



## THE EFFICIENCY OF THE SAṄGHA ADMINISTRATION BY ECCLESIASTICAL ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS IN SAṄGHA ADMINISTRATIVE REGIONS 17-18 (THE DHAMMAYUTIKA SECT)

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### Abstract

**Background and Objective:** In Thailand, Buddhism is an integral part of the society's structure. It has been preserved and practiced alongside other societal norms and values for a long time. The Saṅgha order takes itself as the order of representatives or followers of the Fully Enlightened One. The duties of the Saṅgha order comprise the mission of propagation, inheritance, and the transfer of Buddhadhamma and teachings. These duties are regarded as the important missions of the Saṅgha order to act accordingly. Currently, the Saṅgha administration in Thailand depends on the Saṅgha Supreme Council of Thailand to administer regulations for commanding the subordinating Saṅgha order to be in proper domain with acceptable order. The Saṅgha Supreme Council of Thailand regulates the structure, hierarchy, and authority of ecclesiastical administrative officers in governing the Saṅgha order and temple management. This research aims to study the efficiency of the Saṅgha administration by ecclesiastical administrative officers in Saṅgha administrative regions 17-18 (The Dhammayutika Sect).

**Methodology:** In this quantitative research, the population consisted of 192 ecclesiastical administrative officers. The research tools included the questionnaires, which were used to collect data via an online channel with Google Forms. The statistics used for data analysis were descriptive statistics, which consisted of frequency and percentage for describing the sample demographics. The mean and Standard Deviation (S.D.) values were used in the efficiency analysis.

**Main Results:** The ecclesiastical administrative officers of the Dhammayutika Sect in Saṅgha administrative regions 17-18 were assigned duties that were divided according to the six aspects



of Saṅgha administrative management consisting of the "Governance" aspect, the "Buddhist education" aspect, the "Buddhist propagation" aspect, the "Public education" aspect, the "Public assistance" aspect, and the "Public welfare" aspect. The results indicated a high level of the overall values. The analysis of each aspect demonstrated a moderate level of the "Governance" aspect; a high level of the "Buddhist education" aspect; a high level of the "Public education" aspect; a high level of the "Buddhist propagation" aspect; a high level of the "Public assistance" aspect; and a high level of the "Public welfare" aspect.

**Involvement to Buddhaddhamma:** This study of applied Buddhism is to consider the efficiency that can be interpreted as the Buddhist principle and brought for combination in order to produce Buddhist innovations for the Saṅgha administration. This Buddhist principle is known as Sāraṇīyadhamma (Virtues for fraternal living), the teaching of the Buddha that refers to the guidelines of fraternal living. It is the principle for building conciliation within the Saṅgha order. The principle inspires the Saṅgha administration in Saṅgha administrative regions 17-18 (The Dhammayutika Sect) to achieve efficiency and effectiveness, as indicated in the result of the research.

**Conclusions:** The efficiency of Saṅgha administration in Saṅgha administrative regions 17-18 (The Dhammayutika Sect), which consisted of governance, Buddhist education, Buddhist propagation, public education, public assistance, and public welfare, was found to have a high level of overall values. Despite the results, such studies were required to find the problems and additional solutions. Its purpose was to develop the Saṅgha administration by ecclesiastical administrative officers in Saṅgha administrative regions 17-18 to achieve better efficiency and effectiveness under the Buddhist doctrine and the Buddhist monastic disciplinary rules for promoting Buddhism.

**Keywords:** Efficiency, Saṅgha Administration, Ecclesiastical Administrative Officers

## Introduction

The Saṅgha administration had the foundation from the Buddhist monastic disciplinary rules or Sikkhāpada that the Buddha regulated for the benefit of the Saṅgha and the order in fraternal living. Therefore, the Buddhist monastic disciplinary rules or Sikkhāpada had become the constitution for the Buddha to govern for supporting the expansion of the Saṅgha order to manage during the time of the Buddha. However, the enactment of Sikkhāpada depended on the context of society, the diversity of religions, and criticism from people. The purpose of enactment included the unity of the order, sustaining faith from lay people, and the guidelines of conduct to the Saṅgha and the order. Later on, the Sikkhāpada developed and changed in regard to social customs and the nation's law by adapting the rules without infringing the Buddhist monastic disciplinary rules or Sikkhāpada. Therefore, the rules benefitted the administration of the Saṅgha order and built a bureaucratic system (Phra Narong Sangkhawichit, 2017).

