



## The Causal Relationship Model of Employee Participation, Trust in Coworkers, and Task Performance: Empirical from Salesperson in Thailand

Napatcha Pancharoen<sup>1</sup> and Peevara Parnitvitidkun<sup>2\*</sup>

<sup>1,2\*</sup>Faculty of Management Sciences, Surindra Rajabhat University, Thailand

(Received: May 26, 2024; Revised: August 26, 2024; Accepted: September 9, 2024)

### Abstract

In today's rapidly evolving business landscape, employee participation and trust are crucial for team performance and long-term success. However, the complex relationship between these factors requires further investigation. Therefore, this study examines salespersons in Thailand's merchandise industry with the key objective to determine the causal relationship model of employee participation, trust in coworkers, and task performance. This quantitative approach study analyzed empirical data from a sample of 388 salespersons, using questionnaires and structural equation modeling to ensure an acceptable data fit. The study results found that employee participation positively influenced employees' task performance with a path coefficient of 0.81, and employee participation positively influenced trust in coworkers with a path coefficient of 0.77. However, trust in coworkers did not influence their performance and was not the mediator between participation and performance, with a path coefficient of -0.01. This research value sheds light on the importance of salespersons offering organizations actionable insights to tailor strategies that promote participation, cultivate trust, and foster long-term employee performance.

**Keywords:** 1) Employee participation 2) Trust in coworkers 3) Task performance 4) Salesperson

---

<sup>1</sup> Lecturer, E-mail: napatcha@sru.ac.th

<sup>2\*</sup> Lecturer, E-mail: peevara.p@sru.ac.th (Corresponding Author)

## Introduction

In today's rapidly evolving business landscape, employee participation and trust are crucial for team performance and long-term success. However, the complex relationship between these factors requires further investigation. The Ability, Motivation, and Opportunity (AMO) framework, a powerful analytical tool in Human Resource Management (HRM), emphasizes enhancing employee abilities, motivation, and opportunities to achieve sustainable HRM outcomes (Bos-Nehles, et al., 2023, pp. 725-739). This aligns with the growing focus on employee commitment, trust, and well-being, which can positively impact individual task performance and enhance employee participation (Yang and Yang, 2024, pp. 269-290).

In today's complex, interdependent work environments, cultivating trust is indispensable for fostering productive relationships and a positive work atmosphere (Hoang, et al., 2022, pp. 1-13). Trust is a multifaceted concept that encompasses various dimensions. It involves a willingness to rely on others, a belief in their competence and integrity, and a sense of psychological safety (Moorman, Zaltman and Deshpande, 1992, pp. 314-328; Morgan and Hunt, 1994, pp. 20-38). Trust in coworkers refers to individuals' reliance and vulnerability towards their colleagues within professional relationships. This trust is essential for collaboration, knowledge sharing, and overall team performance (Majeed, Kayani and Haider, 2021, pp. 1-22). The literature establishes a clear connection between positive workplace exchanges, characterized by trust

and participation, and employee well-being, which is a critical driver of task performance. This includes a sense of fairness, trust, and reduced absences. The literature establishes a clear connection between positive workplace exchanges, characterized by fairness and trust, and employee well-being, a critical driver of both health and workplace performance (Guest, 2017, pp. 22-38). Such reciprocity within the employment relationship aligns with social exchange theory, underscoring the importance of mutual trust and support in the workplace.

Employee participation, the active involvement of employees in decision-making and problem-solving, has been consistently linked to positive outcomes such as job satisfaction, retention, organizational commitment, and innovation (Benn, Teo and Martin, 2015, pp. 492-510; Curzi and Ferrarini, 2024, pp. 51-67; Guchait and Cho, 2010, pp. 1228-1247; Harter, Schmidt and Hayes, 2002, p. 268). Employees who feel their contributions are valued are more likely to experience higher motivation and a profound sense of ownership over their work. This positive attitude and perception change can also reduce turnover intention (Chen, Fay and Wang, 2011, pp. 85-94). Participation's positive influence extends across multiple domains, from improved health (Hunter, et al., 2018, pp. 349-363) to enhanced service behaviors (Xu, et al., 2023, pp. 218-234) and superior performance outcomes (Lau and Tan, 2012, pp. 151-185). Motivation and perception are central to the link between participation and volunteering (Sekar and Dyaram, 2021, pp. 512-528). Frameworks like the expectancy model (Jabroun and Balakrishnan, 2000, pp.



56-66) and an analysis of organizational factors (Little, Wordsworth and Malinen, 2020, pp. 37-39) offer further insights into participation, motivation, and performance dynamics.

While existing research has explored the relationships between trust, participation, and performance, these dynamics still need to be investigated within the unique cultural context of Thailand's merchandise industry. Studies examining individual factors like mindfulness (Charoensukmongkol, 2024, pp. 52-68) or improvisational behavior (Charoensukmongkol and Pandey, 2023, pp. 766-784) on Thai salesperson performance highlight the need for a more nuanced understanding of the interplay between employee participation, trust in coworkers, and task performance.

This is particularly crucial in Thailand's merchandise industry, a cornerstone of the nation's economy, where salespersons are pivotal in driving sales across diverse sectors. The industry's high reliance on interpersonal interactions underscores the importance of trust and participation. However, Thailand's collectivist culture, emphasizing group harmony and deference to authority, may influence these dynamics differently from Western contexts. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by examining the interplay between employee participation, trust in coworkers, and task performance within the Thai merchandise industry. By understanding these relationships in this culturally specific setting, we can develop tailored HRM strategies that enhance performance within this unique context, thereby potentially improving the overall performance of the industry.

## Literature Review

### Employee participation

Employee participation, defined as the active involvement of employees in decision-making and problem-solving processes, has been consistently linked to a wide range of positive outcomes. These outcomes encompass enhanced job satisfaction, increased retention rates, stronger organizational commitment, and heightened innovation (Guchait and Cho, 2010, pp. 1228-1247; Harter, Schmidt and Hayes, 2002, p. 268). The positive impact of participation is attributed to employees feeling valued and empowered, leading to increased motivation, a sense of ownership over their work, and reduced turnover intention (Chen, Fay and Wang, 2011, pp. 85-94).

