

Human Resource Development Factors and Organisational Values for Sustainable Employment in a Local Thai NGO

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Abstract

This study explores the human resource development and certain human resource management practices that affect employee engagement in a specific organisational context—a Thai non-governmental organisation (NGO) named the Pid Thong Lang Phra Foundation. This exploratory research used a conceptual framework comprising three variables: 1) organisational values modified from Rokeach's (1973) classic theory of values, 2) human resource functions (i.e. training and development, recruitment and selection, evaluation and performance management, and compensation and benefits), and 3) Aon Hewitt's (2015) employee engagement model. A qualitative research method was adopted in this study. In-depth interviews were conducted with 11 respondents who worked at the Pid Thong Lang Phra Foundation in four different geographical locations in Thailand: a northern province (Nan), a north-eastern province (Udonthani), a southern province (Narathiwat), and Bangkok. The results revealed that organisational values lead to a strong work culture and sustainable employment, as these values affect how employees perceive and perform their jobs. In addition, the person–organisation fit variables observed in the human resource development and human resource management processes appeared to be the factors that have retained employees in this local Thai NGO.

Keywords: Organisational values, Sustainability, Employee engagement, Human resource management

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ปัจจัยด้านการพัฒนาทรัพยากรมนุษย์และค่านิยมองค์กร เพื่อการจ้างงานที่ยั่งยืนในองค์กรไทยที่ไม่แสวงหาผลกำไร

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บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยนี้ศึกษาเกี่ยวกับการพัฒนาทรัพยากรมนุษย์และลักษณะการบริหารทรัพยากรมนุษย์ในด้านที่มีผลต่อความผูกพันของพนักงานในองค์กรไทยที่ไม่มุ่งหวังผลกำไร คือ มูลนิธิปิดทองหลังพระ การวิจัยเชิงสำรวจนี้ใช้กรอบการวิจัยซึ่งประกอบด้วยสามองค์ประกอบสำคัญ 1) ค่านิยมองค์กรที่ตัดแปลงจากทฤษฎีค่านิยมของ Rokeach (1973) 2) งานทรัพยากรมนุษย์ (การฝึกอบรมและพัฒนา, การสรรหาและคัดเลือก, การประเมินและบริหารผลการปฏิบัติงาน, และการบริหารค่าตอบแทนและสวัสดิการ) และ 3) ตัวแบบด้านความผูกพันของพนักงานที่ตัดแปลงจาก Aon Hewitt (2015) งานวิจัยนี้ใช้ระเบียบวิธีวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพ โดยสัมภาษณ์เจ้าหน้าที่ของมูลนิธิปิดทองหลังพระทั้งหมด 11 คนที่ประจำอยู่ในสี่สำนักงานภูมิภาคได้แก่ สำนักงานภาคเหนือ (จังหวัดน่าน) สำนักงานภาคตะวันออกเฉียงเหนือ (จังหวัดอุดรธานี) สำนักงานภาคใต้ (จังหวัดนราธิวาส) และสำนักงานใหญ่ที่กรุงเทพมหานคร ผลการวิจัยพบว่าค่านิยมองค์กรนำไปสู่วัฒนธรรมการทำงานที่เข้มแข็งและการจ้างงานที่ยั่งยืน เนื่องจากค่านิยมขององค์กรส่งผลต่อวิธีการคิดและการปฏิบัติงาน นอกจากนี้ยังพบว่าองค์ประกอบที่เกี่ยวกับความเข้ากันได้ของคน—องค์กรในกระบวนการพัฒนาและการบริหารทรัพยากรมนุษย์เป็นปัจจัยสำคัญที่ทำให้เกิดการจ้างงานอย่างต่อเนื่องในองค์กรที่ไม่หวังผลกำไรแห่งนี้

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Introduction

Charities and humanitarian organisations have been growing internationally. In Thailand, the government has paid more attention to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as a mechanism to promote social, cultural, economic, labour and migration, and environmental activities, especially in remote areas. More than 80% of Thai NGOs have focused on developmental and charitable activities. Generosity and a harmonious society are the major values that have become the main pillars of NGOs in Thailand (Prateapusanond, 2017).

Nevertheless, currently, the rapidly changing business environment has made sustainable development and employment a challenge for NGOs. Given the humanitarian mission of an NGO, it is crucial for the organisation to systematically conduct strategic human resource development (HRD) and management-related activities, policies, and practices that enhance the performance of the employees as well as that of the organisation.

This study focuses on the employees of a Thai NGO called the Pid Thong Lang Phra (PTLP) Foundation. The foundation was first established in 2008 to drive public learning and development through 4,447 royal projects created by King Bhumibol Adulyadej. This study examines the personal and organisational work values, as well as the HRD and certain human resource management (HRM) functions, that are mainly deployed at the Foundation. To date, there have been minimal research studies on the role of local Thai NGOs and their discourse and practices (Sthapitanonda & Watson, 2013).

Research Questions

(1) How do organisational values affect employee performance in a Thai NGO?

(2) How do HRM practices help with sustainable work and employee engagement?

Literature Review

Based on the research purposes and questions, this literature review focuses on four topics: NGOs in Thailand, organisational values, HRM practices, and employee engagement.

