

# เจตคติและเจตนาในการต่อรองราคาสินค้า (ความตั้งใจในการ ต่อรองราคาสินค้าซ้ำ) ในสินค้าประเภทเครื่องนุ่งห่มซึ่ง ขับเคลื่อนโดยวัฒนธรรมของผู้บริโภคชาวไทยและชาวจีน

## Apparel Bargaining Attitude and Bargaining Intention (Intention to Re-bargain) Driven by Culture of Thai and Chinese Consumers

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**Abstract:** This research aims to investigate the bargaining attitude and bargaining intention (intention to re-bargain) driven by culture of Thai and Chinese consumers when buying apparel product. The survey took place in major apparel markets in Bangkok such as Chatuchak Market, Center One, and so on, according to their bargaining-prone environment. The opinionnaires were conveniently distributed to Thai and Chinese consumers. With samples of 198 Thai consumers and 116 Chinese consumers, the results generated by Structural Equation Modeling show that both Thai and Chinese consumers' bargaining attitude affected bargaining intention and their culture affected both bargaining attitude and intention. For managerial and marketing application, as international companies go global and companies in the Asia-Pacific region continue to export and become more international, culture will become more and more important. The apparel shop who tends to be flexible with the price will be the winner. For the limitations, this research did not include age as a factor driving bargaining attitude and bargaining intention; that was, it could harm the generalization of the results. For future research, it will be interesting to compare the results of different countries to see if there are highly significant differences.

**Keywords:** Bargaining, bargaining attitude, bargaining intention, culture, apparel

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**บทคัดย่อ:** งานวิจัยชิ้นนี้มีจุดประสงค์ที่ศึกษาเจตคติและเจตนาในการต่อรองราคาสินค้า (ความตั้งใจในการต่อรองราคาสินค้า) ซึ่งขับเคลื่อนโดยวัฒนธรรมของผู้บริโภคชาวไทยและชาวจีนเมื่อซื้อสินค้าประเภทเครื่องนุ่งห่มการสำรวจจัดขึ้นที่ตลาดสินค้าประเภทเครื่องนุ่งห่มรายใหญ่ของไทย โดยคำนึงถึงสภาพแวดล้อมที่เอื้อต่อการต่อรองราคาสินค้า อาทิ ตลาดนัดสวนจตุจักร เซ็นเตอร์วัน เป็นต้น แบบสอบถามถูกแจกจ่าย โดยการเลือกตัวอย่างตามความสะดวกผลการศึกษาทั้งกลุ่มตัวอย่างลูกค้าชาวไทย 198 คน และลูกค้าชาวจีน 116 คน ที่ได้จากการวิเคราะห์สมการโครงสร้างชี้ชัดว่าเจตคติในการต่อรองราคาสินค้าของผู้บริโภคชาวไทยและชาวจีนส่งผลต่อเจตนาในการต่อรองราคาสินค้าและวัฒนธรรมส่งผลทั้งต่อเจตคติและเจตนาในการต่อรองราคาสินค้าสำหรับการประยุกต์ใช้ในทางการจัดการและการตลาดนั้น พบว่าในภาวะที่บริษัทต่างชาติต่างมีการขยายตัวและบริษัทในภาคพื้นเอเชียแปซิฟิกเตรียมจะเป็นบริษัทข้ามชาติเต็มตัวด้วยการส่งออกไปต่างประเทศอย่างต่อเนื่อง ดังนั้นหากร้านขายสินค้าประเภทเครื่องนุ่งห่มสามารถยึดหยุ่นราคาสินค้าที่ตั้งไปตอนแรกได้จะเพิ่มโอกาสที่จะเป็นผู้ชนะในการต่อรองราคาสินค้า ทั้งนี้เมื่อพิจารณาถึงข้อจำกัดในงานวิจัยชิ้นนี้ ผู้เขียนพบว่าตัวงานวิจัยมิได้รวมเรื่องอายุของกลุ่มผู้บริโภคเป็นปัจจัยที่ขับเคลื่อนเจตคติและเจตนาในการต่อรองราคาสินค้า ดังนั้นสาเหตุนี้อาจส่งผลต่อการประยุกต์ใช้ผลวิจัยในวงกว้างได้ส่วนงานวิจัยในอนาคต ผู้เขียนชี้แนะให้นักวิจัยท่านอื่น ๆ ศึกษาในเชิงเปรียบเทียบระหว่างหลาย ๆ ประเทศเพื่อหาผลวิจัยที่แสดงถึงนัยสำคัญต่าง ๆ

