Predicting Teacher Morale on Work Performance, Social Support, and Career Success

Assist. Professor Dr. Soontaree Saksri
Department of Humanities, Faculty of Applied Arts,
King Mongkut's University of Technology North Bangkok, Thailand
1518 Pracharat 1 Road,Wongsawang, Bangsue, Bangkok 10800
E-mail: soontaree.s@arts.kmutnb.ac.th Tel. +66 99 154 2619

Assoc. Professor Dr. Manop Chunin
Department of Humanities, Faculty of Applied Arts,
King Mongkut's University of Technology North Bangkok, Thailand
1518 Pracharat 1 Road,Wongsawang, Bangsue, Bangkok 10800
E-mail: manop.chunin17@gmail.com Tel. +66 64 578 9259

Chatjutha Nokchan
Lecturer at Department of Psychology, Faculty of Education,
Bansomdejchaopaya Rajabhat University, Thailand
1061 Soi Itsaraphap 15, Khwaeng Hiranruchi, Khet Thon Buri,
Bangkok, Thailand 10600
E-mail: chatjutha.nok@gmail.com Tel. +66 92 996 6456

*Correspondence author: E-mail: manop.chunin17@gmail.com

Abstract

The purposes of this research were: 1. to determine the level of morale, work performance, social support, and career success of Thai teachers; 2. to study the relationship between Thai teacher morale, work performance, and career success; 3. to study the relationship between social support and career success of Thai teachers; 4. to predict career success of teachers with morale on work performance and social support. The research sample was 187 teachers, and the research instrument was a questionnaire. Statistics used were frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, Pearson correlation coefficients, and stepwise multiple regression analysis.

The results revealed that: 1. Levels of Thai teacher morale, work performance, social support, and career success were at high levels;. 2. There was a positive relationship between work performance morale and career success of teachers (r = .633, p = 0.013); There was a positive relationship between social support and career success of Thai teachers (r = .794, p = .014). Morale on work performance and social support accounted for 66 percent of the variance in career success of Thai teachers.

Keywords: morale about work performance, social support, career success

1. Introduction

School is an important institution responsible for educating all children and adolescent learners, with the expectation that their education will empower them to become productive members of society, with a proper balance in terms of their knowledge, physical status, morals, ethics, and awareness of being Thai citizens with adhesion to the democratic regime of the Thai government with the King as the head of state. They should obtain knowledge and basic learning skills based on the belief that "everyone can acquire knowledge and do self-development regarding their individual potential" (Ministry of Education Thailand, 2008). One significant person in the educational environment is the teacher, who plays a crucial role in developing education by paving an education path for students, so the students will possess good qualifications, along with knowledge and life skills to survive through the persistent fluctuations in economic cycles, society, and politics.

Career success relies upon the inner inspiration required to create determination, effort, and hard work in order to produce professional results that are recognized and valued by the organization, and which ultimately lead to promotion and higher levels of pay. From the perspective of the individual, career success should have psychological consequences that a person can experience. The teacher's self-esteem, self-efficacy, and perception of career success should result in positive psychological effects that will lead to satisfactory work behavior. A high morale level about work performance is one factor that can have a positive effect on a successful teaching career, since it is considered a behavior of the teacher who is willing, deliberate, and pleased to undertake duties in school without being ordered to do so. However, if a teacher lacks a high level of morale about work performance, it will likely result in a lower level of performance and a decrease in work quality (Vasantham, 2014; Britt et al., 2007; Weakliem & Frenkel, 2006; Neely, 1999). Besides, social support is considered another important factor that affects career success. Receiving social support is a fundamental desire for an individual, living a social life with others, which requires interaction among one another at work. In the performance of duty, the teacher needs to collaborate with various people from many sectors of society: from authorities, colleagues, students, and parents (Cobb, cited in   T. & Feldman, 2014; Drummond et al., 2016). If a teacher receives acceptance, attentiveness, recognition, praise and support from those people, it will help

ensure the teacher's smooth work performance and an awareness of being part of the organization as well as society, all of which could lead to success in a teaching career.

