

From Transformational Leadership to Public-Sector Effectiveness: A Conceptual Model of Organizational Learning Culture, Employee Engagement and Job Satisfaction in Thai Government Agencies

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Abstract

This conceptual paper develops an integrated model explaining how transformational leadership, organizational learning culture and employee engagement shape the effectiveness of government agencies in Thailand, with job satisfaction positioned as the connecting mediator. Thai public administration is expanding in headcount and budget while international governance indicators point to stagnating perceived quality of public service, which suggests that structural and fiscal levers alone are insufficient and that people-centred managerial capabilities deserve closer attention. Drawing on full-range leadership theory, the learning-organization tradition, the engagement literature and discrepancy-based theories of job satisfaction, the paper synthesises definitions, sub-dimensions and prior empirical evidence into a single causal structure. Five latent constructs, each represented by three observed variables, are specified: transformational leadership (inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration), organizational learning culture (continuous learning, knowledge sharing, skill development), employee engagement (vigor, dedication, absorption), job satisfaction (job characteristics, work environment, coworker relationships) and organizational effectiveness (employee efficiency, organizational outcomes, competitive capability). Seven propositions are advanced covering direct paths from the three antecedents to job satisfaction and to effectiveness, and from job satisfaction to effectiveness. The paper then proposes a mixed-method design combining a survey of public personnel analysed through covariance-based structural equation modelling with in-depth interviews of senior administrators and specialists, together with instrument development procedures, validation criteria and ethical safeguards. The contribution lies in transferring a largely private-sector body of evidence into the Thai bureaucratic context and offering a testable framework for subsequent empirical work and for human-resource policy under the Public Sector 4.0 agenda.

Keywords: transformational leadership, organizational learning culture, employee engagement, job satisfaction, public-sector effectiveness

1. Introduction

Governments everywhere now operate under layered uncertainty. Political transitions, fiscal constraint, demographic change and the rapid diffusion of digital technology have widened the role of public agencies far beyond the routine execution of statutory duties. Public organisations are expected to act as the principal machinery of national development, as arenas of public value creation, and as trustworthy spaces in which citizens can access services, scrutinise the use of authority and participate in collective decisions. The effectiveness and quality of these organisations are therefore treated internationally as determinants of both national competitiveness and the quality of citizens' lives (World Bank, 2024). For developing economies in particular, indicators of government effectiveness function as a visible display of state credibility, and improving them has become a persistent reform ambition.

Thailand illustrates this tension with unusual clarity. The Thai bureaucracy is one of the largest in Southeast Asia, and both its workforce and its operating expenditure have continued to expand, while the mission set assigned to it has broadened to include digital service delivery, cross-agency collaboration and innovation-led public value. At the same time, external assessments of governance quality have not improved in step with this expansion, and internal quality assessments

under the Public Sector Management Quality Award 4.0 framework indicate that innovation and results orientation remain the weakest dimensions of agency performance (Office of the Public Sector Development Commission, 2024). Table 1 summarises the contextual indicators reported in the underlying research proposal, all drawn from official or international sources, that motivate the present conceptual work.

Table 1: Contextual indicators motivating the study of public-sector effectiveness in Thailand

Indicator	Reported figure	Interpretation for the study	Source
Public-sector workforce	3,004,485 personnel, about 4.6 per cent of the labour force	Scale of the system makes human-resource levers consequential	Office of the Civil Service Commission (2024)
Composition of the workforce	1,564,683 central and provincial; 544,858 local; 894,944 other	Effectiveness must be theorised across heterogeneous agency types	Office of the Civil Service Commission (2024)
Annual expenditure budget	3.752 trillion baht, up about 7.81 per cent year on year	Growth in spending is not automatically growth in effectiveness	Office of the Civil Service Commission (2024)
Government effectiveness score	0.25, down from 0.31 in the preceding year	Perceived service and bureaucratic quality is not improving	World Bank (2024)
Corruption perceptions index	Score of 34, ranked 107th of 180 countries	Declining external confidence in the administrative system	Transparency International (2025)
Public Sector 4.0 assessment	Innovation and results orientation identified as weakest dimensions	Managerial and cultural capabilities are the binding constraint	Office of the Public Sector Development Commission (2024)

Source: Compiled by the authors from the figures cited in the source proposal.

