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**Saang Kwaampratabjai:
The Influence of Wattana-dharm Thai
on Thai PR practice**

[Impression Building: The Influence of Thai culture on Thai PR practice]

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DECLARATION

This thesis has been composed by Suttanipa Srisai. The thesis embodies has been done by Suttanipa Srisai and has not been included in another thesis.

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Suttanipa Srisai

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ABSTRACT

This thesis describes how and what *Wattana-dharm Thai* [Thai culture] has influenced Thai PR practice through the eyes of Thai PR managers and practitioners. It also provides some background information about the evolution of Thai PR practice to link to the current Thai PR practice. The study employs a qualitative paradigm with in-depth interviews as the main method. Documentary sources are mostly used as a supplement. This thesis provides detailed qualitative data describing how Thai public relations (PR) practitioners operate in Thailand both offline and online.

The findings highlighted that *Wattana-dharm Thai* has a strong influence on Thai PR practice. There are eight main *Wattana-dharm Thai* aspects that influence Thai PR practice: 1) Relationship orientation (relationships in a Thai style including *Bunghun*, *Pen-Mitr*, and *Alum aluay* relationships); 2) Community-based orientation; 3) *Sanook* orientation; 4) Hierarchical structure; 5) Buddhist orientation, 6) Monarchy institution respect; 7) Face and eyes in society; and 8) Form over the content.

Thai PR practice has an emphasis on *Saang Kwaampratabjai* [impression building] through *Wattana-dharm Thai*. For example, historically, Thais accepted westerners because they did *Saang Kwaampratabjai* by bringing technology and development to the country. Thais have a positive attitude toward westerners because of this history of impression. Thai PR practitioners also try to use *Saang Kwaampratabjai* influence the public, such as journalists and opinion leaders by offering incentives altruistically (e.g. *Namjai*, *Bunghun*, etc). Thai PR practice *Saang Kwaampratabjai* based on Buddhism and their respect of the monarchy. Thai PR place an importance on details of public's personal information to instigate *Saang Kwaampratabjai*. For online PR, Thai PR use Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to support *Saang Kwaampratabjai*. It would appear that ICTs, in part, are used to promote company's image rather than having any practical use. Hence, the core of Thai PR is how to practice *Saang Kwaampratabjai* based solely on personal and social relationship.

This thesis aims to fill in the gaps in knowledge relating to PR and culture. It will make a contribution to the academic literature on culture and public relations, not only in the West but globally. This will also provide a framework for Thai PR practitioners to improve and develop their work.

This thesis examines culture and PR through the lens of Thai terminology and discourse facilitated by a native inside-out view moderated by the distance obtained by leaving my country for a substantial proportion of the period of the study. This distance allowed me to re-consider many taken-for-granted aspects of my own culture, as well as allowing me to take on board other cultural perspectives available in a Western but international university. Thus this thesis is in part autobiographical, product of my research journey that allowed me to engage with a range of fundamental issues central to cross-cultural living such as hierarchy, religion, political and regal institutional frameworks, and gender.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the main topic and defines the key terms that are central to the thesis, specifically culture, *Wattana-dharm Thai* (วัฒนธรรมไทย) [Thai culture], *Saang Kwaampratabjai* (สร้างความประทับใจ) and public relations, etc. I begin by explaining something about my own background and experience that has shaped this enquiry before giving a brief summary of the thesis, its focus, and a justification for the study. I then go on to give a brief definitional account of key terms and to explain the structure and scope of the thesis.

In a homogenous and distinctive country such as Thailand, the cultural variables are frequently neglected and insignificant in most studies of culture and public relations. Thai people cannot imagine the importance of culture because our society is harmonised. We generally adopt the attitude that ‘the west is better than we are’, and admire and accept Western concepts due to this positive mindset.

I am a Thai lecturer in the Department of Public Relations, School of Communication Arts of University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce (UTCC) in Thailand and have been teaching in public relations (PR) for a couple years before coming to study abroad in UK. There are many western textbooks, many of which have been translated into Thai in the strong belief that western attitudes are right and that the PR techniques of Western cultures are excellent. Moreover, quantitative research is more prevalent in Thai PR studies than qualitative approaches.

With my undergraduate background in Statistics and quantitative approaches and postgraduate in PR, I began my PhD research journey with the intention of using quantitative research to explore generic PR and measure the impact of new technology on PR. After my literature review and fieldwork, I discovered that qualitative research is suitable to my study and very interesting and challenging for me although I did not have experience in it. Specially, I cannot deny the fact that technology and PR is less important than culture & PR.

Moreover, I have met many students of different nationalities during my study abroad, and have learnt so much about the diverse cultures from them. Each culture has different interpretations and meanings upon the same thing. My view has been shaped by the process of learning. The research journey and experiences has shifted my interest, focus, and attitude toward culture and public relations. Finally, I realised how significance of culture on public relations is and I do strongly believe in the relationship between culture and public relations. ‘You never know what differences and similarities between your country and others if you have never stepped out of your country’.

This thesis provides detailed qualitative data describing how Thai public relations (PR) practitioners operate in Thailand both offline and online. It describes how and what Thai culture has influenced Thai PR practice through the eyes of Thai PR managers and practitioners. It also provides some background information about the evolution of Thai PR practice to link to the current Thai PR practice. The study employs a qualitative paradigm with in-depth interviews as the main method. Documentary sources are mostly used as a supplement.

This thesis focuses on the influence of Thai culture upon Thai PR practice. The actual practice of public relations varies from nation to nation, from culture to culture (Freitag

and Stoke, 2009: 6). Culture plays a crucial role in the changes in public relations practice (PR). Communication influences, and is influenced by, culture. Communication is a cultural tool: it is about what people actually do. According to Bourdieu (1990), every communication practice constitutes an additional part of cultural maps. Communication can be understood as the practice of producing meanings and the way in which the system of meanings is negotiated by participants in a culture. Culture can be understood as the totality of communication practices and systems of meaning (Bourdieu, 1990). *Communication and culture are not separate entities or areas; they are produced through a dynamic relationship.* Indeed, communication (both mass and interpersonal) is the foundation of the PR profession and is a means to build relationships between organisations and relevant public bodies (Grunig and Hunt, 1984; Cutlip, Center, and Broom, 2000; Verčič, Van Ruler, Butschi, and Flodin, 2001). It is therefore logical that culture affects PR, and PR influences culture (Sriramesh, 2004: 12).

In the understanding of public relations (PR) and culture, there are still several gaps in knowledge. Although there are attempts among scholars, practitioners, and students to develop useful PR knowledge, most of the studies are ethnocentric, focusing predominantly on the United States and Western European respectively. By contrast, little evidence is found in other continents, especially in Asia as Sriramesh (2004: 3) pointed out: “Although it is a significant market for public relations activities, Asia has by far been a silent continent when it comes to public relations pedagogy even though public relations is said to have been practiced in Asia since pre-biblical time.”

Moreover, the few empirical studies that exist about PR in Asia are based mainly on Western theories. In fact, many Asian countries still harbour a ‘West is best’ mentality

towards many issues including PR (Sriramesh, 2002: 60; Botan, 1992). They considered PR practice in the United States to be the most advanced and the best in the world. Hence, most research concentrates on applying the dominant paradigms or Western PR theories to their findings (see chapter 2 for more details). However, public relations practice around the world is not based on the development of the field in the United States (Freitag and Stoke, 2009; Sriramesh, 2004), but on its own national evolution and is shaped by its culture.

Thailand is such a case. The study of PR and culture is of interest and under-researched. There are some unique features in Thailand which are distinct among Southeast Asian countries. It demonstrates strong cultural values because it has never been colonised in its 800 year history. In addition, it is a homogenous society, the majority of its population are ethnic Thais, they have a strong faith in Buddhism, a common language (Thai), and a regard for the institution of the monarchy. However, scholars seemed to neglect this unique culture and its nuanced differences. Rather, they applied Western theories to the analysis of their study and neglected the different context and culture (see chapter 2 for more details). Also, the majority of research paradigms in previous studies were quantitative. They aimed to test Western theories and compare public relations practice across countries by numbers, but neglected nuanced cultural differences between countries (see chapter 3 for more details).

This thesis aims to fill in these gaps in knowledge relating to PR and culture. It will make a contribution to the academic literature on culture and public relations, not only in the West but globally. This will also provide a framework for Thai PR practitioners to improve and develop their work.

This chapter describes the key terms used in the thesis and describes the structure of the thesis.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS IN THE THESIS

There are several assumptions on which this research is based:

First, *public relations or PR* is the profession responsible for the management of organisational relationships and reputation. It includes issue management, public affairs, corporate communications, stakeholder relations, risk communication, and corporate social responsibility (L'Etang, 2009b: 13). In addition, PR operates on behalf of many different types of organisations, both at the governmental and corporate level, to small business and voluntary sectors (L'Etang, 2009b: 13). Fawkes (2004) and Seitel (2004) gave a rough guide to the main activities in public relations which are shown in Table 1. This table is divided between the types of audience in PR activities.

Table 1 A rough guide to the main activities in public relations

<i>Public relations activities</i>	<i>Explanation</i>	<i>Examples</i>
Internal communication (Employee relations)	Communicating with employees	In-house newsletter, suggestion boxes
Corporate PR	Communication on behalf of whole organization, not relating to goods or services	Annual reports, conferences, ethical statements, visual identity, images
Media relations	Communicating with journalists, specialists, editors from local, national, international and trade media, including newspapers, magazines, radio, TV and web-based communication	Press releases, photocalls, video news releases, off-the-record briefings, press events
Business to business	Communicating with other organizations, e.g. suppliers, retailers	Exhibitions, trade events, newsletters
Public affairs	Communicating with opinion formers, e.g. local/national politicians, monitoring the political environment	Presentations, briefings, private meetings, public speeches
Community relations /	Communicating with local communities,	Exhibitions, presentations,

corporate social responsibility	elected representatives, head teachers, etc	letters, meetings, sports activities and other sponsorship
Investor relations	Communicating with financial organizations / individuals	Newsletters, briefings, events
Strategic communication	ID and analysis of situations, problems, and solutions to further organizational goals	Researching, planning and executing a campaign to improve the ethical reputation of an organisation
Issue Management	Monitoring the political, social, economic and technological environment	Considering effects of US economy and presidential campaign on UK organisations
Crisis Management	Communicating clear messages in a fast-changing situation or emergency	Dealing with the media after a major rail crash on behalf of the police, hospital or local authority
Copywriting	Writing for different audiences to high standards of literacy	Press releases, newsletters, web pages, annual reports
Publications management	Overseeing print / media processes, often using new technology	Leaflets, international magazines, websites
Counselling	Dealing with management and interactions with key public figures.	
Events management, exhibitions	Organization of complex events, exhibitions	Annual conference, press launch, trade shows
Web site development and Web Interface	Creating what is often the organization's principle interface with the public-its website, monitoring the world wide web and responding, when appropriate, to organizational challenge.	

Source: Adapted by Srisai from Fawkes (2004) and Seitel (2004)

PR terms can be used interchangeably with 'Corporate Communication' (Van Ruler and Verčič, 2004: 3) or 'Corporate Social Responsibility'. The discipline of PR is frequently blended with related disciplines, most often with journalism, advertising, and marketing (Freitag and Stokes, 2009: 7). Sometimes, the term 'propaganda' is used to describe public relations (Fawkes, 2006: 267-287).

Second, the term '*culture*' is the central of this thesis. Culture represents a 'collective programming of the mind' (Hofstede, 1984: 23) that has affected the enabling of one group of people to be distinctive from another (Macmaus, 2003: 159-160). It is as 'a software of the mind' (Hofstede, 1997: 4). It is "the pattern of thinking, feeling and potential acting" that are learned throughout our lifetime (Hofstede, 1997: 4). In this thesis, culture refers to two meanings. First, most of culture refers to societal culture which Thais have produced. It also sometimes reflects organisational culture. Another meaning, it is PR culture, behaviour and things that have been created and shared by PR practitioners. A detailed account of theoretical approaches to culture is included in the Literature Review (pp. 13 – 26).

Third, '*Wattana-dharm Thai*' (วัฒนธรรมไทย) is used instead of 'Thai culture'. Although the term '*Wattana-dharm Thai*' could simply be replaced by the term 'Thai culture' in English, it has many different nuances. In Thailand, Thais use the term '*Wattana-dharm*' (วัฒนธรรม) for 'Thai culture'. However, '*Wattana*' (วัฒนะ) means 'development in both mentality and materials' while '*Dharm*' (ธรรม) is a Buddhist term which stands for a *phenomenon* or *constituent factor* of human experience. On the other hand, '*Wattana-dharm*' or 'culture' in Thai language means 'the way Buddhists' live.' *Wattana-dharm Thai* therefore includes the traits of Thai people and of the society. It means the societal culture that has influenced Thai PR practice (see details in Chapter 2).

Fourth, '*Saang Kwaampratabjai*' (สร้างความประทับใจ) is used in the Title and also runs through the whole thesis. It refers to 'impression building' in English. However, I do not base my study on the theory of 'impression management'. Rather, I imply that this term describes the nature of Thai PR practice and highlights my 'significant findings' in

the thesis. I prefer keeping the original term, using ‘*Saang Kwaampratabjai*’ rather than translating it into English in order to add to the richness of the study from a cultural perspective. Indeed, the term *Saang Kwaampratabjai* (in Thai has many nuanced differences which cannot be translated into English, as will be seen throughout the thesis.

Fifth, the term ‘*influence*’ in this thesis is used interchangeably with ‘shape’ and ‘impact’. In qualitative research, the extent/size of the influence is not measured, as in quantitative research. However, I will research the details to discover the dominant *Wattana-dharm Thai* that shapes Thai PR practice and reveal how it works in Thai PR.

Sixth, the term ‘*ICTs*’ stands for Communication and Communication Technologies. I adopted this term from the meaning given by the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology of Thailand (MICT) (2007) and Thanyapong and Thurongwaroj (1998: 12) which is a fusion of computers and telecommunications. It includes all technology such as radio and TV, digital appliances like desktop and laptop computers, software, peripherals, mobile phones and connections to the Internet that are intended to fulfil information processing and communications functions.

Finally, ‘*Thai PR practice*’ refers to two dimensions of practice: offline and online. ‘Offline PR’ in this thesis examines what PR practitioners do generally without using ICTs for their work. ‘Online PR’ is a term to describe all work which uses the new technologies/ICTs.

THESIS STRUCTURE

This thesis provides three dimensions of PR practice in Thailand: the evolution of Thai PR practice, offline Thai PR practice, and online Thai PR practice. It consists of seven chapters.

The first chapter, the 'Introduction' provides the background and the definition of key terms used in the study together with the thesis structure. The second chapter, the 'Literature Review' gives a conceptual background and framework that underpins this study together with the research questions. The third chapter 'Research Methodology' elaborates the research questions and the focus of the study which leads to a discussion of the research paradigms and an explanation of the methodology. It determines the research site and sampling frames, and narrates the process of data collection as well as the data analysis and data presentation before examining the reliability and validity of the research. Finally, it reflects on the experience of data collection.

The fourth chapter looks at the 'Evolution of PR practice in Thailand'. In this chapter, the history of Thai public relations is traced to the time before the Government Public Relations Department was officially set up. The root of Thai PR and the evolution of Thai PR are discussed and related to current practice. It also focuses on the evolution of Thai PR professions / departments in 4 sectors: government and state enterprise; private sector; PR consultancy, and education. It presents the historical background and describes key events in organisations and people, which are then drawn together to offer an explanation for the expansion of PR occupations in different periods of Thai history. This chapter is descriptive rather than critical, but provides a valuable historical context.

The fifth chapter considers ‘The Influence of *Wattana-dharm Thai* on (offline) Thai public relations practice’. This chapter contains rich qualitative data derived from the interviewees. It defines the boundaries of PR in the Thai context and distinguishes it from other disciplines such as propaganda and advertising. In addition, it highlights the *Wattana-dharm Thai* aspects that have affected Thai PR practice and demonstrates how *Wattana-dharm Thai* works in (offline) Thai PR practice.

The sixth chapter considers ‘The Influence of *Wattana-dharm Thai* on the use of ICTs in Thai PR practice’ (Online Thai PR practice)’. It presents another dimension of Thai PR practice that is relevant to new technologies. The chapter covers five positions/views of PR and ICTs including the introduction to ICTs in PR practice, ICTs Policy in PR organisations and departments, types of ICTs used in Thai PR practice, the influence of *Wattana-dharm Thai* and ICTs on Thai PR practice, and the difficulty and limitations of ICTs in Thai PR practice. This chapter does not only present aspects about PR and ICTs. It also demonstrates how *Wattana-dharm Thai* works in online Thai PR practice. The final chapter ‘Conclusions’ draws together the research analysis and discussion, and reflects upon the implications of the research.

CONCLUSION

This chapter provided a general outline of the thesis. It described briefly the relationship between public relations and culture and pointed out several gaps in this field of study. I have defined key terms used in the thesis, followed by an outline of the structure. The next chapter reviews literature relevant to the topic of study and highlights key frameworks and concepts that facilitate a deeper understanding of the key questions that frame the thesis, and a clear rationale for its trajectory.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In Chapter 1, I discussed the general outline and contribution of the thesis to the PR and culture field, identified the relationship between culture and public relations, and defined some terms used in the study. This chapter reviews literature from a range of key fields including culture and public relations in order to shed light on the research area of this thesis. My critical review of the literature highlights key themes and frameworks to contextualise the thesis.

This chapter begins with the definition of culture at various levels: societal culture, organisational culture, and occupational culture. Then, it discusses the relationship between culture and public relations together with the debates of PR scholars and researchers on this area of study. Because PR has been much affected by technological change, a review of literature focused on culture and online or digital PR further contextualises the study and provides a contemporary focus. This provides important balance to the thesis which also encompasses an important historical dimension in its reflections on *Wattana-dharm Thai* [Thai culture]. The chapter concludes with a delineation of research questions.

CULTURE

“If the world is to survive and flourish, we all need to know more about the differences rather than concentrating on the similarities. Culture and subculture are probably the most important aspects in this change to global behaviours (Tung, 2000 cited in Warner and Joynt, 2002: 3)”

Culture is an abstract concept, thus elusive to define, to limit its parameters, and scope. Everybody defines culture to suit himself. When a more comprehensive sophisticated definition is attempted, it becomes more difficult to explain (Raksasataya, 1994). There are over 110 accepted definitions and over 400 more for the term in anthropology and it is hard to measure even when we understand what culture is (Sriramesh, 2009: 6). Culture means ‘to work upon.’ Hence, agriculture works upon crops; horticulture works upon plants; aquaculture works upon the water; culture works upon human environments (Hampden-Tuner and Trompenaars: 144). Culture says that ‘the rule comes before the exception’ or vice versa. *Cultures are not right or wrong*, they simply have an orientation on issues.

‘Culture’ is a common word in many languages that conveys some acceptable meanings. In UNESCO’s definition, culture includes ‘the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional features that characterise a society or *social groups*. It does not include only arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions, and beliefs; (Unesco, 1982: 41). Bank (1995: 8) gives a definition of culture that “What is cultural, however, is the lived experience of an event within which it is the natural thing to do and by which a logic of relationship is maintained”.

Culture has been adapted from the Latin *cultura* which is related to *cultus*, cult or worship. *Cult* in Latin means to inhabit, till or worship and is defined as ‘the result of’;

thus in a broad sense, one might define culture as ‘the result of human action’ (Berthon, 1993). In Europe, before the Second World War, the term *Kultur* was used extensively to support arguments on the social and racial superiority of some groups over others (Warner and Joynt, 2002: 3). In Hindi, the word *sanskriti* means a conglomeration of values, beliefs, traditions born out of heritage. In Chinese, *wen-hua* literally means sentence-making, denoting respect for the written word. In many Western countries, the term derives from the Latin *cultura*, which means a set of knowledge. In Thailand, a relatively new word, *Wattana-dharm* (วัฒนธรรม) has been coined. It means development, growth, or evolution from an original state of nature (Raksasataya, 1994: 3-4)

The Royal Institute of Thailand defines *Wattana-dharm* as ‘things that make a group grow, a group’s way of life’. In the Culture Act of 1942, it means characteristics that show growth, order, harmonious progress of the country, and good moral standard of the people. Academically, it means *behaviour and things that people in the group have produced or created from learning from each other and things that people make common use of within that group* (The Royal Institute, 1983: 734). Hall (1959) suggests that culture is the pattern of taken-for-granted assumption about how a given collection of people should think, act, and feel as they go about their daily affairs. In fact, culture represents a ‘collective programming of the mind’ (Hofstede, 1984: 23) that has affected the enabling of one group of people to be distinctive from another (Macmaus, 2003: 159-160). It is as ‘a software of the mind’ (Hofstede, 1997: 4). Culture is “the pattern of thinking, feeling and potential acting” that are learned throughout our lifetime (Hofstede, 1997: 4). Morgan (1998: 111) perceived culture as the “distinctive values, rituals, ideologies and beliefs” that characterise organisation as ‘mini-society’.

The cultures of society have been determined by many factors. Kaplan and Manners (1972 cited in Sriramesh, 2004: 13-14) identified four determinants of culture that explain how culture is formed in society: 1) *Ideology* refers to the values, norms, worldviews, knowledge, philosophies, and religious principles that the members of a society espouse. Humans have always fought over religious philosophies, and continue to do so. Theocracy is increasingly becoming an issue in international relations because of its impact on socio-political systems, and Asia is experiencing many challenges from theocratic fundamentalism, 2) *Social structure* describes the social institutions such as feudalism and caste system that define relationships among different members or groups of a society, 3) *Personality* refers to the personality traits of individuals of a society based especially on the child-rearing practices of what society as well as the acculturation that takes place in school and the workplace. Ideology and personality are closely linked, and 4) *Technoeconomics* refers to the impact that the level of economic development of a society has on the culture of the society. Technological artifacts such as satellites and the Internet continue to play a significant role in shaping culture in the modern world.

Societal Culture

Before I link these dimensions of culture with public relations, I will discuss about the attempts of scholars to measure manifested culture in society. There is a small group of researchers that have attempted to quantitatively measure cultural dimensions in a large number of countries, such as Hofstede (1980, 2001a), Hall (1976), Hampden-Tuner and Trompenaars (2002, 2000, 1997), Laurent (1983), Trompenaars (1993), Schwartz (1994), and Maznevski et al (1997).

Hofstede (1980, 2001), a social psychologist and anthropologist, identified five dimensions of societal culture after studying its presence in organisational contexts. The description of the five dimensions is as follows: 1) Power distance (PDI): The extent to which less powerful members of a society expect and accept that power is distributed unequally, 2) Individualism (IDV): The degree to which members of a society are integrated into strong, cohesive groups over a lifetime. On the opposite side, collectivism, that is the degree to which individuals are integrated into groups. On the individualist side we find societies in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after him- or herself and his or her immediate family, 3) Masculinity (MAS): Versus its opposite, femininity, refers to the distribution of roles between the genders which is another fundamental issue for any society to which a range of solutions are found, 4) Uncertainty avoidance (UAV): It deals with a society's tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity; it ultimately refers to man's search for Truth. It indicates to what extent a culture programmes its members to feel either uncomfortable or comfortable in unstructured situations. Unstructured situations are novel, unknown, surprising, and different from usual, and 5) Long-term orientation (LTO): As opposed to short-term orientation. It can be said to deal with Virtue regardless of Truth. Values associated with Long-term Orientation are thrift and perseverance; values associated with Short-term Orientation are respect for tradition, fulfilling social obligations, and protecting one's "face."

In the same way, Hall's (1976), an anthropologist and cross-cultural researcher, distinguished between cultures on the high- versus- low context scale: A high-context (HC) communication or message is one in which most of the information is either in the physical context or is internalised in the person. A low-context (LC) communication is just the opposite; i.e., the mass of information is vested in the explicit code

(Hall, 1976: 79). Hampden-Tuner and Trompenaars (2002; 2000), a well-known Anglo-Dutch collaboration of cross-cultural management gurus, have conducted research for fourteen years with a sample of more than forty-six thousand managers from more than forty countries with the view that while all members of the human race engaged in enterprise face the same problems or dilemmas, their responses to these vary widely (Hampden-Tuners, 1994). They identified seven dimensions on which cultures disagree. According to Hampden-Tuner & Trompenaars (2002; 2000) and Trompenaars & Hampden-Tuner (1997) these are: 1) Universalism and Particularism; 2) Analysed specifics vs. integrated wholes; 3) Individualism vs. Communitarianism; 4) Inner-directed vs. Outer-directed orientation; 5) Time as sequence vs. Time as synchronization; 6) Achieved status vs. Ascribed; 7) Equality vs. Hierarchy.

For Thai scholars, there was only one study on national culture, by Komin (1991), a Fulbright scholar, based on large samples among the Thai people in 1978 and 1981. From the perspective of cross-cultural psychology, she published her analysis of the values and behavioural patterns of the Thai people in 1991. In her study, Komin (1991: 133-213) identified National Character in the Thai Nine Value Cluster as follows: 1) Ego Orientation: preserving one's ego, dignity, pride, and independence by avoiding public confrontation, maintaining self-face, and preserving the other party's ego (face) by utilising conflict-avoidance strategies; 2) Grateful Relationship Orientation: This is the degree to which the person must remember the good done to him by another and remember to reciprocate it. It incorporates the principle of *Bunkhun* (indebted goodness). This value has an unfortunate duality. In the workplace it guarantees that projects are completed successfully because of the good relationships between workers and leaders. It is also utilized by those with high power needs, by creating power cliques that spread their tentacles by *saang bunkhun* (creating gratitude) among wealthy

members of society; 3) Smooth Interpersonal Relationship: Thais highly value maintaining other-directed social values. These values focus on conflict-free and pleasant interactions, with an observable surface harmony. This results in a preference for courtesy and humility and relaxed and pleasant interactions; 4) Flexibility and Adjustment: Thais are situation-orientated rather than ideologically or system oriented, meaning that they place a higher emphasis on flexibility of approach than honesty. In practical terms this means that Thais are law-oriented, but accept that principles and laws are ever adjustable to fit persons and situations; 5) Religio-Psychical Orientation: religious values are very high for Thais, with the exception of Bangkokians, students and the educated. However, nearly all members of Thai society submit to spiritual superstition and wear charms and amulets pertaining to good luck. Thais psychologically invest these trinkets with *karma* and use them to cope with social environments; 6) Education and Competence Orientation: this is the perception of education as a means to climb up the social ladder. The tangible rewards of education are pursued as they offer opportunities to climb this ladder. Education is much valued for its ability to elevate one's personal status or prestige in society. In this context, the title of having a degree is more important than the knowledge acquired. Consequently, there are a high number of fake qualifications available for purchase for the wealthy social climber; 7) Interdependence Orientation: this is the community collaboration spirit that values the spirit of co-existence. This value allows ethnic groups such as the Chinese and the Thai Muslims in the south to coexist peacefully with the Thai Buddhist majority; 8) Fun and Pleasure Orientation: this is characterised by the attitude of Sanook (enjoy oneself and have a good time). Thais use Sanooks to help maintain social relationships and to guarantee that one has time to relax; 9) Achievement Task Orientation: this relates to McClelland's (1961) study into the 'Need for Achievement'.

This score very low in this category, almost without exception ranking ambition and hard-work as less important than social relationship categories.

Organisational Culture

Generally, organisational culture can be defined in terms of values shared by members of an organisation (or its sub-unit) that manifest themselves in the practices of that organization or sub-unit. Ouchi (1981: 82) states that organisational culture consists of a set of symbols, ceremonies, and myths that communicate the underlying values and beliefs of an organisation and its employees. Pratt et al. (1992: 621-628) stated that organisational culture is a function of size, technology, structure and functional area. Yaakov (1996: 1181-1199) suggested that organisational culture is affected by the nature of the industry the organisation operates in. Other factors that influence organisational culture include national culture (Pratt et al., 1992: 621-628), societal culture (Bloor and Dawson, 1994: 275-292), and organisational environments and goals (Cooke and Rousseau, 1988: 245-273).

Previous research has measured organisational culture among various dimensions. For example, Kilman and Saxton (1983) classified organisational culture along the dimensions of technical/human concern and short-/long-term orientation while Cooke and Rousseau (1988: 245-273) classified it along the dimensions of task/security, satisfaction culture and people/security. Hofstede et al. (1990: 286-316) reported the following six dimensions of organisational culture: process-/results-oriented, employee-/job-oriented, parochial/professional, open/closed system, loose/tight control and normative/pragmatic. Smircich (1983: 55-65) suggested a cultural view of organisations in which a dominant culture shapes the meaning of significant symbols in the organizations. Moreover, Ott (1989) viewed that organisations could have subcultures

that interlock, overlap, and partially coincide and sometimes conflict with the organisations' dominant culture.

Occupational Culture

Although historically researchers studied ethnic cultures, anthropologists have extended their practice to micro-cultures in specific contexts and small communities, such as occupations, workplaces, health, science, sport, and leisure (L'Etang, 2011). As compared to professional culture, the occupational culture concept is a broader construct. It is believed to be the result of similar occupational backgrounds and experiences of different groups of organisational members. In particular, occupational culture (or sub-culture) develops through social interaction, shared experience, common training and affiliation, mutual support, associated values and norms, and similar personal characteristics of members of a particular occupational group. Like organisational culture, occupational culture develops distinct jargon and shapes perceptions of reality by developing classification systems to describe experiences and concepts (Hansen, 1995). More generally, all cultures operate from cognitive models to filter expectations – a kind of meaning-making (Hansen and Kahnweiler, 1997). Likewise, given the PR 'professional projects' (Pieczka & L'Etang, 2001) and considering PR practice as comprising one or more occupational cultures (L'Etang, 2011: 26), I believe PR is an occupation that has its own culture. Its culture is constructed through PR practitioners' experience, perceptions, norms, values, and personal characteristics. The culture, as same as any other occupational cultures, depends upon the meaning-making of members of a group such as PR practitioners. Understanding the cultural constraints (sanctions, taboos) of public relations can help elicit how wider cultural and societal conventions influence the public relations occupation in various contexts as well as shape expectation and generate stereotypes or

even caricatures (L'Etang, 2011: 26). This thesis aims to explore the meaning that Thai PR practitioners attribute to their occupation (offline and online) in *Wattana-dharm Thai*.

Organisational culture and occupational culture can also influence each other through the processes of selection and socialisation. Socialisation refers to the process by which the cultural values of organisational members are brought into line with the organisational culture (i.e., through common values and goals, rituals and procedures, training, evaluation and reward systems, etc. (Hofstede et al, 1990). Hofstede's terminology indicates that organisational cultures are entirely distinct from national cultures and that the two concepts are complimentary. Organisational cultures distinguish organisations, while holding their national organisational contexts as constant as possible (Hofstede, 2001a). Hofstede (2001a) indicates that at the national level, cultural differences reside mostly in values and less in practice, as long as we compare otherwise similar people, while at the organisational level, cultural differences reside mostly in practices and less in values. He places an occupational culture level between nation and organisation, suggesting that entering an organisational field means the acquisition of both values and practices. In between the national and occupational levels, Hofstede (2001a) places a social class culture level; in between the occupational culture levels, and industry level.

In this thesis, culture refers to two meanings. First, most of culture refers to societal culture which Thais have produced. It also sometimes reflects organisational culture. Another meaning, it is culture, behaviour and things that have been created and shared by PR practitioners. To avoid confusion and add richness to the study about culture and

public relations, I will use *Wattana-dharm Thai* to replace ‘Thai societal culture’ in some points as I suggested in the introduction chapter (see chapter 1).

This thesis also undertakes a challenge to make a link between PR and culture. It does not aim only to explore a macro-picture, but also micro (individual) and meso (occupational) pictures of PR occupation. It is based on my belief that micro-level construct the meanings of ‘meso’ level. In other words, Thai PR practitioners attribute the meanings to their work in Thai culture.

The next section will discuss the literature on culture and public relations.

CULTURE AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

As indicated in the Introduction to the thesis, PR and culture affect each other. Both organisational and societal cultures have a significant impact on communication in general and public relations in particular (Sriramesh, 2004: 16). Sriramesh and White (1992) supported that the cultural differences among societies must affect PR practices by people of different societies. However, culture has largely been ignored in public relations literature although it is innate to all human interactions including communication (Sriramesh & White, 1992).

In studying culture and PR, the bulk of literature has taken a cross-cultural approach to the subject, making comparisons between culture generally by employing frameworks of cultural determinants. Much of public relations research works are framed on the dominant paradigm¹ which developed out of U.S. practice-led studies (Piecicka, 2006).

¹ The dominant paradigm is that which is the most popular or majority approach to the subject. The dominant paradigm in a field comprises the framework and methodologies that guide most research in the field and which are regarded as the most important ideas. Ultimately, these ideas become ingrained into a set of formal beliefs about what the discipline stands for (L’Etang, 2008a: 9). The dominant paradigm

For example, Grunig's four models of public relations (press agency/publicity, public information, two-way asymmetrical and two-way symmetrical) have been typically used in several studies to compare public relations practices in different countries (e.g. Shin and Cameron, 2001; Sriramesh and Takasaki, 1999; Zetlin, 1995; Singh, 2000; Panol, 2000; Kaur, 1997; Wee et al., 1996; Huang, 2000; Haug and Koppang, 1997; Taylor, 2000; Davis, 2000; Ferguson, 1998; Lyra, 1991; Hiebert, 1994; Dimitrova, 1998; Verčič et al., 1996; Hiebert, 1994; Singh and Smyth, 2000; Zaharna, 1995; Van Leuven and Pratt, 1996; Toth 2007). Some studies applied Dozier's and Broom (1995) four hierarchical roles (Culbertson and Chen, 1996; Wu and Taylor, 2003; Ekachai, 1995) to understand the role of PR practitioners. Most researchers who studied PR under these frameworks believe that what is known about public relations in one country can be applied to all countries (Vasquez and Taylor, 2000; Verčič et al., 2001; Botan, 1992; Bardhan, 2003; Holtzhausen et al., 2003).

However, the dominant paradigm is criticised by scholars. Firstly, scholars pointed out the weakness of the dominant paradigm. For instance, Grunig's four models have been debated as being discrete and unrealistic (Cameron et al., 1996, Leichty & Springton, 1993, Murphy, 1991, Pearson, 1989). For instance, Cameron et al (1996) pointed out that the practice of public relations is too complex, too fluid and impinged upon by far too many variables for the academy to force it into the four boxes known as the four models of public relations.

Secondly, several scholars criticised its functionalism and the 'American bias' in etic-oriented studies (e.g. Sriramesh, 2007, 2009; L'Etang, 2008a; Pieczka, 2006). The etic

shapes debates to such an extent that other points of view are drowned out or not heard. The dominant paradigm has focussed on functional issues such as effectiveness, excellence, methods, evaluation, professionalism, PR roles and status (L'Etang, 2008a: 9).

approach ignores local nuances in less developed regions (Burdham, 2003; Holtzhausen, Petersen & Tindall, 2003). Scholars adopting the etic approach are often uncritical of the underlying assumptions of a particular public relations theory and its specific cultural settings. Others (e.g. Huang, 2007) have pointed out a need to examine the discrepancies between the assumptions underlying Western theories and indigenous cultural settings where the theories are applied. For example, Cheney and Christensen (2001) questioned that, “What would a non-Western, non-managerial, and non-rationalist form of public relations look like?” (p.182). By relying on such theories to understand public relations practice, there are chances to perceive differences between right and wrong practice (Zaharna, 2001). Asian PR, for example, when examined by using the two-way symmetrical model, leads to conclusions that are not so positive (Gupta and Bartlett, 2009:2). Parks (2003) also claims that although Asian practitioners understand the four models, implementing the two-way symmetrical model for them is more than wishful thinking. Lim, Goh and Sriramesh (2005) studied Singapore’s practitioners and found that 82% of respondents believed that publicity was the main purpose of public relations. There is a distinct division on the practicality of the two-way communication models between western and Asian regions.

Much of research that links societal culture with public relations has relied on the four dimensions of culture offered by those of Hofstede (1980, 2001a) in order to improve effectiveness of international PR (Sriramesh & Verčič, 2009: 11). This genre of research has come mostly from Asia (eg., Sriramesh, 1992; Rhee, 1999; Kim, 2003) with a few non-Asian studies (e.g. Verčič, Grunig, & Grunig, 1996) also contributing to the discussion. A few studies have also gone beyond these popular dimensions and assessed how idiosyncrasies unique to a culture also affect public relations such as *amae* and *wa* in Japanese culture (Sriramesh & Takasaki, 1999), *guanxi* in Chinese culture

(Huang, 2001, 2003), and *Simpatia, Palanca, Confianza, and Flexibilidad frente al incertidumbre* in Mexican culture (Daymon & Hodges, 2009). Sriramesh (2009: 7) points out that more than twenty five years after his first assertion, after a review of literature linking societal and corporate culture with public relations, culture has yet to be integrated into the public relations body of knowledge. He suggests that there is a great potential for much more work to be done in understanding this variable and finding empirical evidence that can help link to public relations.

Moreover, little literature that reflects on public relations and culture has taken an international PR approach. 'International PR' is necessarily inter-cultural, including diplomacy, public diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, and international political communication (L'Etang, 2010). It is involved in inter-cultural communications between different organisations, media and international stakeholders and the public located in various countries. In a globalised world, the public relations industry service has many diverse international organisations including multinational corporations, all of which require international diplomacy and the skills of inter-cultural communication. Such work used to refer to international PR, but now has been partly supplanted by the term 'cross-cultural' or global public relations (L'Etang, 2011: 20).

Sriramesh and Verčič (2009) underline the compelling need for a text describing and explaining public relations practices and body of knowledge in different parts of the world. Public relations as a profession is not necessarily understood and practised in the same manner all around the world. Public relations require a global understanding of cultural differences (Valentini, 2007; Hodges, 2006; Rhee, 2002; Taylor, 2000). Proponents of the cultural approach in international public relations (e.g. Daymon & Hodges, 2009; Sriramesh & Verčič, 2009; Freitag and Stoke, 2009; Sriramesh, 2008; Taylor, 2000) believe that in order to be successful, the generic principles of public

relations need to be reinterpreted according to local applications and practices, which are influenced by the following main factors: cultural, political, economical, media systems, level of economic development, the extent and nature of activism, and historical context. Therefore, they claim that the international academic community needs to focus on acquiring more knowledge of those factors in different parts of the world. As Curtin and Gaither pointed out, 'there's much for public relations to learn about itself by stepping outside of comfort zones and its traditional knowledge base, provided largely by Western scholars and global public relations enterprises' (Curtin and Gaither, 2007: 261). Sriramesh (2007) calls for international PR researchers to study the influence of societal culture on PR:

“...we thought it would be best to design individual studies that break down societal culture to manageable parts and study its impact on public relations with some depth...” (Sriramesh, 2007: 510)

Not only has there been a call for research in international PR practice, but Sriramesh (2002) also emphasised the need to draw the definition of PR in Asian settings:

A similar conceptual extension [to explore whether public relations is just an Anglo-American concept] needs to be made on the definition and social role of PR in Asian settings, which are even more distant to US culture. But how is the definition of PR in Asia different? (Sriramesh, 2002: 60)

There have been attempts to explore and examine PR definitions over the world. The definition, indeed, is largely given by British and US scholars and professional bodies. In fact, these definitions may apply to more fully developed nations such as nations of Western Europe and the United States, but it is unrealistic for developing and transitional countries such as Asia (Freitag and Stoke, 2009) where cultures are complex and inherited. It is, hence, necessary to know how the definition of public relations in Asia is different (Sriramesh, 2002: 60; Freitag and Stoke, 2009: 103).

This thesis considers both gaps in PR practice and definition. It aims to address how *Wattana-dharm Thai* influences Thai PR practice and PR definitions, as I will discuss later in this chapter.

PR occupational culture or Public Relations Practitioner Culture (PRP culture)

To understand the occupation of public relations (whether in a generic sense or more specifically in relation to public relations in any one particular country), researchers *must take account of the macro-influence* of societal culture on the practice of public relations. *They need also to consider micro-level influences such as perceptions about the occupation held by practitioners* situated within particular national, societal or ethnic parameters. A cultural approach offers researchers the potential to illuminate a multiplicity of influences, interactions, and possible differences in public relations as practised around the world (Daymon and Hodges, 2009: 430).

Apart from societal culture that affects PR practice, an occupational culture will also be considered. PRP culture is defined as 1) the practitioner lifeworld - the totality of practitioners' thought, concepts, values and assumptions about their occupational and their occupational experiences and identities that guide their behaviour. Those will evolve with contact with other practitioners and with wider social and cultural influences, and 2) a system of occupational practice involves actions which "make difference to the world in some way (Hodges, 2006: 85). In addition, PRP culture will be constantly changing as the experiences to which individual practitioners are subjected are many and varied (Ibid).

To have PRP culture, PR practitioners play a crucial role as social agents or 'culture-workers' (L'Etang, 2011: 19) or as "cultural intermediaries" (Curtin & Gaither, 2005, 2007; Nixon and du Gay, 2002; Hodges, 2006) in the cultural processes in which meaning is created, modified, and reinvented during the process of symbolisation, representation, consumption, and identity formation (Curtin & Gaither, 2005, 2007).

Cultural intermediaries or cultural workers are by definition advertising practitioners, management consultants, public relations practitioners, and other occupations involving information and knowledge intensive forms of work that have come to be seen as increasingly central to economic and cultural life (Nixon and du Gay, 2002). Bourdieu (1984: 366) stated that cultural intermediaries are predisposed to play a vanguard role in the struggles over everything concerned with the art of living. Hence, sometimes, PRP culture is understood as cultural intermediary occupation. In other words, the nature of PR occupation is shaped by PR practitioners' shared values and common life experience.

Generally, research into public relations occupational culture is found under the rubric of the tradition of ethnography of work. Such research has analysed how people do their jobs, how they take decisions, stresses and tensions experienced in a great variety of workplaces and in relation to the gamut of jobs, with high and low status in the wider culture (L'Etang, 2011: 25). However, there is little research in this area. For example, Hodges (2006) studied PR occupational culture in Mexico City through participant observation, conducted while employed as a full-time public relations consultant in the city. Terry (2005) examines how public relations in Kazakhstan was represented, produced, consumed, and regulated. She had undertaken participant observation for 10 months in 2001-2002. Pieczka (1997) conducted ethnographic and phenomenological approaches with participant observation to study public relations expertise and personal chemistry. The majority of research applied British cultural tradition such as the circuit of culture in their studies (Curtin & Gaither, 2005, 2007; Hodges, 2006; Terry, 2005). Most of them employed general qualitative approaches to their studies, only Hodges (2006) and Daymon & Hodges (2009) based their research on ethnographic approaches.

Scholars suggest that it is challenging to explore PRP culture due to the lack of literature and its importance to the field. For example, L'Etang (2011: 20) suggested that it is a challenge for PR researchers to reflect upon the potential multiplicity of public relations practice cultures and micro-culture as well as the roles that public relations plays 'between the hypens' in culture or enacting culture while Hodges (2006: 85) points out that "exploring public relations in this way would tell us much the pervasiveness of the occupational culture- in essence, those activities inside or outside of the occupation for which the occupation sets the norms". It would also highlight areas of potential difference that affect how PR practitioners have practised by occupational grouping around the world. She emphasised that we need to deconstruct the practice and to consider the importance of public relations as an occupational group in the development of culture (Hodges, 2006). Stevens (1988) advocated that when writing about architecture as an occupation, what is significant for the industry is not what it knows and how to apply this knowledge, so much as understanding what being a public relations practitioner means.

This thesis will take up a challenge to study PR occupation in Thailand that is constructed by Thai PR practitioners' perceptions, attitudes, and opinions. "What do they do?" is one of the main questions I attempt to address.

CULTURE AND ONLINE PUBLIC RELATIONS

In PR literature, several studies claim that the emergence of ICTs is changing the way PR practitioners, individuals, and institutions communicate, which has consequences for PR practice (Grunig, 2009; Fitch, 2009a; Tench and Yeomans, 2006; Holtz, 2002; Bunz 1998). Newsom, Turk, and Kruckeberg (2000) said, "It is virtually impossible to

effectively practice public relations today without using the Internet (p.399). Likewise, Wilcox, Ault, and Agree suggest, cyberspace communication is “a significant, swiftly expanding tool for public relations practitioners.” Health and Comb (2006: 481) emphasise that technology does affect the practice of public relations.

Gregory (2009: 11) stated in the book of ‘*Online public relations: A practical guide to developing an online strategy in the world of social media*’ (Phillips & Young, 2009) that much has been written on the internet as just another means of communication. Nothing could be further from the truth. It is a channel of communication, but it is much more than that. Its unique properties of reach richness and personalization have transformed the mode and quality of mediated communication. Furthermore, the nature of internet publics, or communities, is quite different from that have been traditionally the domain of the PR practitioners. In addition, more recently, some have stated that ICTs have changed everything about PR. Several recent books concerned with the topic ‘online public relations’ such as Phillips and Young (2009), Solis and Breakenridge (2009) have argued that the digital media have changed everything for public relations: ‘The Web has changed *everything*’ (Solis & Breakenridge, 2009: 1); ‘...it is *hard to avoid making the claim that the internet changes everything.*’...for public relations the unavoidable conclusion is that ‘*nothing will ever be the same again*’ (Phillips & Young, 2009: 1). Moreover, Grunig (2009) comments on this issue that:

... I agree with these assertions. *For most practitioners, digital media do change everything about the way they practice public relations.* Other practitioners, however, doggedly use the new media to guide practice especially our generic principles of public relations. Rather, the new media facilitate the application of the principles and, in the future, *will make it difficult for practitioners around the world not to use the principles* (Grunig, 2009: 3).

Some scholars believe that ICTs are a tool for public relations. For example, Grunig (2009) pointed out that digital media can be used for PR practice in many areas such as communication programmes, environmental scanning research, segment stakeholders and the public, anticipating and dealing with issues and crises, measuring relationships and reputation, and evaluation of communication programmes while IABC Research foundation and Buck Consultants (2009) revealed widespread use of digital media for employee communication programmes, including social media (used frequently or occasionally by 80% of survey participants), emails (75%), intranet (88%), websites (76%), virtual meetings (55%), and podcasts (20%). Digital media also are being used extensively for media relations, customer relations, financial relations, community relations, member relations for non-profit, donor relations, alumni relations for colleges and universities, public affairs and political public relations, and many other programmes designed to cultivate relationships with the public.

However, research suggests most practitioners use the internet as *an additional channel for communication rather than as a platform for* meaningfully engaging the public (Fitch, 2009b; James, 2007; Chia, 2002). Although practitioners are increasingly monitoring social media sites—including blogs—as part of their regular activities, many struggle to incorporate social media into public relations practice. This is partly because traditional public relations techniques are not appropriate in a new media environment (Galloway, 2005).

In addition, scholars (Grunig, 2009; Phillip & Young, 2009) pointed out that although the new digital media have dialogical, interactive, relational, and global properties that one would think would force PR practitioners to abandon their traditional one-way, message-oriented, symmetrical and ethnocentric paradigm of practice; communicators tend to use them in the same way that they used the old media. Online media, according

to Grunig (2009), was first used as an ‘information dump’ by PR practitioners in the same way that they used traditional media.

A survey of European public relations practitioners found that the lack of appropriate methods for evaluating the return on investment (ROI) and a lack of appropriately skilled employees were barriers to working with social media (Sandhu, Young, and Zerfass, 2007). The authors of that survey concluded that: “Social Media offers a tremendous opportunity for a new generation of PR professionals who are savvy with the application of new communication tools and can also provide convincing arguments that legitimise the usage of this technology” (Euprera, 2007).

To sum up, although technologies have provided the field of public relations with additional space to grow, there are still gaps to fill in. The bulk of literature that reflects on online public relations has taken on surveys or quantitative approaches rather than looked in qualitative details. I will undertake this challenge to study how PR practitioners do work with ICTs with qualitative methods.

In culture and online public relations, cultural factors are neglected. None of the studies emphasise the impact of culture on online public relations. Most of studies applied generic quantitative concepts with an assumption that ICTs do change everything about PR (e.g. Bunz, 1998; Newsom, Turk, and Kruckeberg, 2000; Wright, 2001). In other words, researchers usually emphasise PR occupation culture: how do they do and use ICTs in their work?

Considering a theory of technology, scholars proposed three approaches: technology determinism (or diffusion model), soft determinism, and Social Construction of Technology (SCOT) to look at the impact of technology on society. Technology determinism scholars (e.g. Latour, 1988; Pinch and Bijker, 1987; Gillies, 1990; Grint &

Woolgar, 1997) argue that technology, taken to structure social relationships, is therefore seen as independent and autonomous of human social intervention. Technical objects move through society and maintain themselves without people, and can seemingly exist independently of human action. They claimed that technology influences human relations and environment. Technological determinism is not a framework that, at present, many accepts with much favour. It has largely fallen out of style due to a shift that has occurred in accounting for technological change not by focusing on the technological, but on the importance of social factors.

The second approach to study technology is soft determinism. Winner (1980) argues that to claim that technology has no effects at all is misguided, and advances a 'softer' version of 'hard' technological determinism. He argues that technologies can be inherently political, and that they can be designed, consciously or unconsciously, to open certain social options to some, and close them to others (MacKenzie & Wajcman, 1999:5). Soft determinism views technology as an enabling or facilitating factor, leading to potential opportunities which may or may not be adopted, whereas with hard determinism, technologies permit few alternatives to their inherent dictates. The view that technology just changes, either through science or its own accord, promotes a passive attitude to technological change. It focuses on how we *should adapt to technology, but not change or shape it* (MacKenzie & Wajcman, 1999: 5). What is missing from this argument is any consideration of other mediating factors, and an understanding of how technologies themselves are understood and socially constructed. In resistance to technological determinism, a number of alternative theoretical perspectives have taken shape. Fundamentally, such approaches investigate the social implications of technological change, and reject the otherwise taken for granted properties and characteristics of technology assigned to it by diffusionist frameworks. In

effect, this has triggered a swing away from the technical toward the social in accounting for technological developments (Akrich 1993). It was a call to place technology 'in context', where context is a contested term, depending on the particular theoretical approach. This 'movement' has signalled that technology comprises much more than just machines: that it includes a culture composed of diverse social arrangements (Grint & Woolgar, 1997: 13). These arguments led to the third approach of SCOT.

SCOT has a fundamental difference compared to previously discussed theories of technology, in the prominence given to the symmetrical treatment of success and failure which is evidenced through the description of the 'interpretative flexibility' of technological artifacts. Pinch & Bijker (1987) extended this principle to their study of technology, specifically as a way to avoid explaining success and failure of technologies by whether or not they 'work.' This approach emphasises that technology works once it has been accepted by relevant social groups:

...institutions and organizations (such as the military or some specific industrial company), as well as organized or unorganized groups of individuals. The key requirement is that all members of a certain social group share the same set of meanings, attached to a specific artifact (Pinch & Bijker. 1987: 30).

Machines, therefore, work only as a site of explanation, as they are understood by those who interpret them (MacKenzie & Wajcman. 1999: 22). This is an important and substantial shift in the way that technologies are conceptualized. Whereas, with earlier accounts of technological change, technologies were taken for granted as explanations of technological success or failure, in this framework they are the site of contested interpretations. Therefore, *success and failure is not placed upon the object itself, but in the histories of its adoption* (MacKenzie & Wajcman. 1999: 22-23).

Technological artifacts are culturally constructed: a contribution to technology studies that first came from Hughes' description of technological systems. The different interpretations of technological objects will influence if and how they are adopted, and have a direct role in how technologies are designed (Pinch & Bijker. 1987: 40). The content of the artifact is designed with different meanings, intentions, and purposes, in agreement with the dictates of the particular social group or groups. Different interpretations will lead to different "chains of problems and solutions." and subsequently, to different further developments (Pinch & Bijker. 1987: 42). This serves to shift explanation for such things as 'failure' from the natural to the social world: a grand departure from those explanations offered by deterministic accounts. Indeed, the socio-cultural and political situation of a social group shapes its norms and values, which in turn, influence the meaning to an object.

In fact, PR occupation can be defined as 'a relevant social group' in SCOT theory. In this thesis, I based my study on the belief of SCOT. I decided not to have technology determinism and soft determinism because I believe that 1) technology or ICTs will work only when Thai PR practitioners accept them, 2) ICTs are understood by those who interpret them and might be understood differently across countries, 3) a success & failure is not placed upon ICT itself, but in histories of its adoption, and 4) the socio-culture of PR groups shaped the meaning of the use of ICTs.

Therefore, in order to study culture and online Thai PR, I will examine four dimensions. First, I will study how ICTs were adopted by Thai PR. Second, I will focus on PR occupational culture: how they use ICTs for their work. Third, I will examine how culture or *Wattana-dharm Thai* impacts on the use of ICTs. Finally, I will investigate the difficulty and obstacles of ICTs adoption.

THAILAND

Thailand is a country where my research has taken place and it is the ‘context’ of the study. It is important for the readers to understand the general background of Thailand. This section provides four brief but important points of information on Thailand: the background of Thailand, politics, economy, and media in Thailand.

Background of Thailand

Thailand, historically known as Siam, was never colonized by any foreign power, unlike its South Asian and Southeast Asian neighbours (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2009; Macdonald and Parkes 2001; National Identity Board, 2000). Despite periodic invasions by the Burmese and Khmer, the kingdom was never externally controlled to the effect of dampening Thai individualism. The Thai are often depicted as a fun-loving, happy-go-lucky people (National Identity Board, 2000: 57). Yet, they are also proud and strong-minded. For centuries, the Thai population struggled to preserve their identity and uphold their spirited resolve for independence. Although Thailand, like other Asian countries, has been influenced by contact with foreign cultures, the ever domineering spirit of the Thai culture has prevailed over the modern Westernized lifestyle (Macdonald and Parkes 2001; National Identity Board, 2000).

Thailand covers a land area of 513,115 km² (Library of Congress, 2007; National Identity Board, 2000), roughly equalling the size of Spain, or slightly smaller than the state of Texas in the US, or bigger than the United Kingdom according to the report of Central Intelligence Agency (2009). Thailand’s longest north-south extension is about 1,600 kilometres, straddling diverse climatic zones in South-East Asia. The topography varies from high mountains in the north to limestone-encrusted tropical islands in the South that form numerous archipelagos in the Andaman Sea as well as in the Gulf of

Thailand (Library of Congress, 2007; Macdonald and Parkes, 2001; National Identity Board, 2000).

The large majority of the 67.39 million citizens are Thai (ITU, 2009), along with strong communities with ethnic origins (National Identity Board, 2000). About 9.6 million people are registered as residents in the capital city of Bangkok (Library of Congress, 2007: 1). Thai is the official language, while English and some Chinese dialects are used in business circles. Nearly 94 percent of the Thai citizens speak Thai (Library of Congress, 2007: 11). The formal education comprises twelve years, including primary and secondary school, of which the first six years are compulsory. The government provides free education for all, resulting in a literacy rate of 92.6 percent (Library of Congress, 2007: 11).

Thailand is one of the most strongly Buddhist countries in the world. The national religion is Theravada Buddhism, a branch of Hinayana Buddhism, practised by more than 90 percent of all Thais (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2009; Library of Congress, 2007: 11). The remainder of the population adheres to Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and other faiths, all of which are allowed full freedom of expression. Buddhism continues to cast strong influence on daily life. Senior monks are highly revered. Thus, in towns and villages, the temple (Wat) is the heart of social and religious life (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2009; National Identity Board, 2000).

Thai people cherish their national dignity. Thailand's national flag is regularly hoisted at 8 a.m. and lowered at 6 p.m. in every city, town and village. The Thai flag features horizontal bands of red, white, and blue. The outer bands of red symbolizes the nation. The enclosing equal inner bands of white represent religion. The blue band, occupying the central one-third of the total flag size, symbolises the monarchy. The flag expresses

the complementary nature of these three pillars of the Thai nation. According to Thai custom, the monarchy and religion are held in highest esteem. Any comments or actions considered derogatory to either one are not tolerated (National Identity Board, 2000).

Politics

The politics of Thailand currently takes place in a framework of a constitutional monarchy, whereby the Prime Minister is the head of government and a hereditary monarch is head of state. Executive power is currently exercised by the military junta and its appointed Prime Minister and Cabinet. Legislative power is vested in a junta-appointed legislature. The Judiciary is independent of the executive and the legislature. Political activities are currently banned. Prior to the 2006 coup, the kingdom was a parliamentary democracy, with an elected bicameral legislature (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2009). Thailand had been ruled by kings since the thirteenth century. In 1932, the country officially became a constitutional monarchy, though in practice, the government was dominated by the military and the elite bureaucracy. The country's current constitution was promulgated in 2006 (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2009).

The King of Thailand has little direct power under the constitution but is a symbol of national identity and unity (Tourism Authority of Thailand 2009, National Identity Office, 2005). King Bhumibol — who has been on the throne since 1946 — commands enormous popular respect and moral authority, which he has used on occasion to resolve political crises that have threatened national stability (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2009; BBC, 2009). Currently, Vejjajiva defeated an ally of exiled former Prime Minister Shinawatra in a parliamentary vote to become Thailand's fifth head of government in just over two years (BBC, 2009).

Economy

The Thai free-enterprise economy development has recovered from the Asian financial crisis triggered by speculation against the Thai baht in 1997–1998 (Library of Congress, 2007: 13). By 2002, Thailand's standard of living had returned to the level prevailing before the financial crisis (Library of Congress, 2007: 13). The recovery reflected the benefits of reform measures tied to assistance by the International Monetary Fund, which is a direct investment from Japan, the United States, Singapore and other nations, and surging exports (Library of Congress, 2007: 13). During 2001–2004 the economy grew at a moderate rate, but the rate of growth was slower than in the booming 1980s and the first half of the 1990s. A long-term shift from agriculture to manufacturing and services continues, but about 39 percent of the workforce is still employed in agriculture, forestry, and fishing, even though this sector is responsible for only 10 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) (Library of Congress, 2007: 13). The economy is heavily dependent on exports, such as textiles and computer components, which account for 60 percent of GDP. Between 2002 and 2005, the number of the poor declined by approximately 2 million. In percentage terms, the poverty rate declined from 15.6 percent (2002) to 12 percent (2004) and to 9.8 percent (2005), according to the World Bank (Library of Congress, 2007: 13).

Media in Thailand

State entities, including the police, military and government allies own almost all television and radio stations and play an important role in determining programming content (Library of Congress, 2007: 18). The government's Public Relations Department requires that all Thai radio stations carry 30 minutes of official news prepared by Radio Thailand, the government's national radio network, twice a day. Radio Thailand has seven networks that specialise in such areas as news and

information, public affairs, social issues, education, and foreign-language broadcasts (Library of Congress, 2007: 18).

Altogether, Thailand has 204 AM radio stations, 334 FM radio stations, six shortwave stations, and 111 television broadcast stations (Library of Congress, 2007: 18). There are between 2,000 and 3,000 community radio stations, many of which operate outside the law by using frequencies restricted to government entities.

Thailand has five television channels, of which two are run by the central government, two by the army, and one by a private enterprise. The radio stations that do register are allowed to continue broadcasting. However, others, including those that are critical towards the government, have been shut down. Thailand has approximately 14 million radios and 15 million television sets (Library of Congress, 2007: 18). Multichannel TV, via cable and satellite, is widely available (BBC, 2009). The radio market, particularly in Bangkok, is fiercely competitive. There are more than 60 stations in and around the capital. The media are free to criticise government policies, and cover instances of corruption and human rights abuses. However, journalists tend to exercise self-censorship regarding the military, the monarchy, the judiciary and other sensitive issues (BBC, 2009). The print media are largely privately run, with a handful of Thai-language dailies accounting for most newspaper sales (BBC, 2009). A series of media reforms are under way, aimed at reducing military interest and influence in the media and opening up more opportunities to the private sector (BBC, 2009). There are 18 major Thai-language daily newspapers, three major English-language dailies, and four major Chinese-language dailies (Library of Congress, 2007).

WATTANA-DHARM THAI

Understanding *Wattana-dharm Thai* is critical to understanding Thai PR practice. Apropos of a country located in Indochina, its culture is strongly influenced by both those of China and India. The Thai language is tonal and grammatically similar to Chinese. However, much of its vocabulary is drawn from Sanskrit. Buddhism is a central feature of Thai life, though some Thais still pay homage to certain Hindu deities. Buddhism in Thailand is different from the Mahayana Buddhism of China, Korea, Japan - even nearby Vietnam (Atmiyanandana and Lawyer, 2003: 232-233).

Within Hofstede's (1980, 2001) well-known system for classifying national culture, Thailand, as with the rest of region, scores high on the collectivist and power distance dimensions. However, Thai culture is much more nuanced - there are strong tendencies towards collectivism and hierarchy, but the extent to which such values are exhibited depends on context. As with the Japanese, there is a strong sense of national identity, of Thainess, that binds people together (Atmiyanandana and Lawyer, 2003: 232-233). This section will begin with 'Thainess'. Then, it provides information about Thai structure and personality respectively.

Thainess

This section introduces Thai ideology - "Thainess" - that influenced Thai culture and the way of Thais' thinking to non-Thai readers. In addition, it uses a theoretical framework to explain the evolution of Thai PR practice in this study. Several studies paid attention to this ideology, but focusing on political or cultural perspectives (Sattayanurak, 2005; Prakitnonthakan, 2004). It is absent in work from PR perspectives. This thesis is an first attempt to link "Thainess" with the PR study.