Regarding what has being mentioned above, the researchers have perceived the importance of workplace morale on work performance and social support, and their relationship in turn to career success of teachers. These could be used as predictor variables that should be able to lead to a successful teaching career. The results of this study are expected to be beneficial for improving the career development and promotion of Thai teachers in the future.

2. Literature Review
2.1 Career success

A career might be defined as an organized path taken by an individual across time and space. Moreover, this term is usually viewed as reflecting a person's progress or success in an occupation. Consequently, most research to date has examined career success as perceived consensually by people evaluating others' careers, generally using objective criteria such as job title, salary, and promotions, as well as subjective components of the career such as increased job security, longer vacations, or advancements in a hierarchy (promotions, different job title) Gattiker and Larwood , Laurie. (1986) compiled a measure of career success consisting of five factors: job success, interpersonal success, financial success, hierarchical success, and life success.

2.2 Social support

Social support is a multidimensional construct that assumes many different forms and can encompass a multitude of relationships, behaviors, and consequences (Streeter & Franklin, 1992). Furthermore, Whittaker & Garbarino (1983) noted that social support often occurs within the family context, among friends and peers, between neighbors, and in specially created support groups. The current study used the social support type categorization developed by House (1981). Specifically, emotional support consists of feelings of trust and love; informational support is providing someone with information or advice; appraisal support is providing evaluative feedback to others; and instrumental support includes providing resources such as spending time with someone or providing him or her with materials or money.

2.3 Morale on work performance

Morale is a mental or emotional state (with regard to confidence, hope, enthusiasm, etc.) of a person or group engaged in some activity; in other words, degree of contentment with one's lot or situation. The grounded theory approach in the qualitative phase identified a three dimensional structure of morale which revolved around affective, future/goal, and interpersonal dimensions (Hardy, 2009). Each dimension has the following characteristics:

First Dimension: The structure of the affective dimension of morale is divided into three sub-characteristics, as follows:
  1) Valued and taken seriously, consisting of appreciation, trust, and autonomy
  2) Self-worth, consisting of achievement, feeling successful, and interesting work
  3) Support and communication, consisting of good communication, recognition, leadership, and praise.

Second Dimension: The structure of the future/goal dimension of morale is divided into two sub-characteristics, as follows:
  1) Vision of future, consisting of attractiveness of vision, clarity of vision, better than present, security, challenge and importance of the task.
  2) Progress, consisting of sense of progress, feeling successful, and contribution to goal.

Third Dimension: The structure of the interpersonal dimension of morale is divided into two sub-characteristics, as follows:

1) Influence of others consisting of contribution, teamwork/ pulling together, pride, and interesting work
2) Relationship with others consisting of cohesion, good atmosphere, and helping others.

In terms of morale on work performance, it is defined as the total satisfaction that a person derives from his job, the prevailing atmosphere, and the factors that appeal to his individual propensities. It is a summary of attitudes and feelings that constitute a reserve of physical and mental strength, including factors like self-confidence, optimism and a positive mental attitude (Vasantham, 2014).

3. Objectives of the study

3.1 To study the levels of Thai teacher morale on work performance, social support, and teacher career success.
3.2 To study the relationship between Thai teacher morale on work performance and teaching career success.
3.3 To study the relationship between social support and teacher career success.
3.4 To predict teaching career success supported by morale on work performance and social support.

4. Research Method

This was survey research conducted by distributing questionnaires to teachers in Thai secondary schools.

5. Population and Sample

The research sample consisted of teachers from two secondary schools in Kanchanaburi province. The samples were selected by the formulation proposed by Krejcie and Morgan (1977) with 95% reliability. A sample of 168 teachers out of 298 were chosen by proportional stratified random sampling. At the school level, 20% was added for a complete number; therefore, the total number was 202. Of these, 187 questionnaires were completed and returned for analysis, for a response rate of 92.57%.

6. Research Tool

In this study, a questionnaire was designed and used for data collection, which was divided into four parts, as follows:

Part 1: Seven items were used to measure the personal data with a checklist method. The personal data were gender, duration of employment, education level, salary, learning area group, and position.

Part 2: 25 items were used to measure the morale on work performance, and the concept of Hardy (2009) was utilized to construct the questionnaire.

