



# The Moderating Effect of Job-Embeddedness on the Relationships between Organizational Socialization and Job Performance and between Organizational Socialization and Employee Well-Being

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## Abstract

Organizational socialization and job-embeddedness are among the tools and interventions that have long been used by practitioners to help newcomers better adjust to corporate culture and to increase employees' retention. This study examines the relationships between organizational socialization and the employee's performance and between organizational socialization and the well-being of salespersons Thailand. Specifically, it aims to explore the moderating effect of job-embeddedness on those relationships. Understanding the relationships and the moderating effect of the variables as mentioned above can provide corporates with deeper insights into how to enhance employees' productivity and capability. Data were collected from 422 salespersons of consumer products, cosmetics, consumer real estate, and whole sale pharmaceutical companies in Thailand. The data analyses showed statistically significant and positive relationships between organizational socialization and employee's performance and between organizational socialization and the employee's well-being. The analysis also indicated the moderating effect of job-embeddedness on the relationship between organizational socialization and the employee's performance, but not on the relationship between organizational socialization and well-being. Implications and suggestions for future research are discussed.

**Keywords:** Job Embeddedness, Organizational Socialization, Role-Based Performance, Well-Being, Thai Sales Personnel

## Introduction

For organizations that rely heavily on sales personnel, the performance and well-being of these employees are vital to the success and growth of companies. Individuals with high performance indicators usually have better career advancement and a higher level of self-motivation than others (Welbourne, Johnson, & Erez, 1998). Evidence shows that employees with high work performance tend to work beyond their stated job description (Lawler III, 1986) and have better career paths than the low-performing ones (Van Scotter, Motowidlo, & Cross, 2000). Therefore, it is reasonable for organizations to create a working environment that fosters and encourages high-performing employees to stay on the job, thrive, and learn. Understanding the related theories, factors, and applications of this research can help human resource practitioners improve their organization's performance. Despite many studies on the relationships among organizational socialization, well-being, and employee performance, there has been no direct study that includes the effect of job embeddedness on those relationships in relation to sales personnel in Thailand. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationships among the organizational socialization, job embeddedness, employee's performance, and employee's well-being of sales personnel in Thailand. Specifically, this study aims to explore the moderating effect of job embeddedness on the relationships between organizational socialization and the employee's performance, between organizational socialization and workers' well-being using a quantitative research framework.



## Literature Review

### Organizational Socialization and Employee Performance

Organizations employ various programs, such as total quality management, employee involvement, job enrichment, skill-based pay, autonomous work teams, and gain sharing incentives, to increase their competitive advantage in today's increasing global economy. Although these interventions may use diverse methods, the purpose is to encourage employees to change their behaviors and to take on greater responsibility to accomplish firms' targets (Lawler III, 1986). One such tool is organizational socialization, which has a significant impact on newcomers' learning and outcomes (Sorod, 1991). The positive impact of organization socialization on the employee's job performance based on task performance, job dedication, and interpersonal facilitation has previously been studied (Wang, Lin, & Yang, 2011). Not only does the organizational socialization affect newcomers at the early stage of employment, it also carries on throughout their career paths and, in fact, extends far beyond their current employment. Therefore, it is reasonable to hypothesize that organizational socialization will encourage employees through job roles, organization roles, career roles, and team roles.

**Hypothesis 1:** Organizational socialization has a positive relationship with employee performance.

### Organizational Socialization and the Employee's Well-Being

Many research studies have found evidence of the direct influence of organization socialization on many variables, both at individual and group levels (Ge, Su, & Zhou, 2010). At the individual levels, much of the empirical evidence suggests that organizational socialization generally has a positive effect on employees' job satisfaction, commitment, and their job turnover (Ostroff and Kozlowski, 1992) as well as their organizational citizenship behavior (Ahmadi, Salavati, Sheikhesmaeili, & Mirzaei, 2011). Sachita and Ruchi (2015) reported a positive relationship between organizational socialization and the employee's happiness in a restorative environment. In addition, Saks and Gruman (2011) conceptualized a framework in which the socialization process, including for example orientation training, social support, mentoring, and feedback, could promote employees' psychological capital (self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience), which in turn has a positive impact on socialization outcomes such as job satisfaction, commitment, turnover, and job performance. These research studies suggest the positive influence of organizational socialization on several elements of the workers' well-being. Career well-being is the result of job satisfaction and commitment. Job performance also can lead to financial well-being. Social and community well-being is also the result of good organizational citizenship behavior. Therefore, organizational socialization is likely to have positive relationship with employees' well-being.

