

ENHANCING THE EFFICIENCY OF ACADEMIC STAFF PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to: 1) examine the significance levels of perceived organizational support, internal organizational processes, learning and growth, and performance efficiency among academic personnel at private higher education institutions in Thailand; 2) investigate learning and growth as a mediating variable between perceived organizational support and performance efficiency of academic personnel at private higher education institutions in Thailand; and 3) examine learning and growth as a mediating variable between internal organizational processes and performance efficiency of academic personnel at private higher education institutions in Thailand. The sample group consists of 300 academic personnel from private higher education institutions in Thailand. Data analysis used frequency distribution, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and structural equation modeling. The study results indicate that: 1) Personnel perceived organizational support at a moderate level, with job security being perceived at a higher level than other aspects. 2) Personnel demonstrated high-performance efficiency, with job knowledge rated higher than other aspects. 3) Personnel with different personal factors did not show significant differences in performance efficiency. 4) Among the various aspects of perceived organizational support, emotional support had the most significant influence on the performance efficiency of personnel. Second to emotional support is the working conditions. Based on the study's findings, institutional administrators should support personnel emotionally by recognizing and praising their achievements through various activities or channels. For example, they could announce outstanding personnel, award prizes, present plaques of honor, or publicize achievements in institutional journals or publications. Such measures can foster a sense of pride and willingness to perform tasks, thereby enhancing performance efficiency.

Keywords: Role of Monks, Community Development, Phlai Chumpon Temple

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INTRODUCTION

Thailand has many higher education institutions, including public universities, private universities, and government-affiliated institutions under the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation that offer graduate programs. It can thus be said that graduate programs are offered nationwide, expanding educational opportunities for many people. This has increased competition among institutions, which employ various strategies to meet enrollment targets and plans. Concurrently, this has provided more opportunities and choices for students. The decision to enroll in a particular higher education institution depends on various factors, including the institution's reputation and image, curriculum, faculty, learning media and equipment, atmosphere and environment, welfare and services, publicity, values, students' skills, knowledge, and abilities, and available scholarships (Chaiporn Jupondee, 2021). While international students prioritize university rankings as a significant factor in their choice of institution (Quacquarelli Symonds, 2020), these factors are invariably the ones that educational institutions must prioritize and enhance to ensure quality. This involves the collaborative efforts of educational stakeholders, including administrators, faculty members, and support staff. To attract prospective students to study at their institution, faculty members' quality, crucial to producing graduates with the requisite qualifications, must be emphasized. These qualifications include abundant knowledge, expertise, and skills in the affiliated curriculum, developed and adapted to be prepared for evolving environments. It is crucial to possess qualities that enable accessibility and understanding of students for effective knowledge transmission. This ensures that students acquire knowledge, abilities, skills, and characteristics aligned with the demands of the labor market and can contribute positively to society as happy citizens and suitable nationals of the country. This aligns with the educational development plan to produce and develop the country's human resources for 2021-2027 by significant contexts and situations during 2023-2027. It is also linked to the policy framework and strategies for education, science, research, and innovation for 2023-2027. Continuing to emphasize the role of education as the foundation for human development and sustainable, leapfrogging knowledge, Strategy 1 focuses on enhancing people's potential. It prioritizes lifelong learning, expands access to education, and elevates the quality of education and human resource capabilities to meet the country's development goals. Additionally, it aims to strengthen highly qualified educational personnel (Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation, 2023). This aligns with the objectives of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation. Recognizing the importance of developing the higher education system to elevate Thai universities to international standards, initiatives have been launched to transform universities and reform the education system. This includes improving the quality of teaching and learning and enhancing faculty skills to meet the demands of the 21st century. Higher education institutions must efficiently utilize knowledge, abilities, and potential according to their strategic focus areas. Competition among universities is encouraged to build reputations for institutions and the country (Office of Higher Education Promotion and Development, Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation, 2022). As technology advances with increasing trends, educators are among those who need to develop themselves continuously. They must adapt teaching processes and activities to align with changing student behaviors and utilize and integrate new technologies as learning stimuli for students. These challenges pose significant hurdles for educators, thus necessitating continuous self-development to enhance their capabilities. To meet the demands of a society embracing a new learning paradigm that emphasizes acquiring knowledge and fostering innovation, we must transition from the Education 3.0 teaching model to the new Education 4.0 system (Pinunta et al., 2017). Education 4.0 encourages students to integrate existing knowledge creatively to develop innovations that address societal needs. However, current teaching practices often fall short on various fronts.

