



## **Intersecta Minds Journal**

**Social Science and Management Science**

ISSN: 3056-929X (Online)

**Pacific Institute of Management Science**

222/2 M.1 Phaholyothin Rd., Bantam, Mueang Phayao 56000

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# **The Development of Social Competency Based on Buddhist Integration**

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### **Article history:**

Received: 02/06/2025, Revised: 15/08/2025,  
Accepted: 30/08/2025, Available online: 01/09/2025

### **How to Cite:**

Kotiram. C. & Thepa, P. C. A. (2025). The Development of Social Competency Based on Buddhist Integration. *Intersecta Minds Journal*, 4(3), 71-87.



## Original Research Articles

# The Development of Social Competency Based on Buddhist Integration

Chompo Kotiram & Phrakhurpalad Chotipath Acharashubho Thepa\*

## Abstract

Social competency has become an essential attribute for effective management in complex and diverse organizational environments. This study aims to examine the development of social competency through the integration of Buddhist principles, proposing a five-factor model grounded in both sociological and Buddhist theoretical perspectives. A quantitative survey design was employed, using a structured questionnaire administered to a sample of 240 respondents drawn from a population of approximately 2,500 employees, determined using Yamane's sample size formula. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze demographic characteristics, while inferential statistics, including one-way ANOVA and Pearson correlation analysis, were applied to examine relationships among demographic variables and social competency factors. The findings indicate that Buddhist-integrated social competency significantly varies across demographic groups and that all five factors are positively correlated. The study contributes to the growing body of literature on values-based management by demonstrating how Buddhist ethical and psychological principles can enhance social competency development. Practical implications are offered for leadership training and organizational development in culturally diverse contexts.

**Keywords:** Development; Social Competency; Buddhist; Integration

## Introduction

In contemporary organizational and managerial contexts, social competency has emerged as a critical capability that extends beyond technical expertise and cognitive intelligence. Social competency generally refers to an individual's capacity to interact effectively with others through communication, empathy, emotional regulation, ethical awareness, and cooperative behavior. Prior research has demonstrated that social competency is associated with leadership effectiveness, employee engagement, and organizational performance (Boyatzis, 2009;

Goleman, 1998). From a sociological perspective, social competency is not merely an individual trait but a socially constructed capacity shaped by cultural values, social norms, and moral frameworks within specific social contexts (Bourdieu, 1986).

Within this context, ethical and value-based perspectives have gained increasing attention in the study of social competency. Buddhist philosophy offers a comprehensive ethical and psychological framework that closely aligns with core components of social competency. Central Buddhist teachings—including mindfulness (Sati), compassion (Karuna), loving-kindness (Metta), right speech, and mental discipline (Samadhi)—emphasize self-awareness (Suebkrapan, et al., 2025), emotional regulation, ethical communication, and harmonious social relationships (Harvey, 2013; Rahula, 1974). These principles provide a holistic approach to social behavior that integrates individual self-development with collective well-being, making them particularly relevant to contemporary organizational and managerial challenges.

In recent years, management and organizational studies have increasingly incorporated Buddhist-inspired concepts, particularly mindfulness, to enhance leadership effectiveness and employee well-being (Grossman, 2015; Purser & Loy, 2013). However, much of this literature focuses narrowly on mindfulness as a psychological technique, often detached from its broader ethical and relational foundations. As a result, existing studies tend to overlook the integrative nature of Buddhist philosophy, which emphasizes the interdependence of awareness, compassion, ethical conduct, emotional regulation, and social harmony.

Moreover, empirical research that systematically operationalizes Buddhist principles into measurable dimensions of social competency remains limited. Few studies have developed and tested comprehensive models that integrate multiple Buddhist concepts into a unified framework of social competency, particularly within sociological and management research contexts in Asian societies where Buddhist values continue to influence social norms and organizational behavior. This lack of empirically validated, culturally grounded models represent a significant gap in the literature.

