

INFLUENCE OF PERCEIVED POWERLESSNESS, NARCISSISM, AND SELF-ESTEEM ON INDIRECT AGGRESSION AMONG THAI HOTEL WORKERS: A PATH ANALYTIC MODEL

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Abstract: This study examined perceived powerlessness and narcissism as predictors and self-esteem as mediator in the frequency of the use of indirect aggression among Thai female and male workers in the hotel industry. The participants obtained through purposive sampling consisted of 78 men and 131 women aged between 19 and 50 years who have worked for 6 to 288 months in their respective hotels in Thailand. The current study utilized a quantitative correlation design. Multiple Regression and MANOVA were employed to analyze the results. The results showed that the male respondents reported higher engagement of indirect aggression techniques of malicious humor, social exclusionary behavior, and guilt induction than their female counterparts, respectively. No significant gender differences for the factors of relational control, fear of negative evaluation, narcissistic personality, and self-esteem were found. Furthermore it was revealed that narcissistic personality has both direct and indirect influences on the use of indirect aggression. In terms of direct influence, it was revealed that the more narcissistic the participants' personality, the more they would employ indirect aggressive techniques. With regard to indirect influence, the more narcissistic the participants' personality, the higher their reported level of self-esteem and the less they would employ indirect aggressive techniques. The results also showed that for the participants, their fear of negative evaluation has an indirect influence on their use of indirect aggressive techniques such that the higher their fear of negative evaluation, the lower their reported level of self-esteem and the more they would use indirect aggressive techniques. The factor of relational control was not found to be significantly related to any of the indirect aggression criterion variables.

Keywords: Powerlessness, Narcissism, Self-esteem, Indirect Aggression, Thailand

Introduction

In the competitive Western world, indirect aggression has, for many years, almost always been present and has already awakened the interest of numerous researchers

especially in North America and the Scandinavian countries. Researchers examined indirect aggression in terms of gender differences (Bjoerkquist, Oestermann, & Lagerspetz, 1994; Bjoerkquist, Oesterman, & Hjelt-Baeck, 1994; Forbes, Zhang, Doroszewicz, & Haas, 2009; Forrest, Eatough, & Shevlin, 2005; Moroschan, Hurd, & Nicoladis, 2009), in terms of preference of strategy (Steil & Hillmann, 1993), in terms of relationship with age (Forrest et al., 2005), in terms of the perpetrator and the peer group (Garandean & Cillessen, 2006), and in terms of the relationship between individualism and collectivism (Forbes et al., 2009). Duncan and Owen-Smith (2006) tested if powerlessness is associated with the use of indirect aggression in same gender friendships and possible gender differences. The problem was studied in countries such as United States, Canada, Finland, Great Britain, and Poland. Only a few studies have investigated the problem in Asian countries. For example, Forbes et al. (2009) examined the influence of collectivism on the use of indirect aggression in China and Steil and Hillmann (1993) examined chosen aggressive strategies (direct versus indirect aggression) in Japan and Korea.

There is a scarcity of research on this topic within the Thai context. The researcher believes that the problem of indirect aggression is not confined to the Western world but is also present in East Asian Countries such as Thailand, much more than people are aware. In Thailand's societal structure, with a tendency toward face saving and a rigid hierarchical structure, indirect aggression should be more or, at least, equally present as in Western cultures.

A focus of available research on indirect aggression is mostly on children, adolescents, or young adults. There are only a few researchers who examined the usage of indirect aggression in adults and in the workplace; for instance, among university employees in Finland (Bjoerkquist et al., 1994), undergraduate students in Canada (Moroschan et al., 2009) and Great Britain (Forrest et al., 2005), and among employees in public and private companies in the US (Baron & Neuman, 1996).

Indirect aggression takes place especially in close interpersonal relationships in and outside the workplace and is far more common than engaging in direct physical aggression (Forbes, 2009). Bjoerkqvist et al. (1994) stated that indirect aggression at work is a form of interpersonal aggression and is, at the very least, as harmful as violence in the traditional sense.