For instance, many educators still rely on traditional methods that do not empower students to self-learn, and they primarily assign conventional exercises rather than aligning with the principles of Education 4.0 (Phaitun et al., 2017).

In addition to ensuring quality teaching, academics or faculty members of higher education institutions also have other crucial responsibilities, such as academic services and generating academic outputs, including inventions and various innovations resulting from research endeavors. These duties are typically designated as primary responsibilities alongside teaching responsibilities by most higher education institutions to enhance national and international competitiveness. One of the factors influencing students' decisions in choosing educational institutions today is the university ranking, both nationally and globally. This factor helps to enhance the institution's reputation, instilling trust and confidence in individuals who graduate from it, ensuring that they are knowledgeable and competent. Furthermore, university rankings also spur intense competition in the education sector, particularly among countries in the Americas and Europe. In addition, several Asian countries, including Thailand, align with Pimprae Srisawat's findings (2020), which indicate that various institutions worldwide are ranked by multiple organizations each year. Universities that receive rankings are acknowledged for their reputation and quality. Consequently, many universities try to strategize and implement policies to improve their global rankings, such as those provided by three internationally recognized ranking institutions: the Academic Ranking of World Universities, Times Higher Education, and Quacquarelli Symonds. It has been found that the fundamental principles used in considering global university rankings focus primarily on research output as well as the quality of teaching. Additionally, strategies for enhancing the competitiveness of Thai universities are proposed in three areas: university management, faculty quality, and internationalization and facilities.

Therefore, if private Thai educational institutions encounter issues related to the quality of teaching staff or face doubts regarding their ability to impart knowledge, skills, and expertise to students effectively, it can significantly impact the institution negatively. This includes tarnishing the institution's reputation and diminishing its competitiveness. Furthermore, it unavoidably affects the number of students deciding to enroll, and it has wide-ranging implications for the quality of education nationwide. Researchers aim to study the effectiveness of academic staff development practices within private Thai educational institutions concerning perception, organizational support, internal processes, learning, and growth. They seek to understand how these factors influence academic staff's performance and development priorities, enabling institution managers to formulate strategies for continuous staff development. This helps increase competitiveness, enhances the quality of education at all levels, and ensures the sustainability of universities as a whole.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

Theory regarding human resource development

Human resource management is crucial to leading an organization towards its operational goals. Organizations globally face complexities in a changing environment, where most businesses must compete to gain a competitive advantage and sustainably thrive (Schutte & Barkhuizen, 2016; de Brito & de Oliveira, 2016). The management of human resources has been described by Barney (1991) through the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory, stating that human resource management is one of an organization's assets. Effective human resource management processes can lead an organization to a competitive advantage. Many scholars acknowledge that HR practices are crucial in enhancing productivity and efficiency within an organization (Bhanugopan et al., 2013). Human resources are vital contributors to business success (Pongpearchan, 2016) and are strategic production factors. Therefore, HR management is integral to creating an efficient workforce (de Brito & de Oliveira, 2016).

Human resources are one of the most critical fundamental resources of the economy and a key component in societal development. Moreover, they differ from other resources because human resources are delicate and complex regarding behavioral requirements, which can lead organizations to success (Otto & Mishra, 2018). Organizations are thus increasingly aware of the need to sustainably develop human resources to utilize them as a strategy for ongoing business operations in the ever-competitive landscape (Jae et al., 2018; Claretha & Matthew, 2019).

Huong and Hadikusumo (2017) explain that human resource development involves developing individuals and teams to achieve organizational goals. Human resource development involves long-term investment and must be continuously pursued. In practice, managers often want quick results for employees and the organization. However, some managers perceive training and development as "costs" rather than "investments," which may not receive much attention from senior management despite understanding its importance. Nevertheless, organizations cannot avoid the issue of human resource development. The data shows that human resource development often involves integrating training, development, and career development (Huong & Hadikusumo, 2017; Sablok et al., 2017). Regarding organizational development, some sources mention career management (Noe et al., 2018). However, training and development remain fundamental aspects of human resource development that help employees acquire skills, knowledge, and abilities in their professions, ultimately leading to improved performance, personal development, and organizational development (Chaubey et al., 2017). This fosters the retention of knowledgeable and experienced employees and prepares them for organizational growth (Srisarin, 2017; Shah & Gupta, 2018).

