the size of the population size, and e is the error set at 0.05. Assuming an approximate entire population of Thailand of 68,200,824 (CIA, 2016) with approximately 39 percent in Generation Z, the minimum sample needed would be 400 Thai respondents.

Google Forms was used to create and launch an online questionnaire which the students could access, using their smartphone, via QR code or by typing in the shortened link. All students were informed that their response was confidential and anonymous. As seen in Table 3, a total of 643 students completed the questionnaire. The results from 44 respondents were removed through the data cleaning process. The remaining 607 also included international students. The study then focused on just the 557 Thai students.

Table 3. Respondent demographic information.

Total respondents (usable)	607
Total Thai respondents (usable)	557
Gender	Male: 201 Female: 406
Age (in year)	Minimum: 17 Maximum: 25 Mean: 21.11 Standard deviation: 1.311
Top 5 Provence's (Thai Students)	Bangkok: 47% Samut Prakan: 8% Chonburi: 5.5% Nonthaburi: 3.2% Rayong: 1.8%

Measures

Below are the scales used to measure each of the generational related values. The selection of the scale is discussed, and sample items are presented.

Work values. The values surrounding work was measured using the “Generational Differences in Work Values” scales (Twenge et al., 2010). The study has been cited over 1000 times and uses data taken from the Monitoring the Future study. Part C of the study focuses on values associated with work and leisure (Bachman et al., 2014). The Monitoring the Future study has been conducted successfully on an annual basis for approximately 30 years. The scales were designed to measure student’s perceptions about what values are important when looking for the ideal job. These values include extrinsic, intrinsic, altruistic, social, and leisure. Results indicate that the scales have internal reliability (Twenge et al., 2010). Sample items include “A job where I can learn new things, learn new skills” and “A job that provides me with a chance to earn a good deal of money.”

As Generation Z in the west has been noted as showing a greater interest then previous generations in starting out on their own rather than join the echelons of the corporate world, we included the Work Autonomy scale, part of the Career Anchor of Information System Personal scales (Crepeau et al., 1992). The scales were taken from the Career Orientation Inventory (DeLong, 1984) and have been used in other studies where they were found to exhibit both reliability and validity (Coetzee and Schreuder, 2009; Crook et al., 1991). Sample items include “The chance to pursue my own life-style and not to be constrained by the rules of an organization” and “A career which permits a maximum of freedom and autonomy to choose my own work, hours, etc.”

All items were scored on five-point Likert-type scales, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

Cultural values. Cultural values are a heavily researched concept and many different cultural dimensions have been developed with multitudes of scales to measure each of them. Often the values themselves are poorly defined with regards to the exact element of culture they are measuring. Furthermore, it is important to choose the scales parameters appropriately to avoid ecological fallacy or vice versa when discussing the findings (Taras et al., 2009). Accordingly, scales were identified to measure each of the elements at the individual level. All cultural values items were scored on five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

The scale to measure UA, which was defined as the extent to which individuals in a culture “feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations”(Hofstede et al., 2010: 190) and thus utilize rules and procedures to minimize uncertainty. The scale from Srite and Karahanna (2006) is consistent with this definition, has shown internal reliability, and was designed to be used at the individual level. Sample items include “Order and structure are very important in a work environment” and “It is better to have a bad situation that you know about, than to have an uncertain situation which might be better” (p. 704).

The concept of IDV was defined for this research as the extent to which an individual identifies as “I,” having responsibility for just himself/herself and potentially the nuclear family versus the extent to which an individual identifies as “we,” as part of a group with the corresponding responsibility and expectation of loyalty. Although scales for both sides have been designed, the COL scale presented by Jung and Kellaris (2001) to measure COL at the individual level was

selected. The scale was found to be valid and reliable. Sample items include “I believe that group harmony is more important than personal satisfaction” and “the interests of the group are generally more important than personal interests” (pp. 142–43).

The concept of PD was defined as “the extent to which the less powerful members of society expect and accept that power is distributed unequally” (Hofstede and Minkov, 2013: 8). While many different scales exist, it was important to consider a scale that measures culture at the individual level and adheres to the abovementioned definition. Accordingly, the scale presented by Farrell and Pasqualoni (2017) was selected to measure PD due to its proven validity and reliability. Sample items include “when standing in a queue, if someone of higher status comes later, it is appropriate to let that person go first in line” and “rank and position in the hierarchy should have special privileges” (p. 19).

