Family Communication Patterns and Conflict Management Styles Young Adults Use with Their Parent in Chiang Mai Thailand[*]

รูปแบบการสื่อสารในครอบครัวและการจัดการความขัดแย้งของวัยหนุ่มสาวกับบิดามารดาในจังหวัดเชียงใหม่ ประเทศไทย

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Abstract

This study examined how family communication patterns influence Thai young adults in Chiang Mai reported conflict management style when they have opinions that are inconsistent with the opinions of their parents. The respondents were 200 young adults who were residents of Chiang Mai Province. A self-administered questionnaire was used for data collection. A one-way MANOVA was used to analyze the data. Most of the participants reported their family communication pattern as being that of a consensual style (33%) and reported themselves as using an integrating conflict management style (39.5%) when engaged in incompatible communication with their parents. The participants whose families employ a consensual communication style use all five-conflict styles (integrating, compromising, obliging, avoiding, and dominating) when they engage in a conflict with their parents.

Keywords: 1. Family Communication Patterns 2. Conflict Management Styles 3. Young Adults

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บทคัดย่อ

        การวิจัยครั้งนี้มุ่งศึกษารูปแบบการสื่อสารในครอบครัวและผลกระทบที่มีต่อรูปแบบการจัดการความ ขัดแย้งของวัยหนุ่มสาวกับบิดามารดาเมื่อมีความคิดเห็นที่ไม่สอดคล้องกันโดยใช้แบบสอบถามปลายปิดเป็นเครื่องมือ ในการเก็บรวบรวมข้อมูล จากวัยหนุ่มสาวในจังหวัดเชียงใหม่จำนวน 200 คน และใช้การวิเคราะห์ความแปรปรวน พหุคูณแบบทางเดียวในการทดสอบสมมติฐาน ผลการวิจัยพบว่า วัยหนุ่มสาวในจังหวัดเชียงใหม่ส่วนใหญ่มีการใช้ รูปแบบการสื่อสารในครอบครัวแบบประนีประนอม (33%) เมื่อมีความคิดเห็นที่ไม่สอดคล้องกับบิดามารดา พบว่าวัยหนุ่มสาวจะใช้รูปแบบการจัดการความขัดแย้งแบบบูรณาการมากที่สุด (39.5%) และพบว่าผู้ที่มีรูปแบบ การสื่อสารในครอบครัวแบบประนีประนอมจะใช้รูปแบบการจัดการความขัดแย้งแบบผสมผสานทั้ง 5 รูปแบบ (แบบบูรณาการ, แบบประนีประนอม, แบบยอมทำตาม, แบบหลีกเลี่ยงม และแบบเผด็จการ) เมื่อมีความคิดเห็น ที่ไม่สอดคล้องกับบิดามารดา

คำสำคัญ : รูปแบบการสื่อสารในครอบครัว รูปแบบการจัดการความขัดแย้ง วัยหนุ่มสาว

Introduction

        The family is the smallest unit of society but has a strong impact on society. Almost all human beings start learning and forming their personality, attitudes, and behaviors within the context of a family. Carter and McGoldrick (2005) explained that the family is where we develop and grow, and is the source of our first relationships and experiences with the world. One of the many components of the family environment is that of communication behavior. Communication is one of the primary skills that people utilize in order to not only survive but thrive in society. Differences in family communication environments can cause children to vary in the development of their functional communication skills (Fitzpatrick & Koerner, 1997). Vuchinich, Vuchinich, and Coughlin (1992) stated that parents serve as their children's first role models, greatly influencing communication development.

        Every relationship, even relationships with family members, will eventually have moments of conflict. As humans, we all need personal relationships. Nonetheless, a person's relationships can have problems and might not go well. In order to maintain good relationships, conflicts need to be properly managed. However, young adults who, arguably, have not had a tremendous amount of experience, might not always react in an appropriate manner when faced with a conflict. Taylor (2010: 445), for example, noted that, "research in interpersonal communication asserts that young adults are often deficient in conflict management [skills]. . .". In the workforce realm, Weitzman and Weitzman (2006) argued that young adults might not handle conflict effectively because of deficiencies in communication skills.