Part 3: 16 items were used to measure social support, and the concept of House (1985, cited in Poonporn, 1991) was utilized to construct the questionnaire.

Part 4: 19 items were used to measure the teaching career success, and the concept of Gattiker and Lawood (1986) was utilized to construct the questionnaire. The questionnaire parts 2, 3, and 4 had the characteristics of 5-point Likert rating scales in which each response option needed to be chosen: 5) extremely, 4) very, 3) moderately, 2) slightly, 1) extremely slightly.

7. Research Tool Development

Three experts examined the constructed questionnaire in the aspects of language use and content validity. A mark of 1 was given when it was certain that the item was congruent with the definition of each variable, while 0 was given when the congruence of each variable was uncertain, and -1 was given when the incongruence of each variable was certain. After that, the index value of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) was calculated and the test items with a value of IOC of .50 or higher were selected. It was found that there were 26 items for the morale on work performance, 16 items for social support, and 17 items for successful teaching career that met the criteria and were included in the questionnaire. Then, 30 questionnaires were pilot tested among teachers from secondary schools in Ratchaburi province, who had similar characteristics to the sample group, to evaluate discrimination power with t-tests, where the t-value must be more than 1.75 to be deemed acceptable (Edwards, 1957), while any items that got a t-value less than 1.75 were eliminated due to the absence of the discrimination power. 25, 16, and 15 items passed the evaluation and were retained in the questionnaires, in the respective order of morale on work performance, social support and successful teaching career. The internal consistency of the subscales was evaluated by using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. The results with Cronbach's reliability coefficients are presented according to Table 1.

Table 1: The Number of Good Test Items, Discrimination Power and Reliability

Questionnaire	The Number of Good Test Items	The Number of Test Items with Discrimination Power	Reliability Cronbach's Alpha
1. Morale on Work Performance			
- Recognition of Value and Importance	3	3	.902
- Self-worth	3	3	.859
- Support and Communication	4	4	.890
- Potentiality	6	6	.868
- Progress	3	3	.823
- External Influence	3	3	.834
- Relationship with Others	4	3	.887
Total	**26**	**25**	**.948**
2. Social Support			
- Emotional Aspect	6	6	.981
- Evaluation Aspect	3	3	.925
- Information Aspect	4	4	.969
- Equipment Aspect	3	3	.958
Total	**16**	**16**	**.988**
3. Career Success	**17**	**15**	**.942**

Data Collection and Analysis

The school directors in Kanchanaburi province, Thailand were contacted and asked for permission to distribute the questionnaires to their teachers. After that, the schools assigned 1-2 teachers to help distribute and collect the questionnaires. Next, the questionnaires were analyzed by the use of a computer program for the data processing. The statistics employed in this research were percentages, frequencies, means, standard deviations, correlation coefficients, and stepwise multiple regression analysis.

8. Results

8.1 Result from analyzing personal data of the teachers

There were 187 teachers in the provincial schools in Kanchanaburi, categorized as follows: 48.1% were teachers from Visuttharangsi School, and 51.9% were from Kanchananukhro School. The majority of the teachers are female (66.3%), and aged between 20-35 years old (55.1%). 65.2 percent of participants had work experience for the period of 1-10 years, 62.0% had bachelor degrees. 57.2% were in the paygrade ranging from 15,000 – 25,000 baht per month, 16.6% were in the home working and technology learning area group, and 29.4% of the teachers were in the K2 Level position (Professional Level Teacher).

8.2 Results from analyzing the level of the morale on work performance, social support, and successful teaching career

Table 2: Thorough and Separate Overview of Mean Scores, Standard Deviations, and Level of Social Support for Teachers

Social Support for Teachers	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level
Emotional Aspect	4.19	.483	High
Evaluation Aspect	4.10	.560	High
Information Aspect	4.08	.581	High
Equipment Aspect	4.07	.644	High
Total	**4.13**	**.478**	**High**

From Table 2, it shows the level of social support was high with a high mean score ($\bar{x}$ = 4.13, S.D. = .478). When considered separately, each of the aspects was found to have a high mean score, especially the emotional aspect, which had the highest mean score ($\bar{x}$ = 4.19, S.D. = 0.483), followed by the evaluation aspect ($\bar{x}$ = 4.10, S.D. = 0.560); the aspect with the lowest mean score was the equipment aspect ($\bar{x}$ = 4.07, S.D. = 0.644).