Read together, these indicators describe a system that is growing in size and cost while struggling to convert that growth into perceived quality. Two further pressures sharpen the problem. First, citizens increasingly compare public services against private digital platforms, which raises expectations of speed, transparency and responsiveness while obliging agencies to devote a rising share of scarce budget to information technology. Second, the demographic profile of the civil service is changing: younger officials weigh meaning, learning opportunity and social impact heavily when they evaluate their work, and their expectations shift quickly, so that the attractiveness of a public-service career relative to private employment cannot be assumed.

The academic literature offers plausible levers. Transformational leadership has been associated with improved employee attitudes and stronger organisational results in both public and private settings (Awaale, 2024; Vuong et al., 2023). A culture of organisational learning has been advanced as a strategic capability that raises performance through knowledge management and learning agility (Meher et al., 2023; Tripathi & Kalia, 2022). Employee engagement has been linked to productivity and to organisational effectiveness in public universities and service organisations (Gede & Huluka, 2024; Ha, 2023). Job satisfaction, in turn, has repeatedly been treated as the mechanism through which personal and contextual antecedents are converted into organisational outcomes (Abawa & Obse, 2024). Yet three gaps persist. The evidence base is dominated by private firms, hospitals and universities, mostly outside Thailand; the four antecedent and mediating constructs are seldom modelled simultaneously; and the mediating role of job satisfaction in a bureaucratic setting characterised by hierarchy, tenure and mission-based motivation remains under-theorised.

This paper responds to those gaps. It is deliberately conceptual: no data have been collected, and no empirical result is claimed. Its objectives are, first, to synthesise the literature on transformational leadership, organizational learning culture, employee engagement, job satisfaction and organisational effectiveness and to derive working definitions and observable sub-dimensions appropriate to Thai government agencies; second, to specify an integrated conceptual model and to state seven testable propositions linking the constructs; third, to set out a research design through which the model can be examined empirically; and fourth, to draw out the theoretical, managerial and policy implications of the model for the Thai public sector. The contribution is to transfer a largely private-sector body of evidence into a public-administration context and to offer a framework that is specific enough to be falsified.

2. Theoretical Background

The five constructs are drawn from four theoretical traditions that are compatible but rarely combined. Full-range leadership theory explains how managerial behaviour raises follower motivation beyond calculative exchange. The learning-organization tradition explains how collective routines of inquiry and knowledge circulation build adaptive capacity that no individual possesses alone. The engagement literature explains how psychological conditions of meaningfulness, safety and availability release energy into the work role. Discrepancy-based theories of job satisfaction explain how officials evaluate their circumstances by comparing experience with expectation. What unites them for present purposes is a shared premise: organisational effectiveness in a service-producing bureaucracy is produced through people, and the intervening psychological states of those people are therefore not incidental to performance but constitutive of it.

Five constructs form the model. Each is defined below with reference to its theoretical origin, its accepted dimensional structure, and the way the underlying proposal adapts it to Thai government agencies. Table 2 records the synthesised working definitions adopted for the study.

Table 2: Working definitions of the five constructs

Construct	Key sources	Working definition adopted
Transformational leadership	Bass (1985); Bass and Riggio (2006); Judge and Piccolo (2004)	Managerial behaviour that inspires, intellectually stimulates and individually develops officials so that performance exceeds expectations
Organizational learning culture	Senge (1990); Marsick and Watkins (2003)	Shared organisational attributes that sustain continuous learning, internal knowledge sharing and skill development in response to change
Employee engagement	Kahn (1990); Schaufeli et al. (2006)	A positive work-related state of mind expressed as vigor, dedication and absorption in one's role and agency
Job satisfaction	Locke (1976); Cao et al. (2025)	The affective and cognitive appraisal officials make of their work when experience is compared with expectation
Organizational effectiveness	Richard et al. (2009); Awaale (2024)	The degree to which an agency achieves its mandate in outputs, outcomes and responsiveness to citizens and stakeholders

Source: Synthesised by the authors from the cited literature.