Essentially, then, relationships are meaningful to the social development of young adults, but if those young adults handle incompatibilities within their relationships in an ineffective manner, that poor response will likely have a negative effect on the quality of their relationships. Unfortunately, the absence of good conflict management skills can result not only in strained relationships but in a person responding to conflict through aggressive behavior. Violence can be in evidence in such situations. Knowing more about the development of a young adult's conflict management style and, in particular, the influence of a young adult's family on his/her skill development, offers potential benefits not only for present relationships but also for future relationships. Children who manage conflict within their family in an effective manner are more likely to have good relationships with their parents and peers, and perform better in school (Sillars, Canary, & Tafoya, 2004). Hence, a study focusing on young adults' conflict management styles will enhance our understanding of how we might improve their social well-being in the future. Thus, conducting research that looks at young adult conflict management styles and examines the relationship between those styles and their family's communication pattern will benefit not only young adults but will speak to other aspects of social development.

Purpose of the Study

The present study examined how family communication patterns influence young Thais adults' conflict management style when their opinions inconsistent with their parents opinions.

Literature Review

Two bodies of research are particularly important to the study reported here. Attention will be paid first to work that has sought to identify different family communication patterns (FCPs). The second body of work that will be examined is that concerning individual communication styles for managing conflict.

Family Communication Patterns

Our contemporary understanding of family communication patterns (FCPs) is typically attributed to Chaffee, McLeod and Atkin (1971). They argued that "family communication patterns help to guide children in their cognitive mapping of situations they ultimately encounter outside the immediate family context" (p. 332). FCPs are classified, within the approach used by Chaffee, McLeod and colleagues, into two categories: socio-

oriented families and concept-oriented families. A socio-oriented family communication pattern focuses on creating harmony in the family. Parents tend to avoid conflicts and disputes. In order to preserve the harmony of the family, a socio-oriented family limits their child's (or children's) expression of opinions, especially opinions that might be in disagreement with those held by the parents. A concept-oriented family is more open to discussion than socio-oriented family. Parents adopted a concept-oriented communication pattern usually let children express their opinions and engage in debates concerning topics that emerge in family discussions (McLeod & Chaffee, 1972). Koesten and Anderson (2004) argued that children from concept-oriented families obtain the communication skills that allow them to accept the opinions of others and defend their own ideas. On the other hand, children from socio-oriented families are less skilled communicators when it comes to expressing disagreement and/or debating ideas. Later, Ritchie and Fitzpatrick (1990; see also, Ritchie, 1991) relabeled the McLeod and Chafee family communication patterns. In the Ritchie and Fitzpatrick approach, a socio-oriented pattern is referred to as "conformity orientation," and a concept-oriented pattern is referred to as "conversation orientation", as seen in Figure 1.

Whatever the labels used, the two basic communication patterns (socio-orientation/conformity orientation and concept-orientation/conversation orientation) create four family types: pluralistic, consensual, protective, and laissez-faire. Parents in pluralistic families are high on conversation-orientation and low on conformity-orientation. That is, they are more open and accept the involvement of their children in family discussions. Parents in protective families are high on conformity-orientation and low on conversation-orientation. That is, they are more concerned about consistency and avoiding disagreement within the family. Koerner and Fitzpatrick (2002) argued that parents in pluralistic families encourage children to advance arguments to support their ideas and allow them to participate in family discussions and decision-making as equals. On the other hand, protective parents do not involve children in decision-making and do not think that there are any benefits (for the family or for their children) in explaining their (the parents') decisions to their children. A consensual family type is high on both conformity-orientation and conversation-orientation. Parents in consensual families are open to children's participation in family discussions, but these parents also expect their children to agree with their (the parents') opinions. Although parents in these families make decisions for the family, they still listen to their children's ideas and devote time and energy to explaining their decisions (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002). Finally, a laissez-faire family type is low on both conformity-orientation and conversation-orientation. In

this type of family, parents and children interact less with each other; additionally, the topics available for communication are highly restricted (Chaffee, McLeod, & Wackman, 1973). Parents in laissez-faire families are aware that family members make their own decisions; however, they do not pay attention to their children's decisions (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002).

High Conversation Orientation

Pluralistic   **Consensual**

Low Conformity Orientation   High Conformity Orientation

Laissez-Faire   **Protective**

Low Conversation Orientation

Figure 1 Family Types Determined by Conversation Orientation and Conformity Orientation (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006).

Shearman and Dumlao (2008) found differences in family communication patterns in the United States versus Japan. Parents in the United States were more likely to employ a consensual style, whereas the laissez-faire family type emerged as most popular in Japan. A comparison of the United States and Japan indicates that differences in culture can affect family communication patterns. The United States and other Western cultures are individualistic cultures whereas Japan and other countries in Asia are collectivistic cultures (Hofstede, 1991; Triandis, 1995). Zhang (2007) found that conversation-oriented families are more prevalent in individualistic cultures than are conformity-oriented families. The family types in China are pluralistic, protective, laissez-faire, and consensual, respectively. Although Thailand, Japan, and China are collectivistic cultures and have the same religious roots, i.e., Buddhism, they might not have the same family communication patterns. Charoenthaweesub and Hale (2011) reported that the most representative family communication pattern emerging in their study of Thai families was the consensual style.

