
Antecedents and Consequences of Employee Engagement in the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration

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Abstract

In this dissertation, the employee engagement model for Thai public sector is developed. Three organizational factors are examined for being antecedents of employee engagement: ethical leadership, procedural justice, and employee empowerment. The researchers expect that these three factors will positively affect employee engagement, and in turn, employee engagement will positively affect work performance.

In this cross-sectional research investigation, the researchers used a quantitative survey research approach. A total of 854 subjects in the sample population were randomly selected from personnel employed in fifty districts of the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA). The research instrument was a questionnaire, and the researchers conducted the data analysis using structural equation modeling (SEM) methods.

The findings showed that ethical leadership and employee empowerment exhibited positive direct relationships with employee engagement at a statistically significant level of .05. However, procedural justice did not correlate with employee engagement and performance. Employee engagement was highly correlated with performance. An analysis of the mediating variable of employee engagement showed that employee engagement was not a mediating variable in the relationship between ethical leadership and performance. However, employee engagement was a partial mediating variable in the relationship between employee empowerment and performance.

Keywords: Employee engagement, Bangkok Metropolitan Administration

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เหตุการณ์ก่อนหน้าและผลที่ตามมาของการมีส่วนร่วมของพนักงานในศาลาว่าการกรุงเทพมหานคร

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บทคัดย่อ

ในบทความฉบับนี้ได้มีการพัฒนารูปแบบการมีส่วนร่วมของพนักงานในภาครัฐของไทย มีการตรวจสอบปัจจัยองค์การสามประการว่ามาก่อนการมีส่วนร่วมของพนักงาน: ภาวะผู้นำทางจริยธรรม กระบวนการยุติธรรม และการเพิ่มขีดความสามารถของพนักงาน นักวิจัยคาดหวังว่าปัจจัยทั้งสามนี้จะส่งผลในเชิงบวกต่อความผูกพันของพนักงาน และในทางกลับกัน ความผูกพันของพนักงานจะส่งผลในเชิงบวกต่อประสิทธิภาพการทำงาน

ในการศึกษาวิจัยแบบภาคตัดขวางนี้ นักวิจัยใช้แนวทางการวิจัยเชิงสำรวจเชิงปริมาณ สุ่มเลือกอาสาสมัครจำนวน 854 คนในกลุ่มตัวอย่างจากบุคลากรที่ทำงานในห้าสิบเขตของกรุงเทพมหานคร เครื่องมือวิจัยเป็นแบบสอบถามและนักวิจัยได้ทำการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลโดยใช้วิธีการสร้างแบบจำลองสมการโครงสร้าง (SEM)

ผลการวิจัยพบว่า ภาวะผู้นำอย่างมีจริยธรรมและการเสริมอำนาจให้พนักงานมีความสัมพันธ์โดยตรงในเชิงบวกกับการมีส่วนร่วมของพนักงานที่ระดับที่มีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติที่ .05 อย่างไรก็ตาม กระบวนการยุติธรรมไม่มีความสัมพันธ์กับความผูกพันและผลการปฏิบัติงานของพนักงาน การมีส่วนร่วมของพนักงานมีความสัมพันธ์กับประสิทธิภาพอย่างมาก การวิเคราะห์ตัวแปรการไถ่เกลี่ยของความผูกพันของพนักงานพบว่าการมีส่วนร่วมของพนักงานไม่ใช่ตัวแปรไถ่เกลี่ยในความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างความเป็นผู้นำทางจริยธรรมและผลการปฏิบัติงาน อย่างไรก็ตาม ความผูกพันของพนักงานเป็นตัวแปรการไถ่เกลี่ยบางส่วนในความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างการเสริมอำนาจและประสิทธิภาพของพนักงาน

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Introduction

Reforming public organizations under new public management and governance values can lead to challenges for public managers when attempting to bring about changes in public organizations. Changes to organizational structure and development such as downsizing, networking, and performance-based management have caused public sector employees to change accordingly. When roles have been altered from service provider to service facilitator, changes in job attitudes, such as acceptance or resistance, can occur. Additionally, while public managers wish their employees to change their perspective and behavior in a positive manner, many tools and techniques have also been employed to reduce the gap between reality and what the administration desires in order to maintain motivation. Therefore, managers seek ways to understand what conditions will motivate each employee and how to encourage engaged employees to stay longer and perform better in their jobs.