2.1 Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership derives from the full-range model of leadership, in which leaders raise followers' motivation and moral commitment rather than merely exchanging rewards for compliance (Bass, 1985). Meta-analytic evidence indicates that transformational behaviours predict follower satisfaction, motivation and performance more strongly than transactional alternatives (Judge & Piccolo, 2004), and the construct has been elaborated across contexts as a repertoire of observable managerial behaviours rather than an abstract disposition (Bass & Riggio, 2006). The present model follows the proposal in retaining three observed dimensions. Inspirational motivation refers to the communication of a vision that allows officials to see the purpose of daily tasks and to feel pride in a public mission. Intellectual stimulation refers to encouragement to question established assumptions and to propose better ways of serving citizens. Individualized consideration refers to coaching, mentoring and attention to the distinctive development needs of each subordinate. In Thai agencies, where hierarchy is pronounced and signals from superiors carry weight, these behaviours acquire additional force: a leader who reduces the communicative distance created by rank while emphasising the value of public service can convert reform pressure into perceived opportunity rather than perceived burden (Vuong et al., 2023).

2.2 Organizational Learning Culture

The learning-organization tradition holds that organisations sustain adaptation by institutionalising inquiry, dialogue and systems thinking rather than by relying on individual expertise (Senge, 1990). Marsick and Watkins (2003) operationalised this idea as a measurable set of cultural dimensions that link individual, team and organisational learning to performance outcomes, and their

instrument has become the reference point for subsequent work. Consistent with the proposal, three observed dimensions are retained. Continuous learning captures the everyday encouragement to learn from practice and from error and the allocation of time and resources for development. Knowledge sharing captures the openness of exchange across units and generations of officials and the existence of forums in which good practice circulates. Skill development captures deliberate investment in new competencies, including the digital and analytical skills that Public Sector 4.0 reform requires. Studies in public and quasi-public settings suggest that such a culture raises satisfaction and reduces turnover intention (Lin et al., 2022) and that its performance effects operate through learning agility and knowledge management (Tripathi & Kalia, 2022).

2.3 Employee Engagement

Engagement was introduced as the harnessing of the self to the work role, expressed physically, cognitively and emotionally, and conditioned by psychological meaningfulness, safety and availability (Kahn, 1990). The subsequent measurement tradition specifies engagement as a persistent affective-motivational state comprising vigor, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2006). Vigor denotes energy, mental resilience and persistence in the face of difficulty; dedication denotes a sense of significance, pride and enthusiasm about the work; absorption denotes concentrated immersion in the task. For public officials, dedication carries particular content because the significance of the work is bound to a social mission rather than to commercial results. Prior studies position engagement as an antecedent of favourable job attitudes and as a mechanism through which leadership reaches performance (Jiatong et al., 2022), and treat it as a direct contributor to agency-level effectiveness (Gede & Huluka, 2024).

2.4 Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is classically defined as a pleasurable emotional state arising from the appraisal of one's job as fulfilling one's values, so that satisfaction reflects the discrepancy between what is expected and what is experienced (Locke, 1976). The proposal adopts three observed dimensions with clear counterparts in the instrument literature. Satisfaction with job characteristics concerns the fit between duties and competence, the variety and autonomy of the role, and the visibility of its results for citizens. Satisfaction with the work environment concerns physical conditions, the adequacy of equipment and resources, and the fairness of workload. Satisfaction with coworker relationships concerns trust, cooperation and support among colleagues. Job satisfaction occupies the mediating position in the model because it is the point at which leadership, culture and engagement are subjectively integrated before they influence behaviour that matters organisationally (Abawa & Obse, 2024; Cao et al., 2025).