**คำสำคัญ:** การต่อรองราคาสินค้า เจตคติในการต่อรองราคาสินค้า เจตนาในการต่อรองราคาสินค้า วัฒนธรรมเครื่องนุ่งห่ม

## Introduction and background

Different individuals have different ways to interact with others. Buyers and sellers, as well, when they try to gain an equilibrium price for a product, they use bargaining as an interaction tool to reach both parties' optimal goal. In our daily life, bargaining is a practice in which a consumer and seller generate a mutually agreeable price for a product. Different country embodied with different culture exhibits different bargaining attitudes. Research by Campbell *et al.* (1988) suggests that in Europe, the bargaining process differs from Asia, especially in Britain, negotiators' status is very important. They mention that British negotiators are mannered and reserved, while German negotiators are distant and impersonal. As a result, negotiation is considered a debate between the buyer and the seller. Therefore, the similarity of characteristics of the negotiator to the buyer is also important. According to the diversity of culture, the bargaining attitude is varied.

How about the other part of the world? In fact, it is evident that Asia today has become significantly more powerful in various aspects ranging from economy to sociopolitical influences (Nuttavuthisit, 2011). In China, the Chinese expression "Shang Chang Ru Zhang Chang" is translated to "the market place is a battle field" (Chen, 1995). This means that not knowing how to be flexible on reducing price when buyers ask can lead to the failure of business. From the Asian perspective, the success or failure of a family business influences the well-being and survival of the family (Chen, 1995), which is obviously true for Asian countries like China and Thailand. Through the years, the Asian economy has embraced changes from a past that focused on export industry with government-led management to the current vision of a consumer-oriented market (Nuttavuthisit, 2011). Thus, by a view of Nuttavuthisit (2011), she claims that it is essential to recognize the Asian perspectives and practices; especially, in apparel

bargaining attitude and bargaining intention (intention to re-bargain) between Thai and Chinese consumers. This statement support by a report of Euromonitor International (2013) which mentions that apparel markets in Thailand have positive retail values and growth in year 2012. Euromonitor International (2013) also adds that the demand in apparel products in Thailand was interrupted after the flooding crisis in year 2011. Table 1 shows the percentage of apparel industry in Thailand.

With the percentage of more than 90% of apparel product export (Thai Trade Center, North America, 2011), we cannot deny the importance of apparel industry in Thailand. In addition, there is a considerable amount of research investigating the bargaining process. For example, Osman-Gani and study the influence of culture on negotiation styles of Asian managers; Meng and Nasco (2009) apply price perception model to American, Chinese, and Japanese cultures to test the measurement equivalence across three cultures and to compare the price perception constructs across three cultures using equivalence instruments; and, Kwon *et al.* (2010) study the characteristics of bargain hunters over forward-looking price expectation. Very little research has been done on culture, cross cultural aspects, or organizational culture as they relate to marketing (Swierczek, 1990). Nonetheless there are

numerous studies that have concentrated on the bargaining process. Notwithstanding, cultural studies on apparel bargaining attitude, especially, Thai and Chinese consumers still have not been undertaken. Therefore, this research aims to investigate the bargaining attitude and bargaining intention (intention to re-bargain) driven by culture of Thai and Chinese consumers when buying apparel product.

### **The nature of bargaining**

Bargaining occurs when there is a negotiation between two parties or more. Through this bargaining relationship, as long as an agreement is still unresolved, the bargaining between two parties will continue ceaselessly. Kwon *et al.* (2010) mention that, seeking a discount is a necessary aspect of shopping behavior, and bargaining from a business aspect must deal with the marketing transaction between sellers and buyers. Such bargaining mainly relates to the monetary factor, but also the concerns about the process known as tangible product exchange. Why do all buyers enjoy negotiating the price of a product? The answer is that, after the negotiation, the outcome can generate satisfaction that is important to bargainers (Patton and Balakrishnan, 2010). Notwithstanding, the fact remains that some buyers feel bargaining is always disappointing or embarrassing (Herrmann, 2004).

