

Competency Model of Theravada Buddhist Monks in Thailand - A Methodological Fit*

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Abstract

The competency model of Theravada Buddhist monks in Thailand was derived from a view of a pragmatist, using the grounded theory approach, and mixed methods as the research methodology. This research contains three sequential steps. First, a survey of 357 monks tallied by frequency analysis produced the name list of persons with best practices (BPs). Second, evidence-based competency interviews with 22 BPs, which were analyzed using thematic analysis, with the help of Atlas.ti, generated the lists of role-based behaviors. The third and last step was the process of the Delphi technique, with 28 subject matter experts (SMEs) that assessed the importance and the impact of those behaviors, analyzed using descriptive statistics. The filtered results were fine-tuned to create the concluding model.

The competency model of Theravada Buddhist monks in Thailand that emerged from this research is comprised of two clusters: one of generic competencies and the other of functional competencies. The eight generic

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competencies include: 1) mastering Dhamma knowledge; 2) observing monastic conduct; 3) sustaining Buddhist longevity; 4) rightful execution; 5) authentic-modern integration; 6) mindful elevation; 7) faith building; and 8) relationship building. The six functional competencies are: 1) Vinaya guarding; 2) Pali preserving; 3) purposeful orchestrating; 4) Dhamma disseminating; 5) appropriating artifacts; and 6) socially engaging. The competency model can be a starting point for individual monks to plan their development or for the monastic organizations to ignite changes.

Keywords: Competency model, Theravada Buddhist monks, Methodology

ตัวแบบสมรรถนะของพระสงฆ์เถรวาทในประเทศไทย - ความเหมาะสมของระเบียบวิธี*

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บทคัดย่อ

ตัวแบบสมรรถนะของพระสงฆ์เถรวาทในประเทศไทยสกัดจากมุมมองแบบปฏิบัตินิยม โดยใช้วิธีการตามแบบทฤษฎีฐานรากและใช้ระเบียบวิธีวิจัยแบบผสม งานวิจัยนี้ประกอบด้วย 3 ขั้นตอนเรียงตามลำดับ ขั้นตอนแรก คือ การสำรวจพระสงฆ์ 357 รูป และวิเคราะห์ความถี่เพื่อให้ได้รายชื่อของพระสงฆ์ต้นแบบ ขั้นที่สอง คือ การสัมภาษณ์พระสงฆ์ต้นแบบจำนวน 22 รูปโดยวิธีศึกษาสมรรถนะจากเหตุการณ์สำคัญและนำคำสัมภาษณ์มาวิเคราะห์แก่นสาระโดยใช้โปรแกรมคอมพิวเตอร์แอทลาสช่วยในการวิเคราะห์เพื่อให้ได้รายการของพฤติกรรมต่าง ๆ ตามแต่ละบทบาท ขั้นตอนที่สาม คือ การใช้เทคนิคเดลฟายให้ผู้เชี่ยวชาญ 28 ท่านประเมินความสำคัญและผลกระทบของแต่ละพฤติกรรมและวิเคราะห์โดยใช้สถิติเชิงพรรณนา ผลลัพธ์ที่ถูกรองออกมาจะถูกนำมาปรับเข้าในตัวแบบสุดท้าย

ตัวแบบสมรรถนะของพระสงฆ์เถรวาทในประเทศไทยที่ปรากฏออกมาจากงานวิจัยนี้ประกอบด้วยสองกลุ่ม คือ กลุ่มสมรรถนะทั่วไป และ กลุ่มสมรรถนะเฉพาะบทบาท สมรรถนะทั่วไปประกอบด้วย 8 อย่าง คือ 1) เชี่ยวชาญในธรรม 2) ประพฤติปฏิบัติตามพระธรรมวินัย 3) รักษาไว้ซึ่งความยั่งยืนของพระพุทธศาสนา 4) ทำงานให้สำเร็จอย่างถูกต้อง 5) ผสมผสานต้นแบบของแท้และสมัยนิยม 6) ยกระดับตนอย่างมีสติ 7) สามารถสร้างศรัทธา และ 8) สามารถสร้างความสัมพันธ์ สมรรถนะเฉพาะบทบาทประกอบด้วย 6 อย่าง คือ 1) คัมครองหลักพระธรรม

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คำสำคัญ: ตัวแบบสมรรถนะ พระสงฆ์เถรวาท ระเบียบวิธี

Introduction

Thailand is known as the “Land of Smiles,” where Theravada Buddhism has been established widely, has tremendous influence on the life of Thai people, and forms our unique national culture in such a way that the country is also known as “the land of yellow robes” (Kusalasaya, 2001). The monks, who traditionally observe 227 monastic disciplinary rules and are venerated persons, especially in rural areas, have been affected by invading western influences and dynamic changing contexts. Nowadays, especially in urban areas, people are quite distant from monks - they see the monks as useless or even a problem (Phra Paisal Visalo, 1999). The past and previous recognition and respect have been changed, and the status of monks seems to be less respectful. The declining situation of Buddhism and the *Sangha* has been caused by many accumulated problems which have reduced the roles, narrowed the services, and declined the credibility of the monks. As the monks gradually lose their spiritual leading role, unless they change, a wider gap with Thais will occur along with the accelerated deterioration of Buddhism in Thailand.

Existing and available studies on Buddhist monks focus on the roles and duties of the monks but not on what is needed for them to perform their roles and duties competently. If the monks are clear about what can be expected from them, if they know what the skills, knowledge, attributes and behaviors of good monks are, if they understand who they can look at as role model, they will be able to adjust and develop themselves to the right track, better and faster.

The objective of this research was to develop an expected, future-oriented competency model for Theravada Buddhist monks in Thailand. There was one question that guided this research: “what are the competencies of monks in order to perform their six roles?” The research investigated the knowledge, skills, attributes to be “competent” monks in the limit of and in relation to performance according to the six designated roles and duties, in the context of today and for the years to come. The six roles are: 1) ecclesiastical administration; 2) religious studies; 3) education welfare; 4) propagation; 5) public facilities; and 6) public works.

Approaches to Competency

The concept of competency emerged in 1973 when David C. McClelland presented a seminal paper entitled “Testing for Competence Rather Than Intelligence” in 1973 (Adams, 1997). From that time until now, competency has been acknowledged in the human resources field as an important tool and has been applied in both the business environment and government context, including Thailand.

Basically, there are two main approaches to competency study. First is the American approach, which focuses on people that are exceptional performers and identifies what they do. This approach talks about competencies as characteristics that support performance and about personal attributes of those exceptional performers (Akaraborworn, 2006; Akaraborworn, 2009; Dale & Iles, 1992). Competencies generated from the American approach have been primarily behavioral, specifying the skills or qualities that a person will use to do a job. The competencies have also often been generic and describe as succinctly as possible the behaviors that all high performers may display, though in different proportions according to level or function or context (Dale and Iles, 1992).

Second is the British approach. The U.K. government with the National Council of Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ), studied competency dealing with the functions involved in particular jobs and the minimum standard of competence required for each job, focusing on performance in carrying out tasks. The British approach focuses on the work that people do, so competency implies knowledge or skill (Akaraborworn, 2009), is much more linked to job performance in specific functions, and is much more geared to certification and accreditation (Dale & Iles, 1992).

The American and the British approaches are two distinctive approaches with different objectives, using different processes, focusing on different points, covering different scopes, leading to different implementation, and using different methods (Wedchayanon, 2006; Akaraborworn, 2006). The differences are summarized in Table 1:

Table 1: Comparison of American and British Competency Approaches

	American Approach	British Approach
Objectives	To develop the competency level of the employee	To evaluate for certification of people
Focus	Good personal attributes	Good performance
Process	Superior performance	Acceptable performance standards of the job or profession
Scope	Organization specific	Job and profession specific
Methods	Behavioral event interviews focusing on organization	Functional analysis focusing on national qualifications

Source: Adapted from Akaraborworn, 2006

In this research, both British and American approaches are blended to suit the identification of competencies of Theravada Buddhist monks in Thailand. This competency study reveals the threshold competencies of British approach as well as the superior and differentiating competencies of the American approach.

