

**EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: LINKING MOTIVATIONAL  
ANTECEDENTS, TRUST IN LEADERSHIP, AND TURNOVER  
INTENTION**



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**EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: LINKING MOTIVATIONAL  
ANTECEDENTS, TRUST IN LEADERSHIP, AND TURNOVER  
INTENTION**

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on  
August 21, 2016



.....  
Mr. Keeradit Hirunyasiri

.....  
Assoc. Prof. Roy Kouwenberg,  
Ph.D., CFA  
Advisor

.....  
Asst. Prof. Prattana Punnakitikashem,  
Ph.D.  
Chairperson

.....  
Assoc. Prof. Annop Tanlamai,  
Ph.D.  
Dean  
College of Management  
Mahidol University

.....  
Simon Zaby,  
Ph.D.  
Committee member

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Keeradit Hirunyasiri

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KEERADIT HIRUNYASIRI 5749136

ENTREPRENEURIAL MANAGEMENT

THEMATIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE: ASSOC. PROF. ROY KOUWENBERG, Ph.D.,

ASST. PROF. PRATTANA PANNAKITIKASHEM, Ph.D., SIMON ZABY, Ph.D.

**ABSTRACT**

Employee engagement is seen as a powerful source of competitive advantage amidst stiff competition. Nevertheless, there are evidences showing that engagement has been declining today. In Thailand, employee turnover becomes one of the critical issues for companies especially if lost employees are key people. Moreover, little theory or empirical observations account for the role of engagement as a means through which organizations can create competitive advantages. This paper builds on Kahn's (1990) definition to propose engagement as a key mechanism explaining relationships among a variety of organizational factors and turnover intention. Also, this paper introduces trust in leadership as a crucial means through which organizational practices affect engagement. The objective of this study is to investigate whether three distinct organizational practices- motivating work design, HRM practices, and transformational leadership behavior- generate higher level of trust in leaders, and whether such level of trust influences employee engagement that ultimately leads to lower level of turnover intention. This study uses quantitative method based on employee survey from one private company operated in Thailand. The results reveal that when the organization designs jobs to enrich work characteristics and is steered by transformational leaders, this increases the level of trust in leaders, which leads to enhancement of employee engagement. Additionally, winning trust in leaders from employees could directly lower the level of turnover intention. The current investigation contributes to the engagement literature in the context of Thailand workplace, and benefit the management who values the human capital and seeks to improve employee engagement in order to retain their key talent as means for overcoming its counterparts.

**KEYWORDS:** Employee engagement/motivational antecedents/trust in leadership/turnover intention

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Both academic scholars and business consultants have claimed that engaged employees provide a company competitive advantages. The ability to create engaged employees will be one of the biggest challenges in the coming decades. Most of scholars agree that job engagement leads to positive outcomes including employee performances and to negative turnover intention. As a company strives to survive and rise above its counterparts, physical and mental well-being of employees become one of the important aspects that a company need to pay attention. Hence, employee engagement is seen as a powerful source of competitive advantage amidst stiff competition (Bedarkar and Pandita, 2014). Nevertheless, at the same time, there are evidences showing that engagement has been declining today. It has been reported that around half of American workers in the workforce are disengaged that costs the US businesses \$300 billion a year in lost productivity. (Bates, 2004; Saks, 2006).

In Thailand, employee turnover becomes one of the critical issues for a company in several industries especially if lost employees are key people or high performers since companies have been investing in training and developing knowledge on those employees (Wu and Polsaram, 2013). High employee turnover in Thailand has adverse effect not only on organizations 'productivity but also on nation in term of inconsistent human resource development and the nation's global competitiveness. Thailand has experienced more than a 10% average turnover rate for several years (Thapanachai, 2007). WillisTowersWatson's survey (2014) reveals that turnover rates in Thailand in 2012 and 2013 were at 12.5% and 12.8%, respectively. This trend is likely to continue due to the governmental policy of higher minimum wage and free flow of labor as a result of the AEC. This leads to increasing labor market competition that makes retention of the talents harder than ever before (The Nation, 2013). Amidst

fierce competition, cost saving is very crucial for successful organizations. According to “2015 Q1 Flash Survey: HR Trends and Challenging Issues for General Industry” conducted by Willis Towers Watson, a leading global advisory, broking and solution company, building employee engagement was ranked as number one HR challenge by companies, followed by talent retention. Therefore, this paper aims to study which organizational factors could lead to low turnover intention through engaged employees. Today, winning companies are those who know how to develop and manage their people, retain their best people and unleash their full capability (WillisTowersWatson, 2016).

For the management research literature, employee engagement is a relatively new concept. Although the concept of employee engagement has gained a great deal of interest during the past decade, little theory or empirical observations account for the role of engagement as a means through which organizations can create competitive advantages. In other words, researchers have not fully examined the role of engagement as a mechanism that links organizational factor to employee job performance (Rich et al., 2010).

This article builds on Kahn’s (1990) definition to propose engagement as a key mechanism explaining relationships among a variety of organizational factors and turnover intention. Engagement- defined by Kahn (1990) as the harnessing of an employee’s full self in terms of physical, cognitive, and emotional energies to work role - is a robust motivational concept of engagement that provides a comprehensive explanation for individual-level outcomes and attitude. Moreover, we introduce trust in leadership as a key mechanism through which organizational resources affect engagement. Trust in leadership is an indicator of high quality of the leader-follower relationship (Blau, 1964; McAllister, 1995). Covey and Merrill (2006) found that lack of trust in supervisors and organizations ends with lack of employee engagement with their works. Therefore, we aim to examine the degree to which engagement serves as a significant mechanism that transmits the effects of the organizational practices to employees’ turnover intention through social process (i.e. trust) (Qu et al., 2015).



This paper seeks to answer three fundamental research questions. First, which organizational resources or practices affect trust in leadership? Second, does gaining trust in leadership from employees enhance the level of employee engagement? Third, to what extent employees invest themselves into their work in a way that reduces their negative work attitude measured as turnover intention?

Therefore, the objective of this paper is to investigate through what explanatory mechanism, organizational resources or practices might encourage followers to engage in their work activities in order to promote the positive outcome. Specifically, we seek to explain whether motivating work design, HRM practices, transformational leadership behavior generate higher level of trust in leaders, and whether such level of trust influences employee engagement that ultimately leads to lower level of turnover intention.

In the current investigation, we contribute to the engagement literature in the context of Thailand workplace. As far as it is concerned, there are no solid empirical studies on employee engagement in Thailand. In addition, although engagement has been part of the company success, many Thai companies are still experiencing a poor performance due to high rate of turnover, resulting in financial loss and time-wasting for both company and management team. Therefore, this paper would benefit the management who values the human capital and seeks to improve employee engagement in order to retain their key talent as means for enhancing competitive advantage.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **THEORY AND HYPOTHESES**

Employee engagement is a vital element in determining the extent of organizational effectiveness, innovation and competitiveness. Barrick et al. (2015) propose that having an internal workforce that fully engages in one's own job is a unique, human resource-focused capacity. However, the area of employee engagement was considered largely as practical consultancy field till 1990s. Since then, the concept has been gained greater attention from researchers in such disciplines as business and management, psychology, and organizational behavior (Bedarkar and Pandita, 2014). In this study, we draw on Kahn's (1990) employee engagement theory as a key theoretical explanation of which appropriate organizational practices could bring about employee engagement through social mechanism (i.e. trust), which in turn, negatively affect turnover intention of engaged employees.

#### **Engagement**

Employee engagement has increasingly gained attention for the past ten years. Academic scholars and business consultants have agreed that organizations could use engaged employees as a tool for strategic partner in order to win the marketplace. Compared with many studies from the practitioners and consulting firms, research on employee engagement in the academic literature is still little (Robinson et al., 2004). In other words, little empirical observation accounts for the role of employee engagement as a means through which organizations can create competitiveness (Rich et al., 2010).