The problem might be even more present in international companies in Thailand where traditional Thai values and Western principles encounter each other. Those companies have their own hierarchical system and have no regard for the traditional Thai system. In light of

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this situation, the current researcher has chosen to examine hotels in Thailand relative to the prevalence of indirect aggression inasmuch as tourism represents a major economic factor in Thailand, with a large contribution to Thailand's GDP. Due to the opening of Thailand's borders in 2015 (ASEAN) and the forecasted 24.5 million tourists coming to Thailand in 2013 (Bangkok Post, 2013), this researcher believes that hotels in Thailand would be the best place in which to analyze and understand indirect aggression. Although there are numerous studies about indirect aggression and the contributing factors, there is no research available which provides a clear link between indirect aggression, gender, perceived powerlessness, narcissism, and self-esteem. In view of this knowledge gap, this researcher has taken on the unique challenge to examine the interrelationships, if any, among the aforementioned variables, particularly within the Thai hotel industry.

Objectives

The current study aimed to examine the following:

1. The direct influence of perceived powerlessness and narcissism on the use of indirect aggression among Thai hotel workers.
2. The indirect influence of perceived powerlessness and narcissism on the use of indirect aggression among Thai hotel workers, being mediated by self-esteem.
3. Gender difference in perceived powerlessness, narcissism, self-esteem, and indirect aggression among Thai hotel workers.

Literature Review

Indirect aggression is a kind of social manipulation where the perpetrator manipulates other people to attack the target, using the existing social structure to offend the victim, without any personal involvement. Indirect aggression is a form of aggression that uses indirect methods to cause harm to others such as gossiping, excluding the target of the aggression from a group, manipulation of relationships, embarrassing the person, and making fun of the person. There are different categories of indirect aggression including malicious humor, social exclusionary behavior, and guilt induction techniques (Forrest et al., 2005). In this study, indirect aggression was measured by means of the *Indirect Aggression Scale* by Forrest et al. (2005). Indirect aggression is a serious problem in the workplace. Its adverse consequences are not only confined to affected individuals but also to their company in particular and to society in general. According to Bjoerkquist et al. (1994), victims of indirect aggression can suffer from depression, anxiety, aggression, insomnia, various nervous symptoms, melancholy, apathy, lack of concentration, and social phobia. Furthermore, Baron and Neuman (1996) cited damaged reputation and careers as well as the desire for revenge. For the company, rising costs may stem from resignation, re-employment, sick leave, and loss of

competitiveness of the company while society has to take rising health insurance contributions into account. Leymann (1986, 1992, as cited in Bjoerkquist et al., 1994) identified some of the risk factors at work which contribute to the use of indirect aggression – poor communication within the workgroup, strict hierarchical organization, and authoritarian atmosphere. All these factors are prevalent in Thai society. Thus, there is an urgent need to reveal the extent of the prevalence of indirect aggression in Thailand in order to sensitize the people responsible for this problem and to take appropriate measures.

A review of the literature revealed links between gender, perceived powerlessness, narcissism, self-esteem, and indirect aggression. Forrest et al. (2005) and Bjoerkquist et al. (1994) found no gender differences in the usage of indirect aggression whereas Moroschan et al. (2009) established that men scored higher than women on the frequency of use of indirect aggression.

