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A Structural Equation Model of Team Management Influencing the Performance of Agents in a Life Insurance Company

by

Kawinphat Sirikanakarasin

Doctor of Business Administration,
Graduate School of Management,
Sripatum University, Bangkok, Thailand

and

Vichit U-on

Graduate School of Management,
Sripatum University, Bangkok, Thailand

Abstract

This study investigates the causal relationships among leadership style, communication effectiveness, employee motivation, team management, and organizational performance within the context of AIA Thailand, a leading life insurance organization. Grounded in the Input–Process–Output (IPO) model, the research conceptualizes leadership style, communication effectiveness, and employee motivation as input factors that influence team management as a process variable, which subsequently affects organizational performance as an output variable. The study employs a quantitative research design using structural equation modeling (SEM) to examine the hypothesized relationships among the five constructs. Data were collected from employees and team leaders across various departments within AIA Thailand through a structured questionnaire. The findings reveal that leadership style, communication effectiveness, and employee motivation each have a positive and significant impact on team management. In turn, team management exerts a strong direct effect on organizational performance. Among the examined relationships, leadership style demonstrates the highest total effect on performance, both directly and indirectly through team management. Communication and motivation also play crucial roles in fostering collaboration, trust, and engagement among team members, leading to improved operational efficiency and customer satisfaction. Furthermore, the mediating role of team management confirms the process-oriented assumption of the IPO model, showing that effective team management serves as the key mechanism through which leadership, communication, and motivation translate into superior performance outcomes. This study contributes to both theory and practice by providing an integrated framework for understanding the interplay between human and managerial factors that influence organizational performance. The findings offer valuable implications for leadership development, communication systems, and motivation strategies in the life insurance industry and other service-based organizations.

Keywords: Leadership Style, Communication Effectiveness, Employee Motivation, Team Management, Organizational Performance

1. Introduction

In today's highly competitive business environment, building effective teams is a critical factor for organizational success, particularly in the life insurance industry, where field agents play a central role. The ability to manage teams effectively thus becomes a key driver of organizational performance (Katzenbach & Smith, 2005; Salas et al., 2015). Previous studies have identified several crucial factors influencing team management, such as leadership style (Bass & Avolio, 1994), communication effectiveness (De Janasz et al., 2018), and employee motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000), which all significantly affect team collaboration and outcomes.

However, few studies have examined the structural relationships among these factors specifically in the context of life insurance companies in Thailand, such as AIA. This makes the present research important for developing a structural model that explains the relationship between input factors, team management processes, and organizational performance. Such a model will help guide strategies to sustainably enhance team capacity.

This article aims to synthesize knowledge from relevant literature and previous studies in order to identify the factors, their components, and causal relationships involved in team management and performance. The analysis applies the Input–Process–Output (IPO) conceptual framework. The input stage includes three key factors often cited in the literature: leadership style, communication effectiveness, and employee motivation. Leadership style reflects how managers inspire, involve, and guide team members toward a shared vision. Communication effectiveness encompasses clarity, timeliness, and mutual understanding in information exchange, which helps reduce conflict and build cooperation. Employee motivation acts as a driving force behind enthusiasm, commitment, and teamwork readiness.

These input factors influence the core process, team management, which integrates member competencies, assigns roles, builds relationships, and fosters collaboration, all aimed at boosting productivity. Effective team management involves systemic coordination of structure, communication, decision-making, and performance evaluation, forming the bridge from inputs to desirable outcomes.

The ultimate outcome is improved organizational performance, measurable through both quantitative indicators (e.g., output, sales, revenue) and qualitative outcomes (e.g., customer satisfaction, loyalty, and brand image). Prior studies consistently show that effective team management has a strong positive impact on performance, especially in businesses that rely on network-based sales structures like those used in the life insurance industry, including AIA.

From this synthesis, the research framework is constructed with leadership style, communication effectiveness, and employee motivation as input variables, team management as the process variable, and organizational performance as the output. These elements are interrelated systematically and offer a foundation for both academic inquiry and practical organizational strategy, as illustrated in Figure 1.