‘Thainess’ is a concept that was constructed under absolute monarchy since the reign of King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) (Sattayanurak, 2005: 1). It is defined by a number of mainstream intellectuals who have profound influence on the Thai ideology of “society and culture.” This ideology formed the basis for prevalent explanations of various incidents and problems in Thailand’s political society, and has wielded tremendous influence on the Thais’ way of thinking through the years down to the present day (Sattayanurak, 2005: 2).

The heart of “Thainess” includes the concept of “nation, religion, and kingship” that justified and sustained the political structure of centralised power, and the social structure that divided people into hierarchical classes in accordance with their birthright (Sattayanurak, 2005:8).

When Thailand had to face Western culture that came with superior power, Thailand’s ruling class chose to accept Western-style material progress and maintain most parts of “Thainess” in culture by assigning new definitions to various constituent parts of “Thainess” to prevent it from being seen as barbaric (Sattayanurak, 2005:4). At the same time, the ruling class had to ensure that “Thainess” can justify the political structure that centralized power at the king, and can justify the social structure that divided people into different classes according to their birthright – the kind of social structure that is extremely crucial in an absolute monarchy (Sattayanurak, 2005:4). To maximize the effectiveness of the power centralization process, King Rama V focused the efforts of defining “Thainess” on giving new meanings to various royal rituals and processions, and on constructing symbols that place the king at the centre of state, wielding absolute power over aristocrats, civil servants, and subjects of all “races” whose lives depended on the king’s power, wisdom, and magnanimity (Sattayanurak, 2005:4). He paid special attention to the definition of “king” and “civil servants,” since

this period marked the first time the king wielded absolute power and wielded it as a man, not as an avatar of a god (Sattayanurak, 2005:4). Throughout his reign, he led the nation in selecting artistic and cultural expressions of “Thainess” that showed uniquely Thai traits, and made those traits sustain absolute monarchy at the same time. For example, he ordered that Wat Benchamabopitr (Marble Temple) be constructed in a “Thai style” but with new symbols that represent his power under absolute monarchy (Prakitnonthakan, 2004: 187-191).

In the meantime, a modern bureaucracy was established to serve as an effective governmental mechanism – both in ensuring national security and managing national resources – while posing no threat to the king. King Rama V stressed that the king’s power was absolute over “northern Siam, southern Siam, central Siam... Laos... Malay peninsula,” as illustrated by the symbol of kingship on the royal flag mandated by the Royal Decree on Flags, 1891 A.D. (Lailuk, 1935: 79-80). In addition, he stressed the identity of civil servants as honoraries whose honour was conferred by the king, via conducting royal ceremonies that were made “more Thai” by accentuating the people’s social standing that was determined hierarchically in accordance with their social class, in combination with a judicious use of several “universal” symbols meant to promote “Thainess” to ensure respectably as part of the civilized world (Sattayanurak, 2002: 101-124).

King Vajiravudh (Rama VI) introduced the concept of “Thai nation” that means nation of the people. This concept was popularised by journalists, a few aristocrats, several civil servant groups, and Chinese people in Siam (Mektrairat, 1999: 1-104). Because this concept could easily provide the ideological base for movements to change the political regime, King Rama VI accelerated the efforts to define “Thai nation” and “Thainess” to reign supreme over all other definitions. He defined “Thai nation” as a

nation that comprises people whose livelihood was intricately linked with Thai culture and who were loyal to the heart of “Thainess,” which consists of the royal institution and Buddhism. He stressed that Thai culture was “truly Thai” in that it was continually inherited from the olden days. But he suggested that this “Thainess” has a core that is no less universal than European civilisations, because it is based on Buddhism which was “superior” to all other religions, both in terms of rational dogma and Buddha’s royal lineage (Sattayanurak, 2005: 5). At the same time, King Rama VI created the concept of “the other” which he focused on the Chinese people in Siam who were increasing both in numbers and economic influence, and who brought the political ideal of a republic as well as Chinese nationalist sentiment into Siam (Sattayanurak, 2005:5).

Defining “Thai nation” and “Thainess” therefore became an urgent matter, both to counter the threat to absolute monarchy from Western and Chinese influence, as well as to realign power relationships in the modern state. King Rama VI’s definition of “Thai nation” and “Thainess” therefore was focused on building a political unity in which the “king” who was the heart of “Thai nation” wielded supreme power because he was the focal point of Thai people’s loyalty. His intent was to reaffirm the importance of “king” as patron and chief architect of Thai civilization, and squeezed out the Chinese, who refused to “become Thai,” from membership of the “Thai nation.” At the same time, his definition also countered the idea that “the nation and its sovereignty belongs to the people.” In addition, efforts to define “Thai nation” and “Thainess” in Rama VI’s reign were meant to respond to internal political strife among many high-ranking aristocrats; King Rama VI became distrustful of civil servants since the “1984 A.D. rebellion,” and as a result tried to wield even more absolute power than during the reign of King Rama V (Sattayanurak, 2005:6).

The construction of a king-centred ideology of “Thai nation” has made “Thais” all over the country aware of the nation’s totality, with the king the focal point of their loyalty and unity (Sattayanurak, 2005:4). At the same time, King Rama VI tried to make Siam part of civilised countries, but since he had to preserve “Thainess” because it was the cultural root that supported the power structure of absolute monarchy, he stressed that “Thainess” that was preserved and inherited by kings throughout the ages was “civilised,” i.e. having a universal essence that was no different from Western civilisations. This was to allow “Thais” to feel proud of their “Thai nation,” and to feel grateful of the king’s magnanimity which helped make “Thai nation” civilized, free, and able to see eye-to-eye with Western nations (Sattayanurak, 2002: 101-124).

Prince Patriarch Wachirayanwarorot helped delineate the ideology of “Thainess” that centred on the king who led Thailand to achieve Western-style civilisation, in such a way that made it clear and memorable to people across all social classes (Sattayanurak, 2005: 6). He did this by transforming the ideas regarding “Thai nation” and “Thainess” as constructed by King Rama VI into Buddhist-based ideas (“Buddhistisation”) that were disseminated via sermons and monastic educational reforms. He also composed numerous Buddhist texts that were used by monks and apprentices in their examinations (Sattayanurak, 2005: 6). The use of Buddhist ideas in defining a king-centred concept of “Thai nation” helped create a clear, indivisible ideology of “nation, religion, and kingship.” This ideology was widely known among monks, most of whom came from the lower-class populace, both in the cities and the countryside. Many Buddhist texts written by Prince Patriarch Wachirayanwarorot became part of the monastic curriculum up to the present day (Sattayanurak, 2005: 6).

With the idea of “nation, religion, and kingship” as a Buddhist idea, Prince Patriarch Wachirayanwarorot was forced to focus only on the worldly part of Buddhism (*lokiya dhamma*), without any means to link it to the spiritual part (*lokuttara dhamma*) (Sattayanurak, 2005:6). This is because the spiritual portion would have made the “nation, religion, and kingship” idea devoid of substance or dependable identity (Sattayanurak, 2005: 6). As a result, the religious aspect of “Thainess” became extremely important, because being a Buddhist meant having beliefs and opinions that are profoundly attached to “Thai nation” and “Thainess” (Sattayanurak, 2005: 6). For instance, a ‘proper’ Buddhist was one who accepted the virtues of “Thai-style governance,” swore utmost loyalty to “the king,” fully understood the meaning of governance in accordance with Buddhist virtues (*rājadhamma*), and was proud of all Thai art and culture for which “Buddhism” was an important progenitor.

To sum up, during the period of absolute monarchy, although the thinking of four intellectuals were not perfectly aligned, they all shared the common focus on *the heart of “Thainess” which was the concept of “nation, religion, and kingship” that justified and sustained the political structure of centralized power, and the social structure that divided people into hierarchical classes in accordance with their birthright*, although the “language” or “vocabulary” that they used to build the concept of “nation, religion, and kingship” differed somewhat from each other. In this thesis, “Thainess” is conceptualised to explain the evolution of Thai PR occupation in the next chapter.

Thai Social Structure

The Thai social system is hierarchically structured (Suvanjata, 1976: 171-186; Holmes & Tangtongtavy, 1995: 26) and collectivist (Hofstede, 1980, 2001; Komin, 1991;

Atmiyanandana & Lawyer, 2003, Siengthai & Vadhanasindhun, 1991). Hierarchy and deference to authority are expressed symbolically and reinforced in many ways in Thai society. Traditions and practices associated with a royal family help to reinforce class distinctions (Atmiyanandana and Lawyer, 2003). In fact, the hierarchical structure of the Thai society has its roots from *Sakdi na*.

In the fifteenth century, King Borommatrailokanat, more simply known as King Trailok, put into legislation ideas that were already strong in practice: the ranking of all citizens within the kingdom based on numbers. Originally, the ranking of the king's subjects had been based on size of land - thus the name *sakdi na*, or "field power". However, when Trailok enacted his Law of the Civil Hierarchy, he was able to classify and place every individual, irrespective of land holdings, by assigning the person certain *sakdi na*, a number (Holmes, 1995: 27).

Sakdi na was abolished four hundred years later by King Chulalongkorn but the fundamental belief that every person should have place in hierarchy, and be to some extent content with it, lives. In addition, belief in karma as a determinant of one's social standing means Thais tend to believe that one's current status is related to the way one led one's prior lives. High status is the reward for a good prior existence, just as low status is a sanction for poorly led prior lives. Thus higher status is seen as earned and deserving of respect; low status individuals can hope to enhance their good karma and move on to a better next life through enduring their position in this life and leading good lives (including respecting their superiors) (Atmiyanandana & Lawyer, 2003).

A Thai may move up or down the social ladder. In the Thai world view, society appears primarily as a hierarchical system with all positions in it fixed and arranged in ranked fashion. However, individuals who occupy these positions are free to move in any direction such as soccer players on the soccer field (Phodhisita, 1985: 32). However, it does mean that each should learn and behave appropriately according to the present

social position. The expectations of those who are senior and those who are junior are clearly defined:

As for adults, they should act respectably and not play with children so much that children consider them as equals. Those who are getting old should not behave like young people. An older woman who dresses up like a young girl or who has the manners of a young girl is criticised. Also, an older man who acts foolishly like a young man is condemned. Older people should demonstrate that they are worthy of respect (Banhumedha, 1985: 95).

Most Thais are keenly aware of their position of seniority to some (and the obligations they have towards them) and their position of inferiority to others (again with its own set of obligations). For example, it would be normal when eating out as a group, for the most senior in the group to pay for a bill (Taylor, 1997: 9).

Although class and social background are important determinants of social position, many other factors can enter the picture. Thai social rank is determined by age, wealth (how the wealth is obtained is not always a factor), professional rank, religious merit, and personal and political power (Macdonald & Parkes, 2001: 12-14). Educational attainment is another important determinant of status - being graduates of a leading university and the social networks opened to one as a consequence of this, provides considerable opportunity for mobility. The social networks that develop within academic cohorts are extremely strong and can provide advantage throughout one's life (Atmiyanandana & Lawyer, 2003; Komin, 1991). This may not be unlike other cultures in the world, but the difference lies in the rigid divide between the levels of social order and the set of obligations that links all members of society (Macdonald & Parkes, 2001: 12-14).

Forget egalitarianism. It does not exist in Thailand. It is almost automatic to defer to someone of higher status and to accord a respect that, in some cases, Westerners would like to fawn. But in patron-client relationships, in return for respect, those of higher social status are expected to show benevolence to those of lesser rank (Macdonald and Parkes, 2001: 14)

Moreover, Thailand is a collective society. Social connections and networks are quite similar to the Chinese notion of *guanxi* (Tsui et al. 2000). In addition, family is central in Thai society and the members of one's family evolve in ways similar to Chinese and other East Asian culture as in *guanxi*: one's bloodline, attending the same school or university, coming from the geographic area or village, being part of the same political movement, interacting at work, or just being friends. Ritualistic behaviour, such as entertaining others and gift giving, serves to reinforce personal connections (Atmiyanandana and Lawyer, 2003). Behaviours within social networks tend to be quite particularistic (Warner & Joynt, 2002; Atmiyanandana & Lawyer, 2003: 235; Hampden-Tuner & Trompenaars, 2002; 2000). An emphasis on the maintenance of harmonious relationships is another typically Asian aspect of *Wattana-dharm Thai* (Atmiyanandana and Lawyer, 2003).

Thai Personality

Thai personality is closely linked to Thai ideology. "Thainess", especially Buddhism, shapes Thai personality. Taylor (1997) revealed in his study "Patron-Client Relationships and the Challenge for the Thai Church" that Thailand has Patron-Client Relationships that has been shaped by Buddhism. In the same way, Macdonald and Parkes (2001) pointed out that:

The country's dominant religion, Buddhism, is a major shaper of this Thai personality, with its precepts of a detached view of life and lack of judgmental attitudes to most actions and human frailties. Buddhism traditionally values respect, quietude, and subtleness (Macdonald & Parkes, 2001: 12).

Almost all major life events in Thailand are somehow connected to Buddhism and many of the country's national holidays are Buddhist holy days. Indeed, the highest authority in Thai society is the *Sangha* (Buddhist clergy and hierarchy) and even the king must pay homage to the lowliest monk. Most Thai males spend at least a short period in the monkhood. Buddhists believe that karma (the sum of both good and bad deeds one achieves during life) help determine one's next life and most Thais seem concerned mainly with achieving a good 'next life' (*Bunwassana* 'บุญวาสนา') rather than the blissful state of nirvana.

Also, the centrality of Buddhism means that values associated with acquiring positive karma (merit), such as kindness towards others, particularly the less fortunate, has a strong influence on managerial behaviour: the ideal Thai leader is seen as more of a benevolent father than an autocrat. However, the strong belief in karma also affects the social order. A class system is quite evident in Thai society and is different than was traditionally so in Europe, where class lines were often immutable. And though karma plays a role in Thai class differences, this system bears no relationship to the rigidities of the Hindu caste system, which is similarly based on karma (Atmiyanandana and Lawyer, 2003: 233-234).

In addition, Macdonald and Parkes (2001) suggested that Thai personality includes cherishing the monarchy, smiling in any situation, fun-loving of *Sanook*, *Mai pen rai* [never mind] to save face, and Festivals. One is expected to maintain calmness and a 'cool heart'. One can express feelings, but not in a strongly emotional manner, at least

in public. Loss of face is an important social sanction and means of maintaining social control. Thais are also very concerned about causing loss of face to others and will avoid exchanges that create the potential for loss of face. Thus, direct confrontations, criticisms of others and explicitly denying requests are generally avoided. Telling someone 'no' is an art form that requires considerable use of non-verbal communication and careful inflections of the voice while avoiding literally saying 'no'. Thais tend to be quite fatalistic and rely on panoply of techniques and methods to foretell the future, suggesting more of a sense of external than internal control (Hampden-Tuner and Trompenaars, 2002; 2000).

Likewise, several Thai Sociology and Anthropology scholars (e.g. Soupap, 1979; Soontawan, 1979, Apapirom, 1976) summarised some basic values of Thai society: respect Buddhism, lift up money as supremely important, lift up power, lift up those with status, respect those with seniority, lift up the educated, don't disagree with anyone, do not enjoy disagree with anyone, do not enjoy risk and lack of patience, like to gamble, like fun, like to be extravagant when competing in society, like it easy, like ceremonies, believe in spirit and luck, lack order and discipline, don't care for corporate things, concern with doing their own things, like the freedom of being one's own man, don't like to see others as good, love face and eyes in society, love groups to which one belongs, like to put things off, gratitude as a response to supporters or patrons, curious about the affairs of others, forgive easily.

In conclusion, *Wattana-dharm Thai* is shaped and centralised by Buddhism. A religion affects Thai lives and activities. Also, Thailand has a collectivist and hierarchical culture as in China. It focuses on social connection and personal relationships and is quite similar to the notion of *guanxi* in Chinese.

DEVELOPMENT OF ICTS IN THAILAND

The major fixed-line service providers include TOT Corporation Public Company Limited (the Telephone Organization of Thailand, as it was then), formerly a state enterprise under the Ministry of Transport and Communications until it was privatized in 2003 (TOT, 2007). There were also two private companies that have been awarded concessions to operate fixed-line services: True Cooperation (previously Telecom Asia Corporation), which serves Bangkok and its surrounding provinces; and TT&T Public Company Limited, which operates in the upcountry (NECTEC et al., 2005: 17). True Cooperation, is a subsidiary of Charoen Pokphand Groups Co., Ltd.

The growth in telephone penetration has been sluggish over the past couple of years, with slight increases in numbers of fixed line subscribers. Although the fixed-line penetration in rural areas or countryside has been increasing at a greater rate than in Bangkok, the digital divide still prevails (NECTEC et al., 2005: 17). According to a survey of ITU (2009c), numbers of fixed line users has increased 12% between 2003 and 2008 from 6,632,400 in 2003 to 7,024,000 users in 2008 (ITU, 2009c). However, when comparing with countries that have the same size and population, such as the United Kingdom, the number of fixed line users is still low. According to the records of ITU who compares number of users internationally, the United Kingdom has approximately five times more users compared with Thailand (ITU, 2009c).

For wireless communication network industry, TOT brought in analogue systems based on the standards of Nordic Mobile Telephone (NMT), and CAT brought Advanced Mobile Phone System (AMPS), which were then popular in Europe and North America in 1986 (NECTEC et al, 2003a). However, as the demand for mobile phones grew rapidly, TOT and CAT could not meet the demand. Therefore, concessions were

granted in 1990 to the following corporations, namely; Advance Info Service Plc. (AIS, an affiliate of Chinnawatre Group), for 25 years and Total Access Communication Plc. (TAC, an affiliate of UCOM group), for 27 years. Nevertheless, with restricted frequency range and limited signal channels of analogue systems, the growing demand for the service was not efficient. Thus, in 1994, digital systems were brought in to increase the ability in transmitting signals and expanding channels in order to utilise more handsets. Each channel can hold more than a pair of speakers, enhancing service capacity and preventing interfering signals. The systems utilising digital technology include Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM), Personal Communication Network (PCN) and Code Division Multiple Access (CDMA) (Rattananuban and Somboontanon, 2007: 7-8).

After 2002, Thai mobile phone became cheaper because operators competed strongly by offering creative packages with aggressive pricing strategies such as airtime and handset subsidies (AIS, 2004: 45; DTAC, 2004: 25). In 2008, the penetration rate of mobile phone users reached 92%, according to the survey ITU (2009d). Although mobile penetration in Thailand is heading towards 100%, the saturation point and the penetration in each region vary. While Bangkok and other major cities have reached 100-120% penetration rate, the upcountry areas, mainly in North and Northeastern provinces have only achieved 50-60% penetration (AIS, 2008: 64). In 2008, mobile operators focused on these rural areas for growth by expanding and strengthening network coverage as well as stimulating demand through targeted marketing activities (AIS, 2008: 64). The Thai mobile phone service industry consists of three main mobile operators: AIS, DTAC, and TMV, which take more than 97% of mobile service revenues in total (AIS, 2008: 64).

The Growth of Thai Internet

Since 1995, the annual growth of the international bandwidth of Thailand was more than 200% (NECTEC et al., 2003a). The popularity of Internet usage in Thailand has soared during the period 1999-2003, with an average annual growth in Internet usage of 58.3 percent (NECTEC et al., 2003a). The popularity of the Internet can be attributed to the fact that it is a new form of borderless communication technology offering a diverse range of services, such as the opportunity to keep up with new information, the use of instant messaging (ICQ, MSN) and chat services, the use of Web boards, the search for information, the purchase of goods, to play online games, or to download games, software and music (NECTEC et al., 2003a).

Yet despite the drastic increase in Internet usage, a wide gap has developed between the population of Bangkok and other provinces in terms of Internet access. Thirty-three percent of Thailand's Internet users are based in Bangkok indicating that people living in provinces have fewer opportunities to gain access to new information and knowledge via the Internet than do people living in Bangkok and the surrounding areas (NECTEC et al., 2003a: 7).

However, efforts were made to expand Internet access, whether through the Thailand SchoolNet Project linking up schools, the establishment of community telecenters, or the Internet Tambon Project (NECTEC et al., 2003a: 8; MICT, 2005: 41). In addition, the new low-cost computer program initiated by the Ministry of ICT added more than 150,000 new computers to the market, all with the capability to access the Internet. All of these projects will help support the use of ICT and increase the number of Internet users in different regions of the country (NECTEC et al., 2003a; MICT, 2005).

In 2003, the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (MICT) launched a major initiative to make widely available “low-cost” PCs to the general public as well as civil servants (NECTEC et al., 2005). The PCs distributed through this project were bundled with open-source software, i.e., Office TLE, which has equivalent functions to the Microsoft Office packages (Ibid.). Shortly after the launch of the project, Microsoft announced a drastic price reduction of Microsoft Office packages, to approximately US\$ 35 (at that time), for an individual user who purchased a PC under this project (Ibid.). Moreover, a “low-interest” fund was also made available for those in need. This fairly well-designed package has generated much interest from those who were considering buying a home-use PC for the first time. It was reported that more than 200,000 units were purchased under this program, causing a big jump in the PC penetration rate in Thailand (Ibid.).

In fact, the Thai government has attempted to construct a clear plan to develop Thai ICTs infrastructure, increase penetration, IT literacy, and determine an acceptable cost of internet access (Hongladarom, 2003). It has conducted many campaigns to support this policy. For instance, the project of ‘good wish computers’, the policy to sell cheap computers and laptops to the poor, was launched by the Thaksin government. It was very popular and certainly guaranteed Thaksin another term in office (Hongladarom, 2003). However, it did not impact Thai ICTs penetration. In 2008, according to ITU, Internet broadband penetrations in Thailand were much lower than similar countries with around the same size and population as the United Kingdom (ITU, 2009a; 2009b).

The summary of ICTs penetrations in Thailand and the UK is represented in Table 2.

Table 2: Population and ICTs Penetrations in Thailand and UK in 2003 and 2008 classified by types of ICTs

Country	Population (0000s)	Fixed Phone Line Penetration		Mobile Phone Penetration		Internet Penetration		Broadband Penetration	
		2003	2008	2003	2008	2003	2008	2003	2008
Thailand	67.39	10.28	10.42	N/A	92.01	N/A	23.89	N/A	1.41
UK	61.30	57.91	54.24	N/A	126.34	N/A	76.24	N/A	28.21

Source: Adapted by Suttanipa Srisai from data of International Telecommunication Union (www.itu.int)

According to Table 2, it can be obviously seen that the penetration Thailand and the United Kingdom is substantially different. Overall, Thailand has lower fixed lines, mobile phone, Internet, and broadband penetration. This might be important when analysing and drawing conclusions about the use of ICTs in Thai PR practice, which I will discuss later in this thesis. However, it is noted that this thesis does not aim to compare Thai PR with British PR. The comparison shown in the table is just a demonstration to emphasise that Thailand is different from other countries.

Section Absorption of ICTs in Thailand

Government

The Thai government has launched a number of policies and initiatives over the last decade to drive ICTs. The foremost player was the National Electronics and Computer Technology Centre (NECTEC), created in 1989 (NECTEC, 2007). NECTEC is one of three research centres under the National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA) that in turn is part of the Ministry of Science and Technology (Ibid.). A formal ICT policy body, the National Information Technology Committee (NITC) was established in 1992. Chaired by the Prime Minister and consisting of senior officials from the public and private sector, the mission of NITC is to promote ICT for

social and economic development. NECTEC serves as the secretariat for NITC (NITC, 2007).

In 1996, the government approved the first national IT plan. Dubbed IT-2000, this plan was developed by NITC and NECTEC. It was allocated 4.2 billion Baht (US\$ 168 million) and integrated into the 8th National Economic and Social Development Plan covering the period 1997-2001 (Gray et al., 2002: 29). IT-2000 identified three main areas for development: information infrastructure, human resources and good governance. Good governance refers to the potential use of ICT in the public sector and the different ways in which the government can contribute to the development of ICT (Gray et al., 2002: 29).

The current Thailand ICT Policy Framework (IT 2010) and ICT Master Plan (2002-2006) calls for a promotion of ICT usage in the government or “e-government”. Consequently, many initiatives/programs/projects have been implemented by various ministries, with the aim to achieve the “e-government” objectives and targets put forwards by the MICT (NECTEC et al., 2005; NECTEC et al., 2005).

In early 2004, NECTEC initiated the first on-line survey on government e-services called “Service e-Readiness Explorer” or SEE evaluation program. The purpose was to evaluate the readiness of government web services, based on five-level of e-Government maturity, i.e., Information, Interaction, Transaction, Integration, and Intelligence, and to provide recommendations for future web service development to achieve a high level of integration among various government agencies (NECTEC et al., 2005: 60).

The survey of NECTEC, again, revealed that all 267 government agencies have web sites to provide information to the public. However, 13% of these sites were still at the basic level (NECTEC et al., 2005: 60).

Business

The National ICT Masterplan (2002-2006) encourages business sectors, particularly small and medium enterprises, which are the driving force behind national development, to deploy ICT in order to boost their competitiveness. ICT is to be applied in both manufacturing and marketing functions (NECTEC et al., 2003b).

However, according to a National Statistical Office (NSO) survey in 2003, the diffusion of ICT among business establishments was limited and uneven. On average, 11% of business establishments have computers, whereas only 4.2% and 1.2% have access to the Internet and own web sites, respectively (NSO, 2004). The size of firms is related to the extent to which firms absorb new technology, the larger the firm is, the more likely it will own and use ICT in its Business (NSO, 2004). Overall, computers are more widespread and commonly used than internet and web sites.

Moreover, the survey indicated that computers and related services were undoubtedly the most advanced sector, with 89.9% of its establishments having computers, 81.9% and 11.2% having Internet access and web sites, respectively (NSO, 2004). Research and development surprisingly comes in second with close records, 100% for computer usage and 79.2% for Internet access. However, none of the establishments in the Research and Development sector has its own web site (NSO, 2004).

Business-to-Consumer or B2C, on the other hand, is not well established in Thailand. According to the survey on Internet Users Profile of Thailand conduct annually by

NECTEC, it was found that during 1999-2003; only 20% of Internet users had ever purchased goods/services via the Internet (NECTEC et al., 2005: 43). Cultural factors also affected e-commerce take up. In Thailand, shopping is an important activity, as much social as practical because of the collective society. Consumers liked to touch and feel products and where permitted, bargain, prior to making a purchase (Gray et al, 2002; NECTEC et al., 2005). Another issue was the cheap availability of electronic media such as computer software and music and video CDs that are main products for online purchases in other countries (Gray et al., 2002: 38). Others were concerned with online security and fraud, particularly when they have to give out their credit card number on the Internet (NECTEC et al., 2005: 43).

However, a growing number of banks were providing e-banking services with confidence boosted by certification from the Bank of Thailand (Gray et al., 2002: 39). There were also a number of e-commerce projects, for example, the projects of the Ministry of Commerce to promote e-commerce for Thai manufacturers and exporters; the projects of the Ministry of Industry's Department of Industrial Promotion to promote e-commerce for SMEs through a variety of services such as financing, training, and by providing them with free homepages. For example, the e-commerce for tourism web portal <www.tourismthailand.org> developed by the Tourism Authority of Thailand and an e-commerce and database for farmer's site by the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives and NECTEC (Ibid.). Based on my review of literature about development of ICTs in Thailand, how ICTs have absorbed in Thai PR occupation is still missing. This thesis attempts to answer this question.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has reviewed a wide range of literature from culture and public relations that provides background context for a study that explores how and what *Wattana-dharm Thai* has influenced Thai PR practice through the eyes of Thai PR managers and practitioners. The literature review has presented definitions of culture and key frameworks that elucidate problematics in understanding public relations as a cultural practice. It has also provided useful background of Thailand and development of ICTs in Thailand that help widen understanding the context of thesis. My review of literature shows how little is known about culture and PR. The impact of culture on online and offline PR in Asia and specifically Thailand is unknown, a gap this thesis aims to address. Methodologically there is also a gap in terms of qualitative approaches to the role of culture in PR practice. Therefore, I undertake a challenge and accept the implicit challenge of researching PR international contexts. This study is conceptualised beyond the dominant paradigm because I believe in the nuanced differences between PR across countries. I also believe that qualitative approaches would add a 'rich' and 'thick' body of knowledge to PR and culture. Based on my analysis of the literature, I developed a research project to explore the experience of practising PR in Thai culture in terms of daily realities focused on the research questions itemised beneath. My methodological rationale is detailed in the next chapter.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS (RQ)

RQ1: How did PR occupation evolve in Thailand?

RQ2: Does *Wattana-dharm Thai* influence PR terms of definition in Thailand?

How?

RQ2.1: What is the definition of PR in Thailand?

RQ2.2: Is PR in Thailand different from propaganda and advertising terms?

How?

RQ 3: How does *Wattana-dharm Thai* influence the working world of Thai PR?

RQ 3.1: What are *Wattana-dharm Thai* aspects that influence the nature of the

working world of Thai PR?

RQ 3.2: What is the experience of practising PR in *Wattana-dharm Thai* in

terms of daily realities?

RQ4: How do *Wattana-dharm Thai* influence the use of ICTs in Thai PR practice?

(What meanings do Thai PR practitioners attribute to their online work in *Wattana-dharm Thai*?)

RQ 4.1: How did ICTs arrive into Thai PR practice?

RQ 4.2: What are ICTs policies in Thai PR practice?

RQ 4.3: What types of ICTs are used in Thai PR practice?

RQ 4.4: What are the difficulties and limitations of ICTs used in Thai PR

practice?

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH PARADIGM AND METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I outline the main components of the methodology adopted in this research to examine the influence of *Wattana-dharm Thai* on Thai PR practice. I begin the chapter with the research questions and the focus of the research. Then, I provide a discussion of research paradigms and explain research methodologies used in this study in order for the reader to have a mutual understanding about what, why, and how I select these approaches. Following this, I determine a research site and sampling frames and narrate the process of data collection as well as data analysis and data presentation for the research. Reliability and validity are established later. Finally, I reflect on the experience of data collection and make some suggestions.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND FOCUS

As it is clear from the review of literature, that both Western and Thai literature have failed to provide detailed empirical research of Thai PR to develop an original theoretical understanding of the practice of Thai PR. As discussed in the ‘Introduction’, this thesis aims to fill the gap in the literature by raising basic questions about the Thai PR ‘working’ world through practitioners’ experiences, opinions, and attitudes within a Thai context, including the emergence of information and communication technologies (ICTs). Next, the influence of culture on Thai PR practice is addressed. In order to answer the basic questions of the thesis, the following specific questions will be discussed:

RQ1: How did PR occupation evolve in Thailand?

RQ2: Does *Wattana-dharm Thai* influence PR terms of definition in Thailand? How?

RQ2.1: What is the definition of PR in Thailand?

RQ2.2: Is PR in Thailand different from propaganda and advertising terms?

How?

RQ 3: How does *Wattana-dharm Thai* influence the working world of Thai PR?

RQ 3.1: What are *Wattana-dharm Thai* aspects that influence the nature of the working world of Thai PR?

RQ 3.2: What is the experience of practising PR in *Wattana-dharm Thai* in terms of daily realities?

RQ4: How do *Wattana-dharm Thai* influence the use of ICTs in Thai PR practice?

(What meanings do Thai PR practitioners attribute to their online work in *Wattana-dharm Thai*?)

RQ 4.1: How did ICTs arrive into Thai PR practice?

RQ 4.2: What are ICTs policies in Thai PR practice?

RQ 4.3: What types of ICTs are used in Thai PR practice?

RQ 4.4: What are the difficulties and limitations of ICTs used in Thai PR practice?

This research looks at three main elements of PR practice: PR history, offline PR practice and online PR practice. However, the focus of this study is ‘the influence of *Wattana-dharm Thai* on Thai PR practice’. This focus will help the researcher to step back from the detailed empirical data to perceive broader patterns and structures in the works. It

contributes to the broad aim of the thesis to provide a unique insight into Thai PR practice through their experiences.

RESEARCH PARADIGM

In PR research, the majority of studies are based on short-term quantitative tradition (Cutler, 2004; McElreath & Blamphin, 1994; Mackie, 2001; Morton & Lin, 1995; Ruhl, 2005). The prominence of such a tradition is understandable because of the discipline's practical orientation--which demands "immediate" results --and a greater respect for "old scientific" quantitative research approaches in the academic community (Mckie, 2001; Pavlik, 1987). Morton and Lin (1995) observed that PR academic articles using quantitative research are cited significantly more often than those using qualitative approaches. Holtzhausen (2002) suggests that PR researchers and theorists focus much of their research on quantitative analyses because they want to prove that PR is a discipline to be taken seriously.

In the same way, many scholars who look at PR from a cultural perspective - as I do - often apply quantitative Western theories such as Grunigs' 4 models and Dozier's and Broom (1995) to study the differences among PR practice to describe PR cross-culturally.

Additionally, many cultural quantitative frameworks such as Hofstede's five dimensions (1980, 2001a) and Hall's (1980) have been mainly applied to international PR studies in order to explain, understand, and differentiate the phenomenon of PR occupation in each country. Few studies are seriously interested in conducting qualitative research. PR scholars have yet to come to grips with the shift in research paradigms from the tradition of logical positivism and value-free, neutral scientific observations to the new ideas of

phenomenological deconstructionism and value-added participant observations (Holtzhausen, 2000 cited in Jelen, 2008: 43). Hence, the humanistic and unpredictable PR field needs to move toward more interpretative approaches to help to answer “why” and “what” questions (Jelen, 2008: 43-44) rather than “yes” and “no”.

In this thesis, I will look at PR practice from a different perspective. I chose a qualitative approach as central to my study. Qualitative research is more appropriate because of the nature of my study. As the focus of this thesis is upon the influence of *Wattana-dharm Thai* on Thai PR practice, I tend to search for rich data that can well describe the reality of Thai PR practice rather than rely predominantly on frameworks of other scholars or test theories or hypothesis. This thesis is based on my belief that PR occupation is *socially constructed*. Its practitioners act as social actors or agents and, in relationship with other agents from the same occupation, are shaped by certain socio-cultural conditions and situations (Daymon & Hodges, 2009; Hodges, 2006; Pieczka, 2002; Serini, 1994).

The Qualitative method is a suitable tool to explore this different perspective. Denzin and Lincoln (2005: 10) suggested that in qualitative studies, researchers stress the *socially constructed nature of reality*, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005: 10). Such researchers emphasize the value-laden nature of inquiry. They seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning. In addition, qualitative research has an unrivalled capacity to constitute compelling arguments about *how things work in particular contexts*” (Mason, 2002). It is grounded in a philosophical position which is broadly ‘interpretivist’ in the sense that it is concerned with how the social world is interpreted, understood, experienced, produced or constituted. Although the

researchers use different versions of qualitative research to understand different elements in different ways, all will see at least some of these as meaningful elements in a complex, multi-layered and textured social world (Mason, 2002). “We can do all of this qualitatively by using methodologies that celebrate richness, depth, nuance, context, multi-dimensionality and complexity rather than being embarrassed or inconvenienced by them” (Mason, 2002: 1). Qualitative research can be defined as a:

...situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative involves an interpretive, natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008: 4).

Qualitative research is based on the premise that individuals search for an understanding of the world in which they participate. Hence, researchers who operate within this paradigm see the importance that context has for studying the phenomenon. The interpretations and meanings relating to their experiences are varied and complex and result in rich detailed descriptions of the phenomena research (Creswell, 2003). It is also described as “intensive observation” (Broom and Dozier, 1990: 143) as there is in-depth observation of a small sample. It is interpretive, often inductive, and focuses on making sense of phenomena by examining representations of the world. It draws upon numerous theories rather than one single paradigm (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). This is a cultural study, but not a case study as such since it is not clearly bounded in time, although the thesis methods adopted do share some of the benefits commonly associated with case study (multiple perspectives; relational and experiential foci; intertwined levels and influences).

In contrast, quantitative studies rely on “extensive observation” (Broom and Dozier, 1990: 144). It emphasises the measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables, not processes. Proponents of such studies claim that their work is highly prized from within a value-free framework, objectivity, reliability, controlled hypothesis testing, and generalization (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Silverman, 2002; Flick, 2002). It has been used for purposes of isolating “causes and effects...operationalizing theoretical relations...[and] measuring and ...quantifying phenomena...allowing the generalisation of findings (Flick, 2002: 3). It is a scientific method which also entails starting with a theory or hypothesis, collecting data that supports or negates it, and using deductive processes (Flick, 2002; Creswell, 2003).

In summary, quantitative and qualitative research paradigms provide different views of the world owing to the differing epistemological assumptions. Quantitative research is based on positivist/postpositivist assumptions (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008; Denzin and Lincoln, 2003), involving a range from basic to advance statistics. It aims to address objectives or test hypotheses with deductive processes. On the other hand, qualitative research focuses more on theory building and research with inductive methods.

Although there has been much debate whether qualitative or quantitative research is the best, both research paradigms are based upon rich inquiry traditions. I would agree with Denscombe (2010: 5) that “In themselves, research strategies are neither ‘good’ nor ‘bad’, nor are they ‘right’ or ‘wrong’. It is only in relation to how they are used that they take on the mantle of being good or bad, right or wrong...it is better to think of strategies in terms of how useful they are and how appropriate they are...” It depends on the nature of research. Quantitative and qualitative methods do not work equally well at different levels of analysis

or for both formative and evaluative research. For example, qualitative research is ideal for formative research at the program level, although it can also be used for evaluation at that level. Quantitative research can be especially valuable for segmenting [publics and for evaluating outcomes at the program level. However, in many cases, both types of research can be used to provide complementary perspectives in both formative and evaluative research (Grunig, 2008: 98).

Hence, I conclude that qualitative research is the best *fit* for my study for understanding in depth about the PR working world in a Thai context and addressing research questions inductively rather than simply through abstract theorizing (Mason, 2002: 22). In this research, I employ a qualitative approach with in-depth interviews and documentary sources to gather pieces of the ‘Thai PR’ puzzle in the working world and glue them into a big picture in order to grasp the real practice of Thai PR.

Historical perspectives and methodology

In this thesis, history is my secondary rather than primary focus. Historical enquiry played a role in my thesis in terms of providing background of cultural context and occupational context. It also helps to address RQ1: How did PR occupation evolve in Thailand? I establish the historic chapter for this thesis because I believe that Thai PR history will influence my handling of unexpected or ‘chance’ events in my latter chapters about Thai PR working world (online and offline). It helps to shape the concepts and ideas of current PR practice in Thailand as Freitag & Stokes (2009) stated that understanding the cultural roots will be useful to understand the dynamic forces that have shaped the discipline and continue to influences its development. In the same way, L’Etang (2008b: 319) highlighted

that *'histories may also be intellectual, engaging with histories of ideas that shape the concepts, theories, and thought about PR'*.

There are many approaches when studying about PR history according to L'Etang (2008b) (e.g., historic sociology & sociology history, social structure and function, economic and politics arrangement, international relations, consultancies, corporations, relationships with business, biographical approaches, and autobiography). However, L'Etang, (2008b: 321) indicated that the PR discipline and its theorisation of processes has been rather strongly moulded in terms of patterning, a process also described by historian as 'colligation'. I also chose to present a colligation in writing PR in my study. I gather significant events in PR and Thailand (e.g. political changes, anti-monarch rebellion, and the establishment of Publicity Department) together to form a pattern of development of PR and link them together. I highlight the historical background and describe key events, organisations and people for the readers to understand PR in different periods of Thai history. I also focus mainly on the evolution of Thai PR occupations in 4 sectors: government and state enterprise; the business sector; PR consultancy, and education.

There are also several techniques to grasp PR histories such as oral history, archival research (L'Etang, 2008b: 324-326), and documentary research (McCulloch, 2004). Therefore, I decide to use variety of documentary sources as my main methods to explore and in-depth interviews are sometimes used as a supplement. I will discuss these methods in the next section about the research methodology and sampling frames.

I use several documentary sources to approach the research question, for example, online and offline documents of related and reliable organisations such as the Thai Government

Public Relations Department, PRESKO (PR consultancy), and universities, articles and publications from *well-known* scholars in related fields, and books in other areas such as Thai politics. In some parts of the study, the context of Thai history and politics are crucial to explain the phenomenon of Thai PR. I also select both written books and articles by Thai and western authors to strike a good balance of writing a PR history. I am aware of authenticity, credibility, meaning, and representativeness in order to avoid the difficulties arising from the inevitable politics and subjectivity of documents.

It is noted that my historic chapter is descriptive rather than critical analysis. However, it is one way of reading the evidence as L'Etang (2008b: 321) suggested that there is no 'universal' or 'right' history, but a series of 'interpretations of interpretations' (of records, key witnesses).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Throughout the thesis, two research methods are employed: *-in-depth interviews and documentary sources* - to address my main and sub research questions. In-depth interviewing is used to address RQ2, RQ3, RQ4 and their sub-research questions and address some missing points in answering RQ1. Meanwhile, documentary sources are used for answering RQ1 and also as a supplementary method for addressing RQ2-RQ4.

In-depth Interviewing as a main method of data collection

In social science, there are several qualitative methods that are used to collect qualitative data, which focus on meanings and are concerned with the production of in-depth knowledge such as interviews and focus groups. Interviews are a key method associated

with qualitative research (Platt, 2002). Interviews involve an interviewer and an interviewee engaging in face-to-face conversation, with the interviewer guiding the conversation by posing questions related to particular topics in order to gain a better understanding (Meyer, 2008: 70). Interviews vary in terms of depth, focus, scope, and degree of structure, but there is a common underlying ideal that interviews produce in-depth and complex knowledge of the human world by focusing on meanings and interactions with research participants and their life-worlds (Meyer, 2008: 70). Meanwhile, focus groups involve an interviewer (moderator) and interviewees (participants) in a face-to-face situation in which the moderator asks questions relating to a particular issue in order to gain a better understanding (Meyer, 2008: 71). Moreover, the data emerges from discussions rather than being ‘answers’ to ‘interviewers’ questions. Focus groups differ from interviews by including group interaction as data and producing shared meanings between participants (Meyer, 2008: 85).

However, I chose in-depth interviews as my main research method because it was more suitable for my study for both theoretical and cultural reasons. First, it is appropriate for the nature of my study as it aims to explore the PR working world in Thailand. It enables the researcher to develop an understanding of the participants’ working ‘world’ so that they might influence it, as in the case of critical or action research (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe, 1991). It is also used commonly to seek for “deeper” information and knowledge than is found in surveys, informal interviews, or focus groups. (Johnson, 2002). This information usually concerns very personal matters, such as an individual’s self, lived experience, values and decisions, *occupational ideology*, *cultural knowledge*, or perspective

(Johnson, 2002: 104-105). Indeed, in-depth interviews are the best method to explore the Thai PR working world embedded into their occupational culture.

This thesis is based upon my belief that PR is a part of *the human story* (L'Etang, 2009a). The term 'story' originates from a Greek word which means one who is 'wise' and 'learned' (Watkins 1985: 74). Therefore, it can be said that to study about PR or a human story is to learn from people who are "enlightened" and "erudite" as Thai PR practitioners, and who have worked in the field for a long time. Interviewing is a technique of collecting data in order to understand the human story through their conversations. Conversations, indeed, are an old way of obtaining systematic knowledge (Flick, 2007: 5). Hence, telling stories is essentially a meaning-making process. When people tell stories, they select details of their experience from their stream of consciousness (Seidman, 1998:1). At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience (Seidman, 1998: 3). The value of interviews is that they are very flexible because the answers given by interviewees guide the evolving conversation (Daymon and Holloway, 2002: 166).

Second, in-depth interviewing is compatible with *Wattana-dharm Thai* (วัฒนธรรมไทย). In my experience, Thais are friendly and easy to get access to, but find it difficult to express their opinions in public. It is relaxing to talk to them on general topics. However, if you need to know them deeply, such as their personal life, opinions, experiences and attitudes, it is necessary to build personal trust and relationships. Several scholars suggest that there must be a level of trust between the interviewer and interviewees. Rapport building is a key to this process (Silverman, 1997: 106; Gubrium and Holstein, 2002). The interview setting

must allow the interviewee to feel relaxed and able to focus. Time is also needed for both parties in the interview to feel comfortable with each other and become acquainted. This acquaintance can be developed during the initial stage of the interview - the rapport-building session - before the actual interview starts (Gubrium and Holstein, 2002: 57).

In Thai society, the level of 'trust' depends on the familiarity between interviewees and the interviewer, and/or the credibility and reputation of the interviewer (or institutions that they belong to). In *Wattana-dharm Thai*, familiarity depends on the time spent with each other. The more time the interviewer spends with the interviewees, the more trust and a familiarity develops. . However, there is one exception that does not rely on time. Familiarity can also grow by compatibility and '*Kwaamprataabjai* (ความประทับใจ)' before/during/after the interviewing process. In another words, you can gain trust from a participant during an interview if they impress you by their personality or/and, conversations or/and, questions although you have not spent too much time with them. For example, they might be impressed by your look at first sight because you look professional or they might be satisfied with your questions and answers during the interview or they might get along well with you throughout the whole process.

In addition, interviews enhance personal and social relationships that are very important in Thai society (Komin, 1991). It provides opportunities to develop connections through the interviewing process. It is compatible with *Wattana-dharm Thai* which concentrates on personal relationship building. According to Johnson (2002: 104), in-depth interviewing involves a certain style of social and interpersonal interaction. To be effective and useful, in-depth interviews develop and build intimacy; in this respect, they resemble the form of

talking among close friends. They resemble friendship, and they may even lead to long-term friendships.

Moreover, interviews commonly involve *one-on-one, face-to-face* interaction between an interviewer and an informant, and seek to use the information obtained in the interaction for some other purposes (Johnson, 2002: 103-104) through friendship building. This one-to-one interaction is more suitable with *Wattana-dharm Thai* than group interaction such as focus groups. In fact, both interviews and focus groups can produce in-depth, detailed, and complex data on attitudes, practices and experiences as well as the discourse and motivations behind their meaning-making processes. The choice of method depends on the nature and aims of the research (Meyer, 2008: 73), including the behaviour of participants. In general, the majority of Thais avoid confrontations (Komin, 1991) and they are too shy to express their opinion in public. They also want to save face and do not want people to look down at them (Komin, 1991) because of their 'stupid' answers. They might feel uncomfortable and reluctant to answer questions if I asked them in a focus group. In addition, it is culturally easier for interviewees to be convinced by dominant people or opinion leaders in the focus group. Therefore, the collected data might be biased or not be enough for my analysis.

Undoubtedly, I am convinced that in-depth interviews are the most appropriate method to gather data and address most of my research questions. However, there are some gaps in the thesis that cannot be addressed only by interviews. Hence, I will also use documentary sources to collect data for my study.

Documentary sources as supplementary sources

Documents are literally all around us, they are inescapable, and an integral part of our daily lives and our public concerns (McCulloch, 2004: 1). Documentary sources are mainly about *written* documents (Denscombe, 2010; McCulloch, 2004; Finnegan, 2006). They arise through some natural process rather than automatically (Finnegan, 2006). Also, they are the results of human activity produced by human beings acting in particular circumstances and within the constraints of particular social, historical or administrative conditions (Finnegan, 2006). Documents indicate the way an organisation or industry views its past and present actions, achievements, and people (Hodder, 2000).

Documentary sources have become largely the preserve of historians (McCulloch, 2004). As Scott observed (1990:1), ‘the handling of documentary sources—government papers, diaries, newspapers and so on—is widely seen as the hallmark of the professional historian, whereas the sociologist has generally been identified with the use of questionnaires and interview techniques.’ In social research such as PR research, documentary sources form either/both a major or/and a supplementary source of data (Finnegan, 2006; Daymon and Holloway, 2002; Hodder, 2000). Finnegan (2006) recommended that:

Interviews, questionnaires, observation, and experiments are all important sources of data in social and educational research and widely drawn on by researchers, but they do not comprise all the forms of information gathering, despite what is sometimes implied in ‘method’ textbooks. Existing sources, whether in writing, figures or electronic form, are also important bases for research. *They can function both the main source for the researcher’s conclusions and to supplement information from other sources* (Finnegan, 2006: 138)

When documentary sources are used for supplementary purposes, they allow researchers to ‘flesh’ out, cross-check or question the picture’ that has emerged from the evidence you have gathered yourself (Deacon et al., 1999: 14). This method enables researchers to

counteract some of the possible biases of other methods such as interviews (Daymon and Halloway, 2002: 218).

However, using documentary sources in social science research might often be played down because they are shared with a number of other disciplines. In addition, it may not seem quite as distinctive of the social sciences as the data generated through questionnaires, surveys or experiments (Finnegan, 2006: 138). Rather, the use of existing sources comes in at various stages of the research process (Finnegan, 2006; Mason, 2002). One phrase is that of the preliminary 'literature search'. This usually comes near the start of any research endeavour, which is concerned primarily with the phase of 'data collection and construction'. However, there is frequently some overlap between these phases, if only because existing sources are not only a source of data for producing research findings in the first place, but are also commonly used for their criticism, or for further development. Thus, they are doubly important in assessing research (Finnegan, 2006: 138).

There are many types of documentary sources which include both traditional documents such as written documents and non-written forms such as the media. Denscombe (2010) suggests that documentary sources include government publications and official statistics, newspapers and magazines, records of meetings, letters and memos, diaries, and website pages and the internet. Finnegan (2006: 140-141) summarised in Mowatt (1971) that there are 6 types of sources currently in the UK: (1) standard and official sources (works of reference), government reports (including parliamentary papers and non-command papers), statistical records, annual and special reports, parliament debates, and documents on foreign policy issued by or with the cooperation of the Foreign Office); (2) Cabinet and other papers (cabinet records, other government documents, private papers such as private papers

of politicians); (3) Memoirs and biographies (Biographies and autobiographies, diaries, memoirs); (4) Letters and contemporary documents (current affairs, including works by journalists as well as by social scientists, social surveys, novels, poetry, plays, newspapers and other periodicals); (5) image, sound, and objects (film, photographs, maps and picture, sound and video recordings, interviews, taped-recordings, museums and their contents, history on the ground); and (6) computerised records such as databases. However, MacCulloch (2004) simply classified them into two groups: private documents and public records (McCulloch, 2004).

Documentary sources are classified by how researchers use them to collect and analyse evidence into two groups: primary and secondary sources. Primary sources, in other words, form the basic and original material for providing the researchers' raw evidence (Finnegan, 2006; Marwick, 1970; Marwick, 2001). Secondary sources are produced later and copy, interpret, judge material and make use of the primary sources created within it (Finnegan, 2006; Marwick, 2001). The widely accepted distinction between primary and secondary sources is defined in terms of the 'contemporaneity' of the source and closeness to the origin of the data. 'True research should ideally involve acquaintance with all the relevant primary and secondary sources for the topic being studied, but with particular emphasis on the primary sources – the basic and original data for study' (Finnegan, 2006: 142).

In addition, they can be distinguished by the way of using them: 'direct' and 'indirect' uses of sources. Direct sources contain factual content such as an annual report that gives information about members of students, staff, departments or courses and so on – useful information for someone researching the topic (Finnegan, 2006). However, the direct sources could have their own agenda and select or 'twist' the evidence to fit their purposes

(Finnegan, 2006) as Hakim (1987: 36) suggested that “vast quantities of information are collated and recorded by organizations and individuals for *their own purposes*, well beyond the data collected by social scientists purely for research purposes”. Hence, if we cannot trust the overt content, the indirect use of sources comes in. Indirect uses are defined as interrogations of records for their unwitting content (Finnegan, 2006: 150). For example, the university annual report might contain positive comments in order to build a good image for the university. However, it conveys indirect information about the ideals aimed at, the standard terminology, or intended market. Therefore, a great deal of information can often be gained from sources indirectly, even when a direct approach employing a model of information-transfer in terms of literal truth is likely to be less successful.

There are many discussions about the advantages and disadvantages of using documentary sources in research. Positively, documentary sources are important in qualitative research because they are cost-effective, easy to access, and permanent and available in a form that can be checked by others (Denscombe, 2010; Hodder, 2000). The information provided in them may differ from or may not be available in spoken form, and because documents endure over time, they provide historical insights (Hodder, 2000). They span time, allowing you to track historical processes or reconstruct past events as well as check ongoing processes that are not available for direct observation. It also enables you to identify the factors that over time have led to particular decisions or courses of action (Daymon and Holloway, 2002: 217). However, the downside of using documentary sources is concerned with the credibility of the sources (Ulin et al., 2005; Dencombe, 2010). Denscombe (2010: 233) suggested that the researcher needs to be discerning about the information they use, evaluate the authority of the sources and the procedures used to produce the original data in

order to gauge the credibility of the documents. Moreover, he pointed out that documents can owe more to the interpretations of those who produce them than to an objective of reality (Dencombe, 2010: 233). Hence, researchers should be aware of those factors.

In this thesis, documentary sources are used to trace the historic background of Thai PR practice and to answer RQ1. In addition, they are employed to support the answers of RQ2 to RQ4 and explain the surrounding context in the thesis. Also, they are supplementary sources to fill the missing gaps that the interviews cannot address. However, I do not intend to analyse documents in depth. Rather, I employ them to build up the evolution of Thai PR occupation in order to develop evidence and explanations for the later chapters in the study. Indeed, my aim of this study is not about history, but about how the history of PR can be used to develop the context for the study of Thai PR practice.

RESEARCH SITE AND SAMPLING FRAMES

1. RESEARCH SITE

The research took place in Bangkok, Thailand where many PR offices are located. It is difficult, if not impossible, to estimate the number of PR practitioners in Thailand. According to the interview with Jaichansukkit, the President of the Public Relations Society of Thailand, there might be more than 100,000 PR practitioners in Thailand. However, there are only 2,000 PR people who are apparently registered as members of the society in 2008 (interview, 9 April 2008).

2. SAMPLING FRAMES

2.1 In-depth Interviews

Unlike quantitative research, the sample size is not significant in qualitative research, as it analyses small samples (Dencomsbe, 2010; Daymon and Holloway, 2002; Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). In this study, my principal participants are Thai PR managers who are working in government and state enterprises or the private sector or PR consultancies, or in education. I used purposive sampling as the first step to select my participants.

Then, I added further interviewees through the snowballing technique, asking my interviewees to recommend somebody else. However, I was aware that interviewing PR managers may not be able to reflect all about Thai PR work because executives might delegate the practical work. Hence, I added Thai PR junior practitioners, who are working in the Thai PR industry as my supplementary sample in order to fill the missing gaps that executives cannot address. The criteria of sample selection and numbers are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Samples, criteria of selection, sampling techniques and numbers of interviewees in the study.

Samples	Criteria of selection	Sampling techniques	Total (interviewees)
1. Thai PR managers or management people (from government and state enterprises, private sector, PR consultancy, and education)	1) Thai 2) senior managers or members of the management team 3) a crucial role or responsibility on the policy of company	Purposive sampling Snowballing	29*
2. Thai PR junior practitioners (working in Thai PR industry)	1) Thai 2) at least 1 year experience in PR	Snowballing	14**
Total of interviewees in the study			43

* 11 from government and state enterprises, 8 from the private sector, 7 from PR agencies, and 3 from education. The list of interviewees together with their positions is in Appendix I.

** 6 from government and state enterprises, 4 from the private sector, and 4 from PR agencies. The list of interviewees is attached in Appendix I.

2.2 Documentary Sources

The qualitative documentary research is less concerned with representative samples because on many occasions you have no information or control about the numbers, variety of documents with regards to a particular event (Daymon and Holloway, 2002: 220). As PR activity is central to political, economic, technological and socio-cultural changes, anyone finding themselves researching or writing about PR history will soon find themselves bogged down in extensive wider readings in order to understand the context in which PR emerged or took place (L'Etang, 2008b: 326). Historian should be open about the limitations of sources and access ((L'Etang, 2008b: 326). Hence, documentary sources in this study, included 'direct' and 'indirect' sources. Direct sources are documents that are concerned directly with Thai PR such as books and research about PR history, statistics and numbers of PR departments. Meanwhile, 'indirect' sources were employed to support and

explain the surrounding context that happened in the periods such as written books and websites about Thai politics, cultures, religions, and travelling as. Documentary sources in this thesis cover a wide variety of books, articles in journals, internal publications, newspapers, diaries of crucial people in Thai PR history, web sites of authority organisations, newsletters and research articles and thesis. Documentary sources were both in Thai and English.

RESEARCH PROCEDURE:

INSTRUMENTS AND DATA COLLECTION

1. A Starting Point: Documentary sources

I began my data collection with documentary research, and then moved to in-depth interviews. First, I searched for basic information about Thai PR history from books, research articles and websites. I found initial evidence in my preliminary study that the Government Public Relations Department was the first to start a Thai PR department. Hence, I started my data collection using purposive sampling to collect documents from Government Public Relations archives in order to trace the history of the Thai government PR. However, Thai historic documentary sources are scarce, because in the past, middle-class and labour-class Thais were illiterate. Only royal family members and the upper class, such as lords and rulers could read and write. Consequently, I found little direct information from those archives. Therefore, I employed the snowballing technique in order to collect information from other sources. For example, when I found the name 'Jayanama', one of the pioneer founders of the Government Public Relations Department mentioned in the texts, I tried to find articles, diaries or other documents about him and his work from

other sources in order to support my arguments. Another example is that when I was writing about the evolution of Thai PR consultancy, I found that Esko was a key person in PR history, so I tracked all stories about him and his jobs from other sources.

In addition, I also collected ‘indirect’ documents that can be used to explain the surrounding context of Thai PR history by snowballing techniques. Documents about Thai politics, culture, religions, and travelling were in my consideration. Since there are very few Thai historic documents due to the illiteracy of the people, I also used English documents or documents written by Westerners as reference for my thesis as they help to reduce bias.

All documents in this study were from different sources such as the Government Public Relations Department’s website and archives, libraries of educational institutions such as Chulalongkorn University, Thammasart University, and so on.

2. Continuous Process: In-Depth Interviews

After I finished collecting documentary sources, I designed two semi-structured interview forms for in-depth interview data collection as seen in Appendix II. The first was for PR management. It was developed from literature and two pilot studies.

The term ‘pilot study’ is used in two different ways in social science research. It can refer to so-called feasibility studies which are “small scale version [s], or trail run[s]. Done in preparation for the major study” (Polit et al., 2001: 467). One of the advantages of conducting a pilot study is that it might give advance warning about where the main research project could fail, where research protocols may not be followed, or whether

proposed methods or instruments are inappropriate or too complicated. De Vaus (1993: 54) points out “Do not take the risk. Pilot tests first.” After I had designed the interview form for PR management in 2007, I flew back to my home country - Bangkok, Thailand and made appointments with Modraki, Chief Executive Officer of 124 Communications (PR agency) and Associate Professor Pittipattanacozit, Faculty of Communication Arts, Chulalongkorn University. After two pilot interviews, I adapted the form and edited some questions. Also, I designed another interview form for asking PR junior practitioners to fill the gap that PR managers could not address. For example, PR junior practitioners may obtain more knowledge and experience in ICTs than PR managers because they might have to use them for their daily work.

In 2008, I went back to Thailand for data collection. This time, I went to the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce (UTCC) where I worked before and where I will resume work after I finish my studies. First, I tried to develop a close relationship with my university as a personal relationship is very important in Thai society according to Komin (1991). I went to the university as if I still worked there, almost every day, in order to become familiar with my colleagues. Although I had good relationships with them, the familiarity needed to be rebuilt since I had been away to study for about 2 years (in 2008). Finally, I obtained the lists of PR managers who have connections with the university, from my colleagues. Generally, my department (PR department) has long term and well-established relationships with those practitioners. Indeed, the department invites them to be guest speakers almost every year while they give opportunities to UTCC students to do internships without any conditions, and often recruit the students to become permanent staff members. This is how relationships work in Thailand. Thai cultural values are experienced

as ‘*Namjai* relationships’ and ‘*Bunghun*’ relationships -- *exchange relationships that are not bound by time or distance*—which helped smooth my data collection.

Next, I looked through the lists and selected my sample. The criteria for my sample were discussed in an earlier section in this chapter. Because of the strong hierarchical structure in Thai society, Thais pay respect to high positions and superior persons¹. Thus, all of my interviewees were in high positions such as Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director. Hence, I needed to carry out the interviews by myself since they tended to be more comfortable to talk to the person in the same or higher position. In fact, lecturers in Thailand are regarded to be in a higher position than in the West².

To arrange appointments, formal processes were followed. I applied the following four steps to make appointments:

- 1) I initially used my personal connections with the Department of Public Relations, School of Communication Arts, and the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce to ask for a list of interviewees.
- 2) I wrote a cover letter explaining the reasons for the research with the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce seal (see cover letters in Thai and English in the appendix).
- 3) The semi-structured interview guides attached with a cover letter were sent to the interviewees via either FAX machine or e-mail.
- 4) I confirmed an appointment with the interviewees via telephone.

¹ Superiors are judged by from age, experience, or position status (Komin, 1991).

² Teacher occupation obtains high social status in Thailand. As per Buddhist tradition, teachers are as important as parents. In addition, Thais honour and pay respect to teachers.

It was surprising that I did not experience difficulties in arranging the meetings. Those approached accepted my invitations quickly and confirmed appointments a couple of days later after receiving my letters. The only problem for me was that some of them were available on the same day and their offices were far away from each other. I needed good time management and drove through terrible traffic jams across Bangkok to different offices on the same day. Most interviews were conducted at the interviewees' offices. There was one exception to this – one interview was conducted in a coffee shop.