In recent years, many scholars and human resource practitioners have focused on employee engagement and its consequences to develop a deeper understanding of motivation. When Gallup, Inc. conducted surveys with over 1.4 million employees in 49,928 work units across 34 countries in 2013, they found employee engagement had a significant effect on an individual's performance as well as organizational outcomes such as profitability, productivity, customer loyalty, turnover, and absenteeism (Gallup Inc. 2013). Additionally, BlessingWhite published the results of its Employee Engagement Research Report, which indicated that only 1 in 3 employees were engaged with their work, while 1 in 5 reported being unengaged with their work (BlessingWhite 2013). This finding prompted managers across the world to be more concerned about employees' attitude toward work. This low level of engagement implied that organizations were facing low levels of performance. Although there have been many studies concerning engagement, most studies have involved employees at private organizations. This lack of knowledge regarding employee engagement in public sector led us to explore the conditions that can create employee engagement in this sector and what may be some of the consequences of these conditions. The objective of this study was to develop a model of employee engagement for managers in the public sector that provides guidance on motivating other public sector employees.

Literature Review and Hypotheses

To understand employee engagement, various scholars have developed different definitions of terms such as "employee engagement", "work engagement", and "psychological engagement". This diverse usage makes it more difficult to discover a central meaning. William A. Kahn first defined psychological engagement in his 1990 article. His grounded theory study explored the state of being engaged in terms of employee role performance to explain what traditional motivation theories overlooked. Kahn noted that people tend to harness their real selves according to shifting conditions.

One's self was expressed in the workplace cognitively, physically, and emotionally. When people feel engaged with their work, he or she inhabits their role, speaks up regarding their perceptions, and pays attention to what is occurring in the organization. This is also known as "psychological presence" (Kahn 1992). This state of mind allows people to focus on their tasks and perform at their best. However, psychological engagement cannot be sustained over time because people need time away from work to recharge. To remain engaged at work, managers must seek ways to cultivate conditions that foster engagement.

Three conditions converge to shape engagement: meaningfulness, safety, and availability (Kahn 2010: 21-22). Meaningfulness denotes that people feel it is valuable to do this work. Safety is one's feeling of being able to work without fear of negative outcomes to one's self-image. Availability is the readiness to complete the work (Kahn 1990). This study encouraged researchers to determine what organizational conditions help to develop engagement and how engagement can benefit broader organizational outcomes.

Subsequently, another group of scholars explored the concept of work engagement by expanding the concept of antitheses of burnout. (e.g., Mashlach & Leiter 1997, Mashlach, Schaufeli, & Leiter 2001, Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, & Bakker 2002). Work engagement is a positive state of mind that is filled with energy. Inherent to perseverance and a positive intention to fulfill one's needs, engaged people will ensure that their goals are reached and their work potential is used to resolve problems that arise (Schaufeli et al 2002, Leiter & Bakker 2010). Other frameworks offer different perspectives to explain employee engagement at work. Saks's social exchange model differentiated job engagement from organizational engagement; he proposed two roles for an organization's employees, a work role and a member of an organization. Saks said that engagement was not only an attitude but was also at the level of an individual mind psychologically existing in a particular moment (Saks 2006: 604). Some scholars have said that employee engagement is an old wine in a new bottle (Macey & Schneider 2008, Robinson, Perryman, & Hayday 2004, Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes 2002, Robertson & Cooper 2010), alluding to prior motivational concepts such as satisfaction, organizational commitment, and individual participation that combine to explain an individual's attitude toward work.

Although researchers have suggested various terms for employee engagement, many of them have also attempted to develop an operational definition of engagement. Rothbard (2001) posited that engagement has 3 dimensions: attention, absorption, and energy. She also proved that engagement is distinguishable from other motivational terms. Rich (2006) developed the Job Engagement Scale (JES) to measure employee engagement over 3 dimensions: physical, cognitive, and emotional engagement. He concluded that engagement represents a higher-order factor with

3 lower-order factors. Physical engagement refers to the exertion of effort. Cognitive engagement is defined by the measure of attention and absorption, and emotional engagement is determined by pleasantness and activeness. The JES scale was able to prove discriminant validity and convergent validity among 3 different dimensions and was consistent with Kahn's (1990) theory of engagement.

Theoretical Frameworks of Employee Engagement

To study what working conditions affect employee engagement, researchers identified four approaches to explain the process of engagement: (1) Kahn's (1990) need-satisfying approach, (2) Mashlach et al's (2001) burnout-antithesis approach, (3) Harter et al's (2002) satisfaction-engagement approach, and (4) Saks's (2006) multidimensional approach (Shuck 2011). Synthesizing each of the approaches brings these similar focuses together into one concept. Our hope is that the conclusions of this framework provide a deeper understanding of employee engagement within the field of human resource management.

