

**EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IN PUBLIC SERVICES: CASE  
STUDY OF ADVISORY GROUP, DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL  
HEALTH, MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH THAILAND**



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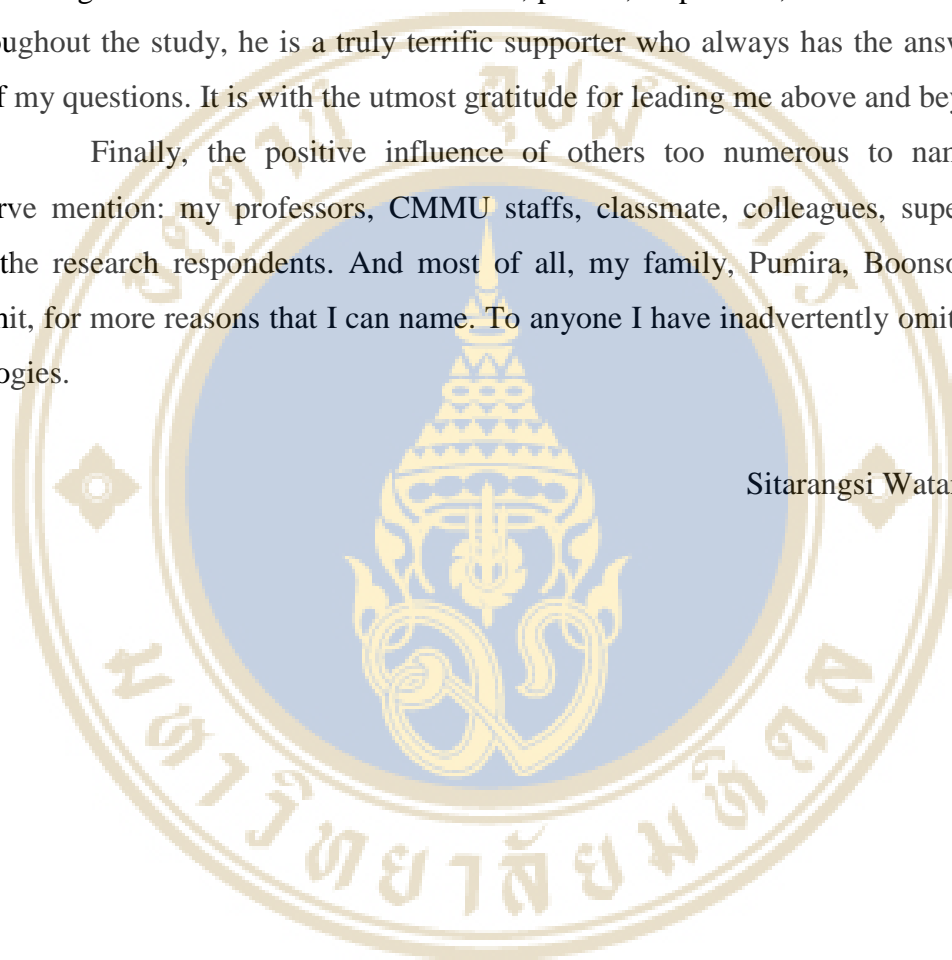
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ADVISORY GROUP, DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH, MINISTRY  
OF PUBLIC HEALTH, THAILAND**

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**ABSTRACT**

**Objective:** This exploratory research aims to understand what employee engagement is and what the key factors that influenced employee engagement are in public services as well as to make recommendations that will help the organization to leverage employee engagement.

**Methods:** This research was conducted in the Advisory Group, a part of Department of Mental Health (DMH), Ministry of Public Health. The research methods are semi-structured interviewing and reviewing of the existing studies which focus on the individuals' experience in the organization to identify the effects on attitudes toward work, organization, HR practice, working environment, and relationship with supervisors and colleagues. The sample was chosen randomly across different age and gender in different levels of position in Advisory Group. Seven academic and administrative officers out of 15 officers in the Advisory Group were in-depth interviewing. The primary data for the study were collected through the interaction and discussion with the employees which took 45 minutes to an hour. The interviewees are Public Health Officers, Supply Officer, General Administrative Officer, General Affairs Officer, Social Worker, and General Service Supervisor.

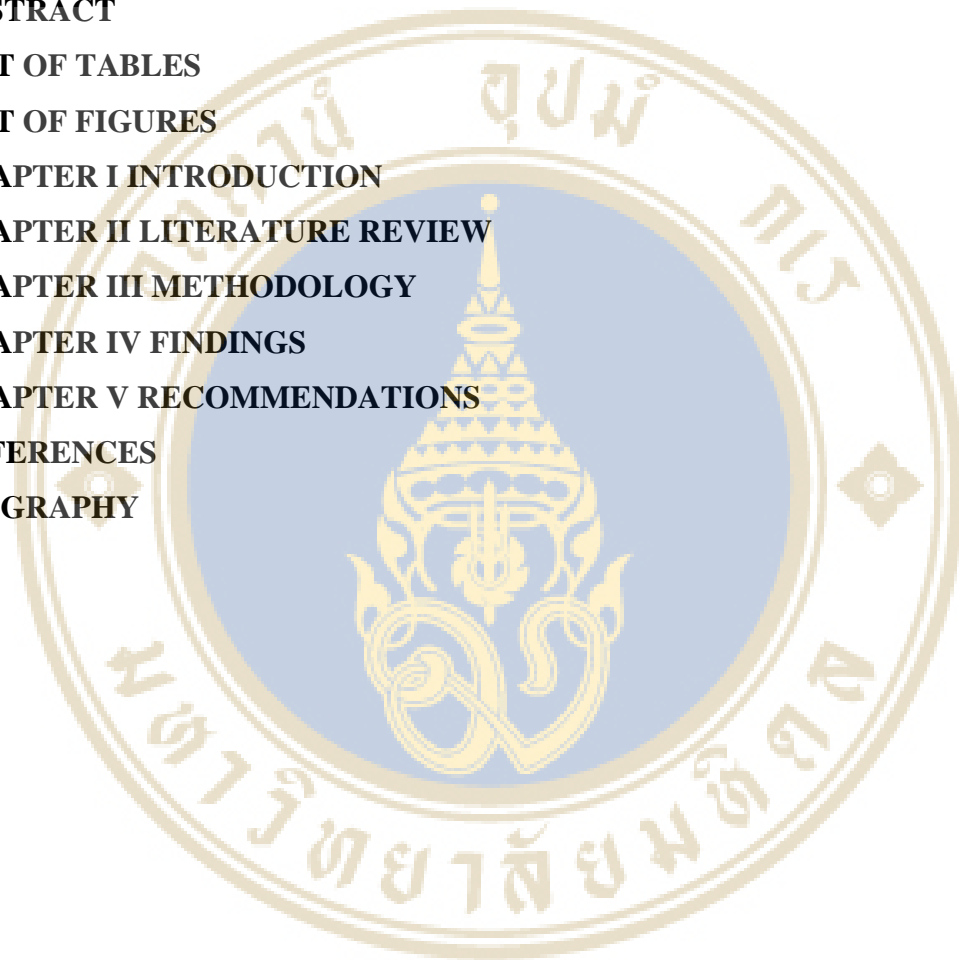
**Results:** The finding revealed that factors such as task characteristics, role characteristics, and rewards and payment have no effect in this organization regarding to employee engagement. Other factors such as job recognition, organizational values, career opportunity, internal communication, working environment, and relationship with supervisors and colleagues have the most influential effect.

