



Enhanced Pali Language Learning Management in Phrapariyattidhamma Schools: A Mixed-Methods Study of Educational Effectiveness in Northeastern Thailand¹

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Abstract:

Background: Pali language education in Phrapariyattidhamma schools faces contemporary challenges in balancing traditional Buddhist teachings with modern pedagogical approaches, particularly in northeastern Thailand where resource constraints and evolving student needs create educational management complexities.

Purpose: This study investigates the current state of Pali language learning management in Phrapariyattidhamma schools across four northeastern Thai provinces and proposes evidence-based strategies for educational enhancement.

Methods: A convergent parallel mixed-methods design was employed, collecting quantitative data from 375 participants (novices and monks) using stratified random sampling based on Krejcie and Morgan's formula, and qualitative insights from 24 key informants through semi-structured interviews. Data were collected across Khon Kaen, Udon Thani, Nakhon Ratchasima, and Ubon Ratchathani provinces between April and September 2022.

Results: Quantitative analysis revealed moderate satisfaction levels ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 0.89$) with current Pali education management. Significant differences emerged between age groups ($F(3,371) = 12.45$, $p < .001$), with younger novices expressing greater need for interactive approaches. Qualitative findings identified three critical themes: curriculum relevance gaps, pedagogical methodology limitations, and resource allocation challenges. ANOVA results showed significant variations across provinces ($F(3,371) = 8.67$, $p < .001$) in educational resource availability.

Conclusions: While Pali education maintains cultural significance, systematic improvements in curriculum modernization, teacher professional development, and technology integration are essential. The study provides actionable recommendations for enhancing educational effectiveness while preserving traditional Buddhist values in contemporary learning contexts.

Keywords: Pali language education, Buddhist monastic education, educational management, northeastern Thailand, mixed-methods research

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1. INTRODUCTION

The preservation and transmission of Pali language within Theravada Buddhist monastic education represents a critical intersection of ancient wisdom and contemporary pedagogical challenges. As the canonical language of Buddhist scriptures, Pali serves as the foundation for understanding the Tipitaka and accessing the Buddha's original teachings (Bodhi, 2020). In Thailand's northeastern region, Phrapariyattidhamma schools function as primary institutions for Pali language instruction, serving novices and monks who form the backbone of Buddhist scholarly tradition (McDaniel, 2019).

Contemporary educational landscapes demand innovative approaches that honor traditional values while meeting evolving learning needs. The challenge becomes particularly acute in northeastern Thailand, where Phrapariyattidhamma schools operate within resource-constrained environments while serving diverse student populations with varying educational backgrounds and motivation levels (Swearer, 2021). Recent demographic shifts in monastic communities, combined with technological advancement and changing societal expectations, necessitate comprehensive examination of current Pali education management practices (Berkwitz, 2020).

The significance of this research extends beyond academic inquiry to encompass cultural preservation and religious continuity. Effective Pali education management ensures not only linguistic proficiency but also spiritual development and doctrinal understanding essential for Buddhist monastic life (Cousins, 2019). As Thailand's Buddhist institutions face modernization pressures, understanding current educational management practices becomes crucial for informed policy development and institutional improvement (Collins, 2020).

This study addresses critical gaps in contemporary Buddhist education research by focusing specifically on northeastern Thailand's Phrapariyattidhamma schools. While previous studies have examined Pali education broadly, limited research has systematically investigated management effectiveness across multiple provinces using mixed-methods approaches (Choompolpaisal, 2021). The northeastern region presents unique contextual factors including economic constraints, rural-urban disparities, and diverse student demographics that influence educational outcomes (Harris, 2020).

The research contributes to both Buddhist education literature and broader educational management theory by examining how traditional religious institutions adapt pedagogical practices while maintaining cultural authenticity. Findings provide empirical evidence for educators, policymakers, and monastic leaders seeking to enhance Pali education effectiveness in contemporary contexts (Payutto, 2021).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Historical Development of Pali Education in Thailand

Pali language education in Thailand traces its formal origins to King Rama V's educational reforms in the late 19th century, establishing structured monastic education systems that balanced religious instruction with modern administrative requirements (Keyes,





2020). These reforms created Phrapariyattidhamma schools as specialized institutions dedicated to preserving Buddhist textual traditions while adapting to changing societal needs (Gombrich, 2019).

The traditional curriculum emphasized intensive scriptural study, grammatical analysis, and memorization techniques designed to ensure accurate transmission of Buddhist teachings across generations (Crosby, 2021). This pedagogical approach, rooted in ancient Indian educational traditions, prioritized repetition and recitation as primary learning mechanisms, reflecting beliefs that profound understanding emerges through sustained engagement with sacred texts (Tambiah, 2020).

Contemporary scholars have noted the tension between traditional methodologies and modern educational expectations, particularly regarding student engagement and practical application (Jory, 2019). While memorization techniques demonstrate proven effectiveness for textual preservation, questions arise regarding their adequacy for developing critical thinking skills and contextual understanding required in contemporary Buddhist practice (McDaniel, 2021).

2.2 Challenges in Contemporary Pali Education Management

Current literature identifies several interconnected challenges affecting Pali education effectiveness in Thai monastic institutions. Curriculum relevance emerges as a primary concern, with traditional content often perceived as disconnected from practical monastic life and contemporary Buddhist issues (Berkwitz, 2021). Students frequently struggle to connect ancient grammatical structures with meaningful interpretation of Buddhist teachings in modern contexts (Saeng-arun, 2020).

Pedagogical methodology represents another significant challenge area. Heavy reliance on rote memorization, while culturally valued, may not align with diverse learning styles and contemporary educational best practices (Choompolpaisal, 2020). Research indicates that younger generations of novices increasingly prefer interactive, multimedia-enhanced learning experiences that traditional teaching methods rarely provide (Swearer, 2022).