Technology usage and attitudes. Given the role technology plays in shaping Generation Z, it is important to understand their usage and attitude towards technology. The scales from Rosen et al. (2013) were designed to measure technology usage. The technology identified and measured in the study are smartphone usage, social media usage, Internet searching, e-mailing, media sharing, and TV viewing. The scales were found to be reliable. Although the original scale used a 10-point frequency ranging from 1 (*Never*) to 10 (*All the time*), it was reduced to 5 points 1 (*never*) to 5 (*hourly*). Sample items include how often respondents “browse the web on a mobile phone” and “Watch TV shows, movies, etc. on a TV set.”

Data analysis

SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) was used to conduct mean comparisons, non-parametric testing and exploratory factor analysis (EFA). It is one of the “most widely available statistical software packages” (Greasley, 2007, p. 1). It has proven to be a strong tool to conduct statistics tests ranging from scale reliability and *t* tests to Factor and Regression Analysis.

Smart PLS was used to understand how culture impacts work values. Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) “is a variance-based method that estimates composites representing latent variables in path models” (Richter et al., 2016: 581). The study sample size is sufficient to meet the minimum sample size requirements (Hair et al., 2011). The results are offered not only with regards to the explanatory power but also with regards to the extent to which the model generates predictions. As PLS-SEM “does not presume any distributional form of measured variables, it is distribution-free hence suitable for data from non-normal or unknown distributions” (Aibinu and Al-Lawati, 2010: 718).

Results

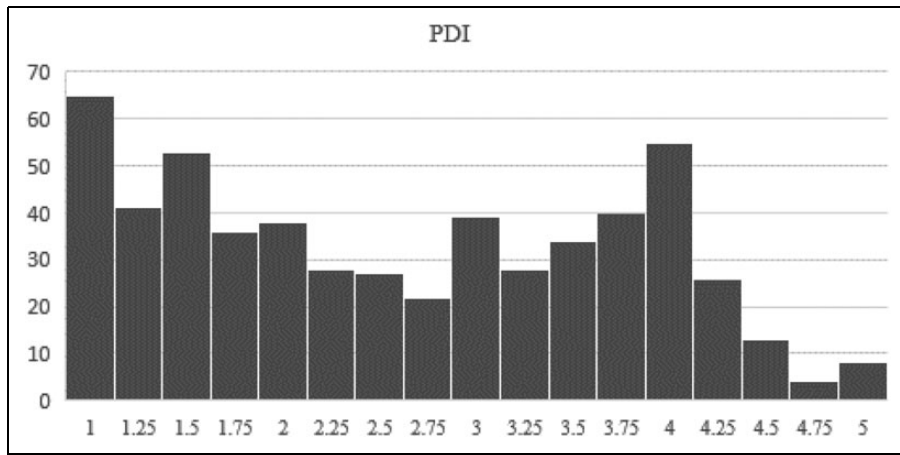
The study was initially run on 200 respondents. Testing was conducted to confirm internal reliability. With the exception of social and leisure rewards, all remaining work values, culture values, and tech preference values were above 0.7. Both social and leisure rewards were 0.668 and above, which although slightly low, would still be within the realm of acceptable (Goforth, 2015). Accordingly, the survey was continued.

Once data collection was complete, both the test of Normality Kolmogorov–Smirnov and Shapiro–Wilk analysis were conducted. The results were 0.000 indicating that the data are not normally distributed. Accordingly, precaution was taken when analyzing the data as the non-normal distribution impacts the statistics which can be applied, which would include parametric testing (Vickers,

Table 4. Mean: Espoused national cultural values of Thais.

	Mean	Std. deviation	Median
PD	2.605	1.152	2.500
COL	3.795	0.597	3.750
UA	4.055	0.538	4.000

Note: PD: power distance; UA: uncertainty avoidance.

**Figure 4.** Histogram of response frequency for PD.

2005). EFA was conducted on each of the three groups, culture, work, and technology values, to investigate the extent to which the factors were indeed independent factors. In all three groups, the factor analysis confirmed the distinct variables. Specifically with regards to the tech related variables, it was found that the social media measurement were two separate factors, one focused on creator and the other focused on consumer. Based on this insight, the social media variable was broken into create and consume for the remaining means and PLS-SEM analysis.