Employees exhibit differently in term of their dedication, energy and attention they put forth in their jobs. Such variation is captured by individuals' job

engagement (Kahn, 1990). Although most researchers agree on the construct of job engagement, there are different means of its conceptualization developed chronologically (Babcock-Roberson and Strickland, 2010). One of the earlier concept developed by Goffman (1961) defined engagement as the “spontaneous involvement in the role and a visible investment of attention and muscular effort” (cited in Wildermuth and Pauken, 2008). Csikszentmihalyi (1982) expressed engagement as a flow of holistic sensation through which employees experience when they are totally involved in their jobs. Robinson et al. (2004) defined engagement as a positive attitude of employees towards their organization where they work to improve job and organizational effectiveness. Flemming and Asplund (2007) delineated employee engagement as “the ability to capture the heads, hearts, and souls of your employees to instill an intrinsic desire and passion for excellence.” Moreover, burnout researchers found that engagement is the direct opposite of burnout. Engagement involves high level of energy and identification with one’s work that is opposed to burnout which involve lower level of those aspects (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007). In addition, Maslach et al. (2001) characterized engagement into three elements which are energy, involvement, and efficacy that were the direct opposite of three burnout components which were exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy, respectively.

Rothbard (2001:656) defines engagement as psychological presence but further differentiates the construct into 2 components- attention and absorption. Attention refers to “cognitive availability and the amount of time one spends thinking about a role” whereas absorption refers to “being engrossed in a role or intensity of one’s focus on a role. Furthermore, Schaufeli et al. (2002:74) define engagement as “a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption”. The vigor refers to high level of energy and mental resilience, willingness to exert effort and persistence in the face of obstacles. The dedication refers to a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride and strong identification with work. The absorption refers to being fully concentrated and engrossed in one’s work whereby time passes quickly, and feeling difficult to detach

oneself from work. Moreover, they point out that engagement is not a temporary specific state. Rather, it is a more persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state reflected high intrinsic motivation that is not focused on any specific object, event, individual, or behavior (Schaufeli et al., 2002; Solanova et al., 2011). Cook (2012) defines engagement as how positively the employee thinks about the organization and is proactive in achieving organizational goals for customers, colleagues and other stakeholders. In sum, there is no consensus on definition and measurement of employee engagement construct. However, the present paper builds on definition developed Kahn (1990) since it is a multi-faceted construct that has been consistently used in organizational research area.

According to Kahn (1990:700), engagement is defined as “the simultaneous employment and expression of a person’s ‘preferred self’ in task behaviors that promote connections to work and to others, personal presence (physical, cognitive, and emotional) and active, full performances”. Organization members harness their full selves in term of physical, cognitive, and emotional energies to work role performances. Kahn further elaborates that individuals exhibit engagement when they become physically involved with tasks; are cognitively vigilant, focused and attentive; and are emotionally connected to their work and others in the service of one’s defined role. In other words, engagement involves contributing “hands, head, and heart” (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1995: 110) to work performance. This conceptualization shows the linkage between engagement and job performance in a holistic and connected manner since it accounts for the possibility of simultaneous investment of available resources (i.e. affective, cognitive, and physical energies) into role performance. Therefore, it represents an inclusive view of the employee’s agentic self and could provide a comprehensive explanation for the variation of job performances as compared to other engagement concepts and other narrower evaluation of one’s connection with one’s work role (Rich et al., 2010).

Rich et al (2010) argues that Kahn’s engagement concept provides a more comprehensive view of the self than more familiar and well-researched concepts such

as job involvement, job satisfaction, and intrinsic motivation that emphasize relatively narrow aspects of employees' selves. Job involvement refers to the degree to which an employee relates to or identifies with his or her jobs. An employee who exhibits high job involvement is likely to focus his or her thoughts on job even when outside of work (Kanungo, 1982). Job satisfaction refers to a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the favorable perception of one's job or job experience such as job characteristics, supervisors, and coworkers (Russell et al., 2004). Intrinsic motivation refers to internal desire to accomplish a task in the absence of external constraints or rewards (Deci, 1975). Each of these three constructs focuses on a different aspect of the self to perform a task role. This means that job involvement focuses on the cognitive energy that employees invest in various works to maintain their self-identities related to works (May et al., 2004). Job satisfaction captures emotional reactions to fulfill psychological needs or values. Intrinsic motivation focuses on physical energies exerted on specific task activities in order to maintain competency, autonomy, and control. However, we argue that these three aspects should be considered as an aggregate construct to explain variability of job performances. Therefore, since Kahn's engagement contains all of them simultaneously in a more complete representation of the self rather than in a fragmented manner, in this study we draw the concept of engagement from Kahn's work as a key mechanism to explain a relationship among organizational factors, individual characteristics and turnover intention. Rich et al. (2010) found that job engagement significantly mediates the relationship among the antecedents (i.e. value congruence, perceived organizational support, and core self-evaluation) and performance outcomes (i.e. task performance and organizational citizenship behavior) even though job involvement, job satisfaction, and intrinsic motivation are included as mediators in the model. Put simply, they found no significant indirect relationships attributed to job involvement, job satisfaction, and intrinsic motivation. This result provides evidence of the distinctiveness of engagement relative to those narrower aspects of the self.

Employee engagement could be explained by using Social Exchange Theory (SET). According to Blau (1964), employee engagement is a means of repaying an organization in exchange of career- and social-related support provided by one's organization. Put simply, when the organization provides resources and support to employees, they will reciprocate by fully engaging in their work roles (Downey et al., 2015). Employees who perceive high organizational support are inclined to reciprocate with higher level of engagement. Engaged employees would have a high-quality relationship with the employer leading them to have more positive attitudes, behaviors, and intention, that in turn, leading to higher business results (Saks, 2006).

Researches on employee engagement have indicated that engagement results in employees' positive health and positive attitudes towards work and organizations. These consequences include intrinsic motivation, creativity, ethical behaviors, employee retention, productivity, and business success (Bedarkar and Pandita, 2014). Harter et al. (2002) provided evidences from their meta-analysis of 7,393 business units in 3 companies that employee engagement is positively associated with customer satisfaction, productivity, profit, and negatively related to employee turnover. Ultimately, these consequences lead to increased likelihood of business success.

### **Antecedences of Trust**

Trust is defined as “a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectation of the intentions or behavior of another” (Rousseau et al., 1998:395). Similarly, Mayer et al. (2009:712) define trust as “the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other party will perform a particular action important to the trustor irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party”. These definitions of trust imply that trust is neither behaviors nor choice, but an underlying psychological condition that can cause or result from actions or behaviors (Rousseau et al., 1998).

Many scholars have acknowledged that trust matters in organizations. It has been widely recognized as a fundamental element of cooperative relationship on the basis of the words, actions, and decision of another (Blau, 1964; McAllister, 1995). Kahn (1990:708) notes that the situations that promote trust are “predictable, consistent, clear, and nonthreatening”. In this study, we focus on trust in leadership which reflects a high quality of the leader-follower relationship. Trust in leadership has become one of the most important factors that gain attention in management researches. Dirks and Ferrin (2002) explain that trust could lead to a wide range of outcomes including job attitudes, in-role and extra role performances and turnover intention. Therefore, it is worthwhile to gain further understanding of the circumstances under which trust is created and worked.

***Motivating work design.*** Work design has a purpose to increase employees’ internal motivation through enrichment of work and role characteristics and work interactions (Humphrey et al., 2007). One of the most well-established theories of the influence of task characteristics on individual performance is Hackman and Oldham’s Job Characteristic Model (Hackman and Oldham, 1980). Drawing on Hackman and Oldham, job characteristic model suggests that autonomy, skill variety, task significance, task identity, and feedback are key characteristics of a task for enhancing work motivation, increasing high-quality performance, and lowering level of absenteeism and turnover.

