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## Operational Approaches to Managing Automotive Upholstery Teams: Clarity of Roles, Accountability, and Process Monitoring

Maksym Hrunskyi<sup>1\*</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

The effectiveness of operational team management largely depends on the clarity of role distribution, since ambiguity in functional boundaries weakens coordination, complicates accountability, and reduces the effectiveness of process monitoring. In this context, the purpose of the study is to provide a theoretical substantiation of role clarity as a basic element of operational management that ensures an adequate level of accountability, process control, and coherence of team interaction. The study adopts a conceptual and analytical approach, reviewing, comparing, and synthesizing scholarly works on role clarity, accountability, and process monitoring. The main result of the study is the development of the RCA-PM model, within which role clarity, accountability, process monitoring, and corrective coordination form an integrated practical framework for improving the effectiveness of operational team management. The model is additionally formalized as a multiplicative chain of normalized indicators and illustrated on hypothetical team configurations, which shows that the level of operational manageability is limited by the weakest element of the sequence rather than by the strongest.

### INTRODUCTION

In operational management, the problem of role clarity is especially acute in teams whose results depend on the sequence of interrelated actions, the speed of coordination, and the continuity of workflow execution. In the absence of clearly assigned functions, even a relatively small team encounters duplication of actions, delays in decision-making, overlaps in responsibility, and the overloading of the manager with ongoing operational interventions. Under such conditions, managerial attention shifts from development and process improvement to the constant elimination of situational disruptions, thereby limiting the possibilities for scaling operations and reducing the team's overall manageability. For this reason, role clarity should be regarded not only as an element of the internal organization of work but also as a prerequisite for stability, performer autonomy, and the team's operational resilience.

In environments where work outcomes depend on the sequence of operational actions, the coordination of performers, and the timely control of intermediate results, role clarity, responsibility definition, and process transparency become especially important. These elements form the foundation of team manageability, as they ensure a clear distribution of functions, stable coordination, and predictable task execution. Contemporary research emphasizes that "both goal clarity and self-management positively affect team performance" (van der Hoek *et al.*, 2018, p. 472). This provides grounds for viewing operational effectiveness not as the sum of separate managerial decisions, but as the outcome of systematically organized interaction in

which role clarity creates the basis for accountability and process monitoring.

The relevance of this topic lies in the fact that in an operational environment, any ambiguity in role distribution quickly becomes a practical managerial problem. In the absence of clearly assigned functions, duplication of actions, gaps between stages of work, uncertainty regarding responsible persons, and difficulties with ongoing control emerge. Related studies explicitly note that "current literature does not adequately characterize the determinants of clarity of roles and responsibilities" (Gil-Garcia *et al.*, 2019, p. 1). Thus, even at the level of scientific conceptualization, the problem of role clarity remains insufficiently developed, while in the practice of team management, its importance is even more pronounced. Under such conditions, a team loses not only its internal coherence but also its ability to sustain stable task performance in accordance with established requirements, deadlines, and expected results. Despite considerable scholarly attention to the issues of role clarity, accountability, and process monitoring, these categories are most often analyzed separately—as independent factors of organizational or team effectiveness. The existing literature convincingly demonstrates the influence of role clarity on interaction coordination, the importance of accountability for ensuring responsibility, and the role of monitoring in maintaining process manageability. At the same time, their interrelationship as a coherent operational logic of team management remains insufficiently conceptualized. It is particularly important that studies of team reflexivity show that "only the combination of team performance

<sup>1</sup> Masterpiece Auto, Miami, Florida, United States

\* Corresponding author's e-mail: [maksym.hrunskyi.edu@gmail.com](mailto:maksym.hrunskyi.edu@gmail.com)

feedback and guided reflexivity leads to performance change” (Gabelica *et al.*, 2014, p. 86). This means that control alone does not guarantee improved performance; what is decisive is the inclusion of monitoring within a clearly organized system of roles, responsibilities, and corrective interaction.

Accordingly, the unresolved question is how role clarity not only improves the organization of interaction but also structurally determines the formation of accountability and creates the conditions for effective process monitoring. This gap necessitates a theoretical synthesis of the relevant approaches and the development of an integrated analytical framework that combines these elements into a unified approach to operational team management.

In view of the outlined problem, the purpose of the article is to substantiate role clarity as a basic element of operational management that determines accountability and process monitoring in a team. Accordingly, the main research question is: how does role clarity, as a basic element of operational management, determine accountability and process monitoring within a team? To specify this question, the study addresses the following sub-questions: how does role clarity determine the functional structure of interaction within a team, how does it influence the formation of accountability in the execution of operational tasks, and in what way does it ensure effective monitoring and control of operational processes in a team? In accordance with this, the study aims to identify how role clarity structures functional interaction, supports accountability, enhances process transparency, and provides the basis for an integrated model of effective operational team management.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical understanding of role clarity in a team should appropriately begin with classical works in which role structure is regarded as one of the basic conditions of organizational order. In this context, the work of Rizzo *et al.* (1970) is foundational, as role conflict and role ambiguity are described there as phenomena that generate “dysfunctional individual and organizational consequences” (p. 150). This thesis is of fundamental importance for understanding role clarity, as it shows that unclear roles are not merely a psychological inconvenience for an individual employee. Rather, they represent a broader organizational phenomenon that affects the structural logic of joint activity. If a performer does not have a sufficiently clear understanding of what exactly is expected of them, within what boundaries they operate, and how their function relates to the functions of other participants, then not only is individual orientation in work disrupted, but also the very possibility of coordinated team interaction. In such a case, functional boundaries weaken, responsibility overlaps arise, and team members’ actions become less predictable. Accordingly, role clarity emerges as the opposite and normatively desirable state, in which functional expectations are understandable, boundaries

of responsibility are delineated, and interaction between team members is structured and orderly.

The significance of this issue was substantially reinforced in subsequent studies, particularly in the meta-analytic work of Fisher and Gitelson (1983). The very fact that the authors describe the accumulated findings on role conflict and role ambiguity as “still somewhat unclear” (p. 320) indicates the complexity and multidimensionality of this problem. Their work is important not only as a summary of previous empirical observations, but also as evidence that role ambiguity is not accidental or situational, but systemic in nature. It affects employees’ attitudes toward their work, their level of involvement, the quality of functional performance, and ultimately the overall effectiveness of organizational behavior. For the logic of this study, this means that the consequences of role ambiguity extend far beyond individual experience and affect the very possibility of stable coordination within a team. If the role structure is unclear, teamwork loses order because participants do not have a shared and unambiguous understanding of who is responsible for what, when, and in what sequence. Therefore, role clarity should be regarded not as an optional characteristic of a job description, but as a functional condition of operational order, without which joint activity inevitably loses predictability and stability.