Kahn suggested that conditions of meaningfulness, safety, and availability would encourage engagement at work. The only research that has demonstrated this hypothesis was May, Gilson, & Harter (2004)'s, which found that all three of these psychological conditions had significantly positive relationships with employee engagement. In particular, meaningfulness was found to have the strongest effect on engagement. Determinants which influence these psychological conditions were also explored. The study revealed that job enrichment and work role fit were positively associated with meaningfulness. Rewarding co-workers and supportive supervisor relations were positively linked to safety. Resource availability was positively related to availability. However, the results also showed that availability was negatively associated with participation in outside activities. Tests for mediation identified that meaningfulness mediated the relationship between job enrichment and work role fit with engagement, while safety partially mediated the relationship between adherence to co-worker norms and engagement. This research offers a framework of antecedents to engagement and has confirmed all three of psychological traits that Kahn (1990) proposed were significantly associated relationship with employee engagement.

By examining engagement's consequences, Rich (2006) also concluded that employees who possessed high engagement (as rated by supervisors) demonstrate higher levels of task and contextual performance and lower levels of withdrawal behaviors. This study also found that perceived organizational support was positively related to engagement and that employees who had core self-evaluations and high levels of conscientiousness were engaged in their jobs. The result was confirmed by the work of Rich et al (2010), which found that engagement was the mediator in the relationship between value congruence, perceived organizational support, and core

self-evaluations along with two job performance dimensions: task performance and organizational citizenship behavior.

Various employee engagement frameworks have been introduced in the field of HRD. By attempting to cultivate positive conditions in the workplace, HRD scholars seek ways to develop engagement strategies that focus on leveraging outcomes toward improving individual performance (Shuck & Rose 2013). Soane et al (2012) incorporated the theoretical concepts of HRD into developing the concept of engagement by including positive sensation, activation, and focus. Intellectual engagement, affective engagement, and social engagement became the 3 dimensions needed for employee engagement. To explain the process of performance development through engagement, models have been built to show the relationship between organizational conditions, engagement, and individual outcomes (e.g., Shuck & Wollard 2010, Shuck & Reio 2014, Shuck et al 2011a). Shuck et al (2011a) constructed a model of engagement to explain the process of transferring perceived working conditions to positive behaviors. Job fit, affective commitment, and psychological climate were positively associated with engagement, while engagement was a mediator between the antecedents of engagement and its consequences (discretionary effort and intention to leave their job). They concluded that HRD managers could create conditions that cultivate employee engagement as a strategy for improving organizational performance. Using qualitative research techniques helps researchers to understand engagement clearly. Shuck, Rocco & Albonoz (2011b) attempted to explore people's perception of their experiences during engagement. An interesting discovery was that the level of engagement was influenced by employees' perceptions, experiences, and interpretation of events, which meant that organizational environment and interaction between people could create employee engagement and performance.

The analysis of the mediators of employee engagement would help to understand the process of employee engagement in leveraging performance. To test which conditions in the organization would affect employee engagement and the resulting outcomes, various factors such as traits, working habits, and mental status were examined to identify drivers of positive engagement among employees (Wildermuth 2008, Rich 2006, Rich et al 2010, Shuck et al 2011, Shuck&Reio 2014). Employee engagement studies have helped to expand our knowledge regarding mental states and attitudes towards self-expression as well as the relationship of man to his surroundings in organizations from a variety of perspectives, including physical, cognitive, and emotional.

Consequence of Employee Engagement

In this research, we focus on micro levels of performance that individuals can contribute to an organization by measuring individual performance and innovative behavior. When employees have the option to simply accomplish the tasks assigned according to role but still choose to innovate in the workplace, this is a sign that the individual has committed himself or herself to organizational goals (Holzer & Callahan 1998, Lee 2000). To measure performance, we use Janssen (2000)'s scale, which includes the emergence of new ideas, promoting new ideas, bringing ideas to implementation, and evaluating whether these ideas are used. Innovation in organizations represents benefits to processes and functions, including developing new products and services, adopting technological changes, and transforming working procedures to improve performance (De Jong 2007, Lee 2008). We believe that innovative work behavior refers to behaviors that employees knowingly apply to achieve performance levels.

A key factor in achieving innovation and performance among public sector employees is to encourage motivation (Denhardt et al 2013). Many scholars have shown that employee engagement is positively related to individual performance (Rich et al. 2010, Salanova et al. 2005, Babcock-Roberson & Strickland 2010, Saks 2006, Soane et al. 2012). To test the relationship of employee engagement with organizational outcomes, Soane et al. (2012) found that engagement had a positive relationship with performance and organizational citizenship behavior and was negatively associated with turnover intention. In his dissertation, Rich (2006) showed a nomological network of employee engagement and behavioral outcomes by demonstrating the relationship between its antecedents and consequences. The findings of his research indicated that the higher the level of employee engagement is, the higher individual performance is, which leads to increased production. Theory has said that people have internal complexity and consciously choose their own actions to express themselves when performing work roles. This is the reasoning behind why people choose to use their personal opinions to address difficulties (Kahn 2010). When people are engaged, their positive mindset motivates them to be eager to work and to be creative, which results in good health. Those attitudes bring forth additional efforts to achieve their goals beyond the original scope of their work (Bakker 2009). Agarwal (2014) provided a summary of findings demonstrating that employee engagement was positively related to innovative behavior. Another piece of research showed that the state of being engaged led to a positive attitude towards work (Swinton-Douglas, 2010). All of these studies support the notion that employee engagement is a positive state of mind and can lead to positive outcomes. Accordingly, we propose that employee engagement will have positive relationship with performance.

