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Psychological Empowerment and Morale on Work Performance Predicting Intention to Stay as Teachers

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Abstract

The purposes of this research were: 1. to study the level of psychological empowerment, morale on work performance, and intention to remain in teaching; 2. to study the relationship between psychological empowerment and intention to stay as a teacher; 3. to study the relationship between morale on work performance and intention to stay in teaching; 4. to predict the intention to stay in teaching from psychological empowerment and morale on work performance. The research sample was 170 Thai teachers, and the research instrument was a questionnaire. Statistics used were frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, Pearson's correlation coefficients, and stepwise multiple regression analysis.

The results revealed that: 1. psychological empowerment, morale on work performance, and intention to stay as a teacher were at high levels; 2. there was a positive relationship between psychological empowerment and intention to stay as a teacher (r = 0.42, p = 0.013). There was a positive relationship between morale on work performance and intention to stay as a teacher (r = 0.64, p. = 0.014). Morale on work performance in three dimensions-external influence, progress, and relationship with others-accounted for 44.20 percent of the variance in intention to stay in teaching.

Keywords: Psychological empowerment, Morale on work performance, Intention to stay in teaching

1. Introduction

Teachers play an important role in the development of educational quality because the quality of teachers will have a positive impact on students. It has been discovered in many studies that students who have the opportunity to learn from good teachers have three times more development than those who do not. Teacher development has hence been an important educational policy goal of every Thai government (Office of the Education Council, Thailand, 2013).

To enhance student competency, one significant factor is that teachers are required to have quality work performance since they are expected through their duties and responsibilities to be the mold of the nation that produces quality students with skills and virtues. However, teacher development cannot solely rely on the knowledge enhancement system, or on teaching and learning arrangements, since the important matters related to humans also include their thoughts, feelings, individual perceptions, colleagues, and authorities with whom one has to be in contact or involved with. These perceptions have an impact on the teachers' moral and mental strength and satisfaction, that lead to the self-development of competency and commitment to teaching (Saksri, 2018).

For any team or organization, which is tightly or thinly staffed, losing a member of the team or member of the staff can cause major agony, increase work pressure, create a drop in employee morale, and in extreme cases, result in failure in achieving desired results (Mobley, 1982). HRM practices are closely related to this. A good understanding of the relationship between HRM practices and employee intention to stay will help organizations make the correct decisions in achieving results (Johari et al., 2012). Teacher intention to stay is a significant matter that school executives need to support so as to retain their personnel. Banan (2017) found that there is a statistically significant correlation between psychological empowerment and intention to stay. This result is in alignment with the results of Nawawi et al. (2017), which found that psychological empowerment influenced the retention intentions of 5-star rated spa employees, and also showed that employees' psychological empowerment positively influenced their retention intentions.

Empowered employees are dedicated, which might reduce their intention to quit and also affect the employees' contributions to teams and correlate to them taking greater initiative if they want to stay (Oluwaseun, 2016). The concept of empowerment is embraced under the guise of the movement away from control towards a proactive and strategic commitment style of management (Walton, 1985). According to Kanter (1979), psychological empowerment is the product of employee interaction with organizational structures of information, support, resources, and opportunity that enable the employee to develop further and to be more effective in the organization. In addition, the study conducted by Meng & et al. (2013) entitled "Relationships among Structural Empowerment, Psychological Empowerment, Intent to Stay and Burnout" revealed a significant correlation between psychological empowerment and employees' intent to stay.

Morale is connected to the idea of job and the decision to stay or leave a position. Low morale teachers that are not hopeful about their future in the classroom are more likely to leave. In this regard, it is useful for understanding the factors and processes that support teacher retention (Senechal, Sober and Hope, 2016).

Morale is a mental or emotional state (with regard to confidence, hope, enthusiasm, etc.) of a person or group engaged in some activity; in other words, the degree of contentment with one's lot or situation. The grounded theory approach in the qualitative phase identified a three dimensional structure of morale, which revolved around affective, future/goal, and interpersonal dimensions (Hardy, 2009) and the study of Chaisuriyathavikun & Punnakitikashem (2015), that discovered that job satisfaction and co-worker & supervisor support positively influence organizational commitment and intention to stay. If employees are satisfied with those two factors, they will.

Be proud to present to others that they are a part of this company with a sense of belonging. Therefore, they will care about the company in the future. Then they will accept and put effort to any work from this company. After they commit to this company, they will be happy to work with this company. The turnover rate of this company will decrease, which is consistent with Littler (2006), who found that the effectiveness of leaderships' communication has a significantly strong relationship to employee engagement and intent to stay. Furthermore, Othman and Lembang (2017) revealed that training and development were significantly positively associated with intention to stay.

