

# Human Revolution in the Soka Gakkai Buddhist Movement in Thailand: Qualitative Research and Applications to HRD

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**Abstract:** *Soka Gakkai is as a Buddhist religious movement that originally developed in Japan and extended to many other countries including Thailand. This study applies a constructivism paradigm and uses a phenomenological inquiry, to assess the lived experiences of the members of the Soka Gakkai Organization in Thailand. This research is self-interpreting of being and uncovers the meanings of the Human Revolution, revealing the value perceived and the transformational process. Pilot studies of three co-researchers were initially undertaken. Purposive sampling and snowballing of fourteen co-researchers then took place.. An unstructured interview technique and non-participate observations were employed in data collection. The data were analyzed by using both manual codings and the ATLAS.ti7 program. Three themes and nine categories were identified and defined in order to interpret the data. The first theme “Being a member” has four categories, the second theme “Learning from the Human Revolution” has two categories and the third theme, “Constructing a New Me and The World” has three categories. The Human Revolution concept has indicated the benefits of the inner transformation and has awakened a new value creation. A new sets of values found in this research comprised wisdom, courage, compassion and gratitude which are possessed with a New Me. The concept has significant implications for self development and social development for HRD scholars and practitioners, by applying this concept in order to gain sustainability in people development at all levels.*

**Keywords:** Human Revolution, Human Resource Development, Spiritual Development, Soka Gakkai

## Introduction

In the modern era, the development of communities leads to the rising of various problems in the area of social and personal growth. These events have drawn social scientists’ attention towards new ways of problem solving, by using religious, spiritual, and ethical orientations. Casanova (1994) theorizes as to the potential of religion to assist modernity in fulfilling the promise of the enlightenment by strongly advocating universal values within the public sphere. Noy (2008) has summarized these engaged spiritualities including: the Catholic Liberation Theology teaching of Bishops Romeo and Ruiz, the engaged Hinduism of Mohandas Gandhi and Sri Aurobindo, the renewal Judaism of Michael Lerner, and

the engaged Buddhism of Thich Nhat Hanh and Sulak Sivaraksa. The emerging reasons vary from the dream of social revolution, democratic ideas of religious leaders, coping with failures of the modern political and scientific world, and the lack of human spiritual development and cultivation are at the core of these modern failures. Another richness and meaningful agenda here for HRD is to explore how social engagement with religion or spirituality can generate greater values to social development.

When engaging into a religious discussion about Thailand there is no doubt about the place of the Buddhist religion as the main religion of the nation. However, Thailand has witnessed the emergence of new religious movements both within the Theravada Buddhist Sangha and outside the mainstream of the Thai Buddhist tradition. There are few works on imported new religious groups in Thailand, the first one was indicated by Derrett (Derrett, 1983) as cited in Angurarohita (2003) and second was Soka Gakkai in Thailand: its rationale, strategy and tactics, by Angurarohita (2003). Additional research papers mainly focus on how a Japanese – new religion entered other countries, e.g. USA, Australia (Chappell, 1999; Metraux, 2001).

Soka Gakkai can be seen as a new religious movement or as a new paradigm, it embraces the possibility of modernity by consciously attempting to imbue globalization with spiritualism (Smith & Froese, 2008). Dr. Daisaku Ikeda is a Soka Gakkai Buddhist leader and peace builder, a prolific writer and the founder of a number of cultural, educational and peace research institutions around the world. He is a committed proponent of dialogue who believes that deepening the mutual understanding of people of different cultures and beliefs is a key to building lasting peace in the world. A central theme in Ikeda's philosophy is the "human revolution"—that inner-motivated change—within even a single individual can positively influence all humankind. From this small frame of his philosophy, it shows the richness of the contribution of the role of HRD in social development and is not limited to humanity as a whole (SGI, 2013).

In this study, the researcher first did a pilot study. The purpose of doing a pilot study is indicated by Creswell (2005), who suggested that qualitative research does not begin with already established instruments to evaluate discrete variables. Instead, the researcher seeks to gain knowledge from participants and develops protocols such as the interview progresses. Prior to the full study, the pilot study consisted of three participants who are current members of the Soka Gakkai Organization in Thailand. The rationale for this was that it gave access and the preliminary findings. The preliminary findings indicated four significant issues: 1) development, 2) crises in lives, 3) a learner and mentor, and 4) the organization as a "home". Using the lens of the Human Resource Development perspective, the focus was on the participants' memories and their "lived through" experiences. This perspective facilitated breaking through the transformation process and the challenges faced and being faced along their lived journeys.