To address this gap, the present study develops and empirically examines a five-factor model of social competency based on Buddhist integration. By combining sociological theory, management research, and Buddhist philosophical principles, this study seeks to contribute a culturally informed framework for understanding and enhancing social competency in organizational contexts.

## Objective

1. To develop a five-factor model of social competency based on Buddhist integration.
2. To analyze differences in social competency across demographic variables.
3. To investigate relationships among the five factors of Buddhist-integrated social competency.

## Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Social competency has been widely examined in sociology, psychology, and management studies as a multidimensional construct encompassing interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence, ethical behavior, and the capacity to function effectively within social systems (Boyatzis, 2009; Goleman, 1998). From a sociological perspective, social competency is understood as a socially constructed capability shaped by cultural norms, moral values, and relational structures within specific social contexts (Bourdieu, 1986). These perspectives emphasize that effective social functioning depends not only on individual skills but also on ethical awareness and culturally grounded modes of interaction.

Buddhist philosophy, particularly as articulated in the Theravāda Pāli Tipiṭaka, offers a comprehensive ethical and psychological framework that closely corresponds with contemporary notions of social competency. The Noble Eightfold Path (Ariya Atṭhaṅgika Magga) provides foundational guidance for socially competent behavior through principles such as Right Speech (Sammā Vācā), Right Action (Sammā Kammanta), and Right Mindfulness (Sammā Sati). Right Speech emphasizes abstaining from false, harsh, divisive, and idle speech, thereby promoting truthful, respectful, and harmonious communication (Majjhima Nikāya [MN] 141; Dīgha Nikāya [DN] 22). These teachings directly align with ethical communication and responsible social interaction.

The cultivation of mindfulness (Sati) is central to Buddhist psychology and social conduct. Mindfulness is described in the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta as continuous awareness of body, feelings, mind, and mental phenomena, enabling individuals to recognize internal states and respond skillfully in social situations (DN 22; MN 10). This mindful awareness supports emotional regulation and self-control, which are essential components of social competency. Buddhist teachings further explain that mental discipline (Samādhi) enables individuals to restrain impulsive reactions and maintain emotional balance during interpersonal interactions (Samyutta Nikāya [SN] 45.8).

Compassion (Karunā) and loving-kindness (Mettā) are repeatedly emphasized in the Pāli Canon as essential qualities for harmonious social relationships (Thepa, 2022). The Karanīya Mettā Sutta instructs individuals to cultivate unconditional goodwill toward all beings, promoting cooperation, non-harm, and social harmony (Sutta Nipāta [Sn] 1.8). Similarly, compassion is described as the empathetic response to others' suffering and a motivating force for ethical and supportive behavior (SN 46.54). These teachings highlight the relational and prosocial dimensions of Buddhist ethics, which are directly relevant to social competency in organizational and communal contexts.

Although contemporary management and organizational studies have increasingly incorporated Buddhist-inspired concepts—particularly mindfulness—to enhance leadership effectiveness, ethical decision-making, and employee well-being (Grossman, 2015; Purser & Loy, 2013), much of this literature adopts a decontextualized or instrumental approach. Mindfulness

is often treated as a value-neutral psychological technique, detached from its ethical foundations and relational aims emphasized in the Pāli Tipiṭaka. Consequently, the broader integration of mindfulness, compassion, ethical speech, emotional regulation, and social harmony as an interconnected system of social competency remains underexplored.

Importantly, empirical research that systematically operationalizes core Buddhist principles from the Theravāda canon into measurable dimensions of social competency is limited. Few studies have developed comprehensive, culturally grounded models that translate canonical Buddhist teachings into empirically testable constructs within sociological and management research. This gap is particularly evident in Asian organizational contexts, where Buddhist values continue to shape social norms, ethical expectations, and interpersonal behavior.