What is Competency?

Apparently, there is no universal definition of the term “competency” that is used across industries and across organizations. However, there are certain common competency components, i.e. knowledge, skills, self-concept, traits, motives. The appropriate behaviors linked to a competency differ depending on the culture in which that competency is grounded (Dubois & Rothwell, 2004).

Regarding the types of competencies, scholars categorize competencies differently, i.e. “threshold” or “effective” and “performance” or “differentiating” competencies (Woodruffe, 1992; Spencer & Spencer, 1993); “functional” or “technical” competencies (Rothwell, 2010); and “management” competencies (Hellriegel, Jackson, & Slocum, 2005).

In this research, “competency” is defined as the knowledge, skills and attributes (motives, traits and self-concept) of a person that result (causally related) in effective (threshold) and superior (differentiating) performance (criterion-referenced) in specific job roles. The types of competencies in the competency model that appear in this research are generic and functional. “Generic competencies”

are the critical and expected behaviors that the monks in all roles need to possess, while “functional competencies” are the specific behaviors that the monks that perform a particular role have. It should be emphasized that the competencies must be observed, described, verified, measured, and can be developed.

What is the Competency Model?

Competency identification is the process of discovering the competencies and a competency model is the result of competency identification (Rothwell, 2010). A competency model can be demonstrated in many ways. There is no specific formula or format for a competency model; it rather depends on the nature of business and the purpose of the use of the competency model (Akaraborworn, 2006). However, to promote good understanding of competency, Woodruffe (1992) suggests that competency model should: 1) focus on a level of generality; 2) have visible dimensions; 3) have simplicity and brevity; 4) be user friendly; 5) label the dimensions; 6) have discrete dimensions; and 7) be future oriented.

A competency model is organization specific and includes generic competencies, functional competencies, and others. Practice shows that a general competency model typically includes nine to 12 competencies for a specific occupational role (Kormanik, Lehner, & Winnick, 2009). McClelland (1998) suggested 10 competencies in a typical case of competency model construction. Chiraprapha Akaraborworn (2006) suggests that, in general, a job should have not more than 15 competencies: five core competencies and the remaining are functional competencies.

Reports on the competency model are generally organized into three to six clusters or groups of distinguishing competencies. Each cluster contains two to five competencies, so the models contain 12 to 27 competencies. Each competency has a narrative definition, plus three to seven behavioral indicators, plus examples (quotes from interviews) or specific behavioral ways of demonstrating the competency in the job (Spencer & Spencer, 1993). Most competency definitions have more than one dimension, typically two or three dimensions (Spencer & Spencer, 1993). Each competency description is accompanied by a table containing the full scale. Each level is distinguishable from the preceding and following levels with varying intensity,

completeness, or scope, and a clear progression from lower to higher levels on one or more dimensions (Spencer & Spencer, 1993).

How Is Competency Identified?

There are many ways to identify competencies, and each way may have different goals. No one methodological approach or technique deserves more serious attention than others, and none can or should claim to be the one and only way of identifying competencies (Kandola & Pearn, 1992). It is important that the researcher be clear before initiating the study so that the results will be useful.

In this research, the competency identification was based on the work of Spencer and Spencer (1993), who suggested six steps in the classical competency study design, a full-scale classic study. Those six steps are: 1) define performance effectiveness criteria; 2) identify a criterion sample; 3) collect data; 4) analyze data and develop a competency model; 5) validate the competency model; and 6) applications. However, only the first five steps are covered in this research but not the sixth step - the application.

There were three main reasons for not including the application step in this research. First, the researcher would like to focus on and ensure the depth of knowledge and understanding of the topic studied in order to develop the competency model, as the result would be the first of its kind. Second, so that the competency model can be used in full, the researcher was automatically forced to study all six roles, not just part or some of them - missing competencies for any of the six roles would not complete the picture of the competencies needed. Last, if the application step was included, the research design would have to be adjusted to be a longitudinal study, which would take a longer time frame to complete the step and obtain the results. For the benefits of the rapid use of the competency model to a wider group of users, the researcher would like to bring the results to the public at the soonest opportunity. In conclusion, considering the breadth and depth of the research, together with the systematic methodical research design, the research resulted in a competency model of Theravada Buddhist monks which has value in itself. The exclusion of the application step was considered not doing any damage to the value of the research.

Monastic Roles

There are many roles that monks perform in practical reality, but not all the roles were in the scope of this study. This research studied the competencies of the monks in the limit of and in relation to performance according to the designated six roles and duties of the monks, as stipulated by the Sangha Act (No. 2) B.E. 2535. The six roles are: 1) administration; 2) religious study; 3) education welfare; 4) propagation; 5) public assistance; and 6) public welfare (Phra Dharmakosajarn, 2010). A specific label with operational definition of each role is offered in this research.

“Ecclesiastical administration” is to control and promote the appropriate and proper behaviors of the monks, to supervise the monks and novices in the area under their responsibility to behave correctly in compliance with Dhamma-Vinaya and with the Sangha Act, laws, and rules laid down by the Sangha Supreme Council, orders, agreements and instructions of the Supreme Patriarch.

“Religious studies” is to arrange ecclesiastical education, which is comprised of two curricula: Dhamma and Pali. Dhamma is divided into three levels: Nukdhamtri, Nukdhamtho, and Nukdham-ek. Pali is divided into nine grades: level 1 - 2 and Pariandham 3-9.

“Education welfare” means to arrange alternative education for monks and lay people, i.e. universities for monks, Buddhist Sunday school, daycare or child centers, normal school (secondary school level), charity school, and vocational school.

“Propagation” is to propagate Buddhism with various means, i.e. Dhamma teachings through different kinds of media such as journals, newspapers, radio, and television, including Dhamma and meditation centers.

“Public facilities” means to build and maintain the buildings inside the temples, and to install necessary infrastructure such as electricity, water, telephones and other utilities. This includes adjusting the landscape and gardens so that the temples are beautiful, peaceful and appropriate for performing monastic duties and attracting lay people to make merit and meditate.

“Public works” means to render help to people on different occasions, i.e. natural disasters, offering food for the poor, and donating to others, including scholarships and infrastructure for the community.

Research Paradigm and Methodology

Being a pragmatist, the researcher designed this research in a way that theory was extracted from practice and can be applied to practice. The researcher used grounded theory as the theoretical perspective in order to distill the experiences of people into a competency model and to allow conceptual patterns to appear between participants, the researcher, and the method. Regarding the methodology, the researcher used mixed methods.

The paradigm in conducting this research was pragmatism, which is an American philosophical tradition that views reality as characterized by indeterminacy and fluidity, and as open to multiple interpretations. In a pragmatist philosophy, meanings emerge through practical actions to solve problems, and through actions people come to know the world. Pragmatists do not separate facts and value (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007). They understand things based on consequences, not antecedents, and do not build an a priori logic but rather extract theory from practice, and apply back to practice.

The theoretical perspective for this research was grounded theory. It uses inductive reasoning to build idea from data collected from the ground. In grounded theory research, the collection and the analysis of data run simultaneously and reciprocally. The study distilled the experiences of persons with best practices (BPs) into a competency model that is a generalizable HRD tool across people, time and context, and allowed conceptual patterns to appear in the space between participants, the researcher and the method (Bergkamp, 2010).