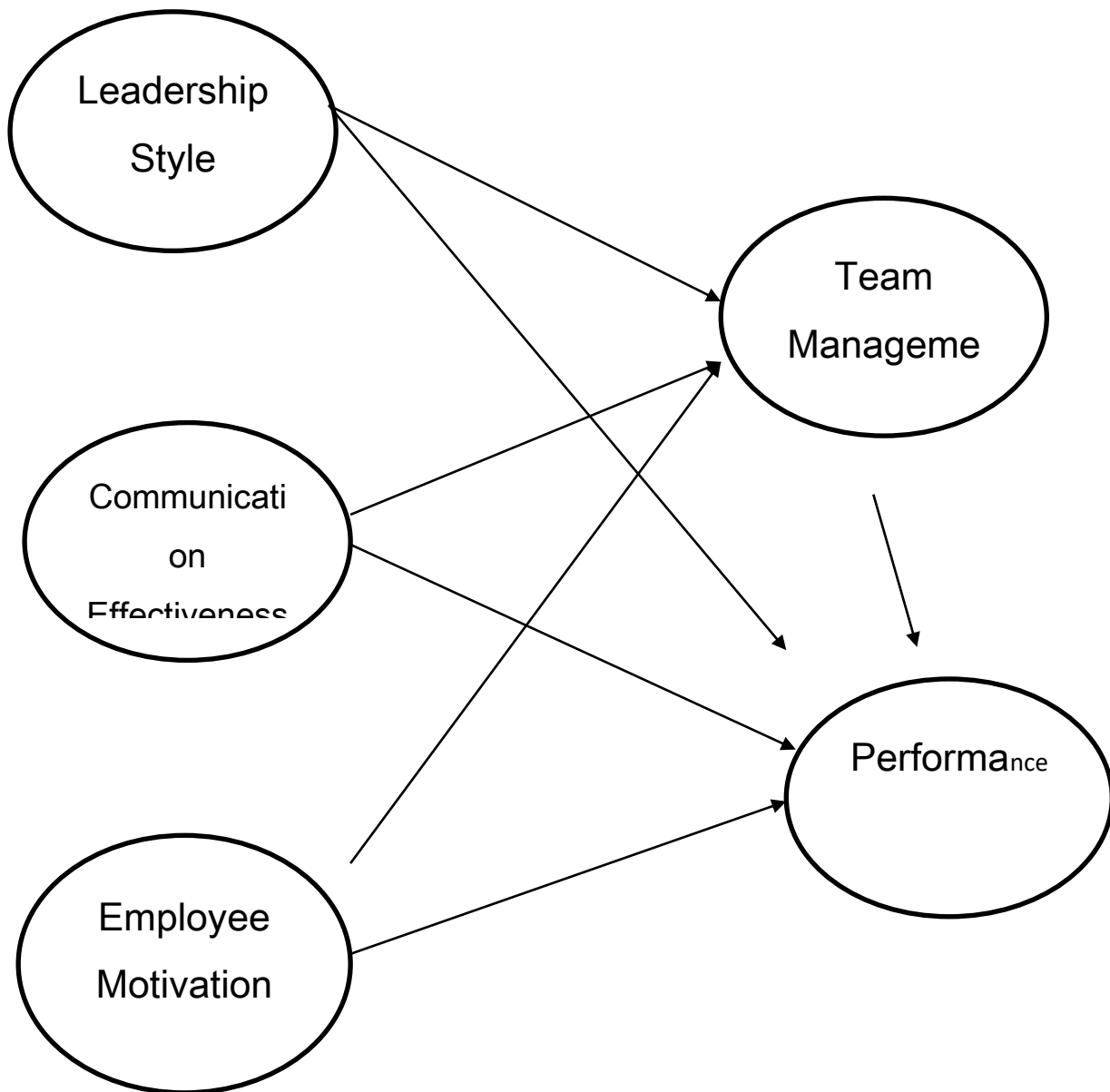


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework of the Study

The researcher conducted a literature review and established the following research hypotheses:

- H1: Leadership style has a positive effect on team management.
- H2: Communication effectiveness has a positive effect on team management.
- H3: Employee motivation has a positive effect on team management.
- H4: Team management has a positive effect on organizational performance.
- H5: Leadership style has a positive effect on organizational performance.
- H6: Communication effectiveness has a positive effect on organizational performance.
- H7: Employee motivation has a positive effect on organizational performance.

This article is an academic review that explores team management as a factor influencing agent performance within a life insurance company. It aims to define key characteristics, identify

influential variables, and propose a structural model framework to guide future research. The study reviews variables related to business strategy, human resource management systems, and organizational performance, with a particular focus on the relationships among variables affecting team performance in the context of the life insurance industry.

The Input–Process–Output (IPO) theoretical model is used as a framework for analysis. It explains the relationship between input factors, including leadership style, communication, and motivation, and the process of team management, which in turn leads to performance outcomes for agents within the organization.

This research applies a documentary research methodology, drawing from 250 academic articles. From these, 137 were selected for detailed analysis, sourced from the Scispace database and other academic platforms. The data was analyzed using content analysis (percentage-based frequency) to classify key components and identify emerging patterns in the literature.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Definition and Component

2.1.1 Leadership Style

Leadership refers to the process by which an individual influences the behaviors of others in order to achieve organizational goals (Northouse, 2019; Yukl, 2013). Effective leaders can inspire trust, motivate their teams, and lead them toward high performance (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Avolio & Gardner, 2005). The components of leadership style include:

Transformational Leadership – Leaders who inspire followers to innovate and embrace positive change, with an emphasis on continuous organizational development (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

1) Transactional Leadership – Leaders who focus on exchanges such as rewards and punishments to regulate followers' behavior (Judge & Piccolo, 2004).

2) Participative Leadership – Leaders who encourage team members to take part in decision-making and promote open expression of opinions (Somech, 2006).

Table 1 Leadership Style

Reference (Author/Year)	Transformational Leadership	Training and Development	Internal Mobility
Bass & Riggio (2006)	✓		
Avolio & Bass (1995)	✓		
Bennis & Nanus (1985)	✓		
Tichy & Devanna (1990)	✓		

Yukl (2013)	✓		
Judge & Piccolo (2004)		✓	
Podsakoff et al. (1990)	✓		
Burns (1978)	✓		
Breevaart et al. (2014)	✓		
Waldman et al. (2001)	✓		
Somech (2006)			✓
Arnold et al. (2000)			✓
Pearce & Sims (2002)			✓
Lam et al. (2010)			✓
Hoch & Kozlowski (2014)			✓
Conger & Kanungo (1988)	✓		
Keller (2006)		✓	
Lowe et al. (1996)	✓		
Schriesheim et al. (2009)		✓	

Table 1 presents a review of the literature regarding leadership across three key components: transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and participative leadership. The table includes references from 20 research studies, each of which discusses different leadership components. The most frequently cited component is transformational leadership, reflecting its popularity and importance in fostering inspiration and innovation within teams. Meanwhile, transactional and participative leadership styles appear in contexts where clarity or team member involvement is particularly emphasized.

2.1.2 Communication Effectiveness

Communication effectiveness refers to the ability to exchange information between individuals or within a team in a clear, concise, and mutually understood manner (Clampitt, 2010; De Janasz et al., 2018). It plays a critical role in reducing conflicts within teams and fostering collaboration at work (Keyton, 2011; Downs & Adrian, 2012). The key components of communication effectiveness include:

1) Message Clarity

This refers to communication that is to the point, easy to understand, and unambiguous, which helps the team comprehend direction and shared goals effectively (Keyton, 2011).

2) Feedback Mechanisms

This refers to the act of giving opinions, responses, or constructive suggestions to others' communication, promoting improvement and timely problem-solving (De Janasz et al., 2018).

3) Active Listening

This refers to attentive listening without interruption, with an open attitude and reflective understanding, which fosters trust and collaboration within the team (Downs & Adrian, 2012).