Concepts and theories related to organizational support perception

Organizational management that focuses on and supports processes that accommodate future changes, adjusting organizational structures to align with each change phase. This development aims to enhance competitiveness by strengthening strengths and addressing weaknesses, ensuring continued competitiveness during each phase of change towards the new industry and Thailand 4.0 era (Digital et al. Agency, 2017). Emphasis is placed on digital innovation skills and information technology to support operations, as information technology plays a widespread role in various industries. Developing knowledge and skills in information technology is likened to the bloodstream and heart of almost every business organization (Marakot & Krissada, 2019).

Organizational support encompasses promoting and facilitating various aspects of an organization's business operations. This includes establishing regulations, rules, guidelines, policies, organizational structures, and systems. It involves acquiring and allocating new hardware and software resources and utilizing information technology for operations. Organizational support also extends to managing workforce capacity, defining compensation and benefits structures to be adequate and appropriate, and enabling competitiveness to adapt to rapidly changing work processes. Furthermore, it aids in problem-solving hindrances to operations, preparing convenient work facilities, considering employees' safety and occupational health, and fostering internal and external networks for smooth and efficient operations. The success of such support, aligned with the organization's goals, requires mutual understanding and awareness between organizational management and supported employees, ultimately adding value to the organization (Santhanam et al., 2015).

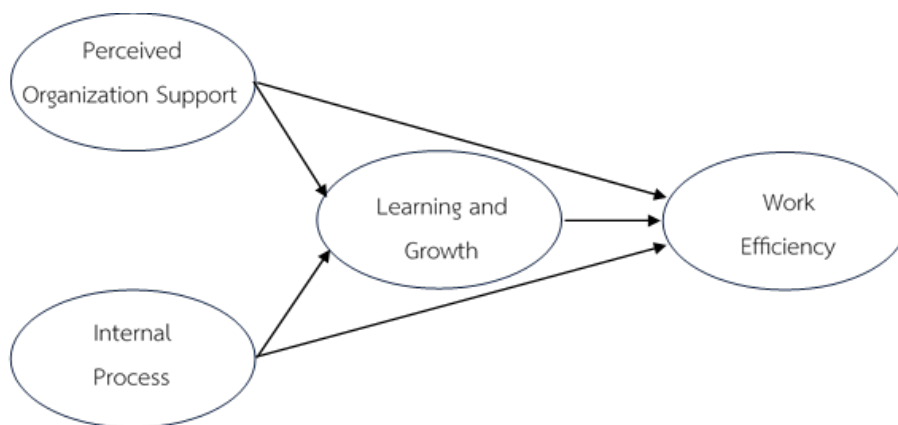


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Population

The population in this research is the academic personnel of private higher education institutions in Thailand in the Bangkok Metropolitan Region, with a total of 73,087 academic personnel. This data is from the submission of the number of personnel of each higher education institution to the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation (MHESI) in September 2023 (Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation (MHESI), 2024).

Sample

The sample group in this research is 300 academic personnel of private higher education institutions in Bangkok and its vicinity who are at the appropriate level (Good) according to the concept of Comrey and Lee (1992). The sample size used for the research was determined by using the structural equation model analysis method. The study by simulation and statistical formula development found that the sample size for the structural equation model can be of various sizes and varies according to the statistical criteria. In this research, the researcher considered the determination of the sample group by using the method of determining the sample group according to the concept of Comrey and Lee (1992), which determined the sample size according to the appropriate criteria for determining the sample size.

Data collection involved field surveys using questionnaires distributed to communities, targeting students from Thai higher education institutions in Bangkok listed in the Asia University Rankings 2024. The sampling process was conducted based on real-world data and the required sample size, followed by statistical analysis. Secondary data collection involved studying information from the research area, including gathering academic documents, articles, theses, research reports, books, journals, publications, online searches for information, and other documents relevant to the study. The collected concepts, theories, and related research supported this research.

Data analysis: Analyzing data using descriptive statistics and checklist-type questionnaires involves finding frequencies and summarizing them into percentages. Mean and standard deviation (S.D.) are calculated for rating scale questionnaires. This includes 1) analyzing personal factors by distributing frequency and percentage values, including gender, age, marital status, income, education level, and work experience, to describe personal characteristics and 2) analyzing data to study components such as perceived benefits, ease of use, satisfaction, and intention to use by calculating mean and standard deviation. These statistics are used to interpret the meaning of the data for summarization and explanation of variable characteristics. Inferential statistics involves using statistical methods to test hypotheses for causality and determine factors influencing direct and indirect variables. This includes analyzing structural equation models (SEM) using the PLS Graph 3.0 software (Chin, 2001) for hypothesis testing.

