

Leadership Influence on Employee Outcomes through Job Resources and Employee Engagement

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ABSTRACT--Purpose - Organizations worldwide have started to invest resources to increase employee engagement in order to improve organizational performance. This research study attempts to investigate the influence of effective leadership on employee outcomes (job satisfaction and turnover intention) through job resources (performance feedback and social support) and employee engagement. **Design/methodology/approach** – A sample size of 400 employees of Thai Nippon Rubber Industry Public Company Limited who were serving for more than one year was considered, who responded to the offline questionnaire survey. Data was analyzed with linear regression analysis and ANOVA. **Findings** – All of the hypothesis were statistically supported. The result of this study suggested that effective leadership is a key factor in employee engagement, with both performance feedback and social support available tools that leaders can employ to drive employee engagement. It also confirmed the significance of employee engagement on job outcomes such as job satisfaction and turnover intention. **Practical Implications** - This study has implications on leadership training in order to focus on behavior to drive organizational strategy and goals through employee engagement. Review of the inferential data analysis shows that organizations should focus on effective leadership in order to promote employee engagement. From a leadership standpoint, it was found that performance feedback programs are the most effective, rather than social support, in employee engagement. In addition to hiring the best talent pool available, these employees need to be placed in a position to help the employees grow and drive the organization forward.

Keywords-- Effective leadership, performance feedback, social support, employee engagement, job satisfaction, turnover intention

I. INTRODUCTION

It was concluded in a 2013 survey by the American Society for Training and Development that 82% of the employees believed that employee engagement is the most important issue having an impact on the organization and that only 15% believed that the leadership they had, is the correct skills in leading employees to positive engagement. The Gallup Employee Engagement Index Survey estimates that was based on the results of the survey showed that the cost of disengaged workers in the Thailand economy is as much as 98.8 billion THB each year due to the lower productivity (Ratanjee, 2005). It was established that organizations with strong employee engagement had a strong correlation with financial performance (Aon Hewitt, 2011).

It was found that the level of personal work engagement is a function of role development and cumulative experience of personal engagement over time, leading to increased employee engagement (Kahn, 1987). Benefits

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of positive employee engagement include low turnover, increased productivity, and creating a culture of success and striving for the best because employees feel that their work matters.

More research shows that the employee engagement plays a huge role in the financial performance of the organization, organizations are investigating the factors that affect engagement in the organization. It was implicated that organizations are able to create factors that improve employee engagement through psychological meaning, psychological safety and psychological availability (Kahn, 1987). Managers or leaders can forge interpersonal relationships and work environment with employees who either cause employees to retract their engagement to the work or solidify a role where employees can increase engagement (Kahn, 1987). Psychological availability comes from the conditions that organizations set to have their employees being psychologically available.

There are several researches in publications regarding the role, job resources play in employee engagement, but does not include the role that leader plays in employee engagement. It was established that leadership and job resources are antecedents to employee engagement (Gallego-Pace, 2017). In addition to the productivity factor that employee engagement plays a role in, we can also see other positive correlations such as job satisfaction, innovation and turnover rate, and decreased absenteeism (Gallego-Pace, 2017). On the another hand, there are a lot of researches regarding the role, positive employee engagement plays in employee outcomes, such as job satisfaction, decreased turnover intention, innovation, stress level and many others. Although there are many researches regarding the role job resources play in employee engagement, the role that effective leadership plays in providing job resources to the employee which leads to positive engagement and the outcome due to the engagement, has not been looked at as a whole very much.

This research attempts to study the influence of effective leadership on job resources (performance feedback and social support) and the influence it has on employee engagement leading to positive employee outcome such as job satisfaction and decreased turnover intention.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Effective leadership

Effective leadership has been considered the leading factor in success of the organization and it has been shown that the organizational failure of many major companies such as Enron, General Motors, Mattel, WorldCom and many others is due to ineffective leadership (Godzyk, 2008). Leadership was defined by Burns in 1978 as a balance between leaders providing a vision for the followers, while also protecting the followers and their interest (GeRue, 2006) and identified five behaviors, which were tapping into individual's inner drive through reward of good performance, challenging the status quo, inspiring a shared vision, setting an example of how to proceed and enabling the followers to act (Figueroa-Gonzalez, 2011).

