การธำรงรักษาคนเก่งในภาครัฐ
Talent Retention in the Thai Public Sector

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บทความเรื่อง "Talent Retention in the Thai Public Sector" เป็นการสรุปและเรียบเรียงจากผลการวิจัยเรื่อง "ปัจจัยที่มีผลต่อการธำรงรักษาคนเก่งในภาครัฐ" โดยได้ศึกษาถึงระดับการธำรงรักษาคนเก่งในภาครัฐ และผลของการบริหารทรัพยากรมนุษย์ที่มีต่อการตัดสินใจอยู่รับราชการจนเกษียณของคนเก่งในระบบราชการ ด้วยตัวแบบการบริหารทรัพยากรมนุษย์ (HRM models) 2 ตัวแบบได้แก่ แบบ"อัตถประโยชน์-กลไกนิยม" (Utilitarian Instrumentalism) และแบบ "มนุษย์นิยมเชิงพัฒนาการ" (Developmental Humanism) นอกจากนี้ ได้ศึกษาเพิ่มเติมว่า ความผูกพันของคนเก่ง (talent engagement) เป็นตัวกลาง (mediator) ที่เชื่อมโยงความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างวิธีการบริหารทรัพยากรมนุษย์กับการธำรงรักษาคนเก่งหรือไม่ พร้อมกับได้เพิ่มปัจจัยด้านลักษณะส่วนบุคคล (personal characteristics) ลักษณะขององค์กรที่ทำ (organizational characteristics) และลักษณะของงานที่รับผิดชอบ (job characteristics) เข้าไปด้วย ซึ่งกลุ่มเป้าหมายของการวิจัยในครั้งนี้คือ ผู้ที่เข้าร่วมระบบข้าราชการผู้มีผลสัมฤทธิ์สูง (High Performance and Potential System: HiPPS)

สำหรับวิธีวิจัยใช้วิธีการวิจัยแบบผสมผสาน (the mixed methods design) ทั้งการวิจัยเชิงปริมาณ (quantitative research method) และการวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพ (qualitative research method) ก่อนการนำผลที่ได้จากทั้งสองวิธีวิเคราะห์ไปพร้อมๆ กัน (parallel mixed data analysis)

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ซึ่งผลการวิจัยพบว่าการธำรงรักษาคนเก่งในภาครัฐอยู่ในระดับต่ำ เนื่องจากมีผู้ตอบแบบสอบถามเพียงร้อยละ 31.4 ที่ตอบว่าจะทำงานอยู่ในระบบราชการจนกว่าจะเกษียณ สำหรับการบริหารทรัพยากรมนุษย์ทั้งแบบอัตถประโยชน์กลไกนิยม และแบบมนุษย์นิยมเชิงพัฒนาการไม่มีความสัมพันธ์กับการธำรงรักษาคนเก่ง แต่ระดับความผูกพันและระดับการศึกษามีความสัมพันธ์กับการธำรงรักษาคนเก่งอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติ

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Abstract

The article "Talent Retention in the Thai Public Sector" is an excerpt version of the research entitled "The Determinants of Talent Retention in the Thai Public Sector". The main objective of this research was to investigate HR practices related to talent retention by employing the two models of HRM, namely "Utilitarian Instrumentalism" and "Developmental Humanism". In addition, examination of talent engagement as the mediator between HR practices and talent retention was included. Apart from that, factors of personal characteristics, organizational characteristics and job characteristics have been integrated into the analytical model of this study. Those government officials who participated in the High Performance and Potential System (HiPPS) were defined as talented people in this study.

The "mixed methods" design was employed in this study. This method focuses on collecting and analyzing both quantitative and

qualitative data in a single study. The findings from both methods were finally analyzed using parallel mixed data analysis. The findings revealed a low level of talent retention in the Thai public sector since only 34.1% of respondents revealed that they would work until retirement. Furthermore, HR practices, both utilitarian instrumentalism and developmental humanism, did not relate to talent retention. Only talent engagement and educational background of respondents were significantly related to talent retention, while the rest of the variables did not reveal such relationships.