**KEY WORDS:** Employee / Engagement / Thailand / Public Service / Mental Health

27 pages

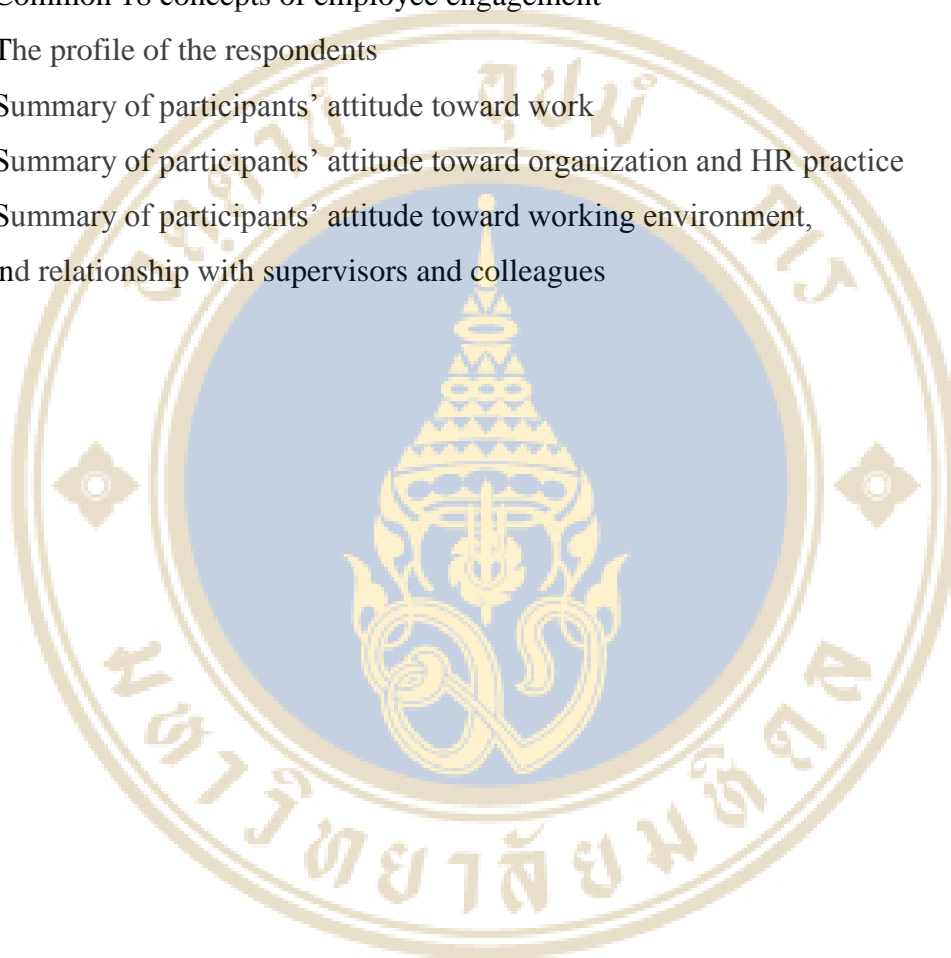
## CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>CHAPTER III METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>CHAPTER IV FINDINGS</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>CHAPTER V RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>BIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>30</b>



## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table</b>	<b>Page</b>
1.1 Common 18 concepts of employee engagement	5
3.1 The profile of the respondents	11
4.1 Summary of participants' attitude toward work	17
4.2 Summary of participants' attitude toward organization and HR practice	20
4.3 Summary of participants' attitude toward working environment, and relationship with supervisors and colleagues	23



## LIST OF FIGURES

<b>Figure</b>	<b>Page</b>
2.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of needs	8
2.2 Parallels between Gallup's Q 12 Engagement Measurement Model and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs	9
2.3 Proposed Framework	10



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Recently, employees are claimed to be the most important strategic assets for success. Many organizations started to recognize their employees as individuals who can create success for the organization as a whole. Unfortunately, there are only 13% of employees are engaged at work, 24% actively disengaged, and 63% are not engaged (The Gallup Organization, 2012). On the other words, there is about one worker in eight workers contribute to their works and organizations! Accordingly, employees engagement is critical not only to increase customer satisfaction but also to improve overall organizational performance. Most research on employee engagement focused on private companies; however, the aim objective of this paper is to explore employee engagement in a public service organization in Thailand.

The concept of employee engagement is developed from organizational practice rather than from academic research. Many of the barriers and its differential antecedents and consequences of employee engagement have been discovered through the practitioner and academic research (Saks, 2006). A great deal of researchers has shown that employee engagement is one of the main success factors that drive the organization more successful than another (Aon Hewitt, 2013; The Gallup Organization, 2012). Unsurprisingly, engaged employees significantly outperform disengaged employees. Highly engaged employees can improve organizational performance up to 30% (The Gallup Organization, 2012). However, another issue that has to be taken into account is that engaged employees are not the only contributory factor to enhance employee performance.

To recognize the key engagement drivers, employees can make a positive impact to their works and organizations. They will be more productive, “less likely to turnover, less likely to be absent and more willing to engage” (Shuck & Wollard, 2010). They will be able to create themselves for continued success by keeping themselves engage. At the bottom line, the organizations will be benefits from engage



and retain valuable employees. For the long term benefits, the organizations will be more effective and better performance (Kataria et. al., 2013). In other words, employee engagement expects employee outcomes, financial performance, and organizational success (Harter et. al., 2002; Muthuveloo et. al., 2013).

However, International Survey Research (IRS) revealed that the same engagement do not work for employees in countries with different economics and cultures. “One size does not fit all when it comes to motivating employees to engage with their company and work.” In some countries, company management is more influential than long-term employment and career opportunities in terms of the determination of engagement (Kataria et. al., 2013). Unfortunately, there is no research support on what engagement works in Thai context and whether it is significantly different from other countries.