Table 2 Communication Effectiveness

Reference (Author/Year)	Message Clarity	Feedback Mechanisms	Active Listening
Keyton (2011)	✓		
Clampitt (2010)	✓		
Greenbaum (2015)	✓		
De Janasz et al. (2018)		✓	
Downs & Adrian (2012)			✓
Robbins & Judge (2019)	✓		
Lunenburg (2010)		✓	
Tubbs & Moss (2008)	✓		
Katz & Kahn (1978)	✓		
Hackman & Johnson (2009)		✓	
Daft (2016)	✓		
Guffey & Loewy (2017)			
Barker & Gower (2010)		✓	
Eisenberg et al. (2016)			✓
Hargie (2016)			✓
McShane & Von Glinow (2015)			
Barrett (2006)			
Adler & Elmhorst (2012)		✓	
Zenger & Folkman (2016)		✓	✓

Conrad & Poole (2012)			✓
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Table 2 presents the results of the literature review on the components of communication effectiveness, focusing on three key aspects: message clarity, feedback mechanisms, and active listening.

The table shows that “message clarity” is the most frequently cited component across various studies, followed by “feedback mechanisms” and “active listening.” This indicates that these elements are all critical in fostering mutual understanding and collaboration within a team.

2.1.3 Employee Motivation

Employee motivation refers to the internal and external driving forces that stimulate individuals to commit and behave in ways that help achieve organizational goals (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Robbins & Judge, 2020). Herzberg (1966) proposed the Two-Factor Theory, which distinguishes between motivators and hygiene factors. The key components of motivation include:

1) Intrinsic Motivation

This refers to the satisfaction derived from the work itself, such as challenge, creativity, autonomy in decision-making, or the sense that the work is meaningful and valuable (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Intrinsic motivation leads to long-term commitment and higher quality of performance.

2) Extrinsic Motivation

This refers to external incentives that affect motivation, such as salary, benefits, bonuses, or rewards provided by the organization. These tangible rewards are particularly effective in contexts that emphasize measurable outcomes (Robbins & Judge, 2020).

3) Growth and Advancement

This refers to opportunities for continued learning, skill development, and career progression. It is a critical factor in building long-term motivation and fostering organizational commitment (Herzberg, 1966; Robbins & Judge, 2020).

Table 3 Employee Motivation

Reference (Author/Year)	Intrinsic Motivation	Extrinsic Motivation	Growth and Advancement
Deci & Ryan (2000)	✓		
Ryan & Deci (1985)	✓		
Herzberg (1966)			✓
Robbins & Judge (2020)		✓	✓
Hackman & Oldham (1976)	✓		
McClelland (1987)			✓
Gagné & Deci (2005)	✓		
Pink (2009)	✓		

Latham & Pinder (2005)		✓	
Amabile (1993)	✓		
Steel & König (2006)		✓	
Locke & Latham (2002)			✓
Nohria et al. (2008)	✓		
Grant (2008)	✓		
Kanfer (1990)	✓		
Schunk et al. (2008)	✓		
Oldham & Cummings (1996)	✓		
Baard et al. (2004)	✓		
Thomas (2000)	✓		

Table 3 presents the findings from a literature review on employee motivation, emphasizing three key components: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and growth and advancement opportunities.

The table reveals that intrinsic motivation is the most frequently cited component across studies, underscoring the importance of internal drivers such as job challenge and meaningfulness. Meanwhile, *extrinsic motivation* and *growth opportunities* are also significantly highlighted, demonstrating their essential roles in fostering employee engagement and job satisfaction.

2.1.4 Team Management

Team management refers to the process of organizing a group of individuals to work together effectively through planning, role assignment, communication, and performance evaluation (Katzenbach & Smith, 2005; Salas, Sims, & Burke, 2005). Hackman (2002) explained that an effective team must have shared goals, transparent decision-making systems, and continuous collective learning. The core components of team management include:

1) Shared Goals

The clear and common objectives that align all team members toward the same direction.

2) Role Assignment

The distribution of tasks and responsibilities according to each member's strengths and expertise.

3) Collaborative Decision Making

The process of making decisions together, encouraging participation and consensus among team members.

Table 4 Team Management

Reference (Author/Year)	Shared Goals	Role Assignment	Collaborative Decision
Katzenbach & Smith (2005)	✓	✓	
Salas et al. (2005)	✓		
Hackman (2002)	✓		✓
Kozlowski & Ilgen (2006)	✓	✓	
Mathieu et al. (2008)		✓	
Edmondson (1999)			✓
Ancona & Caldwell (1992)			✓
Zaccaro et al. (2001)			✓
West (2002)			
Marks et al. (2001)	✓		
LePine et al. (2008)		✓	
Ilgen et al. (2005)	✓		
McGrath (1984)			✓
Bell (2007)			
Tuckman (1965)		✓	
Wheelan (2005)			✓
Burke et al. (2006)			✓
Campion et al. (1993)		✓	

Sundstrom et al. (1990)			✓
Guzzo & Dickson (1996)			✓

Table 4 presents the results of the literature review on the components of team management, focusing on three main areas: shared goals, role assignment, and collaborative decision making.

The table reveals that “shared goals” is the most frequently mentioned component, highlighting the importance of having common objectives to enhance team effectiveness. Meanwhile, “collaborative decision making” and “role assignment” also appear prominently in several studies, indicating their significant roles in fostering team coordination and performance.

2.1.5 Performance

The researcher conducted a literature review on the definition of organizational performance and found various definitions across studies. However, empirical research in human resource management over the years has indicated that human resource outcomes are significantly linked to and influence other dimensions of organizational performance, as proposed by Dyer and Reeve (1995), and supported by the works of Teo et al. (2011), Muduli (2012), Ahmad and Schroeder (2003), and Crook et al. (2011). The components of organizational performance include:

1) Financial Performance

The organization’s ability to generate profit, grow revenue, control costs, and maintain financial liquidity. These are fundamental indicators of the organization’s survival and long-term competitiveness (Huselid, 1995; Kaplan & Norton, 1996). Measurements include return on assets (ROA), return on equity (ROE), and net profit margin.