## Research question

The research questions for this study are:

What is lived experience of Soka Gakkai Organization's members in Thailand as perceived as the human revolution?

How does the transformative process create practical lived experiences in the human revolution of Soka Gakkai Organization's members in Thailand?

## Literature review

### The human revolution concept

The Soka Gakkai organization introduced the Human Revolution Concept. Soka Gakkai International (SGI) is a worldwide network of lay Buddhists dedicated to a common vision of a better world through the empowerment of the individual and the promotion of peace, culture and education. It currently consists of 84 constituent organizations and has 12 million members in 192 countries and territories worldwide. The SGI was founded on January 26, 1975, but the movement has its roots in the 1930s in Japan and the struggle against the thought-control of the Japanese militarist government of that time. The Buddhism practiced by SGI members is based on the teachings of the 13th-century Japanese priest Nichiren and his interpretation of the Lotus Sutra (SGI, 2013). Nichiren Buddhism is embraced in the Soka Gakkai. (Meers (2004). Nichiren Daishonin teachings begins with the conviction that all individuals have the potential to achieve enlightenment through their own efforts. He has inscribed the Gohonzon and declared that the Myoho-Renge-Kyo, the title of the Lotus Sutra, is the essence of the entire sutra. Professor Dr. Dhra Dharmakosajarn and Dr. Daisaku Ikeda are two names found in Phra Maha Somboon Wuttikaro (2005) about Buddhist Humanism. Humanism is a key concept within the SGI, which often describes its philosophical basis as "Buddhist Humanism." In Thailand, the mainstream Hinayana Buddhism applies, while Mahayana Buddhism is considered as "new religious movement" (Chappel, 1999; Metraux, 2001, Angurarohita, 2003). Soka Gakkai has a reputation as "socially engaged Buddhism", "a lay Buddhist organization", and a "new religious movement (NRMs). The concept was emphasized in the aspect of the role of spirituality in leadership for social change upheld in Yasuno (2008).

### The linkage of human resource development and spirituality development

Apart from the origin of the Human Revolution concept, in this research the theoretical lens of HRD will be used to reveal the Human Revolution concept. The literature reviewed is dominated by Human Resource Development (HRD). HRD has evolved as a field of theory and practice with a distinctive tripartite agenda of human betterment, organizational enhancement and societal development. The transformative power of HRD lies in its capacity to empower the creation of innovative and radical solutions to real world problems. The purpose of HRD varies and is focused mainly on performance and learning within economic agenda. A list of given HRD definitions is summarized by Weinberger (1998); McGuire, O'Donnell, Garavan, and Murphy (2001) and McGuire and Jorgensen (2011). A critical HRD theory (CHRD) emerged to challenge current notions of HRD. CHRD calls for other ways of 'seeing' and researching HRD, drawing upon more interpretive philosophies and innovative methods (Valentin, 2006) such as Self Development Theories - The Western relevant theories vary in terms of transpersonal, ego development (Loevinger, 1987), the higher stages of Human Development (Hartman & Zimberoff, 2008), transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991; Cranton, 1996), self-transcendence (Maslow, 1943). Venter and Venter

(2010, p. 29) proposed factors that make it possible for people to reach the sixth tier of Maslow's need for self actualization (Maslow, 1943).

Spiritual Development - Jones (2013) defines spiritual in the Thai context as “*refers to Buddhist practices or the prevalent belief in ghost and the magic that emanates from the spirit world where ghosts and spirits roam, haunt, bless, protect, or cause various mischiefs and beneficial actions*” (p. 3). From Western thought, Zinnbauer, Pargament, & Scott, (1999) define spirituality as “*a search for the sacred. As such, spirituality is the heart and soul of religion, and religion's most central function*” (p. 909). Robbins and Judge (2013) research emphasized on the values of spiritual organizations: (1) Value in showing kindness toward others and promoting the happiness of employees and other organizational stakeholders - Benevolence, (2) Value strong senses of purpose (3) Value in trust and respect, consistent with the dignity of each individual and (4) Value in flexible thinking and creativity among employees - open-minded. Vongpiromsanti (2012) confirmed that at the present time, many international organizations are moving to Spirituality Development in Organizations (SDS).