The reform in the structure of administration and governance of the Saṅgha order in the current day was in regard to the Sangha Act 2505 B.E. The enactment of this Act derived from the demand of the cabinet at that time. The cabinet had Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat as the prime minister, who determined to change the form of administering the Saṅgha order to be consistent



with the administrative policy of Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat, which favored absolute decision power from a strong leader. Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat considered that a system of government in terms of democracy was deferred and lacked efficiency for operation. Therefore, dividing the command of the Saṅgha order into three parts comprising the Saṅgha Council, the Saṅgha Cabinet, and the Vinaya Council, as in The Saṅgha Act of BE 2484, was considered a system that devastated the efficiency and caused the administration of the Saṅgha order to face obstacles and defer. For the reasons mentioned earlier, the cabinet passed the bill to appoint a committee to draft a new Act in 1960 AD. Upon the committee's success, the cabinet enacted the Saṅgha Act 2505 B.E. by recommendation and consent of the Constitution Drafting Assembly of Thailand on behalf of the Thai parliament. The Act indicated the reason for its promulgation: "The reason for the promulgation of this Act is that the power of executing the activities of the Saṅgha should not be divided with the aim of creating a balance of power as it appears in the current law. As such a system results in weakening the efficiency of the execution of activities, it was thus deemed appropriate to improve the Saṅgha Act by having the Supreme Patriarch govern the Saṅgha through the Saṅgha Supreme Council under the law and the Dhamma-Vinaya. This is to ensure the progress and prosperity of Buddhism" (Phra Methidhammapon (Prayun Dhammachitto), 1996); (Phramaha Adisak Gavesako & Nuthongkaew, 2019).

It was seen that the structure of that society had Buddhism simultaneously with itself all along. Each community had a Saṅgha institution or temple simultaneously with itself for a long time. The Saṅgha order acted as the representatives or followers who performed the mission of propagation and passed on the aspiration of Buddha's teachings, which the Buddha had constituted. The mission of propagation was for Buddhists to take the Buddha's teachings for daily life practice and benefit themselves and society. It was considered an important mission of the Saṅgha order to perform (Phramaha Jaran Bhurikovid, 2020). The Saṅgha administration in the current day was developed from the Buddhist doctrine and the Buddhist monastic disciplinary rules to be used for governance along with the growth of Thai society. The Saṅgha Act 2505 B.E. specified the missions of ecclesiastical administrative officers within six aspects, which consisted of governance, Buddhist education, Buddhist propagation, public education, public assistance, and public welfare (Bunthong, 2018).

However, the administration management of Buddhism, efficient or not, had leaders as the most important personnel, which included ecclesiastical administrative officers at all levels of the hierarchy. They consisted of the Abbot, the Assistant Abbot, the Ecclesiastical Commune-Chief, the Ecclesiastical District Officer, the Ecclesiastical Provincial Governor, and the Ecclesiastical Regional Governor. The most important person was the Abbot, who had direct duty in temple management, and the temple was a spiritual anchor among Buddhists (Phrakru Wimon Suwanakorn, Thong-in, & Phra Raphin Phutthisaro, 2016). The temple had the Abbot as its absolute manager. The Abbot must have performed the duty of Saṅgha administration appropriately. The administration from the Abbot must have been honest, efficient, under the Buddhist doctrine and the Buddhist monastic disciplinary rules, and adaptive to changes in current