NGOs in Thailand

NGOs in Thailand are growing abundantly as charitable and humanitarian organisations that provide social services or fulfil the needs of society. Since Thailand is well known for its generosity and for being a harmonious society, such values have become the main pillars of NGOs in Thailand (Prateapusanond, 2017). According to Vadhanasindhu (2002), NGOs and the Thai government have been coexisting and collaborating as mutual partners. The Thai government recognises the importance of both local and international NGOs in the development process to promote social, cultural, economic, and environmental activities as well as their significant contributions to rural development programs through national development policy. However, Vadhanasindhu (2002) has stated that local Thai NGOs mainly perform four common tasks: (a) strengthening the community, (b) educating the public about social issues, (c) providing direct assistance to minorities, and (d) expanding networks and collaboration.

According to the Civil and Commercial Code in Thailand, associations and foundations are legally acknowledged by the Thai government whereas unregistered organisations such as small working groups and campaigns exist side-by-side to perform developmental activities and to preserve the cultural heritage of Thailand. Associations can be categorised into three sub-groups: (1) commercial/trade/employer associations, (2) cremation associations, and (3) general non-profit associations. This paper discusses a Thai NGO, namely the PTLP Foundation, which was selected as a case study. The main objective of the foundation's projects is to apply the sufficiency economy concept of area-based development to reduce poverty and to improve living standards (Petison, et al., 2016). More details about the Royal Initiative Discovery Foundation are presented below.

PTLP foundation

The foundation's name literally means 'putting a gold leaf on the back of the Buddha's image', implying doing something good without advertising it. The Foundation was established on the initiative of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadei, who had worked to improve the living standard of the Thai people for more than 60 years (Petison et al., 2016). The objectives were to provide knowledge and skills to people involved in rural agriculture so as to create and sustain self-reliance among the poor. The knowledge and technology transfer that had accumulated over the years eventually evolved into a foundation that acts as a driving force to propel other royal projects.

Additionally, the foundation promotes the philosophy of the sufficiency economy—with its core principles of moderation, reasonableness, life immunity with knowledge, and morality. The King guided and encouraged the involved governmental agencies and bodies working in rural development to adopt his guiding principle under the slogan '*Understanding-Accessing- Developing*' (the 'UAD' approach) as the preferred mode of community development. According to Padunchewit (2013), this UAD approach, which was simultaneously both the foreground and the background of human and community development, has been kept intact and practiced throughout a variety of development projects.

Organisational values

According to Abreu and Camarinha-Matos (2008), the concept of values is multifaceted. Many academics have expressed the definition and meaning of values at different levels. Examples include the instrumental and terminal levels (Rokeach, 1973), the individual and organisational levels (Posner & Schmidt, 1992), and the occupational, organisational, and national levels (Hofstede, 1989). However, Tuulik et al. (2016) concluded that, in general, values can be interpreted as beliefs, standards, principles, and preferences that play an important role in behaviour and are influenced by the external environment. In this study, Rokeach's terminal and instrumental model of values is used. Rokeach (1973) defines values as 'an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or

socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence'. He proposed a list including two sets of values. The first set was terminal values (referring to desirable and end-state existence; the goals that a person would like to achieve during his or her lifetime and that may vary among different groups of people in different cultures). The second set was instrumental values (referring to preferable modes of behaviour; the means of achieving the terminal values). Moreover, Rokeach (1973) indicated that, once acquired, a value becomes part of an organised system of values; this value system works as a general plan for resolving conflicts and for making decisions.

We aimed to explore the organisational values of an NGO foundation, an organised system of values that may be different from that of other governmental or profit organisations in the country. The following section will elaborate further on HRD and management practices in NGOs.

HRD and other related management practices in NGOs

NGOs have a different nature from government and profit organisations. These organisations have specific missions and have emerged as charities to serve educational, healthcare, and community purposes (Chandler & Johansen, 2012). Irrespective of the different types of organisations, HRD and HRM practices affect individual and organisational performance. In addition to HRD, the need to have effective HRM and organisational development is also at the heart of sustainable success (Burke & Cooper, 2012).

Training and development

Training and development are the primary functions of HRD (Blanchard & Thacker, 2004; McLean, 2012). Blackmar and LeRoux (2012) viewed training as a systematic, planned process that improves employee attitudes and organisational performance. The training process includes inputs (organisational needs, employee needs, budget, equipment, and staff), the process (analysis, design, method, implementation, and evaluation), and outputs (knowledge, skills, attitudes, and motivation and job performance) (Blanchard & Thacker, 2004, p. 21). In a non-profit firm, employees are required to acquire the necessary skills and abilities to meet the

organisation's specific mission. Investment in effective training and activities is vital in becoming a high-performing non-profit organisation and contributing to the creation of a culture of learning, high performers, and organisational success (Blackmar & Leroux, 2012).

For effective training, McLean (2012) suggested the self-development of employees with the use of technology, to help reduce training costs and time and to establish customised training programs to meet the needs of the individual. For NGOs whose specific missions involve mainly educational, healthcare, and community-building purposes (Chandler & Johansen, 2012), the training and development programs in Thai communities must be designed to embrace the relevant social actors and equip the workers to be effective facilitators (Pruetipibultham, 2010).

In addition to HRD, certain HRM functions, when implemented effectively, can help motivate NGO employees. These functions include recruitment and selection, benefits and compensation, and performance management. Despite strong HRD, inadequate HRM practices may cause challenges that affect employee and organisational performance. Hence, HRM has become one of the factors that can result in the success or failure of an organisation's effectiveness (Batti, 2014).