Construct reliability and validity were established for each of the latent variables. With the exception of leisure rewards and social rewards, the Cronbach's α s were above 0.7. Social rewards had a Cronbach's α of .659 and leisure rewards .676 which were slightly low but both within the realm of what is considered acceptable.

Hypothesis 1 predicted that Thai Generation Z would show a preference toward high PD. To understand the general values orientation of the respondents, the means, medians, and frequencies were analyzed. As seen in Table 4, hypothesis 1 was not supported. With a mean of 2.605 and a median of 2.5, Thais were more inclined to low PD. However, the large standard deviation and the corresponding frequency of responses seen in Figure 4 indicate that respondents are rather divided on this topic. Hypotheses 2 and 3 were both supported indicating that Thai Generation Z is in fact more prone to collectivism and UA. With a mean of 3.79 and a median of 3.75, it can be said that Thais tend toward the value of COL. The corresponding frequency of responses seen in Figure 5 further illustrates this. Finally, with a mean of 4.05 and median of 4, Thai Generation Z could be considered fairly uncertainty avoidant. This is visible in the frequency of responses in Figure 6.

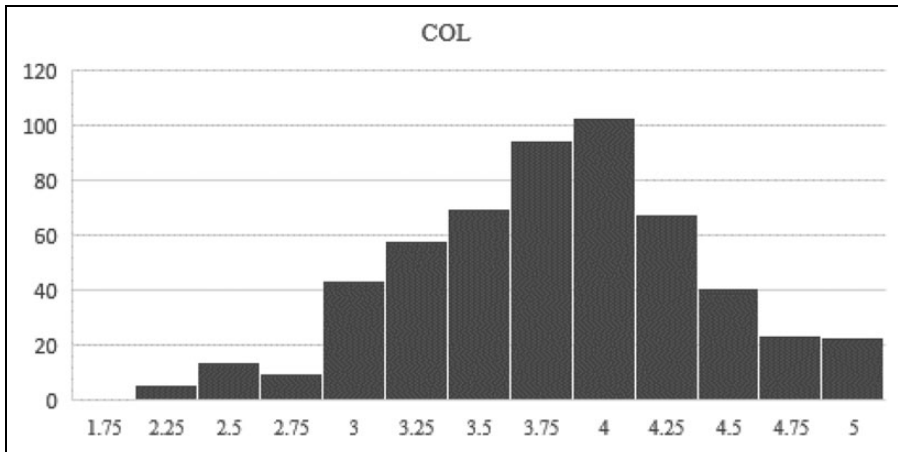


Figure 5. Histogram of response frequency for COL.

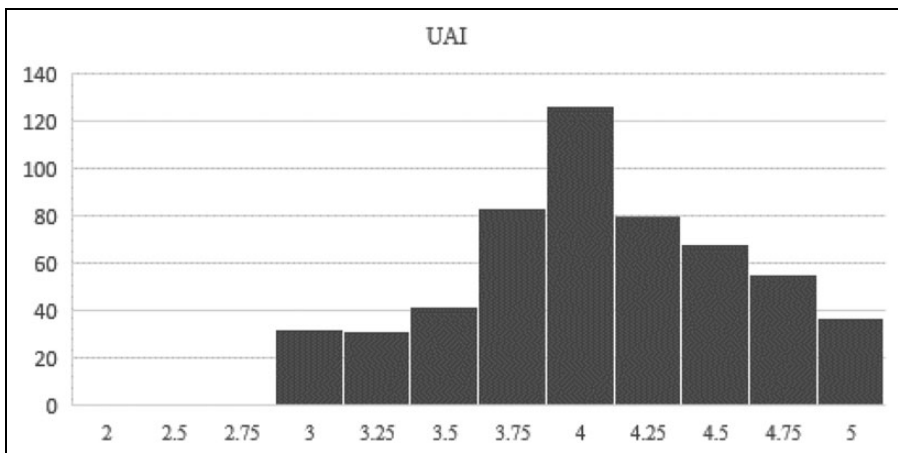


Figure 6. Histogram of response frequency for UA.

Similarly, as seen in Table 5, it can be seen that Thai Generation Z values intrinsic rewards the most and although they do value leisure rewards, they value them the least.

To understand how cultural values, impact work values, PLS-SEM analysis was conducted using Smart PLS. PLS-SEM has been noted to overcome type 1 error associated with non-normally distributed data (Bag, 2015).

