Research Article

MODEL FOR CHINESE SANGHA DEVELOPMENT IN THE NEW NORMAL ERA

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Abstract

Background and Objective: Thai Buddhism responds to new challenges and opportunities that cut across Thai society and cultural patterns in the modern period. Buddhism is playing a growing role in constitutional practice in Thailand. In recent years, constitutional reform efforts in majority-Buddhist Thailand have sparked new questions about the development of Sangha for sustainability. This research focuses on the relationship between ecclesiastical officials and organizational development, learning organization, commitment, and Chinese Sangha development. It evaluates the effectiveness of these relationships and determines how they directly influence the development of the Chinese Sangha. This research aims to examine the causal factors affecting the Chinese Sangha development in the New Normal era.

Methodology: The sample group consisted of Chinese Sangha and Sāmaṇera from 14 Chinese sects' temples with a structural equation model (SEM). The researchers had set the sample size at a ratio of 20 times the observable variable. The study consisted of 16 observed variables. The sample comprised 325 persons, which included 82 Sangha and 243 Sāmaṇera from 14 Chinese sects' temples in Thailand. The sampling was conducted with proportional stratified random sampling and set the sample group as a ratio of each stage per population of Upāsaka and Upāsikā.

Main Results: The research questions dictated the use of the structural equation model. The model was a suitable model, which indicated that every latent variable connected with every observed variable, and Error terms were uncorrelated. The research results revealed that the relationship between the ecclesiastical officials and the other endogenous variables was positively related statistically and significantly at a level of 0.01. The statistical analysis found that the ecclesiastical officials, organizational development, learning organization, and commitment influenced Chinese Sangha development at 0.001 and 0.05 accordingly. The leaders' variable impacted the Chinese Sangha development, valued at 0.94 shared from the indirect effect valued at 0.72 at a statistically significant level of 0.01. Additionally, the learning organization factor had the strongest direct impact on the development of the Chinese - the greatest influence was valued at 0.40. A measurement model indicated satisfaction in Sangha convergent validity and discriminant validity (CR>0.7, AVE>0.5). All significant paths were positively related to personnel development. The structural equation model indicated the absolute fit measure since the model

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fit the data. The statistical values were as indicated: - Chi-square = 88.49, df = 74, p-value = 0.119, GFI = 0.97, AGFI = 0.93, RMR= 0.005, RMSEA = 0.025, and CFI = 1.00. The findings provided empirical evidence that this structural equation model was fruitful for generalization.

Involvement to Buddhadhamma: The research findings has supported the structural model indicating that the model for the development of Chinese Sangha contributes to sustainable development in Thailand. The model for Chinese Sangha development differs from previous studies, which do not integrate various concepts and theories to promote religious sustainable development. Leaders who focus on human resource development can make the organization thrive. Religious organizations should have a clear roadmap for developing their human resources that promotes global thriving and welfare that contribute to positive socio-economic progress. This interdisciplinary and collaborative research model enables religious leaders to deliver their communities with accurate and timely informative guidelines about the best way to care for the world.

Conclusions: This research result indicated that the findings generally supported the proposed model that was deeply rooted in the theoretical foundations of leaders, organizational development, learning organization, and commitment. The study also produced findings that every causal factor that influenced the dependent variable statistically significantly and consistently with the research objectives.

Keywords: Chinese Sangha, Development, New Normal Era

Introduction

Despite many research studies on the COVID pandemic, a study by Raghavan et al. covers change at the organizational (meso) and individual (micro) levels. There is rare research on the role of temple leadership in organizational development and monastic capacity development. According to organizational research papers (Raghavan et al., 2021), it indicates that Treesawat studies the organizational development of the Thai Sangha. Most studies are based on discipline principles with a focus on the manner of Sangha and Buddhists to be safe from the COVID-19 pandemic. The world is rapidly changing, and the Sangha should adopt a modern approach to temple management within their milieu (Treesawat, 2018).

The temple can be considered an exceptional organization, not a for-profit organization, not a business, and a government organization, in which administrators, organization members, and stakeholders are involved and depending on personal faith. The ecclesiastical officials of the temple, as the leader, must have the vision to apply management concepts to develop the temple and the Sangha, to be strict with the Dhamma discipline, to be initiative, to be nurturers of the temple, and to be upholder of the religion permanently. At this moment, the people call for the modernization of monasteries and Sangha and the need for society to accelerate the reform of monastic or monastic property for educational purposes.