## **Conceptual Framework and Significance of the Study**

### **Conceptual Framework**

Grounded in the Theravāda Pāli Tipiṭaka and contemporary social competency theory, this study proposes a five-factor model of Buddhist-integrated social competency:

1. Mindfulness Awareness (Sati) – conscious awareness of thoughts, emotions, and behaviors in social interactions (DN 22; MN 10).
2. Compassion and Empathy (Karunā) – sensitivity to others' suffering and emotional states, motivating ethical and supportive responses (SN 46.54).
3. Ethical Communication (Right Speech / Sammā Vācā) – truthful, respectful, and non-harmful communication that fosters trust and harmony (MN 141).
4. Emotional Regulation (Samādhi) – mental discipline and emotional balance that prevent impulsive and harmful reactions (SN 45.8).
5. Social Harmony and Cooperation (Mettā) – promotion of goodwill, cooperation, and collective well-being in social and organizational life (Sn 1.8).

Together, these factors represent an integrated framework in which internal awareness, ethical intention, emotional discipline, and prosocial behavior operate holistically to support effective social functioning (Miseliunaite, et al., 2022) and ethical management behavior. By grounding social competency in original Theravāda sources, this study contributes a culturally authentic and theoretically robust model that bridges Buddhist philosophy and contemporary organizational research.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study advances sociological and management research by integrating Buddhist philosophy into social competency development. It provides a culturally grounded model that can inform leadership development, organizational training programs, and ethical management practices, particularly in Asian and multicultural contexts.

## Research Hypotheses

H1: Social competency levels differ significantly across demographic variables (gender, age, education, work experience).

H2: There are significant positive correlations among the five factors of Buddhist-integrated social competency.

## Research Methodology

### Research Design

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design to examine social competency based on Buddhist integration among employees in Thailand. Data were collected at a single point in time to capture respondents' perceptions of Buddhist-integrated social competency and its dimensions. The quantitative approach enabled statistical analysis of patterns, differences, and relationships among variables in a systematic and objective manner.

### Population and Sample

The study population consisted of approximately 2,500 employees. Sample size was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:  $N = 2,500$  and  $e = 0.05$  as

$$n = \frac{2500}{1 + 2500(0.05)^2}$$
$$n = 240$$

### Sampling Technique

Simple random sampling was used to select participants from the target population, ensuring that each individual had an equal and independent chance of being included in the sample. This sampling technique was chosen to minimize selection bias and to enhance the representativeness and generalizability of the findings to the broader population.

## Research Instrument

A self-administered questionnaire with 35 items measured the five factors using a 5-point Likert scale. The research instrument used in this study was a structured, self-administered questionnaire designed to measure social competency based on Buddhist integration. The questionnaire consisted of 35 items, divided equally into five factors, with seven items per factor. All items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree (Hatchinson, & Chyung, 2023). The instrument was developed based on relevant literature in social competency, sociology, and Buddhist studies. Content validity was assessed by three experts in sociology and Buddhist philosophy, and minor revisions were made according to their recommendations consist of Mindfulness Awareness (7 items), Compassion and Empathy (7 items), Ethical Communication (7 items), Emotional Regulation (7 items), Social Harmony (7 items)

### Factor 1: Mindfulness Awareness (Sati)

(Awareness of thoughts, emotions, and behaviors in social interactions)

- MA1. I am aware of my thoughts when interacting with others.
- MA2. I notice my emotional reactions during social situations.
- MA3. I remain attentive when listening to others speak.
- MA4. I am conscious of how my behavior affects people around me.
- MA5. I reflect on my actions after social interactions.
- MA6. I remain mentally present during discussions and meetings.
- MA7. I recognize stress or tension within myself during interactions.

### Factor 2: Compassion and Empathy (Karuna)

(Sensitivity to others' feelings, perspectives, and difficulties)

- CE1. I try to understand others' feelings before responding.
- CE2. I show concern when others experience difficulties.
- CE3. I am patient with people who make mistakes.
- CE4. I consider others' perspectives even when I disagree.
- CE5. I feel motivated to help others when they are struggling.
- CE6. I treat others with kindness regardless of their position.
- CE7. I am sensitive to emotional changes in people around me.