2.5 Organizational Effectiveness in the Public Sector

Organisational performance is a multidimensional construct whose measurement requires explicit choices about the domain and the referent (Richard et al., 2009). In a public setting the domain cannot be reduced to financial return, so the proposal specifies three observed dimensions. Employee efficiency concerns timely completion of mandates, prudent use of constrained resources and streamlined service processes. Organizational outcomes concern the attainment of strategic goals and the positive impact of public services on citizens. Competitive capability concerns the ability to attract and retain capable personnel and to meet the emerging demands of Public Sector 4.0 and national strategy. This specification is compatible with studies of public agencies in comparable developing contexts, in which transformational leadership and engagement have been examined as antecedents of agency effectiveness (Awaale, 2024; Chau et al., 2022). Table 3 sets out the full measurement structure of five latent constructs and fifteen observed variables.

Table 3: Latent constructs, observed variables and representative sources

Latent construct	Code	Observed variables	Representative sources
Transformational leadership	TL	Inspirational motivation; intellectual stimulation; individualized consideration	Bass and Riggio (2006); Notarnicola et al. (2024)
Organizational learning culture	OLC	Continuous learning; knowledge sharing; skill development	Marsick and Watkins (2003); Bui et al. (2024)
Employee engagement	EE	Vigor; dedication; absorption	Schaufeli et al. (2006); Kłos (2023)
Job satisfaction	JS	Job characteristics; work environment; coworker relationships	Locke (1976); Memon et al. (2023)

Latent construct	Code	Observed variables	Representative sources
Organizational effectiveness	OP	Employee efficiency; organizational outcomes; competitive capability	Richard et al. (2009); Rajendran and Doraisamy (2022)

Source: Synthesised by the authors from the source proposal and the cited literature.

3. Conceptual Framework and Propositions

The framework is a structural model with three exogenous constructs, one mediator and one endogenous outcome. Transformational leadership, organizational learning culture and employee engagement are specified as exogenous latent variables, each measured by three observed variables. Job satisfaction is specified as the mediating latent variable, and organisational effectiveness of Thai government agencies as the endogenous latent variable. Each exogenous construct is hypothesised to exert a direct influence on job satisfaction and a direct influence on effectiveness, and job satisfaction is hypothesised to exert a direct influence on effectiveness, so that indirect paths run from each antecedent through satisfaction to the outcome. The model contains no moderators and no reciprocal paths, which keeps it identified and permits direct, indirect and total effects to be decomposed. Seven propositions, corresponding to the seven hypotheses of the underlying proposal, express these relationships.

3.1 Transformational Leadership, Job Satisfaction and Effectiveness

Leadership reaches subordinates through concrete behaviour rather than abstraction. When superiors communicate a credible vision, invite officials to rethink service processes and attend to individual development, the meaning of routine work is reframed and satisfaction is nourished in all three of its dimensions. Evidence from healthcare leadership indicates that inspirational and individually considerate behaviours accompany higher satisfaction and personal mastery (Notarnicola et al., 2024), while public-sector evidence links transformational behaviour to job-related outcomes via public service motivation (Vuong et al., 2023). Educational research adds that satisfaction transmits leadership effects to creative behaviour (Kaya, 2024). Proposition 1 (P1): Transformational leadership has a direct positive influence on the job satisfaction of personnel in Thai government agencies.

Leadership is also expected to reach effectiveness directly, through coordination, priority setting and the mobilisation of collective effort that do not depend on individual attitudes. Studies of public and private organisations report direct associations between transformational leadership and organisational performance alongside knowledge-management capability (Aldhaheeri & Ahmad, 2024), while research in public service organisations in a developing country locates the effect within new public management orientations (Chau et al., 2022). Evidence from public agencies in a comparable setting is especially pertinent, since it concerns government bodies in a developing country rather than commercial firms (Awaale, 2024). The public-sector case for a direct path is strengthened by the observation that many determinants of agency effectiveness, such as the clarity of priorities, the willingness to redesign procedures and the readiness to collaborate across organisational boundaries, are settled at the level of executive behaviour before they ever register in the attitudes of individual officials. Proposition 2 (P2): Transformational leadership has a direct positive influence on the organisational effectiveness of Thai government agencies.

