The impact of cultural differences on LINE app communication among Thai and Chinese employees: Its effects on employee engagement

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Abstract---This research explored the impact of cultural differences using LINE application as a communication channel toward the components of employee engagement. This research added more contributions to using LINE application and employee engagement which found that both factors--job demands and employee support--are associated positively with the intensity of social media use. The survey data were gathered from 300 Thai lecturers and 300 Chinese lecturers from a private university in Thailand. Partial least squares structural equation modeling was employed for data analysis. The results from the regression analysis showed that the LINE app used for personal related internal communication has negative effects on vigor, dedication and absorption for the Thai respondents. As for the Chinese respondents, it has positive effects on vigor, dedication and absorption. This means that in the Chinese context the more they are engaged with their personal whereabouts the more active they are in the workplace.

Keywords---LINE, cultural differences, communication, employee engagement, employee.

Introduction

The advancement of technology and the innovation of communication tools are convenient in transferring information through international contexts and facilitating collaboration worldwide (J. Wu, Guo, Huang, Liu, & Xiang, 2018). Definitely, social media and instant messaging (IM) have been adopted as the key channels in internal communication especially in the workplace (Wamba, Edwards, & Akter, 2019). Literature support the valid role of instant messaging in the workplace communication (Wang, 2016). The increase in the usage of messenger applications such as the LINE App has significantly changed the delivery of communication among colleagues, workmates and supervisors (Aunyawong, Puyod, Buaphiban, & Jitt-Aer, 2020). According to Dhir, Kaur, and Rajala (2020), the use of instant messaging like LINE App has been increasing over 200 percent in 2013. The most famous messenger application in Thailand is LINE. Everywhere on the public transportation, such as on trains, people can be seen bowing their heads and paying attention to chatting with people using the LINE app.

Instant messaging such as LINE application may cause less disruptive compared to other communication channel such as face-to face, e-mail conversations and over the phone. Previous research found that workers who utilized instant messaging save more time as they had shorter conversations on the computer (Oluoch, 2015). Employees were less frequently interrupted if they use instant messaging, since they may use this form of messaging to confirm whether a coworker is busy before engaging in a more intense conversation. Furthermore, there's no need to see a person face-to-face before inquiring about current tasks (Dwyer, Kushlev, & Dunn, 2018). Moreover, instant messaging such as LINE delivers the convenience of choosing when one can communicate with colleagues. A person may write in the status whether a person is available or busy and a person had a choice as to when he/she can reply to a message instantly or later. Therefore, because of the aforementioned reasons, LINE app gains its popularity among people both for personal and professional use.

Thailand has been considered as one of the top countries in employing foreign workers. It is ranked as number three in the world (Iqbal, 2020). However, the corporate communication process may pose certain challenges as the context in communication in Thailand may be different from that of the foreign workers. For instance, in educational institutions, foreign workers mainly communicate in English while the Thai workers comfortably communicate in their local language. This poses greater concerns especially when communication is done through a messenger app. The introduction of LINE as a means of communication has changed how workers communicate with each other. The LINE application has now been adopted as an official carrier of corporate messages as it is fast and more efficient (Chen Hsieh, Huang, & Wu, 2017). But the question of whether these cultural differences in communicating through LINE messenger create an impact on employee engagement is worth investigating. LINE communication affects employee engagement among Thai lecturers as it caters to fast exchanges in communication. It helps organizations to motivate workers to do their jobs better by having better engagement such as developing more loyalty towards the company, being happy with work and have the full energy to perform tasks (P.-H.

Wu & Marek, 2016). However, it should be noted that this result is only limited to work-related matters and not with personal-related issues. The use of the LINE app for personal-related matters creates a negative effect on employee engagement as it may interrupt the workers in the process of completing their jobs.