society. According to the principle, ecclesiastical administrative officers or the Abbot had duties in governance or Saṅgha administration to be in order. It was an important term to indicate efficiency and success in promoting Buddhism to be sustainable in the future. This statement implied that to make Buddhism become the nation's religion, prosper, and become sustainable depended on ecclesiastical administrative officers because ecclesiastical administrative officers were approachable to people. Particularly, ecclesiastical administrative officers at the level of Abbot, who became prestigious among the people, had a direct role in upholding the Saṅgha administration to be sustainable (Sangha Act, B.E. 2505., 1962). It led to the interest of this research, which required efficiency of the Saṅgha administration by ecclesiastical administrative officers in Saṅgha administrative regions 17-18 (The Dhammayutika Sect) for collecting data to further study the efficiency of the Saṅgha administration by ecclesiastical administrative officers in each region of Saṅgha administrative regions.

### Objective

This research aims to study the efficiency of the Saṅgha administration by ecclesiastical administrative officers in Saṅgha administrative regions 17-18 (The Dhammayutika Sect).

### Methodology

In this research, the researchers utilized a quantitative research method with the following details:

#### Population

The population in this research consisted of 194 ecclesiastical administrative officers under the jurisdiction of Saṅgha administrative regions 17-18 (The Dhammayutika Sect). The population, which was utilized as a study group, had been calculated to be the hundred percent of the population, as indicated in Table 1.

**Table 1** Population Utilized in the Study

Saṅgha Administrative Areas	Ecclesiastical Administrative Officers Utilized for Data Collection					Total
	The Eccl. Provincial Governor/the Deputy Eccl. Provincial Governor	The Eccl. District Officer/the Deputy Eccl. District Officer	The Eccl. Commune- Chief/the Deputy Eccl. Commune- Chief	The Abbot	Secretary Monk	
Phang Nga-Ranong	1	3	3	12	3	22
Phuket-Krabi-Trang	1	3	3	5	3	15
Phatthalung	1	3	3	11	13	31
Songkhla-Satun	1	8	11	51	25	96
Pattani-Yala- Narathiwat	1	3	3	18	5	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>194</b>



## Research Tools

The researchers created research tools by studying academic documents and research studies related to the efficiency of the Saṅgha administration. There were two steps in creating research tools. In the first step, the researchers studied documents, theories, and studies related to the efficiency of the Saṅgha administration, then created a framework for the content coverage and the objective of the study. In the second step, the researchers designed the questionnaire based on the scope of the research, which was divided into two sections. The first section consisted of multiple-choice personal factors classified by age, the number of years in the monkhood, academic standing in Dhamma scholar, academic standing in Pali scholar, academic standing in secular studies, position in Saṅgha administration, and duration in the position in Saṅgha administration (Referred only current position). The second section required information about the efficiency of the Saṅgha administration by ecclesiastical administrative officers in Saṅgha administrative regions 17-18 (The Dhammayutika Sect) based on the six aspects of Saṅgha administration including governance, Buddhist education, Buddhist propagation, public education, public assistance, and public welfare. This section consisted of 42 items with a numerical rating scale from 1 to 5.

The examination for the quality of the questionnaire consisted of four steps. In the first step, the researchers conducted validity identification by presenting the questionnaire to three experts to assess the content validity, the comprehensiveness of research questions and the language use. The scoring system specified each value "+1" represented the appropriateness of a question, "0" represented the unsureness of the experts on a question, and "-1" represented the inappropriateness of a question. Later, the researchers brought the data considered by the experts to find the IOC (Index of Item-Objective Congruence) value, if the IOC value was above 0.50, it would indicate that such question measured according to the objective or the content was serviceable (Lumbensa, 2016). However, the IOC value of the questionnaire was equal to "1". In the second step, the researchers preliminarily tested 30 sets of draft questionnaires validated by the experts with the sample that was similar to the population in this study. In the third step, the researchers brought the questionnaires that were brought to try out with the sample to calculate the reliability value with the alpha coefficient analysis of Cronbach. If the alpha coefficient value were above 0.70, it would be considered that the questionnaires were valid, which the validity was from finding the reliability value with the whole set of the questionnaires at 0.912. In the fourth step, the researchers improved and corrected the questionnaires according to the result of the analysis one more time before applying them to the research sample with the criterion of interpretation from the Likert's rating scale.