I conducted all the interviews face-to-face. All interviewees were tape-recorded. During the first ten minutes of each interview, I spent time chatting in order to develop familiarity between the interviewee and me. After ten minutes passed, the interviewees were significantly more comfortable to have conversations with me. They answered the questions honestly and revealed some significant companies' confidential information to me. However, they asked me not to disclose that information and off-record the tapes. Confidentiality is a key ethical principle. It refers to agreements with persons about what may be done with their data (Sieber, 1992: 52). I respected the agreement and promised not to quote that information without their permission.

I employed a prepared semi-structured interview form to gather the data. I had a list of questions, but the interviewees have a great deal of leeway in how to reply (Bryman 2004). The questions were contained in an interview guide with a focus on the issue or topic areas to be covered and the lines of inquiry to be followed (Daymon and Holloway 2002: 171).

At the data collection stage, I asked my interviewees a lot of basic questions about their work experiences and their impressive PR projects. Indeed, these questions were asked to

confirm their 'thinking'. I always kept asking research interviewees for more clarification and asked them to give examples to reflect their opinion. All questions were open-ended. However, the questions for each interviewee sometimes differed. I developed additional questions during the interview in order to gather a clearer understanding of some issues mentioned by interviewees and also followed up new leads.

Time spent in each interview was much longer than I expected. The average period of time of each interview was between one and a half and three hours. The longest interview was five hours. The interviewee took me to tour his company, introduced all his PR projects, and showed me the collections of ICTs equipment for PR practice that the company kept. One interviewee mentioned that he had only an hour free for the interview because he had another meeting. However, after an hour, he was still happy to talk and tell me his experiences. Finally, he devoted two hours to my interview. Indeed, the most difficult part of the interviews was 'how to stop the conversations' since the participants were friendly, talkative, and too happy to stop talking.

After such a long period of staying in the interviewees' offices as if it was my home, I gave them some small gifts to thank them. Gift-giving in Thai culture is normal and used to show gratefulness or return *Bunkhun* or pay for *Namjai* that they had devoted time for my interviews. It is also a technique to build up *Kwaam prataabjai*. At last, I used the snowballing technique by asking them to suggest other PR managers that fall in my sample criteria selection. Most of them were happy to provide names and contact numbers of other PR managers to me and I had permission to refer to their names in case I wanted to make appointments with the others. Moreover, some managers were very helpful. They contacted another person and arranged an appointment for me.

To make appointments with PR junior practitioners was less formal. Since, as I mentioned that lecturers have a higher status in Thai society, it was easy to find the designated sample and asked them to recommend others. Face-to-face interviews were conducted, most of them at the interviewees' offices. Only three of them were conducted at the School of Communication Arts, University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce in Bangkok, Thailand. Time spent for each interview was up to a half an hour, which was much less than the interviews with PR management since the information from PR junior practitioners was just to fill in missing points.

DATA ANALYSIS

1. Documentary sources

To understand documents is to read between the lines of our material world. We need to comprehend the words themselves to follow the plot, the basic storyline. But we need to get between the lines, to analyse their meanings and their deeper purpose, to develop a study that is based on documents (McCulloch, 2004: 1).

In this thesis, I did not intend to analyse documentary sources in depth. Rather, I attempted to narrate the evolution of Thai PR occupation to frame and support later chapters about offline and online Thai PR practice. In data analysis, I coded and plotted 4 themes for documentary analysis as follows:

1. The root of Thai PR;
2. PR in Thai government and state enterprises;
3. PR in Business;
4. PR consultancy and;
5. PR Education.

After I got 4 themes, I put my documentary sources into each group and developed descriptions of contexts or settings surrounding the themes. My analysis were under *what, when, where, how, and why* questions. I was also aware that some of my documents were written by organisations with their own purposes. Hence, I read between the lines, found the hidden meanings, and made the links between history, reasons, and people. If some points were missing or not sufficient for readers' understanding in the contexts, I searched for more evidence from other sources to make further explanations. Finally, I assigned phrase or names to each group: the root of PR, the history of government PR, the history of PR in the business sector, the emergence of PR consultancy, and the history of Thai PR education. I also designated phrases for circumstances or events that happened in each period such as PR as an Information Provider and Thai Social Reforms and PR and the fight over the globalisation and remaining Thainess.

2. In-depth interviews

All tape-recordings were transcribed in Thai language after interviewing. I had a hard time transcribing tape-recordings by myself according to the ethics of the researcher not to reveal some companies' information or keep some confidential for companies as I promised some Thai PR managements. According to Daymon and Holloway (2002: 80), "many informants share confidential information that could jeopardize their careers or even

the future of their organisation. It is vital that you honour their trust in you and do not release this information to other members or organisation. It is sometimes tempting when interviewing to let something slip especially if you are keen to gain confidence of subsequent interviewees. Therefore the research should be used only for the purpose which you have presented to participants and you should only disclose that which participating individuals permit you to share publicly” (Daymon and Holloway, 2002: 80-81). This study strictly followed this confidentiality clause.

After transcribing, I went through my interview data and highlighted ‘significant statements,’ sentences or quotes that provide an understanding how Thai PR practitioners practiced. Next, I developed *clusters of meaning* from these significant statements into themes. Those significant statements and themes were then used to write a description of what Thai PR practitioners thought and experienced. They were also used to write a description of the context or setting that influenced how the interviewees experienced their jobs. Indeed, at the last stage, I took charge in explaining the context and situations that have influenced their experiences because I am a PR lecturer and Thai speaker who lived in Thailand for 32 years and have in-depth knowledge about Thai culture. In addition, I was the interviewer of the study who had seen contexts and environment during the interviews.

DATA PRESENTATION

After data analysis, I put my data analysis in three finding chapters (Chapter 4, Chapter5, and Chapter 6). Documentary sources were put into chapter 4 about the evolution of Thai PR occupation. In chapter 4, I presented the data in a narrative way. The Thai PR historical background, including key events, organisations and people in each category were drawn

together according to a timeline. At this stage, I took huge amounts of time doing translations. I did all the translations myself. It was very difficult to translate Thai documents into the English language because the majority of historic texts are either ancient or dead Thai. In addition, some key people in history had more than one name. For example, Thai Kings had their actual names, their recognised names (with royal title), and the names known in the West. King Chulalongkorn, for instance, can be called either King Rama V or Somdejpra Junlajornklaowjaowyouhua. However, I solved this problem by keeping chapter consistency. I put his actual name together with his name known in the West in order to have a mutual understanding between the readers and me.

For in-depth interviews in chapter 5 and chapter 6, I translated ‘significant statements’ from the Thai language into English. It was one of the toughest tasks for me in this study. Sometimes, it was difficult to find English terms to put in the right Thai context. For example, some words in the Thai language have been influenced by Buddhism so that they do not have an equivalent term in English. A ‘talent’ or ‘gift’ is one of the best examples. In Thai language, ‘*Pornsawan*’ was mentioned by some Thai practitioners when discussing ICTs skills. *Pornsawan* has a close meaning with ‘talent’, but it is not exactly the same. *Pornsawan* is a talent that each Buddhist may obtain because they earned merits from the previous life. Hence, I kept the original Thai terms in the thesis. There are many Thai terms appearing throughout the thesis. However, I explained each term by using footnotes or described the term in the context where it was used.

The findings were presented in narratives with several quotes of interviewees’ speeches. These quotes were based on the actual words of different individuals and presented different perspectives from individuals.

Culturally, along the story, interviewees' real surnames, positions, and workplaces were referenced directly. Anonymity did not apply to this study because I had already asked for permission from each interviewee to reveal the conversations. In some cases, the informants asked me not share some confidential information as I mentioned in the previous section. Additionally, according to Thai culture, to quote interviewee's names and positions is the way to honour, acknowledge, and give credit to the interviewees. As discussed in the previous chapter, Thailand has a strong hierarchical structure and praising and respecting superiors is important. Form rather than content is significant. Superiors are judged by age, experience, or position status (Komin, 1991), it is therefore important to cite superiors' names and positions to add weight to the evidence.

RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Reliability in quantitative research is the extent to which a research instrument such as a questionnaire is consistent when used more than once. However, in qualitative inquiry, as in this study, the researcher is the main research instrument. A researcher can never be wholly consistent and replicable. Therefore, one way to achieve some measure of reliability in qualitative research is to set up an audit trail or a 'decision trail' (Daymon and Holloway, 2002: 90). This study clarified the data, methods, and decisions that the researcher has made during the project to help the reader understand and accept the reliability of the results.

To ensure the quality of the study, the internal validity has been checked. Internal validity is the extent to which the findings of a study are 'true' and whether they accurately reflect

the aim of the research and the social reality of those participating in it (Daymon and Holloway, 2002: 90). Member checking was carried out to identify the validity. According to Linclon and Guba (1985), a member check is the way to check researchers' understanding of the data with the samples you study, by summarising, repeating, or paraphrasing their words and asking about veracity and interpretation. It provides feedback to participants, enables researcher to check their reaction to the data and findings, and helps them to gauge their response to the data interpretation.

In documentary sources, I paid attention to authenticity, credibility, meaning, and representativeness in order to avoid the difficulties arising from the inevitable politics and subjectivity of documents (Daymon and Holloway, 2002; Denscombe, 2010). I cross-checked some points by using documents of both Thai and Western authors to reference my findings. This is a technique to reduce the bias that might creep in because I am Thai and may want to present only the positive side of Thailand. In addition, I chose documents from well-known scholars in related fields rather than anonymous authors. For online documents, I chose only information from authorised and well-known organisations and was also aware of interpreting meanings of organisational documents.

THE REFLECTION OF THE RESEARCHER ON RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

It is clear that *Wattana-dharm Thai* has affected my research data collection. Learning the culture of the sample is important to a qualitative researcher, especially a cross-cultural researcher. I was lucky in that I have an academic position and the same nationality as my interviewees so that it was quite easy to access and grasp the interviewees' personalities, attitudes, opinion, and integral information. However, anyone who wants to study Thai PR and needs to get access to PR executives, I suggest that you take *Wattana-dharm Thai* seriously. You must know the appropriate time to give and take. From my experience, I suggested that there are four initial steps before/during/after doing in-depth interviews in Thailand. The details are as follows:

1. First contact

Because Thai PR executives are ranked in a high position in Thai society, you may have difficulties to get an appointment if you are not Thai and do not have any personal or social connections. It is better to find your initial connection (should be a local person or a foreigner that has connections) who will recommend you to another source. For example, you may know someone who works in the PR industry. You may need to use his/her name as a reference before making contact. It is even easier if you can get in touch or co-work with PR academic staff or at a university. The majority of Thai people respect educational staff and institutions.

2. Build first impression

In my experience, *Kwaam Prataabjai* [impression] is crucial for Thais throughout the whole process of interviewing. However, to deal with Thai PR practitioners, you should put importance on the 'first impression'. For example, the way you dress can show how you

respect the interviewees. As I mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, PR executives are seen to be in a high position and superior persons, so you have to be mindful of the way you dress and talk to them. Proper, formal, beautiful, and neat dress is necessary. In addition, nice and friendly smiles also make a good impression.

3. Develop familiarity

After greeting and making a first impression, it is important to spend some time to develop familiarity with the interviewees. In Thai culture, you may have to talk about general life such as hot news and people's life before going straight to the research questions. Soft and compromising conversations can help to smooth and increase efficiency throughout the interviews. 'Soft and compromising' in my meaning is that you should try to avoid confrontation in any way and that you should not have any strong opinions or replies towards anything or any topics during the interview.

4. End up with a good impression

To close the interview, a *Namjai* and *Bunghun* relationship should be built. You may need to give a small souvenir or a gift to the interviewee in order to return their *Namjai* i.e. the time and knowledge they provided. In fact, not only gives a good impression at the end but it may also build long-term relationships between you and the interviewees.

Indeed, what I have learnt from the fieldwork is that culture obviously shapes the data collection in cross-cultural research. It taught me that I must study and be aware of the (nuanced) differences between cultures before I am going to my research site in order to increase the efficiency of data collection. I realised that data collection in each country might not be the same.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has set the key methodological foundation for the thesis through providing a detailed explanation of the research questions and focus, research paradigm, research methodology, research site, sampling and sampling frames, research procedure, instruments and data collection, data analysis, data presentation, and reliability and validity.

The chapter suggested that qualitative research with in-depth interviews and documentary sources was a suitable paradigm for this study. Also, it explained where, when, how, and why I conducted the research and its surrounding context. It also pointed out how *Wattana-dharm Thai* influenced the process of data collection and included suggestions for other researchers who may want to study about PR practitioners in Thailand.

The next chapter aims to provide a background on the history of Thai PR occupation. The majority of the chapter employs documentary sources for its methodology.

CHAPTER 4

THE EVOLUTION OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN THAILAND

This chapter plays a role in my thesis in terms of providing background of cultural context and occupational context. It is a secondary rather than my primary focus of the thesis. It employs the historical perspectives and methodology (see chapter 3) to answer RQ1: How did PR occupation evolve in Thailand? In this chapter, I highlight the historical background and describe key events, organisations and people for the readers to understand PR in different periods of Thai history. I focus mainly on the evolution of Thai PR occupations in 4 sectors: government and state enterprise; the business sector; PR consultancy, and education. This chapter contains rich background of Thai PR before stepping forward to present current PR practices in Thailand in the subsequent chapter.

The materials in this chapter were largely drawn from three documentary sources. First, I generated the findings from online and offline documents of related and reliable organisations such as the Thai Government Public Relations Department, PRESKO (PR consultancy), and universities.

Second, I used articles and publications from *well-known* scholars in related fields, for instance Pittipattnacozit¹'s work, to support my arguments. Books in other areas such as Thai politics were also considered. In some parts of the study, the context of Thai history and politics are crucial to explain the phenomenon of Thai PR.

¹ the expertise in evolution of Thai PR

Finally, I selected written books and articles by western authors such as Sir John Bowring²'s diary. I paid attention to authenticity, credibility, meaning, and representativeness in order to avoid the difficulties arising from the inevitable politics and subjectivity of documents. Some might say there is an issue of 'bias' when I explain about Thai history because I am Thai and may want to present only the positive sides of Thailand. In addition, the history and culture that was written by Thai people might not be sufficient. Hence, I cross-checked the facts in this chapter by referencing western materials at some points. Apart from documentary sources, in-depth interview were sometimes used to support the gaps that could not be completed from documentary sources.

This chapter begins with the root of PR, the history of government PR, the history of PR in the business sector, the emergence of PR consultancy, and the history of Thai PR education, respectively. The findings in each section is organised chronologically. Besides this, I designated names for each period followed by the key events that happened in those eras.

² A British diplomat who was known for the opening of Thailand to foreign relations in 1855. Bowring has stated (Autobiographical Recollections) that one of the most interesting parts of his public life was his visit to Siam in 1855. He went upon a special mission, being authorised to conclude a treaty of commerce with the two kings of that country. There had already been many unsuccessful attempts on the part of the United States, of the governor-general of British India, and of the English government, to establish diplomatic and commercial relations with Siam. Sir John Bowring succeeded in concluding a treaty, which was carried out with promptitude and sagacity. In 1857 Bowring published an account of his travels and experiences in Siam under the title of 'The Kingdom and People of Siam. See more information: <http://www.historyhome.co.uk/people/bowring.htm>.

THE ROOT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

The linkage between PR and political systems was discussed by Siramesh and Verčič (2003), who say that a nation's political system is critical to PR practice. In the same way, Thailand's early political system was dominated by absolute monarchies who have been linked to the origins of Thai PR practices.

In Thai history, kings played important roles in every sector of the country. The importance of kings in Thailand is reflected, for example, in the Thai Flag as shown in Figure 1. The flag represents the heart of 'Thainess', which consists of three elements: nation, religion, and kingship (Sattananurak, 2005: 8). A monarch was put in the centre of the flag of Thailand as Thais emphasise the monarch as an institution.

The extraordinary bond between people and monarch has been built since the beginning of Thai history. Thailand had been ruled by Kings or an Absolute Monarchy for many centuries, as Mom Rachawong³ Pramote recorded in an article about 'the Role of the King and Power Control of Thai Government' during the Sukhothai Period – the beginning of Thai history - and expressed his idea that Thailand has a different historical background from other nations:

“...In previous time, Thailand had no idea about setting any institutions or organisations in order to control ‘arms and legs’ of society. We had used ‘head’ of society or monarch institution to control the unfair judge or any mistakes that may happen to the society. Therefore, we had been happy on this system for many centuries...This is Thai's principle way of life (Pramote, 2003: 103-104)”.

³ a royal title

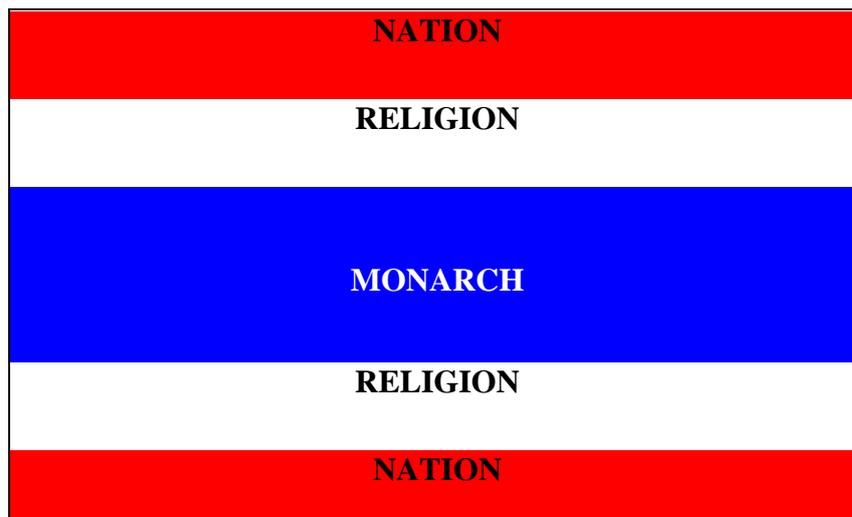


Figure 1: The flag of Thailand and its meanings

To control the arms and legs of society, PR techniques were initiated by the head of society - which were kings (Tansuppapol, 1948: 46-47; Lapidattanakul, 1999; Pittipatanacozi, 2000). Evidence shows that the development of Thai PR started with the practice of the kings in order to build and maintain the Thai nation together with religion during the first period. For instance, since the beginning of Thai history – in the Sukhothai period – PR was claimed to be used as a tool for administrative and political purposes. From the evidence, King Ramkhamheng the Great was the first king who applied the techniques to his administration (Tansuppapol, 1948: 46-47; Lapidattanakul, 1999; Pittipatanacozi, 2000; Praditchpholpanich, 2001). He used two-way communication by hanging a bell on the palace door for his subjects to lodge petitions over people’s plights, so that he could take care of them directly. Ultimately, he could enhance his popularity and undertake *Saang Kwaampratabjai* between Kings and people (Tansuppapol, 1948: 46-47; Lapidattanakul, 1999; Praditchpholpanich, 2001; Pittipatanacozi, 2000; Dhurakij Pundit University, 2007). The statement on the first page of the Ramkhamheng’s Stone reads,

...There was a bell hanging in front of the palace door for the people to make complains or tell any troubles. If King Ramkhamhaeng heard the stories, he would call those people and ask for their plights. Sukhothai people were satisfied and made compliments to the king... (cited in Burapha University, 2008: 6)

PR was not only used for such administrative purposes, but also to propagate Buddhism in Thailand. During his reign, Ramkamheang invented the Thai alphabet (which is different from the English or Latin alphabet) and revived Theravada Buddhism in Thailand (Macdonald and Parkes, 2001: 40). Buddhism has spread through Thai religious literary works (Praditchpholpanich, 2001; Pittipatanacozit, 2000; Dhurakij Pundit University, 2007).

Another example comes from the next era – the Ayutthaya Period (1349-1767). Thailand has borrowed the principles of law and administration from the Khmer since the Ayutthaya period (Praditchpholpanich, 2001). Thailand at that time was still ruled by Absolute monarchy, but the kings were raised to be as high as gods. Hence, PR purposes during the period focused predominantly on praising the kings and heroes through literature (Dhurakij Pundit University, 2007; Praditchpholpanich, 2001). Up until the next period, after Ayutthaya was destroyed by the Burmese (the Thonburi Period (1767-1782), King Taksin organised an army, drove the Burmese from Ayutthaya, and regained control of the country. At this time, King Taksin abandoned Ayutthaya as a capital and moved it to a more defensible location at Thonburi (Macdonald and Parkes, 2001: 42). PR, then, was mentioned to be crucial for collecting armies and encouraging people during the war (Dhurakij Pundit University, 2007).

Communication through oral announcements had been used as a technique for PR at the beginning of Thai history (Praditchpholpanich, 2001). However, the technique evolved due to the innovation of printing technology, which will be discussed in the next section on the evolution of PR in Thailand.

THE HISTORY OF GOVERNMENT PUBLIC RELATIONS

1. Public Relations Practice and the Arrival of the Printing System (1782-1933)

Significant events at the beginning of the period (the reigns of King Rama I to King Rama VII) were the origin and development of the Thai printing media, which later became integral tools for PR practices. The evolution of printing media in Thailand in this period started with the cultural flow from the West to Thailand through two routes: trade and Christian missionaries.

The door to foreigners opened to the West again in the reign of King Rama III, as it had been closed at the end of the Ayutthaya period due to fears regarding French intentions (Macdonald and Parkes, 2001: 42). King Rama III had supported relations and trade with many European nations as well as the United State of America (USA) (Thailand-USA Information Portal and Hub, 2008). Thailand signed the Treaty of Amity and Commerce with the USA in 1833, which made American citizens free to enter all the Ports of the Kingdom of Thailand (The U.S. Embassy in Thailand, 2008).

At the same time, attempts to diverse Thai religion from Buddhism to Christianity were throughout the country by American missionaries (Thailand-USA Information Portal and Hub, 2008). However, due to strong beliefs in Buddhism, American missionaries failed to convert Thai people to Christianity as Sir John Bowring, an Englishman who was known for the opening of Thailand to foreign relations in 1855, stated in his book entitled, "The Kingdom and People of Siam":

“The Diversity of the religious instruction of the Catholic and Protestant missionaries is an immense difficulty in the way of both...Buddhism, by habit and education, is become almost a part of Siamese nature; and that nature will not bend to foreign influences. The Siamese, whether, or not they have religious convictions, *have habits*, which the teaching of strangers will not easily change” (Bowring, 1969:36-337).

Although American missionaries had not accomplished diversity of religion, they succeeded in positively changing the attitudes of Thai people toward Western people (Thailand's Ministry of Defence, 2008). Moreover, they brought up new technologies such as printing technologies, which were later used to produce PR media in Thailand (Thailand's Ministry of Defence, 2008).

Dr. Bradley, a medical doctor and a missionary physician with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) was recorded to be the first person to set up the first printing press using the Thai alphabet in Thailand in 1832, in order to print religious books (The Government Public Relations Department, 2006; The U.S. Embassy in Thailand, 2008; Science and Technology Knowledge Services, 2008; Tansuppapol, 1984: 46-47). As a result, the first Thai PR medium was published in 1839. King Rama III hired the ABCFM Press to print 9,000 copies of a decree titled, "The King of Siam's Late Proclamation Against Opium" on May 18, 1839 (Tansuppapol, 1984: 46-47; The U.S. Embassy in Thailand, 2008; Pittipattanocozit, 2000). The proclamation's subtitle read, "it being the first official document ever printed in Siam D.B.B." (D.B.B. is an acronym for Dan Beach Bradley) (cited in The U.S. Embassy in Thailand, 2008). This proclamation intended to establish mutual understanding between the state and its people that the state did not permit the smoking of opium. Therefore, it can be counted as a PR tool (Praditchpholpanich, 2001).

2. Public Relations and the First Newspaper due to European colonialism

After King Rama III died, the reign of King Mongkut, Rama IV, began. During this period, Thailand experienced several changes in its society, culture, and economy. In fact, Thai society was transformed from a traditional society to a modern society (following Western patterns); however, the identity of Thais still remained (Kosaiyawat, 2004: 29). Significant factors that provoked alterations in Thai society were forces driven

from outside the country (Somdejprajaow Barommawontur Kromprayapovarejwariyalongkorn, 1938: 223) such as the technologies that brought the arrival of American missionaries and globalisation due to European colonialism. As a result, Thailand had to adapt its own customs and develop the country to be more modern. King Mongkut's speech states that, "The ways for Thailand to survive are to associate with foreign, accept innovative idea and alter our old-fashioned customs" (Griswold, 1968: 2).

Not only did external factors cause changes in Thailand, but also internal factors such as the intelligence and curiosity of King Mongkut in Western culture. According to the history of Thailand, King Mongkut was an enlightened and progressive leader (Chu, 1968: 47; Macdonald and Parkes, 2001: 43), who liked to study Western culture in order to watch the West and immunise Thailand from colonial encroachment in an era when European imperialism was at its height. He knew that Thailand's independence could be retained by moving his country into the modern era and encouraging contact and trade with the West (Chu, 1968: 44-45; Macdonald and Parkes, 2001: 43). In fact, he was interested in English before he became a king. He asked American missionaries to teach him English, according to a record in the diary of Dr. Caswell, one of King Mongkut's English teachers, which reflects his interest in English:

"...The prince wrote me a letter that he allows me to use the room in the temple to propagate Christianity and release the religious books. By the way, I have to pay back by giving an English lecture to him and his 3 monks and 10 noblemen. The classes are at 9 am to 10 pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday" (cited in Sukhapanich, 1975: 120).

Besides the king, English was highly regarded by Thai elite groups such as royal families and lords (Kosaiyawat, 2004: 29-31). Learning Western culture became popular among high class people, as Somdej Krompraya Dumrongrachanupap, King Mongkut's son, wrote in his book:

“...by that time, the intelligent people in the ruling class understand the importance of English language since they have to associate with the foreigners more than the past. Some of royal family members and officers have desires to study both academics and customs of the Western. They, indeed, have tried to study English with American missionaries...” (Somdej Krompraya Dumrongrathanupap, 1961: 105).

Because of high demand to study Western culture, to watch the West and immunise Thailand from colonial encroachment, the first non-government Thai-language newspaper, *The Bangkok Recorder*, was launched by Dr. Bradley in 1844 (The U.S. Embassy in Thailand, 2008). The contents of the newspaper comprised official news, trade news, miscellaneous stories and documentaries, including news from the United States (The Government Public Relations Department, 2006). At this stage, advertising was initially found in the newspaper although few people understood it as an explanation of advertising, as in this article published on November 3, 1865:

I, the owner of this newspaper, have heard that those who purchase the *Bangkok Recorder* wonder, "Why are so many things reprinted? Like the article about the new dock, it's run 2 or 3 times already. There are many other items which have been reprinted many times. What is the reason for this? Can't they find new material?"...An article that is repeated like this, in English is called 'advertisement'... (Bradley, *Bangkok Recorder*, 1865: 1).

Although people were confused about advertising, they had more idea about advertising than PR at that time as Pittipatanocozit, who has been working as Associate Professor in the Public Relations Department at Chulalongkorn University in Thailand, and was studying, ‘The Evolution of PR in Thailand’ pointed out that:

...Thailand had PR techniques such as communication through proclamations and oral announcements, but we don't know how to call these things. We knew only that advertising was about selling something while PR was telling information and propaganda was about politics (Pittipatanocozit, Interview, 10 January 2007).

For the government side, King Mongkut had his own printing press set up within the Grand Palace and named it “*Rong Akson Phimphakan*” (The Government Public Relations Department, 2006). The press published the Royal Gazette, with the first one

issued in 1858, containing court news, laws and significant announcements of the state (The Government Public Relations Department, 2006). This publication (the Royal Gazette) was the first official internal publication and one PR tool in Thailand. (Pittipattanocozit, 2000: 15) Its purpose was written in the first edition of the Royal Gazette:

When there are any government affairs in the country, his Majesty King and lords need to tell the stories and put them on the Royal Gazette in order to inform Thai people, protect rumours which would happen due to the misunderstanding, and maintain country's reputation (King Mongkut, 1858: 1).

However, the limitation of this journal was that it was created only for elite people as few Thai people at that time were literate. Although there was a school established by American missionaries, it was for the royal family or high officials only (Somdej Krompraya Dumrongrachanupap, 1961: 111). For middle or working class people, the printing system was used for proclamations, replacing an oral announcement technique, in order to inform people about news and any developing changes (National Thai Letter Division, 1865).

3. Public Relations as an Information Provider and Thai Social Reforms

The development of Thai society and media continued through the next reign, that of King Chulalongkorn, Rama V. During King Chulalongkorn's 42-year reign (1868-1910), Thai society underwent major changes and reforms were introduced. King Chulalongkorn extended education in Siam, reformed the civil administration, initiated postal and telegraph services, and sent many promising young people to study in Europe – students who would later return to serve in the Thai government (Chu, 1968: 46; The Government Public Relations Department, 2006; Jaichansukij, interview, 31 March 2008). Due to many changes in the country, PR in this era played a crucial role as an

information provider. Numbers of government internal publications such as ‘*Koaw Ratchakarn* (Government News)’ published in 1875, ‘*Yuthagost*’- the journal of Ministry of Defence in 1894, ‘*Vittayacharn*’ - quarterly journal of the Teacher’s Council of Thailand in 1906, and ‘*Talaengkarn Kanasong*’ - monthly journal in 1913, had been issued in order to ensure mutual understanding between officers (Tansuppapol, 1984: 46-47). In addition, the printing industry grew at a fast rate. A variety of Thai and English newspapers, writings, and literature was written. There were up to 47 new journals and 17 newspapers (The Government Public Relations Department, 2006). The growth rate of the printing industry influenced the evolution of PR at that time. Jaichansukij, the president of Public Relation Society of Thailand, gave his opinion about the importance of printing systems on PR:

...a printing system during King Chulalongkorn’s era had much effect on people’s process of learning; it drove people’s demands to exposure and exchange information. Indeed, PR should begin with providing people facts and letting them think and consider about those information... (Interview, 31 March 2008).

For the film industry, there was no Thai film at that time, but a Japanese film about the War between Japan and Russia was shown in 1904. A few years later, an American documentary team produced a film about ‘Thai history and culture’, located in Thailand (Pittipattanacozit, 2000: 15). Although Thailand had not yet produced its own films, it learned about film – a PR tool – at that time.

5. Public Relations and the fight over globalisation and remaining ‘Thainess’

In the next reign, King Vajiravudh (Rama VI), some journalists, officials, royals, and Chinese people called for a change in the administrative system from absolute monarchy to democracy in Thailand (Mektrirat, 1999: 1-104). With the support of the king and the awareness of Thais regarding civil rights and freedom, and modernisation of administration, there were numerous journals and non-daily publications in the era.

There were 127 journals, 22 daily newspapers, and 133 weekly, bi-weekly, and monthly publications, in Thai, Chinese and English (The Government Public Relations Department, 2006). Several newspapers at that time were generally conservative; presenting news and views that concurred with the authorities, royals and high officials (The Government Public Relations Department, 2006), while many progressive publications called for changes and were produced by common people, officials, and some royals (The Government Public Relations Department, 2006).

To maintain a kingship and Thainess, crisis PR were used. King Vajiravudh gave a definition of “Thai Nation” and “Thainess”; a nation that consisted of Thai people who had ties with Thai culture and loyalty to the heart of “Thainess”, which were the monarchy and Buddhism (Mektrirat, 1999: 1-104). He had used these definitions to convince Thais, including elite groups, to be aware of Thainess and trust in the kingship. He emphasized the crucial role of Thai Kings and the monarchical institution as he believed they could bring civilisation to the country and had abilities to balance traditional society and modernisation (Mektrirat, 1999: 1-104; Sattayanurak, 2002: 101-124). In fact, he had distributed his speeches to government publications in order to persuade Thai people to be patriots of the nation and loyal to the religion and king (Ritchareon, 2006: 40). At the same time, he wrote literature, literary works and plays involving Buddhist beliefs, trust in the king, and fondness for the nation (Chu, 1968: 50; National Library of Thailand, 2008). Moreover, he created pen names and wrote articles in newspapers in order to exchange his ideas with the people (National Library of Thailand, 2008; Ramkhamhaeng University Library, 2008; Office of the National Culture Commission in Ministry of Culture, 2008). Indeed, the techniques of PR such as the speeches of the king, literary works, plays, and articles in the newspapers were employed for emphasising the King’s idea of Thainess.

6. Public relations as a tool for Tourism

At the same time, PR films were first produced for the Royal Thai Railway. Prajao Barommawontuer Pra-ongjao Burachatchaiyakom Krompraya Kumpangpetchachrayothin, a Commander of Royal Thai Railway, set up a 'Film Division' in Royal Thai Railway, with the task of producing travel documentaries and propagating organisational news in order to persuade both Thai and foreigners to travel via trains (White Media Association, 2009).

7. The Publicity Division: the beginning of the PR profession

Before 1933, PR were still in use as a concept of practice. In King Prachathipok's reign (King Rama VII), PR became a profession in Thailand. On 3 May 1933, the Publicity Division was established due to a fundamental change in the country's administrative system from absolute to constitutional monarchy, with the king as the head of state, and a coup staged by the People's Party on 24 June 1932 (The Government of Public Relations, 2006). The idea of setting up the division was borrowed from the Ministry of Publicity in Germany, with the aim to educate people about new democracy. A part of Professor Jayanama's diary indicated that:

The one, who played a significant role in the founding of the Publicity Division...was Vice Admiral Phraya Ratchawangsan...His interest in setting up something like the Ministry of Publicity of Germany, Reichsministerium fuer Volksaufklaerung und Propaganda, was not because he subscribed to an ideal of dictatorship, but he saw it as a novelty for the country. And as Thailand was undergoing a transformation with the fundamental change in the administrative system to the new form of administration, he deemed it appropriate to study the organisation in detail and to use it as the model in publicizing the country abroad, and in propagating the new administrative system in as much as it was possible, without going against the country's tradition in administration.... (Jayanama, 1983: 6)

Its first aims were to publicise official and general news, to propagate good images of the country and rectify misunderstandings both in and outside the country, to provide general knowledge, and to promote Thai culture (The Government of Public Relations, 2006).

The division, at the beginning, informally comprised administrative, documentation, press and radio broadcasting sections. Although the Post and Telegraph Department mainly operated radio transmitters at that time, official news was generated from the Publicity Division. The Press Section had tasks concerned with writing and monitoring news: following up on news and information from government agencies and compiling them for the press while coordinating with reporters from all newspapers, and monitoring print media in and outside the country, and neighbouring countries in particular (The Government of Public Relations, 2006).

A month later, on January 1934, the Publicity Bureau was restructured by establishing a new division called the “Knowledge Dissemination Division”, by assembling all sections which were responsible for looking after publicity tools, such as the Documentation Section, Radio Section, Film Section, and Entertainment Section in the same division. Moreover, the Lecture unit was added to the division in order to educate people about democracy (The Government of Public Relations, 2006). The book on the structure and operation of the Publicity Bureau defined the function of the division as:

The Knowledge Dissemination Division has as its main function the propagation of democratic rule among the people, so that they have faith in the Constitution, be truly patriotic, loyal to the religion and the monarch, keeping firm in good morality and ethics, on par with all civilized nations, while maintaining certain Thai customs and traditions. The Division also gives advice and instructions to the people concerning various professions mainly pursued in Siam, and propagate the condition of Siam to create confidence in the international community (The Public Relations Bureau, 1937: 5).

However, the Press Division, and the Secretariat Division were still in the same position with the same tasks as previously. Until 1937, the Press Division was enlarged, comprising the domestic press and foreign press sections, showing the government’s increased interests in the press, which was then entirely in private hands (The Government of Public Relations, 2006). The Publicity Bureau took up the same tasks

such as collaboration, giving information to the press, while monitoring news and reports. The Domestic Press Section had the responsibilities of compiling news and reports to be published, coordinating with correspondents, monitoring newspapers, and taking care of correspondents while the Foreign Press Section monitored the foreign press, compiled official news, rectified misunderstandings, and coordinated with foreign press, correspondents and representatives of foreign news agencies. It also publicised reports in the foreign press, and produced *Siam Today*, a newsletter issued every 4 months (The Government Public Relations Department, 2006). This implies that, at the time, the government focused more on foreign news than previously.

In summary, the Publicity Bureau, which was the first institution of the PR profession in Thailand, was established to initially take charge of advertising the country, educating people about democracy, and creating confidence and awareness among people in the new society, as the statement in the Handbook on Rules and Regulations of the Publicity Bureau notes that:

Siam is a small country, just embarking on the path of progress and modernisation. It is therefore essential to advertise the country to be known and trusted in the world community. As well, Siam has just changed her administrative system, with a newly-established constitutional democracy. It is thus necessary to publicise and induce the people to have their faith in constitutional democracy, which is the regime that will bring progress and prosperity to Siam (cited in the Government Public Relations Department, 2006).

8. The Publicity Division and the Role of Democratic Education

Afterward, the Publicity Division was busy with educating people regarding democracy. Lectures were also given at the head office. At the same time, citizens' manuals were published in simple language and distributed widely. PR campaigns were also launched at functions such as National Day celebrations and Constitution Day, while the mobile lecture units were sent to operate in all regions, in coordination with volunteering

members of parliament three months at a time, to explain democratic principles to the people (The Government Public Relations Department, 2006). The 6 principles of the People's Party were emphasised, namely, determination to preserve national integration and independence, maintaining safety in the country, promoting happiness and the economic prosperity of citizens, providing job opportunities, bringing about equality, freedom, and liberty inasmuch as the mentioned principles are not violated, and giving the people knowledge, with the use of all propagating means, including megaphones, pictures, movies, and publications in plain language, arranged as roving exhibitions (The Government Public Relations Department, 2006).

Professor Jayanama (1983) wrote about the lecture units sent to operate in provincial areas:

After the fundamental change from absolute to constitutional monarchy, people then had no ideas what the constitution was. There were rumours in the remote areas that Constitution was a son of Phraya Phahon Pholphayuhasena, The government therefore had to explain the system to the people. The holding of Constitution Fair in various provinces was one way to promote understanding in the constitution and public awareness in principle legislations governing the administration of the country. Pictures of the constitution were published for distribution, and lectures on the constitution were presented. After the first general elections, several MPs consulted with the Publicity Division on the understanding of the constitution. Some MPs volunteered to talk to the people on their visits to the constituencies in remote areas (Jayanama, 1983: 4).

9. The Publicity Department and Political Crisis: PR tasks to protect the Monarchical Institution

The Publicity Division evolved into the Publicity Bureau and the Publicity Department respectively, as the scope of the work expanded, not only because of the objectives stated, but also the changes that happened in the country. During the period that the People's Party was in power from 1932 to 1946, the growth of the Publicity Bureau was encouraged, in response to the tumultuous situation in the country. After 24 June 1932, reactionary forces came from the upper classes and conservationists. Soon after that, the

tense conditions before and at the start of the Second World War reigned, followed by serious conflicts among military and civilian members of the People's Party, leading to the dissolution of the House by Phraya Nitithada, and a coup staged by Phraya Pholphayuhasena on 20 June 1933, the Bovorndej royalists' rebellion on 12 October 1933, the abdication of King Prajadhipok, Rama VII in December 1934, and the spread of Japan's influences in Southeast Asia. All these events greatly affected security and survival of the People's Party, prompting the government to utilise all mechanisms of the Publicity Division to tighten its grip on power, creating its legitimacy, confidence in the government and awareness among people of the new society replacing absolute monarchy. The new administrative system enabled the government to use the media, especially the mechanisms of the Publicity Bureau, as its political tools for the first time (The Government Public Relations Department 2006).

When the Bovorndej royalists' rebellion broke out and was put down by force, the government issued statements rebutting rebels' charges through various media under the Publicity Division, radio broadcasts and more than 40 fliers containing the government's statements issued continuously, including privately-owned newspapers. They were used by the government to convey urgent news and the current situation to the masses, and to communicate with personnel in the provinces, mainly by radio broadcasting. The drafting of texts and statements for the broadcasts was the responsibility of the Secretariat to the Cabinet. The Publicity Division took charge of publicizing and coordinating with the media under its supervision. Statements issued at the time were rebuttals of charges made by the rebels in 1933, stressing the fact that the government upheld the Constitution and loyalty to the King. They cited the general elections as proof and pointed out that rebellion using force to affect change was unconstitutional. It was stated in one statement that:

The military is to serve the nation, for the nation, as the force of the nation. This is emphasised because the rebel forces have been deceived by their own boss. They knew nothing about politics, since they were not politicians. So they violated the Constitution....The struggle should be conducted through the parliamentary system (cited in The Government Public Relations Department, 2006).

Besides radio broadcasts, newspapers and fliers, and statements made to rebut the rebels on a continual basis, news and other announcements were published, courtesy of printers such as *Prachachart*, *Sri Krung*, *Thai Noom*, *Bamrung Nukulki*, *Thai Mai*, *Lak Muang*, and other independent printers. The government's information and messages were relayed to the people in a systematic manner, comprehensively, and quickly, while the rebels lacked coordination and their forces were confused.

The government was able to coordinate with provincial officials thoroughly, mainly through radio broadcasts. Official announcements were constantly relayed to various provinces. Evidence existed in Chiang Mai as documents in Thai and Lao languages (The Government Public Relations Department, 2006).

10. PR in State Enterprises and Government Agencies

Besides the Public Relations Department, PR was practised in state enterprises and government agencies. However, according to Sadawedin et al's survey (1981), 80% of PR works in Thailand emerged after 1977. Regarding the survey, more than 80% of PR personnel were employed in government agencies and state enterprises such as government offices, education institutions, town halls, state enterprises, and public hospitals (Sadawedin et al, 1981).

In government agencies, PR units and departments had been set up in many agencies. In accordance with the research from the School of Public Relations (1976: 200), the findings indicated that 76.7% of government organisations practised PR in 1976. However, some of them (32.2%) did not have their own PR units; they needed to ask

other departments to undertake their PR. In addition, the study found that the majority of PR users were the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, the Ministry of University Affairs, and the Ministry of Education respectively (School of Public Relations, 1976: 200). In fact, it was noticeable that organisations that concentrated on PR works were related to education and administration tasks – taking care and looking after citizens. On the other hand, agencies that had no direct dealings with working class people such as the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Commerce, and his Majesty's principle Private Secretary, used PR less (School of Public Relations, 1976: 200-213).

For the roles of PR, it was reported that PR in government agencies had involved technical rather than managerial roles. Most government and state enterprises had PR plans, but only two of them, the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Education, let PR executives be involved in policy making (School of Public Relations, 1976). Being an information provider was the majority role of the government's PR. All government offices, besides the Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, had information desks in front of the offices in order to answer any enquiries (School of Public Relations, 1976: 210-213). Ten PR tactics were found: news releases, internal publications, press party⁴, press tour, charity⁵, radio and TV special programmes, film, documentary, sport days, and organisation's birthday celebrations. The most popular tactics were news releases and internal publications respectively (School of Public Relations, 1976: 210-213).

⁴ Press party is one PR tactic. PR organises or creates a party for journalists or press in order to thank them.

⁵ Charity is doing something to make merit, for example, blood donation, donate clothes to poor people, funding.

By the 1990s, the numbers of government agencies and state enterprises that had PR departments within organisations had significantly increased. Almost all of them had their own PR departments (98.8%) (Niwedrunsun, 1992). Additionally, more than 50% of PR departments were directly under the administrative sections (Niwedrunsun, 1992). Government PR, however, had faced difficulties since 1977 and the same issues still remained unsolved in the 1990s. The first issue was the lack of skilled and creative PR personnel. Most PR government agencies and state enterprises staff did not obtain qualifications in PR. According to Sadawedin et al. (1981), although 73% of PR executives had obtained degrees, more than a half of them had no knowledge about PR (56%). Moreover, they were not devoted to their work and paid less attention. The monarchy system has a deep root in Thai society, not even PR practice. PR practice in Thailand was claimed to be rooted by the monarch institution to creative skills. The second issue focused on the limitation of budget and equipment - the allocated budget for PR departments was not enough for organising big PR events (Sadawedin et al., 1981). The difficulties of coordinating with other departments as a result of misunderstandings about PR jobs within organisations were the final issues that were still unresolved (Sadawedin et al., 1981).

THE HISTORY OF PR IN THE BUSINESS SECTOR

PR had been initiated to the business sector in the 1950s by the West. In the private sector, the Shell Company of Thailand Limited, a regional branch of Dutch Oil Company, had trailed PR for the task of gathering government and political information, reporting to the director in 1952. Seven years later, in 1959, it set up a PR division with responsibility for publicity and image building (Pitipattanacozi, 2000) with the belief that a good image would indirectly support company sales

(Wissawasawangasuk, 1981). The roles and scope of Shell PR included three areas: media relations, internal communication, and social contribution⁶ (Pitipattanacozi, 2000). Social contribution techniques seemed to be important for the company. Shell was in cooperation with government agencies to make a social contribution (Pitipattanacozi, 2000). In addition, it provided funds for education, public health, and community development to both employees and external target groups (Pitipattanacozi, 2000).

In the same way, PR concepts expanded to the truly Thai companies⁷ such as Bangkok Bank. Although the company is owned by Thais, it cannot be denied that PR was indeed influenced by the American concept. According to Pittipattanakozi (2000), the key success factor and player of PR at Bangkok Bank was Mr. Prachuub In-odd⁸ who had received a scholarship from Bangkok Bank to study Advertising and Public Relations at postgraduate level in the USA, and obtained an opportunity to visit and see PR in New York, USA before returning back to work for the bank. PR in Bangkok Bank began because of misunderstandings regarding the bank's activities. People believed that Bangkok Bank was serving only high-class people. The middle-class and working class hesitated to use bank services (Pitipattanacozi, 2000). PR, then, was used as the main solution to improve an organisation's image. A PR department was established with the policy that 'the main purpose of all practices done in Bangkok Bank is to make people

⁶ The PR role of Shell during that time was divided into 9 categories: education; community development; radio and television; newspaper; films; employee relations; public charity; religion; and environmental protection

⁷ Truly Thai company means a company that is entirely owned by Thais. Bangkok Bank was founded by local Thai businessmen who faced difficulty in obtaining credit facilities from foreign banks, which then dominated the financial sector. Currently, it is one of the most dominant banks in Thailand.

⁸ Due to his outstanding PR works, In-odd was respected and accepted by Thai advertisers and PR practitioners to be one of the most important PR personnel of Thailand, especially in the business sector (Pittipattanakozi, 2000: 44).

understand and believe that bank has social responsibilities' (Pitipattanacozi, 2000). The roles and scope of PR in Bangkok Bank covered two areas of practices: social contribution and communicating to people (Pittiyapaiboonpong, 1994: 19-20). As well as Shell, Bangkok Bank PR seemed to focus on its social contribution campaigns rather than any others. It provided funds to government agencies for education, public health and medical support, and religion as well as Shell. Additionally, it managed events supporting Thai arts and culture such as Book Fairs, Thai Literature Competition, Thai Essay Competition, Children's Book-Writer Contests, Painting Contests, High School Music Contests, and Thai Grand Orchestra Competitions (Pittiyapaiboonpong, 1994).

According to the history of Thai PR in the business sector, there were three points to be noted. Firstly, it can be seen that pioneer organisations who initiated PR jobs in the business sector were organisations that had more risks in reputation management. Shell, for example, was challenged by environmentalists and related groups regarding the nature of its business as well as Bangkok Bank that was faced with the difficulty of explaining its business to the public. These were the reasons why they both utilised social contributions as the main PR technique for their organisations. It can be summarised that Thai PR in the business sector began with the concept of reputation management.

Secondly, PR practices in the business sector during the early stages had been impacted indirectly by Westerners. For instance, Shell Company Limited was owned by a Dutch company and it brought PR knowledge to its practices. Bangkok Bank, in the same way, had a key person who obtained his PR degree from the U.S. He would transfer his knowledge to the Bank's practices.

Finally, although western ideas had been imported to Thai PR practices in the business sector, Thai PR was not practiced in western ways as only the principles and theories were applied to Thai contexts. Only PR techniques such as feature articles, road shows, exhibitions, open houses, radio programmes, television specials, VDO documentaries, and cassette presentations were used (Pittiyapaiboonpong, 1994). Thai culture and identity remained crucial elements in Thai PR, reflecting in-depth details of PR activities. For instance, Thailand was classified as a developing country, hence, a variety of PR development campaigns such as scholarships for rural doctors, nursing research fellowships, volunteer students on rural development projects, including constructing school buildings and medical institutes, were created. Religious ceremonies such as *Tod Kra Tin* – the ceremony of presenting yellow to Buddhist monks at the end of the Buddhist Lent and the Buddhist Sunday School and the support of Thai traditional music and local arts were other examples that reflected Thai culture in PR activities during that time.

THE EMERGENCE OF PR CONSULTANCY

Similar to PR in the business sector, PR consultancy⁹ in Thailand in the early period was indirectly influenced by the United States as Esko K. Pajasalmi, the founding father of Thailand's first full-service PR consultancy - PRESKO Company Limited, was educated in PR from the U.S. (Chuprasert, 1993; Pitipattanacozit, 2000; Garside, 2000; The Nation, 2007). Esko¹⁰ set up his business after he finished his studies and moved to Thailand as a Christian missionary (Chuprasert, 1993; The Nation, 2007). Evidence showed that PR used to be a part of advertising agencies. According to Chuprasert (1993), Esko succeeded in applying for a job at Groarke Advertising, one of the oldest

⁹ In Thailand, the term PR consultancy can be used interchangeably with PR agency

¹⁰ In Thailand, first names are generally used for naming systems, rather than surnames

advertising consultancies and proposed the idea of setting up a business PR department in the company. In 1959, Esko had been promoted to the PR department manager before he set up his own company (Pittipattanacozi, 2000: 36). PR was unknown in Thailand at that time but Esko developed the industry almost single-handedly in the early days and most importantly trained some of the biggest names in the Thai PR industry (Orient Pacific Century Market Research, 2000). He had approached targets by using ‘one-to-one door knocking’ and explaining the advantages of PR comparing to advertising to them (Chuprasert, 1993: 9). PR jobs in PRESKO were divided into business categories by business sector such as tourism and transportation sector, financial sector, government and state enterprise sector, health sector, customer product sector, and environmental sector (PRESKO, 1981: 1-9).

During the first 15 years of establishing a company, the majority of PRESKO clients were foreign companies such as Japan Airlines and other 6 airlines (Pittipattanacozi, 2000). PRESKO gained a reputation and is well-known in PR since it often organised international events (Pittipattanacozi, 2000: 37). Additionally, it was able to expand its business to Thailand’s neighbouring countries such as Singapore and Malaysia after being assigned as an organiser for “*Laem Thong Sport*¹¹”, sponsored by Seiko (Thailand) Company Limited (PRESKO, 1981: 1-9). However, to persuade Thai customers to use its services was difficult due to the misunderstanding of Thai PR practitioners toward PR roles during that time. Thai companies believed that PR relied only on press releases so that people could process news by themselves (Pittipattanacozi, 2000).

¹¹ *Laem Thong Sport* was the old name of Southeast Asian Games or SEA Games before 1977

In 1989, PRESKO was taken over by Shandwick Groups, the world biggest PR group (Stevenson, 1989) and renamed PRESKO Shandwick (Thailand) Company Limited (Pittipattanacozit, 2000). However, Esko stayed on as chairman and joint managing director before he retired and let his son, Norman Pajasalmi, manage the business (The Nation, 2007).

The second PR consultancy, Ogilvy & Mathers Public Relations, was established a few years after PRESKO. Similar to the history of PRESKO, Ogilvy & Mathers Public Relations was a division of an advertising agency - Ogilvy & Mathers (Pittipattanacozit 2000: 39). In 1989, Ogilvy & Mathers Public Relations was renamed Ogilvy Public Relations World Wide. Its corporate headquarters was in New York, USA, with 32 branches throughout the Asia-Pacific region and a regional head office in Hong Kong. The policies of PR services through the company were to provide creative PR counselling and conduct PR work; analyse situations and opportunities and set PR strategies that suit target groups; work closely with a client in order to understand the client's businesses; provide services to the clients of Ogilvy & Mathers Thailand and other institutes including any product brands that focused on marketing and image building; and providing PR services to both retainer accounts and project accounts (Pittipattanacozit, 2000: 39-40). On the whole, the scope of PR services of the company included marketing PR, corporate PR, PR for finance and investment, media relations, crisis management, and internal communication (Pittipattanacozit, 2000: 40):

After PRESKO and Ogilvy & Mathers Public Relations were set up, there were no reports of PR consultancies establishment until 1982. During 1982-1987, PR agencies seemed to be popular. Many advertising consultancies such as Far East Advertising, Burson & Marsteller, Prakit and Associate, Watson Advertising, Pattern, Amex & Grey Advertising; Asia 21, Synergic Communication, Ball Patterns, Thai Image Advertising;

Excalibur; Leonard Advertising; CVT & Bersia, Victor Promotion and Dai-Ichi Ichi Kikaku added PR services/departments to their organisations (Pittipattanacozit, 2000: 64-65). In the same way, PR in the business sector such as the PR department of Bangkok Bank, turned its functions to both in-house PR and a PR agency, providing services to other organisations. However, according to the Thai Advertising Year Book 1990-1991, few PR consultancies that provided only PR services were found in the 1990s (Advertising Association of Thailand, 1990; 1991). However, the number of PR consultancies have been increasing since the beginning of the 20th century, with a record 96 PR consultancies operating in Thailand in 2006 (Advertising Association of Thailand 2006). Indeed, because of the economic turndown, PR has become much more important than previously. The interesting point is that the most successful PR consultancies in Thailand are local players who understand Thai culture and have strong connections to clients, such as Modrakee, CEO of 124 Communications, the only PR consultancy listed on the Thai stock market who gave this interview in The Nation newspaper:

Even during an economic downturn, every business needs to maintain a healthy image, and they usually seek the cheapest way to keep communication with their customers...We have been in the leading position for two consecutive years. In 2005 we achieved revenues of Bt118 million, up from Bt80 million in 2004. The second biggest operator, Bangkok Public Relations, achieved revenues of nearly Bt90 million last year, following by MDK Consultants and Ogilvy PR with around Bt80 million each and Pimplus with less than Bt50 million. The advantages of Thai PR agencies over international players is found in their flexibility and better understanding of the business culture and stronger connections with clients (Modrakee, 2006: 7).

It can be said that PR consultancies in Thailand were historically derived from advertising agencies. According to the interview of Pittipattanacozit (interview, 10 January 2007), advertising was known by Thais prior to PR. Hence, it might be a case of confusion between the terms ‘advertising’ and ‘PR’.

In 1989, both PR consultancies were joined with or developed from bigger global foreign companies. It could be concluded that the PR consultancy business had been widened and transformed from local to become more global during this period.

Again, Thai PR practices had been influenced by the West because of the educational background of the founder and business takeovers. It was also noticeable that the names of PR consultancies were in the English language. It could be implied that Thai PR consultancies were largely affected by foreigners.

THE HISTORY OF PR EDUCATION

PR education in Thailand did not begin until 1965 at Chulalongkorn University, the nation's oldest and most prestigious university, although courses in PR were recommended to be offered at Thammasat University in 1953, (Siriyuwasak, 1983). At that time, the programme offered a bachelor's degree and was a part of the mass communication and PR division, School of Journalism. In 1973, the school was upgraded and renamed the Faculty of Communication Arts, which is the equivalent to a department status in the United States (Ekachai, 1994; Ekachai et al., 1998).

Currently, PR courses are offered at 22 four-year colleges at undergraduate level, eleven of which offer a bachelor's degree with advertising and PR concentration¹² (Hirunrak, 2000). In addition, a private university called Rajapat University, also offers PR courses at its 36 campuses nationwide (Ekachai et al., 1998: 221). In addition, advertising and PR majors are the most popular choice for undergraduate students (Hirunrak, 2000).

¹² The 11 universities are: Chulalongkorn University, Thammasat University, Bangkok University, Ram Kamhaeng University, Chiangmai University, University of Thai Chamber of Commerce, Assumption University, Durakijbundit University, Sri Prathum University, Kasembundit University, and Naraysuan University.

For postgraduate study, there are seven universities who offer a master's degree programme in communication, where students can take advanced courses in PR¹³. The first postgraduate programme in the area of PR was established at Chulalongkorn University in 1978, with the degree of communication arts in development communication (Ekachai, 1994; Ekachai et al., 1998). In addition, short courses and training workshops are occasionally offered by these academic institutions as well as by the Associate of Public Relations Practitioners of Thailand, a professional organisation (Ekachai et al., 1998). In 1984, a distance learning system for PR was established by Sukothai Thammathirat Open University. It offered televised PR courses through Channel 11, a television station owned and operated by the state's PR department (Ekachai et al., 1998).

It is noted that although Thai is the language of instruction at almost all universities offering PR courses, curriculum and course content in both undergraduate and postgraduate levels have been influenced by America. The ideology and structure of journalism and mass communication education in the United States has served as a master guideline for the Thai programmes since the very beginning. Moreover, some institutions invited American professors to help them build, organise, and teach their communication programmes. Most staff rely on western-published books for theoretical information or practical applications (Ekachai, 1998). Translated or rewritten versions of American texts are used as major sources of PR instruction (Siriyuwasak, 1983). In the early stages of setting PR education, according to the survey in 1980, 80 percent of communication professors in Thailand held their advanced degrees from American universities (Adhikarya, 1980). In addition, the survey in 1995 showed that 39 of its 55

¹³ The seven universities are: Chulalongkorn, Thammasat, Bangkok, Durakijbundit, Siam, Sri Prathum, and Thai Chamber of Commerce.

full-time academic staff (71%) at Chulalongkorn University's Faculty of Communication Arts earned a masters or doctorate from U.S. universities. Thammasat University had lower numbers of U.S trained communication educators, where 16 of its 25 full-time academic staff had their advanced degrees from overseas, 10 of them from the U.S.

The impact of the West on Thai PR education reflects on Thai PR practice. 'How to' techniques are the majority of the PR curriculum in Thailand. Thai scholars have transferred knowledge and imported Western ideas to the Thai classroom and practices, even the definition and distinction between PR and other disciplines. However, Thailand has its own culture and some Western theories cannot be applied to this context. The next chapter will discuss these issues and characteristics of PR practice in Thai culture.

CONCLUSION

This chapter traces the history of Thai PR practice in order to address RQ1: How did PR occupation evolve in Thailand? The study pointed out that PR practice in Thailand evolved in three separate periods as follows:

1) Pre-Thai history (Sukothai period – Thonburi period). PR was anonymous in the first period. PR was just a concept that helped build the nation. It was initially used to smooth country administrations, introduce religion, promote and praise kings, and collect armies and drive people during the war. PR techniques in the first period relied mainly on oral communication.

2) Rattanakosin period (before the country's government administrative change). PR in the second period evolved dramatically in the royal and government sector through technologies introduced by the West. However, like in the previous period, PR

was still a concept for practice. PR was used to monitor Western culture in order to raise the position of Thailand to be as high as the West to avoid colonisation. The changes in the country (during the country's social reform) drove PR to play the role of information provider for internal communication (making employees understand alterations within organisations). In addition, PR was occasionally used to protect national identities, such as a monarchic institution and national culture. PR techniques in this period were mainly through print and broadcast media. PR jobs were mainly focused on publicity.

3) Rattanakosin period (after administrative change). PR in this period officially changed when the Government Public Relations Department (or Publicity Division at that time) was established. PR was used to propagate and educate people about democracy. Later, PR expanded to other sectors, such as government and state enterprise agencies, business and PR consultancy. Moreover, PR education was set up in this period to support the profession. PR in this period moved systematically toward business purposes. It was used to scan political and business environments, build a good image for organisations, and correct misunderstandings of people toward organisations. PR techniques in this period focused more on conducting various activities, such as media relations, social contributions, and internal communication rather than just news announcement as previous periods.

In summary, PR occupation in Thailand has evolved dramatically from kings to government usage and business purposes with education support in the late century. Media and technology introduced by the West affected the changes in Thai PR development in these periods. PR techniques moved from fundamental communication (oral communication) toward [more] strategic communication (PR activities). However, Thais accepted Western concepts through their impression [that the West has brought

development and new technology to the country], but adapted in their own way. This chapter is useful information for the reader to generate greater understanding about Thai PR before I present Thai PR in the working world in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

THE INFLUENCE OF *WATTANA-DHARM THAI* ON (OFFLINE) THAI PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICE

In Chapter 4, I discussed the evolution of Thai PR practices in order for the reader to understand the background of PR in Thailand before entering the current working world in 2008 (when I did my fieldwork). This chapter gives an insight into the lifeworlds, values and occupational cultures of Thai PR practice. It contains rich qualitative data derived from my interviewees' experiences and views. My personal experience as an 'insider' of *Wattana-dharm Thai* and documentary sources were used to contextualise and triangulate the project. The ultimate goal of this chapter is to address RQ2¹ and RQ3² together with their sub-research questions (RQ2.1³, RQ2.2⁴, RQ3.1⁵, and RQ3.2⁶).

The chapter begins with the definition of PR terms in Thailand and the distinctions between PR and other terms such as propaganda and advertising. Later, *Wattana-dharm Thai* aspects that have affected Thai PR practice are highlighted. Finally, I have captured the rich experience of Thai PR cultural practices expressed through discourse and narratives and the uniqueness that derives from the particularity of *Wattana-dharm Thai*. This chapter demonstrates how PR practice is profoundly affected by culture.