Narcissism is a personality trait which is part of normal psychology. It can be found in normal individuals to a lesser amount and to a high amount in people with narcissistic personality disorder, which describes the other end of the continuum (Foster & Campbell, 2007; Raskin & Hall, 1981). Narcissism's main characteristics are a grandiose sense of self-importance, preoccupation with fantasies of unlimited power, brilliance and success, and a sense of entitlement. A person who scores high on narcissism believes he is special and unique, requests excessive admiration, is interpersonally exploitative, and lacks empathy (American Psychiatric Association, DSM-IV-TR, 2000). In this study, narcissism was measured by means of Raskin and Hall's (1981) *Narcissistic Personality Inventory*. In their study on indirect aggression, Garandeau and Cillessen (2006) reported evidence of a relationship between the use of indirect aggression and certain personality traits such as lack of empathy. Inasmuch as lack of empathy is a core feature of narcissistic personality disorder and narcissism is a personality trait, the researcher concluded that narcissism predicts indirect aggression. This perspective is supported by past research. For example, Ronningstam (2011) emphasized that individuals with impaired empathic ability tend to be indirectly aggressive while Bushmann and Baumeister (1998) asserted that narcissism leads to high levels of aggression.

Powerlessness is defined as "devoid of strength or resources" or "lacking the authority or capacity to act" (Merriam-Webster, 2013). Perceived powerlessness refers to being regarded as powerless or to feel powerless. How much power individuals have in a situation and with whom they are interacting influence the individual's behavior, according to Duncan and Owen-Smith (2006) who outlined that powerlessness can be seen in relationships and on the individual level. Subsequently, they split power in relationships in relational control and in anxiety about one's status in friendships. In this study, relational control was measured by means of a 5-item

questionnaire constructed by Duncan and Owen-Smith (2006) and anxiety about one's status in relationships was measured by means of the *Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale II* (BFNE II) by Carleton, McCreary, Norton, and Asmundson (2006). Regarding perceived powerlessness, Duncan and Owen-Smith (2007) demonstrated that lack of power is related to higher usage of indirect aggression. The use of indirect aggression depends on how much power the individual has (Sagrestano, 1992). People in powerful positions use less indirect aggression than those in powerless positions (Steil & Hillmann, 1993).

Rosenberg (1965) established that an individual with high self-esteem has a sense of self-worth, a self-attitude of respect, and has the ability to distinguish realistically between one's weaknesses and strengths. A lack of self-esteem, on the other hand, can create a sense of unworthiness which can contribute to depression. In this study, self-esteem was measured by means of *Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale* (1965). In their thorough literature review about self-esteem and its influence on performance, interpersonal success, happiness, and healthier lifestyle, Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, and Vohs (2003) demonstrated that high self-esteem does not predict good school performance; instead, good school performance can lead to high self-esteem. The same is applicable to job performance in that success at work can boost self-esteem but rarely vice-versa. In terms of relationships, it seems, at first, that people with high self-esteem are more attractive, likable, and knowledgeable in how to approach people, but there is no objective measure that confirms that high self-esteem predicts quality and duration of a relationship. However, self-esteem has a strong relation to happiness such that high self-esteem leads to greater happiness and low self-esteem can lead to depression, under certain conditions. Additionally, self-esteem enhances initiative and pleasant feelings.

Conceptual Framework

Based on salient theoretical perspectives and findings of related studies, a conceptual framework was developed (Figure 1).

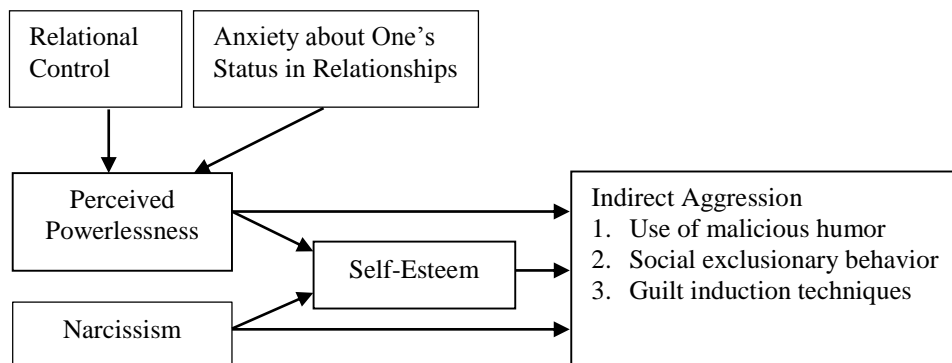


Figure 1: A Development of Instructional Leadership Model for Schools in The Kachin Area of Myanmar

The following hypotheses were generated for testing:

H1. There are gender differences in perceived powerlessness, narcissism, self-esteem, and the frequency of use of indirect aggression among Thai hotel workers.