The motivational force of job enrichment induces intellectual stimulation that encourages employees to approach their works in a new way and think out of the box, and provides them opportunity for task autonomy, variety, and additional challenge. Allowing followers to work towards organizational vision by securing their “buy-in” to the big picture make tasks more significant and foster a sense of task identity. Moreover, assigning tasks on the basis of an individual’s needs and abilities promotes development of skill variety of employees. Finally, being able to provide timely feedback to employees also enhance internal motivations in employees (Avolio,

1999; Whittington et al., 2004). Whittington et al. (2004) found that enriched jobs lead to both higher in-role and extra-role behaviors.

Job characteristics convey a certain level of trust since they convey clear direction and expectations towards employees' work roles and performances. For example, providing employees with control over their jobs signals that the firm trusts in their capacities. In contrast, low job control and highly directive supervisor signal low trust in one's capacities and enhance prevention action, which ultimately leads to disengage oneself from work role. Similarly, when employees perceive that their roles provide them with ownership over their jobs (task identity), opportunity to utilize a variety of skills (skill variety), opportunity to make differences or challenging work (task significance), and quality interaction with others (feedback), they will sense that their jobs are so valuable, useful and purposeful (Hackman and Oldham, 1976). This shows that leaders trust in them and commit to their career development. As interpersonal trust is a key foundation in leader-follower social exchange relation. Employees are likely to reciprocate task-related support from leaders with their trust. Additionally, constructive feedback could also increase trust by mitigating risk through information sharing, which builds trust in leaders that provide such information. Lastly, increasing task identity and task significance, employees may feel a greater sense of alignment between employees' values, goals, and objectives, and those of the organizations (Barrick et al., 2015). As a result, employees will perceive clearly how their work roles contribute to organizational goals. Thus, they could trust in leaders that their contributions would not be abused. Therefore, jobs that are high on these core job characteristics induce employees to develop trust in their leaders, which ultimately bring more themselves into their work (Saks, 2006).

*Hypothesis 1: Motivating work design (i.e. autonomy, task significance, task identity, variety, and feedback) will be positively related to trust in leaders.*



*Human resource management practices.* Several scholars have pointed out that HRM strategies and practices could influence organizational outcomes. According to Collins and Smith (2006:545), “HR systems affect firm performance by creating an organizational environment that elicits employee behaviors and capabilities that contribute to firm competitive advantage”. However, the assumption that HRM practices impact employees’ individual-level attitudes and behaviors through social mechanism has been largely untested (Takeuchi et al, 2009). Therefore, little empirical evidences could explain the mechanism through which HR practices influence employees’ attitudes and behaviors.

As opposed to single activities, patterns of HR activities are vital to achieve organizational objectives. According to Pfeffer (1998), bundling HR practices so that they complement and strengthen each other creates the mutually reinforcing conditions that generate desired outcomes. The effective HRM practices tend to shift away the employee-firm relationship from a short-term, economic based exchange of employee contribution towards a long-term, open-ended relationship in which both parties commit to invest in one another’s goals (Blau, 1986). In such mutual investment relationship, employees are likely to view organizational interest as important as their self-interest. In turn, organizations are likely to be more attentive to employees’ well-being and make long-term investment in employees’ career development.

Researchers have posited that HR practices play a vital role to create trust. Whitener (1997) argues that HR activities create a situation where employees feel obligated to reciprocate with positive attitudes such as trust. Introducing the formal performance appraisals and merit-based compensation within companies provides clear directions for performance expectation to employees. Moreover, pay equity and job security could signal to employees that organizations care about their well-being and their future. Therefore, appropriate HRM practices foster trust in leadership due to reducing uncertainty and unpredictability by providing clarity regarding to employees’ past performance and future expectation (Guest and Conway, 2002; Barrick et al.,

2015). Moreover, providing constructive information in areas that employees could perform better and get additional rewards would make them feel valued and appreciated, especially in the form of positive feedback (Tsui et al, 1997).

Employees usually evaluate the quality and appropriateness of HRM practices that significantly affect their level of trust in their leaders. Then, such level of trust influences the degree of their engagement in those practices, which in turn, lead to outcomes such as organizational performances, employee attitudes and behaviors (Cho and Poister, 2014). Fair performance appraisal substantially enhances employees' motivation that would affect level of trust in leaders (Vroom, 1964). Gould-Williams and Davies (2005) propose that based on SET, HRM practices are positively perceived as management's commitment to employees that in turn, employees will reciprocate by exhibiting valued attitudes and behaviors. In the other words, when employees believe that their leaders commit to and concern about their well-being and career development, they tend to positively respond to the organizations with higher level of trust. Cho and Poister (2014) demonstrate the importance of trust by differentiating into three kinds of trust in leadership from the hierarchical level. They found that those three kinds of trust mediated the relationship between managerial practices and organizational performances. First, career development plays a major role in fostering trust in departmental leaders and leadership teams. Second, communication is a key factor for trust in leadership teams and supervisors. Third, performance appraisal is a crucial factor for determining trust in supervisors. Effective HRM practices signal that leaders value, care about, and support the followers' success and well-being. Therefore, it is concluded that trust is enhanced as a result of such positive exchange. This study proposes that when HRM practices are carried out effectively, they increase level of trust.

*Hypothesis 2: HRM practices (i.e. equity pay, job security, developmental feedback, and pay for performance) will be positively related to trust in leaders.*

***Transformational leadership.*** According to Bass (1990: 21), transformational leaders motivate followers when they “broaden and elevate the interests of their employees, when they generate awareness and acceptance of the purposes and mission of the group, and when they stir their employees to look beyond their own self-interest for the good of the group.” This ultimately results in achievement of higher levels of performance than expectation. Past researches reveal that transformational leadership contributes to followers’ engagement through intrinsic motivation (Tims et al., 2011; Zhu et al., 2009). Bass (1985) and Burns (1978) point out that transformational leaders are driven out of deeply held personal value systems such as justice and integrity. The main behaviors of transformational leaders may include articulating goals, building an image, demonstrating confidence in their followers’ ability, and arousing motivation. These behaviors can stimulate followers’ task motivation to do more than they are expected to do (Yukl, 1989a) and perform beyond the compliance of formal role requirement (Bass, 1985) without bartering goods and rights provided by transactional leaders (Kuhnert and Lewis, 1987).

Transformational leaders inspire their followers to move to higher performance than requirement through four dimensions called the four I’s: Idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individual consideration, and intellectual stimulation. *Idealized influence* refers to demonstration as a role model for ethical behaviors, the adoption of organizational goals over personal benefits, and willingness to pursue these goals at the expense of personal cost. This should strengthen the emotional bond between leaders and followers. As a result, employees would identify with and admire their leaders so they develop trust and respect to leaders that ultimately lead to work harder to promote organizational goals. Also, such leaders could transcend employees’ self-interest for sake of organizational interest. *Inspirational motivation* refers to showing followers with a sense of purpose in their jobs that will generate additional organizational goal-directed energy. Such leaders develop an appealing vision of the future, mobilize commitment to that vision, create strategy to accomplishing that vision, and articulate precisely to followers. They show

high performance expectation to the followers and communicate this expectation to them. When followers can have a common understanding of leaders' vision, identify with that vision, and ensure attainment of that vision, they should possess high level of trust (Avolio, 1999). *Individualized consideration* means that leaders act as mentors by acknowledging that individuals have their own needs and abilities for achievement and development. Leaders show that they sincerely care for them and their well-being by such actions as keeping communication lines open, mentoring followers, listening attentively to their concerns and needs and helping them to address these. With providing compassion, support, guidance and empathy, this instills trust among followers. Finally, *intellectual stimulation* refers to stimulating creativity in their followers by nurturing and developing innovative thought of followers. Leaders challenge followers' assumptions and belief, encourage followers to think deeply about their own jobs, figure out better ways of executing their tasks, and approach problems in a different perspective. In doing so, followers may experience fear, anxiety, frustration, and uncertainty. However, all of these can be relieved by trust they have in their leaders. By stimulating creativity, leaders empower employees in the process of decision-making. This shows that leaders respect them so the social exchange between two parties is developed and then lead to higher level of trust (Bass, 1990; Breevart et al., 2014; Vicki et al, 2011; Bass and Avolio, 1995; Avolio, 1999). All of these four dimensions heighten the perception among followers towards their leaders in that their leaders are benevolent, competent, trustworthy, and dependable (Zhu et al., 2013)

