

## Antecedents and Consequences of Organizational Citizenship Behavior among NGO Staff from Thailand, Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia

Saran Pimthong<sup>1</sup>

This study intended to analyze the antecedents and consequences of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) of the staff working at non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Thailand, Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia. The 640 NGO staff were recruited to participate as the representative samples of this study. A stratified random sampling method was employed to obtain the participants in each country. Respondents were assessed using questionnaires on a 6 point Likert scale to measure the hypothesized structural equation model. A good fit was found for the structural and measurement models of the latent variables through confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling. Positive relationships were found between organizational commitment, servant leadership, organizational citizenship behavior and team effectiveness. The findings emphasize the role played by organizational commitment and servant leadership in promoting desirable behaviors and outcomes for teams. The practical implications of the findings and some interesting methods for future research are discussed.

**Keywords:** organizational citizenship behavior, team effectiveness, NGO staff, ASEAN community

In 2003, the ASEAN countries agreed that 2020 would be the year for the establishment of the ASEAN Community before the target time was accelerated to 2015 (Association of Southeast Asian Nations, 2008). The three pillars of the ASEAN Community are drawn to comprise of the ASEAN Political Security Community, the ASEAN Economic Community and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community. Nevertheless, the Initiatives for ASEAN Integration (IAI) which is a strategic work plan aim primarily for the ASEAN member countries to benefit from regional cooperation. The capacity building and human resource development is a key to IAI efforts while the collective goal is to bridge the gap of economic development between the member countries, particularly those with lower economic growth rate (Buddhakosa, 2011).

In preparation for the arrival and to ensure a comprehensive stability and sustainability of the ASEAN Community, the involvement of public-private sector is one of the most significant factors that need to be acknowledged and implemented. Needless to say, a sustainable existence and operation of the ASEAN Community cannot be achieved solely from its reliability on the government sector. As a result, the member countries must advocate for the ASEAN to become the Community of Action, Community of Connectivity and Community of People (Suphatheerathada, 2012). The emphasis must be put on the role and participation of every involving sector from government, private, and public sectors, including the social organization such as Non-governmental organization (NGO).

Most non-governmental organizations or the NGOs share a common objective in initiating and operating social development and service activities. Their operations are carried out independently for non-profit purpose. While a NGO may come in the form of a registered

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<sup>1</sup> Lecturer, Behavioral Science Research Institute, Srinakharinwirot University, Thailand

foundation or an unregistered assembly, it can be categorized as a part of the Non-Profit Sector, which plays a significant role in social development and service through activities of various kinds (Pruekpongsawalee, 1998).

On an international level 'Non-Government Organizations' can be considered the key variable of development, specifically, in the developing countries (Lewis, 2001). The NGOs, particularly the international ones, have continually and consistently undertaken developmental issues, working closely and collaboratively with private, governmental and public sector, nationally and internationally. Collectively, they are, therefore, a key driving force that can cause substantial changes in several aspects of development at the policy level. With an increasing number of non-governmental organizations in the ASEAN countries, these agencies' purview encompasses a vast landscape of development within the social sector. The collaboration has been expanded to include the provision of supports for other organizations in order to maximize the efficiency of the operation. To assist these non-governmental organizations to succeed the goals they are set out to do, support from governmental sector or other financial resources is not the only important factor. Valuable human resource is also considered as one of the top priorities. As the operators of the organization's activities, the role of human resources is extremely crucial for the improvement of organization's strength. Their intellectual and physical contributions render tremendous creative outputs and developments within the social sector. It is their personal sacrifice for the benefit of social development and, ultimately, the public interest (McMullen & Schellenberg, 2003).

Individuals who undertake the role and responsibility in a non-governmental organization must suitably meet the job descriptions, from body of knowledge to professional skills and other requirements indicated by the organization. They are also expected to possess specific characteristics, which are crucial in this line of work from voluntary spirit to personal sacrifice and ideology in social service (Chitradub & Kao-jean, 2013). The employee salary working for NGOs tends to be rather low, especially when comparing to those of private organizations. The benefit may not be as much comprehensive while the working hours can be indefinite depending on circumstances and occurring issues of a particular period of time. More importantly, employment stability cannot be guaranteed since most of NGOs hire their workforce according to the timeframe or condition of each project, which is indicated by the received grants support. Employment contract often stipulates the payment for a person hired for the job. As a result, people who wish to work with NGOs must be truly prepared and determined to undertake social service works despite the possible financial instability. (McMullen & Schellenberg, 2003).