**Table 1** Apparel Industry in Thailand (Adapted from Thai Trade Center, North America 2011)

Main Thai export items	Percentage
Apparel products	90.24
Form fittings	1.64
Other	8.12

### Buyer-seller relationship in bargaining

By exploring one day consisting of one buyer and one seller in a market place, there must be at least a relationship (either positive or negative) between them. For the buyer and seller, bargaining is bound to values, personal judgment, bargaining skill, and feelings (Herrmann, 2004). We can assume that a bargaining is comprised of the seller determining the lowest acceptable price, and the buyer determining the highest acceptable price (White and Neale, 1994). A study by Maxwell *et al.* (2003) also supports that for price haggling, there is a perfectly negative correlation in payoffs between buyers and sellers. From this relation, it is therefore comprehensible that the seller will try to lure or even persuade the buyer to make a purchase (Johnston and Bonoma, 1984); while, both the buyer and seller will try to maximize personal benefit (Cakravastia and Nakamura, 2002; Maxwell *et al.*, 2003).

### Bargaining and culture

People of different nationalities simply perceive the world differently; that is, there is a significant cultural difference within country (Osman-Gani and Tan, 2002). Each culture has its own notions of what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior. In fact, bargaining attitude is consistent within each culture group (Osman-Gani and Tan, 2002); namely, bargaining is socially acceptable. For instance, the bargaining style in the Asian context is often described as relationship-oriented (Swierczek, 1990). In fact, buyers and sellers in the West deal with one another as social equals, unlike Asia, where buyers and sellers differ fundamentally in social status (Lee, 2000). Due to Thai culture where people tend to be humble and avoiding argument, the bargaining negotiation seems to be softer than the other countries. In contrast, Chinese buyers who are

dominant and demanding since sellers are stereotyped as being low status; that is, they are in better competitive bargaining position than sellers (Lee, 2000). Therefore, here is the hypothesis:

**H<sub>1</sub>** Culture, which consumers belonged to, affects bargaining attitude.

### Bargaining attitude and bargaining intention (intention to re-bargain)

Individuals can embody various bargaining attitudes. Kwon *et al.* (2010) report that hunting for a bargain is a part of shopping enjoyment; namely, when the needs of both negotiating parties are fulfilled, both parties will be satisfied (Campbell *et al.*, 1988; Maxwell *et al.*, 2003). A study by Simonson (1991) mentions that an unsuccessful deal will lead the buyer to dissatisfaction. However, Patton and Balakrishnan (2010) claim that the unsuccessful bargainers do not only feel upset about the unsuccessful negotiations but also feel less of a tendency for future bargain (less intention to re-bargain). Stroecker and Antonides (1997) state that bargaining is seen as the part of negotiation that aims at agreement. Bargaining involves disagreement as parties (sellers and buyers) seek agreement over the terms of their exchange (product). It is mainly a negotiation between retailers and customers, the customers bargaining for a discount on the price that the sellers offer, or for free gift or service at the differed price (Lee, 2000). As a result, as long as the agreement is unmet, buyers intend to bargain (Stroecker and Antonides, 1997). Further is our second and third hypothesis.

**H<sub>2</sub>** Consumers' bargaining attitude (driven by culture) affects bargaining intention (intention to re-bargain)

**H<sub>3</sub>** Consumers' culture affects bargaining intention (intention to re-bargain)

### Population and Study Sample

Since this research employs structural equation modeling (SEM), where the proposed SEM is the basis for the research hypotheses, ad hoc rules of thumb requiring the choosing of 10 observations per indicator in setting a lower bound for the adequacy of sample sizes have been widely used (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). As a result, this research will have to survey the sample of three indicators such as culture, bargaining attitude, and bargaining intention (intention to re-bargain) multiply by 10 and equal to at least 30 sample (30 Thai consumers and 30 Chinese-embodied tourists). However, 60 samples is still not enough due to the previous research done by Lee (2000) mentions his 100 samples for each group of consumers may not be sufficient for SEM. As a result, this research should use around 200 samples for each Thai consumers and Chinese consumers in order to increase the sufficiency (in total of around 400 samples). Raison d'être, this research is a comparative research and the way to collect tourist information is difficult (since tourists have little time in answering opinionnaires). Ergo, nonprobability sampling such as convenient sampling is used to obtain a sample of 200 Thai buyers and 200 Chinese buyers. Only Thai respondents and Chinese respondents who are at least 20 years old and have already spent time in Thailand for at least three days are recruited.