Keywords: Human Resource Management (HRM), Talent Management, Engagement, Retention

Introduction

For any kind of an organization to run successfully, as Herman (1999: 1) states, human elements are essential. Cascio (1992: 5) also claims that "Organizations are managed and staffed by people. Without people, organizations cannot exist."

However, people in organizations perform and deliver differently, Michaels, Handfield-Jones and Axelrod, (2001: 127) have classified people in organizations into three groups: "A" players define the standard for exceptional performance by consistently delivering results and inspiring and motivating others; "B" players are solid performers who meet expectations but who may have limited upward mobility; and "C" players deliver barely acceptable results.

"A" players or "talented people" in this study can be referred to by various terms. Goffee and Johns (2007: 72) call them "clever people." These people are the handful of employees whose ideas, knowledge, and skills give them the potential to produce at a disproportionate value from the resources their organizations make available to them. With a similar meaning but in different terms, Seldeneck (2004: 169) names those people as "superkeepers." He defines superkeepers as "people high in potential and performance who also personify the organization's value-creating competencies," while Morton (2004, quoted in Hughes and Rog, 2008: 744) indicates that they are "individuals who have the capability to make significant difference to the current and future performance of the company."

Whatever they are called, scholars agree that a talented workforce is a crucial human asset of organizations. Lunn (1992:13) suggests the value of talented people by proposing an HR strategic formula in terms of the following equation;

"Talent x (Reward + Expectation + Investment) = People Productivity"

Talented people are then viewed as the source of competitive advantage (Michaels, Handfield-Jones and Axelrod, 2001: 6; Stone, 2002: 72; Hughes and Rog, 2008: 743; Srivastava and Bhatnagar, 2008: 253). It is increasingly recognized that human capital is a source of value for firms and shareholders as talented people are rare, valuable, and difficult to substitute. Organizations that better attract, select, and retain these talented workers perform better than those that do not (Cairncross, 2000 quoted in Srivastava and Bhatnagar, 2008:253).

Competition among organizations for high performers has then emerged. It is known as “the war for talent”. This phrase was coined by McKinsey & Company in 1997 during the economic boom of the mid-to-late-1990s (Stone, 2002: 6). During that period, organizations experienced a high turnover, or attrition, as employees and even new hires moved from one job to another for the most challenging and financially rewarding work available to them. Stone (2002: 21) claims that the study brought to the business press’s attention the seriousness of the shortage of talent worldwide. To illustrate this situation, data according to a survey based on 33,000 employers from 23 countries revealed that 40% of the employers had difficulty in finding and hiring the desired talent, and approximately 90% of nearly 7,000 managers indicated that talent acquisition and retention were becoming more difficult (Axelrod, et al. 2001 quoted in Srivastava and Bhatnagar, 2008: 254).

Therefore, trends for talent management, talent wars, talent raids and talent shortage, talent metrics retention, and concerns for talent strategy are expressed in the literature across various countries like the USA, the UK, Australia, Japan, China, India and across Asia (Yeung, 2006; Ruppe, 2006; Dunn, 2006; Chugh and Bhatnagar, 2006; Lewis and Heckman, 2006; Lewis, 2005; Branham, 2005; Bennett and Bell, 2004 quoted in Bhatnaga, 2007: 640).

In order to promote talent retention, proper HR practices are required. However, Legge (1995 quoted in Gill, 1999: 10) explains that there is not one language of HRM, but two: utilitarian instrumentalism and developmental humanism HRM. Gill (1999: 4) explains that utilitarian instrumentalism stresses the “resource” aspect of HRM. It stresses

HRM's focus on the crucial importance of the close integration of human resource policies, systems, and activities with a business strategy. From this perspective human resources are largely a factor of production, an expense of doing business rather than the only resource capable of turning inanimate factors of production into wealth. In contrast, developmental humanism places emphasis on the "human" and is associated with the human relations school of Herzberg and McGregor. Whilst emphasizing the importance of integrating HR policies with business objectives, the developmental humanism model focuses on treating employees as valued assets and as a source of competitive advantage through their commitment, adaptability, and high-quality skills and performance.