Hypothesis 1 Employee engagement will have a positive relationship with performance.

Antecedents of employee engagement

To find out what conditions in public organizations drive employee engagement, we turned our interest towards new public management values that have been discussed in the field of public administration for some time. Ethics, justice, and empowerment are some of the most debated values in the field. For instance, ethics is commonly discussed when corruption and misconduct occur concurrent to NPM. New managerial changes such as public-private contracts to deliver public services and procedural changes can lead to channels of prohibited exploitation. Ethical movements appear to reduce those problems (Frederickson 2013). It is considered to be very important for leaders in public organizations to be able to lead employees ethically. In this paper, we wish to explore whether ethical leadership promotes engagement in employees. In public personnel management, justice is considered to be a form of social equity in organizations (Frederickson 2010), which helps to understand the perceptions of employees towards the justice they feel they receive. Justice in organizations can become motivating and lead to performance increases (Rubin 2009). In civil service reform, changes in the procedures utilized to discipline employees may lead to negative consequences. Thus, we included procedural justice as an antecedent variable in this study. Administrative reforms also urge decentralization (Kernaghan 2000). In public organizations, leaders can provide autonomy and empowerment to employees by advocating for efficiency and responsiveness, as empowerment will enhance individual performance (Fernandez & Moldogaziev 2011). We propose that these NPM values will help employees bring out their internal potential, in turn benefitting organizational performance.

Ethical leadership and employee engagement Brown & Treviño (2006) defined ethical leadership as the expression of action within the ethical norms of leaders in personal and interpersonal relationships. Ethical leaders promote ethical conduct to followers through two-way communication and encourage decision-making in ethical ways. The ethical leadership construct comprises the dimensions of moral and ethical leadership behavior. Moral and ethical leadership behaviors depend on experience and collective values. Combined with beliefs and perceptions of what is right or wrong, good or bad, these ethical behaviors are also shaped by religious beliefs and parenting. Ethics represents the standards of decency that guide individuals in how to make the right decisions and behave in appropriate ways (Greenberg 2011: 78). Therefore, characteristics of ethical leadership included trustworthiness, honesty, and integrity (Howell & Avolio, 1992, Treviño et al, 2000). Ethical leaders can make an impact on followers by promoting normative adherence in decision-making and role performance. Followers who perceive the ethical behaviors of leaders tend to have positive feelings towards leaders. (Connelly et al 2004, Eisenberg 2000, Gaudine & Thorne 2001, Griffin & O’Leary-Kelly 2004) Additionally, positive perceptions of the leaders, such as fun and

happy, result from ethical leadership and can lead to employee optimism (Johnson 2009). Researchers use social learning theory to explain how ethical leadership influences followers by being a role model. When people observe ethical values and behaviors in leaders, followers then imitate them in response to their cognition that the leader is just and worthy of trust. Moreover, when people are treated fairly and attentively, they tend to behave similarly in return. (Brown & Treviño 2006).

To explain how ethical leadership leads people to be open-minded and become engaged, researchers have said that ethical leadership stimulates voices representing the true self (Avey et al 2012). As a result of feeling safe when leaders act honestly, employees can create new things without fear (Den Hartog & Belschak 2012). Qualitative research helps us to understand more deeply what perspectives occur in the minds of employees in both private and public settings after observing the ethical behaviors of leaders: employees felt safer, were ready to become altruistic, were concerned for public goods and services, and were responsive to society (Heres & Lasthizen 2012). Safety encourages people to both be attentive and participate in activities happening in the workplace (Walumbwa & Schaubroeck 2009). As Kahn (1990) mentioned in his engagement theory, psychological safety is a state of mind that leads to engagement. We propose that ethical leadership will have positive relationship with employee engagement.

Hypothesis 2 Ethical leadership will have a positive relationship with employee engagement.