## Research design

Martin Heidegger (1962), a student of Husserl, believed that humans are hermeneutic (interpretive) beings capable of finding significance and meaning in their own lives (Draucker, 1999). The phenomenology approach, therefore, serves as the methodological framework for the research. From the literature reviewed there were few research that focus on this issue, and little research has been done relevant to the Soka Gakkai organization. Creswell (2009) described key criteria's for selecting a research design as if there is a little research has been done on this and it merits a qualitative approach; is an exploration and is useful when the researcher does not know the important variables to examine; is new; has never been addressed with a certain sample or a group of people; and existing theories do not apply to the particular sample or group under study. Social constructivist theory holds assumptions that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. Individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences - meanings directed toward certain objects or things. These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrowing meaning into a few categories or ideas (Creswell, 2009). Hermeneutic phenomenology is grounded in the belief that the researcher and the participants come to the investigation with forestructures of understanding shaped by their respective backgrounds, and in the process of interaction and interpretation, they generate an understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

## Data collection and analysis

The Heideggerian hermeneutic phenomenology is used as the philosophical underpinning and methodology in order to reveal the values and knowledge shared from a total of fourteen co-researchers, thirteen from purposive sampling and one from using the snowball technique in this research. Prior to the research phase, as indicated, a pilot study was done in order to gain access to key informants. The volunteer co-researchers were given names by the key informants using purposive selection criteria. All co-researchers were contacted in advance in order to recheck their lived experience in the Human Revolution concept before



proceeding to the interview as the next step. The interviews took approximately 90 – 120 minutes each and prior to the interviews the researcher explained the purpose of the research with all necessary information then asked co-researchers to sign a consent form. The data collection also took the form of non-participant observations, field notes, reflexive notes and photographs taken as appropriate and with permission.

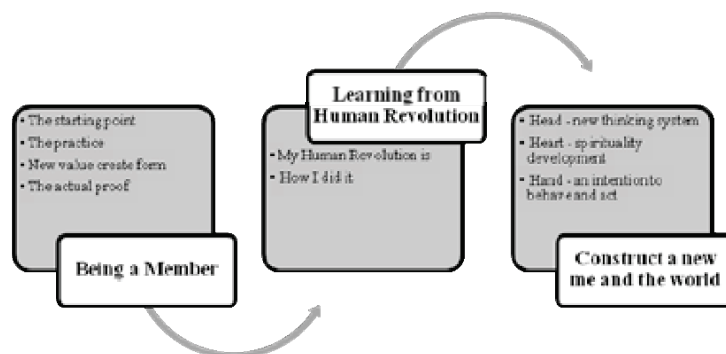
In analyzing the data, the researcher first transcribed each interview and validated it by checking with the co-researcher before the next interview. The researcher read and re-read back and forth with writing and re-writing, codings and recoding manually and using the ATLAS.ti7 program in order to get first initial codes, categories and themes or stories before reaching the final products. The researcher utilized all findings to summarize and analyze and derive the final results to answer the two research questions and the next section provides conclusions generated from the results of the research questions.