Conflict Management Styles

An individual's pattern of response to conflict is called that person's "conflict style" (Putnam & Poole, 1992; Sternberg & Dobson, 1987; Ting-Toomey, 1997). Kaushal and Kwantes (2006) noted that individuals use different conflict management styles. Those styles differ in their effectiveness and productiveness and, as a result, will be more likely to decrease (or increase) negative effects on the school environment, faculty, students, and family. Moreover, researchers have found significant differences in individual conflict styles across interpersonal, inter-organizational, and international realms. Noller (1995) noted that individuals first learn

about conflict and how to resolve interpersonal problems from their family of origin. The conflict style a young adult is familiar with using in the family will, arguably, be used in other areas of life, such as friendships, romantic relationships, and work life. Rattanasimakool (2009) stated that the most prominent conflict management style in Thai organizations has been reported as being the compromising style followed by collaboration, avoidance, accommodation, and competition, respectively.

The notion of conflict style is aligned with Blake and Mouton's (1964) identification of five organizational conflict management styles based on the level of concern that a manager has for production (or tasks) versus people (or relationships). Following Blake and Mouton, many other scholars (for example, Rahim, 1983, 2001; Thomas, 1976; Thomas & Kilmann, 1974) extended the conceptualization of conflict styles; however, Rahim's instrument measuring the five conflict styles has been used repeatedly. Rahim's assessment of five conflict styles is grounded in the concept of a person's level of concern for self versus concern for others. Individual concern for self is manifested in satisfaction with self or need for one's views to be respected; whereas, concern for others embodies a focus on the needs of others. The resultant five styles for handling interpersonal conflict are integrating/collaborating, compromising, dominating/competing, obliging/ accommodating, and avoiding/withdrawing [see Figure 2].

The integrating style refers to a person's high concern both for self and for others when a solution is needed in a conflict situation. When engaged in incompatible events, individuals who adopt an integrating conflict management style will evince a concern for openness, exchanging information, and looking for alternatives, sometimes known as problem solving (Rahim, 2002). The compromising style balances concern for self and for others on conflict issues. Individuals adopt a compromising conflict management style related to give-and-take. They give up something to make a mutually acceptable decision (Rahim, Antonioni, Krumov, & Ilieva, 2000). The dominating style reflects a person's concern for self more than for others when engaged in conflict. This style is also known as competing or a win-lose orientation. Individuals are more likely to attempt to win his/her position and ignore the needs of others (Rahim, 2002). The obligating style indicates a higher concern for others than for self. This style describes individuals who neglect their own concerns in order to satisfy the concerns of others. They attempt to play down any differences and emphasize commonalities (Rahim, 2002). Lastly, the avoiding style reflects a low degree of concern for self and for other and is commonly associated with a person who avoids engagement with conflict.

	Low socio-orientation	High socio-orientation
Low concept-orientation	Laissez-faire	Protective
High concept-orientation	Pluralistic	Consensual

Figure 2 The styles of handling interpersonal conflict.

A difference in conflict styles has also been identified in different cultures. Chinese and Taiwanese, as representatives of Asian cultures, are more likely to use obliging and avoiding conflict styles (Ting-Toomey, Gao, Trubisky, Yang, Kim, Lin, & Nishida, 1991; Trubisky, Ting-Toomey, & Lin, 1991). Ting-Toomey (1988) explained that people from collectivistic/high context cultures are more likely prefer the obliging and avoiding conflict management style, while people from individualistic/low-context cultures prefer dominating, integrating, and compromising conflict management styles. Boonsathorn (2007) reported that Thais prefer avoiding and obliging conflict management styles.

