

## แนวทางการพัฒนาสมรรถนะของตัวแทนขายประกันชีวิตในประเทศไทย

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### บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาสภาพ ปัญหาสมรรถนะของตัวแทนขายประกันชีวิตในประเทศไทย เพื่อเปรียบเทียบความแตกต่างของปัจจัยภายในและปัจจัยภายนอกซึ่งส่งผลกระทบต่อกระบวนการพัฒนาสมรรถนะของตัวแทนขายประกันชีวิต รวมทั้งข้อจำกัดในการพัฒนาสมรรถนะของตัวแทนขายประกันชีวิต เพื่อศึกษา วิเคราะห์ และระบุปัจจัยในการส่งเสริมการพัฒนาสมรรถนะของตัวแทนขายประกันชีวิตในประเทศไทย และเพื่อนำเสนอแนวทางการพัฒนาสมรรถนะของตัวแทนขายประกันชีวิตในประเทศไทย ซึ่งเป็นการวิจัยแบบผสมผสานโดยใช้ข้อมูลเชิงปริมาณจากการตอบแบบสอบถามของผู้บริหารหน่วยงานบริหารตัวแทนขายประกันชีวิต 411 ราย ด้วยการสุ่มกลุ่มตัวอย่างโดยใช้หลักความน่าจะเป็นจากบริษัทประกันชีวิตในประเทศไทย และข้อมูลเชิงคุณภาพจากการสัมภาษณ์เชิงลึกจากผู้บริหารระดับสูงในหน่วยงานบริหารตัวแทนขายประกันชีวิต นักวิชาการด้านธุรกิจประกันชีวิต และเจ้าหน้าที่ภาครัฐในหน่วยงานกำกับดูแล จำนวนรวม 17 คน

ผลการวิจัยพบว่า ปัจจัยระดับหน่วยงานบริหารตัวแทนขายประกันชีวิต จำนวนตัวแทนขายประกันชีวิตที่กำกับดูแล และจำนวนกรมธรรม์ประกันชีวิตใหม่ที่ได้รับผิดชอบในแต่ละปี เป็นปัจจัยที่ส่งผลกระทบต่อกระบวนการพัฒนาสมรรถนะของตัวแทนขายประกันชีวิต โดยมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติที่ระดับ .05 และ .01 ตามลำดับ จากการวิเคราะห์ถดถอยพหุคูณ พบว่า กระบวนการพัฒนาทรัพยากรมนุษย์มีความสัมพันธ์อย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติกับสมรรถนะของตัวแทนขายประกันชีวิตโดยรวม ได้แก่ สมรรถนะด้านความรู้ความเข้าใจด้านผลิตภัณฑ์ประกันชีวิต สมรรถนะด้านการสื่อสาร สมรรถนะด้านการตัดสินใจ สมรรถนะด้านการสร้างความสัมพันธ์ สมรรถนะด้านการคิดวิเคราะห์และแก้ปัญหา และสมรรถนะด้านการปรับตัวและใช้เทคโนโลยี โดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งการประเมินการพัฒนาทรัพยากรมนุษย์ซึ่งส่งผลต่อการพัฒนาสมรรถนะของตัวแทนขายประกันชีวิตทุกด้านอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติที่ระดับ .05 และ .01 ทั้งนี้การสังเคราะห์แนวทางการพัฒนาสมรรถนะของตัวแทนขายประกันชีวิตได้แนวทางการจัดการ 8 แนวทาง ที่สามารถตอบสนองต่อการพัฒนาสมรรถนะของตัวแทนขายประกันชีวิตในประเทศไทยได้

**คำสำคัญ:** ตัวแทนขายประกันชีวิต การพัฒนาสมรรถนะ การพัฒนาทรัพยากรมนุษย์

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## GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING THE COMPETENCE OF LIFE INSURANCE AGENTS FOR LIFE INSURANCE BUSINESS IN THAILAND

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### Abstract

This study aims to investigate the problems associated with the competency of life insurance agents in Thailand, compare the differences between internal and external factors that affect the development of life insurance agent competency, including limitations, study, analyze, and identify factors that support the competence of life insurance agents, and provide guidelines for developing the competence of life insurance agents in Thailand. This is a combined study utilizing quantitative data from questionnaires distributed to 411 executives in Thailand's life insurance agent management departments and qualitative data from in-depth interviews with 17 individuals, including senior executives in the life insurance agent management department, academics in the life insurance industry, and government officials in regulatory agencies.