### Research Tools and Collection of Data

Self-administered opinionnaires are used to obtain a sample of 400 buyers. Rating Scale with score ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5

(Strongly Agree) are employed. Since apparel business is considered to be retail business, therefore, the opinionnaire will adapt retail bargaining process measurement from Lee (2000) in "Retail bargaining behavior of American and Chinese customers" and from our intensive literature review. Thai opinionnaire first observed by two experts in marketing and economics from Eastern Asia University for content consistency in order to increase the validity of the opinionnaire. After review, Thai opinionnaire was later sent to translator to translate into Chinese. Finally, Chinese opinionnaire was sent to one expert in Chinese language from Eastern Asia University to recheck the content and the correctness. After the final check, the pilot test was performed. At last, the survey took place in major apparel market in Bangkok such as Chatuchak Market, Center One, and so on, from 1<sup>st</sup> February until 28<sup>th</sup> February 2013, according to their bargaining-prone environment. The self-administrative opinionnaires were distributed to Thai consumers and Chinese consumers.

### Pilot test

Opionnaire is adapted from Lee (2000) and our intensive literature review focuses on his work, His study examines the differences in retail bargaining process between American and Chinese consumers. That is, we need to check the reliability, since the previous research provided different context. As a result, the pilot test was taken by surveying 30 Thai students from Faculty of Business Administration, Eastern Asia University. Questions those gain Cronbach  $\alpha < 0.60$  will be removed from the opinionnaire. The survey opionnaire included questions on culture, bargaining attitude, and bargaining intention (intention to re-bargain) and were measured on a five-point Likert scale. The

questions on demographic and socioeconomic characteristics were also included. 73.3% of the pilot respondents were female. The apparel they consumed most is clothes and shoes.

### Culture

Five items ("I consider bargaining to be necessary when buying things", "I negotiate for a free gift/service when the price of a product is fixed", "I encourage my friends to bargain", "I encourage my family members to bargain", and "I shop in stores that allow bargaining") were assessed with  $\alpha = 0.834$ .

### Bargaining attitude

Seven items ("Bargaining gives me the pleasure of shopping", "I like bargaining", "Bargaining makes me feel good", "Bargaining makes me happy", "Bargaining makes my life more interesting", "I find bargaining exciting", and "I feel comfortable when doing a bargain") were assessed with  $\alpha = 0.894$ .

### Bargaining intention (intention to re-bargain)

Three items ("Whenever I go shopping, I would bargain", "As long as the agreement is still unmet, I will not stop bargaining", and "I will bargain during my next shopping trip") were assessed with  $\alpha = 0.726$ .

## Data Analysis and Results

314/400 (78.50%) usable opinionnaires were received (without missing data, duplicated answers, and unclear answered items – some respondents even refused to complete the opinionnaires), comprised of 198/200 (99.00%) of Thai samples and 116/200 (58.00%) of Chinese samples. That is, our samples seem sufficient as the suggestion by Lee

(2000) who mentions that more than 100 samples for each group of consumers may be sufficient for SEM.

