Research Article

THE DEVELOPMENT OF BUDDHIST LEADERSHIP BASED ON THE PRINCIPLES OF SARANIYADHAMMA FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERS TO PROMOTE HAPPINESS AND WELL-BEING IN THE ERA OF CHANGE

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Abstract

Background and Objectives: The principles of Saraniyadhamma fostered good relationships and cooperation within organizations, leading to an environment that promoted happiness and well-being in educational institutions, which could be sustained in the long term. Management based on Saraniyadhamma encouraged cooperation and mutual understanding among leaders, organizational members, and students while also effectively reducing conflicts within the organization. This study aimed to examine Buddhist leadership in management based on the principles of Saraniyadhamma in the era of change, focusing on happiness and well-being. Additionally, it aimed to develop Buddhist leadership based on the principles of Saraniyadhamma for educational leaders to promote happiness and well-being in the era of change.

Methodology: Methodology: This was mixed-methods research. The quantitative study began by defining the research scope, which included teachers and educational personnel from schools that implemented the Buddhist Path School Project, totaling 1,320 individuals in Bangkok. A sample of 302 individuals was selected using simple random sampling. The research instrument used was a questionnaire, which was reviewed by experts in various fields and tested for reliability (Cronbach's Alpha) with a value of 0.86, which was considered to be good. Data collection from the questionnaire was completed 100%, and descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, and hypothesis testing using Pearson's correlation coefficient were applied. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews and focus group discussions for the qualitative study. Data analysis in this section used content analysis and triangulation to ensure the reliability and comprehensiveness of the research findings.

Main Results: It was found that the study of leadership in accordance with the Buddhist Path based on the principles of Saraniyadhamma during times of change, as a whole, was at the highest level ($\bar{x}$ = 4.65, S.D. = 0.22). When considering each aspect individually, all aspects were at the highest level, listed from highest to lowest as follows: 1) Mettàvacãkamma, speaking politely

($\bar{x}$ = 4.67, S.D. = 0.23); 2) Mettàmanokamma, having goodwill and positive intentions ($\bar{x}$ = 4.65, S.D. = 0.26); 3) Diññhisàmannatà, mutual agreement ($\bar{x}$ = 4.61, S.D. = 0.26); 4) Sãlasàmannatà, integrity and correctness ($\bar{x}$ = 4.64, S.D. = 0.31); 5) Mettàkàyakamma, having polite actions ($\bar{x}$ = 4.63, S.D. = 0.26); and 6) Sàdhàranabhogità, sharing and distributing resources ($\bar{x}$ = 4.60, S.D. = 0.31). It was found that happiness and well-being, as a whole, were at the highest level ($\bar{x}$ = 4.65, S.D. = 0.22). When considering each aspect individually, all aspects were at the highest level, listed from highest to lowest as follows: 1) Kāyika-sukha, physical health ($\bar{x}$ = 4.71, S.D. = 0.22); 2) Citta-sukha, mental health ($\bar{x}$ = 4.65, S.D. = 0.22); 3) Sosiala-sukha, social well-being ($\bar{x}$ = 4.65, S.D. = 0.25); and 4) Citta-vīrya-sukha, spiritual well-being ($\bar{x}$ = 4.62, S.D. = 0.28). It was found that there was a positive relationship between Buddhist leadership based on Saraniyadhamma during times of change and happiness and well-being. The relationship was strong (r_{xy} = 0.714) and statistically significant at the .01 level. It was found that developing Buddhist leaders based on the principles of Saraniyadhamma promoted workplace happiness and well-being.

Involvement to Buddhadhamma: This article applied Buddhism and the development of wisdom and morality with Buddhism. It involved using leadership principles that emphasized good relationships and living a life of virtue. These principles focused on being aware of change and living mindfully, which contributed to developing a happy life and effective collaboration within organizations.

Conclusions: The principles of Saraniyadhamma served as a fundamental basis for developing Buddhist leadership, which helped build good relationships, promoted virtue, and enhanced leaders' abilities to guide organizations toward success.