This research will focus on the comparison between Thai and Chinese employees in a private international university in Thailand, that uses English as a medium of instruction in its classes, in their preference of using LINE application as a means for organizational communication. Thai and Chinese are selected for comparative analysis because it is found that Thai people are more engaged with their work using LINE application and in statistics Thailand rank as the third-largest user of LINE application in their day to day work (Iqbal, 2020). However, it is not yet clear whether Chinese employees also have the same engagement here in Thailand. In China, the messenger application WeChat is more popular than LINE but the contention of whether the Chinese prefer to use messenger applications for work-related purposes has not been so far established. Thus, this study aims to determine the engagement of Thai and Chinese employees in a private international university in Thailand using the messenger app specifically the LINE messenger in their work-related communication. It will seek to answer the following questions:

1. Is there a significant difference between Thai and Chinese employees in terms of their work engagement when using LINE application for work-related matters?
2. Does the use of LINE application affect Thai and Chinese employees' work engagement in terms of their vigor, dedication and absorption at work?

This study is beneficial because if it is found effective, LINE application and other messenger apps could be endorsed as an official means of communication among employees in an organization as it encourages employee engagement.

Literature Review

Employee Engagement

Career advancement, mentoring, rewards, recognition, safety, and values are aligned with the organization's vision, well-being, decision making and autonomy (Osborne & Hammoud, 2017). Employee engagement is a multifaceted, extensive concept that incorporates a lot of different studies including human behavior, satisfaction at work, commitment and loyalty in the organization (Graffigna, 2017). Correspondingly, employees of the company who are zealous can take initiatives, give total support to the company, and are committed, active, satisfied, and willing to make a difference in the organization (Pandita & Ray, 2018). Companies typically define engagement as employees having pride in the work that they do and being loyal to the organization. They go beyond their job description to show total dedication. Employee engagement could be gleaned by the manner in which the employees devote their time regardless of their assigned workloads, their high level of energy and mental resilience in the performance of their respective work assignments, and maintaining their state of well-being and

being genuinely happy about their job despite the challenges that may come with it (Charoensukmongkol & Puyod, 2020; Kang & Sung, 2017).

According to Constantin and Baias (2015) aside from the aforementioned factors affecting employee engagement, the most important element to be looked upon in an organization is how the internal communication process flows from the top management to the employees. Internal communication serves as a pathway to publicize, connect and support the employees' need to communicate with their superiors, or within their ranks (O'Neill, Hodgson, & Al Mazrouei, 2015). In a corporate setting, the top-down communication process is the way in which the top-level management course through the information to their subordinates (Schubert & Alpermann, 2019). This is essential in an organization as a failure to do the proper communication channeling may lead to misunderstanding and confusion, which in turn leads to disengagement or disorientation (Karanges, Johnston, Beatson, & Lings, 2015).

From the memo type of communication process, internal communication has now shifted to become digital. Since the turn of the century, corporations have seen changes in terms of sending information to the employees through electronic means such as email or text (Men & Bowen, 2016). The accessibility of internet connection over mobile devices has advanced this process with the use of messenger applications. Many companies in Thailand have adapted to this technology as they have seen efficiency and haste in the exchange of internal communication. However, the idea of whether the use of messenger application affects employee engagement is yet to be found out. This study looks into the use of LINE application as a channel of internal communication and aims to determine whether this facilitates employee engagement in terms of their dedication, vigor, and absorption to their jobs. More interestingly, however, cultural factors may have a hand over this process as internal communication may also be affected by the employees' cultural orientation (Puyod & Charoensukmongkol, 2019). Thus, this study aims to investigate how the use of messenger apps as an internal communication tool affects employee engagement specifically among Thai and Chinese employees.

Messenger application as a form of internal communication

With the advent of the internet, workplaces have now adopted technological advancements that make the exchange of communication more cost-effective, hassle-free and modernized. Instant messaging through messenger application has become very popular in almost all corners of the world as long as one is connected to the internet (Käihkö, 2020). The use of messenger applications has become a more common tool to exchange communication among co-workers, family members and friends. It becomes more preferable as users can perform multiple tasks while engaging in a conversation with the person on the other LINE (Sheer & Rice, 2017). Using messenger applications in the office is faster compared to email as this application has a notification system that calls the attention of the person quickly, thus messages can be read right away. In most cases, messenger application enhanced performance in different types of institutions in a way that it can help speed up processes in a more efficient and agile manner. Organizations should be able to maximize the use of messenger

applications to be more competent and technology savvy in relaying information towards employees (Aydin, 2020). It does not matter whether a person is situated in the city, different country or states as long as he is connected to the internet, then instant messaging can cater to this service.