Winning employees' trust is a crucial component of a transformational leadership. The main reason why followers are motivated to perform beyond expectation is that they trust and respect in their leaders (Podsakoff et al., 1996). In contrary to economic exchange-based transactional leadership, transformational leadership engages in social exchange relation that engenders reciprocal trust between leaders and followers (Bai et al., 2012). Social exchange is widely used to explain the effect of transformational leadership and employees' work outcomes. When

transformational leaders treat their follower well, their followers tend to reciprocate with extra effort and to perform beyond expectation due to increased enthusiasm, energy, and commitment with their leaders (Zhu et al., 2013). Trust is deemed as an indicator to measure high quality of social exchange relationship between leaders and followers. Several researches have studied trust in leaders as a consequence of transformational leadership (Pillai et al., 1999). Norman et al. (2010) point out that those leaders' levels of positive psychological capacities are positively associated with the subordinates' perceived trust in leader. Moreover, trust would not exist in the absence of empathy. Gillespie and Mann (2004) developed an aggregate index of cognitive trust, affective trust and behavioral trust, and found that all components of transformational leadership were positively associated with trust. Podsakoff et al. (1996) and Dirks and Ferrin (2001) also found strong correlation between all aspects of transformational leadership and trust. Recently, there is an emphasis on inspirational aspects of effective leadership in building trust. Therefore, we propose that transformational leaders could develop high level of trust among their followers due to they provide support, encouragement, concern, and respect to their followers.

*Hypothesis 3: Transformation leadership will be positively related to trust in leaders.*

### **Consequence of Trust: Employee Engagement**

SET has been applied to researches on the manager-employee exchange relationship. It has been widely used to provide theoretical foundation in explaining employee engagement and trust in leadership. Researches on social exchange approach focuses on the norm of reciprocity. That means the actions of one party lead to responses from other parties. A central tenet of SET is that obligation happens through a series of interactions between parties abided by "rule of exchange". Rule of exchange involves with reciprocal interdependence or repayment that employees choose to

engage more or less with their work roles. For example, when employees receive economic or socio-emotional supports from their organizations, they feel obliged to respond in kind and repay their organizations with higher level of engagement (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). Employees will choose to more engage themselves in their work roles and contribute greater level of cognitive, emotional, and physical resources in order to exchange for resources and benefits provided by organizations (Saks, 2006). Moreover, Mayer and Gravin et al. (2005) found that employees are willing to reciprocate when they are fairly treated by their leaders.

However, Leadership is a key antecedent of employee engagement. According to Blau (1964), social exchange relationship could not be developed without trust. If employees trust their leaders, their psychological well-being would be enhanced and then they are likely to be more engaged in their jobs. This is in line with the result of Covey and Merrill (2006) that found that lack of trust in supervisors and organizations ends with lack of employee engagement with their works. Also, employee work motivation is based upon support from leaders and psychological trust. In order for employees to feel comfortable and fully engage themselves in their work role, Pulakos et al. (2008) point out that they must have trust that their leaders treat them fairly. If leaders and followers lack of trust, they are unlikely to have productive conversation, which would lead to negative results. Moreover, trust is foundation for engagement process as employees trust that their investment of resources will be rewarded (Macey and Schneider, 2008). They also support that engagement cannot develop without trust.

We expect that high level of trust would allow for more attentive resources to be devoted to the job since the willingness to accept vulnerability with others generates positive work attitudes (Yang and Mossholder, 2010). Moreover, trustworthiness also contributes to build a safe social atmosphere at work (Burke et al., 2006). According to Whitener (1997), employees can have trust in at least 2 main levels- supervisor and top team management (hereafter, TMT) level. Influences exerted

by supervisors are different from those exerted from TMT. TMT is responsible for formulating strategies and allocating organizational resources so their decisions have a broad impact on employees. Trust in TMT encourages employees to fully engage in management initiatives. On the other hand, immediate supervisors are likely to have greater impact on daily operation of employees. Similarly, trust in supervisors foster employees to fully engage in their work roles (Yang and Mossholder, 2010; Avolio et al. 2004). Therefore, we argue that both of trust in different levels can have significant implication for employee engagement. Trust in leaders encourages employees to be more engaged by contributing their physical, cognitive, emotional resources on performance behaviors (Yang and Mossholder, 2010).

*Hypothesis 4: trust will be positively related to employee engagement.*

### **The Mediating Role of Trust**

We posit trust as mediator because employees who trust their leaders are likely to feel themselves to be less risky of being harmed or abused by their leaders. In contrast, followers who distrust their leaders are likely to invest their physical, cognitive and emotional energy to protect themselves from leaders (Kelloway et al., 2012). In this present study, we consider the motivating design of jobs, the application of specific HRM practices, and the exhibition of transformational leadership could influence the three conditions necessary for engagement through psychological mechanism (i.e. trust). The combination of these three resources simultaneously maximizes the extent to which employees perceive themselves as having sufficient psychological meaningfulness, safety, and availability provided by leaders so they trust in their leaders and then choose to engage.

According to Kahn (1990), individuals' psychological experience of work roles and their work context significantly influence the willingness to fully invest themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally (i.e. personal engagement). Kahn

further illustrates three psychological conditions of which their presences lead to job engagement. They are meaningfulness, safety, and availability. First, psychological meaningfulness refers to “sense of return on investment of self in role performances” by feeling useful, valuable, and not being taken for granted. It is influenced by individuals’ perception of work and role characteristics. Second, psychological safety is defined as “sense of being able to show and employ self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status, or career”. It is influenced by perception of social system whether it creates predictable, consistent, and nonthreatening climate. Finally, psychological availability refers to “sense of possessing the physical, emotional and psychological resource necessary for investing self in the role performances”. It is impacted by individual perception of self-capability towards role performance situations and the level of confidence towards one’s status within organizations (Kahn, 1990: 705). In other words, when employees experience work environment promoting meaningfulness, safety and availability, they will reciprocate with increased engagement with their work roles. May et al. (2004) found that meaningfulness, safety, and availability were significantly related to employee engagement.

When firms implement job characteristics to enhance motivation at lower level of organizations, employees will sense that their jobs are so valuable, useful and purposeful that generates perception of meaningfulness (Hackman and Oldham, 1976). Additionally, feedback from job could also increase perception of psychological safety by reducing insecurity through information exchange. Lastly, more autonomy at work may also enhance psychological availability due to greater control over their own works (Barrick et al., 2015). Jobs that are high on these core job characteristics provide individuals with incentives to bring more themselves into their work or to be more engaged.