The findings of this study indicate that the process of developing the competence of life insurance agents is significantly impacted by three factors: the level of management, the number of regulated life insurance agents, and the annual objective amount of new life insurance. These factors were statistically significant at levels of 0.05, and .01, respectively. Multiple regression analysis reveals a statistically significant correlation between the human resource development process and the overall competence of life insurance agents. The study found that the following competencies were positively associated with the human resource development process: knowledge and comprehension of life insurance products, communication, decision-making, relationship management, analytical thinking and problem solving, and technology adaptation. The evaluation of human resource development has a statistically significant impact at the .05 and .01 significance level on the enhancement of life insurance agents' competencies across all domains. In addition, the development of competencies for life insurance agents in Thailand requires the synthesis of eight management-based guidelines. These strategies are designed to meet the requirements of life insurance agents in terms of competency development.

**Keywords:** Life Insurance Agents, Competency Development, Human Resource Development

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## Introduction

In Thailand, the average annual premium for life insurance ranges from 560,000 to 620,000 billion Baht. In 2020, the total value of premiums was 600,206 million baht, or approximately 4% of the Thai GDP (15.7 trillion baht in 2020). (The Thai Association of Life Insurance, 2021). Consequently, the life insurance industry is one of the primary industries fueling economic growth. The government has given importance to the life insurance industry and the insurance system. Part 4: National Development Strategy, Strategy 3: Build Economic Strength and Sustained Competitiveness of the 12<sup>th</sup> National Economic and Social Development Plan (2017-2021). Insurance is one of the network's connections to increase access to financial services, which are linked to the financial stability of the nation's citizens. Later, the ninth objective of the 13<sup>th</sup> National Economic and Social Development Plan (2023–2027) is that Thailand has reduced intergenerational poverty with adequate and appropriate social protection, which has also consistently supported the role of the life insurance industry. For the life insurance industry to pass on financial stability from its insured, the majority of whom are working individuals, to their heirs, thereby enhancing financial and social protection for individuals of all ages, this is one of the ways to encourage more voluntary savings, resulting in effective savings planning in Thai society.

Nevertheless, the number of licensed life insurance agents in Thailand has been consistently declining since 2016, according to the Thai Life Assurance Association's report on life insurance business statistics, between 2019 and 2020, the number of licensed agents decreased by 5.71 percent, indicating that there is currently an issue with the availability of agents and the entry of newer generations into this profession. In addition, a Practical Guide for Life Insurance Agents published by the Office of Insurance Commission: OIC (2016, 2021) identifies life insurance agent competency development issues as requiring refinement and knowledge improvement. There are knowledge bases for various life insurance products, relevant laws and regulations, and guidelines for the ethical and responsible provision of services. This is consistent with the annual complaints statistics of the OIC, which reveal that three of the top five complaints involve life insurance agents, causing credibility issues for the life insurance industry.

Based on the aforementioned factors, the researcher discovered that the performance of life insurance agents is still inconsistent and linked to the changing

requirements of consumers. This will impact the future career stability of life insurance agents. Therefore, the researcher is interested in examining the competency development of Thailand's life insurance agents. As a foundation for the financial viability of the nation's citizens, serve as a guideline to support and propel the growth of the life insurance industry.