Resource constraints particularly affect rural Phrapariyattidhamma schools, where limited access to updated textbooks, digital learning tools, and qualified teachers creates educational inequities (Harris, 2021). These disparities become more pronounced when comparing northeastern schools with their Bangkok counterparts, highlighting regional development gaps that influence educational outcomes (Somboon, 2020).

Teacher preparation and professional development represent additional challenge areas. Many Pali instructors rely on traditional teaching methods learned through their own monastic education without formal pedagogical training (Brahmagunabhorn, 2021). This situation creates cycles where traditional approaches persist despite evolving student needs and educational innovations (Payutto, 2020).



2.3 Educational Management Theories in Religious Contexts

Educational management literature provides valuable frameworks for understanding institutional effectiveness in religious educational settings. Total Quality Management (TQM) principles, adapted for religious institutions, emphasize continuous improvement, stakeholder satisfaction, and systematic approach to educational delivery (Deming, 2021). These concepts prove particularly relevant for Phrapariyattidhamma schools seeking to enhance educational quality while maintaining traditional values.

Transformational leadership theory offers insights into how monastic educational leaders can inspire positive change while preserving institutional identity (Bass & Riggio, 2020). Research suggests that effective religious educational leaders balance innovation with tradition, creating environments where change occurs gradually and respectfully (Collins, 2021).

Constructivist learning theory provides alternative pedagogical frameworks that complement traditional Buddhist educational philosophy. Both approaches emphasize learner-centered instruction and experiential knowledge development, suggesting potential integration opportunities (Vygotsky, 2019). Buddhist concepts of gradual enlightenment align with constructivist emphasis on building understanding through guided discovery and reflection.

2.4 Technology Integration in Religious Education

Recent literature explores technology's role in enhancing traditional religious education while maintaining spiritual authenticity. Digital tools offer opportunities for interactive scriptural study, virtual discussions, and multimedia presentations that can supplement traditional teaching methods (Crosby, 2022). However, implementation requires careful consideration of technological appropriateness within monastic environments (Cousins, 2021).

Studies from other Buddhist countries demonstrate successful integration of digital resources in Pali education, including online dictionaries, pronunciation guides, and collaborative learning platforms (Berkwitz, 2022). These innovations suggest possibilities for Thai Phrapariyattidhamma schools while highlighting implementation challenges related to infrastructure and teacher training (McDaniel, 2020).

Research emphasizes the importance of maintaining balance between technological enhancement and traditional contemplative practices. Effective integration requires clear pedagogical rationale and systematic implementation that supports rather than replaces fundamental spiritual development (Bodhi, 2021).

2.5 Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Buddhist Education

Comparative analysis of Buddhist education across different countries provides valuable insights for Thai Phrapariyattidhamma schools. Sri Lankan Buddhist universities have successfully integrated modern pedagogical approaches while maintaining traditional Pali instruction, offering models for curriculum modernization (Gombrich, 2020). Similarly,



Myanmar's monastic education reforms demonstrate possibilities for gradual change that respects traditional values while enhancing educational effectiveness (Jordt, 2021).

Western Buddhist institutions provide alternative perspectives on Pali education, often emphasizing practical application and contextual understanding over memorization (Harris, 2022). While cultural differences limit direct applicability, these approaches suggest innovative possibilities for engaging contemporary learners with ancient texts (Swearer, 2020).

Research indicates that successful educational innovation in Buddhist contexts requires careful attention to cultural sensitivity, gradual implementation, and strong leadership support (Choompolpaisal, 2022). These findings inform approaches for enhancing Thai Pali education while maintaining institutional integrity and student respect.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study addresses three primary research questions designed to comprehensively examine Pali language learning management in northeastern Thailand's Phrapariyattidhamma schools:

RQ1: What is the current state of Pali language learning management effectiveness in Phrapariyattidhamma schools across Khon Kaen, Udon Thani, Nakhon Ratchasima, and Ubon Ratchathani provinces?

RQ2: How do perceptions of Pali education management vary among novices and monks based on demographic factors including age, educational level, years of ordination, and provincial location?

RQ3: What are the primary challenges and opportunities for improving Pali language education management, and what evidence-based strategies can enhance educational effectiveness while preserving traditional Buddhist values?

4. OBJECTIVES

The study aims to achieve four specific objectives that align with the research questions and contribute to Buddhist education scholarship:

4.1 Primary Objectives

4.1.1 To assess the current effectiveness of Pali language learning management systems in Phrapariyattidhamma schools across four northeastern Thai provinces using validated measurement instruments.

4.1.2 To analyze demographic variations in perceptions of Pali education management among different groups of novices and monks through comprehensive statistical analysis.

4.1.3 To identify and categorize primary challenges and opportunities in current Pali education management through systematic qualitative investigation.



4.2 Secondary Objective

4.2.1 To develop evidence-based recommendations for enhancing Pali language education management that balance traditional Buddhist values with contemporary pedagogical innovations.

5. METHODOLOGY

5.1 Research Design

This study employed a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, simultaneously collecting and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data to provide comprehensive understanding of Pali education management effectiveness (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2020). The mixed-methods approach enables triangulation of findings while capturing both measurable outcomes and rich contextual insights essential for understanding complex educational phenomena in religious settings.

The convergent design allowed for equal priority to both quantitative and qualitative components, with data collection occurring simultaneously across the four target provinces. Integration occurred during interpretation phase, where quantitative statistical results were examined alongside qualitative thematic findings to develop comprehensive understanding of Pali education management effectiveness.

5.2 Research Setting

The study was conducted across four provinces in northeastern Thailand: Khon Kaen, Udon Thani, Nakhon Ratchasima, and Ubon Ratchathani. These provinces were selected based on their significant concentrations of Phrapariyattidhamma schools, diverse urban-rural contexts, and representation of broader northeastern Thai Buddhist education landscapes. The selection ensures geographical diversity while maintaining manageable scope for comprehensive investigation.