A further development of this logic can be found in studies in which clarity within a team is linked not only to the absence of role contradictions but also to the team’s ability to achieve coordinated results. Thus, van der Hoek *et al.* (2018) show that “both goal clarity and self-management positively affect team performance” (p. 472). Although the direct subject of their analysis is primarily goal clarity, these conclusions are also of fundamental importance for understanding role clarity, since in a real team environment, clarity of goals and clarity of roles are closely interconnected. Goals cannot be achieved in an orderly way if it is not clear who exactly performs the relevant actions, while role structure loses practical meaning if it is not tied to concrete team orientations and expected results. For this reason, functional clarity of roles and goal clarity within a team reinforce one another. Under such conditions, interaction among participants becomes less chaotic, the distribution of actions becomes more meaningful, and coordination becomes more stable. This directly supports the thesis that role clarity is not a secondary characteristic of work organization, but one of the fundamental prerequisites for the functional organization of a team.

This thesis is complemented by studies in which clarity is examined at the level of team leadership and the overall coordinating logic. West *et al.* (2003) emphasize that “leadership clarity is associated with clear team objectives, high levels of participation, commitment to excellence, and support for innovation” (p. 393). This conclusion is especially important for the theoretical understanding of role clarity because it shows that clarity within a team is not limited to the description of individual executive

functions. It also includes the clarity of leadership orientations, boundaries of authority, principles of coordination, and the overall direction of interaction. A related empirical perspective is offered by Yabrifa *et al.* (2024), who found that leadership styles explain a substantial share of the variation in organizational effectiveness, which confirms that the manner in which managerial direction is exercised is closely connected with how effectively performers fulfil their functions. In the context of this article, this means that role clarity is effective only when it is supported by a broader clarity of the managerial structure. In other words, a team can act as an integrated system only if its members not only know their own functions but also understand how these functions are connected within the overall logic of joint work. Therefore, role clarity should be considered both an element of functional division and a component of the team's coordinating architecture.

Summarizing this theoretical block, it is useful to turn to the study by Gil-Garcia *et al.* (2019), which devotes special attention to "clarity of roles and responsibilities" as a condition for effective interaction and information exchange. Particularly illustrative is the authors' statement that "current literature does not adequately characterize the determinants of clarity of roles and responsibilities" (p. 1). This demonstrates that even with considerable scholarly interest in the issue, clarity of roles and responsibilities is still insufficiently conceptualized as an independent mechanism of organizational integration. Although that study focuses on interorganizational collaboration, its conclusions are also relevant at the team level, since in both cases the key issue is a clear definition of who is responsible for what, within what boundaries, and at what stage. It is precisely at this point that role clarity acquires significance not merely as an organizational characteristic, but as a mechanism of functional team integration. In such an approach, role clarity ensures not just the distribution of tasks but also the coordination of information, actions, and decisions among participants in joint work. Therefore, the existing literature provides grounds for asserting that role clarity is a basic theoretical condition of structured team interaction and, accordingly, naturally emerges as the starting point for further analysis of accountability as a derivative mechanism of operational management.

The next logical step after analyzing role clarity is to consider accountability as a managerial mechanism that transforms functional clarity into a system of responsibility for task execution and achievement of results. In this context, the work of Frink and Klimoski (1998) is of fundamental importance, as accountability is treated there as an important element of organizational and human resource management associated with the need to explain one's actions, answer for their consequences, and act within expected standards. Such an approach provides grounds for arguing that accountability is not reducible merely to the control or evaluation of an employee. It serves a broader function, structuring the link among

role, action, and result. Within this logic, accountability appears not as an external addition to operational activity, but as an internal mechanism of its organization. For the logic of this study, this means that accountability should be regarded as a natural continuation of role clarity: the more clearly the functional position of a team member is defined, the easier it becomes to establish the boundaries of their responsibility, determine the expected contribution, and formulate criteria for evaluating performance. Conversely, if functional boundaries are blurred, accountability itself inevitably loses specificity, since it becomes unclear exactly whom, on what grounds, and before whom the performer should be held accountable.

Such a connection between clarity of expectations and responsibility for results is also confirmed in the study by van der Hoek *et al.* (2018), where goal clarity is associated with higher team performance. Although the authors primarily focus on the clarity of goals, their conclusions are also directly relevant to the issue of accountability. The reason is that clarity of expected results creates the basis for determining who exactly should be responsible for what within joint activity. If a team lacks clear reference points on which functions are performed, what contribution is expected from each participant, and what the criteria for successful results are, accountability loses substantive specificity and becomes a formal requirement without real operational content. For this reason, clarity in a team environment serves not only as a coordinative foundation, but also as a normative foundation of responsibility: it connects role structure with the system of expected outcomes and thereby creates real prerequisites for meaningful rather than merely declarative accountability.

A more direct link between role clarity and responsibilities can be found in the work of Gil-Garcia *et al.* (2019), in which role clarity is regarded as a prerequisite for effective interaction and information exchange. For this article, it is particularly important that the authors effectively bring together the concepts of functional clarity and responsibility clarity, showing their interdependence. Within operational management, this means that accountability cannot arise as an isolated managerial prescription. It requires a prior determination of who performs a given action, within what boundaries, at what stage of the process, and with what expected result. In other words, accountability is possible only where there is already a clearly structured space of roles and responsibilities. For this reason, role clarity should be regarded as a structural condition of accountability, and not merely as a general element of organizational order. In this sense, accountability is not added to role clarity from the outside but logically follows from it, serving as a mechanism for translating functional clarity into the domain of responsibility for action and outcome.