### **Research Objectives**

1. To examine the current state of the profession of life insurance agents, the issue of inadequacy, and the competencies that must be developed for life insurance agents in Thailand.
2. To compare the differences between internal and external factors that influence the development of life insurance agent competencies, including any limitations in the development of life insurance agent competencies.
3. To investigate, analyze, and identify factors that promote the development of competence among life insurance agents across the nation.
4. To present guidelines for the development of life insurance agent competency in Thailand.

### **Literature Reviews**

#### **Human Resource Development in the Profession of Life Insurance Agents**

HRD develops and improves employees' knowledge, skills, talents, and behavior to fulfill corporate objectives. HRD includes need identification, planning, selection and design, implementation, methodologies, and evaluation. HRD includes recognizing and assessing the learning and development requirements of people or groups in an organization. Designing and executing successful HRD programmes or interventions requires this phase (Beardwell et al., 2019). Plan HRD strategies and activities to address the learning and development requirements of people or groups in an organization. Set objectives, create an action plan, and allocate resources for HRD efforts (Wilson, 2005). HRD selection and design entails selecting and creating training and development programs to meet the requirements of people or groups in an organization. Selecting instructional techniques, generating learning materials, and establishing assessment measures are included (Brown, & Harvey, 2018). Implementation in HRD entails training and development initiatives to help a company learn

and grow. It involves training, monitoring, and assessing intervention efficacy (Negi, & Thite, 2019). HRD approaches are the tools and procedures used to develop human resources in a company. These methods include training, mentoring, coaching, performance management, and career development (Kraiger et al., 2016). The systematic evaluation of HRD treatments and programs' efficacy, impact, and results is called HRD assessment. It measures learning and development goals' achievement (Pasmore, & Francis, 2017).

Bal et al. (2020) evaluated how HRD practices affect employee outcomes. Training and development programs and performance management systems substantially predicted employee job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior, according to the research. Another Jiang et al. (2020) research examined how HRD fosters innovation and creativity in enterprises. The research indicated that HRD methods including creative thinking and problem-solving training, information sharing, and learning culture increased workers' innovation and creativity. Albliwi et al. (2019) examined how HRD affects healthcare personnel retention. HRD strategies including training, career development, and performance management predicted employee retention and organizational commitment, according to the research. These studies show that HRD improves employee results, creativity, and retention. HRD techniques may increase individual and organizational performance by creating a happy work environment, developing individuals' talents, and aligning them with corporate requirements.

Life insurance agents' HRD improves their knowledge, skills, and capacities to promote, sell, and offer insurance goods and services. HRD in this profession aims to boost agent performance, customer happiness, and company development (Cheng, 2017; Chaganti, & Sitasamit, 2019). Janowski (2016) examined competence management and organizational effectiveness in the Central European life insurance market. The research may examine how competency management—employee skills, knowledge, and abilities—affects Central European insurance companies' performance. Anagol et al. (2017) presumably studied insurance agents' behavior and advise in the Indian life insurance market, notably how commissions affect their customer recommendations. The authors may examine how commission-driven salespeople advise insurance purchasers and how this guidance affects their choices. Kajwang (2022) examines education, skills, and insurance industry performance. The research may examine how insurance personnel' education and abilities affect company

performance, efficiency, and effectiveness. It covers several topics, including insurance industry skills and competences. Technical skills like underwriting and risk assessment or soft skills like communication and customer service.