2) Market Performance

The organization’s ability to gain market share, retain customers, and maintain customer satisfaction and loyalty, as well as brand image in target markets. This reflects the organization’s competitive strength (Delaney & Huselid, 1996; Youndt & Snell, 2004). Evaluation indicators include sales growth rate, market share, and customer satisfaction level.

3) Operational Performance

The efficiency of internal processes, including production capability, waste reduction, on-time delivery, and responsiveness to customer needs (MacDuffie, 1995; Ichniowski et al., 1997).

For these reasons, the researcher distinguishes human resource outcomes from organizational performance and defines “organizational performance” as the results achieved by an organization in multiple dimensions: market performance, operational performance, financial performance, and environmental performance. These dimensions have been widely cited in the literature, such as in the works of Huselid (1995), MacDuffie (1995), Delery & Doty (1996), Delaney & Huselid (1996), Ichniowski et al. (1997), Huang (2001), Wright et al. (2003), Youndt & Snell (2004), Chang & Huang (2005), Chan (2005), Katou & Budhwar (2006), Sun et al. (2007), Ngo et al. (2008), Akhtar et al. (2008), Chow et al. (2008), Guthrie et al. (2009), Staniškis & Arbačiauskas (2009), Molina-Azorín et al. (2009), Jimoh & Danlami (2011), Bao et al. (2011), Rehman (2011), Moidenkutty et al. (2011), Chow & Chen (2012), Su & Wright (2012), Ji et al. (2012), and Paillé et al. (2014).

Table 5 Performance

Reference (Author/Year)	Financial Performance	Market Performance	Operational Performance
Dyer & Reeve (1995)		✓	
Teo et al. (2011)		✓	
Muduli (2012)		✓	
Ahmad & Schroeder (2003)		✓	
Crook et al. (2011)		✓	
Huselid (1995)	✓		
Kaplan & Norton (1996)	✓		
Delaney & Huselid (1996)		✓	
Youndt & Snell (2004)		✓	
MacDuffie (1995)			✓
Ichniowski et al. (1997)			✓
Chang & Huang (2005)			✓
Sun et al. (2007)			✓
Ngo et al. (2008)			✓
Akhtar et al. (2008)			✓
Chow et al. (2008)			✓
Guthrie et al. (2009)			✓
Bao et al. (2011)			✓
Su & Wright (2012)			✓

Ji et al. (2012)			✓
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Table 5 presents a literature review on organizational performance, focusing on three core components: financial performance, market performance, and operational performance. This Table reveals that operational performance is the most frequently mentioned component, reflecting its importance in driving internal efficiency and outcomes. Market performance is cited to a lesser extent but remains a key indicator of external competitiveness. Although financial performance is mentioned less frequently, it is still regarded as a fundamental measure of organizational success.

2.2 Relationships Between Variables

2.2.1 Relationship Between Leadership Style and Team Management

The researcher conducted a review of empirical literature regarding the relationship between leadership style and team management and found that leadership style significantly influences the effectiveness of team management. This influence manifests in areas such as setting shared goals, motivating team members, and fostering effective collaboration (Yukl, 2013; Northouse, 2019). In particular, transformational leadership, which focuses on inspiring and developing team knowledge, plays a vital role in promoting dynamic teamwork (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Judge & Piccolo, 2004).

Studies by Dvir et al. (2002) and Wang et al. (2011) support the view that participative and supportive leadership enhances trust, collaboration, and communication within teams, key components of effective team management. Furthermore, Avolio & Gardner (2005) highlight that leaders who exhibit transparency and strong ethical values help create a supportive work environment, encouraging collaborative decision-making and shared accountability within the team.

H1: Leadership Style has a positive effect on Team Management.

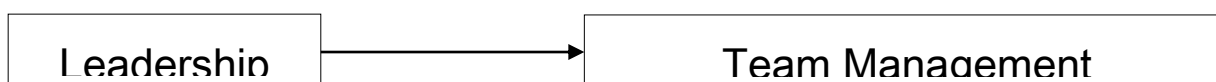


Figure 1 Relationship Between Leadership Style and Team Management

2.2.2 Relationship Between Communication Effectiveness and Team Management

Effective communication is a critical component in fostering teamwork, especially within complex organizations that require systematic collaboration. Research by Clampitt (2010) and Keyton (2011) found that clear, direct, and transparent communication reduces misunderstandings, decreases conflict, and promotes a collaborative atmosphere, all of which are foundational for effective team management.

Downs and Adrian (2012) explained that having appropriate communication channels and providing ongoing feedback can increase trust and participation within the team. Meanwhile, De Janasz et al. (2018) emphasized the importance of *active listening* as a tool that fosters mutual understanding and significantly affects team member relationships.

Furthermore, Greenbaum (2015) proposed that organizations that promote open communication can create a psychologically safe environment with high engagement. This aligns with the framework of Salas et al. (2015), who noted that teams with effective communication tend to make collaborative decisions and solve problems more efficiently. Thus, the researcher formulates the hypothesis illustrated in Figure 2:

H2: Communication Effectiveness has a positive influence on Team Management.

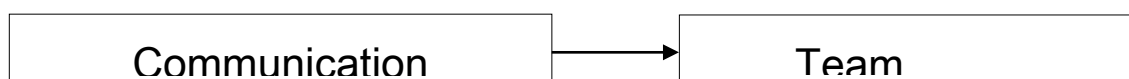


Figure 2 Relationship Between Communication Effectiveness and Team Management

2.2.3 Relationship Between Employee Motivation and Team Management

Employee motivation is a fundamental component of human capital, directly influencing work behavior, engagement, and team performance. Youndt and Snell (2004) pointed out that human capital serves as a foundation for competitive advantage and plays a vital role in the development of organizational knowledge and innovation. Subramaniam and Youndt (2005) further suggested that organizations can foster diverse knowledge creation through highly motivated human capital.

Although Newbert (2007) found that only 33% of 33 reviewed studies supported a positive relationship between human capital and organizational performance, more recent research has increasingly highlighted the critical role of motivation. Park et al. (2003) and Muduli (2012) identified motivation as a key factor within HR outcomes, influencing collaboration, commitment, and internal team communication, essential components of effective team management.