There has been a call for more empirical research to shed light on the “black box” of intervening mechanisms that clarify how HR practices have an impact on organization and employee outcomes. We propose that trust provide mechanism through which HR practices can take effect since it is at heart of any positive exchange



relationship. Amidst uncertainty and vulnerability in the workplace, trust will help fostering interpersonal cooperation and employee well-being (Downey et al., 2015; Yukl, 2010). The effective use of HRM practices encourages employee engagement by fostering psychological safety. Formal performance appraisal and merit-based compensation provide employees clarity and consistency regarding past performances and future expectation towards employees. Moreover, job security and pay equity also signal that firms commit to their employees, and value their well-being. Therefore, psychological safety is developed. Providing constructive feedback to guide employees to perform better and get additional rewards also enhances psychological meaningfulness. In addition, developmental appraisal reinforces a sense of competency and self-efficacy that increase psychological availability (Tsui et al, 1997; Barrick et al., 2015).

The behaviors of transformational leadership produce all three psychological conditions of engagement. Through inspiration motivation and idealized influence, transformational leaders articulate value-based vision that enhances value congruence between firms and followers. When employees believe that their personal values are aligned with organizational values, they should find their job more meaningful, which in turn, exhibit higher engagement. Moreover, intellectual stimulation encourages employees to take risk, allows for dissent, and supports new ways to approach the current work role. Such behaviors of supportive management and interpersonal relationships promote feeling of psychological safety to invest oneself without fear of negative consequences. Through individualized consideration, leaders act as a mentor of employees to develop high level of potential that, in turn, foster psychological availability (Bass, 1990; Rich et al., 2010; Barrick et al, 2015). This relies on trusting interpersonal relationship between leaders and employees.

## **Consequence of Engagement: Turnover Intention**

The results from meta-analysis reveal that engagement is significantly related to a number of consequences including performance, turnover intention, and commitment (Gruman and Saks, 2011). Employee engagement has now gained more acceptance as a value-creating capability that leads positive outcomes including lower turnover intention.

Generally, the employees who are highly engaged in their work roles will invest their physical, cognitive and emotional energies to pursuit role-related goals. Although we believe that employee engagement leads to firm performances, engagement is an individual-construct. As a result, before leading to business results, engagement must impact individual level first (Saks, 2006). As employee turnover intention is the best predictor of turnover and is the last step before employees decide to leave (Xu and Polsaram, 2013), we study on consequences of employee engagement on turnover intention as a way to engage the talent of the organization.

Employee turnover is detrimental to organizations. Recruiting, selecting, and training new employees are very costly. A great deal of researches has revealed that turnover is associated with a great variety of negative effects, including decreasing financial performances, declining employee work attitudes, and undermining workforce productivity (Park and Shaw, 2013, Tse et al., 2013). According to SET, when both parties are in a high trusting and high-quality relationship due to the continuation of favorable reciprocal exchange between them, they are likely to continue to engage themselves in their jobs. Thus, it is expected that individuals who are more engaged are likely to exhibit more positive attitudes and intention towards organizations (Saks, 2006). Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) found that engagement is negatively related to intention to quit and mediate the relationship between job resources and turnover intention. Leaving the organizations that one engages in and leaving the high-quality exchange relationship with leaders would

engender psychological suffering and become costly for employees (Mossholder et al., 2005).

*Hypothesis 5: Job engagement is negatively related to turnover intention.*

Thus, we present a model of employee engagement as shown in figure1.

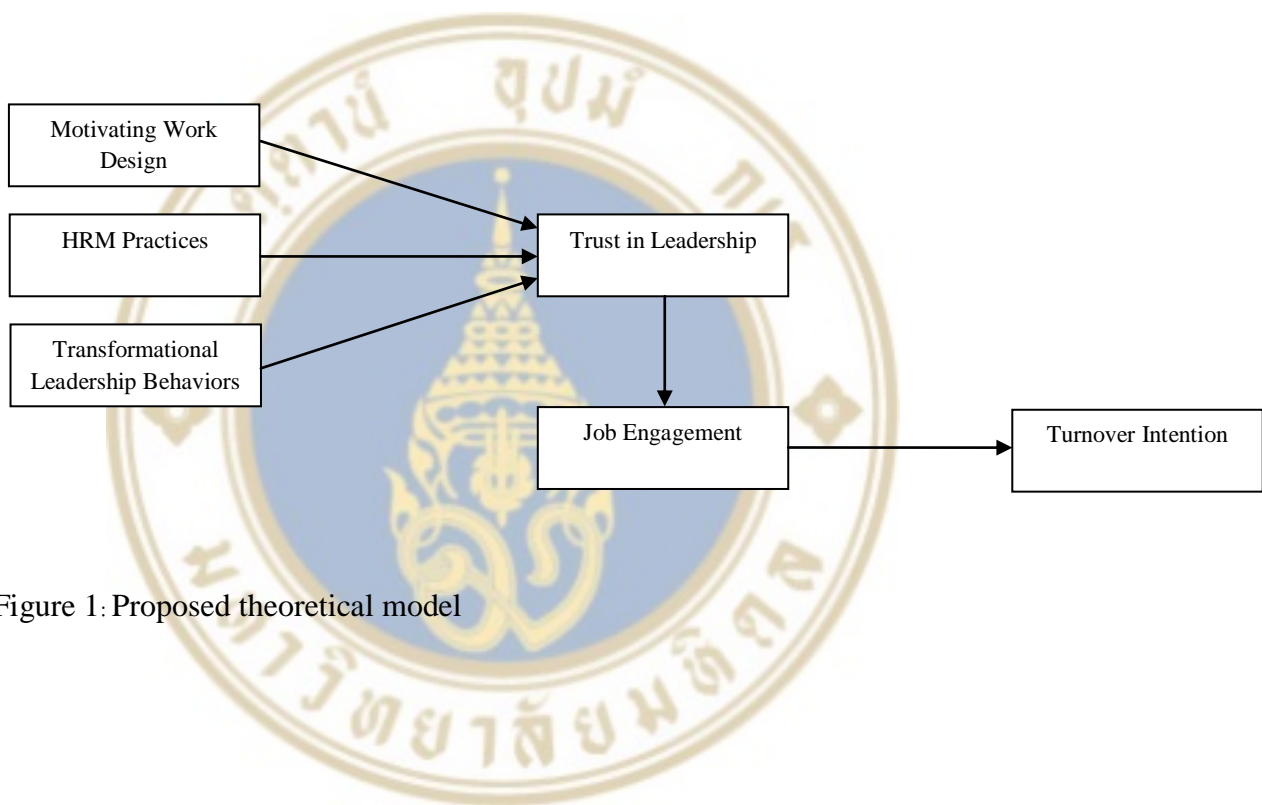


Figure 1: Proposed theoretical model

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHOD**

#### **Sample Procedures and Participants**

This study uses quantitative methods. The aim of quantitative research is to explain phenomena, examine causes and effects, or measure and evaluate something. Verified data are based on empirical evidences. This article seeks to explain how and under what circumstance employees would be engaged in their work. In other word, the paper aims to discover the relationship among organizational resources, trust in leadership, employee engagement, and turnover intention. The results from this study seek to be generalized to another setting which have similar practices and operate in the similar environment. Therefore, quantitative method is suitable in this case. Moreover, the quantitative research would allow us to test the applicability of theory and framework to another context (i.e. the context of Thailand).

To satisfy the research objective and questions, the method of this study is based on survey. In contrast with other methods such as interview, focus group, experimental research, survey facilitates the researcher to efficiently reach a large number of samples so it is useful in describing the characteristics of a large group of population. It is an efficient method for systematically collecting data from a broad range of individual and educational settings. Moreover, survey is a method of choice when generalizability is a key concern since it allows various subgroups to be sampled. Then, the consistency of relationships could then be examined across subgroups. In addition, the anonymity of surveys will ensure the more honest and unambiguous responses from participants (Sagepub.com, n.d.).