### **Rigor of the study**

An audit trail of this research contained all raw data; research proposal drafts, pilot study files, letter to key informants, co-researcher's files, interview recorded files, interview transcripts, field notes, reflexive notes, and the principal advisor's email contact. In terms of validity, the researcher interpreted and reviewed the material with co-researchers, spending prolonged time in the field. Bracketing occurred based on the Heideggerian approach, of the research pre-understanding – the self reflection presented in the research in order to clarify possible bias. The researcher applied all forms of triangulation in the research; (1) gathered data from purposive sampling and using the snowball technique, (2) the researcher worked closely with her advisor to interpret data and consulted with other experts, (3) the researcher also used more than one theoretical position in interpreting data, and (4) interviews and non-participant observation were used in the research. Authenticity checks were conducted in the form of: obtaining informed consent from all co-researchers, accuracy checks, and additional interviews were held with certain co-researchers. Accuracy checks were done by using the SGT Thai-English vocabulary list as a guideline for translation. The co-researchers' confidentiality was maintained by using a number to represent, each co-researcher's background which was written in a broad context in order to maintain privacy and confidentiality. The researcher also played a role of the interviewer in an unstructured interview, so interviewing skill was critical to its success. Minichiello, Timewell, & Alexander (1990) argued that a skillful interviewer needs to have knowledge and experience. Prior to the research phase, the researcher attended the training course in qualitative study with IGHRD together with undertaking the pilot study which offered an opportunity to undertake practical training and confidentiality testing before undertaking the research.

### **Findings and discussions**

The summary of the overall three themes, nine categories and twenty four codes are illustrated in figure 1. Both manual coding and AtlasTi.7 programs were used in order to get the essential meanings of the experiences. Based on world events in time and history, the fourteen co-researchers were encouraged to share the meanings and experiences where they perceived significance to them as part of the human revolution and the transformation process.



**Figure 1:** the Linkage of Three Themes and Nine Categories of this Study

### ***“Perceived as the human revolution”.***

The research findings revealed that the Human Revolution concept perceived by co-researchers can be defined as a gradual self transformational process in terms of their ways of thinking, attitudes, feelings about self and others that result in different actions. It was unable to be defined as one specific phenomenon, but rather to be all sorts of positive changes and improvements growing slowly in their lives.

For the second research question, co-researchers interpreted the meaningful knowledge about the developmental changes in a person by awakening their inner calls to their true selves. However, the inner call has a starting point and a turning point which portrays the whole and part of co-researchers lived experiences in the being a member theme. This theme was employed to understand the life events of the co-researchers where they saw themselves in the past, and present as well as in the future. This is the self constitution of such phenomena that is constructed as a meaningful pathway to the Human Revolution.

### ***“the human revolution transformation process”.***

From these research findings, co-researchers accepted that their desires and suffering were the factors that drove, forced or motivated them to the practice as stated. Meers (2004, p. 12) emphasized *“Nichiren Daishonin teaches that Buddhahood includes all aspects of life, and that our desires and sufferings are connected to the awakening of our Buddha nature”*. Our own desires and sufferings are the catalyst in starting but are not the Human Revolution. The co-researcher perceived the first essential to the transformation process is the balance of the three elements consists of faith, practice and study. Faith is well situated as the most important point to start the practice. The practice consists of chanting Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo and reciting portions of the Lotus Sutra in the morning and evening, the duration is up to the individual. The practice can take place at home and at the center. To study is to understand the Buddhist teachings from arranged discussion meetings, this is learning together with experience sharing among members. “Introductory Exam Study Guide” (2012, p. 11) cited second President Josei Toda who remarked *“reason gives rise to faith; faith in turn, seeks reason, reason thus gains elevates faith; and faith thus is elevated further to deepen reasons”*. From the research findings, these are the “three elements” proclaimed as the pathway to the Human Revolution. “Daily Practice” (n.d., para. 12) argues



that “*Soka Gakkai International (SGI) members believe in such a process of inner spiritual transformation or human revolution*”. Sanchez and Vieira (2007, p. 51) described the three basic elements needed for transformational work as: (1) *presences (awareness, mindfulness)*, (2) *the practice of self-observation, gain from self-knowledge, and* (3) *understanding what one’s experiences mean (an accurate interpretation provided by a larger context such as a community, a teacher, or a spiritual system)*. “Beginning Your Practice” (n.d., para. 1-3) argued that to do the chanting is neither traditional meditation, nor positive thinking, though it reaps the benefits of both these practices and much more by expressing our Buddha nature.

In order to awaken their inner call, Professor Dr. Phra Dhra Dharmakosajarn described the two inner and more individual factors of training in higher mentality (samadhi) and that in higher wisdom (pañña) are, broadly stated in the single more generalized factor of mental development (bhavana). The mental development focuses on the cultivation of loving-kindness, together with giving and virtuous conduct, is mainly intended for bringing about happiness in the realization of a world free of conflict (Payutto 2007, p. 38). The three elements perform as a pathway to construct a new set of values that the co-researchers possesses along the journey of “being a member”. The Human Revolution therefore is derived from a process of acquiring a new set of values into day-to-day lives in order to do the “self transformation” by balancing the three elements. The Human Revolution is gradually happening and it is a lifelong improvement process.