3.2 Organizational Learning Culture, Job Satisfaction and Effectiveness

A learning culture alters the daily experience of work. Where learning from error is legitimate, where knowledge circulates across units, and where skills are deliberately developed, officials perceive competence growth, receive informational support from colleagues and find their duties better matched to their abilities. Research in enterprises reports that a learning organisation raises satisfaction, which then transmits to performance (Cao et al., 2025), and that continuous learning and knowledge sharing carry the greatest weight among the dimensions (Bui et al., 2024). Public personnel research shows the same association together with lower turnover intention (Lin et al., 2022). Proposition 3 (P3): Organizational learning culture has a direct positive influence on the job satisfaction of personnel in Thai government agencies.

The same culture is expected to raise effectiveness directly by accelerating problem solving, reducing duplicated effort and improving the absorption of new mandates. Service-sector evidence links a learning culture to organisational performance through knowledge management and

organisational intelligence (Meher et al., 2023); information-technology evidence identifies learning agility and innovation as the transmitting mechanisms (Tripathi & Kalia, 2022); and second-order modelling supports a direct path from the learning organisation as a higher-order construct to performance (Sandhane et al., 2024). Proposition 4 (P4): Organizational learning culture has a direct positive influence on the organisational effectiveness of Thai government agencies.

3.3 Employee Engagement, Job Satisfaction and Effectiveness

Engagement and satisfaction are conceptually distinct: the first is an energetic state directed at the role, the second an evaluative judgement about conditions. The proposal treats engagement as an antecedent, on the reasoning that officials who bring energy, pride and immersion to their duties interpret the same conditions more favourably and accumulate positive experiences that feed the evaluative judgement. Research in higher education positions engagement as a direct contributor to satisfaction and as a mediator between internal communication and loyalty (Ha, 2023); enterprise research confirms the causal ordering within sustainable human-resource management (Kłos, 2023); and mediation research reports engagement transmitting job involvement to satisfaction and commitment (Arulsenthilkumar & Punitha, 2024). Proposition 5 (P5): Employee engagement has a direct positive influence on the job satisfaction of personnel in Thai government agencies.

Engagement should also raise effectiveness directly, because energy and immersion translate into discretionary effort, initiative and persistence that aggregate into agency-level output. Evidence from public universities in a developing country supports a direct path from engagement to organisational effectiveness (Gede & Huluka, 2024), and sector studies report the same relationship in dimensions of productivity and quality (Rajendran & Doraisamy, 2022). Proposition 6 (P6): Employee engagement has a direct positive influence on the organisational effectiveness of Thai government agencies.

3.4 Job Satisfaction and Effectiveness

The final path completes the mediating structure. Satisfied officials are expected to be more stable, more cooperative and more willing to invest in service quality, so that individual appraisal converts into collective attainment of mandates. Research treats satisfaction as the mechanism connecting organisational culture to effectiveness in mission attainment (Abawa & Obse, 2024); and construction-sector evidence connects satisfaction to employee performance as a basic component of effectiveness (Memon et al., 2023). In a public setting the argument has an additional strand: dissatisfaction in a tenured workforce is expressed less through exit than through withdrawal of discretionary effort, so that its cost appears in the quality and responsiveness of services rather than in turnover statistics. Proposition 7 (P7): Job satisfaction has a direct positive influence on the organisational effectiveness of Thai government agencies. Taken together, P1 to P7 imply that job satisfaction mediates part of the influence of each antecedent, and the empirical study is expected to decompose direct, indirect and total effects accordingly. Table 4 maps each proposition to its supporting literature.