In Thailand, the most popular messenger application of use today is the LINE app. In 2011, LINE was introduced by Naven Corporation in Japan. The name LINE came about from the long queues of people getting relief goods after a massive earthquake that hit Japan in 2011 (Dejima & Ikeda-Ohtsubo, 2016). The inventors seemingly need a fast and light communication system that could connect people during that time who were affected by the catastrophe (Nollet, Komazawa, & Ohto, 2016). Japan prioritized and programmed public phones to connect with each other throughout and after the earthquake incident. Since then, LINE application became very popular, in which up to this day, organizations adopted it as a communication system in the workplace. LINE application enables users to send messages that are real-time to any individuals or in a group or circle of friends with no cost at all (Cho & Hung, 2015). This present time, workplaces have adopted this internal way of communicating to all employees to deliver quick and fast information. Where it is known that LINE may have facilitated better communication process among employees in Thailand, it is still unclear whether this form of internal communication may be preferred by other cultures. Thus, this study investigates whether LINE is also preferable among Chinese workers here in Thailand as Chinese people's way of communication has certain distinct characteristics compared to Thai.

The use of the LINE app among Thai and Chinese employees

Culture is demarcated in many ways but Geert Hofstede (1983) defines how cultural factors affecting behavior bring about greater impacts Hofstede (1983) posits that culture is communal mental programming of mind or way of thinking that distinguished from one category to another. Culture immensely affects the way in which a person performs his communication process (Puyod & Charoensukmongkol, 2019). Each culture has its own rule and decorum as to the performance of proper communication with others. This may be affected by such factors as the language itself, the use of words, gestures, tone of voice, and even the manner in which a person looks into the eye of another person.

In this present study, however, Thailand and China are compared in their use of messenger application in the workplace primarily because of their collectivist cultures (G Hofstede, 1980). The styles of communication between Thai and Chinese are both indirect and high in context, in which the audience should read between the lines to understand its meaning. In terms of social languages, both countries depend largely on gender, age, social status and familiarity of the speaker and listener to completely understand the communication process (Dragojevic, Berglund, & Blauvelt, 2018). The use of a different mobile application such as LINE and WeChat varies in different cultures. In Thailand, LINE application is very prominent in work-related, personal-related or even school-related matters as university students use it mostly in their communication practices as evidenced by the study of Bangkok University. Out of 32 million user of LINE globally, Thailand ranked as the second LINE user with more than 18

million users in figure (Leesa-Ngauansuk, 2018). It is palpable that people in Bangkok are seen using LINE applications in public places such as in malls and trains. Moreover, Young (2015) found that Thai people are very expressive of their emotions in LINE application such that they are willing to spend any amount of money just to purchase stickers. This sticker trade became the success factor of the popularity of LINE application in Thailand. Young (2015) mentioned that Thai people use LINE application because of the shared interest in Japanese cartoon characters that are present in the emoticons, which are aligned with the high context communication in Thailand. This has to do with the collective norm of Thai people.

On the other hand, in China WeChat is a more popular mobile application that was established on January 21, 2011, by Tencent Holding Ltd (Lien & Cao, 2014). Li (2016) revealed that WeChat matches with Chinese culture which is the collectivist and high context in terms of communication. WeChat has the feature of moments in which the user can share their activities every day. In Chinese culture, it was stated that they love to show off to the group where they belong (Daud, Daud, & Kassim, 2016). Holmes, Balnaves, and Wang (2015) revealed that using WeChat reflects the culture of Chinese which is guanxi means connection and closeness so that asking favors is not a problem. Having these characteristics of WeChat is also true to the LINE application.

LINE messenger application and employee engagement

Some communication theories support the use of LINE application in the workplace. The critical mass which requires several users to communicate successfully (Ferdous, Osmani, & Mayora, 2015) explains the proliferation of the use of LINE application, especially among adults. This means that the success in communicating using mobile applications wouldn't rely on individual users but rather the responses from other users are vital like for instance, the response rate. This enables the user to connect with many users with at least minimal effort. Thus this theory of critical mass advocates that employees will have a positive attitude toward the use of messenger applications such as LINE on a daily basis (Ewing, Men, & O'Neil, 2019). Edward (1959) introduced the theory of polychronic communication, which refers to the process in which multiple conversations are managed one time in a certain period. This allows the user to do multitasking, and it carries around positive effects on work and personal life settings.