H2. There is a negative relationship between how much relational control individuals feel they have in their equal hierarchy work relationships and the frequency of use of indirect aggression.

H3. There is a positive relationship between level of anxiety about one's status in relationships and the frequency of use of indirect aggression.

H4. There is a positive relationship between the prevalence of narcissism and the use of indirect aggression.

H5. Narcissism has an indirect influence on the use of indirect aggression, being mediated by self-esteem, such that the higher the prevalence of narcissism, the lower the self-esteem and the higher the use of indirect aggression.

H6. Perceived powerlessness has an indirect influence on the use of indirect aggression, being mediated by self-esteem, such that the higher the perceived powerlessness (determined by relational control and anxiety about one's status in relationships), the lower the self-esteem and the higher the use of indirect aggression.

Method

This study is quantitative research which used descriptive and inferential statistical tools to analyze the obtained data. The data was acquired from 131 female and 78 male workers from different departments (restaurant, kitchen, housekeeping, engineering, stewarding, recreation, laundry, human resources, and general administration) of 10 international five-star hotels in Thailand. Purposive sampling was used as a sampling technique. The participants needed to meet the criteria of nationality (Thai), age range (19 to 50 years), and duration of hotel employment (at least six months). The tool for collecting data was a test battery which consisted of six separate survey questionnaires in Thai language. The research instrument consisted of the following measures: (1)

Demographic questionnaire – to find out the participant's age, gender, department, and duration of hotel employment; (2) Indirect Aggression Scale-aggressor version (IAS-A) – to measure usage of indirect aggression towards someone else within the last 12 months; (3) A 5-item-questionnaire to measure how much relational control individuals feel they have in their relationships; (4) Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale II (BFNE II) – to measure anxiety about one's status in relationships; (5) Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) – to measure narcissism in normal populations (sub-clinical narcissism); and (6) Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) – to measure the global perception of personal value and self-acceptance. As the aforementioned surveys were originally developed in English, the scales had to be translated into Thai by a bilingual translator, for use with Thai participants. Back translation was subsequently performed by another translator. In case of any difference, a third expert was consulted. When administering the questionnaires, the full name of the scales was removed to avoid socially desirable answers.

Findings

The analyses conducted and the results obtained are presented in the following sequence:

1. Demographic profile of respondents

The sample consisted of 209 participants of whom 78 (37.3%) were males and 131 (62.7%) were females. Their ages ranged from 19 to 50 years, with a mean age of 31.91 years. In terms of the length of time they had been working at their respective hotels, the duration of service ranged from six months to 288 months, with a median duration of 36 months. The majority of the participants worked in housekeeping (15.8%), accounting

The purpose of the reliability analysis was to maximize the internal consistency of the seven measures by identifying those items that are internally consistent (i.e., reliable), and to discard those items that are not. The criteria employed for retaining items are (1) any item with 'Corrected Item-Total Correlation' (I-T) $>.33$ will be retained (.33² represents approximately 10% of the variance of the total scale accounted for), and (2) deletion of an item will not lower the scale's Cronbach's alpha. Results from the reliability analysis showed that one item (IG1) representing the indirect aggression sub-factor of 'guilt induction' has corrected item-total correlation (I-T) $<.33$ and that its deletion would increase that factor's overall Cronbach's alpha. This item was deleted prior to the computation of the factor. Thus, the factor of 'malicious humor' is represented by 9 items, the factor of 'social exclusionary behavior' is represented by 10 items, the factor of 'guilt induction' is represented by 5 items, the factor of 'relational control' is represented by 5 items, the factor of 'fear of negative evaluation' is represented by 12 items, the factor of 'narcissistic personality' is represented by 40 items, and the factor of 'self-esteem' is represented by 10 items. The computed Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all seven scales were adequate and ranged from .79 to .95 (malicious humor .90, social exclusionary behavior .89, guilt induction .79, relational control .79, fear of negative evaluation .94, narcissistic personality .95, and self-esteem .83).