Table 4: Proposition–literature support matrix

Proposition	Relationship	Supporting studies	Expected direction
P1	Transformational leadership → job satisfaction	Notarnicola et al. (2024); Vuong et al. (2023); Kaya (2024)	Positive, direct
P2	Transformational leadership → organisational effectiveness	Aldhaheri and Ahmad (2024); Chau et al. (2022); Awaale (2024)	Positive, direct
P3	Organizational learning culture → job satisfaction	Cao et al. (2025); Bui et al. (2024); Lin et al. (2022)	Positive, direct
P4	Organizational learning culture → organisational effectiveness	Meher et al. (2023); Tripathi and Kalia (2022); Sandhane et al. (2024)	Positive, direct
P5	Employee engagement → job satisfaction	Ha (2023); Kłos (2023); Arulsenthilkumar and Punitha (2024)	Positive, direct
P6	Employee engagement → organisational effectiveness	Gede and Huluka (2024); Rajendran and Doraisamy (2022); Jiatong et al. (2022)	Positive, direct
P7	Job satisfaction → organisational effectiveness	Abawa and Obse (2024); Memon et al. (2023); Cao et al. (2025)	Positive, direct

Source: Synthesised by the authors from the literature reviewed in the source proposal.

4. Proposed Research Design

The propositions are intended to be examined through a mixed-method design in which a quantitative strand tests the structural model and a qualitative strand interprets and corroborates it. The quantitative population is defined as personnel of Thai government agencies, comprising central and provincial administration, local administration, state enterprises and public organisations. Official reporting places this population at 3,004,485 personnel (Office of the Civil Service Commission, 2024), which is large enough that sample size is determined by analytical requirements rather than by finite-population correction. Following the convention of twenty cases for each observed variable, and given fifteen observed variables, the proposal specifies a minimum of three hundred respondents, a figure consistent with recommended ranges for confirmatory factor analysis (Hair et al., 2010). Respondents are to be drawn from Bangkok and its metropolitan region, where all five agency types are concentrated, using quota sampling across agency type followed by purposive selection of officials holding permanent positions with at least one year of service in their current agency, so that respondents have direct experience on which to base their assessments.

The instrument is a structured questionnaire with a demographic section and five measurement sections corresponding to the latent constructs. Items are to be developed from the operational definitions established in the literature review and adapted from validated instruments, with wording rewritten for the vocabulary and mandate structure of Thai agencies. Responses are recorded on a five-point rating scale, and mean scores are to be interpreted using equal class intervals of 0.8. Table 5 illustrates the intended item structure with sample items translated from the proposal's item tables.

Table 5: Illustrative measurement items by construct and dimension

Construct and dimension	Sample items (translated and adapted)	Adapted from
TL: inspirational motivation	My supervisor communicates the agency's vision so that I can see the purpose of my work; my supervisor speaks about the value of our public mission in a way that makes me proud	Notarnicola et al. (2024); Kaya (2024)
TL: intellectual stimulation	My supervisor encourages me to view work problems from new perspectives; my supervisor supports creative proposals for improving administrative practice	Bass and Riggio (2006); Judge and Piccolo (2004)
OLC: continuous learning	My agency encourages personnel to learn from daily practice; I am supported in reviewing and learning from mistakes made by me and by my team	Marsick and Watkins (2003); Senge (1990)
OLC: knowledge sharing	Personnel in my agency share work knowledge and experience openly; my agency provides forums for exchanging good practice	Tripathi and Kalia (2022); Meher et al. (2023)
EE: vigor and dedication	I feel energetic when carrying out my daily duties; I feel that my work is genuinely meaningful and valuable to society	Schaufeli et al. (2006); Kahn (1990)
JS: job characteristics and environment	My duties match my knowledge and abilities; my agency provides sufficient equipment and resources for my work	Locke (1976); Memon et al. (2023)
OP: efficiency and outcomes	My agency completes its mandates on schedule; the results of our public services have a positive impact on citizens	Richard et al. (2009); Gede and Huluka (2024)

Source: Translated and adapted by the authors from the item tables of the source proposal.

Instrument quality is to be established in two stages. Content validity is to be assessed by three specialists, drawn respectively from public administration and public human-resource management, from social-science research methodology and statistics, and from organisational behaviour and leadership, each rating the congruence of every item with its operational definition on a three-point scale. Items with an index of item-objective congruence above 0.5 are to be retained, and the remainder revised or discarded. Reliability is then to be examined in a pilot administration with fifty public personnel who resemble the target respondents but are excluded from the main sample,

using the coefficient alpha criterion of 0.70 for each construct. Only after both criteria are met is the final instrument to be administered.