The contribution of using LINE application and employee engagement can also be supported by the study of (Charoensukmongkol, 2014; Tarsakoo & Charoensukmongkol, 2019), who found that both factors--job demands and employee support--are associated positively with the intensity of social media use. The analysis revealed that there is a positive connection between job contentment and job performance and the use of social media in the workplace. In general, evidence showed that social media usage at work does not have a direct negative effect on work engagement. This implies that establishments should allow workers to use social media because it can eliminate stress-related work issues and can also help do their tasks in an efficient and effective way. This is also true to LINE application as a source of internal communication in the workplace.

Moreover, (Aunyawong et al., 2020; Hayase, 2009) purported that there is a positive rapport between components of employee engagement and internal communication in the workplace. In his study, Hayase (2009) claimed that communication channel preference and the combination of any type of communication tools were linked with employee engagement in certain organizations. Furthermore, Aunyawong et al. (2020) asserted that LINE app used for work-related matters has positively related towards the components of employee engagement. If this is so, the traditional communication method coupled with the use of messenger application such as LINE may be preferred by the workers and may facilitate better communication process in their workplaces.

However, some other studies revealed that the use of messenger apps for personal use may malign the attainment of vigor, dedication and absorption as forms of employee engagement as this interrupts the process of delivering proper corporation communication. Bowden, Burton, and Power (2018) mentioned that there are a lot of people who are exposed to interactive text messages just to chat or exchange rumors and gossip, which are basically not important. Discussing personal whereabouts or sharing some mundane personal news have been common in instant messaging, if done in the workplace, this may disrupt the worker's performance of his job. Interactive text messaging in the workplace is somewhat time-consuming, and in the worst-case scenario, it's communally undesirable. However, it is not known whether cultural differences play a part in making the use of messenger applications effective or not in the workplace. Thus, this study is conducted to determine the effects of messenger application in employee engagement being mediated by culture. Therefore, this present study hypothesizes that:

H1: The use of the LINE app as personal related internal communication has a positive effect on vigor.
H2: The use of the LINE app as personal related internal communication has a positive effect on dedication.
H3: The use of the LINE app as personal related internal communication has a positive effect on absorption.
H4: The use of the LINE app as work-related internal communication has a positive effect on vigor.
H5: The use of the LINE app as work-related internal communication has a positive effect on dedication.
H6: The use of the LINE app as work-related internal communication has a positive effect on absorption.

Methodology

Sample and data collection

The respondents of this research study are lecturers of a private international university in Thailand. The researchers collected the data online through self-administered survey questionnaires using Google Doc platform. The researchers, informed that top management of the university for the data collection, once approved, the human resource department was contacted, to help further with the dissemination of the questionnaire though the campus official emails. A

convenience sampling method was employed as it is easy and convenient to gather the data from the respondents (Kemper, Stringfield, & Teddlie, 2003). The 25-item questionnaire was distributed ONLINE via e-mail, Facebook and LINE application. A total of 600 lecturers responded to the survey 300 Thais and 300 Chinese. The demographic and job characteristics of the participants were reported in Table 1 for Thai respondents and Table 2 for Chinese respondents.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of the sample for Thai respondents

Demographic factor	Descriptive statistics
Gender	Male: 130 (43.3%) Female: 170 (56.7%)
Age	Mean: 39.70 Standard deviation: 9.151
Marital status	Single: 160 (53.3%) Married: 140 (46.7%)
Education Level	Master's Degree: 210 (70%) Doctoral Degree: 90 (30%)
Job Title	Part-time: 30 (10%) Full-time: 230 (76.7%) Deputy/Assistant to Chairperson: 30 (10%) Dean/Chairperson/Program Director: 10 (3.3%)
Work Experience (years)	Mean: 10.10 Standard Deviation: 6.728
Department	Management: 140 (46.7%) Marketing: 100 (33.3%) Accounting: 30 (10.0%) Mathematics: 20 (6.7%) ACCSC: 10 (3.3%)
Minutes/hours per day spent in using LINE application	0-20: 90 (30%) 21-40: 80 (26.7%) 42-60: 40 (13.3%) More than 60 Min: 90 (30%)