In the sales context, employee participation is particularly crucial due to the dynamic and customer-centric nature of the work. Research has shown that when salespersons are involved in setting sales targets, developing strategies, and making decisions related to their work, it can significantly enhance their job satisfaction, motivation, and ultimately, their sales performance (Herjanto, Amin and Fatimah, 2024, pp. 183-198; Høgevold, et al., 2024, pp. 201-224). This active involvement allows them to leverage their expertise and knowledge of customer needs and market trends and fosters a sense of ownership and commitment to achieving organizational goals. Moreover, where adaptability and responsiveness to market changes are essential in sales, employee participation can be a key driver of innovation. By involving salespersons in identifying opportunities for improvement and developing

creative solutions, organizations can tap into their frontline insights and enhance their ability to adapt to evolving customer demands. For example, a salesperson who regularly interacts with customers may have valuable insights into emerging trends or unmet needs, which can be leveraged to develop new products or services. Additionally, involving salespersons in developing sales strategies can lead to more effective and targeted approaches, as they deeply understand the customer base and the competitive landscape. Participation's positive influence also extends to enhanced service behaviors (Xu, et al., 2023, pp. 218-234) and superior performance outcomes (Lau and Tan, 2012, pp. 151-185). Frameworks like the expectancy model (Jabroun and Balakrishnan, 2000, pp. 56-66) and an analysis of organizational factors (Little, Wordsworth and Malinen, 2020, pp. 37-39) offer further insights into the dynamics of participation, motivation, and performance.

Thus, we hypothesize the following:

H1: Employee participation positively influences employee performance.

### **Trust in Coworkers**

A significant aspect of participation's influence on organizational success is its ability to build trust within the workplace. Trust, broadly defined, involves a willingness to rely on others and accept a degree of vulnerability (Moorman, Zaltman and Deshpande, 1992, pp. 314-328; Morgan and Hunt, 1994, pp. 20-38). This sense of trust lays the foundation for positive work environments where employees feel safe to take risks, collaborate, and share information, ultimately empowering them and fostering a sense of value within the organization.

In the sales context, trust is particularly crucial due to the interpersonal nature of the work and the reliance on colleagues for support and information sharing. When salespersons trust their coworkers, they are more likely to engage in collaborative behaviors, such as sharing leads, providing feedback, and offering assistance, which can enhance individual and team performance (Drollinger and Comer (2013, pp. 50-59). Moreover, trust among sales team members can create a positive team climate, characterized by mutual support and cooperation, which has been linked to increased sales performance (Schwepker and Good, 2013, pp. 535-546).

Research has shown that employee participation can play a significant role in fostering trust among coworkers. When salespersons are involved in decision-making processes and feel their voices are heard, they are more likely to trust their colleagues and the organization (Ahuja and Khamba, 2008, pp. 709-756; Yang and Yang, 2024, pp. 269-290). This increased trust leads to improved collaboration and communication, enhancing individual and team performance.

Furthermore, trust in coworkers can act as a mediating mechanism between employee participation and task performance. When employees participate in decision-making, they are more likely to trust their coworkers, as they feel that their opinions and contributions are valued. This increased trust can then lead to improved collaboration and communication, which can enhance individual and team performance.



The sales environment, often characterized by competition and individual targets, presents unique challenges to building trust among coworkers. However, when trust is established, it can lead to increased collaboration, information sharing, and mutual support, ultimately enhancing individual and team performance. For example, in a study of pharmaceutical sales representatives, (Poon, Albaum and Shiu-Fai Chan, 2012, pp. 588-603) found that managing trust in direct selling relationships is crucial.

Specific behaviors significantly shape coworker trust. For instance, research has shown that customer-centric behaviors, such as prioritizing customer needs and providing excellent service, can build trust among sales team members (Guenzi and Georges, 2010, pp. 114-138). On the other hand, overly competitive or self-interested behaviors can damage trust within the team.

Therefore, the literature indicates that participation, by influencing these key factors, is likely to impact trust among coworkers, leading to our hypothesis positively:

H2: Employee participation positively influences trust in coworkers.

### **Task Performance**

Task performance is a critical aspect of organizational behavior and a central concern for managers seeking to enhance employee effectiveness. It encompasses behaviors formally recognized and rewarded by the organization, aligning with the job requirements outlined in job descriptions (Williams and Anderson, 1991, pp. 601-617). These behaviors often involve cognitive skills, knowledge, expertise, and hab-

its that contribute to fulfilling job responsibilities (Al Kahtani and M. M., 2022, pp. 1-18).

In the sales context, task performance is typically measured by sales outcomes, such as revenue generated, number of deals closed, or customer satisfaction ratings. However, it also includes other essential activities contributing to sales success, such as prospecting new clients, building relationships with existing customers, and providing after-sales support. Effective task performance in sales requires a combination of technical skills, including product knowledge and sales techniques, and interpersonal skills, such as communication and persuasion.

Research in the Thai sales context suggests that a complex interplay of individual and contextual factors influences task performance. For instance, Charoensukmongkol (2024, pp. 52-68) found that individual characteristics like trait mindfulness can significantly impact sales performance, particularly among older salespeople. This highlights the potential for mindfulness training to enhance task performance among experienced sales professionals in Thailand. Moreover, Charoensukmongkol and Pandey (2023, pp. 766-784) demonstrated the importance of improvisational behavior in navigating the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, suggesting that adaptability and flexibility are crucial for sales success in a rapidly changing environment like Thailand.