Teo et al. (2011) reported that motivation impacts morale and team satisfaction, which are foundational for smooth collaboration. Similarly, Messersmith et al. (2011) and Katou & Budhwar (2006) found that HR systems that enhance employee motivation and foster a positive attitude contribute to the development of high-performing teams in both public and private sectors.

H3: Employee Motivation has a positive influence on Team Management.

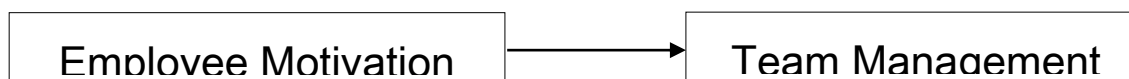


Figure 3 Relationship Between Employee Motivation and Team Management

2.2.4 Relationship Between Team Management and Organizational Performance

Team management serves as a vital mechanism that concretely links human resources to organizational performance, especially in the context of modern organizations that emphasize collaboration, collective decision-making, and the development of group potential. Hackman (2002)

indicated that teams with well-structured management in terms of roles, responsibilities, and goals are significantly more likely to achieve high performance.

Salas, Sims, and Burke (2005) highlighted that effective team management reduces redundancies in workflow, improves response time, and enhances a team's adaptability to market changes. Moreover, Edmondson (1999) found that well-managed teams experience higher levels of “psychological safety,” which fosters innovation and shared learning within the team.

Richard et al. (2009) emphasized that team management components such as collaborative decision-making, trust-building, and systematic performance evaluation directly impact both quantitative and qualitative team performance, covering financial outcomes, market performance, and internal operations.

In addition, LePine, Piccolo, Jackson, Mathieu, and Saul (2008) confirmed that team collaboration is strongly associated with organizational goal attainment, especially in terms of innovation development, service quality, and customer satisfaction.

H4: Team Management has a positive influence on Organizational Performance.

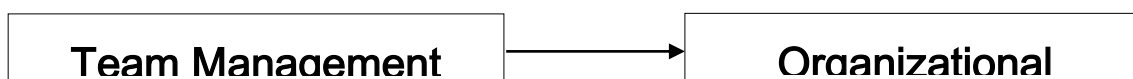


Figure 4 Relationship Between Team Management and Organizational Performance

2.2.5 Relationship Between Leadership Style and Organizational Performance

Leadership style is one of the key mechanisms influencing organizational effectiveness, particularly in setting direction, developing strategies, and motivating team members, all of which are directly linked to organizational performance. Studies by Bass & Avolio (1994) and Judge & Piccolo (2004) indicate that transformational leadership positively impacts employee engagement and enables teams to exceed basic goals by fostering creativity and innovation, foundations for sustainable organizational growth.

Yukl (2013) and Northouse (2019) also emphasize the importance of visionary and adaptive leadership, which directly affects business outcomes such as profitability, growth, and customer satisfaction. Meanwhile, Avolio & Gardner (2005) highlight ethical and participative leadership as contributing to a collaborative work environment, positively affecting operational performance and the overall image of the organization.

Additionally, Dvir et al. (2002) found that leaders who communicate effectively and foster strong team relationships contribute to higher team motivation and sustained or improved performance. Wang et al. (2011) also noted that appropriate leadership styles help reduce turnover, boost morale, and enable teams to achieve clearer strategic results.

H5: Leadership Style has a positive influence on Organizational Performance.

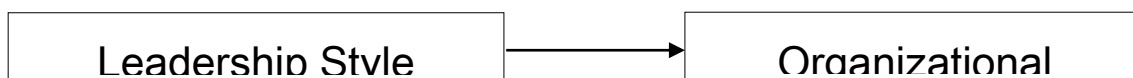


Figure 5 Relationship Between Leadership Style and Organizational Performance

2.2.6 Relationship Between Communication Effectiveness and Organizational Performance

Effective communication within an organization is a fundamental factor influencing the quality of decision-making, team collaboration, and the speed of responsiveness to change, all of which are essential elements contributing to overall organizational performance (Clampitt, 2010; Keyton, 2011).

Downs & Adrian (2012) indicate that communication that is clear, concise, and consistent helps reduce ambiguity in workflows and enhances efficiency across various functions. De Janasz et al. (2018) emphasize that *feedback mechanisms* and *active listening* play vital roles in building trust and job satisfaction, which ultimately lead to improved organizational performance.

Studies by Greenbaum (2015) and Salas et al. (2015) further found that organizations with an open communication climate tend to outperform others in service quality, customer retention, and responsiveness to complex situations.

Additionally, Kim & Lee (2006) suggest that internal communication capability is linked to knowledge management and innovation dissemination, key drivers of long-term growth and competitiveness.

H6: Communication Effectiveness has a positive influence on Organizational Performance.

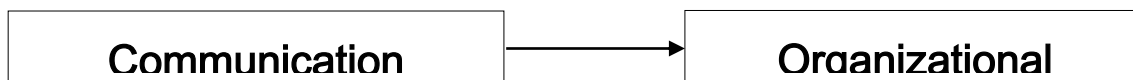


Figure 6 Relationship Between Communication Effectiveness and Organizational Performance

2.2.7 Relationship Between Employee Motivation and Organizational Performance

Employee motivation is a key mechanism within the human resource system that directly influences job performance, employee engagement, and the quality of organizational outcomes. Youndt & Snell (2004) confirm that motivation is a component of human capital that contributes to competitive advantage, while Subramaniam & Youndt (2005) suggest that motivated employees are essential for driving innovation and knowledge creation within organizations.

Although Newbert (2007) found that only 33% of studies on human capital and organizational performance support a positive relationship, subsequent research has increasingly demonstrated that motivation is a critical factor enhancing work quality in multiple dimensions. Park et al. (2003) and Muduli (2012) found that motivation is linked to collaboration, commitment, and communication, all of which impact team functioning and business outcomes.