Another concern of talent retention is employee engagement. Many scholars claim that there is a linkage between employee engagement and talent retention. Srivastava and Bhatnagar (2008: 254) claim that "with better talent acquisition, employee engagement improves and so does the productivity." The reason is because employee engagement is seen as a key to the retention of talent (Glen, 2006 quoted in Bhatnagar, 2007: 640).

Employee engagement is an area in which the lead has been taken by practitioners (Parsley, 2006; Baumruk et al., 2006; Woodruffe, 2005; Gallup Management Journal, 2006; Bennett and Bell, 2004; Hay Group, 2002 quoted in Bhatnagar, 2007: 641), and also is an area where rigorous academic research is required (Cartwright and Holmes, 2006; Joo and Mclean, 2006; Luthans and Peterson, 2002 quoted in Bhatnagar, 2007: 641). It is important to study engagement because it is linked to positive individual and work-related outcomes (Burke, Koyuncu, Jing, and Fiksenbaum, 2009: 7).

In sum, it can be concluded from the literature that both talented employees and employee engagement are crucial factors in any kind of organization. Both are concerned with the soft side of HR practices and the facilitation of competitive advantages and other positive contributions to organizations.

Rationales of the Study

In the Thai public sector, government agencies also face difficulty in terms of talent retention. Brain-drain problem is one of the crucial issues in a bureaucratic system. Kriengsak Chareonwongsak (2008: paragraph 5) states the following:

> "A Brain Drain situation is happening in Thailand as well, where a proportion of top people are turning to work in the private sector where they can earn much more than they can in state departments. Some go to work for foreign universities where they receive more benefits and resources than they would in the state system in order to develop scholarly work."

Thus, retaining high performers who work in crucial areas is one of many challenges in the Thai public sector. In order to manage these talented officials, the Office of the Civil Service Commission (OCSC) has introduced the High Performance and Potential System (HiPPS). This project was initiated based on the concept of talent management, which comprises selection, retention, development, motivation, and delegation of talented government officials. The main purpose of the HiPPS is to help

these people to utilize their maximum potential in their assigned jobs, and to ensure that these talented officials will act as the drivers in the government sector (Office of the Civil Service Commission, 2009: 13).

The HiPPS has been implemented since 2004. From then until 2009, 229 government officials from 52 government agencies have participated in the project (Office of the Civil Service Commission, 2009: 130-133). Many studies have been conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the project, but have rarely touched on major determinants influencing talent retention. Therefore, this study investigates whether talent retention has resulted from these HR practices.

This research then emphasizes investigation of the situation of managing talented government officials. Since they are the core group, which has a high impact on the country's development, retaining them in the bureaucratic system is one of the biggest challenges in the Thai public sector today.

The Objectives of the Research

To study the level of talent retention among HiPPS members

To examine the factors determining talent retention in the Thai public sector, which are HR practices, talent engagement, and related contexts, namely personal, organization, and job characteristics

Literature Review

Talent Retention

There are a number of factors that should be considered in any talent retention. One commonly held myth is "turnover is the flip side of

retention" (Schiemann, 2009: 223). Consequently, the main aspect of this part of the study emphasizes turnover intentions. However, absenteeism is also added.

Bycio (1992 quoted in Fenton, 1995: 3) offers an explanation for the progression of withdrawal model in his meta-analytic analysis of absenteeism and job performance. According to this model, frequent absences may lead to supervisory labeling of the employee as lazy, a troublemaker, or as deviant. Subsequent low performance evaluations may, in turn, propel the employee toward even higher levels of absenteeism and, eventually, turnover.

The cost of absenteeism and turnover is estimated by the Business Round Table (1981: 3), which indicates that "a conservative estimate of the direct cost effects of absenteeism and turnover, based only on clearly identifiable costs, indicates that 9% reduction in project labor costs is attainable on a typical job." These costs have been estimated to represent 100-150% of the salary of high-performing employees with unique skills. Organizations also lose from worker turnover because employees are repositories of human capital—an organization's knowledge, skill and know-how (Somaya and Williamson, 2008: 29).