## Data Collection

In terms of data collection for this research, the researchers collected data by themselves using three steps. In the first step, the researchers sent the official correspondences to the counselors of Ecclesiastical Regional Governors of Saṅgha administrative regions 16, 17-18 (The Dhammayutika Sect) to request cooperation from ecclesiastical administrative officers to fill out the questionnaires via the online system. The researchers brought the questionnaires to





design online questionnaires with Google Forms and then sent the hyperlinks of the questionnaires to Line chat groups of ecclesiastical administrative officers within the administrative area of Nakhon Si Thammarat province. In the second step, the researchers examined the data from the online questionnaires that were designed with Google Forms to determine whether the data was complete or not. Upon the examination, the researchers received the reply for a total number of 192, which was calculated as the questionnaires that returned 98.97 percent from all sent questionnaires. In the third step, the researchers conducted data analysis to find the efficiency of the Saṅgha administration by ecclesiastical administrative officers in Saṅgha administrative regions 17-18 (The Dhammayutika Sect).

### Data Analysis

The researchers analyzed the data from the questionnaires using social science research software. The statistics that were used in data analysis consisted of descriptive statistics, which included frequency and percentage for describing the demographic of the sample. The mean and Standard Deviation (S.D.) values were used in the analysis of the efficiency of the Saṅgha administration by ecclesiastical administrative officers in Saṅgha administrative regions 17-18 (The Dhammayutika Sect) within the six aspects, which consisted of the "Governance" aspect, the "Buddhist education" aspect, the "Buddhist propagation" aspect, the "Public education" aspect, the "Public assistance" aspect, and the "Public welfare" aspect. The researchers used the Likert's rating scale as the criterion for score classification and interpretation.

### Results and Discussion

The efficiency of the Saṅgha administration by ecclesiastical administrative officers in Saṅgha administrative regions 17-18 (The Dhammayutika Sect) was divided accordingly to the six aspects of Saṅgha administration, which consisted of governance, Buddhist education, Buddhist propagation, public education, public assistance, and public welfare.

**Table 2** The results of the analysis of the overall mean values ( $\bar{x}$ ) and Standard Deviation (S.D.) values of the efficiency of the Saṅgha administration by ecclesiastical administrative officers in Saṅgha administrative regions 17-18 (The Dhammayutika Sect)

The Efficiency of the Saṅgha Administration by Ecclesiastical Administrative Officers in Saṅgha Administrative Regions 17-18 (The Dhammayutika Sect)				
Item		$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Interpretation
1	The Saṅgha administration in the "Public welfare" aspect	3.86	0.62	High
2	The Saṅgha administration in the "Buddhist education" aspect	3.85	0.61	High
3	The Saṅgha administration in the "Buddhist propagation" aspect	3.77	0.63	High
4	The Saṅgha administration in the "Public assistance" aspect	3.76	0.64	High
5	The Saṅgha administration in the "Public education" aspect	3.64	0.63	High
6	The Saṅgha administration in the "Governance" aspect	3.25	0.52	Moderate
Total		3.69	0.49	High

From Table 2, the overall analysis results of the efficiency of the Saṅgha administration by ecclesiastical administrative officers in Saṅgha administrative regions 17-18 (The Dhammayutika Sect) were found at a high level ( $\bar{x} = 3.69$ , S.D. = 0.49).