The significance of the contribution of NGOs workers in the social sector continually increases (Lewis & Kanji, 2009), and more soon with the regional integration of the ASEAN Community on the horizon. This research conducted an investigation the organizational citizenship behavior as an extra-role behavior displayed by NGOs staff that is not clearly acknowledged by the formal incentive system and to promote the effective operation of the non-governmental organization. These are the reasons guiding the researcher's decision to study the hypothesized relationships between OCB, its antecedents and consequences among the NGO staffs in Thailand, Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia. Servant Leadership and Organizational Commitment are examined to observe whether they have direct and indirect impact as contributing or obstructing factors that cause the organizational citizenship behavior of a NGOs member to deviate from the research' hypothesis. It is expected that the research

outcomes can be used as the foundation of professional behavioral development planning for personnel working in the social sector. Appropriate and sufficient support at both national and international level can contribute to the better preparedness for the member countries as ASEAN Community approaches near.

## **Literature Review**

The primary goal of the study was to conduct an analysis of the relationships that exist between servant leadership, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior and team effectiveness. The secondary goal was to validate a theoretical model explicating the structural relationships between these variables in the staff working at NGO in Thailand, Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia.

### **Servant leadership**

The concept of 'Servant Leadership' was proposed by Greenleaf (1977) and essentially involves the notion where a good leadership begins by serving others first. People in executive level must have an innate desire to help others, acknowledging the value, importance and individuality in every human being. They are to serve the common need of a group rather than to fulfill their own personal wish. They search for ways to develop other individuals for the betterment and success of the organization. The concept enhances collaboration, sharing and participation as parts of the decision making process, promoting a sense of community and highlighting morally conceived behaviors and caring for others. The key issue is leaders of such kind tend to encourage the value of human resource development while still being attentive in issues such as the quality of life of people within the organization. This is what differentiates servant leader from most leaders in general, for the latter often favors the exercise of authoritative power that allows them to order, lead or have superiority over the true desire to help or serve others.

Greenleaf (2002) also developed a theory for successful professional organizational management through servant leadership. With years of experience in researching people's perception and practical knowledge towards leadership, Greenleaf established servant leadership concept. He believed that a servant leader must serve first and that feeling should be innate and natural. The ramification of such realization ultimately becomes the inspiration for that person to lead others. The person with such principle will not 'casually' accept the power granted by an organization or institution, instead, they will freely acknowledge the leader who is proven and trusted as a servant.

The word servant and leader are often regarded as a binary opposition. When two words with entirely opposite meanings are combined, the paradoxical result emerges as the method of incredible efficiency, rendering creativity and great competence (Spears, 2005). Servant leadership is an intrinsic characteristic as one feel the need to serve others than one's own desire. This type of leader favors teamwork and collaboration. Participation is considered an important part of the decision making process, which is made on the fundamentals and principles of morality. A servant leader takes others' feelings and development into account, encouraging them to improve themselves in several different aspects. In investigating the relationships between servant leadership and its consequences, many studies revealed a significant positive relationship between servant leadership and organizational citizenship

behavior (Davoudi, 2012; LePine, Erez, & Johnson, 2002; Schelecker & Engelbrecht, 2006), and servant leadership and team effectiveness (Irving & Longbotham, 2007; Transcritti, 2010; Hu & Liden, 2011). These results affirm the findings that perceived support of the leader has been documented to correlate positively with desirable behaviors of the organization. The analysis of servant leadership characteristic for this research measures the state of leadership through the perception of a sample group of employees of non-governmental organizations about the role the executive personals and the impact it has on them.