Procedural justice and employee engagement To understand how justice affects employees' state of mind, Folger (1993) explained that people can become more engaged when they observe equity in the workplace. He used referent cognitive theory to explain the reciprocal relationship between the organization and its employees. Scholars indicate that morality, neutrality, consistency, and accuracy are principles of justice in the workplace (Skarlicki & Folger 1997; Leventhal et al 1980). People in organizations are susceptible to the environment and are likely to express their feelings about justice if needed. For example, if a leader or manager demonstrates that he or she prefers one particular person more by assigning them pleasant job tasks, then others will be offended by the leader's action in reaction to the sense of unfairness (Greenberg 2011). Accordingly, fairness is a process that is perceived to influence feelings and behaviors toward work (Baldwin 2006). In public organizations, procedural justice is typically determined by third parties who establish the rules and regulations associated with working and decision-making processes (Thibaut & Walker 1975). Regulations will become fair if employees are able to control or take part in these processes (Leventhal 1980). Thus, rules and regulations that apply equally to all employees at all times, including the unbiased treatment of leaders, are considered to be fair. When employees are involved in decision-making processes and are able to create rights to protect themselves against injustice and

correct any errors that might occur in an organizational system, employees perceive their workplace to be fair.

Scholars believe that justice activates the brain, generating energy and ideas to improve performance (Elamin 2012). Researchers found that when confronted with injustice, parts of the brain that affect emotion, such as anger, are aroused (Dulebohn et al 2009). People who identify a just workplace are more likely to devote time to additional tasks and be engaged at work (Saks 2006; Agarwal 2014). Scholars believe that justice helps to reduce uncertainty in the workplace because people feel safe when their environment is just (Lind & Van den Bos 2002, Thibaut & Walker 1975). In addition, adherence to justice brings integrity and ethical behavior, cultivating a meaningful professional life (Cropanzano et al 2001, Folger 1998). Researcher previously studying public organizations found that procedural justice had a positive relationship with satisfaction and trust in managers but, in contrast, had a negative relationship with turnover intentions (Rubin 2009). According to the results of previous studies, we propose that procedural justice will have a positive relationship with employee engagement because once people feel safe as a result of being treated fairly and having meaningful of their actions, people will be engaged in their work role.

Hypothesis 3 Procedural justice will have a positive relationship with employee engagement.

Employee Empowerment and Employee Engagement

The purpose of empowering employees is to reduce ‘red tape’ and promote efficiency. Once people feel empowered, they perceive that the work they are doing is more interesting, which encourages them to perform better (Thomas & Velthouse 1990). When empowered, people also tend to make better decisions and take responsibility for their actions (Peters 2009). Conger & Kanungo (1988) described the state of being empowered as the process of strengthening self-efficacy and confidence in one’s organizational role (Knol & van Linge 2009). People become more self-determined to make appropriate choices, as evidence in their ideas and actions. (Deci, Connell, & Ryan 1989).As a result, a person can contribute to the organization by creating influence and impacting the work environment when they are recognized as competent and effective (Spreitzer, 1995). In this study, Spreitzer (1995)’s concept of employee empowerment was used to quantify this concept. Employee empowerment comprises four components: meaningfulness, self-determination, competence, and impact.

In terms of the psychological aspects of empowerment, feelings of meaningfulness emerge when people are empowered. (Chalofsky 2003)Meaningfulness is related to values, norms, and beliefs, which are embedded in perception and can consequently create purpose in one’s professional life. (Brief & Nord 1990). Competency is also related to the trust in one’s own abil-

ity to work and use skills related to their role; this component of competency focuses on self-efficacy (Spreitzer 1995). Self-determination refers to the ability to define one's own strategy to obtain desired results. In the organizational setting, employees can control his or her work and make their own choices (Deci et al 1989). Impact refers to the degree to which a person can influence strategies, management, and procedures at work (Spreitzer 1995, Ashford 1989). Employee empowerment has become the mechanism that implies responsibility toward assigned work (Ford & Fottler 1995). Scholars believe those four components have become conditions of employee engagement (Stander & Rothman 2010). Thus, we assume that employee empowerment will have a positive relationship with employee engagement because empowerment causes a sense of meaningful work, a defining characteristic of employee engagement.

Hypothesis 4 Employee empowerment will have a positive relationship with employee engagement.

In this study, we aimed to examine the antecedents and consequences of employee engagement in the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration. From our review of the literature, we propose that ethical leadership, procedural justice, and employee empowerment will have a positive relationship with employee engagement. Employee engagement is predicted to have a positive impact on performance through the indicators of performing better on assigned tasks and being innovative at work.