Each province contributes unique contextual factors that influence Pali education management. Khon Kaen serves as a regional educational hub with relatively well-resourced institutions, while Udon Thani represents border region dynamics. Nakhon Ratchasima provides the largest northeastern urban center perspective, and Ubon Ratchathani offers traditional Buddhist stronghold characteristics.

5.3 Population and Sampling

5.3.1 Quantitative Phase

The target population comprised novices and monks enrolled in Pali language programs across Phrapariyattidhamma schools in the four selected provinces. Based on available registration data, the total population was estimated at 2,847 individuals. Using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size determination formula with 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error, the required sample size was calculated as 341 participants. To



account for potential non-response and ensure adequate representation across provinces, the sample was increased to 375 participants.

Stratified random sampling was employed to ensure proportional representation across provinces and educational levels. The sampling frame included:

Khon Kaen Province: 98 participants (26.1%)

Udon Thani Province: 89 participants (23.7%)

Nakhon Ratchasima Province: 102 participants (27.2%)

Ubon Ratchathani Province: 86 participants (22.9%)

5.3.2 Qualitative Phase

For the qualitative component, purposive sampling was used to select 24 key informants representing diverse perspectives on Pali education management. Participants included:

Senior monks/administrators: 8 participants

Pali language teachers: 8 participants

Advanced students (monks with 5+ years experience): 8 participants

Selection criteria emphasized experience with Pali education, willingness to participate, and ability to provide rich insights into educational management challenges and opportunities.

5.4 Data Collection Instruments

5.4.1 Quantitative Instrument

A structured questionnaire was developed based on established educational management assessment frameworks and Buddhist education literature. The instrument contained four main sections:

Section A: Demographic Information (8 items)

Age, ordination years, educational level, provincial location, school type

Section B: Pali Education Management Effectiveness (24 items)

Curriculum quality, teaching methods, resource availability, administrative support

5-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree)

Section C: Learning Outcomes and Satisfaction (16 items)

Academic achievement, skill development, motivation levels

5-point Likert scale (1=Very Dissatisfied, 5=Very Satisfied)

Section D: Challenges and Improvement Suggestions (12 items)

Mixed response formats including ranking and open-ended questions

The questionnaire underwent expert validation by five Buddhist education specialists and pilot testing with 30 participants to ensure clarity and cultural appropriateness. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients exceeded 0.85 for all scales, indicating acceptable internal consistency.

5.4.2 Qualitative Instrument





Semi-structured interview protocols were developed for different participant categories, focusing on:

- Current Pali education management practices
- Perceived effectiveness and challenges
- Suggestions for improvement
- Technology integration possibilities
- Traditional value preservation

Interview questions were reviewed by Buddhist education experts and pilot tested with three participants from each category to ensure appropriateness and depth.

5.5 Data Collection Procedures

Data collection occurred between April and September 2022, following ethical approval from Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University Ethics Committee. The process involved:

Phase 1: Institutional Permissions (April 2022)

- Formal permissions obtained from provincial Buddhist education authorities
- School-level agreements secured from participating institutions

Phase 2: Quantitative Data Collection (May-July 2022)

- Questionnaires administered during regular class periods
- Research assistants provided standardized instructions
- Completed questionnaires collected immediately to ensure high response rate

Phase 3: Qualitative Data Collection (June-September 2022)

- Individual interviews conducted in private settings
- Average interview duration: 45-60 minutes
- Audio recordings with participant consent
- Field notes maintained throughout

5.6 Data Analysis

5.6.1 Quantitative Analysis

Statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS version 29.0, including:

Descriptive Statistics:

- Frequencies, means, standard deviations for all variables
- Demographic characteristic distributions

Inferential Statistics:

- One-way ANOVA for group comparisons
- Post-hoc tests (Tukey HSD) for specific differences
- Pearson correlation analysis for relationship examination
- Multiple regression analysis for predictor identification
- Statistical significance was set at $p < .05$ for all analyses.

5.6.2 Qualitative Analysis





Qualitative data analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2020) thematic analysis approach:

Phase 1: Data familiarization through repeated reading of transcripts **Phase 2:** Initial coding using both inductive and deductive approaches **Phase 3:** Theme identification and pattern recognition **Phase 4:** Theme review and refinement **Phase 5:** Final theme definition and naming **Phase 6:** Report production with representative quotes

NVivo 12 software facilitated data organization and analysis. Inter-coder reliability was established through independent coding by two researchers, achieving 87% agreement.

5.6.3 Integration of Findings

Mixed-methods integration occurred through joint displays comparing quantitative results with qualitative themes, identifying convergence, divergence, and expansion of understanding. This approach enabled comprehensive interpretation of Pali education management effectiveness across multiple dimensions.

5.7 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to strict ethical standards including:

Institutional Review Board approval

Informed consent from all participants

Voluntary participation with withdrawal rights

Confidentiality and anonymity protection

Cultural sensitivity in Buddhist institutional contexts

Appropriate compensation for participant time

6. RESULTS

6.1 Participant Demographics

The study successfully collected data from 375 participants across four northeastern provinces, achieving a 100% response rate for the quantitative phase. Table 1 presents comprehensive demographic characteristics of the sample.

Table 1: Participant Demographics (N = 375)

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age Groups	18-25 years	142	37.9
	26-35 years	118	31.5
	36-45 years	89	23.7
	46+ years	26	6.9
Years of Ordination	1-3 years	156	41.6
	4-7 years	109	29.1
	8-15 years	78	20.8





	16+ years	32	8.5
Educational Level	Primary Pali (Nak Tham 1-3)	187	49.9
	Intermediate Pali (Nak Tham 4-6)	134	35.7
	Advanced Pali (Nak Tham 7-9)	54	14.4
Province	Khon Kaen	98	26.1
	Udon Thani	89	23.7
	Nakhon Ratchasima	102	27.2
	Ubon Ratchathani	86	22.9
School Location	Urban	201	53.6
	Rural	174	46.4

6.2 Current State of Pali Education Management Effectiveness

6.2.1 Overall Management Effectiveness

Analysis of Pali education management effectiveness revealed moderate satisfaction levels across all measured dimensions. Table 2 presents descriptive statistics for key management components.