Although there are extensive researches of “employee engagement” from many practitioners and academic researchers, there is no universal definition and a lack of ways to measure engagement (Kular et. al., 2008). “Most of the existing research is opinion, rather than evidence-based scholarship” (Shuck & Wollard, 2010). Some researches consider employee engagement as concepts of job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Harter et. al., 2002). It is generally accepted as “a multi-faced construct” (Kular et. al, 2008). To conclude, it is difficult to determine employee engagement since each study examines it under different practices.

### **Aim of this Study**

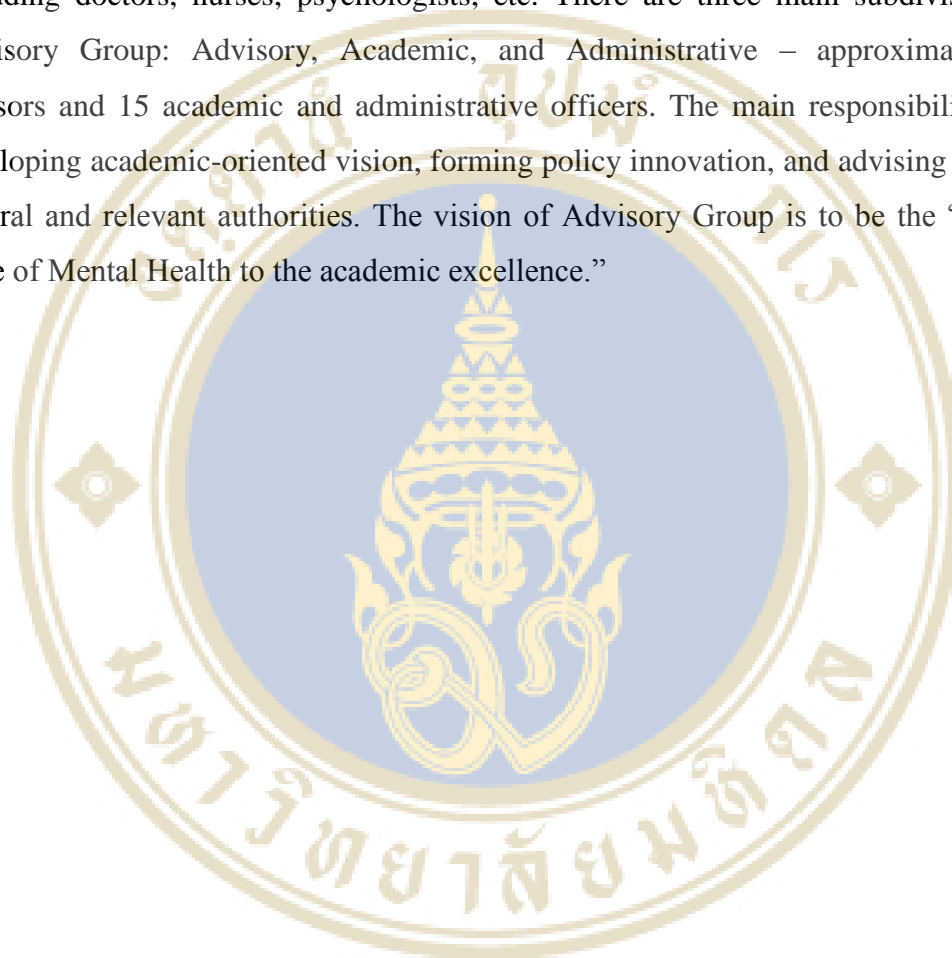
This exploratory research aims to understand what employee engagement is and what the key factors that influenced employee engagement are in public services as well as to make recommendations that will help the organization to leverage employee engagement.

### **Research Scope and Framework**

The research was conducted at Advisory Group which is a part of Department of Mental Health, Ministry of Public Health. In this research, I will start by exploring the literature reviews on the employee engagement and following by description of my research methodology and the presentation of the research findings

from in-depth interviewing seven academic and administrative officers out of 15 officers. Finally, I will make recommendations that will help the organization to leverage employee engagement.

For further information, Advisory Group was found in 1955 on May 9<sup>th</sup> as a part of Department of Mental Health (DMH), Ministry of Public Health. It provides health benefits to the public. This group is composed of specialists in various fields, including doctors, nurses, psychologists, etc. There are three main subdivisions in Advisory Group: Advisory, Academic, and Administrative – approximately 15 advisors and 15 academic and administrative officers. The main responsibilities are developing academic-oriented vision, forming policy innovation, and advising director general and relevant authorities. The vision of Advisory Group is to be the “driving force of Mental Health to the academic excellence.”



## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The purpose of reviewing the existing literature is to define employee engagement and to identify the antecedents and approaches to measuring it. The proposed framework of this study is also provided.

#### **Definitions**

Currently, extensive variations of “employee engagement” definitions are provided from many practitioners and academic researchers. Many researchers have been used engagement to refer to a psychological state such as enthusiasm, involvement, commitment, attachment, and satisfaction (Schneider & Macey, 2008). Some researchers consider employee engagement as concepts of job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Harter et. al., 2002). However, there is no universal definition and a lack of ways to measure engagement (Kular et. al., 2008).

A number of definitions of “employee engagement” have been consistently identified in the literature as follows.

Individual’s involvement and satisfaction with as well as enthusiasm for work (Harter et al., 2002).

A positive employee attitude towards the organization and its values, involving awareness of business context and work to improve job and organizational effectiveness (Robinson et al., 2004).

A distinct and unique construct consisting of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components that is associated with the individual role performance (Saks, 2006).

A positive, fulfilling work-related state of mind that is characterized by Vigor, Dedication, and Absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2006).

A desirable condition (that) has an organization purpose, and connotes involvement, commitment, passion, enthusiasm, focused effort, and energy so it has both attitudinal and behavioral components (Macey & Schneider, 2008).

An individual employee's cognitive, emotional, and behavioral state directed toward desire organizational outcomes (Shuck & Wollard, 2010).

**Table 1.1 Common 18 Concepts of Employee Engagement**

Concept	Percentage Used
Commitment - cognitive, affective, behavioral	5.5%
Commitment - rational & emotional	5.5%
Discretionary effort – going above and beyond	11%
Drive innovation	5.5%
Drive business success	22%
Energy, involvement, efficacy	11%
Passion and profound connection	5.5%
Positive attitude toward company	5.5%
Psychological presence- attention and absorption	5.5%
Shared meaning, understanding- active participation	5.5%
Stay, say, strive	5.5%
Think, feel, act, during performance	11%
Translate employee potential into performance	5.5%

The table shows the common 18 concepts of employee engagement (Dicke et. al., 2007).

