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Title

**THE LEADERSHIP AND THE RETENTION OF
EMPLOYEES THAT WORK FOR NONGOVERNMENTAL
ORGANIZATION (NGOS) IN THAILAND**

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Abstract:

Leadership is a key success factor in the success in managing of any organizations including nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Most Thailand's NGOs focus on community services which related to women rights, education for less opportunity people, healthcare, and rescue services. In Thailand, most employees who join and work in the NGOs not only because of financial issues, but they believe some other factors. This study aims to investigate the impact of leadership on employees retaining in nongovernment organizations in Thailand. Four Thai NGOs were taken in this study. In-depth interview was employed to collect data from managers who worked in the NGOs.

The results found that leadership played important roles in NGOs employees' retention in addition to other job satisfaction factors in most organizations. All leaders in the sample NGOs determined high value of their employees. The leaders stated that they would find the best way to retain their employees to work for their organizations in the long term. First, they collected information related to factors impacted on the employees' satisfactory in working. However, if they found the problem, they would work along side the employees to resolve it. Some NGOs found the organizations' working philosophy helped them to screen people who are going to join working with the organizations. The employees who accepted those philosophies before joining to work in the organizations seemed to fit the work condition and continue to work in the organizations in longer period of time. Finally, the results found that leadership in the NGOs played more importance roles than other factors which are relationships among employees, devotion to voluntary works, work condition, internal communications, compensation, and hygiene factors in order to retain employees to work with the NGOs.

Key words: Nongovernment organizations, leadership, retaining, employees, Thailand.

Introduction:

Leadership is an important tool in managing human resource in any organizations including nongovernment organizations (NGOs). The steady rise of nongovernmental organizations has

captivated the imagination of some policymakers and activists. The employees often join and stay with NGOs because they believe in the ideals and inspiration of the leadership.

In Thailand, there are more and more NGOs being established and played significant roles in providing various services to society in addition to the government services. In this study four well known NGOs were selected including the Paveena-Hongsakul Foundation, the Duangprateep Foundation, the Potektueng Foundation, and the Chaipattana Foundation. They all work and provide services in the field social and community development, with specific interests in literacy, education, health care, child and women welfares, environment, advocacy, animal welfare, rescue service and etc. This study aims to investigate leadership effect toward the retention program in order to retain employee to work in nongovernment organizations.

Objectives of the study, to find and explain the leadership effect on the retention of employees that work for nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Thailand. And to present the leader's vision about how to manage retention of employees working for nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Thailand.

Literature Review:

Nongovernment Organization (NGO)

Kaldor (2005), Schiller (2005), and Gray et al. (2006) presented that the nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations has have been established in significant numbers. NGOs are becoming more practical, flexible, and less strict. The organizations are trying to develop better working environments, to gain credibility among policy makers and opinion formers and to improve their reputations. Recent surveys by Phillips (2005), Burchell and Cook (2006) find NGOs are emerging as a key participant in the dialogue process and as an important channel for communication within the CSR realm.

Andriof et al., (2002), and Goodstein and Wicks (2007) point out that NGOs have gradually strengthened their influence and this societal evolution has substantially changed the external environment in business. Civil society now expects business to take its responsibilities on an increasing number of issues seriously. Companies can no longer operate independently from their environment. Stakeholder theory strongly urges an ethical approach, based on respect and

consideration of a firm's constituencies. Ruggie (2004) presents that NGOs engage corporations and business associations to identify and disseminate corporate best practices. They aim to promote social and environmental actions, provide technical assistance to corporations, promote and design corporate social responsibility (CSR) standards as well as management and reporting processes, and participate in CSR monitoring and auditing. These new forms of collaboration between business and NGOs reflect broader changes in the overall governance environment, while contributing to the reconstitution of the global public domain where firms carry out their activity.