In addition to individual traits, interpersonal factors like trust in coworkers have also been shown to play a significant role in task performance. Drollinger and Comer (2013, pp. 50-59) found that colleague trust fosters

communication and collaboration within sales teams, improving sales performance. Similarly, Schwepker and Good (2013, pp. 535-546) demonstrated that trust in the organization, often built upon trust in coworkers, can positively influence salesperson performance through its impact on ethical decision-making and moral judgment. This suggests that fostering a trusting and supportive work environment is crucial for maximizing task performance among salespersons in Thailand.

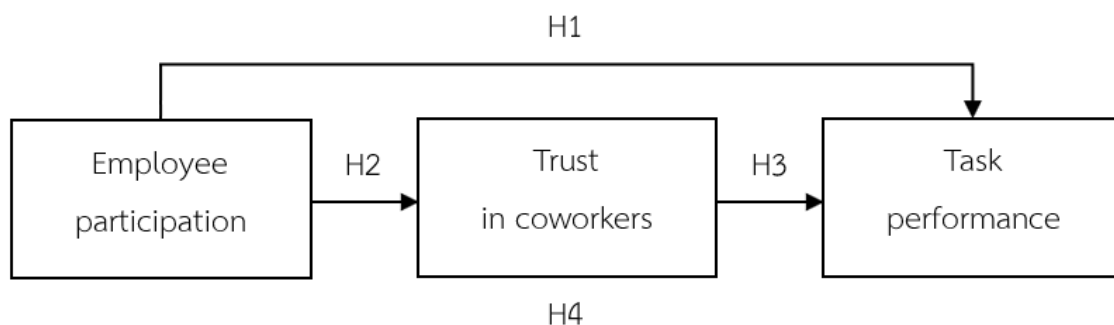
The literature suggests that employee participation and trust in coworkers can positively influence task performance. Employee participation can enhance task performance by increasing motivation, ownership, and commitment to organizational goals. When salespersons are involved in decision-making processes, they are more likely to feel invested in the outcomes and motivated to achieve their targets. Trust in coworkers can also improve task performance by fostering collaboration, knowledge sharing, and mutual support among

team members. In a high-trust environment, salespersons are more likely to share information and resources, collaborate on strategies, and help each other overcome challenges, all of which can contribute to improved sales performance.

The literature review suggests that both employee participation and trust in coworkers are positively related to task performance. The relationship between participation and performance may be particularly relevant in the Thai context, where a collectivist culture emphasizes teamwork and collaboration. Trust in coworkers, meanwhile, may be especially important in sales environments where individuals rely on each other for information, support, and resources. Hence, it leads to hypotheses 3 and 4:

H3: Trust in coworkers positively influences task performance.

H4: Trust in coworkers mediates the relationship between employee participation and task performance.



**Figure 1** Conceptual framework

## Methods

### Population and Sample

This study focuses on the crucial role of salespersons in Thailand's merchandise industry and their significant contribution to

the country's economy. At the end of 2023, there were 1,145 firms listed in the merchandise industry by the Department of Business Development (2024, p. 1). Each firm employed approximately 2 to 10 salespeople. While pre-



vious studies have explored the relationships between trust, participation, and performance in different contexts, this study will specifically investigate the Thai merchandise industry to identify challenges and cultural factors that shape these dynamics. The study will involve full-time salespersons working in merchandise businesses across Thailand, offering a comprehensive understanding of this critical sector.

It is essential to maintain a 10-20:1 ratio of observations to variables is essential to ensure a more accurate sample size for studies with an infinite population. In this study, a sample of 390 respondents was selected using simple random sampling, as recommended by Hair, et al. (2019, p. 391). This method helps to improve the representativeness and generalizability of the results.

### **Research Instrument**

The questionnaire comprised four sections. The first collected demographic data: employee gender, age, education level, and work tenure. The remaining sections measured the following key constructs: Employee participation (12 items): This scale was adapted from the works of Delery and Doty (1996, pp. 802-835); Moolprahas (2002, pp. 115-119); and Ma Prieto and Pilar Pérez-Santana (2014, pp. 184-208) to ensure suitability for this study's context. Trust in coworkers (5 items): This scale drew upon the work of McAllister (1995, pp. 24-59); Podsakoff, et al. (1990, pp. 107-142); and Robinson and Rousseau (1994, pp. 245-259) with modifications for contextual relevance. Employee performance (5 items): This scale was developed from the research of Carpiní, Parker and Griffin (2017, pp. 825-885); Koop-

mans, et al. (2011, pp. 856-866); Koopmans, et al. (2016, pp. 609-619); Mennens, et al. (2018, pp. 500-520); and Ramos-Villagrasa et al. (2019, pp. 195-205). All items employed a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5), utilizing a closed-ended question format.

This research utilized an online, self-administered questionnaire. The instrument was thoroughly developed based on a comprehensive literature review to operationalize the study's key variables. To ensure the instrument's rigor, a panel of three experts in the management field assessed its content validity. The Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC) was employed, and only items scoring above 0.50 were retained (Rovinelli and Hambleton, 1976, pp. 49-60). Subsequently, a pilot study was conducted using the refined instrument (17 items) to further evaluate its reliability and validity.

### **The Ethical Considerations**

This study received approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee of Surindra Rajabhat University (HE 662052). Prior to participation, all respondents were provided with an informed consent document outlining the study's purpose, procedures, and potential risks/benefits. Participation was voluntary, and respondents could withdraw without explanation or penalty. Strict confidentiality measures were implemented to safeguard participant data.

### **Research Instrument Quality Testing**

The questionnaire underwent pre-testing with a non-sample group of 30 participants. The instrument's Cronbach's Alpha was 0.95,



surpassing the threshold of 0.70 for acceptable reliability set by Hair, et al. (2019, p. 606). Additionally, corrected item-total correlations ranged between 0.39 and 0.82, surpassing the recommended minimum of 0.30 (Cristobal, Flavian and Guinaliu, 2007, pp. 317-340). These results confirm the instrument's reliability and internal consistency.