**“Summary of a set of new values, derived from human revolution”.**

Values can be defined as desirable, trans-situational goals, varying in importance that serve as guiding principles in the life of a person or group (Allport 1961; Rohan, 2000). Schwartz (2006) specifies six formal features that recur in conceptual definitions of values as (a) are concepts or beliefs, (b) refer to desirable goals that motivate to action (c) are abstract in that they transcend specific actions and situations, (d) serves as standards or criteria (guide the selection or evaluation of actions), (e) are ordered in by importance relative to one another, and (f) the relative importance of multiple values guides action. He further explained what distinguished one value from another is the motivation or the type of goal that the value expresses. From this finding, the Human Revolution concepts pertain to motivate through the growth needs. The new value obtained along the pathway of being a member and through the Human Revolution transformative process are profoundly important to Human Development. Jumsai Na Ayudhya (2003) study emphasized transformation that was evident through the emergence of Human Values, and defined as the five universal values of Truth, Right Conduct, Peace, Love and Non-Violence. In this case, the Soka Gakkai Thailand (SGT) members are transformed by all forms of practicing based on balancing the faith, practice, study, inspired mentors or leaders, community of the same practice at the center and the center atmosphere in order to create a new set of values. In order to make these new values comprehensive, this section will be divided into three parts, which illustrates the differing perspectives on values obtained at the development and improvement at the individual level and the social level and the cluster of new values congruence to construct a new me and the world.

- The new values obtained that have significance to self development. SGT members endorse values that represent personal growth needs; these values include openness to change, self reflection, self checking, willingness to learn, a

winning attitude, conviction and determination.

- The new values obtained have significant to social development  
SGT members endorse values that represent “for others” needs; these values include benevolence, openness to diversity, humanistic consciousness, compassion and understanding others.
- The cluster of new values construct a new me and the world.  
The Human Revolution concept transforms an individual with a cluster of new values and construct a new profile with these qualities; wisdom, courage, compassion, happiness, and gratitude. All these are summarized and represented in theme 3 which consists of three main categories, “Head”, “Heart” and “Hand”.
- HEAD represents the new thinking system that derived from the three elements.  
Wasi (2012) highlighted the need for new thinking to fight with Western civilization by stating the solution to the “Consciousness Revolution” and “Spiritual Revolution” in his book “Meditation and Transformation” (p. 6). SGT members endorse these new values. The practice expressing the Buddha nature and the Buddha are characterized as profound wisdom. In order to gain wisdom is by self-mastery “*become the master of one’s mind*” (“Wisdom”, n.d. para 15). The ultimate goal of the practice is gaining wisdom is to enable the Human Revolution. From Buddhist perspectives, wisdom is having completely understanding of the nature of phenomena by means of wisdom awareness. Payutto (2007, p. 149) emphasized “*wisdom is the crown jewel or key virtue of Buddhism, because it is only through the knowledge of things as they really are that one realizes the truth, has the perfect right attitude to life and to the world, and becomes free. One has thus purified oneself and gained freedom*”. Brown & Ryan (2004) stated that mindfulness provides “*a window of opportunity to choose the form, direction, and other specifics of action, that is, to act in an autonomous manner*” (p. 116). The openness to the practice, enhances the pathway to the “Mindfulness”. Sati, or mindfulness, implies there is an action of the mind.
- HEART represents the new spirit to inspire both self and others.  
This represents a matter of courage, this is a new value of spirit revealed from the research findings. In order to obtain respect from others, especially in society. I should prove to them that I am capable to overcome my own hardships. My victories therefore inspire others who are suffering. “*Buddhism thus views courage as a vital element of compassionate action to help others--as well as a key to our ability to change our own lives*” (“Courage”, n.d. para 10).