Methods

Sample and Procedures We conducted a cross-sectional research study design to examine employee engagement processes. We focused on the influence of antecedents (ethical leadership, procedural justice, and employee empowerment) and the impact of employee engagement on consequences (performance). The study population included employees who had been working in 50 district offices of the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) during August-October 2014. The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration is an organization that carries out public services and implements policies regarding the management of Bangkok. These public services include transport services, urban planning, waste management, housing, road and highways, security services, and environmental management. All of the district offices also provide services at the district level. The total eligible population for this study was 6251. To derive a sample, we divided all Bangkok areas into 6 groups. Each group contained 7 to 9 district offices, depending on location. We conducted probability random sampling by randomly selecting 1 district out of each group. We collected data from 854 participants in the Klong San district, Tungkrui district, Huaykwang district, Buengkum district, Bangkhen district, and Klongtoey district.

Measures The instrument used to collect data was a questionnaire divided into five parts. Questions about employee engagement were adapted from the Rich (2006) Job Engagement Scale, which contained 14 questions for measuring three components of employee engagement (physical engagement, cognitive engagement, and emotional engagement). Performance was measured by using indicators of innovative work behavior adapted from Janssen (2000) and consisted of 17 questions. The ethical leadership scale was adapted from Brown, Treviño, & Harrison (2005)'s Ethical Leadership Scale and consisted of 10 questions. Procedural justice was measured by four questions adapted from Leventhal (1980). Lastly, employee empowerment was measured using 10 questions adapted from Spreitzer (1995)'s empowerment scale, which reflected 4 components: meaningfulness, competence, self-determination, and impact. All questions were measured by a 5-level Likert scale.

Pilot study and analysis procedures We administered a pilot study to assess the quality of our instruments. We received completed questionnaires from 100 employees who had been working in one of the district offices of BMA. Cronbach's alpha reliability (Cronbach 1990) for all scales had a standardized alpha value of .927. We also conducted content validity and construct validity testing to identify whether the translated scales could be understood and whether the measures can be theoretically related to each concept. In our primary study, we used our revised instruments to collect data from the participants. A total of 576 questionnaires (67.4%) were returned for data analysis; respondents were primarily female (59.55%) with more than 10 years of work experience (49.48%). Prior to data analysis, we completed data analysis to check for missing data and outliers using Mahalanobis Square Distance (D^2) from AMOS (Arbuckle, 2009). A total of 153 questionnaires had missing data and outliers. We decided to use bootstrapping to aid our non-normal data resampling (2,000 samples). This method does present additional Type I error rates and power than a single sample method assuming a normal distribution. Finally, the number of data points used for analysis was 423. We used AMOS 18 for the structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis. SEM combines factor analysis and multiple regression analysis to examine the relationship between latent variables (Hair et al 2006). The SEM process had 2 stages: (1) analysis of the measurement model and (2) analysis of the structural model.

Results

To analyze the relationship between the antecedents and consequences of employee engagement, we developed a model for testing the significance of the relationship and model fit. First, a measurement model was used to conduct a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of SEM. Our model was comprised of 5 latent variables, 2 of which were second-ordered constructs. Employing maximum likelihood estimation procedures, a CFA was conducted to determine the fit of the measurement model to the data by using fit indices (chi-square, GFI, NFI, CFI, RMSR, and RMSEA).

The results indicated good fit in some indices (chi-square = .00, relative chi-square = 3.469, GFI = .738, NFI = .855, CFI = .892, RMSR = .027, and RMSEA = .076). We allowed the disturbance terms of latent variables to be correlated for a better fit by using modification indices and the test of standardized residuals. The revised measurement model indicated a better fit in all fit indices (p -value = .00, relative chi-square = 3.056, GFI = .770, NFI = .873, CFI = .910, RMSR = .029 and RMSEA = .070). The validity of each concept was supported in several ways. First, the construct reliability for all concepts was found to be high, with an alpha level over .9. Second, construct validity, convergent validity, and discriminant validity were assessed by estimating the variance extracted (VE) (Hair et al 2006). The results indicated that all concepts had variance extracted values over .5, implying convergent validity for all of the concepts. We then compared VE to the squared correlation estimate of two concepts for testing discriminant validity; the result indicated discriminant validity between concepts.