**Hypothesis 2:** Organizational socialization has a positive relationship with the employee's well-being.

### The Moderating Effect of Job Embeddedness

Many studies have found that job embeddedness has a significant impact on various aspects of individuals (Ng & Feldman, 2010), including organizational citizenship behavior (Wijayanto & Kismono, 2004) and voluntary job turnover (Felps, Mitchell, Hekman, Lee, Holtom, & Harman, 2009). In fact, the job embeddedness model has been shown to be a better predictor of employee voluntary turnover than job satisfaction, organizational commitment, perceived job alternatives, or job searching (Crossley, Bennett, Jex, & Burnfield, 2007). Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablinski, & Erez (2001) found that job embeddedness has a positive impact on corporate performance because embedded employees, when rewarded, tend to become high performers. Subsequent work by Lee, Mitchell, Sablinski, Burton, & Holtom (2004) revealed that on-the-job embeddedness had a greater effect



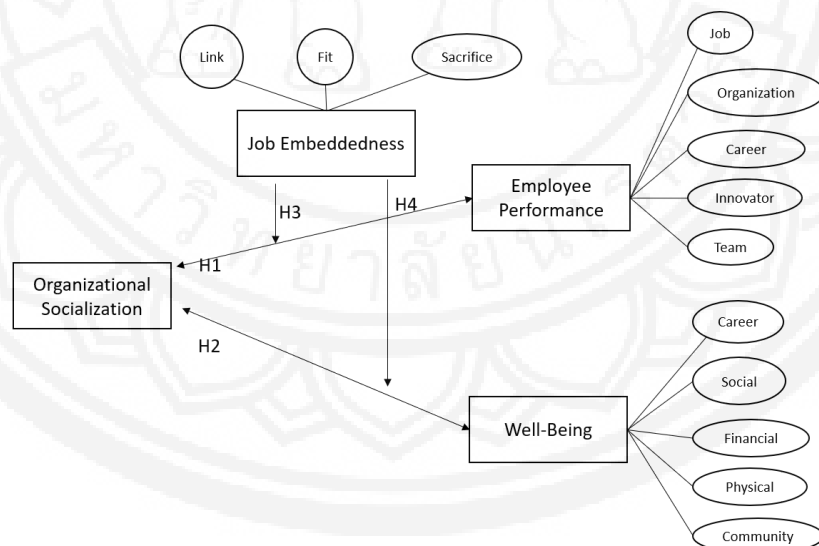
on job performance than off-the-job embeddedness. Further, Özçelik and Cenkci (2014) also found a moderating influence of job embeddedness on the relationship between paternalistic leadership and performance. Moreover, while the relationship between performance and turnover has been found to be significantly negative (Park & Shaw, 2013), it was also found that job embeddedness moderates the effect of performance on job turnover as well (Lee et al., 2004). No direct link among organizational socialization, job embeddedness, and employee performance has ever been reported, however the present study is expected to demonstrate the moderating effect of job embeddedness on organizational socialization and employee performance.

**Hypothesis 3:** Job embeddedness has a moderating effect on the relationship between organizational socialization and employee performance.

Meanwhile, Allen (2006) has shown that that organizational embeddedness mediates the relationship between socialization tactics and employee turnover, which in turn is influenced by employees' well-being (Wright & Bonett, 2007). Furthermore, Bambacas (2011) found that the organizational fit and community fit dimensions of job, two of the dimensions of embeddedness, actually "[amplify] career and life satisfaction". Since career and life satisfaction are both important constructs of well-being, the effect of job embeddedness on well-being should be further explored in order to determine whether job embeddedness possesses an amplification influence as well. As organizational socialization is hypothesized to have a positive relationship with well-being in Hypothesis 2, it is therefore interesting to evaluate the effect of job embeddedness on the relationship between these two variables among sales personnel in Thailand.

**Hypothesis 4:** Job embeddedness has a moderating effect on the relationship between organizational socialization and the employee's well-being.

All four hypotheses are depicted in Figure 1 as the research framework of this study. The bidirectional arrows of H1 and H2 in the framework represent the correlation of the related variables.