### SEM Results: Thai Consumer Case

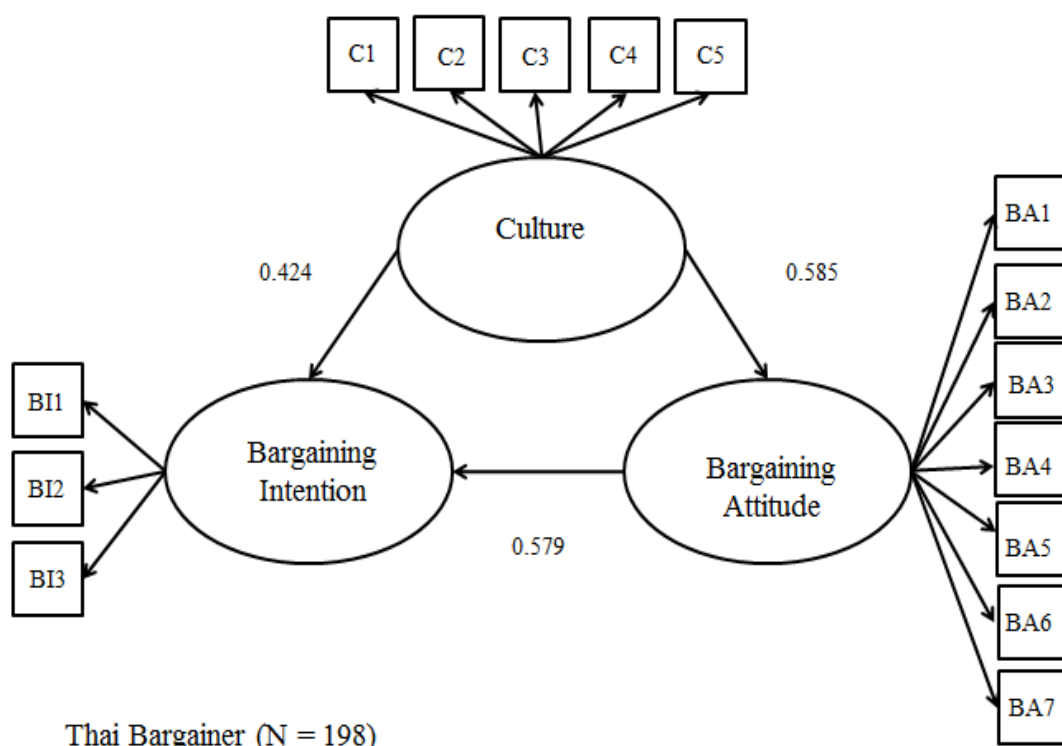
Table 2 and figure 1 shows the coefficients between construct of this research model. There are three causal which are significant: Culture  $\rightarrow$  Bargaining Attitude (coefficient = 0.585\*\*\*), Culture  $\rightarrow$  Bargaining Intention (Intention to Re-bargain) (coefficient = 0.424\*\*\*), and Bargaining Attitude  $\rightarrow$  Bargaining Intention (Intention to Re-bargain) (coefficient = 0.579\*\*\*). As a result, this confirms that Thai culture affects Thai consumers' bargaining attitude ( $H_1$ ), Thai consumers' bargaining attitude (which driven by culture) affects bargaining intention (intention to re-bargain) ( $H_2$ ) and Thai consumers' culture affects bargaining intention (intention to re-bargain) ( $H_3$ ).

### SEM Results: Chinese Consumer Case

Table 3 and figure 2 show the coefficients among constructs of this research model. There are three causal paths which are significant: Culture  $\rightarrow$  Bargaining Attitude (coefficient = 0.697\*\*\*), Culture  $\rightarrow$  Bargaining Intention (Intention to Re-bargain) (coefficient = 0.262\*\*), and Bargaining Attitude  $\rightarrow$  Bargaining Intention (Intention to Re-bargain) (coefficient = 0.677\*\*\*). As a result, this confirms that Chinese culture affects Chinese consumers' bargaining attitude ( $H_1$ ), Chinese consumers' bargaining attitude (which driven by culture) affects bargaining intention (intention to re-bargain) ( $H_2$ ) and Chinese consumers' culture affects bargaining intention (intention to re-bargain) ( $H_3$ ).