Upon consideration of each aspect in descending order, it indicated that the "Public welfare" aspect had the highest mean value ( $\bar{x} = 3.86$ , S.D. = 0.62) because the service of offering convenience to people utilized Buddhist temples as the places to conduct meritorious activities, such as assisting the Buddhist monks who struggled with disasters and poverty and offering convenience to people making merit on Buddhist holidays. Additionally, the Saṅgha order was the leader in social organization, which included participation in controlling illegal uses of narcotic drugs, helping broadcast information from the government to local people, conducting public welfare activities to fellow devotees of different religions in the local area, and helping people in times of natural disasters (Watthanachaiwanich, 2021).

Then, it was the Saṅgha administration in the "Buddhist education" aspect, which overall was at a high level. It came from the fact that opportunity and promotion were dedicated from the Saṅgha order to Buddhist monks and novices to receive education in both secular and Dhamma. The aspect of Buddhist education promoted educational funding to Buddhist monks and novices who graduated as both Dhamma scholars and Pali scholars. The Saṅgha order supervised and maintained all Buddhist monks and novices within administrative areas to receive Buddhist education. Buddhist education utilized educational media, technology, and recent teaching techniques for learning management in Buddhist education. The Saṅgha order supported and facilitated Buddhist monks and novices to receive education outside the country. The Saṅgha order conducted fundraising to fund Buddhist education as a welfare and sought recent educational media and materials for Buddhist education to Buddhist monks and novices. As Phramaha Adisak Gavesako & Nuthongkaew (2019) explained, it was extremely important that many temples in the current day were decent educational sources that built places for learning and promoted education for Buddhist monks and novices who were interested in learning both Pali scholars and Dhamma scholars. Next, the mean value of the Saṅgha administration in the "Buddhist propagation" aspect was found at a high level. The Saṅgha order conducted activities for building good relations between fellow devotees of different religions. The order allowed Buddhist monks and novices to propagate Buddhism in various places. In addition, the Saṅgha order programmed numerous summer novice ordinations to instill morality (Watthanachaiwanich, 2021).

Next, the mean value of the Saṅgha administration in the "Public assistance" aspect was found at a high level ( $\bar{x} = 3.76$ , S.D. = 0.64). Many Buddhist temples planted trees and redesigned their landscapes by shaping temples to be pleasant and suitable places for meditation. This aspect emphasized repairing, construction, and renovation to preserve archaeological sites, which consisted of valuable facilities. In addition, many Buddhist temples improved their facilities to be hygienic, exquisite, and organized (Sawetworrachot, 2019).



After that, the mean value of the Saṅgha administration in the "Public education" aspect was found at a high level ( $\bar{x} = 3.64$ , S.D. = 0.63). The Saṅgha order assisted the government with public announcements to local citizens. Besides, the order performed as the leader in organizing the society, which included participating in narcotics enforcement and assisting fellow devotees of different religions in the local area.

Finally, the Saṅgha administration in the "Governance" aspect was found at a moderate level ( $\bar{x} = 3.25$ , S.D. = 0.52). It included the supervision and oversight for Buddhist monks and novices under jurisdiction to conduct themselves under the Buddhist doctrine, Buddhist monastic disciplinary rules, regulation, and the orders of The Saṅgha Supreme Council of Thailand. The aspect of governance also included inspecting the order of the temple, forming temple executive committees to be substantial, and governing and inspecting lay people who lived within each temple to be under the rules (Sawetworrachot, 2019). Using the principle of power decentralization for all parties to participate in temple management, mobilizing Buddhist monks to reside among temples in appropriate situations, and using the temple as a center of networking with other organizations in local areas were at a moderate level in respective order.