One of the early researches by Willam H. Kahn (1990) defined “engagement” as “the harnessing of employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances.” Kahn mainly focused on people's experience of themselves, their work, and the environment. Other factors that very important are the employees' beliefs about organizations, its leaders, and working conditions. Because the emotional experiences the employees have at work affect how they feel about each of these factors, their positive or negative attitudes toward their leaders or organizations is also affected. Kahn mentioned that “Engaged employee drives personal energies (physical, cognitive, emotional) into their work roles. He further stated that “Disengaging” means “uncoupling self from role; people's

behaviors display an evacuation or suppression of their expressive and energetic selves in discharging role obligation.” At last, engaged employees is at the necessary focus of various organizations.

Gallup Organization, the widely well-known organization that associated employee engagement, defines engaged employee as “a heightened emotional connection that an employee feels for his or her organization that influences him or her greater discretionary effort to his or her work.” The engaged employees are those who are “loyal and psychologically committed to the organization.” They are more productive, more likely to stay with the organization, less likely to have accidents on the job, and less likely to steal (The Gallup Organization, 2012).

There are many definitions and common concepts attempting to define employee engagement. To determine what employee engagement is completely depends on the users and organizations. Despite the lack of consistency in the literature, the definitions of “employee engagement” tend to fall into two broad categories. First, a group of researchers suggested engagement as “high levels of personal investment” in term of cognitive, emotional, physical energies in the work tasks perform on a job (Kahn, 1990; Saks, 2006; Macey & Schneider, 2008; Shuck & Wollard, 2010). Second, some researchers focus only on “emotional engagement” as feeling of a strong emotional bond to the employees (Maslach et. al., 2000; Harter, 2002; Robinson et al., 2004; Schaufeli et. al, 2006). They identified engagement as “emotional attachment,” “emotional commitment, or “emotional connection” to the organizations (Kular et. al., 2008; Muthuveloo et. al., 2013).

From the above mentioned studies, I concluded that employee engagement is “a measureable degree of employee’s positive or negative emotional attachment to their job, colleagues, and organization, which profoundly influences their willingness to learn and perform at work” (Vaijayanthi et. al., 2011).

### **Antecedents of Employee Engagement**

Antecedents of employee engagement are, for example, “organizational environment positive emotions such as involvement and pride are encouraged” (Robinson, 2004); fostering of feelings of being valued and involved (Konrad, 2006);

job satisfaction includes benefits, recognition, cooperation, treatment, company policies, team spirit and performance management system (Abraham, 2012).

Kahn (1990) found that there were three psychological conditions strongly related with engagement or disengagement at work: safety, meaningfulness, and availability.

Safety is a “sense of being able to show and employ self without fear or negative consequences to self-image, status, or career.” Four factors that most directly influence safety are interpersonal relationships, group and intergroup dynamics, management style and process, and organizational norms.

Meaningfulness is a “sense of return in investments of self in role performance.” Three factors that most directly influence meaningfulness are task characteristics, role characteristics, and work interaction.

Availability is a “sense of possessing the physical, emotional, and psychological resources necessary for investing self in role performances.” Three factors that most directly influence availability are depletion of physical energy, depletion of emotional energy, individual insecurity, and outside lives.

To conclude, employees will engage more at work when they receive more psychological safety, psychological meaningfulness, and psychological availability. Kahn’s work is confirmed by May, Gilson, and Harter’s study in 2004 that safety, meaningfulness, and availability are significantly associated to employee engagement.

Vaijyanthi, Shreenivasan, and Prabhakaran (2011) found the influence of organization factors on employee engagement: infrastructure, cross functional discussions, communication & interaction, reflection on the feedbacks, support & orientation. In order to improve engagement in the organization, the factors that related to administrative principles such as “communication, support services, and accountable responses from corporate office,” have to be improved. As a result, it is the manager responsibility for developing the organizational strategy and implementing it more carefully.

In 2013, Muthuveloo, Basbous, Ping, and Long found the positive relationship between antecedents consisting of employee communication, employee development, extended employee care, and rewards and recognition in manufacturing sector. The study concluded that the most influential factor on employee engagement



is employee development. Employee development is included training, workshops, or programs that develop skills and abilities of the employees. Once the employees have development opportunity to growth, learn, and advancement in the organization, they will not quit or find another job.

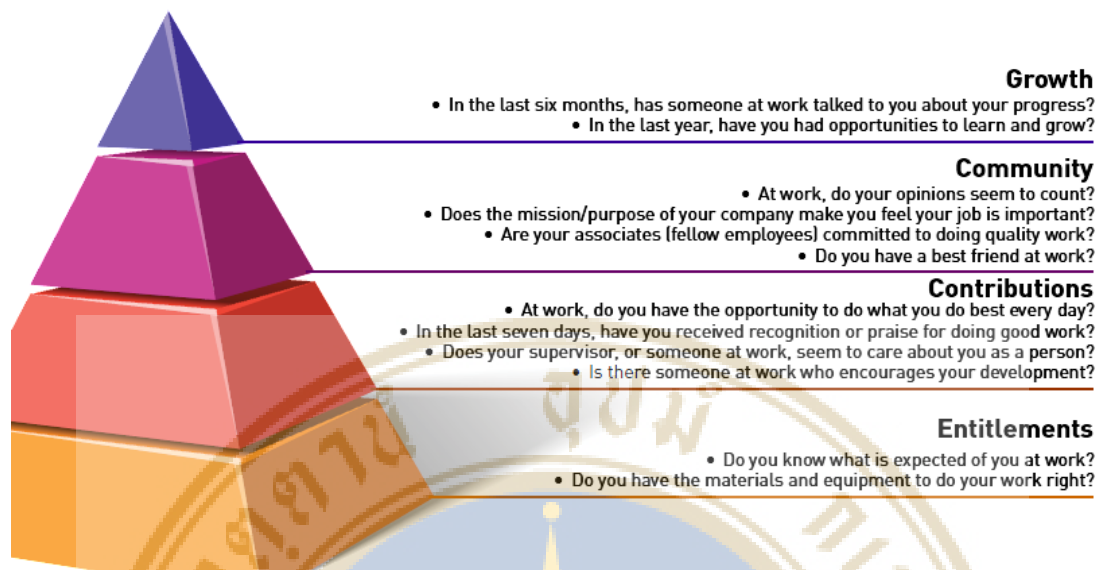
### Approaches to Measuring Employee Engagement

Many researchers suggest that employee engagement is a concept that reflects in human motivation. By motivating employees beyond basic needs, they will have a chance to achieve the highest levels of engagement. The most notable dating back in 1943 theory of Maslow's Hierarchy of needs explained that employees become more engaged through the personal growth and recognition than salary (see figure 1).