A well-known theory of leadership is the traits theory of leadership, which hypothesized that effective leaders are determined by the ability to influence the behavior of other men, regardless of the issue or characteristic of the leader (Martin, 2017). This is different from previous leadership theories because this hypothesized that effective leadership can be obtained through proper training.

It has been found through many researches that authentic leader provides relational transparency to employees by sharing their true opinion through performance feedback with employees leading to psychological empowerment and allows the employee to show initiative and show proactive behavior (Colbert, 2012). It gives the employee a platform to voice their opinion, expectation and indirectly increases the motivation through the ability to freely express himself while at the same time developing a relationship with the leader (Kaymaz, 2011).

Another effective trait of transformational leaders is providing social support to employee through coaching, which helps the employee to reach full potential and inspire the employee to overachieve and improve through communication techniques to personally relate to the employee, on a personal level, to better understand their view point and motivational techniques to encourage employees to act in a way that align with the organizational goals (Colbert, 2012).

Job Resources (Performance feedback & Social Support)

According to the JD-R theory, extremely high levels of demands in the work can lead to emotional exhaustion and burn out, while high level of job resources can lead to job satisfaction (Pavone, 2018). In the JD-R model, social support is the emotional supporting relationship that helps to provide reassurance and confidence in the person and assist in times of needs through informational support such as coaching network or peer support (Kennedy, 2015). Social support has been found to reduce the level of strain, which had no correlation to the experienced stressor intensity, which leads to better psychological well-being, job satisfaction in their work, and work vigor and can help individual to complete work on time and achieve work goals.

A study done by Halbesleben and Rotondo showed that social support had many benefits such as higher employee engagement, higher performance evaluation, reduced turnover intention, and feeling of empowerment. Other studies showed that social support from leaders buffered job insecurity and led to better relationship with supervisor (Cheng, Mauno, & Lee, 2014). All of these effects help to support the job resources and lead to employee engagement with the organization (Kennedy, 2015) and creates a work environment of trust and cooperation (Gallego-Pace, 2017).

Performance feedback is defined as the performance information that is readily available to the employee regarding the effectiveness of his or her performance. (Garcia, 2015). It was also hypothesized that performance feedback helps to decrease performance ambiguity, improve manager-employee relationship, assisting in the achievement of set goals, improve personal development and help adaptation to change, all of which affects employee engagement (Kaymaz, 2011).

There are several direct impact performance feedbacks on employee engagement such as on reduction of uncertainty in performance, improved leader-employee relationship, assisting the employee in achieving goals, personal development and adaptation to changes. Indirectly, performance feedback affects productivity through job design, career planning, training and compensation (Kaymaz, 2011). Other studies have also shown that employee engagement was found to have a positive correlation with constructive performance feedback by leading to decrease in uncertainty, increase in motivation and job satisfaction (Kaymaz, 2011).

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is the worker's emotional, behavioral, and cognitive behavior towards the organizational goals and outcome. Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) proposed that the success of employee engagement is vigor, dedication and absorption. Vigor is defined as the mental resilience and high investment and persistence into their work. Dedication referred to the inspiration, pride, and goal setting challenges for their work. Absorption is the concentration one engages in their work (Alkhalaf, 2017). Other researches have proposed employee engagement as a persistent, positive state of mind and fulfillment through high level of pleasure and activation.

A third theory on employee engagement was proposed by Harter et al. (2002) who stated that employee engagement as the employees' involvement, job satisfaction and enthusiasm for their job. It was also shown that positive employee engagement can lead to positive outcomes for the organization and employee whether it was from customer satisfaction, less turnover intention, and higher financial returns, while creating a work environment of trust and cooperation (Gallego-Pace, 2017).

There have been many studies over the years showing the importance and impact of certain leadership behavior on employee engagement which includes involving employees and making contribution, being transparent, having employee engage in change activities, assisting the employees and rewarding and recognizing the employees (Colbert, 2012). Training programs that leaders give to employees such as feedback can produce positive changes, and make employees feel satisfied with their job and want to follow the leader which reduces emotional exhaustion, stress levels, turnover intention and increase job satisfaction (Green, Miller, & Aarons, 2013).