The first step in assessing the outcome of PLS-SEM is to consider the reflective measurements (Hair et al., 2011). As previously mentioned, construct reliability was established and all Average Variance Extracted (AVE) scores were above 0.5. Discriminant validity was established by looking at cross-loadings and Fornell–Larcker criterion. Furthermore, the Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio (HTMT) of the correlations was analyzed. All results were below 0.9.

Table 5. Means and medians: Thai work values.

	Mean	Std. deviation	Median
Leisure rewards	3.768	0.768	3.667
Autonomy	3.989	0.635	4.000
Social rewards	4.104	0.712	4.000
Extrinsic rewards	4.124	0.660	4.250
Altruistic rewards	4.189	0.696	4.000
Intrinsic rewards	4.317	0.586	4.429

Table 6. PLS path coefficients.

	Altruistic rewards	Autonomy	Extrinsic rewards	Intrinsic rewards	Leisure rewards	Social reward
COL	0.266**	0.195**	0.157**	0.143**	0.040	0.226**
PD	-0.136**	-0.041	-0.063	-0.212**	-0.088*	-0.039
UA	0.330**	0.297**	0.362**	0.421**	0.309**	0.255**

Note: PLS: partial least squares; PD: power distance; UA: uncertainty avoidance.

**t Values: 2.57 significance level of 1%.

*t Values: 1.96 <=> 2.56 significance level of 5%.

Moving on to the formative measurements, all latent variable outer loadings were acceptable, with the majority falling well above 0.7 and none falling below 0.6. All variance inflation factors (VIFs) were below the suggested upper limit of 5.00 (Hair et al., 2013).

Looking at the structural model itself, as seen in Table 6, COL positively impacts all of the values associated with work rewards. This would indicate that the more respondents tended toward greater cultural collectivism, the more they showed a preference for all the rewards associated with work values. With the exception of leisure rewards, the relationships are at a level that can be considered statistically significant. On the other hand, PD negatively affects all rewards associated with work values. Thus, the more the respondents tended toward low PD, the more they valued the various rewards. In the case of altruistic rewards, intrinsic rewards and leisure rewards, the relationships are at a level that could be considered significant. Finally, UA positively impacts all of the work values. This means the more the respondents tended toward UA; the more they valued all the rewards. The relationships between UA and all of the work values are at levels that could be considered significant. In fact, out of the three cultural values, UA had the strongest relationship with all of the rewards.

Hypothesis 4 predicted that Thai Generation Z would positively perceive extrinsic rewards and the relationship between PD and extrinsic rewards would be positive. This hypothesis was partially supported. As seen in Table 5, with a mean of 4.12, extrinsic rewards were positively perceived however, as seen in Table 6, the path coefficient is negative, indicating that respondents valuing greater egalitarianism (low PD) were the ones that valued extrinsic rewards more. However, the relationship was not at a level that could be considered significant.

Hypothesis 5 predicted that Thai Generation Z would positively perceive intrinsic rewards and do so more than other values. The relationship between COL and intrinsic rewards would be positive. This hypothesis was supported. Not only did they positively perceive this work value,

Table 7. R^2 adjusted for rewards variables.

	Altruistic rewards	Autonomy	Extrinsic rewards	Intrinsic rewards	Leisure rewards	Social rewards
R^2 adjusted	0.246	0.169	0.197	0.269	0.107	0.158

Table 8. f^2 : Strength of predictor variable in explaining R^2 of endogenous work value variable.

	Altruistic rewards	Autonomy	Extrinsic rewards	Intrinsic rewards	Leisure rewards	Social rewards
COL	0.065	0.032	0.021	0.020	0.001	0.042
PD	0.021	0.002	0.004	0.053	0.007	0.002
UA	0.112	0.083	0.127	0.189	0.084	0.060

Note: Values between 0.02 and 0.15 have a small effect, values between 0.15 and 0.35 have a medium effect, and over 0.35 have a large effect (Hair et al., 2016). PD: power distance; UA: uncertainty avoidance.

Boldface values indicate those that have at least a small effect. Better said, the non-bold variables could not even be considered to have a small effect.

with a mean of 4.31, “intrinsic rewards” was the most important value to Thai Generation Z. The relationship between COL and intrinsic rewards was positive with a path coefficient of 0.143. This relationship was at a level that could be considered significant.

