

Relevance of the Buddhism Program in Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on the relevance of the Buddhism Program in Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Thailand. It looked into the status of the Buddhism program along administration, vision, mission, goals and objectives, research and development, curriculum management, and curricular and extra-curricular activities. The relevance of the program is measured in terms of their service to the community, relationship with the Buddhist Religion, and the values and attitudes developed. The descriptive-correlational research design was utilized in the study. Questionnaire Checklist and Documentary analysis were used. There were 245 respondents. Ethical protocols were observed. Mean and simple correlation analysis were the statistical tools used. Results showed that the status of the Buddhism Program of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University is commendable. Second, it offers a very relevant Buddhism program that is worthy of the respect of other universities offering Buddhist studies in Thailand and other countries of the world. Lastly, curriculum management has a significant bearing on community service as well as on the values and attitudes of the graduates. It is highly recommended that the status of the Buddhism Program of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University should be maintained or further improved by constantly enhancing and updating its administration, vision, mission, objectives and curriculum. To guarantee the attainment of program objectives and to ensure effective teaching and learning, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities should be considered in curriculum management.

Keywords: *community service, curriculum development, status, values and attitude*

INTRODUCTION

Buddhism is one of the world's oldest religions. It is the religion of many Asian countries like Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Myanmar. It reached Thailand from Sri Lanka in the 12th century and it is the official religion of 95 percent of the Thai population.

Buddhism in Thailand has humble beginnings. King Rama V officially crowned as King Chulalongkorn (1873- 1910) had strong faith in Buddhism and

supported education for monks. He saw this as necessary for security, prosperity and peace in Siam. He consistently supported Buddhism and the monks.

Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University (MCU) is a public autonomous Buddhist University founded by King Chulalongkorn in 1887. It is located in Bangkok with ten campuses and five colleges over the country. MCU aims to promote academic excellence in Buddhist Studies and to form a community of Buddhist scholars in Buddhism, Education, Humanities, and Social Science with the Core-Buddhist Subjects incorporated in all majors. Its mission is to be a center of Buddhist learning, cultivating moral persons of high ability, providing for high quality education and research and offering academic services through effective administration.

On September 13, 1896, His Majesty King Chulalongkorn the Great, raised the status of Mahathat Witthahayalai to that of a royal college, under the title of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya (Mahachulalongkorn Royal College), aimed at providing Tipitaka studies, and higher education, not only for monks and novices, but also for laypeople. On January 9, 1947, the chief abbot of Wat Mahathat, Phra Phimonlatham (Choi Thanadhatta thera), assembled 57 senior monks of the Mahanikaya sect at Somdet's residence of Wat Mahathat to draft a new curriculum featuring Buddhist Studies along university lines, which survives, with modifications, to the present day.

In 1950 a faculty of Buddhist Studies at the undergraduate level was established. The Faculty of Buddhism is composed of Office of the Dean, Department of Buddhism, Department of Religion and Philosophy and the Department of Pali and Sanskrit. On February 23, 2001, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University formed affiliation with several institutes, starting the Buddhist Dongguk Chonbob College in South Korea. At present, there are six overseas Affiliated Institutes of the University. It is the leading center of Buddhist education integrating Buddhism with modern sciences for greater mental and social development.

MCU has a strong commitment to be the leading center of various valuable sciences for human beings with the intent to educate people, conduct excellent academic research, and develop and integrate Buddhist knowledge with the various sciences for the development of university's academic studies. It aims to provide Buddhist academic services both theoretically and practically that shall lead to the balanced and sustainable development of human beings, societies and environment.

Further, the university envisions to be the international center of Buddhist and philosophical education and research, and to produce graduates with Buddhist academic excellence, abilities to apply Buddhist knowledge into various sciences, respectable conduct, curiosity, spiritual and intellectual leadership, problem-solving

abilities, faithfulness and dedication towards Buddhism, self-sacrifice for society, understanding of social changes and visions with the potential to develop themselves.