There are six main characteristics of grounded theory. First, grounded theory is not based on a theoretical framework (Egan, 2002). The research initiation commences from a general understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Second, it uses the inductive approach to generate or discover theory (Egan, 2002; Bergkamp, 2010) that “emerges” from the continuous interplay during the process of

data collection and data analysis. Third, it acknowledges that the researcher influences the results (Bergkamp, 2010: 29) so there is no need for bracketing. Fourth, it does not attempt to force control on the research situation or to limit confounding factors in order to prove hypotheses. Therefore it allows conceptual patterns to appear between researchers, participants and the methods (Bergkamp, 2010). Fifth, the anchor of the grounded theory-building approach is practice or action so that it builds a strong connection between theory and practice. Last, it shows the capacity to predict as it produces and enables hypotheses for potential testing (Egan, 2002).

The process building grounded theory is unique, as it is not linear but rather sequential, simultaneous, and spiraling (Bergkamp, 2010; Egan, 2002), as there are continuous interchanges between data collection and analysis, allowing researchers to alternate from data collection to data coding to memo writing to literature review and back again. Grounded theory acknowledges that the researcher can influence the results and does not view it as a vulnerability of the research findings, but as a strength (Bergkamp, 2010). Grounded theory accepts to use assumption to derive codes, determine variables and form concept.

Regarding methodology, with the dyadic nature of the study, it did not seem fit for the researcher to locate this study in one of the methodological dualisms, either quantitative or qualitative. The mixed methods approach seemed to fit appropriately the research question, as it includes a diversity of methodological traditions, inquiry designs, methods for data gathering and analysis, and forms of interpretation and reporting. Mixed methods research involves collecting and analyzing both forms of data in a single study. The purpose of using a mixture or combination of methods is to obtain the complementary strengths of each research type: the scientific attributes of the quantitative approach and in-depth investigation and examination of the qualitative approach (Creswell, 2003: 15-16).

Research Design

The research design was based on Spencer and Spencer's first five steps of job competency assessment (Spencer and Spencer, 1993). First, as there was a ready-made credible and undebatable source of performance effective criteria,

there was no need for the researcher to take any action in this step. The performance effectiveness criteria were defined in line and in accordance with the Bhikkhu Sangha Act 1962 and 1992. Current duties of the Sangha Supreme Council are divided into six categories, which are: 1) ecclesiastical administration, 2) religious studies, 3) education welfare, 4) propagation, 5) public facilities, and 6) public works. These were the six areas from which competencies of the monks were derived in this study.

The research was designed using sequential procedures and was comprised of three main steps, starting with the survey of monks in order to determine their three living role models (idols) for each of the six monastic duties. The name list obtained was considered a list of the BPs, some of whom would undergo evidence-based competency interviews. According to the interviews and transcriptions, the researcher conducted a thematic analysis to derive codes, categories and themes. The qualitative analysis method revealed the competencies of Buddhist monks. In parallel, the researcher purposively selected subject matter experts and stakeholders (SMEs) and invited them to be panelists in the process of the Delphi technique and to give their opinions in Delphi rounds. The last step was the process of the Delphi technique. Rules of detachment and objectivity were applied and results were reported in numbers. Comments from SMEs were incorporated in the subsequent round. All steps complemented one another in the overall research process. The results of each step are discussed next one by one, and at the completion of all of the processes of this research design, the results from the Delphi technique were fine-tuned in order to create the concluding competency model of Theravada Buddhist monks in Thailand.

The following figure illustrates Spencer and Spencer's six steps and this research design.

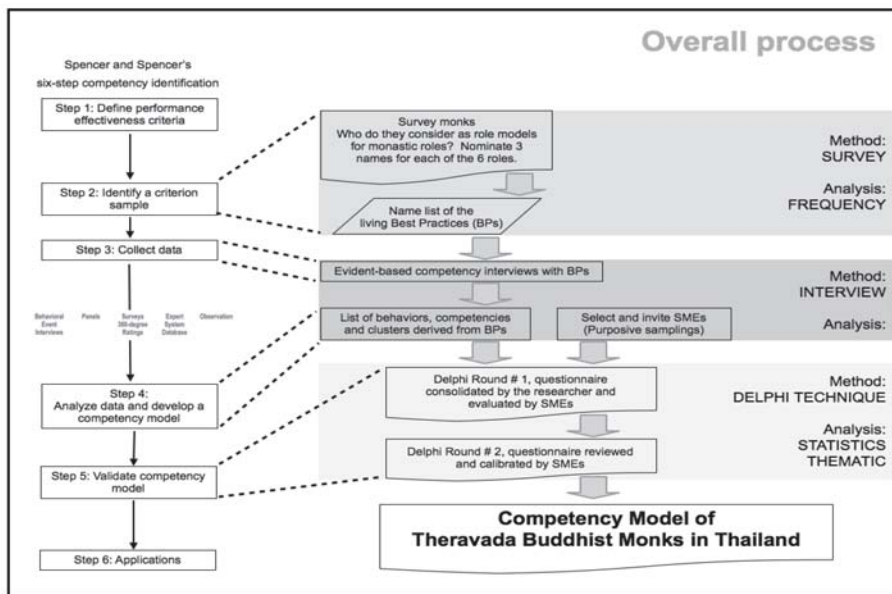


Figure 1: Designed Research Process for “Developing the Competency Model of Theravada Buddhist Monks in Thailand”

Survey Results

It was not possible to sample monks from temples around Thailand. Therefore, for a realistic and practical administration of the survey, the researcher took 225 samples from monks studying in graduate and undergraduate levels at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University and Mahamakut Buddhist University and their 222 referred samples (called “snowballs”). They were asked to write down three names at maximum that they considered BPs in each of the six monastic roles. The researcher then assigned weighting to the names: the first name in each role was multiplied by three points, the second name was multiplied by two points, and third name was multiplied by one point. The summed points comprised the list of BPs.

The results showed that there were many monks that appeared in more than one role, as well as many monks that appeared in only a specific role. Many names were of those that appeared frequently in the media. Many names of the most venerables and venerables did not seem to appear. As a research, the researcher could simply take such results as they were. However, the results shown raised

some doubt as to whether the samples and snowballs had any bias or not. To address this observation, even though it was not planned, another additional survey was decided in order to cross check the above results with the attempt to eliminate the doubt. If the second survey confirmed the first one, it would increase the trustworthiness of the results. If the second survey yielded different results from the first ones, it also would increase trustworthiness for the fact that more samples were added to the survey.

The second survey was done with 227 abbots who hold the position of head of sub-district (Tambon) and head of district in Ecclesiastical Region II, covering three provinces in the central part of Thailand: Saraburi, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya, and Angthong. The results were treated similarly as the first survey.

All in all, from both surveys, 674 forms were distributed and 367 were returned, making a 54.5% return rate. Among those returned, 10 or 4.5% were rejected. Therefore 357 surveys or 52.9% were used in the data analysis. Details can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2: Total Number of Forms Distributed, Returned, Rejected, and Used

Type		Distributed	Returned	Rejected	Used
First Survey	- Students	225	98 (43.5%)	5 (2.3%)	93 (41.3%)
	- Snowballs	222	90 (40.5%)	5 (2.2%)	85 (38.3%)
First Survey Total		447	188 (42.1%)	10 (4.5%)	178 (39.8%)
Second Survey	- Saraburi	86	62 (72.1%)	0	62 (72.1%)
	- Ayutthaya	93	69 (74.2%)	0	69 (74.2%)
	- Angthong	48	48 (100%)	0	48 (100%)
Second Survey Total		227	179 (78.9%)	0 (0%)	179 (78.9%)
Combined Total		674	367 (54.5%)	10 (4.5%)	357 (52.9%)

The majority of sample monks were more than 45 years of age (46.6%) and had been ordained for more than 25 years (38.1%). They have Nukdham-ek (94.9%), Pariandhamtri - Grade 3 (26.7%), and graduated with a Bachelor's Degree (31.8%). 28.1% have more than 25 years working experience. The demography of samples is displayed in Table 3.