### Statistics Analysis

In addition, the questionnaires were distributed among participants in this study using Google form links and QR codes. This study collection period was conducted from November 2023 to January 2024. To increase the generalizability of this research model, the data were collected from salespersons who have worked in organizations for more than a year, and in different operating organizations such as pharmaceutical, department stores, banking, hospitality, and automobile in various regions of Thailand as the qualifying respondents.

After 3 months, 388 participants returned complete questionnaires. The preliminary data analysis of the sample profiles was done using descriptive statistics with SPSS, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. The Structural Equation Model (SEM) estimated the model parameters using the Maximum Likelihood Estimates method and used various index values. SEM, Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and correlation were performed in Mplus, involving all variables in our hypothesized model. In addition, the results indicated that average variance extracted (AVE) values are more than 0.50, composite reliability (CR) values

are higher than 0.70, and the square root of AVE is bigger than the relationships with other constructs. The structural equation modeling fit with the empirical data was then analyzed with chi-square/degree of freedom ( $\chi^2/df$ ) less than 2, indicating that the model fit with the empirical data. Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) should be more than 0.95, indicating that the model fits with empirical data. RMSEA and SRMR should be less than 0.07, Hair, et al. (2019, pp. 674-677) indicating that the model fits the empirical data. Path analysis was adopted to assess both direct and indirect effects of the relationships between participation, trust, and performance, which were explored with Mplus.

### Results

After removing poorly answered questionnaires, 388 valid surveys were used for data analyses. Among the employee profiles of 388 participants, 51.00% were female ( $n = 198$ ), 59.00% were 26 – 40 years old ( $n = 229$ ), and 66.80% had bachelor's degrees ( $n = 259$ ). Respondents comprise 48.40% whose work tenure has been with less than 7 years ( $n = 188$ ), while 51.60% has been with more than 7 years ( $n = 200$ ). The mean and standard deviation patterns indicate a relatively high level of employee participation, trust in coworkers, and task performance of salespersons, as shown in Table 1.



**Table 1** Summary of mean and standard deviation

Construct and indicators		Mean	SD
<b>Employee participation</b>			
PAR1	I like to join different work activities.	3.89	0.91
PAR2	I'm always ready to help my colleagues with their work.	4.33	0.80
PAR3	I think it's important to take part in all work activities.	4.17	0.82
PAR4	I work hard to help our company reach its goals by getting involved in different activities.	4.21	0.83
PAR5	I help set boundaries and share responsibilities within our team.	3.99	0.87
PAR6	I get support to bring new ideas to work for making things better.	4.02	0.91
PAR7	I share my ideas to help our team work better together.	3.94	0.89
PAR8	I care about the tasks I'm assigned.	4.44	0.75
PAR9	I understand how to do the tasks I'm given.	4.31	0.79
<b>Trust in coworkers</b>			
TRU1	I feel happy and have a good time when I'm with my colleagues at work.	4.08	0.90
TRU2	I talk to my colleagues about personal things.	3.48	0.88
TRU3	My colleagues and I make a great team.	4.22	0.85
TRU4	My colleagues are honest with me.	3.85	0.86
TRU5	I feel like myself and comfortable when I am close to my colleagues at work.	3.89	0.87
<b>Task performance</b>			
PEF1	I managed to plan my work so that I finished it on time	4.23	0.76
PEF2	I was able to carry out my work efficiently	4.20	0.79
PEF3	I managed my time well	4.21	0.79

In Table 2, a validation factor analysis is conducted using Mplus to verify the convergent and discriminant validity of the questionnaire, where convergent validity requires standardized factor loadings between 0.55 and 0.89. Hair, et al. (2019, p. 663) recommend that the CR range from 0.85 to 0.91, which meets the acceptable level of 0.60 and indicates good internal consistency. Fornell and Larcker (1981, pp. 39-50) suggest that the AVE range

from 0.53 to 0.68, an acceptable convergent validity threshold. To establish discriminant validity, the square root of the AVE for each factor is compared with the factor's inter-construct correlations in Table 3.

**Table 2** Measurement Model Analysis

Construct and indicators	Standardized factor loadings	S.E.	t	R2	Residual	CR	AVE
<b>Employee participation</b>						0.91	0.53
PAR1	0.63	0.04	17.24	0.40	0.62		
PAR2	0.74	0.03	27.42	0.54	0.45		
PAR3	0.67	0.04	19.33	0.45	0.55		
PAR4	0.75	0.03	27.88	0.56	0.43		
PAR5	0.65	0.03	20.16	0.42	0.59		
PAR6	0.71	0.03	21.80	0.50	0.48		
PAR7	0.74	0.03	24.72	0.55	0.47		
PAR8	0.80	0.02	36.44	0.64	0.37		
PAR9	0.85	0.02	45.94	0.73	0.26		
<b>Trust in coworkers</b>						0.85	0.53
TRU1	0.83	0.02	39.17	0.69	0.60		
TRU2	0.55	0.04	13.74	0.30	0.83		
TRU3	0.82	0.02	37.56	0.68	0.58		
TRU4	0.60	0.04	13.46	0.36	0.81		
TRU5	0.79	0.02	33.56	0.63	0.66		
<b>Task performance</b>						0.86	0.68
PEF1	0.78	0.03	32.52	0.61	0.39		
PEF2	0.89	0.02	51.60	0.79	0.21		
PEF3	0.80	0.02	34.62	0.63	0.37		

**Table 3** Discriminant Validity and AVE Square Root Matrix

Variables	Employee participation	Trust in coworkers	Task performance
Employee participation	<b>0.73</b>		
Trust in coworkers	0.64**	<b>0.73</b>	
Task performance	0.69**	0.53**	<b>0.82</b>

**Note:** The square root of AVE is shown as bold numbers along the diagonal.

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

Table 4 shows the study results, which found that employee participation positively influenced employee task performance with a path coefficient of 0.81 at a statistically significant level of 0.01, which accepted Hypothesis