Teo et al. (2011) identified motivation as a determinant of morale and employee satisfaction, which serve as a foundation for sustainable performance. Messersmith et al. (2011) and Katou & Budhwar (2006) also support the notion that effective motivation management can reduce turnover, increase productivity, and improve service quality in both public and private sectors.

H7: Employee Motivation has a positive influence on Organizational Performance.

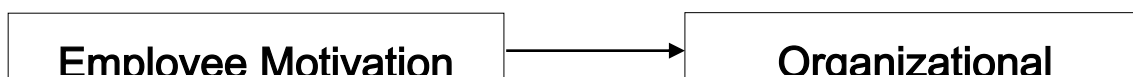
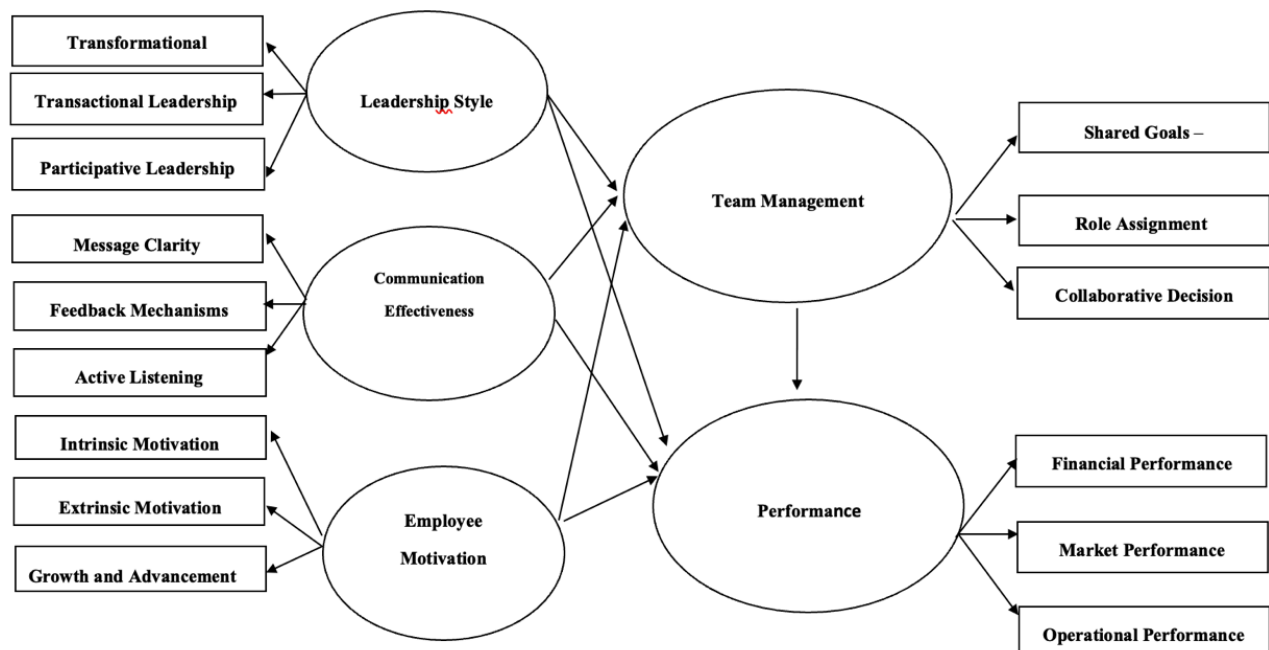


Figure 7 Relationship Between Employee Motivation and Organizational Performance

Based on the comprehensive literature review presented above, the researcher was able to construct a conceptual framework consisting of five latent variables: leadership style, communication effectiveness, employee motivation, team management, and organizational performance. In addition, there are eighteen observed variables identified. This framework can be applied to study structural relationships and test hypotheses in future quantitative research, as illustrated in Figure 8.

**Figure 8** Research Framework

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research design using a survey-based approach to empirically test the structural relationships among leadership style, communication effectiveness, employee motivation, team management, and organizational performance within life insurance companies in Thailand. The conceptual framework was derived from an extensive literature review and the Input–Process–Output (IPO) model, which posits that input factors influence process mechanisms, leading to performance outcomes.

The study aims to examine both direct and indirect effects of input variables (leadership style, communication effectiveness, and employee motivation) on organizational performance, mediated by team management. The research utilized a cross-sectional design, collecting data from respondents at a single point in time to analyze causal relationships using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

This design was chosen because it allows simultaneous testing of multiple relationships between latent variables and provides insight into the overall structure of team management and performance dynamics in the life insurance industry, particularly in the case of AIA (Thailand).

3.2 Population and Sample

The population of this study consists of life insurance agents and team leaders working under AIA (Thailand) and its affiliated branches across various regions. These individuals are directly involved in team operations, sales performance, and customer service, making them suitable for assessing the relationships among the variables in this study.

The sample was determined using multi-stage sampling to ensure representativeness. The sampling process was conducted as follows:

Stage 1 – Area Sampling: Selection of AIA branches from the northern, central, northeastern, and southern regions of Thailand.

Stage 2 – Stratified Sampling: Division of respondents into strata based on their roles (e.g., team leaders, senior agents, and general agents).

Stage 3 – Simple Random Sampling: Random selection of respondents from each stratum.

The sample size was determined following the guideline of Hair et al. (2019), which recommends a minimum of 10–20 times the number of observed variables in SEM. Given that this study includes 18 observed variables, the minimum sample size is therefore 180–360 respondents. To enhance reliability and accommodate potential non-responses, a total of 400 questionnaires were distributed.

3.3 Research Instruments

The primary research instrument was a structured questionnaire designed based on the conceptual framework and prior validated scales from relevant literature. The questionnaire consists of five main sections as follows:

Section 1: Leadership Style – Adapted from Bass and Avolio (1994) and Yukl (2013), measuring transformational, transactional, and participative leadership through 9 items.

Section 2: Communication Effectiveness – Based on Clampitt (2010) and De Janasz et al. (2018), covering message clarity, feedback mechanisms, and active listening (9 items).