Job Outcome (Job Satisfaction & Turnover Intention)

Job satisfaction is defined as the employee's attitude towards their job and how the job fulfills his or her needs (Tennison, 1996). Job satisfaction is important as it affects turnover and absenteeism, factors that can cause tremendous financial cost to organization.

Herzberg's two-factor theory stated that job satisfaction should be in direct correlation with whether the motivating factors are present, while job dissatisfaction is related to the extent to which hygiene factors play a role in the job. He stated that improvement in the job satisfaction and motivation must come from redesigning of the job to increase more motivators and increase personal recognition possibilities (Tennison, 1996).

There are many studies showing the impact, positive employee engagement has, on job satisfaction due to better employee work performance and experience, which directly and positively impact satisfaction. It was found that employee engagement led to positive change in perception about their work leading to decreased possibility of burnout and decreased turnover intention (Li, 2016).

Turnover intention has been defined as the intent to terminate employment with the organization. Turnover is a huge problem for organization, which necessitates the need to recruit new talent, leading to huge training cost and low organization performance through loss of corporate knowledge. It was concluded by Allen et al, 2010 that turnover cost is around 90 to 200 percent of the salary (Wong & Wong, 2017).

It was found that employee engagement has a reverse correlation with burnout and turnover intention. High levels of employee engagement lead to employees wanting to stay within the organization, and thereby reducing the turnover intention since the employee feels that their work role has many positive aspects (Gallego-Pace, 2017). In addition, it was found that turnover intention is a predictor of performance due to the lack of engagement in the work. The main prevalent theory between employee engagement and turnover intention is the social exchange

theory, which links the employees' behavior to the attitude toward their job. The employee engagement has been shown to lead to trust, higher affective commitment, and respect for leader, all of which leads to drop in turnover intention (Wong, Wong, & Wong, 2015).

III. PREDICTOR

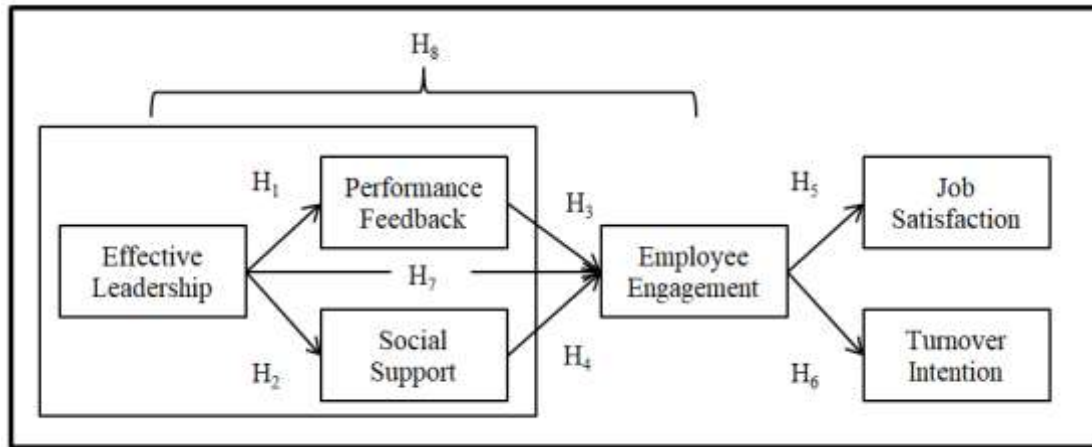


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Impact of Effective Leadership on Employee Outcome

IV. HYPOTHESES

There is a total of 8 hypotheses that the researcher would like to analyze from the conceptual framework.

H1: Effective leadership does have a positive statistical significant influence on performance feedback.

H2: Effective leadership does have a positive statistical significant influence on social support.

Previous studies have established a positive association between the influence of effective leadership on job resources with study concluding that effective leadership is a predictor of performance feedback and also social support with both having $p < 0.1$ (Gallego-Pace, 2017).

H3: Performance feedback does have a positive statistical significant influence on employee engagement.

H4: Social support does have a statistical positive significant influence on employee engagement.