1. Employee participation positively influences trust in coworkers, with a path coefficient of 0.77 at a statistically significant level of 0.01, which is accepted in Hypothesis 2. Trust in coworkers had not influenced their performance

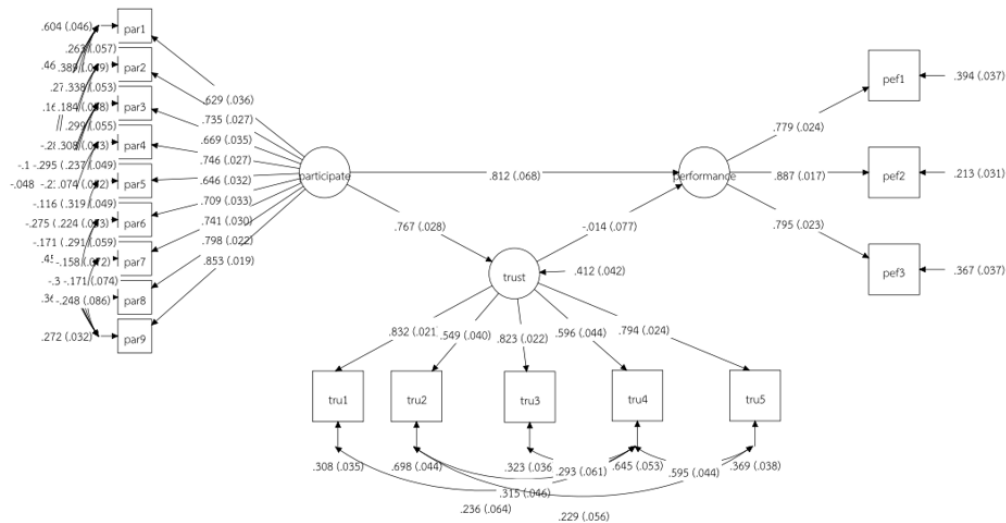


and was not the mediator between participation and performance, with a path coefficient of -0.01 at non-statistically significant, which rejected Hypothesis 3. Trust in coworkers had not influenced their task performance and was

not the mediator between participation and performance, with a path coefficient of -0.01 at non-statistically significant, which rejected Hypothesis 4, as shown in Figure 2.

**Table 4** Results of this study's hypotheses

Hypotheses	Beta value	p-value	Path Description
H1: Employee participation positively influences task performance.	0.81	0.00	Accepted
H2: Employee participation positively influences trust in coworkers.	0.77	0.00	Accepted
H3: Trust in coworkers positively influences task performance.	-0.01	0.85	Rejected
H4: Trust in coworkers mediates the association between employee participation and task performance.	-0.01	0.85	Rejected



**Figure 2** Result of path analysis

In Table 5, direct and indirect effects on employee performance show that only participation directly affects performance with the beta coefficient for participation being 0.80; a p-value of 0.00 is less than 0.05 ( $\alpha = 5\%$ ), indicating that participation has a significant influence on employee performance and this model can explain performance at 64%. The structural model provided a strong fit to the

data with the empirical data that was then analyzed with  $\chi^2/df$  being 1.96 at a statistically significant level of 0.00. CFI is 0.98, and TLI is 0.97, indicating that the model fits with empirical data as evidenced by Hair, et al. (2019, pp. 699-722). RMSEA is 0.05, and SRMR is 0.03, indicating that the model fits the empirical data, as reported by Goretzko, Siemund and Sterner (2024, pp. 123-144).

**Table 5** Summary of analysis results of overall effect of path analysis

Variables	Direct effects	Indirect effects	Total effects
Employee participation	0.81**	-0.01	0.80**
Trust in coworkers	-0.01	-	-0.01

$X^2 = 168.23$ ,  $df = 86$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ,  $CFI = 0.98$ ,  $TLI = 0.97$ ,  $RMSEA = 0.05$ ,  $SRMR = 0.03$   
 $R^2$  of Task performance = 0.64

Note: \*\*  $p < 0.01$

## Discussion

However, their complex relationship with employee task performance and the potential influence of factors like work experience require further investigation. As presented in Figure 2, the results indicate that the structural model provides a strong fit with 388 salespersons. Findings emphasize the importance of participation and trust for successful teamwork and performance. Finally, this study investigates the interaction effects of employee participation and trust in coworkers on individual employees' task performance, which previous studies have not examined.

The result of this first hypothesis study was that employee participation positively influences task performance. This result is in line with the research of Huang, et al. (2021, pp. 1185-1199), who investigated the impact of unions on employee performance. Additionally, their study delved into the mediating role of employee participation in connecting union commitment to task performance. In their work, Jabroun and Balakrishnan (2000, pp. 56-66) indicated the relationship between managerial employees' perception of high participation levels and its influence on task performance. Their findings underscore a moderate yet positive correlation between employee participation and task performance, particularly within a managerial context. Benn,

Teo and Martin (2015, pp. 492-510) highlighted the crucial role of employee participation in cultivating support for novel initiatives, underscoring the direct link between employee participation and improved performance. Lau and Tan (2012, pp. 151-185) conducted an examination of the relationship between budgetary participation and employee motivation, affirming a probable association with favorable employee outcomes, encompassing enhanced job satisfaction and task performance. Similarly, Park (2015, pp. 604-622) also posited a connection between employee participation and task performance.

The result of this second hypothesis study was that a significant aspect of employee participation positively influences trust in coworkers. As per Ahuja and Khamba (2008, pp. 709-756), cultivating trust in coworkers has been shown to lead to increased participation and enhanced performance in achieving organizational goals. These objectives may encompass enhancing the skills of the workforce and knowledge, delineating employee roles and responsibilities, and bolstering job satisfaction. This increased participation and performance can consequently lead to elevated productivity and quality. Similarly, Ertürk (2008, pp. 462-483) suggested that employee participation is positively and significantly associated with their trust in supervisors, facilitating effective



management of current and future organizational changes. This study further confirms that employee participation positively impacts salespeople's trust in their coworkers, reinforcing previous research findings.