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of the sample for Chinese Respondents

Demographic factor	Descriptive statistics
Gender	Male: 110 (36.7%) Female: 190 (63.3%)
Age	Mean: 36.87 Standard deviation: 10.533
Marital status	Single: 130 (43.3%) Married: 170 (56.7%)
Education Level	Bachelor's Degree: 30 (10%) Master's Degree: 240 (80%) Doctoral Degree: 30 (10%)
Job Title	Part-time: 50 (16.7%) Full-time: 210 (70%)

	Deputy/Assistant to Chairperson: 20 (6.7%) Dean/Chairperson/Program Director: 20 (6.7%)
Work Experience (years)	Mean: 6.50 Standard Deviation: 4.361
Department	Confucius: 200 (66.7%) Management: 40 (13.3%) Business: 20 (6.7%) Marketing: 20 (6.7%) Economics: 20 (6.7%)
Minutes/hours per day spent in using LINE application	0-20: 80 (26.7%) 21-40: 150 (50%) 41-60: 20 (6.7%) More than 60 Min: 50 (16.7%)

Measures

The main independent variables, the LINE application used for work-related and personal matters were measured using the questionnaire adopted from the scale originally developed by Ellison et al. (2007). Six questions were determined in order to assess the use of the LINE app for work-related matters and two questions were included for personal related matters. Responses ranged from 1 – almost never; 2 – rarely; 3 – sometimes; 4 – very often; and 5 – always. Respondents were also asked to indicate the number of minutes per day that they normally spend on LINE applications both for work and personal related matters. This indicates the intensity in which the respondents use LINE application for both work and personal related matters. They are represented by such dummy variables as 1 (0-20 minutes), 2 (21-40 minutes), 3 (41-60 minutes) and 4 (60 minutes and above). Furthermore, the demographic and professional profiles of the respondents were included in the conceptual framework as its control variables in certain associations could be identified from them.

The control variables such as gender were measured as a dummy variable (females=0; male 1). Age was measured in years; marital status was measured as a dummy variable (single=0; married=2). divorce=3). Educational level was measured using the ordinal scale (1=Bachelor's degree;2= Master's degree; 3=Doctoral degree). Job title was measured using the ordinal scale (1=Part-time;2=Full-time;3=Deputy Chairperson/Assistant to chairperson; 4=Dean/Chairperson/Program Director). Work experience was measured as the number of years that the respondents had rendered service in the university. Department was measured as ordinal scale (1=Confucius; 2=Management; 3= Business; 4=Marketing; 5=Economics). The three main dependent variables of employee engagement are vigor, dedication and absorption—were measured by the scale made by Salanova, Agut, and Peiró (2005). The scale consists of 17 items that were answered through a five-point Likert scale rating, in which 1 indicates never to 5, which means always.

Estimating technique

The data analysis was performed using multiple regression analysis. Multiple regression analysis is implemented in the prediction of the value of one variable based on the value of two or more other variables (Zikmund, Babin, Carr, & Griffin, 2013). The assessment of construct reliability was justified using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability coefficients. Both indicators were expected to be 0.7 or more (Nunnally, 1978). The results reported in Table 3 confirmed that all indicators passed this requirement, suggesting that the quality of construct reliability was adequate.

Results

There are a few steps needed to be performed before executing the multiple regressions analysis. First, the reliability of the concepts that are measured using multiple item scales must be evaluated using Cronbach alpha's coefficient. It shows that the reliability of all concepts is satisfactory with higher than 0.7 Cronbach alpha (Zikmund et al., 2013). The results from the reliability test for Thai respondents were shown in Table 3 and Table 4 for Chinese respondents. The summated scales of each concept are created for further regression analysis.
In the second step, the variance inflation factor (VIF) analysis was conducted to check for multicollinearity. The result indicates that VIF values range from 1.601 to 7.102 for Thai respondents and 1.223 to 2.119 for the Chinese respondents respectively lower than the maximum threshold limit of 10. This supports the reliability of all concepts as satisfactory.