DISCUSSION

Perceiving organizational support

Academic staff in private Thai universities most perceive organizational support for job security. They believe that the organization will continue to provide work opportunities, even though there may be occasional errors in performance, mainly because the organization has a labor responsibility policy that strictly adheres to labor laws. According to the Labor Protection Act, BE 2560, employers are prohibited from taking any action that could be considered harassment to force employees to resign, such as unjustified terminations. Compliance with the law thus instills a sense of job security in employees, making them feel that they will not be unjustly terminated. Consequently, they perceive higher organizational support compared to others. This aligns with the findings of Sathornnun and Tiposot (2013), who discovered that bank employees perceived higher organizational support regarding job security than other aspects. They felt more assured about continuing to work in the organization, even in the face of occasional errors, which had the highest average value compared to other aspects. Similarly, Ruangnapa (2014) found that employees in Thai Casey Spa businesses perceived that the organization operated pretty, with the lowest likelihood of being terminated without cause.

Work Performance

Academic staff in private Thai universities have the most influential work performance, mainly because the organization is a service-oriented institution with its core focus on its personnel. The organization prioritizes the development of its staff's knowledge and abilities, particularly in the service aspect. It implements systematic personnel management policies and continuous development programs, enabling staff to perform their duties effectively. This aligns with the findings of Pranee Kamonthipkul (2009), who emphasized the importance of job-related knowledge and effective job performance. It was found that Cent Air and Sea Services (Thailand) Limited employees had more effective job performance in terms of job-related knowledge than others. Additionally, in the study by Ratapol Sriksanun (2008), it was found that employees of Thanachart Bank Public Company Limited, located at the Rasada Building, Ratchadaphisek Road, had more effective job performance in terms of job-related knowledge compared to other aspects. When comparing differences in job performance based on personal factors, academic personnel in private Thai universities with different personal factors, including gender, age, work experience, job position, English communication skills, foreign language communication skills, basic computer knowledge, physical fitness, and personality, had equally effective job performance. In this regard, it may be due to personal factors or characteristics of academic personnel in private Thai universities not differing significantly. The organization has already established the characteristics of employees needed to perform effectively as part of its recruitment policy. Therefore, although there may be some minor differences in personnel characteristics, everyone has the qualifications to perform their duties effectively, consistent with the study by Nimmannit Thongsan (2016: 129). Additionally, the study by Rungnapa Patamchai-amont (2013: 66) found that employees in a cosmetics manufacturing business in Pathum Thani province, with differing personal factors such as gender, age, job position, and work experience, demonstrated equally effective job performance. Similarly, another study found that employees in a private company with differing personal factors such as job position and work experience also exhibited equally effective job performance.

Perception of organizational support that influences job performance

1) Perceiving emotional and organizational support significantly influences job performance at a statistical level of 0.05. This perception involves employees feeling acknowledged, valued, respected, and supported by the organization when they successfully perform their duties. Moreover, understanding and empathy from the organization when employees make decisions or mistakes are crucial for individuals seeking acceptance from others. Recognition and praise

for job success contribute to a sense of pride and belonging within the organization, increasing job satisfaction and willingness to perform tasks effectively. This aligns with Sasinan Tip-osot's study, which found that perceiving emotional and organizational support significantly impacts employees' work performance in the banking industry at a statistical level of 0.05 (Tip-osot, 2556: 32).

2) Perceiving organizational support regarding the work environment significantly influences job performance at a statistical level 0.05. This aligns with Eisenberger's concept, as cited in Sasinan Tip-osot's study (2556: 32), stating that a conducive work environment leads to employees feeling motivated, comfortable, and willing to work. A suitable work environment plays a motivational role in encouraging employees to work to their fullest potential, thus enhancing work effectiveness. This finding is consistent with Wannachai Thurasoepang's study (2557: 77), which found that perceiving organizational support regarding workplace environmental management positively impacts the work performance of employees at Thai Sumitomo Electric Wiring Systems Co., Ltd. at a statistical significance level of 0.05.

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