Wingfield, Barb and Berry, Janice. (2001: 3) also reveal a number of drawbacks from turnover. Firstly, high turnover often leaves customers and employees in the lurch; departing employees take a great deal of knowledge with them. This lack of continuity makes it difficult to meet an organization's goals and to serve customers well. Secondly, replacing employees costs money. The cost of replacing an employee is estimated as up to twice the individual's annual salary, and this does not even include

the cost of lost knowledge. Thirdly, recruiting employees consumes a great deal of time and effort, much of it futile. There is not only one organization vying for qualified employees, and job seekers make decisions based on more than the sum of salary and benefits. Lastly, bringing employees up to speed takes even more time. When organizations are short-staffed, it is often necessary for people to put in extra time to get the work done.

It has been found that the factors affecting absenteeism include job satisfaction, workers' personal factors, safety, organizational factors, and management. Similarly, the factors that impact workers turnover are job satisfaction, workers' personal factors, organizational factors, job performance, and management (ELETRI Knowledge Network, 2010: paragraph 1-2). It can be seen that most factors effecting absenteeism are like those effecting turnover. Therefore, there seems to be a need for a strategy to discourage highly-loyal people from job turnover - certainly for the most talented within the organization.

HR Practices

To extend the understanding of talent retention, this study emphasizes HR practices as a major factor influencing retention. Legge (1995 quoted in Gill, 1999: 10) explains that there is not one language of HRM, but two, "utilitarian instrumentalism" and "developmental humanism."

Utilitarian instrumentalism stresses the "resource," while developmental humanism emphasizes the "human" aspect. Legge (1995 quoted in Gill, 1999: 4) indicates that utilitarian instrumentalism focuses on the crucial importance of the close integration of human resource policies, systems, and activities with a business strategy. From this perspective,

human resources are largely a factor of production, an expense of doing business rather than the only resource capable of turning inanimate factors of production into wealth. HR is viewed as passive - to be provided and deployed as numbers and skills at the right price - rather than the source of creative energy. Its emphasis on the quantitative, calculative, and business-strategic aspects of managing the "headcount" has been termed human asset accounting (Storey, 1987 quoted in Gill, 1999: 4). The utilitarian instrumentalism approach has some kinship with scientific management, as people are reduced to passive objects that are not cherished as a whole people, but assessed on whether they possess the skills/attributes the organization requires (Legge, 1995; Vaughan, 1994; Storey, 1987; Drucker et al., 1996; Keenoy, 1990 quoted in Gill, 1999: 4).

On the other hand, Harvard University academics have introduced a new compulsory component of HRM into their MBA syllabus and have reinforced this so-called "Harvard Model" with influential books and articles (Beer et al., 1984; Walton, 1985; Walton and Lawrence, 1985 quoted in Edgar and Geare, 2005: 534-535). This concept stresses that HRM should lead to employee commitment. It should not simply be used as a means to employer objectives of improved productivity and profits because "the fulfillment of many employee needs is taken as a goal rather than merely a means to an end" (Walton, 1985 quoted in Edgar and Geare, 2005: 534-535). Legge (1995 quoted in Gill, 1999: 4) refers to developmental humanism as a method of "releasing untapped reserves of human resourcefulness" by increasing employee commitment, participation, and involvement. Employee commitment is sought with the expectation that effectiveness will follow as second-order consequences. In theory,

developmental humanism fulfils employee needs as an end in itself, and the favorable attitudes generated from the use of "appropriate" HRM practices (Guest, 1997 quoted in Edgar and Geare, 2005: 534-535) together with "communication, motivation and leadership" (Storey, 1987 quoted in Edgar and Geare, 2005: 534-535) result in commitment to the organization and improved performance.

From the above literature review, it seems that the developmental humanism model is more related to retention than utilitarian instrumentalism. If the public sector emphasizes utilitarian instrumentalism too much, huge budget and resource allocation may not result in retention, especially of those that are high performers. However, this kind of study has not been done before in the Thai public sector and there is limited number of research to be reviewed. Therefore, this study aims at investigating empirical evidence surrounding this issue.

Considering HRM in the Thai public sector, the utilitarian instrumentalism and developmental humanism models can be analyzed based on the HiPPS project. The OCSC introduced this project based on the concept of talent management. It is comprised of selectiion, retention, development, motivation, and delegation of talented government officials. (Office of the Civil Service Commission, 2009: 13). Exhibit 1 presents the analysis of HR practices in the HiPPS.