Analysis proceeds in stages. Descriptive statistics address the first research objective by establishing the level of each construct. Covariance-based structural equation modelling then addresses the second and third objectives. Data screening and examination of bivariate correlations precede confirmatory factor analysis of the measurement model, in which factor loadings, average variance extracted and construct reliability are inspected. The structural model is then estimated and its correspondence with the data judged against conventional goodness-of-fit criteria, including the ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom, the goodness-of-fit index, incremental indices such as the normed, relative, incremental, Tucker-Lewis and comparative fit indices, and the root mean square error of approximation, with model respecification undertaken where criteria are not met. Path analysis then examines the propositions and decomposes direct, indirect and total effects.

The qualitative strand comprises in-depth interviews with fifteen key informants selected purposively and extended by snowball referral until data saturation, all with at least five years of experience in Thai public agencies. The informant groups comprise senior executives of central and provincial administration, executives of state enterprises and public organisations, local administrators, specialists in public-sector development and public human-resource management, and academic specialists in public administration and human-resource management. Interviews of roughly forty-five to sixty minutes follow a flexible guide covering the five latent constructs, are audio-recorded with consent, and are analysed by content and thematic analysis, with source and method triangulation used to establish credibility. Ethical safeguards include an official letter of introduction from the university, explanation of purpose, voluntary participation, consent to recording, member checking of summarised points, anonymity of individuals and agencies, and secure storage of transcripts. A further consideration is that the two strands are sequenced deliberately rather than run in parallel: the quantitative strand establishes the structure of relationships, and the qualitative strand is then used to interpret the pattern obtained, to probe paths that behave unexpectedly, and to surface contextual mechanisms that a fixed-item questionnaire cannot capture. This ordering keeps the interviews analytically useful rather than merely illustrative, and it allows the informants' administrative experience to inform the explanation of the model rather than the specification of it. Table 6 summarises the proposed design.

Table 6: Proposed research design and quality criteria

Design element	Quantitative strand	Qualitative strand
Participants	Personnel of five types of Thai government agency	Senior executives and specialists in public administration
Sampling	Quota by agency type, then purposive selection	Purposive selection extended by snowball referral
Planned size	Three hundred respondents, twenty per observed variable	Fifteen key informants, continued to data saturation
Instrument	Structured questionnaire, five-point rating scale	Semi-structured in-depth interview guide
Quality criteria	Item-objective congruence above 0.5; alpha of at least 0.70	Member checking and source and method triangulation
Analysis	Descriptive statistics; confirmatory factor analysis; structural equation modelling; path decomposition	Content analysis and thematic analysis mapped to the five constructs
Ethics	Voluntary participation; anonymity; secure data handling	Informed consent to recording; anonymity of agencies

Source: Compiled by the authors from chapter three of the source proposal.

5. Discussion and Implications

Theoretically, the model contributes in three ways. It brings together three antecedents that are usually studied in isolation, so that their relative contributions can be compared rather than assumed, and so that the incremental explanatory value of a learning culture beyond leadership, and of engagement beyond both, becomes an empirical question. It specifies job satisfaction as a mediator rather than as an outcome, which repositions a much-studied variable as a mechanism and allows indirect effects to be estimated. And it transposes constructs developed largely in private firms into a bureaucratic setting in which motivation is bound to a public mission, tenure is comparatively secure,

and performance is judged by outputs, outcomes and responsiveness rather than by profit. If the propositions are supported, the model would extend full-range leadership theory and the learning-organization tradition into public administration in a Southeast Asian setting; if particular paths are not supported, the divergence would itself be informative about the boundary conditions of theories built on private-sector samples.