### **Important Competencies in the Profession of Life Insurance Agents**

Modern businesses must build competencies to flourish in numerous areas. Understanding, communication, decision-making, customer interactions, analytical thinking, and technology adoption are key to corporate success. First, comprehension is key to good decision-making. Professionals who understand their industry, market trends, and client demands may make business-growing choices. Yan et al. (2015) found that life insurance agents perform better when they understand the insurance industry and consumer demands. Effective communication is needed to share ideas, expertise, and collaborate with teammates. Strong communication skills help colleagues, customers, and stakeholders get along, creating a pleasant work environment. Marinkovic and Radojevic (2018) found that communication skills build trust and customer satisfaction. Another aspect is that good decision-making is essential throughout company. Skilled decision-makers analyze risks, options, and the optimal course of action, resulting in success. Customer interactions are as important as decision-making. A customer-centric strategy promotes long-term success by ensuring satisfaction, loyalty, and repeat business. The insurance sales process requires decision-making skills, according to Sun et al. (2020). Kim et al. (2014) found that customer relationship abilities boost revenues and customer loyalty. In today's data-driven environment, analytical thinking is also essential. Analytical professionals can analyze complicated data sets, find patterns, and get insights for strategic planning and problem-solving. Technology adoption is essential to keeping up with the fast-changing corporate world. Technology proficiency streamlines procedures, boosts production, and gives companies an advantage. Yang et al. (2019) stress analytical thinking in insurance. Research by Joo et al. (2019) shows that technology adoption abilities improve agent effectiveness and customer service.

### **Factors and Limitations of life Insurance Agent Competencies Development**

Competencies development is key to life insurance agent success. They can adapt to industry changes and provide customers with efficient solutions. Several elements and restrictions impact the development of these competences, which must be considered for success. Rapid insurance landscape change is a crucial aspect. Technology, regulatory rules, and client preferences demand agents to continually learn. Pareto Academy found that agents should

keep current on digital marketing methods and data analytics to better target certain consumer categories (Pareto Academy, 2019). Lack of training and education also hinders agent competency growth. While many insurance firms educate agents, continued professional development is sometimes disregarded. The Insurance Institute of America advises that poor training may impair product understanding, sales, and customer relationship management (CNA National Honor Society, 2016). Insurance firms should spend time on ongoing training and certifications to help agents improve their skills. Stress from sales objectives might also hinder competence growth. Agents may concentrate on completing transactions above skill growth, neglecting skill development. LIMRA found that agents had less time for competence development due to sales targets and administrative activities (LIMRA, 2018). Insurance firms should incentivize or decrease administrative constraints to allow agents to concentrate time to professional advancement.

## Methodology

This study investigates guidelines for developing the competence of life insurance agents in Thailand. The researcher conducted the research using quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The research population for this study comprises executives from management agencies of life insurance companies in Thailand, third parties involved in the development of life insurance agents, government officials responsible for supervising life insurance agents in Thailand, and academicians engaged in the study of life insurance business. For sampling group, the samples were categorized into two distinct groups. The first sampling group was the management department executives of life insurance companies performed quantitative data analysis through random sampling, utilizing the Krejcie and Morgan table (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970) to determine the estimated proportion of the population. The sample size was determined to be 381. To enhance the dependability of the research, the researcher opted to gather a total of 411 sample sets for the study. The researcher employed the principle of probability sampling and allocated an appropriate proportion to the population of each company. In the meantime, the second sampling group involved a group of 17 experts, comprising 14 senior executives from management departments, representatives from life insurance companies, 1 government agency representative, and 2 academics with relevant expertise. The selection of experts with specific qualifications was made by the researcher through a sampling process. The attributes of the chosen sample align with the research goals

and necessitate proficiency, know-how, and familiarity in the respective field. The study employed the Delphi technique developed by Thomas Macmillan (Macmillan, 1971) to determine the minimum sample size required, which was found to be at least 17 participants. The data was collected through in-depth interviews and analyzed for content. The study also proposed guidelines for enhancing the competence of life insurance agents in Thailand.

For research instruments, the instrument utilized for gathering quantitative data was a questionnaire, designed to collect data from a sample group comprising executives of life insurance firms. The instruments employed for gathering qualitative data involved the utilization of three interview forms to elicit information from a panel of experts. The experts in question comprised senior executives from life insurance companies, representatives from government agencies, and academics with a vested interest in the study of the life insurance business.