The result of the third hypothesis study was that trust in coworkers does not positively influence task performance. This is consistent with the findings of Drollinger and Comer (2013, pp. 50-59), which previously indicated that there was no positive relationship between trust in coworkers and heightened levels of salesperson task performance. To clarify the difference at this point, Moorman, Zaltman and Deshpande (1992, pp. 314-328) assert that expectancy refers to an individual's anticipation of the behavior of others. Trust is fundamental in establishing successful business partnerships. It is cultivated when one party possesses a strong belief in the reliability and integrity of their exchange partner. Within the domain of sales, trust in salespeople plays a pivotal role in facilitating successful interactions and transactions (Guenzi and Georges, 2010, pp. 114-138). However, the result of the third hypothesis lends credence to previous research indicating that salespersons focus on promoting their interests and consistently demonstrating reliability to foster trust with their coworkers (Poon, Albaum and Shiu-Fai Chan, 2012, pp. 588-603). Majeed, Kayani and Haider (2021, pp. 1-22) underscore the significant benefits of trusting coworkers, citing its positive impact on overall performance. Similarly, Al-Amad, Ali and Al-Haddad (2024, pp. 83-107) examine salespeople's perspectives on trust in personal selling, affinity, and the importance of corporate heritage in enhancing

sales activities and empowering salespeople.

The result of the fourth hypothesis study was that trust in coworkers is not the mediator in the relationship between employee participation and task performance. This finding is consistent with Drollinger and Comer's (2013, pp. 50-59) research, which establishes that trust does not serve as a mediating factor in the correlation between communication skills, the ability to uphold quality, and sales performance. In specific contexts, trust significantly influences interactions and enables employees to direct their attention more productively towards their work (Salas-Vallina, et al., 2021, pp. 333-347). Robinson and Rousseau (1994, pp. 245-259) articulated that trust in coworkers represents the level of reliance an employee places in their employer following their integration into the company. This underscores the significance of trust as the linchpin for enabling the dissemination of knowledge, information, and resources, thereby safeguarding the achievement of high-performance standards. However, trust alone is not a sufficient foundation for achieving success (Majeed, Kayani and Haider, 2021, pp. 1-22). Understanding the intricate relationship between trust and participation stands as a pivotal factor in the development of evidence-based HRM strategies that uphold the well-being of employees and the overall organizational structure. Consequently, managers must possess a comprehensive comprehension of the work environment, one that cultivates superior task performance among subordinates and facilitates collaborative endeavors (Hung, et al., 2022, pp. 1-14). Furthermore, it is imperative to establish compensation systems and facilitate

effective communication that aligns with the organizational values to actively foster positive task performance (Ohunakin and Olugbade, 2022, pp. 1-12).

## Conclusion

The existing body of literature has explored the intricate relationships between employee participation, trust in coworkers, and task performance in various contexts. However, there remains to be a research gap in understanding these dynamics within the specific context of Thailand's merchandise industry. This industry plays a crucial role in Thailand's economy, with salespersons as a key interface between businesses and consumers. The Thai merchandise industry is characterized by its diversity, encompassing various sectors such as pharmaceuticals, department stores, banking, hospitality, and automobiles. Given Thailand's cultural nuances and distinct business practices, the generalizability of Western-centric research findings to this context is not guaranteed. Empirical data from a sample of 388 salespersons revealed that employee participation positively influenced employees' task performance and trust in coworkers. However, trust in coworkers did not influence task performance or mediate the relationship between participation and performance.

The literature review gap has led to a poor understanding of this research point. In particular, this study offers new insight into how trust in coworker differences influences task performance across salespersons. One possibility is that employees perceive any gains or benefits as their due because they derive from performance improvements. Curzi and

Ferrarini (2024, pp. 51-67) suggest that employee participation has become considerable as the right human resources strategies enable innovation and enhance service behaviors as employees are hesitant to take risks, pursue new ideas, and extend beyond traditional task performance (Galeazzo, Furlan and Vinelli, 2021, pp. 34-64). It underscores the vital role of social exchange theory as put forward by Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005, pp. 874-900). When employees feel heard and respected, they trust their colleagues and the organization more. Trust is essential for effective participation. When there is a high level of trust within teams, members are more likely to share information, participate actively, and support each other. Trust also helps build strong working relationships, allowing individuals to rely on and collaborate with their coworkers. Understanding the importance of trust in creating a workplace culture that thrives on effective strategies is key. Building trust in the workplace requires consistent actions and behaviors that demonstrate reliability, honesty, and respect. These can include fulfilling participation, being transparent in communication, actively listening to others, and treating colleagues fairly and with empathy. By involving employees in these key aspects of the business, participative management can lead to improved creativity, motivation, job satisfaction, and overall performance. Additionally, employees who trust each other are more productive and likely to collaborate to solve problems. This approach recognizes the value of input from employees and empowers them to contribute to the success of the organization.



### Limitations and Future Research

The findings of this study underscore the importance of participation and trust for successful teamwork and performance. However, it's important to acknowledge the limitations. This study, one of the few to investigate the relationship between employee participation, trust, and sales performance within Thailand's merchandise industry, offers a unique perspective that significantly advances the existing value co-creation literature. The potential mediating role of employee trust in the relationship between participation and task performance is another key area for future exploration. While our focus on Thailand's merchandise sales sector provides a unique perspective on employee participation and trust dynamics in culturally diverse and dynamic business environments, the generalizability to other sectors or countries may be limited.