HR professionals are the 'game changers' in serving and developing organisations and, additionally, serve as a medium that helps retain employees and enhances the engagement between employees and organisations. HR professionals are responsible for leading managers to appreciate the HRD policies and HRM practices of the organisation, and for reviewing and revising policies and practices when necessary (Burke & Cooper, 2012; Ulrich & Smallwood, 2003). The following are HRM practices that, if integrated with training and development, may help with sustainable engagement in the long term:

Recruitment and selection

Employees represent the strength of the organisation and, hence, recruiting and retaining them is crucial. Many NGOs rely on volunteers, and it is highly important to recruit and place the right volunteers and employees in the right positions (Bryan et

al., 2006). Not only is recruiting the right employees vital but so is retaining the right employees via recruitment from within, which enables the personal growth, increases the career opportunities, and enhances the engagement of the employees (Vance, 2006).

Compensation and benefits

In general, compensation consists of financial and non-financial incentives for the employees and their immediate family members. Having a well-designed compensation and benefit system supports the organisation's goals and encourages employees to become engaged. However, having one set of benefits that applies to all employees can be inefficient and may not meet all employees' needs very well (McLean, 2012, p. 258). Several research studies have indicated that employees working for NGOs are paid less than those working for for-profit organisations (Preston, 1989). As the compensation plans of the organisation have an impact on employee performance (Vance, 2006), compensation and benefits should be individualised and employees should be given a choice so that the needs of a diverse workforce are fulfilled.

Performance Management

Performance management has been utilised as a tool for organisational development (Cummings & Worley, 2009). Performance management is an ongoing process that takes place through the systematic mission, strategy, and objectives of the organisation, making these measurable through key performance indicators to keep the organisation on course (de Waal, 2013; Smither & London, 2009). Performance management systems in NGOs differ from those in for-profit organisations due to the value systems of the former. Baruch and Ramalho (2006) explored the notion that NGOs highly prioritise and prize soft evaluation criteria in their performance measurements. Thus, a systematic performance management must be in place for the betterment of the organisation.

Organisational engagement

The majority of HR practitioners have indicated that employee engagement is one of the primary objectives of a talent acquisition strategy. According to Aon Hewitt (2015), a general definition of engagement is something beyond satisfaction that describes an employee's discretionary effort. Kahn (1992) introduced the concept of engagement in terms of three psychological conditions and people's experiences: meaningfulness, safety, and availability. In later years, engagement was studied in the form of work engagement, personal engagement, job engagement, staff engagement, and employee engagement (Truss et al., 2014). Overall, employee engagement shows the degree of employees' involvement and commitment to their jobs and organisations (Vance, 2006). From a positive psychological perspective, the psychological well-being of employees and their engagement are intertwined (Chalofsky, 2003).

The Aon Hewitt (2015) engagement model included organisational drivers, and business and individual outcomes for engagement. This means that, when we talk about the employee engagement construct, we are referring to the psychological state and behavioural outcomes that lead to better performance. This engagement model proposes that employees who are committed to an organisation demonstrate three kinds of behaviours: (1) Say: The employees speak positively about the organisation to their co-workers, potential employees, and customers. (2) Stay: The employees have an intense sense of belonging and desire to be part of the organisation. (3) Strive: The employees are motivated and strive for success in their job and for the company.

According to Aon Hewitt (2015), the 'say, stay, strive' definition was derived from a study on what engaged employees think and do, which was conducted globally. In addition, Cunningham (2012) and Griffin et al. (2015) stated that satisfactory HR policies and practices can be the drivers of sustainable employee engagement that connect the employees and the organisation. Moreover, they can also strengthen the employees' engagement and performance level, and when

employees are engaged with the organisation, they can achieve the organisation's mission and generate valuable organisational outcomes (Vance, 2006).

The following picture represents the structural model of this study.

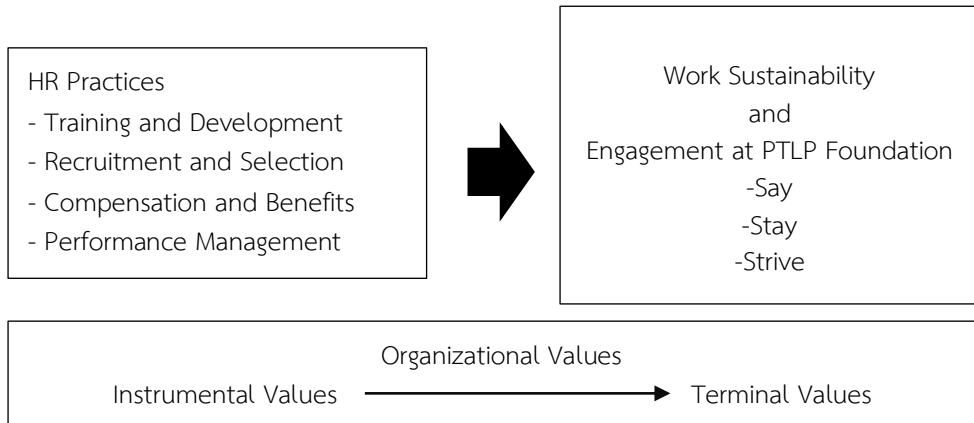


Figure 1 Structural model for human resource practices, work sustainability and engagement, and organizational values.