3. GL6M multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) to test for gender differences in the seven scales

The following Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations for the seven computed factors for male and female participants separately and for the entire sample.

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations for the Computed Factors of Malicious Humor, Social Exclusionary Behavior, Guilt Induction, Relational Control, Fear of Negative Evaluation, Narcissistic Personality, and Self-Esteem

| | <u>Male</u> | | <u>Female</u> | | <u>Entire sample</u> | |
|------------------------------|-------------|-----------|---------------|------------|----------------------|-----------|
| | <u>Mean</u> | <u>SD</u> | <u>Mean</u> | <u>SD</u> | <u>Mean</u> | <u>SD</u> |
| Malicious humor | 1.60 | .69 | <u>1.36</u> | <u>.56</u> | 1.45 | .62 |
| Social exclusionary behavior | 1.57 | .69 | <u>1.38</u> | <u>.55</u> | 1.45 | .61 |
| Guilt induction | 1.52 | .65 | <u>1.34</u> | <u>.51</u> | 1.40 | .57 |
| Relational control | 2.68 | .78 | <u>2.59</u> | <u>.65</u> | 2.63 | .70 |
| Fear of negative evaluation | 2.42 | .81 | <u>2.36</u> | <u>.80</u> | 2.38 | .80 |
| Narcissistic personality | 2.43 | .74 | <u>2.24</u> | <u>.70</u> | 2.31 | .72 |
| Self-esteem | 3.09 | .40 | <u>3.10</u> | <u>.41</u> | 3.09 | .41 |

(13.9%), front office (12%), and administration (11.5%), with the remaining (46.8%) spread across the hotel's kitchen, restaurants, engineering, laundry, IT, purchasing, human resources, sales, and marketing, spa, security, gardening, and organizing events.

2. Reliability analysis of the scales employed

Reliability analysis was conducted on the seven scales of relational control, fear of negative evaluation, narcissism, self-esteem, use of malicious humor, social exclusionary behavior, and guilt induction techniques.

As can be seen from Table 1, for the entire sample, the indirect aggression sub-factors of 'malicious humor', 'social exclusionary behavior', and 'guilt induction' were rated, on average, below the mid-point on their respective scales. Thus, overall, the respondents reported low tendency to use indirect aggression against their colleagues. The respondents also rated the factors of 'fear of negative evaluation' and 'narcissistic personality' below the mid-points on their respective scales. Thus, the respondents expressed low fear of negative evaluation by

their colleagues and did not perceive themselves as overly narcissistic. The descriptive statistics showed that the respondents rated the factors of 'relational control' and 'self-esteem' above the mid-point on their respective scales. Thus, overall, the respondents perceived themselves as being in a controlling position over their colleagues, as well as possessing high self-esteem.

In order to investigate gender differences for the seven computed variables (malicious humor, social exclusionary behavior, guilt induction, relational control, fear of negative evaluation, narcissistic personality, and self-esteem), GLM multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted. The results showed that there was no overall gender effect for the seven variables combined, $F(7,201)=1.35$, $p>.05$. However, follow-up tests of between-subjects effects showed that gender has a significant effect for the dependent variables of malicious humor, $F(1,207)=7.52$, $p<.01$, social exclusionary behavior, $F(1,207)=4.83$, $p<.05$, and guilt induction, $F(1,207)=4.85$, $p<.05$. Examination of the marginal means showed that the male respondents reported higher engagement of indirect aggression techniques of malicious humor ($M=1.60$), social exclusionary behavior ($M=1.57$), and guilt induction ($M=1.52$) than their female counterparts ($M=1.36$, $M=1.38$, $M=1.34$, respectively). The analysis results showed no significant gender differences for the factors of relational control, fear of negative evaluation, narcissistic personality, and self-esteem ($p>.05$).