It is the mission of the university to produce and develop graduates with nine desirable characteristics: Morality, Awareness, Helpfulness, Ability, Curiosity, Hospitality, Universality, Leadership, Aspiration; to conduct research that develops the body of knowledge along with learning and teaching process emphasizing the development of Tipitaka knowledge through interdisciplinary means; to apply the knowledge to solve the moral problems in society and to develop Buddhist academics, and to promote Buddhism and academic service for the society in accordance with the intentions in establishing the university through the improvement of various activities helpful for serving the work of the Sangha in producing knowledge and understanding; to cultivate a greater sense of moral responsibility for the people and to organize meetings, seminars and conduct training for religious training and teaching development for ordained and lay personnel with leading characteristics for upholding and propagating Buddhism as well as being a capable teacher for mind-development; and to promote and develop learning resources for preserving arts and culture suitable for the studies, to raise awareness and pride and to support local wisdom to serve as the basis of development.

The curriculum therefore of the program should be in consonance to its mission, goal and objectives. Thus, the need to review and analyze the curriculum to make sure that desired outcomes and expectations are achieved. The Curriculum Management Process (CMP) is fundamentally concerned with effective teaching and learning. The process consists of managing what students are expected to learn, evaluating whether or not it was learned, and seeking ways to improve student learning. An effective curriculum management process is evidenced by graduates who are well equipped to succeed after college, either in the business world (defined broadly to include any organization) or in advanced education. To effectively prepare graduates, the curriculum must be current, responsive and innovative. It must be delivered in an appropriate format and through an effective channel. Above all, students need to gain appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes as they progress through and complete a program.

In the keynote address presented at the 10th International Conference on Buddhist Studies in 2015, Ven. Prof. Kotapitiye Rahula, Director, Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Kelaniya, Anunāyaka, stated that Buddhist education aims at a personality transformation into the highest form of humanity through ethical, intellectual and spiritual perfection. These three faculties of perfection of human life undoubtedly lead a man through mundane happiness to supra mundane happiness, which is the highest achievement that everyone aspires for. Therefore, the Buddhist education is grounded on the primary psychological need of every human being.

Further, Reddy (2014), stated that in Buddhism, compassion (*Karuna*) and loving kindness (*Upekka*) are taught. When somebody is in trouble, help is extended. There are no friends, no enemies, no one higher, and no one lower.

Based on this scenario, the researchers find it imperative to look into the Buddhism Program of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University to find out if deserves to be a center of Buddhist education providing relevant education to its graduates. It is hoped that the results of this research will provide valuable information regarding the relevance of the program, that will serve as basis in making their curriculum and program even more relevant and responsive to the needs of their students and the community that they serve.

Specifically, this study aimed to look into the Buddhism Program of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Bangkok, Thailand during the Academic Year 2018 - 2019. It determined the following: a. the status of the Buddhism Program of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Bangkok, Thailand along administration, vision, mission, goals and objectives, research and development, curriculum management, and curricular and extra-curricular activities; b. the level of relevance of the Buddhism Program in terms of service to the community, relationship with the Buddhist religion, and values and attitudes; c. the relationship between the status and relevance of the Buddhism Program.

The study is guided by the following research paradigm.