Research Methodology

This research study employed a qualitative method to explore the factors leading to organisational engagement in the local NGO under study. Creswell (1994) suggested that qualitative study is the process of finding answers to a problem and of obtaining a better understanding of complex phenomena. According to Creswell (2007), there are five commonly used qualitative approaches: narrative, grounded theory, phenomenology, ethnography, and case study. We opted for the case study method. To gain a better understanding of case study research, it is essential that researchers define this type of research as follows:

Case study research is a heterogeneous activity covering a range of research methods and techniques, a range of coverage (from a single case study through carefully matched pairs up to multiple cases), varied levels of analysis (individuals, groups, organizations, organizational fields, or social policies), and differing lengths and levels of involvement in organizational functioning. (Hartley, 2004, p.332)

The above statement is in line with Yin (2012), who stated that case study research is a process of inquiry for gaining a greater understanding of the complex situations related to the cases. In the present study, it is appropriate to apply the case study method as we aim to examine descriptive questions that can assist us in comprehending a social situation.

Data derived from the interviews was analysed by performing thematic analysis via transcribing the interview tapes; then the process of data reduction and data categorization by coding were employed (Heath, 2011). The researchers interpreted the data, explored the meaning by connecting data and the studied variables. As such, the relationships between data and the variables were identified with data reduction and categorization one more time and the themes were constructed accordingly (Gomm, 2008; Heath, 2011).

Participant selection

We applied purposive sampling for participant selection and the single case study approach. We chose the purposive sampling technique to select the participants as this technique is normally used for small numbers of particularly informative participants (Kumar, 2011). Although the concept of saturation in qualitative research is widely discussed by many theorists (Charmaz, 2006), we focused on 11 participants who worked in different geographical locations in Thailand. In addition to interviewing two people in Bangkok, the researchers embarked on three long-distance trips to interview six people in Nan Province in the north of Thailand, one person in Udonthani Province in the northeast, and two people in Narathiwat Province in the southern part of the country.

The major criterion used to select the participants was that the participants had to have worked for the foundation for at least 3 years, to ensure that they had been engaged with the organisation for a certain number of years and that they understood the organisation's values and its HR system. Among the eleven participants, there were five people whose work tenure was 9 years. The remainder of the participants had worked at the foundation for 8, 7, and 5 years, and three people had worked there for 3 years. Altogether, there were six male and five female participants. Participants with four different job functions were selected: operational staff members (6), consultants (1), managers (2), and supervisors (2).

We assigned a 6-digit coding system to represent each participant as follows:

- (1) The first digit: Gender (F/M).
- (2) The second and third digits: Job function
 - ST--Staff
 - CS--Consultant
 - MG--Manager
 - SV--Supervisor
- (3) The fourth and fifth digits: Geographical location
 - BK--Bangkok
 - NA--Nan Province
 - NR--Narathiwat Province
 - UD--Udonthani Province
- (4) The last digit: Work tenure (9/8/7/5/3)

Therefore, a male participant working as a consultant in a subsidiary in Udonthani Province for three years was coded as MCSUD3. Table 1 below summarises the participants' codes.

Table 1 Summary of the participants' codes

Number	Gender	Job Function	Geographical Location	Work Tenure (years)	Code
1	Male	Consultant	Udonthani	3	MCSUD3
2	Male	Manager	Nan	8	MMGNA8
3	Male	Supervisor	Nan	9	MSVNA9
4	Female	Supervisor	Nan	9	FSVNA9
5	Male	Staff	Nan	9	MSTNA9
6	Male	Staff	Bangkok	9	MSTBK9
7	Female	Manager	Bangkok	9	FMGBK9
8	Male	Staff	Bangkok	5	MSTBK5
9	Female	Staff	Bangkok	7	FSTBK5
10	Female	Staff	Narathiwat	4	FSTNR3
11	Female	Staff	Narathiwat	3	FSTNR3*

Note. FSTNR3* was accepted to work in Narathiwat Province at the same time and in the same position as FSTNR3.

Instrumentation

Following Yin (2012), a case study protocol was developed as part of the research design. The interview questions in the present study were developed based on the research questions and were verified by three HR professionals in a relevant field for content validity. The major variables and interview questions were classified into three categories, examples from which are provided below.

Example of questions on work/personal values

- What were the main factors that affected your decision to apply for a job in a non-governmental organisation?
- How different are the organisational values/missions here compared to your personal values?
- How satisfied are you with human resource development and other related practices (i.e. recruitment and selection, compensation, and benefits)
- How did you learn about the job vacancy here? What were the major selection criteria?
- To what extent are you satisfied with the compensation and welfare here?
- Have you received enough training and the right kind of personal development? What is your career goal?
- How is your performance evaluated here? Do you agree with the results?

Example of questions on work engagement (i.e. say, stay, strive)

- If you had a chance to tell other people about the Foundation, what would you tell them?
- What makes you stay here? Do you see yourself working here for a long time?
- Do you think that the Foundation aims for sustainable development? If yes, how? How do you help the foundation achieve this objective? Have you enjoyed working on this?

Findings

The data in this study were acquired through the interview process as well as personal observation. The content analysis method, in which the researcher uses frequencies by counting the occurrences of words and themes, was applied in this study as an initial method to filter the interview data. To accomplish this task, the three-phase data analysis procedure proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994) was applied. This three-phase procedure comprised: a) data reduction, b) data display, and c) conclusion drawing and verification. The data were first analysed using open coding to compare, conceptualise, and place them into categories. Data display was then performed to present the findings of the data reduction in the form of tables, matrices, and quotations so that the researchers could make conclusions based on the data display and the trustworthiness of the data. Below, we describe the findings based on our research questions.