Therefore, the ecclesiastical officials are important players in making the temple prosperous and play a very important role in their administration development. They act as the top leader in

monastery management. Leaders must use wisdom to integrate management to balance material development with mental development. Leaders are thoughtful, knowledgeable, visionary, and operational planning. The first part is pertained to the leader variable as an exogenous variable in the structural model.

The subsequent relationship between variables depicts the organizational development variable as the endogenous variable. The traditional role of the Sangha as educators has been falling out of worship, making religion an inferior matter. The hope of society is weak; How can the ecclesiastical officials and Sangha develop and improve their organization and themselves? The Organizations responsible for training morality and ethics development must play a role in developing and adapting to changes and maintaining righteousness and goodness according to the Dhamma discipline according to modern management principles. Sangha must be insightful, digitally literate, prominent, and able to collaborate by putting secular knowledge into practice. All Leaders must train, educate themselves and educate their members, invest and encourage members to be technologically literate, and encourage team building (Miremadi et al., 2021).

The third part is portrayed as the learning organization variable that can be kept as another exogenous (independent) variable in the structural model. According to the writings of Phra Thepvedhi & Bhavilai (Phra Thepvedhi & Bhavilai, 1989), learning among the Sangha is carried out through the behavior of the Upacha and the Patriarch. By making a Pratimok**Ṣ**a every Buddhist Holy day, the Sangha can experience and practice skills from the Upacha to be able to help solve operational problems. Learning creates opportunities and empowers Sangha to make the right decisions. Pratimok**Ṣ**a increases bonding in temples and raises the standard of performance of the Sangha, as well as reduces errors in daily life. Organizational learning affects the pride in work and the value of quality of life. The research proves that knowledge management is one of the key factors in ensuring members are responsible for their goals. The budget, performance, and activities that take place in the organization are all based on knowledge sharing in organization (Xin et al., 2022).

Leaders must foster and create an environment that conducive to learning. Leaders play vital roles in strategic plans, provide opportunities, and stimulate the exchange of ideas for members to express their opinions through meetings (Davenport et al., 1998); (Almansoori et al., 2021). It is considered a powerful catalyst for change and a cornerstone of innovation (Fein & Tziner, 2021). This results in innovation in the organization, as the leaders create an atmosphere and encourage mutual innovation and knowledge sharing, giving members the opportunity to suggest new things for the organization because the members have full authority from the leaders to encourage other members to think together (Meng et al., 2015).

The final part of the structural model relationship is the commitment variable. Leaders who invest in technology can manage knowledge and engage members in the organization (Wahida et al., 2021). Knowledge management increases organizational commitment. Leaders should invest in information technology systems to facilitate both workplaces in remote areas (Ramalho et al., 2018). Organizational commitment is a demonstration of the strength of each

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member toward their participation in the organization (Porter et al., 1974); (Dahmardeh & Nastiezaie, 2019); (Tuna et al., 2016). Member commitment is an indicator of member retention (Allen & Meyer, 1990); (Tuna et al., 2016) through their attitudes and behaviors toward the organization. Member commitment also indicates the willingness of members to fulfilling the mission and vision of the organization's leaders (Singh et al., 2015). The organizational commitment theories originate from a large number of scholars (Porter et al. 1974); (Mowday et al., 1979); (Meyer & Allen, 1991). This study employs Meyer and Allen's commitment theory which includes the affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment.

All of these variables selected are drawn to test the causal effect between exogenous and endogenous constructs. Specifically, three out of five variables are tested as mediator variables.

Objective

This study aims to examine the model, relationship, and influence of leaders, organizational development, learning organization, and commitment to personnel development.

Methodology

The structural equation model was extrapolated by using Windows software packages to analyze the statistical values. A questionnaire was designed from the theories and previous studies, using a Likert scale in five levels for collecting data. The content validity, reliability, and practicality of the variables were tested before collecting actual data. Then, the validated questionnaire was used to collect data from a sample population, and the collected data were analyzed statistically.