Table 1: Analyzing HR Practices in the HiPPS

UTILITARIAN INSTRIMENTALISM	DEVELOPMENTAL HUMANISM
1. Recruitment and seletion process	10. Individual career development plane
2. Flexible positioning based on performance	11. Experience Accumulate Framework: EAF
3. Workforce planning for future leadership	12. Individual Development Plan: IDP
4. Competency-based management	13. Challenging assingnments
5. Need analysis for competency assessment	14. Coaching and mentoring
6. Performance agreement with KPI	15. Job Rotation
7. Result oriented approach	16. Government scholarships
8. Special promotion quota for salary increase	17. Network and connection building
9. Performance appraisal	18. Recognized as high performers

Talent Engagement

Robinson et al. (2004 quoted in Sak, 2006: 601) state that employee engagement has been defined in many different ways and that the definitions and measures often sound like other better-known and established constructs, like organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior. In some circumstances, engagement is seen as similar to the old fashioned word “motivation” (Schiemann, 2009: 154).

Engagement, from Schiemann’s point of view, goes beyond employee satisfaction with or commitment to one’s job or organization. It includes the level of advocacy on the part of employees for their organizations as great places to work, purchase from, and even invest in. In this view,

engagement is defined as the level of that special energy or advocacy and typically operationalizes an engagement index as a combination of satisfaction, commitment, and advocacy (Schiemann, 2009: 155)

Kahn (1990 quoted in Saks, 2006: 601) defines personal engagement as "the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances." Personal disengagement refers to "the uncoupling of selves from work roles; in disengagement, people withdraw and defend themselves physically, cognitively, or emotionally during role performances." Thus, according to Kahn (1990 quoted in Saks, 2006: 601), engagement means to be psychologically present when occupying and performing an organizational role.

From the above engagement definitions, it can be seen that many of them refer to personal psychology. However, this research is more attracted to Kahn's definition, which is based on the social exchange theory, which Kahn (1990 quoted in Saks, 2006: 603) explains as follows:

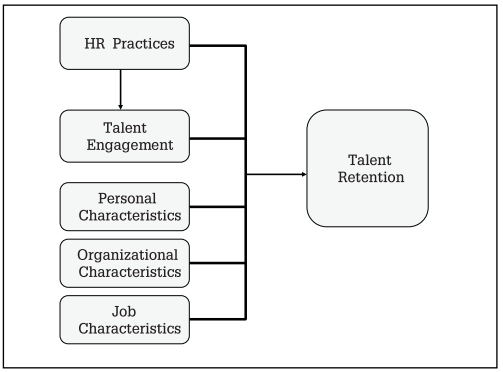
> "... employees feel obliged to bring themselves more deeply into their role performances as repayment for the resources they receive from their organization. When the organization fails to provide these resources, individuals are more likely to withdraw and disengage themselves from their roles. Thus, the amount of cognitive, emotional, and physical resources that an individual is prepared to devote in the performance of one's work roles is contingent on the economic and socioemotional resources received from the organization."

This study then employs two types of employee engagement, job and organization engagements, which follow from the conceptualization of engagement as role related (Kahn, 1990; Rothbard, 2001 quoted in Saks, 2006: 603); that is, it reflects the extent to which an individual is psychologically present in a particular organizational role. The two most dominant roles for most organizational members are their work role and their role as a member of an organization. Therefore, the model explicitly acknowledges this by including both job and organization engagements. This also follows from the notion that people have multiple roles, and as suggested by Rothbard (2001 quoted in Saks, 2006: 603-204) and May et al. (2004 quoted in Saks, 2006: 603-204), research should examine engagement in multiple roles within organizations.

An Analytical Framework

The analytical framework is designed based on the findings of previous research and the literature review. Details of the variables used in this research are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: An Analytical Framework



Research Methodology

A "mixed methods" design is employed in this study. This method focuses on collecting and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study. In this methodology, the researcher can expand an understanding from one method to another. Alternatively, they may converge or confirm findings from different data sources (Creswell, 2003: 210).