Hypothesis 6 predicted that Thai Generation Z would positively perceive leisure rewards but less than others. This hypothesis was supported. With a mean of 3.77, it is the lowest of the work values but respondents did positively perceive it.

Hypothesis 7 that predicted Thai Generation Z would positively perceive social rewards and the relationship between COL and social rewards would be positive. This hypothesis was supported. The mean of 4.1020 indicates a preference for social rewards and a path coefficient of 0.226 indicates a positive relationship. The relationship is at a level that could be considered significant.

Hypothesis 8 was also supported in that Thai Generation Z did positively perceive Autonomy, and the relationship between COL and Autonomy was positive with a path coefficient of 0.195. The relationship was at a level that could be considered significant.

Furthermore, as seen in Table 7, according to the adjusted R^2 for both altruistic rewards and intrinsic rewards, approximately one-quarter of the variance in each of the variables can be explained by the three cultural dimensions. The remaining rewards related to work values have adjusted R^2 ranging from 0.107 to 0.197 indicating that 10 percent to 19 percent of the variance can be accounted for by culture.

The f^2 (Table 8) indicates the effect size each predictor variable has on an endogenous variable. For altruistic rewards, all three cultural variables have a small effect on its R^2 . For intrinsic rewards, COL and PD each have a small effect while UA has a medium effect. For autonomy, extrinsic, and social rewards, both COL and UA have a small effect on the R^2 . For intrinsic rewards, on the other hand, COL and PD had a small effect while UA had a medium effect. Finally, only UA had a small effect on leisure rewards.

Concerning the technology related hypothesis, aside from H10, all the hypothesis 9–13 were supported. As seen in Table 9, Thai did show a strong preference for smartphone (H9) usage and

Table 9. Means comparison of technology usage.

Technology	Mean	Std. deviation	Median
Social media usage: Create	3.2916	0.84879	3.2
E-mail	3.2998	0.81513	3
TV	3.3824	1.00139	3.5
Media sharing	3.5673	0.84604	3.5
Internet search	3.8604	0.76318	4
Social media usage: Check	4.0768	0.72613	4
Smartphone	4.0738	0.72789	4.125

Table 10. Path model culture and technology.

	E-mail	Internet search	Media sharing	Smartphone	Social media create	Social media check	TV
COL	0.085	0.022	0.009	0.082	0.010	-0.013	0.006
PD	0.199**	0.083	0.262**	0.238**	0.272**	-0.056	0.299**
UA	-0.088	0.112	0.021	-0.045	-0.049	0.106	0.062

Note: PD: power distance; UA: uncertainty avoidance; COL: collectivism.

**Significance level of 1%.

*Significance level of 5%.

Table 11. R^2 adjusted for technology variables.

	E-mail	Internet search	Media sharing	Smartphone	Social media create	Social media check	TV
R^2 adjusted	0.056	0.018	0.066	0.072	0.073	0.009	0.090

social media (H11). During the EFA, it was noticed that the social media scale factored into two. One was actively posting content on social media and the other was checking social media. Accordingly, a qualification must be made that only checking social media had the strong preference. Surprisingly on the opposite end, Thai's showed the least preference for creating content on social media and using e-mail (H10).

Looking at the tie between cultural values and technology usage, PLS-SEM was conducted. The reflective and formative measurements supported model appropriateness. Proceeding to the structural model, the only cultural value that has any significant impact on technology usage is PD. As seen in Table 10, PD positively impacts all technology except Social Media: Check. In the case of Email, internet Search, Media sharing, Social Media: Create and TV, the relationships are at a level that could be considered significant.

Furthermore, the model accounts for a rather small amount of the variance in the endogenous variables, as seen in the R^2 adjusted. As seen in Table 11, the model accounts for a maximum of 9

Table 12. f^2 : Strength of predictor variable in explaining R^2 of endogenous technology variable.

	E-mail	Internet search	Media sharing	Smartphone	Social media create	Social media check	TV
COL	0.005	0.000	0.000	0.005	0.000	0.000	0.000
PD	0.036	0.006	0.062	0.052	0.068	0.003	0.084
UA	0.007	0.010	0.000	0.002	0.002	0.009	0.003

Note: Large effect is 0.35 and above, medium effect is 0.15 > 0.35, and small effect is 0.02 > 0.15 (Hair et al., 2013: 198).