Data were obtained from branches of one private company located in Thailand, MTS Gold. MTS Gold is a precious-metal brokerage firm, servicing Thai

clients by delivering gold ornaments and gold bullions. Personnel list was obtained from human resource department. Employees were invited to participate in this survey. We focused on full-time, permanent and knowledge workers since they were more likely to be exposed to firm practices. We also restricted our sample to employees who had work tenure of at least 6 months since this period would allow them to get familiar with firm's leaders, culture, and policies.

The following data collection procedures were undertaken. The questionnaires were distributed through human resource department from headquarter with assurance and control to protect anonymity and confidentiality of respondents. This means is the most effective way for distributing survey to respondents across branches. The following data collection procedures were undertaken. Respondents completed paper surveys on the site during working hours and sent back to HR department.

The final sample consisted of and 126 employees. This captures all available workforces, based on our criteria (i.e. full time employees and over 6-month work tenure). Of the participants from employee level, 30.95% were men; 58.74% were in the age of 26-35 followed by 15.87% and 12.7% in the age of 20-25 and 36-40 respectively; 62.69% held a minimum of a four-year undergraduate degree; and 42.86% had work tenure during 1-5 years and 51.59% had work tenure over 5 years (See Appendices).

## **Measures**

The importance of developing appropriate measurement across cultures has been generally recognized. Thus, extra care was taken to ensure that the selected items were phrased in language that would be familiar, relevant and meaningful for the Thai employees (Brislin, 1990; Lonner, 1990). Moreover, to maximize response rate, some measures were shortened to keep the survey length to minimum by including the items that loaded well on their factors in prior research. In addition, the adopted

measures in this paper had been used in several published papers that showed test of reliability and validity and translated well to the Thai context

All measures utilized a five-point likert scale (1= strongly disagree; 5= strongly agree). Our data were collected employee level. Job design, HRM practices, transformational leadership, trust and employee engagement was rated by employees at each branch. Turnover intention was also based on employees' self-reports.

***Motivating work design.*** Job design was rated by employees to depict the extent of motivating work design that existed in non-managerial jobs. The job design characteristics were measured using the 24 items from Morgeson and Humphrey's (2006) Work Design Questionnaire. Respondents were employees in each branch who were asked to indicate the level to which each attribute is present in their jobs using statements such as: "The job involves doing a number of different things" (variety), "The job allows me to plan how I do my work" (autonomy), "The job provides me the chance to completely finish the pieces of work I begin" (identity), "The job itself is very significant and important in the broader scheme of things" (significance), and "The job itself provides me with information about my performance" (feedback).

***HRM practices.*** We adopted the scale from Barrick et al. (2015) which followed Shaw, Gupta, and Delery (2005), the 10-item measures of HRM investments and expectation-enhancing practices- job security, developmental performance management, performance-based use of incentives, rewards and promotions, and competitive and fair compensation. This measure focuses on a balanced mutual investment approach rather than emphasizing on a breath of practices as existing HRM scales. Moreover, Barrick et al. (2015) adapted items to specifically assess inducement, investment, and expectation-enhancing practices. Participants were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed that each practice was being utilized in the organization. For example, "providing employment security to our employees is a priority in this branch", "As long as a person does their job, they can expect to stay safe", and "Employees regularly receive feedback regarding their job performance".

***Transformational leadership.*** Transformational leadership was rated by employees to capture the extent to which their leaders exhibited transformational leadership behaviors. We used 20-item measure from Bass and Avolio's (1995) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) to measure the transformational leadership behaviors. Employees rated the frequency with which the supervisor and branch managers exhibited the behaviors by using a five-point Likert response scale (1= not at all to 5 = very frequently, if not always) for each item. This scale has been widely used to measure the individuals' perception of transformational leader behaviors. In line with MLQ, four items were used to measure inspirational motivation (e.g., "articulates a compelling vision of the future"); intellectual stimulation (e.g., "re-examines critical assumptions to question whether they are appropriate") and individualized consideration (e.g., "spends time teaching and coaching me"). Eight items were used to measure idealized influence (e.g., "talks to us about his/her most important values"). Items were averaged to create a mean score for each dimension.

***Trust in leadership.*** Trust was also rated by employees to capture their psychological attitudes towards leaders. Some studies used McAllister's (1995) measure of the cognitive and affective trust. The measure developed by McAllister (1995) is proper for trust between peer managers. However, in this paper, a measure that could reflect trusting relationship within organizational hierarchy would be more suitable. Thus, we followed the 20-item measure created by Yang and Mossholder (2010) that captured trusts in both management and immediate supervisors. The examples of these statements are "I am confident in management because it approaches work with professionalism.", "I am confident that management will always care about my personal needs at work.", "My supervisor follows through with commitments s(he) makes.", and "If I shared my problems with my supervisor, I know s(he) would respond with care".

***Employee engagement.*** We selected 6 high loading items from scales developed by Rich et al. (2010)'s scale measuring all 3 dimensions (physical, cognitive,

and emotional) of engagement. Rich et al. (2010) drew from the existing measures of Brown and Leigh's (1996)'s measure of "work intensity" for physical aspect, Russell and Barret's measure (1999) for emotional aspect, and Rothbard's measure (2001) for cognitive aspect, and refined these items to promote conceptual consistency with Kahn's definition of engagement. Moreover, they had already test reliability and cross-validity for these measures. The examples are "I exert my full effort on my job.", I try my hardest to perform well on my job.", I feel enthusiastic in my job.", and "At work, my mind is focused on my job."

**Turnover intention.** Turnover intentions were based on employees' self-reports on 5-item scale from Wayne, Shore, and Liden (1997). A sample item is, "As soon as I can find a better job, I'll leave the organization".

**Control variables.** We controlled for employee age, education level and organizational tenure because these variables were found to be related to job attitudes or relationships involving job attitudes (Takeuchi et al., 2009)



## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

This paper used a five-point likert scale (i.e. 1= strongly disagree; 5= strongly agree). Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations of the key scales. The scores given by all survey respondents were averaged to obtain the mean score of each variable in the model and were also calculated to obtain standard deviation. In the table below, the mean of all variables were quite high, ranging from 3.49 to 4.10. The HRM practices and transformational leadership had the lowest mean (i.e. 3.49) compared to other variables while employee engagement had the highest mean score (i.e. 4.10). Overall, employees had quite positive attitudes towards these key variables.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics

Key variables	$\bar{X}$	S.D.
Motivating work designs	3.81	0.45
HRM practices	3.49	0.60
Transformational leadership	3.49	0.60
Trust in leadership	3.67	0.67
Employee engagement	4.10	0.56
Turnover intention	4.05	0.79

Hypothesis 1 to 3 predicted that three organizational resources of motivating work design, HRM practices, and transformational leadership would positively predict trust in leaders. We used multiple regression technique in SPSS to test these hypotheses. The results were shown in table 2 below.

Table 2: Regression results for trust in leaders

<b>Variables</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
(Constant)	0.122	0.449		0.271	0.787
Motivating work design	0.424	0.135	0.283	3.141	0.002*
HRM practices	0.148	0.101	0.133	1.465	0.145
Transformational leadership	0.367	0.095	0.321	3.863	0.000*

R<sup>2</sup> = 0.355, Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = 0.339, F = 22.394, Sig. = 0.000, SE est = 0.547

\*Significant level at 0.05

Overall, the three predictors accounted for 35.5% of the variance in trust in leaders. Since the F-value was 22.394 ( $p < 0.05$ ), this showed that at least one independent variable had statistically significant impact on trust in leaders. The results showed that motivating work design and transformational leadership were significantly related to trust in leaders (Beta = 0.276,  $p < 0.05$  and 0.314,  $p < 0.05$ , respectively). In the other words, motivating work design and transformational leadership had significantly positive effect on trust in leaders. The better perception of motivating work design and transformational leadership in the view of employees is, the higher level of trust in leaders the employees would have. However, HRM practices had no significant impact on trust in leaders (Beta = 0.136,  $p > 0.05$ ). Although the company implemented effective HRM practices, the level of trust would not increase significantly. Therefore, only hypothesis 1 and 3 were supported.