Table 3: Demography of Participants

Demography	1st	2nd	3rd
Age	More than 45 years (157 / 46.6%)	26 – 30 years (44 / 13.1%)	36 – 40 years (43 / 12.8%)
Years in Monkhood	More than 25 years (129 / 38.1%)	5 – 10 years (68 / 20.1%)	16 – 20 years (41 / 12.1%) 21 - 25 years (41 / 12.1%)
Dhamma Education	Nukdham-ek (316/ 94.9%)	Nukdhamtho (9 / 2.7%)	Nukdhamtri 8 / 2.4%)
Pali Education	Pariandhamtri - Grade 3 (42 / 26.7%)	Pariandhamtri - Grade 1-2 (28 / 17.4%)	Pariandhamtho - Grade 4 (22 / 13.7%)
Normal Education	Bachelor's Degree (105 / 31.8%)	Secondary 1 - 6 (74 / 22.7%)	Master's Degree (67 / 20.3%)
Working Experience	More than 25 years (82 / 28.1%)	6 – 10 years (73 / 25%)	5 years and less (63 / 21.6%)

The researcher combined the points of both surveys and the results finally emerged with a name list of BPs whom the researcher attempted to contact for evidence-based competency interviews.

Evidence-Based Interview Results

The target number of BPs to be interviewed was set at three persons for each role, making 18 persons in total as a minimum. The researcher interviewed 22 BPs in the data collection process in the role or roles in which they were regarded as BPs, as shown in Table 4. The interviews were semi-structured and were conducted following an interview schedule based on the behavioral event interview (BEI) of David McClelland. Interviews were voice recorded. The 31.48 hours of interviews were fully transcribed and re-checked before analyzing. Sensitive and irrelevant parts were omitted.

Table 4: List of Best Practices, Their Roles, and Ranking

No.	Name	Surveys		Ranking from Combined Results of Surveys						Duration (Hrs.)	Transcription - (# Pages)	
		Samples & Snowballs	Abbots	Ecclesiastical administration	Religious studies	Education welfare	Propagation	Public facilities	Public works			
1	Phra Thepkhunaporn (พระเทพคุณาภรณ์)	1						2		1.06	14	
2	Phra Rajthammanithet (พระราชธรรมนิเทศ)	2	9			7	6	7	1	1.28	23	
3	Phramaha Vudhijaya (พระมหาวุฒิชัย วชิรเมธี)	1	4				2			0.56	13	
4	Phra Udomprachathorn (พระอุดมประชาพร)	1	10						2	1.22	17	
5	Phra Ratpanyawethee (พระราชนิพนธ์วาท)	3				5				0.54	15	
6	Somdej Phra Maharatchamangalacharn (สมเด็จพระมหาธีรราชเจ้า)	2	7	4	2			8	7	0.16	3	
7	Phra Medheewaraporn (พระเมธีวราภรณ์)	8			13					1.20	15	
8	Phra Teppanyamunee (พระเทพปัญญามุนี)	4			6					1.30	14	
9	Dr. Phramaha Phairoh Thitasilo (ดร.พระมหาไพเราะ ฐิตสีโล)	2				2				2.20	22	
10	Phra Wimolsutaporn (พระวิมลสุตาภรณ์)	8							15	1.58	22	
11	Phra Theppariyattiyacharn (พระเทพปริยัตยาจารย์)	3			5					0.58	10	
12	Somdej Phra Wannarat (สมเด็จพระวันรัต)	8		10						0.37	6	
13	Phra Brahmadi lok (พระพรหมดิลก)	3	8	6	3			4		1.30	17	
14	Phraajarn Mitsuo Gavesako (พระอาจารย์มิตซูโอะ คเวสโก)	7					8			0.54	9	
15	Phra Paisal Visalo (พระไพศาล วิสาโล)	6					7			1.28	17	
16	Phra Khru Amnaj Opaso (พระครูใบฎีกาอำนาจ โอภาโส)	9						17		2.26	32	
17	Phra Sasanasophon (พระสาสนโสภณ)	10		14						1.46	18	
18	Phra Rachaphudivaraphom (พระราชพุทธวิวัฒภรณ์)		6			12				0.39	9	
19	Phra Rajvijitphatiphan (พระราชวิจิตรปฏิภาณ)	8	8				9			2.55	27	
20	Phra Rajnganakavi (พระราชนิพนธ์กวี)	5				9				1.49	21	
21	Phra Rajsutalangkarn (พระราชสุตาลังการ)		5			6			9	1.15	16	
22	Phra Rajthamvathee (พระราชธรรมวาท)		7				11			2.21	17	
		Total									31.48	357

Three hundred and fifty-seven pages of transcription were analyzed using thematic analysis, requiring precision, consistency and attention to detail. Taking into consideration the amount of collected data, the researcher decided to use Atlas.ti version 7 to make the analysis easier - the program did not replace the researcher's analysis but it facilitated the analysis.

The 22 transcription files (one file per one BP) were saved in Rich Text Format (.RTF) and added in the project (called Hermeneutic Unit - HU) created in Atlas.ti. Each file was linked to one or multiple areas to set constraints in the system to analyze the BPs in the roles in which they were regarded only. The mapping of 22 files and the six roles in Atlas.ti are shown in Figure 2.

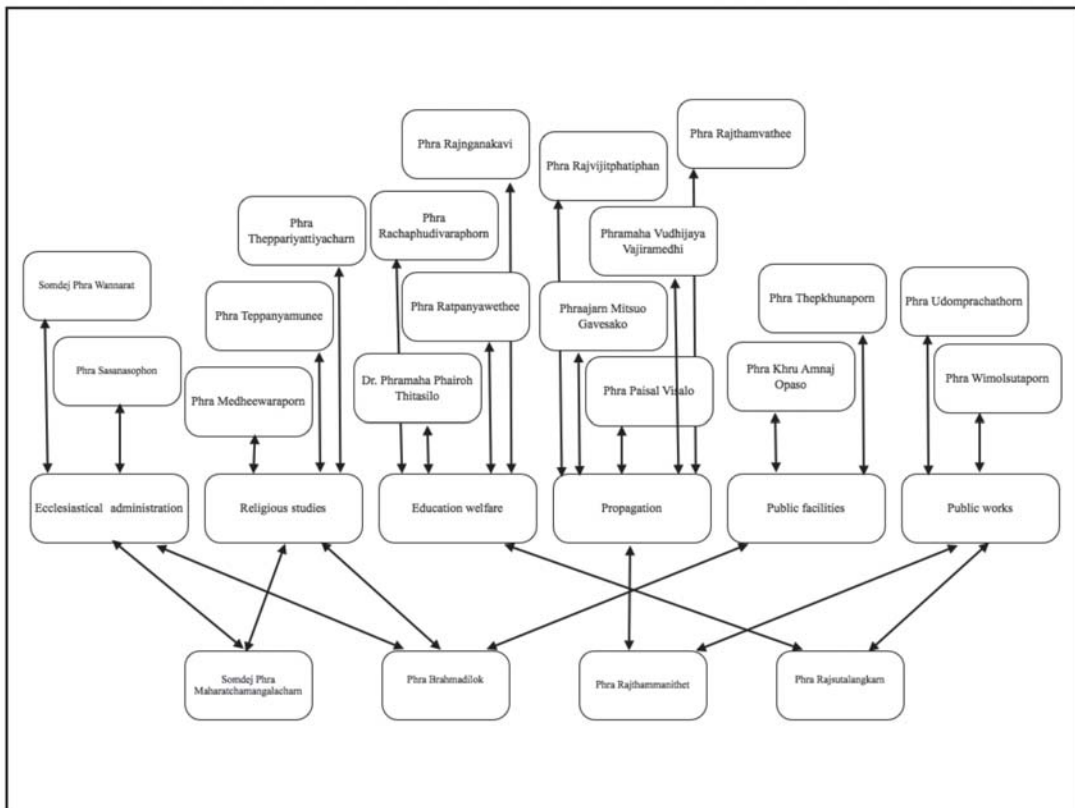


Figure 2: Mapping of 22 Best Practices and Six Roles

Thematic analysis was the most difficult and creative part of the competency analysis process (Spencer & Spencer, 1993), even though it was made easier with Atlas.ti. It was for the researcher to look at how the BPs answered each of the questions: situation, involved persons, thoughts, motivation, feelings, actions, outcomes and other characteristics, including physical appearance, physical setting, materials, props, articulateness, conversational style, verbal fluency.

