Practical Framework: Creation of Causal Model of Job Involvement, Career Commitment, Learning Motivation, and Learning Transfer

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Abstract—Research objectives were to determine a practical framework and to create a causal model of job involvement, career commitment, learning motivation, and learning transfer of petroleum refinery plant employees in Thailand. The study reported the responses of 594 operational employees from seven petroleum refinery plants in different parts of Thailand. Data were analyzed with descriptive statistics using SPSS (version 11.5) and assessed with confirmatory factor analysis to confirm the heterogeneity of all constructs and path analysis to test the cause and effect relationships among main constructs of the study using LISREL (version 8) on a structured questionnaire containing standard scales of job involvement, career commitment, learning motivation, and learning transfer. Research findings indicated that dimensions of job involvement, career commitment, and learning motivation behavior have mediated the positive effect on learning transfer. Furthermore, learning motivation fully mediates the relationships between job involvement and learning transfer and between career commitment and learning transfer.

Keywords—Career Commitment, Job Involvement, Learning Motivation, Learning Transfer

I. INTRODUCTION
Transfer of learning is the most significant issue for their practice [1] [2] [3]. Transfer of learning is an issue of organizational sustainability and personal survival [4] [5] [6]. Furthermore, learning transfer can be defined as the application, generalization, and retention of newly acquired knowledge and skills in the workplace [7]. Job involvement is considered to be a key factor influencing important individual and organizational outcomes [8]. Job involvement positively affects employees’ motivation and effort toward higher levels of in-role job performance [9]. Trainee motivation and attitudes play an important role in determining training effectiveness [10]. Job involvement is defined as the extent to which individuals psychologically identify with work or the importance of work to the total self-image [11]. Job involvement is conceptualized as a cognitive state of psychological identification with the job which, in turn, depends on the potentialities of the job [12]. In a training situation, the highly job involved trainees anticipate higher performance as a result of doing well in training [13]. The highly job involved trainees are more motivated to learn and transfer the skills to the job [14]. Job involvement is the state of mental or
psychological identification with a specific job which depends on both the importance of one’s needs (intrinsic and extrinsic), and the perception of work as satisfying those needs [12]. Job involvement contains two overlapping measures: psychological identification with the job, and the level at which work plays a central role in the individual’s life and identity [15]. In other words, job involvement is the degree to which the job situation is central to the person and his/her identity [11] [12]. Trainees with high commitment to their career or work are likely to exert considerable effort toward learning because these trainees have the intention of improving their job performance [16] [17].

When trainees attend training programs, they invest more effort in learning new skills or knowledge [16] [17]. Career commitment is defined as an affective concept which represents identification with a series of related jobs in a specific field of work and is behaviorally expressed in an ability to cope with disappointments in the pursuit of career goals [18]. One who shows more career commitment is able to persist in pursuing career goals, even if confronting obstacles and setbacks [19]. Career commitment has been included in several integrative models of organizational behavior to study its relationship with various work-related outcomes [18] [20].

Furthermore, career commitment is positively and significantly related to both skill development [18] and job performance [21], whereas it is negatively related to actual turnover [22]. Although its effect on training has not been widely studied, the influence of its energizing component (i.e. career planning) on learning transfer has been investigated [23]. Career commitment is specifically relevant to individuals who try to develop a high level of skills, as it can help them persist long enough through years of training, development, and experience across different organizational settings [19]. Career commitment is defined as the strength of one’s motivation to work in a chosen career role [16]. Changing work environments and the pace of careers in organizations have led employees to exhibit more commitment to their careers and perhaps less or conditional commitment to their organizations [24].

Career commitment has become a significant source of occupational meaning and continuity as organizations become flatter and less able to provide secure jobs or careers [19] [25]. Individual differences and situational characteristics are important predictors of career commitment, and that individuals who are high on career motivation might have greater career satisfaction [26]. For example, career commitment positively affects the learning motivation and the learning transfer [27]. Individuals with a learning goal orientation are found to commit themselves to developing a plan for performance success [28]. Carson et al. [29] linked career commitment and organizational commitment to work-related outcomes and discovered that individuals who rated highly on career commitment reported greater career satisfaction than those rated low on career commitment.

Career commitment is positively related to career satisfaction in the case of municipal employees [30]. Career commitment reflects a form of work commitment that the employees have toward their careers and could be related to desired career outcomes [18]. Individuals with a strong degree of career commitment and higher levels of career expectations may make significant investments in their careers [18]. Learning motivation can be defined as the specific desire of a learner to learn the content of a training program [10] [14]. Training motivation is crucial for the most sophisticated training program to be effective [31]. Some studies have indicated that learning motivation is related to training performance [13] [32] and task performance [33]. Past studies have revealed that higher levels of motivation to learn result in improved performance in learning [33].
Motivation in academics is influenced by a lot of factors including personal, social, instructional, familial, and cultural aspects [34]. Glynn and Koballa [35] developed the Science Motivation Questionnaire (SMQ) which included six components of motivation, namely intrinsically motivated learning, extrinsically motivated learning, personal relevance of learning, self determination, self-efficacy, and anxiety about assessment. Furthermore, intrinsic motivation promotes a working environment that expedites both formal and informal communication, which entails greater transfer and acquisition of knowledge as well as the development of behaviors that strengthen organizational learning [36]. Thus, intrinsic motivation performs two significant roles in the knowledge transfer process [36].