For data analysis, firstly, the researchers examined the attributes of the specimen through illustration. The study employed descriptive statistics, specifically percentage, mean, and standard deviation. Secondly, the researchers conducted an analysis of information and opinions pertaining to the conditions, problems, needs, suggestions, and guidelines for enhancing the competency of life insurance agents in Thailand. The process involves utilizing descriptive statistics and content analysis to depict the substance. Thirdly, the researchers conducted an analysis that compares the impact of internal and external factors on the performance development process of life insurance agents. This analysis will also examine the limitations that exist in developing the competency of agents based on information received from agents' management agencies. The one-way ANOVA method will be utilized in this study. Fourthly, the researchers compared the concepts of human resource development (HRD) and competency development. The analysis was conducted using a criteria-based approach, whereby the opinion level was assessed, and the average score was divided into five levels: least, less, medium, more, and most. These levels served as the criteria for evaluating the concepts. The statistical analysis involved the utilization of Best and Kahn's criteria for weighting the mean score (Best & Kahn, 1998). Fifthly, the researchers examined the correlation between various factors in human resource development and the performance level of life insurance agents. The analysis was conducted using statistical criteria for correlation, specifically Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA). Sixthly, analysis of the approach utilized to enhance the competency of life insurance agents in Thailand was conducted,



utilizing the TOWS Matrix Analysis (Weihrich, 1982) and content analysis. Seventhly, comprehensive guideline for enhancing the competency of life insurance agents in Thailand was provided by summarizing the results from all aspects. Lastly, soliciting feedback to enhance the comprehensiveness of the research was conducted. The objective is to widely distribute the findings of said investigations for the purposes of facilitating their utilization by others in subsequent times.

## **Results**

### **Current States of the Profession of Life Insurance Agents**

The Conduction of qualitative content analysis utilizing secondary sources and in-depth interviews with Thailand's life insurance industry experts. Changeable external ambient factors such as politics, the economy, society, technology, the environment, and laws influence the career of a life insurance agent over time. In addition, within the purview of management divisions in life insurance companies, it is essential not only to establish a team of life insurance agents to achieve sales goals, but also to cultivate agents with a wide range of skills. The operational factors of life insurance agent management agencies have a significant impact on agent performance. These factors include promoting and instilling a positive attitude toward the profession, enhancing knowledge and understanding of all types of products offered by the company, developing effective communication skills, fostering efficient thinking and decision-making processes, cultivating valuable time management skills, building a body of knowledge for relevant license examinations, acquiring knowledge and competence in technology information, and developing strategies to maintain customer relationships.

### **Factors and Limitations of life Insurance Agent Competencies Development**

The fulfillment of questionnaires made it easier to analyze numerical data. The research consists of four distinct sections: an overview of the general information of the respondents; a comprehensive account of the life insurance agent management agencies; an in-depth analysis of the human resources development process, which includes internal organizational factors; and an evaluation of the competence of life insurance agents. This study aims to investigate the discrepancies between internal and external factors that influence the performance development process of agents, as well as the limitations that impede the enhancement of their competencies. The study yielded significant results indicating that the level of management within agencies, the number of regulated agents, and the annual number

of new life insurance targets all had a statistically significant impact on the process of agents developing their competencies. Factors present at the management level of the agencies influenced the performance of relationship-building. Two factors that influence overall performance are the number of licensed agents and the number of new life insurance prospects each year.

### Factors Promoting Competence Development among Life Insurance Agents across the Nation

The study provides an overview of the human resource development process in relation to the concept of human resource development and its impact on the development of competencies among life insurance agents.

**Table 1.** The competencies possessed by life insurance agents

The concept of HRD	The competencies possessed by life insurance agents					
	Knowledge and understanding of life insurance products	Communication	Decision-making	Customer relationships	Analytical thinking and problem solving	Adapting and using technology
Identifying the needs of HRD	.001** ✓	.097	.000** ✓	.003* ✓	.004* ✓	.696
HRD planning	.002* ✓	.248	.052	.094	.131	.114
Selection and design of HRD	.036* ✓	.258	.213	.004* ✓	.006* ✓	.020* ✓
Implementation of HRD activities	.021* ✓	.211	.000** ✓	.138	.000** ✓	.002* ✓
HRD Techniques	.007* ✓	.000** ✓	.277	.263	.970	.056
HRD Assessment	.000** ✓	.097	.000** ✓	.003* ✓	.004* ✓	.696

\*\* The results exhibited statistical significance at a significant level of .01.