Path Analysis

In order to test the hypothesized direct and indirect relationships represented by the path model depicted in Figure 1, path analysis via regression analysis was conducted. The analysis involved: (1) regressing the dependent variables of malicious humor, social

exclusionary behavior, and guilt induction on the predictor variables of relational control, fear of negative evaluation, narcissism, and self-esteem; and (2) regressing the mediator variable of self-esteem on the predictor variables of relational control, fear of negative evaluation, and narcissism. The results of this path analysis are presented in Figure 2.

The results showed that for the study's participants, their narcissistic personality has both direct and indirect influences on their use of indirect aggression, as represented by the sub-factors of use of malicious humor, use of social exclusionary behavior, and use of guilt induction techniques. Thus, the more narcissistic the participants' personality, the more they would employ the indirect aggressive techniques of malicious humor (Beta = .33), social exclusionary behavior (Beta = .45), and guilt induction (Beta = .38) when interacting with their colleagues. The influence of their narcissistic personality on their use of malicious humor, social exclusionary behavior, and guilt induction techniques is also mediated by their reported level of self-esteem. Thus, the more narcissistic the participants' personality, the higher their reported level of self-esteem (Beta = .27). Subsequently, the higher their level of self-esteem, the less they would employ the indirect aggressive techniques of malicious humor (Beta = -.22), social exclusionary behavior (Beta = -.28), and guilt induction (Beta = -.28).

The results also showed that for the participants, their fear of negative evaluation has an indirect influence on their use of indirect aggressive techniques, being mediated by self-esteem. Thus, the higher their fear of negative evaluation, the lower their reported level of self-esteem (Beta = -.19). Subsequently, the lower their level of self-esteem, the more they would employ the indirect aggressive techniques of malicious humor (Beta = -.22), social exclusionary behavior (Beta = -.28), and guilt

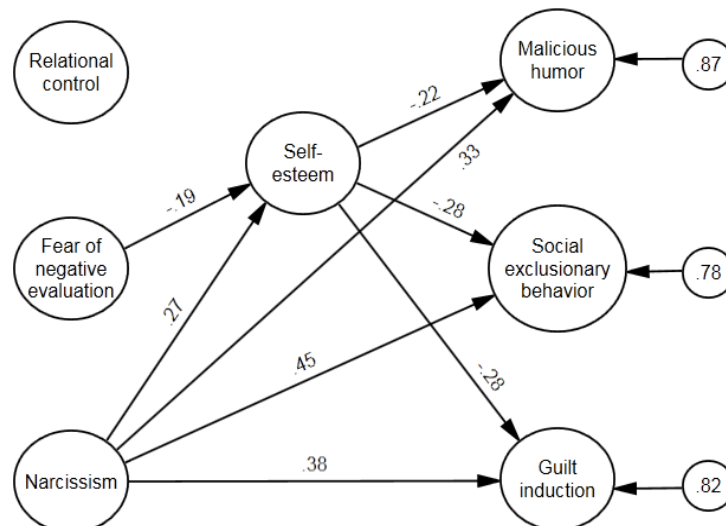


Figure 2: Path Model of Hotel Employees' Use of Indirect Aggression as A Function of The Direct and Indirect Influences (Being Mediated by Their Level of Self-esteem) of Their Relational Control, Fear of Negative Evaluation, and Narcissism

(Note: For ease of interpretation, only significant path coefficients were included in Figure 2.)

induction ($\beta = -.28$) when interacting with their colleagues. The factor of relational control was not found to be significantly related to any of the indirect aggression criterion variables ($p > .05$).

