

The Adjustment of the Manufacturing Labors in the Northeastern, Thailand

¹Junlasun Thuninart, ¹Jaruwan Tammawat, ²Prasopsuk Rittidet and ³Budsakorn Saenyabud

¹Faculty of Humanities and Social Science, Mahasarakham University, Thailand

²Faculty of Education, Rajabhat Mahasarakham University, Thailand

³Faculty of Humanities and Social Science, Rajabhat Mahasarakham University, Thailand

Abstract: Problem statement: Northeastern labors used to live in the community cultures moved to work at the garment factory. The capitalism and the national economic and social development plan of Thailand were the causes. The policy of this plan was to make Thailand modern and emphasized development of an economic power. The Northeastern labors lacked of the lands for planting and turned to be head over heels in dept. They migrated to be the labors in the industry section for themselves, their families and the rural communities can survive under the capitalism context. The purpose of the article was to study the adjustment of the manufacturing labors in the garment manufacturing in Khon Khaen province located in Northeast of Thailand. **Approach:** It was a qualitative research. Data collection included interviews and participant observations and document analysis. Research data was classified into groups on study topic and analyzed on the purpose of study by using descriptive analysis. Informants included 60 key informants were the labors, the owned factory and the officer. **Results:** The result of this research was the adjustment causes of the labors who worked at the garment factory has divided into 3 conflict levels were as follows: (1) practicing, (2) norm and (3) value and ideal. These causes made them by adjusting themselves to economy acculturation for sufficient economy, namely employees stopped working when they earned enough money and the adjustment in duration of work hours was not strict. The Northeastern labors adjusted themselves for stopped working with traditional condition that was called "Heatsipsong". It was the cultural capital of the Northeastern labors and the adjustment from cultural integration of the labors. The Northeastern labors enjoyed working as collective work and the rule and duty in work were held to a family and kinship structure; however, the rule and duty in the scheduling and assigning of employees was up to a specialization for each person. The employers viewed that the intimate relationship among family and kinship was an obstacle to produce an added value to the economy. For these reasons, the employers adjusted themselves to the labors by depending on the individual specialization. **Conclusion/Recommendations:** The Northeastern labors who dissatisfy working at the garment factory, they adjusted themselves to amalgamation by stopping to work at the garment factory. They chose instead to sew clothing at home. It was the short adjustment for them in their live.

Key words: Adjustment of manufacturing, manufacturing labors, Northeastern labors, Thailand

INTRODUCTION

The ancestor of the Northeastern labors came from Lao ethnic groups in Laos. They were forcibly moved to the Thonburi area and settled in the Northeast and central part of Thailand. The beginning of migration to work as farmers of Northeastern labor in the central part of Thailand began in King Rama 5^[1].

At same time, the capitalism from the West spread into Thailand in 1990 and occupied the local economy of Thailand. So, Thai economy was drawn into the economy of the world. In the Second World War, the

capitalism spread to Northeast of Thailand^[2] and this influenced the workers there who were seduced by money and more earning power; thus, they migrated to work in the big cities and urban areas of commerce.

Later, the Thai government set up the national economic and social development plan of Thailand, Issue 1-9. The policy of this plan was to make Thailand modern and emphasized development of an economic power such as earmarking Khon Kaen to be the main city and the development centre of the Northeast of Thailand. So, the Thai government built the infrastructure such as railway, highway, airport and

Corresponding Author: Prasopsuk Littidej, Faculty of Education, Rajabhat Mahasarakham University, Thailand
Tel: +66-43-754316 Fax: +66-43-754316

dam to support the development centre of the Northeast that was Khon Kaen. Many businessmen run business in the agricultural sector in Khon Kaen. Thus, the northeastern farmers grew mono crops for trade and emphasized profit. There were a lot of factories in Khon Kaen. There were challenges such as pollution, lack of natural resources, drought and a lack of fertilized soil, all of which constrained the ability to sustain jobs for workers. Consequently the Northeastern labors migrated to Bangkok for work as housemaids, factory workers, waiters and waitresses and construction workers^[3].