As this is a grounded theory research, the researcher used the open-coding method and created new codes as new ideas or variables emerged. "Open-coding is the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Altogether, there were 1,278 competency-related quotations in 22 documents, which were conceptualized in 153 codes. Having coded all transcriptions, the researcher retrieved reports from Atlas.ti showing the codes and their related quotations in order to be able to recheck the consistency. The codes were adjusted, renamed, merged or cancelled where needed. The 153 codes were adjusted to 146 codes.

According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), after having identified particular phenomena in the data, the concepts around them should be grouped. This is to reduce the number of units to work with. This is the step of axial coding. "Axial coding is a type of coding that treats a category as an axis around which the analyst delineates relationships and specifies the dimensions of this category. A major purpose of axial coding is to bring the data back together again into a coherent whole after the researcher has fractured them through line-by-line coding" (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007). In this research, the researcher did not analyze the relationship between 146 codes but focused on relating the 146 codes to categories (called "family" in Atlas.ti). Most of the codes were related to categories, as they were behaviors that represent, contribute or lead to one of the categories which were competencies of the monks.

The 10 categories created in this step were: 1) mastery of theoretical and practical knowledge; 2) attributes; 3) visioning and objectives setting; 4) planning ability; 5) execution ability; 6) faith building ability; 7) communication ability; 8) networking ability; 9) integration ability; and 10) development ability.

The next process was one of selective coding - selecting the core category, "systematically relating it to other categories, validating those relationships, and filling in categories that need further refinement and development" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). This is an analytic step in grounded theory - of selecting certain codes that are more significant than others or abstracting common themes and patterns in several codes into an analytic concept. The researcher raised the conceptual levels of the analysis from description to a more abstract theoretical

level. Grounded theorists make their most significant theoretical categories into the concepts of their theory (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007). At this stage, the selective coding added another dimension to the competency model. Two types of competencies were used as two main themes: generic competency and functional competency. Therefore, 146 codes were assigned to these two themes. In order to systematically assign the themes to codes, the researcher used the number of occurrences as criteria.

Generic competencies are the critical and expected behaviors that the monks in all roles need to possess. In this research, the researcher filtered the generic competencies from the codes that had supporting quotations from the BPs in three or more roles.

Functional competencies are the specific behaviors that the monks that perform a particular role have. In this research, they were the codes with supporting quotations from the BPs in one or two roles.

In brief, the codes from the open coding were the bases of the questionnaire, together with their supporting quotations. They were categorized, thematized, and put into appropriate sentences. In the structuring of the questionnaire, for clarity reasons, some codes were split. As a result, 139 behaviors were listed in the questionnaire to be used in the following step: the Delphi technique.

Delphi Technique Results

The last step of this research was the process of the Delphi technique. One hundred thirty-nine behaviors were proposed to SMEs through the Delphi technique protocols and processes. The Delphi technique is a systematic way of collecting and organizing the opinions of several experts into a single decision. The trustworthiness of the Delphi technique results relies on the credibility of the SMEs, who are purposively sampled by the use of judgment and a deliberate effort to obtain representative samples by including typical areas or groups in the sample. In this research, 28 SMEs were purposively sampled to represent their organization and that were considered stakeholders in Buddhism, i.e. scholars from universities, government authorities, and key persons from Buddhist associations, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Subject Matter Experts

Representatives	Male	Female	Total	Total %
- Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University	6	1	7	53.6%
- Mahamakut Buddhist University	4	1	5	
- Other Universities	3	-	3	
Total Academic	13	2	15	
- Government Officials	6	-	6	46.4%
- Non-profit Buddhist and Private Organizations	6	1	7	
Total Organizations	12	1	13	
Total	25	3	28	100%
Total %	89.3%	10.7%	100%	

The purpose was to have combination of males and females, monks and lay people, from academic and non-academic contexts. Among the 28 SMEs, three were female and the rest of 25 were male, comprising 10 monks and 15 lay people. Considering the SMEs as representatives of their organization, 15 were from the academic context and 13 were government officials and from Buddhist and private organizations. The twenty-eight persons that accepted the researcher's invitation are listed in Table 6 with their representative organization.

Table 6: Subject Matter Experts and Their Organization

Organization	Subject Matter Experts
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University (7 persons)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Associate Professor Dr. Phra Sigambhirayarn, Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs 2. Assistant Professor Dr. Suraphon Suyaphrom, Vice-Rector for General Affairs 3. Dr. Phra Suthithammanuwat, Dean of Graduate School 4. Dr. Phra Rajvoramuni, Dean of Faculty of Buddhism 5. Dr. Phra Rajsithimuni, Assistant Abbot of Wat Mahathat Yuwarajarangsarit Rajaworamahavihara 6. Dr. Phramaha Suthit Aphakaro, Director of the Buddhist Research Institute 7. Dr. Maechee Kritsana Raksachom, Director of Master's Degree Program - Buddhist Studies, Graduate School
Mahamakut Buddhist University (5 persons)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assistant Professor Dr. Phramaha Panya Panyawuttho, Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs 2. Assistant Professor Dr. Phramaha Boonsri Nanavuddho, Acting Dean of Graduate School 3. Phramaha Samak Mahaviro, Acting Dean of Faculty of Education 4. Assistant Professor Dr. Phramaha Maghavin Purisuttamo, Leader of Department of Buddhism and Philosophy, Graduate School 5. Dr. Maechee Duangporn Kamhomkul, Lecturer at Mahapajapati Buddhist College
Other Universities (3 persons)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dr. Veerachart Nimanong, Head of Philosophy Department, Assumption University 2. Associate Professor Dr. Pathompong Bodhiprasiddhinand, Director of the International Ph.D. Programme in Buddhist Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Mahidol University 3. Assistant Professor Lieutenant Dr. Bunjob Bannarужи, Lecturer, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University

Table 6: Subject Matter Experts and Their Organization (continued)

Organization	Subject Matter Experts
Government Officials (6 persons)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dr. Preecha Gunteeya, Director General of The Religious Affairs Department, Ministry of Culture 2. Mr. Charoon Narakhon, Deputy Director - General of The Fine Arts Department, Ministry of Culture 3. Dr. Amnaj Buasiri, Deputy Director - General of Office of National Buddhism 4. Mr. Phanom Sonsill, Deputy Director - General of Office of National Buddhism 5. Dr. Kanok Sanprasert, Deputy Director - General of Office of National Buddhism
Non-profit Buddhist and Private Organizations (7 persons)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Phramaha Sathien Suwannathito, Assistant Abbot of Wat Phradhammagaya 2. Mr. Natthaphat Inthaputi, President of The Buddhist Association of Thailand Under Royal Patronage 3. Police Major General Norawat Charoen-Rajapark, President of The Young Buddhists Association of Thailand Under Royal Patronage 4. Dr. Buncha Pongpanich, Director of Buddhadasa Indapanno Archives 5. Major General Dr. Chainat Yatshimplee, Ex-Director of Office of Chaplain, The Secretariat Department, Ministry of Defense 6. Associate Professor Suchao Ploychum, Lecturer, Kasetsart University and member of Mahamakuta Rajavidyalaya Foundation Under Royal Patronage 7. Mrs. Supawadee Komaradat, Senior Executive Vice President, Amarin Printing and Publishing Company Limited

The instrument of the Delphi technique was a questionnaire, which was derived from the codes, categories and themes analyzed and derived from the interviews and then rearranged. Questionnaire round one was comprised of two

parts: part one was generic competencies, with 105 questions, and part two was functional competencies, with 34 questions. The questions were categorized according to 10 competencies.