Keywords: Well-Being, Saraniyadhamma, Educational Leaders, Happiness

Introduction

Buddhism emphasizes the development of the mind and virtues in humans as a means of liberation from suffering and attaining true happiness. The teachings of Buddhism focused on training the mind to achieve calm, mindfulness, and compassion, which could be applied to leadership development to foster collaboration and create a society based on mutual understanding and happiness. The application of Buddhist principles that emphasized the development of the mind and interpersonal relationships helped leaders make ethical decisions and encouraged cooperation among members of an organization or community effectively. This was especially important in an era of rapid change and challenges in adaptation in social, economic, and technological aspects (Goleman, 2000). Leadership in organizations that aimed to link "Happiness" with "Quality of Life" was crucial in organizational development and the creation of a happy society. Happiness refers to having good relationships among members and the ability to adapt to change, which is the foundation of a good quality of life at work. Developing school leaders following this approach helped create an environment filled with respect and collaboration within organizations (Nilkote et al., 2024), leading to increased job satisfaction and improved quality of life, resulting in a wellness-oriented organization (Seligman, 2011). In an era

of rapid economic and technological change, having leaders who could adapt and understand principles that focused on the development of the mind and relationships helped create a society that was happy and capable of coping with challenges efficiently. Developing leaders with integrity who understood uncertainty and were willing to adapt continuously helped ensure that decision-making within organizations or society positively impacted the creation of a sustainable quality of life and promoted long-term happiness (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Applying Buddhist teachings in leadership development was a vital approach to enhancing the quality of life in society by cultivating happiness through self-awareness and understanding others. Promoting virtues in leaders improved organizational management and had positive long-term effects on individuals and society.

The leadership of educational institutions was a crucial factor that directly impacted the development of educational quality and the creation of an environment conducive to learning for both students and staff within the organization. Educational leaders played a key role in setting the vision and management strategies that guided the institution toward success. The rapid changes in the digital age affected teaching methods and communication within organizations, especially with the integration of new technologies into the educational process. Educational leaders who had the skills to adapt and manage change helped their institutions face new challenges and create a learning environment that continued to promote the happiness and well-being of students (Eknarong & Poosakaew, 2018). The development of educational leaders, therefore, should have focused not only on effective management but also on creating an environment that promoted happiness and well-being for both students and staff. In an era of rapid change, creating an appropriate environment for learning and well-being was essential. This helped both students and teachers experience better well-being and collaborate to create quality learning that effectively responded to the changing world (Robinson, 2007). In an era of change, leaders need to have a far-reaching vision to develop educational institutions, including adapting to new technologies, creating an environment suitable for learning, and fostering good relationships between leaders and students. By doing so, educational institutions could face future changes with stability and sustainability.

This research article aimed to study the development of Buddhist leadership by using the principles of Saraniyadhamma as a framework for enhancing the moral qualities of educational leaders. This study examined how the principles of Saraniyadhamma helped promote the development of positive relationships and happiness among members of the organization, fostering growth at both the individual and collective levels. Educational leaders with Buddhist leadership qualities were able to create an environment conducive to the happiness and well-being of students and staff in an era of rapid change in both social and technological fields. This led the educational institution toward sustainable development and enabled it to respond effectively to various challenges.

Objectives

This study aimed to examine Buddhist leadership in management based on the principles of Saraniyadhamma in the era of change, focusing on happiness and well-being. Additionally,

it aimed to develop Buddhist leadership based on Saraniyadhamma principles for educational leaders to promote happiness and well-being in the era of change.

Methodology

This research had the following methodology:

This research was a mixed-methods study. The researchers defined the scope of the study and the following research procedures:

Quantitative study as follows: 1) Population for the Study: The study population included teachers and educational personnel in schools that implemented the Buddhist way of life project, totaling 1,320 people in the Bangkok area. A sample of 302 people was selected using simple random sampling, with the sample size determined using the table for sample size selection by Krejcie & Morgan (1970); 2) Research Instrument: The instrument used in the study was a questionnaire developed from a review of relevant literature. The questionnaire was reviewed and evaluated by 5 experts in educational administration, educational innovation, language, and research to ensure content validity. The content validity index (IOC) ranged from 0.60 to 1.00 (Wongrattana, 2010). The questionnaire was tested with a pilot group of 30 people similar to the sample, and the reliability coefficient (Cronbach, 1990) for the entire instrument was found to be 0.86, which was considered acceptable. The final questionnaire was developed as a 5-point Likert scale (Likert, 1993); 3) Data was collected personally, and 302 completed questionnaires were returned, representing 100% of the sample; and 4) Data Analysis: Descriptive statistics, including mean, standard deviation, and Pearson correlation coefficient, were used for hypothesis testing.