Population and Sample

1. The population included 100 Buddhist Sangha and 1,683 Sāmaṇera (March 24, 2022) from 14 Chinese sects' temples in Thailand, which included Wat Mangkon Kamalawat, Wat Bhoman Khunaram, Wat Thiphaya Waree Wihan, Wat Bamphen Chin Phrot, Wat Boromracha Kanchanaphisek, Wat Khitchakut Wihan, Wat Phothitattaram, Wat Muen Buddha Mettakhunaram, Wat Thep Phuttharam, Wat Mettadhamma Pothiyan, Wat Pho Yen, Wat Chue Chang, Wat Cheen Pracha Samosorn, and Wat Mangkon Buppharam (Fischer, 2017).

2. The sample group consisted of Sangha and Sāmaṇera from 14 Chinese sects' temples, which the size was determined with a structural equation model (SEM). The researchers had set the sample size at a ratio of 20 times the observable variable (Grace, 2008). The study consisted of 16 observational variables. The sample volumes were 325 persons, which included 82 Sangha from Chinese sects' temples out of 100 Sangha. The remaining sample which included 243 Sāmaṇera from 1,683 Sāmaṇera was obtained from 14 Chinese sects' temples in Thailand. Consequently, the researchers used a proportional stratified random sampling to set the sample group as a ratio of each stage per the population of Upāsaka and Upāsikā (Sutthichaimethee & Ariyasajjakorn, 2018).

Determination of Concepts and Hypothesis of Research

These factors found the components of Monastic Buddhism survived with sustainability comprised five variables: 1) the ecclesiastical officials, 2) organizational development, 3) learning organization, 4) commitment, and 5) Chinese Sangha Development.

Results and Discussion

1. Analysis of the relatives

It was found that the relationship lines between passive variables were negative and not statistically significant two routes equal to -1.38 and -1.05. There were six routes that indicated positive relationship between latent variables but were statistically insignificant. There were only two lines with positive and statistically significance at level of 0.01. The model was poorly fit. There were only two qualified stats: RMR and CFI (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1996). Therefore, it needed to be modified and tested to improve the model (Jöreskog, 1988); (Leamer, 1978); (MacCallum, 1986). After justifying that the error terms should have been correlated, the model's goodness of fit improved. The structural equation model indicated the absolute fit measure. The statistical values were as follows: - Chi-square = 88.49, df = 74, p-value = 0.119, GFI = 0.97, AGFI = 0.93, RMR= 0.005, RMSEA = 0.025, and CFI = 1.00. It had been indicated that the revised model was harmonized with empirical data. It also complied with the organizational theories and previous studies. The analysis result was depicted in the Table 1.

Table 1 The result of the relative index of the revised model.

ITEMS	ACCEPTED STATISTICS	REVISED MODEL	RESULTS
1. Chi-square (χ^2)	* 0	88.49	PASS
	*EQUAL df	74	PASS
Relative Chi-square	(χ^2 /df)< 2.00	1.20	PASS
2. GFI	> 0.90	0.97	PASS
3. AGFI	> 0.90	0.94	PASS
4. RMR	0.00	0.005	PASS
5. RMSEA	< 0.05	0.025	PASS
6. CFI	*0.00-1.00	1.00	PASS

The values of fit indexes were so well indicated that the structural equation model was constructed relatively to the theoretical concepts as well as the variable measured and the nature of the data.

A high degree of consistency between the alternative model and the empirical data was present. As a result, the alternative model was regarded as a good model based on the standard. It was more practical than the fictitious model and appropriate for serving as a model for ecclesiastical officials, organizational development, learning organization, commitment, and Chinese Sangha development to promote the flourishing of Buddhism in the Chinese Sangha Sect.

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The revised model was tested with the same data had higher statistical validity and concordance than the hypothesis model, as evidenced by the data presented above. According to the measurement model, the structural model was then overall verified. The average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR) values were computed to assess the discriminant validity and internal consistency of the measurement.

This contemporary study used the average variances extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR) as the basis to estimate the convergent validity (Hair et al., 2019). A dimension with a CR value of over 0.7 and an AVE value of over 0.5 would have been considered high convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The correlation coefficient (Pearson Correlation Coefficient) value was less than 0.7 (Kline, 2023). The convergent validity indicated the operational accuracy, turning abstract concepts into measurable variables. As indicated in Table 2, all dimensions had AVE and CR that were higher than the aforementioned cutoff values which suggested a good convergent validity. The bold and diagonal values in Table 2 referred to the AVE value.

Table 2 AVE and CR.