In each question, the SMEs were asked to answer two things: the importance and the impact of the competency. The first assessment was regarding importance. There were five possible answers, with specific definition applied from McLean (2006). The importance of competency asked how important behavior was in terms of performing the six monastic roles. Opinions could be given by choosing one of five choices: 5) the behavior is absolutely essential and cannot be done without; 4) while it might be possible to get by without this behavior, something important is missing; 3) the behavior helps to do the work and the organization would benefit, but there would not be a huge loss if the monk did not do it; 2) it might be nice to have this behavior but it really does not make a difference in doing the work; and 1) I do not know enough about this behavior to say if it is important and necessary or not, or whether it is not important and not necessary at all.

The second assessment concerned the impact. Spencer and Spencer separated achievement impact into seven levels (1993: 27). In this research, the researcher collapsed those levels into five to be in line with the assessment of importance. The impact of competency asked how the behavior impacted oneself and others. The opinion could be answered by choosing one of the five choices: 5) the behavior impacts the world and the humanities; 4) the behavior impacts the nation; 3) the behavior impacts the organization; 2) the behavior impacts the individual self only; and 1) I do not know enough about this behavior to say whether it impacts or not, or whether it does not have an impact at all.

The answers returned were analyzed using descriptive statistics, i.e. min, max, mode, median, and mean of each question. The minimum was the smallest number in a collection, while the maximum was the largest number in a collection. The range of a set of data was the difference between the largest and smallest values. The mode was the most frequently occurring value in a collection of numbers. The median was the median value in a collection of numbers. It is the value where half of the numbers in the set are less than the median and half are greater. The mean was the average (arithmetic mean) of a collection of numbers.

The questionnaire was repeated for the second round. In Delphi round two, the researcher kept 139 questions identical to the one of round one in order that SMEs were not confused and did not have to be re-read all over again. In this round, the SMEs were asked whether they confirmed their round one answer or wanted to change it. If they wanted to change it, a reason was needed. This was coupled with the round one individual report of the results and summary of comments.

The answers were calculated using descriptive statistics, Table 7 illustrates the results of both rounds. There was only a slight difference.

Table 7: Comparison of Descriptive Statistics

Round	Importance			Impact		
	Mode	Median	Mean	Mode	Median	Mean
Round # 1	4.633	4.345	4.176	3.540	3.471	3.594
Round # 2	4.619	4.356	4.187	3.518	3.475	3.595
Dif (2 - 1)	-0.014	0.011	0.011	-0.022	0.004	0.001
Dif (2 - 1) %	-0.31%	0.25%	0.26%	-0.61%	0.10%	0.04%

The results of the Delphi round two was used for further analysis. In Figure 3, the researcher plotted the mean score of the importance and impact of each of the 139 questions, with the mean score of importance on a horizontal axe and the mean score of impact on a vertical axe. The total mean score was plotted in red dots, showing the total mean score of importance at 4.19 and the total mean score of impact at 3.60. Drawing a line horizontally and another line vertically, the chart containing the 139 questions was systematically divided into a quadrant of four groups.

The quadrant is used to filter competencies. Spencer and Spencer (1993) stated there should be no more than 100 competencies involved in the model (cited in Kormanik, Lehner, & Winnick, 2009: 494). The SMEs suggested also in the Delphi technique that 139 behaviors were far too many to be in the competency model and needed to be screened out. The researcher objectively and systematically filtered the competencies using the mean score from the above descriptive statistics in Delphi round two as a cutting point to make the quadrant and screened the

competencies into the model.

The first group at the top right located the questions whose scores were above the mean in both importance and impact. They were 47 “core” behaviors.

The second group at the bottom right located the questions whose scores were above the mean in importance only. They were 20 “important” behaviors.

The third group at the top left located the questions whose scores were above the mean in impact only. They were 19 “impacting” behaviors.

The fourth group at the bottom left were the questions whose scores were below the mean in both importance and impact. They were 53 behaviors that were not included in the model.

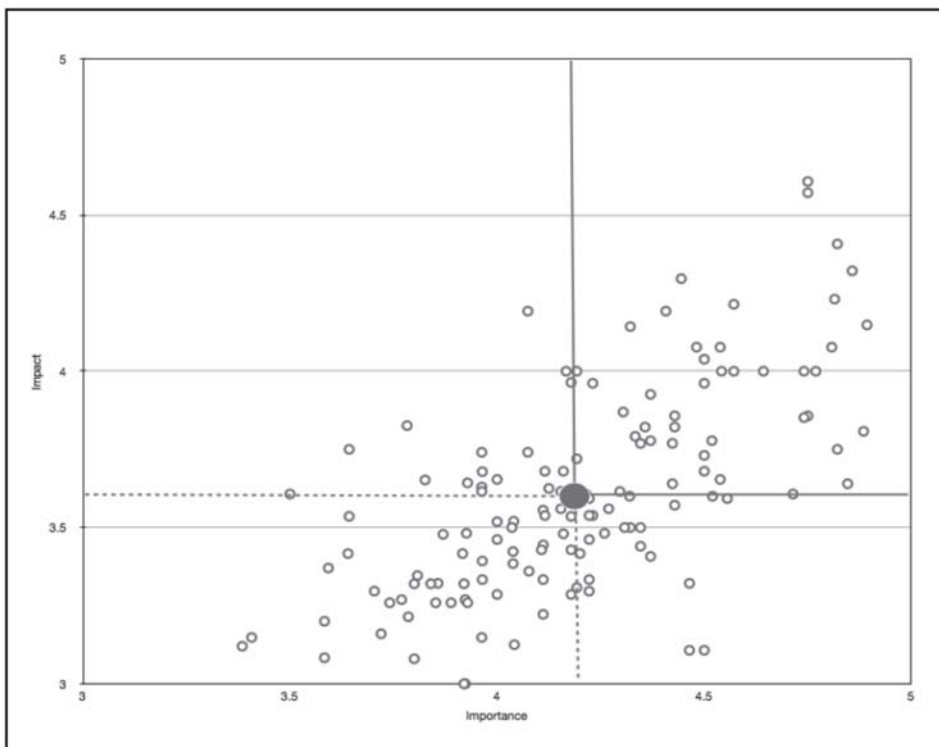


Figure 3: Quadrant by Mean Score as Cutting Point

Competency Model

“The aim of grounded theory is to generate an analytic substantive schema through the processes of theoretical sensitivity which, after comparison with other substantive areas, can become formal theory” (Grbich, 2007). Grbich stated that theorizing is the “process that involves taking the results collected and looking at them again through the lens or frame of one or several theoretical or conceptual positions in order to make further sense of them and to lift the analytical discussion to a more abstract level” (2007).

In this research, the researcher took the results of the Delphi technique, together with the background knowledge from the literature review and additional comments from the SMEs, in short, all of the factors, into consideration. The researcher adjusted the sequence of the competencies, selected the wordings that best represented the behaviors in the model, pictured the parts that made for an integrated whole, and developed the concluding competency model of Theravada Buddhist monks in Thailand, as shown in Figure 4. Therefore the terms used and the sequence of competencies in the model were not the same as those in the Delphi questionnaire.