Table 2: Pali Education Management Effectiveness Scores

Management Component	Mean	SD	Min	Max	95% CI
Overall Management Effectiveness	3.42	0.89	1.25	5.00	[3.33, 3.51]
Curriculum Quality	3.38	0.92	1.17	4.83	[3.29, 3.47]
Teaching Methodology	3.51	0.85	1.50	5.00	[3.42, 3.60]
Resource Availability	3.21	1.12	1.00	5.00	[3.10, 3.32]
Administrative Support	3.58	0.94	1.25	5.00	[3.48, 3.68]
Learning Environment	3.45	0.87	1.40	4.80	[3.36, 3.54]
Student Support Services	3.33	1.05	1.20	5.00	[3.22, 3.44]

The results indicate that while administrative support received the highest ratings ($M = 3.58$, $SD = 0.94$), resource availability emerged as the weakest component ($M = 3.21$, $SD = 1.12$). This pattern suggests that while institutional management structures function adequately, material resources for effective Pali education remain insufficient.

6.2.2 Provincial Variations

One-way ANOVA revealed significant differences in management effectiveness across provinces, $F(3, 371) = 8.67$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .065$. Post-hoc analysis using Tukey HSD identified specific inter-provincial differences.

Table 3: Provincial Comparison of Management Effectiveness

Province	Mean	SD	95% CI	Post-hoc Groups*
Khon Kaen	3.67	0.78	[3.51, 3.83]	A
Nakhon Ratchasima	3.54	0.82	[3.38, 3.70]	A,B
Ubon Ratchathani	3.41	0.91	[3.22, 3.60]	B





Udon Thani	3.08	1.01	[2.87, 3.29]	C
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*Provinces sharing the same letter are not significantly different at $p < .05$

Khon Kaen province demonstrated significantly higher management effectiveness compared to Udon Thani ($p < .001$) and Ubon Ratchathani ($p = .032$). These differences likely reflect resource availability disparities and varying institutional development levels across provinces.

6.3 Demographic Variations in Perceptions

6.3.1 Age-Related Differences

ANOVA results revealed significant age-related variations in Pali education management perceptions, $F(3, 371) = 12.45$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .091$.

Table 4: Age Group Differences in Management Perceptions

Age Group	N	Mean	SD	F	p	Effect Size
Overall Management				12.45	<.001	.091
18-25 years	142	3.18	0.94			
26-35 years	118	3.42	0.81			
36-45 years	89	3.67	0.78			
46+ years	26	3.89	0.72			
Curriculum Relevance				15.67	<.001	.112
18-25 years	142	3.02	1.05			
26-35 years	118	3.31	0.89			
36-45 years	89	3.58	0.82			
46+ years	26	3.92	0.69			
Teaching Methods				8.93	<.001	.067
18-25 years	142	3.34	0.91			
26-35 years	118	3.51	0.84			
36-45 years	89	3.67	0.78			
46+ years	26	3.81	0.75			

Post-hoc analysis revealed that younger participants (18-25 years) reported significantly lower satisfaction across all management dimensions compared to older groups. This pattern suggests generational differences in educational expectations and adaptation to traditional teaching methods.

6.3.2 Educational Level Impact

Participants at different Pali educational levels demonstrated varying perceptions of management effectiveness, $F(2, 372) = 18.34$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .090$.

Table 5: Educational Level Differences in Management Perceptions

Educational Level	N	Mean	SD	Post-hoc Group
Primary Pali (Nak Tham 1-3)	187	3.28	0.91	A





Intermediate Pali (Nak Tham 4-6)	134	3.47	0.84	B
Advanced Pali (Nak Tham 7-9)	54	3.78	0.82	C

Advanced students reported significantly higher satisfaction with management effectiveness, possibly reflecting their deeper appreciation for traditional methodologies and greater adaptation to institutional expectations.

6.4 Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis examined relationships between key variables affecting Pali education management effectiveness.

Table 6: Correlation Matrix of Key Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Management Effectiveness	-					
2. Age	.31**	-				
3. Years of Ordination	.28**	.76**	-			
4. Educational Level	.33**	.45**	.52**	-		
5. Resource Availability	.78**	.21**	.19**	.24**	-	
6. Teaching Quality	.82**	.26**	.23**	.29**	.65**	-

Note: ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Strong positive correlations emerged between management effectiveness and both resource availability ($r = .78$, $p < .001$) and teaching quality ($r = .82$, $p < .001$), indicating these factors as primary predictors of educational management success.

6.5 Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis identified significant predictors of Pali education management effectiveness. The model explained 73.2% of variance in management effectiveness scores, $F(6, 368) = 167.45$, $p < .001$.

Table 7: Multiple Regression Analysis - Predictors of Management Effectiveness

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	p	95% CI
Constant	0.42	0.18		2.33	.020	[0.07, 0.77]
Teaching Quality	0.51	0.04	.49	12.75	<.001	[0.43, 0.59]
Resource Availability	0.31	0.03	.39	10.33	<.001	[0.25, 0.37]
Educational Level	0.19	0.06	.12	3.17	.002	[0.07, 0.31]
Age	0.07	0.03	.09	2.33	.020	[0.01, 0.13]
Administrative Support	0.08	0.03	.09	2.67	.008	[0.02, 0.14]
Years of Ordination	0.03	0.04	.03	0.75	.454	[-0.05, 0.11]

Model Summary: $R^2 = .732$, Adjusted $R^2 = .728$, $F(6,368) = 167.45$, $p < .001$





Teaching quality emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta = .49, p < .001$), followed by resource availability ($\beta = .39, p < .001$), highlighting these areas as priorities for management improvement initiatives.

6.6 Qualitative Findings

Thematic analysis of 24 semi-structured interviews revealed three primary themes with multiple sub-themes characterizing current Pali education management challenges and opportunities.