### Factor 3: Ethical Communication (Right Speech)

(Truthful, respectful, and non-harmful communication)

- EC1. I communicate honestly in my interactions with others.
- EC2. I avoid using harsh or offensive language.
- EC3. I speak in a respectful manner even in difficult situations.
- EC4. I consider the impact of my words before speaking.

EC5. I avoid gossip or harmful talk about others.

EC6. I express disagreement without causing conflict.

EC7. I communicate in ways that promote mutual understanding.

#### Factor 4: Emotional Regulation (Samadhi)

(Ability to manage emotions and impulses in social contexts)

ER1. I am able to control my emotions during stressful interactions.

ER2. I remain calm when facing criticism from others.

ER3. I can manage anger during disagreements.

ER4. I recover quickly after emotionally challenging situations.

ER5. I avoid reacting impulsively when emotions arise.

ER6. I maintain emotional balance in high-pressure situations.

ER7. I can separate personal feelings from professional interactions.

#### Factor 5: Social Harmony and Cooperation (Metta)

(Promotion of cooperation, respect, and collective well-being)

SH1. I work cooperatively with others to achieve common goals.

SH2. I value harmonious relationships in my work environment.

SH3. I respect differences among individuals.

SH4. I contribute to a positive and supportive social atmosphere.

SH5. I resolve conflicts in a peaceful and constructive manner.

SH6. I encourage teamwork and mutual support.

SH7. I prioritize collective well-being over personal gain.

### **Validity and Reliability**

**Validity** Content Validity (Kappa Coefficient) of the questionnaire was evaluated by three experts with expertise in sociology and Buddhist studies. The experts assessed each item for relevance, clarity, and consistency with the intended construct using a dichotomous scale (relevant = 1, not relevant = 0). Cohen's Kappa coefficient was calculated to determine the level of agreement among experts beyond chance. The results indicated a high level of inter-rater agreement, with an overall Kappa coefficient of 0.86, which exceeds the acceptable threshold of 0.75 and indicates excellent content validity (Fleiss, Levin, & Paik, 2013). Therefore, all questionnaire items were considered appropriate and relevant for measuring Buddhist-integrated social competency.

**Table 1** Content Validity Assessment Using Kappa Coefficient

Factor	Number of Items	Kappa ( $\kappa$ )	Interpretation
Mindfulness Awareness	7	0.85	Excellent agreement
Compassion and Empathy	7	0.88	Excellent agreement
Ethical Communication	7	0.84	Excellent agreement
Emotional Regulation	7	0.86	Excellent agreement
Social Harmony and Cooperation	7	0.87	Excellent agreement
<b>Overall Scale</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>0.86</b>	<b>Excellent content validity</b>

Note. Kappa values  $\geq 0.75$  indicate excellent agreement beyond chance.

**Reliability** The internal consistency reliability of the questionnaire was examined using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The results indicated that all five factors demonstrated acceptable to excellent reliability, with alpha values ranging from 0.82 to 0.91, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Holmbeck, & Devine, 2009). This confirms that the instrument is reliable and suitable for data collection.

**Table 2** Reliability Coefficients of the Buddhist-Integrated Social Competency Questionnaire

Factor	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ )	Interpretation
Mindfulness Awareness	7	0.88	Good reliability
Compassion and Empathy	7	0.91	Excellent reliability
Ethical Communication	7	0.86	Good reliability
Emotional Regulation	7	0.84	Good reliability
Social Harmony and Cooperation	7	0.82	Acceptable reliability
Overall Scale	35	0.89	Good reliability

Note. Cronbach's alpha values  $\geq 0.70$  indicate acceptable internal consistency (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

## Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using statistical software. Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, were used to summarize the demographic characteristics of the respondents and to describe the overall levels of Buddhist-integrated social competency and its five dimensions.

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed to examine differences in social competency scores across demographic variables such as gender, age, education level, and work experience. When statistically significant differences were identified, results were interpreted at a significance level of  $p < .05$ .

Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among the five factors of Buddhist-integrated social competency. Correlation coefficients were interpreted to determine the strength and direction of relationships, with statistical significance set at  $p < .05$  and  $p < .01$ .