**Figure 1** Research Framework Model

## Methods

The primary goal of this study was to examine the relationships among organizational socialization, employee performance, the employee's well-being, and job-embeddedness using quantitative analysis. The participants of

this research were sales force employees or personnel that had roles in generating revenue for companies. With physical headquarters and main operations based in Thailand, these companies were privately-owned firms with more than 100 employees. Their industry sectors were consumer products, cosmetics, consumer real estate, and whole sale pharmaceutical companies. These companies were heavily dependent on sales force personnel to drive the overall growth of the firm. All of these companies had some form of organization socialization programs, both formal and informal, to help new employees adjust to their new work environment.

### Measurements

In order to measure performance, the role-based performance scale (RBPS) published by Welbourne et al. (1998) was used because it captures five perspectives related to job function namely job role, career, role, organization role, innovator role, and team role. The questionnaire consisted of 20 five-leveled Likert scale items with an alpha value of 0.942. Well-being was measured using a 35-item five-level Likert scale by Rath and Harter (2010), Jariyapanya (2013), and Amornpipat (2016), whose study was previously conducted in Thailand. The alpha for this questionnaire was 0.914. For organizational socialization, measurements were based on Mongkhondeeklakul (2011). Divided into three parts, beginning, middle, and the present length of employment, the questionnaire was a 28-item 5-level Likert scale with an alpha value of 0.937. The Cronbach's alpha value for the questionnaire was 0.939. The measurement of the job embeddedness scale used in this study was based on that developed by Mitchell et al. (2001). The questionnaire was a 23-item measurement on 5-point scale with an alpha value of 0.913.

### Data Collection

The self-administered online and hard copies questionnaire was then sent to all target participants, reaching approximately 1,050 employees, the population size for this study. Of all the recipients of the online questionnaire links and hardcopies, 521 sample responses were collected, out of which 422 were fully completed, representing 40.2% of the studied population. The demographic characteristics of this participant group are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1** Demographic Characteristics of the Samples

Demographic Information		Count	Percentage
Gender	Male	134	31.75%
	Female	288	68.25%
Age	< 20–29	129	30.57%
	30–39 years	215	50.95%
	> 40 years	78	18.48%
Educational Level	High school or less	126	29.86%
	Bachelor's degree	242	57.34%
	Master's or more	54	12.80%
Marital Status	Single / Separated	293	69.43%
	Married	129	30.57%
Years of Employment	< 5 years	243	57.58%
	6–10 years	101	23.94%
	> 10 years	78	18.48%
<b>Total</b>		<b>422</b>	<b>100%</b>



## Data Analysis

Questionnaires were tested to ensure high reliabilities ( $\alpha > .77$ ). To test Hypothesis 1 and 2, bivariate correlation matrices were performed to test the hypotheses whether there was significant correlation between the two variables with the confidence level of 95%. If p-value of the regression was less than 0.05, the hypothesis was supported. For Hypothesis 3 and 4, the normalized scores of all variables were used to conduct two-stepped linear regressions. The first step was the normal linear regression with no interaction effect from job-embeddedness. Then, in the second step, the interaction effect between organizational socialization and job embeddedness, or the product of the normalized scores of the two variables, was introduced into the linear regression as a new independent variable. Then, the values of r-squared of these two steps were compared for significant change between the first and second step with 95% confidence level. If there was significant change in the value of r-squared, job-embeddedness would then be confirmed to have moderating effect on the relationships.

## Results

### Relationship between Organizational Socialization and Role-Based Performance

The data analyses indicated significant positive correlations between each pair of the variables with a 2-tailed significance level as shown in Table 2. The relationship was strongest for organizational socialization in the present and career role-based performance ( $r = 0.755$ ), suggesting that organizational socialization in the present has the greatest correlation on the employee's career. However, innovation role-based performance exhibited the weakest relationship with organizational socialization in the beginning of the career ( $r = 0.413$ ). Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was fully supported.

**Table 2** Correlation between Organizational Socialization and Role-Based Performance

	Mean	S.D.	RBJ	RBO	RBC	RBI	RBT	OSB	OSM	OSP	RB	OSO
<b>RBJ</b>	19.45	2.64	(.878)									
<b>RBO</b>	19.67	2.69	.745**	(.830)								
<b>RBC</b>	19.00	3.14	.621**	.675**	(.876)							
<b>RBI</b>	19.42	2.87	.676**	.715**	.698**	(.885)						
<b>RBT</b>	14.76	2.15	.564**	.656**	.624**	.663**	(.783)					
<b>OSB</b>	29.73	4.24	.418**	.444**	.533**	.413**	.461**	(.794)				
<b>OSM</b>	27.71	4.79	.418**	.449**	.615**	.451**	.472**	.757**	(.817)			
<b>OSP</b>	72.59	13.55	.517**	.581**	.755**	.569**	.530**	.550**	.693**	(.924)		
<b>RB</b>	92.31	11.58	.843**	.886**	.860**	.882**	.802**	.532**	.567**	.698**	(.942)	
<b>OSO</b>	130.04	20.20	.533**	.590**	.764**	.575**	.564**	.758**	.860**	.950**	.714**	(.939)