Quantitative Approach

The Unit of Analysis

The study focuses on the individual level by aiming at the analysis of factors affecting talent retention in the Thai public sector. Therefore, assessing the level of retention of talented civil servants in the HiPPS is the focused. From 2003 to 2009, 52 government agencies participated in the HiPPS project. In total 229 government officials were included in the process. Eleven of them, however, resigned or transferred from their agencies (Office of the Civil Service Commission, 2009: 103, 106, 133). Therefore, the total number of HiPPS members in this study was 218.

Population and Sampling

A total of 218 government officials from 52 government agencies constituted the population in this study. Since the size of the population was not too large, all of them participated in the research without sampling.

Measurement

In this study, a five-part questionnaire was constructed. Like other questionnaires, the first part consisted of demographic data. Next was

perception toward HR practices. The third was engagement assessment, whereas intention to resign and absenteeism constituted the fourth part. Open-end questions were included in the last part.

The measurement development process was employed to generate the items to measure the construct in this research. In order to gain high content validity and construct reliability, measurement development comprised of the following steps.

First of all, the questionnaire was initially theory-based. A pool of items that captured the domain of each research construct in the conceptual framework was collected from the reviewed literature. In some cases, translation into the Thai language was required. Each statement in the item pool was sophisticatedly designed by using a bureaucratic writing style. At this stage, consulting with current government officials was also conducted.

Second, in order to ensure that the measurement was truthful or genuine, content validity was employed. After the first draft of the questionnaire was approved by the academic lecturers from the National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA) and Sri Pratum University, it was sent to two Human Resource Development officers at the OCSC. One of them had directly responsibility for the HiPPS project, while another was an HR Specialist. From their suggestions, various areas were amended, such as increasing utilitarian instrumentalism and developmental humanism HR practice items based on HiPPS practices, rewriting some sentences, and adding more specific questions in the open-ended part. The questionnaire was revised until all of them agreed.

Third, a pilot test was conducted in order to determine the reliability of the measurement instruments and to identify potential problems that might occur during the data collection. Sudman (1976 quoted in Jitlada Amornwatana, 2008: 101) notes that the size of a sample for a pilot test should be 20-50; consequently, 50 questionnaires were distributed to government officials who held similar qualifications in the HiPPS. The respondents for the pilot test were government officials who were met by chance during the testing period. Only those that worked at level 3-6 and were of age 25-40 years were asked to fill out the questionnaire. They were from various agencies such as the OCSC, The Office of the Public Sector Development Commission (OPDC), The Department of Mineral Resources, and other agencies. Thirty-two questionnaires were returned, but only 29 of 32 cases were complete and processed. It was revealed that the reliability coefficient of this questionnaire was .856. According to Cronbach (1951 quoted in Jitlada Amornwatana, 2008: 106), it is suggested that an alpha coefficient of 0.7 be considered the minimum threshold. Therefore, the questionnaire was deemed reliable.

Qualitative Approach

Aiming at hypothesis confirmation, in-depth interviewing was used at this stage. which employed the individual semi-structured pattern. This method is in between structured and unstructured. The reason was that both aspects were required for this study. For the structured one, there were obvious questions to be asked such as opinions about HR practices, the impact of HR practices in engagement, and so on. Questions about absenteeism and reasons for resignation required, however, an unstructured format which would enable the informants to openly disclose their answers.

The data analysis part in this study was not different from other qualitative research where coding and memo writing were utilized while collecting and analyzing the data. However, the more important part is the method of analysis. According to Neuman (2000; 426), data analysis means "a search of patterns in data—recurrent behaviors, objects, or a body of knowledge." The collected data in this study were analyzed in terms of description, classifying, and connecting.

Maximizing reliability and validity are just as important in qualitative research as they are in quantitative research (Miles and Huberman, 1984, quoted in Jitrada, 2008: 118). In order to maximize the validity of this part of the study, Miles and Huberman's (1984, quoted in Jitrada, 2008: 118) suggestion was followed, where that the participants' responses should be accurately reported and represented, and multiple sources of information be used to triangulate the qualitative data. Therefore, in order to enhance the validity of the findings, a triangulated approach was employed by interviewing those that had voluntarily quit the HiPPS project but that still worked in the public sector. Moreover, interviewing of the OCSC officials that were responsible for the HiPPS project was also carried out. Lastly, in order to ensure that the analysis was reliable, a final draft of this research as sent to all key informants for approval.