SGT members value the “benevolence” and “compassion”, is a matter of mind as well as of practice Nichiren’s Buddhism. Berger (1987) defined compassion as the altruistic thread that not only civilizes human judgments, it also spiritualizes human action by providing a pathway to altruistic caring. The definitions of compassion somewhat vary in areas of loving-kindness and sympathetic joy that may lead to charity, kind speech, and acts of service on various appropriate occasions, and equanimity (or neutrality) is essential for equality and impartiality. Benevolence emphasized voluntary concern for others’ welfare. Schwartz (2005) defined it as helpful, honest, forgiving, responsible, loyal and true friendship and mature love. In Buddhist benevolence is strongly tied with good merit in the light of interaction with





others or social relations.

However, openness and acceptances to the differences of others especially for the minority was raised several times in the interviews. The point is first to reflect on how co-researchers perceive themselves from the social acceptance aspect. On the other hand, to reflect on how their values apply in treating others. Another interesting point from the research findings, is that women perceive unequal treatment when it comes to the religious agenda for Thai. People. Komin (1990) stated that Thai people seem overwhelmed by the influence of Buddhism in life, but most of them have little knowledge about it. This statement does not apply to all Thai people, but this also shows the difficulty for Thai women in which they also seek to attain Buddhahood in this lifetime as well. Nichiren Buddhism and other non-mainstream movements endeavored to answer such a need.. This is a good example of how social values can dictate our social norms, ethics and practices. In order to undertake social development using a humanism approach is worth considering for the betterment of humanity.

- HAND represents an intention to behave or act differently.

The last set of values that motivates individuals to a new action emphasizes as to first, “believe in individual change, then the world will change too”. This represents the interrelationship of the individual and society . The development of change in the individual certainly affects social development. Buddhadasa (1994, p.124) “*Bodhisattva ideal focuses on helping others, dedicating to others; he can even sacrifice his life for the sake of the society. Buddhism accepts this idea because it has socialistic intention*”. Second, “my new drives provide absolute happiness and gratitude” . This value found in the matter of questions about the purpose of life and anything to share about their future plans, the findings reveal “Absolute Happiness” . The co-researchers explanation on absolute happiness or true happiness in terms of less materially driven, not for their own prosperity, and able to live with any circumstances in life with the purpose of attaining Buddhahood in this lifetime. Komin (1990) stated “*It is not in cognition of the general Thai to think of reaching the ultimate state of enlightenment*”, for SGT member this emphasizes a different perspective. Thirdly, “Gratitude” or “Being grateful” is stressed as an important value of SGT members. Gratitude or being grateful (katanyu in Thai) is a highly valuable quality in a person. Komin (1990) defines the distinction between “Roo bunkhun” meaning to know, acknowledge or be constantly consciously and bear in the heart of the kindness done and “Tob than bunkum” which means to reciprocate the kindness whenever there are opportunities. In this research, “Tob thaen” is often mentioned in terms of how they bear in heart and mind or being grateful to the kindness of the Presidents of the organization where they said that the three founders were mentors of their lives. Nichiren Daishonin Buddha, Gohonzon, the organization, the good friends (fellow members) were for whom they feel grateful. . Gratitude is one of the core values mentioned in Nichiren Buddhism teachings. There are three categories of people to whom we owe gratitude. The sovereign, the teacher and the parent. The sovereign in a contemporary context refers to society, the teachers refer to one’s mentors in practice and faith. In a broader sense, this means the vital role of education in human life and all those

who help shape the development. In order to reciprocate the gratitude is to do “Shakubuku” and “Kosenrufu” which are strongly tied to the value of being grateful.

***“Importance of the leadership - the transformational and spiritual perspectives”.***

In order to achieve the Human Revolution, there is a key person “the leader”. In this research the term ‘leader’ covers the President or the mentor (they called archan in Thai), and the senior fellow member. The co-researchers have been raised about their leaders in a very positive way, with respect and trust as good role models, good examples together with strong faith in the leadership. The leadership plays an important role here in aspects of transformational success both individually and at the organization level. Transformational leadership theory and spiritual leadership theory are discussed to illustrate the importance of the change agent in HRD (London, 1988). Bass (1985) depicted transformational leadership as comprising four distinct factors: charisma, inspiration, individual consideration and intellectual stimulation. Jumsai Na Ayudhya (2003) research conducted in the Sathya Sai School identified the one of the main causes of the transformation process is inspiring teachers. Bezy (2011) research defined spiritual leaders as leaders who put people first. Their thoughts and actions are directed toward others in the organization. In his study, spiritual leadership can be applied in any organization was accepted by 96.15 percent of the panelists in his study, which consisted of philosophers, writers, business leader, nonprofit leaders, religious leaders, educator and politicians.