Despite these limitations, this study provides a foundation for future research to explore the following areas: Future research could examine the impact of compensation, workload, and the company's selling environ-

ment on the relationships between employee participation, trust, and task performance. Additionally, while this study focused on trust between coworkers, exploring trust in leaders and the organization could offer valuable insights, given their potential influence on employee behavior and outcomes (Hoang, et al., 2022, pp. 1-13; Yasir, et al., 2016, pp. 1-12). Furthermore, future research could investigate developing and implementing trust-building interventions tailored to the Thai sales context to mitigate potential trust issues and enhance collaboration and performance, as trust fundamentally shapes interactions and communication within the workplace to empower employees to focus more effectively on their work (Salas-Vallina, et al., 2021, pp. 333-347). By addressing these research gaps, future studies can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the complex interplay between employee participation, trust, and task performance, ultimately informing the development of effective HRM strategies that cater to Thailand's merchandise industry's unique cultural and organizational context.

### Bibliography

- Ahuja, I. P. S. and Khamba, J. S. (2008). Total productive maintenance: Literature review and directions. **International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management**, 25(7), 709-756.
- Al-Amad, A. H., Ali, S. and Al-Haddad, H. B. (2024). Listening to unheard voices: Exploring sales people's perspectives on the value of corporate heritage. **Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal**, 27(1), 83-107.
- Al Kahtani, N. S. and M. M., S. (2022). A study on how psychological capital, social capital, workplace wellbeing, and employee engagement relate to task performance. **Sage Open**, 12(2), 1-18.
- Benn, S., Teo, S. T. T. and Martin, A. (2015). Employee participation and engagement in working for the environment. **Personnel Review**, 44, 492-510.



- Bos-Nehles, A., Townsend, K., Cafferkey, K. and Trullen, J. (2023). Examining the ability, motivation and opportunity (AMO) framework in HRM research: Conceptualization, measurement and interactions. **International Journal of Management Reviews**, 25(4), 725-739.
- Carpini, J. A., Parker, S. K., and Griffin, M. A. (2017). A look back and a leap forward: A review and synthesis of the individual work performance literature. **Academy of Management Annals**, 11(2), 825-885.
- Charoensukmongkol, P. (2024). The moderating effect of age on the benefits of trait mindfulness and functional flexibility among salespeople. **Baltic Journal of Management**, 19(1), 52-68.
- Charoensukmongkol, P. and Pandey, A. (2023). The effectiveness of improvisational behavior on sales performance during the COVID-19 pandemic: The moderating effect of functional customer orientation. **Journal of Asia Business Studies**, 17(4), 766-784.
- Chen, Y., Fay, S. and Wang, Q. (2011). The role of marketing in social media: How online consumer reviews evolve. **Journal of Interactive Marketing**, 25(2), 85-94.
- Cristobal, E., Flavian, C. and Guinaliu, M. (2007). Perceived e-Service Quality (PeSQ) measurement validation and effects on consumer satisfaction and web site loyalty. **Managing Service Quality: An International Journal**, 17(3), 317-340.
- Cropanzano, R. and Mitchell, M. S. (2005). Social exchange theory: An interdisciplinary review. **Journal of Management**, 31(6), 874-900.
- Curzi, Y. and Ferrarini, F. (2024). High-performance work systems and firm innovation: The moderating role of digital technology and employee participation. Evidence from Europe. **Management Research Review**, 47(13), 51-67.
- Delery, J. E. and Doty, D. H. (1996). Modes of theorizing in strategic human resource management: Tests of universalistic, contingency, and configurational performance predictions. **Academy of Management Journal**, 39(4), 802-835.
- Department of Business Development. (2024). **Provincial business registration statistic report on sector (Jan - Dec 2023)**. Retrieved October 24, 2023, from <https://www.dbd.go.th/data-storage/attachment/35988437de69b1de1caab42a.pdf>
- Drollinger, T. and Comer, L. B. (2013). Salesperson's listening ability as an antecedent to relationship selling. **Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing**, 28(1), 50-59.
- Ertürk, A. (2008). A trust-based approach to promote employees' openness to organizational change in Turkey. **International Journal of Manpower**, 29(5), 462-483.
- Fornell, C. and Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. **Journal of Marketing Research**, 18(1), 39-50.
- Galeazzo, A., Furlan, A. and Vinelli, A. (2021). The role of employees' participation and managers' authority on continuous improvement and performance. **International Journal of Operations & Production Management**, 41(13), 34-64.



- Goretzko, D., Siemund, K. and Sterner, P. (2024). Evaluating model fit of measurement models in confirmatory factor analysis. **Educational and Psychological Measurement**, 84(1), 123-144.
- Guchait, P. and Cho, S. (2010). The impact of human resource management practices on intention to leave of employees in the service industry in India: The mediating role of organizational commitment. **The International Journal of Human Resource Management**, 21(8), 1228-1247.
- Guenzi, P. and Georges, L. (2010). Interpersonal trust in commercial relationships. **European Journal of Marketing**, 44(1/2), 114-138.
- Guest, D. E. (2017). Human resource management and employee well-being: Towards a new analytic framework. **Human Resource Management Journal**, 27(1), 22-38.
- Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J. and Anderson, R. E. (2019). **Multivariate data analysis** (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). Hampshire: Cengage Learning, EMEA.
- Harter, J. K., Schmidt, F. L. and Hayes, T. L. (2002). Business-unit-level relationship between employee satisfaction, employee engagement, and business outcomes: A meta-analysis. **Journal of Applied Psychology**, 87(2), 268-279.
- Herjanto, H., Amin, M. and Fatimah, C. E. (2024). Does knowledge collecting and donating enhance a bank's salesperson performance?. **Business Process Management Journal**, 30(1), 183-198.
- Hoang, G., Luu, T. T., Nguyen, T. T., Du, T. and Le, L. P. (2022). Examining the effect of entrepreneurial leadership on employees' innovative behavior in SME hotels: A mediated moderation model. **International Journal of Hospitality Management**, 102, 103142.
- Høgevold, N., Rodriguez, R., Svensson, G. and Otero-Neira, C. (2024). Salespeople's sales performance skills in b2b of services firms – A cross-industrial study. **European Business Review**, 36(2), 201-224.
- Huang, W., Yuan, C., Shen, J. and Li, M. (2021). Effects of union commitment on job performance in China. **Personnel Review**, 50(4), 1185-1199.
- Hung, T. K., Wang, C. H., Tian, M., Lin, M. and Liu, W. H. (2022). How to prevent stress in the workplace by emotional regulation? The relationship between compulsory citizen behavior, job engagement, and job performance. **Sage Open**, 12(2), 1-14.
- Hunter, J. R., Gordon, B. A., Bird, S. R. and Benson, A. C. (2018). Perceived barriers and facilitators to workplace exercise participation. **International Journal of Workplace Health Management**, 11(5), 349-363.
- Jabroun, N. and Balakrishnan, V. (2000). Participation and job performance in the Malaysian public service department. **International Journal of Commerce and Management**, 10(3/4), 56-66.