Hypothesis 4 predicted that trust in leaders would be positively related to job engagement. The results were shown in table 3 below. As predicted, trust in leaders significantly and positively affected job engagement (beta = 0.383,  $p < 0.05$ ). Thus, hypothesis 4 was supported. When employees trust in their leaders, they will significantly be more engaged in their job.

Table 3: Regression results of trust in leadership on job engagement

<b>Variables</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
(Constant)	2.920	0.259		11.296	0.000*
Trust in leadership	0.320	0.069	0.383	4.621	0.000*

$R^2 = 0.147$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.140$ ,  $F = 21.355$ ,  $Sig. = 0.000$ ,  $SE\ est = 0.521$

\*Significant level at 0.05

However, when we tested direct effect of HRM practices on job engagement (see table 4 below), HRM practices significantly and positively affected job engagement (beta = 0.299,  $p < 0.05$ ). The result suggested that HRM practices had no indirect effect on job engagement through trust in leader. Rather, HRM practices directly led to job engagement. In the other word, if the company implements more effective HRM practices, employees will be more engaged in their job.

Table 4: Regression results of HRM practices on job engagement

<b>Variables</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
(Constant)	3.119	0.283		11.012	0.000*
HRM practices	0.279	0.080	0.299	3.495	0.001*

$R^2 = 0.090$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.082$ ,  $F = 12.216$ ,  $Sig. = 0.001$ ,  $SE\ est = 0.538$

\*Significant level at 0.05

Hypothesis 5 proposed the negative impact of job engagement on employee turnover intention. The result was presented in table 5. As opposed to hypothesis 5, the result showed that job engagement was negatively related to turnover intention (Beta = -0.125). However, such effect was not statistically significant ( $p > 0.05$ ). Therefore, hypothesis 5 was not supported. Job engagement had no influential effect on turnover intention.

Table 5: Regression results of job engagement on turnover intention

<b>Variables</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
(Constant)	3.787	0.427		8.863	0.000*
Job engagement	-0.145	0.103	-0.125	-1.406	0.162

$R^2 = 0.125$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.016$ ,  $F = 1.977$ ,  $\text{Sig.} = 0.162$ ,  $SE \text{ est} = 0.649$

\*Significant level at 0.05

Since job engagement had no significantly influential effect on turnover intention, we tested direct effect of trust in leader on turnover intention (see table 6 below). The result showed that trust in leadership had a significantly negative effect on turnover intention (beta = -3.295,  $p = 0.05$ ). Hence, it could be inferred that trust could directly influence turnover intention in regardless of job engagement. When employees trust in their leaders, they are less likely to quit the company.

Table 6: Regression results of trust in leadership on turnover intention

<b>Variables</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
(Constant)	4.202	0.311		13.490	0.000*
Trust in leadership	-0.275	0.083	-0.284	-3.295	0.001*

$R^2 = 0.080$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.073$ ,  $F = 10.856$ ,  $\text{Sig.} = 0.001$ ,  $SE \text{ est} = 0.628$

\*Significant level at 0.05

In addition, this paper also tested direct effect of HRM practices on turnover intention to see whether implementing effective HRM practices could negatively lead to turnover intention. The result in table 7 below showed that HRM practices did not significantly related to turnover intention (Beta = -0.092,  $p > 0.05$ ). Hence, HRM practices had significant impact on neither trust in leadership and turnover intention.

Table 7: Regression results of HRM practices on turnover intention

<b>Variables</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
(Constant)	3.542	0.343		10.323	0.000*
HRM practices	-0.100	0.097	-0.092	-1.034	0.303

R<sup>2</sup> = 0.009, Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = 0.001, F = 1.068, Sig. = 0.303, SE est = 0.652

\*Significant level at 0.05



## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

We found that when the organization designs jobs to enrich work and role characteristics and is steered by transformational leaders, it maximizes the level of trust in leaders, which leads to enhancement of employee engagement. This is in line with past research (e.g. Blau, 1964; Convey and Merrill, 2006; Pulakos et al., 2008; Macey and Schneider, 2008) that revealed that when employees trust their leaders, their psychological well-being would be enhanced and then they are likely to be more engaged in their jobs as a means of repaying the organization in exchange of career- and social-related support provided by the organization.

In order to gain trust among employees, the management team should increase employees' internal motivation through enrichment of work and work interactions in term of autonomy, skill variety, task significance, task identity, and feedback in order to gain higher level of trust. In addition, leaders should inspire their followers to move to higher performance than requirement and do more than they are expected to do through acting as a role model for the followers, developing and articulating an appealing vision of the future to them, acting as mentors by acknowledging that individuals have their own needs and abilities for achievement and development, and stimulating creativity in their followers by nurturing and developing innovative thought. All of these will heighten the level of trust and respect in their leaders.

Although HRM practices ( *i.e. equity pay, job security, developmental feedback, and pay for performance*) has no significant impact on trust in leaders, this paper found that they significantly have a positive impact on job engagement. It could be inferred that employees usually evaluate the quality and appropriateness of HRM practices. Effective HRM practices signal that the organization values, cares about, and

supports the followers' success and well-being. As a result, they will reciprocate by fully engaging in their work roles. In other words, employees who perceive high organizational support are inclined to reciprocate with higher level of engagement (Downey et al., 2015). Therefore, job engagement is enhanced as a result of such appropriate HRM practices. When HRM practices are carried out effectively, they significantly increase level of job engagement.

The result that job engagement is not significantly related to turnover intention contradicts to the existing prevailing research findings in the field (e.g. Gruman and Saks, 2011; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004; and Mossholder et al., 2005). This may result of bias from the respondents since the survey was solely conducted in one company. However, winning trust in leaders from employees could directly lower the level of turnover intention. It might be explained that once employees trust their leaders, they tend to develop long-term bonding relationship with their leaders. As a result, they would be likely to work for current company rather than risking themselves to work with new leaders at a new company.

This paper contributes to the engagement literature in the context of Thailand. Moreover, our core contribution is to illustrate how firms can effectively manage their human resources in order to enhance job engagement and reduce turnover rate in the company as means for increasing competitive advantage. We propose that the senior executives should focus on designing the motivating job characteristics, implementing effective HRM practices and promote the culture of transformational leadership in the organizations in order to enhance employee engagement. Referred to previous research (e.g. Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004; Borman and Motowidlo, 1993; Seeley, 2007; Salanova et al., 2011; Hammond et al., 2011; and Qu and Janssen, 2015), job engagement could lead to better employees' in-role performance, extra-role performance (i.e. good organizational citizenship behavior) and more creativity that could increase the success of the firms. Furthermore, this paper also suggests the senior executive team to retain the talent by winning trust from employees.

## CHAPTER VI

### LIMITATION

First, due to time limitation, this paper collected data from branches of merely one private company. Thus, generalization may be limited to other companies that have similar policies and practices that operate in the same industry. Moreover, limiting data from one company may be the reason for insignificant outcome for the effect of job engagement on turnover intention. Lastly, although the survey is anonymous, the respondents may feel uncomfortable to complete the survey based on their real opinion or experience.