### **Organizational commitment**

Organizational commitment is the employees' attitude, which reflects a sense of affirmation and unity as well as confidence towards the organization they work for. Such commitment has a great deal of influence on a person's decision to prolong the status of a member of the organization including the acknowledgement in their own role and responsibility to support the organization's activities (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Three different elements of organizational commitment can be examined. (a) Affective commitment is a person's desire to work for the organization in a long and continual term. This can be regarded as an emotional commitment where the person feels like he or she is a part of the organization and strives to contribute his ability to help the organization achieve its goal; (b) Continuance commitment views a person's involvement in an organization, be there as an employee or a member, as a form of investment. As the period of the involvement becomes longer, the commitment becomes greater, making it hard for the person to leave the organization due to the stake of losing the invested contribution; (c) Normative commitment is when a person's responsibility and professional intent is regarded as a norm and emotional commitment, consequentially; the person is determined to help the organization achieve its goal.

Organizational commitment has been found from the previous studies to be an important predictor of organizational citizenship behavior (Aubé & Rousseau, 2005; Freund & Drach-Zahavy, 2007; Mahembe & Engelbrecht, 2013) and team effectiveness (Hammond, 2008; Salas, Goodwin, & Burke, 2008). On the basis of the above findings, it was assumed that when individuals feel cared for their organization. They will respond with good judgment towards their capability to commit to team and organizational goals.

### **Organizational citizenship behavior**

Organizational citizenship behavior is considered to be a special role where members of an organization are expected to undertake. It is an expression of one's compassion, sacrifice and volunteering spirit, carried out willingly without expecting anything in return. Such expression must be done without any relevance to the organization's rewarding system. Most academics of organizational studies are interested and highlight the importance of such behavior since it is something expressed innately as an individual motivation. It prioritizes the organization's long-term effectiveness and success and can be divided into two different types of behavior, which differentiated behaviors directed towards individuals, called OCBI, and behaviors directed towards the organization, called OCBO (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000).

The categorization of organizational citizenship behavior may be varied in different concepts and can comprise of 2 to 7 dimensions. This research divides the dimensions

according to Organ's principle (1988), which proposes 5 behavioral elements:- (a) Altruism: willfully helping others within the same organization; (b) Conscientiousness: acceptance and adherence in the organization's rules and regulations; (c) Sportsmanship: the ability to tolerate unexpected circumstances without overreacting or worsening the situation; (d) Courtesy: Behaviors and actions that prevent the cause of further conflicts or dilemmas; and (e) Civic virtue: concern for the welfare and interest of the organization.

For the NGOs staffs, organizational citizenship behavior can be compared to voluntary acts carried out willingly and pleasantly by the individuals themselves. While these people are not forced to act nor contribute, they do not expect anything in return except for their support to help the organization achieve its objective. The internal and external context surrounding the organization, as well as a specific objective and circumstance, can cause the expression of good membership behavior to be varied.

Several studies have addressed the relationship between organizational citizenship behavior and organizational citizenship behavior in various contexts (Karambayya, 1990; Ren-Tao & Heung-Gil, 2009; Mahembe & Engelbrecht, 2014). These empirical findings should also apply to this study from which the present study's data were obtained.

### **Team effectiveness**

Team effectiveness refers to the way in which an objective is met as a result of team-working and collaborative contribution of the team members (Irving & Longbotham, 2007). Additionally, it also entails methodological development of the team's collaboration, problem solving ability as well as positive emotional fulfillment. The members should feel comfortable to be working and exchanging professional experiences with others, as they are encouraged to express their opinions independently.

The assessment of team effectiveness from many past researches utilizes different types of measurement, both subjective and objective. A subjective measurement is an assessment where team members or leader report their perceptions towards the team's performance by themselves (Hyatt & Ruddy, 1997). An objective assessment can be done by the evaluation of the team's performance using the recorded data such as financial, production or human resource documents, etc. Furthermore, the assessment of team effectiveness can also be done using Internal and External measurement. Internal measurement is derived from the members' perception towards the team's performance. External measurement relies on parties outside of the team such as clients, organization leader and manager to do the assessment on the team's performance (Hyatt & Ruddy, 1997).

In conclusion, there are many different methods that can be used to conduct assessment of team effectiveness. The study of the past researches shows either the use of combined methods or one singular method. For this research, the assessment of team effectiveness is carried out by subjective and internal measurement where team members report to their own team about their satisfaction and perception towards the team's performance. The nature of the sample group's work is also put into consideration as well as the appropriation of the context of this research.