- Koopmans, L., Bernaards, C. M., Hildebrandt, V. H., Lerner, D., de Vet, H. C. W. and van der Beek, A. J. (2016). Cross-cultural adaptation of the individual work performance questionnaire. **Work**, 53(3), 609-619.
- Koopmans, L., Bernaards, C. M., Hildebrandt, V. H., Schaufeli, W. B., de Vet Henrica, C. W. and van der Beek, A. J. (2011). Conceptual frameworks of individual work performance: A systematic review. **Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine**, 53(8), 856-866.
- Lau, C. M. and Tan, S. L. C. (2012). Budget targets as performance measures: The mediating role of participation and procedural fairness. In Epstein, M. J. and Lee, J. Y. (Ed.), **Advances in Management Accounting (Advances in Management Accounting, Vol. 20)** (pp. 151-185). Leeds: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- Little, A., Wordsworth, R. and Malinen, S. (2020). Workplace exercise programmes – How organizational factors influence employee participation. **Development and Learning in Organizations: An International Journal**, 34(6), 37-39.
- Majeed, H., Kayani, U. N. and Haider, S. A. (2021). The project communication and trust nexus as an antecedents of project success: Moderating role of authentic leadership. **International Journal of Business Communication**, 0(0), 1-22.
- McAllister, D. J. (1995). Affect-and cognition-based trust as foundations for interpersonal cooperation in organizations. **Academy of Management Journal**, 38(1), 24-59.
- Mennens, K., Van Gils, A., Odekerken-Schröder, G. and Letterie, W. (2018). Exploring antecedents of service innovation performance in manufacturing SMEs. **International Small Business Journal**, 36(5), 500-520.
- Moolprahas, N. (2002). **Relationship between attitude towards work, belief in own power, organizational climate, and participation in the work of staff nurses Hospital under the Ministry of Defense**. Master thesis, M.N.S., Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok.
- Moorman, C., Zaltman, G. and Deshpande, R. (1992). Relationships between providers and users of market research: The dynamics of trust within and between organizations. **Journal of Marketing Research**, 29(3), 314-328.
- Morgan, R. M. and Hunt, S. D. (1994). The commitment-trust theory of relationship marketing. **Journal of Marketing**, 58(3), 20-38.
- Ohunakin, F. and Olugbade, O. A. (2022). Do employees' perceived compensation system influence turnover intentions and job performance? The role of communication satisfaction as a moderator. **Tourism Management Perspectives**, 42, 100970.
- Park, R. (2015). Employee participation and outcomes: Organizational strategy does matter. **Employee Relations**, 37(5), 604-622.
- Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Moorman, R. H. and Fetter, R. (1990). Transformational leader behaviors and their effects on followers' trust in leader, satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behaviors. **The Leadership Quarterly**, 1(2), 107-142.



- Poon, P., Albaum, G. and Shiu-Fai Chan, P. (2012). Managing trust in direct selling relationships. **Marketing Intelligence & Planning**, 30(5), 588-603.
- Ma Prieto, I. and Pilar Pérez-Santana, M. (2014). Managing innovative work behavior: The role of human resource practices. **Personnel Review**, 43(2), 184-208.
- Ramos-Villagrasa, P. J., Barrada, J. R., Fernández-del-Río, E. and Koopmans, L. (2019). Assessing job performance using brief self-report scales: The case of the individual work performance questionnaire. **Revista de Psicología del Trabajo y de las Organizaciones**, 35(3), 195-205.
- Robinson, S. L. and Rousseau, D. M. (1994). Violating the psychological contract: Not the exception but the norm. **Journal of Organizational Behavior**, 15(3), 245-259.
- Rovinelli, R. J. and Hambleton, R. K. (1977). On the use of content specialists in the assessment of criterion-referenced test item validity. **Tijdschrift voor Onderwijsresearch**, 2(2), 49-60.
- Salas-Vallina, A., Alegre, J. and López-Cabrera, Á. (2021). The challenge of increasing employees' well-being and performance: How human resource management practices and engaging leadership work together toward reaching this goal. **Human Resource Management**, 60(3), 333-347.
- Schwepker, C. H. and Good, D. J. (2013). Improving salespeople's trust in the organization, moral judgment and performance through transformational leadership. **Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing**, 28(7), 535-546.
- Sekar, S. and Dyaram, L. (2021). What makes employees participate in volunteering programs? The role of organizational support. **International Journal of Organizational Analysis**, 29(2), 512-528.
- Williams, L. J. and Anderson, S. E. (1991). Job satisfaction and organizational commitment as predictors of organizational citizenship and in-role behaviors. **Journal of management**, 17(3), 601-617.
- Xu, A. J., Zhu, T. T., Loi, R. and Chow, C. W. C. (2023). Can customer participation promote hospitality frontline employees' extra-role service behavior?. **International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management**, 35(1), 218-234.
- Yang, Y. and Yang, B. (2024). Employee participation in total productive maintenance – A bottom-up perspective. **International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management**, 41(1), 269-290.
- Yasir, M., Imran, R., Irshad, M. K., Mohamad, N. A. and Khan, M. M. (2016). Leadership styles in relation to employees' trust and organizational change capacity: Evidence from non-profit organizations. **Sage Open**, 6(4), 1-12.