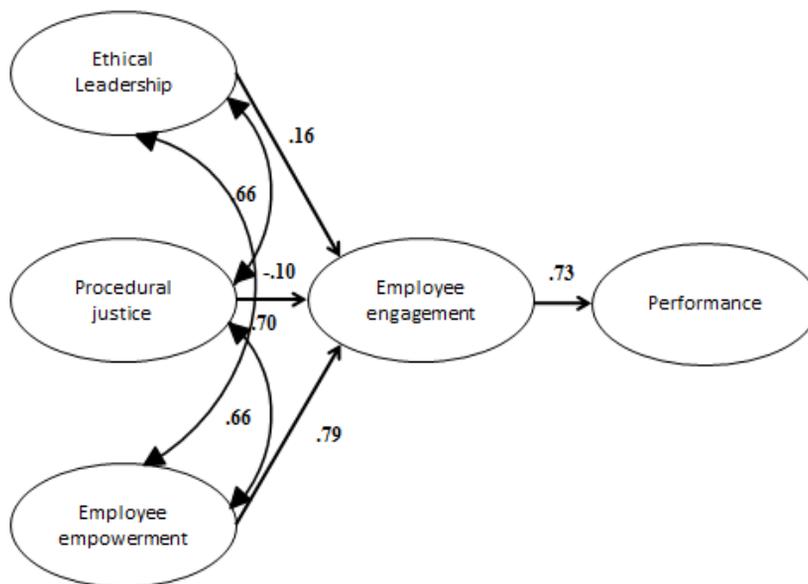


Figure 1. Structural Model

To test for substantive relationships between concepts, we used the structural model depicted in Figure 1. Fit indices were used to test the overall fit of the structural model to the data. The result indicated a good fit (p -value = .00, relative chi-square = 3.094, GFI = .768, NFI = .870, CFI = .908, RMSR = .032 and RMSEA = .070). However, there was no statistically significant direct relationship between procedural justice and employee engagement. This result did not support hypothesis 3, in which we proposed that procedural justice would have a positive relationship with employee engagement. Therefore, we devised a revised structural model in which we eliminated the direct relationship between procedural justice and employee engagement. This model was also a good fit to the data (p -value = .00, relative chi-square = 3.095, GFI = .767, NFI = .870, CFI = .908,

RMSR = .032 and RMSEA = .070). The fit of this model to the data was the same as the fit of the first structural model. To investigate our hypotheses, we examined standardized path estimates from our revised structural model, depicted in Figure 3, which indicated support for hypotheses 1, 2, and 4.

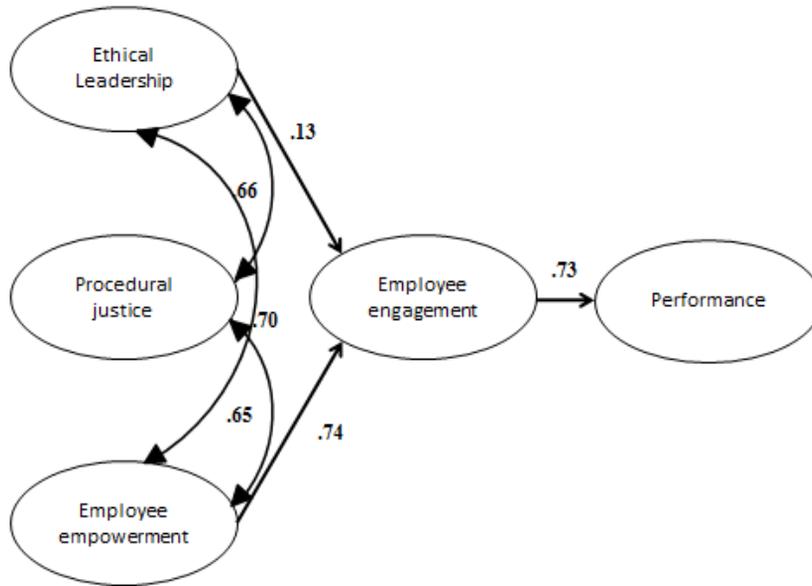


Figure 2. Revised Structural Model.

Employee engagement was positively related to performance at a high level ($\beta = .73$). The path from ethical leadership to employee engagement was positive and statistically significant ($\beta = .13$) and the path from employee empowerment to employee engagement was strongly positive and also statistically significant ($\beta = .74$). In other words, BMA employees were more productive when they perceived the behavior of leaders to be ethical and when they felt empowered to do their work. Thus far, our analysis supports the mediating role of employee engagement in the relationship between employee empowerment and performance. The mediation effect of employee engagement required significant correlations among independent, mediating, and dependent variables. Theoretically, a mediator transfers the effect of independent variables to dependent variables (Hair et al 2006). After following a series of steps to evaluate mediation, the results shown in Table 1 indicated that only employee engagement was a partial mediator in the relationship between employee empowerment and performance. Being a partial mediator means that the direct relationship between employee empowerment and performance is reduced but remains significant when employee engagement is entered as an additional predictor. However, employee engagement was not a mediator between ethical leadership and performance because ethical leadership did not have direct correlation with performance.

Table 1. Test of mediation

Independent variables	Direct effect on employee engagement	Effect on performance			Types of mediation
		Direct effect on performance (without employee engagement)	Direct effect on performance (with employee engagement)	Indirect effect	
Ethical Leadership	.165*	-.011	-.077	.120	non-mediation
Organizational Justice	-.102	.058	.109	-.074	non-mediation
Employee Empowerment	.787*	.690*	.442*	.265	partial mediation

(p – value < .05)

To confirm the mediation effect, we conducted bootstrapping to ensure accuracy for computing bias-corrected bootstrap confidence intervals. The result indicated that the mediation effect of employee engagement is non-zero. As a result, employee engagement was a significant mediator in the relationship between employee empowerment and performance.