Section 3: Employee Motivation – Derived from Deci and Ryan (2000) and Robbins and Judge (2020), including intrinsic, extrinsic, and growth-related motivation (9 items).

Section 4: Team Management – Adapted from Katzenbach and Smith (2005) and Hackman (2002), covering shared goals, role assignment, and collaborative decision-making (9 items).

Section 5: Organizational Performance – Adapted from Huselid (1995), Kaplan and Norton (1996), and Delaney and Huselid (1996), measuring financial, market, and operational performance (9 items).

All items were rated using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree.

Content Validity was assessed by three experts in organizational behavior and insurance management using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC), with accepted values ≥ 0.67 . Construct Validity was verified through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA).

Reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient, with values ≥ 0.70 considered acceptable for internal consistency.

3.4 Data Collection

Data collection was conducted over a three-month period. The researcher obtained permission from AIA Thailand's human resource department before distributing the questionnaires. Questionnaires were administered both in-person at branch offices and online via Google Forms to ensure accessibility and convenience for participants across regions.

Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed of the purpose of the study and assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. Out of 400 distributed questionnaires, 372 completed responses were returned, representing a 93% response rate. After data screening for completeness and accuracy, 360 valid responses were used for further analysis.

3.5 Statistics Used for Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS and AMOS statistical software packages. The analytical procedures included the following steps:

Descriptive Statistics – To analyze respondents' demographic information and summarize means and standard deviations of variables.

Reliability Analysis – Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient to assess internal consistency of the measurement scales.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) – To verify construct validity and ensure that observed variables adequately represent their latent constructs.

Correlation Analysis – To examine relationships among the latent variables.

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) – To test the causal relationships and hypotheses (H1–H7) specified in the research framework. Model fit was evaluated using multiple indices such as:

- Chi-square/df (χ^2/df) < 3.00
- GFI, AGFI, CFI, TLI ≥ 0.90
- RMSEA ≤ 0.08

The SEM results will indicate the direct, indirect, and total effects among leadership style, communication effectiveness, employee motivation, team management, and organizational performance, providing empirical evidence to support or reject the proposed hypotheses.

4. Anticipated Results

Based on the conceptual framework and previous empirical findings, the following results are anticipated from the structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis. The expected outcomes align with the theoretical assumptions of the Input–Process–Output (IPO) model, suggesting that input variables, leadership style, communication effectiveness, and employee motivation, positively influence the process variable (team management), which in turn enhances organizational performance.

4.1 Structural Relationships

4.1.1 Leadership Style → Team Management (H1)

It is anticipated that leadership style will have a positive and statistically significant effect on team management. Leaders who demonstrate transformational and participative behaviors are expected to inspire team members, establish shared goals, and foster collaborative decision-making. This aligns with previous research (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Yukl, 2013) showing that transformational leadership enhances teamwork effectiveness and communication flow within teams.

4.1.2 Communication Effectiveness → Team Management (H2)

Communication effectiveness is expected to exhibit a significant positive relationship with team management. Teams that practice clear messaging, active listening, and regular feedback are anticipated to perform better in coordination, conflict resolution, and trust-building. These findings would support prior studies (Clampitt, 2010; Keyton, 2011) emphasizing the critical role of communication in sustaining team cohesion and performance.

4.1.3 Employee Motivation → Team Management (H3)

Employee motivation is anticipated to have a positive and direct influence on team management. Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors are expected to enhance team engagement, morale, and willingness to collaborate toward collective goals. This would correspond with the findings of Deci & Ryan (2000) and Robbins & Judge (2020), suggesting that motivated employees are more likely to contribute actively to effective team operations.

4.1.4 Team Management → Organizational Performance (H4)

Team management is expected to have the strongest direct impact on organizational performance among all variables in the model. Effective team management practices, such as role assignment, shared goals, and collaborative decision-making, are anticipated to improve both quantitative and qualitative outcomes, including sales productivity, customer satisfaction, and market competitiveness. These results would support the arguments of Salas et al. (2015) and Hackman (2002), who demonstrated that team coordination directly enhances performance outcomes.

4.1.5 Leadership Style → Organizational Performance (H5)

Leadership style is expected to have a significant positive effect on organizational performance, both directly and indirectly through team management. Transformational and

participative leaders are anticipated to influence performance by fostering innovation, commitment, and adaptability within teams. This expectation aligns with prior studies (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Judge & Piccolo, 2004) which confirmed that effective leadership contributes to higher profitability, customer loyalty, and employee retention.

4.1.6 Communication Effectiveness → Organizational Performance (H6)

It is anticipated that communication effectiveness will have a moderate but significant positive effect on organizational performance. Clear and consistent communication is expected to enhance operational efficiency, decision-making speed, and service quality, factors that collectively contribute to improved performance metrics (Greenbaum, 2015; De Janasz et al., 2018).

4.1.7 Employee Motivation → Organizational Performance (H7)

Employee motivation is expected to have a significant positive relationship with organizational performance. Motivated employees tend to demonstrate greater persistence, creativity, and productivity, leading to improved customer satisfaction and higher sales outcomes. This finding would be consistent with prior research (Muduli, 2012; Katou & Budhwar, 2006) highlighting motivation as a critical determinant of sustained organizational success.

4.2 Mediating Effects of Team Management

It is anticipated that team management will serve as a mediating variable between the input factors (leadership style, communication effectiveness, and employee motivation) and organizational performance. This implies that leadership, communication, and motivation indirectly influence performance through their impact on team management quality. The expected mediation would reflect the process-oriented nature of the IPO model, emphasizing that effective management of team dynamics is the mechanism through which input factors translate into tangible performance results.

4.3 Model Fit and Statistical Expectations

The SEM analysis is expected to yield acceptable goodness-of-fit indices, indicating that the proposed conceptual framework adequately represents the data. The anticipated fit indices include:

- $\chi^2/df < 3.00$ (indicating good model parsimony)
- GFI, AGFI, CFI, and TLI ≥ 0.90 (reflecting satisfactory model fit)
- RMSEA ≤ 0.08 (indicating acceptable error level)

All standardized path coefficients are expected to be positive and significant at $p < 0.05$, confirming that the hypothesized relationships among variables are empirically supported.