Table 3: Results from the reliability test (Thai)

Variables	LINE app for personal related	LINE app for work-related	Vigor	Dedication	Absorption
Cronbach alphas (α) coefficient	0.913	0.916	0.795	0.792	0.839

Table 4: Results from the reliability test (Chinese)

Variables	LINE app for personal related	LINE app for work-related	Vigor	Dedication	Absorption
Cronbach alphas (α) coefficient	0.953	0.943	0.873	0.860	0.880

Finally, bivariate correlations among variables were analyzed using Pearson correlation coefficients. This correlation analysis was conducted to explore one-on-one relationships between the key concepts. The results from correlation analysis are shown in Table 5 for Thai and Table 6 for Chinese.

Table 5: Correlation among variables (Thai)

Variables	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1.LPRMT	.408*	-.114	-.275	-.292	-.223	-.106	-.166	-.220	-.185	.025
2. LWRMT	1	.295	.086	.032	-.181	-.047	-.243	-.244	-.325	.168
3.VigorT		1	.587	.541	-.089	-.090	.045	-.036	.189	.128
4.DedicationT			1	.795**	.044	-.053	.158	-.068	.442*	.455*
5.AbsorptionT				1	.315	-.151	.403*	.087	.430*	.254
6.Work Experience					1	-.217	.887**	.012	.145	.121
7.Gender						1	-.076	.015	-.396*	.133
8.Age							1	.006	.221	.172
9.Education								1	.175	-.203
10.Marital Status									1	-.008
11.Job title										1

Note: *P<0.05, **P<0.01

Table 6: Correlation among variables (Chinese)

Variables	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
LWRMC	.561**	.422*	.340	.391*	.198	-.054	.122	-.049	-.253	-.073
LPRMC	1	.327	.326	.428*	-.042	-.050	.287	-.126	-.162	-.113
VigorC		1	.821**	.722**	.133	-.094	.359	.039	.234	.020
Dedication			1	.680**	-.035	-.358	.313	-.029	.133	-.057
AbsorptionC				1	.171	-.056	.604**	.042	.240	-.055
Gender					1	.497**	.107	.155	.160	.331
Age						1	.255	.216	.342	.473**
Marital Status							1	.301	.137	.180
Education								1	.106	.104
Job Title									1	.556**
Work Experience										1

Note: *P<0.05, **P<0.01

Regressions analysis was performed, and the summarized results are shown in Table 7 and Figure 1 for Thai respondents and Table 8 and Figure 2 for Chinese respondents. Hypothesis 1 predicts that the use of the LINE app for personal related internal communication has a positive effect on vigor. However, as the results show, the LINE app for personal use has a negative effect on vigor (β= 0.-

965; p=.018) for Thai respondents but Chinese respondents (β= .059; p=.012), it has a positive effect, and it is statistically supported. Thus, hypothesis 1 is not statistically supported by the Thai group but supported by a Chinese group.

Hypothesis 2 predicts the use of the LINE app as personal related internal communication has a positive effect on dedication. The results reveal that for Thai respondents, there is a negative relationship between these two variables, and it is not statistically significant (β=0.-632; p= .012). As for the Chinese respondents (β=0.121; p= .650), it has a positive effect on dedication but not statistically supported. Therefore, hypothesis 2 is not supported.

Hypothesis 3 predicts the use of the LINE app as personal related internal communication has a positive effect on absorption. The results reveal that there are negative relationships between these two variables with Thai respondents and it is not statistically significant (β=0.-708; p= .057) and for the Chinese group, it has a positive effect but not significant (β=0.200; p= .432). Therefore, hypothesis 3 is not supported.

Hypothesis 4 predicts that the use of the LINE app as work-related internal communication has a positive effect on vigor. The results for Thai respondents reveal that these two variables are positively related, and it is statistically significant (β=0.314; p=.010). On the other hand, for Chinese respondents, it has also positive effects on vigor (β=0.121; p=.368) but not significant, therefore hypothesis 4 is supported by Thai results but not supported Chinese results.

Hypothesis 5 predicts that the use of the LINE app as work-related internal communication has a positive effect on dedication. The results for Thai respondents turn out that these two variables are positively related, but it is not statistically significant (β= 0.126; p= .076). The same for Chinese respondents, (β=.0684; p= .571). Thus, hypothesis 5 is not supported.