Leadership:

More and more professionalization nongovernmental organizations exist in the past decades. The figure from Kennedy School of Government illustrated that in 1980, 8 percent of the Masters in Public Policy graduates took jobs in the NGO sector (Kennedy School of Government, 1998). By 2004, the number had risen to over 31 percent (Kennedy School of Government, 2004). In Canada alone (2007) there are more than 72,000 registered charities delivering services locally, provincially and nationally. These organizations provide over 350,000 full time jobs as well as over 220,000 part time jobs. Total annual salaries exceed \$13 billion dollars. This is a large and growing sector (Hardy.2007). NGOs are better managed than they used to be, and one aspect of that improved management is having a growing and more secure revenue source. (Frooman, 1999). Leadership plays significant roles in the success of NGOs success. Schermerhorn (2001) presented that leadership is the process of inspiring others to work hard to accomplish important tasks with the rapid technological change, intense global competition, and workforce diversity of the new workplace leadership is essential to management. Leaders plan and set the direction, objectives, organize things, brings resources together to turn plans into action. Leaders also build the commitment and enthusiasm needed for staffs to apply their talents to help accomplish plans, and they control and make sure things turn out right.

Ebrahim (2003) and Hardy (2007) found significant findings that leadership in NGOs is different from leadership in the for-profit sector where the NGOs have a social purpose such as environmental groups, human rights organizations, organizations that fight against poverty and underdevelopment or provide medical assistance in emergencies. Their clients (beneficiaries) are

different from the people who contribute time and resources; as such they are also called non-membership organizations. The NGOs is similar to business organizations in one thing that they could be grow or die. Many NGOs began to look at the real world as they have to survive. They try to learn business management practice from the for-profit sector. House and Dessler (1974) presented the organizations focus more on job satisfaction and leader acceptance where leader behavior must be perceived as immediately satisfying or as leading to future satisfaction.

Retention Issues:

Organizations are struggling with turnover and retention with NGOs is not exception. The Institute of Management and Administration (2008) found that many organizations that are struggling with employee retention. The IMA have plans in place to counter the problem. The solutions fall into four categories including market compatibles compensation, employees' satisfaction, creating succession plans, and ensuring new hires are fit for the organization.

According to Brundage and Koziel,(2010) presented that by stating in the firm a culture that people are the top priority could lead to the retention success. This must come from the top of the leadership hierarchy and flow down through the organization. Building a cohesive staffing system should be based on a common foundation, such as a competency model, that applies to all levels within the firm. For example, a competency model helps managers to counsel poor performers because it displays the behaviors and actions that team members should be demonstrating. One in which each function, such as recruitment, training and performance management, is integrated with the others. This will demonstrate a commitment to the people power of the organization and will regularly promote retention efforts. When retention becomes a priority, that mindset flows through the firm and staffing programs will naturally gravitate toward maximizing employee satisfaction and retaining the best and brightest talent. There are many possible ways to creatively link reward and performance in the new workplace. To take full advantage of the possibilities, however, managers should (1) respect diversity and individual differences, (2) clearly understand what people want from work, and (3) allocate rewards to satisfy the interests of both individuals and the organization (Schermerhorn, 2001).

Method:

The population in this study was the leaders who were currently working in Thailand's NGOs at managerial levels including policy makers, executives, and department managers. Four largest NGOs were taken into account as samples. An in-depth interview was used to collect data from 40 leaders (10 leaders from each organization) who were working in the four NGOs in Bangkok during March to May, 2011 using snow ball sampling approach.

First NGO's objectives

1. Help victims of fire, floods, hurricanes and other disasters.
2. Establish public hospital for the treatment of disease and illness.
3. Establish schools and academies.
4. Help managing the care and burial of the deceased.
5. Promotion and maintenance activities of religious art, literature and science.
6. Perform general charity.

Second NGO's objectives

To assist children and women when their rights are being violated, and to create a society that promotes health and happiness of its children.

Third NGO's objectives

1. To provide educational opportunities for children and youth in poor communities. This includes training and professional skills development.
2. To encourage children to develop their health, physically and spiritually and to cultivate moral righteousness. To live for the benefit of society and national government
3. To assist and support education with a focus on understanding the development of poor communities and the environment.
4. To disseminate knowledge and technical expertise about education and training of children and youth. This includes publishing educational materials about the environment, human relations, and the development of poor communities.