PD: power distance; UA: uncertainty avoidance.

Boldface values indicate those that have above 0.02 which indicate at least a small effect size.

percent of the variance in the case of TV viewing. The least variance (1.8 percent) accounted for by the model is the variable Internet Search.

Looking at the f^2 , the only cultural variable that had any effect is PD. As seen in Table 12, PD has a small effect on the R^2 of e-mail, media sharing, smartphone, social media: create, and TV.

Hypothesis 12 suggested that there would be a positive correlation between PD and social media usage. This hypothesis was partially supported in that there is a positive correlation between PD but only with social media: create. It is the second strongest relationship between PD and a tech value, after the relationship between PD and TV. For social media: check, on the other hand, there is a negative relationship according to the path model and the impact PD has on the R^2 of social media: check is negligible.

Finally, hypothesis 13 suggested that Thai Generation Z would have a strong preference for TV. This is only partially supported in that Thai Generation Z do show a slight preference for TV viewing, but at 3.38, it could not be considered strong. However, TV also has the highest standard deviation indicating that there is a large spread in opinion regarding the utilization of this media. Although the median was the same, the mean was below that of media sharing. Perhaps this could indicate that Thai Generation Z are beginning to consume more media online than via television.

Discussion

The present study aimed at understanding to what extent those in Thai Generation Z most likely to exhibit values and characteristics similar to their global cohort actually do. Regarding the espoused national cultural values, evidence shows Thai Generation Z tends toward both collectivism and high UA. Generation Z in the west on the other hand are noted as being prone toward individualism (McQueen, 2011; Sladek and Grabinger, 2014). With regards to avoiding uncertainty, the generation in the west has been said to have an interest in bringing about change, despite any fears or uncertainty they may have (Seemiller and Grace, 2017; Vallone et al., 2016). This would indicate an inclination toward less UA, rather than more. This is in opposition to Thailand showing high UA. The results indicating low PD came as a surprise, given the plethora of research suggesting that Thais are high power distant. However, perhaps this is consistent with previous research on the nature of collectivism. The research conducted by McCann et al. (2010) showed that Thais had a positive association with horizontal collectivism, collectivism with the expectation of equality, and a negative association with vertical collectivism thus indicating an unwillingness to accept high PD. That being said, the limitations of the selected sample could also have had an impact on the results.

Generation Z in the west has been shown to place value on intrinsic, social and extrinsic rewards while valuing leisure rewards the least (Iorgulescu, 2016). They have also been said to place greater emphasis on intrinsic rewards over extrinsic rewards (Adecco, 2015) and embody more of an entrepreneurial spirit (Lanier, 2017). Finally, Generation Z has been shown to have a great interest in bettering the world and helping people (Hampton and Keys, 2017).

Generation Z in Thailand did indeed show similar values to those expressed in the west, valuing intrinsic rewards the most and leisure rewards the least. Altruistic rewards was among the top three, meaning that the social implications of what they do matter. Although with regards to work autonomy, Thai Generation Z did fall to the side of entrepreneurial spirit, it is questionable whether Thai Generation Z fit with their international counterpart as portrayed in the Ford (2015) research. Furthermore, the concept was positively correlated with UA and Collectivism. This is interesting as according to Hofstede et al. (2004), just the opposite should have been true.

Finally, concerning the usage of technology, one very striking difference emerged. It is suggested that Generation Z in the west is moving away from passive media consumption and moving more toward active participation and creation of media (Fietkiewicz et al., 2016; Yadav and Rai, 2017). Accordingly, it was interesting to see that checking social media, which could be considered more passive, was ranked so high while actively posting on social media was the least accepted and utilized rivaling e-mail. The lack of preference for e-mail is consistent with the expectations and research suggesting high context countries such as Thailand tend to prefer other forms of communication (Farrell and Hutasingh, 2018). That being said, the lack of interest in actively engaging with social media goes against the trend of the international generational cohort to be less of a passive consumer and more of a creator. The Thai Generation Z showed acceptance and usage of the Television. However, this was not favored to the extent that Internet search, smartphone usage, and the abovementioned checking of social media was favored.