Strategy for Analyzing the Mixed Methods Data

After obtaining two sets of findings, the parallel mixed data analysis was employed. Teddlie and Tashakkori (1993: 266) claim that this strategy is probably the most widely used in human sciences, and it has been associated with other design concepts, such as triangulation and convergence.

Parallel mixed data analysis involves two separate processes: quantitative analysis of data using descriptive/inferential statistics for appropriate variables, and qualitative analysis of data using thematic analysis related to relevant narrative data. Although the two sets of analyses are independent, each provides an understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. These understandings are then linked, combined, or integrated into meta-inferences (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 1993: 266).

Research Findings

The findings revealed a low level of talent retention in the public sector since only 34.1% of respondents revealed that they would work until retirement. HR practices, both utilitarian instrumentalism and developmental humanism, did not relate to talent retention. Only talent engagement and educational background of respondents were significantly related to talent retention, while the rest of the variables did not reveal such relationships. Details are as follows.

Level of Talent Retention

In order to examine the level of talent retention, percentage distribution was accumulated by combining the percentage of "strongly agree" and "agree" in the direct items. In this case, over 50% indicated talent retention, or less than 50% for the reverse scale.

Exhibit 3 shows a majority of 80.5% reporting that if they were not seriously unable to work, they would not take a leave of absence, while only 34.1% revealed that they would work until retirement. This means that most of the respondents do not intend to be absent if unnecessary, but in

the long term they do not intend to remain working in the public sector until retirement. In other words, a low level of talent retention was found. It was also verified from the reverse scale that 59.8 and 48.8% disagreed with searching for an opportunity to work elsewhere, and planned to work at their current organization for a certain time respectively. These findings also indicated that most of them were not actively searching for a new job but may leave the public sector in the future. To conclude, the findings showed that the Thai public sector requires paying more attention to talent retention in order to prevent troubles in the workforce that may emerge in the future.

Table 3: Percentage Distribution of Talent Retention

Retention	Strongly agree	Agree	Fair	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
If I am not seriously unable to work, I will not take a leave.	41.5	39.0	17.1		2.4	100.0
	80.5					(82)
I always search for an opportunity to work anywhere else.(R)	4.9	8.5	26.8	36.6	23.2	100.0
				59.8		(82)
I plan to work at this organization for a certain time, and will leave after that.(R)	8.5	13.4	29.3	30.5	18.3	100.0
				48.8		(82)
I will work at this organization until retirement.	8.5	25.6	37.8	18.3	9.8	100.0
	34.1					(82)
$\bar{X}$= 3.61	Min=1.00		Max=5.00		SD= 0.76	

Factors Determining Talent Retention

The findings revealed that the talent engagement and educational background of respondents are significantly related to talent retention, while the rest of the variables did not reveal such relationships. Data are presented in Table 4 and 5.

Table 4: Correlation of Talent Engagement and Talent Retention

Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3
1. Talent Retention	3.05	.413	1		
2. Organizational Engagement	3.72	.731	.645**	1	
3. Job Engagement	3.91	.614	.409**	.377**	1

Data in Table 4 shows that both organizational and job engagement are significantly related to talent retention (r=.645, r=.409 respectively; p <0.01). Among personal characteristics, the findings from the multiple regression analysis in Exhibit 5 revealed that educational background has a significant relationship with talent retention (t=-2.684, p <0.01). This indicates that the higher the education, the lower the retention.

Table 5 Regression Analysis of Personal Factors and Talent Retention

Variables	Beta	t-value	Sig.
Gender	-.095	-.850	.398
Age	.167	1.462	.148
Educational background	-.325	-2.684	.009
Years of working	.028	.241	.810
R^2 =.064	F=2.360	p=.061	

Using qualitative analysis, all key informants agree that the HiPPS is a good project but that it is not very much associated with their retention. However, developmental humanism, such as rotation and career path, is more attractive than utilitarian instrumentalism. In terms of organizational engagement, a sense of working for the country was considered to be the core element. Support from the supervisor also allows high performers to engage in their organizations. It is also interesting to note that the bureaucratic system, especially the complex process of work, is connected to both organizational and job engagement. Apart from that, dissatisfaction with development policy and personal reasons are key drivers of turnover intentions. Lastly, there is no empirical evidence for the relationship between absenteeism and talent retention.