Table 3: Thorough and Separate Overview of Mean Scores, Standard Deviations, and Level of Teachers' Morale on Work Performance

Teacher's Morale on Work Performance	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level
Recognition of Value and Importance Aspect	4.16	.576	High
Self-Worth Aspect	4.05	.565	High
Support and Communication Aspect	4.11	.527	High
Potentiality Aspect	4.15	.567	High
Progress Aspect	4.16	.551	High
External Influence Aspect	4.12	.570	High
Relationship with Others Aspect	4.19	.563	High
Total	**4.13**	**.478**	**High**

Table 3 shows the level of the teachers' morale on work performance, with a high mean score ($\bar{x}$ = 4.13, S.D. = 0.478). When considered separately, it was found that all the aspects had high mean scores, especially the relationship with others aspect, which had the highest mean score ($\bar{x}$ = 4.19, S.D. = 0.563), followed by the recognition of value and importance aspect ($\bar{x}$ = 4.16, S.D. = 0.576), and the progress aspect ($\bar{x}$ = 4.16, S.D. = 0.551). The aspect that had the lowest mean score was the support and communication aspect ($\bar{x}$ = 4.11, S.D. = 0.527).

Table 4: Overview of Teaching Career Success

Teaching Career Success	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level
Total	4.17	0.456	High

Table 4 reveals the level of teaching career success, with a high mean score ($\bar{x}$ = 4.17, S.D. = 0.456).

8.3 Results from analyzing the relationship between the morale on work performance and teaching career success

Table 5: Pearson's correlation coefficients between the morale on work performance and teaching career success

Morale on work performance	Career Success	
	r	P
Recognition of Value and Importance Aspect	.673**	.000
Self-Worth Aspect	.696**	.000
Support and Communication Aspect	.700**	.000
Potentiality Aspect	.647**	.000
Progress Aspect	.671**	.000
External Influence Aspect	.670**	.000
Relationship with Others Aspect	.680**	.000
Total	**.794**	**.000**

** $P < .01$

The findings from Table 5 show that the teachers' morale on work performance had a positive relationship with teaching career success with a statistical significance level of .01 and a Pearson correlation coefficient of .794. When considered separately, all aspects concerning teachers' morale on work performance, including the recognition of value and importance, self-worth, support and communication, the potentiality aspect, the progress aspect, external influence and relationship with others had large positive correlations with successful teaching career success at the $p < .01$ level, and with correlation coefficients of .673, .696, .700, .647, .671, .670 and .680, respectively.

8.4 Results from analyzing the prediction of teachers' work engagement in terms of good organizational citizenship and perceived organizational reputation

Table 6: Correlation Coefficients from Stepwise Multiple Regression between Social Support and Successful Teaching Career

Social Support	Career Success	
	r	P
Emotional Aspect	.678**	.000
Evaluation Aspect	.612**	.000
Information Aspect	.520**	.000
Equipment Aspect	.450**	.000
Total	**.663**	**.000**

** ** $P < .01$

The findings from Table 6 show that social support had a positive relationship to career success, with a correlation coefficient of .663, statistically significant at $p < .001$. When considered separately, it was found that all the aspects concerning social support—emotional support, the evaluation aspect, the information aspect, and the equipment aspect, had positive correlations with teaching career success. All correlations were statistically significant at $p < 0.001$, and the correlation coefficients were .678, .612, .520 and .450, respectively.