## Results

### Results Related to Objective 1: Development of a Five-Factor Model of Social Competency

Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to examine the overall level of Buddhist-integrated social competency and its five dimensions. The results indicate that respondents reported high levels of social competency across all five factors. Among the dimensions, Social Harmony and Cooperation (Metta) demonstrated the highest mean score, followed by Compassion and Empathy (Karuna) and Mindfulness Awareness (Sati). Ethical Communication (Right Speech) and Emotional Regulation (Samadhi) also showed high mean values, indicating that respondents generally perceived themselves as socially competent in accordance with Buddhist-integrated principles.

These findings support the proposed five-factor model of Buddhist-integrated social competency, confirming that mindfulness, compassion, ethical communication, emotional regulation, and social harmony are salient and measurable dimensions of social competency in the studied context.

**Table 3** Mean and Standard Deviation of Buddhist-Integrated Social Competency Factors (n = 240)

Factor	Mean	SD	Level
Mindfulness Awareness	4.12	0.46	High
Compassion and Empathy	4.25	0.44	High
Ethical Communication	4.08	0.48	High
Emotional Regulation	4.01	0.52	High
Social Harmony and Cooperation	4.32	0.41	High
Overall Social Competency	4.16	0.46	High

### Results Related to Objective 2 and Hypothesis 1: Differences Across Demographic Variables

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed to examine differences in overall social competency scores across demographic variables, including gender, age, education level, and work experience. The results revealed statistically significant differences in social competency across age groups and work experience, while no statistically significant differences were found for gender and education level. Respondents with higher age and longer work experience reported significantly higher levels of Buddhist-integrated social competency. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was partially supported, as social competency differed significantly across certain demographic variables.

**Table 4** One-Way ANOVA Results for Demographic Variables and Social Competency

Demographic Variable	F	p-value	Result
Gender	1.24	0.267	Not significant
Age	4.27	0.015	Significant
Education Level	1.89	0.132	Not significant
Work Experience	5.11	0.007	Significant

Note. Statistical significance at p < .05.

### Results Related to Objective 3 and Hypothesis 2: Relationships Among the Five Factors

Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among the five factors of Buddhist-integrated social competency. The results indicate that all five factors were positively and significantly correlated with one another at the .01 significance level. The strongest correlation was observed between Compassion and Empathy and Social Harmony and Cooperation, while Mindfulness Awareness showed strong positive correlations with

Emotional Regulation and Ethical Communication. These findings confirm that the five dimensions function as interrelated components of a coherent social competency framework.

Accordingly, Hypothesis 2 was fully supported, indicating significant positive relationships among all five factors of Buddhist-integrated social competency.

**Table 5** Pearson Correlation Matrix of Buddhist-Integrated Social Competency Factors

Factor	MA	CE	EC	ER	SH
Mindfulness Awareness (MA)	1				
Compassion and Empathy (CE)	.62**	1			
Ethical Communication (EC)	.58**	.66**	1		
Emotional Regulation (ER)	.61**	.59**	.63**	1	
Social Harmony and Cooperation (SH)	.67**	.71**	.69**	.65**	1

Note.  $p < .01$

#### Summary of Hypothesis Testing

H1: Social competency levels differ significantly across demographic variables to Partially supported (age and work experience).

H2: There are significant positive correlations among the five factors to Fully supported.

## Discussion

### Discussion of the Five-Factor Model of Buddhist-Integrated Social Competency

The findings related to Objective 1 demonstrate that the proposed five-factor model—Mindfulness Awareness, Compassion and Empathy, Ethical Communication, Emotional Regulation, and Social Harmony and Cooperation—is empirically supported. Respondents reported high levels across all five dimensions, suggesting that Buddhist-integrated social competency represents a coherent and meaningful construct within the studied context. This result aligns with sociological perspectives that emphasize the role of cultural and ethical frameworks in shaping social behavior and interpersonal competence (Bourdieu, 1986). The highest mean score observed for Social Harmony and Cooperation (Metta) reflects the central importance of harmonious social relationships in Buddhist philosophy. Metta emphasizes goodwill, cooperation, and the pursuit of collective well-being, which are foundational to socially competent behavior in organizational and community contexts (Harvey, 2013). This finding is consistent with prior research indicating that prosocial orientation and cooperative values are critical predictors of effective social functioning and leadership effectiveness (Boyatzis, 2009).