It was found that both performance feedback and social support was positive predictor of employee engagement, albeit did not show the positive gain spiral relationship that was predicted in the hypothesis.

H5: Employee engagement does have a positive statistical significant influence on job satisfaction.

H6: Employee engagement does have a negative statistical significant influence on turnover intention.

It was found that employee engagement was a significant predictor of employee outcomes with job satisfaction ($p < .001$) exhibiting positive impact and turnover intention ($p < .001$) exhibiting negative impact, which supported the researcher hypothesis (Gallego-Pace, 2017).

H7: Effective leadership does have a positive statistical significant influence on employee engagement.

H8: Performance feedback, social support and effective leadership do have a positive statistical significant influence on employee engagement.

Based on the research finding of Maria Gallego-Pace, it was concluded that effective leadership was not predictor of employee engagement with $p > 0.5$. However, another study did show leadership exhibited positive and significant predictor of employee engagement ($p < .001$) (Park, 2015). A third study showed that leadership behavior (task-oriented, relation-oriented, change-oriented) was a positive predictor of employee engagement with $\beta = 0.242, 0.321, 0.389$ respectively. Based on the many positive predictor of employee engagement, it was found that change oriented leadership behavior had the most effect on employee engagement, leading to a recommendation that organizations should hire leaders whose strength is in change leadership through intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation (Li, 2016).

V. METHOD

Sample

Using stratified sampling based on organizational chart level, questionnaires were distributed on October 17, 2018 to October 24, 2018 to 462 employees of Thai Nippon Rubber Industry Public Company Limited, which took into account the calculated sample size of 385 employees (Robert V. Krejcie and Daryle W. Morgan) and adding an additional 20% in order to take into account the screening questions and potential lack of survey submission.

The researcher received 441 surveys on the deadline date, which is an initial survey response rate of 95%. After screening through the survey, the sample size dropped to 400 employee survey for a final response rate of 86.5%, which satisfied the questionnaire requirement of employees with at least one-year tenure. The number of sample size was found to be satisfactory to proceed with the descriptive and inferential analysis due to the fact that the final response rate was higher than the calculated sample size of 385 ($400 > 385$). The summary analysis of the demographic factors using frequency and percentage is shown below

Females dominated the sample size, accounting for 83.5%. Majority of the age group was in the 21 – 25 (25.8%), 26 – 30 (24.5%), and 31 – 35 (23.5%) bracket, with the rest consisting of the 36 – 40 (14.2%), 41 or more (9%), and 20 or less (3.0%) bracket. The monthly income for the sample size was mainly between 10,001 – 20,000 THB (71.3%), with 20,001 – 30,000 THB (18%), 10,000 or less (9%) and 30,000 or more (1.8%). Most of the employees were production workers (88.5%) with the remaining (11.5%). The educational level scaled from “High school graduate or less” (54.3%), “Associate Degree” (28%), “Bachelor degree graduate” (16.8%), and “Postgraduate” (1%). The job position category was mostly “Operator” (82.25%) with the rest scaling from “Asst. Supervisor – Supervisor” (8.25%), “Asst. Officer – Officer” (5.5%), and “Sr. Officer – Asst. Manager” (4.0%). The tenure was mostly “5 or more years” (49.3%), followed by “1 – 2 years” (23.3%), “2 – 3 years” and “3 – 4 years” (9.8%) and finally 4 – 5 years (8%).

VI. MEASURE

Table 1: Independent and Dependent Variable Scale, Reliability and Source Summary

#	Category	?	Scale Used	α	Source
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1	Screening Question	1	Simple Category	-	
2	Demographic Factors	7	Category Scale	-	
3	Effective Leadership	4	Likert Scale	0.873	(Gallego-Pace, 2017)
4	Performance Feedback	3	Likert Scale	0.866	(Gallego-Pace, 2017)
5	Social Support	4	Likert Scale	0.864	(Buttigieg & West, 2013)
6	Employee Engagement	6	Likert Scale	0.888	(Gallego-Pace, 2017)
7	Job Satisfaction	5	Likert Scale	0.800	(Cropanzano & Wright, 1998)
8	Turnover Intention	3	Likert Scale	0.877	(Azanza, Moriano, Molero, & Mangin, 2015)
Total # of Questions		32		0.915	