5. To cooperate with other charitable organizations in the improvement of slum communities.
6. To promote and encourage strong community organizations

Forth NGO's objectives

1. To support the implementation of Royally-initiated and other development projects.
2. To promote the development of social and economic welfare activities to improve the quality of life of the people and to enable them to become self-reliant.
3. To carry out plans or projects that is beneficial to the people and the country as a whole.
4. To co-operate with the government sector and other charity organizations for public benefit or to take actions that reinforce support of public welfare.

Findings:

The information obtained from the in-depth interviews of respondents were analyzed using content analysis and presented in each category. First, the valued employees, most of the leaders are working on finding out the best way to retain their employees. They stated that, from time to time, they collected data from their employees to find out factors that make their employees to be satisfied with their jobs. Majority of the respondents stated that they continue to work on the solution for the factors that make their employees are not satisfied with their jobs. The results also presented that organization's philosophy is crucial for the organization in order to recruit the right employees who commit to work within the organization for a long period of time. One organization which provides services in the area of women and children's rights has the philosophy in regard to recruit new employees that the job applicants must be women and love to deal with children. And leader must be good at dealing with all aspects of communication, interpersonal relations and motivation.

However, leaders in second organization sees employee retention successfulness depending on working condition, devotion to volunteers, relationship with colleagues, and hygiene factors. The leaders from this organization illustrated that leadership has less influence on employee retention successfulness. Leaders in the third organization presented that retention of employees embedded

as part of their moral system. They continue to have training or activity plans to convince their employees to love their jobs and working place. The organization established this plans in their human resource practice, evaluated and adjust the plans. Only leaders in the forth NGO that stated their opinions that the retaining program is up to the purpose of the organization. The leaders stated that many people are applying to work with the organization even though the employees would work for voluntary jobs with no pay. The leaders from the last organization believed that employees who apply to work for them because of the name of their organization and type of jobs that would be benefits directly to the standard living of people and the Thai society as a whole.

Conclusion:

This study has shown the leader's vision to retaining employees to work in the Thai nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). We could conclude that leadership affects on the retention of employees as leaders manage employees' job descriptions, recruitment, employee selection, and the purpose of the organizations. The study also found that experiences of leaders effected on the practice in retaining employees to working for the organization. Jobs rotation is accounted as rewarding and retaining practice in some nongovernment organizations. However, some benefits including vacation, sick leave, and medical insurance are accounted as major causes in retaining employees to work in the NGOs.

Implication:

Since NGO is, most of the time, a non-for-profit organization, their setting are differ from a for profit organization. The differences come from types of jobs, work condition, compensation system, employees' qualifications, and etc. Leaders in the NGOs should practice their leadership skills accordingly to purpose of their organizations. Since most of employees who work in Thailand's NGOs have less or no wage provided by the organizations, leadership is more importance to lead the employees to their success which finally to the success of their organizations. Also the retaining program is importance for the organizations in order to keep it

to be able to run the business. Thus, leadership is a major tool would be used by the managers in the NGOs to help retaining their employees to work longer time in their organizations.

Employees differ in many ways including their capabilities, attitudes, personal goals and personalities. Therefore, leaders should be able to read, analyze, and cope with those employees' behavior they face in their routine work. They leaders should find effective way to deal with individual worker which may vary from one to another to keep them feel satisfied with their jobs. With the differences in organizational' s goals between a for-profit and a non-for-profit organization where a for-profit one focuses on profits, thus, the organization also provides good services to their employees vary from working condition to a good compensation package. The NGOs, however, have different goals where they focus more on CSR activities. The organizations therefore, have less opportunity to provide the best services to their employees as equal to the for-profit ones. Therefore, the factor such as leadership style could be a major tool to encourage employees to work more efficiency and effectively and to retain them to work longer time.

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