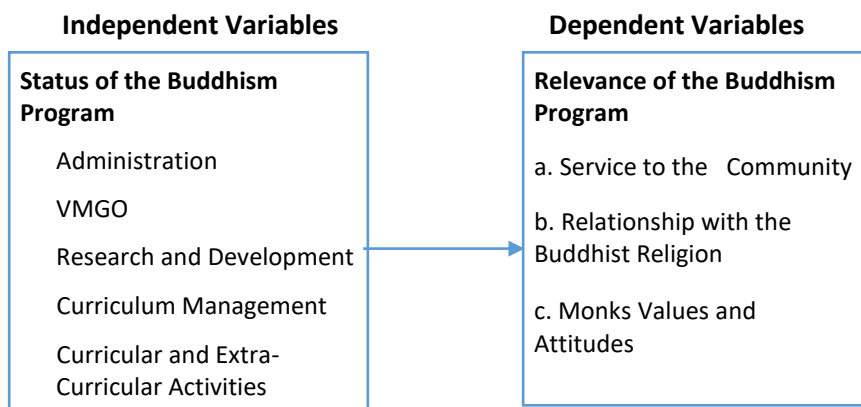


Figure 1. The Research Paradigm

Figure 1 shows the significant relationship between the status of the Buddhism Program and its relevance measured in terms of service to the community, relationship with the Buddhist Religion and developed values and skills of the monks which are the outcome of the study.

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive -correlational method of research was used in this study. It is descriptive because it described the status and relevance of the Buddhism Program. It is correlational because it looked into the relationship between the aforementioned variables. Documentary analysis was also done.

A total enumeration of the 42 administrators/lecturers of Buddhism Program and 203 of the 412 students of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Bangkok, Thailand served as respondents of the study. The sample size was determined using the Slovin’s formula. The questionnaire used in this study was based on the study of Pat Watanasin (2017). However, some modifications were made to suit the present study. It was validated by knowledgeable persons in the field. It consists of two parts, as follows: Part I, elicited information on the status of the Buddhism Program along administration, vision, mission, goals and objectives, research and development, curriculum management, and curricular and extra-curricular activities. Part II, gathered data on the Relevance of the Buddhism program in terms of service to community, relationship with the Buddhist religion and values and attitudes developed by the monks.

The following norms for interpretation were used in the study:

Statistical Range	Item DR	Overall DR for Status	Overall DR for Relevance
4.21 – 5.00	Very High (VH)	Very Good (VG)	Very Much Relevant (VMR)
3.41 – 4.20	High (H)	Good (G)	Very Relevant (VR)
2.61 – 3.40	Average (A)	Acceptable (A)	Moderately Relevant (MR)
1.81 – 2.60	Low (L)	Poor (P)	Not Relevant (NR)
1.00 – 1.80	Very Low (VL)	Very Poor (VP)	Not so Relevant (NsR)

Permission to conduct the study was sought from the President of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University. Likewise, the assistance of the Dean of Faculty of Buddhism was also solicited to facilitate the administration and retrieval of the questionnaires.

Ethical considerations were observed in the conduct of the study. It considered the vulnerability of the respondents. Their anonymity and confidentiality of personal information was observed. The participation of the respondents was voluntary. There were no risks involved in the gathering of data.

The researchers made sure that the objectives of the study and the items in the questionnaire were properly understood by the respondents. Sufficient time were given to them before the questionnaires were retrieved.

Mean and simple correlation analysis were the statistical tools used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Status of Buddhism Program

a. Administration

Taken singly and as a whole, the items that “Students are given the chance to participate in decision-making and policy formulation especially when it affects them”, (\bar{x} = 4.40) and “The accomplishment of tasks/ activities targets and objective are continuously monitored by the administrator”, (\bar{x} = 4.30) obtained “Very High” ratings. Per group of respondents, it can be seen that administrators and lecturers are consistent in giving a “Very High” rating to the aforementioned items. However, “Average” rating is given to “motivational factors...This probably shows that the administration is not yet satisfied with what they have provided to their employees thus the need to motivate them further, thou the latter already rated the same item as “Very High” (\bar{x} = 4.51). This clearly shows that the university’s Buddhism Program is of quality status as supported by the “High” level of assessment of the two groups of respondents. It further reveals that students are involved in policy formulation and decision-making process. This is a manifestation of a democratic leadership style. This is supported by the findings of Mati et al. (2016) that students’ involvement in the key decisions of their educational process produces motivation, a sense of ownership and therefore a higher inclination to abide by the set rules, personal drive to meet the individual and collective goals, and an overall higher academic performance.