Finally, the findings of both the quantitative and qualitative methods were then analyzed together. It was found that the findings from both parts were similar and support each other. A number of findings were verified, such as more respondents engage in their jobs

than the organizations, they really "throw" themselves into their jobs, and respondents highly agree with both the utilitarian instrumentalism and developmental humanism practices of the HiPPS.

Implications of the Findings

Theoretical Implications

Even though the findings reveal that HR practices in the HiPPS do not correlate with talent engagement or retention, a number of empirical facts regarding the theory of HR have been verified. First, it has been proved that HR practices in developmental humanism, which focuses on the "human" side of HRM, are effective motivational factors. The findings also revealed that career path, learning opportunity, and rotation are more attractive than other HR practices in the HiPPS. As Kane et al. (1999: 496) claim, this "developmental humanist approach" involves a focus on fostering employee motivation, commitment, and development.

Second, the multiple roles of organization members results in a relationship between the two types of talent engagement. The data shows a significant relationship between organizational and job engagement ($r=.377$, $p<0.01$). This aligns with the conceptualization of engagement as role related (Kahn, 1990; Rothbard, 2001 quoted in Saks, 2006: 603), indicating that the two most dominant roles for most organization members are their work roles and their roles as members of the organizations. Therefore, their job and organization engagement are significantly related.

Third, "employer branding" of the public organization leads to organization engagement. The findings from both the quantitative and qualitative methods illustrate that HiPPS participants value the sense of

working for the nation. A number of answers indicate pride in working in the area of the country's development. Since employer branding plays a crucial role in the talent acquisition system (Schiemann, 2009:45), it is a good sign for the public sector that talented people are willing to work for the country.

Next, it has been confirmed that compensation is less a factor in retention and more in recruitment (Stone, 2002: 58-59). Acceptance of being a government official from the first day with a government compensation package seems to indicate that a monetary reward is not the core factor influencing the individual's decision to work in the public sector. Since monetary rewards are accepted, both findings from the quantitative and qualitative methods have verified that monetary rewards are not the factor influencing their staying in the public sector.

Lastly, it has also been found that employee engagement was positively associated with intent to remain with one's organization (Hackman and Oldham, 1980; Harter et al., 2002; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004 quoted in John and Harter, 2005: 79). This is also verified by the finding that both organizational and job engagement are significantly associated to talent retention ($r=.645$, $r=.409$; $p < 0.01$, respectively).

Practical Implications

Regarding the talent engagement framework, Phillips and Roper (2009: 11) state that attracting and selecting talent are only the start and can appear to be the simplest of the phases. The HiPPS then can be seen as the first step in talent management in the Thai public sector. The next step of encouraging talent engagement is suggested by understanding more effectively and by responding to individual expectations from work.

At the individual level, research reveals that "peers and colleagues" of HiPPS members most influence their organization engagement. Therefore, team building is recommended in order to encourage a positive working culture and organization engagement. The research findings also showed that challenges in the assigned job leads to job engagement. Therefore, more provision of supervisory knowledge and skills by employees' coaches and mentors is suggested. However, each talented person has his or her own aspirations, so the interpersonal skills of those that are around them are encouraged.

The HR Unit in each organization plays a crucial role in implementing HR practices. The findings showed that they require a more proactive manner in responding to HiPPS processes. Strengthening the coordination between the HR unit and the OCSC, especially regarding HiPPS practices, should be addressed.

At the organizational level, Lunn (1992: 12) suggests "the challenge is to enable the key motivators of responsibility, achievement and feeling of self worth, to become common currency throughout the organization rather than the preserve of the minority." Thus, performance management, which emphasizes results-based approach, should be promoted. This would provide the ground rules for everyone in the organization. This performance management will lead to the perception that rewards are allocated based on performance, not because of being a HiPPS member. It is expected that this approach will facilitate the working life of HiPPS members and will prevent the wrong perception of the HiPPS.

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