From the findings of the related concepts and research, it was found that the study of intention to stay has been limited to the field of nursing, but only a few on teachers, so the researchers have noticed the importance of psychological empowerment and the morale on work performance, which has a positive relationship to the intention to stay. Teachers are important educational personnel who play an crucial role in the development of education. In this study, the focus is on the prediction of which variables could significantly affect teachers' intention to stay, and the results of the study could be beneficial for the enhancement of the teachers' work performance competency.

2. Objectives of the study

2.1 To study the level of teachers' intention to stay, psychological empowerment, and morale on work performance.

2.2 To study the relationship between psychological empowerment and teacher intention to stay.

2.3 To study the relationship between morale on work performance and teachers' intention to stay.

2.4 To predict the teachers' intention to stay supported by the psychological empowerment and morale on work performance.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Morale

Motowidlo (1977) claims that morale is not just a mood or feeling of an individual or group; rather, it is the combination of motivation and a signal for behavior and performance of an individual and group. In Motowidlo's definition, morale is presented as both an end and a means towards a higher level of productivity and performance. Moreover, Britt & Dickinson (2006) explain that morale is a level of motivation and enthusiasm for accomplishing mission objectives. Morale is not an emotional state, whether the presence of happiness or the absence of depression, but a variable that can energize the efforts of an individual leading to a new level of performance. Hardy (2009) compiled a measure of three dimensions of morale, consisting of seven factors: being valued and taken seriously, self-worth support and communication, vision of the future, progress, influence of others, and relationship with others.

3.2 Psychological empowerment

Psychological empowerment is a set of motivational thoughts or ideas shaped by a work environment and reflecting an individual's active orientation to his or her work role. It has four components: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact (Iqpal & Hashmi, 2015). Furthermore, psychological empowerment makes individuals part of the decision making process in organizational issues by empowering them with control and

independence. Employees who feel supportive, self-determining, meaningful, and energetic prefer to stay in their roles, and would like to make contributions to the organization (Banan, 2017). According to Spreitzer's Psychological Empowerment Scale (1995), the scale is composed of four subdimensions: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. Each of the individual dimensions of empowerment has been found to be related to behaviors conducive to managerial effectiveness: meaning results in high commitment and concentration of energy; competence results in effort and persistence in challenging situations, coping and high goal expectations, and high performance; self-determination results in learning, interest in activity, and resilience in the face of adversity; and impact is associated with an absence of withdrawal from difficult situations and high performance (Spreitzer, 1995).

3.3 Intention to stay

Intention to stay is defined as employees' intention to stay in the present employment relationship with their current employer on a long term basis (Johari et al., 2012), whereas employees' intention to quit is an individual's estimated probability that they are permanently leaving their organization at some point in the near future (Vandenberg & Nelson, 1999). According to Larrabee, Wu, & Persily (2010) and Martin & Ryan (2010), meaning refers to intent to stay and can be seen as the employees' anticipation of staying in the present job for the foreseeable future. It is linked to job satisfaction, work empowerment structures, job performance, and job stress. These factors can affect an organization's retention rate.

4. Research Methodology

This was survey research by distributing questionnaires to Thai teachers in secondary schools.

4.1 Population and Sample

The research sample was teachers from two secondary schools in Nakhon Pathom province, Thailand. The sample size was selected by the formulation proposed by Krejcie & Morgan (1970) with 95% reliability. A sample of 169 teachers out of 301 were chosen by proportional stratified random sampling. At the school level, 10% was added for a complete number; therefore, the total number was 186. 170 questionnaires were completed and returned, and the completed ones were used for the analysis, for a response rate of 91.39%.

4.2 Research Tool

In this study, a questionnaire was used for the data collection, which was divided into four parts, as follows:

Part 1: 7 items were used to measure the personal data with a checklist method. The personal data were gender, duration of employment, education level, salary, learning area group, and position.

Part 2: 6 items were used to measure the intention to stay, and the concept of Cowin & Hengstberger (2006) was utilized to construct the questionnaire.

Part 3: 22 items were used to measure psychological empowerment, and the concept of Spreitzer (1995) was utilized to construct the questionnaire.

Part 4: 25 items were used to measure the morale on work performance, and the concept of Hardy (2009) was utilized to construct the questionnaire. The questionnaire parts

2, 3, and 4 have the characteristics of a 5-point Likert rating scale, in which one of each response option needs to be chosen: 5) extremely, 4) very, 3) moderate, 2) slightly, and 1) extremely slightly.