Research question #1: What are the common values that help retain the employees at the PTLP Foundation sustainably?

It was found that all of the participants were interested in applying to work at the PTLP Foundation because they personally had faith in the King's work, especially in the royal projects, and, therefore, wanted to become a part of disseminating knowledge from these projects to enhance people's lives. Every respondent mentioned the '*pride*' that they received from accomplishing their work and the moment when they witnessed the '*happiness*' of poor people, particularly of those who lived in rural areas.

I have been impressed with the King's philosophy since I was small. One of his philosophies was to contribute without expectation for anything in return. I wanted to know if I could do such a thing. (MSVNA9)

Isn't it good if we can disseminate the knowledge acquired and collected by the King to those who totally need it? If you can help to apply the knowledge in other places outside these projects, it would make such good memories that you will treasure them for the rest of your life. (MCSUD3)

People in my province have lived with the fear of the religious separatist insurgency for a long time (Narathiwat is one of the four southernmost provinces, which has become the centre of the ongoing conflict since 2004—the researchers). However, we have received one of the greatest royal agricultural projects in this province, the Pikul Thong Development Project. The King had never abandoned us. Now, I am proud to be working to support his legacy. (FSTNR3)

All of the respondents stated the common work principles that they embrace according to the six-dimension principle, with a major focus on 1) soil, 2) water, 3) crops and other plants, 4) alternative energies, 5) forestation, and 6) the environment.

Moreover, all the respondents reported the work values that created sustainable development, which in turn created their personal pride. All the participants stated that part of their work was to share the sufficiency-economy philosophy established by His Majesty the King in a way that was easy to understand. It was of the utmost importance that the employees found ways to stimulate the people in the community to discover critical issues, join in the analysis process, and develop solutions for the community's benefit. A common phrase that several respondents used was 'ra-berd-jak-kang-nai' or the burst-from-within concept. In this context, it refers to the ability to help community members discover the root cause of a problem and take responsibility and ownership to solve the problem. One of the respondents who worked in Bangkok used the phrase as follows:

It is essential for us to develop a KM system by following the sufficiency-economy philosophy as a guideline in every branch. However, in practice, we need to find an area where we can make a prototype, ra-berd-jak-kang-nai. (FMGBK9)

To rely on the 'ra-berd-jak-kang-nai' concept is to keep asking several questions, as seen in the following quotes:

What will people in the community gain from our work? How will they live sustainably in their land? What crops will they plant, eat, and sell? We have

to apply the sufficiency concept and the six-dimension guideline differently in different areas across the country. (MSTNA9)

First, we want to help the villagers learn basic knowledge about the sufficiency-economy concept. Therefore, they need to start from being able to calculate their own monthly income and expenses. The majority of people here, unfortunately, could not do that. That is why they did not know the root cause of their poverty. My colleague and I were trained to apply the *ra-berd-jak-kang-nai* concept for the villagers. We conducted the participant observation, stayed with them in the village for half a year, talked to them, and finally interviewed each of the villagers about their daily expenses—item by item. It has taken a great deal of time. However, most people realised that they consistently spent more than they earned. That is the beginning of the end of their poverty (FSTNR3*).

Finally, the organisational values that the respondents reported to embrace together were the concept ‘*kao-jai, kao-tung, patana*’ or ‘understanding, assessing, developing’. The value comprises three-step developmental values that have been embedded and passed on from generation to generation in Thailand. One relevant respondent quote was as follows:

I will give you an easy explanation: to ‘understand’ is to gather and understand basic information, social traditions, and agricultural practices within a community. To ‘reach out’ is to establish a good relationship with the community members. Then, when you understand and reach out to people, it paves the way to creating ‘sustainable development’. (FSVNA9)

Essentially, we need to gather information and create a developmental model through *kao-jao, kao-tung, patana*, according to the needs of a particular community. With our tools, we are to assist in the work of relevant governmental bureaus. There are things the authorities up there do not know and are not able to access well, and we are here to assist those policymakers. (FSTBK7)

For the first research question, three types of values that retained employees seemed to emerge: 1) personal values, 2) work values, and 3)

organisational values. All the participants mentioned that the personal values they received from their work were the feeling of ‘pride and happiness’. Such feelings occurred when they achieved their goals in helping community members discover the root cause of their problems and find alternative solutions that emerged from partnerships between PTLP staff and the community members. The developmental model learned from one community was retained, improvised, and applied in other similar areas across the country. The work values that all respondents stated were important to them were the six-dimension principle, the sufficiency-economy philosophy, and ra-berd-jak-kang-nai (burst-from-within) concept. Finally, the organisational values that all the participants embraced were kao-jai, kao-tung, patana (understand, reach out, develop).