¹ Does *Wattana-dharm Thai* influence PR terms of definition in Thailand? How?

² How does *Wattana-dharm Thai* influence the working world of Thai PR??

³ What is the definition of PR in Thailand?

⁴ Is PR in Thailand different from propaganda and advertising terms? How?

⁵ What are *Wattana-dharm Thai* aspects that influence the nature of the working world of Thai PR?

⁶ What is the experience of practising PR in *Wattana-dharm Thai* in terms of daily realities?

DEFINITION OF THE TERM ‘PUBLIC RELATIONS’ IN THAI CONTEXT

In this section, I discuss the definition of the term ‘PR’ in order to create understanding regarding PR in the ‘working world’ in the Thai context for non-Thai readers. The majority of this section was drawn largely from the interviews of twenty-nine PR managers. Documentary sources were used in some areas that interviews could not address. This section addresses the gaps in the literature review (See Chapter 2).

The public relations (PR) term in Thailand was borrowed from the English language according to several interviews (e.g. Boonnak, 2008; Kongklan, 2008). Thai scholars use the term ‘*Prachasamphant* (ประชาสัมพันธ์)’ in the Thai language to stand for ‘PR’ in English. Indeed, *Prachasamphant* is translated from the English language. *Pracha* (ประชา) stands for ‘public’ or ‘a group of public’ that gains mutual benefits with organisations while *samphant* (สัมพันธ์) is for ‘relations’ (Watdanon, 2001: 5). Hence, *Prachasamphant* is how to make relations with the public.

PR is normally seen as a front of an organisation. However, it works behind the scenes. Rungsepanodorn (2008) equates PR tasks as actors and scriptwriters of a stage performances or a comedy show that:

I think PR practitioners have both *front and backup tasks*. It is like *a comedy show*. PR people are supposed to be *lively* like actors who *play* a script. In the same time, they are like script-writers who have to *think about gags*. Behind the scenes, tasks are much more *serious*. For example, we organise an event. We have to be *well prepared for 10 days*. What, if on that day, *the electricity turns off* or an air conditioner is out of order, we are dead...(Rungsepanodorn, Interview, 28 March 2008).

The interview pointed out several points about Thai PR practices. First, it is clear that PR works both in front and behind the scenes. PR is normally seen as the face of organisations while few people know that it also runs back up tasks as well. ‘Play’ and

'think of gags' were also used to support how PR works behind the scenes and in public. Positively, to be an actor and a script writer at the same time may make the 'stage performance' smoother because PR has engaged in the whole process of production. However, it brings up the difficulty of PR practice. It is hard to have PR managers who have both front and back up skills. Several interviewees complained that 'today, practitioners seem like having multi-skills, but they do not. No one has balanced skills in both front and back up'. For example, some can write news well, but they are quiet and lack oral communication skills while the rest have good co-ordination skills, but cannot write. Interviewees suggested that to be a good PR practitioner, you must have balanced skills.

Second, the conflict in Thai PR practice' personality was reflected in the interview. 'Lively' and 'Serious' were raised at the same time when explaining about the definition of Thai PR. It indicates that those in PR are fun and entertaining when they are in the front line, but humourless when back stage. Hence, for Thai PR practice it is necessary to balance moods.

Third, the concept of good planning and time requirements in PR jobs was dominant in the interviewee's statement. The phrase '*well prepared for 10 days*' shows the nature of Thai PR work. PR requires a length of time and a proper plan to run a job. Besides, PR must have a reserve plan for emergency cases.

Finally, PR was equated to 'a comedy show'. It implies that PR must be fun and entertaining. It may say that PR must make the audience relaxed and happy. In other words, PR has the task of impressing the public once they finish seeing the show.

In conclusion, PR must be fun, creative, well-planned (including having second plans when emergencies happen), time planned, and based on balanced multi-task skills. Ultimately, PR is more than how to make a relationship with the public, but how to do *Saang Kwaampratabjai* to the public.

At the national level, from the government point of view, PR has a major role in being an information provider as the definition given by His Majesty King Adulyadej⁷ remarked in an address to the Public Relations Association of Thailand:

...In the public sector, government agencies have to keep the public informed of the steps they are taking to safeguard the nation's security and well-being, and that, too, is PR work...PR means communicating with the public or getting members of the public to communicate with one another. The success of almost every kind of enterprise depends on PR. If everyone is committed to working for the common good, then one can be confident that society at large will be happy (cited in Government Public Relations Department, 2006)"

Information management is a very important task for PR according to the interview of Kongklan (2008). PR, moreover, plays an educator role, providing knowledge for government organisations that have complicated products or services such as the Administrative Court and Ministry of Finance according to several interviews (e.g. Rungsepanodorn, 2008; Tippayachanawong, 2008). In the business sector such as private companies and PR consultancies, PR has dealt with the tasks of reputation, relationship, and image building/management (interviews of Banvorn, 2008; Hongthong, 2008; Santhanasiri, 2008). Managerial roles are mentioned as being important. It becomes the most frequent task of PR practitioners followed by a media relations role, PR communication role, spokesperson and representative of the organisation, and research and evaluation roles, respectively (Thammawitpatch, 1999: 253)

⁷ His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej is regarded as an outstanding model for everyone in the field of public relations because of his outstanding communication campaigns

Indeed, Spokesperson and representative of the organisation roles include the task of being a guest speaker for other institutes while research and evaluation roles are related to keeping management informed of public opinion survey results as well as of public reactions to organisational policies and/or actions, diagnosing PR problems, and creating opportunities for management to hear the views of its various publics, and evaluating communication campaigns (Thammawitpatch, 1999: 251-252).

Similar to the UK, PR in Thailand is interdisciplinary according to the interviews of Colonel Sangamuang (2008) and Santhanasiri (2008). PR is related to many areas of studies in social sciences & humanities such as sociology, psychology, philosophy, political science, and economics (Lapirattanakul, 1999: 201). In addition, it has linkages with strategic management and marketing (Jaichansukkit, Interview, 9 April 2008). It is, moreover, described as both arts and science as Colonel Sangamuang (2008) and Santhanasiri (2008) advocated that:

...PR, indeed, is science. How many years have we learnt PR? We can study PR for several years at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. Eleven years of studying PR can indicate that PR is science. Also, its process needs evidence and needs to be monitored, evaluated, and proved. However, PR is a science that also needs an arts application. Who can teach arts?...(Sangamuang, Interview, 8 April 2008)

...you have to look back at the title of your degree. We get a degree in Silapasart (in Thai Language) or Liberal Arts (in English). Silapasart is the combination of two words 'Silapa' (an art) and 'Sart' (science). Hence, you get science from your study. The rest is an art, which you have to learn from your experience. I think the most difficult part of PR work is you have to know when to apply art to your job. In fact, I think PR is an art. It is relation to speech and communication arts. Theory is a theory, but how we apply the theory with our jobs is an art (Santhanasiri, Interview, 21 January 2008).

The concept of the 'art' of PR was discussed by Rungsepanodorn (2008). He contrasted PR with the process of the legal discipline by giving an example that:

PR practice is different from legal work. PR is more flexible, without rules and regulations. For example, to get number 2, a lawyer may say that it must be 1 plus 1 that makes 2. However, PR can use 3 minus 1, or 0.5 plus 1.5 to get 2...It is like a book cover. Although there is nothing inside, people want to see it if you have a beautiful book cover (Rungsepanodorn, Interview, 28 March 2008)

However, the term 'PR' in Thailand is increasingly replaced by other terms such as 'Corporate Communication' as several informants pointed out (e.g. Jaichansukkit, 2008; Pittipattanacozit, 2007; Phetwong, 2008) as in many countries in Europe according to Van Ruler & Verčič (2004: 3). According to the interview of Phetwong (2008), PR works in Thailand nowadays are difficult to identify by titles of department; many organisations have changed their names to Corporate Communication due to the involvement of marketing in PR practices. Moreover, PR nowadays is blended with other disciplines in communication such as advertising and marketing (Pittipattanacozit, 2000: 48), PR sometimes belongs to 'Marketing Communication' or 'Advertising and Promotion' departments (Jaichansukkit, Interview, 9 April 2008). Communication is another alternative term used for PR, according to Jaichansukkit (2008):

“..Marketers want to know about PR and PR needs to know about marketing. I think everything has been integrated. I prefer using the term 'communication' rather than PR. It is easier to understand...” (Jaichansukkit, Interview, 9 April 2008).

Additionally, some organisations such as Total Access Information (DTAC), a wireless telecommunication service company, do not have PR departments. On the other hand, DTAC has called themselves a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) department with a media relations unit within it:

The definition of PR has been developed and changed. We cannot specify whether our work concerns PR or not. For example, our CSR department may look after PR jobs since we have social contribution activities...we try to combine all communication techniques together...DTAC used to have a PR department, then, it was transformed to Corporate Communication. Later, DTAC set up a marketing department, taking over almost all of the corporate communication department's tasks. Finally, the CSR department was established instead since the company has done a lot of social contributions...we have dealt with the media to communicate with the public (Klinla-Or, Interview, 9 March 2008).

To sum up, PR in Thailand is defined as *Prachasamphant*. It is how to make relations and do *Saang kwaampratabjai* to the public. In practice, it represents an organisation's face and it also plays the task of company back up at the same time. It is interdisciplinary and can be used interchangeably with Corporate Communication and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). It has several roles such as information provision, education, and spokesperson.

THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN PR AND OTHER TERMS IN THAI CONTEXT

1. PUBLIC RELATIONS & PROPAGANDA

In this section, I aim to investigate the boundary between PR and propaganda in Thailand. However, it excludes my critical views regarding the institution of the monarchy. As I am a cross-cultural researcher, I must be aware of the country's taboo and the *lésé majesté* law.

The term used in the Thai language, '*Propaganda*' is replaced by the term '*Persuasive Advertising*' [Kod-sa-na-chuan-chue (โฆษณาชวนเชื่อ) in Thai language]. The term '*Advertising*' or '*Kod-sa-na (โฆษณา)*' in Thai language indicates that PR scholars denied the relationship between PR and propaganda. Pittipattanacozit, one of the interviewees who has been working as an Associate Professor in the PR Department at

Chulalongkorn University in Thailand, and is studying about ‘The Evolution of PR, gave her opinion about this issue:

“...Do you think it is strange that we use the word ‘Kod-sa-na’(Kod-sa-na (โฆษณา) in Thai language means advertising) instead of propaganda. We think propaganda is related to Communism...We look at propaganda as a black colour. PR prefers using the word ‘persuasion’ (Pittipattanacozit, Interview, 28 January 2007).

‘Psychological Operations (ปฏิบัติการจิตวิทยา)’ is another term that is mentioned as being used interchangeably with propaganda in Thailand as illustrated by the interviews of Banvorn (2008) and Sangamuang (2008)¹.

In the real practical world, the evidence from interviews shows that several practitioners did not accept that propaganda is equally well used to describe PR. Most of those I spoke to highlighted the differences between propaganda and PR in many areas. I, myself, have coded the transcriptions and categorised all interviewees’ ideas together. I, in addition, appointed dualisms to each category to explain the differences between them. Then, I attempted to group them and assign each group a theme. However, it appears to me that persuasive communicative frameworks (e.g. Barnlund’s (2008); Berlo’s (1960); Schram’s (1954); Shanon and Weaver’s (1949)) seems to fit well with my interview data. I therefore adopted those persuasive communication models in my consideration of each group in order to signal the differences between PR and propaganda. This indicates that PR and propaganda may be interpreted as having some differences, but share the same root—persuasive communication. I also latterly put all summarised data in a table (see table 4) in order for the readers to compare the concepts easily. The details are as follows:

¹ See quotes in appendix 4.1

1. Overview: Negative VS Positive
2. Sender perspectives
 - 2.1 Goals: Influence VS Publicity
 - 2.2 Purpose of Use: Specific VS General
 - 2.3 Unethical VS Ethical
3. Message perspectives
 - 3.1 One-sided VS Two-sided Information
 - 3.2 Message Presentation: Exaggeration VS Attractive fact
 - 3.3 Credibility: Less VS Loaded
1. Channel Perspectives
2. Receiver & Feedback Perspective: Force VS Fair

1. Overview: Negative VS Positive

As in the United Kingdom, propaganda is mentioned by practitioners as a negative approach in Thailand, while PR is always seen as a positive perspective. ‘Negative’ is a keyword that interviewees used to describe propaganda. Practitioners believed that propaganda has some hidden agendas (interviews of Jaichansukkit, 2008; Pittipattanacozit, 2008)². Furthermore, the definition by the Royal Institute Dictionary (1999) shows that propaganda is not ‘white’ in Thai society. It is defined as ‘a tricky’ strategy, aiming to influence people:

“*Kod-sa-na-chuan-chue* (โฆษณาชวนเชื่อ) [propaganda] means to trickly disseminate ideal or opinion in order to manipulate people’s minds” (Royal Institute, 1999: 112).

² See more quotes in appendix 4.2

2. Sender Perspective

2.1 Goals: Influence VS Publicity

Some Thai practitioners believe that propaganda may have some similarities with PR. However, their purposes are different. While the aim of PR is to publicise news with the ultimate output of a positive image toward a company, propaganda intends to influence people's mind, belief, and behaviours as demonstrated in the quotations³:

“I think PR and propaganda are different in their goals. PR is just like intermediary to make mutual understanding between organizations and target groups. It compromises with each other's aim. In contrast, propaganda has only one target, effecting receivers in the desirable direction.” (Thongsuwan, Interview, 8 February 2008)

2.2 Purposes of Use: Specific VS General

Propaganda is believed to be used for politics or military purposes. Some practitioners claimed that propaganda originates from Communism and is used separately to PR according to several interviews.⁴

In contrast, some practitioners thought propaganda supports PR. Propaganda is used as one PR tool, especially for organizational change management, crisis management campaigns, as illustrated below⁵:

“I think sometimes PR can be propaganda while another time it can be persuasion. Propaganda has influence on people. For example, if we have a change management campaign or we need to change organisational culture or create morale and encourage employees, we must use propaganda. We might use a variety of techniques...Propaganda is something about psychology.” (Thabthim, Interview, 20 March 2008)

³ See more quotes in appendix 4.3

⁴ See quotes in appendix 4.4

⁵ See another example in appendix 4.5

Likewise, Santanasiri (2008) advocates that propaganda is used for crisis management. However, she saw PR and propaganda as similar; PR looks as if it is neutral, but it conceals propaganda purposes. Moreover, she proposed the idea that propaganda PR practice is the root of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):

... The way of PR practice is propaganda. It is a PR technique or tactic that is applied for crisis management. We try to say we are good citizens, but we make pollute water. Or we are in the oil industry; we have to establish gas pipelines. But we tell the public that we are good citizens, we undertake reforestation. In conclusion, I think PR and propaganda are on the same side. Indeed, propaganda PR is the root of CSR (Santhanasiri, Interview, 21 January 2008).

In summary, it can be seen that propaganda is used for specific purposes. It isn't only used for politics, military, and security, but is also for crisis management and organisation change management.

2.3 Unethical VS Ethical

Ethical issues are highlighted as a significant boundary between propaganda and PR, like in other countries. PR practitioners in Thailand claimed that morality is neglected in propaganda. Propaganda makes an effort to influence people without any concerns according to several interviews⁶ (e.g. Boonnak, 2008; Rungsepanodorn, 2008; Santhanasiri, and Punyaratabandhu, 2008):

⁶ See quotes in appendix 4.6

3. Messages Perspective

3.1 One-sided VS Two-sided Information

Thai practitioners as well as scholars advocate that messages communicated by propagandists and PR are presented in different ways. Propagandists propose one-sided information while messages of PR tend to be two-sided (interviews of Promkoj, 2008; Prownpuntu, 2008; Boonnak, 2008)⁷. However, Colonel Sangamuang (2008) has a different point of view. He proposed that propaganda's messages do not need to be only one sided. It could be presented in all sides: positive, negative, and neutral - just to have a victory over the competitors (Sangamuang, Interview, 8 April 2008). Santanasiri (2008) sees this issue differently. She stated that content sent by both PR persons and propagandists are one side and insinuated them as a man and a woman who are falling in love:

...PR is as same as propaganda. They both are telling a half truth to the public. They present only good news or stories. They have tried to convince people that they are good citizens. It is something like a man and a woman when they love each other. They turn on their good sides to each other, for example, I am a good cook (Santhanasiri, Interview, 21 January 2008).

3.2 Message Presentation: Exaggeration VS Attractive Fact

According to interviews, the techniques of presenting messages are different between PR and propaganda. PR presents attractive and creative facts while propaganda messages are not based on truth, but overstatements according to interviews of Phetwong (2008), Hongthong (2008), and Jaichansukkit (2008)⁸.

⁷ See quotes in appendix 4.7

⁸ See quotes in appendix 4.8

3.3 Credibility: Less VS Loaded

Some interviewees believe that PR has more credibility than propaganda since it relies on the truth and being presented by third persons such as journalists:

“Thai people have the feeling that propaganda is negative, while, PR is something about positive image and *credibility*...” (Kritsamai, Interview, 22 January 2008).

...PR has more *credibility* since it doesn't rely on the third person. Journalists are speakers for PR. People believe in speakers rather than a person. On the other hand, a propagandist communicates only in positive news...” (Nawawat, Interview, 7 April 2008).

...Advertising lack principles, evidence, and a fact... Sometimes the stories might have little fact with no references or from unknown sources....At present, we as a PR people have to comply ourselves. There is an internal audit in our organisation. We always ask the original department that is concerned directly with this news to check and correct news before releasing to journalists. On the other hand, propaganda does not care about anything (Punyaratabandhu, Interview, 11 February 2008).

4. Channel Perspectives

Colonel Sangamuang (2008) suggested that there are no differences between the communication channels of PR and propaganda: “...the techniques of using media, such as personal media and print media [of both PR and propaganda], are quite similar...” (Sangamuang, Interview, 8 April 2008) while Hongthong (2008) saw the difference in budget spending on the channels by PR person and propagandists. Propaganda may acquire some budget to generate news coverage while PR sometimes can obtain it for free:

Much of propaganda, currently, needs more money than PR. PR still has some free media coverage...Propaganda spends a lot of money to ask the media to say what it wants since the free media may not speak as it wants” (Hongthong, Interview, 20 February 2008).

5. Receiver & Feedback Perspective: Force VS Fair

Another feature distinguishing between propaganda and PR, according to the interviews, is the treatment of receivers. Propaganda is claimed to force the receiver to believe its message rather than PR. Audience feedback is neglected in propaganda processes while PR is fair enough to listen to the public and gives them opportunities to decide for themselves:

Consumers perceive information and have the right to decide. On the other hand, propaganda has conducted all strategies in order to influence receivers to follow its desirable direction” (Jaichansukkit, Interview, 9 April 2008).

“...propaganda...doesn’t mind about receivers or target groups... It pushes people to believe without listening to them” (Boonnak ,Interview, 14 February 2008).

“...PR...let people decide which one they like...” (Prownpuntu, Interview, 13 February 2008)

“...Propaganda forces people to follow...PR is just about information and asking people to follow” (Banvorn, Interview, 1 January 2008).

Moreover, propaganda is stated to be one of the strongest degrees among all communication techniques such as PR and advertising as Rungseepanodorn (2008) pointed that only ‘enforcement’ is stronger than propaganda (Interview, 28 March 2008).

In summary, in Thai PR practitioners and scholars’ perceptions, PR is obviously different from propaganda in many aspects as show in Table 4. They view that propaganda is ‘black’ and has little concern with PR. They perceive propaganda as ‘a devil’ while PR is ‘an angel’. However, the propaganda concept is not strong in Thailand. It shows that Thai scholars in communicative disciplines have paid little attention to propaganda, which is reflected in the few research works or literature on the topic (Pittipattanacozit, Interview, 28 January 2007).

Although, from historical evidence, the Government Public Relations Department of Thailand (which was the Publicity Division) was set up following the idea of the Ministry of Publicity of Germany, Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda (Government Public Relations Department, 2006), propaganda has not had much impact in Thai society. This may be because, firstly, Thailand was not a dominant leading country during the inter-war period as Britain or Germany and has never been colonised by any other country. Thailand adapted only a part of the propaganda idea about publicity in practice in order to educate people on democracy. Secondly, Thailand is considered to be a peaceful country. It is rich with a variety of natural resources and a low occurrence of natural disasters compared to its neighbouring nations (Global Market Information Database, 2005). Furthermore, it has no racial or religious conflicts about religions and ethnicities (Macdonald and Parkes, 2001). Thailand is relatively homogenous.

For religion, the majority of Thais are Buddhists (95% of the population). Buddhists are quite free in practising their religion (Global Market Information Database, 2005). It does not push people to believe or practise. Hence, it is not necessary to do propaganda. Moreover, there is no distinguishing between nationalities. More than 99% of the population is Thai (Global Market Information Database, 2005). The unity and peacefulness in Thailand, therefore, has softened the degree of propaganda in Thailand.

Table 4: The differences between PR and propaganda in Thailand in Thai scholars and practitioners' perceptions by Suttanipa Srisai

Element of Communication	Perspective	Public Relations	Propaganda
1. Sender	1.1 Goals of communication	Publicity/ Announcement	Try to influence public's mind, belief, and behaviour
	1.2 Purpose of Uses	General uses (can be used for education, business, and non-profit organisations)	Specific (normally related to military, politics, and Communism)
	1.3 Ethics	Do work with ethics	Do work without ethics
2. Messages	2.1 Side of Message	Present two-sided information to the public	Present one-sided information to convince people to believe and behave as organisational aims
	2.2 Message Presentation	Create attractive facts in order to persuade target public	Present exaggeration of facts to persuade people to believe and behave as organisational aims
	2.3 Credibility	Have loaded credibility	Have less credibility than PR
3. Channel	The same		
4. Receiver and Feedback		Fair and give the right and choices so that target groups to choose	Force target groups to believe and behave as organisational aims
Overall		Positive image and white colour in Thai PR practitioners' perception	Negative image and black colour in Thai PR practitioners' perception

However, few PR practitioners such as Colonel Saungamuang (2008) and Hemmatad (2008) believe that propaganda is practised among government agencies and business sectors where there is high competition as propaganda is difficult to operate. Due to the

changes to an information society: the growth of the media industry and freedom of media, flows of information, whereby knowledgeable people have more choices and the right to choose, be exposed to, and believe information. Journalists, in the same way, have more opportunities to select news to be published as Hemmatad (2008) stated:

...Currently, we cannot use only propaganda since the public have more knowledge and consider whether they should believe or not. PR must be more cautious about information. It is tough to do direct propaganda. Propaganda becomes less in intensity (Hemmatad, Interview, 7 March 2008).

Although attempts to distinguish PR and propaganda have been put, there are some comments left to be noted. Generally, PR in Thailand is not propaganda. However, PR would become propaganda in three cases. First, PR is propaganda when a crisis has emerged—propaganda is used instead of PR. Second, PR is propaganda when a company wants to do strong internal communication campaigns such as persuading employees to do something. Finally, PR is propaganda if PR practitioners lack ethics.

2. PR VS Advertising

Although in Thai PR history, PR was derived from advertising agencies, PR in the 20th century is not the same as advertising (see chapter 4). In the past, Thai scholars and professionals looked at PR tasks only as writing and releasing news, organizing press conferences, and all kinds of media production. However, nowadays, PR has changed its ways. It is very difficult to separate PR from advertising by channels. They are different in objective, content, and format according to the interviews of Hemmatad (2008) and Jaichansukkit (2008).

Advertising aims to arouse the public's interest in the short beginning period and persuade people to take actions or buy products, while PR tends to give information or

change the perception of people towards companies or products, including building image and reputation (the interviews of Boonnak , 2008; Hongthong, 2008; Prownpuntu, 2008). Jaichansukkit (2008) gave an example from his previous work:

I produced a film for Siam Commercial Bank to celebrate its 100th year establishment. I didn't want to sell any products, but I needed people to be aware that it was not easy for us to reach this point and the bank has stood by Thais for many decades. This is about an objective...I consider the differences between PR and advertising from the content (Jaichansukkit, Interview, 9 April 2008).

Another example given by Jaichansukkit (2008) was the advertisement of a direct sale company as Giffarine Skyline Unity said:

The advertisement began with a couple who are going to get married. A man tells a woman that he is going to work for Gifferine, but the woman seems disappointed as she thinks that working in direct sales for a business is not good. Then, the guy explains to his partner that this career has something more than she had thought. It is good for the family. I think the objectives of advertisement were not to sell products, but to build good images to direct the sales industry. I don't think this was advertising, on the other hand, it was PR. (Jaichansukkit, Interview, 9 April 2008).

Beside objectives and content, the limitations of advertising media space were discussed among the interviewees. Since advertising requires a lot of budget to buy media space, advertising needs to say something short, attractive, but effective (direct to the point). It is controllable (Keangpradoo, Interview, 12 March 2008), but lacks continuity according to several interviews (e.g. Kritsamai, 2008; Punyaratabandhu, 2008). On the other hand, PR needs plans and long-term processes (interviews of Boonnak, 2008; Punyaratabandhu, 2008).

Another distinction between PR and advertising is the technique of persuasion. Advertising is based on emotional and functional communication (interviews of Nawawat, 2008; Santhanasiri, 2008). It focuses on product specifications and tries to

convince people to buy a product. On the contrary, PR involves information with proper references rather than emotions (Nawawat, Interview, 7 April 2008). For example, if PR wants to tell clients that the organisation is a leading company with top sales volumes compared to competitors, it needs to prove this by using reliable sources and support (Nawawat, Interview, 7 April 2008). PR, indeed, has more credibility than advertising (Keangpradoo, Interview, 12 March 2008). Santhanasiri (2008) explained about the distinction between PR and advertising as follows:

...Advertising is so far away from PR. The less time we have, the more exaggerated we speak. You will see when you use too much emotion in your work, it looks fake. Advertising is like a stage performance. It looks like overacting. Since advertising has less time to communicate, they have to speak loudly. You, for example, have to promote the sweets. The truth is they are so common. What advertising has done is promote them as magic sweets. Another example, a mobile phone is so undistinguished, but advertising makes it superb and part of being human. Advertising drives people's demands. While advertising says you must have it, PR is used to explain its functions. PR describes the essential of a mobile phone in this society. Whenever advertising and PR are working together, PR is a support, magnifying advertising stories (Santhanasiri, Interview, 21 January 2008).

According to the interviews, there are nuanced differences between PR and advertising. PR and advertising have the same channels for sending messages. In addition, they have the same processes of listening to feedback. The interviewees indicated that there are slightly differences in budget for buying media space.

In summary, PR term has shared the concept of persuasion with propaganda and advertising. They all rely on persuasive techniques. However, the differences between them are found mainly in sending and messages elements such as aims/objectives and message presentation techniques.

**WATTANA-DHARM THAI ASPECTS THAT INFLUENCE THAI
PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICE**

This section introduces *Wattana-dharm Thai* aspects that have influenced Thai PR practice. It has mainly been drawn from interviewees who have long experience in the PR industry. The majority of interviewees comfortably related their work stories to me as they trust in me. I, therefore, connected their experience with the theoretical framework of ‘*Wattana-dharm Thai*’ (see chapter 2). In addition, my observation and participation in Thai society is useful for the analysis. At the final stage, I categorised and coded them into eight groups as follows:

1. Relationship Orientation (Relationships in Thai style)
 - 1.1 *Bunkhun* (บุญคุณ) Relationship
 - 1.2 *Pen-Mitr* (เป็นมิตร) Relationship
 - 1.3 *Alum aluay* (อะลุ่มอล่วย) Relationship
2. Community-based Orientation
3. *Sanook* (สนุก) Orientation
4. Hierarchical Structure
5. Buddhist Orientation
6. Monarchy institution respect
7. Face and Eyes in society
8. Form over the Content

It is noted that I appointed some names such as Relationship in Thai styles, Community-based Orientation, *Sanook* Orientation, Hierarchical Structure, Buddhism Orientation, Face and Eyes in society, and respect for the institution of the monarchy by myself.

However, some terms such as *Pen-Mitr* Relationship, and *Alum aluay* Relationship, which I appointed, have been adapted from Komin's concept (1991) and re-arranged into new groups in order to make them suitable to explain Thai PR practice.

The findings in this section help broaden and explain in more detail about '*Wattana-dharm Thai*', in addition to the information provided in Chapter 2. However, I do not give rich examples to explain each category in this section. Rather, many illustrations are highlighted in the next section, which discusses about 'the practice of Thai PR'.

1. RELATIONSHIP ORIENTATION

The majority of Thai PR tasks focus on how to manage and maintain relationships with stakeholders such as media, employees, and community. 'Relationship in Thai Style' seems to be a keyword to explain Thai PR practices concerned with relation building. Relationships in Thai style are defined by me to reflect a specific relationship in Thai society. It is mainly related to 'personal' and 'social' relations. For the Thais, personal relationship and social relationships are usually uninhibited in every single area of Thai society. Thai society is "relational". The Thais are very much aware that the right relationship, the right connection, or being in the right place at the right time, could be the means of advancing oneself. This gives rise to the careful culturing of relationships (Talyor, 1997: 14).

According to Hofstede (2001b), Thailand has low scores in Individualism (IDV) at 20 (compared to the world average at 24 and Great Britain at 89). The score indicates different levels of relationship among society between Thailand and other countries, especially Great Britain. Thailand, indeed, is collectivist as compared to individualist. Its society fosters strong relationships where everyone takes responsibility for fellow

members of their group (Hofstede, 2008). Indeed, they love the groups to which one belongs (Soupap, 1975: 7).

Historically, Thai collectivist society originates from Thai occupation as rice farmers in ancient times. Without advanced mechanical tools, all of these farmers needed as much help as they could get from their neighbours, especially at harvest time. Traditional Thai Farmers took turns helping one another as agricultural labour. This reciprocal conduct in agricultural life is reflected today in cooperative activities and established collective values among Thai people (Srivardhana and Cater, 2006: 107-128). In fact, the collective society has impacted on relationships among Thai people- relationship in Thai style. Not only ancient Thai agricultural occupation influenced relationship in Thai style, but also Buddhism plays a crucial role to shape these relations.

According to my findings, relationship in Thai style [that was found to be significant in Thai PR practice] consists of 3 styles of relationship: *Bunghun* Relationship, *Pen-Mitr* Relationship, and *Alum aluay* Relationship. The details are as follows:

1.1 *Bunghun* Relationship

‘*Bunghun* relationship’ describes a psychological bond between someone, who out of sheer kindness and sincerity, renders another person the needed help and favours, and the latter’s remembering of the goodness done and his ever-readiness to reciprocate the kindness. It is opposite to the “etiquettical” or “transactional” relationship. It is based on the value of gratitude. Reciprocity of kindness, particularly the value of being grateful is a highly valued characteristic trait in Thai society (Komin, 1991: 139-143). The Thai have been socialized to value this Grateful (*Katanyuu* ‘กตัญญู’) quality in a person. A person should be grateful to persons who render *Bunghun* (goodness, help, favours, etc.) to him.

The term of ‘*Bunkhun* relationship’ is sometimes referred to as *phrakhun* (พระคุณ). There is no English equivalent of this term but it may be described as any good thing, help or favour done by someone, which entails gratitude and obligation on the part of the beneficiary. Thus, if my friend helps me to overcome a difficulty whatever it is he is said to be *ni bun khun* (หนี้บุญคุณ) (one who has done favour), I am supposed then to be grateful and to seek an occasion to repay the favour whenever I can. In this way, anybody can be a *phu mi bunkhun* (ผู้มีบุญคุณ) to anybody else. Thus in actual life an individual may owe many people *Bunkhun*. The term *khun* (คุณ) in this context refers to any good thing, favour or help extended to others. Hence, *Bunkhun* is any good thing, favour or help that is meritorious (*bun*) but since it creates a social tie, it also entails some kind of obligation on the part of the receiver (Podhisita, 1985: 47)

The *Bunkhun* system of obligation and the network that develops from it are based on the provision of benefits or favours of any kind by one party to another and the special relationship thus established between the two parties. The relationship is unequal by the fact that the guarantor party places the guarantee in his debt by his favour while the guarantee, by accepting the benefit, contracts the obligation to show gratitude and return the favour at an appropriate time (Smuckarn, 1985: 139)

By being grateful, it implies two aspects—*Roo Bunkhun* (รู้บุญคุณ), which means to know, acknowledge, or constantly be conscious of and bear in heart the kindness done; and *Tob thaen bunkhun* (ตอบแทนบุญคุณ), which means to reciprocate the kindness whenever there are opportunities (Vichit-Vadakan,

1990). *It is an exchange relationship that is not bound by time nor distance* (Komin, 1991: 139-143).

Although the person who renders help, kindness, and favours, usually does it without expectation of anything in return, the obligated person must be Grateful. And *Bunkhun* must be returned, often on a continuous basis and in a variety of ways, because *Bunkhun* should not and cannot be measured quantitatively in material terms. It is an ongoing, binding of good reciprocal feelings and lasting relationship. In addition, society provides way (ceremonies) for expressing gratitude (Soupap, 1975: 7). Therefore, being Grateful to *Bunkhun* constitutes the root of any deep, *meaningful relationship and friendship*—be it a grateful bond towards one's parents, or to a relative who supports one through school, or a teacher who provides one with knowledge, or *a good friend who helps one out in times of trouble*, etc (Komin, 1991: 139-143). Time and distance are not the factors to diminish the *Bunkhun* (Komin, 1991: 139-143). It is an important base for relationships.

The concept of being Grateful in response to *Bunkhun* or kindness and favours given has been the base for good and meaningful relationships in general, and has helped to explain the effectiveness and efficiency of successful completion of jobs and projects, which have been accomplished basically through *good connections and social relations* (Tontisirin, et al., 1986). In order to succeed, a businessman must have loyal workers; a leader must have loyal followers (Holmes and Tangtongtavy, 1995: 61). In order to live, the poorer man must have a welfare network (Holmes and Tangtongtavy, 1995: 61).

The "I scratch your back, you scratch my back" mentality and obligation generated by *Bunghun* maintains some form of cohesion in a society where individualism would otherwise reign (Holmes and Tangtongtavy, 1995: 61). To succeed as a manager in Thailand, you should (1) earn their *friendship* in order to get their trust, (2) earn their *respect* (in order to earn their respect you have to be in a position of seniority or you have to command fear resulting from your power), and (3) make them owe you something (always give and make them see that you are always sacrificing and giving; your staff will thereby be fearful of you, but they will also be obligated to you (Holmes and Tangtongtavy, 1995: 61). Then, they will do everything for you (Holmes and Tangtongtavy, 1995: 61).

In summary, *Bunghun* relationship has deeper meaning than 'just having a relationship'. Rather, it is concerned with 'friendship,' 'goodness,' and 'respect'. To earn *Bunghun* relationship, you must treat people as friends and give them many good things (either material or help) with respect. It is a continual exchange relationship that helps build good feelings between people. Ultimately, it helps support *Saang Kwaampratabjai* toward that person.

In the Thai PR working world, *Bunghun* relationship has obviously influenced Thai PR practice. It is in a form of both 'personal' and 'social' relationship between an organisation (either organisations or employees or PR) and its public. An organisation can play the role of 'friend', or '*phu mi bunghun*' (เพื่อนบุญคุณ) in a process of relation building. For example, several of my interviewees mentioned that 'to be a *good friend* with journalists is important for Thai PR in order to maintain good connections and get news published'. In the same way,

some CSR projects and organisations give assistance and education to the community in order to gain respect and *Kwaampratabjai* from local people (see quotes in the next section about the practice of Thai PR).

1.2 *Pen Mitr* Relationship

Apart from *Bunghun* relationship, *Pen Mitr* Relationship is also found as a *Wattana-dharm Thai* aspect that influences Thai PR practice. ‘*Pen Mitr* Relationship’ is equivalent to a ‘friendly’ relationship. It presents the smooth interpersonal personality of Thai people as well as Thai PR. It means a non-overconfident, polite, and modest type of personality (expressed through appearance, manners, and interpersonal approach). These types of personality are reflected through relaxation, smiling, and friendly aspects of Thai people.

Pen Mitr Relationship also includes many traits such as caring and considerate, kind and helpful, responsive to situations and opportunities, self-controlled, tolerant, restrained, polite and modest, calm and cautious, contented, and social. ‘Caring and considerate,’ according to Komin (1991), is the Thai cultural-laden value that is significant and cannot be found in American culture. It indicates the deepest reason for smooth and pleasant interpersonal interactions. It is to maintain or preserve one another’s feelings and ego (*Raksa Namjai Kan* ‘รักษาใจกัน’).

Raksa Namjai Kan means that one should be careful not to hurt another person’s feelings, for example, not to criticise as well as not to reject another person’s kindness or good intention, even though it is contrary to one’s own feelings (Komin, 1991: 143-161). The fact that one disagrees with another person’s

opinion or is not convenient or comfortable to accept another person's kindness, etc., does not entitle him/her to hurt the other's ego. On the contrary, by sacrificing a bit of one's inconvenience or one's urge to disagree, one will not hurt the other person, and the resulting atmosphere is much more pleasant, soothing to both parties as well as to everybody (Komin, 1991: 143-161). There is nothing to lose, because there are chances where he/she can voice his different opinions in another time and space, and still save one another's ego by avoiding face-to-face confrontation (Komin, 1991: 143-161). Therefore, being flexible (responsive to situations and opportunities) in not doggedly forcing and asserting one's own desire at times of potential differences and conflicts, is very important (Komin, 1991: 143-161).

In PR practice, according to the interviews, I found the *Pen Mitr* relationship inherited in Thai PR practice. One illustration is reflected in the response of Pradistsakul, a Managing Director of a PR agency. He explained the difference between Thai PR practitioners and practitioners from other countries that:

Thai PR practice is different from other countries. Thai PR is more compromising. PR people *always smile* no matter if they are rebuked by journalists or clients... (Pradistsakul, Interview, 24 January 2008).

According to the interview, it can be said that Thai PR avoids confrontation by being patient and smiling. They believe that *Pen Mitr* relationship can help reduce the degree of conflicts. In addition, it is useful to do *Saang Kwaampratabjai* at the first sight and in the long run. This is dominant *Wattana-dharm Thai* that can be generally found in Thai PR practice.

Besides, showing of *Namjai* (literally meaning ‘water from the heart’, kindness, considerateness, and sincere concern) in being kind and helpful, is something to *give out without any expectation* in return. The Thais are not calculative in the showing of kindness and help. This is why it has been overtly observed by foreigners that Thai interactions are usually smooth, pleasant, and “often accompanied by genuine kindness and an interest in the well-being of the other” (Mulder, 1978: 66). *Nam jai* is based on the same concept of *Bunghun* relationship. It focuses on ‘giving’ things or help or advice as *Bunghun* relationship. However, you can offer *Namjai* to people that you may not know. It can do once or many times, depending on the place and time. It is a basic relationship that helps support *Saang Kwaampratabjai*, but it is not as deep as the bonds of *Bunghun* relationship. In Thai PR practice, there are many activities that offer *Namjai* to the public as I will explore in more detail in the next section about Thai PR practice. Indeed, PR does *Saang Kwaampratabjai* through this kind of *Wattana-dharm Thai*.

In summary, *Pen Mitr* relationship includes smiles, friendliness, having *Nam jai*, and *Raksa Namjai Kan*. It is used to smooth interpersonal relationships and support *Saang Kwaampratabjai* (see next section about the practice of Thai PR).

1.3 Alum aluay Relationship

Alum aluay means ‘flexible’ and adjustable’. This *Wattana-dharm Thai* describes how Thai people respond to these situations. It is opposite to ‘strict’ and ‘unbendable’. Komin (1991) discussed about this *Wattana-dharm Thai* in the term of flexibility and adjustment orientation. In her study, she found that

Thais who live in Bangkok and other provinces preferred to describe themselves as “ever-flexible” than “truly honest”. Her data indicated that while most Thais favour “sincere” interactions, they also value the flexible characteristic in a person (Komin, 1991).

Moreover, there is nothing too serious to be unchangeable. When confronted with some breaching or deviation from rules, the common reaction is ‘*Ca aow aria kan nak naa*’ (จะเอาอะไรหนักหนา) (meaning, “Don’t be too strict or rigid, it’s absurd”). The general attitude towards problems is: ‘*Pen rueng lek*’ (เป็นเรื่องเล็ก) (It’s a small matter); ‘*Mai chai rueng kho khaad baad tai*’ (ไม่ใช่เรื่องกอลาดบาดตาย) (It’s not a matter of dead-or-alive); or ‘*Tukyang kae khai kan dai*’ (ทุกอย่างแก้ไขกันได้) (Everything can be adjusted) (Komin, 1991: 161-171).

In Thai relationships, it is always the “person” and the “situation” over principles and system. Principles, rules, policies, and even agreements might not be upheld when weighed against personal relations. Instead, they are dispensable and can be overruled by self and group interests (see chapter 2). Since the Thais are not principle-oriented, and have a high value for personal relationship, they also appear not to be strictly law-oriented (Komin, 1991: 161-171). In practice, principles and laws are adjustable to fit persons and situations. As described by one prominent Thai in a seminar, “We Thai are not a society of law; we are a society of relationship... It is not what a person has done that’s wrong; it’s who he is... If he is your cousin, or your friend, then what he has done is not wrong...” (Komin, 1991).

In the same sense, the *Wattana-dharm Thai of Alum aluay* can obviously explain the nature of Thai PR practice. For instance, the relationship between Thai PR practitioners and journalists does not come under strict rules. Rather, it works well under personal and social connections. One example is related by Santhanasiri (2008) that:

In my experience, many Thai journalists *are very strict*. If we miss even one word or write using wrong grammar, they will discard our news immediately. However, *in the case where we have good connections* with them, they will call us to correct the mistakes (Santhanasiri, Interview, 21 January 2008).

Regarding the interview, it can be seen that everything can be *Alum aluay* in Thai PR occupation. Although journalists are so serious with rules, there are sometimes special exceptions for the ones who have good connections. Thai PR, indeed, focuses on “person” and the “situation” over principles and system.

2. COMMUNITY-BASED ORIENTATION

To gain more understanding about Thai collectivist society requires a focus on the basic unit, the village, and therein the family lifestyle, especially in rural areas where most Thais live. Thai society is generally a village life cycle with a working life in agriculture. It has extended family, consisting of several generations living in one household, or perhaps under several roofs within the same compound. The house is usually a simple, wooden structure raised on posts (National Identity Board, 2000: 59). Various species of livestock such as buffaloes, pigs, dogs, and chickens are kept beneath the house, and the family members live above, often in a single room, though larger structures may consist of a platform in front of two or more rooms (National Identity Board, 2000: 59).

The father is regarded as the leader, and the mother plays a significant role in household activities, particularly in the kitchen, and gives instruction to their children (National Identity Board, 2000: 59). Regarding relationships in the Thai style, rural Thais have closer relationships than urban Thais. Rural Thais have close ties with their family, friends, and community (Komin, 1991). In PR practice, the close ties are beneficial for PR practitioners. PR has brought this value to their work. It, indeed, helps to expand target groups of PR community relations campaigns. "If one in a family such as a son loves our company, other family members will love our company as well." (Keangpradoo, Interview, 12 March 2008) According to the interview, I would say that to increase high efficiency in PR, PR may create a group identity (*Saang Kwaampratabjai* via groups or community). PR practitioners who intend to work in Thailand will face difficulties in managing an organisation's image as Thais rely on groups that they belong to rather than individuality. Having a bad image for a member in a community would cause trouble for PR. Hence, PR must be aware of group impacts and rumours that might pass quickly through the community.

Another interesting point about Thai community is the opinion leader system. Opinion leaders are key communicators in Thai rural areas. They have influence as to whether to accept or deny the diffusion of innovation (Keyes, 1979: 197-260). Traditionally, teachers, Buddhist monks, individual teachers, and long term residents of the village are frequently reported to have gained the confidence of the community and play influential roles in community affairs (Hanks, 1958: 9-14, Keyes, 1979:198-199). Winning the hearts of teachers is very important when there are general elections. Teachers are influential in rural areas. They are well respected and treated as opinion leaders by villagers. They can convince voters who to cast the ballot for when the time comes to vote. (Marukatat, 2008)

The roles of opinion leaders in Thailand in history are communicators, advisors, educators, and persuaders on rural matters such as agriculture and health campaigns. For instance, in the study about 'Community-Based Communication: A New Approach to Development Communication', Genilo (2004) explores roles that communication plays in the formation of collective definitions (perspectives) and the construction of local knowledge and practices in rice farming in a small homogenous community in the Chainat province of Thailand. She found that opinion leaders are asked for advice on most farming activities (Genilo, 2004). Farmers and opinion leaders alike likewise have multiple informal networks, e.g., they belong to more than one informal group at any one time. Informal networks also have links to formal and informal networks outside of the community (Genilo, 2004).

From these links, community residents update their information on rice farming (Genilo, 2004). Informal networks have also devised means of organizing and disseminating this information (Genilo, 2004). Opinion leaders use various communication channels (research stations, extension workers, other opinion leaders, mass media and farmers' organisations) to update rice farming information/knowledge and organise this information in different ways (memory, document storage, classification and retrieval) (Genilo, 2004: 6). Likewise, in health communication campaigns such as HIV/AIDS prevention programmes, opinion leaders in the community are necessary (Rao and Svenkerud, 1998).

Indeed, it is fair to say that in Thai society, leaders are middlemen who link villages to national society. Unsurprisingly, PR practitioners use this link to fulfil the needs of organisations. Maneenoi, PR manager of oil company summarised the relationship between community orientation and PR that:

...To organise Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) or develop community, we must understand community behaviours and get acceptance from the community. Thai society is different from the West...Whoever has power in the area will have stronger power to convince local people...(Maneenoi, Interview, 31 January 2008).

Keeping connections with opinion leaders in the community seems to be an attentive area of PR practice in Thailand. ‘Winning the heart of an opinion leader’ is a crucial *Wattana-dharm Thai* that can explain the nature of Thai PR.

3. *SANOOK* ORIENTATION

Sanook refers to having fun, enjoying oneself, and having a good time. Thailand has been known as the ‘Land of Smiles’, a stereotyped image that comes along with the much-talked-about myth of the Thais being easy-going, enjoying every day routines and pleasures of life with a happy carelessness, not letting troubles touch them easily, viewing life as something to be enjoyed not endured, and will not do anything that is not *Sanook* (National Identity Office, 2005: 496-497). They are easily bored or *Buua* (เบื่อ), not because of having nothing to do like Westerners, but because the repetitive activities they are doing are not *Sanook* (Komin, 1991: 191-197; Macdonald and Parkes, 2001; National Identity Office, 2005: 496-497). They not only like to have fun during free time, but also during work. They also like to put money or effort in work that is fun rather than in work that may not be fun, but basic (Soupap, 1975; Apapirom, 1976). As *Sanook* is deeply ingrained in Thai culture and society, it is passed on through child socialisation, from generation to generation (National Identity Office, 2005).

Evidently, many writings of this myth are derivations from the primary sources of Benedict (1943) and Embree’s (1950) anthropological observations, and the application and implication of which should be subjected to further verification and analysis

(Benedict, 1943; Embree's 1950). This *Wattana-dharm Thai* of fun loving is almost the standardised description of any agricultural, non-industrialized society such as Thai, Indonesian, and Micronesians in the Pacific Islands (Benedict, 1943; Embree's 1950). They are often the common general attributes given to the more relaxed way of life of the rural community dwellers, as opposed to the more hectic ways of life of the competitive industrialized city dwellers (Benedict, 1943; Embree's 1950). Culturally, it is meaningless to not be able to distinguish the *Wattana-dharm Thai* from other cultures (Benedict, 1943; Embree's 1950).

Komin (1991) disagreed with these interpretations and suggested that this myth can be looked at and explained from two aspects: the abhorance of hard-work, and especially, the fun-leisure and "smiling" aspects (Komin, 1991: 191-197). As for the fun-leisure and "smiling" aspect, it can be explained as the resulting behavioural pattern from keeping a pleasant and smooth face-to-face interpersonal interaction (Komin, 1991: 191-197). In so doing, most Thai social interactions are pleasant, light, might be superficial, yet fun and humorous in nature (Komin, 1991: 191-197). Joyful behaviour can be observed at any Thai party, which is usually characterised by small talk, gossip, jokes, teasing one another, making fun of all kinds of non-personal inconsequential things and events, including playing with words, etc. in a clever, humorous and amusing fashion (Komin, 1991: 191-197). Thais are not xenophobic, which could possibly be due to the fact that the Thais have never been colonised, and thus adding to the friendly interactions with foreigners (Komin, 1991: 191-197). Likewise, Mulder (1978) also views this value of fun and relaxation as a necessary means. He recognises the typical Thai relaxed interaction, where one is relaxed and enjoys the pleasant atmosphere and those joyful behaviours—which is definitely *Sanook* (สนุก)—to the point that he states that "the Thais are masters of relaxation" (Mulder, 1978: 103).

Ceremonies and Celebrations are also highlighted as one element of *Wattana-dharm Thai* (Soupap, 1975; Apapirom, 1976) to support *Sanook*. Ceremonies are needed for honour (Soupap, 1975; Apapirom, 1976). They give position and help lift their organisations up so others can see them and give them recognition (Soupap, 1975; Apapirom, 1976). The pursuit of ‘face and eyes’ is the reason for most ceremonies (Soupap, 1975; Apapirom, 1976). They, in addition, convey rich meaning to Thai people, and bring fun (Johnson, 2006). Apart from being fun, ceremonies could bring *samakhii* (สามัคคี) harmony [united harmony in English terms] to society (Johnson, 2006: 146). Also, Thais like to have luxury and prefer eating out with plenty of food and drink (Global Market Information Database, 2005). Hence, it is no surprise that Thai ceremonies and celebrations are normally filled with luxury food and drinks.

These traits have been, indeed, influenced by Buddhism. Buddhists prefer ceremonies. According to Alan R. Johnson, a Christian Missionary who stays in Thailand, who wrote a chapter ‘Exploring Social Barriers to Conversion among the Thai’ to explain Thai culture and explained the difficulty to convert Thai Buddhists to Christians because:

I had this brought home to me while doing a participant observation on the parade put on during Thai New Year (*Songkran*) in the slum community in which I have been doing research in. What I initially thought was a brief walk through the community turned out to be a two and a half hour street closing event, where a special image from the local temple was paraded around a major city block compete with a brass band drums, water throwing, and lots of drinking...When I got home and was reflecting on this event I realized really for the first time how bland Christian worship is in comparison like this...The typical church service is exceedingly tame next to that, and definitely not *sanook* in the way Thais count fun...(Johnson, 2006: 146).

Again, he gave another example:

...I was recently teaching a Sunday school class at a church and was asking the people in the class about how they share their faith with other people. One person said that they tell people that Christians don't have any ceremonies like Buddhists do...(2006: 146).

Likewise, ceremonies and celebrations have also shown up in many areas of Thai PR practice, especially in PR events, gimmicks and media relations. Thai PR focuses on *Sanook* activities through celebrations and ceremonies. Sometimes, *Sanook* activities can bring up *samakhii* to the group that they belong to. This could be reflected in several PR activities since Thais prefer having fun, not just work.

4. HIERARCHICAL STRUCTURE

As I discussed in the literature reviews, Thai society places great value on its hierarchal structure (see chapter 2). It also affects Thai PR organisations and practice. This structure is significantly seen in government agencies and state enterprise structures (Soupap, 1975). Thais prefer working for government agency or state enterprise rather than the business sector since they need to lift up those with status (Soupap, 1975: 6). Status is generally connected with government positions so that it is easier to become a man with status (*chao nai* 'เจ้าชาย') this way (Soupap, 1975: 6). To become *chao nai* is the popular pursuit of all Thai people as it is easy work, brings honour, gives power, and elevates one to a position where others give respect and homage (Soupap, 1975: 6). The *Chao nai* trait has incidentally brought autocracy (a form of government in which political power is held by a self-appointed ruler) to Thai government agencies. This form is problematic for practices - not just for PR practice as I will discuss the difficulty of government publicity jobs in the next section.

In government offices where rigid hierarchical structure goes hand in hand with autocratic leadership along the line of command, there is a likelihood of conflict between work values and social relationship values for employees. The conflict comes from the way the leader sees himself and what he expects from subordinates, and his management style (i.e., through cliques, in-groups, with or without merit systems), all combine to account for the degree of organisational effectiveness (Komin, 1991: 197-213).

As a Thai who generally cannot separate ideas/opinions from the person, an autocratic government superior once he assumes his position, likewise, views his position as an extension of his “ego” self—the power derived from the position rather than its accompanying responsibilities, duties, and tasks (Komin, 1991: 197-213). This sense of power aggrandizement, derived from and expressed in signing his signature on papers passing over his desk, is so encompassing that it increases the degree of self-importance (Komin, 1991: 197-213). Basically, he is an unquestioned boss, highly sensitive to criticism, expecting respect and submissiveness from his subordinates to please him, and work to boost his ego “face” and “prestige” in public (Komin, 1991: 197-213). With positional power at hand, he reaps benefits both up and down the hierarchical structure. He could make good or bad reports on his subordinates for advancement. He has total power over his subordinates (Komin, 1991: 197-213). He plays favouritism upward by pleasing his higher-ups, and cleverly siding with the winning team and influencing others according to the situation (Komin, 1991: 197-213).

The situation occurs in every single part of an organisation, not even PR departments or units. A requirement about multi-level approvals is one obstacle for PR practitioners who work for government or state enterprises according to several interviews (e.g.

Phetwong, 2008; Rattanapan, 2008; Thongsuwan, 2008). PR in Thailand can be described as a practice under hierarchical structures. It requires complex processes to complete each job. Examples will be provided in the next section.

5. BUDDHIST ORIENTATION

“When you share your Christian faith with a Thai Buddhist, you will invariably run up against a wall which can be summarized in the sense people have that to be Thai is to be a Buddhist” (Johnson, 2006: 138)

Although the Thai constitution since 1932 has provided that a person shall have complete freedom to profess any religion as long as such practices do not go against public order and morality, approximately 95% of the Thai population profess Buddhism (Foreign & Commonwealth Office, 2009; Library of Congress, 2007). Undoubtedly, Buddhism has directly or indirectly exerted a strong influence on people’s everyday life. The simple descriptive sentence that Buddhism teaches tolerance and kindness towards their fellow men regardless of race, creed or nationality, might not be incorrect. But how much such influence is actually perceived and functions in the everyday life of Thai people and thereby differentiates the Thai from other cultural groups, might not be as simple and needs closer scrutiny (Institute of Ratchapad Suandusit, 2000: 83-85; Komin, 1991: 171-185). With regards to religious activities, likewise, the Thai are constantly engaged in merit-making, and numerous other religious ceremonies. These activities are religious rituals. And as a Buddhist country, there are such activities to perform all year round, at work, and in the community. Such occasions are merit-makings on one’s birthday⁹, a new house, new company, new building, celebrations of anniversaries, etc., not to mention those of festivals, customs, and religious days (Komin, 1991: 171-185; Soupap, 1975: 3). These activities are also a part of PR

⁹ Buddhists usually celebrate their birthday with activities that can earn a merit. Activities to earn a merit are for example, give food or stuff to a monk, poor children, disabled people, and general people.

activities. Many organisations have brought religious themes to their PR activities and issue management, as discussed later in this chapter.

Moreover, Buddhism believes in a circle or rebirth and it is a link in a chain of lives. The notion of karma is the most functional one—in the sense that it is more commonly used in everyday life interactions (Komin, 1991: 171-185). However, it is the matter of when and how it is used that is important here. In reality, the concept of karma has almost always been used in “after-event” descriptions or attributions with the differentiation between “good karma” (*Bunwassana*) and “bad karma” usually referred to as *Kam* (karma) (Komin, 1991: 171-185). The Thais generally believe in the inequality *Bunwassana* of each person. That is, each person is born with unequal results of predestined goodness (or good karma).

The Thais always use this concept in situations to attribute someone else’s success, fortune, high status, promotion, or having a good family, good children, and so on (Komin, 1991: 171-185). Wealth and secular status are viewed as the just rewards of merit earned in a previous life (Deyo, 1975). It is used to refer to self only as a conversational ploy to humbly refuse any suggestion for higher status or anything associated with success or promotion, etc. And it is always used in a negative form, like “I don’t have the *Bunwassana* for...” In cases when it is used to truly reflect one’s feelings, it indicates psychological acceptance of one’s failure and another’s achievement, attributing the cause of one’s failure and the cause of another’s achievement to something beyond one’s ability (Komin, 1991: 171-185). The perception of Karma in Buddhism is linked with Thai PR practice. Many social contributions have been conducted by PR practitioners and organisations due to the concept of Karma and earning merits for the next life. Corporate Social Responsibility

(CSR) is, in addition, claimed by Thai PR practitioners to have been set up in Thailand right before the West introduced this term to Thailand. Likewise, CSR is also claimed to be a product of Buddhism due to the concept of Karma (Banvorn, Interview, 1 January 2008). There are rich examples about this in next section that I will discuss later.

6. MONARCHY INSTITUTION RESPECT

...Siam [Thailand] has a common father, the king, who possesses the Ten Kingly Virtues. He possesses morality, ability, bravery, and knowledge as his great assets, and never scorns any people of foreign origins or races that have come to be under this bounty, in all periods and eras, for they all are Siamese [Thai], who are equal, regardless of race and take pride in their country...Therefore, the Thai people should maintain this august institution, since the monarchy most succinctly constitutes the national identity (National Identity Office, 2005: 15)

Thai people have an invaluable cultural heritage that their forefathers diligently created and maintained for posterity. This cultural heritage stands out as the unique identity of an ancient nation. Above all, it is the Thai monarchy that has bestowed great benevolence on the country, the heritage of pride and dignity that all Thais are aware of (National Identity Office, 2005: 11; Institute of Ratchapad Suandusit, 2000: 83-85). Thais have been cherished kings since ancient time, especially, the current king, King Bhumibol as Prem Tinsulanonda, a privy councillor, gave an interview that:

We are a kingdom. You [the West] are not. So you have to think of some minor different ways to run your country. Normal people love the king very much, you know that. If you saw what happened on June 9 [60th anniversary celebrations of King Bhumibol's reign], you can tell how much we love the monarch. That's something different between your [country] and mine (cited in Murphy, 2006).

In fact, it can probably be said that no monarch in the world is as popular as King Bhumibol (Gearing, 1999). Apart from being the longest reigning monarch in the world, he has done thousands of royal development projects (Tasker, 1996: 20-21) such as the

Artificial Rain Project and the Chaipattana Aerator. His hard work over 60 years on the throne has brought love from Thai people (Chadchaidee, 1994; Grunig and Hunt, 1984; Van Praagh, 1989: 17-21). The following extract from his official memoir more or less reflects the sentiment of Thai citizens vis-à-vis their monarch:

Thus his dedication to the welfare of his people becomes so apparent and infectious for all people in all walks of life, and they respond to him and his generosity in an equally dedicated manner. In this way a link is formed between the King and his people who have steadily grown into a bond of mutual trust and affection. Wherever there is joy or celebration, the King is there to bless the joy and share in the celebration. Wherever there is a problem, the King is there to help look for a solution. Wherever there is distress or sorrow, the King is there to soothe, to assist, to strengthen. People thus become used to feel his presence in all instants of life. The King and the people become one. The Throne and the Nation become one, and the profound meaning is thus given to the Thai Throne (Office of His Majesty's Principal Private Secretary, 1987).

Regarding his popularity among Thais, it is unsurprising to see the king's portrait hanging in virtually every home and office in the land, a kind of benevolent father watching over his children is obviously seen in Thailand. Thais stand respectfully for the royal anthem, which is played in cinemas before every screening of every movie (Harvey, 2009; Leithead, 2009). Moreover, every night all TV channels run footage of royal family members attending official functions. Some, such as visits by foreign heads of state, are clearly significant; others would make little television sense anywhere else (Gearing, 1999).

The agenda about the institution of the monarchy seems to appear in almost every study concentrating on Thai studies. For as Momratchawong¹⁰ Tongyai (1990), the King's Private Secretary of Foreign Affairs, explains, 'we Thai...feel that any study or attempt to understand our country would not be complete...unless you take the role of the monarch...into consideration,' (Tongnoi, 1990: 154).

¹⁰ A royal title

In PR practice, in the same way, PR campaigns have been affected by this value. Interviewed PR practitioners agreed that they usually organise events or campaigns about monarchy or the royal family since people tend to participate voluntarily in these events according to several interviews (e.g. Banvorn, 2008; Phetwong, 2008). Hence, the monarchical institution appears throughout this chapter of Thai PR practice. However, I will not criticise the monarchical institution in this thesis because it is against the law in Thailand. However, this *Wattana-dharm Thai* is given to explain Thai culture that impacts Thai PR practice that I will discuss later in the next section. Tongnoi (1990) states that ‘anti-monarchists’, the sceptical or the plain jealous should know that the position of the monarchy is one of the ‘facts of life’ and one has to accept it (Tongnoi, 1990: 158). Most Thai academics are unwilling to comment on the monarchy due to *lésé majesté* law or because of a genuine belief that the monarchy is above criticism (Streckfuss, 1993: 61:58).