4.3 Research Tool Development

Three experts examined the constructed questionnaire in the aspects of language use and content validity. A mark of 1 was given when it was certain that the item was congruent with the definition of each variable, while 0 was given when the congruence of each variable was uncertain, and -1 was given when the incongruence of each variable was certain. After that, the index value of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) was calculated, and the test items with a value of IOC of .50 or more were selected. It was found that 6 items of the intention to stay portion, 28 items measuring psychological empowerment, and 26 items on the morale on work performance passed the evaluation criteria. Then, 30 questionnaires were tested among teachers from secondary schools in Ratchaburi province, who had similar characteristics to the sample group, to evaluate discrimination power with t-values, where the t-value must be more than 1.75 to be deemed acceptable (Edwards, 1957). The items that got t-values less than 1.75 were eliminated due to the absence of discrimination power. Six, 22, and 25 items in the questionnaire, in the respective order of intention to stay, psychological empowerment, and morale on work performance, passed the evaluation criteria. Internal consistency was evaluated by using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. The results with Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficients are presented in Table 1.

Questionnaire	The Number of Good Test Items	The Number of Test Items with Discrimination Power	Reliability Cronbach's Alpha							
1. Intention to Stay	6	6	.787							
2. Psychological Empowerment										
- Meaning	5	4	.776							
- Competency	5	4	.714							
- Individual Intention	7	6	.871							
- Impact	11	8	.923							
Total	28	22	.926							
3. Morale on Work performance										
- Recognition of Value and Importance	3	3	.902							
- Self-worth	3	3	.859							
- Support and Communication	4	4	.890							
- Potentiality	6	6	.868							
- Progress	3	3	.823							
- External Influence	3	3	.834							
- Relationship with Others	4	3	.887							
Total	26	25	.948							

Table 1: The Number of Good Test Items, Discrimination Power and Reliability

4.4 Data Collection and Analysis

School directors were contacted and asked for permission to distribute the questionnaires to their teachers. After that, the schools assigned 1-2 teachers to help distribute and collect the questionnaires. Then the questionnaires were analyzed by a use of computer program for the data processing. The statistics employed in this research were percentages, frequencies, means, standard deviations, correlation coefficients, and stepwise multiple regression analysis.

5. Results

5.1 Results from analyzing personal data of the teachers

The majority of the teachers were 121 female teachers (71.18%); 87 teachers were aged between 25-35 years old (51.18%); 106 teachers (62.35%) had duration of employment from 1-10 years; 96 teachers (56.47%) had bachelor's degrees; 88 teachers (51.76%) were in the paygrade ranging from 15,000-25,000 baht per month; 30 teachers (17.65%) were in the Thai language learning area group, and 47 were teaching assistants (27.65%).

5.2 Results from analyzing the level of intention to stay, psychological empowerment, and morale on work performance

There was a high average score in the teachers' intention to stay (Mean = 4.161, SD = 0.687).

A high average score in the teachers' psychological empowerment was also found (Mean = 3.769, SD = 0.444). When separately considered, a high level of teacher psychological empowerment was found in three aspects: meaning, competency, and individual intention. The competency aspect had the highest average score (Mean = 4.068, SD = 0.460), followed by meaning (Mean = 3.990, SD = 0.416), and then individual intention (Mean = 3.959, SD = 0.522); while the impact aspect had a moderate average score (Mean = 3.368, SD = 0.683).

The average score of morale on work performance had a high level (Mean = 3.864, SD = 0.538). When considered separately, a high morale level on work performance was found in every aspect. The morale aspect of relationship with others was found to have the highest average score (Mean = 3.982, SD = 0.683), followed by progress (Mean = 3.975, SD = 0.614), recognition of value and importance (Mean = 3.873, SD = 0.632), the potentiality (Mean = 3.872, SD = 0.652), external influence (Mean = 3.844, SD = 0.667), self-worth (Mean = 3.763, SD = 0.592) and support and communication (Mean = 3.762, SD = 0.606). 3. Results from analyzing the relationship between psychological empowerment, morale on work performance and intention to stay.

Psychological empowerment had a positive impact on the teachers' intention to stay (r = 0.421, p < .01), which accounted for 17.724% of the variance explained. When considered separately, all aspects of psychological empowerment (meaning, competency, individual intention, and impact), had a significantly positive impact on teacher intention to stay, statistically significant at p < 0.01, and Pearson correlation coefficients of 0.251, 0.292, 0.454 and 0.381, respectively, which accounted for 6.30%, 8.53%, 20.62%, and 14.52% of variance explained.