Similarly, high scores for Compassion and Empathy (Karuna) and Mindfulness Awareness (Sati) support existing literature suggesting that mindfulness and compassion enhance interpersonal sensitivity, ethical awareness, and emotional balance (Grossman, 2015; Goleman, 1998). Buddhist teachings emphasize that awareness of one's internal states and sensitivity to

others' suffering are prerequisites for ethical and socially responsible action (Rahula, 1974). Therefore, the present findings confirm that Buddhist principles can be operationalized into measurable dimensions of social competency.

### **Discussion of Demographic Differences in Social Competency**

In relation to Objective 2 and Hypothesis 1, the results indicate that social competency differed significantly across age and work experience, while no significant differences were found for gender and education level. The partial support for Hypothesis 1 suggests that social competency development is influenced more strongly by life experience and prolonged social exposure than by formal educational attainment or gender-based differences.

The finding that older respondents and those with longer work experience exhibited higher levels of Buddhist-integrated social competency is consistent with sociological theories of social learning and moral development, which propose that ethical awareness, emotional regulation, and interpersonal competence evolve through accumulated social experience (Bandura, 1986). From a Buddhist perspective, maturity and sustained practice of mindfulness and ethical conduct are understood as gradual developmental processes rather than innate traits (Harvey, 2013).

The absence of significant gender differences aligns with previous studies suggesting that when ethical and relational competencies are framed as universal human capacities rather than gendered traits, differences tend to diminish (Goleman, 1998). Likewise, the lack of significant differences across education levels may indicate that Buddhist-integrated social competency is cultivated primarily through experiential learning and reflective practice rather than formal academic instruction alone.

### **Discussion of Relationships Among the Five Factors**

Regarding Objective 3 and Hypothesis 2, the correlation analysis revealed strong, positive, and statistically significant relationships among all five factors, providing full support for Hypothesis 2. These findings indicate that the dimensions of Buddhist-integrated social competency are interdependent and mutually reinforcing rather than independent constructs. The strong correlation between Compassion and Empathy (Karuna) and Social Harmony and Cooperation (Metta) reflects core Buddhist teachings, which emphasize that compassionate awareness naturally leads to harmonious social relationships (Rahula, 1974). This relationship also aligns with contemporary management research suggesting that empathy fosters trust, cooperation, and collective effectiveness within organizations (Boyatzis, 2009). Additionally, the significant associations between Mindfulness Awareness and both Emotional Regulation and Ethical Communication support prior research demonstrating that mindfulness enhances self-regulation and ethical decision-making (Grossman, 2015; Purser & Loy, 2013). Buddhist psychology emphasizes that mindful awareness serves as the foundation for mental discipline (Samadhi) and right speech, reinforcing ethical interaction and emotional balance. Collectively,

these interrelationships confirm that Buddhist-integrated social competency functions as a holistic system in which internal awareness, ethical intention, emotional regulation, and prosocial behavior operate together to support socially competent action.

### **Theoretical and Practical Implications**

The findings of this study contribute to sociological and management literature by demonstrating that Buddhist philosophy provides a robust theoretical foundation for social competency development. The validated five-factor model offers a culturally grounded framework that integrates Eastern ethical traditions with contemporary social competency theory.

Practically, the results suggest that leadership development and organizational training programs may benefit from incorporating mindfulness practices, compassion-based learning, and ethical communication training. Such approaches are particularly relevant in Asian and multicultural contexts, where Buddhist-influenced values continue to shape social norms and organizational behavior.