**Table 2** Predictors and significances of Thai consumer structural model

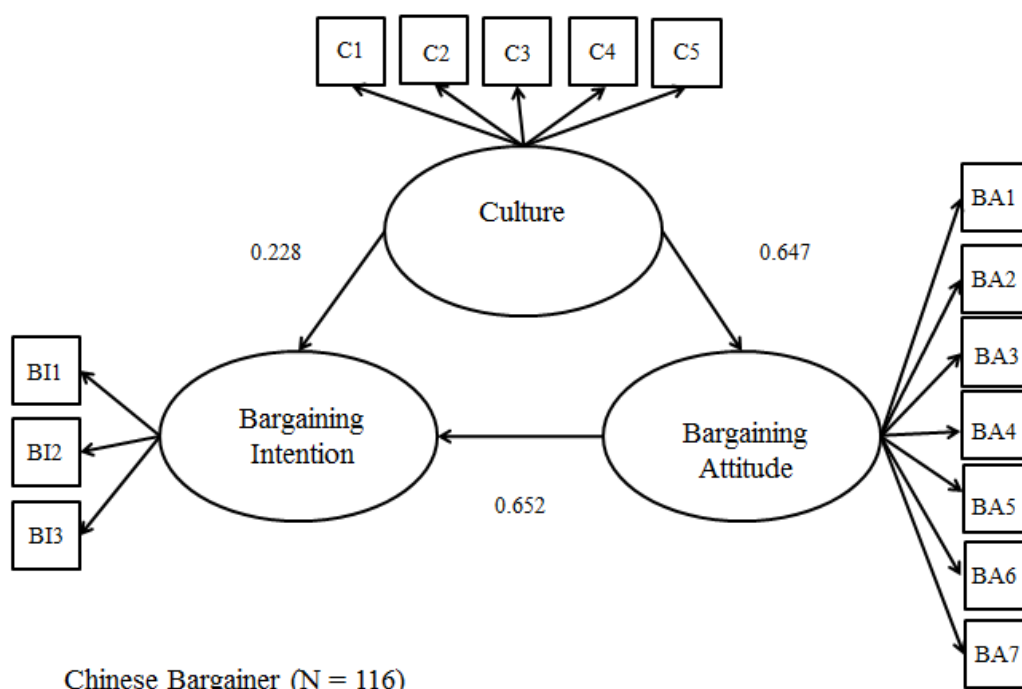
Predictors	Coefficient	Standard error	Critical ratio	Probability
Culture → Bargaining Attitude	0.585	0.078	7.453	0.000*** (Sig. at p-value < 0.001)
Culture → Bargaining Intention	0.424	0.076	5.553	0.000*** (Sig. at p-value < 0.001)
Bargaining Attitude → Bargaining Intention	0.579	0.077	7.479	0.000*** (Sig. at p-value < 0.001)



**Figure 1** Graphical representation of coefficient value of Thai consumer structural model

**Table 3** Predictors and significances of Chinese consumer structural model

Predictors	Coefficient	Standard error	Critical ratio	Probability
Culture → Bargaining Attitude	0.647	0.089	7.272	0.000*** (Sig. at p-value < 0.001)
Culture → Bargaining Intention	0.228	0.084	2.703	0.007** (Sig. at p-value < 0.01)
Bargaining Attitude → Bargaining Intention	0.652	0.109	5.961	0.000*** (Sig. at p-value < 0.001)



**Figure 2** Graphical representation of coefficient value of Chinese consumer structural model



## Discussion

When knowing the difference in bargaining attitude of Thai consumers and foreigners, sellers may adapt price tactic/negotiation style to suit the culture to which the consumers belong. Notwithstanding, when dealing business with partners (any parties not sellers), Chinese tend to believe in developing good connections or “Guanxi” (Osman-Gani and Tan, 2002). As a result, in order for sellers to win the bargaining negotiation, they have to know the cultural differences among culturally diversified buyers. Tung (1984) also supports that unfamiliarity with cultural differences and inability to bridge the cultural gap can very often lead to the failure of business bargaining. Moreover, this research tends to increase the mutual understanding in price negotiation between sellers and buyers.

### Limitations, future research, and conclusion

This research does not include age as a factor driving bargaining attitude and bargaining intention (intention to re-bargain); that is, it can harm the generalization of the results (even though we try to use advance statistical technique like Structural Equation Modelling – SEM). A research by Vieregge and Quick (2011) also supports that young Asians nowadays seem to be more individualistic than their elders and tend to oversee the process of relationship building. Therefore, as bargaining is partially a process of relationship building between buyer and seller, these young Asian buyers may exhibit various kinds of bargaining attitude and bargaining intention (intention to re-bargain). For future research, we have yet to merge these research streams to examine cultural difference effects on bargaining attitude. It will be interesting to compare the results of different countries to see if there is a common trend or if there are highly significant differences.

Shopping activities are closely tied to culture and cultural differences are detected in many aspects of consumer behavior (Meng and Nasco, 2009). As a result, cultural difference is also affected to the apparel bargaining attitude. For managerial and marketing application, as international companies go global and companies in the Asia-Pacific region continue to export and become more international, culture will become more and more important (Swierczek, 1990). This is the evidence why we can see many transnational apparel shops in Thailand (a research by Puncreobutr (2014) mentions that big manufacturing companies in Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Nakhon Ratchasima, or even Songkhla have workers from at least three Southeast Asian nationalities). And, the competitions among them, in order to get the highest sales, are getting more and more severe. The apparel shop who tends to be flexible with the price will be the winner. In much of Asia, buyers are not only kings but gods (Engholm, 1991). It is obviously true that buyers love cheaper price of the product. Finally, I hope that the findings from this research will trigger new research interests among cross-cultural bargaining scholars in the future.

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