The questionnaire consisted of 32 questions, which was separated into 8 categories. The first part is intended to be used to screen out unqualified respondents who have less than a year of experience working at Thai Nippon Rubber Industry Public Company Limited by having respondents answering the question “Have you worked at this company for more than one year?”. The second part of the questionnaire consists of the demographic factors. This part is intended to gather information regarding the respondent personal information such as gender, age category, monthly income, educational level, job position level, department category and tenure. The following 6 categories consist of effective leadership, performance feedback, social support, employee engagement, job satisfaction and turnover intention, which were measured using the 5 Point Likert Scale, all of which were found to be reliable ($\alpha > 0.6$).

VII. RESULT

Eight hypotheses were developed based on the research objectives in order to study the conceptual framework and the testing the variables and their relationship. The results of study indicated that all of the null hypothesis were rejected as the significant value of each were found to be less than 0.05 at the confidence level of 95 percent. It was found that all of these independent variables were considered to be an influence on the dependent variable. The results are concluded as follows

Table 2: Summary of Hypothesis Testing through Linear Regression

Null Hypothesis	Significant Level	Result	Beta	Prediction
H1 _o : Effective leadership does not have a statistical significant influence on performance feedback.	0.000	Reject	0.561	Supported
H2 _o : Effective leadership does not have a statistical significant influence on social support.	0.000	Reject	0.599	Supported

H3 _o : Performance feedback does not have a statistical significant influence on employee engagement.	0.000	Reject	0.540	Supported
H4 _o : Social support does not have a statistical significant influence on employee engagement.	0.000	Reject	0.602	Supported
H5 _o : Employee engagement does not have a statistical significant influence on job satisfaction.	0.000	Reject	0.660	Supported
H6 _o : Employee engagement does not have a statistical significant influence on turnover intention.	0.000	Reject	-0.328	Supported
H7 _o : Effective leadership does not have a statistical significant influence on employee engagement.	0.000	Reject	0.527	Supported
H8 _o : Performance feedback, social support, and effective leadership do not have a statistical significant influence on employee engagement.	0.000	Reject	0.234 0.246 0.249	Supported

Out of the three factors that were reviewed to have an influence on employee engagement, it was found that performance feedback had the highest influence, followed by effective leadership and social support. However, this was not supported in the multiple linear regression, which showed that effective leadership had the highest influence, followed by social support and effective leadership. Based on the reason that the simple linear regression is used to confirm the relationship and the multiple linear regression is used to quantify the influence and the higher R² value between the simple linear regression of the three individual variables and the multiple linear regression, we found the multiple linear regression model result represented the model better. Based on this, we found that effective leadership had the highest influence, followed by social support, and performance feedback.

Out of the two factors that were reviewed to be influenced by employee engagement, it was found that job satisfaction had the highest beta in comparison to turnover intention.

VIII. DISCUSSION

The researcher studied the influence of effective leadership on employee engagement through job resources and effect of employee engagement on job outcomes that affect the organization. Overall, it was found that effective leadership had a statistically significant influence on job resources (performance feedback and social support) to improve employee engagement, which is supported by previous studies. It was found that effective leadership had the highest influence on employee engagement, followed by social support and performance feedback. In order to create an organizational culture of success through high employee engagement, organizations should focus on employing key performers and training them to become effective leaders. Training programs for

effective leaders should emphasize social support for employees, both as a peer to peer support and boss to employee support in order to increase employee engagement through coaching and creating a culture where coworkers support each other to inspire the employee to overachieve and encourage employees to act in a way that align with the organizational goals (Colbert, 2012). Performance feedback may also be another tool that effective leaders use in order to improve employee engagement by allowing employees a platform to voice their opinion and expectation and improve the engagement of the employee (Kaymaz, 2011).

This study also confirmed the benefits, positive employee engagement played on organizational success through job outcome such as job satisfaction and turnover intention. It was confirmed that positive employee engagement led to positive motivation regarding their job and being more likely to be satisfied with their job. Possible rationale for this findings are that engaged workers are more willing to try harder on their work, be more resourceful, discuss with supervisor and peers, and thereby more likely to be successful in their job, which leads to pride and satisfaction in their job.