7. FACE AND EYES IN SOCIETY ORIENTATION

‘Face and Eyes in Society Orientation’ is a Thai idiom. It stands for the idea that Thais do not like losing face and want to be ‘an honourable member of society’. In addition, they would do activities that help them have ‘reputation’ or ‘respect’ toward others. Thais give more emphasis to prestige and social recognition than hard-working achievement.

This is a very important part of Thai society. Thais believe strongly in the concept of saving face, for example, avoiding confrontation and endeavouring not to embarrass yourself or other people (except when it is *Sanook* to do so) (Soontawan, 1979: 39). The Thai person will not allow anyone to look down on him (Soontawan, 1979: 39). He would rather die (run away, or quit) than to suffer loss of face in society (Soontawan,

1979: 39). Others think is more important than anything else and one would willingly go into debt to 'keep face' (Soontawan, 1979: 39). The ideal face-saver does not bring up negative topics in conversation, and when they notice stress in another's life, they usually will not say anything unless that person complains or asks for help (Werner, 2008; Komin, 1991). This highlights the reason why PR is popular in Thailand. Not bringing up negative topics and conveying only organisations' positive messages to the public is a nature of Thai PR. This *Wattana-dharm Thai* helps balance communication between PR and the public very well. While Thais prefer listening to good things, PR communicates positive messages. They serve the needs of each other.

Psychologically, the nature of achievement and motivation of the Thai is in contrast to Americans (Komin, 1991). With social recognition as an important underlying motive for success, achievement in Thailand is more social in nature (Komin, 1991: 197-213). While Americans have tasked themselves and professionalism as achievement goals, with self assertive efforts as the means, the *Thai give prestige and social recognition as goals for success* in life, with work and relations as necessary means (Komin, 1991: 197-213). All Thais, without exception, ranked hardworking achievement value much lower than the group of social relationship values. This trait has been influenced by the Buddhist view of man's subjugation to nature, giving rise to "opportunism" rather than "hard-work" as being a root to success (McClelland, 1961).

In general, therefore, to be successful and to "achieve" in Thai society does not depend so much on one's competence as on one's ability to perceive and choose the right means and opportunity that lead to success in the society (Komin, 1985: 179).

In Thai PR practice, ‘face and eyes in society’ value has been reflected in some PR gimmick. For instance, the National Blood Centre has used the psychology about face and eyes in the society as Phetwong (2008) says:

The identity of Thai PR is a matter of the donor. The Thai donor is easy to understand, but difficult to please. The donors think they are important. Hence, we must do something to emphasize that they are special. For example, we have a Donor Pin Appreciation Ceremony, a day event that praises the donors, since we know that the donors are proud of this day. In addition, we must write big news about this event, not just small gossip news to make them happy. We have to link their feelings with the campaign. Or we have World Blood Day for appropriate donors. How to make them special is what PR have to do. Indeed, the most important job for PR is recognition. You have to *extol* the donors (Phetwong, Interview, 11 February 2008).

According to the interview, ‘extol’ was highlighted in order to show how ‘face and eyes in the society’ works in the Thai PR working world. Because Thais like to be ‘a prestige member’, PR must pay attention to this *Wattana-dharm Thai* and know the right time to use it.

8. FORM OVER THE CONTENT

Form over the content has a direct meaning. It means that Thai PR believes that a good form or a nice appearance is more crucial than the quality of content. In Thailand, the value of “form” more than “content” seems to point out a number of behavioural patterns, ranging from bribing to getting good grades, to get degrees and honorary degrees (Komin, 1991: 186-191). Education in Thailand has been perceived more as a “means” of climbing up the social ladder, in terms of higher prestige and higher salary pay, than as an end value in itself. Thais prefer highly educated people (Komin, 1991: 186-191). They value and give importance to form more than content or substances. These cases occurred, because basically the Thai value good form and appearance—the

proper respectable social “front” and all the status and prestige related symbols. Since the Thais place highest value on the “ego” self, the “face”, and social relations, these decorative external labels, degree, decorations, etc., are important, for the possession of them would identify the owner with the respected class of the society. When these are something to be sought after, under the circumstances of Thai social relations networks, and flexibility over rules and law, many things can be and have been “bought” (Komin, 1991: 186-191).

Hence, money is sometimes claimed to be the most important item rather than honours and honesty in Thai society since it is seen as an honour and those who possess it are lifted up and praised (Soupap, 1975: 4-5). The value of a person is not measured by personal attributes or goodness but by his money (Soupap, 1975: 4-5). For instance, in the past, persons who donated a sufficient amount of money to the military were allowed to wear the honorary military uniform which led to the joke of “round-belly general” or the “round-belly army” for a while (Komin, 1991).

In Thai PR practice, I found this *Wattana-dharm Thai* plays a part in Thai PR works. The obvious example is when Thai PR organises a press conference. According to my interviewees, PR is usually concerned about gimmicks or formats of a press conference rather than a press release itself. PR tries to do *Saang Kwaampratabjai* toward journalists through a creative press conference as I will discuss in the next section.

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THE PRACTICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN THAILAND

This section aims to address RQ3.2: What is the experience of practising PR in *Wattana-dharm Thai* in terms of daily realities? It also expands the understanding about the nature of Thai PR and *Wattana-dharm Thai* aspects that influence Thai PR through reflection of the interviewees who have been working in the PR world for decades. In addition, I used documentary sources and my experience in the PR field to support explanations on some missing points. This section provides rich qualitative examples with quotes of interviewees.

The description of practice in Thailand is organised into functional operations highlighted by my interviewees. According to my interviewees, I found eleven areas of Thai PR practice in no particular order as follows:

1. Publicity
2. Media Relations
3. Community Relations
4. Issue Management
5. Social Contribution to Corporate Social Responsibility
6. Internal PR
7. Special Events
8. Executives counselling
9. Partnership
10. Crisis Management
11. Research and Evaluation

1. PUBLICITY

Publicity is a routine part of the work of Thai PR practitioners. Government and state enterprises used traditional publicity as a major tool for PR while publicity plus creativity was very important to PR works in the business sector. Indeed, government and state enterprises paid more attention to publicity than other activities according to several interviews.¹¹

Rungsepanodorn (2008), Chief of PR Division in The Treasury Department in the Ministry of Finance, advocated that his work is mainly on producing publications. Moreover, he accepted the fact that government PR practice is like doing a report, with unenthusiastic news releases. However, he explained the reason why PR practitioners write news to please their bosses:

Indeed, a bureaucracy is not like a private organisation. It has a hierarchal structure. There are steps of filters. For instant, I correct my employees' news writing. Then, it needs to be sent to my higher-ranked bosses to screen the writing. Finally, we could release the news. It sometimes takes 3 days for correcting procedures since the news from us is released to 62 million people (Rungsepanodorn, Interview, 28 March 2008).

Likewise, Jaiprasart (2008), Director of the PR Division of the National Housing Authority, gave her opinion that besides the complex structure of an organisation, a lack of PR knowledge among higher-ranked executives has also been an obstacle for government PR. She pointed out that PR in government agencies sometimes is not directly under top management and there are many stages of approval. It makes PR tough work, especially when top management is not keen on PR, but still involved with the task of correcting news releases (Jaiprasart, Interview, 8 March 2008).

¹¹ See quotes in appendix 4.9

In addition, limited budgets and a non-competitive environment are also problematic and affect the lack of creativity in government publicity. Rungseepanodorn (2008) agreed that many Thai government agencies do not have much creativity because they don't have enough personnel, money, and competitors¹². Moreover, they could easily ask for support from both public and private organisations. Thai PR in government agencies have good collaborative connections with the media and their news is mostly related to the life of Thai citizens. Moreover, they are hierarchically-structured monopoly businesses. Hence, Thai government PR is rather reactive than proactive according to the interview Kittisaowapak (2008).¹³ Differing to state enterprises and the business sector, it is essential to have differentiated publicity due to the factor of high competition among the PR industry.¹⁴ Punyaratabandhu (2008), for example, advocates that publicity must have creativity:

...our photo releases are distinguished. We have rules for photos taken - *no hand shaking, no exchange of folders, and no champagne toasts*. I think they are so plenty. We have to be more creative. We have valuable content, a great boss, good speeches, and cool photo releases; hence, we obtain plenty of photo releases for sure (Punyaratabandhu, Interview, 11 February 2008).

According to interviews, it can obviously be seen that there are two *Wattana-dharm Thai* aspects that influence Thai PR publicity. First, Thai PR publicity teams work under a hierarchical structure. *Chao Nai* or a boss is an important person in the approval process. Hence, Thai PR tends to do *Saang Kwaamptraatabjai* to their bosses rather than its readers. The boss becomes the most crucial target for Thai PR in publicity work. Second, Thai PR gives emphasis to 'form' over 'content'. The term '*creative*' or '*no hand shaking, no exchange of folders, and no champagne toasts*' in my interviews can reflect the nature of Thai PR publicity very well. Thai PR pays attention to creativity

¹² See a quote in appendix 4.10

¹³ See a quote in appendix 4.11

¹⁴ See a quote in appendix 4.12

rather than content. These *Wattana-dharm Thai* may unexpectedly become obstacles to efficiency of PR publicity jobs because PR should address more on the need of 'its audience' through quality content rather than trying to please 'its boss' through 'nice format'.

2. MEDIA RELATIONS

According to several of my interviewees (e.g. Nawawat, 2008; Pradistsakul, 2008; Punyaratabandhu, 2008), Thai PR practices rely predominantly on media relations as Boonnak (2008) viewed that:

Thai PR concentrates on personal relationships. We have not just dealt with only our tasks, but adhoc duties. Thai journalists prefer personal relationships. Sometimes, what we have got is from personal bonds that we have....We can talk and request personally. For example, I ask them to help us in some areas because we do not have enough budget... (Boonak, Interview, 14 February 2008).

Personal relationships have been mentioned to be crucial for PR work as Prownpuntu (2008) pointed out in the importance of personal relations between PR and the media:

...Thai journalists like to be well taken care of... I can tell that sometimes it doesn't depend on how good news releases are. Young generations can write press releases, but they don't have connections. Sometimes, we have strong relationships with the journalists. We can call them and ask them to write news for us. I think 'connection' is most important for Thai PR...We have to think that journalists are our friends...Good feelings between each other and connections are significantly important (Prownpuntu, Interview, 13 February 2008).

'Friendship' is a keyword for media relations in Thailand. Several interviewed practitioners clarified the relationships between PR and the media as a friendship according to several interviews (e.g. Prownpuntu, 2008; Punyaratabandhu, 2008). Unsurprisingly, the relationship in Thai style occurs at this stage. As mentioned above about '*Bunghun* relationship' and '*Namjai* relationship' together with *Pen Mitr*

relationship, they have been taken into account for media relations. Sometimes, relationships in a Thai style can be built personally, without the boundary of time and distance (Komin, 1991). ‘*Saang Kwaampratabjai* with journalists’ tends to be the aim of PR media relations. PR practitioners are mindful of journalists:

...I have emphasised over this issue with my employees. Journalists are like our customers. We must build impressions with journalists who come to our press conferences. They must *take both news releases and impressions* back home. We might have small souvenirs for them. However, it is not because journalists are greedy...but we want to do something for them (Tonawanik, 2007: 89-91).

Punyaratabandhu (2008) reflected her experience on how to make relations with the media in a Thai style, besides the framework of time and occasion:

...We know how to approach and make friends with the media. Journalists say that they don’t want to have rice, but they hunger for news... we should understand their characteristics. I, for example, have to go back home to bake blueberry pies as I promised to journalists. I have to know when they have lunch. I would not bring them a pie at that time since they are too full to see how delicate my bakery is. We must know the right time to offer something to someone. Journalists, moreover, are modest. They do not like luxury things (Punyaratabandhu, Interview, 11 February 2008).

Again, she showed another example of how she gave journalists things to *satisfy* them on an occasion:

Giving pounds of cakes to journalists at the New Year Festival is so boring. No journalists like it. Last year (2007), we did something different. In order to emphasise our branding, we tried to find something which would remind journalists of our company. Finally, we gave them baskets of magenta heart-shaped delectable limitation fruits – Thai sweets with magenta ribbons. Journalists were happy. This year (2008), we gave them ‘*Somtam* (ส้มตำ)’ – Thai Papaya Salad in magenta baskets together with spoons. Many years ago, Muang Thai Life Assurance was the first company that gave vegetable baskets to journalists at New Year. They were very happy. We are mindful of journalists. It is very difficult to approach them. We must understand appropriate time and places (Punyaratabandhu, Interview, 11 February 2008).

In the same way, Boonak (2008) made a comment about *Namjai* and media relations:

...We have to take care of journalists on occasions such as New Year and their birthdays. We must care for their feelings. Journalists help us a lot. They are crucial to our jobs. We must care for them. *We must appreciate and thank them. Namjai is what we have to give them when we work together* (Boonak, interview, 14 February 2008).

Based on another *Wattana-dharm Thai of Sanook*, entertaining and relaxing gimmicks are also important for Thai media relations such as press conferences. Many organisations in the business sector, including big state enterprises such as Thai Airways International Public Company Limited have paid attention to gimmicks to attract the media and gain more media coverage. ‘We try to make press conference colourful and *sanook*...the ultimate outcomes are the good feelings of journalists toward us’ (Tonawanik, 2007: 91). The formats of press conferences in Thailand have changed from ‘*Plain and Formal press conferences*’- having backdrops behind executive panel press conferences, to ‘*Event press conferences*’- more relaxing and lively. Event press conferences were defined by Prownpuntu (2008):

Press Conference formats have changed from previously. In the past, we had only backdrops and a room for press. Now, it’s more colourful. I can say it becomes an event press conference. For example, we launched ‘*Samui Island (เกาะสมุย) Trip*’ project. We organised a press conference with a theme of the sea. We had beach umbrellas and our executives were dressed up in Hawaii concepts. They had to dance as well. We also made journalists excited by putting *Leelawadee (ลีลาวดี)* [Name of flowers] garland around their necks...Sometimes, the styles [of press conference] are like variety shows...(Prownpuntu, Interview, 13 February 2008).

Another example is a press conference of Muang Thai Life Assurance Co., Ltd, according to Punyaratabandhu:

In the past, a press conference was just set up as a panel with a bunch of flowers. At the present, there are many changes. Muang Thai Life Assurance did many things. For example, we wanted to organize a press conference in order to show company profits. We tried to find a creative concept for this press conference. Finally, we obtained the idea of a press conference on an airplane. This idea could emphasize the fact that our company had high profits and we will go higher. Indeed, we have sponsored 'Nok' airline – the domestic airline in Thailand. We did a press conference on the flight from Mahongsorn to Chaingmai - provinces in the North of Thailand. We invited journalists on our journey. PR people and Chief Executives were dressed as airhostesses. Vice Presidents were asked to dress up as mechanics while our president dressed up as a captain. As a result, there was a lot of our company news on the media (Punyaratabandhu, Interview, 11 February 2008).

A press party is another activity for Thai media relations according to interviews (the interviews of Banvorn, 2008; Punyaratabandhu, 2008). Normally, Thai PR practitioners organise a press party annually in order to say thank you to the press. Indeed, Thais like to have ceremonies and celebrations (Soupap, 1975). Besides *Sanook* [having fun], it is also held to return gratitude or *Roo Bhunkhun* to journalists who help organisations communicate news and activities to the public. It's a press party, basically, with gimmicks and luxury food (Punyaratabandhu, Interview, 11 February 2008).

Another popular activity that Thai PR practitioners prefer to do for media relations is a press tour (Banvorn, Interview, 1 January 2008; Kongklan, Interview, 12 February 2008). A press tour is a trip for journalists and PR practitioners. It is an opportunity for PR practitioners to get closer to journalists by doing some activities together. Apart from *Sanook* [being fun], a press tour could bring *samakhii* harmony to the group and build good connections between PR practitioners and journalists. Banvorn (2008) reflected his experiences about a press tour that:

We organise a press tour for them [journalists] to have fun with us...they get to know us more than previously...we, for example, took journalists to *Surin Island* (เกาะสุรินทร์) to do some diving activities...Ultimately, it makes the PR job easier and unexpectedly successful (Banvorn, Interview, 1 January 2008).

According to the interviews, it can be seen that personal connection is very important for Thai media relations. All activities held by PR practitioners aim to do *Saang Kwaampratabjai* with journalists. Many *Wattana-dharm Thai* such as *Bunkhun*, *Namjai*, *Pen Mitr* relationship, *Sanook*, form over content, and *samakkii* have obviously influenced Thai media relations. Hence, media relations in Thailand rely on strong personal bonds, which are based on *Wattana-dharm Thai*.

3. COMMUNITY RELATIONS

As mentioned in community-based orientation, most Thais live in a rural setting as villagers. In addition, they have extended families that live next to each other and have influenced neighbours nearby (National Identity Board, 2000). Therefore, several organisations have seen opportunities to build relationships between companies and the public through community relations (Keangpradoo, Interview, 12 March 2008). Indeed, the most significant organisations requiring community relations practice are organisations that are risky to activism and involved in environmental issues such as Electricity Generating Authority, Telecommunication, and the oil industry (Kongklan, Interview, 12 February 2008; Santhanasiri, Interview, 21 January 2008). “Our plan is to do local community development campaigns...we will provide the body of knowledge about local wisdom management and education....develop local schools, give education about environmental protection to the community...we’ll give the projects to His Majesty the King when he is 80 years old” (Maneenoi, Interview, 31 January 2008)’.

Panyamak, Assistant Governor of the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand and Chair of Sub-committee in Communication and Public Acceptance, in the same way, stated that,

Since our job was concerned with provincial areas, making community relations was significant. We must do community relations continually because our business is at risk from many stakeholders. Of course, some groups agreed with us 100% while others resisted. PR practice was the key to how to make our work a success. When the dam was constructed, local people were glad that they got electricity. On the other hand, they disagreed with the idea of making a dam. However, we respected their opinions. We were the good neighbours. We helped them set up a cooperative and encouraged them to run their own enterprises...PR departments must *support both academics* and set guidelines for community relations. However, the practice of community relations depends upon the desires of each village...Mostly; we got them (cited in Thammawitpatch, 1999: 276).

Advance Info Service (Public) Co., Ltd., the biggest telecommunication company in Thailand, is another case demonstrating how community relations practice works. The organisation itself is concerned with the community due to the frequency with which they establish telecommunication equipment or fibres and expand its network to rural areas. Hence, in order to maintain relationships between the company and communities surrounding it, AIS has operated some community relations projects such as ‘*Dek dee hua jai kraeng* (เด็กดีหัวใจแกร่ง) [Good Kids with Solid Hearts] and ‘*Tang Nam pue Thai mai Kad Nam* (ถังน้ำเพื่อไทยไม่ขาดน้ำ) [Water Tanks for the Thai Community inspired by His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej] (Keangpradoo, Interview, 12 March 2008) in order to gain trust from the community. Keangpradoo, PR Vice President of AIS, explained about ‘*Dek dee hua jai kraeng* (เด็กดีหัวใจแกร่ง) [Good Kids with Solid Hearts] that:

...For *Dek dee hua jai kraeng* (เด็กดีหัวใจแกร่ง) campaign, we have brought and shown cases of children in poor families to society. Those children have their parents, schools, and teachers. We have not only given to children, but are also concerned with their families. We have to figure out why those families are poor

and teach them how to earn a living. For example, we have a case - a family who had shell farms, but did not have any knowledge about marketing. We asked our local employees to coordinate with government officers to educate them about this [marketing]. The ultimate result is that they love us. We didn't give them money. The feedback doesn't return in money form, but we know that they love us because they always pass their shells through our local employees to us (Keangpradoo, Interview, 12 March 2008).

Winning an opinion leader's heart is another job that Thai PR usually do to support their practices. Thai PR practitioners build relationship with opinion leaders in each area that they have done the projects as Thabthim, General Manager - External Affairs of The Shell Company of Thailand Limited explained her work:

Our relationship with opinion leaders is based on trust. Each year, we must visit them. *We meet them every New Year. We help each other.* It's better to open communication channels (Thabthim, Interview, 20 March 2008).

Besides community-based orientation with an opinion leader, I found that Thai PR practitioners work under other *Wattana-dharm Thai* such as *Namjai*, *Bunkun*, and form over content. For example, from Thabtim's interview that '*We meet them every New Year. We help each other...*' it indicates relationship in a Thai style. *Namjai* and *Bunkun* were dominant here in practice. In addition, local development projects or 'giving' education on various subjects (such as marketing and business administration) were clearly seen in practice, according to the interviews. 'Giving' is a concept of form over content as this Buddhist teaching appeared frequently in the interviews. Hence, it can be seen that Thai PR practitioners do community relations based on *Wattana-dharm Thai*.

4. ISSUE MANAGEMENT

Issue management has been ranked as one of the crucial jobs for Thai PR (Thammawitpatch, 1999; Kongklan, Interview, 12 February 2008). It is the identification, monitoring and analysis of trends in key public opinions that can mature

into public policy and regulatory or legislative constraint of the private sector (Health, 1997: 6). Issues management implies a strategic role for PR that can highlight communication challenges and reputational threats and help the organisation to think through in advance its stance and policy in relations to emerging and future agendas (L'Etang, 2008: 79). Indeed, issue management can help arouse media and the public interest and creative agendas become more vital for Thai issue management according to the interview of Keangpradoo (cited in Thammawitpatch, 1999: 278-279)¹⁵. However, in some organisations, creativity is controlled and limited by Risk Management departments, as Punyaratabandhu (2008) stated:

I think it is very important to do reputation risk management. My president had once volunteered to give a press conference underwater by diving and feeding a shark by himself in order to let people know that Muang Thai Life Assurance was a partner with Siam Ocean World. We as a PR people had studied the possibility to do so. My president can absolutely swim. In addition, there was an instructor who could look after the president while he was feeding a shark. However, this idea was not accepted by the risk management department in our company. Another example was when we planned to make the president give a speech on the back of an elephant since we were a partner with The National Elephant Institute. The risk management department did not allow us to do that due to its danger (Punyaratabandhu, Interview, 11 February 2008).

In Thailand, agendas engage with both global and local issues and trends. Regarding globalisation, several PR practitioners agreed that PR agendas correspond to global trends such as global warming and environmental issues. Thai PR follows trends and PR campaigns over a period of time according to several interviews (e.g. Kongklan, 2008; Hemmatad, 2008; Hemmatad, 2008; Prownpuntu, 2008; Rattanapan, 2008).

However, besides global trends, there are plenty of *local issues* that could be raised and noted. Firstly, any issues linked to the institution of the monarchy and the royal family are extremely interesting in Thai society. As mentioned above about the value of the

¹⁵ See a quote in appendix 4.13

beloved monarch and kings in Thai society, any PR campaign that involves and/or has been created for and/or from the idea of the King, seems to be successful in Thailand. People tend to participate and join projects (Phetwong, Interview, 11 February 2008). Regarding the interviews, there are plenty of PR campaigns associated with the institute such as Blood Donation for his Majesty the King on his birthday, *Clinic Loy Fah Cha-learn-pra-kiet* (คลินิกลอยฟ้าเฉลิมพระเกียรติ) [Sky Medical Clinic for Royals] of TV 5, and *Tang Nam pue Thai mai Kad Nam* (ถังน้ำเพื่อไทยไม่ขาดน้ำ) [Water Tanks for Thai Community inspired by His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej]. Several PR practitioners choose to have cooperation with the king's foundation in order to create and develop PR campaigns such as the campaign of Thai Airways International Public Company Limited:

We have contacted The Chaiwattana Foundation¹⁶. This foundation has remote lands waiting to be developed and funded. We planted Vetiver grass continually in order to develop soils in distant areas. Every year, our employees participate in the project, helping plant forests (Prownpuntu, Interview, 13 February 2008).

Secondly, any issues related to Buddhism are found more attractive in Thai society. As discussed above, Thai society has a Buddhist orientation and there are, unsurprisingly, a lot of PR campaigns corresponding with Thai Buddhism or Buddhist events¹⁷. Indeed, it is fair to say that in Thai society, the more you make merit, the more you get face and eyes in the society. These values obviously impact issue management practice. For instance, there was a PR project '*Thot Krathin* (ทอดกฐิน) Recycle' that took advantage of

¹⁶ The Chaiwattana Foundation was initiated by His Majesty the King, Adulyadej, aiming to help his people through development activities in various forms where help can also be given in other ways that truly benefit the people and that are not affected by time constraints.

¹⁷ See an illustrative quote in appendix 4.14

a Buddhist occasion ‘*Ork Phansa*’¹⁸(ออกพรรษา). This project aimed to convince its employees to donate recycled or unused products to the organisation. Thereafter, the organisation donated money to a charity or to temples from selling recycled goods (Kritsamai, Interview, 22 January 2008).

Thirdly, any issues that related to community and culture seem popular in Thailand. For instance, DTAC, the big telecommunication and mobile network in Thailand, has a successful campaign ‘*Sam Nuek Rak Bann Kerd* (สำนึกรักบ้านเกิด) [Be Mindful to Your Birthplace]’. This project aims to persuade sons or daughters who have been away from home or emigrated to the city for jobs or education to return home and return gratitude (*Tob Tan Bunkhun* ‘ตอบแทนบุญคุณ’) to their birthplace and parents (Klinla-Or, Interview, 9 March 2008).

5. SOCIAL CONTRIBUTION TO CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR)

Social contribution could be done in various ways such as culture and arts, religion, sport, and music. These depend on type of products, services, including budget and the support from the executives of organisations (Thammawitpatch, 1999). It was reported that social contribution has been practised by PR practitioners since the beginning of the

¹⁸ During the annual three-month Rain Retreat, *phansa* in Thai, Buddhist monks are committed to remaining in their monastery overnight. This tradition predates Buddhism. In the *phansa* period, the monks meditate intensely, study rigorously and teach vigorously. *Phansa* also is customarily the season for young men to enter the monkhood for spiritual education. When the Rain Retreat ends (*Ork Phasa*), monks throughout the country receive new annual presents in a ceremony called *thot kathin*. Villagers present monks with Buddhist literature, kitchen equipment, financial contributions, or anything deemed a necessity for monks during the forthcoming monastic year. This ceremony unveils an intricate pattern of countrywide support for monasteries and temples.

profession (see chapter 4). ‘When talking about PR in Thailand, we usually talk about internal PR and social contribution’ (Kongklan, Interview, 12 February 2008).

Social contribution is famous in Thailand due to the concept of Karma in Buddhist teaching. To have *Bunwassana* (born to be rich, beautiful, a well educated person) for the next life, a person must make merit as much as they can. Social Contribution is, hence, one of the ways to earn merits. In Buddhism, earning merits is not only to give money, but also to give other materials such as help and education to others. Hence, social contribution projects in Thailand can range from a donation to education providers.

Apart from Buddhist values, social contribution is the way to show *Namjai* relationships to the public. To help others when in trouble is an element of *Namjai* relationship. Moreover, if the people who organisations help have *Bunkhun* relationship to companies, for instance, they are their clients. Social contribution is the route to showing gratitude (*Roo Bunkhun*). Indeed, these relationships indirectly lead to ‘face and eyes’ of society value to the organisation. On the other hand, they help build image for organisations (Pradistsakul, Interview, 24 January 2008).

However, the majority of PR social contribution campaigns in Thailand still range from donations to campaigns. Based on ‘form over the content’, money is claimed to be the most important item rather than honour and honesty in Thai society, since it is seen as an honour and those who possess it are lifted up and praised. The valuable person is not measured by personal attributes or goodness but by his money (Soupap, 1975: 4-5). Materials such as railway stations and infrastructure are sometimes seen to be symbols of development toward community’ eyes (Komin, 1991). Hence, it is unsurprising to

see a lot of donation campaigns in the form of ‘funding’ or ‘material support’ established in Thailand.

Several PR projects such as ‘Fund raising for environmental disaster victims’ of TV5 (Kongklan, Interview, 12 February 2008), ‘Fund for education’ by The Shell Company of Thailand Limited (Thabthim, Interview, 20 March 2008), and ‘*Tang Nam pue Thai mai Kad Nam* (ถังน้ำใจเพื่อไทยไม่ขาดน้ำ) [Water Tanks for Thai Community inspired by His Majesty King Adulyadej] (Keangpradoo, Interview, 12 March 2008) are obviously seen in Thai PR practice.

Indeed, it is noted that most Thai donations are given to local Thais, not generated globally. This might be because Thailand is a developing country, which still needs local support and have many areas to be developed.

Again, the beloved monarch institution value could be easily found in social contribution campaigns. The Tourism Authority of Thailand, for instance, organised ‘Disabled Kids on Train Tour’ – a social contribution created for His Majesty the King Bhumibol (Rattanapan, Interview, 15 February 2008). Moreover, community relations could be commonly used for social contribution campaigns (Mahavanich, Interview, 3 April 2008).

In fact, a social contribution in Thailand is sometimes understood by PR practitioners as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Because of the same task of protect ‘face and eyes’ of a company in society, social contribution and CSR are sometimes used interchangeably in the sense of the Thai PR context. Many PR practitioners pointed out that CSR has been practiced in the form of social contributions since ancient times - before the concept of CSR had been introduced to Thailand (the interviews of Banvorn, 2008; Hemmatad, 2008; Klinla-Or, 2008; Kongklan, 2008; Mahavanich, 2008).

Hemmatad (2008) denied using the term ‘CSR’ if it is not necessary. In addition, he added that CSR is one of the principal teachings of Buddhism in Thailand:

We have practised it [CSR] since ancient times...Thais have made merit since a long time ago. The westerners have just created this term. Indeed, CSR is originally from Buddhist activities such as donations and *Tod Pah Paa* (ทอดผ้าป่า) [giving monks necessary things without occasions]. They are CSR...I use the term ‘social contribution’ instead of ‘CSR’ when I propose projects to Thai clients. If necessary, I would use it with foreign clients...I think CSR is how to make merits (Hemmatad, Interview, 7 March 2008).

Likewise, Jaichansukkit (2008) emphasised that CSR activities have been practiced in Thailand since the previous era. He demonstrated the case of Siam Commercial Bank:

CSR consists of two parts: ethics and social contribution. We started practising it long time ago, but we didn’t call it CSR. The case is similar to ISO and good governance terms. We have practiced them since ancient times, but we haven’t defined the terms. To prove this, you could review Siam Commercial Bank’s annual reports from the National Office building. You will find the statements about our social contribution activities. We just hadn’t called it ‘CSR’ (Jaichansukkit, Interview, 9 April 2008).

In the same way, Nawawat (2008) agreed with other practitioners. She explained from her experience that:

“CSR has been popular recently in Thai PR. Ten years ago, we used the term ‘social contribution’. It changed to CSR 3-5 years ago” (Nawawat, Interview, 7 April 2008).

However, due to overlapping tasks between community relations and social contribution campaigns in Thailand, CSR is claimed to originally come from community relations.

“Every organisation should have CSR in order to contribute to society. We did it in the past, but we didn’t call it CSR, but community relations” (Mahavanich, Interview, 3 April 2008).

In practice, most CSR activities are conducted by big organisations according to several interviews (e.g. Kritsamai, 2008; Santhanasiri, 2008; Banvorn, 2008; Keangpradoo, I 2008; Maneenoi, 2008) that are concerned with community relations (Santhanasiri, Interview, 21 January 2008). Mahavanich, (2008) revealed a reason why big organisations must have CSR activities through her experience:

...It is a must to show that we have obvious CSR activities. In a public company's view, you have to return benefits to society. If your organisation is big and won't contribute to society, you would look bad in peoples' eyes. CSR, hence, is an indicator [to judge how good or bad a company is] (Mahavanich, Interview, 3 April 2008).

Although many Thai practitioners view social contribution and CSR as the same matter, some practitioners see a difference between these two. CSR concentrates more on the involvement in projects by employees rather than just giving money/materials or doing campaigns as a social contribution according to several interviews (e.g. Klinla-Or, 2008; Mahavanich, 2008; Prownpuntu, 2008)¹⁹.

Some organisations, in addition, such as DTAC and PTT Public Company Limited (PTT) have viewed CSR as having a broader meaning than PR. They have made an effort to separate CSR from PR according to the interviews of Klinla-Or (2008) and Maneenoi, (2008). DTAC, indeed, doesn't have a PR department. On the other hand, it has a CSR department, aiming to communicate both internally and externally. PR tasks such as media relations, indeed, are a part of a CSR department (Klinla-Or, Interview, 9 March 2008). In the same way, PTT has made an effort to separate CSR from the PR department. Maneenoi, PR Policy Manager of PTT said that:

¹⁹ See quotes in appendix 4.15

...We have tried to separate CSR from the PR department. In fact, big companies such as PTT must be audited. We do not want people to think that we are making an image. On the other hand, we really want to contribute to society. If the one who does CSR is still practising PR, it is unavoidable for people to think about that. It's better to move CSR to the Social Department (Maneenoi, Interview, 31 January 2008).

6. INTERNAL PR

Internal PR in Thailand has been crucial for Thai PR practices since early in Thai PR history (see chapter 4). PR tasks involve both internal and external PR according several interviews (e.g. Jaichansukkit, 2008; Jaiprasart, 2008; Tippayachanawong, 2008). However, internal PR seems to be more vital than external PR since it helps smooth all external PR activities according to the interview of Banvorn (2008)²⁰ and it is very special to facilitate communication in big organisations that have large numbers of employees such as Thai Airways International Public Company Limited²¹.

Another task of internal PR is to encourage proactive PR-protection for crises that might happen to organisations (Hongthong, Interview, 20 February 2008). Prownpuntu expressed her experience that:

...we have Thai Airway State Enterprise Labour Union that is free to talk or communicate to the public. Sometimes, there are many misunderstandings between employees or employees and the company. We should do internal communication (Prownpuntu, Interview, 13 February 2008).

Not only to communicate corporate news and for proactive PR purposes, PR has the task of gaining employees' awareness towards social issues such as global warming and environmental issues in order to support CSR projects.

²⁰ See a quote in appendix 4.16

²¹ See a quote in appendix 4.17

...Currently, big companies have developed social contribution to CSR. It means that we must raise awareness of employees toward social responsibility. For instance, we should convince them to become conscious of the environment, convincing them to collect used papers for blind people or local handicrafts (Keangpradoo, Interview, 12 March 2008).

Indeed, to persuade employees to participate with CSR projects, PR has to coordinate with Human Resource Departments (HR). Although many textbooks state that PR sometimes has overlap tasks with HR, they do help support each other. PR assists HR in term of training, organising internal events, and conveying HR news to employees (Kongklan, Interview, 12 February 2008).

Creating employee loyalty to the company is what PR must do. Based on *Wattana-dharm Thai* of face and eyes in society value and ‘form’ over ‘content’, strategies of internal PR in Thailand seems to be about making employees proud of their jobs and companies according to several interviews (e.g. Banvorn, 2008; Thabthim, 2008) by rewarding them with gifts. For example, Siam Motors Co., Ltd. gives annual awards to the best employees who are honest and hardworking. Likewise, Charoen Pokphand Groups Co.,Ltd. (CP) has designed and given prizes to employees who have worked for the company for a long time. Hongthong (2008) related her story that:

We reward employees who have worked with us for long time. We coordinated with the HR department to organise an activity...We designed lotus-shaped gold medals as special prizes for 12 years, 24 years, and 36 years employment. We gave gold medals, gold medals with small diamonds, and gold medals with bigger diamonds to employees who have worked with us for 12 years, 24 years, and 36 years respectively. It costs huge amounts of money, but we have done it for our employees (Hongthong, Interview, 20 February 2008).

In fact, giving awards to loyal employees does not mean that Thais are greedy or prefer luxurious things, it reflects relationships in a Thai style: *Bunghun* and *Namjai* relationships as Soupap (1975) stated that *Bunghun* should not and cannot be measured

quantitatively in material terms. It is an ongoing, binding of good reciprocal feeling and lasting relationship. In addition, society provides ways (ceremonies) for expressing gratitude (Soupap, 1975: 7). A company, indeed, organised the event to return *Bunkhun* to employees. Mentally, the ceremonies could address Thai employees' sense of achievement as identified in relationship in a Thai style value, of achievement-task orientation that give Thais prestige and social recognition as goals for success in life, with work and relations as necessary means (Komin, 1991: 197-213).

Regarding the reflection of Hongthong (2008), it can be seen that ceremonies are commonly used as techniques to achieve and support internal PR as it can bring *samakhii*²² harmony to the organisation (Johnson, 2006: 146). Buddhist ceremonies performed for any occasion such as merit-making on company anniversaries are another famous internal PR activity in Thailand (Hongthong, Interview, 20 February 2008).

In addition, due to relationship in a Thai style and hierarchical structure, employees sometimes hardly argue with their superiors and avoid making criticisms to them. Surprisingly, Thai PR plays a role of reducing ambiguous situations within organisations, compromising conflicts between management and employees. Hemmatad (2008) reflected this issue in his interview that:

Organisations have seen the importance of PR agencies more than previously since we are middlemen. Hiring PR agencies is better than doing in-house PR...Sometimes, their bosses have made mistakes, which they could not say directly. We, hence, work with in-house PR to facilitate communication (Hemmatad, Interview, 7 March 2008).

²² *Samakhii* harmony is united harmony in English term

According to Hemmatad's interview, Thai PR practitioners also work on managing conflicts within an organisation. PR works as a middleman to reduce a gap between *Cho Nai* and low-positioned employees in hierarchically structured organisations.

7. SPECIAL EVENTS FOR PR

Special events are used to support PR practice, especially in Thailand. "Another adhoc job of PR is event organising. It is a PR discipline...PR has a tough job...they are not doing only PR; events are also their task...practitioners do not have only routine functions" (Nawawat, Interview, 7 April 2008).

Based on the nature of Thai PR, Thais love having fun, entertainment, ceremonies and celebrations (*Sanook*). Moreover, they prefer social relationships because it is a collectivist society. Therefore, special events for PR are a famous PR activity in Thailand. It, according to the interviews, helps PR practitioners help organisations get closer to target groups.²³

Thai PR practitioners tend to use special events more than previously because of the slowdown in the economy. 'Due to small amounts of budget, PR has moved forward to special events' (Kritsamai, Interview, 22 January 2008). Therefore, gimmicks were mentioned by interviewed PR practitioners to help attract media interest. Also, it is used to colour PR events. Thai journalists prefer gimmicks, attractive, and special contents...Thais like excitement as we can see from diary news headlines...the majority of headlines in newspapers are negative...we as PR people do not want our news to be that way so we need to create more lively events (Hemmatad, Interview, 7 March 2008). Hence, 'the strangest, the biggest, the newest, unforgettable events are typically seen in

²³ See quotes in appendix 4.18

Thai PR events according to several interviews (e.g. Hemmatad, 2008; Hemmatad, 2008; Jaichansukkit, 2008; Kritsamai, 2008; Pradistsakul, 2008).

...we do not know the style of events that Thai people prefer. However, we know the favourite events for the Thai media. Thai media *likes excitement, differentiation, outstanding, and novel events* such as painting the town or the longest catwalk of Sunsilk²⁴. The events that never happen in Thailand are what the Thai media is seeking. It is such a hard task for PR to think about. Hence, PR today must have more creativity and innovative thinking (Santhanasiri, Interview, 21 January 2008).

Hemmatad related his story when he launched a PR campaign for Marie France Body Line, the slimming centre:

We have continually done PR for Marie France Body Line for 4 years. At the beginning, we introduced celebrities and showed journalists photos of the celebrities before and after they lost their weight. The content was, then, too boring for journalists so we needed to find other gimmicks. We decided to organise unconventional events....Once, we asked a celebrity to do body painting to show her real shape before and after the campaign...we created a slimming battle for two popular female celebrities, challenging them to a fight. We organised a press conference on a boxing ring. We dressed our celebrities up as boxers...Although we organised an event in the suburbs, journalists followed us. They liked it. We coordinated with event organisers to set up a boxing ring...Another event was the competition between two country music singers...we set a 'singing battle' through their concerts in the centre of Central World²⁵. In the same way, it was to promote the slimming campaign...(Hemmatad, Interview, 7 March 2008).

According to the interview, it seems that being the 'talk of the town' is what PR practitioners require. 'Talk of the town' stands for gossiping, talking, chatting, having conversation, or mentioning frequently about organisations or their campaigns. On the other hand, it is to make people in the 'town' talk about organisations. It may be explained by Thai *Wattana-dharm Thai* as mentioned, as Thai society is community-oriented and focused on social relations. Thais live in rural areas and villages. They tend

²⁴ A brand of hair products

²⁵ One of the big department stores in Thailand, located in the centre of Bangkok

to rely on personal communication rather than the media itself. Hence, 'below the line', such as events, is proposed to be more effective in Thai society than 'above the line' according to interviews (e.g. Hemmatad, 2008; Tungwongtrakul, 2008; Nawawat, 2008).

Apart from the advantages of special events or the closer distance to target groups and media attention, Thai practitioners tend to use special events to communicate to villagers or with development projects. Jaichansukkit (2008) explained by raising his previous PR campaigns as an example:

Some project might not use mass media. If our target groups are common folks, we must use personal media rather than mass media. I might talk to the abbot of a Buddhist temple or village chief. Then, it is easier to ask them to explain and demonstrate to the villagers...According to my previous work, the government had a mosquito protection campaign and produced posters for villagers to stick on their houses. It did not work until I managed a stage performance - I asked university students to do role plays. People, finally, understood the matter (Jaichansukkit, Interview, 9 April 2008).

Another character of Thai events is in relation to '*Sanook*' orientation. In Thailand, it can be easily seen as fun activities. For example, the National Housing Authority organised a day camp for children who live in its communities:

I organised an annual painting and drawing competition for children who live in or around National Housing...I grouped them together and gave them objects for drawing...After three hours, I let them have activities outside. I conducted games for them...I asked them to arrange exhibitions...I gave them awards...It was so much fun...(Jaiprasart, Interview, 8 March 2008).

In order to have fun, practitioners often take advantage of Buddhist occasions such as the Loy Krathong festival²⁶. Tippayachanawong (2008) narrated his experience that:

...We took advantage of the Loy Krathong festival when we hosted an international summit Supreme Court conference [in Bangkok]. We invited all judges from all nations to Loy Krathong. We provided luxurious and beautiful light floating boats for them to experience the way of Thai life along the Choapraya River. They were proud of Thailand...Besides educating people, the Administrative Court PR has a task of gaining confidence among Thais and foreigners toward Thailand. It is more than just an Administrative Court (Tippayachanawong, Interview, 19 February 2008).

Regarding Tippayachanawong's interview, it reflects again the nature of Thai PR regarding luxury preferences and loving ceremonies.

8. EXECUTIVE COUNSELLING

Since executives are the most credible sources and Thai journalists prefer asking them about policies, Thai PR is always concerned about their images (Phetwong, Interview, 11 February 2008).

Apart from creating corporate image, Thai PR practitioners tend to pay attention to the image of executives such as managers or presidents. According to the interviews, most informants gave a focus on making and looking after executive images (e.g. Prownpuntu, 2008; Tippayachanawong, 2008; Hongthong, 2008; Punyaratabandhu, 2008; Hemmatad, 2008; Jaichansukkit, 2008)²⁷.

²⁶ Loy Krathong Day is one of the most popular festivals in Thailand, celebrated annually on the Full-Moon Day of the Twelfth Lunar Month. It takes place at a time when the weather is fine as the rainy season is over and there is a high water level all over the country. "Loy" means "to float" and a "Krathong" is a lotus-shaped vessel made of banana leaves. The Krathong usually contains a candle, three joss-sticks, some flowers and coins. In fact, the festival is of Brahmin origin in which people offer thanks to the Goddess of the water. Thus, by moonlight, people light the candles and joss-sticks, make a wish and launch their Krathongs on canals, rivers or even small ponds. It is believed that the Krathongs carry away sins and bad luck, and the wishes that have been made for the new year are due to start. Indeed, it is the time to be joyful and happy as sufferings are floated away.

²⁷ See examples in appendix 4.19

The reasons that Thai PR is concerned on this point might be because Thailand has a hierarchical structure, praising and respecting superiors and giving more importance to form rather than content. Superiors are measured by age, experience, or position and status (Soupap, 1975). Executives are counted as superiors in Thai society. Consequently, they tend to be more respected than general employees.

Another interesting point emphasises the relationship distance between PR practitioners and management. It may be noted that Thai PR has a close relationship with management. Several interviewees agree that PR is not only a business counsellor for management (e.g. Hongthong, 2008; Hemmatad, 2008; Pradistsakul, 2008; Prownpuntu, 2008; Tippayachanawong, 2008), but also their personal advisors and trusted friends (the interviews of Modraki, 2007; Punyaratabandhu, 2008). They are, indeed, side by side with management. They look after executives' images, not just how they dress and learning how to balance their moods (Punyaratabandhu, Interview, 11 February 2008). Thai PR, indeed, is affected by relationships in a Thai style. Personal relationships are still considered to be a crucial factor for PR practice in Thailand.

9. PARTNERSHIP

According to interviews (e.g. Phetwong, 2008; Punyaratabandhu, 2008; Kittisaowapak, 2008), partnership tasks are found in many PR areas that don't even exist in business sectors. A partnership task means to coordinate with other organisations in order to expand target groups such as lists of journalists (Punyaratabandhu, Interview, 11 February 2008) or reduce/save PR costs (Phetwong, Interview, 11 February 2008). The majority of government PR has been recorded using partnerships in their strategies because of the limitation of PR budgets and hierarchy structures with multi-level approval processes (see *Wattana-dharm Thai* aspects that influence Thai PR). Recently, budgets or financing are

not a major problem for PR practice in Thailand as Phetwong (2008) suggested that ‘There are no excuses about limited budgets; we must find wise ways to survive...Partnership is how we have dealt with the situation (Interview, 11 February 2008)’. The concept of partnership is shown in several interviews.²⁸ In Thai PR practice, partnership works well under *Wattana-dharm Thai*. Relationship in a Thai style also plays a crucial part in this kind of practice.

10. CRISIS MANAGEMENT

A Crisis management plan was necessary because news and information was travelling faster than ever. Companies must be able to quickly answer questions and allegations about looming crises. Two practitioners expressed their experiences about crisis management and PR jobs that:

During the financial crisis, we were fine. Fortunately, we knew the situation rapidly since we had good connections with finance department and systematic data collection. We had planned to tell employees what was happening with the company, including raising employee awareness on how to help a company overcome the problem. We decided to categorise employees into groups. Then, we asked opinion leaders from sport clubs in the company to spread out the information to target groups. However, we had a second plan. We listened to feedback of employees. If any groups did not understand the point, we selected new opinion leaders for them. We got over the crisis because we had prudent plans, ongoing processes, and support from the executives. Our executives were very smart. They could answer and handle all employee questions... (Keangpradoo, 1999 cited in Thammawitpatch, 1999: 280).

Crisis PR is applied to three provinces in the southern part of Thailand...We cannot use normal plans...we must analyse the situation and the root of problems... (Sangamuang, Interview, 8 April 2008).

As with many countries, when the crisis comes, PR is the most important unit that must work closely with management. It can become the most powerful management tool

²⁸ See more quotes in appendix 4.20

(Sangamuang, Interview, 8 April 2008). The most effective way out for PR practitioners to deal with a crisis situation is clarify and show the facts to journalists (Hemmatad, Interview, 7 March 2008). Personal and social relationships take charge in this account.

However, with the hierarchical structure of Thai society (especially in government agencies), the objective of PR jobs about management plan still exists. Kongklan suggested that executives should include PR in their strategic plans. Who has the authority in decision-making must be clearly appointed (Kongklan, Interview, 12 February 2008).

11. RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

Research and evaluation are used more often in PR than previously. PR practitioners have applied research and evaluation for identifying and solving problems, planning, setting objectives, surveying attitudes, and studying stakeholder opinions toward products, services, and organisations (Sangamuang, Interview, 8 April 2008). Some organisations have the potential to conduct their own research, while others hire research agencies to handle the projects. However, according to interviews, PR professionals should know how to implement research findings²⁹ and it is necessary to monitor social trends and environment³⁰.

Not only business and private sectors pay attention to research, but government PR practitioners who were mentioned as being passive about research and evaluation because of their business nature (monopoly business) are also concerned about it as Phetwong, a PR management in a non-profit organisation, stated:

²⁹ See a quote in appendix 4..21

³⁰ See a quote in appendix 4.22

Although we have no actual competitors, we must monitor competitors who have side projects with us such as Don't Drink and Drive campaigns and any health campaigns. What is going on with them? (Phetwong, Interview, 11 February 2008).

In agencies, Return of Investment (ROI) is the majority of measurement mentioned by several interviewees (e.g. Pradistsakul, 2008; Santhanasiri, 2008; Tungwongtrakul, 2008; Kijwan, 2008) that used to evaluate the media value of PR news³¹.

Indeed, when looking through all interview data, it is interesting to see that the majority of work mentioned by informants relies on research and monitoring social trends and business environments rather than evaluation after the projects or campaigns according to the reflections of informants (e.g. Banvorn, 2008; Boonnak, 2008; Jirapisankul, 2008). Although several evaluation techniques such as media coverage, sales volumes, questionnaires, focus groups, and media opinion interviews are reported to be employed by numbers of practitioners according to the reflections of all PR junior practitioners in the study, only simple techniques are applied:

It [research and evaluation] is our task. All of our work must be evaluated. We conduct short and easy measurements such as media surveys...if they [the clients] need to have more complex evaluation, it is not our task. They must hire specialists instead (Modraki, Interview, 14 January 2007).

According to the quote, it might say that although PR practitioners claimed that they are multi-skilled and research is necessary for their jobs, they still lack research skills. They are in uncomfortable zones when talking about evaluation techniques. It has led to the conclusion that PR practitioners count and accept simple and unscientific ways such as media coverage to measure their achievements. Critically, several practitioners do not believe that there are any evaluation techniques that can truly reflect PR success as Punyaratabandhu stated that:

³¹ See quotes in appendix 4.23

The evaluation of PR departments has relied on KPI. I think it is very difficult to evaluate PR works. Many people advise me to use column inches as a key indicator. I disagree with them. I don't think column inches can truly measure and reflect the success of PR. It wastes time. I have a lot of work to do instead of measuring column inches. I don't believe in this concept. Or when we organized events, we were asked to conduct a survey. I refused to do it. If you want to do any evaluations, please hire someone to do it. I have a small number of employees. I have only 10 employees in my department. We have too many jobs to do. We must coordinate with an organizer, take care of customers, meet VIPs, solve problems that occur in the booth, look after sales groups, and so on (Punyaratabandhu, Interview, 11 February 2008).

Less concern for research and evaluation may occur in every PR occupation culture worldwide. However, in Thai practice, it can explain by the nature of *Wattana-dharm Thai* aspects that influence Thai PR. Thai *give prestige and social recognition as goals for success in life, with work and relations as necessary means*. Therefore, it is unsurprising to see Thai PR practitioners look at abstract processes of relationship building as their achievements rather than measurable evaluations.

Considering the titles of Thai PR functions, it seems that Thai PR practitioners have the same tasks as PR in the West. This thesis finds that these generic functions are named according to the concepts of PR in the West because there are several shots in Thai PR evolution as noted in 'Chapter 4', where Thai PR has been influenced by the West. For example, Thai PR education has followed the USA in matters such as textbooks. In addition, the majority of Thai PR staff gained degrees from the US. However, there are differences in details of practices. Indeed, the practice of Thai PR has been strongly influenced by *Wattana-dharm Thai*.

CONCLUSION

This chapter pointed out three main elements of current Thai PR practice: the definition, *Wattana-dharm Thai* aspects that influence Thai PR, and the practice of Thai PR. It also aimed to address RQ2 and RQ3 including their sub-questions.

To sum up, PR in Thailand is defined as *Prachasamphant*. It is how to make relations and do *Saang Kwamprataabjai* to the public. In practice, it represents the organisation's face and it also plays the task of company back-up at the same time. It is interdisciplinary and can be used interchangeably with Corporate Communication and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). It has several roles such as information provision, education, and as a spokesperson.

The term PR in Thailand is obviously different from propaganda. This chapter pointed out eight differences between PR and propaganda. However, there is a nuanced difference between PR and advertising. In current practice, there are only two criteria used to distinguish PR and advertising: the message and objectives of the senders.

Overall, *Wattana-dharm Thai* does not have a strong influence on Thai PR definition. In addition, *Wattana-dharm Thai* has not shaped the difference between PR and advertising terms in Thailand. Rather, the definition of Thai PR has been affected by western PR approaches. According to the evolution of Thai PR (see Chapter 4), the influence of Western PR approaches in the business sector and education were absorbed over periods of time. Moreover, in the past, Thai PR consultancies were separated from advertising agencies. This might make Thai PR look similar to advertising.

However, according to the findings, *Wattana-dharm Thai* has influenced the difference between PR and propaganda. It may be because of the country's social structure and uniqueness (as stated in the chapter that Thai society is independent, unique with a homo-religion and ethnic, and not a dominant country in the Second World War). The definitions were indeed affected by *Wattana-dharm Thai*. In summary, *Wattana-dharm Thai* has little influence on Thai PR definition.

In the practical world, this chapter pointed out eight main *Wattana-dharm Thai* aspects that influence Thai PR practice: 1) Relationship orientation (Relationships in Thai style including *Bunkhun*, *Pen-Mitr* and *Alum aluay* Relationships); 2) Community-based orientation; 3) *Sanook* orientation; 4) Hierarchical structure; 5) Buddhist orientation; 6) Monarchy institution respect; 7) Face and eyes in society; and 8) Form over the content. Moreover, it found eleven areas of PR practice in Thailand: 1) Publicity; 2) Media relations; 3) Community relations; 4) Issue management; 5) Social contribution to Corporate social responsibility; 6) Internal PR; 7) Special events; 8) Executive counselling; 9) Partnership; 10) Crisis management; and 11) Research and evaluation.

As a whole, the chapter suggested that *Wattana-dharm Thai* has a strong influence on Thai PR practice and Thai PR practitioners employ these *Wattana-dharm Thai* to support all PR jobs and do *Saang Kwaamprataabjai* to the public.

CHAPTER 6
THE INFLUENCE OF WATTANA-DHARM THAI
ON THE USE OF ICTS IN THAI PR PRACTICE
(ONLINE THAI PR PRACTICE)

In Chapter 5, I examined the working world of ‘offline’ Thai PR practice based on a focus upon the influence of *Wattana-dharm Thai* on Thai PR practice. Previously, my findings suggested that *Wattana-dharm Thai* has a strong influence on offline Thai PR practice and Thai PR practitioners employ these *Wattana-dharm Thai* to support all PR jobs and do *Saang Kwaamprataabjai* to the public.

This chapter attempts to address a resulting question that was neglected in chapter 5. It presents ‘online’ practice dimensions to confirm/decline my assumption as to whether *Wattana-dharm Thai* has influence online Thai PR practice or not. However, due to the gap in literature as no scholar focuses on the study of ICTs in Thai PR practice, I attempt to cover some ground that is useful to the context, such as the introduction of ICTs in PR practice and the use of ICTs in Thai PR practice, by addressing sub-research questions (RQ4.1¹, RQ4.2², RQ4.3³, RQ4.4⁴). Then, I move on to answer the main research question (RQ4): How do *Wattana-dharm Thai* influence the use of ICTs in Thai PR practice? (What meanings do Thai PR practitioners attribute to their online work in *Wattana-dharm Thai*?)

¹ How did ICTs arrive in Thai PR practice?

² What are ICTs policies in Thai PR practice?

³ What types of ICTs are used in Thai PR practice?

⁴ What are the difficulties and limitations of ICTs used in Thai PR practice?

The majority of this chapter was drawn largely from the interviews of twenty-nine PR managers together with fourteen PR junior practitioners. Documentary sources were consulted to support some parts that were missing from the interviews. Moreover, as a Thai academic who teaches PR to Thai students and an ‘insider’ of Thai culture, I will use my opinions, views and experiences to critically discuss some parts of the stories that were related by the informants. In addition, with my background I will explain the situation in Thai society in order to confirm the findings from documentary sources and interviews. The chapter contains rich qualitative data explaining how and why PR practitioners have practised in the way they have done. Policies, real experience, opinion, expectation combined with cultural explanations were included in this chapter.

The chapter covers five grounds of PR and ICTs. It begins with the introduction of ICTs in PR practice, ICTs Policy in PR organisations and departments, types of ICTs used in Thai PR practice, the influence of *Wattana-dharm Thai* and ICTs on Thai PR practice, the role of ICTs in Thai PR Practice, and the difficulty and limitations of ICTs used in Thai PR practice, respectively.

THE INTRODUCTION OF ICTs TO PR PRACTICE

As discussed in previous sections regarding ICTs in Thailand, there are several organisations that were recorded in the history and evolution of ICTs. I interviewed several companies from the historical accounts such as Charoen Pokphand Group Co., Ltd.- a mother company of True Cooperation, Advance Info Service (Public) Co., Ltd. (the leader of mobile phone operators), and Siam Commercial Bank (one of the Internet pioneers). My interviewees did not know when and how ICTs were introduced to Thai PR practice. In addition, only a little Thai literature addresses this issue.

In Pittipattanacozi's study about "The Evolution and Status of PR' Body of Knowledge in Thailand", she reported a lack of knowledge of the Internet for PR practices during 1957-2000 (Pittipattanacozi, 2001). In this case, it might mean that the Internet was not dominant in PR practice until the 21st century. When I interviewed Pittipattanacozi, Associate Professor in the Faculty of Communication Arts, Chulalongkorn University, she only gave a brief history of ICTs in Thailand:

ICTs arrived in Thailand in the 1990s, but it was used in education institutions. Later on, the internet spread because of low cost PCs. In the past, computers were too big and people had no purchasing power until desktop computers were introduced. They are cheaper...mobile is another dominant tool... (Pittipattanacozi, Interview, 28 January 2007).

In fact, according to the literature review about the emergence of the Thai Internet, the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (MICT) launched a 'low-cost' PC project in 2003. Obviously, this finding corresponds with the interview of Pittipattanacozi. In addition, Banvorn, who has worked in PR for almost a half of century, had clear doubts regarding this account. He related his memory that:

I don't know when ICTs arrived in PR. As I can remember, 4-5 years after the *Tom Yum Kung* (ต้มยำกุ้ง) economic crisis in 1997, ICTs arrived in our organisation. Computer monitors were smaller and cheaper. We sent our employees to learn ICT techniques... Around 2000, the Internet was introduced to our department (Banvorn, Interview, 18 February 2008).

Another evidence that indicates minor use of ICTs in Thai PR practice before the year 2000 is shown in a study of Anunnab in 1997. His study aimed to explore advertising and PR business through the Internet in Thailand by interviewing subjects from two sources: samples from Internet advertising business and advertising agencies. One of his findings showed that people who create web advertising believed in its media potential, especially in the channel of advertising and PR. On the other hand, they lacked of knowledge and understanding of the Internet. Also, the Internet was inaccessible to its audience, and not widespread. The latter study revealed that many advertising agencies did not use the Internet as a medium for their clients due to its low bandwidth. In addition, his findings stated that advertising agencies planned to use the Internet when it was widely accepted by Thai people in the future (Anunnab, 1997).

According to the study of Ananub (1997) together with the research paper of Pittipattanacozit (2001) and interview of Pattanacozit (2007), and Banvorn (2008), it is clear that ICTs have not been dominant in Thai PR practice until 2000s, due to the limitations of ICT infrastructure such as low bandwidth and the high cost of equipment.

Although there is not enough evidence to show exactly how and when ICTs arrived in PR practice, I would suggest that ICTs were initiated in Thai PR practice for the purpose of internal communication. As interviewed PR management who have long-work experienced in companies that are recorded in Thai ICTs history such as Charoen Pokphand Group Co.,Ltd (CP Groups), Hongthong, Manager, Office of Corporate

Communications Affairs, CP groups, explained the view about their departmental set up of ICTs:

...In the past, we were not concerned about internal communication. We had only occasional activities. Afterwards, we faced political activists. Since our president obviously admired the vision of Thaksin, ex-prime minister, there were some activists...our employees were complained to by people outside the organization [about the president's view]. Hence, we decided to have more internal communication... In the past, we had internal publications, but they consumed a lot of time to produce. It was too slow. Hence, we set up www.cpthailand.com to communicate internally.... (Hongthong, Interview, 20 February 2008).

In the same way, Kongklan, PR manager of Army Television of Thailand, Channel 5 (TV5) - the first Thai TV station to have a presence on the Internet (see the literature review about the emergence of Thai Internet), explained how her PR department adopted ICTs:

...we [TV5] have had the Internet for more than 10 years...At that time, our management had a vision to seek channels that were able to reach the mass public. The Internet emerged in that era, people were interested in it...people looked at us as a high-technology company...we [PR] *felt that we should set up an Intranet...* (Kongklan, Interview, 12 March 2008)

Phetwong, PR and Donor Recruitment Section of the National Blood Centre, Thai Redcross Society, also told me her memory of how ICTs came to her department:

...About ten years ago [1998], I changed my work style - doing my job by using a computer instead of a typewriter. It was easier to type on a computer. I did not need to retype documents again when I spelt something wrong. It watsed a lot of time [to use a typewriter]. Afterwards, *I started to use e-mail to communicate internally*. Then, it was applied for media relations and media production... (Phetwong, Interview, 11 February 2008)

In fact, according to these quotes, ICTs were absorbed in Thai PR because of internal communication purposes. It is unsurprising that PR decided to use it as another PR medium and productivity tool because it increases speed of communication. In fact, Thai PR practitioners have focused on internal communication tasks since its history (see chapter 4 and 5) as Kongklan stated that: 'When talking about PR in Thailand, we

usually talk about internal PR and social contribution' (Kongklan, interview, 12 March 2008). Thais give importance to *samakhii* harmony within society (see chapter 5). This is the reason why Thai PR is always concerned about internal PR, even when ICTs arrived. Indeed, ICTs are used to support *samakhii*.

