

## Report on Participation in Field Research in Thailand

Piao Wenyang  
Year level: M2  
Faculty/Graduate School of: Economics  
Kyoto University

### A. Academic outcomes

Participating in the student workshop in Kasetsart University enabled me to revise my research plan and accelerate my research progress. In particular, my research topic is about the relationship of leadership style and corporations' innovation outcomes. After participating in the student workshop session, I decided to re-consider my study object and measurement of variables.

#### 1) Re-consider of study objects

I intended to focus on venture companies in Japan as my study object. Firstly, because "servant leadership" is a new leadership concept which would be hardly seen in traditional Japanese corporations and secondly, questionnaires and interviews could be collected more easily in venture corporations than large size companies. In this regard, the students and professors of Kasetsart University raised several concerns. Firstly, there will be a selection bias because companies who are open enough to answer the questionnaire might have different answers from the companies who don't. Secondly, selection bias of industries is a concern, as different industries would have different result.

I think all of the concerns are reasonable. I should avoid the selection bias otherwise my results may become meaningless so I am now working on them and discussed with professor to hopefully solve these problems.

#### 2) Re-consider of measurement of variables

In my research, I intended to measure to what extent managers belong to servant leadership as an independent variable. But as Kasetsart one student pointed out, there may be several different types of leadership within an organization or even within one manager. I think it is an important element to consider. Because not only servant leadership but also other types of leadership have an influence on employees' innovation. I will need to consider how to measure other types of leadership as well and to control other types of leadership as control variables if possible.

### B. Experiences while overseas

It was a wonderful experience. I learned about East Asia's labor flow and Japanese companies' overseas investment in Thailand. Especially when I went on a city tour in my free time. When visiting stores and universities, I found there are many workers from Cambodia and Laos because Thailand is proactive in immigrant policies. Almost 80% of the cars running on the streets are Japanese brand cars. It turns out that Thailand was one of the earliest and most successful country where Japanese automobile companies expanded overseas. I found there are many 7-11 convenience stores but I can hardly see Lawson or Family mart in Thailand. Through talking with the professors, I learned that that's because the franchise right of 7-11 in Thailand was owned by CP corporation, a huge national corporation. And at the time Thailand's retail trade was dominated by little mom & pop shop traders, where prices weren't marked, quality inconsistent and a very limited range of goods are offered. When 7-11 stores were built, they provided food, SIM cards, ice cream etc., all in one place with standardized prices, air-conditioned comfort. The shops themselves are small businesses, paying franchise fees and buying their wholesale from CP's distribution channels, and so CP figures the more the

better, help shut out any competition from squeezing in. The owners of these stores certainly make a lot more money than if they were still selling just rice or plastic toys. In a word, it was interesting to observe the business in Thailand.

C. The content of the program

The content was well organized. Visiting two of the best universities in Thailand enabled me to compare the differences of educational institutions among Thailand and Japan. Additionally, the discussion on SDGs with Thamassat University student and visiting UNESCAP deepened my understanding of sustainability and SDGs, which I think was my major “take home” of this field trip. Visiting the Bank of Thailand and the Money Museum made me deepen my understanding of the monetary history of Thailand. The bicycle tour and the market on the third day was interesting because we were able to experience the local life of Thai people more closely. The seminars on the fifth day also were very interesting, where we had the chance to hear about Thailand’s Sufficiency Economy and also the life path of a Thai former Kyoto University EA Program student. Overall, I felt I learned a lot from the content and was very satisfied with the trip. If I must give some advice for the content, from the perspective of a management student, I would say it would be great if there was a chance to visit some of Thailand’s prominent companies.

D. Impact on my career plans

The field trip to Thailand, especially to Thamassat University and UNESCAP (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific), enabled me to re-consider my career plan. My previous plan after graduation was working as a business consultant. But now, I am considering to work where I can contribute to solve the social and environmental problem. As a student from the EA Program, Graduate school of Economics, I always thought it would be such a good thing if I can work related to sustainability. From the lecture of UNESCAP staff and the conversation with Thamassat student, I got a hint that it might be possible to work as sustainability consultant. Nowadays companies are also aware of the necessity of sustainability, but are still regarding solving sustainable problem as cost to companies. Actually, companies could regard sustainable problems as opportunities and adjust their business in order to solve the environmental and social problems while making profits. Sustainability consultants are people who give advice and help companies in that process. In addition, I am also considering to apply for UN internships in Japan before working. This is one of the biggest things I got from this field trip.