Family Communication Pattern and Conflict Styles

Koerner and Fitzpatrick (1997) examined the relationship between family communication patterns and conflict styles. Young adults who reported that their family employed a consensual family communication pattern also reported using obliging conflict styles more than those from other family types. Additionally, young adults from consensual families are more likely to report adopting a collaborating or integrating style when they engage in a conflict with their father (Dumlao & Botta, 2000). In the Asian context, Zhang (2007) reported that Chinese children from consensual families use all five-conflict styles, so they handle conflict situations in both constructive and destructive ways. Chinese children prefer collaborating, accommodating, avoiding, compromising, and competing styles, in that order. This preference is shared with their parents. Chinese children from protective families are most likely to use competing/dominating conflict styles, whereas children from pluralistic families use collaborating/integrating and compromising styles. Children from laissez-faire families are most likely to use the avoiding style for conflict management. Steinhoff (1994) explained that the Japanese family has a strong hierarchical order; the head of the family is at the top and is the most significant person. The Japanese culture defines conflict as dangerous; as such, Japanese people tend to avoid conflict. Perhaps as a result, Japanese parents are more likely to use a laissez-faire style.

Although there are no similar reports about conflict management styles among Thais, avoidance of conflict is one of the distinct features of Thai culture. Slagter and Kerbo (2000), for example, stated that Thai people recognize harmony in social relations; therefore, they try to avoid confrontation and avoid conflict. Also, Fieg (1989) stated that American children are encourage to think independently and critically; in contrast, Thai children are not encouraged to engage in those behaviors, especially with people who are older or have a higher-level position.

Based on the literature, the following research questions and hypothesis are proposed:

RQ1: What communication pattern is reported by most Thai young adults as characterizing their family?

RQ2: What do most Thai young adults report as being their conflict management style when engaged in communication with their parents about topics where the young adults and their parents hold incompatible views?

H1: There is a significant difference in young adults' conflict management styles based on their reported family communication pattern.

Methods

This study employed a self-administered questionnaire to collect data from Thai young adults' between the ages of 18 and 21 who, at the time of the research, were residents of Chiang Mai province and lived at home with their parents. G Power Software was consulted to calculate the minimum sample size. Based on the hypothesis, a one-way MANOVA was used to analyze the data. G Power Software shows that a minimum sample size of at least 68 participants is needed for a one-way MANOVA with approximately 95% power at the .05 significance level and with a medium effect size of 0.25 (Erdfelder, Faul & Buchner, 1996). Taking all of this into consideration, the target sample size for this study was set at 200 participants: 100 men and 100 women. A pre-determined quota of participants was sought from each of the 7 universities. The quota was based on the number of young adults enrolled in each university. The questionnaires were distributed through the 7 universities located in Chiang Mai that provide undergraduate education. Those universities are Chiang Mai University, Maejo University, Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna Chiang Mai, Chiang Mai Rajabhat University, Payap University, Far Eastern University, and North-Chiang Mai University. The researcher asked for permission to collect data from lecturers in each university. The

researcher attended classes and sought student participants who met the previously described participant inclusion/exclusion criteria.

The questionnaire contained the Revised Family Communication Patterns instrument (RFCP) (Ritchie & Fitzpatrick, 1990). The RFCP consists of 26 items employing a five-point Likert scale that ranges from 5 "strongly agree" to 1 "strongly disagree" intended to measure family communication patterns. The RFCP was translated into Thai and then back translated into English. The questionnaire was pilot tested with a group of university students. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for conversation orientation was .84 and conformity orientation was .85.

After completing the RFCP, the participants completed Rahim's Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II) (Rahim, 1983) to assess participant conflict management style. The ROCI-II instrument consists of 28 Likert-type scale items that tap into the five conflict styles: integrating, compromising, dominating, obliging, and avoiding. Participants respond to the items using five-point Likert scales that range from 5 "strongly agree" to 1 "strongly disagree." Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the five conflict styles ranged from .62 to .81. The last section of the questionnaire sought demographic information from the participants including sex, age, religion, family income, number of family members living in the household, parents' level of education, and length of residence in Chiang Mai.

The statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) was employed to analyze the data. In order to answer the research questions and hypotheses, a one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was employed. The acceptable statistical significance level was specified as alpha (α) ≤ .05.

Results

A majority of the participants reported their age as 21 years (31.5%). Most of the participants reported their religion as Buddhism (89.5%). The participants reported having an income per month of less than or equal to 3,000 baht (32.5 %). At the time of the research, the participants were living with their father and mother (73%); and 35% of the participants indicated that they are the youngest child in their family. With respect to the participants' parents, 69.5% were living together, and their family income per month was listed as less than or equal to 15,000 baht (21.5%). The largest percentage of participants (34.5%) reported that 3 family members, excluding the participant, live under the same roof. That was followed by 20.5% who reported 4 family members (excluding themselves) under the same roof. The smallest percentages concerned families of 6 or more individuals under the same roof. The

participants' father's level of education is undergraduate (26.5%) while mother's level of education is elementary school (29%) and undergraduate (29%). The participants reported their father's (38.5%) and mother's (37.5%) occupation as personal business. In addition, 26.5% of participants had lived in Chiang Mai for 20 years.