The university however, is output- oriented because accomplishment of tasks are being monitored. The “recognition of the interests, abilities, knowledge and skills achievements and experiences of each employees” and “the use of motivational factors such as promotion, adequate salary and professional development for greater work efficiency” were assessed by the administrators / lecturers as “Average”, which the students rated them “High”. The difference in their ratings could be explained by the unceasing desire of the Buddhism Program for excellence and this could possibly be attained when students are motivated and properly recognized. These findings are in consonance with the mission, vision and objectives of the university.

Table 1
The status of the Buddhism Program in Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University along administration

Status of Buddhism Program	Administrator / Lecturer		Students		As a Whole	
	\bar{X}	DR	\bar{X}	DR	\bar{X}	DR
1. The administrator gives opportunities to subordinates to participate in planning and decision – making on matters pertaining to instruction – related activities.	3.83	H	4.05	H	3.94	H
2. Students are given the chance to participate in decision-making and policy formulation especially when it affects them.	4.45	VH	4.35	VH	4.40	VH
3. Class scheduling and work loading of faculty are well – planned and executed.	3.95	H	4.01	H	3.98	H
4. Academic unit heads are involved in the recruitment and screening of faculty.	3.52	H	4.46	VH	3.99	H
5. The educational qualification, skills and abilities are considered in the selection of faculty to be hired.	3.69	H	4.55	VH	4.12	H
6. Channels of communication are evidently open among administrators, faculty, employee and students.	4.05	H	4.52	VH	4.28	VH
7. Internal friction, complaints and grievances between and among faculty and other employees are treated.	4.31	VH	3.86	H	4.09	H
8. The interests, abilities, knowledge and skills achievements and experiences of each employee are recognized.	3.38	A	3.67	H	3.53	H
9. Motivational factors (i.e. promotion, adequate salary, professional development) are used to provide necessary incentives for greater efficiency.	3.31	A	4.51	VH	3.91	H
10. Rules governing students' admission, retention and other academic requirements are strictly enforced no matter who is affected.	3.86	H	3.54	H	3.70	H
11. The accomplishment of tasks/ activities targets and objective are continuously monitored by the administrator.	4.48	VH	4.13	H	4.30	VH
12. Measures are undertaken by the administrator to ensure that targeted activities are accomplished.	3.88	H	3.89	H	3.88	H
Overall	3.89	H	4.13	H	4.01	G

b. Vison, Mission, Goals and Objectives

Table 2 presents that on the overall, the two groups of respondents described the status of the Buddhism Program along administration as “Good” (\bar{X} = 4.01). On the overall, the two groups of respondents rated mission, vision, goals and objectives, as “Good”, (\bar{x} = 3.73).

This shows that the Buddhism Program has a well- directed plan that guarantees the effectiveness and success of the program. It also ensures that everyone is working for a common purpose. Taken singly and as a whole, “the vision commits to ensure the best work and productivity in the organization”, was described as “Average”. However, the administrator/ lecturer rated the item as “High”. The same group rated that the program’s vision “gives opportunity to work on time-bounded organizational productivity” as “Very High”, while the students described it as “Average”. However, most of the items were rated “High”.

Table 2
Status of the Buddhism Program along Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives

Status of Buddhism Program	Administrator / Lecturer		Students		As a Whole	
	\bar{X}	DR	\bar{X}	DR	\bar{X}	DR
1. The vision enhances the future outlook of the Buddhism program.	3.48	H	4.05	H	3.76	H
2. The vision ensures the effectiveness of the organization.	3.74	H	4.13	H	3.94	H
3. The vision ensures the well - directed plan of the output.	4.05	H	3.74	H	3.90	H
4. The vision gives opportunity to work on time-bounded organizational productivity.	4.36	VH	2.92	A	3.64	H
5. The vision commits to ensure the best work and productivity in the organization.	3.76	H	3.04	A	3.40	A
Overall	3.88	H	3.58	H	3.73	G

Awareness, understanding, and congruency of an institution’s vision and mission, goal and objectives is imperative. As Cascolan and Venture (2019), mentioned in their study, the vision, mission, goals and objectives serve as the guiding principle of an educational institution. The success of an institution depends upon unity in people’s thoughts and interests, both physically and philosophically. The view of the world is influenced by the values the people hold in the institution. They need to reconcile differing perspectives, find common ground, and create a shared vision and mission.

c. Research and Development

The status of research and development is generally good.