Morale on work performance had a positive relationship to the teachers' intention to stay, which was statistically significant (p < 0.01) with the Pearson correlation coefficient of r = 0.639, accounting for 40.83% of explained variance. When considered separately, all aspects of morale on work performance (recognition of value and importance, self-worth, support and communication, potentiality, progress, external influence, and relationship with others) had significant positive correlations with teachers' intention to stay at p < 0.01. The Pearson correlation coefficients were r = 0.456, 0.531, 0.530, 0.507, 0.601, 0.607 and 0.589, respectively, which accounted for 20.79%, 28.20%, 28.09%, 25.71%, 36.12%, 36.85% and 34.69% of the explained variance, respectively.

Var.	Mean	SD	Level*		Correlation Coefficient Value**											
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. PE1	3.99	0.42	High													
2. PE2	4.07	0.46	High	0.44												
3. PE3	3.96	0.52	High	0.54	0.61											
4. PE4	3.37	0.68	Mod.	0.38	0.37	0.57										
5. PE	3.77	0.44	High	0.64	0.67	0.85	0.88									
6. MOR1	3.87	0.63	High	0.35	0.44	0.54	0.50	0.59								
7. MOR2	3.76	0.59	High	0.39	0.51	0.63	0.48	0.63	0.56							
8. MOR3	3.76	0.62	High	0.36	0.44	0.56	0.44	0.57	0.61	0.78						
9. MOR4	3.87	0.65	High	0.33	0.45	0.48	0.44	0.54	0.62	0.63	0.71					
10. MOR5	3.98	0.61	High	0.35	0.48	0.56	0.36	0.53	0.56	0.72	0.77	0.75				
11. MOR6	3.84	0.67	High	0.38	0.35	0.51	0.43	0.53	0.65	0.61	0.75	0.69	0.75			
12. MOR7	3.98	0.68	High	0.31	0.32	0.49	0.37	0.47	0.56	0.51	0.71	0.56	0.67	0.73		
13. MOR	3.86	0.54	High	0.41	0.50	0.63	0.51	0.65	0.76	0.80	0.90	0.88	0.88	0.87	0.79	
14. ITS	4.16	0.67	High	0.25	0.29	0.45	0.33	0.42	0.46	0.53	0.53	0.51	0.60	0.61	0.59	0.64

Table 1: Mean Scores, Standard Deviations, Level and Value of Correlation Coefficient in the Study

Note :*Average Score ranging from 1.00 to 1.80 means lowest, 1.81 to 2.60 means low, 2.61 to 3.40 means moderate, 3.41 to 4.20 means high, 4.21 to 5.00 means highest;

	**Correlation Coefficient Value at Statistica	al Significa	unce $(p < .01);$
Mear	n means average score	MOR2	means self-worth
SD	means standard deviation	MOR3	means support and
			communication
PE1	means meaning	MOR4	means potentiality
PE2	means competency	MOR5	mean progress
PE3	means individual intention	MOR6	means external influence
PE4	means impact	MOR7	means relationship with others
PE	means psychological empowerment	MOR	means morale on work
			performance
MOR	R1 means recognition of value and	ITS	means intention to stay
	importance		

4. Results from the analysis of the prediction of the intention to stay supported by psychological empowerment and morale on work performance

The analysis of the intention to stay supported by psychological empowerment and morale on work performance was carried out using Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis. The initial analysis agreement were that linearity and multicollinearity (r > .80) with the

correlation coefficient value among 11 variables, which were: meaning, competency, individual intention, impact, recognition of significance and importance, self-worth, support and communication, potentiality, progress, external influence, and relationship with others, for a total of 55 pairs, of which the correlation values ranged from 0.306 to 0.776. Every pair had its own relationship with statistical significance at .01 (Table 1). From the initial analysis, it was found that the data were in accordance with the agreement, so that all the variables could be used to analyze the prediction of the teachers' intention to stay.