Implications

Further theoretical implications for generational and cross-cultural research include the fact that to some extent the Internet has created an environment that facilitates cultural convergence (Tamayo Torres et al., 2008) which in turn supports the idea of a global Generation Z (BAV Consulting, 2015). However, the extent of convergence possible between developing and developed countries is limited by the fact that many in developing countries did not have access to this technology during their formative years.

Implications from a practitioner perspective include that Thai Generation Z, overall, positively associated with all five work values of extrinsic, intrinsic, social, leisure rewards, and work autonomy with the most valued reward being intrinsic rewards. This is consistent with other findings suggesting that Generation Z tends to place greater value on intrinsic rewards. Such rewards should be publicized to better attract and retain employees from this cohort (Thibault Landry et al., 2017). HR policies that focus on intrinsic rewards have proven successful in Thailand (Napathorn, 2018). Furthermore, the second most important work value was altruistic rewards. This is consistent with Buddhist teachings (Prayukvong and Rees, 2010) which could mean that it is less of a generational specific preference, but rather is consistent among all the generations in the work place (Twenge et al., 2010). Accordingly, opportunities to volunteer and information about how the company benefits society should also be publicized to attract and retain employees across all generational cohorts.

Given the correlation between UA and both of the abovementioned rewards, emphasis must be placed on the importance of clearly discussing and elaborating on these rewards. High UA means individuals will tend to avoid ambiguity and only take action if they understand what the outcome will be and how to achieve it. And especially with regards to recruitment, without this clarity, individuals will tend to stay in a position they do not like rather than risk the unknown (Hofstede, 2011).

Considering the low PD scores, companies looking to recruit this cohort of college graduates in Thailand may want to consider this low score as this could indicate a shift in preference toward managers that utilize a more consultative style as opposed to paternalistic (Hofstede et al., 2010).

Looking at the lack of preference for actively engaging with media and e-mail, it will be important for MNC international staff to understand the issues associated with relying on just e-mail. Accordingly, international staff will need to moderate their communication style by utilizing messaging apps (LINE specifically) rather than relying on e-mail (Farrell and Hutasingh, 2018).

This study offers implications for the work place as Generation Z is starting to enter the workforce and it will be increasingly more important to understand how to attract, motivate, and retain them. Given their strong preference for intrinsic rewards, it will be important for HR to communicate opportunities for creativity as well as training and development. Understanding their values and work-related expectations can help companies, looking to attract Generation Z employees, better tailor their message. Furthermore, it can help managers and HR professionals better tailor incentives packages to meet the needs of their incoming Generation Z workforce.

Limitations

Despite these findings, this study does have several limitations, the first of which being the sample selection. Private universities attract different personalities than do public schools. Furthermore, the location of the university in Bangkok means more metropolitan minded individuals will be attracted to the university. Accordingly, this cannot speak for all of Thai Generation Z but rather just those with a greater chance of being part of the global cohort. Also, the cross-sectional nature of the study means that it is difficult to understand any changes between this generation of Thais from previous generations. All attempts to control common methods bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003) were made and, based on the results of a Harman's single factor test, were not an issue. Future research will need to tap into a more diverse segment of Thais in both rural and urban settings and consider utilizing a longitudinal approach to see the changes in the generations and society as a whole.

Conclusion

This article contributes to both the intergenerational studies and cross-cultural studies body of knowledge by looking at the extent to which espoused generational cultural values and espoused national cultural values affect work and technology values. This intersection between international research and Thai based research contribute most to the body of knowledge surrounding Generation Z in Thailand.

Overall, with the exception of PD and the positive correlation of work autonomy with UA and collectivism, these findings are consistent with expectations. The divergence of respondent PD value orientation from expectations underscores the need for cross-cultural researchers to measure such values at the individual level as opposed to committing an ecological fallacy and utilizing national level scores to interpret individual level results.

It can be argued that while there is evidence of similarities between the Thai Generation Z and their international cohort, there is also evidence to the contrary. While technology has on the one hand flattened the world, on the other hand, culture and institutions still exert their influence. It will be important for future research to continue to consider the impact technology has on espoused national cultural values as well as intergenerational values. Especially as evidence suggests traditional values may be shifting (Harzing and Pinnington, 2015).

Finally it will be important for future research to understand the extent to which the digital divide (McCoy et al., 2012) is ultimately the barrier to the global generation vs. the extent to which culture and institutions (Gesthuizen and Verbakel, 2011) have the greatest impact on the lack of convergence.

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