## **Implications**

The Human Revolution has profound implication to the HRD field which is not limited to HR professionals, scholars and practitioners, the contribution to the knowledge is open to a wider horizons of knowledge (Netzer, 2012). The list of the contributions can be summarized as:

***Implications for practice # 1: For individual development.*** Mezirow (1997) pointed out self-reflection can lead to significant personal transformation. From this research, the self reflection occurs while Soka Gakkai members chant. The self reflection can apply to every individual, doing this will help a person recall themselves from any complex feelings, in their own thoughts. The self reflection helps learners become aware and critique upon their own assumptions. Mezirow (1997) emphasized in greater depth to the critical reflection and transformation of habit of mind, or transformation. Franken (1994) states “*self-change is not something that people can will but rather it depends on the process of self-reflection. Through self-reflection, people often come to view themselves in a new, more powerful way, and it is through this new, more powerful way of viewing the self that people can develop possible selves*” (p. 443). From the researcher’s perspectives, this technique applies well not only for individual development but also in doing qualitative research for novice doctoral students.

***Implications for practice #2: For organization development (OD).*** First is the self reflection which can be utilized in a training and development program for any organizations. This can apply to the similar key index in the performance review – 360 degrees performance review The self-reflection should give the employee reflection on the job, their feelings, emotions toward the particular assignment and the result in self



development planning, self strength and weakness analysis, a person may work on this with the supervision of a consultant or coach in parallel with the corporate development program. Both result from self and a corporate plan should give better or a tailor made design in the personnel development program.

Second, Spiritual development has another implications for OD from this study. The new set of values derived from the Human Revolution concept are relevant to the spiritual development aspect. The essence of the findings are similar and well applied to spiritual organizations. Robbins and Judge (2013) explained that several cultural characteristics tend to be evident in spiritual organizations: (1) Benevolence, spiritual organizations value showing kindness toward others and promoting the happiness of employees and other organizational stakeholders, (2) A strong senses of purpose, spiritual organizations build their cultures around a meaningful purpose. Although profits may be important, they are not the primary value of the organization, (3) Trust and respect, spiritual organizations are characterized by mutual trust, honesty, and openness. Employees are treated with esteem and value, consistent with the dignity of each individual and (4) Open-mindedness, spiritual organizations value flexible thinking and creativity among employees. Vongpiromsanti (2012) research confirmed that many international organizations are moving to Spirituality Development in Organization (SDS) such as Raytheon, Porter & Gamble, General Mills, and Comcast which represents three levels of application into the organizational level.

Lastly, OD should consider how to build the same togetherness atmosphere where employees are volunteering to do particular things together, live and learn together, mentor and mentee knowledge sharing, polish and refining together like SGT does. This should result in effective organizational development.

**Implications for practice #3: For the education sector.** These research findings result positively in utilizing the religious teachings into practices with wider dimensions. Pedagogy or the education sector should pay more attention and realize the power and benefit of religious practices and teachings offered to human development at all levels starting with each individual. There are scholars' attention to the significance of the Buddhist teachings to HRD (Jumsai Na Ayudhyam 2003, Payutto, 2004, Takawicharna, 2007, Pongsabutr, 2009, Wasi, 2012, Mohjhaw 2013). All these are most recent research conducted that have strongly emphasized the area of the need of awakening Buddhist teachings into action. However, the researcher emphasized this should apply to any religious teachings depending on the cultural context with openness to understand the differences among us.