Hypothesis 6 predicts that the use of the LINE app as work-related internal communication has a positive effect on absorption. The results for both Thai and Chinese turn out that these two variables are positively related, but it is not statistically significant (β= 0.189; p= .083). As for the Chinese group, the results are the same, they are positively related but not statistically significant (β=0.228; p= .058). Thus, hypothesis 6 is not supported.

The r-square suggests that all independent variables in the regression model can explain vigor, dedication and absorption by 52.8 percent, 63 percent and 50.6 percent for Thai respondents as for the Chinese, the regression model can explain vigor, dedication and absorption by 58.8 percent, 59.9 percent and 73.3 percent.

Moreover, one control variable, namely minutes or hours spent in using LINE app, shows significant effect on vigor (β= 1.305; p= .038). On the other hand, dedication and absorption show no significant effects for Thai respondents (β= .620; p= .098), (β= .613; p= .276). Moreover, on Chinese context, vigor (β= -.105; p= .858) and absorption (β= -.210; p= .679) shows negative result, while dedication (β= .089; p= .818) shows positive result.

Table 7: Regression results (Thai)

	Dependent Variables		
	VigorT	DedicationT	AbsorptionT
	Hypothesis 1	Hypothesis 2	Hypothesis 3
Constant	3.844	8.690	4.582
LWRMT	.314**	.126	.189
LPRMT	-.965**	-.632**	-.708
Age	.402**	.144	-.243
Gender	-.682	.074	-.274
Marital Status	1.266	2.076**	2.179
Education	.291	-.321	.578
Job Title	-.722	.985	.387
Work Experience	-.524**	.186	-.177
Minutes/hours spent using LINE app	1.305**	.620	.613
R-square	0.528	0.630	0.506
Adjusted R-square	0.279	0..436	.245
Number of observations	300	300	300

Notes: Unstandardized beta coefficients are reported
***p<0.001,**p<0.05

Table 8: Regression results (Chinese)

	Dependent Variables		
	VigorC	DedicationC	AbsorptionC
	Hypothesis 1	Hypothesis 2	Hypothesis 3
Constant	18.409***	18.540***	14.809***
LWRMC	.121	.068	.228
LPRMC	-.059	.121	.200
Age	.059**	-.198**	-.107
Gender	1.108	.864	2.048
Marital Status	3.330**	2.037**	4.546***
Education	-1.542	-1.074	-.457
Job Title	1.922	1.448	2.922**
Work Experience	-.006	.029	-.349
Minutes/hours spent using LINE app	-.105	.089	-210
R-square	0.588	0.559	0.743
Adjusted R-square	0.372	0.327	.608
Number of observations	300	300	300

Notes: Unstandardized beta coefficients are reported
***p<0.001,**p<0.05

Discussion and Conclusion

Is there a significant difference between Thai and Chinese employees in terms of their work engagement when using LINE application for work-related matters? Is there a significant difference between Thai and Chinese employees in terms of their work engagement when using LINE application for personal-related matters? Does the use of LINE application affect Thai and Chinese employees' work

engagement in terms of their vigor, dedication and absorption at work? This present study aimed at investigating the effects of LINE application used for work-related and personal-related internal communication towards the components of employee engagement namely vigor, dedication and absorption between Thai and Chinese groups. Results from the regression analysis showed that LINE app used for personal related internal communication has negative effects towards vigor, dedication and absorption for the Thai respondents, which means that the higher the lecturers use LINE app in sending personal communication the lesser it has an effect on their performance of their jobs in terms of vigor, dedication and absorption. This implies that when employees use the LINE app in sending personal messages to friends and families about non-work-related issues, it may interrupt the performance of their respective job assignments and may not be as productive. As for the Chinese respondents, it has positive effects on vigor, dedication and absorption. This means that in the Chinese context the more they are engaged with their personal whereabouts the more active they are in the workplace.