Table 7: Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis Results – Model Summary of the Prediction of Teaching Career Success Supported by Morale on Work Performance and Social Support

Variable	b	S.E.$_b$	β	t	p
Constant	.832	.185		4.51**	.000
Social Support for Teachers in the Aspect of Emotion	.160	.064	.170	2.50*	.013
Teachers' Morale on Work Performance in the Aspect of Self-Worth	.206	.053	.256	3.91**	.000
Teachers' Morale on Work Performance in the Aspect of Recognition of Value and Importance	.186	.049	.235	3.81**	.000
Teachers' Morale on Work Performance in the Aspect of Potentiality	.127	.050	.158	2.52*	.012
Teachers' Morale on Work Performance in the Aspect of Relationship with Others	.127	.055	.157	2.30**	.023

R = .812 R^2 = .660 Adj. R^2 = .650 SE$_{est}$ = .269 F = 70.186 P = .000

**Statistical Significance Level at .01
*With Statistical Significance Level at .05

9. Discussion

Morale on work performance had a positive relation to teachers' career success, with a statistical significance level at .01. Besides, it could successfully predict success in this profession, which could be interpreted that the teacher with high morale on work performance will lead to a successful teaching career. The finding is consistent with the study conducted by Vasantham (2014), which found that employee morale plays a very important part in organizational success. High morale leads to success while low morale brings on defeat. In an organization where the employees possess high morale, their attitude to stay in the organization will increase, and vice versa. The success or failure of the enterprise depends on the morale which the employees have towards their organization. Additionally, Britt et al. (2007) provided an excellent review of morale, defining morale as 'a service member's level of motivation and enthusiasm for achieving mission success, including the studies by Weakliem and Frenkel (2006) and Neely (1999).

Furthermore, social support also had a positive relationship to teaching career success, especially the aspect of emotional support, which had the highest correlation coefficient. Social support in the aspect of emotion could effectively predict teaching career success, which could be interpreted to mean that the teacher with emotional social support will lead a successful teaching career. This finding is consistent with that of the T. and Feldman (2014) study on subjective career success: a meta-analytic review that revealed employees have to face a variety of obstacles over the course of their careers, each of which can create stress for employees and, in so doing, lower their

subjective career success. It is also consistent with the study of Drummond et al. (2017), that found that social support from supervisors and family members was associated with reduced psychological strain and increased job and family satisfaction.

10. Recommendations

10.1 Recommendations for Practices and Development

10.1.1 School executives should provide teachers with more social support, especially concerning equipment, which had the lowest mean satisfaction score of all the aspects, and purchase them modern and more adequate teaching equipment such as computer projectors and visualizers.

10.1.2 School executives should work to increase the teachers' morale on work performance, especially morale related to recognition of their value and importance to the organization, because it had the lowest mean score ($\overline{X} = 4.05$). They could do this by encouraging the teachers to envisage their achievement, or find a sense of achievement in their own minds, so as to perform their duties with more enthusiasm, and by helping them design and enliven their work environments and job descriptions.

10.1.3 Regarding morale on work performance, school executives should recognize that morale has a positive relationship to the teaching career success in all four aspects of morale: self-worth, value and importance, potentiality, and relationship with others. Improving morale can predict better success in the teaching profession. Consequently, the school executives should endeavor to increase teacher morale on work performance by encouraging them to appreciate their self-worth, giving importance to them so that they could see their positive potentiality, and encourage them to have good relationships with one another. The higher the teachers' morale is, the more successful their career will become.

10.1.4 Social support had a positive relationship to teaching career success, especially on the aspect of emotional support, which had the highest correlation coefficient level (r = .678). Because emotional social support can predict the teacher's career success, the school executives should increase support in this regard by encouraging knowledge exchange, reciprocating attentiveness, promoting good relationships, honesty, compassion, and assisting one another. The more social support the teachers are provided with, the more successful a teaching career they will have.

10.2 Recommendations for further study

10.2.1 Experimental studies where teachers receive training on providing emotional social support should be conducted, since this particular type of support had the highest relationship to a successful teaching career (r = .70), and was the only one of all the variables from multiple regression analysis concerning social support that could be used to predict success in this profession. Afterwards, an assessment of social support and teaching career success could be conducted before and after the training.

10.2.2 Teachers should be encouraged to participate in various types of activities that increase their morale related to work performance, such as holding an annual convention or event for outstanding teachers, where they receive awards, or sponsoring an event where successful alumni return to the school and give advice to the current students. This will show the teachers the tangible results of their work in helping their students to become successful. This should be followed by an assessment of the morale on work performance, and career success before and after the participation in these activities, and a comparison of each of these activities should be made to identify the most beneficial ones.

11. Acknowledgements

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