### **Conclusion**

This study examined the development of social competency through the integration of Buddhist philosophy and empirically validated a five-factor model consisting of Mindfulness Awareness (Sati), Compassion and Empathy (Karunā), Ethical Communication (Right Speech), Emotional Regulation (Samādhi), and Social Harmony and Cooperation (Mettā). The findings demonstrate that Buddhist-integrated social competency is a coherent, measurable, and meaningful construct within contemporary organizational contexts.

The results revealed that respondents exhibited high levels of social competency across all five dimensions, indicating that Buddhist ethical and psychological principles remain highly relevant to modern social and organizational life. Significant differences were found across age and work experience, suggesting that social competency grounded in Buddhist integration develops progressively through accumulated life experience and sustained social practice. In contrast, no significant differences were observed across gender and education level, reinforcing the view that socially competent behavior rooted in ethical awareness and mindfulness is a universal human capacity rather than a demographic-specific trait.

Furthermore, the strong and positive correlations among all five factors confirm that Buddhist-integrated social competency functions as a holistic and interdependent system. Mindfulness supports emotional regulation and ethical communication; compassion fosters social harmony; and loving-kindness reinforces cooperative behavior and collective well-being. These findings align closely with both sociological theory and canonical Buddhist teachings, highlighting the inseparable relationship between internal mental cultivation and external social conduct.

Overall, this study contributes a culturally grounded and empirically supported framework that bridges Buddhist philosophy with contemporary social competency and management research. The model offers valuable insights for leadership development, organizational training, and ethical management practices, particularly in Asian and multicultural contexts where Buddhist values continue to shape social norms and interpersonal behavior.

## **Suggestions**

Based on the findings and implications of this study, the following suggestions are offered for both practical implementation and future research.

### **Suggestions for Implementation**

Organizations, educational institutions, and leadership development programs are encouraged to integrate Buddhist-informed social competency training into their human resource development initiatives. Training programs may incorporate mindfulness practices, compassion-based learning activities, ethical communication workshops, and emotional regulation techniques grounded in Buddhist principles.

Leaders and managers should be encouraged to model socially competent behavior by practicing mindful awareness, compassionate decision-making, and ethical communication in daily interactions. Such role modeling can foster a culture of trust, cooperation, and social harmony within organizations.

Additionally, organizational policies and performance evaluation systems may include social competency indicators aligned with the five-factor model. This approach can support sustainable organizational development by promoting ethical conduct, emotional balance, and collaborative work environments.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

Future studies may employ longitudinal research designs to examine how Buddhist-integrated social competency develops over time and how sustained mindfulness and ethical practice influence long-term social behavior and leadership effectiveness.

Cross-cultural research is also recommended to compare Buddhist-integrated social competency with other value-based or religiously informed social competency frameworks across different cultural and organizational contexts.

Moreover, qualitative approaches such as in-depth interviews, case studies, or phenomenological research could provide deeper insights into individuals' lived experiences of cultivating social competency through Buddhist practice. Future research may also explore the application of this model in specific sectors, such as education, healthcare, public administration, or monastic and lay Buddhist organizations.

### **Declaration of Interests**

The authors declare that there are no financial, personal, or professional interests that could have influenced the research process, data analysis, or interpretation of the findings presented in this study.

### **Ethical Considerations**

This study was conducted in accordance with recognized ethical standards for social science research. Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institutional ethics review board prior to data collection. All participants were clearly informed about the objectives of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty.

Informed consent was obtained from all respondents before participation. Participants' anonymity and confidentiality were strictly protected, and no personally identifiable information was collected. All data were used solely for academic purposes and securely stored to prevent unauthorized access.

### **Acknowledgments**

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to all participants who generously contributed their time and perspectives to this study. Appreciation is also extended to the experts in sociology and Buddhist studies who provided valuable guidance during the questionnaire development and validation process. Any remaining limitations or errors are solely the responsibility of the authors.

### **Definition of Conflicts of Interest**

A conflict of interest refers to any financial, personal, institutional, or professional relationship that could potentially influence, or be perceived to influence, the objectivity, integrity, or interpretation of research findings. The authors confirm that no conflicts of interest exist in relation to this study.

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