\*\* Correlation was significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Numbers in parentheses in diagonal cells show the Cronbach's alpha value of the questionnaires

RBJ = Job Role-Based Performance

OSB = Organizational Socialization in Beginning

RBO = Organization Role-Based Performance

OSM = Organizational Socialization in Middle Term

RBC = Career Role-Based Performance

OSP = Organizational Socialization in Present

RBI = Innovation Role-Based Performance

OSO = Total Organizational Socialization

RBT = Team Role-Based Performance RB = Total Role-Based Performance



### Relationship between Organizational Socialization and the Employee's Well-Being

The data analyses indicated significant positive correlations among all stages and all dimensions of the employee's well-being at a significant level, as shown in Table 3. The data revealed that organizational socialization in the present exhibited the strongest relationship with career well-being with the correlation value of 0.606. Meanwhile, organizational socialization in the beginning had weak relationships with both financial well-being and physical well-being with the correlation values of 0.22 and 0.279 respectively. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was fully supported.

**Table 3** Correlation between Organizational Socialization and Well-Being

	Mean	S.D.	WBCr	WBS	WBF	WBP	WBCm	OSB	OSM	OSP	WB	OSO
<b>WBCr</b>	35.06	3.96	(.751)									
<b>WBS</b>	34.79	4.55	.464**	(.809)								
<b>WBF</b>	29.17	6.59	.352**	.400**	(.851)							
<b>WBP</b>	25.71	4.84	.442**	.450**	.453**	(.753)						
<b>WBCm</b>	31.41	5.60	.395**	.537**	.494**	.534**	(.818)					
<b>OSB</b>	29.73	4.24	.474**	.381**	.220**	.279**	.372**	(.794)				
<b>OSM</b>	27.71	4.79	.471**	.388**	.296**	.332**	.454**	.757**	(.817)			
<b>OSP</b>	72.59	13.55	.606**	.328**	.356**	.429**	.503**	.550**	.693**	(.924)		
<b>WB</b>	156.14	19.51	.660**	.736**	.775**	.757**	.801**	.440**	.504**	.578**	(.913)	
<b>OSO</b>	130.04	20.20	.618**	.392**	.356**	.425**	.523**	.758**	.860**	.950**	.599**	(.939)

\*\* Correlation was significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Numbers in parentheses in diagonal cells show the Cronbach's alpha value of the questionnaires

WBCr = Career Well-Being

OSB = Organizational Socialization in Beginning

WBS = Social Well-Being

OSM = Organizational Socialization in Middle Term

WBF = Financial Well-Being

OSP = Organizational Socialization in Present

WBP = Physical Well-Being

OSO = Total Organizational Socialization

WBCm = Community Well-Being WB = Total Well-Being

### Moderating Effect of Job-Embeddedness on the Relationship between Organizational Socialization and Employee Performance

In order to test the moderating effect of job-embeddedness on the relationship between organizational socialization and employee performance, two-stepped linear regression was conducted. The first step was to regress the standardized score of organizational socialization and job-embeddedness as independent variables on the standardized score of role-based performance. Then, the second step was to add the product of the standardized score of organizational socialization and job-embeddedness as the third independent variable in order to test for any interaction effect between the two independent variables. The calculation shows that the change in r-squared after adding the product of organizational socialization and job-embeddedness was 0.08 with a p-value of 0.004. The ANOVA table also shows the standardized coefficient of the moderation to be statistically significant with the coefficient value of 0.09. The results of the regression are illustrated in Table 4. In other words, job-embeddedness was seen to have a significant moderating effect on the relationship between organizational socialization and employee performance. Figure 2 shows the two-way interaction plot of this moderating effect. It is evident that at a high level of job-embeddedness, the slope of the relationship between organizational socialization and employee performance becomes higher, thus confirming the moderating effect.