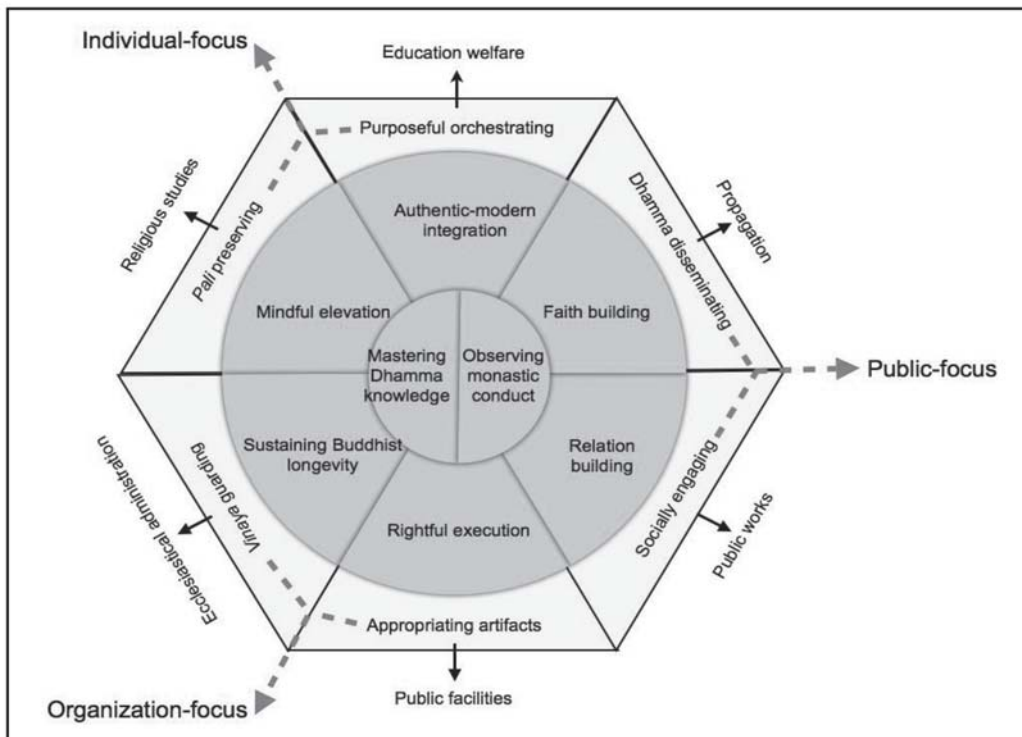


Figure 4: Competency Model of Theravada Buddhist Monks in Thailand

The competency model of Theravada Buddhist monks in Thailand is composed of two clusters of competencies: generic competencies in the two circles in the center, and functional competencies in the hexagon around the circles. The generic competencies are the critical and expected behaviors that the monks in all roles need to possess. The first two competencies in the central circle are: 1) mastering Dhamma knowledge and 2) observing monastic conduct, which are the most fundamental competencies. The outer circle contains the six remaining generic competencies: 3) sustaining Buddhist longevity; 4) rightful execution; 5) authentic-modern integration; 6) mindful elevation; 7) faith building; and 8) relationship building.

The hexagon depicts the six performance areas or roles of the monks as identified by the *Sangha* Act. It contains the functional competencies that are the specific behaviors that the monks who perform a particular role need to have. Each functional competency is specific to each role. The six functional competencies are as follows: 1) *Vinaya* guarding is the functional competency of ecclesiastical

administration; 2) *Pali* preserving is the functional competency of religious studies; 3) purposeful orchestrating is the functional competency of education welfare; 4) Dhamma disseminating is the functional competency of propagation; 5) appropriating artifacts is the functional competency of public facilities; and 6) Socially engaging is the functional competency of public works.

The functional competencies are needed in addition to and on-top of the generic competencies. The monks need generic competencies as a foundation and need functional competencies when they are to perform a specific role.

With the dotted lines and three arrows, the model implies the orientation of the role-based competencies towards the individual, the organization or the public. *Vinaya* guarding and appropriating artifacts aim towards the organization of the *Sangha* and Buddhism. *Pali* preserving and purposeful orchestrating aim to develop individual monk to better acquire knowledge. Dhamma disseminating and socially engaging focus on a wide audience and help people in general.

The model gives a broad and holistic view of the generic competencies fundamentally needed for the monks, as well as the functional competencies in order to achieve performance in a specific deontological area. It gives the direction of effort as well as is contextualized with the six monastic roles as designated by the *Sangha*. At the same time, the selective terminology indicates precisely and concisely the competencies of the monks that emerged from the data grounded in this research.

Eight Generic Competencies

The generic competencies are the critical and expected behaviors that the monks in all roles need to possess. Eight generic competencies emerged from this research. Table 8 summarizes these competencies with their description and related core behaviors.

Table 8: Description of Generic Competencies

Competency	Definition	Core Behaviors
Mastering Dhamma knowledge	Acquaintance with facts, truths or principles in specific areas or subjects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knows and understands the doctrine (Dhamma) and its essentials profoundly and precisely without any mistakes and deviations, nor with individual interpretation. - Possesses the knowledge according to the curriculum of Nukdham. - Knows the principles of tranquillity meditation (Samatha), insight meditation (Vipassana), related methods and practices them by himself. - Knows Pali, which is the language of the Buddha.
Observing monastic conduct	Characteristics of monks covering their conduct or course of practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thinks, speaks, and does things correctly. - Acts and behaves correctly and according to Vinaya. Complies fully with training rules (sila) as standard of living. - Is always aware of his monastic status and behaves appropriately for his monkhood. - Knows his own duties and roles. - Gives without expecting any return, focuses on others' benefits, and dedicates himself and his materials. - Helps, shares, gets rid of avarice (selfishness), gives love and good wishes to others, forgives.
Sustaining Buddhist longevity	Looking and projecting wide and long into the future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aims to sustain the longevity of Buddhism. - Aims at present benefits and what can be utilized at once, supports people to change their behaviors that are useful, and generates happiness for the benefit of their own and common interests. - Has ideology for wisdom, love, morality and righteousness. - Aims to help people when they are in trouble or in case of emergencies to release their sufferings.

Table 8: Description of Generic Competencies (continued)

Competency	Definition	Core Behaviors
Rightful execution	Getting things done for the right reasons, right efforts, right time, right place, right methods, right resources and right quality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knows what is right and wrong. - Knows why it is right and wrong. - Uses and optimizes funds with transparency, effectiveness, and for the best and real benefits. - Decides based on principles, reasons, causes and conditions. - Puts continuous effort until the successful results are obtained. - Uses rationales in management with clear policies, and decentralizes power. - Is determined, dedicated, and serious in achieving noticeable changes and tangible outcomes. - Uses available funds according to donators' objectives and allocates funds appropriately.
Authentic-modern integration	Making into a unified whole by choosing and mixing original Dhamma with other worldly sciences to match the audience in time and place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is able to link the Dhamma of the Buddha and current worldly context, mixes the knowledge of the Dhamma and modern sciences, and integrates them to Applied Buddhism to match with current situations. - Applies old with new, i.e applied Dhamma teaching, and adjusts the methods to suit the time and place.
Mindful elevation	Act of organizing actions or activities aimed at bettering oneself, others or one's performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is strict and serious about behaviors, rules, manners and etiquette; defines disciplinary boundaries, and ensures, and educates subordinates to be in <i>Dhamma-Vinaya</i> and laid-down rules.