**Figure 2.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of needs**

Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of needs theory was used in the Gallup's Q 12 employee engagement instrument (The Gallup Organization, 2012). The similarities show in the figure below.



**Figure 2.2 Parallels between Gallup’s Q 12 Engagement Measurement Model and Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs**

From figure 2, the Gallup’s Q 12 employee engagement instrument is a very popular survey tool for measuring employee engagement. The survey has 12 elements which classify into four dimensions of employee engagement – growth, community, contribution, and entitlement. The Gallup study believes that among the many variables that discriminate between highly productive workplaces and those that are unproductive is the quality of the manager.

Another interesting instrument is 17-item Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) (Schaufeli et. al., 2011). The UWES is mainly focus at work engagement – “a positive work-related state of fulfillment that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption.”

Vigor is “high levels of energy and mental resilience while working the willingness to invest effort in one’s work and persistence even in the face of difficulties.”

Dedication is “a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration pride, and challenge.”

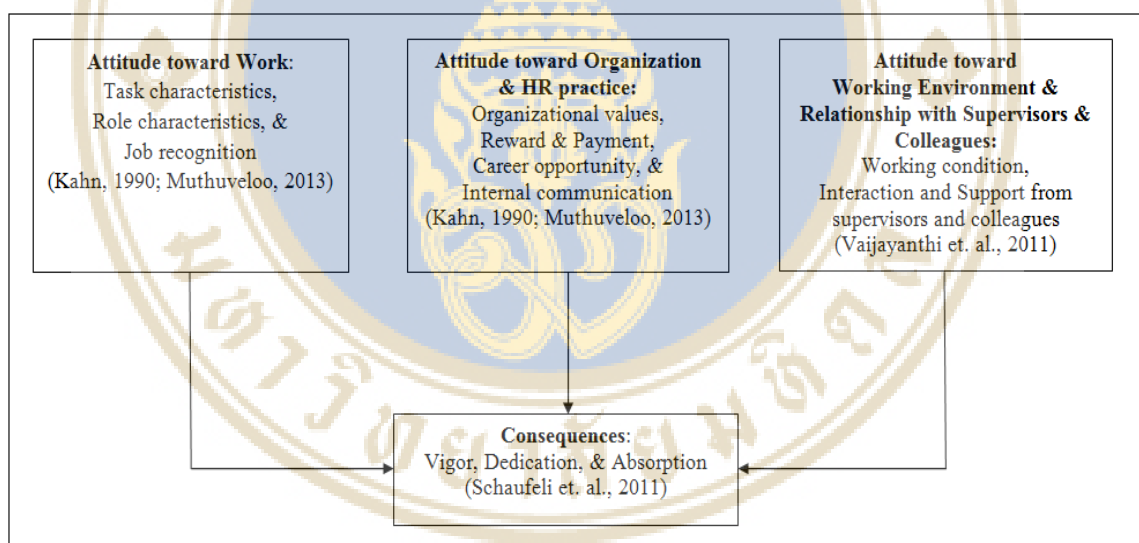
Absorption is a state of occupation of mind, and concentration and engrossment in work.



The research found that vigor and dedication are considered direct opposite of the core “burnout” dimensions of exhaustion and cynicism, respectively.

### Proposed Framework

According to the above literature, 10 factors that influence employee engagement are task characteristics (Kahn, 1990), role characteristics (Kahn, 1990), job recognition (Muthuveloo, 2013), organizational values (Kahn, 1990), reward & payment (Muthuveloo, 2013), career opportunity (Muthuveloo, 2013), internal communication (Muthuveloo, 2013), working condition, relationship with supervisors and colleagues (Vaijayanthi et. al, 2011). Therefore, the hypothesize is that these antecedents of engagement may have effects on attitudes toward job, organization, HR practice, working environment, and relationship with supervisors and colleagues, which may result in term of work engagement – vigor, dedication, and absorption.



**Figure 2.3 Proposed Framework**

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted in the Advisory Group, a part of Department of Mental Health (DMH), Ministry of Public Health. This group is selected as a case study to identify the antecedents of employee engagement in public services.

#### Sample & Data Collection

In this exploratory research, semi-structured interviews were used to collect information from employees. This research focuses on the individuals' experience in the organization to identify the effects on attitudes toward work, organization, HR practice, working environment, and relationship with supervisors and colleagues. The sample was chosen across different age and gender in different levels of position in Advisory Group. Seven academic and administrative officers out of 15 officers in the Advisory Group were in-depth interviewing. The primary data for the study were mainly collected through the interaction and discussion with the employees. Each interview took between 45 minutes to an hour. The interviewees are Public Health Officers, Supply Officer, General Administrative Officer, General Affairs Officer, Social Worker, and General Service Supervisor. The profile of respondents is illustrated in the following table.

**Table 3.1 Respondents Profile**

No.	Experience at DMH (Years)	Position
1	31	General Service Supervisor, Experienced Level
2	8	Public Health Officer, Experienced Level
3	5	Supply Officer, Operational Level
4	3	General Administrative Officer, Practitioner Level
5	2	General Affairs Officer, Operational Level
6	1 and a half	Social Worker, Practitioner Level
7	1	Public Health Officer, Practitioner Level

For this study, Kahn's factors that influence Meaningfulness and safety (i.e. task characteristics, role characteristics, organizational norms, interpersonal relationship, and management style) and Muthuveloo's antecedences of employee engagement (i.e. communication, reward and recognition, employee development, and employee care) were applied to generate the questions. The three sets of interview questions are about (1) attitude toward work, (2) attitude toward organization and HR practice, and (3) attitude toward working environment, and relationship with supervisors and colleagues. The interview questions were provided open-end questions to elicit the information from the respondents. The questions are provided below.

#### Interview questions about attitude toward work

- Could you talk to me about your life at DMH and describe what a typical day is for you in the DMH?
- Could you tell me about your work?
- What is your role and responsibility?
- What do you like? What do you dislike?
- Do you think people find challenge or appreciation at their work? Why?

#### Interview questions about attitude toward organization and HR practice

- Could you tell me about working for the DMH?
- How do you feel as an employee?
- Is it a good place to work?
- Would you recommend others to work here?
- What about rewards or payment?
- Do you know the department values? If yes do you think that these values are important for all employees?
- What do you think about opportunity for growing here?