**Table 4** Two-Stepped Linear Regression of Organizational Socialization and Job-Embeddedness on Role-Based Performance

Model Summary									
Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	0.776 <sup>a</sup>	0.602	0.600	.63223093	.602	317.124	2	419	.000
2	0.781 <sup>b</sup>	0.610	0.607	.62677685	.008	8.324	1	418	.004

a: Predictors: (Constant), zJE, zOSO

b: Predictors: (Constant), zJE, zOSO, zOSOxzJE

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	253.519	2	126.760	317.124	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	167.481	419	.400		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>421.000</b>	<b>421</b>			
2	Regression	256.789	3	85.596	217.886	.000 <sup>c</sup>
	Residual	164.211	418	.393		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>421.000</b>	<b>421</b>			

a: Dependent Variable: zRB

b: Predictors: (Constant), zJE, zOSO

c: Predictors: (Constant), zJE, zOSO, zOSOxzJE

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
1	(Constant)	4.574E-15	.031		.000	1.000
	zOSO	.314	.051	.314	6.162	.000
	zJE	.502	.051	.502	9.854	.000
2	(Constant)	-.053	.036		-1.478	.140
	zOSO	.323	.051	.323	6.388	.000
	zJE	.509	.051	.509	10.067	.000
	zOSOxzJE	.066	.023	.090	2.885	.004

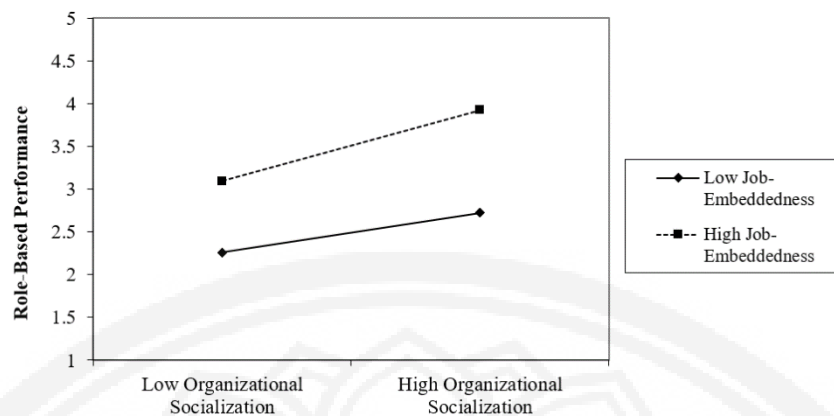
a: Dependent Variable: zRB

zJE = Standardized Job-Embeddedness

zOSO = Standardized Organizational Socialization

zRB = Standardized Role-Based Performance

zOSOSxzJE = Product of zOSO and zJE



**Figure 2** Two-Way Interaction Plot of Moderating Effect of Job Embeddedness on the Relationship of Organizational Socialization and Role-Based Performance

### **Moderating Effect of Job-Embeddedness on the Relationship between Organizational Socialization and Well-Being**

Similarly, two-stepped linear regression using SPSS was conducted. The first step was to regress the standardized score of organizational socialization and job-embeddedness as the independent variables on the standardized score of well-being. Then, the second step was to add the product of the standardized score for organizational socialization and job-embeddedness as the third independent variable in order to test the interaction effect between the two. The analysis showed that even though job-embeddedness had a positive relationship with well-being in the first step regression, the product value of organizational socialization and job-embeddedness was not significant in the second step. When introducing the interaction effect in the second step, even though there was a change in the r-squared of 0.03 from the first step, the change was not significant, with a p-value of 0.135.

Table 5 shows the results of the regression. Therefore, there was no significant moderating effect of job-embeddedness on the relationship between organizational socialization and well-being.

**Table 5** Two-Stepped Linear Regression of Organizational Socialization and Job-Embeddedness on Well-Being

Model Summary									
Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	0.636 <sup>a</sup>	0.405	0.402	.77336702	.405	142.450	2	419	.000
2	0.639 <sup>b</sup>	0.408	0.404	.77222426	.003	2.241	1	418	.135

a: Predictors: (Constant), zJE, zOSO

b: Predictors: (Constant), zJE, zOSO, zOSoxzJE

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	170.398	2	85.199	142.450	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	250.602	419	.598		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>421.000</b>	<b>421</b>			
2	Regression	171.734	3	57.245	95.995	.000 <sup>c</sup>
	Residual	249.266	418	.596		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>421.000</b>	<b>421</b>			