From the interference of capitalism, the expansion of industry and service sector, the policy of Thai government as up the national economic and social development plan, the government set up Khon Kaen province be the main and development center of the Northeast of Thailand made the Northeastern labors migrate to work in Khon Kaen more and more. The issue of the Northeastern labors was so very interesting such as how they adjusted themselves in live under the influences of the new context as the labors at the garment manufacturing in Khon Khaen province.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Area of the study: This research was the Qualitative Research methods. The main purpose of this research was to study the adjustment of the manufacturing labors in the garment manufacturing in Khon Khaen province located in Northeast Thailand. Data collection included interviews and participant observations and document analysis. Research data was classified into groups on study topic and analyzed on the purpose of study by using descriptive analysis. Informants included 60 key informants were the labors, the owned factory and the officer.

RESULTS

The cultural conflict of the Northeastern labors in the garment manufacturing: The employers and employees in garment trade were different in background, rule and duty. So there were a lot of complications and interaction in cultures namely there were the dominant culture such as capital culture (the culture of employer), masculine culture and the inferior culture such as the feminine culture and community culture (the culture of employees). The phenomenon of complication and interaction in cultures caused to the conflict between capital culture and community culture that they were different in the work worldviews.

Cause and characteristic of conflict: The study founded that the causes of cultural conflicts and the phenomenon of conflicts between the Northeastern labors and the employer under capital culture divided into 3 levels as follows:

- Practicing
- Norm and (3)
- Value and ideal level

Practicing level: The difference in work worldviews namely the Northeastern labors ,basically, enjoyed working in Collective group, working for fun, no strict working hours, while employers wanted their workers worked as individuals, in the assembly line holding to specialization for each person, displaying punctuality and competition. The specialization could encourage the potentiality of the labors to add the produce most in economic as human resource economics and moreover the employers would like the labors work as individual as well. So the difference in work worldviews was a cause of conflict.

The relationships in society and kin of the Northeastern labors such as among relatives, families and close friends that was called “Siew”. The rule and duty in work were held by kin and family system was the most important at work of the Northeastern labors because the work of the Northeastern labors was like help each other or collective work. While the employers viewed to the good relationship among the Northeastern labors was an obstacle to produce the added valuable economic.

The labor rights, employers infringed on the labor rights of employees such as layoffs female workers who were pregnant or other actions that were against labor laws, such as wage-cutting.

Norm level: Religious/local tradition was a caused of work conflict because the way of life of the Northeastern labors based on “Heatsipsong” tradition. Heatsipsong tradition made the Northeastern labors close relationship^[1] and it was the original culture of the Northeastern labors namely when there were the festival as Heatsipsong tradition especially on Songkran festival (throwing water day). They did not work on that traditional holiday because the activities on Songkran festival built the intimate among them and the intimate among the Northeastern labors became social capital of the Northeastern labors. Social capital was the most important thing in their lives because when they needed help such as work in farm; they would be helpful each other because of the good relationship^[4].

Law, Policy and regulations in working founded that the employers were against labor laws in garment trade such as employers cut wage of employees if they went to work late. The regulation conflict came from such as; employers controlled the employees work overtime or no have holiday for employees as Thai law's enforcement.

Value and ideal level: The aim of the Northeastern labor's work was to suffice ,no collect property and the way of life up to the relationship with the others such as relatives family and close friends (siew) while the employers work for wealth by getting the profit most and losing the expense least.

From the phenomenon of these conflict levels, the Northeastern labors adjusted themselves to the cultural adjustment.

The cultural adjustment of the Northeastern labors in the garment manufacturing: There were 3 steps in cultural adjustment for survival of him/her as follows^[1]:

Acculturation: The Northeastern labors in the garment factory and developed sewing skills and they used Lao (I-san) language. The garment factories were located in rural areas, so the cultural community was very intensive in rural.

Cultural Integration: almost all of Northeastern labors in garment factories were not accept working on the assembly line, having strict guidelines for working hours and duties. And all of Northeastern labors in the garment industry still spoke Lao (I-san) language because they did not have the chances to meet the foreigners.