Variable	b	SE	β	t	р			
Constant	1.098	.273		4.018**	.000			
External Influence	.240	.102	.233	2.360*	.019			
Progress	.293	.102	.262	2.858**	.005			
Relationship with Others	.246	.089	.244	2.774**	.006			
$R = .665, R^2 = .442, Adj. R^2 = .432, SE_{est} = .518, F = 43.896, p = .000$								

Table 2: Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis Result – The Prediction of the Intention to Stay from Psychological Empowerment and Morale on Work Performance

Note: *p < .05; **p < .01

Table 2 shows that aspects of the morale on work performance, in particular external influence (b = .240, β = .233), progress (b = .293, β = .262) and relationship with others (b = .246, β = .244), could be used altogether to predict the teachers' intention to stay, explaining 44.20% of the variance, with the statistical significance level at .01, which could formulate the predication equation in the form of raw scores as follows:

Intention to Stay = 1.098 + .240 (External Influence) + .293 (Progress) + .246 (Relationship with Others)

and we could formulate the predication equation in the form of Z-Scores as the following:

 $Z_{\text{Intention to stay}} = .233 (Z_{\text{External Influece}}) + .262 (Z_{\text{Progress}}) + .244 (Z_{\text{Relationship with Others}})$

6. Discussion

Psychological empowerment could not be used to predict the teachers' intention to stay; however, the former had a positive relationship to the latter (p = .01). This is consistent with Whitney et al. (2018), who explained that psychological empowerment refers to feeling capable of shaping one's work role and context, and is composed of four factors: meaning associated to work tasks, feelings of competence and belief in one's abilities to perform work activities, self-determination relating to control and choice over work behaviors, and observable positive impacts of one's work behaviors. It relates positively to other attitudes, including job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and is linked to work outcomes including lower turnover intention and elevated worker performance, such as effectiveness and productivity. Hassan & Banan (2017) found that there is a statistically significant correlation between psychological empowerment and staff nurses' intention to stay. Also, this result was supported by the study results of Saif & Saleh (2013) and Klerk (2013), whose results indicated that employees who perceived themselves as empowered felt that they had an influence on their daily work, were independent, and motivated to remain part of the organization.

Furthermore, aspects of morale on work performance had a positive impact on teachers' intention to stay. Progress, influence of others, and relationship with others could predict the intention to stay, which is in line with Othman & Lembang (2017), who found that training and development were significantly positively associated with intention to stay, and Chaisuriyathavikun & Punnakitikashem (2015), who revealed that job satisfaction and co-worker and supervisor support had a positive influence on organizational commitment and intention to stay. If employees are satisfied by those two factors, they will be proud to present to others that they are a part of this company with the sense of belonging. Therefore, they will care about their company's future. Then they will accept and put an effort into their work at this company. After they commit to this company, they will be happy to work there. The turnover rate of this company should decrease. Ashraf et al. (2017) also discovered there is a correlation between workplace bullying, employees' morale and turnover intention, and Littler (2006) stated the effectiveness of leaderships' communication has a significantly strong relationship to employee's engagement and intent to stay.

7. Recommendations

7.1 Recommendations from the Study

1) School executives should increase the enhancement of the teachers' psychological empowerment, particularly in the impact aspect, since it had the lowest mean score. This could be carried out by allowing teachers to have more impact on the work results, with a greater role in the control of movements and situations occurring in the learning area they are a part of.

2) School executives should attempt to increase the morale on work performance, especially in the aspect of support and communication, which had the lowest mean score. This could be carried out by encouraging better communications, fostering mutual acceptance among the colleagues, and providing approbation of good deeds done by the teachers. Plus, heads of departments should be encouraged to gain proper knowledge of leadership.

3) Psychological empowerment had a positive impact on the teachers' intention to stay, especially with the individual intention aspect, which had the highest correlation coefficient (r = .454). Consequently, school executives should give teachers alternatives and more authority to take control of activities. This could be reflected in the teachers' freedom and capability to work in their own ways, which could help increase their psychological empowerment and ultimately lead to an increase in their intention to stay.

4) Morale on work performance had a significantly positive relationship to the teachers' intention to stay. Three aspects in morale on work performance that hold particular importance are external influence, progress, and relationship with others, which could predict the teachers' intention to stay. Therefore, school executives should be able to increase morale, especially in the external influence aspect, which had the highest correlation coefficient value (r = .607). This could be carried out by encouraging the mutual support among the teachers, and the participation or membership in teams that could make them proud of being assigned to interesting tasks. This could also increase the level of their intention to stay.

7.2 Recommendations for Further Study

1) Teachers should be encouraged to feel more psychological empowerment by participating in training on the topic, with before and after assessment of the empowerment training. This could be followed up after they return to their duties to evaluate the level of additional empowerment achieved and their intention to stay.

2) Experimental research should be devised and conducted on the promotion of morale on work performance and the assessment of morale, as well as the intention to stay. This could be followed up by before and after evaluation after an experimental intervention promoting workplace morale is completed.

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