An additional dimension of this logic is revealed in the study by West *et al.* (2003), where leadership clarity is associated with the effectiveness of teamwork and the

ability of the collective to act in a coordinated way within a shared direction. In this context, accountability acquires not only an individual but also a team dimension, since the clarity of leadership orientations, boundaries of authority, and directions of interaction determines the extent to which team members understand their responsibility for individual stages of work and for the final result as a whole. In other words, accountability is supported not only by a formal distribution of duties, but also by the overall comprehensibility of the coordinating structure within which those duties are implemented. This allows an important conclusion to be drawn: accountability is not an isolated characteristic of an individual performer, but an element of a broader system of team order. If the managerial logic of the team is clear, the responsibility of participants acquires not a formal but a practical meaning. If, however, this logic is blurred, even formally assigned duties do not guarantee real responsibility for the course and results of the work.

To conclude this block, it is useful to return to the classic work of Rizzo *et al.* (1970), now with an emphasis on how role ambiguity makes the stable assignment of responsibility impossible. If an employee does not have a clear understanding of their functions or faces incompatible expectations, not only does the execution of tasks become problematic, but also the very determination of who should be responsible for their result. In such a situation, accountability loses operational specificity because the link between role, action, and consequence becomes blurred. The absence of clear functional boundaries results in either responsibility being duplicated or, conversely, responsibility falling outside the scope of the actual assignment. In the first case, several individuals may simultaneously claim control over one stage of the work; in the second, none of them considers themselves truly responsible for its result. For this reason, the literature provides grounds for asserting that accountability is a derivative but necessary mechanism of role clarity: it relies on a clear functional distribution and at the same time translates it into the domain of responsibility for execution. Such a conclusion naturally leads to the next aspect of the study—process monitoring as an instrument of ongoing control over team activity, which completes the logic of transition from role clarity through accountability to the practical provision of operational manageability.

In contemporary studies of teamwork, process monitoring is increasingly viewed not as an auxiliary administrative procedure, but as one of the central mechanisms for maintaining the manageability of joint activity. In this regard, the study by Gabelica *et al.* (2014) is particularly important, as it directly demonstrates that “only the combination of team performance feedback and guided reflexivity leads to performance change” (p. 86). This conclusion is of fundamental importance for understanding process monitoring, because it shows that feedback alone does not guarantee improved performance unless it is accompanied by reflection on

how the work is carried out and by corrective adjustment of joint actions. Accordingly, team control cannot be reduced merely to recording an already achieved result or to a simple comparison between the expected and actual states. Its substance lies in continuously tracking how task execution is organized, what the logic of coordination among performers is, where breakdowns occur, and what corrective actions are needed to maintain coherence. For the logic of this article, this means that process monitoring should be understood as an instrument that provides visibility into work progress, supports the coordination of actions, and provides the basis for timely responses to deviations, rather than as a formal ex post control procedure.

A further development of this line of reasoning can be found in the study by M. Yang *et al.* (2020), in which team reflexivity is considered a mechanism through which a team analyzes its own activity, revises its coordination practices, and improves performance. The authors emphasize that “team decision quality is a partial mediator of the relationship between team reflexivity and team performance” (p. 1). This thesis is extremely important for understanding process monitoring, because it shows that between the mere fact of observing a process and final performance, there is an intermediate link—namely, the quality of team decisions. Thus, process monitoring acquires not only an observational but also an analytical meaning. The team does not simply record the current state of task execution, but evaluates whether the chosen logic of action is effective, whether it corresponds to the task, and whether the sequence of interaction, the ways information is transferred, or the distribution of functions requires change. For this reason, process monitoring in the contemporary sense should be associated not only with the control of stages, but also with the team’s internal ability to reflexively evaluate its own operational behavior. This approach is important for the present article because it demonstrates that effective process control presupposes not only formal checkpoints but also mechanisms for making sense of joint work that transform observation into a basis for improving team activity.

The relevance of this logic for operational and manufacturing environments is confirmed by the study by Chen *et al.* (2018) devoted to manufacturing teams. The very framing of the problem in this work—“the effects of team reflexivity on psychological well-being in manufacturing teams” (p. 443)—is important for the logic of this study, since it moves process monitoring beyond the narrow confines of productivity control. The issue is not only whether an operational result has been achieved, but also how the organization of joint work affects team stability, predictability of interaction, and the capacity to avoid internal destabilization. Although the authors also devote considerable attention to employees’ psychological well-being, their conclusions are directly relevant to this article because they demonstrate that process control in manufacturing teams is important not

only for evaluating performance, but also for maintaining the internal coherence of teamwork itself. In the context of operational management, this means that monitoring should be understood as a mechanism that helps to identify problematic areas of the process in a timely manner, sustain predictability of work, and reduce the destabilizing influence of inconsistency. Contemporary studies therefore show that reflexive control is particularly significant precisely where team activity is sequential, interdependent, and repetitive.

A more applied dimension of process monitoring is presented in the work of Wu *et al.* (2014), in which freeway service patrol is analyzed using “discrete event-based simulation” (p. 141). This study is important to the present article because it demonstrates the possibility of viewing an operational process as a sequence of events, stages, and intervention points that can be not only observed but also modeled and evaluated for effectiveness. Within such a logic, monitoring acquires a distinctly operational meaning: it provides not only general observation of the process but also allows one to see exactly where delays, overloads, breaks between stages, or disruptions in the sequence of actions occur. In other words, the process ceases to remain hidden within the team’s internal dynamics and becomes structurally visible for analysis and managerial influence. This directly brings monitoring closer to the practical framework proposed in this article, because it demonstrates that process manageability depends on the ability to make the process formally describable, analytically traceable, and suitable for timely correction. For this reason, process monitoring should be regarded not as passive observation, but as an instrument of operational visibility and controllability of team activity.

A contemporary strengthening of this trend can be found in the study by Wang *et al.* (2024), where improving the effectiveness of safety service patrol programs is also associated with the development of “a simulation-based framework to assist with SSP service optimization” (p. 1026). The very framing of this issue indicates that, in applied operational environments, effectiveness is increasingly understood through the quality of process tracking, the timely identification of weak points, and the ability to change the logic of work based on data about its actual course. From this perspective, monitoring does not appear as a secondary addition to work execution, but as a condition for its improvement. At the same time, these approaches mostly demonstrate the practical value of process monitoring but leave largely unexplained the degree to which monitoring itself depends on the team’s clear internal organization, particularly on the definition of roles and responsibilities. For this reason, contemporary literature convincingly confirms the importance of process control, yet it also raises an unresolved question: how can role clarity, accountability, and monitoring be combined within a unified logic of operational team management?