Discussion

The present study proposes a number of important implications for Thai hotel workers. Working in the hospitality industry can be both physically and emotionally demanding as well as stressful as it is associated with heavy overtime work, pressure from management, and occasional confrontational guest contact. It would be quite natural for hotel workers to cope with their demanding work situation through indirect aggressive behavior against their co-workers. The current study demonstrated that the Thai hotel worker-participants cope well with their demanding profession as evidenced by their reportedly low tendency to engage in indirect aggression strategies against their colleagues. The practice of adaptation to stressful situations during the low season (when this study was conducted) will help the Thai hotel workers to prepare for the high season when daily workload, overtime, and stressors will multiply. The study revealed, furthermore, that an individual's gender influences the self-reported frequency of indirect aggressive behavior among Thai hotel workers. Men reported higher engagement of indirect aggression techniques overall, and in the three subcategories of "use of malicious humor", "social exclusionary behavior", and "guilt induction techniques".

The latter findings are consistent with those of Moroschan (2009) who examined the use of indirect aggression in 486 undergraduate students from the University of Alberta in Canada and found that men are more indirectly aggressive than women on all subscales. A possible reason for this gender difference is what participants regarded as indirect aggressive behavior and what behavior is acceptable and normal for men and women. There is a possibility that women consider their behavior as appropriate and, thus, do not perceive it as indirect aggression. Another reason for this outcome could be gender role differences. Men are socialized to be aggressive and it is appropriate, up to a certain age, to manage frustration or anger with physical aggression. Later in life, the use of physical aggression decreases and indirect aggression is used to manage conflicts, frustration, and anger. In contrast, women are socialized not to be aggressive and, for them, there could be higher value in smooth interpersonal relationships than the need to express frustration and anger.

Another important finding of the current study refers to the direct influence of narcissism on indirect aggression in that the higher the level of narcissism, the greater the engagement in indirect aggression strategies against others. It can, thus, be concluded that having a narcissistic personality leads to high usage of indirect aggression, combined with insult or threat leading to even more aggression, according to Bushmann and Baumeister

(1998). It should be noted that insulting or threatening the hotel staff is a very common practice by international guests, and even by foreign managers to their subordinates, as some countries have a rougher tone of interpersonal communication compared to Asian/Thai culture.

When the aforementioned key variables are mediated by self-esteem, a different picture emerges. Relative to the indirect influence of narcissism on the use of indirect aggression, being mediated by self-esteem, the more narcissistic the Thai hotel worker's personality, the higher is their reported self-esteem. Subsequently, the higher their level of self-esteem, the less is their engagement in indirect aggressive behavior. It can, thus, be concluded that self-esteem is an important mediating variable which needs to be increased and enhanced among Thai hotel workers, to avoid or minimize their use of indirect aggressive behavior. Baumeister et al. (2003) established that boosting self-esteem with the help of therapeutic programs or workshops will not lead to the intended improvement; it may even be counterproductive at times. Instead, Baumeister and associates (2003) recommends using praise as a means to enhance self-esteem as a reward for socially desirable behavior and self-improvement.

The study's results regarding the indirect influence of perceived powerlessness on the use of indirect aggression strategies, being mediated by self-esteem, shows that the higher the fear of negative evaluation (one factor of perceived powerlessness), the lower the reported self-esteem; and the lower the level of self-esteem, the higher the hotel workers' employment of indirect aggressive strategies against their co-workers. This researcher believes that by ensuring that the workers are in control of their daily work, they will gain greater self-confidence and not perceive themselves as being powerless.