Research question#2 was ‘How do human resource practices help with employee engagement? The question targeted HRD and related management practices in recruitment and selection, evaluation and performance management, and compensation and benefits. The findings revealed that HRD was vital in engaging the employees. In addition, it was discovered that training and development have played an important role in work engagement and also in creating sustainability in the communities. Eight out of nine participants revealed that they were satisfied with the way in which training and development were conducted at the Foundation. They thought that attending the right training course that could answer their needs and job demands was vital, as one of the female participants indicated:

We can definitely ask for the skill development that we need by telling our boss. For example, I just applied for training regarding communication, especially presentation techniques. However, of course, it needs to relate to your job—this is what your boss will consider the most. (FSTBK7)

In line with the statement above, another participant with a long tenure, who worked in the Bangkok office, contended the following:

There are quite a number of training courses we can choose. An employee can consult directly with the boss and ask to attend a training program. Here, at our foundation, a line manager works as an HR manager too, especially in terms of training decisions. We have to be multitasking. For my work, for example, I have to learn the Amadeus program so that we can manage the

ticket reservation system. I need to know how to use GPS (global positioning system) in my fieldwork. When I proposed these training programs to my boss and provided all the reasons, he simply immediately approved them (MSTBK9).

Nevertheless, there was one participant who thought that there had been fewer training programs provided, especially for those who worked outside the office. One respondent mentioned that ‘after the (organisational) restructuring, there have been fewer trainings for the field workers...only on-the-job trainings have been continuing’ (MSVNA9).

In addition to the findings about HRD, the discovery of some HRM practices enhanced our understanding of how to engage the non-profit workforce. Concerning the recruitment and selection process, six participants revealed that they learned of the job opening through recruiting websites. Aside from the job description that was reported as being precise and clear, these six participants contended that the requirement of having a volunteering attitude and inspiration for social development were essential. The participant with the nine-year tenure shared his opinion as follows:

The resumes sent via websites would go through a recruiting team that filters them before passing them for a selection call. The team members are usually those who will be the candidate’s potential team workers. We selected them because we know what type of people we are looking for. The person who receives the job will be on probation for 119 days. That is a time for him or her to prove that he or she is fit for the job. I started here as an intern for three months and I knew it was really the workplace for me. (MSTBK9)

The major personal attributes that were vital in the selection criteria were patience, voluntarism, and adaptability. In addition, the Foundation emphasised providing opportunities to the underprivileged locals. Other participants, who worked in Nan Province, stated the following in regards to this:

We try not to adhere to the old conventional mind-set when it comes to selecting people. We want to give opportunities to the local people who

may have a little dark background...alcoholism, vandalism, and so on. They had been through healing and rehabilitating processes, and we told them to forget the past and start a new life with us. (MSTNA9)

I think they may have selected me partly because I am a local Muslim person. I can definitely work well for the Muslim villagers. In addition, it is difficult to find non-locals to work in these areas of conflict. They will not even apply to travel and work here. (FSTNR3*).

The findings revealed detailed information regarding evaluation and performance management. It was found that eight out of nine participants agreed that, at the Foundation, there were clear work guidelines and evaluation processes. These eight participants also stated that, in general, they were satisfied with the evaluation outcomes. One of the participants from the Bangkok office stated the following:

I think we have quite a good evaluation process even though it started only five years ago. One of the reasons is that our bosses know us all very well. Thus, they can assess our performance and comment on what we should improve. I like that they appraise us for our further development and promotion. However, there are not many levels to promote people here. There is also a crisscross evaluation with the departments whose work is relevant to ours. This reflects how collaboration has been for the past year. (MSTBK9)

The statement above is in line with that of another respondent who worked in Nan Province, as indicated in the following:

We are asked to perform self-evaluation, and then submit it to our immediate supervisor who proceeds with it further. I am happy with how they have appraised me so far. (MMGNA8)

Nevertheless, one participant perceived that the Foundation still lacked clarity, especially from appraisers: 'I know the evaluation criteria. However, I never know what and how I should improve myself. I have asked but have never received any feedback' (MSVNA9).

Furthermore, the other human resource function discussed in this study was compensation and benefits. All of the participants agreed that they did not have any issues with the Foundation's compensation and benefit system as they learned at the first stage of their employment about the amount of salary, welfare, and benefits they would receive. Most of the participants mentioned that they had been inspired by His Majesty the King's work and dedication to the country, which, in turn, inspired them to follow his path.

We do not actually receive much salary here; I have to agree it is clear. However, so far, I am quite satisfied with the welfare package. We have group life and medical insurance. We can reimburse outpatient fees of 2,500 Baht per time and dental-care fees up to 3,000 Bath annually. We have had our provident fund accumulated, which means we can secure our savings. We can be reimbursed for all work-related expenses for our fieldwork outside the office. We travel by airplane when traveling out of town. Those who work outside Bangkok also receive free meals daily. I think it's simply great. (MSTBK9)

I know that my friends who work in the private sector did not always seem to be happy with their jobs because their salary is always tied to their performance evaluations. Their happiness depends very much on the grading and the money...None of us here is going to be rich but I think we are a happy bunch. (MSTBK5)

As regards engagement and organisational sustainability, the findings revealed three important facets regarding the say-stay-strive model. First, the 'say' facet was exhibited by every participant as all of them had positive and constructive feedback about the Foundation. Say occurred from the valuable work they performed and witnessed the consequences of it. A participant from Udonthani Province stated the following:

I am very proud to work here. It is really worthwhile for me. When I worked for a governmental bureau in the city, I never thought of what the villagers really wanted. The work here at the Foundation has really broadened my horizons. The villagers think I am one of them—we have really bonded. (MCSUD3)

Similarly, a participant from Nan province discussed the ‘say’ facet as follows:

We have been helping with the deforestation around here. Thus, people can live sustainably. What we see is environmental change, a drastic change, but it clearly takes time. How can one inspire the villagers to ‘plant what they eat and eat what they plant’? We have done this quite successfully. I always feel proud to tell people that I work here. (NSTNA9)

