

**ปัจจัยเชิงเหตุของพฤติกรรมการสนับสนุนทางสังคมของหัวหน้าไทย  
ตามรูปแบบปฏิสัมพันธ์นิยม**  
***Antecedents of Social Support Behavior in Thai Supervisors:  
An Interactionism Approach***\*

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**บทคัดย่อ**

การวิจัยนี้ได้ศึกษาปัจจัยเชิงเหตุทั้งด้านจิตลักษณะและสถานการณ์ของพฤติกรรมการสนับสนุนทางสังคมของหัวหน้า โดยมีพื้นฐานจากทฤษฎีปฏิสัมพันธ์นิยม ซึ่งได้เสนอไว้ว่า พฤติกรรมของบุคคลเกิดจากสาเหตุที่สำคัญหลายด้าน กลุ่มตัวอย่าง คือ หัวหน้าสถานีนายกมัณฑล จำนวน 509 ผลจากการวิจัยนี้สนับสนุนทฤษฎีปฏิสัมพันธ์นิยม และยังพบผลเพิ่มเติมอีกว่า สาเหตุที่สำคัญที่สุดด้านจิตลักษณะของพฤติกรรมนี้ คือ แรงจูงใจใฝ่สัมฤทธิ์ ส่วนสาเหตุที่สำคัญที่สุดด้านสถานการณ์ คือ ความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างหัวหน้ากับลูกน้อง และสาเหตุที่สำคัญที่สุดด้านจิตลักษณะตามสถานการณ์ คือ ทักษะคนที่ติดต่อพฤติกรรมการสนับสนุนทางสังคม นอกจากนี้ยังพบอีกว่าหัวหน้าช่วยให้การสนับสนุนทางด้านอารมณ์แก่ลูกน้องเพื่อเป็นการ "กระตุ้น" ผลการปฏิบัติงานให้เพิ่มขึ้น แต่หัวหน้าหญิงให้เพื่อเป็น "อนุรักษ" ผลการปฏิบัติงานที่ดีของลูกน้อง ผลการวิจัยนี้ได้ชี้ว่าการประยุกต์และการวิจัยในอนาคต

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A supervisor is one of the most important persons in a subordinate's work environment. He or she is not only motivating subordinates to work, but also controlling and managing immediate resources to support them in accomplishing the tasks.

In the last two decades, research studies have revealed the importance of a phenomenon, called "social support" in workplace. These studies examined many actors of social support, especially from the supervisor. Most studies have focused on its consequences on subordinates, such as, job satisfaction and job stress (Sorod & Wongwattanamongkol, 1996; Mayfield, Mayfield, & Kopf, 1998), commitment to work (Littrell, Billingsley, & Cross, 1994; Thacker, Fields, & Bracley, 1990), burnout (Etzion & Westman, 1994) and occupational injury (Iverson & Erwin, 1997; Sherry, 1991).

Many studies, especially in Thailand, also revealed that social support at work from the supervisor was positively related to the subordinate's performance in the forms of self-report (Tamavong, 2001; Pinpradit, 2002), and supervisory rating (Na Wajun, 1993; Bhanthumnavin, 2003). This result was also consistent with recent studies in other countries (Ballentine & Nunns, 1998). Thus, this event calls for studies of its antecedents, and may have some common components.

### ***Definition of Supervisory Social Support***

Recently, Duchduen Bhanthumnavin (2000) reorganized and proposed a more precised definition of supervisory social support behavior (SSSB) as an interpersonal behavior. between the supervisor and the subordinate where the supervisor provides the subordinate one or more types of the three supports for the purpose of creating, improving, and/or maintaining work motivation, performance, and/or effectiveness of the recipient

person or the actor in question. The Interactionism Model was used as a guideline for grouping the antecedents of the SSSB, as well as for setting the hypotheses in this study.

### ***Situational Variables and Supportive Behaviors***

Many scholars and researchers agree that human behaviors are influenced by situational factors, such organizational support, supervisor-member relation, and subordinate performance. Perceived organizational support (POS), such as fairness of general treatment by the organization, was found to be related to workers' prosocial behavior (Lee, 1995; Moorman, 1991), and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) (Lynch, Eisenberger, & Armeli, 1999).

Relationship between the supervisor and the member may also influence supervisory supportive behaviors. For example, Wayne, Shore, and Liden (1997) employed 252 pairs of leader-member in a large corporation in the United States in a study of perceived organizational support and leader-member exchange. The researchers found significantly positive correlation between leader-member exchange and members' prosocial behavior in terms of OCB.