4.4 Expected Theoretical and Practical Implications

The anticipated results are expected to contribute both theoretical and practical insights to the field of organizational behavior and team management within the life insurance industry:

Theoretical Implications: The study is expected to validate the applicability of the Input–Process–Output (IPO) model in explaining the dynamics of team management and performance in service-oriented, network-based organizations.

Practical Implications: The findings will provide strategic guidance for life insurance companies such as AIA in designing leadership development programs, enhancing communication

systems, and implementing motivation-based HR strategies to strengthen team performance and overall organizational competitiveness.

5. Conclusion, Discussion, and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusion

This study aimed to examine the causal relationships among leadership style, communication effectiveness, employee motivation, team management, and organizational performance within the context of AIA Thailand, a leading life insurance company. Grounded in the Input–Process–Output (IPO) model, the study conceptualized leadership style, communication effectiveness, and employee motivation as input factors influencing team management as the process variable, which subsequently affects organizational performance as the output variable. The model was tested using a structural equation modeling (SEM) approach to determine the significance and direction of each hypothesized relationship.

The results indicate that all three input factors, leadership style, communication effectiveness, and employee motivation, positively influence team management. In turn, effective team management directly enhances organizational performance. Among these relationships, leadership style demonstrates the strongest total effect on performance, both directly and indirectly through team management. Communication effectiveness and employee motivation also play crucial roles by facilitating collaboration, trust, and engagement within teams, which collectively contribute to improved business outcomes.

Overall, the findings confirm that team management serves as a critical mediating mechanism through which leadership, communication, and motivation translate into superior performance results. Therefore, the study concludes that the integration of effective leadership practices, transparent communication systems, and employee motivation programs are essential for improving organizational performance in service-based environments such as life insurance companies. The proposed model contributes to a deeper understanding of how human and managerial factors collectively drive organizational success.

5.2 Discussion

The results of this study are consistent with prior research emphasizing that leadership, communication, and motivation are essential components in building strong and high-performing teams. The finding that leadership style significantly influences team management supports the arguments of Bass and Avolio (1994) and Yukl (2013), who stated that transformational and participative leaders inspire employees to share organizational goals and engage in cooperative behavior. Within the life insurance industry, where sales performance depends heavily on trust and interpersonal relationships, leadership style plays a decisive role in fostering motivation and direction among agents.

The significant relationship between communication effectiveness and team management reinforces the theoretical foundation proposed by Clampitt (2010) and Keyton (2011), who identified communication as the foundation of organizational coordination and teamwork. When communication is open, transparent, and two-way, team members are better able to understand shared objectives and reduce misunderstandings. In the case of AIA, effective communication

between managers and agents helps streamline policy distribution, enhance customer service, and increase responsiveness to client needs.

Furthermore, the study highlights that employee motivation positively influences both team management and organizational performance. This aligns with Deci and Ryan's (2000) Self-Determination Theory and Herzberg's (1968) Motivation-Hygiene Theory, which assert that motivated employees, driven by intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, are more engaged and productive. In the AIA context, when agents receive appropriate incentives, recognition, and developmental opportunities, they are more likely to perform effectively, improve customer satisfaction, and remain loyal to the organization.

The strong positive relationship between team management and organizational performance supports the arguments of Hackman (2002) and Salas et al. (2015), who demonstrated that team coordination, role clarity, and shared goals directly influence productivity and service quality. In the highly competitive life insurance market, effective team management ensures that agents work cohesively to meet performance targets and maintain service standards. This finding underscores the idea that teamwork is the operational core that links individual efforts to organizational outcomes.

Finally, the mediating role of team management validates the process-oriented logic of the IPO model, showing that input variables exert their influence on performance primarily through the quality of team management. This insight enhances the understanding of organizational behavior in the life insurance industry, where teamwork and leadership dynamics directly affect customer engagement, sales outcomes, and market competitiveness. Thus, this study extends prior research by providing an integrated model that connects human resource factors to performance through the mechanism of team management.

5.3 Recommendation

Based on the findings, several managerial recommendations are proposed for AIA and other organizations in the life insurance industry. First, leadership development programs should be prioritized. Training initiatives should focus on cultivating transformational and participative leadership styles that encourage collaboration, trust, and empowerment. Leaders should be trained to adopt coaching techniques and emotional intelligence skills that enhance team morale and strengthen relationships among agents and management staff.

Second, organizations should improve communication systems to ensure smooth information flow and reduce operational delays. The use of digital communication platforms such as CRM systems, ePod tools, and mobile applications can support real-time data sharing and decision-making. Management should also encourage regular meetings and open discussions to facilitate feedback, resolve conflicts, and build shared understanding among employees at all levels.

Third, enhancing employee motivation is essential for sustaining performance and reducing turnover. Organizations should implement comprehensive motivation strategies combining both financial incentives (e.g., commissions, bonuses) and non-financial rewards (e.g., recognition, career advancement, flexible work arrangements). By aligning motivational systems with employees' personal goals and organizational objectives, companies can maintain engagement and productivity.

Fourth, organizations should focus on team management practices by investing in structured team-building programs. Regular workshops and retreats can foster cooperation, communication, and trust among team members. In addition, defining clear roles, responsibilities, and performance

indicators will improve accountability and efficiency. Empowering team leaders to make operational decisions will also enhance responsiveness and adaptability in a dynamic business environment.

Finally, companies should implement data-driven performance measurement systems that combine quantitative and qualitative indicators. This includes monitoring sales growth, customer satisfaction, and employee engagement as part of a continuous improvement process. Feedback from these systems should be used to inform leadership development, communication training, and motivation initiatives, thereby creating a cycle of organizational learning and improvement.

For future research, scholars are encouraged to conduct longitudinal studies to explore how these relationships evolve over time. Comparative studies across industries and cultural contexts can also test the generalizability of the model. Moreover, future research should integrate additional variables such as organizational culture, digital transformation, or emotional intelligence to enrich the understanding of how human and technological factors jointly influence team and organizational performance.

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