VARIABLE	LEAD	OD	LO	COMMI	PDEV	CR
LEAD	**0.57**					**0.84**
OD	0.51	**0.52**				**0.76**
LO	0.50	0.48	**0.52**			**0.76**
COMMI	0.36	0.34	0.49	**0.50**		**0.74**
PDEV	0.50	0.50	0.56	0.46	**0.68**	**0.86**

2. The model correlation path analysis findings

The measurement variables corresponded to the latent variables. It appeared in the relation between the latent variable panel. Thus, there were regression models to fit this conceptual model to the data. The statistical result indicated every correlation path valued was a significant value of 0.01 and 0.05 accordingly ([t] >1.96), a statistically significant value of 0.05, and a value of t was greater than 2.58 ([t] >2.58). Based on the standard element weight value, which was the decision coefficient indicated the influence of the variable, the test results were summarized as depicted:

Table 3 The causal direct and indirect effects on Chinese Sangha Development.

Factored Variable	PDEF		
	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Total effect
LEAD	0.22*	**0.72****	**0.94****
OD	0.30*	0.48**	0.78**
LO	**0.40***	0.15*	0.55**
COMMI	0.25**	-	0.25**

Note that * indicates statistical significance at the 0.05 level ([t] >1.96) and ** indicates statistical significance at the level of 0.01 ([t] >2.58).

Table 3 revealed that leaders as ecclesiastical officials (LEAD) had the greatest overall effect on the development of the Chinese Sangha, organizational development (OD), learning organization (LO), and commitment (COMMI), respectively. When considering only the variables that directly affect the development of the Chinese Sangha, it was found that the learning organization had the greatest direct influence on the development of the Chinese Sangha, followed by the organizational development, organizational commitment, and leaders. It was also found that the leaders had the greatest indirect effect on the development of Chinese monasteries in the New Normal era, followed by organizational development and learning organizations. Therefore, it could be concluded that the development of the Chinese Sangha was to figure out the causal effect of exogenous variables (leaders) and endogenous variables (organizational development, learning organization, and commitment).

The research result indicated that the Chinese Sangha development in the New Normal era was directly affected by leaders, organizational development, learning organizations, and commitment. It also revealed the indirect effect of the leaders' variable which was 72% greater than the direct effect, which was valued at 22%.

Additionally, the Chinese Sangha development in the New Normal era was directly affected by organizational development and directly affected by learning organization, and organizational commitment. It was also found that the indirect path of organizational development effect was 48% higher than the direct effect which was valued at 30%.

There was also statistical reveal that the learning organization had a direct effect value of 40% and an indirect effect value of 15% on the Chinese Sangha development. Lastly, organizational commitment directly effected Chinese Sangha development value by 25%.

Originality and Body of Knowledge

This study generates innovative knowledge guidance to discover that the Chinese Sangha sustainable development of a country involves developing the economic sphere in accordance with the social development sphere and political development sphere, as well as ensuring environmental development. The key approach that actually contributes to the sustainability of development policies is to help policymakers identify what is working, who is benefiting, and who is being left behind. It is about solving a real problem in a simple way to promote Sangha education, improve learning support via data collection and statistical analysis, and help government agencies assess progress and reform across a range of research outcomes to strengthen national Buddhism Education Management Systems so that Sangha, abbots, and communities gain the information they need to engage decision-makers at all levels and hold them accountable, which is as depicted in the following diagram (Figure 1).