Based on the above theoretical foundation, the proposed research framework showing the hypothesized relationships servant leadership, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior and team effectiveness are represented in figure 1.

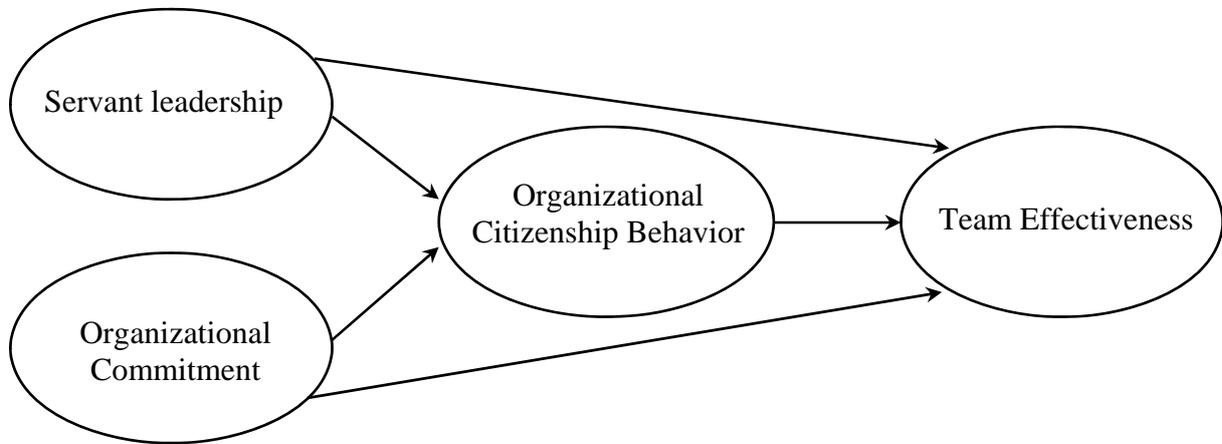


Figure 2. Hypothesized research framework.

## Methodology

### Participants and sampling procedures

NGOs staff from Thailand, Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia, who have more than 1 year of work experience in NGOs, represent the sample group of this research.

The sampling is done with 160 samples taken from the Thai participants, 160 from the Burmese participants, 160 from the Lao participants and 160 from the Cambodian participants, yielding a total of 640 samples. A sample was selected through simple random sampling. The sample size is in accordance with the criteria to conduct the analysis of structural equation model with latent variables (Madden & Dillion, 1982; Tabachnic & Fidell, 1996). The data collection was conducted between January to May, 2015.

### Materials and procedure

The study uses questionnaire as instrument for measuring the 4 variables and the demographic data to obtain the participants' biosocial and social backgrounds. Most of these tests are revised and improved versions adapted from high validity standardized tests. Certain adjustments were made in order for the test and the questionnaire to suit the participants. The tests and the questionnaire were written in four languages: a Thai version for Thai participants, Burmese version for Burmese participants, Lao version for Lao participants and Khmer for Cambodian participants.

All tests are in a summated Likert scale, with the 6 rating scales ranging from 'Strongly agree' to 'Strongly disagree'. Every test was evaluated for content validity, in which an examination is done on the specification of the topic following each variable's operational definition. The content is submitted to and inspected by qualified experts. The test was later given to 80 Thai NGOs staffs from NGOs in Bangkok for conducting an item analysis using Item discrimination test and item-total correlation. The reliability of each test is also

calculated. All instruments were reliable with Cronbach's alpha scores ranging from 0.86 to 0.97.

The following section describes the instrument for each of the study variable.

*Servant Leadership* The measure consisted of 25 items based on the scale by Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) that measured 5 construct of leader characteristics, which were: (a) altruistic, (b) emotional healing, (c) wisdom, (d) persuasive mapping, and (e) organizational stewardship. Items included were such as—"This person (NGOs' executive) is willing to help staff without expecting anything in return".

*Organizational Commitment* The construct questionnaire was based on the scale by Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993) that measured 3 components of commitment, which were: (a) affective, (b) continuance, and (c) normative. The 15 items, on a 6 point Likert scale, included "I do not feel 'emotionally attached' to this organization".