In terms of family communication patterns, a consensual style was reported by 33% of the participants; 26% reported a laissez-faire style, and 20.5% reported their family's communication style as pluralistic with the final 20.5% reporting their family's style as protective. The participants reported their conflict management style when engaged in incompatible communication with their parents as an integrating style (39.5%), 20.5% as a compromising style, 15% as an avoiding style, and 12.5% as either a dominating style or an obliging style.

The results showed that young adults who reported a consensual family communication pattern (M = 4.049, SD = .496) were more likely to report a compromising conflict management style than were those young adults who reported their family communication as laissez-faire (M = 3.504, SD = .488), protective (M = 3.567, SD = .750), or pluralistic (M = 3.719, SD = .527). Young adults who reported a consensual family communication pattern (M = 3.954, SD = .491) scored higher on the avoiding conflict management style than young adults who reported a pluralistic (M = 3.174, SD = .618) or a laissez-faire (M = 3.448, SD = .529) family communication pattern. Furthermore, young adults who reported a protective family communication pattern (M = 3.695, SD = .455) scored higher on the avoiding conflict management style than young adults who reported a pluralistic family communication pattern (M = 3.174, SD = .618).

For the dominating conflict management style, young adults who reported a consensual family communication pattern (M = 3.700, SD = .675) scored higher on the dominating conflict management style than young adults who reported a pluralistic (M = 3.141, SD = .805) or a laissez-faire (M = 3.242, SD = .606) family communication pattern. For the obliging conflict style, young adults who reported a consensual family communication pattern (M = 3.904, SD = .464) scored higher on the obliging conflict management style than young adults who reported a laissez-faire (M = 3.380, SD = .440), a pluralistic (M = 3.471, SD = .413), or a protective (M = 3.642, SD = .484) family communication pattern.

Moreover, young adults who reported a protective family communication pattern (M = 3.642, SD = .484) scored higher on the obliging conflict management style than young adults who reported a laissez-faire family communication pattern (M = 3.380, SD = .440). For the integrating conflict management style, young adults who reported a consensual family communication pattern (M = 4.218, SD = .437) scored higher on the integrating conflict management style than young adults who reported a laissez-faire (M = 3.553, SD = .390) or protective (M = 3.610, SD = .565) family communication pattern. Additionally, young adults who reported a pluralistic family communication pattern (M = 4.230, SD = .394) scored higher on the integrating conflict management style than young adults who reported a laissez-faire (M = 3.553, SD = .390) or a protective (M = 3.610, SD = .565) family communication pattern.

Table 1 *The Results of the Post Hoc Comparisons between Four Family Communication Styles on Five Styles of Conflict Management*

Dependent Variable	Family Communication Pattern	P	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower	Upper
Compromising Style	Consensual-Laissez-faire	.000	.266	.822
	Consensual-Pluralistic	.021	.032	.627
	Consensual-Protective	.000	.184	.779
	Laissez-faire-Pluralistic	.413	-.527	.098
	Laissez-faire-Protective	1.00	-.375	.250
	Pluralistic-Protective	1.00	-.178	.483
Avoiding Style	Consensual-Laissez-faire	.000	.247	.764
	Consensual-Pluralistic	.000	.502	1.057
	Consensual-Protective	.083	-.018	.535
	Laissez-faire-Pluralistic	.077	-.016	.565
	Laissez-faire-Protective	.149	-.538	.044
	Pluralistic-Protective	.000	-.829	-.213
Dominating Style	Consensual-Laissez-faire	.002	.126	.789
	Consensual-Pluralistic	.000	.203	.914
	Consensual-Protective	.168	-.060	.650
	Laissez-faire-Pluralistic	1.00	-.272	.474
	Laissez-faire-Protective	1.00	-.536	.210
	Pluralistic-Protective	.462	-.658	.131

Obliging Style	Consensual-Laissez-faire	.000	.299	.747
	Consensual-Pluralistic	.000	.193	.672
	Consensual-Protective	.024	.021	.501
	Laissez-faire-Pluralistic	1.00	-.342	.161
	Laissez-faire-Protective	.037	-.513	-.009
	Pluralistic-Protective	.530	-.437	.095
Integrating Style	Consensual-Laissez-faire	.000	.444	.886
	Consensual-Pluralistic	1.00	-.248	.225
	Consensual-Protective	.000	.371	.845
	Laissez-faire-Pluralistic	.000	-.925	.427
	Laissez-faire-Protective	1.00	-.305	.192
	Pluralistic-Protective	.000	.356	.883

Discussion/Conclusion

The present study investigated how family communication patterns influence the reported conflict management styles of Thai young adults in Chiang Mai when they have opinions that are inconsistent with the opinions of their parents. Two research questions and one hypothesis were proposed.