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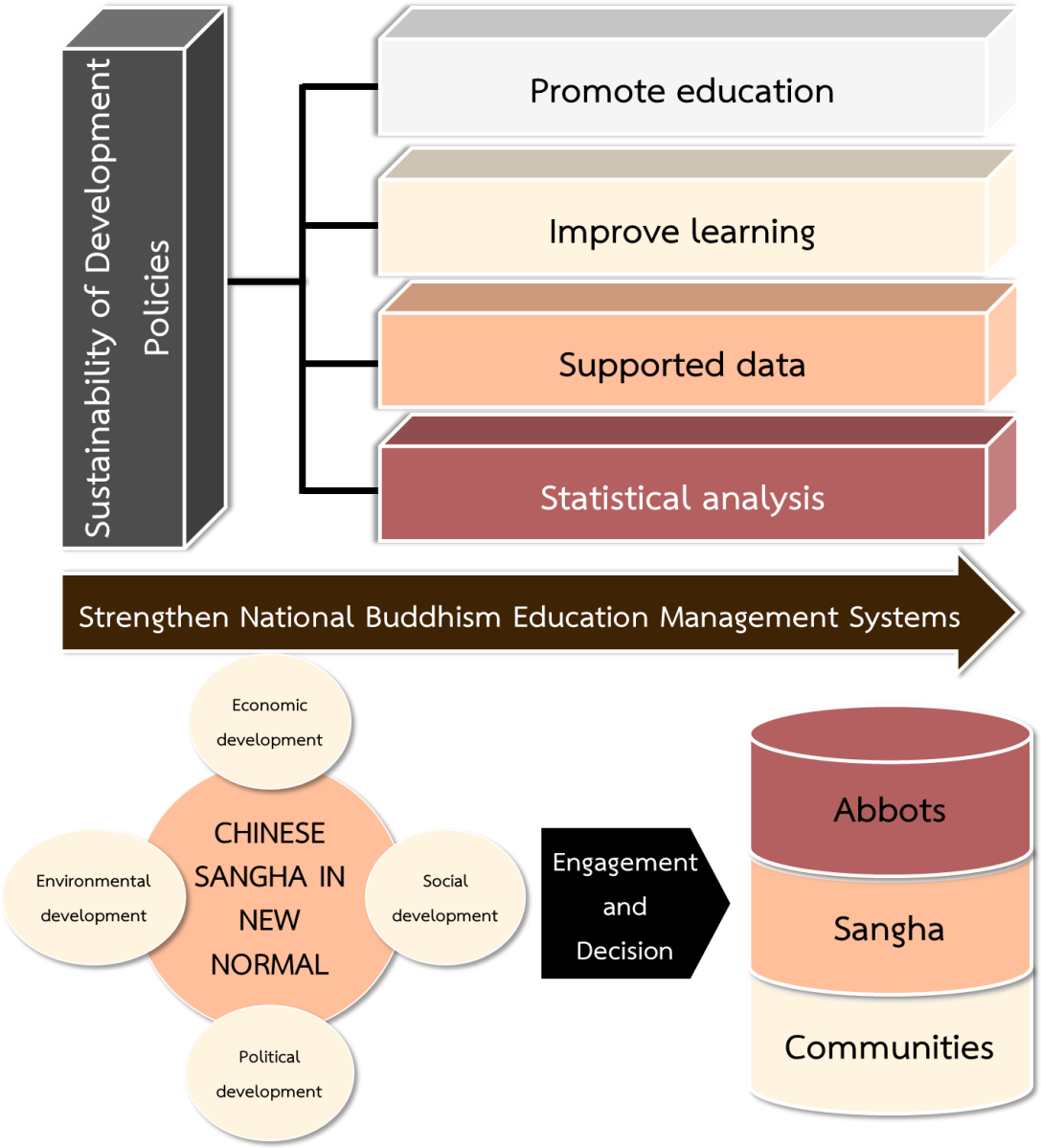

Figure 1 Sangha Sustainable Development Policy.

Conclusions and Recommendations

It was concluded that leaders, directly and indirectly, had influenced Chinese Sangha development via the organizational development variable, the learning organization variable, and the organizational commitment. It was recommended that policymakers should have been applied this model as a social policy to reform of monastic, monastic property, and modernization. Since society wanted more transparency in donations so that the temple was accountable and gotten rid of corruption. An abbot voluntarily implemented this model to improve and develop administration. Religious humiliation was a problem with certain people. Then, the reform of monastic education and administration was one of the necessities for building up a better society. Public policy related to Sangha should have been promoted higher education to enhance proficiency of Sangha in moral discipline as well as education in the secular education system. Knowledge helped Sangha developed a better perspective on things and continually

improved their behavior. Lack of knowledge of the Tripitaka and education in secular systems made them misbehave. For further study, the researchers would recommend conducting longitudinal research on whether the statistical results were still supported this model or not. It was challenging to prove the structural model in other sects, types of population, countries, and contexts to generalize the model. This research did not test the invariant covariance to prove the saturated model between the Chinese Sangha and the Sāmaṇera due to the small population of the Sangha. Therefore, those who were interested in studying this model should have been conducted a comparative test of variance and covariance of variables in different samples. For the academic community, the findings of this research were stepping stones to more research into new frontiers.

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