*Organizational Citizenship Behavior* This was measured by 23 items based on the scale by Podsakoff and Mackenzie's (1994). The self-report items were measured on five dimensions; altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy, and civic virtue. Items included statements such as, "I am mindful of how my behavior affects other people's job".

*Team Effectiveness* Sixteen items on the construct were adapted from the questionnaire by Larson and LaFasto (2001). The instrument was modified to 6 point Likert scale and consisted of items such as "Achieving the team goal is a higher priority than any individual objective".

## **Data analyses**

The SEM was used to test the hypothesis and interpret the content data. Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to obtain construct validity. There were 8 fit measures to examine the goodness of fit of the model and empirical data (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000; Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006).

## **Results**

This section consists of analysis of the data collected. The path analysis was conducted using SEM, for the total sample to test the proposed model.

### **Goodness-of-fit: The measurement and structural models**

The hypothesized model of antecedents and consequences of organizational citizenship behavior in Thai, Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia NGOs Staffs was tested by latent variable path analysis. The fit of hypothesized model was good ( $\chi^2 = 73.63$ ,  $df = 44$  ( $\chi^2 / df = 1.67$ ),  $SRMR = .036$ ,  $RMSEA = .032$ ,  $GFI = .98$ ,  $CFI = 1.00$ ,  $AGFI = .96$ , and  $CN = 584.26$ ). As shown in Figure 2, all path coefficients were significant at .05. This illustrates that NGOs staffs' team effectiveness are directly influenced by the causal variables, listed in ascending order: organizational citizenship behavior (standardized effect = .42), servant leadership (standardized effect = .35), and organizational commitment (standardized effect = .25). The

total causal variables accounted for 65% of the variance in the NGOs staffs' team effectiveness.