The qualitative study was as follows: 1) The researcher reviewed relevant concepts and collected field data through focus group discussions. In this phase of the study, two main groups of informants were selected using the Triangulation method. Purposive sampling was applied based on specific criteria, with a total of 20 participants. These consisted of 10 people for in-depth interviews and 10 people for focus group discussions. The selection criteria were as follows: 1.1) Having at least 2 years of work experience; 1.2) Being involved in educational management for at least 2 years; and 1.3) Being willing to cooperate and provide additional information if needed or upon request for further interviews. The two groups did not overlap; 2) The instruments used for this study, which were reviewed by 5 experts, included a focus group discussion guide. The guide contained open-ended questions to allow the informants to discuss, exchange opinions, share experiences, and express ideas related to the key topics of the study; and 3) Data Analysis: The data was analyzed using content analysis and triangulation and presented in a descriptive manner.

Results and Discussion

The results and discussion of this study examined Buddhist leadership in management based on the principles of Saraniyadhamma in the era of change, focusing on happiness and well-being. Additionally, it aimed to develop Buddhist leadership based on the principles of Saraniyadhamma for

educational leaders to promote happiness and well-being in the era of change, with the results shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Mean and Standard Deviation of Buddhist Leadership according to the principles of Saraniyadhamma in the era of change, both overall and by dimension.

Buddhist Leadership Based on the Principles of Saraniyadhamma in the Era of Change.	n = 302		Level	Rank
	$\bar{x}$	S.D.		
1. Mettàkàyakamma	4.63	0.26	Highest	4
2. Mettàvacãkamma	4.67	0.23	Highest	1
3. Mettàmanokamma	4.65	0.26	Highest	2
4. Sàdhàranabhogità	4.60	0.31	Highest	6
5. Sãlasàmannatà	4.64	0.31	Highest	3
6. Diññhisàmannatà	4.61	0.26	Highest	5
Overall	4.65	0.22	Highest	

According to Table 1, the study of Buddhist leadership based on the principles of Saraniyadhamma in the era of change was found to be at the highest level overall ($\bar{x}$ = 4.65, S.D. = 0.22). When considering each dimension, all were at the highest level, ranked from highest to lowest as follows: Mettàvacãkamma ($\bar{x}$ = 4.67, S.D. = 0.23), Mettàmanokamma ($\bar{x}$ = 4.65, S.D. = 0.26), Sãlasàmannatà ($\bar{x}$ = 4.64, S.D. = 0.31), Mettàkàyakamma ($\bar{x}$ = 4.63, S.D. = 0.26), Diññhisàmannatà ($\bar{x}$ = 4.61, S.D. = 0.26) and Sàdhàranabhogità ($\bar{x}$ = 4.60, S.D. = 0.31).

Study of Happiness and Well-Being. The results of the analysis of happiness and well-being, using mean ($\bar{x}$) and standard deviation (S.D.) statistics, both overall and by dimension, were presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Mean and Standard Deviation of Happiness and Well-Being, Overall and by Dimension

Happiness and Well-Being	n = 302		Level	Rank
	$\bar{x}$	S.D.		
1. Kāyika-sukha, Physical Health	4.71	0.22	Highest	1
2. Citta-sukha, Mental Health	4.65	0.23	Highest	2
3. Sosiala-sukha, Social Well-Being	4.65	0.25	Highest	3
4. Citta-vīrya-sukha, Spiritual Well-Being	4.62	0.28	Highest	4
Total	4.65	0.21	Highest	

According to Table 2, the overall happiness and well-being were at the highest level ($\bar{x}$ = 4.65, S.D. = 0.22). When considering each dimension, all were at the highest level, ranked from highest to lowest as follows: Kāyika-sukha, Physical Health ($\bar{x}$ = 4.71, S.D. = 0.22), Citta-sukha, Mental Health ($\bar{x}$ = 4.65, S.D. = 0.22), Sosiala-sukha, Social Well-Being ($\bar{x}$ = 4.65, S.D. = 0.25), and Citta-vīrya-sukha, Spiritual Well-Being ($\bar{x}$ = 4.62, S.D. = 0.28)