Table 3
Status of the Buddhism Program Research and Development

Status of Buddhism Program	Administrator/ Lecturer		Students		As a Whole	
	\bar{X}	DR	\bar{X}	DR	\bar{X}	DR
Research and Development						
1. There is support for research funding.	4.12	H	3.84	H	3.98	H
2. Researches are accepted and presented in national and international levels.	4.10	H	4.34	VH	4.22	VH
3. There are competent people who manage research in the program	3.79	H	4.19	H	3.99	H
4. There is dissemination of religious researches	3.62	H	4.54	VH	4.08	H
5. Research meetings, seminars, conferences are conducted	4.07	H	3.64	H	3.85	H
6. Academic services are provided.	4.45	VH	3.51	H	3.98	H
Overall	4.02	H	4.01	H	4.02	G

The “Good” assessment of the respondents on research and development, ($\bar{x}=4.02$) is a clear manifestation that the Buddhism Program is research- oriented. This is shown by the “very High” assessment of students on the dissemination of religious researches. The research culture of the Buddhism Program could be attributed to the financial support that the program provides to the stakeholders, academic services extended and the research endeavors that have been initiated. As a producer of knowledge, the researches are disseminated and presented in various fora. This could be supported by the presence of the *Journal of MCU Peace Studies* that is utilized to disseminate the researches and academic articles of scholars, faculty and graduate students of MCU. Their peer- reviewed journal is interdisciplinary as it focuses on various topics such as Buddhism, Peace Studies, Social Sciences, among others.

In the study conducted by David (2002) research is seen as a worthwhile investment, with potential implications for improvement in pedagogy. School staff accept the potential link between research and pedagogy for the enhancement of student learning and for the professional learning of teachers. In addition, research can be said to be embedded in this school in the sense that it is seen as a pervasive and inclusive activity to be undertaken by the many, regardless of role (staff or students), status, or curriculum specialty.

d. Curriculum Management

The table below shows the assessment along curriculum management.

Table 4
Status of the Buddhism Program along curriculum management

Status of Buddhism Program	Administrator / Lecturer		Students		As a Whole	
	\bar{X}	DR	\bar{X}	DR	\bar{X}	DR
Curriculum Management						
1. Readiness of the nature of expected job, work or assignment.	4.05	H	3.46	H	3.75	H
2. Knowledge and understanding of Buddhism Program to provide solutions to actual problems.	3.48	H	3.54	H	3.51	H
3. Principles of human relations	3.86	H	3.33	A	3.59	H
4. Relate effectively with clientele, workers and supervisors through their job.	4.12	H	3.25	A	3.69	H
5. Apply ethical standards in the performance of certain tasks.	4.40	VH	3.48	H	3.94	H
Overall	3.98	H	3.41	A	3.70	G

On the overall, curriculum management is rated by the two groups of respondents as “Good”. This could mean that the Buddhism Program values effective teaching and learning. This manifests that the curriculum of the program is in accordance with its goals and objectives. Taken singly, it can be observed that “Application of ethical standards in the performance of certain tasks” obtained the highest mean, (3.94). This could be attributed to the religious nature of the program, as such, they should exhibit and observe proper conduct in the performance of their work.