Amalgamation: The research showed that the Northeastern labors at the factory wanted to go on working. Their increased desire came from working indoor with air-conditioning and being able to earn a better income than in the past; on the other hand, almost all of the Northeastern labors in the garment trade hesitated to go to work because the employers did not allow them to be social and talked together during working hours and they were held to strict working hours. The Northeastern labors in the garment trade were stopping to work at the garment factory. They chose instead to sew clothing at home (home worker). Working at home was a way to adapt and assured them that they still had a good relationship among family, kin and community without the interference of the employer.

DISCUSSION

The Northeastern labors that used to live in the community culture moved to work at the garment factory. The causes were the capitalism and the National Economic and Social Development Plan of Thailand. The policy of this plan was to make Thailand modern and emphasized development of an economic power and there were many projects such as the dam and the chemical to eradicate the insects for their products. They did not attend the effecting to the environments and their communities. The Northeastern labors lacked of the lands for planting and turned to be head over heels in dept. They migrated to be the labors in the industry section for themselves, their families and rural communities can survive in the capitalism context. The inter-reaction between the community culture of the Northeastern labors and the capitalism culture of the employers. The Northeastern labors were not strict on times and concentrated on flexible working under the social and culture contexts such as they stopped working if their cousins were sick or died. They believed that the relationship was more important than working. There were 3 conflicts: (1) The difference in work worldviews (2) The relationships in society and kin of the Northeastern labors (3) The labor rights. The causes and conflict effected to the labors and they adjusted themselves to the social adjustment were: (1) Acculturation (2) Cultural Integration (3) Amalgamation. The adjustment of the employers were: (1) the working worldviews. (2) Law, Policy and regulations in working (3) the inter-reaction between the employers and the employees (4) the relationship to their families and cousins. They were the social conditions of the Northeastern labors' working.

CONCLUSION

The Northeastern labors had the agricultural social. They worked on farms by depending on the natures and had worldviews as community cultures. When the agriculture section was failed because the government policies were not suitable for development the country since 1961^[3].The state had the policies to develop the industry section, the Northeastern labors migrated to the big city and outside country to be the labors for the industry section to get more incomes. The good relationship between their families, religion, custom and tradition was destroyed by the social changing. Those were the causes of the problems for them such as drugs, AIDS, broken families and spoiler child. The Northeastern labors in the garment factory adjusted themselves by Acculturation: The labors had a higher

position for their ability. They were active and came to work on time, Cultural integration: the labors adjusted themselves by working with a groups and taking care the members and Amalgamation: the labors in the garment trade were stop working. Working at home (home worker) was a way to adapt and assured them that they still had a good relationship among family, kin and community without the interference of the employer.

Suggestion and recommendation: This research applied cultural Qualitative Research methods and data collection included interviews and participant observations, the population should small to describe the events with clearly. The population in this research was Northeastern ethnic, should study Khmer ethnic or Combodia ethnic to comparative the working adjustment and the conflict for developing and administrate the human resource. The Northeastern labors trended to work at home more increase. The state should had the policies to take care them.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The researchers express their sincere appreciation for all of support provided.

REFERENCES

1. Chattip Nartsupha, 2003. The Thai village economy in the past. *J. Econ. History*, 63: 265-266. DOI: 10.1017/S0022050703331808
2. Sati, P., J. Dhamawat, P. Pratepha and S. Rittidech, 2005. Changes in the conscious mind in applying technology for growing rice at the chee river basin in Northeastern of Thailand. *J. Soc. Sci.*, 1: 172-177. <http://www.scipub.org/fulltext/jss/jss13172-177.pdf>
3. Rithidet, P., P. Piampongsan, P. Prathepha and B. Yodmalee, 2005. The development of community economic system of thung kula ronghai famers at Ban Ta Yuak, Northeastern Thailand. *J. Soc. Sci.*, 1: 240-242. <http://www.scipub.org/fulltext/jss/jss14240-242.pdf>