A similar conclusion follows from the study by C. Yang *et al.*

(2023), which analyzes incidents involving first responders. The authors focus on first-responder-involved traffic incidents and on the complexity of coordination under the conditions of operational response. For this article, it is important that the results of such an analysis show that the effectiveness of action in such an environment depends not only on speed of arrival or technical equipment, but also on the ability of several participants to maintain coordinated action simultaneously, clearly distinguish functions, and control the course of the process in real time. In the context of operational management, this means that coordination complexity in incident-operational environments cannot be explained solely by external response parameters. It also requires attention to how the team’s internal structure organizes responsibility and enables process control. It is precisely this link between internal role architecture and external effectiveness that is often insufficiently conceptualized in the literature, even though its importance in risk-intensive contexts is obvious. A comparable conclusion follows from the study by Boahene (2026), which, examining crime-operations management in law enforcement, shows that the influence of leadership on operational performance is realized largely through officers’ decision-making practices and team dynamics, that is, through the internal organization of the team rather than through external resources alone.

At the same time, a significant share of applied studies in the field of service patrol and incident management focuses primarily on issues of planning, resource deployment, and coverage optimization. This is clearly evident in the work of Edara and Dougald (2007), who sought to “develop a deployment planning tool” (p. 181) for freeway safety service patrol programs. A comparable orientation is characteristic of the work of Lou *et al.* (2011), who address freeway service patrol deployment planning for incident management and congestion mitigation. Such studies are undoubtedly important for understanding the instrumental aspects of operational efficiency, since they enable assessment of where, when, and to what extent resources should be allocated. However, they generally do not rise to the level of conceptualizing the internal logic of team management. In other words, they answer well the question of where and how patrol resources should be deployed, but explain to a much lesser degree how role structure, accountability, and process monitoring interact within the team itself during the execution of work. This is where one of the key gaps in the field becomes apparent: the predominance of an instrumental focus over an organizational-operational one. In this article, this circumstance is important because it further justifies moving from analyzing the external deployment of resources to understanding the team’s internal manageability.

A separate group of applied works evaluates the outcomes of such operations rather than their planning. Carrick *et al.* (2018) examine the safety of freeway service patrol operations using the case of the Florida Road

Rangers, while Salum *et al.* (2020) assess the impact of the same program on incident clearance duration. Islam *et al.* (2022) extend this line of analysis by testing the spatial transferability of the observed effect on incident clearance times. These studies are important for the present article because they show that operational effectiveness is measured through the duration, safety, and stability of process execution, that is, through indicators that directly depend on how consistently the work of performers is organized. At the same time, they record the result of operational activity without explaining which internal characteristics of team organization—the distribution of roles, the assignment of responsibility, or the arrangement of ongoing control—produce that result. This once again confirms that the applied literature convincingly measures the outcomes of operational work but leaves the internal managerial logic that generates them outside the scope of analysis.

A similar limitation can also be observed in works oriented toward optimizing real-time response. In particular, Buil *et al.* (2021), analyzing roadside incidents, emphasize the value of algorithmic tools for improving the quality of operational decisions and directly connect their study with “real-time response” (p. 1) and optimization. The methodological strength of such approaches is indisputable, as they enable improvements in response time, allocation, and routing. Yet even with high analytical precision, these solutions mostly consider effectiveness through external parameters of process flow, leaving its internal organizational basis outside the center of attention. For the logic of this article, this is crucial because operational effectiveness is not exhausted by optimizing routes, speeds, or resource distribution. It also depends on how clearly roles are defined within the team, how responsibility is assigned, and how performance monitoring is organized. Therefore, although optimization approaches have undeniable practical value, they do not eliminate the need for an integrated model of team management that would explain how the operational process becomes controllable through the team’s internal structural order.

The most recent studies also confirm this trend. In the work of Li *et al.* (2025), which proposes “a machine learning-driven robust approach” (p. 1) to integrated location and operation for emergency road service, there is a clear effort to combine spatial and operational aspects of management into a single solution. This indicates the undeniable progress of applied science toward a more comprehensive analysis of operational settings. At the same time, even such integrated approaches focus primarily on combining response parameters, reliability, location planning, and resource provision, rather than on explaining how internal team structure determines accountability and process monitoring in everyday operational work. Therefore, despite significant studies in role clarity, accountability, reflexive monitoring, and applied operations, the field still lacks an integrated analytical framework that consistently combines these

elements within a unified logic of team management. This gap underlies the relevance of the RCA-PM model proposed in this article, which considers role clarity as the basic condition for accountability, process monitoring, and subsequent corrective coordination.

Despite the substantial body of research devoted to role clarity, accountability, team feedback, reflexivity, and operational control, the existing literature still tends to illuminate these phenomena in a fragmented way—as separate factors of team or organizational effectiveness. Theoretical work convincingly demonstrates the importance of role clarity for coordinating interactions and the significance of accountability for assigning responsibility, while contemporary applied studies primarily focus on monitoring, modeling, and optimizing processes. However, what remains insufficiently conceptualized is how role clarity functions as the initial structural condition that sequentially forms accountability and enables effective process monitoring within a unified logic of operational team management. It is precisely this gap that creates the need for an integrated, practical framework that combines role clarity, accountability, process monitoring, and corrective coordination into a coherent model of team management.

The literature, therefore, provides sufficient grounds for considering role clarity, accountability, and process monitoring as interrelated components of operational team management; however, it does not offer a comprehensive analytical framework that would combine them into a unified practical logic. In view of this, the next section appropriately focuses on the methodological foundations of the conceptual-analytical study within which the integrated RCA-PM model is developed.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted within a conceptual-analytical design based on a structured review, comparison, and synthesis of scholarly literature. The choice of this approach was determined by the purpose of the article, which is not to empirically test individual hypotheses but to provide a theoretical substantiation of role clarity as a basic element of operational management that shapes accountability and enables process monitoring within a team. Accordingly, the methodological logic of the study was directed toward identifying, comparing, and integrating scholarly approaches to role clarity, accountability, and process monitoring in order to construct a coherent conceptual framework for analysis. Because the study is non-empirical in nature, participants or a sample in the conventional sense used in quantitative or qualitative research are absent. Instead, the analytical basis consisted of a corpus of 21 scholarly works relevant to the issues of role clarity, accountability, process monitoring, team reflexivity, and operational management. This body of sources was used as the foundation for the theoretical examination of the main research question and the more specific research questions. Within this logic, the unit of analysis was not

respondents or organizations, but scholarly approaches, concepts, analytical links between categories, and ways of interpreting them in contemporary literature.