According to Waree (2016) Buddhism way of Thailand means educational management for developing overall quality of life of the learners including morality, ethics, and other aspects of living. It is the application Buddhist principles as the guidelines for operations, managerial services in educational institutes, curriculum management, learner development activities, and the like in order to develop Thai youth on their behaviors, mentality, and intellectually.

e. Curricular and Extra- Curricular

Table 5 shows the status of the program along curricular and extra-curricular activities.

Table 5
Status of the Buddhism Program along curricular and extra-curricular activities

Status of Buddhism Program	Administrator/ Lecturer		Students		As a Whole	
	\bar{X}	DR	\bar{X}	DR	\bar{X}	DR
Curricular and Extra-Curricular Activities						
1. Field trips/ educational tours to places which are relevant to the course.	4.00	H	4.34	VH	4.17	H
2. On-the -job training.	4.21	VH	3.42	H	3.82	H
3. Use of computer-aided instructions.	4.00	H	3.01	A	3.50	H
4. Lecture series/ seminars / workshops/ conferences and other related for a	3.83	H	3.75	H	3.79	H
5. Activities are properly coordinated with the students, faculty, organizations and offices concerned before they are undertaken.	3.69	H	3.69	H	3.69	H
Overall	3.95	H	3.65	H	3.80	G

On the overall, curricular and extra-curricular activities are rated “Good”, (\bar{x} = 3.80) by the two groups of respondents. This implies the importance of said activities in the development of the students. Taken singly and as a whole, “Field trips/ educational tours to agencies which are relevant to the course” (\bar{x} =4.17) was described as “High” by the administrators and “Very High”, (\bar{x} =4.34) by the students. The presence of these activities in the Buddhism Program is also a clear manifestation that the administration recognizes the learnings that their students can acquire beyond the four walls of the classroom. This further means that the program does not solely depend on classroom instruction, but also on allowing the students to discover and explore new things and broaden their horizons. All the other items, as a whole, were rated “high”. This shows that co-curricular and extra-curricular activities are essential part of education and for the holistic development of the learners.

Massoni (2011) Students that participate in extra-curricular activities also showed positive changes in student’s self- confidence, teacher perception, and greater confidence, and then developed positive school related adult attachments. Further, he also asserted that extracurricular activities increase student’s connection to school, raises their self-esteem, and positive social natures.

Table 6 presents the summary of the status of Buddhism Program in Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Thailand.

The Buddhism Program is “Good” with a grand mean of 3.85. Taken singly, all items are rated “High”. As a whole, all the items are rated “High” except curriculum management which is described as “Average”, (\bar{x} =3.41). This could mean that Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University provides quality education to the learners and this makes the university a prestigious center of Buddhist learning that

Table 6
Summary on the status of the Buddhism Program of
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University

Status of Buddhism Program	Administrator/ Lecturer		Students		As a Whole	
	\bar{X}	DR	\bar{X}	DR	\bar{X}	DR
Administration	3.89	H	4.13	H	4.01	G
Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives	3.88	H	3.58	H	3.73	G
Research and Development	4.02	H	4.01	H	4.02	G
Curriculum Management	3.98	H	3.41	A	3.70	G
Curricular and Extra-Curricular Activities	3.95	H	3.65	H	3.80	G
Grand Mean	3.94	H	3.75	H	3.85	G

is worthy of the respect of other universities offering Buddhist Studies in the country and the world. This could be supported by the various development programs and projects of the Buddhism Program along instruction, research and community service that make the university a very good training ground of Buddhist monks.

Problem 2. Relevance of the Buddhism Program

a. Service to community

Table 7 presents the assessment along service to community of the Buddhism Program.