As regards the ‘stay’ dimension, 8 out of 11 respondents planned to work for the Foundation continuously as most of them mentioned that it felt as if the work were a part of their lives that truly inspired and kept them moving. Two female employees from Bangkok and one from the Nan office stated the following:

This organisation is like my home. It is almost a spiritual thing to work here. Therefore, yes, I am not planning to move anywhere else. I have wanted to follow the path we do and be innovative about it. (FMGBK9)

Well...I see myself working here, at least for the next five years. The only question is how the Foundation will adapt to the new and upcoming challenges. I think we all need to adapt to change and work for the better. (FSTBK5)

However, three respondents mentioned that they would be open to other job opportunities that appeared or to becoming a housewife after marrying: ‘I have been working here for nine years and still have nothing of my own. I think I may resign to look after my parents’ business and my little brother’ (FSVNA9). A Muslim participant from Narathiwat Province stated that ‘You know, as a good Muslim woman, your main duty is to be a housewife and to take care of your family. I may have to quit my job after I marry’ (FSTNR3).

As regards the last dimension—‘strive’, seven out of nine participants agreed that they would want to strive and grow older with the Foundation, as they believed that the organisation had been on the right course. Again, most of the participants mentioned the sustainable philosophy—understanding, assessing, developing.

The Foundation was established to put King Rama IX's great knowledge into practice. I have learned to be a better person by helping people who are not even my relatives. (FSTBK7)

We are on the right track, to create sustainability, not only in terms of environmental concerns but in every dimension. First, we only become involved with the well-being of people in our areas. If they live well or better, it means we are doing a good job. Second, it proves the King's sustainability philosophy—understanding, assessing, developing—simply works marvellously, although it takes time. (FSTBK7)

The following table displayed the themes, sub-themes and examples of quotes from this study.

Table 2 Summary of themes, subthemes, and examples of quotes

Major theme: The common values that help retain the employees	
<i>Sub-themes</i>	<i>Example of Quotes</i>
The faith in the King and in his work (personal value)	I have been impressed with the King's philosophy since I was small. One of his philosophies was to contribute without expectation for anything in return. I wanted to know if I could do such a thing. (MSVNA9)
The belief in ra-berd-jak-kang-nai and the sufficiency economy philosophy (work value)	It is essential for us to develop a KM system by following the sufficiency-economy philosophy as a guideline in every branch. However, in practice, we need to find an area where we can make a prototype, ra-berd-jak-kang-nai. (FMGBK9)
The belief in the concept of kao-jai, kao-tung, patana (organizational value)	Essentially, we need to gather information and create a developmental model through <i>kao-jao</i> , <i>kao-tung</i> , <i>patana</i> , according to the needs of a particular community. With our tools, we are to assist in the work of relevant governmental bureaus. There are things the authorities up there do not know and are not able to access well, and we are here to assist those policymakers. (FSTBK7)

Table 2 (Continue)

Major theme: human resource practices that help with employee engagement	
<i>Sub-themes</i>	<i>Example of quotes</i>
Training and development is vital to employee engagement	We can definitely ask for the skill development that we need by telling our boss. For example, I just applied for training regarding communication, especially presentation techniques. However, of course, it needs to relate to your job—this is what your boss will consider the most. (FSTBK7)
Including clear job description is beneficial	The resumes sent via websites would go through a recruiting team that filters them before passing them for a selection call. The team members are usually those who will be the candidate's potential team workers. We selected them because we know what type of people we are looking for. The person who receives the job will be on probation for 119 days. That is a time for him or her to prove that he or she is fit for the job. I started here as an intern for three months and I knew it was really the workplace for me. (MSTBK9)
Clear work guidance and evaluation process is essential	We are asked to perform self-evaluation, and then submit it to our immediate supervisor who proceeds with it further. I am happy with how they have appraised me so far. (MMGNA8)
Clear communication about compensation and benefit in the first place is vital	We do not actually receive much salary here; I have to agree it is clear. However, so far, I am quite satisfied with the welfare package. (MSTBK9)
Major theme: engagement and organisational sustainability by say, stay strive	
<i>Sub-themes</i>	<i>Example of quotes</i>
say occurred due to the work and consequences of the valuable work	We have been helping with the deforestation around here. Thus, people can live sustainably. What we see is environmental change, a drastic change, but it clearly takes time. How can one inspire the villagers to 'plant what they eat and eat what they plant'? We have done this quite successfully. I always feel proud to tell people that I work here. (NSTNA9)
Stay occurred due to the fact that the employees felt the work is inspiring	This organisation is like my home. It is almost a spiritual thing to work here. Therefore, yes, I am not planning to move anywhere else. I have wanted to follow the path we do and be innovative about it. (FMGBK9)
Strive occurred due to the fact that the employees believed in the organization's action	The Foundation was established to put King Rama IX's great knowledge into practice. I have learned to be a better person by helping people who are not even my relatives. (FSTBK7)

Implications for HRD

Based on the findings, we can conclude that the personal values of all the participants who worked at PTLP Foundation include ‘pride and happiness’. The means to achieve these values was derived from faith in the King as a leader and the proud feeling that they further contributed to the King’s work. In particular, engagement occurred when the participants helped the poor, particularly those who lived in the rural areas, and witnessed their happiness after implementing or joining the royal projects; this generated a sense of accomplishment inside them. This finding is supported by numerous studies that have discussed the idea that intrinsic reasons for working and finding the work meaningful are important (Chalofsky, 2003; Kelloway & McKee, 2007). Chalofsky (2003) suggested that perceiving meaning in work not only concerns the rewards that an employee receives for his or her performance but also the link formed between the organisation’s purposes and the employee’s values. The consistency between the organisation’s purposes and the core values of its employees has been identified as a potentially important factor in the development and maintenance of employee commitment to the organisation (Meyer, et al., 2010).