It can also be seen that job position had a positive statistically significant relationship with employee engagement, which was not observed for salary, tenure and other demographics. This is likely due to job position being a culmination of salary, tenure, job authority, and potential for role increase.

Not surprisingly, employees who are more engaged to their work have lower turnover intention, which is consistent to other findings (Wong & Wong, 2017). This would be expected as positive employee engagement has also been shown to have a positive influence on job satisfaction and therefore less likely to feel the need to switch jobs. It is likely that the workers who have low levels of employee engagement feel that their work role is unappreciative and their output is insignificant and they have less chance of job promotion which leads to more friction with other coworkers and increase the turnover intention (Gallego-Pace, 2017). Previous studies have shown that positive employee engagement leads to trust, higher affective commitment, and respect for leader, and drop in turnover intention (Wong, Wong, & Wong, 2015).

On the other hand, it was also found that age group played a role in turnover intention rather than job position or tenure or education. This is likely due to younger employees having more intention to improve their job status through switching of jobs. This study did not show any statistical significance regarding education on turnover intention.

Previous studies by other researchers have shown that good leadership behavior helped to involve employees, help employee to engage in change activities, reward and recognize the employees, which led to employee engagement (Colbert, 2012).

With better understanding toward these factors, organizations will be able to focus on leadership training programs in order to increase employee engagement and improve job outcome for the benefit of the organization.

IX. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The inferential data analysis supports the conceptual framework, showing that effective leadership is a big influence on employee engagement through job resources, which will lead to positive job outcomes. Effective leaders should focus on job resources such as performance feedback and social support which will cascade into improvement of employee engagement and eventually job outcome. A culture of social support should be the main

focus based on the higher beta value for effective leader in order to create a culture of positive employee engagement, which will lead to higher job satisfaction and lower turnover intention. This is supported by Hypothesis 7 and 8, which also showed effective leadership had statistical significance on employee engagement. Training programs should be developed by companies in order to prepare supervisors to gain these skills or learn about these tools in order to improve employee engagement in the company. Organizations should work to hire the best talent available and train them in order to enable their employees to work to their maximum talent through employee engagement. These leaders need to focus their skills on maximizing employee effort and responsibility, show initiative and invest into their role within the organization. This cascades into social support of coworkers, as engaged workers are more likely to provide social support to their colleagues, which further leads to employee engagement for their colleagues. In addition to training, organizations should try to instill a culture of employee engagement, focusing on job resources throughout the organization, in order to improve the job outcome such as turnover intention and job satisfaction and lead to retention of key employees within the company.

The positive employee engagement will lead to positive job outcome for the employee, which has been established as instrumental to financial success of the organization. Positive job outcomes that were found to be influenced by employee engagement in this study includes turnover intention and job satisfaction, which are both important in building an organization with a culture of success. Low turnover intention has been linked to low turnover rate, which means the knowledge that has been gained over time through working at the company will stay with the company and less training cost and hidden cost that come from employing a new employee. In addition, employees who have high job satisfaction are more likely to provide social support to peers, work harder and better for the company. There are also many other job outcomes that this study did not cover but through this study, we could see the importance of high employee engagement in a successful company. It is also established in this study that an effective leader is a big influence on employee engagement and there are many tools that an effective leader can use to further improve employee engagement and improve the success of the organization.

X. LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY

This study was focused only on the employee of Thai Nippon Rubber Industry Public Company Limited, who had at least one year of tenure. Thus, the study can be expanded to other companies within Thailand and other countries while varying the demographics of the sample size. In Thai Nippon Rubber Industry Public Company Limited, we analyzed that the main demographic were female (>80%) with the age of 21-50, with education level of high school graduate or below and salary ranging from 10,000 to 20,000 baht and tenure of greater than 5 years. The level of influence of these variables such as employee engagement, job satisfaction and turnover intention may differ based on the level of education or salary or age, and may be an interesting follow-up to this study.

In addition, there are many job resources that effective leadership can employ on employees to increase employee engagement that does not include performance feedback and social support. In addition, job outcomes such as innovation and other factors may be looked at to complement this study and gain a better understanding as to how effective leadership affects organizational success through job outcome.

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