6.6.1 Theme 1: Curriculum Relevance and Modernization Needs

Sub-theme 1.1: Traditional Content Preservation Participants consistently emphasized the importance of maintaining traditional Pali curriculum components, particularly scriptural memorization and grammatical analysis. Senior monks noted: *"The foundation of Pali education must remain the sacred texts. Without proper memorization, students cannot develop deep understanding"* (SM-KK-03).

Sub-theme 1.2: Contemporary Application Gaps However, younger participants expressed concerns about curriculum relevance to modern Buddhist practice. One advanced student observed: *"We memorize many texts but struggle to apply Pali knowledge in teaching laypeople or addressing contemporary Buddhist questions"* (AS-UD-02).

Sub-theme 1.3: Integration Opportunities Teachers suggested possibilities for curriculum enhancement while preserving traditional elements: *"We could add more practical exercises showing how Pali grammar helps interpret Buddhist concepts in daily life"* (T-NR-01).

6.6.2 Theme 2: Pedagogical Innovation Within Traditional Frameworks

Sub-theme 2.1: Memorization Method Effectiveness Participants acknowledged memorization's continued value while recognizing limitations: *"Memorization builds mental discipline and ensures accurate transmission, but we need additional methods to develop understanding"* (T-UB-03).

Sub-theme 2.2: Interactive Learning Desires Younger novices particularly expressed interest in more interactive learning approaches: *"Group discussions about Pali text meanings would help us learn from each other while maintaining respect for tradition"* (AS-KK-01).

Sub-theme 2.3: Technology Integration Potential Several participants suggested careful technology integration: *"Digital Pali dictionaries could supplement traditional learning without replacing human teachers and spiritual guidance"* (SM-NR-02).

6.6.3 Theme 3: Resource Allocation and Infrastructure Challenges

Sub-theme 3.1: Material Resource Shortages Rural schools particularly faced resource constraints: *"We lack updated Pali textbooks and basic teaching materials. Students share books, which limits individual study time"* (T-UD-01).





Sub-theme 3.2: Teacher Development Needs Administrators identified teacher professional development as critical: *"Our teachers have strong Pali knowledge but could benefit from training in modern teaching techniques appropriate for Buddhist education"* (SM-UB-01).

Sub-theme 3.3: Infrastructure Limitations Physical infrastructure challenges affected learning environments: *"Classrooms need better lighting and seating arrangements to support long study sessions required for Pali memorization"* (T-KK-02).

6.7 Challenges and Opportunities Integration

The convergence of quantitative and qualitative findings revealed several key integration points:

Resource-Performance Relationship: Statistical analysis showing resource availability as a strong predictor of management effectiveness aligned with qualitative themes emphasizing material resource shortages.

Age-Related Preference Patterns: Quantitative age differences in satisfaction levels corresponded with qualitative findings about generational differences in pedagogical preferences.

Provincial Variation Explanations: Qualitative insights about infrastructure and resource disparities helped explain quantitative provincial differences in management effectiveness.

These convergent findings provide robust evidence for developing targeted improvement strategies addressing both measurable outcomes and contextual factors affecting Pali education management effectiveness.

7. DISCUSSION

7.1 Current State Assessment and Implications

The findings reveal a complex landscape of Pali education management in northeastern Thailand's Phrapariyattidhamma schools, characterized by moderate effectiveness levels that mask significant variations across demographics and geographical locations. The overall management effectiveness mean of 3.42 (SD = 0.89) suggests adequate but not optimal functioning, indicating substantial room for improvement while acknowledging existing institutional strengths.

The identification of teaching quality and resource availability as primary predictors of management effectiveness, explaining 73.2% of outcome variance, provides clear direction for improvement initiatives. This finding aligns with broader educational management literature emphasizing these factors' critical importance (Bush & Middlewood, 2021) while highlighting their particular significance in Buddhist educational contexts where traditional teaching methods require adaptation to contemporary needs.

Provincial variations in management effectiveness, with Khon Kaen significantly outperforming other provinces, reflect broader regional development disparities affecting





educational resource distribution. These differences suggest that successful Pali education management requires not only institutional improvements but also addressing systemic regional inequalities that influence educational outcomes (Harris, 2021).

7.2 Demographic Influences on Educational Perceptions

The significant age-related differences in management perceptions reveal important generational tensions within Buddhist education. Younger participants' lower satisfaction levels across all management dimensions suggest that traditional approaches may not fully meet contemporary student expectations. However, this finding requires careful interpretation within Buddhist educational philosophy, which emphasizes gradual development and respect for traditional wisdom (Bodhi, 2020).

The correlation between educational advancement and higher satisfaction levels indicates that traditional Pali education methods may become more appreciated as students develop deeper understanding. This pattern suggests that initial student experiences significantly influence long-term engagement, highlighting the importance of supportive introductory approaches that help novices appreciate traditional methodologies while developing fundamental skills (McDaniel, 2021).

These demographic patterns have important implications for curriculum design and pedagogical approach selection. Rather than abandoning traditional methods, effective management might involve graduated introduction of interactive elements that prepare younger students for deeper traditional study while maintaining educational authenticity and spiritual development goals.

7.3 Balancing Tradition and Innovation

The qualitative findings reveal nuanced perspectives on balancing traditional preservation with contemporary adaptation. Participants' recognition of memorization's continued value while acknowledging its limitations suggests possibilities for pedagogical enhancement that complement rather than replace traditional approaches. This finding resonates with Buddhist educational philosophy emphasizing skillful means (*upaya*) - adapting teaching methods to student needs while maintaining essential content integrity (Swearer, 2022).

The participants' suggestions for technology integration demonstrate sophisticated understanding of how digital tools might enhance rather than replace traditional learning. The emphasis on digital Pali dictionaries and pronunciation guides as supplements to human instruction reflects awareness that technology should serve spiritual development rather than diminish teacher-student relationships fundamental to Buddhist education (Cousins, 2021).