For managers of Thai agencies, the framework identifies three levers that are available without legislative change. Leadership development programmes can be designed around the three behavioural dimensions rather than around generic competency lists, emphasising the articulation of mission, the invitation to question routine, and structured attention to individual development. Learning mechanisms can be institutionalised through after-action review, cross-unit and cross-generational knowledge exchange, and protected time for skill development, so that a learning culture becomes an operating routine rather than an aspiration. Engagement can be cultivated by making the social impact of public work visible and by designing roles that offer energy, pride and immersion, which is particularly consequential for younger officials who weigh meaning and learning heavily in their career decisions. Because the model routes part of every effect through job satisfaction, managers are also directed to the more prosaic determinants of satisfaction: fit between duties and competence, adequacy of equipment and resources, and the quality of relationships among colleagues. It also follows that the practical value of the model does not depend on every path being supported; a demonstration that one lever dominates the others in a bureaucratic setting would itself be actionable guidance for agencies choosing where to place limited developmental budgets.

Three features of the Thai setting shape how the model should be read. Hierarchy is pronounced, which magnifies the effect of executive behaviour on the interpretive climate of an agency and makes individualized consideration a scarcer and therefore more consequential resource than it would be in a flatter organisation. Agency types differ markedly in mandate, autonomy and resourcing, so that a state enterprise, a ministry department and a subdistrict administrative organisation may convert the same leadership behaviour into very different outcomes. Digital capability is unevenly distributed between the metropolitan region and outlying provinces, which means that the skill-development dimension of a learning culture is not a uniform quantity across the system. These features do not alter the propositions, which are stated at the level of latent constructs, but they indicate where subsequent empirical work should look for heterogeneity in the strength of the modelled paths.

For policy, the framework speaks directly to the agenda of the central agencies responsible for civil-service and public-sector development. Assessments under the Public Sector 4.0 framework indicate that innovation and results orientation are the weakest dimensions of agency performance (Office of the Public Sector Development Commission, 2024), and both dimensions depend on precisely the leadership behaviours and learning routines specified here. A model that connects those routines to measurable effectiveness offers a diagnostic instrument that central agencies could use to target support, and provides a rationale for treating investment in leadership and learning as an investment in effectiveness rather than as discretionary training expenditure. Given that personnel costs absorb a substantial share of the national budget while external governance indicators have declined (Transparency International, 2025; World Bank, 2024), evidence about which human-resource levers actually raise effectiveness has direct fiscal relevance. The contextual specificity of the Thai case, including hierarchical distance, heterogeneity across agency types and uneven digital capability between the metropolitan region and outlying provinces, means that findings from private firms abroad cannot simply be imported, which is the practical justification for the empirical study to follow.

6. Conclusion

This paper has proposed a conceptual model in which transformational leadership, organizational learning culture and employee engagement influence the effectiveness of Thai government agencies both directly and indirectly through job satisfaction. It synthesised working definitions and dimensional structures for five constructs, specified fifteen observed variables, advanced seven propositions supported by prior empirical studies across a range of national and sectoral contexts, and set out a mixed-method design capable of testing the model, including

instrument development, validation criteria, structural equation modelling and complementary interviews with senior administrators and specialists.

The limitations follow from the nature of the exercise. No data have been collected, so every relationship remains a proposition rather than a result; the supporting studies were conducted in other countries and mostly in other sectors, so their transferability to Thai agencies is an assumption to be tested; the model deliberately excludes moderators such as agency type, tenure, generation or digital maturity in order to remain parsimonious; and the planned cross-sectional survey, while adequate for testing a specified structure, cannot by itself establish temporal precedence among constructs that are plausibly reciprocal.

Future work therefore proceeds in three directions. The immediate step is the empirical study for which this framework was written, in which the measurement model is validated and the seven propositions are examined with data from personnel across the five types of Thai government agency. Beyond that, the model invites extension through the introduction of moderators, through comparison of agency types or of metropolitan and provincial settings, and through longitudinal or multi-source designs that reduce reliance on a single self-report at a single point in time. Should the model be supported, it would supply Thai public agencies with an evidence-based account of how leadership, learning and engagement are converted, by way of the everyday satisfaction of officials, into the effectiveness on which public trust ultimately rests.

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