\* The results exhibited statistical significance at a significant level of .05.

### Guidelines for the Life Insurance Agent Competency Development in Thailand

A SWOT analysis is conducted using both quantitative and qualitative data analysis to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This study incorporates considerations for content-related challenges, drawing on insights garnered from expert interviews and recommendations. Consequently, eight guidelines were formulated based on the TOWS matrix's fundamental principles, which are as follows:

**Table 2.** SWOT analysis

Factors	Internal Strengths (S)	Internal Weakness (W)
<b>External Opportunities (O)</b>	<b>SO-Guidelines (Aggressive)</b> 1) Improve life insurance agents' attitudes and interactions with consumers. 2) Evaluate the effectiveness of the work and implement the suggested improvements to produce life insurance agents who can effectively meet the needs of clients.	<b>WO-Guidelines (Corrective)</b> 5) Encourage efficient time management during the educational phase by providing resources and incentives to cultivate proficient life insurance agents. 6) Develop the personality traits and increase the level of expertise of a life insurance agent in order to instill in customers a greater sense of confidence and dependability.
<b>External Threats (T)</b>	<b>ST-Guidelines (Preventive)</b> 3) Develop "life insurance" competencies and understanding within the organization to facilitate efficient client provision and marketing. 4) Increasing the congruence of fundamental principles between life insurance agents and their respective organizations.	<b>WT-Guidelines (Passive)</b> 7) Develop and promote a psychology for resolving customer disputes. 8) Prioritize the recruitment and selection of life insurance agents who have the capacity for growth and are prepared for a vocation in the industry.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

### **Current States of the Profession of Life Insurance Agents**

Agencies that supervise life insurance agents must persevere in their efforts to improve the agents' skills. This includes fostering a positive attitude toward the profession, enabling agents to recognize their own value while promoting life insurance products to clients. It is suggested that agencies prioritize enhancing the knowledge and comprehension of their agents regarding all the company's products. To address the issue of misunderstandings or disagreements with clients who possess a higher level of expertise, it is essential to acquire proficient communication skills. This is corresponding to the study done by Marinkovic and Radojevic (2018) found that communication skills build trust and customer satisfaction. Error reduction requires efficient cognitive processes and decision-making strategies. Most of these incidents can be attributed to a lack of knowledge and impatience. Develop proficiency in time management techniques. Agents can be classified according to their temporal allocation, which can be subdivided into two distinct categories. The first classification applies to full-time agents who are expected to act as financial advisors for their clients. The second classification applies to part-time agents who are expected to foster professional development and adhere to ethical sales practices. The process of acquiring knowledge for various authorized examinations in a specific field of study. Therefore, it is imperative that life insurance companies provide additional training programs for their agents to equip them with the essential knowledge and skills required to pass the life insurance agent licensing exam and acquire investment recommendation licenses for related products. One recent study by Bal et al. (2020) examined the impact of HRD practices on employee outcomes. The study found that HRD practices, such as training and development programs and performance management systems, significantly predicted employee job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior. Furthermore, utilizing the development of information technology has streamlined the sales process. It is recommended to allocate resources towards the design and development of mobile applications or computer programs to simplify and expedite operations. And the process of cultivating and sustaining customer relationships through the expansion of communication channels. Also, research by Kim et al. (2014) highlights the importance of customer relationship competencies in achieving customer loyalty and increasing sales. Additionally, technology adoption is integral in keeping pace with the rapidly evolving business landscape. Competency in leveraging

technology enables organizations to streamline processes, enhance productivity, and gain a competitive edge. The study by Yang et al. (2019) emphasizes the importance of analytical thinking competencies in the insurance industry. Also, Research by Joo et al. (2019) highlights the role of technology adoption competencies in improving agent performance and customer service.