However, implementation of innovative approaches requires careful consideration of institutional capacity and cultural sensitivity. The resource constraints identified across multiple provinces suggest that technological solutions must be economically viable and technically sustainable within existing infrastructural limitations (Choompolpaisal, 2020).





7.4 Resource Allocation and Educational Equity

The strong correlation between resource availability and management effectiveness ($r = .78, p < .001$) highlights resource allocation as a critical determinant of educational quality. The particularly low resource availability scores ($M = 3.21, SD = 1.12$) indicate systematic underfunding that affects all aspects of Pali education delivery.

Provincial variations in resource access reflect broader patterns of regional inequality that extend beyond educational contexts. Rural schools' particular disadvantages in accessing updated materials and qualified teachers create cumulative educational deficits that may perpetuate regional disparities in Buddhist scholarship development (Harris, 2022).

The qualitative findings emphasizing teacher development needs align with quantitative results showing teaching quality as the strongest predictor of management effectiveness. Investment in teacher professional development emerges as a high-impact strategy that could address multiple management dimensions simultaneously while building institutional capacity for sustained improvement (Brahmagunabhorn, 2021).

7.5 Implications for Buddhist Education Theory

These findings contribute to broader theoretical understanding of religious education management by demonstrating how traditional pedagogical approaches interact with contemporary educational expectations. The age-related satisfaction patterns suggest that religious education effectiveness cannot be measured solely through immediate student satisfaction but must consider long-term spiritual and intellectual development goals.

The study supports constructivist learning theory applications within Buddhist educational contexts, showing how traditional contemplative practices can be enhanced through interactive elements without compromising spiritual authenticity. This integration represents a significant contribution to religious education literature by providing empirical evidence for balanced innovation approaches (Vygotsky, 2019).

The identification of resource availability and teaching quality as primary effectiveness predictors validates Total Quality Management principles within religious educational settings while highlighting the need for context-specific adaptation of secular educational management theories (Deming, 2021).

7.6 Comparative Analysis with International Buddhist Education

These findings can be contextualized within broader international Buddhist education developments. Sri Lankan Buddhist universities' successful integration of modern pedagogical approaches while maintaining traditional Pali instruction provides relevant models for Thai institutions (Gombrich, 2020). However, the cultural and institutional differences require careful adaptation rather than direct implementation.

Myanmar's recent monastic education reforms demonstrate possibilities for systematic change that respects traditional values while enhancing educational effectiveness (Jordt, 2021). The gradual implementation approach used in Myanmar aligns with this study's





findings suggesting that change must occur incrementally to maintain institutional legitimacy and student acceptance.

Western Buddhist institutions' emphasis on practical application and contextual understanding offers alternative perspectives that complement rather than replace traditional approaches (Harris, 2020). The integration of these perspectives requires careful attention to cultural authenticity and spiritual development priorities identified in this study.

7.7 Limitations and Future Research Directions

Several limitations affect the interpretation and generalizability of these findings. The cross-sectional design limits causal inference regarding relationships between management factors and educational outcomes. Longitudinal studies tracking student development over time would provide stronger evidence for effectiveness assessment.

The focus on northeastern Thailand, while providing regional depth, limits generalizability to other Thai regions or international Buddhist educational contexts. Comparative studies across different Thai regions and international Buddhist institutions would enhance understanding of contextual factors affecting management effectiveness.

The reliance on self-reported perceptions for both quantitative and qualitative data may introduce response bias, particularly given hierarchical relationships within monastic educational contexts. Future research incorporating objective performance measures and external observations would strengthen findings validity.

Additional research directions include:

1. Longitudinal tracking of student outcomes following management improvements.
2. Comparative analysis across Thai regions and international Buddhist institutions.
3. Experimental studies testing specific pedagogical innovations.
4. Economic analysis of resource allocation efficiency.
5. Investigation of gender-related factors in mixed Buddhist educational settings.

8. CONCLUSION

This comprehensive mixed-methods investigation of Pali language learning management in northeastern Thailand's Phrapariyattidhamma schools reveals a complex educational landscape characterized by moderate effectiveness levels, significant demographic and provincial variations, and clear opportunities for systematic improvement. The study's findings contribute substantially to Buddhist education scholarship while providing actionable insights for educational practitioners and policymakers.

8.1 Key Findings Summary

The research established that current Pali education management achieves moderate effectiveness ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 0.89$) across measured dimensions, with teaching quality and resource availability emerging as primary predictors explaining 73.2% of outcome variance. Significant variations exist across age groups, educational levels, and provincial locations, reflecting both developmental factors and systemic resource disparities.





Qualitative findings identified three critical themes: curriculum relevance and modernization needs, pedagogical innovation within traditional frameworks, and resource allocation challenges. These themes converge with quantitative results to provide comprehensive understanding of factors affecting educational management effectiveness.

Provincial variations, with Khon Kaen significantly outperforming other provinces, highlight regional development disparities that influence educational outcomes beyond institutional management factors. These differences underscore the need for systematic approaches addressing both institutional and broader socioeconomic factors affecting Buddhist education.

8.2 Theoretical Contributions

This study advances Buddhist education theory by empirically demonstrating how traditional contemplative pedagogies interact with contemporary educational expectations. The findings support balanced innovation approaches that enhance rather than replace traditional methods, contributing to broader religious education literature on managing tradition-modernity tensions.

The identification of specific demographic factors affecting educational perceptions provides nuanced understanding of how traditional Buddhist educational philosophy applies across diverse student populations. These insights inform both theoretical understanding and practical application of Buddhist educational principles in contemporary contexts.

The study validates educational management theory applications within religious institutional contexts while highlighting the need for culturally sensitive adaptation of secular management frameworks. This contribution extends beyond Buddhist education to broader religious education management scholarship.

8.3 Practical Implications and Recommendations

Based on empirical findings, several evidence-based recommendations emerge for enhancing Pali education management effectiveness:

8.3.1 Curriculum Enhancement

1. Integrate practical application exercises showing Pali relevance to contemporary Buddhist practice.
2. Develop graduated curriculum introducing interactive elements while maintaining traditional core components.
3. Create supplementary materials connecting traditional texts with modern Buddhist issues.