The study materials comprised journal articles, theoretical inquiries, and analytical works that reflected both classical approaches to role ambiguity, role conflict, and accountability, as well as contemporary studies on feedback, reflexivity, process monitoring, and applied operations. Sources were selected according to three main criteria: thematic relevance to the research problem, conceptual significance for building the theoretical foundation, and analytical suitability for forming the integrated logic of the study. The corpus included works that either establish the basic theoretical foundation for understanding role clarity and accountability, or illuminate contemporary approaches to process monitoring, team feedback, and reflexivity, or help more clearly identify the research gap the article seeks to address.

The organization of the study was built as a sequential examination of the literature through four interrelated analytical blocks. The first block covered sources devoted to role clarity as the basis of the team's functional organization and as a prerequisite for structured interaction among its members. The second block concerned accountability as a derivative managerial mechanism that translates functional clarity into the sphere of responsibility for action and outcome. The third block focused on process monitoring, as well as the related categories of team feedback and reflexivity as mechanisms of ongoing control, reflection, and correction of team activity. The fourth, integrative block was aimed at identifying the research gap, that is, establishing the extent to which the existing literature addresses role clarity, accountability, and process monitoring mainly in a fragmented way, without combining them within a unified logic of operational team management.

This sequence of analytical processing was not accidental, as it reflected the article's internal logic and directly corresponded to its research questions and objectives. First, works were analyzed in which role clarity is treated as a condition of functional order and coordinated teamwork. At the next stage, studies on accountability were examined, which made it possible to trace how role clarity develops into a system of assigned responsibilities for the execution of operational tasks. This was followed by an analysis of the literature on process monitoring, feedback, and reflexivity, which enabled an understanding of how process control supports the manageability of team activity and ensures timely responses to deviations. After that, all three blocks were integrated into a single analytical scheme, which enabled the identification of the existing research gap and the formation of a coherent conceptual framework.

The sources were processed through a set of complementary analytical techniques, the main ones being conceptual comparison, thematic grouping, analytical synthesis, and logical generalization. Conceptual comparison was used to contrast different interpretations

of role clarity, accountability, and process monitoring across different scholarly traditions and applied contexts. Thematic grouping made it possible to organize sources according to their substantive focus and to identify stable meaning clusters around which the analytical logic of the study was built. Analytical synthesis was used to integrate separate propositions into a common theoretical construction, while logical generalization was used to formulate conclusions regarding the structural interrelationships among the key categories of the article. As a result, the analysis was aimed not only at describing individual scholarly positions, but also at revealing the internal connections among role clarity, accountability, and process monitoring, as well as at explaining their sequential role in operational team management.

It is important to emphasize that the methodological procedure was oriented primarily toward interpretation and conceptualization rather than toward measuring variables in a statistical sense. This means that the study did not seek to establish the quantitative strength of the relationship between role clarity, accountability, and process monitoring, nor to test causal relationships by means of empirical instruments. Instead, its task was to theoretically explain how these categories are interconnected within a unified logic of operational management and how role clarity may be understood as the initial organizational condition that sequentially shapes accountability and enables effective process control.

At the final stage of the study, the analytical conclusions obtained were synthesized into an integrated conceptual framework intended for subsequent presentation in the results section. Within this framework, role clarity is treated as the primary structural condition of operational management that creates the basis for establishing accountability, sustaining process monitoring, and enabling subsequent corrective coordination. Thus, the final model is not a mechanical combination of separate concepts, but the result of a consistent theoretical generalization of the literature, in which role clarity, accountability, process monitoring, and corrective coordination are interpreted as interrelated elements of a unified practical logic of team management.

To make the internal logic of the resulting framework verifiable, the study additionally applies a numerical illustration of the RCA-PM chain. The elements of the chain are expressed as normalized indicators on the interval from zero to one, and the sequential dependence among them, established in the analytical part of the study, is represented in multiplicative form: each subsequent element can realize only that share of manageability which the preceding element has already made possible. On this basis, several hypothetical team configurations are compared with one another. It should be emphasized that the values used are not empirical measurements and do not describe any real organization. They are analytical assumptions whose sole function is to demonstrate the behavior of the proposed structure, that is, to show

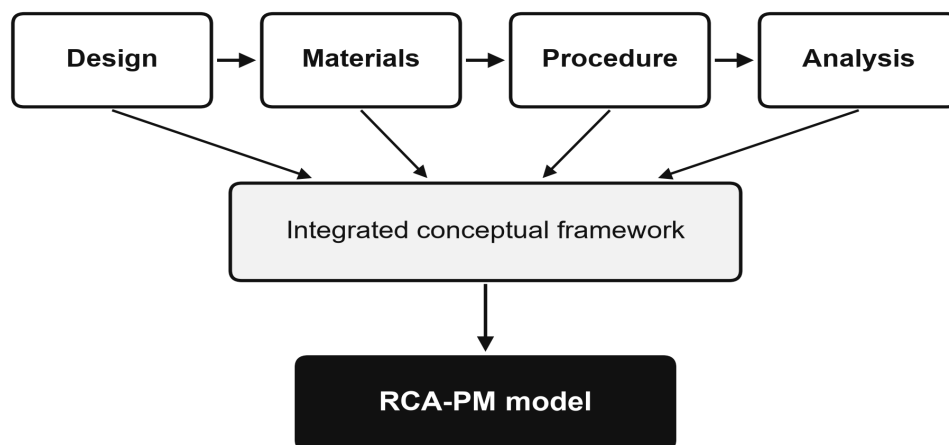
which consequences follow from the very sequence of role clarity, accountability, process monitoring, and corrective coordination, rather than to estimate the actual magnitude of these effects.