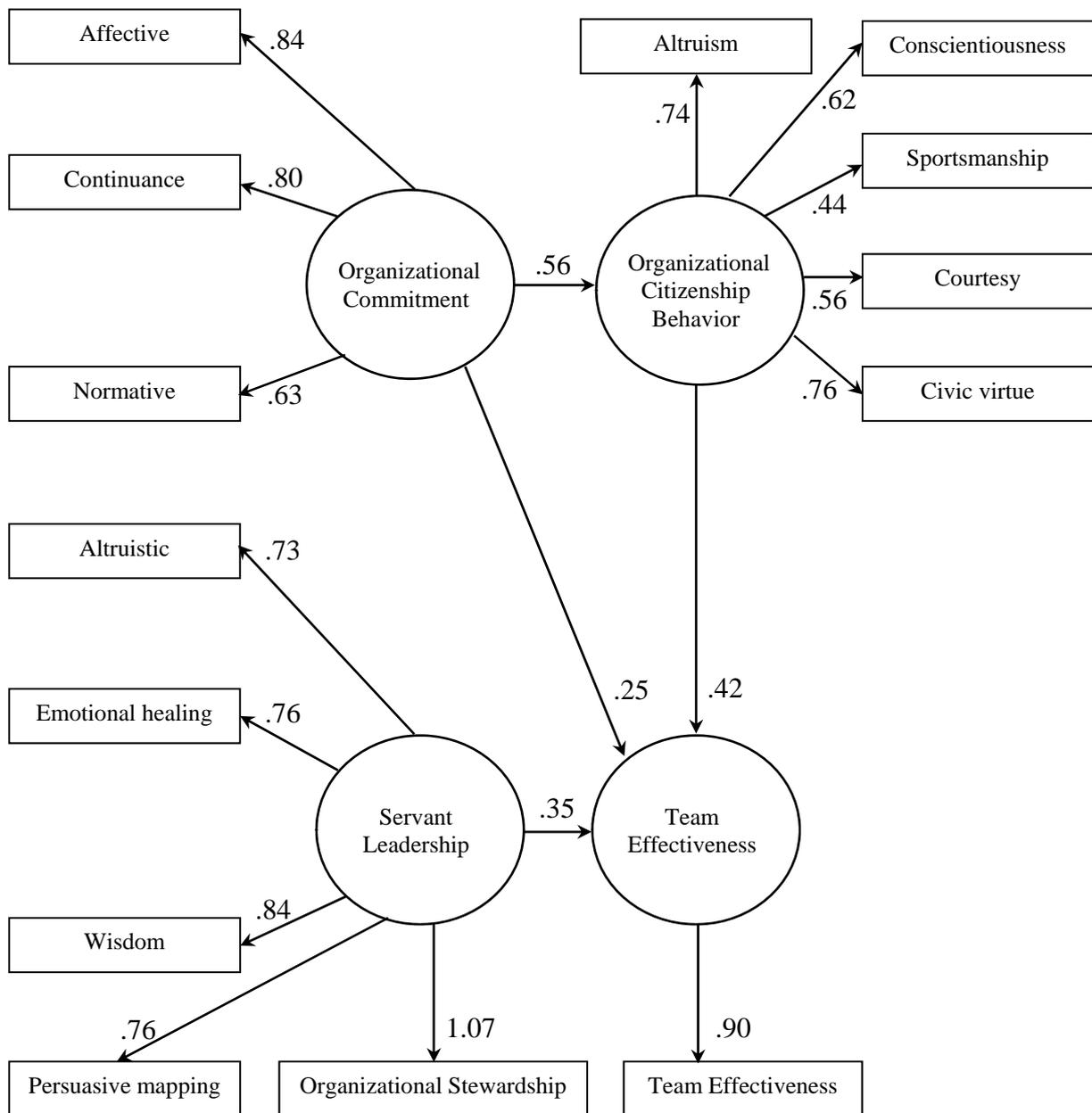


Figure 2. The hypothesized model of antecedents and consequences of OCB in Thai, Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia NGOs Staffs.

As the mediator in the model, organizational citizenship behavior received significant effects from organizational commitment (standardized effect=.56). Organizational commitment also had significant indirect effect on team effectiveness (standardized effects=.23). All of these results indicated that organizational citizenship behavior played as mediator role between organizational commitment and team effectiveness on NGOs staffs.

## Discussion

The causal relationships among the variables of antecedents and consequences of organizational citizenship behavior in Thai, Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia NGOs staffs were supported by the empirical data. The findings of the current study reveal that team effectiveness was found to be directly affected by organizational commitment and indirectly affected through organizational citizenship behavior. The finding is in accordance with the previous researches on other sample groups (Aubé & Rousseau, 2005; Freund & Drach-Zahavy, 2007; Mahembe & Engelbrecht, 2013). The result of the study also exhibits effectiveness of the collaboration and team working of NGOs staffs is indirectly influenced by their organizational commitment with organizational citizenship behavior acting as the mediator. As a result, the implementation of policies in the organizational level that encourages employees' organizational commitment is crucial to NGOs' operation. This is because employees' commitment, dedication and expression of positive organizational citizenship behavior are often related. Such a connection plays an important part in the progress and effectiveness of the organization's operations in developmental work. Low commitment to the organization can potentially cause several significant impacts on employees' work behaviors such as the unwillingness to sacrifice, participate or contribute to the common interest or the avoidance of duty. These behaviors can, in the long run, have negative impact on the effectiveness of organization's operations.

The result of the analysis indicates that organizational commitment directly effects team effectiveness, which is in accordance with previous studies (Hammond, 2008; Salas, Goodwin, & Burke, 2008). It also suggests that the higher NGOs staffs develop the level of organizational commitment, the greater team effectiveness is enhanced. From this finding, it can be suggested that organizational commitment is an indispensable factor in efficient team working. As the key psychological factor among employees, organizational commitment is closely related to each individual's innate personality as well as team effectiveness, particularly the sense of organizational identification. If this were the case, the issue every NGO has to face is what can be done to facilitate and encourage such commitment among their employees. Ideally, the commitment should take place in both individual and team level, while the organization is still able to maintain the objective in reinforcing the effectiveness of its operation.

The study also reveals that servant leadership does not have positive effect on organizational citizenship behavior of NGO staffs. This finding is, however, not in accordance with the past researches (Davoudi, 2012; LePine, Erez, & Johnson, 2002; Schelecker & Engelbrecht, 2006). The dissimilarity illustrates that workplace environment may not be the only circumstantial factor with significant impact on the development of desirable organizational behavior of NGOs staffs. This is may be due to the short-term employment period, which is determined by the project's longevity and received grant support. As a result, it is common for NGOs staffs to transfer themselves to other organizations. Nevertheless, the format or approach of internal organizational administration does not have as much significant impact on employees' behavior as their innate psychological characteristics and preparedness to perform duties in social service work.