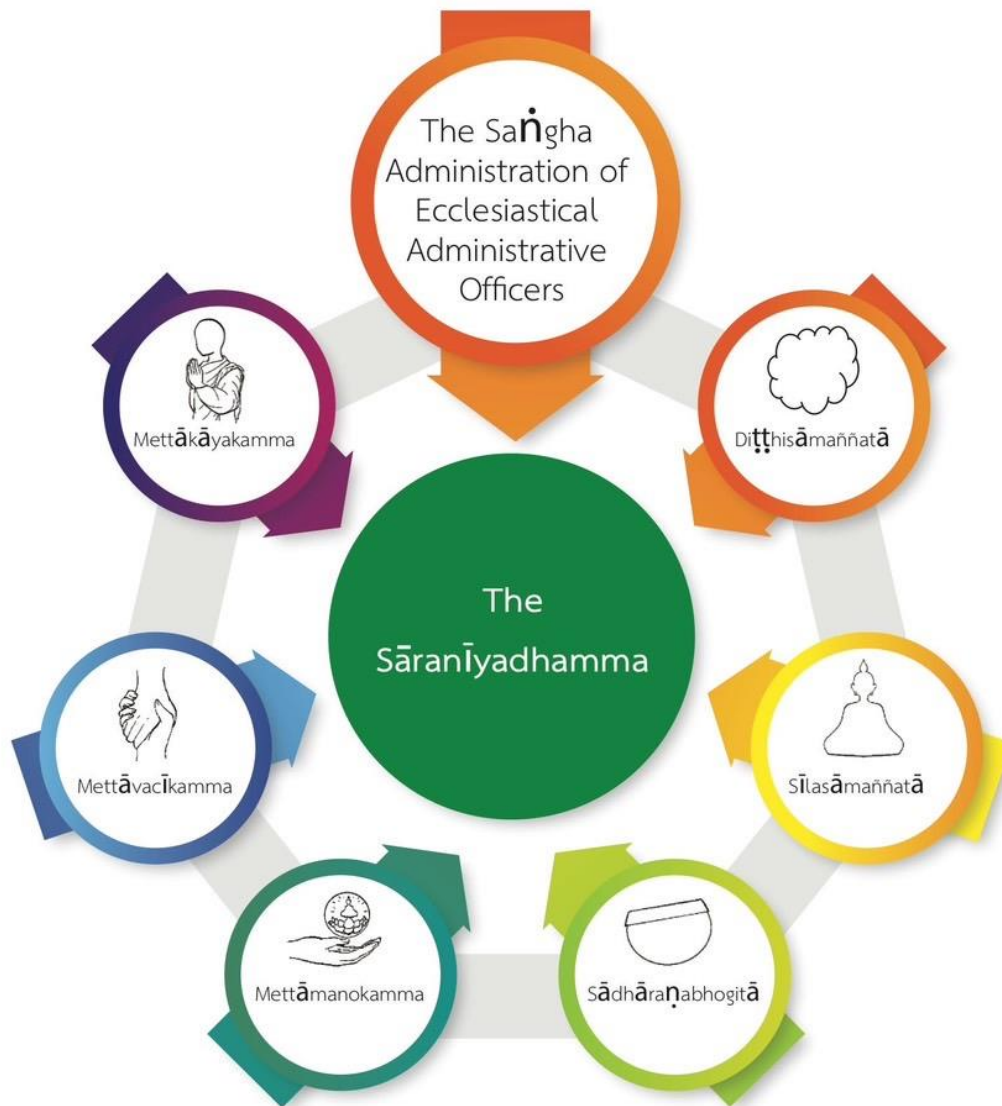
The results were consistent with concepts and theories that derived from integrating with concepts and theories emphasizing work, personnel, and systems. The concepts and theories that emphasized work had a main point that indicated the operation within the organization must have emphasized or dedicated precedence to the mission to be successful. The other elements in operating work within an organization, such as human resources, tools, instruments, or any other materials, were considered to be of lesser priority. However, there was one group of theories that took an interest only in "Personnel" within an organization (Sisabai, 2022). Nevertheless, it was due to the fact that personnel existed as a resource in management that possessed emotions by means of the concepts and theories that emphasized personnel. On behalf of concepts and theories, this group disagreed with methods that emphasized work and management styles, which these concepts and theories group emphasized personnel more than other matters. There were two more groups of theories that had opinions on the matter of the system. It suggested concepts and theories that emphasized systems, which consisted of input, conversion processes, and outputs for such organizations to operate. Administrators must have participated in giving precedence to the integration of elements in the system. It was identical to a management style that depended on the situation or in accordance with the occurrence, which derived from the integration of concepts and theories that emphasized work, personnel, and systems. In order to operate works within such an organization to success, administrators must have dedicated precedence to occurrences or environmental matters. Administrators must have adapted management methods to be consistent with presented occurrences or environmental matters (Prasertsri, 2020). Each management style was suited to different circumstances, such as social conditions, cultures, areas, and diversity in multiculturalism.