A methodological limitation of the study is its non-empirical character. The proposed conceptual framework was not subjected to statistical testing, experimental verification, or field application in a specific organizational environment. In addition, the results of the study depend on the boundaries of the constructed literature corpus, the principles of source selection, and the analytical logic of their interpretation. To some extent, this means

that a different configuration of the source base or another mode of conceptual grouping could have led to somewhat different emphases in the construction of the final model. At the same time, this limitation does not contradict the purpose of the article, since its principal task is to conceptualize the problem and develop a practical framework that may serve as a theoretical foundation for further empirical research, applied testing, and adaptation to specific operational contexts. The methodological structure of the study is summarized in Table 1, and the general sequence of its analytical stages is presented in Figure 1.

**Table 1:** Methodological structure of the study

| Methodological element    | Content                                                                                                                          |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Research design           | Conceptual and analytical study based on a structured review and synthesis of scholarly literature                               |
| Source base               | 21 scientific sources relevant to role clarity, accountability, process monitoring, team reflexivity, and operational management |
| Selection criteria        | Thematic relevance, conceptual significance, and suitability for addressing the main research question and sub-questions         |
| Analytical structure      | Four analytical blocks: role clarity, accountability, process monitoring, and integrative gap analysis                           |
| Procedure                 | Sequential review, comparison, grouping, and synthesis of literature according to the internal logic of the study                |
| Analysis techniques       | Conceptual comparison, thematic grouping, analytical synthesis, and logical generalization                                       |
| Illustrative modeling     | Normalized multiplicative representation of the RCA-PM chain applied to four hypothetical team configurations                    |
| Research outcome          | Development of an integrated conceptual framework that served as the basis for the RCA-PM model                                  |
| Methodological limitation | Non-empirical design without statistical testing or field validation; the numerical illustration uses hypothetical values        |



**Figure 1:** Methodological Logic of the Study

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first result of the analysis is that role clarity serves as a basic mechanism for structuring functional interaction within a team. It defines functional boundaries, establishes individual performers' areas of participation, and provides a clear logic for distributing actions within a

shared operational process. When a clearly delineated role structure is present, team members better understand their place within the system of interdependent actions and the relationships between their tasks and those of other performers. This reduces role ambiguity, lowers the risk of duplicating operations, minimizes gaps between

individual stages of work, and prevents situations in which important functions remain inadequately performed. As a result, team interaction becomes more coordinated, predictable, and functionally ordered, while the team itself acquires a structural foundation for stable operational activity.

The second result of the analysis is that role clarity is directly linked to the formation of accountability in the execution of operational tasks. If the role structure is clearly defined, each task can be linked to a specific performer, an expected outcome, boundaries of responsibility, and criteria for evaluating performance. In such a situation, accountability takes not a declarative but an operationally defined form, since it becomes clear who is responsible for carrying out a given action, for complying with the established standard, for transferring the result to the next stage, and for the final quality of execution. Accordingly, role clarity creates the preconditions for assigning responsibility not only at the formal level, but also in the practice of everyday teamwork. This strengthens the definition of responsibility within joint activity, increases execution discipline, and reduces the risk of situations in which responsibility becomes blurred or distributed too ambiguously.

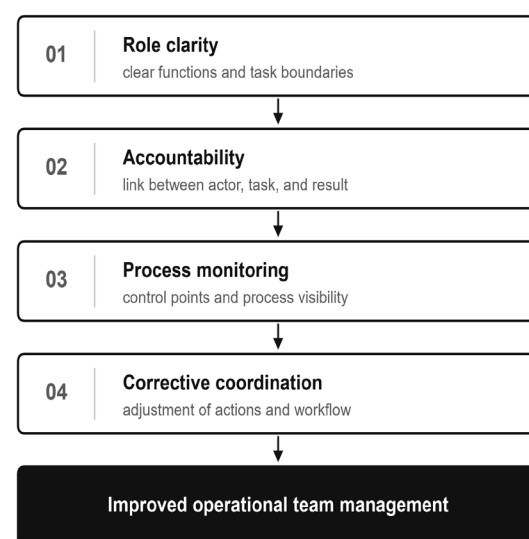
The third result of the analysis showed that role clarity is directly associated with the ability to effectively monitor and control operational processes within a team. Owing to the clarity of roles, the work execution process becomes structurally visible: it becomes possible to determine who is responsible for a specific stage, where exactly the control points are located, in which part of the process deviations arise, and at what level corrective intervention is needed. Under such conditions, monitoring ceases to be a general or vague observation of the course of work and acquires a more targeted, systematic, and functionally ordered character. This makes it possible not only to track the execution of individual stages but also to identify in a timely manner disruptions in the sequence of actions, overloads of particular performers, delays in the transfer of results, or breakdowns in team coordination. Thus, role clarity increases process transparency, makes the process more controllable, and creates conditions for a more accurate organization of ongoing operational control.

The generalization of the obtained results enabled the formulation of the practical RCA-PM model, in which role clarity, accountability, process monitoring, and corrective coordination are presented as interrelated elements of operational team management. In this model, role clarity serves as the initial structural element, as it ensures an orderly distribution of functions and provides the organizational basis for subsequent managerial mechanisms. Accountability reflects the assignment of responsibility for actions and the achievement of results, transforming functional clarity into a system of accountability. Process monitoring is the ongoing control of execution, enabling timely tracking of process flow, identification of deviations, and maintenance of

operational manageability. Corrective coordination, in turn, captures the corrective component of the management cycle, that is, the mechanism for introducing changes into interaction, the sequence of actions, or the allocation of resources in response to identified problems. Thus, the model reflects not a set of isolated categories, but a sequential logic of operational management in which each subsequent element is based on the preceding one. The general sequence of the model is as follows: role clarity → accountability → process monitoring → corrective coordination. The structure of the model is presented in Figure 2.

In a broader analytical dimension, the proposed model shows that effective operational team management cannot be reduced solely to the formal distribution of duties or to separate control procedures. Its foundation is a consistently organized chain of managerial elements, in which role clarity creates structural order, accountability secures responsibility, process monitoring ensures ongoing visibility into execution, and corrective coordination enables adapting joint work to identified deviations and changing conditions. It is in this combination that these components form a coherent practical framework suitable for explaining the operational manageability of team activity.

Based on the analysis, the RCA-PM model's main value lies in its integrative character. It makes it possible to combine those aspects of team management that in the existing literature are often considered separately: role clarity, responsibility for execution, ongoing process control, and corrective managerial response. As a result, the model can be used not only as a theoretical generalization but also as a practical analytical tool for describing, assessing, and improving teamwork in operational environments where coherence of action, transparency of responsibility, and timeliness of control are of particular importance. The main results of the conceptual analysis are summarized in Table 2.