It can be seen in Table 7 that the Buddhism Program in terms of Service to community (\bar{x} =3.90) is “Very relevant” This could mean that the more graduates there are, more monks could help serve the community and spread the Buddhist teachings and philosophy. This could be further supported by the activities of the university wherein monks are sent not only to serve communities in different parts

Table 7
Relevance of the Buddhism Program in terms of service to community

Items	Administrator / Lecturer		Students		As a Whole	
	\bar{X}	DR	\bar{X}	DR	\bar{X}	DR
Service to community						
1. The graduates provided better services to the community.	3.57	H	3.86	H	3.72	H
2. The monks provided moral support and lessons to the community.	3.86	H	4.24	VH	4.05	H
3. The monks provided to the community an enhanced moral teaching of Buddhist philosophy	4.21	VH	3.44	H	3.83	H
4. The monks brought enlightened/ better moral values to the community	4.12	H	3.87	H	3.99	H
Overall	3.94	H	3.85	H	3.90	VR

of Thailand but also abroad for a missionary work. Further, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University has community-oriented programs and development projects and also provides academic services to the community in many ways. This can also be supported by the presence of the radio and television broadcast program of the university whose primary purpose is to spread Buddhism. In addition, they also established in 2011 a major center for flood relief in response to catastrophic flooding and also provided assistance to disaster victims.

This act of generosity is supported by the five precepts that are taught in Buddhism as mentioned by Masih and Vidyapati (2018) that represent: kindness, honesty, purity, truthfulness, and mental sobriety. The students must also acquire the spirit of generosity and self-sacrifice (*cāga*), so essential in overcoming selfishness, greed, and the narrow focus on self-advancement that dominates in present-day society.

b. Relationship with the Buddhist Religion

Table 8 shows the assessment on the Program’s relationship with the Buddhist religion.

On the overall, the Buddhism Program in terms of relationship with the Buddhist religion ($\bar{x}=3.87$) is “Very Relevant”. Taken singly and as a whole, the strong foundation that the Buddhism Program provides to the students can be observed as shown by the “high” assessment of the two groups of respondents in all of the items. The graduates/ monks are primarily trained and educated to spread the religious tenets of Buddhism. It should not be forgotten that the university was primarily established to spread the Buddhist faith. It is a training ground where monks are prepared for their missionary works. This could also be supported by MCU’s aim to promote academic excellence in Buddhist Studies.

Table 8
Relevance of the Buddhism Program in terms of relationship with the Buddhist religion

Relationship with the Buddhist Religion	Administrato r/ Lecturer		Students		As a Whole	
	\bar{X}	DR	\bar{X}	DR	\bar{X}	DR
1. Desire to work with the Buddhist religion	3.74	H	3.67	H	3.70	H
2. Monks religious activities enhanced significantly	3.50	H	4.10	H	3.80	H
3. Expansion of the spiritual knowledge to Thai people.	4.14	H	3.54	H	3.84	H
4. Greater opportunity to embrace and propagate the Buddhist religion	4.14	H	4.13	H	4.14	H
Overall	3.88	H	3.86	H	3.87	VR

According to Berkwitz (2006), in the monastic universities of Thailand, the monastery's role in health and education was seen as part of the original vision of the Buddha. Nuns and monks were encouraged to be socially engaged. They provided social services to the poor. Monks from monastic universities were assigned to be teachers in rural areas, volunteers and hospitals and assistants in community economic development.

c. Values and Attitudes Developed

Table 9
Relevance of the Buddhism Program in terms of values and attitudes developed

Values and attitude	Administrator/ Lecturer		Students		As a Whole	
	\bar{X}	DR	\bar{X}	DR	\bar{X}	DR
1. Strong sense of morality	3.71	H	3.89	H	3.80	H
2. Awareness and flexibility in adapting to social change	3.88	H	4.05	H	3.97	H
3. Willingness and tact in solving problems	4.12	H	3.01	A	3.56	H
4. Helpfulness to society	4.57	VH	3.75	H	4.16	H
5. Curiosity and passion for knowledge.	3.83	H	3.67	H	3.75	H
6. Hospitality and dedication	4.29	VH	3.59	H	3.94	H
7. Universality and opened mindedness	4.17	H	4.40	VH	4.28	VH
8. Better leadership behavior	3.81	H	3.88	H	3.85	H
9. potential to develop high sense of ethics	4.29	VH	3.89	H	4.09	H
Overall	4.07	H	3.79	H	3.93	VR