The relationship between ethical leadership in the Buddhist way of life, based on the principles of Saraniyadhamma during times of change, happiness, and well-being, was examined by calculating the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3 The Relationship Between Buddhist Leadership Based on the Principles of Saraniyadhamma in the Era of Change and Happiness and Well-Being

Variable	X_1	X_2	X_3	X_4	X_5	X_6	X	Y
X_1	1							
X_2	0.632**	1						
X_3	0.589**	0.627**	1					
X_4	0.439**	0.586**	0.691**	1				
X_5	0.569**	0.643**	0.598**	0.575**	1			
X_6	0.461**	0.546**	0.579**	0.553**	0.458**	1		
X	0.794**	0.849**	0.841**	0.764**	0.817**	0.729**	1	
Y	0.532**	0.568**	0.621**	0.535**	0.525**	0.676**	0.714**	1

** Statistically significant at the .01 level.

According to Table 3, the results showed that the relationship between Buddhist ethical leadership based on the principles of Saraniyadhamma in the era of change and happiness and well-being was positively correlated, with a strong correlation level (r_{xy} = 0.714), statistically significant at the .01 level.

Approaches to Developing Buddhist Leadership Based on the Principles of Saraniyadhamma in the Era of Change to Promote Happiness and Well-Being

The in-depth interview results revealed several key approaches to developing leadership based on Buddhist principles, specifically Saraniyadhamma, in order to enhance happiness and well-being in the workplace. These were as follows: 1) Compassion and Caring for Others: Leaders demonstrated compassion and care for their team members. Expressing concern and providing support helped strengthen relationships, which was a crucial foundation for promoting happiness and well-being in the workplace; 2) Being a Good Role Model: Leaders who practiced Buddhist principles, such as maintaining mindfulness in every action and balancing life and work, inspired confidence in team members and motivated them to develop themselves; 3) Effective Communication: Open and transparent communication between leaders and team members fostered understanding and reduced conflict. Actively listening to other's opinions and feelings made everyone feel valued and respected; 4) Creating a Supportive Environment for Well-Being: Leaders created a work environment that promoted both physical and mental well-being. This included encouraging mindfulness practices, stress management, and fostering teamwork that led to happiness. A supportive environment helped everyone maintain good health and enjoy a positive work experience; and 5) Employee Development and Growth: Leaders provided opportunities for learning and development for team members, promoting skill development in both work-related and personal growth areas. Supporting career advancement helped improve satisfaction and overall well-being.

The study's findings indicated that applying the principles of Saraniyadhamma to enhance leadership capabilities could create an organization that fosters happiness and well-being in all aspects,

including work performance and interpersonal relationships. This approach enabled organizations to grow and adapt effectively during periods of change.
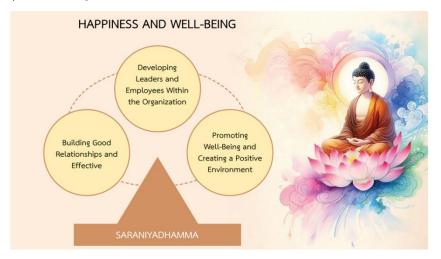
The development of Buddhist leadership based on the principles of Saraniyadhamma in the modern era of change offered an approach that promoted happiness and well-being within organizations. Several international research studies aligned with this approach, presenting the use of various principles such as mindfulness, effective communication, and the development of ethical leaders in a conducive work environment to enhance overall well-being at work. One of the key approaches was effective communication. Leaders who communicated openly and transparently with organizational members fostered understanding and reduced conflicts. Actively listening to other's opinions and concerns with care helped build trust and mutual respect within the organization. Goleman (2000), in his research on "Emotional Intelligence," highlighted that leaders who managed their emotions and communicated effectively helped cultivate positive relationships and promote sustainable well-being at work. Furthermore, effective communication helped reduce conflicts and created an atmosphere of cooperation within teams. Another important approach was leading by example. When leaders practiced mindfulness and maintained a balance between their personal lives and work, it served as an inspiration for organizational members. The study by Deci & Ryan (2008) found that providing individuals in the organization with autonomy in their work and personal development was a crucial factor in enhancing job satisfaction and well-being within the organization. When leaders modeled good emotional management and mindful work practices, members felt motivated to develop themselves and gained confidence in their work. Creating a work environment that promoted well-being was also a critical factor in fostering happiness within organizations. Practicing mindfulness and stress management created both physical and mental environments that supported well-being. Saetang & Pasunon (2015) conducted a study examining employees' opinions and job satisfaction at Krung Thai Bank. The findings revealed that the majority of employees held positive views on organizational change and organizational commitment and reported average levels of job satisfaction. The study also highlighted those personal factors, such as age and job position, influenced employees' opinions and job satisfaction. Furthermore, organizational change and organizational commitment were found to have a moderate positive correlation with job satisfaction. Moreover, the development of leadership also involved employee development and growth, which was crucial in promoting job satisfaction and well-being within organizations. A study by Baer (2003) found that mindfulness in the workplace helped reduce stress and improve focus, which positively impacted both work performance and overall well-being. Providing opportunities for learning and development within the organization boosted employee confidence and satisfaction while also encouraging personal growth, making employees feel valued and content in their roles. Integrating the principles of Saraniyadhamma into the development of Buddhist leadership not only helped enhance happiness within organizations but also fostered better relationships and created a positive work environment. This had a beneficial impact on overall well-being and job satisfaction. The international research mentioned above demonstrated that ethical leadership and applying