Interview questions about attitude working environment and relationship with supervisors and colleagues

- What do you think of the working environment here? Is it affects the work?
- Do you think people get enough support from their supervisors?
- What about your colleagues?
- Please tell me more about other employees of the department. Usually do they spend time or share work experience with their colleagues?

In-depth interview is a qualitative research method that is appropriate to conduct a research in this case; since it allows us to observe body language signs as well as nonverbal gestures. The focus is not only what the participants say but also the way they say it. A semi-structured interview allows the participants to feel at ease which may lead them to answer something interesting and meaningful to the current study. The key of interviewing is being flexible. The questions may not follow the outline and some questions may arise during the interview. The interviewer has a list of questions on specific topics to be covered but the interviewees feel free to reply in their own way. The interviewer is required to encourage the interviewees to speak their opinions or reveal hidden feelings. The additional information the research may not has previously thought of is very helpful for better understanding of the employee engagement. The new discovery may help the researcher define the areas to be explored. The questions that urge the interviewees to elaborate, to explain in detail, or to give example in some issues are listed below.

- Would you please give me an example?
- Can you elaborate on that idea?
- Is there anything else you would like to say?
- Could you say some more about that?
- What do you mean by that?
- I am not sure I understand what you are saying, can you please rephrase it again?
- Can you please summarize what you just said?

During the in-depth interview, note taking and voice recording will be used. Thus, the more thorough examination can be identified afterward. At the end of interviewing, the interviewer may take an opportunity to thank the participants.



## **CHAPTER IV**

### **FINDINGS**

In this chapter we will describe our findings based on the results of three topics covered during employees' interviews: 1) attitude toward work, (2) attitude toward organization and HR practice, and (3) attitude toward working environment, and relationship with supervisors and colleagues. For each topic the consequences for the organization are also discussed.

#### **Attitude toward Work**

The first set of questions is about attitude toward work which comprise of three components – task characteristics, role characteristics, and job recognition. Seven officers were asked to describe their works and their typical days at DMH. From analyzing the officers' answers, it is clear that the work tasks have to be challenging, varied, meaningful, and somewhat autonomous; role characteristics have to carry attractive identity, status, and influence; recognition for the employees' contribution is also informed of day-to-day informal recognition.

#### **Task characteristics, role characteristics, and job recognition**

31 year experienced General Service Supervisor at Department of Mental Health, Ministry of Public Health stated that

“Even though, the job is routine, I am still happy doing it. I can continue working for very long periods at a time. It is my specialty and I know it through. I love my job even though it takes lots of effort and hard work to accomplish. I know I can overcome any kinds of obstacles. Passion for work is the key success. I'm proud of the work I do and I'm glad my boss sees my work. I work more because of him. The things I don't like the most is the role status I'm required to perform. It's unclear to me and others what our roles in the group are. Although I got enough support from my boss, I feel like I am not needed in the organization. I'm a supervisor but I don't have any authority. My subordinates sometimes treated me as meaningless.”

To summarize, the supervisor experienced a sense of competence from her routine work and a sense of being valued from her supervisor. She also perceived her roles as unimportant in the organization. When further talking about her supervisor, she busted into tears. She cried, “I’m so lucky, I got him as my boss. If he wasn’t my boss, I may quite long time ago.” To her, the routine is considered as meaningful because of her supervisor. Even though the task characteristics and role characteristics are not assured, she received more from job recognition. This case revealed that the task is routine, the role is unclear, but the job recognition is high. It is quite similar to another three officers: 2 year experience General Affairs Officer, 5 year experienced Supply Officer, and 8 year experienced Public Health Officer.

The previous case is somewhat different from one year experienced Public Health Officer, She explained:

“I am enthusiasm about my job. It’s not routine; in fact, it offers various tasks. Every day is not the same. There are so many little things about these filed that I don’t know. I’m glad I can improve my skills in many areas. Besides, my boss allows me to work in the way I want. She trusts me and always gives challenged assignment. When work accomplished, I’m proud and have more energy to work non-stop. About work role, it is quite unclear to everyone. It seems like we are powerless in the world as a whole.”

The Public Health Officer’s tasks are challenging, varied, meaningful, and somewhat autonomous. She felt secure when she had some control over her work. To her, the role is still unclear and the job recognition is still high. Two other officers (i.e. 3 year experience General Administrative Officer and one and a half year experience Social Worker) also elucidated the same answers.

### **Consequences of Participants’ Attitude toward Work**

The results indicated that task characteristics and role characteristics are not as important as recognition of task performance. Muthuveloo (2013) asserted that “people like to be acknowledged for their exceptional offerings and contribution... Many employees are still ambitious for more day-to-day informal recognition.” In this case studies, all of the participants agreed that recognition play a crucial role in



employees' decisions to quit the job and leave the organization. I will conclude that recognition of task performance can promote a sense of worthiness which leads to meaningful work and engagement. From observing, all of the officers who received recognition present themselves with high energy (vigor), pride (dedication), and focused (absorption). The consequences of participants' attitude toward work are illustrated in the table 4.1

**Table 4.1 Summary of Participants' Attitude toward Work**

No.	Position / Year Experience	Task Characteristics	Role Characteristics	Job Recognition
1	General Service Supervisor / 31	No challenging nor varied; but meaningful	Unclear	High
2	Public Health Officer / 8	No challenging nor varied; but meaningful	Unclear	High
3	Supply Officer / 5	No challenging nor varied; but meaningful	Unclear	High
4	General Administrative Officer / 3	Challenging, varied, meaningful, and autonomous	Unclear	High
5	General Affairs Officer / 2	No challenging nor varied; but meaningful	Unclear	High
6	Social Worker / 1 and a half	Challenging, varied, meaningful, and autonomous	Unclear	High
7	Public Health Officer / 1	Challenging, varied, meaningful, and autonomous	Unclear	High

#### **Attitude toward Organization and HR Practice**

In our exploratory research the second set of questions is about attitude toward work that includes four components – organizational values, HR practice, career opportunity, and internal communication. For example, the officers were ask to answer how do they feel as an employee at DMH and will they recommend others to work here.



### **Organizational values**

From interviewing, only one officer stated that she has not aware of the organizational values; another two officers stated that it has no effect on their works; the rest of the officers stated that the norms or values do not really exist because “every time the Director changes, he always brings something new.” Since the Directors can be selected from outside of the Department, they sometimes change the directions of the Department as well as the way of working. The new policies, management styles, and working atmosphere are completely different from one director to another. Supply Officer responded to this topic in the same direction that

“Supportive managerial environment can influence the opportunities to experiment with new design techniques in the organization. It also allows us to try or fail without fear of the consequences. What I want to say is that we sometimes confuse and not sure what to do in the organization. We have to learn each director before we decide to do something. Some directors even discourage us to work. So, I don’t want to engage or commit in some projects.”