A recent study on SSSB and performance (Bhantumnavin, 2001) employed 355 pairs of supervisor-subordinate in health centers. The researcher found that subordinates reporting of higher supervisory social support in three dimensions: emotional, information, and material, were rated by their supervisor as more effective than their counterparts. Other studies (Ballentine and Nunns, 1998; Mayfield, et al., 1998) also found similar results. These studies, however, were correlational-comparative studies which assessed SSSB and member's performance at the same time. Thus, the relationship between these two variables could be seen

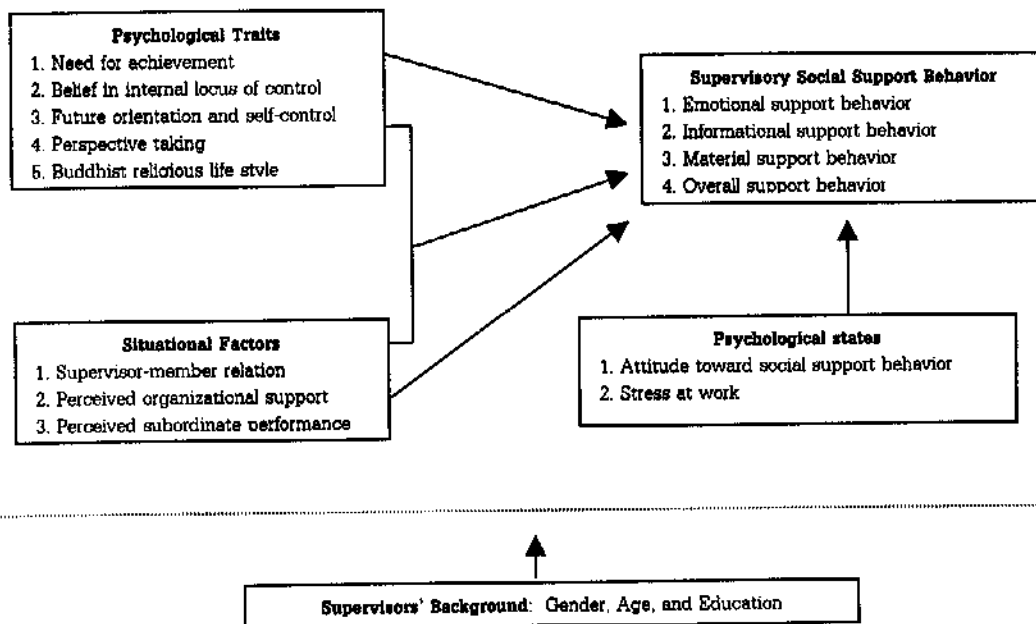
Future orientation and self- control (FOSC) is defined as a person's ability to anticipate future events/ goals, to accept their importance, and to regulate himself or herself to achieve the set goal (Bhantumnavin, Chuachom, and Loyd, 1986). The direct relationship between FOSC and helping behavior has not yet been fully investigated. Nevertheless, FOSC was positively related to many desirable behaviors, such as, work behavior of new government officials in Thailand (Billamart and colleagues, 1986; Sakmanee, 1989).

Belief in internal locus of control of reinforcement is another factor relating to supportive behaviors. Internal persons believe that the consequences or reinforcement they receive are the results of their own efforts, behaviors, or characteristics, while external persons believed that the consequences or reinforcement are from outside, such as luck, fate, or under other's control (Rotter, 1966). Many researchers (Anderson & Schneier, 1978; Mitchell, Smyser, & Weed, 1975) found that internal leaders perceived as task-oriented gave more support, formed coalition, and perceived reward, respect, and expertise as an approach to influence subordinates. On the contrary, external leaders perceived as social/ emotional leaders showed more consideration, emotion, and friendly.

Supportive behaviors also relate to religious orientation. It has been suggested that intrinsic religiousness is more positively related to prosocial attitudes than is extrinsic religiousness (Batson & Ventris, 1982). Hunsberger and Platonow (1986) studied 105 students in summer classes and 295 students in fall classes. The researchers found that intrinsic religious students reported more volunteering behaviors than extrinsic religious students. Other studies (Hansen, Vandenberg, and Patterson, 1995) also found similar result.

### Objectives of the Study

This study employed interactionism model as a conceptual framework (Magnusson & Endler, 1977). Figure 1 displays the relationship among the variables of this study.