Before looking at how practitioners use ICTs, I will discuss a factor that might affect the use of ICTs in PR practice – ICTs policy in PR organisations. I discuss how Thai PR management set plans about ICTs including the opinion and requirements of PR managements toward ICTs and personnel qualifications.

ICTs POLICY IN PR ORGANISATIONS AND DEPARTMENTS

I employed a semi-structured interview form to investigate the policy of PR management on ICTs. After I obtained raw data, I summarised and coded them into three groups: budget & infrastructure, ICT skills, and training support of management and organisations. Hence, a policy in this section refers to a policy that relates to these three groups. In the analysis stage, I link *Wattana-dharm Thai* aspects that influence PR practice from the previous chapter and my experience as a highly-experienced insider in Thai culture with the findings to draw a conclusion about how and why the circumstances happen the way they do.

1. BUDGET & INFRASTRUCTURE

According to several interviews, PR managers do not have responsibility in allocating budget for ICTs. In addition, they do not set either short or long term plans about ICTs. Prownpuntu (2008) stated that:

Actually, we should set an annual plan for it. However, ICTs change really quickly so we sometimes ask for special projects to buy IT... We haven't prepared budget for ICTs clearly, but it is a part of the investment budget (Prownpuntu, Interview, 13 February 2008).

Likewise, Jaichansukkit (2008) reflected that:

...I think PR does not have an ICT policy...we have a policy about job descriptions, budget, social campaigns...however, it [an ICTs plan] is not obviously seen. PR, indeed, must understand organisations' directions and integrate skills and technologies in their work (Jaichansukkit, Interview, 9 April 2008).

If analysing the statements of Prownpuntu and Jaichansukkit using a general concept or a generic concept, it may simply be summarised that PR management does not seem to care much about ICT activities or they give less importance to this issue. However, if looking down to the root of Thai society, it cannot be simply judged that they do not pay attention to the uses of ICTs. It's because of 'relationships in Thai styles': *Alum aluay*, there is nothing so serious as to be unbendable or unchangeable and always the 'person' and the 'situation' over principles and system (see chapter 5).

In the same way, *Alum aluay* relationship is shown by the interview of Tippayachanawong (2008). He related PR and ICT situations in government agencies as:

...I have to accept that government agencies use less ICTs because they have small amounts of budget...*Honestly, the majority of Thai PR practice relies on connections.* It may be because we have less money and top management does not accept ICTs...ICTs may be extremely useful, but the PR industry might not reach that high potential... (Tippayachanawong, Interview, 19 February 2008)

From his point of view, it can be seen that in government, PR is affected by *Alum aluay* (อะลุ่มอล่วย) relationship. Because of a budget limitation, Thai PR has to be '*Kling wai korn, pho sorn wai*' (กลิ้งไว้ก่อนฟอสอนไว้) (see chapter 5) by relying on connections rather than any activities that require a high budget.

From my experience as an insider in Thai culture, there are two possibilities for the case of 'no ICTs policy in PR plan'. Firstly, it might be true that Thai PR practice really relies on connections and discards ICTs. On the other hand, ICTs might be significant for Thai PR practitioners, but they have no choices to do it -- except accepting, adapting and adjusting their styles of work.

Another issue that ICT policy in PR organisations and departments may face is limitation of the budget and also lack of ICT equipment. Big organisations or government agencies may have faced difficulty requesting budget and ICT infrastructure from the top management⁵ since Thai organisations are mostly hierarchically structured (see chapter 5).

'Fight' [for ICTs] either in the department or across departments is a common term found in the interviews. It reflects the situation about ICTs infrastructure in Thai PR organisations; PR practitioners are out of their comfort zones when talking about ICTs.

In contrast, smaller organisations such as PR agencies are more flexible on this policy and it's easier to approve ICT facilities as they are less hierarchal.

We have 8-9 PR people. All of them have their own computers. Asatsu provides laptops for manager levels and PC computers for operational levels. For the Internet connections, managers can use Wi-Fi while the rest of employees use the Lan system. Moreover, we have two backup servers. Our company has given support to ICT usage. Only messengers and housekeepers have no computers. I have never refused to approve an IT equipment budget. In addition, I think IT equipment is a face of the company (Santhanasiri, Interview, 20 January 2008).

According to the interview, although it seems good that there are enough ICT facilities and support among small PR organisations such as PR agencies, the concealed reason

⁵ See more quotes in appendix 5.1

why ICTs are supported is reflected in the interviews; they look at ICTs as a ‘face and eyes’ of organisations as illustrated in several interviews⁶:

...ICTs enhance a good image for a company...you have good presentation techniques...they help create good feelings for the receivers...(Taychasuriyaworaku, Interview, 29 March 2008).

Now, we have online conferences, teleconferences, and a touch-screen. Can you use them? Maybe you might have to present via a touch screen. You must know how to use it. If you cannot use PowerPoint, you would lose the trust from your clients. It represents the image of your company (Santhanasiri, Interview, 20 February 2008).

According to interviews, PR practitioners use ICTs to gain trust from clients and potential customers. Indeed, they must look like experts in all area of practice in clients’ eyes. Hence, they see ICTs as a mean of luxurious ‘furniture’ that companies must have to support their professional looks in order to obtain *Kwaampratabjai* toward companies. This can be explained by the value of ‘Form over Content’ (see chapter 5). Thais basically value good form and appearance - a proper respectable social ‘front’ and all the status and prestige related symbols. The Thais as well as Thai PR generally value material symbols, as they are seen as a “form of being modern” (*Thansamai* ‘ทันสมัย’) and “developed” (Komin, 1991: 186-191). Likewise, ‘ICTs’ in Thai PR organisations are also seen as a ‘form of being modern’ and ‘developed’ in clients’ eyes. In addition, this links to a *Wattana-dharm Thai* about face and eyes in the society orientation (see chapter 5). Indeed, in Thailand, work is not as important as social recognition and prestige (see chapter 5). ICTs, indeed, are used to save face in Thai society as Sathanasiri, PR manager of a PR agency, pointed out:

We can’t deny that sometimes *we use technology only to save face*. It is not because we need it. We usually buy a machine before knowing what this machine can do. We have never studied it. You are a PR person. You must know the tools (Sathanasiri, Interview, 21 January 2008).

⁶ See more quotes in appendix 5.2

In conclusion, Thai PR management does not have clear policies on budget spending for ICTs. Also, in big organisations, a lack of ICTs infrastructure and equipment still remains. Contrast this to PR agencies that have provided sufficient ICTs such as computers to staff. However, in real practice, ICTs in Thailand are used as a means of ‘furniture’ to support the good taste of a company. Indeed, the practice is obviously impacted by *Wattana-dharm Thai* that views ‘materials’ as a ‘form of development’. Thai PR practitioners, indeed, use ICTs to support doing *Saang Kwaampratabjai* toward a company.

2. ICT SKILLS OF THAI PR PRACTITIONERS

I gave interviewees a question about qualifications of Thai PR practitioners that they require in order to recheck whether management really see the significance of ICTs for PR practice. I assume that if ICTs are crucial for Thai PR, one of the important qualifications to recruit practitioners should include ICT skills.

The findings derived from interview data indicate that several Thai PR managers see ICTs skills, as necessary but not as important as other skills such as language and news writing. They are happy if their personnel can use basic computer programmes such as Power point, Excel, Internet, and so on. PR managers have low expectations towards the ICT skills of their employees according to the interviews.⁷ The expectation can reflect the level of ICT involvement in Thai PR practice.

When concerned with ICTs, PR practitioners might have another role besides IT technicians and maintenance, as is the view of Keangpradoo, a PR management of a telecommunications company that:

⁷ See quotes in appendix 5.3

I require only basic [ICT] skills when recruiting PR personnel...*the core of PR is not about [how to use] ICT, but content.* I can ask for assistance from whomever in the company when computers are broken down...I need an employee who can deal with the content...ICT skill can be taught, but content and writing skills are more necessary...(Keangpradoo, Interview, 12 February 2008)

Another interesting finding is that several informants mentioned about skills in computer programmes for media productions such as Photoshop and Illustrator. For instance, Punyaratabandh, PR executive, stated that ‘PR practitioners should know how to use Illustrator’ (Punyaratabandh, Interview, 11 February 2008). In the same way, Nawawat, another PR manager of a PR agency, advocated that PR practitioners should have ICT skills. However, ICT skills in her meaning are focusing on skills of media production as in her statement:

...I think it is necessary to have ICT skills...for example, we should know how to do graphics in case sometimes we cannot ask graphic designers to do it due to their bad moods... (Nawawat, Interview, 7 April 2008).

In fact, no informants pay attention to ICT strategies or management. It might be said that in the area of ICT practice, Thai PR practitioners have not used ICTs at advanced levels compared to other countries that have enough ICT equipments and high penetration such as the UK. It seems that they tend to use them for publicity and media production. Moreover, a writing task including all skills for content creation seems to be more important when talking about ICT skills with informants. Many interviewees reflected that there is no difference between writing styles for traditional media and ICTs.

Therefore, it might be said that Thai PR practitioners still work at the technical level although they claim that they are moving towards strategic PR as in the previous chapter which discussed that PR in Thailand has progressed towards more sophisticated two-way communication or strategic communication (Ekachai and Komolsevin, 2004:

283-320). In conclusion, the core of PR practice is still the same, no matter how technologies have changed.

3. ICT TRAINING

According to the previous section discussing the expectations of PR executives towards ICT skills of PR employees, PR management viewed that PR practitioners are not necessary to be good at ICT. However, I attempted to investigate how important ICTs for PR jobs in the view of management are. Again, I assume that if PR executives have seen the significance of ICTs, they should have employed development policies about ICTs or at least encouraged their employees to learn about them.

According to the interviews, several PR executives agreed that PR practitioners should either obtain *Pornsawan*⁸ or pursue self learning about ICTs as demonstrations⁹:

...[We have] None [of training supports to employees], *I think PR people should learn by themselves* (Santhanasiri, Interview, 21 January 2008).

For ICTs, my employees do not attend any training classes because the technologies change quickly...but the nature of our business forces them to update and *study by themselves*... (Keangpradoo, Interview, 12 February 2008).

According to the interview data it can be seen that many Thai PR executives do not have supportive policies on ICTs. Moreover, they are not very concerned about training. On the contrary, when I conducted the interviews about training, they tended to focus on PR strategies and PR techniques rather than ICTs:

...we encourage internal trainings on special topics such as the need of journalists. We asked journalists to give a presentation. However, *we haven't gone in depth about ICTs* (Kritsamai, Interview, 22 January 2008).

In conclusion, from executives' reflections, Thai PR practice as a big picture might not largely focus on ICTs for PR work. However, several managers stated that they have

⁸ *Pornsawan* has a close meaning with 'talent', but it is not exactly the same. *Pornsawan* is a talent that each Buddhist may obtain because they earned merits from the previous life.

⁹ See more quotes in appendix 5.4

seen an importance of using ICTs for their jobs, but they tend not to support further learning. This, indeed, reflects *Wattana-dharm Thai* of 'Form' over 'Content' in Thai PR practice (see chapter 5). While ICTs are used to support the organisations' work, they are often treated merely as decoration and not as the powerful PR tool as they are considered in the West.

As a whole, the general policies of Thai PR are not focused on the use of ICTs. Thai PR people must adjust themselves to the situation. The obstacles of policy settings include the difficulties of asking for ICT budgets due to hierarchal structured organisations and lack of ICT equipment. In addition, ICTs in some organisations that pay more attention to ICTs are seen as 'furniture' rather than high potential equipment. Moreover, the majority of interviewees viewed ICT skills as 'talents' or 'natural gifts' rather than something that needs to be learned and practiced. Hence, PR people are often ignorant as to the overall benefits of stronger integration of ICTs in their work.

TYPES OF ICTs USED IN THAI PR PRACTICE

This short section describes the types of ICTs used in practice. The findings are derived from the interviews of both PR management and junior practitioners. Applications included computer programmes, intranet, e-mails, online community boards, corporate websites, social networking sites, databases, online clippings services, search engines, and mobile phones.

1. Computer programmes

The majority of PR junior interviewees stated that they have used only basic MS programmes such as MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Acrobat as well as graphic programmes such as Illustrator, ACDsee, and Photoshop in practice. The findings correspond to the policy of PR executives that require PR practitioners to use basic

computer programmes. Therefore, the findings emphasise the fact that Thai PR practice focuses largely on publicity and media production jobs.

2. Intranet

The Intranet is used in organisations to communicate internally. ‘...I use the Internet for external PR; the Intranet for internal PR...’ (Jaiprasat, interview, 8 March 2008). ‘Lotus Notes’ and ‘Outlook’ were two intranet programmes that both PR management and junior practitioners mentioned were used for contact within organisations.

3. E-mail

Several PR practitioners indicated that they use both free e-mail and organisation e-mails to communicate with both the internal and external public. Yahoo mail and Hotmail were the top two free e-mail services that Thai PR used to communicate both to internal employees and the external public. A general purpose of using e-mail is to communicate to stakeholders such as journalists, clients, and employees as demonstrated in the interviews.¹⁰

Another type of e-mail technique found every so often in Thai PR practice is a viral email or forwarded e-mail for disseminating corporate news and activities, ‘We use viral emails to spread out corporate news and events...’ (Hemmatad, Interview, 7 March 2008). A few practitioners (e.g. Nawawat, 2008) stated that they used forwarded e-mails to propagate news because they have no costs of operations.

¹⁰ See more quotes in appendix 5.5

4. Online Community board or Web board

An online community board or web board is a discussion board that is generated by another company [does not belong to corporate web sites]. There are many chat rooms classified by people's interests. For example, www.pantip.com, a big Thai web site, provides web board services, and was mentioned by informants to be one of the dominant community boards they have used, 'We have used www.pantip.com to update social trends...' (Keangpradoo, interview, 12 February 2008). Indeed, *Pantip* is a pioneer and one of the top 10 popular web boards in Thailand. It has 22 Cafes (chat rooms) classified by people's interests as seen in Appendix VIII.

According to the interviews, a community board in Thailand is mentioned as being used for PR jobs with two main purposes. The first aim is to disseminate corporate news and activities as Hemmatad stated that:

If we organise any events or fairs, we would use web boards for information disseminations and announcements...For example, we organised ICT Expo event. We went to IT chat rooms such as www.pantip.com and related IT web sites. We asked them to propagate news for us (Hemmatad, Interview, 7 March 2008).

The second objective is to monitor social trends and attitudes of the public towards organisations, and create social trends as Kongklan, PR management of TV5 stated that:

Again, they [TV5 Internet Centre] have responsibility to manage and monitor web boards. We help them if necessary. I think in the long run, there are still a few web board users. They [web boards] are just used to create social trends. Our nature business [TV] is concerned with the mass, not niche market. Hence, it is not worth enough to focus on it [web boards] (Kongklan, Interview, 12 March 2008).

According to the interview of Kongklan, it can be seen that although a community board is useful for PR jobs, it is not worth enough to pay much attention to it. Kongklan claimed that numbers of community board users in Thailand are still limited (Kongklan, Interview, 12 March 2008). This has led to the reason why several informants do not

consider using it in normal situations. However, a community board becomes highly significant for Thai PR practitioners when crisis comes.¹¹

An interesting point arose from Punyaratabandhu's reflection. Although PR practitioners focus more on it during the crisis, they do not involve the community board much, '...it is not a PR function to monitor web boards...' (Punyaratabandhu, Interview, 11 February 2008). PR practitioners know how useful the web board is, but they do not use it directly in their jobs.

Additionally, a community board is not suitable for explaining difficult and complicated content. In some organisations that have specific content or content that is too academic such as the Administrative Court, ICTs are less valuable than personal connections as Tippayachanawong (2008) expressed his experience:

...because of the nature of our business, we cannot give advice to people via web boards...It is better to phone in...it is confidential... (Tippayachanawong Interview, 19 February 2008).

To sum up, most of the time, community boards are neglected by PR practitioners because there are only small user numbers and some PR practitioners think that it is not the right tool to communicate long and complex stories. However, if a crisis arises affecting PR practitioners, those community boards become suddenly very important as they are an additional tool to measure the public's mood.

5. Corporate Web site

There are broad discussions about the relevance of PR practice and corporate web sites. In Thailand, corporate web sites involve several departments. To construct a corporate web site is like building a house. Indeed, PR people are like architects that design a house structure and take charge of interior design. On the contrary, IT technicians are

¹¹ See quotes in appendix 5.6

like engineers who take responsibility for building a house. Santhanasiri, a PR manager in an agency, pointed out the relationship between PR practice and corporate web sites :

Clients think websites are related to PR tasks...I asked my clients what the relation is between PR and websites. They mentioned that websites are like the front desk of a company. It relates to corporate image. Generally, a company already has its own website. PR functions are to upload content and make recommendations on the appearance of a website. PR is as the interior. *Our task is to design and help sketch the house's structure. We cannot construct a house. Hence, we will find a constructor. PR duties include decorating. We help smooth the language of speech or vision before posting on the website...PR must have sufficient knowledge and technical terms about a website to discuss with the customer and create websites (Santhanasiri, Interview, 21 January 2008).*

From her point of view, corporate web sites are linked with corporate image. However, PR tasks focus mostly on content. Her opinion corresponds with several interviewees' ideas. In Thailand, the majority of informants stated that PR people have responsibilities in creating some content for web sites¹², '...we are a user, not a technician. We are involved with the contents (Inpongpan, Interview, 30 March 2008).

According to my list of interviews, I found only one organisation that allocated corporate web site jobs directly to the PR department - ThaiTV3. However, the department has also dealt with the content as Mahavanich (2008) related that:

...PR structures the site, but we are not the one who set a system or programmes. However, *we create all content*. It is as if we work for an online magazine company (Mahavanich, Interview, 3 April 2008).

From the interviews of Mahavanich, it can be seen that the difference between a department who has direct tasks in site development and others, is the percentage of content they create. Creating 'all' or 'some' content on the web site is a significant keyword that can reflect how closed PR departments are to the web sites tasks. Moreover, her statement emphasises that Thai PR still focuses on publicity jobs. Online magazines require people who have skills in writing. This is unsurprisingly why PR management viewed writing skills as more crucial than IT skills in PR jobs.

¹²See more quotes in appendix 5.7

In some organisations, PR is merely a ‘viewer’ who looks after the overall picture of a web site as one PR manager stated that ‘We do not take care of the corporate web site. We look at it as the big picture. Each department has its own section [to look at and update information]...’ (Thabtim, Interview, 20 March 2008). Few PR people believed that corporate sites are not relevant to PR jobs as Punyaratabandhu stated that ‘It is not our duty to do corporate websites since we have insufficient employees’ (Punyaratabandhu, Interview, 11 February 2008). In government agencies, PR is rarely concerned with the task of web site development since they have Information Service Centres that have been established following the Official Information Act, B.E. 2540¹³ of 1997. The web sites, according to the Act, must be set up for all state agencies to disclose information (Prownpuntu, Interview, 13 February 2008). Therefore, in many government agencies, web site development tasks are allocated to Information Centres instead of PR departments as Kongklan, PR management of TV5, stated that:

...we don’t have a task of taking care of corporate website. We have the TV5 Internet centre that takes charge directly in this area. They update information every day. In case we have some news to be released, PR can either ask them to upload any news or we can upload by ourselves (Kongklan, Interview, 12 March 2008).

Finally, the failure of press rooms on the website was found in Thai PR practice. Few PR practitioners mentioned that they have set press rooms on their web sites. In addition, journalists rarely access the rooms although they have the opportunity because they have their own agendas and prefer face-to-face communication. For instance, Prownpuntu (2008) reflected that:

...Oh, we also have the section ‘News Room’ on our website. However, it is very complicated to find this section on web pages...*I don’t see any journalists using it. It seems like we have this section just to make us modern.* Most journalists have their own questions or points. We often feel disappointed when we organize press conferences and we want journalists to present these issues, but

¹³ More information about the act can be found from the Office of Official Information Commission’s website available at http://www.oic.go.th/content_eng/act.htm

they have their own agendas from their bosses. On the next day, there is nothing about news releases. They just want to interview our No.1 executives. Sometimes, we have to negotiate with them. For example, we may ask them to publish our news and we'll arrange the meetings with our executives for them (Prownpuntu, Interview, 13 February 2008).

Again, according to Prownpuntu's statement, the failure of using an online press room reflects how Thai PR practitioners use ICTs. They, indeed, have ICTs as the 'furniture' of a company. They do not focus much on how to develop or convince journalists to use it. This is the way of Thai practice.

6. Social Network Site

Social network sites were not dominant in Thai PR practice in 2008 when interviews took place. Only four sites, 'www.hi5.com', 'www.multiply.com', 'www.facebook.com', and 'www.youtube.com', were mentioned by several interviewees as being used as PR tools. The sites were used mainly to disseminate corporate news and activities for both external and internal communication purposes,¹⁴ but PR did not pay attention to the evaluations.¹⁵

Social network sites may be suitable to PR that looks after 'IT' clients such as mobile phone companies. According to my fieldwork, there was only one campaign that mentioned success in using social network sites. Santhanasiri (2008) related her work experience that:

I am lucky. I have trainees who come from a new generation and specialise in the online area. Most customer requirements are to obtain online coverage. Honestly, my trainees know more about websites than me. They can post news releases on many sites. One of my projects was to build an 'LG mobile community'. The objective of this project was to launch a beauty community. I did so step by step. Firstly, I released a teaser to make people doubtful about who the celebrity of the community was. Next step before launching a celebrity was to create online a 'Best Bright & Brilliant Mobile Photo Contest' campaign to support the fact that this mobile has a high resolution camera. My task was to draw contestants. What we did was post campaign news via www.multiply.com

¹⁴ See a quote in appendix 5.8

¹⁵ See a quote in appendix 5.9

or www.hi5.com. It was successful. 200 people joined the program. Finally, we launched the celebrity. Our challenge was how to make a website move all the time (Santhanasiri, Interview, 21 January 2008).

In fact, in Thailand, few practitioners use social networks as PR tools.

7. Database

In Thailand, I would suggest that a database is a '*memory of mindful thought*'. A memory of mindful thought is a database that keeps details about stakeholders, especially journalists. Besides, a database is used to keep all records and documents according to several interviews (e.g. Tungwongtrakul, 2008; Punyaratabandhu, 2008; Banvorn, 2008; Kongklan, 2008). It is also used to keep all records about journalists' personal information such as date of birth, number of children, their favourite activities as Punyaratabandhu (2008) and Keangpradoo (2008) reflected that:

...we must have good databases. In our company, there are lists with the details of journalists. We have all information *about journalists such as numbers of children and the ages of their children. We use them to create the relationship with journalists.* We, for instant, gave free tickets to Siam Ocean World, which we sponsor, to journalists who have young children...We always ask them what sorts of activities they like...(Punyaratabandhu, Interview, 11 February 2008).

...We have a database of journalists which contains their [journalists] personal information such as their favourite activities and date of birth...we send them a card on their birthdays... (Keangpradoo, Interview, 12 February 2008).

To be mindful of journalists is the way to maintain relationships in Thai style between Thai PR and journalists. ICTs, indeed, are supportive tools used to support smooth interpersonal communication including *Bhunkun* and *Namjai* relationships. To keep all records about journalists is to remember how to return *Bhunkun* and provide *Namjai* to journalists properly. Moreover, in Thai society as I have experienced, they are really concern about seniority and social positions due to a hierarchically structured society. People would get upset easily if you misspell their names or titles. Hence, a database would help to reduce the mistake in this point as demonstrated:

We don't frequently have problems about misspelling journalists' names since we have archived them. We cut and paste their names to the letters... (Prownpuntu, Interview, 11 February 2008)

Not only 'personal' information' of journalists, some organisations such as PR in the National Housing Authority keeps 'personal' information on their customers in the database. Jaiprasat, a PR management, reflected that:

...ICTs help us in this part. We have a database about our customers. It can be used for customer analysis. We must study their lifestyles. We have to know, for example, how many days they work and their religion...Thais like keeping their feelings hidden and do not easily complain with other people. If they are under stress, they might talk to families, neighbours, people across villeges...They would talk to us if they cannot stand it anymore...Hence, we are mindful to everybody...we must keep the database of eveybody... (Jaiprasat, Interview, 8 March 2008).

According to her interview, it is obviously seen that the database is used for being a 'memory of mindful thought' for Thai PR practitioners. The contents kept in the database indicate how Thai PR is concerned about customers. Also, it is a sign that PR comes closer to the customers rather than involvement with journalists, when talking about ICTs.

Besides, as I discussed in a previous chapter, Thais prefer ceremonies and luxurious food (see chapter 5). Hence, it is unsurprising to see that PR practitioners pay attention to keep all contact lists of restaurants, beverages, and related materials shops as Natawat (2008) gave an example that:

...what PR keeps in their database are journalists' personal information such as names, addresses, columns, sections, newspapers, and their date of birth. We also have a list of celebrities. In addition, *a database contains shop directories such as cake shops, wreath shops, flower shops, and food & restaurants*. We have assorted tasks...PR should have multi-functional skills...They should be able to order food and entertain clients...(Natawat Interview, 7 April 2008).

The database in each country must be used for different purposes. In Thailand, apart from keeping all formal records, a database also obtains 'personal' information.

Because Thai PR as well as the society gives an emphasis on personal and social relationships (see chapter 5), the database is used as a *memory of mindful thought*. According to Thai media relations (see chapter 5), PR is doing everything to impress journalists. Hence, a database is used to support doing *Saang Kwaampratabjai* to journalists.

8. Online Clipping Service

An online clipping service is employed by several Thai PR organisations. It helps save time as Punyaratabandhu, a PR management, stated that:

News clipping techniques, moreover, have changed over time. We had used a traditional way – cut and paste the papers. It took too much time and human resources to collect news clippings. Therefore, we quit and employed online news clippings services instead. Online news clippings services are definitely easier than the traditional way. However, PR people still have to read and recheck news by themselves... In fact, there are plenty of online clippings services in Thailand. They have a variety of services. We are going to accept another online service. It reports news minute by minute. These services are very fruitful for corporate strategy planning. At the first sight, I did not decide to employ online clippings since they did not have photo releases services. We were at a disadvantage (Punyaratabandhu, Interview, 11 February 2008).

In several practitioners' views, an online clipping service is faster than the traditional way of cutting news by hand. However, some practitioners argued and commented that it, on the other hand, is slower than the usual practice as Jaichansukkit (2008) expressed his opinion that:

We use both online and traditional news clippings. *I have not seen any online news clippings companies that work fast...I think letting a messenger ride a motorcycle to me is faster than accessing online clippings.* However, online clippings might be more easily evaluated (Jaichansukkit, Interview, 9 April 2008).

Also, few PR practitioners raised the issue about the difficulty of tracing online news clippings in the past as Rungseepanodorn stated that “Online news clipping could not be tracked 10 years ago” (Rungseepanodorn, Interview, 28 March 2008). In addition,

some top management do not prefer visual things. They still like to have a 'real' report as Inpongpan (2008) reflected:

...we still have manual news clippings. The manual one will be sent to a president of a university while the online clippings are generated on the web site for employees to see the university's activities (Inpongpan, interview, 30 March 2008).

In conclusion, although there are some contradictions about the disadvantage of using online news clippings, PR practitioners in Thailand tend to use them as tools of PR.

9. Search Engines

Among a variety of search engines, www.google.com is the dominant site that several interviewees mentioned. Search engines in Thai PR practice are used mainly for basic research, to monitor social issues, and crisis management (Kongklan, interview, 12 March 2008). In addition, Santhanasiri (2008) pointed out that search engines can be another channel for PR. Her clients wanted their corporate web site to be on the first page Google shows when a search is made for relevant words about their companies. It is similar to the need of having corporate news on the front pages of big newspapers. Moreover, she pointed out that search engines are databases of knowledge for PR people.¹⁶ Search engines can be used for scanning the PR environment and several PR managers look at them as another media space and attempt to use them to obtain the public's perception.

10. Mobile phone

A mobile phone is a dominant tool used by Thai PR practitioners. Several PR practitioners viewed a mobile phone as a supportive communication tool to maintain relationship between PR and employees as well as journalists. For internal

¹⁶ See her quote in appendix 5.10

communication, a mobile phone is used to spread corporate news to employees¹⁷. Not only communicating with employees, but executives must take responsibility too. A mobile phone is used as a medium between PR and an organisation's executives¹⁸.

For journalists, besides sending texts to journalists to remind them to check e-mail [news releases] according to the interview of Banvorn (18 February 2008), PR people have used mobile phones to support and facilitate 'relationships in Thai style'. It helps maintain relationship and *Saang Kwaampratabjai* to journalists¹⁹:

I don't usually use a mobile with a PR campaign. I always send out messages via mobile phone to *say happy birthday to journalists. It makes them feel good.* In the past, we carried a box of cake for them (Santhanasiri, interview, 21 January 2008).

Indeed, the character of mobile phones in personal matters corresponds perfectly to Thai PR practice that relies dominantly on personal relationships. A mobile phone in Thai PR practice is used to facilitate and smooth communication between PR and employees as well as journalists. Also, it is a tool to *Saang Kwaampratabjai* to journalists.

THE INFLUENCE OF WATTANA-DHARM THAI AND ICTS ON THAI PR PRACTICE

After investigating types of ICTs used in Thai PR practice, this section will integrate all types of ICTs mentioned in the previous section to explain how they influence Thai PR practice. In addition, I also highlight how *Wattana-dharm Thai* has affected the use of ICTs in Thai PR practice. I conclude and structure this section by using interview data with my interpretations through thirteen groups as follows:

¹⁷ See quotes in appendix 5.11

¹⁸ See a quote in appendix 5.12

¹⁹ See more quote in appendix 5.13

1. ICTs & Publicity
2. ICTs & Media Relations
3. ICTs & Community Relations
4. ICTs & Special Events for PR
5. ICTs & Internal PR
6. ICTs & Social Contribution to Corporate Social Responsibility
7. ICTs & Research and Evaluation
8. ICTs & Issue Management
9. ICTs & Crisis Management
10. ICTs & Partnership
11. ICTs & Online Community Relations
12. ICTs & Content and Web site Management
13. ICTs & ICTs Counselling

1. ICTs & PUBLICITY

According to the interviews, few practitioners mentioned the impacts of ICTs on publicity. However, the majority of interviewees in this study reflected their experiences that they have used ICTs such as corporate web sites and community boards to publicise news and activities (as stated in the above section). ICTs are, indeed, used as another channel for publicity²⁰ and can also help segment target groups so that PR can send news directly to those targets.²¹

In addition, some practitioners view that ICTs make PR publicity more interesting, ‘ICTs help colour our publicity...They are convenient, cost and budget saving’ (Taychasuriyaworakul, Interview, 29 March 2008). Punyaratabandhu, in the same way,

²⁰ See a quote in appendix 5.14

²¹ See quotes in appendix 5.15

commented that ICTs assist her publications to be more attractive than before as she stated that:

In the past, colour printings as well as photocopies were so expensive...Let's imagine. *My celebrities looked so terrible with black faces in the photocopies. Computer systems make life easier. We can correct and prove art works easily* (Punyaratabandhu, Interview, 11 February 2008).

According to the interviews, in publicity practice, ICTs involve much with media production tasks. This has led to the reason why Thai PR managers prefer PR practitioners who have skills in media production when talking about ICTs. It is noted that in Thai PR practice, there are broad discussions about creativities between government agencies and business sectors (see chapter 5). Thai PR requires creativity for publicity jobs. However, in the sense of ICTs, no practitioners gave an emphasis to creativity. It may be because ICTs for publicity involve IT technicians rather than PR practitioners. "PR people are users, not IT technicians..." (Inpongpan, interview, 30 March 2008). Additionally, PR practitioners claim that they have dealt much more with content rather than technical IT. However, many informants stated that there are no differences in styles of content writing for traditional media and ICTs (e.g. Kritsamai, 2008; Santasiri, 2008; Hemmatad, 2008; Prownpuntu, 2008).

2. ICTs & MEDIA RELATIONS

Media relations jobs, in contrast to publicity, are mentioned by several PR practitioners to be one of the areas of practices most impacted by ICTs. They help reduce the process of sending news releases, save time, increase speed of communication, and generate direct interpersonal communication between PR and journalists as illustrated²²:

The methods of sending press releases have changed. In the past, we sent them via post. It took about 3 days for each delivery. Later, we had the Fax. We used Fax instead. However, Fax has its limitations. They can be sent one-by-one. Then, e-mail arrived. We prefer the e-mail system because we just click a button

²² See more quotes in appendix 5.16

to send to all publishing companies. In particular, e-mail can reach journalists directly and personally. Most of the e-mail addresses that they gave us are their personal e-mails. It seems like we have individual communication. Later, it depends whether they consider publishing our news or not (Prownpuntu, Interview, 13 February 2008).

According to the interviews, it can be seen that Thai PR is the same as in other countries; it has changed its media relations practices due to ICTs. E-mail is used to send news releases instead of messengers while Short Message Services (SMS) are used for reminding journalists to see their e-mail boxes. In addition, ICTs affect the belief that a 'news value' is the most important criteria - followed by connections - Thai journalists use to consider materials for publishing. Timing, on the other hand, is becoming more significant as Boonak (2008) pointed out that:

...We have to adjust our work styles to be faster due to the quick changes of technology...sometimes, value and credible news releases might be worthless if you are not concerned about timing... (Boonak, Interview, 14 February 2008).

Although ICTs have impacted many areas of Thai media relations practice, I would say that ICTs do not influence 'everything'. Firstly, the core of Thai PR - a connection - is still the same, according to several interviews²³. They agreed that ICTs do not change 'relationships in Thai styles'. ICTs are used to *satisfy*, *accommodate*, and *support* 'friendly' relationships between PR and journalists rather than *change* it as Nawawat (2008) related her experience that:

...Journalists are likely to go online, accept e-mail, and play Hi5..I think Hi5 can help maintain personal connections between PR and journalists. *The best way to do media relations is making them become friends with us.* Journalists usually blame PR that PR lures them to publish news for them. 'I am your friend' can reduce their suspicion...(Nawawat, Interview, 7 April 2008).

²³ See more quotes in appendix 5.17

Additionally, according to all interviews, Thai PR people have not completely changed their channels of sending journalists news releases to ICTs. Many of them still use traditional ways such as Fax, depending on the preference of journalists.²⁴

In addition, the strong seniority principle in Thai PR media organisations can be seen as a main reason for Thai PR practitioners still using traditional ways for new releases. For instance, Tungwongtrakul (2008) reflected her own story that:

I asked journalists about this...they prefer receiving news releases by e-mail to Fax. However, I asked the younger generation of journalists. They, also, told me that there are a lot of journalists who still prefer Fax. *It may be because senior journalists are not exposed to the Internet. Moreover, they have someone type for them...*(Tungwongtrakul, Interview, 29 March 2008).

According to the interview, Thai media organisations as well as PR organisations are hierarchically structured. These structures, have brought *Chao nai* (เจ้านาย) [a man with a status] trait (see chapter 5). Senior journalists in Thailand are as if *Chao nai*. They have moral rights to command young journalists to type news or material for them. ICTs, hence, are still far from their usage.

In addition, some practitioners revealed that some materials such as invitation cards are better sent by post rather than electronically. Psychologically, seeing and touching things are better than visually seeing. Moreover, something that is worth keeping, such as all things about the King, should also be sent manually as Inpongpan, a PR junior practitioner, illustrated that:

...something is not online. For instance, we still send invitation cards to journalists manually. For instance, we still send luxurious invitation cards for the concert ‘Songs for His Majesty the King’ together with maps to journalists by post...(Inpongpan, Interview, 30 March 2008)

²⁴ See more quotes in appendix 5.18

In conclusion, many practitioners advocated that ICTs have impacted Thai PR media relations practice. Because of their efficiencies, ICTs help reduce processes of sending news releases, saves time, increases speed of communication, and generates direct interpersonal communication between PR and journalists. However, ICTs do not change ‘all’ of Thai PR practice. Due to *Wattana-dharm Thai*, the core of Thai PR --personal relationships-- is still the same.

3. ICTs & COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Among all Thai PR practices, ICTs were mentioned to have less or no influence on community relations. As mentioned in a literature review, the majority of the Thai population that is using the internet is concentrated in Bangkok and suburbs (see chapter 2). However, the majority of Thais live in villages outside Bangkok. This has led to the explanation of why ICTs have not worked well with community relations practices. Taychasuriyaworakul (2008) stated that: “...it depends on the ICT accessibility of each community...” (Interview, 29 March 2008). According to her statement, it might say that practitioners still hesitate to use ICTs concerned with this area of practice. Phetwong (2008) had the same idea as Taychasuriyaworakul. For her work, she deals with people who live in both urban and rural areas. She expressed her experiences that: ‘we cannot use ICTs with community relations in Thailand...*Bulletin boards, mobile cars, and posters work better in a Thai context*’ (Interview, 12 February 2008).

Similarly, Klinla-Or, PR of a telecommunication company, said that in Thai society, traditional PR strategies might be more suitable for rural areas. Although he has focused on using ICTs because of his corporate business nature, he advocated that ICTs are not the right tools for Thai community relations practice:

...I think [PR] strategies used 20 years ago can still be applied to our work, but it might not be sufficient for a competition. However, *if we do PR campaigns in rural areas, we could not ask people to send SMSs. We have to pay more attention to the details... it would have different results* (Klinla-Or, Interview, 9 April 2008).

These reflections correspond with the interview of Jaichansukkit (see chapter 5) about Thai PR practice as he explained by raising his previous PR campaigns as an example:

Some projects might not use mass media. If our target groups are common folks, *we must use personal media rather than mass media*. I might talk to the abbot of a Buddhist temple or village chief which makes it easier to ask them to explain and demonstrate projects to the villagers... According to my previous work, the government did a mosquito protection campaign and produced posters for villagers to stick on their houses. It did not work until I managed a stage performance - I asked university students to do role-plays. People, finally, understood the matter (Jaichansukkit, Interview, 9 April 2008).

According to the interviews, to communicate with Thai communities, alternative tools are more crucial than ICTs. In conclusion, ICTs have less or no impact on Thai community relations practice.

4. ICTs & SPECIAL EVENT FOR PR

Special Events are another area that has been less impacted by ICTs, according to several interviews. “I think ICTs are less effective in this area of practice [special events]...” (Taychasuriyaworakul, Interview, 29 March 2008). “It is difficult to conduct special events on the web... we must create outstanding online activities to compete with other websites... we must attract people to the sites...” (Komalesara, Interview, 11 April 2008).

In Thai PR practice, the involvement of ICTs and special events would be in the form of facilitating and doing *Saang Kwaampratabjai* to journalists rather than conducting activities on the site. ICTs impact on how to accommodate and facilitate journalist's before/during/after the special events. Several informants reflected that it is necessary to

check and provide ICT facilities to journalists when there are any events such as a press conference. Kritsamai (2008), for example, suggested that:

...particularly, in a special event, laptops as well as web sites are very important. We must prepare them for journalists... yesterday, we organised three events... we must facilitate both clients and journalists. We sent photos via e-mail to them... (Kritsamai, Interview, 22 January 2008).

According to all quotes, it can be seen that Thai PR concentrates intensively on how to please (*Saang Kwaampratabjai*) journalists. It corresponds to the result in chapter 5 of '*Kwaampratabjai of journalists*', which tends to be the aim of PR media relations (Tonawanik, 2007: 89-91). ICTs are used to satisfy and accommodate journalists on special events in order to make them happy. It is noted that Thai PR does not prefer online special events because of the behaviour of Thai people. Thailand is a collectivist society. Thais love going outside and going shopping at the shopping malls (Global Market Information Database, 2005). In contrast to the United Kingdom, Thais prefer staying outside rather than sitting in front of computers. It may be because of the climate difference as Hofstede suspects that colder climates demand more technology for survival, bringing with it a need for education, and ultimately, equality (cited in Freitag & Stoke, 2009: 62). Indeed, colder climates force people to stay inside. Meanwhile, people in warmer climate have more opportunities to spend time outside having social relationships.

5. ICTs & INTERNAL PR

Unlike special events, internal PR has been largely impacted by ICTs according to several interviews. ICTs are suitable for communication in big organisations that have large numbers of employees (Thabtim, Interview, 20 March 2008). They, moreover, make news and announcements more interesting than traditional ways²⁵:

²⁵ See quotes in appendix 5.19

Apart from communicating corporate news and activities to employees, ICTs help build and maintain *samakhii* harmony within an organisation. For example, Punyaratabandhu (2008) attempted to make *samakhii* harmony in her organisation. She uploaded new advertising internally before launching it to the clients or public. She mentioned that psychologically, employees should know prior to the public:

We have brought Information Technology (IT) to our company. It is great. We employ the Lotus Notes – an Intranet e-mail system to communicate with internal employees. We always post corporate news on the Lotus Notes. We, for instance, were going to launch a new advertising movie. We will have sent a synopsis of the movie including media schedules to all employees in the company. When we had a full version of this advertising, we will have uploaded it on a company website for anyone who was interested. It facilitates peoples' lives (Punyaratabandhu, Interview, 11 February 2008).

Additionally, ICTs help keep employees who work inside the company as 'insiders'. Prownpuntu, a PR manager of Thai Airway, stated that it is important to communicate with employees who have little chance of getting involved with corporate news. ICTs such as SMS are important in this role²⁶:

Moreover, in some organisations, ICTs are used as a diary in order for employees to share and exchange their feelings, work experiences, life stories, and knowledge regarding PR. This creates 'sympathy' through organisations²⁷. Indeed, providing a chance for sharing their personal information is a technique for Thai *Alum aluay* relationships. ICTs help Thai PR avoid face-to-face confrontation. They, in addition, encourage the value of caring and consideration and maintain or preserve one another's feelings and ego (*Rak sa nam jai kan*) (see chapter 5).

Additionally, ICTs can be used to check 'informal' feedback from employees. They help reduce ambiguous situation within organisations, compromising conflicts between management and employees. As a case of Charoen Pokphand Groups Co., Ltd that

²⁶ See a quote in appendix 5.20

²⁷ See a quote in appendix 5.21

claimed to be a pioneer company that set up ICTs in PR organisations, Hongthong, its PR manager related the situation as follows:

We have had www.cpthailand.com [corporate website] for 7-8 years. We have seen the importance of establishing it. We are one of the pioneer companies [that has corporate websites]...PR did not force the creation of a site for internal communication [intranet]. It was the president's idea. At first, he wanted to listen to [employee] feedback, suggestions, and problems... *Employees did not dare to write or express any complaints directly to him... Therefore, we had to find tools to overcome these obstacles... the Intranet was then set up. It really belongs to employees, containing news related to employees' lives and work... if they have any issues, we can talk [through it]* (Hongthong, Interview, 20 February 2008).

Although there were a lot of positive impacts of ICTs mentioned by several interviewees, there were some concerns about using ICTs for internal PR. The first worry concerns security. Some organisations decided not to use ICTs to their full potential due to this issue as Kongklan (2008) reflected that:

...currently, we could not really access the Intranet system... *in practice, we cannot make our office paperless since there are a lot of confidential data and information that must be kept in a safe place. There are a lot of hackers. We must be careful about this...* (Kongklan, Interview, 12 March 2008)

Besides, the second concern focuses on 'evidence'. In some countries, e-documents such as e-mail are accepted as good/proper evidence for organisations. However, in Thailand, especially in governmental agencies, electronic documents have not been officially accepted, yet. The signatures of authorised people or bosses are very important for Thai organisations (see chapter 5), ICTs cannot fill the gap of this *Wattana-dharm Thai*.²⁸

In some organisations, according to the experiences of Jaiprasart, a PR manager of the National Housing Authority, ICTs impact indirectly on PR. It forces PR to work harder. PR has a task of communicating through employees during the implementation of ICTs in an organisation. She gave an example of her experience:

²⁸ See quotes in appendix 5.22

I have the task of internal communication... I must organise an event 'Open Nine Try Open Source' to introduce an 'open source'²⁹ to the organisation. We have to create a name for the event. It is not a one-day event. I must set a communication master plan: how to persuade employee to accept it. It is change management. To change employee behaviour is not easy. It is not fun as well. We have done 2-3 projects like this before. For example, we did PR campaigns to introduce SAP³⁰ programmes... we must have action plans such as when and how to use it and whether we should have training or not. The organisation has spent more than 10 million Baht on this project. If it [a PR campaign] had not worked or failed, it would have been problematic...(Jaiprasart, Interview, 8 March 2008).

According to her demonstration, it can be seen that PR people must adapt themselves quickly to adopt the changes due to ICTs. PR has dealt with 'change management' in the organisation. In the meanwhile, PR people must learn about ICTs quickly and at least pretend to be early innovation adopters in the organisation. ICTs, indeed, put PR people in a tough position.

In conclusion, ICTs impact largely on internal PR practices. They help smooth internal communication, support values of caring and consideration of Thai PR, and maintain *samakhii* harmony within organisations. However, several Thai PR practitioners still hesitate to use ICTs to their full potential since they question security and evidence issues. Also, ICTs make PR practitioners act like ICT professionals; PR is in a tough position.

6. ICTs & SOCIAL CONTRIBUTION TO CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR)

The roles of ICTs in Thai Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practices vary from publicising news to doing a campaign. ICTs can be another channel for publicising CSR news as Keangpradoo (2008) stated that:

²⁹ Thai software that created for government agencies in order to use instead of Microsoft

³⁰ SAP is enterprise software applications used to support to businesses of all sizes globally. SAP's products focus on [Enterprise Resource Planning](http://www.sap.com/index.epx) (ERP). For more information, it can be seen from <http://www.sap.com/index.epx>.

Our organisation has a webmaster that looks after technology matters. The contents on the web site are assigned to related departments. *PR has responsibility for CSR content...* (Keangpradoo, Interview, 12 February 2008).

Surprisingly, ICTs can be used as agendas and objects of social contribution campaigns.

The agendas can be found in the form of either ICT knowledge distribution or ICT donation to the community. For instance, Keangpradoo narrated about her previous CSR campaign that:

...We have, for example, a project in *Mahasarakham* province³¹. We have brought technologies to university students. We set up university registration systems on their mobile in order to remind them about all events and movements of the university. Students appreciated us... (Keangpradoo, Interview, 12 February 2008).

Additionally, ICTs can be used as a technique to reach target groups for CSR campaigns. Among all interviews, I found that ICTs are significant PR tools for technology companies to support social contribution or CSR campaigns. Also, any organisations that have partnership with ICTs companies are reported to use ICTs for the campaigns. For example, Phetwong (2008), related her experience that she has been a partner with DTAC [a mobile and telecommunication operators] and has joined CSR campaigns with it:

We own a partnership with DTAC. DTAC has a CSR campaign 'Doing good Everyday' with DTAC by Donating Blood. It sends SMS to its customers everyday in order to remind them about blood donation... The campaign is not boring because DTAC creates new texts every day. On special days, special texts are sent to customers... (Phetwong, Interview, 11 February 2008).

Similarly, the Thai Royal Army, has joined with DTAC to perform a CSR campaign via SMS as Klinla-Or, a Vice President of CSR department of DTAC related that:

We are coordinating the Royal Thai Army to do a CSR campaign - a forest rehabilitation project... we help to send SMS to 500,000 people in order to convince them to join the campaign... (Klinla-Or, Interview, 9 April 2008).

³¹ A province in Northeast of Thailand

In addition, Klinla-Or gave examples of his own work regarding CSR campaigns through technologies that:

...we have ‘*Tam Dee Tookwan by DTAC*’ [Doing Good Everyday] campaign... because we are an IT company, we decide to conduct a ‘doing good’ campaign with technologies...we persuade people to do good from their heart...The success of CSR campaigns must come from the willingness of people, not an enforcement... we ask people to call us to collect goodness. We also post all people’s merits on the web site, the biggest goodness storehouse. In addition, we use SMSs to facilitate related activities to the campaign... (Klinla-Or, Interview, 9 April 2008).

We give opportunities to people to *make merit* by helping children who have cleft lips and palates. People can send free SMSs to DTAC to encourage these disabled children. We convert each SMS to 10 Baht [approximately 25 pence per SMS]. Every month, we collect this and donate this to children in forms of money and encouragement... (Klinla-Or, Interview, 9 April 2008)

According to all exemplary quotes, it can be seen that although the techniques or tools have changed from traditional ways to ICTs, the core of Thai social contributions or CSR campaigns are still the same. Firstly, Buddhist teaching is also found in every practice such as *Tam Dee Tookwan (ทำดีทุกวัน) by DTAC*’ [Doing Good Everyday] campaigns that encourage people to participate with the campaign through ICTs. The campaign emphasises the concept of *Bunwassana* (see chapter 5).

Also, the campaign of DTAC that encourages people to make merit by helping children who have cleft lip and palates by SMSs pointed out the value of *Namjai*. Besides Buddhist values, social contribution is the way to show *Namjai* relationship to the public. To help others when they perceive any trouble is an element of *Namjai* relationship (see chapter 5).

To finish, ‘Form over Content’ value is still found, no matter how technologies have changed. ICTs and ICT equipment have sometimes turned out to be ‘materials’ for donations to do *Saang Kwaampratabjai*, as they are seen as symbols of development in

the eyes of the community, as demonstrated by the project from *Mahasarakham* province³².

ICTs, in conclusion, are alternative techniques for reaching and supporting *Saang Kwaampratabjai* to target groups of CSR campaigns rather than changing PR practitioners' ideas, patterns, behaviours, and practice.

7. ICTs & RESEACH AND EVALUATION

Several PR practitioners viewed that ICTs impact their research and evaluation practice. They pointed out that ICTs force PR people to work harder as Maneenoi (2008) demonstrated that:

...web boards make PR work more complicated. In the past, we did not have to monitor them... I confess that ICTs change too quickly; it is difficult for PR to monitor them... (Maneenoi, Interview, 31 January 2008).

To monitor problems regarding ICTs is an ad-hoc job and is an important part of PR practice. For example, PR in Thai Airways has planned to set up a web boards monitoring project in order to serve the changes as Prownpuntu (2008) stated:

...Monitoring and answering topics on web boards is our first project which starts on January 2009...we have a team to monitor news. The team consists of two people. The majority of monitoring is focusing on www.pantip.com – the big community board. Others are www.wikipedia.com, and www.5flibt.com. Actually, we monitor more than 30 web sites, but watch closely 4-5 big web sites such as www.pantip.com, www.manageronline.co.th, and www.youtube.com. Also, online news agencies are focused on sites such as AP (Prownpuntu, Interview, 12 February 2008).

In the same way, Jaichansukkit (2008) compared ICTs with mirrors. To monitor them is something like watching corporates via their shadows:

...We monitor top web sites to see how they talk about us. They [top websites] are like mirrors [reflecting corporate images] (Jaichansukkit, Interview, 9 April 2008).

³² A province in the Northeast of Thailand

In research practice, ICTs are largely mentioned as tools for PR basic research and environmental scanning. Also, they have been used to search for client information³³ and to update news and general information. However, they declined to use them as the main resources because of their lack of credibility³⁴:

For evaluations, almost all junior practitioners who I interviewed reflected that they use ‘numbers of site visitors’ as criteria to measure the success of PR via ICTs. The result corresponds with the interview of the PR manager of ThaiTV3 who related that her PR department takes account of ICTs:

We measure levels of people’s interest on our site...currently, the numbers of site visitors are not that high, but we think 8000-9000 visitors are satisfactory (Mahavanich, Interview, 3 April 2008).

Besides numbers of site visitors, ‘informal’ surveys of journalists and executive’s opinions toward ICTs are mentioned to be another technique for measurement³⁵. ICTs can help to generate Return of Investment (ROI) for some organisations, especially PR agencies. Santhanasiri, a PR manager of a PR agency, gave an example of her work that:

What is the measurement process? The clients give grades for our news. In fact, they have criteria for each grade. When news is published in the Thai media, we have to translate it from Thai language to English. At this stage, we should know at which grade this news will be received. PR value will be weighted via 3, 2.5, and 1, depending on which grade is received. Then, we have to upload it to clients’ central portal - this portal can be accessed worldwide - on the right grade category. Now, the portal will automatically calculate the value of news. In cases where we think that this news should be ‘A’, but the result of portal is opposite, it will automatically deny the news and generate an e-mail message that is sent to me to correct the news. Later, we have to re-upload and put it in another grade category. The number of denials has an impact on our performance. It leads to the view that we are not professional. In the past, we did news clippings on paper. Now, if you do not use technology, you will be in trouble (Santhanasiri, Interview, 21 January 2008).

³³ See quotes in appendix 5.23

³⁴ See quotes in appendix 2.24

³⁵ See quotes in appendix 2.25

However, few organisations are reported to have big surveys about ICTs. For example, Advance Info Service (Public) Co., Ltd hires research agencies to conduct annual online surveys about ICTs and internal PR for the company, but once a year.³⁶ In addition, some practitioners still believe that it is tough to evaluate ICTs and PR. Therefore, they give less attention to ICT evaluations because they believe this evaluation has less credibility compared to other tools as Hemmatad pointed out that:

Honestly, information releases on ICTs in Thailand have less credibility than published newspapers. Hence, they give less attention to ICTs, except in cases where somebody posts negative comments on community boards. It is, indeed, difficult to evaluate the success of ICTs... (Hemmatad, Interview, 7 March 2008).

The reflections of interviewees toward evaluation methods can emphasise the fact that ICTs have been involved with four major PR practices: internal PR, publicity, media relations, and executive relations. There are evaluations on these areas of practice. For example, an internal online survey is used for measuring ICTs & internal PR while ROI is employed for evaluating publicity. However, ICTs make PR jobs come closer to the customers as number of site visitors is considered to be one of the indicators to measure the success of PR jobs.

8. ICTs & ISSUE MANAGEMENT

There are not a lot of discussions regarding the impact of ICTs on issue management. Kongklan (2008) gave her opinion "...I do not like to use web boards to create social trends...it's fake" (Interview, 2008). However, several practitioners pointed out that ICTs such as web boards can help create social trends.

ICTs can create social trends. However, they can be used solely by a computer user group. For exceptional cases, they would be potentially used when issues are outstanding or have a massive impact on the public... social networks such as Hi5 are involved in this case (Taychauriyaworakul, Interview, 29 March 2008).

³⁶ See a quote in appendix 2.26

ICTs can be occasionally used as issues themselves. Some organisations raised ICTs as an agenda such as energy saving projects or global warming projects as well as CSR campaigns, as discussed in the above section about ICTs and social contribution to CSR. Santhanasiri (2008) reflected her experience that:

We can't deny that technologies or ICTs are thus part of the cause of global warming... but *'harm' comes with 'having opportunities'*. We must face the truth and accept it... When talking about global warming, we might organise a PR event to support the issue. For instance, I used to organise 'Edutainment' concerts – providing both education and entertainment. It was a concert that aimed to convince people to save energy... sometimes, I advise my IT clients to organise campaigns about global warming and energy saving... (Santhanasiri, Interview, 21 January 2008)

According to the interview of Santhanasiri, the negative impacts of ICTs on global warming can be used by PR practitioners to create PR issues. To turn 'threats' into 'opportunities' is a strategy of PR for issue management.

In conclusion, ICTs are used to create social trends when issues are outstanding and impact on the mass public. However, PR practitioners seem to not like to use them because they look unnatural in PR people's eyes. In addition, some organisations raised ICTs as agendas such as energy saving projects or global warming projects as well as CSR campaigns.

9. ICTS & CRISIS MANAGEMENT

ICTs are suitable and well used with crisis management (as discussed in an earlier section about web boards used in PR practice). PR practitioners use ICTs immediately in a crisis. This indicates that PR practitioners have seen the importance of ICTs during the crisis.

In general, ICTs are useful for scanning business environments in order to create strategic plans rather than crisis management as stated in research and evaluation

practice. ICTs force PR to be proactive rather than reactive. ICTs allow rumours to spread quickly, which might impact on corporate image. For example, Kaengpradoo, PR of a famous telecommunication company, used her company case as a demonstration of neglecting the power of ICTs:

...we were hurt because of having underestimated the Internet. It was 4 years ago when we looked at the Internet as a tool for a niche market-only for computer users. Most people used e-mail and chat rooms for interpersonal communication purposes. At that time, we thought it was worthless to waste time and money on them. Until one day, news about the dangers of mobile phones to brain cells was spread. We still ignored it, since we thought it concerned a specific audience. It was unexpectedly spread out quickly to the public. As a result, customers strongly required confirmation from the company that using mobile phones is safe... it was difficult to correct the rumours. In fact, it is prohibited for PR to lie. We told them honestly that no evidence supports that the use of mobile phones is 100% safe ... we must not underestimate the power of ICTs (Kaengpradoo, Interview, 12 February 2008).

According to her experience, it might be said that ICTs are difficult to control, especially in a Thai society that believes in ‘other people say that...,’ i.e. rumours spread more quickly. Kaengpradoo, again, gave her opinion that:

In other counties such as Japan, people do not listen much to the rumours. On the contrary, Thais do. PR practice works differently under different contexts of culture... Thai society listens to ‘words of an unknown person’s mouth’ or ‘somebody says that’. It makes PR jobs more difficult (Kaengpradoo, interview, 12 February 2008).

Hence, PR should be aware of these issues and should always be prepared. Proactive PR might be the best way to protect rumours that are going to happen.

When crisis emerges, ICTs could help to spread out news quickly³⁷. Moreover, ICTs are middlemen who help correct misunderstandings between organisations and the public.

For example, Maneenoi (2008) explained his experience that:

...For example, we have tried to re-establish our web site in order to gain more understanding of people towards our organisation. We have been attacked that we take advantage of people. Therefore, people understand that we sell petroleum for high prices. From this point, we must establish a site to explain to

³⁷ See a quote in appendix 2.27

them that PTT has a lot of businesses and several companies. We do not only have gas stations, but also big assembly companies (Maneenoi, Interview, 31 January 2008).

Additionally, ICTs help Thai PR people work more comfortably during the crisis because they help to skip some complicated steps in hierarchically structured organisations. Boonak (2008) expressed her experience in a crisis that:

...We have bought online news clippings. We can track them back to the past 10 years. We have spent huge amounts of budget for them, but it is worthwhile. Sometimes when the government faces a debate of no-confidence by individual Ministers of the opposition, supportive information should be ready and easy to find... In practice, it is difficult to ask information from other departments or related organisations when the crisis comes. It is better to help ourselves by collecting this news... (Boonak, Interview, 14 February 2008)

In conclusion, ICTs definitely impact PR practice in crisis management. They allow rumours to spread quickly; PR must work harder to protect the rumours. PR needs to adapt its work to be more proactive rather than reactive. Moreover, ICTs help PR people work faster when crises emerge. They facilitate PR work when crisis emerges in hierarchically structured organisations such as government agencies.

10. ICTs & PARTNERSHIP

According to Chapter 5 on partnership, PR needs to coordinate with other organisations in order to expand their target groups such as lists of journalists (Punyaratabandhu, Interview, 11 February 2008) and reduce/save PR costs (Phetwong, Interview, 11 February 2008). Because of ICTs, PR has an ad-hoc job to seek for IT partners in order to expand target groups as well as to strengthen weak points in IT techniques. For example, PR in ThaiTV3, an organisation that lets PR take account of ICTs, has coordinated with IT organisations to strengthen its PR works as Mahavanich, a PR manager, stated that:

We are in partnership with big IT organisations such as www.sanook.com. They are really keen to build an IT system, but are not able to create PR content... (Mahavanich, Interview, 3 April 2008).

Another example is from Phetwong (2008). She has built relationships with web site organisations in order to gain media space:

For external communication, we have co-ordinated with www.kapook.com and opened an online column 'I Care' in order to invite people to donate blood. Whoever needs blood themselves or has relatives that need blood can use this column to ask for help... (Phetwong, Interview, 11 February 2008).

In conclusion, ICTs increase PR jobs. Besides finding general partners, PR needs to find IT partnerships in order to support their work. Having IT partners can help to make PR jobs stronger.

11. ICTS & ONLINE COMMUNITY RELATIONS

'Online community relations' builds and develops relationship with 'online community' or 'web board users' through ICTs. The ultimate goal of online community relations is gaining members or persuading online users to join offline activities rather than gaining perceptions. For example, Keangpradoo, a PR manager who works for a mobile and telecommunications company, related her experience about online community relations:

...One day; I looked at a web board; a question came up in my mind, 'Why can't we make a relationship with web board users?' We, indeed, can create relationships with them, but must do it with caution. For example, we have used movie sponsor campaigns to build relationships with several clubs on web boards... Then, we infiltrated knowledge on the contents by communicating with them. *Finally, we had a meeting outside* (Keangpradoo, Interview, 12 February 2008).

In the same way, Mahavanich, a PR manager of ThaiTV3, an organisation that allocates ICTs jobs to the PR department, expressed her experience that:

...we have more than 100,000 [online] members...we ask them to register as a member.... We once asked people to play games with us. The reward was a trip to Korea. We got new members and a database from that event (Mahavanich, Interview, 3 April 2008).

Another online activity we have done is letting people chat directly to celebrities via the Internet. Sometimes, we open a webcam in order to let people at home see the celebrity's face. *They have a lot of fun. Afterwards, we organise [offline] activities for fan clubs. We, for example, have 'eating out with your celebrity' campaign* (Mahavanich, Interview, 3 April 2008).