The path analysis of this research also finds that servant leadership has positive effect on team effectiveness, which is consistent with the previous studies (Hu & Liden, 2011; Irving & Longbotham, 2007; Transcitti, 2010). It suggests that, in the case of NGOs staffs,

the executives' expression of encouragement and supportiveness as well as equal acknowledgement in every employee's value and significance results in the employees' satisfaction and willingness to work and help the organization succeed its objective. It is also a validation of team effectiveness, which ultimately brings about the achievement in the organization's objectives and working plan. Robbins (2005) proposes that leadership is a prominent factor that influences team effectiveness with the key elements being the leader's expectation and sensibility. If a leader expects positive outcome from the team, the end result may be better than those executed singlehandedly by the leader him/herself. In addition, it is found that the team led by the leader with positive emotional expression tends to have better performance than the team whose leader expresses his/her emotions negatively.

The findings, which exhibit that organizational citizenship behavior has direct effect on team effectiveness, are in the same results as the previous studies (Karambayya, 1990; Mahembe & Engelbrecht, 2014; Ren-Tao & Heung-Gil, 2009). It is possible to conclude that effective team performance can be delivered once the team members express good membership behavior willingly and voluntarily. The concept proposed by Podsakoff and MacKenzie (1997) suggests that by encouraging employees to develop good membership behavior, the effectiveness of their performance can be enhanced. Different indicators can be considered to support this claim, for instance, the higher productivity rate of both employees and executives, efficient use of human resource, as well as the flexibility of the organization's operations. Consequentially, the facilitation of teamwork between team members within a non-governmental organization, regardless of each person's area or scope of responsibility, can result in the efficiency of the organization's overall performance and operation.

### **Suggestions**

The study explored the relationships between organizational commitment, servant leadership, organizational citizenship behavior and team effectiveness. This was achieved through the testing of a structural model that explains the structural relationships hypothesized to exist amongst the constructs. These findings can be applied and used as the foundation of human resource management in developmental agencies such as non-governmental organizations. Special acknowledgement should be put on the importance of the adaptation of servant leadership concept, which is one of the factors that can ultimately lead to the effectiveness of NGOs workers' performance. This is because, in most cases, the operation of non-profit organizations highlights the importance of stakeholders on the basis of a community. These organizations concern themselves with the objective to attentively administer and encourage the participation of every involved party in social development. Servant leadership, therefore, is a characteristic of executive personnel whose presence and role influences the effectiveness of employees' performance. In addition, the suggestion also encompasses an approach in the development of organizational psychological variation, which involves the improvement of employment practice. The improvement aims to create and develop organizational commitment, as personnel are encouraged to be confident and acceptant of objectives that are parts of the characteristic of developmental social work. The approach can be carried out in the form of an intervention activity through empowerment and developmental process carried out according to relevant concepts and theories.

In general, the operators of non-governmental organizations are required to interact with people from different backgrounds. They also encounter a broad range of situations that

come with the job, particularly the circumstance that involves stakeholders or target group of the development. With the existing and emerging problems in the society, it is common for these NGOs workers to be confronted by stress and pressure whether from their colleagues or outside parties. This suggestion can be useful for the conduct of prospective research. However, other psychological characteristics of NGOs workers must be put into consideration in order to emphasize their ability to comprehend emotions and emotional expressions, both of themselves and the people they come into contact with.

The body of knowledge of the causal factor and its influences on the effectiveness of performance of NGO workers in four member countries of ASEAN provides helpful findings. These findings consequentially render useful suggestions in policy formation for the development of operation and performance of agencies within the social sector. The issue is perceived and the suggestions are made for the implementation in the regional scale. The personnel's preparedness in social development administration for ASEAN Community will benefit the involved agencies and the governmental sector. It will also allow the administration to take place within the organizational cultural dimension, which can be applied under the cross-cultural management through future operational supports and administrative policies.

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