#### **Factors and Limitations of life Insurance Agent Competencies Development**

The effect of agency management hierarchy on the effectiveness of relationship-building indicates that individuals with prior experience are adept at preserving and enhancing consumer relations. The increase in the number of licensed life insurance agents and new prospects for life insurance has a statistically significant impact on all six aspects of agents' competencies. The incorporation of life insurance targeting has led to increased pressure, which has had a significant effect on agent performance. Furthermore, it is imperative to take into account various factors and limitations that impact the development of these competencies in order to achieve favorable results. One of the primary determinants pertains to the expeditious transformation of the insurance industry. Agents must continually update their skills and knowledge due to advancements in technology, changes in regulatory policies, and shifting customer preferences. Based on a study conducted by Pareto Academy (2019), it is imperative for agents to remain well-informed about emerging trends, such as digital marketing strategies and data analytics. This knowledge can significantly increase their capacity to effectively target the appropriate customer segments. One additional factor that hinders the advancement of agent competencies pertains to the insufficiency of adequate training and education. Although numerous insurance companies offer initial training programs for their agents, the significance of continuous professional development is frequently disregarded. According to the CNA National Honor Society (2016), the Insurance Institute of America posits that the insufficiency of training could impede the acquisition of crucial competencies, including product knowledge, sales strategies, and customer relationship management. These phenomenon cause disadvantages for collaboratively undertaking life insurance business.

#### **Factors Promoting Competence Development among Life Insurance Agents across the Nation**

There was a statistically significant correlation between the competence of life insurance agents and most human resource development processes. The evaluation of

human resource development has a substantial effect on the agents' overall performance. One recent study by Bal et al. (2020) examined the impact of HRD practices on employee outcomes. The study found that HRD practices, such as training and development programs and performance management systems, significantly predicted employee job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior. Another study by Jiang et al. (2020) explored the role of HRD in promoting innovation and creativity in organizations. The study found that HRD practices, such as training in creative thinking and problem-solving, knowledge sharing, and learning culture, positively influenced employees' innovation and creativity. When employees can feel motivated and be organizational citizenship behavior, they will work harder to satisfy their customers. Nevertheless, the determination of corrective solutions is dependent on the evaluation's findings. All components of the human resource development process influence the development of agents' competencies in terms of knowledge and comprehension of life insurance products. Life insurance sales proficiency is a crucial and indispensable skill for industry professionals. The study done by Janowski (2016) focuses on the concept of competency management and its relationship with organizational effectiveness, specifically within the context of the life insurance industry in Central Europe. Accordingly, it is imperative that agency management and the life insurance company prioritize the provision of training courses designed to improve their agents' understanding and awareness of life insurance products. This will ensure that the agents have the knowledge necessary to offer appropriate life insurance products to consumers in accordance with the terms and conditions specified. Research by Yan et al. (2015) indicates that a deep understanding of the insurance market environment and customer needs positively influences the performance of life insurance agents.

### **Guidelines for the Life Insurance Agent Competency Development in Thailand**

By considering the 8 proposed guidelines, it can be found as follows.

Guideline 1 proposes that the cultivation of soft skills and the setting of expectations can facilitate the promotion of mutual respect. Inspire life insurance agents to display high levels of enthusiasm. Agents are tasked with providing extraordinary service to impress both customers and insured parties.

Guideline 2 recommends endorsing and advancing the collection of data that evaluates the effectiveness of life insurance products, as well as the accumulation of

customer feedback, perspectives, and observations. A follow-up and evaluation procedure is implemented in order to use the gathered data to cultivate a life insurance agent whose characteristics and behavior are optimally aligned with client demands.

Guideline 3 recommends that life insurance agents take their knowledge development seriously. Dedicated resources and specialists are required to provide comprehensive knowledge. There are proposals that incentivize agent participation in the development of knowledge. Create a database that is organized and easy to use. Include encouraging agents to work together to share knowledge and experience. This will help the organization maintain a positive reputation and provide life insurance plans that satisfy the needs of customers and insureds.