Discussion

Our findings have extended and clarified our understanding of employee engagement model. First, the results support engagement theory in terms of the three constructs of physical, emotional, and cognitive engagement. This theory was supported by Kahn's theory and many recent researchers (Rich 2006, Rich et al 2010, Shuck 2010, May et al 2004). Second, during the assessment of content validity and construct validity, we found that the translated scale could not be understood and therefore used. As a result, we developed an employee engagement scale in Thai to assess levels of engagement that could be used for employee engagement surveys in both public and private organizations. Our scale had already been tested for its construct validity and reliability.

In the test of the hypotheses, we found that our hypotheses were mostly supported by the empirical data. To examine the consequences of employee engagement in hypotheses 1, we concluded that employee engagement positively affected performance. This finding was consistent with the arguments associated with Kahn's theory of employee engagement (Kahn, 1990). It also confirmed that employee engagement was a state of mind and mediated the relationship between

the perception of the working environment and performance. Expression of all three dimensions of employee engagement (physical, emotional, and cognitive) helped facilitate internal forces of innovation and behaviors that stimulate performance (Kahn 1990, Bakker 2009, Bakker et al 2004). Our conclusion was supported by previous research demonstrating that engaged employees initiate the work necessary for completing tasks and respond to feedback with enthusiasm, energy, and attentiveness (Halbesleben 2010, Salanova et al 2005, Babcock-Roberson & Strickland 2010, Saks 2006, Soane et al 2012).

Being engaged is not necessarily a steady state of mind that is only internal. When employees are present in their job roles, they also need internal moments of preparedness and external support to stimulate engagement. To determine what conditions in the workplace can motivate employees to meet an organization's goal, we examined the relationship between antecedents and employee engagement in hypotheses 2, 3, and 4 using SEM for estimation. Only hypotheses 2 and 4 were supported by the empirical data. Ethical leadership was positively correlated with employee engagement. This finding was supported by previous research (Avey et al 2012, Den Hartog & Belschak 2012, Heres & Lasthuizen 2012). We agreed that qualities of leadership such as integrity, trustworthiness, and rational decision-making could change employee perceptions of the workplace, resulting in high levels of employee engagement. A sense of safety when perceiving of leader's ethical behaviors could also help employees feel at ease and ready to take on extra effort to accomplish their work.

We found that employee empowerment was positively related to employee engagement at a high level ($\beta = .74$). Empowered employees were more likely to engage in work because they were treated with respect and honor by managers or leaders and, as a result, felt valued (Kahn 1992, 2010). This finding aligns with Kahn's theory and recent studies (May et al 2004, Stander & Rothmann 2010, Bhatnagar 2012). However, our data did not support hypothesis 3. We found that procedural justice was not positively correlated with employee engagement at a significant level. This was surprising because previous research has found that justice in organizations was an important factor affecting the motivation and engagement of employees (Karatepe 2011, Choi 2011, Rasheed et al 2013). Nevertheless, there are some researchers who have found uncorrelated relationships between organizational justice and other motivational constructs (Alvi & Abbasi 2012, Thomas & Nagalingappa 2012). This lack of correlation may be the result of the scale used to measure procedural justice. We used a translated procedural justice scale that may have caused respondents to not answer truthfully. Our test of mediation also indicated that employee engagement could partially explain the process of being empowered and motivated, therefore improving performance, as there were also some direct effects of employee empowerment on performance.

The development of this BMA employee engagement model contributes to the existing knowledge of human resource management and public administration. This model can help scholars and HR practitioners understand the process of motivation in public sector employees more clearly. Managers and HR practitioners can leverage performance by developing engagement among employees that is based on meaningfulness, safety, and availability at work. This study also contributes to the theoretical implications and relationships between antecedents and consequences of employee engagement by measuring performance using indicators such as in-role performance and innovative behavior, which had not yet been empirically tested. The study of antecedents could also help managers expand strategies to motivate engagement in public organizations and to develop working conditions that facilitate employee engagement, such as building a culture of ethics or empowering employees to complete important assignments. To develop ethical standard for organization's leaders, values such as honesty, accountability, responsibility, and fairness should be integrated to HR's leadership training for the next leaders. Recruitment committees and HR managers can inspect prospect leader's moral and ethical beliefs from his actions. Moreover, we also encourage researchers to examine the relationship between procedural justice and employee engagement in public sector employees using comparative methods to evaluate the impact of focusing on public sector employees versus private sector employees.

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