**Figure 2:** RCA-PM Model for Operational Team Management

**Table 2:** Main results of the conceptual analysis

| Analytical focus                    | Main result                                                                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Role clarity and team interaction   | Role clarity structures the functional interaction of team members by defining task boundaries and reducing ambiguity                           |
| Role clarity and accountability     | Role clarity supports accountability by linking tasks, responsible actors, and expected outcomes                                                |
| Role clarity and process monitoring | Role clarity enables more effective monitoring by making operational stages, control points, and responsibilities visible                       |
| Integrated operational logic        | Role clarity, accountability, process monitoring, and corrective coordination form the RCA-PM model as a practical framework of team management |

### Illustrative Formalization of the RCA-PM Chain

The conceptual conclusions formulated above make it possible to express the RCA-PM chain in a compact analytical form. Let role clarity be denoted by  $r$ , the degree to which functional clarity is converted into assigned responsibility by  $a$ , the intensity of effective process monitoring by  $m$ , and the responsiveness of corrective coordination by  $c$ , with each indicator normalized to the interval from zero to one. Two considerations determine the form of their combination. First, each element of the chain is derivative of the preceding one and cannot exceed the possibilities that the preceding one creates, which means that the elements are combined multiplicatively rather than additively. Second, role clarity enters the chain twice, since, as the second and third results of the analysis show, it conditions both the assignment of responsibility and the visibility of the process. The resulting operational manageability index (OMI) therefore takes the following form:

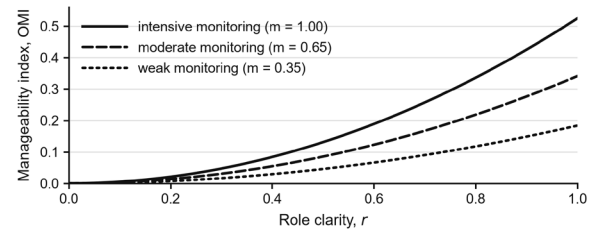
$$OMI = r^2 \cdot a \cdot m \cdot c \quad (1)$$

Two properties follow from expression (1), and both correspond to the conclusions of the conceptual analysis. First, the index equals zero when role clarity equals zero: where functional boundaries are not defined, no intensity of control and no speed of correction produce manageability, because there is no one to whom a stage of work, a standard, or a result can be attributed. Second, the marginal effect of strengthening monitoring is not constant but depends on the level of role clarity already achieved:

$$\frac{\partial OMI}{\partial m} = r^2 \cdot a \cdot c \quad (2)$$

In other words, the same managerial effort invested in control yields a different return depending on how clearly roles have been defined beforehand. The elasticity of the index with respect to role clarity equals two, whereas for each of the other three elements it equals one, which

means that an equal relative improvement in role clarity produces approximately twice the effect of the same improvement in any single subsequent element. This formally reproduces the central thesis of the article: monitoring is not an autonomous instrument but a function of the order that role clarity and accountability have already established. Figure 3 shows the behavior of the index across the whole range of role clarity for three levels of monitoring intensity, with the remaining parameters fixed at  $a = 0.75$  and  $c = 0.70$ .

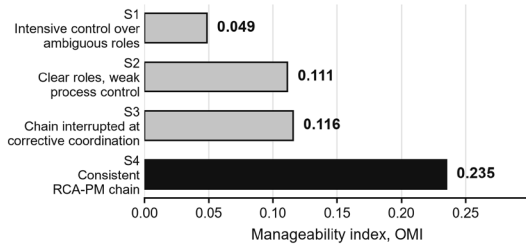

**Figure 3:** Manageability Index and Role Clarity at Three Monitoring Levels (illustrative values)

The curves in Figure 3 diverge as role clarity increases and converge toward zero as it decreases. At low values of role clarity the distance between weak and intensive monitoring is negligible, which means that in a team with undefined functional boundaries additional control changes almost nothing. As role clarity increases, the same difference in monitoring intensity produces an increasingly large difference in manageability. The sequence of managerial actions therefore matters: the ordering of roles precedes the strengthening of control rather than the other way around.

To make this dependence more concrete, four hypothetical team configurations are compared in Table 3 and in Figure 4. Each of the first three is deliberately strong in one element of the chain and weak in another, whereas the fourth represents a consistently constructed chain without a pronounced weak link.

**Table 3:** Manageability index for four hypothetical team configurations

| Illustrative configuration                       | $r$  | $a$  | $m$  | $c$  | Manageability index |
|--------------------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|---------------------|
| S1. Intensive control over ambiguous roles       | 0.35 | 0.55 | 0.90 | 0.80 | 0.049               |
| S2. Clear roles, weak process control            | 0.85 | 0.80 | 0.35 | 0.55 | 0.111               |
| S3. Chain interrupted at corrective coordination | 0.85 | 0.80 | 0.80 | 0.25 | 0.116               |
| S4. Consistent RCA-PM chain                      | 0.80 | 0.75 | 0.70 | 0.70 | 0.235               |



**Figure 4:** Manageability Index for Four Hypothetical Team Configurations

The comparison presented in Table 3 and Figure 4 shows that the three unbalanced configurations produce a low level of manageability despite the substantial differences between them. Intensive control over ambiguous roles (S1) gives the weakest result of all, since control is applied to a process in which responsibility cannot be attributed. Clearly defined roles without established control (S2) and a chain interrupted at the stage of correction (S3) give a similar outcome to each other, because in both cases the weakest element limits the entire sequence. The fourth configuration (S4) yields an index roughly twice as high as the closest of them, although not one of its individual indicators is the highest in the set. This illustrates the integrative nature of the RCA-PM model: manageability is determined not by the maximum value of a single managerial instrument but by the absence of a break in the chain.

It should be stressed once again that the values used in Table 3 are analytical assumptions rather than measurement results. Their purpose is to demonstrate the internal logic of the proposed structure, and not to estimate the actual strength of the relationships, which remains a task for subsequent empirical verification.