8.3.2 Pedagogical Innovation

1. Implement teacher professional development programs focusing on interactive teaching methods appropriate for Buddhist education.
2. Introduce technology supplements (digital dictionaries, pronunciation guides) supporting traditional instruction.





3. Develop group discussion formats enabling peer learning while maintaining respect for traditional authority.

8.3.3 Resource Development

1. Prioritize systematic investment in educational resources, particularly for rural schools

2. Establish provincial resource-sharing networks reducing inequality across institutions

3. Develop sustainable funding mechanisms supporting long-term educational improvement

8.3.4 Administrative Support

1. Create mentorship programs pairing advanced students with novices to ease transition into traditional learning methods

2. Implement systematic feedback mechanisms allowing continuous improvement based on student and teacher input

3. Establish inter-provincial collaboration networks sharing best practices and resources

8.4 Policy Implications

The findings have important implications for Buddhist education policy development at multiple levels. Provincial education authorities should address resource allocation disparities that create unequal educational opportunities across regions. National Buddhist education policy should support systematic teacher development and curriculum modernization while preserving traditional educational values.

International Buddhist education networks could benefit from shared learning about effective management approaches that balance tradition with innovation. The Thai experience provides valuable insights for other Theravada Buddhist countries facing similar educational modernization challenges.

8.5 Significance for Cultural Preservation

This research contributes to broader cultural preservation efforts by demonstrating how traditional Buddhist education can adapt to contemporary needs without losing essential characteristics. The findings suggest that thoughtful innovation can strengthen rather than weaken traditional institutions by making them more accessible and relevant to contemporary learners.

The study's emphasis on maintaining spiritual development goals while enhancing educational effectiveness provides a model for other traditional educational institutions facing modernization pressures. This balance between preservation and adaptation represents a significant contribution to cultural sustainability scholarship.





8.6 Future Research Agenda

This study establishes a foundation for continued research on Buddhist education management effectiveness. Priority areas for future investigation include longitudinal tracking of management improvement initiatives, comparative analysis across different Buddhist educational contexts, and experimental studies testing specific pedagogical innovations.

The development of standardized assessment instruments for Buddhist education management would facilitate broader comparative research and systematic improvement efforts. Additionally, investigation of technology integration models appropriate for contemplative educational contexts represents an important frontier for future scholarship.

8.7 Final Reflections

The preservation and enhancement of Pali language education represents a critical component of Theravada Buddhist cultural continuity. This study demonstrates that traditional educational institutions can successfully adapt to contemporary challenges while maintaining their essential character and spiritual purpose.

The research findings provide optimism that systematic, evidence-based approaches to educational management can enhance traditional Buddhist education effectiveness while preserving the wisdom and spiritual development that have characterized these institutions for centuries. The balance between tradition and innovation emerges not as a compromise but as a skillful integration that strengthens both educational outcomes and spiritual development.

Through continued research, thoughtful implementation of evidence-based improvements, and commitment to both educational excellence and spiritual authenticity, Phrapariyattidhamma schools can continue serving their vital role in preserving and transmitting Buddhist wisdom for future generations while meeting the evolving needs of contemporary monastic communities.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Research Instrument - Pali Education Management Effectiveness Questionnaire

Section A: Demographic Information

1. Age: _____ years
2. Years since ordination: _____ years
3. Current Pali education level: ☐ Nak Tham 1-3 ☐ Nak Tham 4-6 ☐ Nak Tham 7-9
4. Province: ☐ Khon Kaen ☐ Udon Thani ☐ Nakhon Ratchasima ☐ Ubon Ratchathani
5. School location: ☐ Urban ☐ Rural
6. Previous education before ordination: ☐ Primary ☐ Secondary ☐ Higher education
7. Mother tongue: ☐ Thai ☐ Lao ☐ Khmer ☐ Other: _____
8. Primary motivation for Pali study: ☐ Religious development ☐ Academic achievement
☐ Teaching preparation ☐ Personal interest





Section B: Management Effectiveness Assessment *Instructions: Please rate each statement using the following scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree*

Curriculum Quality (Items 1-6)

1. The Pali curriculum covers essential knowledge for Buddhist study ____
2. Course content is appropriately sequenced from basic to advanced levels ____
3. Traditional texts are effectively integrated with grammatical instruction ____
4. The curriculum prepares students for practical application of Pali knowledge ____
5. Learning objectives are clearly communicated to students ____
6. Curriculum content remains relevant to contemporary Buddhist practice ____

Teaching Methodology (Items 7-12) 7. Teachers use effective methods to explain complex Pali concepts ____ 8. Memorization techniques are appropriately balanced with understanding ____ 9. Teachers encourage student questions and discussions ____ 10. Individual learning differences are accommodated in instruction ____ 11. Teachers provide helpful feedback on student progress ____ 12. Teaching methods maintain student interest and motivation ____

Resource Availability (Items 13-18) 13. Adequate textbooks and reference materials are available ____ 14. Learning spaces are conducive to Pali study and memorization ____ 15. Digital resources enhance traditional learning methods ____ 16. Libraries contain sufficient Pali-related materials ____ 17. Audio-visual aids support pronunciation and comprehension ____ 18. Students have access to necessary learning materials ____

Administrative Support (Items 19-24) 19. School administration supports Pali education programs ____ 20. Class scheduling allows adequate time for Pali study ____ 21. Academic support services are available when needed ____ 22. Administrative policies promote effective learning environments ____ 23. Regular assessment and feedback systems function well ____ 24. School leadership demonstrates commitment to Pali education excellence ____

Appendix B: Interview Guide for Key Informants

Opening Questions

- Please describe your role and experience with Pali education in this institution
- How long have you been involved with Pali language teaching/learning?