a: Dependent Variable: zWB

b: Predictors: (Constant), zJE, zOSO

c: Predictors: (Constant), zJE, zOSO, zOSoxzJE

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1.	(Constant)	5.819E-15	.033		.000	1.000
	zOSO	.506	.046	.506	11.013	.000
	zJE	.296	.046	.296	6.450	.000
2.	(Constant)	-.042	.037		-1.147	.252
	zOSO	.517	.046	.517	11.265	.000
	zLINK	.301	.046	.301	6.586	.000
	zOSOxzJE	.060	.024	.081	2.467	.014

a: Dependent Variable: zWB

zOSO = Standardized Organizational Socialization

zWB = Standardized Well-Being

zJE = Standardized Job Embeddedness

zOSoxzJE = Product of zOSO and zJE

### Discussion

First, this research study established evidence that there were significant positive relationships between organizational socialization and the employee's job performance and well-being. Based on these two relationships, the job-embeddedness variable was introduced as an independent variable in order to explore the moderating effect on those relationships. Consequently, it was found that job-embeddedness has a significant moderating effect on the relationship between organizational socialization and role-based performance. On the other hand, no significant moderating effect of job-embeddedness on the relationship of organizational socialization and well-being was found. The implication of this study is that while organizational socialization has a significant positive impact on

the performance of employees, those with higher job-embeddedness will perform at even higher levels of role-based performance. However, although the moderating effect of job-embeddedness was seen to have a positive correlation with the relationship between organizational socialization and employee's well-being, the effect was found to be statistically insignificant. This insignificant finding indicates that job-embeddedness does not strengthen or weaken the relationship between organization socialization and employee well-being. Unlike previous research studies by Özçelik and Cenkci (2014), (Lee et al., 2004), Allen (2006), Wright & Bonett (2007), or Bambacas (2011), which only focused on some constructs of job-embeddedness and did provide direct evidence on moderating effect of the whole job-embeddedness, this study elucidated the moderating effect of job-embeddedness on relationships between organizational socialization and employee performance and between organizational socialization and the employee's well-being. Although the scope of this research was done on sales personnel in Thailand, the methods could be generalized to other occupations in other regions.

The knowledge obtained from this study can be applied to human resource management planning and programs. In particular, any intervention programs that promote both organizational socialization and job-embeddedness can lead to better employee performance than targeting either one alone. The interaction between organizational socialization and the job-embeddedness did not provide extra benefit for employee's well-being. Unlike employee performance, the management teams should be aware that these combined intervention programs do not result in increased employee's well-being.

This study also has implications for further academic researchers as well. As the questionnaires were proven to be reliable with high Cronbach's alphas among the sales personnel in Thailand, other researchers can then refer to this study to apply these questionnaires for similar study in the future with similar groups of target samples. In addition, the role-based performance questionnaires were translated from English into Thai and back-translated again for verification for this study. The Thai version of the questionnaires was reviewed by experts and was proven to also have reliable Cronbach's alphas. As few role-based performance questionnaires have been previously used in Thailand, future research can also refer to these translated role-based performance items for similar target participants.

### **Conclusion and Suggestions**

There are several limitations of this study which can be improved further in future research. First, this research study might suffer from survivorship bias in the participant pool. The nature of sale personnel profession is that a large proportion of personal benefit usually comes from performance-based sales commission (Schmidtman, 2016), and the occupation usually has high turnover rate (Good, Sisler, & Gentry, 1988). This means that any salespersons who are still working in their sales roles currently have a reasonably high level of performance and well-being, but those who do not perform well may have already left their organizations, voluntarily or not. Since this research was conducted using information from currently employed individuals, the study might not capture the entire picture of the relationship of the constructs among ex-employees. Therefore, the participants could be affected by this survivorship bias. However, conducting a study of ex-employees is often proved to be a challenging task because most companies do not keep a good track record of their contact information. Second, the participants for this study are limited to sale personnel working in Thailand, thus it should be interesting to extend the research to other occupations to explore whether the result from this study could be generalized to other professions. Since each occupation usually has its own unique characteristics, the result could very well be different and interesting.



Next, as this research was conducted in Thai cultural context, a similar study can be done in other countries to investigate whether different cultures may result in different outcome of the study. According to Hofstede (2001), different cultures have different level of value dimensions. Therefore, it is of great interest to investigate whether the moderating effect of job-embeddedness will yield similarities or differences across different cultures around the world.

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