There is another aspect worth considering from this research finding and this is what children and adolescents need. They are mentioned about the quest for answers where they face this complex and modernized world. The problem is parents find this difficult to answer, at least there is a place and a group of good friends there for them in Soka Gakkai. The guidances of the Presidents were stated as the survival tool by the co-researchers, it serves like a source of motivation and encouragement to teenagers. From this valuable viewpoint the education sector should take this more seriously in providing an appropriate source of information that is up to date in order to deal with modernization and globalization. Yasuno (2004) research conducted found spirituality can help college students and found strong connections between their spirituality and leadership. The role of spirituality in leadership for social change is compelling in the higher education system. Yasuno (2008) emphasized on the crisis of spiritual deterioration and the need for transformation.

**Implications for practice # 4: For human resource development developer.** The Human Revolution transformation concept is as an alternative form of transformative learning into practice. From the findings, The Human Revolution concept is “self transformation – is an inner realm” process. The process transforms individuals at the vital cores of wisdom, spirit and behavior. The point is not by means only to focus on the ultimate goal in obtaining “wisdom” rather to consider this as a process to think more holistically in every decision making, problem solving, and planning process. In this study, the values a person holds give power to the transformation process which result in individual, social and sustainable development.

In this study the findings from the co-researchers stated on how they share real life experiences in adapting and applying the religious teachings into action to other members. The stories of the Presidents have been through difficulties with leadership spirits. All these experience sharing becomes shortcuts, easy to digest, reality, touchable and applicable for members. From this aspect, the HRD developer may apply this in various course designs. Takawicharna (2007) recommended this technique in Buddhist - HRD research, the result of this technique is more effective than ordinary teachings or trainings. The dialogues or discourse sharing among learners, the sharing allows them to learn how to adapt and apply to similar situations. From this finding, the philosophy of Buddhism teachings sounds difficult to understand but with experience sharing, a new learner can pick it up more easily. This may require a sense of creativity from HRD to utilize this in development programs.

In social learning, there were number of faith based, engaged religious based organization not only in Thailand that have similar objectives to cultivate new seed amongst individuals or transform them with different practices such as mindfulness, spirituality, and deep listening. We are in need of such good role models as our social change agent. Soka Gakkai well performs in the social learning area, an outstanding one is to praise the role model. In this research, a good role model means the founders, the Nichiren Daishonin, the senior members, fellow members, and even the member him/herself being aware of being a good example. Takawicharna (2007) emphasized that social learning should consider the new attributes of the role model. Transformational leadership first introduced the concept of transforming leadership and defined as a process in which “*leaders and followers help each other to advance the higher level of morale and motivation*” (Burns, 1978).

## Recommendations for further research

The following recommendations were extracted from the findings of this study. Suggestions for future research are discussed as follows: (1) This research underpinned the Human Revolution perceived in Soka Gakkai Thailand only, therefore, finding out from a broader scale should contribute new knowledge to the field. Different cultural contexts may have some effects over the results of this finding. Exploring the set of replications in this study could be generalized which would be essential to theoretical and practical use; (2) The Human Revolution in a cross case analysis with other self transformation theories in order to gain broad and in-depth knowledge about the theory and practices for HRD. Studying the width and depth of each state or stage of the transformative process, in comparison would result in a wiser application; (3) Each of the new values or quality found from this research can be explored in-depth, revealing the priority over one another in order to fully develop

and utilize the human resource development program; (4) In-depth interpretation study of the Nichiren Buddhism teachings, especially by the Soka Gakkai organization that is significant to human development. The human revolution concept is the core philosophy, however, there are plenty of teaching elements that future research may explore more specifically; (5) This study is underpinned by the Heideggerian phenomenology, so the findings illustrated how co-researchers are in a shared world. A prolonged study of a novice's member's life journey who finalize self transformation by applied the human revolution concept would provide a deeper understanding and application.

### Limitation of the study

The limitation derives from the methodology. While this study aimed to provide a rich description of the Human Revolution concept from Soka Gakkai Thailand members, it is not possible to generalize findings from this study to the other Soka Gakkai organization. There are some points to make; First, the research site is Soka Gakkai Thailand, therefore the Thai context has had some degree of influence on the co-researchers. Second, the discussion that relates to the Buddhist teachings present objectives to bring out essences to the readers rather than an in-depth discussion. And, all technical terms present are used with respect to gain the real meanings used in the context of Soka Gakkai members. The interpretation are presented as best to describe the terms used.

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