According to the experiences of Keangpradoo and Mahavanich, it can be seen that Thai PR has used 'material' rewards such as movie tickets and a trip to Korea and 'mental' rewards such as eating out with favourite celebrities to persuade online users to join their activities. In addition, all activities must be in the form of '*Sanook*'. It reflects *Wattana-dharm Thai* of '*Sanook*'. In fact, to develop online community relations, PR must bring '*Sanook*' to the communities.

Another technique for building relationships with online communities is making 'friends' with 'opinion leaders' or 'influential people' on web boards. In each chat room, there were several account users that have strong impacts on others' opinions. PR must find the right person to communicate and make relationships with them according to Santhanasiri, a PR manager in PR agencies:

Online media has developed rapidly. Even though it is not as famous as Western countries, it pushes PR practitioners to work harder. You can see, for example, an online community such as 'www.pantip.com'. It becomes more powerful and leads opinion. There are, in addition, many blogs. PR people must be trendy. I, for example, have one client account, which is a mobile company. The client required us to promote the products via the community web boards such as <http://www.pantip.com>. Therefore, we had to find out the most *influenced person or an opinion leader* in this mobile message board. In this case, we found one person whose username is 'XXXX'. Next step, we were looking for a way to access this person. It was very difficult to track this person since all people in this web board use usernames instead of their real names. After we met this man, we developed a *friendly relationship* and asked him not to post too many complaints about our products on the web boards (Santhanasiri, Interview, 21 January 2008).

According to these quotes, it is noted that the concepts of developing 'friendship' as well as opinion leaders in the offline community is found in the online practice. 'Relationships in Thai styles' and 'Community Orientation' can be found almost

everywhere in online community relations. Personal relationships can be used in a collectivist society because Thais believe in the power of ‘friendship’ (see Chapter 5). Moreover, because of *Sak-di-na* (see chapter 5), opinion leaders are an integral part of society. Hence, opinion leaders are targeted online and offline by Thai PR practitioners.

However, it is noticeable that online community relations have not yet been widely practiced in Thai PR. The majority of organisations that focus on this practice are IT companies or PR agencies that hold IT accounts or organisations that include ICTs jobs in PR departments.

12. ICTS & CONTENT AND WEB SITE MANGEMENT

‘Content and web site management’ has a different meaning to publicity. The task focuses on creating and managing content on the web site including encouraging people to visit the sites. PR people do not only use ICTs as alternative channels to release news and activities, but also to create new messages on ICTs and manage numbers of visitors. However, few PR practitioners reported that they have done this task. Only PR practitioners who have dealt directly with ICTs mentioned practice in this area. For instance, Hemmatad (2008) related his job description as follows:

I must look after clients’ web sites as well. Government agencies give importance to them in order to disseminate information. For example, besides taking care of its Information Service Centre for Energy Policy and Planning Office, [Ministry of Energy, Thailand] we had a project creating a website: www.thaienergynews.com for them as well. This site is for collecting all local and global information and news about energy... *we have the task of writing news and posting it on the site... ..to convince people to visit our sites, we must colour the site by creating online games, writing interview scoops about celebrities, posting videos on the site, and creating online activities between celebrities and Internet users...* (Hemmatad, Interview, 7 March 2008).

I can say that website management is one of our tasks. It is a part of image making..it is one element of corporate image..if the external public want to know about our company or products, they can come to the site...it is a PR job... Hemmatad, Interview, 7 March 2008).

ThaiTV3, an organisation where PR has direct responsibility for ICTs, has done the same task as Mahavanich, as its PR manager demonstrated that:

...we put all news releases on the site. Also, we put TV programmes and synopsis of TV series on the site. In addition, we have cute wallpapers for people who are interested in our site... people, finally, are addicted to our site... (Mahavanich, Interview, 3 April 2008)

Similarly, PTT, an oil company that has plans to reconstruct its web site in order to create mutual understanding between an organisation and the public, sees the importance of ICTs and allocates web management jobs to the PR department. PR plays the role of a web master as Maneenoi, its PR manager, stated that:

..For ICTs & PR, PTT views that the contents are more significant than the systems. ICTs are software supporters, but we are a web master...we hire a web company to design our website, but we have written all the contents...we have a project to reconstruct our website... (Maneenoi, interview, 31 January 2008).

In conclusion, the task of creative content and website management was discussed narrowly among Thai PR practitioners because the majority of Thai PR practitioners do not deal directly with the websites. However, some practitioners have seen the importance of websites and they added the task as one of the PR jobs that needs to be done.

13. ICTs & ICT COUNSELLING

ICT counselling tasks emerged when I interviewed PR managers about ICTs. I, myself, give the term 'ICT counselling'. ICT counselling is not a technical task in this sense. It is rather concerned with an advisory task in how to deal with the changes and to adopt ICTs in organisations. This practice is found in PR agencies as Modraki (2007) gave his idea:

Agencies do not deal directly with ICTs, but we analyse PR tools for clients. We must suggest them to create websites... how do they do internal communication? Do they have Intranet? If yes, how do they use it? Is a manager able to use it? These are examples of what we must take charge of... (Modraki, Interview, 14 January 2007).

Hemmatad (2008) reacted in the same way that:

We must be able to grasp technologies... what the benefits of using ICTs are... what are the characteristics of each technology... in case when clients ask for our recommendations on these [the use of ICTs], we can analyse and suggest to them which one is more beneficial to them (Hemmatad, Interview, 17 March 2008).

According to the interviews, it might be said that this task is undertaken mostly by PR agencies. Because they are expected to be professional in all areas, PR practitioners in PR agencies must adapt themselves to the changes.

DIFFICULTY AND LIMITATION OF ICT USE IN THAI PR PRACTICE

ICTs may be more powerful in one society, but might not have a lot influence in other societies. In Thai PR practice, it depends on many factors. I summarise the difficulties into groups as follows:

1. ICTs Infrastructure and Penetration
2. Country Social Structure and People
 - 2.1 Community Orientation with Opinion Leaders
 - 2.2 Collectivist society & Climate
 - 2.3 Language & Education
3. PR practitioners: Skills, Opinion, and Gender
4. Hierarchical Structure
5. ICTs Application: Creator Vs. User

1. ICTs INFRASTRUCTURE AND PENETRATION

As stated in this chapter about ICT infrastructure in Thai PR units or departments, there is still not enough ICT equipment in organisations. ‘Fighting’ for a computer is regularly found in practice. Hence, it is difficult for PR to generate new campaigns or ICT ideas for PR with limited infrastructure.

ICT penetration in Thailand, in the big picture, is still low according to data from the International Telecommunication Union (www.itu.int) (see chapter 2). However, people in Bangkok and the surrounding areas have more opportunities to gain access to ICTs than people living in the rural area (see chapter 2). In fact, most PR offices are located in Bangkok; it should be no problem for Thai PR practitioners to access ICTs such as mobile phones or the Internet.

Having high-low penetration, sometimes, is not a big deal. The penetration might be meaningful when investigating the situation in urban or city societies. However, it might be meaningless in rural areas. According to the interviews shown in the above sections, several PR companies have sufficient ICT equipment. On the contrary, they choose not to use them because ICTs are sometimes not suitable in some contexts.

ICT infrastructures and penetration rates seem to be big obstacles that limit ICT usage in any area of practice, especially PR. However, in Thailand, they were indeed one of the complications regarding PR practice. Thailand has lower ICT penetration rates compared to other countries. It might reflect the small usage of ICTs in Thai PR, but cannot explain all phenomena. In one dimension, ICTs would be necessary for some countries, but this depends to a great extent on the different social structures and the way people live. For instance, Thailand is not a big country, and has a small population living in the rural areas where people see each other everyday. Face-to-face

communication is regarded as the most important PR tool. Powerful tools can sometimes be powerless when used in the wrong culture and contexts as I discuss next.

2. COUNTRY SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND PEOPLE

2.1 Community Orientation with Opinion Leaders

As mentioned in chapter 5, Thai social structure is in the form of village communities. Most Thais, according to the previous section, live in villages in rural areas where ICTs sometimes cannot reach. Each province has its communities where everybody can recognize each other. Moreover, because the root of Thai society is *Sakdina* (see chapter 5). Opinion leaders are still dominant in Thailand rather than any techniques. It is an obstacle for Thai PR practitioners to use ICTs with these groups. Hence, it can be noticed in the previous sections that ICTs do not work well with several Thai PR practices, such as community relations.

2.2 Collective society & Climate

Although a lot of Bangkokians tend not to believe in opinion leaders, their lifestyles are not in front of a computer. As I have mentioned, Thai society is collectivist because of its agricultural roots Thais prefer activities outside in a group. Moreover, the climate factor is significant. Because Thailand has nice and warm weather, it is good to go outside and join activities. Thais like going outside and spend time doing shopping and eating out, according to the Global Market Information Database (2005). The findings correspond with Hofstede, who concluded that colder climates demand more technology for survival, together with a need for education and ultimately, equality (cited in Frietag and Stokes, 2009: 62).

Indeed, it is difficult to conduct any ICT campaigns while people generally prefer going out. Hence, Thai PR practitioners prefer using traditional media such as newspaper and offline special events rather than online ones.

Somebody asked me why I have to publish a book... I answered him that a book is something we can touch. For example, if you buy a book, but you don't open or read it, it is useless...*technologies cannot replace traditional media...something needs to be experienced...* (Rungsepanodorn, Interview, 28 March 2008).

The statement of Rungsepanodorn reflects that Thais like to experience things. It corresponds with the literature review that shopping is an important activity in Thailand, as it involves social aspects. Consumers like to touch and feel products and where permitted, bargain, prior to making a purchase (Gray et al, 2002; NECTEC et al., 2005). Therefore, these factors have limited ICT use for PR practice.

2.3 Language & Education

ICTs are equipment that requires skilful users. In Thailand, nearly 94 percent of the people speak the Thai language, according to the Library of Congress (2007), while English is the second language among the well educated and is widely understood. But this is only in Bangkok and other large urban areas, where English is a major language of business (Library of Congress, 2007). On the other hand, Thai people who live in rural areas are not familiar with the English language while ICTs are mostly imported from the West containing English applications.

Most internet users, according to Hongladarom's study, describe themselves as being 'fair' or higher in their English proficiency (Hongladarom, 2003). Unsurprisingly, more than 70% of all Internet users in the country live in the

Bangkok Metropolitan area, according to his study (Hongladarom, 2003). ICTs, indeed, suit countries where people are native English speakers such as the United Kingdom and the United States or in countries with high English proficiency. ICTs are not dominant in Thailand because of the language barrier. This is one of the reasons why Thai PR does not choose ICTs as a main tool and why ICTs have little impact on Thai PR practices.

In the same way, to use ICTs requires higher education as the study of Hongladarom (2003) pointed out. Digitalisation divides groups with different educational backgrounds. He found that more than 72% of internet users are holders of bachelor degrees or higher (Hongladarom, 2003). On the contrary, most Thais, as discussed in previous sections, are common folk. Although the literacy rate in Thailand is 92.6 percent (Library of Congress, 2007), they obtain only basic education from primary and secondary school. This education level is not enough for ICT proficiency. Hence, it is unsurprising to see PR use ICTs predominantly with media relations jobs since journalists are well-educated and highly skilled in ICTs. In some areas of practice such as community relations, ICTs do not have major impacts.

In summary, collective society and climate are factors responsible for limitations in ICTs usage in Thai PR. ICTs may be able to gather people in groups when chatting on some interactive media such as a community board and MSN. However, they cannot generate online group activities as well as offline ones. As mentioned in Chapter 5, the root of the collectivist society in Thailand was agricultural occupation that allowed people to have activities together such as in the harvest season. Thais prefer staying together and enjoying as a group rather than being individual. ICTs cannot meet this

requirement. Unsurprisingly, it is seen that ICTs work well in individualistic societies where people like being an individual, such as the United Kingdom and the United States. Also, the climate has shaped people's behaviours. These make the differences. Since people do not use ICTs as main tools to serve their needs, ICTs are sometimes ignored by Thai PR practitioners.

3. PR PRACTITIONERS: SKILLS, OPINION, AND GENDER

Thai PR practitioners, in contrast to common folk, are keener in English and highly educated. According to several interviews, PR managers require practitioners who obtain at least a bachelor's degree. In addition, several PR managers reported that they require personnel who have excellent foreign language proficiency such as English³⁸:

Although in government agencies, English is less important as Rungseepanodorn stated that "...In government agencies, we do not concentrate on English language...we have assistance from other departments when we need English news to be translated" (Rungseepanodorn, interview, 2008), PR people have a high education, which is good enough for ICTs proficiency. Hence, language barrier should not be problematic for PR to learn about ICTs.

However, many theorists of the digital divide agree that training, computer-literacy and other skills are required to make good use of computers and Internet access (Rooksby & Weckert, 2007: xiii). However, Thai PR practitioners, according to the previous section on ICTs policy, are not given advance ICT skills and lack ICT training. Therefore, it might be an obstacle to using ICTs for Thai PR practice in advanced stages such as doing campaigns on the Internet.

³⁸ See exemplary quotes in appendix 2.28

Another threat that blocks PR practitioners from using ICTs is their opinion towards ICTs. As stated in the previous section, several PR practitioners sometimes view ICTs as the ‘furniture’ of an organisation that shows a corporate modern image. If this is the case, ICTs will never be used to their full potential.

This last issue was raised in several interviewees concerning ICTs & gender. Santhanasiri, a PR manager of a PR agency, reflected that ‘In my team, there are a lot of male PR. It looks like we work in a gunman agency. Although most of my employees are male, the majority of PR personnel in Thailand is female...’ (interview, 21 January 2008). She, again, pointed out the contradiction between technology and females:

ICTs are not completely efficiently used in PR jobs. Moreover, the fact that the majority of PR people are female may be another problem. Females are more likely to be afraid of and less interested in technology. Women would rather give attention to fashion than technology. It is quite hard to understand detailed technology (Santhanasiri, interview, 21 January 2008).

Gender, according to Santhanasiri’s view, might be another obstruction for ICTs used in PR practice. In fact, females are not as good in complex and hard matters; unlike males.

In summary, a lack of skills and negative opinions towards ICTs also blocked ICT usage. ICTs require skilful and trained users; PR people did not have the qualifications. Although they have language proficiency, they have less ICTs proficiency. The gender of PR practitioners was also raised as another issue. The majority of PR practitioners in Thailand are female. They are mentioned as being less keen in complex circumstances. It is difficult to make Thai females learn new technologies.

4. HIERARCHICAL STRUCTURE

As seen in chapter 5 and above sections in this chapter, there are plenty of issues regarding the structure of Thai PR organisations. For example, in government agencies, there is a need for a ‘real’ authorised person’s signature and ‘tangible’ evidence.

Although some of them have changed their practices to be online, hardcopies must be kept. Another example is the culture of media organisations. According to many informants' views, Thai media organisations also have hierarchical structures with seniority systems. The senior journalists, who may have higher positions, can ask younger journalists or their secretaries to type news and documents. Hence, ICTs are less useful in this context.

In addition, when talking about budget allocated to ICTs, several PR managers accepted that it is difficult to ask for budget because their top management do not see the importance of ICTs. The difficulty of approval due to the many steps required for the acceptance of ICTs budgets is another impediment to ICTs used in PR practice.

5. ICTs APPLICATION: CREATOR VS USER

Thailand accepts technologies from the West. However, the technologies do not serve all their total needs. It makes Thai PR people use ICTs as users, but not as creators or technicians. Sometimes, it does not rely on how much ICTs infrastructure is in the organisation. On the other hand, Thai PR practitioners do not consider ICTs as important tools because they do not properly suit Thai society. For example, Jaiprasart, (2008) expressed her opinion:

...Thailand has attempted to be released from Microsoft...we must pay for licenses. How many computers do we have? We have to pay, but we do not use all of their functions [Microsoft]. Sometimes, we use computers and programmes just as typewriters... Hence, we want to throw off the yoke... The most important issue is that we cannot develop the software to be compatible within the organisation... we have attempted to use 'open source' [in Thai language] instead (Jaiprasart, Interview, 8 March 2008).

According to the interview, the problem may occur because Thailand is not a creator, but ICTs user. Sometimes, ICTs are too complicated for people who are not building them. Hence, Thai PR may not potentially understand how to use them. In addition, it

may not serve the right needs of Thai PR practices. It is like giving airconditioners to people at the North pole or heaters to Thai people. ICTs may suit one country, but might not necessarily suit another.

In conclusion, I would say that *Wattana-dharm Thai* has largely influenced the use of ICTs in Thai PR. Recent literature on ‘online PR’ such as Phillips and Young (2009), Solis and Breakenridge (2009) has argued that the digital media has changed everything for PR: ‘The Web has changed *everything*’ (Solis & Breakenridge, 2009: 1); ‘...it is *hard to avoid making the claim that the internet changes everything.*’ For PR, the unavoidable conclusion is that ‘*nothing will ever be the same again*’ (Phillips & Young, 2009: 1). Moreover, Grunig (2009) comments on this issue that:

... I agree with these assertions. *For most practitioners, digital media do change everything about the way they practice public relations.* Other practitioners, however, doggedly use the new media to guide practice especially our generic principles of public relations. Rather, the new media facilitate the application of the principles and, in the future, *will make it difficult for practitioners around the world not to use the principles* (Grunig, 2009: 3).

On the one hand, I agree with those who claim that ICTs do change the way of PR practice. However, according to my research findings, I would contradict the idea that ‘ICTs have changed ‘everything’’. My results showed that ICTs have impacts on ‘some’ parts of Thai PR practice, but they do not change ‘all’ practices. The core of Thai PR - a connection and *Saang Kwamprataabjai* - is still the same. *Wattana-dharm Thai* has affected the degree of ‘changes’. It is true that the new media facilitate the change of principles, but it *might not make* it more difficult for practitioners around the world not to use the principles. Without ICTs, PR people can work, especially in a culture where personal and social relations are strong and more crucial than any other factors, such as in Thailand.

CONCLUSION

This chapter examined the influence of *Wattana-dharm Thai* on the use of ICTs in Thai PR practice. It included five areas regarding Thai PR and ICTs: the introduction of ICTs to PR practice, ICT Policy in PR organisations and departments, types of ICTs used in Thai PR practice, the influence of *Wattana-dharm Thai* and ICTs on Thai PR practice, the role of ICTs in Thai PR Practice, and difficulty and limitation of ICTs used in Thai PR practice in order to address RQ 4, How does *Wattana-dharm Thai* influence the use of ICTs in Thai PR practice, through its sub-research questions (RQ4.1-RQ4.4).

To sum up, ICTs were introduced to Thai PR to support internal communication within organisations after the year 2000. The majority of Thai PR practices did not have clear and constructive policies on ICTs. Moreover, several PR organisations and departments did not have enough budget and infrastructure in their organisations. Additionally, several Thai PR managers do not care about ICT literacy and neglected to give their employees training. They believe that ICTs skills are from ‘talents’ or ‘gifts’ rather than ‘studying’. Only basic skills in ICTs are required by PR managers.

In practice, there are many types of ICTs used in PR such as computer programmes, the Intranet, e-mail, community boards, databases, online news clippings, and mobile phones. In fact, those ICTs are used in the same functions as Western PR. For instance, the Intranet is used in internal PR and e-mail is used for general contacts to clients and journalists. However, some are used in the same purposes, but with different contents and contexts. For example, a database was used to keep information for both western PR and Thai PR. On the contrary, the contents in a database were mentioned to be dissimilar. Thai PR has used a database to store the ‘personal’ information of journalists and customers. The database is used as a memory of mindful thought. It seems that ICTs are used more often to support *Saang Kwaampratabjai*.

The chapter also suggested that ICTs have little influence on Thai PR practice. Thai PR practice culture is still the same. The concept of personal connection and *Saang Kwaampratabjai* remains the core of Thai PR practice, no matter how technology has changed. ICTs help to support some areas of PR practice such as media relations, internal PR, research and evaluation, and social contribution to CSR. In addition, they enhance three additional tasks of PR practice: online community relations, content creativity and website management, and ICTs counselling. It also increases the speed of communication between PR and the public. However, they have less impact on community relations and special events. Thai PR practitioners still have questions about their security and evidence issues.

ICTs play various roles in Thai PR. They are value-added alternative channels for disseminating corporate news and information. ICTs cannot compete with the mainstream media such as newspapers and television, but they play a role of communication facilitator. Sometimes, ICTs become agendas for issue management and CSR campaigns. ICTs are ‘materials’ for social contributions. They are the ‘furniture’ of a company. Indeed, ICTs help to support *Saang Kwaampratabjai*.

Lastly, this chapter pointed out five main factors that have obstructed the use of ICTs in Thai PR practice: 1) ICTs Infrastructure and Penetration, 2) Country Social Structure and People (Community Orientation with Opinion Leaders, Collectivist society & Climate, Language & Education), 3) PR practitioners: Skills, Opinion, and Gender, 4) Hierarchical Structure, and 5) ICTs Application: Creator Vs. User.

Overall, ICTs have little impact on Thai PR practice, while *Wattana-dharm Thai* has a great influence on ICT policy as well as the use of ICTs in Thai PR practice. First, *Wattana-dharm Thai* influences Thai PR executives’ attitude and beliefs toward ICT

policy settings. Second, they have formed the role of ICTs in Thai PR practice as *Saang Kwaampratabjai* facilitators. Third, the absorption of ICTs in Thai PR practice was obstructed by *Wattana-dharm Thai*, such as less ICTs infrastructure, less accessibility to technology, complicated social structures, warmer climate, language, and Thai PR practitioners' backgrounds and beliefs. Finally, they created a Thai PR occupation culture of not using ICTs as a basis of work. In addition, they have affected the degree of 'changes' in occupation due to technology. The chapter suggests that Thai PR can work without ICTs due to a culture of strong personal and social relations in Thailand. It is not that necessary for Thai PR to have ICTs at work. Thai PR can live without ICTs.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

This chapter explains the main achievements of this thesis and its contribution to the literature pertaining to international PR. It discusses the main findings and also reflects on the research approach, its limitations, and the implications for PR as well as some potential research areas for continued exploration. This thesis makes a new contribution to the field of public relations in the area of culture and public relations and in doing so I have explored Thai PR practice (online and offline) through the perceptions and experience of Thai PR practitioners from a qualitative perspective. This research has added an understanding of Thai PR practice beyond the dominant paradigm.

DISCUSSION OF KEY FINDINGS

According to my findings, it is clear that *Wattana-dharm Thai* affects both the offline and online Thai PR occupation. It shaped and formed Thai PR practice. I would argue with those scholars who advocate that Western theories of PR can be used across countries. At least, in my findings, generic PR is not applied to all areas of practice in Thailand. Although Thai practitioners accept the Western approaches, it does not imply that they copy all concepts and practices. Rather, they tend to adapt and blend them with the culture. *Wattana-dharm Thai* plays a crucial role in this process.

My findings indicated the significance of *Wattana-dharm Thai* on Thai PR practice. It is true that Thai PR has same functions and titles of PR activities (e.g., media relations, community relations, and publicity) as the West, but is different in meanings, details, roots of practice, and orientations. For example, ‘community relations’ in the West are different from a Thai PR’s perspective. To do community relations (online and offline) in Thailand is to do *Saang Kwaamprataabjai* to members in the community, especially

the opinion leaders via interpersonal communication. ICTs have no significance in community relations. Another example is the term ‘media relations’ in Thai PR. It is more than creating relationships with journalists, but becoming ‘friends’ with them and doing *Saang Kwaamprataabjai* to build long-term relationships.

I suggest that the use of PR models of practice anywhere in the world is like “*cooking with others’ recipes which might not be to your taste*”. I compare the PR practitioner to a chef, the theories to recipes, PR outcomes (production) to food, the success of PR as good taste (deliciousness), and stakeholders to customers/clients. To cook a Thai/English/Indian/American delicate dish might need original ingredients and a proper recipe with a skilful chef (should be a local chef or at least someone who has knowledge of the locality) in order to satisfy the local customers. For example, if you want to cook Thai curry, you may need to have a Thai chef (or at least a chef who is used to cook it) and you may need ‘chilli paste’ to make your curry delicate. On the other hand, if you do not put the paste in it, your curry will turn into a soup instead. PR practice is like cooking. If you adhere to Western theories (recipes) when working in other countries, you might have to face customers’ complaints or lose them because your project may not fit their needs. Hence, if you want to have a successful outcome, you will have to consider these ‘local’ variables since they will affect your work and may lead to unsuccessful results.

Moreover, my findings imply that Thai PR practitioners constructed the meanings of their profession under the *Wattana-dharm Thai*. The difference in orientation of the term ‘CSR’ due to the religious culture in Thailand is a good example to illustrate this. My findings demonstrate that CSR in Thailand can be used interchangeably with social contribution and has its root in community relations (see chapter 5). However, some PR

practitioners denied using CSR when dealing with Thai clients (see chapter 5). These terms hold different connotations from my interpretation. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) focuses on the organisation itself. It shows how the corporation has the 'responsibility', of being a good citizen of the society. Meanwhile, social contribution emphasises how an organisation can 'give' or 'help' people. It indicates 'how to make merit'. Thai people prefer 'giving' by heart than doing by 'responsibility'. They prefer a company that provides '*Namjai*' for them. Indeed, Thais generally do not care much about rules or regulations as their behaviour within social networks tends to be quite particularistic (Warner and Joynt, Atmiyanandana and Lawyer, 2003: 235; Hampden-Tuner and Trompenaars, 2002; 2000). Indeed, the Thai PR emphasis is on 'mind and manner' rather than on hard work. It focuses more on mental benefits than on company benefits.

'Giving' is another interesting point to explain how the meanings of practice are constructed in PR occupation (see chapter 5). Thai PR likes giving help, things, and gifts to its stakeholders, as it is a way to show '*Namjai*' and to return '*Bunkhun*'. It is the norm for Thais and the Thai PR occupation. All PR practitioners in all businesses give presents to journalists/stakeholders on special occasions and even on non-special days. It is part of Thai PR culture to do *Saang Kwaamprataabjai* to journalists. To see this from a Western business ethics perspective, this practice would be considered as bribery or corruption (Freitag and Stoke, 2009) but in *Wattana-dharm Thai*, it is normal.

Even for online PR, Thai PR practitioners constructed their own meanings for ICTs as SCOT theory indicated that machines are understood by those who interpret them (see chapter 2 about SCOT theory). ICT is not a power tool, as other countries or as the literature suggested. It'd rather a supportive tool for mindful thought to the public. It

may be dangerous to claim that ICTs change everything about PR. Although this may apply to the West, it may not be true in a collective society like Thailand. ICTs were given by Thai PR other meanings such as donating materials, face and eyes of the company, modernity, and a tool for mindful thought. Indeed, *Wattana-dharm Thai* influenced the meanings given to ICTs (see chapter 2 about SCOT theory).

I'd like to suggest to international PR that "*powerful tools can be powerless when used in the wrong culture and contexts*". My findings showed that Thai PR use ICTs less in their work because of *Wattana-dharm Thai* (see chapter 6). In some cultures and contexts such as the USA or the UK, ICTs may be important and powerful for PR life. However, in a collective society such as Thailand, where people tend to go outside to enjoy group activities in nice and warm weather rather than just sit inside because of the cold weather, ICTs become less powerful in the society. If international PR insists to do online PR in Thailand, you will not have a great numbers of participants. Also, Thai journalists do not like to use an online press room (see chapter 6). If it is created, international PR may be disappointed with the number of site visitors. In other words, ICTs might work in some countries, but might not work to their full potential in other cultures. This links to the theory of SCOT that technology works once it has been accepted by a social group. Success and failure is not placed upon the technology itself, but on the history of its adoption (see chapter 2 about culture and online PR).

As a whole, I found that '*Saang Kwaamprataabjai*' or 'impression building' is the key idea when discussing Thai PR practice. Historically, Thai PR attempted to do *Saang Kwaamprataabjai* in various ways. Some examples were given in my thesis, e.g. King Ramkhamhaeng's use of a bell on the palace door for his subjects to lodge petitions over people's rights (see chapter 4). This was not only for developing closer

relationships, and having two-way communication between the king and people, but also to increase ‘*Kwaamprataabjai*’ towards the king.

Another historic example is when Thailand accepted the printing system and technologies from the West and when Western PR approaches in the business sector were absorbed or reconciled in the Thai business sector. How could these approaches be absorbed or reconciled within the strong Thai culture? The reason is because they have given *Kwaamprataabjai* or a good impression towards the West. Thais are friendly in nature. They welcome foreigners or newcomers with smiles (see chapter 5). However, they would not easily accept change unless they have ‘*Kwaamprataabjai*’ with something or someone. As seen in chapter 4, Thais did not change their religion to Christian, but accepted the new technology that the West brought because of their impression towards the West. Thailand as some other Asian countries, believes that ‘the West is best’ as I mentioned earlier in the introduction. They believe that ‘*Kwaamtansamai*’ (ความทันสมัย) (modernity) such as electricity and telecommunication have been brought to the country by the West.

In current practice, PR still emphasises doing ‘*Saang Kwaamprataabjai*’ through *Wattana-dharm Thai*. My interviewees often mentioned this term naturally and immediately when they talked about their practices. Indeed, I assume that what they say and answer without second thought is important to them. They are concerned in even small details about their target groups. Not even online PR practice, it seems that Thai PR practitioners use ICTs to support doing ‘*Saang Kwaamprataabjai*’ to the public and enhance company reputation rather than enjoy their high capability.

Due to online and offline PR, I have a small note on different aspects of PR (online and offline) related to ‘*Samakhii*’. Both of them can help create and maintain *Samakhii*

among the employees in an organisation. However, there are some nuanced differences between *Samakhii* that is built between them. For offline PR, *Samakhii* is maintained by having group activities or/and organising ceremonies or celebrations. Offline PR will conduct special events or activities for employees to share experiences and have fun together. In other words, it emphasises building physical relationships between employees. This kind of *Samakhii* will indirectly bring *Kwaamprataabjai* of employees toward an organisation. Meanwhile, online PR creates *Samakhii* by building mental bonds between employees and organisations. Updated news will be sent online to employees around the world no matter where they are. This kind of *Samakhii* makes employees become united, feel that they are a member of the company's family, and have the organisations spirit.

However, *Wattana-dharm Thai* does not only have a positive influence on Thai practice. It is sometimes a barrier for PR practice. It is an obstacle for Thai PR to come online as I described in a previous chapter (see chapter 6). In an interview, Rungsepanodorn suggests that “...technologies cannot replace traditional media...something needs to be experienced...”. This raises an important question in relation to *Wattana-dharm Thai* and the nature of ‘experience’. In my view, the future for PR in Thailand will be the continued use of other communication channels over and above the online media. Because of *Wattana-dharm Thai*, I think ICTs will never replace interpersonal communication and personal media. It is clear that Thai PR has changed dramatically over time. However, it still has the same core concepts and activities. For example, internal communication and social contribution have been the main PR activities from historic times to current practice. In a study by Anunnab in 1997 ICTs were identified as being widely accepted and used for PR practice in the future (see chapter 6). Ten years later (in 2008) in my study, I found that ICTs are being

used by Thai PR practitioners, but are in low demand. This reflects that the reason for not using ICTs much in PR practice is not because of people's behaviour, but because of *Wattana-dharm Thai*.

Moreover, *Wattana-dharm Thai* creates a blurred line between professional and personal relationships. Because the emphasis of Thai PR is on personal and social relationships, it is sometimes difficult to create a 'good balance' between these two relationships. For example, if PR practitioners tend to lean towards the personal side, they may not be concerned about the quality of news releases sent to journalists; paying attention to the connection. Meanwhile, if PR is too strict on the professional side, journalists may be given less help. Also, Thai PR should learn how to balance the mood and skill, because they represent an organisation's face and also have the task of company back up at the same time (see chapter 4 about PR definition).

Another example is the conflict between creativity of publicity and the hierarchical structure of the PR organisation. Multi-layered organisations may limit creativity and reduce quality of news because PR wants to please the boss rather than focus on the ultimate result (see chapter 5). A final example is the balance between form and content. Thai PR prefers outstanding forms rather than content. Sometimes, they worry too much about forms and neglect the matter of content.

FURTHER STUDY

Research Approach

This thesis employs a qualitative research method as a main approach because it aims to study the Thai PR working world (online and offline) through in-depth interviews. PRP culture is learnt through the interviewees' significant statements. However, as this research falls within a qualitative paradigm, the findings are also limited by this paradigm and as such subjective. Instead this research has analysed and provided a rich description of the PR working world (online and offline) relating to a specific context.

I would encourage further research using other research approaches to expand the findings of my study and develop a Thai PR theoretical framework. To generalise the results of my study and widen the body of knowledge, a further quantitative study might also be taken into consideration. To survey Thai PR practitioners following my framework for Thai PR practice, *Wattana-dharm Thai* aspects that influence Thai PR, including the use of ICTs in Thai PR practice are suggested.

Additionally, I am convinced that ethnographic research is another suitable method to study culture. It provides 'thick' description or 'rich' qualitative stories. The researcher can play a role either as an 'outsider' or 'insider' of the research. There are both advantages and disadvantages to the 'outsider' and 'insider' role, as I have noticed during my fieldwork. Being an outsider, the researcher can see differences between cultures better than an 'insider' because he has criteria for a comparison. However, he might face difficulties of accessing information, gaining trust with interviewees or communities, and interpreting the data. On the other hand, being an 'insider' helps to interpret the data well, but may lead to ignore significant phenomena and introduce bias.

Therefore, it is better to have a collaborative team with an 'outsider' and 'insider' working together, since it is very difficult to gain trust from Thai PR practitioners if the researcher takes charge as an 'outsider'. As noted in 'Chapter 4' Thais are friendly, Although Thai PR practitioners, according to 'Chapter 6', can speak English well, it is better to have a Thai native speaker in the research team to facilitate all communications and unlock the complex Thai culture.

Finally, it is possible to use discourse/semiotic analysis to analyse Thai PR writing materials such as press releases, photos, and media coverages to understand Thai PR culture, because the majority of Thai PR practitioners are nice, friendly, and ready to provide the necessary information. However, this research approach requires native speakers who have strong Thai and English language skills.

Potential Research

Several issues emerged from my study. First, it would be interesting to further examine the relationship between PR and Buddhism in Thailand, as earlier chapters (Chapter 4-5) have shown that Buddhism has strongly influenced PR practices. It is one of the *Wattana-dharm Thai* aspects that influence Thai PR and also affect CSR practice in Thailand. Hence, there are still plenty of gaps to be filled by research in Thai literature.

Second, it was noted that Thai communities are completely different from the West, it would therefore be intriguing for researchers to focus on Thai community relations. The researchers could make a comparison across countries to describe how community relations work in Thailand and compare them to other countries. In addition, the role of opinion leaders in Thai PR practice could be another interesting topic to study.

Third, this thesis highlights a lot of social contribution or CSR campaigns. Hence, it is a possibility to investigate different dimensions of Thai CSR campaigns. The history of Thai CSR is interesting while the link between CSR and Buddhism also deserves further investigation.

Fourth, the investigation of Thai PR and gender should be taken into consideration. This area of potential research emerged from my interview with Santhanasiri, the manager of a PR agency, who raised the question about female PR and technologies.

PR has been influenced by many factors in Thailand. Apart from the history of the country, the politics, and education, I would request international PR researchers who intend to examine PR in Asia to focus closely on several societal cultural factors such as religion, relationships between people in the country, community patterns, and basic occupations. As Sriramesh (2002) pointed out, Asia is a home of many religions, I highly recommend that researchers take religion as a crucial factor affecting PR practice, especially when studying a country that has a homogenous religion such as Thailand.

Relationships between people in a country is another important factor that sheds a different light on a story. It is significant to learn how relationships work in each society or country. In Asia, to maintain good relationships between organisations and stakeholders is different from the West, as my findings about relationships in Thai styles in 'Chapter 5' show.

In addition, each country or community has its structure and pattern of living. Some countries have big knowledge based communities while others have illiterate people who live in small villages, close to each other as in Thailand. Hence, to communicate with people or do a PR campaign, community patterns are very crucial to take into

account. This may affect all PR strategies and reflect on the success or failure of PR strategies in different countries.

Moreover, an original/basic occupation in a country can explain people's behaviours in the country. For example, Thailand's traditional occupation is agriculture. It encourages a collective society and affects the nature of Thai PR.

THESIS IMPLICATION

This thesis makes a new contribution to the culture and public relations, as I pointed out the knowledge gap in the literature review chapter (see chapter 2). It addresses the absence of PR work from Asia (Sriramesh, 2004). It will make a contribution to the academic literature on culture and public relations (offline and online). In addition, it will contribute to the literature regarding public relations in Southeast Asia and Thailand. It accesses how idiosyncrasies unique to a culture affect PR and it also adds to the richness of the study from a cultural perspective by keeping the original Thai terms to explain about *Wattana-dharm Thai*. In addition, it includes international implications for businessmen from the west and the rest of the world who want to set up or operate a PR business in Thailand and will provide suggestions for Thai PR practitioners to improve and develop their work, which I will discuss in the next section.

Implication for the Business and Public Relations Practice

This section will discuss the implications of the thesis findings for the future of business and public relations in 1) Thailand, and 2) the rest of the world.

1. Thailand

The thesis reflects the real occupation of Thai PR through practitioners' perceptions and experiences. It helps to add to the body of knowledge how PR practitioners in Thailand

work (online and offline). It reveals some useful information about PR gimmicks and strategies to grasp *Kwamprataabjai* from stakeholders, for example, how PR in big organisations do community relations campaigns and how PR manage issues (see chapter 5). Moreover, it presents Thai online PR techniques in order for interested PR practitioners to follow this route or improve its work by following my findings.

According to my findings, I would like to suggest to Thai PR practitioners several points. First, PR practitioners should learn and be aware of the fact that Thai PR is how to manage *Kwaampratabjai*. Lessons from my interviewees indicate that to do *Saang Kwaampratabjai*, PR practitioners should be mindful to small details and be aware of the right time, right place, and right person (see chapter 5). Moreover, PR practitioners should learn how to balance their 'mood' and be multi-skilled, because they have to be in both, the front and back stage (see chapter 5 about PR definition). Additionally, PR should put more emphasis on research & evaluation because I found that Thai PR is out of its comfort zone when talking about this job (see chapter 5 & 6). PR should improve its skills in a scientific way and learn various techniques for evaluation in order to choose the right methods that can measure the success/and failure of projects in order to improve them. Furthermore, PR practitioners should keep in mind that publicity is a supplementary job, not the main one. They should become more active and creative on publicity even if they are working in monopoly organisations and a non-competitive environment. PR practitioners should not let the poor organisational culture impact its quality of work. If there is no real competitor, they can monitor other organisations that conduct similar PR campaigns with their company (see chapter 5), for example, they can monitor 'PR environment programmes' of others if they are doing a global warming campaign. Also, PR executives should include PR plans in their strategic crisis

management plans. Who has the authority in decision-making must be clearly appointed (as Kongklan suggested in chapter 5).

For online PR, the thesis reveals strategies and difficulties of ICTs use in Thai PR. Due to the lack in infrastructure, good planning and personnel (see chapter 6), I would suggest PR practitioners to set clear plans for ICTs, recruit personnel who is competent in ICTs , and provide and encourage employees to have both internal and external trainings on IT and/or how to use ICTs for PR. Building motivation and encouraging an IT environment within organisations would be beneficial for future PR practice. Although I suggested in the previous section (see in chapter about discussion of key findings) that ICTs in Thai PR will never replace the traditional media such as personal media, I still think that they are value-added and alternative channels for Thai PR to communicate with the younger generation. Hence, it is better for PR managers to consider ICT policy and support the use of ICTs in PR organisations.

There are several factors that limit the use of ICTs in PR (see chapter 6), for example, the low penetration of ICTs in Thailand. In the past, the Thai government attempted to decrease the price of IT equipment, but paid less attention to educate people how to use it (see chapter 2 about development of ICTs in Thailand). I suggest that the Thai government increase its investment in IT literacy programmes so that greater numbers of people can gain access to and, therefore, participate in the online communication experience. Using ICTs is not only beneficial for Thai PR who work locally, but also important for Thai PR who work for an international company. Because we live in a globalised world, Thai PR should have global and local knowledge in order to improve and develop their work. Last but not least, I found that my interviewees had no idea how PR around the world do their job. When I asked them about *Wattana-dharm Thai* aspects that influence Thai PR, they often asked me back: ‘How about other countries?’

‘What do they look like? I suggest that Thai PR learn more about ‘culture and PR’ because I found that culture is very important in international PR. To deal with PR in other countries, one needs to know the culture to avoid misunderstanding (that might happen because of misinterpretation) and to do *Saang Kwaampratabjai*.

2. The Rest of the World

This thesis is very beneficial for the future of business and PR on the international stage. It contributes to the understanding of Thai PR occupation (online and offline): how Thai PR practitioners think, perceive, and experience. Moreover, it draws pictures about idiosyncrasies unique to *Wattana-dharm Thai* in Thai PR practice, to teach international PR and businessmen to understand how to do PR business in Thailand. As I discussed in the previous section, Thai PR applied generic PR to their jobs; the details of practice are different. I suggest to PR in the rest of the world to keep in mind that ‘we are different in our logical priorities, in ‘what comes first’ and ‘where a circle starts’.

To do PR business in Thailand, I think it is easy, but difficult. The reason I stated that it is easy is because Thailand is a homogeneous society with a unique race and religion. People tend to have a similar ideology and personality with the same backgrounds. Based on my key findings, Thai PR emphasises doing *Saang Kwaampratabjai* through *wattana-dharm Thai*. Hence, if Western PR learn to understand *wattana-dharm Thai*, it would not be too hard to be successful in the PR business. Because *wattana-dharm Thai* is shaped by Buddhism (see chapter 2 and 4), I suggest international PR to learn more about Buddhism and its teachings when doing business in Thailand. Some matters make a different sense in Thai PR regarding religion. ‘Good’ or ‘Bad’ is considered in Buddhist teaching. For example, smoking and drinking is perceived negatively in Thailand because of Buddhist teaching. Hence, if you have anti- smoking and drinking

campaigns, you will gain more support from Thai PR, the people, and others. On the other hand, if you work for a tobacco company, you might have difficulties to operate PR campaigns in Thailand because Thais have already decided that your company is bad. Although your company may work hard on social contribution, people will still have questions about your company unless you show that the company is willing to help them 'from the heart'. They will help you back if they can see your good intentions (see chapter 5 about the experience of Thai PR practitioners on community relations).

My research also implies that the popular win-win strategy of many Western businesses might not be understood in Thai PR practice. Rather, *Namjai* and *Bunghun* would work in this case. PR business in Thailand is not only about giving and donation; Thais have Buddhist teachings that indicate which one is 'good' or 'bad'. I suggest that to do PR in Thailand is not *only 'give' or 'take', but to share emotions, minds, feelings, and so on.* You have to be mindful to small details and personal information.

Moreover, being too strict would lose business, Thai PR practitioners focus on 'group rules' rather than 'regulations'. A community is very important in Thai PR. If you want to organise a campaign that invites individuals to join, it would be less successful than having a group activity (see chapter 5). When organising special events and parties, luxurious food with outstanding themes of the party should be prepared to gain more *Kwaaprataabjai*. Thai PR pay more attention to 'local' campaigns than 'global' campaigns because it is a developing country and has more areas waiting to be developed. Hence, you may consider a campaign for local issues first. A third person, for example an opinion leader, is always important for online and offline PR. Thai PR emphasises the influence on the person. Again, you need the right time, right practice, and right person to do PR in Thailand.

'Friendships' and 'personal relationships' are needed when you have to deal with Thai PR and other practitioners. You should always provide '*Namjai*' to your colleagues, boss, clients, employees, and stakeholders. A smiling face with *Pen-Mitr* greeting, even if you are in a bad mood is required when working with Thais. It is important to find out the age of the person you deal with because Thai PR respects superiors. It is hierarchical-structured so that you should pay respect to the elders. Also, the institution of the monarchy is ranked high in Thailand, therefore, you should never criticise it. Moreover, you should be aware of 'face and eyes' in PR society. You should avoid any direct confrontation that will lead to make Thai PR lose face.

Although not a main tool for PR in Thailand, online PR can be used as a supplementary to communicate with teenagers in Thailand. Also, it is effective in internal communication. Hence, it should be used to increase '*samakhii*' among employees.

In conclusion, I suggest that to do PR in Thailand is to do *Saang Kwaampratabjai* (through *wattana-dharm Thai*. International PR should keep in mind that to do PR across countries, you should have understanding, empathy, acceptance, and adaptation. You should try to understand the culture, but not judge it.

Personal Implications of the Thesis

I have learnt and gained so many things through my research journey. I also faced a turning point that shifted my interest forever. As I mentioned earlier in the introduction, my background was Statistics & PR, I began my first PhD proposal with the idea to compare Thai PR practice using the dominant paradigm and a survey. In addition, I planned to include online PR practice in my survey. Indeed, I was interested

in ICTs (new technology) & PR because I taught this topic for two years. It can be stated that the area of my interest in the beginning was PR & ICTs, not culture and PR.

However, my knowledge has been developed through the process of learning. I have read about qualitative and quantitative methodology. Then, I found it more interesting to do qualitative research although I had no experience. I found many different procedures between quantitative and qualitative research. It was difficult to think outside the quantitative box. I have learnt so much about the process, philosophy/assumptions, and limitations of qualitative research. I was starting to compare quantitative and qualitative in my mind. For example, I found that the main idea between qualitative and quantitative research is the same. They attempt to find out and search for some things, but in different forms and using different techniques of data gathering. I found that the process of doing research is similar, but in a different order. For example, quantitative research begins with research questions, tries to test hypothesis, and summarises & discusses how, why, and what differences between our findings and the previous literature exists. Meanwhile, qualitative research starts with broad and general research questions, but they can be shifted and changed along the journey if we find more interesting questions.

For example, I had an idea of shifting my topic from PR & ICTs to culture and PR when I interviewed PR practitioners. The more I asked the more information about culture and PR came out. I made several attempts to ask PR practitioners about PR & ICTs, but they tended to have short answers and moved back to their own interest. It indicated that Thai PR does not give importance to ICTs. However, I still stuck to PR & ICTs during my analysis, but I cannot deny the fact that culture is more dominant in my study than ICTs. Fortunately, I had the chance to go to several conferences, especially the ECREA

doctoral summer school. All tutors and friends suggested and commented on my work that my research should rather focus on culture than ICTs.

What I found at this stage about qualitative research is that research questions in qualitative research are 'developed' during the process of learning rather than completed at the first stage. Moreover, you know your projects the most. No one can help you if you don't spell it out. It is good to share your research with others (even with people from other fields). Sometimes, you get stuck and no one can help. In contrast to quantitative research, you can easily talk to and share your project with others because it relies on either the same concepts or theory or statistics. However, a statistics background at least helped me to form and structure my ideas, but I had to be open-minded and accept changeable things that happened during the project. A quantitative background helps to work systematically, but I had to destroy boxes or systems in my mind.

I also had a hard time to manage my literature review due to my quantitative background. In quantitative, it is based on others' framework to test or to create new theories from existing theories. In qualitative, there is no rule where to start, what to read, and what should be written in the literature review. All researchers have to do is read as much as possible about their areas of study. Then, the literature review is never finished until the end of the research process. In addition, it will never be ending if you are not satisfied with it. You must learn how to say 'enough'.

The most difficult issue in quantitative research is 'Statistics'. You must know how to use the right one, how to interpret, how to select unbiased and representative samples and so on. It is difficult at the beginning, but it is easier to finish. Qualitative research needs skilful researchers. I cannot tell what most difficult was, but I can tell that all

stages are hard in itself. For example, to formulate the research questions, you must have a wide knowledge. You must do enough literature review. You may not need to have all detailed literature, but at least to confirm the situation and context around your topic. 'Is it an original piece of work?' should be kept in mind. You will feel like you are floating in the ocean or get lost in the forest (feel insecure) all the time while you are on the research journey. But finally, you'll find someone or some tools that will help you to get out from the wild jungles.

In this research, I took a role of 'insider' and 'outsider'. I took the role of 'insider' in interpreting and analysing processes because I am Thai and understand the meanings behind 'the context that 'outsiders' may not understand. However, I sometimes acted as the 'outsider' because I lived abroad for five years and sometimes it can be seen clearer from the outside. For example, when explaining and discussing about *Wattana-dharm Thai*, I sometimes included my ideas and opinion. Meanwhile, I was an outsider when I presented about the general background of Thailand and Thai culture.

The role of the researcher in quantitative and qualitative research is also different in my experience. Qualitative research allows researchers to be the 'insider', using first the person ('I' or 'we') to present the stories while you must use the third person (i.e. the researcher, the author) to write up the research and results in quantitative research.

The qualitative researcher needs to be flexible, not to stick closely to the frameworks and not to be too strict on oneself. I suggest that being a qualitative researcher is like being a detective—one has to be suspicious and asks oneself why and how all the time. One has to be a critical thinker and detailed person who see things around oneself as

special and interesting. If one sees things as normal all the time one should not do research. However, quantitative researchers need statistics and analytic skills.

Personally, I don't say that qualitative research is better than quantitative research. In my experience, it depends on the nature of your research or projects. For example, if you would like to explore about PR policy, qualitative research gives you more detailed data in this case. However, if you want to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of your campaigns, you may need to use quantitative methods. In addition, you may need to do mixed methods for some kinds of projects. The distinction between quantitative and qualitative methods is not entirely clear-cut, and all researchers should think very carefully about how and why they might combine any methods, whether qualitative, quantitative, or both (Mason, 2002: 8).

Apart from the issue of my personal background in Statistics, being Thai is also my obstacle for the study. Generally, people always think that it is easier to study about your own country. Personally, I found it was harder to be an 'insider' and 'outsider' at the same time. I also found it was difficult to address questions: "What is Thai culture?", and "Is it different from another culture?" I realised that it is not easy for local people to answer these kinds of questions. I searched for documents for three years. There was little information about 'Thai culture'. The only documents I could find were produced as tourist information about Thai customs. There were limited Thai sources regarding 'Thailand', 'Thai history', and 'Thai culture'. It may be because generally Thais were illiterate in the past; and only the elite groups could read and write. In addition, it was not very interesting to examine Thai culture because we are 'Thai' and we know that 'this is Thai style'. Hence, it is not necessary to investigate within the country.

Likewise, English documents addressing the same issues were rare due to the language barrier. Interestingly, I found that the best sources to learn about 'Thai culture' were documents about Christian studies with the cases in Thailand. I realised that literature written by/for Christian missionaries was very useful for my thesis in order to explain the complex structure and culture in Thailand. Moreover, I have shared my findings with Western friends. It was an exchange process. This technique was useful in the process of learning as it helps me to enrich my understanding with an 'outsider' perspective of my data and enrich my understanding about cultures of other countries.

Wattana-dharm Thai also sometimes obstructed my critical thinking. According to chapter 5, Thai PR (including Thais) avoid a confrontation and do not criticise. It was difficult to overcome the problems due to my cultural background. Qualitative research requires critical thinking and arguments. I have done my best to overcome the issue.

I was lucky that I did not have any difficulties completing the fieldwork as I discussed in 'Chapter 3'. However, the key difficulty I faced in my research was translating the data from Thai to English. It was challenging sometimes to transfer the exact, original words of the participants and to keep the cultural meanings they implied as I discussed in 'Chapter 3'. Coming from the same culture enabled me to read what was behind the interviewees' words, to interpret the silence, and to know what was not said. To overcome this challenge, I asked interviewees to clarify their statements.

As a whole, I have gained and grown a lot from doing this thesis. The thesis enriches my 'learning by doing' knowledge about research methodologies, techniques, PR theories, the importance of history on PR, and the significance of culture and PR. It also increases multi-skills (e.g., critical thinking, translation, presentation, open-minded in

academic, how to make constructive comments on people's papers) and teaches me how to deal with tough situations. It helped me gain a wide range of networks and connections from PhD in PR, media and communication, and other departments as well as Thai PR managers and practitioners (whom I interviewed). Finally, I realised the phrases 'be patient' and 'nothing is perfect'.

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APPENDIX I**LIST OF INTERVIEWEES****Interview Sources: Personal Interview (Face to Face Communication)****PR Management**

1. Mr. Boonphee Banvorn

Position: General Manager Public Relations and Social Activities and Secretary of Think Earth Project

Company: Siam Motors Co., Ltd.

Date of Interview: 1/02/ 2008.

Period of Interview: 5 hours

2. Mrs. Wisunee Boonnak

Position: Executive Director -- News Analysis and Database, Public Relations Department

Company: Secretariat of the Prime Minister

Date of Interview: 14/02/2008.

Period of Interview: 1.5 hours

3. Mrs. Pramesiri Dilokpreechakul

Position: Managing Director

Company: Siam PR Consultant

Date of Interview: 11/03/2008

Period of Interview: 1.5 hours

4. Mr. Burin Hemmatad

Position: Chief Executive Officer

Company: Kith and Kin Communication and Consultant Limited

Date of Interview: 7/03/2008

Period of Interview: 2.5 hours

5. Ms. Suthana Hongthong

Position: Manager Office of Corporate Communications Affairs

Company: Charoen Pokphand Groups Co.,Ltd. (Consumer Product)

Date of Interview: 20/02/2008

Period of Interview: 3 hours

6. Dr. Phot Jaichansukkit

Position: President -- Public Society of Thailand

Company: Siam Commercial Bank Public Society of Thailand

Date of Interview: 9/04/2008

Period of Interview: 2.5 hours

7. Mrs. Na-mon Jaiprasart
Position: Director Public Relations Division
Company: National Housing Authority
Date of Interview: 8/03/2008
Period of Interview: 3 hours
8. Associate Professor Ubolwan Pittipattanacozi
Position: Associate professor
Company: Faculty of Communication Arts, Chulalongkorn University
Date of Interview: 28/01/2007
Period of Interview: 1.5 hours
9. Mrs. Vilai Keangpradoo
Position: Vice President -- Public relations
Company: Advance Info Service (Public) Co., Ltd. (Mobile and Telecommunication business)
Date of Interview: 12/03/2008
Period of Interview: 3 hours
10. Mr. Perapong Klinla-Or
Position: Vice President / Department Head Corporate Social Responsibility
Company: DTAC
Date of Interview: 9/03/2008
Period of Interview: 3 hours
11. Mrs. Tawinan Kongklan
Position: PR manager
Company: TV5
Date of Interview: 12/02/2008
Period of Interview: 2 hours
12. Ms. Chantanee Kritsamai
Position: PR Director
Company: Polyplus PR Co.,Ltd
Date of Interview: 22/01/ 2008
Period of Interview: 2.5 hours
13. Duangrat Mahavanich
Position: Assist. Director of Public Relations TV3 Website Management & Development
Company: Thai TV3 (Television)
Date of Interview: 3/04/2008
Period of Interview: 3 hours
14. Mr. Mukkapol Maneenoi
Position: Public Relations Policy Manager
Company: PTT Public Company Limited
Date of Interview: 31/01/2008
Period of Interview: 2 hours

15. Mr. Nimitz Modraki

Position: Chief Executive Officer

Company: 124 Communications

Date of Interview: 14/01/2007

Period of Interview: 1.5 hours

16. Ms. Jaruwan Nawawat

Position: Senior Account Manager (PR) Amex Team Advertising Limited

Company: Amex Team Advertising Limited

Date of Interview: 7/04/2008

Period of Interview: 3 hours

17. Miss Krongthong Phetwong

Position: Chief -- Public Relations and Donor Recruitment Section

Company: National Blood Centre, Thai Redcross Society

Date of Interview: 11/02/2008

Period of Interview: 3hours

18. Mr. Charoen Pradistsakul

Position: Managing Director

Company: Zing Republic (Bangkok) Co., Ltd

Date of Interview: 24/01/2008

Period of Interview: 2 hours

19. Ms. Wipa Praditchpholpanich

Position: Head of Public Relations Department, School of Communication Arts

Company: The University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce

Date of Interview: 5/04/2008

Period of Interview: 1.5 hours

20. Ms. Patcharee Promkoj

Position: Senior Lecturer

Company: Public Relations Department, School of Communication Arts, The University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce

Date of Interview: 12/02/2008

Period of Interview: 1.5 hours

21. Mrs. Sriprapat Prownpuntu

Position: Manager, Media Relations and Corporate News Division Corporate Communication Department

Company: Thai Airways International Public Company Limited

Date of Interview: 13/02/ 2008

Period of Interview: 3 hours

22. Mrs. Phittraporn Punyaratabandhu

Position: First Senior Vice President (Corporate Communication)

Company: Muang Thai Life Assurance Co., Ltd.