The second determinant of perceived powerlessness (relational control) failed to establish a significant relationship with any of the indirect aggression criterion variables. One explanation for this result is rooted on the collectivistic nature of Thai hotel workers. Adherence to a collectivistic identity decreases autonomy and increases dependency such that members of collectivistic cultures are encouraged to subordinate personal goals to group goals, according to Caldwell-Harris and Aycicegi (2006). The authors argued that while collectivistic societies foster social support and sociability, the collectivistic individual subordinates personal goals to those of the group leader or other members of the group. A consequence is that the productivity of such a group is decreased as the energy of the group members is absorbed in social relationships. In summary, it might be not important among Thai hotel workers to possess relational control as they are (in the collectivistic culture of Thailand) encouraged to subordinate their own desires and goals to those of the group. It may be that there is mutual understanding in their social interactions and,

therefore, there is no need for relational control in their work relationships. Furthermore, social cohesion and self-sacrifice is encouraged; by this token, having relational control does not lead to indirect aggression among Thai hotel workers.

In the current study, several procedural limitations need to be mentioned.

Sample size. Caution should be taken when generalizing the findings of the current study to a broader population of Thai hotel workers since the sample size was moderate and consisted only of 209 participants from 10 internationally managed five star hotels (with up to 250 rooms) in Bangkok, Hua Hin, and Phuket.

Instruments. Instruments employed in this study were designed and widely used in the Western world and may not necessarily apply to Southeast Asian populations as, in this case, Thai hotel workers. Psychometric properties such as reliability and validity of the scales used to measure the variables of indirect aggression, relational control, fear of negative evaluation, narcissism, and self-esteem have not been tested extensively on the Thai population. Furthermore, the English into Thai translation might not be reliable in terms of comparable meaning and cultural understanding. Thus, there is an urgent need for the validation of the translated scales used in terms of psychometric properties as well as linguistic and cultural connotation in the Thai culture, before results obtained can be interpreted with certainty.

Literature review. The research questions and research hypotheses with regard to the variables of indirect aggression, narcissism, perceived powerlessness, and self-esteem were drawn from Western-based scientific articles and theoretical perspectives and, thus, may not be fully applicable within the Thai context. The heavy reliance on Western-based literature and related studies is primarily due to the scarcity of Thai-based studies, resources, and databases. In this regard, the current study would be profoundly useful for Thai researchers as it would serve to bridge the knowledge gap.

The following recommendations are offered to other researchers who are interested in further exploring the antecedents, dynamics, and consequences of the phenomenon of indirect aggression in general, and in the workplace in particular.

The findings of the current study are based on a dataset drawn from 10 international five-star hotels in only three holiday destinations within Thailand. Perhaps a comprehensive study involving a broader scale of hotels (three- to five-star hotels) in more areas in Thailand, covering all the major Thai provinces would be appropriate to investigate the relationships among the main variables. It would be worthwhile to conduct a cross-cultural study to determine how much indirect aggression is used by Thai hotel workers in direct comparison to their European or American counterparts, incorporating the collectivistic-individualistic components. Further studies on this topic could also explore if there are seasonal differences (high season versus low season) as the hospitality industry is

quite dependent on the time of year, in which a different picture could emerge. The researcher suggests the inclusion of other variables such as stress, locus of control, workplace satisfaction, and self-efficacy in the study, to examine if they influence the frequency or magnitude of use of indirect aggression among Thai hotel workers. Further studies should investigate if there is a difference in the use of indirect aggression among blue-collar workers and white-collar workers.

The researcher recommends paying attention to the issue of whether perceived powerlessness, narcissism, and indirect aggression undergo developmental change during the life course and should, therefore, include and examine a broader age range. The race/ethnicity of the workers in association with the above-mentioned variables would be worth exploring more thoroughly.

Finally, it would also be worthwhile for future researchers to develop a shortened version of the Narcissistic Personality Inventory as the current researcher noted that this 40-item questionnaire is extremely lengthy when integrated in a battery of measures/scales. Needless to say, further efforts should include ensuring the reliability and validity of the short version prior to administration.

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