## **CHAPTER VII**

### **FUTURE RESEARCH**

Based on current research in the field of management, employee engagement has now gained more acceptance as a value-creating capability that leads to positive outcomes including job performances. Job performance is defined as an aggregate value to an organization gaining from both direct and indirect contribution of an employee to achieve organizational goals (Campbell, 1990). Many research (e.g. Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004; Borman and Motowidlo, 1993; Seeley, 2007; Salanova et al., 2011; Hammond et al., 2011; and Qu and Janssen, 2015 ) claimed that job engagement has positive relationship to individual in-role performance, extra-role performances and creativity of the employees. Thus, future research should incorporate in-role performance, extra-role performances and creativity into the model in order to see whether job engagement is positively related to those three variables in the context of Thailand. Those variables would be evaluated by supervisors so this would help to reduce bias from only one group of respondent. Additionally, future study should be conducted by choosing various companies in order to gain generalizable and applicable results. Furthermore, with more various samples, the relationship between job engagement and turnover intention should be tested again to yield more solid outcome. Lastly, little is known how firm leaders play a crucial role to structure the organizational resources in order to influence employee engagement (Sirmon et al, 2007). Hence, this paper encourages future study to investigate how upper-echelon leader can intentionally and strategically structure and bundle firm resources to strengthen employee engagement. Specifically, it would be beneficial to gain more insight about how the firm leaders could enhance the effect of managing organizational resources on employee engagement by aligning departmental goals with the firms' strategic objectives and by actively monitoring progress toward goals.

This process is called “strategic implementation” (Sirmon et al., 2011; Barrick et al., 2015).



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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Numbers and percentage of survey respondents

General Information	Employees	
	No.	%
1. Age (years)		
Below 20	0	0.00
20 – 25	20	15.87
26 – 30	37	29.37
31 – 35	37	29.37
36 – 40	16	12.70
41 - 45	12	9.52
46 – 50	2	1.59
Over 50	2	1.59
<b>Total</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>100.00</b>
2. Sex		
Male	39	30.95
Female	87	69.05
<b>Total</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>100.00</b>
3. Education Level		
High school	23	18.25
Diploma	24	19.05
Bachelor	78	61.90
Postgraduate	1	0.79
<b>Total</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>100.00</b>
4. Work Tenure (years)		
0.5 - 1	7	5.56
1 - 3	27	21.43

3 - 5	27	21.43
Over 5	65	51.59
<b>Total</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>100.00</b>

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## Appendix B: Survey Questions

EMPLOYEE SURVEY					
	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>Motivating work design</b>					
<i>Autonomy</i>					
The job allows me to make my own decisions about how to schedule my work.	1	2	3	4	5
The job allows me to decide on the order in which things are done on the job.	1	2	3	4	5
The job allows me to plan how I do my work.	1	2	3	4	5
The job gives me a chance to use my personal initiative or judgment in carrying out the work.	1	2	3	4	5
The job allows me to make a lot of decisions on my own.	1	2	3	4	5
The job provides me with significant autonomy in making decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
The job allows me to make decisions about what methods I use to complete my work.	1	2	3	4	5
The job allows me to decide on my own how to go about doing my work.	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Task Variety</i>					
The job involves a great deal of task variety.	1	2	3	4	5
The job involves doing a number of different things.	1	2	3	4	5
The job requires the performance of a wide range of tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
The job involves performing a variety of tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Task Significance</i>					
The results of my work are likely to significantly affect the lives of other people.	1	2	3	4	5
The job itself is very significant and important in the broader scheme of things.	1	2	3	4	5
The job has a large impact on people outside the organization.	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Task Identity</i>					
The job involves completing a piece of work that has obvious beginning & end.	1	2	3	4	5
The job is arranged so that I can do entire piece of work from beginning to end.	1	2	3	4	5
The job provides me chance to completely finish the pieces of work I begin.	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Feedback From Job</i>					
The work activities themselves provide direct and clear information about the effectiveness of my job performance.	1	2	3	4	5
The job itself provides feedback on my performance.	1	2	3	4	5



The job itself provides me with information about my performance.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>HRM practices</b>					
Employees regularly receive feedback regarding their job performance.	1	2	3	4	5
Employees routinely receive developmental feedback assessing their strengths and weaknesses.	1	2	3	4	5
The rewards employees receive are related to the performance and effort they put into their jobs.	1	2	3	4	5
Promotions are primarily based upon merit or performance as opposed to seniority.	1	2	3	4	5
My organization provides rewards based on job performance.	1	2	3	4	5
Total pay for the typical job in this firm is competitive to the “market wage” for the type of work in the area.	1	2	3	4	5
Employee pay is fair compared to others doing similar work in this company.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Transformational leadership</b>					
<i>Idealized Influence</i>	1	2	3	4	5
Instill pride in others	1	2	3	4	5
Go beyond self-interest for the good of the group.	1	2	3	4	5
Act in ways that builds others	1	2	3	4	5
Display a sense of power and confidence	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Idealize Influence</i>					
Talk about most important values and beliefs.	1	2	3	4	5
Specify the importance of having a strong sense of purpose.	1	2	3	4	5
Consider the moral and ethical consequences of decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
Emphasize the importance of having a collective sense of mission	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Inspirational Motivation</i>					
Talk optimistically about the future.	1	2	3	4	5
Talk enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished.	1	2	3	4	5
Articulate a compelling vision of the future	1	2	3	4	5
Express confidence that goals will be achieved	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Intellectual Stimulation</i>					
Re-examine critical assumptions for appropriateness	1	2	3	4	5
Seek differing perspectives when solving problems.	1	2	3	4	5
Get others look at problems from many different angles.	1	2	3	4	5
Suggest new ways of looking at how to complete assignments.	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Individualized Consideration</i>					
Spend time teaching and coaching.	1	2	3	4	5

Treat others as an individual rather than just as a member of a group.	1	2	3	4	5
Help others to develop their strengths	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Trust in leadership</b>					
<i>Trust in management</i>					
I can depend on management to meet its responsibilities.	1	2	3	4	5
I can rely on management to do what is best at work.	1	2	3	4	5
Top managers follow through with commitments they make.	1	2	3	4	5
I'm confident in management because it approaches work with professionalism.	1	2	3	4	5
I'm confident that management will always care about my personal needs at work.	1	2	3	4	5
If I shared my problems with management, I know they would respond with care.	1	2	3	4	5
I'm confident that I could share my work difficulties with management.	1	2	3	4	5
I'm sure I could openly communicate my feelings to management.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel secure with management because of its sincerity.	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Trust in supervisor</i>					
I can depend on my supervisor to meet his/her responsibilities.	1	2	3	4	5
I can rely on my supervisor to do what is best at work.	1	2	3	4	5
My supervisor follows through with commitments (s)he makes.	1	2	3	4	5
Given my supervisor's track record, I see no reason to doubt his/her competence.	1	2	3	4	5
I'm confident in my supervisor because (s)he approaches work with professionalism.	1	2	3	4	5
I'm confident that my supervisor will always care about my personal needs at work.	1	2	3	4	5
If I shared my problems with my supervisor, I know (s)he would respond with care.	1	2	3	4	5
I'm confident that I could share my work difficulties with my supervisor.	1	2	3	4	5
I'm sure I could openly communicate my feelings to my supervisor.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel secure with my supervisor because of his/her sincerity.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Engagement</b>					
I devote a lot of energy to my job	1	2	3	4	5
I try my hardest to perform well on my job	1	2	3	4	5
I gain considerable pride from performing our jobs well.	1	2	3	4	5
I am passionate and enthusiastic about our jobs.	1	2	3	4	5
Performing work in my work area is so absorbing that we often forget about the time.	1	2	3	4	5
I tend to be highly focused when doing our jobs.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Turnover intention</b>					
As soon as I can find a better job, I'll leave MTS Gold Group Co.,Ltd	1	2	3	4	5

I am actively looking for a job outside MTS Gold Group Co.,Ltd	1	2	3	4	5
I am seriously thinking of quitting my job.	1	2	3	4	5
I often think of quitting my job at MTS Gold Group Co.,Ltd	1	2	3	4	5
I think I will still be working at MTS Gold Group Co.,Ltd five years from now.	1	2	3	4	5