Most of the participants concurred that role of top management can influence the organizational norms, values, and working atmosphere. I may conclude that organizational norms and values have some effect on employee engagement.

### **HR practices**

In this organization, rewards and payment cannot be taken as a motivator. All of the participants agreed that both have no effect on their work performance. One of the officers said

“Payment system is understandable. We work and receive payment according to the rules. So, I accept as it is. I don’t expecting anything and it has no effect on the way I work.”

All of the officers wholeheartedly understand and accept the governmental system as the way it is. To sum up, extrinsic rewards such as payment, bonuses, and benefits do not influence their work performance and engagement.

### **Career opportunity**

Regarding to career opportunity, two officers said it has no effect on them; two officers said it greatly influence; another three officers said they have received continuous training all along. One of the officers who said career opportunity has great influence on their work gave further explanation that “there is unclear about IDP for each position and there’s not a lot of growing for each position.” Another officer argued that her supervisor supports and gives advice about career opportunity to her all the times. She got trained very often because the supervisor always allows her to get training. For some officers, the unclear career path can create the lack of interest or engagement to complete the work.

### **Internal communication**

For internal communication, five out of seven officers declared that communication is a problem in this organization. Another two officers did not completely disagree that there is no problem about communication. In fact, they perceived communication problem as a minor problem. One of them affirmed that

“Errors always happen for internal communication especially notice of meetings. But it’s manageable. Misunderstanding of interaction or less effective communication in the organization is very common in workplace.”

This implies that good communication such as keeping well-informed and having clear understanding about the organization is very important. One of the officer who perceived internal communication as a major problem further stated that “good communication will help employee understand their roles as well as keep up-to-date about the changes that relate to the work. It contributes to the organizational success since it helps employees more organize, focus, and prepare.” Problems can be a de-motivator and cause distractions which will eventually decrease organizational productivity and efficiency. Also, it can consume employees’ mind and procrastinate the work since their minds are not focused at the work.

### **Consequences of Participants’ Attitude toward Organization and HR Practices**

From interviewing many officers, the results showed that rewards and payment have no effect in this organization as regard of employee engagement.

Besides, the most influential factors on employee engagement are organizational value, career opportunity, and internal communication. The officers affirmed that these factors have a great impact on their vigor, dedication and absorption.

For instance, the uncertainty and instability from the management level in the organization have direct impact on the way employees work. Employees who are very attached to the organization may expect the same common work goals and not appreciate the fast-changes. The ambivalence of the organization's management between sense of welcoming and avoiding openness are also mixed in this organization. This is similar to Kahn research (1990). He clarified that organizational norms are one of the factors that most directly influence "psychological safety." People feel safer when they stay in the protective boundaries. Obviously, employees will engage more if they are able to "show and employ self without fear or negative consequences to self-image, status, or career."

The following table presents summary of participants' attitude toward organization and HR Practice.

**Table 4.2 Summary of Participants' Attitude toward Organization and HR Practice**

No.	Position / Year Experience	Organizational Values	Rewards and Payment	Career Opportunity	Internal Communication
1	General Service Supervisor / 31	New policies Management styles Working atmosphere	Acceptable No effect	Received continuous training	Receive well-informed
2	Public Health Officer / 8	New policies Management styles Working atmosphere	Acceptable No effect	No effect	Receive well-informed
3	Supply Officer / 5	Supportive managerial environment	No effect	Received continuous training	Some effect
4	General Administrative Officer / 3	Supportive managerial environment	No effect	Received continuous training	Some negative effect

**Table 4.2 Summary of Participants' Attitude toward Organization and HR Practice (cont.)**

No.	Position / Year Experience	Organizational Values	Rewards and Payment	Career Opportunity	Internal Communication
5	General Affairs Officer / 2	No effect	No effect	Greatly influence	Some effect
6	Social Worker / 1 and a half	No effect	Acceptable No effect	Greatly influence	Some negative effect
7	Public Health Officer / 1	Not aware	Acceptable No effect	No effect	Some negative effect

### **Attitude toward Working Environment, and Relationship with Supervisors and colleagues**

The third set of questions is about attitude toward working environment, and relationship with supervisors and colleagues.

#### **Working environment**

As a result of interviewing officers in topic of working environment, all of them showed a serious concern about working condition and their safety. Except one person, she responded that it has no effect to her. She further informed that the office is her second home and “it’s a good place to work. [She] would recommend others to work here.” In contrast, all of the officers agreed that their workplace is not a pleasant place and it has some affect to their work. Surprisingly, the department does not have the first aid room at the workplace! Moreover, the environment is unsafe and unhealthy. One of the officers said

“The building is breaking in some areas. I feel insecure but nothing I can do. Also, air flow in the office is very bad. Sometimes I’ve got itchy at my eye. When one of my co-workers got sick, we are all affected. This is not healthy at all. Besides, our office is very small. Everyone has to sit together. There’s no cubic for each employee. Not even for a supervisor. One room for 8 people is just too much! Sometimes, I cannot concentrate at my work because it is very noisy. So, I have to work late after work.”

Another officer added that “As a newcomer, the chair, table, or computer was not nice. The computer is very old. The noise of it is very loud. We don’t have enough tools to work. Apart from that, the hallway is a bit dirty in some areas. During raining season, the electricity went down often and there is nothing we can do. Our work had to be paused for a while. I will say it is quite a difficult place to work. ”

Clearly, the attitude toward working environment can create negative feelings about work which greatly affect employee engagement.

### **Relationship with supervisors**

All of the officers concurred that their supervisor are very nice and significantly influence their decisions to quit the job and leave the organization. For example, one officer said

“My boss is my role model who has Four Sublime States of Mind [i.e. loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity]. He always has a good solution for me. Always listens and supports on the continuous learning and training. I’m very happy working with him. He motivates me to work more. I will stay here as long as he’s my boss.”

The findings suggested that support from the supervisors and positive relationships with them are very important. It directly influences the turnover rate. Another officer asserted that her supervisor sees her as a person apart from work which can create positive feelings such as feelings important and meaningful. Thus, supervisors’ characteristics are very important. One officer informed that her supervisor is very friendly and open. She does not afraid to discuss to her supervisor and share some ideas which can promote a sense of worthiness and leads to meaningful work and engagement.