Intrinsic motivation is a reward of the process itself, and it promotes individual participation in the knowledge transfer process [37]. Specifically, intrinsic motivation enables the generation and transfer of knowledge under conditions in which extrinsic motivation fails [38]. Organizations that recognize their employees’ efforts, abilities, and accomplishments provide intrinsic motivation for them to transfer their knowledge [39]. Empirical research has shown that motivation to learn can influence the extent to which employees are willing to participate in training [40] [41], to expend effort to learn and benefit from training [42] [43], and to transfer newly acquired knowledge and skills to the work setting [27] [44].

Employees would be motivated to learn unless they perceive that their participation in training would result in either improved job performance or career development [31]. Since learning is the ultimate goal of training, it is expected that without motivation to learn the content of a training program, a trainee will perform poorly during training, negatively affecting his or her learning level [33] [45]. Motivation to learn has an effect on both learning and intention to transfer [46]. Trainees with higher levels of motivation to learn may perform during training better than their less motivated counterparts [46]. Lower levels of training motivation are more likely to affect the intention of trainees to apply what they have learned in training on their job [47]. Furthermore, motivation to learn is strongly related to training transfer [43] [48].

Bransford et al. [49] identified four key characteristics of learning as applied to transfer, namely the necessity of initial learning, the importance of abstract and contextual knowledge, the conception of learning as an active and dynamic process, and the notion that all learning is transfer. Previous experiences or learning can hinder the learning of new concepts [49]. Transfer of learning occurs when prior-learned knowledge and skills affect the way in which new knowledge and skills are learned and performed [50]. Transfer of learning is deemed to be positive if acquisition and performance are facilitated, and negative if they are impeded [50]. Learning transfer is the process of applying skills, knowledge, and attitudes acquired during a training program to the work place [50]. Their successful application leads to an improvement in job performance and has a lasting effect [50]. Furthermore, transfer of learning is one of the most general phenomena of learning [51].

II. MATERIAL AND METHODS

Data of this study were collected from 594 operational employees from 11,725 operational employees working in the seven petroleum refinery plants in Thailand by using Yamane’s formula [52] for a 96% confidence level with a 4% margin of error by the proportional random sampling method. Data were analyzed with descriptive statistics using SPSS (version 11.5) and assessed with confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to confirm the heterogeneity of all constructs and path analysis [53] to detect the cause-effect relationships among various
dimensions of main constructs of the study using LISREL (version 8) on a structured questionnaire containing standard scales of job involvement, career commitment, learning motivation, and learning transfer, besides some demographic details like age, education, and tenure with the organization.

Learning transfer was measured using the questionnaire on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) developed by [54] comprising four elements of the background of the respondents, respondents’ motivation for choosing a particular type of education, respondents’ learning in traineeship, and relationship between college and traineeship. Learning motivation was measured using the Science Motivation Questionnaire (SMQ) on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always) developed by [35]. The SMQ consists of 30 items which assess six aspects of motivation: intrinsic motivation to learn, extrinsic motivation to learn, relevance of learning to personal goals, responsibility for learning, confidence in learning, and anxiety about assessment.

Job involvement was measured using the 10-item questionnaire on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) developed by [12]. Eight items were reversed in view of earlier findings [15] that job involvement consists of two factors, namely centrality and identification. Career commitment was assessed using the 17-item career commitment questionnaire on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) developed by [19].

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
A practical framework and causal model are created. Research findings indicated that dimensions of job involvement, career commitment, and learning motivation have mediated positive effect on learning transfer. Furthermore, learning motivation fully mediates the relationships between job involvement and learning transfer and between career commitment and learning transfer.

Fig. 1 Practical Framework
JI = Job Involvement, CC = Career Commitment, LM = Learning Motivation, LT = Learning Transfer

Regarding the practical framework, there are lots of researchers studying the relationships of job involvement, career commitment, learning motivation, and learning transfer in a wide variety of fields. The practical framework was positively compatible with the following research findings. Job involvement, career commitment, and learning motivation are positively linked to learning transfer and are very important for general organizational success.

It is important that the other organizations implementing large-scale manufacturing reformations need to pay great attention to job involvement, career commitment, learning motivation, and learning transfer in order to effectively achieve business success. According to the results, improving learning motivation and learning transfer requires the adoption of the appropriate job involvement and career commitment in order to enhance the level of learning motivation and learning transfer.

IV. CONCLUSIONS
The purposes of this study were to determine a practical framework and to create a causal model of job involvement, career commitment, learning motivation, and learning transfer for petroleum refinery plant employees in Thailand. The findings showed that the job involvement, career commitment, and learning motivation have the strength to mediate positive effect on
learning transfer. In relation to the practical framework, this result was the extent to which learning motivation fully mediates the relationships between job involvement and learning transfer and between career commitment and learning transfer.

Job involvement and career commitment help organizations move toward better learning transfer through learning motivation. Organizations aiming to increase learning transfer and achieve business goals should focus on developing job involvement, career commitment, and learning motivation. Future research can benefit from a larger sample to bring more statistical power and a higher degree of representation. This study was done by empirically investigating Thai firms. Cultural limitation should be considered and it is suggested that future research should be done in other cultural contexts and other variables (i.e., organizational culture, trust in the leader, perceived organizational support, team identity, job satisfaction, and organizational innovation) to increase learning transfer and achieve business goals.

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