principles such as mindfulness and effective communication were essential in ensuring employee happiness and enhancing work performance.

Originality and Body of Knowledge

The development of Buddhist leadership based on the principles of Saraniyadhamma in times of change to promote happiness and well-being could be synthesized into three main factors that were essential for fostering sustainable growth in organizations. The first factor was promoting overall well-being by creating a positive work environment. Leaders fostered an environment supporting physical, mental, social, and spiritual health, ensuring employees experienced happiness and holistic well-being. Utilizing technology, such as mindfulness apps or organizing wellness activities, effectively enhanced mental health while promoting social connections and spiritual well-being within the workplace. The second factor was building strong relationships and effective communication. Open and transparent communication between leaders and employees was crucial. Utilizing modern tools like video conferencing or online platforms for feedback helped reduce conflicts, promote teamwork, and strengthen social well-being. Leaders actively listened to employee feedback and shared information to quickly address issues, enhancing both interpersonal relationships and trust. The final factor was the continuous development of leaders and employees. Leaders provided opportunities for personal and professional growth through online learning platforms and flexible training programs that supported physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. By investing in skill development, organizations boost job satisfaction, employee capabilities, and overall work performance, fostering a culture of growth and organizational success. In summary, integrating technology to enhance leadership, well-being, and development across physical, mental, social, and spiritual dimensions enabled organizations to effectively adapt to change. This approach promoted a supportive work environment, built strong relationships, and ensured sustainable growth for all members, as depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Linkage of the Development of Buddhist Leadership Based on the Principles of SARANIYADHAMMA in Times of Change to Promote Happiness

Conclusions and Recommendations

The integration of Buddhist leadership principles, particularly Saraniyadhamma, in the rapidly changing work environment, proved to be an effective strategy for promoting happiness and well-being within organizations. Key elements such as mindfulness, ethical leadership, and effective communication helped build a positive, supportive atmosphere that encouraged personal growth and strengthened employee relationships. Research demonstrated that practicing mindfulness, leading by example, and fostering open communication reduced stress, enhanced job satisfaction, and improved work performance. By cultivating emotional intelligence and balancing personal and professional lives, leaders inspired their teams to follow these principles, creating a culture of mutual respect and collaboration. In the rapidly evolving work environment, promoting happiness and well-being within organizations is essential for fostering a productive and harmonious workplace. To achieve this, organizations implemented several key strategies. Encouraging mindfulness and stress management was key to improving employee well-being and performance. Providing mindfulness training and stress management programs helped employees manage stress and stay focused. Effective communication, including open and transparent dialogue, built trust, reduced conflicts, and fostered collaboration. Leaders led by example, demonstrating emotional regulation and a healthy work-life balance to inspire employees. Creating a supportive work environment, offering professional development opportunities, and promoting work-life balance enhanced employee satisfaction and success. Supporting growth through continuous learning and career advancement helped employees feel valued, boosting performance and engagement. These strategies contributed to a positive, productive workplace and long-term organizational success.

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