**Figure 1.** Relationships among variables in this study according to Interactionism Model.

The purpose of this study is to find psychological traits and states, as well as situational antecedents that can predict SSSB. The results from this study can be used to determine training needs for supervisors, as well as to make policy and practice recommendations. Two hypotheses are made from the purpose of this study.

males (41.7%) and 293 females (57.6%) with four unidentified. Descriptive data and correlations among measures are displayed in Table 1 in Appendix.

### Measures

All measures are in the forms of summated ratings scale written in Thai language. Each item in the questionnaires was accompanied by 6-point Likert Scale ranging from "very true" to "not at all true". The details of measures are as follows.

A group of 5 psychological traits consisted (1) *Social perspective taking* (SPT) assessed the ability to perceive, understand and predict of other's feeling, motives, and behaviors (Boonaree, 2002), (2) *Belief in internal locus of control* (Icon) measured the degree of respondent's belief about the predictability and controllability of oneself concerning different consequences, (3) *Need for achievement* (nAch) is one's degree of commitment for solving many problems with well planned strategies and diligent work performance, (4) *Future orientation with self control* (FOSC) focused on respondent's expectation of future outcomes and events and persistent actions for achieving the final goal, and (5) *Buddhist life style* (BLS) assessed the degree to which Buddhist values and virtues were observed in everyday life activities (Bhathumnavin, Vanintananda, et al., 1998). Ten to 15 items per trait were used with the Alpha coefficient ranged from .67 to .86.

A group of two psychological states consisted of (1) *Stress at work* assessing stress at work from 20 items, each by two dimensions (Sorod, 2002). The first dimension measuring stress level contains 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "very high" to "very low". The second dimension measures how often this situation happens with 3-point Likert

of 15 items for the OSB. Alpha coefficients of these four measures ranged from .67 to .86.

## **Results**

All hypotheses were tested by Multiple Regression Analysis (enter and stepwise). Data were analyzed in total sample and in other 6 subgroups categorized by gender, age, and educational level. Hypothesis 1 states that a group of five psychological traits together with three situational factors, with the total of predictors can account for more variation of ESB, ISB, MSB, and OSB than does either the group of five psychological traits or the group of three situation factors alone for at least 5%. According to Table 2 to 4, the supportive results were found in total sample with the percentage difference of 8.5 for ESB, 8.7% for ISB, 13.4% for MSB, and 12.2% for OSB. In subgroups, the supportive result was found in five out of six subgroups with the highlight results in young supervisors with the range of percentage difference between 6.5% to 9.4% for ESB, 6.5% to 10.3% for MSB, and 9.6% to 11.7% for OSB. For ISB, the supportive result was found in four out of six with the range of percentage difference between 5.9% to 9.4%.

Hypothesis 2 states that all ten predictors can account for more variation of ESB, ISB, MSB, and OSB than does a group of eight predictors consisted of five psychological traits and three situation factors for at least 5%. According to Table 2 to 4, the supportive results were found in total sample with the percentage difference of 7.7 for ESB, 8.6% for ISB, 9.4% for MSB, and 10.6% for OSB. In subgroups, the supportive result was found in all subgroups with the range of percentage difference between 7.2% to 10.3% for ISB, 6.6% to 14.5% for MSB. For ES, and 7.3% to 14.5% for OSB. For ESM, the supportive result was found in four out of

relationship between PSP and ESB. The negative relationship was found in male supervisors, but the reverse relationship was found in females. These results suggest that male supervisors provided emotional support to subordinates when the subordinates performed poorly. This support can be seen as "motivator". But female supervisors gave emotional support to subordinates when they had high performance. This support can be seen as "reinforcer". The similar results as found in females for EBS were also found for ESB, MSB and OSB in highly educated supervisors.

Another important predictor was BLS, especially for young supervisor. It was found that the more BLS the more providing SSSB and its dimensions. Variables related to Buddhism (e.g., Buddhist belief and practice) were also found as the important predictor of desirable behaviors of relatively young participants in other Thai studies of working behaviors of, for example, nurses (Phosrithong, 1993).

### ***Suggestions for practice and future study***

In order to improve performance of subordinate and group, many trainings should be provided to supervisors. One of the training for supervisor should include social support knowledge and skills training. The results from this study further gave suggestion that besides the trainings above, other important psychological characteristics which were found to be related to social support behavior should also be heightened along. This study suggested that supervisors should receive at least two psychological trainings: training to increase need for achievement and training to increase and/or to preserve favorable attitude toward social support behavior. Moreover, the organization as well as all members in the group should be working together to improve



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