Along values and attitudes Table 9 reveals that as a whole, Buddhism Program is "Very Relevant" (\bar{x} =3.93). This could be attributed to the core values of Buddhism and its basic philosophy, the Four Universal Truths which are common to all Buddhists worldwide. Further, Clobert, Saroglou and Hwang (2015) mentioned that a post- doctoral student of Stanford University stated that Buddhist concepts are associated with tolerance, across cultural groups, different ways of thinking, universality and interconnection.

This also implies that the Buddhism Program has inculcated and developed values and attitudes to the graduates that they can emulate in dealing with others regardless of creed and race. It can be noted that the monks are prepared with missionary works abroad and the values and attitudes that they are expected to learn and develop are useful in spreading Buddhist learning. This is in consonance to the mission of the university to produce and develop graduates with nine desirable characteristics: morality, awareness, helpfulness, ability, curiosity, hospitality, universality, leadership, and aspiration.

Rahula, (2015) cited that the chief aim of Buddhist Education is all round development of child's personality. This includes his physical, mental, moral and

intellectual development. It aims to make a free man, a wise, intelligent, moral, non-violent and secular man.

3. Relationship between the status and relevance of the Buddhism Program?

The table below presents the correlation between the Buddhism Program and its relevance.

Table 10
Correlation coefficient between the status and relevance of the Buddhism Program in Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University

Status of the Buddhism Program	Service to the community	Relationship with Buddhist religion	Values and attitude	As a whole
Administration	.214	-.123	.128	.112
Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives	.042	.206	.070	.161
Research and Development	.044	.165	.034	.128
Curriculum Management	.320*	.153	.311*	.223
Curricular and Extra-Curricular Activities	.330*	-.285	-.012	.053

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

As a whole, the status of the program has no significant bearing on relevance. However, taken singly, curriculum management shows significant relationship with the status of the Buddhism Program along service to the community ($r = .320$) and the values and attitudes developed by the graduates ($r = .311$). This implies that a well- managed curriculum results to a better service to the community. In addition, the values and attitudes acquired by the graduates also depend on how the curriculum is managed. Thus, the need to carefully analyze and assess the curriculum to make sure that objectives and desired outcomes are attained. Similarly, curricular and extra-curricular activities noted a significant relationship with service to the community ($r = .330$). This reveals the importance of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities not only enhance classroom learning but to also to hone the knowledge, skills and attitudes of students. These activities can aid in the development of self-esteem and confidence. They provide students the chance to develop their social skills, meet new friends and become more confident in communicating in groups. These are very useful to the graduates/monks especially in the performance of their work considering that their mission is to teach and spread Buddhist principles and philosophy. Likewise, co-curricular activities are also essential part of school life because they make the learning experience better.

According to Hamilton (2000), Buddha’s teachings start when the only thing that people have access to in life is their own experience. They remain centered in

the entirety of their experience, how it works, how it continues and how it might change. He suggested that what Buddha taught is that one needs to understand experience.

CONCLUSIONS

The status of the Buddhism Program of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University is commendable. The University offers a very relevant Buddhism Program that is worthy of the respect of other universities offering Buddhist studies in Thailand and other countries of the world. Curriculum management has a significant bearing on community service as well as on the values and attitudes of the graduates.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are the recommendations of the study: First, the status of the Buddhism Program of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University should be maintained or further improved by constantly enhancing and updating its administration, vision, mission and objectives and curriculum. Second, to guarantee the attainment of program objectives and to ensure effective teaching and learning, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities should be considered in curriculum management. Third, a tracer study on the relevance and responsiveness of the Buddhism Program of MCU can be conducted focusing on the knowledge, skills and attitudes of its graduates. Lastly, a similar study can be conducted in other schools offering Buddhism Studies using other variables.

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