### **Relationship with colleagues**

After analyzing officers’ attitudes and options about their colleagues, all of them replied questions with positive feelings. They seemed to work along well. In fact, they showed some group effort and help each other in order to finish the assignment. One officer said

“We work along well. My co-workers are really helpful. When someone finishes his/her own task, s/he will help others. During crisis, I never feel alone. I know we will help each other. They are good to me. Always support at work. We sometimes share techniques or new ideas about work.”

Meaningful interaction or relationship can enhance senses of unity and valuable. They respect and trust each other while working together. This allows them to well-perform and enjoy their jobs.

### **Consequences of Participants’ Attitude toward Working Environment, and Relationship with Supervisors and colleagues**

All of the officers do not show tension at work. Even though the working environment does not meet the standard, they maintain their high levels of energy (vigor), pride (dedication), and focused (absorption). This is because the relationship with supervisors and colleagues are encouraging. As Muthuveloo (2013) purposed working environment and relationship with supervisors and colleagues have some effects on employee engagement. The following table presents a summary of participants’ attitude toward organization and HR Practice.

**Table 4.3 Summary of Participants’ Attitude toward Working Environment, and Relationship with Supervisors and colleagues**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Position / Year Experience</b>	<b>Working Environment</b>	<b>Relationship with supervisors</b>	<b>Relationship with colleagues</b>
1	General Service Supervisor / 31	Unsafe and unhealthy Not enough space Noisy	A good role model	Support and share ideas Group effort
2	Public Health Officer / 8	Electricity problems Not enough trees Dirty place	Listen and accept	Support and share ideas Group effort
3	Supply Officer / 5	No Effect	Listen and accept	Support and share ideas
4	General Administrative Officer / 3	Unsafe and unhealthy	A good role model	Support and share ideas Group effort



**Table 4.3 Summary of Participants' Attitude toward Working Environment, and Relationship with Supervisors and colleagues (cont.)**

5	General Affairs Officer / 2	Unsafe and unhealthy	A good role model	Support and share ideas Spent times after work
<b>No.</b>	<b>Position / Year Experience</b>	<b>Working Environment</b>	<b>Relationship with supervisors</b>	<b>Relationship with colleagues</b>
6	Social Worker / 1 and a half	Unhealthy No first aid room Not enough equipment	Always give advice, solution, and support	Support and share ideas Group effort
7	Public Health Officer / 1	Unsafe and unhealthy Not enough equipment	Always give advice, solution, and support	Support and share ideas Spent times after work

## **CHAPTER V**

### **RECCOMENDATIONS**

Although employee engagement has been conceptualized in many different approaches; there is no universal definition and still a lack of ways to measure engagement. Since each research was conduct with different measures of engagement under different contexts, it is difficult to conclude. Therefore, this present study attempts to identify a possible set of factors that might contribute to engagement in public services; then, we can understand and help the organization to leverage employee engagement. The literature review shows 10 factors that influence employee engagement which are task characteristics (Kahn, 1990), role characteristics (Kahn, 1990), job recognition (Muthuveloo, 2013), organizational values (Kahn, 1990), reward & payment (Muthuveloo, 2013), career opportunity (Muthuveloo, 2013), internal communication (Muthuveloo, 2013), working condition (Vaijayanthi et. al, 2011), relationship with supervisors and colleagues (Vaijayanthi et. al, 2011).

According to the results, the major findings from the personal interviews with the officers and their attitudes revealed that factors such as task characteristics, role characteristics, and rewards and payment have no effect in this organization regarding to employee engagement issue. Other factors such as job recognition, organizational values, career opportunity, internal communication, working environment, and relationship with supervisors and colleagues have the most influential effect. The results also indicate that these antecedents have a positive impact on employee engagement. The major findings are summarized below.

- Higher job recognition, higher employee engagement
- Lower organizational values, lower employee engagement
- Lower career opportunity, lower employee engagement
- Lower internal communication, lower employee engagement
- Lower working environment, lower employee engagement
- Higher relationship with supervisors, higher employee engagement



- Higher relationship with colleagues, higher employee engagement

As mention earlier, highly engaged employees can improve organizational performance up to 30% (The Gallup Organization, 2012) because they are more productive, “less likely to turnover, less likely to be absent and more willing to engage” (Shuck & Wollard, 2010). They will be able to create themselves for continued success by keeping themselves engage. At the bottom line, the organizations will be benefits from engage and retain valuable employees. For the long term benefits, the organizations will be more effective and better performance (Kataria et. al., 2013).

### **Recommendation**

Since this organization has a high level of recognition and relationship with supervisors and colleagues, it has to give more important to organizational values, career opportunity, working environment, and internal communication.

Firstly, the organization has to build a strong work culture where the goals and values of the organization are aligned. This cannot be achieved if the top executives do not provide clear values. Thus, it is top executives’ responsibility to create a new culture or norms of low ambiguity to attach the employees. Because “engaged employees are likely to have a greater attachment to the organization,” they will never quit their job and leave the organization (Kular, 2008).

Secondly, Individual Development Plan (IDP) is a key to enhance career opportunity. The organization has plenty of training already so it has to develop more on each specific employee. Once employees see the opportunity in their jobs, they will engagement more. Muthuveloo (2013) suggested that job satisfaction can be improved if organizations pay more attention to employee development. Training can also help the accomplishment of organization’s goals. To enhance the knowledge and skills, the employee will gain more work methods and eventually will feel encourage to continue and engage more in their works.

Thirdly, for improving working environment, the organization has to create a first aid room and perhaps a cleaning day once a year for better health and safety working condition. It also has to create a sense of community within an organization. From the personal interviews with the officers, the organizational

environment influences employees as regards of their willingness to stay working and the extent to which they advocate their organization.

Lastly, internal communication can be enhanced by two-way communication through regular meetings such as morning talk. Good communication between supervisors and employees is very important. Employees need to receive well-informed and having clear understanding about the organization and their jobs. It contributes to the organizational success since it helps employees more organize, focus, and prepare. Sahoo and Mishra (2012) once said “clear and consistent communication of what is expected from employees paves the way for an engaged workforce.”

### **Limitations**

There are some limitations in this study. The first major limitation is time restriction as a consequence only a small sample of employees was interviewed. A second possible limitation is that this research is narrow focus i.e. limited to one single department inside the organization. Therefore the results cannot be generalized as a whole. Finally personal interviews on employees' attitude are always subject to some bias. Some people may not be willing to say or share their real opinions or experiences

### **Future Research**

This exploratory research could be a foundation for an employee survey that will collect information on the same topic but on a large sample. Such survey will help to understand differences between departments inside the organization and also between employees. Finally since more employees do not engage in their work, it would be interesting to focus on the concept of “disengagement” in a future research.

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