## Discussion

The practical meaning of the obtained results lies in the fact that role ambiguity creates not only coordination difficulties for the team but also a systemic dependence on the manager's constant intervention. If employees' functions are not defined with sufficient clarity, the manager is forced to repeatedly clarify tasks, redistribute tasks among performers, and effectively compensate for weaknesses in the internal organization through manual control. As a result, the team loses autonomy, and operational management is reduced to reacting to local disruptions rather than sustaining a stable, predictable process. In this context, role clarity acquires the significance of a mechanism that reduces the need for situational managerial intervention and strengthens the autonomy of teamwork.

Equally important is the fact that a clear distribution of roles creates the conditions for real rather than merely formal accountability. When functional boundaries are blurred, it becomes difficult to determine who is responsible for an error, delay, or disruption in the sequence of actions; as a result, control loses its specificity and becomes a general observation without a clear corrective

logic. Conversely, when a structured role architecture is in place, each stage of the work can be linked to a specific performer, facilitating the identification of the problematic segment of the process, the clarification of responsibilities, and the timely correction of deviations. This is precisely where the practical value of combining role clarity, accountability, and process monitoring within a unified managerial logic becomes evident.

The obtained results provide grounds for arguing that role clarity is the primary condition of a team's functional order, since it is precisely role clarity that defines the boundaries of interaction among participants, reduces coordination breakdowns, and ensures the predictability of joint work. In this sense, role clarity appears not merely as a characteristic of organizational structure, but as a basic mechanism of operational ordering that creates the conditions for the coordinated execution of interdependent actions. This conclusion is generally consistent with previous studies on role ambiguity, role conflict, goal clarity, and leadership clarity, which emphasize the importance of clarity for reducing uncertainty, strengthening coordination, and improving the effectiveness of team interaction. At the same time, the conducted analysis makes it possible to refine these approaches by considering role clarity not simply as a separate organizational characteristic, but as a basic element of operational management that sets the internal logic of a team's functional organization.

The second result indicates that accountability does not arise autonomously and cannot be effectively introduced as an isolated managerial mechanism. It depends on a previously defined role structure, within which each task is linked to a specific performer, an expected result, and boundaries of responsibility. It is only under such conditions that accountability acquires operational specificity and ceases to be a formal requirement, becoming a real mechanism for assigning responsibility for an action, a performance standard, and the final result instead. This conclusion is consistent with the literature on accountability and responsibility clarity, while also refining it by showing that responsibility should be treated as a derivative mechanism of role clarity. In other words, accountability does not precede role clarity but logically follows from it, because only where a clear functional structure is present can it be determined who exactly is responsible, within what boundaries, and for what.

The third result demonstrates that effective process monitoring also depends on role transparency, because control becomes targeted only when it is clearly understood who is responsible for a specific stage of work, where the control points are located, and at what level deviations arise. This makes it possible to argue that process monitoring cannot be regarded exclusively as a technical or formal procedure of observation. Its effectiveness is determined by the extent to which the execution process is structurally visible, and that visibility, in turn, depends to a considerable degree on the team's clearly delineated role architecture. In this respect, the results of the study

complement existing work on feedback, reflexivity, and process monitoring, as they show that process control becomes truly manageable only when it is embedded in a system of functional clarity and assigned responsibility. The theoretical significance of the article lies in its integration of role clarity, accountability, and process monitoring into a single conceptual framework, in which these categories are viewed not in isolation but as sequentially interconnected elements of operational team management. Such an approach makes it possible to overcome the fragmentation of the existing literature, where role clarity, accountability, and process control are mostly addressed separately, without sufficient explanation of their internal interdependence. As a result, the proposed interpretation refines the theoretical understanding of team manageability by showing that its foundation lies not in individual managerial instruments, but in a sequential structural chain: from role clarity to responsibility assignment, from responsibility to the possibility of targeted control, and from control to corrective coordination.

The practical significance of the study lies in substantiating the RCA-PM model as a basis for organizing roles, accountability, control, and corrective coordination within a team. The proposed model may be useful for those operational environments in which work effectiveness depends on a clear sequence of actions, the coordination of performers, and timely responses to deviations. Its value lies in the fact that it allows team management to be viewed not as a set of isolated administrative decisions, but as an integrated managerial cycle in which each element builds upon the previous one while simultaneously creating the conditions for the next. For this reason, the RCA-PM model may serve as an analytical basis for assessing teamwork, identifying weaknesses in the internal organization of processes, and developing practical mechanisms to improve operational manageability.

The numerical illustration presented above adds a further practically important nuance to these conclusions. It shows that the overall level of manageability is determined by the weakest element of the chain rather than by the strongest, and that managerial effort therefore produces the greatest effect when it is directed at the gap in the sequence rather than at further strengthening what already functions. For an operational environment, this means that intensifying control in a team with unclear functional boundaries is a predictably low-return investment, whereas ordering the roles changes the return on all subsequent managerial actions.

At the same time, the results of the study should be interpreted in view of its limitations. The main limitation is the article's non-empirical character, as the proposed framework has not undergone statistical testing or field validation in a specific organizational environment. The numerical illustration of the model is likewise based on hypothetical values and is intended to demonstrate the logic of the structure rather than to quantify the strength

of the relationships. In addition, the conclusions depend on the boundaries of the selected body of literature and on the analytical logic of its interpretation. At the same time, it is precisely the conceptual nature of the study that makes it possible to outline a generalized theoretical model that may be used as a foundation for further empirical research, applied testing in different operational contexts, and further clarification of the relationships among role clarity, accountability, process monitoring, and corrective coordination.

## CONCLUSION

This study substantiated role clarity as a basic element of operational team management that shapes accountability and enables effective process monitoring. The analysis showed that role clarity structures functional interaction by defining task boundaries and reducing ambiguity; that accountability is a derivative mechanism that becomes operationally specific only when each task is linked to a defined performer, an expected result, and a boundary of responsibility; and that process monitoring becomes targeted only when clearly delineated roles make the stages of work and control points visible. These relationships were integrated into the RCA-PM model, which combines role clarity, accountability, process monitoring, and corrective coordination into a sequential framework for operational management. The numerical illustration further showed that manageability is limited by the weakest element of this chain, so strengthening a single managerial instrument cannot compensate for a gap elsewhere. In practical terms, clearly defined roles reduce a team's dependence on the manager's constant manual control and shift operational management from situational reaction to systematic coordination. Future research should empirically verify the RCA-PM model across different industries and team types and develop applied indicators for assessing role clarity, accountability, and the effectiveness of process monitoring.

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