Thai group result is a contradiction to the study made by Charoensukmongkol (2014), which showed that the use of social media aids employees in the performance of their job. This contradicting result indicates that messenger apps are now used to be a venue in which people at work exchange rumors and gossip, which may malign the workers' intention of completing their respective job assignments (Bowden et al., 2018). Exchanging information about one's personal whereabouts or sharing some mundane personal news over messenger apps have become disruptive at work since it is time-consuming and distracting. Inversely, for the Chinese group, this condition may not be as disrupting. This could be possibly because Chinese workers may be more motivated to work if they know the whereabouts of their loved ones or families as it gives them peace of mind. In addition, Chinese workers may find the use of LINE as motivating if they communicate with their colleague's certain personal matters as they are away from home. Talking on a personal level among their colleagues may help them adapt and cure their homesickness.

On the other hand, the LINE app used for work-related matters has shown positive relationships towards the components of employee engagement for both Thai and Chinese groups. Results reveal that LINE application used for work-related matters has a positive effect toward vigor, dedication and absorption, which means that the higher the employees use LINE app in sending, sharing and receiving work-related information, the higher they engage in their work, thus showing vigor, dedication and absorption in the process. This implies that employees will be motivated to work when information send to them will be as fast as it is sent in the LINE app. Moreover, the use of LINE applications will develop loyalty and a sense of worth in the workplace. Employees will feel fully concentrated on his work, genuinely happy, and deeply involved in the performance of work. This result is supported by (Charoensukmongkol, 2014), who said that social media at work facilitates better job performance and job contentment. This maybe similarly true with the use of the LINE app at work as it facilitates better job performance and contentment by the quick exchange of information.

This study, therefore, resolves that the LINE app has positive and negative effects on employee engagement when used for work-related and personal-related internal communication respectively. This means that as a method of internal communication, messenger apps and other technological advancements in communication may be applied as it facilitates faster and better delivery of messages. With the use of digital technology nowadays, it is apparent that organizational communication could be achieved in a much faster manner compared to the traditional means some years back. This faster exchange in communication helps organizations to motivate workers to do their jobs better by having better engagement such as developing more loyalty towards the company, being happy with work and have the full energy to perform tasks. However, it should be noted that this result is only limited to work-related matters and not with personal-related issues for Thai respondents. As the results show, the use of the LINE app for personal-related matters creates a negative effect on employee engagement as it may interrupt the workers in the process of completing their job. This means that there is supposed to be a regulation within the company that messenger app should only be limited to the work-related exchange of information during office hours, and not to be used for chit-chatting about personal activities. The use of the LINE app for personal use should be done not within the context of work and should not be used as a rumor mill. The use of technology, as it is inevitable, should work in favor of the organization, and the LINE app along with other messenger apps and social media platforms available nowadays should be used wisely and accordingly.

In the Chinese context, it was found out that both personal and work-related matters have positive effects on employee engagement. This implies that due to acculturation Chinese people in a private international university in Thailand adopted the use of LINE application in terms of personal and work-related matters. It was known that Chinese people dominantly use WeChat, but as they are in Thailand, they began to use the LINE application for different functions. This result may also imply that since Chinese employees are away from their families, using messenger applications such as the LINE app enables them to connect quickly with their loved ones back home. Thus, the use of the LINE app for personal-related matter facilitated better work engagement since they may be inspired to work more when they know the present condition of their family and friends. As mentioned previously, knowing the whereabouts of their family members is important for family-oriented Chinese workers since they are their source of inspiration. Thus, instead of being distracted in their work, chit-chatting with their families or loved ones may motivate them more to perform their respective works well.

This study proves beneficial to the company as it shows that the LINE app, if used accordingly, could promote employee engagement by making them more dedicated to their job, to become more energetic and to be happier. This may also provide additional knowledge to researchers who are interested in exploring the effects of new technologies in LINE of communication, organizational set-up, and job performance among others. This study also adds to the body of knowledge regarding the use of technology in organizational communication and specifically the use of the LINE app along with another messenger app available in recent years. Despite the interesting findings of this study, several weaknesses of this

research should be tackled. Firstly, the numbers of respondents are not enough to make general and meaningful conclusions about the results of the study. Future studies should employ more than thirty per group of respondents to establish better reliability and validity of the results. Secondly, the study made use of a self-report questionnaire which may pose bias among the respondents as they can answer anything from there. There is no internal control as to their behavior in using the LINE app in their LINE of work. Thirdly, this study is only limited among the lecturers in the university. The study did not investigate its relevance and applicability in other organizations such as in business corporations, government agencies and the like.

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