Implications for HRD Research

The King’s three-step developmental values of ‘ understanding, assessing, developing’ were considered as the organisational values that have been embedded and passed on to all members of the PTLP Foundation and to all the people involved in the royal projects. Such values have become the development principle that should be holistic in nature and integrate social, economic, and environmental elements to achieve sustainable outcomes in the target areas, focusing on the needs of the community. These results support Rokeach’s terminal and instrument model of values (1973), where a value can influence an individual’s attitude, perception, needs, and motivation and commitment. The work values of King Bhumibol, therefore, tend to be aligned with those of the people that work in this non-profit organisation. Paribatra (2003) wrote about the King and his work values:

One challenge is poverty, especially in the countryside, and the gap between the rich and the poor...To address the challenge, the King acted as the catalyst of development, following both his own and the government's development projects tirelessly with an eye for detail, encouraging and advising governmental officials in their work. For the King, the key is not to draw up 'macro' plans that may be irrelevant to the people but to bring to the developmental process the human dimension, the balanced touch, and the patient gradualism that are generally lacking in national economic strategies. (p. 301)

In this case, the leader's (King's) values have become the organisational values. When the values are aligned with those of the individual employees, sustainable employment is much more likely to occur. Having faith in a leader or a role model to guide one's actions can be seen in the work of Hofstede et al. (2010), Minkov (2011, 2013), and Minkov et al. (2018) on the cross-cultural dimension called monumentalism versus flexibility. According to Minkov (2011), people from a culture high on the monumentalism index tend to be like a monolithic monument: proud, and having strong values to guide their principles in social exchanges (helping others). According to Minkov et al. (2018), who studied Hofstede's monumentalism and flexibility data extensively, Thailand ranked 7th out of 54 countries on this index. Comparatively, this means that Thailand is very high on the scale; people tend to be proud of their help within a social network that, in turn, creates images of admirable persons and boosts their self-esteem as helpers while creating societal interdependence.

Implications for HRD Practices

In line with the findings above, human resource practices have been leveraged to support the mission and vision of the PTLP which is to help the Thai people learn and gain direct experience from the royal projects and apply it to their daily lives; in order to do so, the Foundation aims to increase the people's learning experience to enhance their careers and well-beings as well as to stimulate public awareness for the environmental protection and the Thai culture in communities

sustainably (www.pidthong.org). HRD, in general, derives from the holistic practice of not only training and development but also from creating shared values, selecting the right employees, and compensating them suitably and sufficiently. As mentioned, the key to successful engagement (of the workforce, in this case) is the alignment of the Foundation's work values and those of the applicants, from the selection stage. Posting realistic work details on the webpage and clarifying the work climate as well as the compensation and benefits during an interview could attract suitable job applicants and eliminate those whose goals are not in line with those of the organisation. When there is sufficient provision of training, compensation, and benefits, the employees are likely to respond by attempting to fulfil their obligations to the PTLP Foundation by becoming more engaged in their job and in the organisation. The results of this study support Kahn's (1992) engagement model, which found that workers are more engaged in work in situations that offer them more psychological meaningfulness and psychological safety.

As regards HRD, Mclean and Mclean (2001) contended that, in Thailand, HRD professionals have opportunities to work strategically on human development in both community and corporate settings. One of the vital skills needed for employees working in a non-profit organisation in Thailand is the ability to work at the community level. It is important to strengthen this skill for individual workers so that they can reach out to villagers in remote areas. In their classic work, Prahalad and Hamel (1990) suggested the use of strategic architecture for training, to identify and construct a roadmap for individual competency development. This roadmap can be initiated by building a good basis for people in their environment to enable them to develop inner strength and to become self-reliant to a certain extent. People can cooperate in various activities in the form of community enterprises. Pruetipibultham (2010) contended that, in Thailand, the guideline for reaching out to a community is to design learning activities that support collaboration among people (e.g. in cooperatives, healthcare centres, and community education centres/saving groups). The next step is to create programs that support knowledge creation. HRD specialists need to be trained to optimise holistic techniques and social linkages so as to enhance the development of community knowledge. This is in line with Connors's

(2005) ideas, who contended that HRD professionals can help community members acquire information and create possible processes to pinpoint how to proceed in community meetings. The key to HRD in the Thai non-profit organisation under study is to *understand* the systematic integration of knowledge, *reach out* to assist in the operation and management of each community, and *develop* a strategy using a variety of areas of knowledge.

Limitations and Future Research

As with any case study, this study cannot be generalised to other Thai or international NGOs. Our major recommendation is that a similar study should be conducted with other NGOs to determine whether organisational values and HRD/HRM practices influence employee engagement and sustainability. From this case study, we found that the organisational values and HR practices that were tied to those of HRD were significant factors supporting employment sustainability and enhancing employees' engagement with the job and the organisation. Future research may focus on employee succession and the ability to transfer these essential values to new members.

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