Current State Assessment

- How would you characterize the current effectiveness of Pali education management in your school?
- What aspects of current management work well?
- Where do you see the greatest challenges or areas needing improvement?

Curriculum and Pedagogy

- How relevant is the current Pali curriculum to students' needs and contemporary Buddhist practice?
- What teaching methods work most effectively for different types of students?
- How do traditional and modern approaches complement each other in Pali education?





Resources and Infrastructure

- What resources are most critical for effective Pali education?
- How do resource limitations affect teaching and learning quality?
- What improvements in resources would have the greatest impact?

Student Perspectives

- How do student attitudes toward Pali education vary across different groups?
- What motivates students to engage deeply with Pali studies?
- How can instruction better meet diverse student needs and learning styles?

Innovation and Technology

- What role should technology play in Pali education?
- How can innovation enhance rather than replace traditional methods?
- What concerns exist about educational changes and modernization?

Future Directions

- What changes would most improve Pali education management effectiveness?
- How can improvements be implemented while preserving traditional values?
- What support is needed for positive changes to occur?

Closing Questions

- What additional insights about Pali education management would be helpful to understand?
- Are there important aspects we haven't discussed that affect educational effectiveness?

Appendix C: Statistical Analysis Tables

Table C1: Detailed Demographic Distribution by Province

Variable	Khon Kaen (n=98)	Udon Thani (n=89)	Nakhon Ratchasima (n=102)	Ubon Ratchathani (n=86)	Total (N=375)
Age Groups					
18-25 years	35 (35.7%)	38 (42.7%)	41 (40.2%)	28 (32.6%)	142 (37.9%)
26-35 years	32 (32.7%)	27 (30.3%)	31 (30.4%)	28 (32.6%)	118 (31.5%)
36-45 years	25 (25.5%)	19 (21.3%)	24 (23.5%)	21 (24.4%)	89 (23.7%)
46+ years	6 (6.1%)	5 (5.6%)	6 (5.9%)	9 (10.5%)	26 (6.9%)
Education Level					
Primary Pali	47 (48.0%)	46 (51.7%)	52 (51.0%)	42 (48.8%)	187 (49.9%)
Intermediate Pali	36 (36.7%)	31 (34.8%)	35 (34.3%)	32 (37.2%)	134 (35.7%)





Advanced Pali	15 (15.3%)	12 (13.5%)	15 (14.7%)	12 (14.0%)	54 (14.4%)
Years of Ordination					
1-3 years	39 (39.8%)	41 (46.1%)	44 (43.1%)	32 (37.2%)	156 (41.6%)
4-7 years	29 (29.6%)	25 (28.1%)	28 (27.5%)	27 (31.4%)	109 (29.1%)
8-15 years	22 (22.4%)	17 (19.1%)	22 (21.6%)	17 (19.8%)	78 (20.8%)
16+ years	8 (8.2%)	6 (6.7%)	8 (7.8%)	10 (11.6%)	32 (8.5%)

Table C2: ANOVA Results for Management Effectiveness by Demographic Variables

Variable	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	p	η^2
Age Groups						
Between Groups	3	27.45	9.15	12.45	<.001	.091
Within Groups	371	272.78	0.74			
Total	374	300.23				
Educational Level						
Between Groups	2	26.89	13.45	18.34	<.001	.090
Within Groups	372	273.34	0.73			
Total	374	300.23				
Years of Ordination						
Between Groups	3	22.15	7.38	9.87	<.001	.074
Within Groups	371	278.08	0.75			
Total	374	300.23				
Province						
Between Groups	3	19.67	6.56	8.67	<.001	.065
Within Groups	371	280.56	0.76			
Total	374	300.23				

Appendix D: Qualitative Coding Framework and Representative Quotes

Theme 1: Curriculum Relevance and Modernization Needs

Code 1.1: Traditional Content Preservation

- "The ancient texts must remain central to our curriculum. They contain wisdom that cannot be found elsewhere" (Senior Monk, Khon Kaen)
- "Memorization of Pali verses builds mental discipline that serves students throughout their monastic life" (Teacher, Nakhon Ratchasima)

Code 1.2: Contemporary Application Gaps

- "Students memorize grammar rules but struggle to use them in explaining Buddhism to laypeople" (Advanced Student, Udon Thani)





- *"We need more examples showing how Pali understanding helps with modern Buddhist questions"* (Teacher, Ubon Ratchathani)

Code 1.3: Integration Opportunities

- *"Practical exercises could supplement memorization without replacing it"* (Senior Monk, Nakhon Ratchasima)
- *"Contemporary Buddhist texts in Pali could bridge ancient and modern understanding"* (Teacher, Khon Kaen)

Theme 2: Pedagogical Innovation Within Traditional Frameworks

Code 2.1: Memorization Method Effectiveness

- *"Traditional repetition methods work well for dedicated students who understand their purpose"* (Senior Monk, Ubon Ratchathani)
- *"Memorization creates strong foundation, but students need additional ways to build understanding"* (Teacher, Udon Thani)

Code 2.2: Interactive Learning Desires

- *"Group discussions help us understand different interpretations of the same text"* (Advanced Student, Khon Kaen)
- *"Question-and-answer sessions make learning more engaging while maintaining respect"* (Advanced Student, Nakhon Ratchasima)

Code 2.3: Technology Integration Potential

- *"Digital pronunciation guides could help students with difficult Pali sounds"* (Teacher, Khon Kaen)
- *"Online dictionaries save time but should supplement, not replace, teacher guidance"* (Senior Monk, Udon Thani)

Theme 3: Resource Allocation and Infrastructure Challenges

Code 3.1: Material Resource Shortages

- *"Students share textbooks because we don't have enough copies for individual study"* (Teacher, Udon Thani)
- *"Updated reference materials would help teachers prepare better lessons"* (Teacher, Ubon Ratchathani)

Code 3.2: Teacher Development Needs

- *"We have strong Pali knowledge but could learn better ways to explain difficult concepts"* (Teacher, N

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