Table 8: Description of Generic Competencies (continued)

Competency	Definition	Core Behaviors
Faith building	An act to draw confidence and trust in the teachings of the Buddha in the right way.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Builds faith with the right method according to the teaching of Buddha, with wisdom and according to their voluntarily will and status. - Discourages delusion, superstitions, nor mantra. - Maintains, creates, and increases firm faith, firstly to Buddhism and to individuals afterwards. - “Walks the talk” and behaves as a role model for others. - Observes monastic activities strictly and habitually, i.e Patimokkha, morning and evening chantings, rounds of alms.
Relationship Building	An act of linking two or more people together.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishes existing networks in the form of formal organization so that it moves the work forward systematically. - Familiarizes with people, builds alliances, has people with the same ideology, gets along well with all parties.

Six Functional Competencies

The functional competencies are the specific behaviors that the monks that perform a particular role need to have. Each functional competency is specific to each monastic role. There are six functional competencies. Table 9 summarizes each competency with the role they are linked to, and their description and related core behaviors.

Table 9: Description of Functional Competencies

Competency	Definition	Core Behaviors
<i>Vinaya</i> guarding (Ecclesiastical administration)	Protecting <i>Vinaya</i> (code of discipline) and related laws and rules with precise usage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Holds on to <i>Vinaya</i>, principles, reasons and righteousness as behavioral norms, and protects the benefits of the Buddhist temples and Buddhism. - Knows <i>Vinaya</i> profoundly and precisely. - Has no bias regarding subordinates, and gives them equal fairness and justice. - Knows the Thai <i>Sangha</i> Administration Act, rules laid down by the Council of Elders, orders of the Supreme Patriarch, and other rules and announcements.
<i>Pali</i> preserving (Religious studies)	Keeping best safe of and transfer the originality of <i>Pali</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knows <i>Pali</i> profoundly. - Aims to keep and pass on the <i>Pali</i> language in the most original form possible.
Purposeful orchestrating (Education welfare)	Pulling and coordinating the resources and efforts from devotees for the best use to support education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Acts as middleman who orchestrates the mutual benefit of all parties. - Thinks proactively.
Dhamma disseminating (Propagation)	Spread the Dhamma widely and correctly by customizing language, methods and techniques to effectively suit the targeted audience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is able to conjugate, explain, clarify and link the true meaning of the Dhamma. - Is able to get the principle and teach. - Senses things and responds quickly and adequately in the context. - Can propagate to various groups of people, i.e. common people, governmental and private organizational units, as well as royal families, and all genders and age groups. - Masters the language, knows the vocabulary and its meaning and various languages, and uses proper words to explain and convince others.

Table 9: Description of Functional Competencies (continued)

Competency	Definition	Core Behaviors
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can propagate with various methods, i.e. written and oral, traditional (The Vessantara Jataka), conventional and contemporary approaches, i.e. speeches, lectures, discussions, debates, training, seminars, and with various media. Inspires people behaviorally with eloquence. - Is straight-forward while being considerate regarding time and place. - Is open, and accepts different ideas while keeping the Dhamma. - Is confident. - Selects the subject, issue, content, perspective, and connection for the teaching to be smooth and creative, and does not attack others nor generates conflicts, and rehearses before the event. - Can draw the continuous attention of the audience, and is concise and precise.
Appropriating artifacts (Public facilities)	Starting projects and setting actions based on resource availability and suitability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Makes use of available resources considering usage, convenience, safety and suitability.
Socially engaging (Public works)	Pertinence in principles but flexibility in helping actions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is patient and resilient. - Gives knowledge and information. - Works proactively, aiming at social contribution. - Is there for the right person, in the right place, at the right time and with the right method to foster help and to relieve people from suffering in their emergencies. - Gives prior to teaching.

Conclusion

The objective of this research was set to develop an expected, future-oriented competency model for Theravada Buddhist monks in Thailand. The question that had driven this research was “What are the competencies of monks in order to perform their six roles?” The six monastic roles were ecclesiastical administration, religious studies, education welfare, propagation, public facilities, and public works. The research was done with grounded theory as the theoretical perspective and used mixed methods with three main sequential steps: survey, evidence-based interviews, and the Delphi technique. Those methods were used in order to answer the research question.

Each step of the research produced the results that were used for the following steps. The survey produced the name list of the BPs to be interviewed, the evidence-based competency interviews suggested the behaviors related to the six monastic roles to be included in the Delphi questionnaire, and the Delphi technique filtered and fine-tuned the competencies leading to the final competency model.

In the end, the results of this research were summarized in the form of the competency model of Theravada Buddhist monks in Thailand. The competency model is composed of two clusters. The first cluster contains eight generic competencies, which are mastering Dhamma knowledge, observing monastic conduct, sustaining Buddhist longevity, rightful execution, authentic-modern integration, mindful elevation, faith building, and relationship building. The second cluster contains six functional competencies tied to each of the six monastic roles, which are *Vinaya* guarding for ecclesiastical administration, *Pali* preserving for religious studies, purposeful orchestrating for education welfare, Dhamma disseminating for propagation, appropriating artifacts for public facilities, and socially engaging for public works.

The competency model of Theravada Buddhist monks in Thailand can help improve the declining credibility of Thai monks nowadays in a way that it provides a blueprint for building the competencies needed at present and in the future, and provides a norm or criterion against which to measure individual development requirements. It is therefore useful for people development. Although the model should be construed neither as the final conclusion in itself nor the answer to all *Sangha*-

related matters, the researcher's hope is to create a wave of change and hopefully, the model can be used as a tool for the design of the changes. The researcher looks forward to its application in real life.

Recommendations

This research and the competency model derived from this research only marked the commencement and represents a meaningful foundation for future researchers to build on. Although this research was carefully designed, and was precisely carried out and thoroughly analyzed in every step, no single research is perfect; there is always room for improvement. The improvement areas outlined in this part will help the vicarious learners design their research better to build a stronger model. Recommendations are listed in this part so other researchers may use them for future research ideas and improvements.

The research was designed used a mixed method with a significant effort on qualitative part of the research. The main part of the research contributing to the developing of the competency model, was the evidence-based competency interviews, which were carried out using qualitative method. It would be interesting to retrieve the competencies of monks using a quantitative method and with different analyses, e.g. factor analysis.

The research was designed based on Spencer and Spencer's six-step job competency assessment, with the sixth step being omitted from this study. Therefore, it would also be interesting for competency students to fulfill the sixth step and prepare its applications.

This was the first attempt to develop a competency model for monks, so a wide angle lens was necessary. For further study, future researchers may elaborate on certain levels of the monks, i.e. management competencies or only on a specific role, in order to achieve greater depth and more details regarding functional competencies.

Additionally, dimension and proficiency levels may be added to the model. In this research, proficiency levels were not proposed; however, the important and impacting competencies can be further studied and developed to proficiency levels.

Regarding the details of conducting future research, the sampling of BPs may be more systematically selected rather than driven by convenience and availability.

In order to improve the trustworthiness of results, the coding may be done with multiple coders. Axial coding may also be analyzed for the relationship between codes.

Last, as a competency model is context sensitive, it should be revisited occasionally.

Epilogue

The combination of pragmatism, grounded theory, and mixed methods were considered the proper choices for conducting this research. Grounded theory allowed the theory (competency model) to emerge from the data (interviews) from the field (the *Sangha*), so the outcome could be practically applied back to its own source. The mixed methods approach also fit well with the design as it allowed flexibility for the pragmatist researcher to use different methods for collecting and analyzing the data. Also, the qualitative and quantitative methods complimented each other so that a solid and trustworthy competency model could be built for Theravada Buddhist monks in Thailand. Well-thought-out, well-designed, well-implemented methods and processes contributed to the reliability, validity and trustworthiness of the study and served to generate greater acceptance and a wider impact for monastic society and general Thai society in the end. The competency model of Theravada Buddhist monks is a reflection and development tool for individuals and organizations, i.e. the *Sangha* Supreme Council, the Department of Religious Affairs, educators in universities, and abbots to progress monks towards those expected competencies. The research aimed to ignite changes that will contribute to the sustainability of Buddhism in Thailand.

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