## Originality and Body of Knowledge

The study of the efficiency of the Saṅgha administration from ecclesiastical administrative officers is the study of applied Buddhism. It is the study to consider the efficiency that can be interpreted as the Buddhist principle and brought for combination in order to produce Buddhist innovations for the Saṅgha administration. This Buddhist principle is *Sāraṇīyadhamma*, (Virtues for fraternal living) which include the teaching of the Buddha that refers to the guidelines of fraternal living. It is the principle for building conciliation within the Saṅgha order. The principle drives the Saṅgha administration in Saṅgha administrative regions 17-18 (The Dhammayutika Sect) to achieve efficiency and effectiveness. The *Sāraṇīyadhamma* (Virtues for fraternal living) comprise six elements. The first element is *Mettākāyakamma*, which implies being amiable in deed with fellow monks who practice chastity openly and in private, which means that all monks of the Saṅgha order have respect for each other. They show generosity in the duty of fellow monks and communities, whether in the open or in private, such as giving assistance with funding and repairing the facilities of the temple. The second element is *Mettāvacīkamma*, which implies being amiable in words with fellow monks who practice chastity openly and in private. It means that the Saṅgha order announces beneficial words to teach, guide, and counsel with concernedness, delivers polite speech, and shows respect openly and in private. The third element is *Mettāmanokamma*, which implies being amiable in thought with fellow monks who practice chastity openly and in private. This means intention from the Saṅgha order must always be within empathy, the thought of giving each other benefits, optimism, and friendly gestures to each other. The fourth element is *Sādhāraṇabhogitā*, which implies sharing any lawful gains with virtuous fellows, means that sharing alms or offering even the littlest thing without being possessive is due to the virtues for the fraternal living of the Saṅgha order, which implies forbearance from selfishness by sharing what one's gains for others to consume. The fifth element is *Sīlasāmaññatā*, which implies keeping without blemish the rules of conduct along with one's fellows openly and in private, which means behaving well accordingly to discipline without misbehaving oneself to be disgusted by the fellows. The sixth element is *Diṭṭhisāmaññatā*, which implies being endowed with the right views along with one's fellows openly and in private, which means being mutually agreeable in the principle that can lead to salvation and the end of one's sufferings, which eliminates problems in all aspects of Saṅgha administration.

The originality and body of knowledge from the study can be summarized, as depicted in Figure 1.



**Figure 1** The Sāraṇīyadhamma (Virtues for fraternal living) and Saṅgha administration of ecclesiastical administrative officers

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The study indicated that the efficiency of the Saṅgha administration by ecclesiastical administrative officers in Saṅgha administrative regions 17-18 (The Dhammayutika Sect) consisted of six aspects including the "Governance" aspect, the "Buddhist education" aspect, the "Buddhist propagation" aspect, the "Public education" aspect, the "Public assistance" aspect, and the "Public welfare" aspect. The results indicated a high level of the overall values. The analysis of each aspect demonstrated a moderate level of the "Governance" aspect; a high level of the "Buddhist education" aspect; a high level of the "Public education" aspect; a high level of the "Buddhist propagation" aspect; a high level of the "Public assistance" aspect; and a high level of the "Public welfare" aspect. In order to maintain the efficiency of administration and develop the Saṅgha administration, the researchers suggested that Saṅgha administrative regions 17-18

(The Dhammayutika Sect) should have been provided with appropriate support in terms of budget allocation by the National Office of Buddhism for the benefit of their operations.

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