Guideline 4 supports the establishment of shared values between life insurance agents and their respective organizations. The cultivation of solidarity among stakeholders, especially through the establishment of shared principles, is of the utmost significance. Integrity, openness, sincerity toward consumers, and a dedication to professional conduct are the pillars of a successful business. Reduction of disparity between agents and central agencies. To ensure that agents do not experience sentiments of abandonment when faced with obstacles. One potential strategy involves the establishment of model leaders at lower levels, who can serve as examples for agents and offer preliminary consultation.

Guideline 5 suggests that life insurance agents establish career goals during their learning phase. Effectively prioritize duties according to their importance and urgency. This requires setting aside time for both work and study. It is essential for agency administration to have a seasoned consultant or senior agent as a guide. The opportunity relates to the roles of mentor, mentee, and apprentice in the life insurance industry. Participants can generate income and receive incentives for their educational achievements through the program. It is anticipated that this initiative will result in the emergence of agents with the necessary skills and aptitude for their profession.

Guideline 6 encourages the organization of activities designed to enhance and cultivate the professionalism of life insurance agents, including personality, posture, and appearance, as well as the implementation of desirable workplace behaviors, such as punctuality. When interacting with clients, it is essential to maintain reliable verbal communication and uphold ethical standards. This might take the form of pecuniary support. It is common for executives to engage in follow-up activities by providing

coaching, learning opportunities through prototypes and observations, conducting evaluations by the supervising agency, and receiving regular feedback from consumers.

Guideline 7 concentrates on the enhancement of psychological abilities and the management of customer conflicts for life insurance sales agents. There is allocation and development of support systems. This initiative is intended to assist agents. It is the responsibility of the agency management department's management team to provide suggestions for enhancing conflict resolution and addressing negative feedback. Organizations must effectively manage negative information and communicate it to agents in a consistent and thorough manner.

Guideline 8 emphasizes the significance of the recruitment and selection process for growth-capable and work-ready life insurance agents. In the process of recruiting and selecting agents, it is essential that they disclose job responsibilities and duties with honesty. It is essential for candidates to demonstrate adequate preparation and genuine interest in their work.

## **Research Limitations**

This research consists of limited data from the executives of management agencies in lesser life insurance companies, whose perspectives on the development of the competencies of life insurance agents may be intriguing. Because the researcher distributed the interviews proportionally to the market share of the life insurance business, most of the information came from senior executives at the top five life insurance companies with approximately 74% market share (OIC, 2021) and a substantial number of life insurance agents under management. This is consistent with the research's objectives, which were to examine the general condition and issues of life insurance agents.

## **Recommendations**

### **Policy Recommendation**

The government agencies responsible for regulating the life insurance industry should prioritize the development of policies to improve the performance standards of life insurance agents. To establish guidelines for life insurance companies to establish, supervise, and oversee the work of agents, which must take the rights of agents and consumer benefits into consideration. This may involve stipulating licensing conditions and implementing appropriate regulations. Continuing education or mandatory training for life



insurance agents. Strict enforcement of laws protecting insurers, monitoring the conduct of the life insurance industry, and innovative monetary incentives for agents who can contribute to society.

### **Managerial Recommendation**

Thailand's life insurance companies and management agencies should concentrate on enhancing the capabilities of life insurance agents. To develop prospective agents who can meet the requirements of clients, including training initiatives with mentoring and experience sharing, or provide effective guidance from genuine specialists. Customers' opinions should be solicited on a regular basis for the purpose of evaluation and enhancement to fostering admirable conduct. Support the advanced technologies that can facilitate customers and establishing a relationship between life insurance agents by constructing a network.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

a study on customer behaviours and expectations to analyse pain points and meet real needs, and a study on measures and policies to support the life insurance business and enhance the competence of life insurance agents in developed countries with a high proportion of life insurance to compare with the operations of Thai government agencies and propose suitable development guidelines.

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