Date of Interview: 11/02/ 2008

Period of Interview: 3 hours

23. Mr. Jamlong Rattanapan
 Position: Executive Director Advertising and Public Relations Department
 Company: Tourism Authority of Thailand
 Date of Interview: 15/02/2008
 Period of Interview: 1.5 hours

24. Mr. Suppawut Rungsepanodorn
 Position: Chief - Public Relations Division
 Company: The Treasury Department, Ministry of Finance
 Date of Interview: 28/03/2008
 Period of Interview: 3 hours

25. Colonel Samurpak Sangamuang
 Position: Public Relations Director
 Company: Royal Thai Army
 Date of Interview: 8 April 2008
 Period of Interview: 3 hours

26. Mrs. Bussarin Santhanasiri
 Position: PR manager
 Company: Asatsu (Thailand) Co., Ltd.
 Date of Interview: 21 January 2008
 Period of Interview: 4 hours

27. Ms. Sutasnee Thabthim
 Position: General Manager -- External Affairs
 Company: The Shell Company of Thailand Limited (Oil and Gas)
 Date of Interview: 20 March 2008
 Period of Interview: 1.5 hours

28. Mrs. Yuwadee Thongsuwan
 Position: Chief -- Public Relations Division
 Company: Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand
 Date of Interview: 8 February 2008
 Period of Interview: 3 hours

29. Mr. Chamnan Tippayachanawong
 Position: Director -- Office of Publicity and Public Relations
 Company: Administrative Court
 Date of Interview: 19 February 2008
 Period of Interview: 3 hours

PR junior practitioners (Period of Interview: 30 minutes per each person)

30. Juntima Yamapewan	
Position	PR Officer
Company	Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives
Date of Interview:	4/04 08

31. Ilada Weawsirirat
 Position PR Plan
 Company Index
 Date of Interview: 4/04/08
32. Nalinee Chalewkriangkrai
 Position Senior PR
 Company Teleinfo Media Co., Ltd
 Date of Interview: 8/04/2008
33. Nonlanee Kittisaowapak
 Position PR officer
 Company Investor Club Association
 Date of Interview: 29/03/2008
34. Piyapak Sinbuathong
 Position Assistant to Marketing Director
 Company Ultimate Property Group Co., Ltd
 Date of Interview: 7/04/2008
35. Pongsathorn Komalesara
 Position section Manager Public Relations
 Company Investor Club Association
 Date of Interview: 11/04/2008
36. Sarawut Jirapisankul
 Position PR Officer
 Company PTT
 Date of Interview: 31/03/2008
37. Sasikarn Tungwongtrakul
 Position PR Executive
 Company PTT
 Date of Interview: 29/03/2008
38. Sataporn Kijwan
 Position PR Consultant
 Company Rippleeffect
 Date of Interview: 29/03/2008
39. Tanachporn Wannpakorn
 Position Senior officer
 Company True vision
 Date of Interview: 1/04/2008

40. Usarat Inpongpan

Position PR Officer
Company Srinakharinwirot University
Date of Interview: 30/03/2008

41. Warattika Patawanich

Position PR Consultant
Company VH1 Thailand co.,Ltd and Search Entertainment
Date of Interview: 1/1/2008

42. Worapa Taychasuriyaworakul

Position PR freelance
Company Not identified
Date of Interview: 29/03/2008

43. Yingruk Ussawipas

Position marketing officer
Company Payathai 2 hospital
Date of Interview: 28/03/2008

APPENDIX II

INTERVIEW FORM OF PR SENIOR MANAGEMENT AND JUNIOR PRACTITIONERS

Interview Form for PR senior management

Part I: Public Relations Practice in Thailand

1. Definition of Public Relations
 - a. Public Relations and Propaganda
 - b. Public Relations and Advertising
 - c. Public Relations and Marketing
2. Public Relations Practice: from the past to present (From your experiences)
3. The Role and Functions of Public Relations
4. The Characteristics of Thai Public Relations
5. Qualification of Public Relations Practitioners
6. Evaluation of Public Relations
7. Factor Effectuated the Change in Thai Public Relations Practice

Part II: Public Relations Practice in Thailand

1. The Role of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for Public Relations Practice
2. ICTs usage for Public Relations Practice
3. ICTs Infrastructure and Policy
 - a. Necessary IT program for Public Relations works
 - b. Internal and IT training
4. The Difficulty of ICTs for Public Relations Practice
5. The Future of Public Relations in Thailand

APPENDIX II

Interview Form for Junior Practitioners ICTs usage for Public Relations Practice in Thailand

General Information

1. Name Company
2. Name of Interviewee
.....
3. Position
.....
4. Experience Year (s)
5. Type of PR works
6. Type of an organisation
 government/state enterprises business sector PR agency/ consultant
7. Type of Business
8. Date of focus group

1. Do you think ICTs have an impact of Public Relations works?
2. If yes, how?
3. Which PR jobs that have employed ICTs the most?
4. Which ICTs do you usually use for PR works? How do you use it?
 - a. E-mail
 - b. Intranet
 - c. Your corporate web site and/or other websites
 - d. Search Engine such as google, yahoo
 - e. Online Community such as www.pantip.com
 - f. Online Research
 - g. Blog
 - h. Instant message such as MSN, Yahoo
 - i. Conference call such as skype
 - j. Database and CD
 - k. Computer programmes
 - l. Mobile phone
 - m. Other ICTs
5. Do you have any difficulties using them? What are those?
6. How do you measure the success of public relations works via ICTs?
7. Other suggestions on the use of ICTs on Public Relations works

APPENDIX III

**AN EXAMPLE OF INVITATION LETTER
[IN BOTH THAI AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE]**



คณะนิเทศศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยหอการค้าไทย
126/1 ถ.วิภาวดีรังสิต ดินแดง กทม. 10900

28 มกราคม 2551

เรื่อง ขอนัดสัมภาษณ์เพื่อเป็นข้อมูลสำคัญในการวิจัยระดับปริญญาเอก
เรียน คุณวิไล เคียงประตุ ผู้ช่วยกรรมการผู้อำนวยการ ส่วนงานประชาสัมพันธ์
บริษัท แอดวานซ์ อินโฟร์ เซอร์วิส จำกัด (มหาชน)

ดิฉันเป็นอาจารย์ประจำสาขาการประชาสัมพันธ์ คณะนิเทศศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยหอการค้าไทยและขณะนี้กำลังศึกษาระดับปริญญาเอกสาขาการประชาสัมพันธ์ ณ University of Stirling ประเทศสหราชอาณาจักร โดยมีหัวข้อในการทำวิทยานิพนธ์เกี่ยวกับ The Implication of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) on Public Relations Practice in Thailand ซึ่งงานวิจัยดังกล่าวมีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาวิวัฒนาการรวมถึงบทบาทของงานประชาสัมพันธ์ในประเทศไทย ปัจจัยที่ทำให้งานประชาสัมพันธ์ไทยเปลี่ยนแปลง บทบาทของ ICTs ต่องานประชาสัมพันธ์ในด้านต่างๆ และศึกษาแนวโน้มของงานประชาสัมพันธ์ไทยในอนาคต

อนึ่ง เนื่องจากท่านเป็นผู้ที่มีบทบาทต่องานประชาสัมพันธ์ในประเทศไทยและเป็นผู้ทรงคุณวุฒิด้านการประชาสัมพันธ์ สามารถที่จะให้ข้อมูลที่เป็นประโยชน์อย่างยิ่งต่องานวิจัยเกี่ยวกับอาชีพประชาสัมพันธ์ในประเทศไทย ดังนั้นดิฉันจึงใคร่ขอความกรุณานัดสัมภาษณ์ท่านในวันและเวลาที่ท่านสะดวก โดยดิฉันได้แนบแนวคำถามมาพร้อมกับจดหมายเชิญฉบับนี้แล้ว

ดิฉันหวังเป็นอย่างยิ่งว่าจะได้รับความกรุณาจากท่านให้เข้าสัมภาษณ์ และหากท่านมีข้อสงสัยประการใด โปรดติดต่อ อาจารย์สุทธนิภา ศรีไสย์ ได้ที่ suttanipa@yahoo.com หรือ โทร. 089-6740316

จึงเรียนมาเพื่อขอความอนุเคราะห์ดังกล่าว ขอขอบคุณเป็นอย่างสูงมา ณ โอกาสนี้ด้วย

ขอแสดงความนับถืออย่างสูง

อาจารย์สุทธนิภา ศรีไสย์
อาจารย์ประจำสาขาวิชาการประชาสัมพันธ์
คณะนิเทศศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยหอการค้าไทย

แนวคำถาม

1. นิยามของ “การประชาสัมพันธ์”
 - 1.1 การประชาสัมพันธ์ VS การโฆษณาชวนเชื่อ
 - 1.2 การประชาสัมพันธ์ VS การโฆษณา
 - 1.3 การประชาสัมพันธ์ VS การตลาด
2. ลักษณะงานประชาสัมพันธ์ (อดีตถึงปัจจุบัน)
3. บทบาทหน้าที่ของงานประชาสัมพันธ์
4. เวกลักษณะของงานประชาสัมพันธ์ไทย
5. งานประชาสัมพันธ์มีการเปลี่ยนแปลงไปจากเดิมในช่วง 5-10 ปีหรือไม่ อย่างไร
6. ปัจจัยที่ทำให้งานประชาสัมพันธ์ไทยเปลี่ยนแปลงไปคือปัจจัยใดบ้าง
7. บทบาทของ ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies) ต่องานประชาสัมพันธ์ด้านต่างๆ
8. ลักษณะการใช้ ICTs เพื่อการประชาสัมพันธ์
9. นโยบายการใช้ ICTs ในหน่วยงาน
 - 9.1 โครงสร้างพื้นฐานและ ICTs ในหน่วยงาน
 - 9.2 นโยบายในการจัดหาอุปกรณ์ ICTs ทั้ง Hardware และ Software
 - 9.3 นโยบายเกี่ยวกับบุคลากร (ความรู้ของผู้บริหาร, การรับสมัครคนักประชาสัมพันธ์, และการจัดอบรมทั้งภายนอกและภายใน)
 - 9.4 งบประมาณที่จัดสรรให้ ICTs
10. การประเมินผลการใช้ ICTs
11. ปัญหาและอุปสรรคในการใช้ ICTs เพื่องานประชาสัมพันธ์
12. อนาคตของ ICTs และงานประชาสัมพันธ์ในอนาคต (10 ปีข้างหน้า)

หมายเหตุ

ICTs หมายถึง การสื่อสารผ่านอุปกรณ์สื่อสารสมัยใหม่ซึ่งมีส่วนช่วยสนับสนุนงานประชาสัมพันธ์ โดย ICTs นั้นได้แก่

1. PCคอมพิวเตอร์และ Laptop รวมถึง database, software, hardware และโปรแกรมคอมพิวเตอร์ที่ใช้ในงานประชาสัมพันธ์
2. อินเทอร์เน็ต รวมถึงอีเมลล์, หน้าเว็บเพจ, community online, และอื่นๆ
3. มือถือและดาวเทียม



School of Communication Arts
 University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce
 126/1 Vibhawadee Rangsit, Dindaeng
 Bangkok 10900

28 January 2008

Subject Request for arranging interview appointment for PhD thesis

To Khun Vilai Keangpradoo Vice President - Public relations
 Advance Info Service (Public) Co., Ltd.

I am a lecturer of Public Relations Department, School of Communication Arts, the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce. I am now studying for PhD in Public Relations at University of Stirling in the United Kingdom. My PhD thesis topic is about 'Public Relations Practice in Thailand Practice and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)'. It aims to study evolution of Thai public relations practice, including the role of public relations; factors effected the changes in Thai public relations, the impact of ICTs on Thai public relations practice, and the future of Thai public relations practice.

In fact, you play crucial roles in Thai public relations practice that obtain high qualifications and expertise in public relations. Your reflection and contribution would be high valuable to generate body of knowledge about public relations occupation in Thailand. Therefore, I would like to request arranging an appointment with you in the date and time that you are available. I enclosed the guide of interviews with the letter. Please see attached interviews.

I look forward to your kind consideration to accept my arrangement. If you have any inquiries, please contact Lecturer Suttanipa Srisai via e-mail at suttanipa@yahoo.com or via mobile phone at 089-6740316.

Please kindly consider and accept my request. Thank you in advance.

Your sincerely,

(Suttanipa Srisai)

Lecturer
 Public Relations Department
 School of Communication Arts
 the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce

The Guideline of Interview

List of Questions

Please relate your experiences about:

1. What is 'PR' definition from your experience?
2. Please relate your work experience from the past to present .What have you done?
3. What are roles of PR?
4. Do you think PR is changed in the last 5-10 years? How?
5. What are factors that impact Thai PR?
6. What are impacts of ICTs on PR practice?
7. How do you use ICTs with your work?
8. Do you have any policies on ICTs?
9. How do you evaluate PR? How's about ICTs?
10. What are your obstacles using ICTs for PR work? Please relate your story.
11. What is the future of Thai PR?

Notes

ICTs are new technologies that help facilitate and support PR work. ICTs include

4. Computer and Laptop (database, software, hardware and programmes that used in PR work)
5. The Internet (e-mail, web sites, online community board, etc.)
6. Mobile phone and Satellite

APPENDIX IV

MORE QUOTES OF CHAPTER 5

Appendix 4.1

“Thai people call propaganda ‘Psychological Operations’ ...PR releases news to the public, but the public have the right to do or not to do it. Propaganda forces people to follow...PR is just about information and asking people to follow” (Banvorn, Interview, 1 January 2008).

Propaganda... is a principle of the military. It’s used for destruction. Is it what PR is about? No, it isn’t. PR is creative, not censored. It is a military task to do propaganda. This is an *operational psychology*, not PR...(Sangamuang, Interview, 8 April 2008).

Appendix 4.2

“Propaganda is about *negative* persuasion. There is something hidden. PR has various purposes, and no hidden agendas” (Keangpradoo, Interview, 12 March 2008).

“I think advertising and propaganda are quite similar. PR, in contrast, presents facts. Advertising, sometimes, has hidden agendas in order to make a company look good” (Phetwong, Interview, 11 February 2008).

“When we talk about propaganda, the feelings would be *negative*...” (Boonnak, Interview, 14 February 2008).

Appendix 4.3

“Propaganda is talking about how to influence people’s minds, in a *negative way*” (Jaichansukkit, Interview, 9 April 2008).

“We look at propaganda as *a black colour*. PR prefers using the word ‘persuasion’” (Pittipattanacozit, Interview, 28 January 2007).

Appendix 4.4

“Actually, PR began with propaganda. Propaganda is used for the military or security purposes. For example, you want to do propaganda about 3 crisis provinces in the southern of Thailand (Prownpuntu, Interview, 13 February 2008).

“...propaganda is believed to be related to politics.” (Kritsamai, Interview, 22 January 2008)

“Propaganda has its root from Communism...” (Kongklan, Interview, 12 February 2008).

“Politics may use this technique [propaganda].” (Hongthong, Interview, 20 February 2008)

“...Propaganda, mostly, is used for politics. It is related to the spread of news and rumour...” (Punyaratabandhu, Interview, 11 February 2008).

“We knew only that advertising was about selling something while PR was telling information and propaganda was about politics.” (Pittipattanacozit, Interview, 28 January 2007)

“...It [propaganda] is a principle of the military. It’s used for destruction. Is it what PR is about? No, it isn’t. PR is creative, not censured. It is a military task to do propaganda. This is an operation psychology, not PR...” (Sangamuang, Interview, 8 April 2008)

Appendix 4.5

In my experience, we have made a campaign for the Energy Policy & Planning Office, Ministry of Energy of Thailand. This campaign aims to inform and enhance the awareness of people toward energy conservation. We must warn them about the crisis situation of energy use; it’s time to reduce energy consumption. Another project of us is for the Board of Investment of Thailand (BOI). We must communicate about positive investment atmospheres in Thailand in order to 1) convince foreign investors to invest in Thailand; and 2) point out good opportunities and situation to Thai investors. I think these two projects are half propaganda and PR... (Hemmatad, Interview, 7 March 2008).

Appendix 4.6

It [propaganda] may lack morals since it presents only an advantageous side...For example, if the government wants to have a propaganda campaign, it means that the campaign must influence people no matter what the negative side effects are... (Boonnak, Interview, 14 February 2008).

“It [propaganda] persuades people to believe them without any doubts in legitimate issues...It doesn’t tell you negative sides, on the other hand, it tries to convince you to pull you to its side.” (Rungseepanodorn, Interview, 28 March 2008)

“...the difference between PR and propaganda is the morality or the responsibility of PR practitioners...” (Santhanasiri, Interview, 21 January 2008)

“Many stories of propaganda are made up without codes of ethics and accuracy. The aim of propaganda is just to convince people to behave in the direction the sender has set...” (Punyaratabandhu, Interview, 11 February 2008).

Appendix 4.7

“I think propaganda presents only one-sided fact. The goal is just to influence the receiver.” (Promkoj, Interview, 12 February 2008)

“I think propaganda presents only one-sided facts...” (Promkoj, Interview, 12 February 2008).

Propaganda presents only one side of information. It’s kind of a little bit guiding what you must do those... PR is softer. It gives all sides of information about an organization and allows the audience to select the messages. In contrast, propaganda presents only one side forever. Propaganda seems like when we have only a piece of paper, we need to advertise only this paper. PR has more pieces, maybe five pieces, and we let people decide which one they like (Prownpuntu, Interview, 13 February 2008).

“...propaganda...seems like we give one-side information for the purpose of self-benefit...” (Boonnak, Interview, 14 February 2008).

Appendix 4.8

“...PR aims to propagate the truth. We are telling the truth. On the other hand, propaganda is *laying it on thick* in order to convince people to believe what it says. It may be not true...” (Phetwong, Interview, 11 February 2008).

“The difference between propaganda and PR is that propaganda may have little truth and *add more exaggeration* in order to receive proposed results...” (Hongthong, Interview, 20 February 2008).

...Propaganda has some amounts of information, but tries to make people understand in another direction. It’s not similar to PR. PR makes information interesting in order to attract consumer’s interest...(Jaichansukkit, Interview, 9 April 2008).

“PR is totally different from propaganda. Propaganda is talking about how to influence people’s minds, in a negative way. Making bad things look good, trying to pull people together to show an organization’s power, and improper campaigns are all propaganda...” (Jaichansukkit, Interview, 9 April 2008)

PR has some similarities with propaganda, but is different in goals. Propaganda is about negative persuasion. There is something hidden. PR has various purposes, and no hidden agendas. Its main function is to publicise information in order to build understanding and gain perception of people which leads to the highest goal of PR-a relationship...We have tested these with a few groups; it was successful. However, we are now making an effort for the masses (Keangpradoo, Interview, 12 March 2008).

Appendix 4.9

...government and small state enterprises usually focused on only publicity since in management's view, PR works were evaluated by the number of news or media coverage. Hence, Thai PR works were still undeveloped. Top management was lacking in understanding about PR... government and state enterprises were strange. They looked at PR as maids of management. That leads to the failure of Thai PR practice. There was no research and evaluation for organisations. News clippings were one way to evaluate the success of PR. In addition, no clipping analysis was done (Pimolsin, 1999 quoted in Thammawitpatch, 1999: 271).

Thai PR could be divided into two sectors: business and government. These do not include big state enterprises. State enterprises were very professional. Government PR practitioners had tried to send news releases as much as they could. But they didn't get any media coverage. In my experience, most of the media thought that government PR practitioners had tried to please their bosses by writing long material and unused news. Moreover, their news releases were lacking in creativity. The styles of writing were boring, similar to official letters. Therefore, the media often threw their news away...(Chumpa, 1999 quoted in Thammawitpatch, 1999: 272).

Appendix 4.10

Normally, we do not use PR agency services...government sector does not have excessive budget [to hire PR agencies]. Moreover, we could ask for support from the Government PR Department or TV channels to broadcast our spots...government sector is different from private sector. We are monopoly organisations. Who is going to compete - producing commemorative coins and medals - with us? ...Or who is going to generate electricity instead of us [Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand]? (Rungsepanodorn, Interview, 28 March 2008).

Appendix 4.11

Bureaucratic PR is definitely different from the private sector...My organisation belongs to the Board of Investment of Thailand, under the Ministry of Industry. We are a monopoly organisation with no competitors. Our main task is to inform investors through monthly newsletters or publications...government agencies are not as flexible as the business sector. Since we are monopoly, PR would rather be reactive than proactive (Kittisaowapak, Interview, 29 March 2008).

Appendix 4.12

Thai PR competition, currently, is tough. Hundreds or thousands of news releases from organisations are sent to journalists each day. Hence, we need to create outstanding content. Photo releases, especially, need to be interesting...we must have gimmicks. Gimmicks could be used for photo releases or press releases or events...(Hemmatad, Interview, 7 March 2008).

Appendix 4.13

PR, nowadays, does not rely only on press conferences. We still organise it, but not all of our works are press conferences. In the year 2000, we must use strategies. In the private sector, we have practiced PR in both formal and informal ways. We should carefully notice and analyse social issues and trends. At the same time, PR practitioners must do proactive PR by creating an agenda that relates to both social trends and organisations. To do this, we should have in-depth knowledge of media productions such as TV, newspaper, radio, and magazines. PR have changed from previously. We could not wait for the media. We should arouse the interest of the media by creating some attractive agenda. For the private sector, television is very difficult to reach. Generally, Thai Television serves government agencies. We sometimes paid for TV programmes and documentaries. Some of our stories were hints in small columns of newspapers. These would spark the interest of other media. Then, they would be broadcasted to the public...(Keangpradoo, 1999 quoted in Thammawitpatch: 278-279).

Appendix 4.14

Our company has many continuing PR campaigns, but we didn't mainly focus on the environmental issue. Our pride project was 'Bringing back *Luang Por Sila* - an image of Buddha. Luang Por Sila, a Thai antique, was stolen as is in the United States. Once, there was a request to private sectors seeking funding assistance. We were willing to bring Luang Por Sila back no matter how much we had to spend on this. We would make a decision based on the benefits we could contribute to society...We were glad to be a part of maintaining Buddhism. This project was given to His Majesty the King in his Golden Jubilee...PR works were related to the social image of organisations (Hongthong, 1999 quoted in in Thammawitpatch: 276).

Appendix 4.15

In the past, PR focused on internal communication...currently, CSR is dominant. PR coordinates more frequently with HR [Human Resource Department] to get company employees involved with projects (Mahavanich, Interview, 3 April 2008).

...CSR covers both internal and external communication. As I told you, it is concerned with organisations, employees, traders, customers, and competitors. If comparing between countries, CSR links all elements such as towns, cities, provinces, and a country together...A human is the best medium for explaining and communication... (Klinla-Or, Interview, 9 March 2008)

Appendix 4.16

The first task of professional PR is how to make people in the same organisation speak the same language. If we can't make them speak the same language, the problems come...I have tried to tell my employees that if people in the organisation do not speak the same language, please do not step forward to do social contribution (Banvorn, Interview, 1 January 2008).

Appendix 4.17

We are dealing with PR media such as press conferences, interviews, paper scripts, and others. And we also have internal relations since we are an international organization and we have dealt with various international companies such as aircraft manufacturers and star alliances. Also, we have 50 stations worldwide so that it is necessary to communicate between employees or give them information about activities of an organization. In addition, we have done internal communication...(Prownpuntu, Interview, 13 February 2008).

Appendix 4.18

In my opinion, special events for PR such as seminars, anniversaries, awards, plant tours, presentations, are very popular in Thailand. If there is a budget, I prefer using them. Contests, for example, could easily reach many target groups. However, the Internet might become famous in the near future. PR campaigns would be set on the Internet by that time. PR practitioners might arrange special events on these modern media since they are convenient and money-saving (Chumpa, 1999 quoted in Thammawitpatch: 275).

Special events are one PR task...it depends on types of organisations...it includes fairs, exhibitions, entertainment, academic events, and seminars... (Hemmatad, Interview, 7 March 2008)

Appendix 4.19

PR stands shoulder to shoulder with the executives. We have a train section for executives before they are going to give speeches. A train section includes the sequence of events and appropriate answers. They are like actors. We have to take care of everything about their image. We have a rule that interviews will be given all the time, except in case journalists request to take photographs or video. Morning is the best time to be given an interview with a photo since the executive is fresh and good looking (Punyaratabandhu, Interview, 11 February 2008).

Besides handing information to society...PR practitioners should be concerned about images of the executive...they must be good and transparent.... (Hemmatad, Interview, 7 March 2008)

'The most vital job of Thai PR practice is corporate PR and executive PR respectively...' (Jaichansukkit, Interview, 9 April 2008).

Appendix 4.20

Media connections help build relationships with new partners. Business partners are now looking for companies that have strong media relations and various contacts with the media to support their business. If they want to join hands with somebody, they must be sure that they will get sufficient return benefits – especially more media coverage. The Public relations of Muang Thai Life Assurance in people's view is

considered to be very strong. My potential partner who is going to sign a contract with us soon has asked me to help him obtain marketing media sections. I told him not to worry; I can help with assurance media sections. If he has a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) campaign, he will gain social sections. Or if he needs an entertainment section, we can bring our celebrities to the events by using our resources. We generally give sponsorship to many events such as Academy Fantasia-a reality singing contest and Miss Thailand World. We are sure to gain photo releases from these events (Punyaratabandhu, Interview, 11 February 2008).

One of the obstacles for PR is an organisation's policy...lack of budget...PR practitioners must overlook this issue...we must find supplemental strategies...Hence, we must have strategic partners to support each other...we, in addition, have collaborative social contribution campaigns... (Kongklan, Interview, 12 February 2008).

Currently, we have a task of establishing partnerships. We are asking for collaboration with other organisations who have good and lots of media connections... (Phetwong, Interview, 11 February 2008).

...We are in a partnership with Toyota Motor...we have 500-600 cars provided for going outside for business...we asked specialists of Toyota to recommend us car maintenance...road safety...this is how we do CSR with our employees... (Klinla-Or, Interview, 9 March 2008)

Appendix 4.21

When planning for any project or image building, I would start with looking at the findings of research. In the government sector, research and evaluation are weak. There is some research, but they were not useful. They do not even answer the questions. I think research and evaluation are very significant for new generations. However, we must have clear and controllable direction. If the company has enough resources, I recommend conducting your own research. Research consultancies do not care about our organisations since they are outsiders...Sometimes; they do not set their mind on our projects. This is a warning. If research is carelessly done, it is worthless...We should know how to analyse, evaluate, and implement the result of research...(Sangsuwan, 1999 quoted in Thammawitpatch, 1999: 281-282).

Appendix 4.22

PR people still have to read and recheck news by themselves. We have to follow up news, not only company news, but also partners' news. When our partners have some cool news or gimmick, we need to call to congratulate them (Punyaratabandhu, Interview, 11 February 2008).

Appendix 4.23

We use PR value to measure the success of a PR job. Clients have goal setting each year for us. At least 50% of PR budget must return in media coverage format. For example, if we receive 700 thousand Bath (approximately 1,100 GBP), we must have 350 thousand PR value (550 GBP). In 2006, our client set 3,000 US dollars for use. Our performance was 3,500. In 2007, the client requested 5,000 dollars commitment... It is ROI...(Santhanasiri, Interview, 21 January 2008).

We have 3 areas of practice [evaluation]. Are our key messages [in media coverage] as our plan? Can we publish or broadcast our new releases in target media? Finally, to calculate media value in PR agencies, ROI is applied to see whether it is beneficial enough for a company (Kijwan, Interview, 29 March 2008).

APPENDIX V

MORE QUOTES OF CHAPTER 6

Appendix 5.1

.. We hadn't changed anything for 10 years. Other people came to our office and felt shocked about why we had only two computers for 10 officers. Later on, the executive supported us so that everyone has his own computer now... 2-3 years ago. Before that, employees had to *fight* to use computers (Prownpuntu, Interview, 13 February 2008).

...we have enough computers. In the PR department, there are two desktop computers [for 7-8 employees]. One is always connected to the Internet; another is for generally use (Kongklan, Interview, 12 March 2008).

I do support [my employees to use ICTs], but the one who gives us budget didn't seem interested. Later, patterns of sending and receiving news have changed. We must be up-to-date. They must give us a budget. We can't send news via FAX or post while others send by e-mail. In terms of news delivery, we must be as fast as or faster than journalists (Prownpuntu, Interview, 13 February 2008).

IT department takes responsibility to set up software and hardware as requested. However, we have to *fight* with them to obtain what we want since they sometimes do not understand our work. At the moment, we have four computers excluding a graphic design computer. It's not sufficient for our department. Our solution is either to fight with the IT department or ask for support from suppliers... The largest problem of our department concerns the budget. PR department needs big amounts of money for each project. Other departments may not understand exactly this issue (Punyaratabandhu, Interview, 11 February 2008).

...we have computers in the department, but not all of us have. I can say that each person does not have his own computer at his desk...it is about budget policy. For example, I have asked to change my computer since 2002 because it was out of order. I lost all of my data. I've not got the new one until now [2008] (Boonak, Interview, 14 February 2008).

...the obstacle of ICT use in PR is low speed internet... (Jaichansukkit, Interview, 9 April 2008)

Appendix 5.2

...if there are two PR practitioners who are coming to the pitch. One is just telling the story without any motion pictures. It is more difficult to understand. If another one uses ICTs, he would be more welcome and impressive...ICT companies might not want to talk to PR agencies that have nothing in their head...we must talk in the same language as clients... (Modraki, Interview, 14 January 2007).

From a client's perspective, plain presentations reflect how foolish-looking a company is...However, a connection is still a core of Thai PR practice rather than other skills. A pattern of Thai PR practice is having a connection, designing creative projects, and linking the idea to ICTs...(Pradistsakul, Interview, 24 January 2008).

Appendix 5.3

In fact, I don't expect too much of IT skills. It can be taught. Some employees here knew nothing about how to use PowerPoint and Excel programs. I taught them. However, I can say that new graduates are more intelligent in IT than me. I have to confess that I regard these new young generations, they are good in IT... (Santhanasiri, Interview, 21 January 2008)

ICTs skills are useful, but I don't take it seriously...(Pradistsakul, Interview, 24 January 2008).

...Two things that PR must be keen in are language and IT...It's not only PR...we can't work if computers are out of order... (Jaichansukkit, Interview, 9 April 2008)

... it is necessary to have personnel who have skills in ICT. However, they do not have to be very keen on it...they do not need to be as good as programmers... (Kongklan, Interview, 12 March 2008).

PR must be smart, otherwise, we cannot be alive [in the competition]...we must be able to grasp the situation, having ICT knowledge...however, I think PR must know broadly, but it's not necessary to understand circumstances in depth... (Boonak, Interview, 14 February 2008).

For me, it is good for graduate students to have presentation skills...however, it is not that necessary. The most crucial skill for PR is computer proficiency in basic computer programmes such as Word, Excel, and PowerPoint... (Hemmatad, Interview, 7 March 2008).

...it includes the problem about ICT policy. I think ICT develop so quickly, but users can not develop themselves to meet their high capacity. In government sections, the problem is the lack of ICT knowledge of staff (Boonak, Interview, 14 February 2008).

Appendix 5.4

We don't quite have internal training on this subject [ICTs]... Each year, the computer department sends us the list of IT courses. Each course takes 3-5 days to be completed. I've tried to make my employees take at least 2 courses per year. They may start with an Internet course or Excel or PowerPoint (Prownpuntu, Interview, 13 February 2008).

...Only big organisations have a policy about trainings Smaller sized organisations do not have human resources development policies...*if you want to know, you must make an effort by yourself...* (Nawawat, Interview, 7 April 2008).

Appendix 5.5

For e-mail, I use it to communicate *with journalists*. In the past, we sent news via fax modem. At the present, journalists prefer receiving news via e-mail since it is easy to edit news on computers. However, not all journalists like e-mail. Some elders prefer the traditional ways (Punyaratabandhu, Interview, 13 February 2008).

I use e-mail as well as mobile phones to *contact clients*...sometimes, clients are not in their office; we have a teleconference with them... (Hemmatad, Interview, 7 March 2008).

I usually communicate *with my employees* via both e-mail and oral communication. In fact, my employees do not like to read an e-mail. When I receive *a brief from a client*, I will forward the email with the attached letter of mine to them. However, *I have to remind them orally that I already sent an e-mail to them and to please read it*. This case makes me understand journalists. I think journalists might not prefer to read an e-mail. However, I push my employees to use e-mail since it is useful. They must use e-mail to contact and send documents to a client. E-mail is good to use when there are many people or departments involved in the loop of work (Santhanasiri, Interview, 21 January 2008).

Appendix 5.6

...In normal situations, we just look through web boards, nothing is so important. *However, we monitor them closely when we are in a crisis* (Boonak, Interview, 14 February 2008).

For web boards, we use it sometimes to bring pressure to bear on society. Nevertheless, *it is not a PR function to monitor web boards*. Normally, Information Technology (IT) departments monitor news for us. *If there are any crisis stories, they will send us news. Later, we have a crisis management team to solve the problem* (Punyaratabandhu, Interview, 11 February 2008).

Appendix 5.7

PR department takes only a responsibility in the section 'About Thai Airway' on the web site. It presents history, list of executives, members of committee, awards, and special services for passengers (Prownpuntu, Interview, 13 February 2008).

...PR is a centre, taking care of web contents. We work together with web designers and technicians... (Jaichansukkit, Interview, 9 April 2008)

... PR in Secretariat of the Prime Minister is not concerned only with paper works. On the other hand, we must concentrate on IT as well...an Information Centre has a responsibility to take care of IT techniques while PR must upload news on the web site... (Boonak, Interview, 14 February 2008).

Appendix 5.8

...Besides increasing our level of vigilance and posting topics on the net, we upload our PR and advertisement movies on www.youtube.com (Prownpuntu, Interview, 13 February 2008)

Appendix 5.9

I've tried to propagate news via social networks...I trialled the campaign by using facebook as you can see...*it might have unclear evaluations, but I think I have done it for employees, intending to inform them of the activities often organization...* (Phetwong, Interview, 11 February 2008).

Appendix 5.10

If we want to know something, ask Google. I believe that the internet can reduce world size. In PR practice, *clients always require their websites to be the first one on Google*. For example, one of my clients is an electrical appliances company. Their requirement is that they want their website to appear on the top of Google when people search for the word electrical appliances. Clients expect that PR must know everything. In addition, I use Google to seek for new knowledge. Sometimes, I search for PR case studies in order to know what other PR do. The case studies I have read may be applicable to my job. *I define the Internet as a database of knowledge*. We do not need to go to the library. Moreover, we can study details about our potential customers through the Internet before we propose them (Santhanasiri, Interview, 21 January 2008).

Appendix 5.11

We use mobile phones for internal communication. Sometimes, we send information about the increase/decrease of oil prices to journalists. It is faster than using FAX (Thabtim, Interview, 20 March 2008).

SMS systems for employee communication are now in the stage of being purchased and they should be implemented in the next 2-3 months [in 2008] (Prownpuntu, Interview, 13 February 2008).

Appendix 5.12

We have to know when and how to contact the media and our executives. How to handle executives is also important. Muang Thai Life Assurance is lucky that *we can text executives anytime* (Punyaratabandhu, Interview, 11 February 2008).

Appendix 5.13

We invite journalists through SMSs. It depends on journalists; some of them do not like it...it is easy to do media relations with ICTs such as sending news releases to a group of media...*although the method of media relations practice changes, relationships in Thai style still remains. Thai society is patronage...* (Keangpradoo, Interview, 12 February 2008)

Appendix 5.14

...our project is about uploading pictures or seeking for free PR spaces. There are about 100,000 people who viewed our PR movies on www.youtube.com (Prownpuntu, Interview, 13 February 2008).

Appendix 5.15

...technology helps us to segment markets in case we need to send short messages to the target group. For example, we plan to send one short article to people who are in the Siam Center - a big shopping centre in Bangkok; technology can make it happen. I really like technology. I think these machines have been created to facilitate PR practices. We, as a PR people, may use them for one or more purposes. Whenever you cannot use them in the most efficient way, they are useless – no difference from a fax modem (Santhanasiri, Interview, 21 January 2008).

Appendix 5.16

I use e-mail to send news releases to journalists. Few journalists still prefer paper versions. It is comfortable to send all materials via e-mail. For example, in case journalists miss a press conference, we can send Questions & Answers (Q&A) to the journalists quickly. We have more time to work on other tasks. Compared to in the past, we had to ask a messenger to carry all documents and the journalists had to retype. It wasted time (Santhanasiri, Interview, 21 January 2008).

I think ICTs take a role of lengthening PR's arms and legs. Previously, we sent news releases by post. When the Internet arrived, it helped increase the speed of PR job. Currently, we send news releases via e-mail (Pittipattanacozit, Interview, 28 January 2007).

...Current journalists prefer contacting [PR] via technology, for example, interviews through technology. In the past, they had to come in person [to make an interview]. Today, they can do it either via phone or e-mail. They will come in person if they really want to take a photo (Phetwong, Interview, 11 February 2008).

Technology has enabled PR practitioners to do more work in less time. For this reason, we have more time to trial new technologies. From the beginning of my career, I used a big pad of paper for writing news releases. Then, it was replaced by fax modems. Technology has been evolving. Until now, we can segment markets. We can reach the target directly. It protects any errors occurring between the journeys. Let

see. If I send e-mail to you, the error occurs only because of the server. In the past, I might ask a messenger to send news releases. What if it were raining? Our news was damaged. We could control nothing. Ok, now it can reach the journalist safely; the messenger can leave it with the client's operator or front desk. Then an operator had to carry it to journalists. It was a long process to the destination. Or if we use a fax modem, we had to stand in front of a fax all day. Currently, we just send e-mails and follow up by phone. That's all. It is very easy (Santhanasiri, Interview, 21 January 2008).

...I think it is more convenient when the computer comes. We can contact journalists via e-mail. The media has recently increased in numbers. Hence, it is too tired to make a trip to visit them (Boonak, Interview, 14 February 2008).

I think ICTs help us to shorten time & processes of sending new releases and other information to journalists while journalists can work easily with that information...They save costs...no messenger costs...no transportation costs... (Taychasuriyaworakul, Interview, 29 March 2008)

We use ICTs, for example, for media relations. We use e-mail to send new releases and send journalists SMSs... (Jaichansukkit, Interview, 9 April 2008)

Appendix 5.17

The connection between journalists and PR is still the same. *ICTs do not impact the relationships between us...*The core of Thai PR is a connection (Pradistsakul, Interview, 24 January 2008).

...*ICTs do not change relationships between PR and journalists.* Although we have contacted them via e-mail, there are a lot of opportunities for us to see them in the real world. For example, we invite them annually by e-mail to join 'Srinakharinwirot University Krathin¹ Praratchatarn' (กฐินพระราชทานมหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒน์) [Srinakharinwirot University's Royal Kathin Ceremony], we have a chance to meet them. We invited journalists to Nan province to see the 'Poo Bundit Kuen Tin' (ปูบ้นจิต คิ่นถิ่น) campaign or 'Take Graduate Student Back Home'. Our relationship is not estranged (Inpongpan, Interview, 30 March 2008).

Appendix 5.18

ICTs are not the main tool for sending news releases to journalists. Many of them still prefer Fax... (Thabtim, Interview, 20 March 2008).

We send new releases via both Fax and e-mail [to journalists]. In Thailand, some journalists prefer Fax to e-mail. *They don't want to check tons of daily e-mail...* (Hemmatad, Interview, 7 March 2008).

¹ The ceremonial presentation of robes to Buddhist monks, usually falling in November

...some journalists accept news releases via e-mail. However, several of them do not like it. It is not convenient to check e-mails...we must understand the nature of journalists...they say that they prefer traditional ways to computers. *They feel dizzy when seeing tons of e-mails each day* (Kritsamai, Interview, 22 January 2008).

Still, we use messengers with some media who don't prefer e-mail, but by hand... If there are dry photo releases, we will send them by messenger. But if they are too dry, I would send web links via e-mail to the journalists... (Prownpuntu, Interview, 11 February 2008).

Journalists do not even like receiving any news or reminding messages via SMS...they told me that only Fax is enough. They want us to respect their right of privacy... (Hemmatad, Interview, 7 March 2008).

...ICTs do not make the relationship between PR and journalists distant. We talk to each other by the phone everyday...we work in a PR agency so we have a chance to speak to journalists almost everyday... (Kritsamai, Interview, 22 January 2008)

We also have a refrigerator and TV for journalists to monitor news here. In the past, there was a typewriter for journalists. It was installed in my office. We had no press room. This room was just set up 3 years ago (Prownpuntu, Interview, 11 February 2008).

...we provide high speed internet in our office...journalists can complete anything [such as write news, and scan photos] here after the conferences finish...we have a room opened 24 hours a day for journalists. You can find this service only in Thailand...*we have better relationships with journalists because of ICTs...*(Modraki, Interview, 14 January 2007)

Appendix 5.19

They [ICTs] are more useful for big organisations rather than other types. They help facilitate corporate activities and communication. They make internal communication more interesting than a traditional announcement board (Taychasuriyaworakul, Interview, 29 March 2008).

In the past, PR work was just making bulletin boards. We made news announcements through bulletin boards since there was no computer. In the past, we had to write and paste photos on the paper. At present, we don't need to do this anymore. We can use the program 'Illustrator' to create bulletin boards in whichever direction we want (Punyaratabandhu, Interview, 12 February 2008).

...we give an importance to them [Intranet] 100%. All departments have it. For example, we have videoconferences and e-documents... All are about internal communication... (Tippayachanawong, Interview, 19 February 2008).

In the past, we communicated all company stories such as our activities to employees through posters, followed by internal publication, and company broadcasting, respectively. Later on, we installed TV monitors at canteens, pathways, lifts, and a

lobby. Also, we have an intranet system called Thaisphere. This system is used to communicate information to employees. It consists of web boards for executives to answer any questions, interesting stories for employees such as health, travelling, family, trading, and other good stories (Prownpuntu, Interview, 11 February 2008).

Another channel is to send e-mails to employees. We've tried to encourage employees to use e-mail and we'll develop the Token system – the system that allows you to check e-mail everywhere in the world. We are now focusing on internal communication since we have huge amounts of employees and tons of information. This is a big problem. We are trying to solve it (Prownpuntu, Interview, 12 February 2008).

Appendix 5.20

...we have developed SMSs for 25,000 employees worldwide who work for 24 hours to receive update corporate news. For example, if we have new promotions such as offering special menus or moon cakes during Chinese New Year, we will text this to the front line officers such as crew who usually deal with customers to inform them. Sometimes crews don't know the updated news and can't answer customer's questions, but customers have already seen advertisements or other news. Hence, we've tried to solve the problem by spreading corporate news via SMS. When this is not enough, we might create a new website for officers to see information (Prownpuntu, Interview, 12 February 2008).

Appendix 5.21

...we have approximately 40 employees... for internal communication; we share folders that everybody can access. In addition, we have a folder for employees. It is like a diary. They can write anything whether to share their work experience or tell stories. Another folder contains information and knowledge about PR for employees to gain knowledge concerning this area. Also, everybody has corporate e-mail. They can check their e-mail on the web site, no matter where they are (Hemmatad, Interview, 7 March 2008).

Appendix 5.22

The disadvantage of online documents is that they do not have signatures [of authorised people]'... in the government sector, we need to have evidence. For example, if something bad happens and we circulate news only on the Intranet, you may say that you haven't known the story or you've already deleted it. It is better to have a hard copy and real signatures. (Rungseepanodorn, Interview, 28 March 2008).

...we still use both paper and online stuff for our work. Papers indeed, can be used as formal evidence... we still have a position of internal messengers... (Inpongpan, Interview, 30 March 2008).

Appendix 5.23

...Internet is another channel to look for basic information... (Hemmatad, Interview, 7 March 2008).

...we are ICTs receivers, using them to study and monitor information. We are not senders who disgrace publicly... (Tippayachanawong, Interview, 19 February 2008).

...Whoever works in the PR area, but does not use ICTs, would die. We must use the Internet and web sites to search for customer information and details before approaching him so that we look wise when we talk to him. PR practitioners must be modern and know how to use technologies (Modraki, Interview, 14 January 2007).

Appendix 5.24

Information sourced from the internet is sometimes reliable, but many times not...Only information from authorised organisations is the most credible (Taychasuriyaworakul, Interview, 29 March 2008).

...all information on the site is expected by people to have proper reference... PR practitioners are slow to grasp the situation... (Maneenoi, Interview, 31 January 2008).

Appendix 5.25

We evaluate ICTs by numbers of site visitors, comments of online visitors toward organisations and the site... Also, we ask executives as well as journalists for their opinions on the site (Hemmatad, Interview, 7 March 2008).

We measure ICTs by asking journalists if they are satisfied with our SMS... (Thabtim, Interview, 20 March 2008).

Appendix 5.26

We have three online surveys each year: employee satisfaction, corporate culture, and overall satisfaction toward the company... For corporate image, we hire research agencies to do this... (Keangpradoo, Interview, 12 February 2008).

Appendix 5.27

...I used ICTs when we needed many units of Rh Negative blood... I contacted donors who registered as a member of a Rh negative Club. Also, we have their e-mail addresses and telephone numbers. We selected qualified people and sent them SMSs and e-mails. Later, there were a lot of return calls to make an inquiry and volunteer (Phetwong, Interview, 11 February 2008).

Appendix 5.28

...I think the most important PR job is strong relations with media. However, *languages are also essential. Our company is an international company, dealing with other nations. Besides the Thai language, they should know English, German, and Chinese languages.* Someone who speaks various languages will get higher profit and chances to succeed in their career (Prownpuntu, Interview, 12 February 2008).

The weak point of my employees is the English Language. It is essential when we contact clients. We have to read all briefing documents in English. Hence, *English is very crucial for PR work.* You can see that the organizations that have PR departments are big. They must deal with foreigners - especially PR consultancies, none of them have no contacts with foreigners. One of my employees took a part-time French course. When I had a PR rally in France, I chose him to go with me. It was his value-added skill (Santhanasiri, Interview, 21 January 2008).

...*English proficiency is important [for PR] in order to understand international news from the Internet. However, it is not as necessary as Thai language...* (Boonak, Interview, 14 February 2008).

APPENDIX VI

AN EXAMPLE OF TRANSCRIPTIONS AND DATA ANALYSIS

1. A Thai Transcription and Data analysis

สัมภาษณ์คุณวิไล ไอเอส วันที่ ๑๒ กุมภาพันธ์ ๒๕๕๑

คุณวิไล : ผู้ช่วยวิจัย

คุณอ้อ: ก่อนอื่น จริจแล้วอ้อทำเรื่องการใช้อิทธิทธิเพื่องานประชาสัมพันธ์อะคะ แต่ว่าบังเอิญว่าไปเรียนที่ยุคพระฉะนั้น อาจารย์ก็อยากจะทำภาพรวมของงานพื่อ ตั้งแต่อดีตจนถึงปัจจุบัน อ้อเห็นคุณวิไลให้สัมภาษณ์ในงานวิทยานิพนธ์เล่มหนึ่งของคุณบุญธิดา ก็เลยสนใจต่ออยุคค้ว ก็เลยมีคำถามสองส่วนเกี่ยวกับเรื่องพื่อทัวๆไป นโยบายการใช้อิทธิทธิ ก่อนอื่นขอเรื่องนิยามประชาสัมพันธ์เพราะว่าเท่าที่อ้อได้ทบทวนเอกสารหรืออ่านมา ส่วนใหญ่ไทยมีคนให้คำนิยามที่เป็นคนไทยแท้ๆไม่ค่อยจะ ส่วนใหญ่จะเอามาจากต่างประเทศ อ้อก็เลยจำขึ้นทีจะต้องถามคำถามในมุมมองของทีเล็ก

คุณวิไล : ทีเล็กมองว่าในนิยามของประชาสัมพันธ์ มันคือการสื่อสารเชิงบูรณาการกับกลุ่มเงินไอเคอร์ ซึ่งคำว่าเงินไอเคอร์ของแต่ละบริษัทก็ไม่เหมือนกัน อย่างเอไอเอสมีเจ็คกลุ่ม กลุ่มแรกคือ พนักงาน ลูกค้ำกลุ่มที่สอง ผู้ค้ำกลุ่มที่สาม สี่ผู้ถือหุ้น ทีหาหน่วยงานภาครัฐ เราจะเลย ทีไอที เคต ไอซีที คลัง แล้วทีพามิชรี่ซึ่งเกี่ยวข้องกับเราโดยตรงเลย แล้วก็กลุ่มสื่อมวลชน แล้วก็ประชาชนทัวๆไป ทีเราต้องแบ่งเพราะว่าในการสื่อสารเชิงบูรณาการไปยังเจ็คกลุ่ม มันมีผลต่อการวางงานประชาสัมพันธ์ในแต่ละกลุ่ม แล้วไม่ใช่ทุกครั้งที่ต้องวางครบทั้งเจ็คกลุ่มแล้วส่วนใหญ่ในเจ็คกลุ่มมันลืลลคกัน อย่างเมสเสสทีสำคัญ เวลาเราให้กับสื่อมวลชนแน่นอนมันจะกระจายไปเจ็คกลุ่ม แต่ในลักษณะนั้นเราคอนโทรลความเข้าใจไม่ได้ เพราะฉะนั้นบางคสบางกรณี เราจะแค่ละกลุ่มเลย ค้วคอนเทนทีมีแก่นเหมือนกัน แต่วิธีการพูดไม่เหมือนกัน เมื่อค้ำไปอ่านหนังสือพิมพ์ค้ำจะไม่แปลกใจ มันเกี่ยวข้องกับสแตตทีจในการวางงานประชาสัมพันธ์ของแต่ละองคักร คั้งนั้นคัพทีเนซันในแง่ประชาสัมพันธ์ของเราทีจะใช้จากการปฏิบัติ ไม่ได้จากค้วร่า แต่ภายใต้มันก็เหมือนกันแต่แรกสโคปให้มันเหมาะสมงานมันเอง เลยเรียกว่าการสื่อสารเชิงบูรณาการเพื่อให้สัมพันธ์กันเงินไอเคอร์ของค้ำ

Comment [s1]: Definition of PR

คุณอ้อ: คะ แล้วประชาสัมพันธ์กับโฆษณาชวนเชื่อทีเล็กก้วมันแตกต่างกันมัยหรือว่าต่างกันอย่างไร

คุณวิไล : มีความเหมือนกันบ้าง แต่ต่างกันทีเป้าหมายของโฆษณาชวนเชื่อมันเพอชอซีป อย่างค้วชวนเชื่อเพื่อให้เกิดอะไรบางอย่างทีไม่ใส เป็นกลยุธทีวาง แต่ประชาสัมพันธ์มันต่างกันมันมีหลายเป้าหมายและมันไม่ได้มีอะเงินค้ำในเรื่องของการทีจะเร็ดคัพอะไรอย่างทีตอบสนองแต่ในพื่อๆของมันหลักๆคือกระจายข่าวสารข้อมูลต่างๆ ในการสร้างค้วมเข้าใจสร้างค้วมรับรู้แต่สุดท้ายอ้อจรว่านพาไปสู่ค้วมคัพกันอัน เนี่ยเป็นสิ่งที่เราต้องการสูงสุด และสูงสุดทีเราต้องการคือเกิดค้วมรัก แล้วทลลงทีแล้ววางกลุ่มทำค้ำได้ ฉนวนว่าเมสทำค้ำได้ แต่เรกัพยอม เพราะเราทลลงกลุ่มเล็กแล้วมันได้ อย่างงี้เป็นค้ำ

Comment [s2]: PR & Propaganda

คุณอ้อ: ช่วยเล่าคส

คุณวิไล : ทีคือว่าเรมมีความรู้สึกว่ถ้าเราอยาทลลงทีคือเอาละเรมมีโครงการชือเอสอาของเร จุดทีเราโฟกัสทีคือเรื่ององสาระเด็กค้วทัวใจแคว่ง มันเป็นโครงการทีเราเอนคักคึในสังคมในสภาพยกไว้มันเป็นตัวอย่างองสังคม เสร้งแล้วเด็กเหล่านี้ก็จะมีชุมชนทีคือพ่อแม่ โรงเรียน คุณค้ว เราก็บอกว่ ในคสทีเรเรียบันค้ว ทีเราต้องการเอ็กทริมค้วรธา แต่มันไม่

2. Translated key points and quotes into English

“Public Relations has some similarities with propaganda, but different in goals. Propaganda is about negative persuasion. There are something hidden. Public relations has various purposes, and no hidden agendas. Its main function is to publicize information in order to build understanding and gain perception of people which leads to the highest goal of PR-a relationship...We have tested these with few groups; it was successful. However, we are now making an effort on the mass” (Vilai Keangpradoo, personal interview, 12 February 2008).

3. Grouped and Coded Interviews

PR and Propaganda

PR is not Propaganda

MS. CHANTANEE KRITSAMAI POLYPLUS PR (....)

“Thai people have the feelings that propaganda is negative while public relations is something about positive image and credibility. In addition, propaganda is believed to be related to politics” (Chantanee Kritsamai, personal interview, 22 January 2008).

Ms. Jaruwat Nawawat, Amex Team Advertising Limited.

“I think propaganda and PR are different...PR has more credibility since it doesn't rely on the third person. Journalists are speakers for PR. People believe in speakers rather than a person. On the other hand, propaganda communicates only in positive news...” (Jaruwat Nawawat, personal interview, 7 April 2008).

Mr. Suppawut Rungsepanodorn, the Treasury Department, Ministry of Finance of Thailand:

“Propaganda is more than public relations and advertising. It has high level than advertising...propaganda applies psychology to pull people to its side ...It persuades people to believe them without any doubts in legitimate issues...It doesn't tell you negative sides, on the other hand, try to convince you to be on its side ...Propaganda has the strongest degree than public relations and advertising...Besides propaganda, enforcement is used.... (Suppawut Rungsepanodorn, personal interview, 28 March 2008).

Ms. Tawinan Kongklan TV5

“Public relations and propaganda is definitely different. Propaganda has its root from Communist. It is top-down oriented; an authorized person has the right to control the direction of information, unlike public relations” (Tawinan Kongklan, personal interview, 12 March 2008).

Dr. Pot Jaichansukkit

“PR is totally different from propaganda. Propaganda is talking about how to influence people's minds, in negative way. Making bad things look good, trying to pull people together to show organization's power, and improper campaigns are all propagandas. Propaganda has some amounts of information, but tries to make people understand in another direction. It's not similar to PR. PR makes interesting information in order to attract consumer's interest. Consumers perceive those information and have right to decide. On the other hand, propaganda has conducted all strategies in order to influence receivers to follow its desirable direction” (Pot Jaichansukkit, personal interview, 31 March 2008).

Ms. Wisunee Boonnak

“When we talk about propaganda, the feelings would be negative. It seems like we give one-side information in a purpose of self-benefits. We don't mind about receivers or target groups...How to influence people's belief, leading to the way it desires to be is an aim of propaganda. It may lack of morals since it presents only an advantage side...For example, if the government wants to have a propaganda campaign, it means that the campaign must influence people no matter what the negative side effects are. It pushes people to believe without listening to them” (Wisunee Boonnak, personal interview, 14 February 2008).

Ms. Yuwadee Thongsuwan

“I think PR and propaganda are different in their goals. Public relations is just like intermediary to make mutual understanding between organizations and target groups. It compromises with each other's aim. In contrast, propaganda has only one target, effecting receivers in the desirable direction” (Yuwadee Thongsuwan, personal interview, 8 February 2008).

Ms. Vilai Keangpradoo

“Public Relations has some similarities with propaganda, but different in goals. Propaganda is about negative persuasion. There are something hidden. Public relations has various purposes, and no hidden agendas. Its main function is to publicize information in order to build understanding and gain perception of people which leads to the highest goal of PR-a relationship...We have tested these with few groups; it was successful. However, we are now making an effort on the mass” (Vilai Keangpradoo, personal interview, 12 February 2008).

Ms. Suthana Hongthong

"I think they are different...Politics may use this technique. The difference between propaganda and public relations is that propaganda may have little truth and add more exaggeration in order to receive proposed results. Most of propaganda, currently, need more money than PR. PR still has some free media coverage...Propaganda spends a lot of money to ask media to speak what it wants since free media may not speak as it wants" (Suthana Hongthong, personal interview, 20 February 2008).

Ms. Patcharee Promkoj

"I think propaganda presents only one-side fact. The goal is just to influence over the receiver" (Patcharee Promkoj, personal interview, 12 February 2008).

Ms. Krongthong Phetwong

"From my experience, I think they (propaganda and PR) are different. PR aims to propagate the truth. We are telling the truth. On the other hand, propaganda is laying it on thick in order to convince people to believe what it says. It may be not true. I think advertising and propaganda are quite similar. PR, in contrast, presents facts. Advertising, sometimes, has hidden agendas in order to make a company look good" (Krongthong Phetwong, personal interview, 11 February 2008).

Ms. Sriprapat Prownpuntu

I think they are different. Propaganda presents only one side of information. It's kind of a little bit guiding that you must do those, do these. However, public relations is not 100% propaganda. Maybe 50% are propaganda, while another 50% are facts.

Actually, public relations began with propaganda. Propaganda was used for the military or security purposes. For example, you want to do propaganda about 3 crisis provinces in the southern of Thailand. However, public relations is softer. It gives all sides of information about an organization and allows the audience to select the messages. In contrast, propaganda presents only one side forever. Propaganda seems like when we have only a piece of paper, we need to advertise only this paper. Public relations has more pieces, may be five pieces, and we let people decide which one they like (Sriprapat Prownpuntu, personal interview, 13 February 2008).

Associate Professor Ubolwan Pittipattanacozi

"PR is something about information publicity, persuasion, and how to give people useful information. Written works about propaganda are scarce in Thailand since Thai people think it concerns only with the politics; we don't want to involve with. Do you think it is strange that we use the word 'Kod-sa-na'(Kod-sa-na in Thai language means advertising) instead of propaganda. We think propaganda is related to Communists...We look at propaganda as a black colour. PR prefers to use the word 'persuasion'" (Ubolwan Pittipattanacozi, personal interview, 10 January 2007).

"We knew only that advertising was about selling something while public relations was telling information and propaganda was about politics" (Ubolwan Pittipattanacozi, personal interview, 10 January 2007).

Mr.Boonphee Barnvorn

"Thai people call propaganda 'Psychological Operation' ...Public relations releases news to publics, but publics has the right to do or not to do. Propaganda forces people to follow...PR is just about information and ask people to follow" (Boonphee Barnvorn, personal interview, 18 February 2008).

Mrs. Phittraporn Punyaratabandhu

I think they are different. Advertising lacks of principles, evidences, and a fact. Many stories of propaganda are made up without code of ethic and accuracy. The aim of propaganda is just to convince people behave in the direction as a sender has set. Sometimes the stories might have little fact with no references from unknown sources. Propaganda, mostly, is used for politics. It is relation to news and rumour spread. At present, we as a PR people have to comply ourselves. There is an internal audit in our organisation. We always ask the original department that concerns directly with this news to check and correct news before releasing to journalists. We have to protect ourselves. Now, Risk Management Department has set up. We do not allow any risks and prosecutions. On the other hand, propaganda does not care anything (Phittraporn Punyaratabandhu, personal interview, 11 February 2008).

Colonel Samurpak Sangamuang, 8April 2008

Advertising is not similar to propaganda. Advertising is to advertise the quality of our products. Propaganda, on the other hand, is in another discipline. It is a principle of military. It's used for destruction. Is it what PR about? No, it isn't. PR is creative, not censured. It is a military task to do propaganda. This is an operation psychology, not PR. However, the techniques of using media, such as personal media and print media, are quite similar. In contrast, the contents of both are different. In order to have a victory, propaganda's messages could be positive, negative, and neutral.

I think some organizations in private sector might still use propaganda; however, it is not titled as operational psychology. They might term it as marketing or anything else in order to destroy their competitors (Samurpak Sangamuang, personal interview, 8April 2008).

PR is similar to Propaganda

Mr. Burin Hemmatad, Kith and Kin...

"In my opinion, public relations sometimes can be propaganda. We can create campaigns in order to pursue people to believe in our organisation. To do public relations via campaigns, advertisements are included...I think propaganda idea was practiced before public relations, especially in government section. For example, all projects of the government reflect propaganda practice. The government must convince people to believe that it can do anything to benefit people..." (Burin Hemmatad , personal interview, 7 March 2008).

"...Currently, we can not use only propaganda since publics have more knowledge to consider whether they should believe or not. PR must be more cautious about information. It is tough to do direct propaganda. Propaganda becomes less in intensity" (Burin Hemmatad, personal interview, 7 March 2008).

"In my experience, we have done a campaign for Energy Policy & Planning Office, Ministry of Energy of Thailand. This campaign aims to inform and enhance awareness of people toward energy conservation. We must warn them about crisis situation of energy uses; it's time to reduce energy consumption. Another project of us is for the Board of Investment of Thailand (BOI). We must communicate about positive investment atmosphere in Thailand in order to 1) convince foreign investors to invest in Thailand; and 2) point out good opportunities and situation to Thai investors. I think these two projects are half propaganda and public relations..." (Burin Hemmatad, personal interview, 7 March 2008).

Ms. Sutasanee Thabthim

"I think sometimes public relations can be propaganda while another time can be persuasion. Propaganda has influence on people. For example, if we have a change management campaign or we need to change organisation culture or create moral and encourage employees, we must use propaganda. We might use variety of techniques...Propaganda is something about psychology" (Sutasanee Thabthim, personal interview, 20 March 2008).

Mrs. Bussarin Santanasiri

In my feeling, public relations is totally different from advertising. In contrary, public relations is as same as propaganda. They both are telling a half truth to public. They present only good news or stories. They have tried to convince people that they are good citizens. It is something like a man and a woman when they love each other. They turn on their good sides to each other, for example, I am a good cook (Bussarin Santanasiri, personal interview, 21 January 2008).

However, the difference between public relations and propaganda is the moral or the responsibility of PR practitioners. Public relations looks as if neutral. In fact, it has hidden propaganda purposes. The way of public relations practice is propaganda. This is the root for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). It is public relations technique or tactic that applied for crisis management. We try to say we are good citizens, but we make water pollutions. Or we are in oil industries; we have to establish gas pipelines. But we tell public that we are good citizens, we do reforestation. In conclusion, I think public relations and propaganda are in the same side (Bussarin Santanasiri, personal interview, 21 January 2008).

4. Analyzed and Assigned dualisms for each group

Overview: Negative VS Positive

Goals: Influence VS Publicity

Purpose of Use: Specific VS General

Unethical VS Ethical

One-sided VS Two-sided Information

Message Presentation: Exaggeration VS Attractive fact

Credibility: Less VS Loaded

Receiver & Feedback Perspective: Force VS Fair.

APPENDIX VII
FILEDWORK IN BANGKOK, THAILAND



At the interviewee' office



Two interviewees



An interviewee with her exhibition



At an interviewee's office



Interviewing a junior practitioners at UTCC



Interviewing in the coffee shop



At an interviewee's office with an interviewee and her PR stuff



The traffic jam on the way to the interviewee's office

APPENDIX VIII

WWW.PANTIP.COM

The lists of cafes in www.pantip.com classified by people's interests

Cafe	Interest
Blue Planet cafe	Travelling
Kon Klua (Kitchen)	Food
Klong (Camera)	Camera and Photographing
Klai Baan (Far From Home)	Study aboard, Working aboard, travelling aboard
Jatuchak (Name of a famous market in Bangkok, Thailand)	Pets, Plants, Collection (such as coins, stamps)
Chalermthai (Name of a theatre)	Movie, TV & Radio programmes, TV series, Cartoon
Chalermkrung (Name of a musical theatre)	Stage performance, Music, Arts
Chanruen (Balcony)	Family, Mother & son
Tohkruengpang (Dresser)	Fashion, Nutrition, Beauty
Tollakong	Announcement
Maboonkrong (Name of a big department store)	Telecommunication
Ratchada (Name of a street)	Automobile
Ratchadamnern (Name of a street)	Politics
Salaprachakom	General issues about society and economy
Sasana (Religion)	Religion
Supatchalasai (Name of a football stadium)	Sports
Siam Square (Name of a famous malls in the middle of Bangkok)	Teenager
Suanlumpini (a public park in Bangkok)	Health and psychology
Sinthorn	Finance and investment
Silom (Name of a street where a lot of business offices locate)	Marketing and Business
Wakor (a town in Thailand)	Technology and Science
Hongsamut (Library)	Books, Literature, Language, and Education

PANTIP.COM : สุธยธเนศวร์ดิโธ... PANTIP.COM : A9104089 ภัทราสาที่ระ... PANTIP.COM : A9103919 มัณณาแล้วทก... PANTIP.COM : A9103778 โฆษณา ส...

โฆษณา สงบ สันติ สามัคคี ดูแล้วน้ำตาจะไหล ขนลุก ใครเป็นบ้าง

ยิ่ง ดูในสภากาชาดแบบนี้ รู้สึก สะเทือนใจ แสงใจ คนไทยอย่างเรา เสียเหลือเกิน
ทุกคนก็รักในหลวง เหมือนกันไม่ใช่หรือ ทำไมไม่ทำให้ท่านสบายใจกันล่ะ

YouTube

เพลงโครงการ สงบ สันติ สามัคคี

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http://www.youtube

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1-7 of 15

2:47 / 2:47

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เขียนเมื่อ : 9 เม.ย. 53 20:08:31 [แก้ไข]
ถูกใจ : Kogoro_lee, puy_haka63, sleepy monster, ต่างแวนน้อย

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ความคิดเห็นที่ 1

ในยามที่บ้านเมืองวุ่นวายเช่นนี้ ศูนย์รวมจิตใจของคนไทย คือ พ่อหลวง
หยุดเถอะครับ ไม่ว่าจะใครที่ทำให้ประเทศและคนไทยด้วยกันเองเดือดร้อน

จากคุณ : BLINKBLINKBEAR 😊
เขียนเมื่อ : 9 เม.ย. 53 20:22:00 [แก้ไข]

ความคิดเห็นที่ 2

เหมือนกันค่ะ

Done