The first research question called for identification of the family communication pattern reported by most Thai young adults. A consensual style of family communication was the FCP most often reported by the young adults (33%) who were involved in this research. In terms of cultural factors, many scholars have positioned Thailand as a collectivistic culture (see, for example, Dimmock, 2000). However, Supap (1999) argued that, due to social changes, contemporary Thai culture is individualistic (or is becoming individualistic). Slagter and Kerbo (2000) noted that Thai culture waivers between individualistic and collectivistic; that is, Thai people are hierarchical but also have a sense of self. Consistent with explanations about individualism versus collectivism as cultural descriptors, Triandis (1989) stated that parents in collectivistic cultures tend to prefer obedience, reliability, and proper behavior. Parents in individualistic cultures, on the other hand, prefer self-reliance, independence, and creativity (Triandis, 1989). According to the research results, Thailand still tends to be a collectivistic culture in that most of the Chiang Mai Thai young adults involved in this research reported their family communication pattern as being consensual in nature. A consensual style is described as including the expectation that children are to be obedient and respectful while

parents also try to encourage their children to express their opinions and ideas. The current study is in accordance with previous research (Charoenthaweesub & Hale, 2011) finding that the consensual pattern is the most representative family communication pattern in Thailand.

The second research question directed attention to the conflict management style reported as being used when a young adult is engaged in communication with his/her parents about a topic where the young adult and his/her parents hold incompatible views. With respect to that second research question, the results indicated that most Thai young adults in Chiang Mai (39.5%) reported using an integrating conflict management style when engaged in incompatible communication with their parents. Previous research (Rattanasimakool, 2009) analyzing conflict management styles in Thai organizations from 1984 to 2008, found that a compromising style was the most prominent conflict management style. Boonsathorn (2007) compared Thais with Americans, finding that Thais prefer avoiding and obliging conflict management styles. Both of these prior studies focused on the work force realm and had participants who were older than the current research participants. Thus, the difference in findings might be accounted for both by the setting for the research and the ages of the participants.

The integrating conflict management style reflects a person's high concern both for themselves and for others when a solution is needed in a conflict situation. Rahim (2002) asserted that individuals who adopt an integrating conflict management style will be concerned with openness, exchanging information, and looking for alternatives. Ting-Toomey (1988) argued that people from individualistic/low-context cultures prefer dominating, integrating, and compromising conflict management styles, Thai people are hierarchical but also have a sense of self. Likewise, Slagter and Kerbo (2000) noted that the Thai culture waivers between individualistic and collectivistic. In accordance with the Thai culture and family culture, the young should respect their elders and should not argue or go against those who have higher seniority (Supap, 1999). Thai children are trained to respect their elders (Girling, 1981). Moreover, Thai culture is influenced by Buddhism which teaches children that they are obligated to their parents and must be obedient to and respectful of their parents, even though some parents do not expect their children to obey blindly or to be loyal (Wongsith, 1994). As such, the findings of this research suggest that, even though Thai young adults are concerned for both themselves and their parents, they still respect their elders, i.e., their parents.

In regarded to the hypothesis that was offered, there is a significant difference in young adults' conflict management styles based on their reported family communication pattern. The results of the study, thus, supported the hypothesis. Significant differences were found among family communication patterns and the conflict management styles reported being used by the participants. The results showed that young adults who report their family communication pattern as consensual are more likely to use all five-conflict styles (dominating, compromising, avoiding, obliging, and integrating). Thus, young adults in consensual family are open and free to discussion with their parents, but parents also look for agreement from their children. This suggests that Thai young adults should be able to talk and share their opinion with their parents, but if conflict arises, the young adults vary widely in the conflict style that they employ in response to the situation.

If possible, future research related to family communication patterns and/or conflict management styles should consider using interviews with all of the participants after they have completed the written questionnaires. The qualitative research might help to support or add depth to the quantitative results. Studies of both parents and young adults are also needed as differences in perception both of the family's communication style and of the communication style employed in response to a conflict might exist.

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