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A Proposed Competency Model for Future Thai Executives

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Abstract

Rapid and unpredictable changes are occurring across multiple dimensions. Executives play a critical role in organizations, and their incompetence can lead to organizational failure. Ineffective management often results from executives lacking the necessary competencies. This article aims to identify the essential competencies for future executives using a concurrent triangulation method. Data were gathered from 27 senior Thai executives, experts, and employees across government organizations, educational institutions, and both public and private sectors in Thailand through in-depth interviews and group discussions. Additionally, a survey of 345 respondents was conducted to perform confirmatory factor analysis of the competencies for future Thai executives. These findings highlight the competencies required for Thai executives to effectively respond to the evolving global workforce and future world of work.

Introduction

Executives play a critical role in management, serving as the key driving force behind the functioning and success of every department. As the world undergoes rapid and unpredictable changes across various dimensions, the competencies of executives become essential in navigating complex environments and delivering optimal performance for their organizations (Love and Femi Ayadi, 2015).

In response to these changes, many organizations are prioritizing strategy development and policy shifts, often leveraging modern technology to adapt to disruptive phenomena such as advancements in disruptive technologies. Abun, Julian, Calipjo, and Nicolas (2023) reported that executives have a crucial role, and their competence—or lack thereof—can determine an organization's success or failure. Poor management arises when executives lack essential competencies such as leadership, vision, communication, and the ability to create conducive learning environments.

The literature review highlights various factors that can affect the management system and, consequently, organizational productivity. These issues may also lead to high employee turnover. Developing executive competencies is challenging, as it often depends on the executives' willingness to grow. However, for an organization to achieve sustainability, it must balance management with the development of both short- and long-term strategies.

Identifying the key competencies executives need in this context is crucial for enhancing performance before they assume their roles, much like fastening the first button of a shirt correctly. Furthermore, the continued development of competencies after taking office—akin to equipping executives with the necessary tools—is vital for success. This development significantly influences the proactive performance of the management team and is a key factor in shaping future leadership success (Chiu, Wu, Bartram, Parker, & Lee, 2023).

The purpose of this article is to identify the competencies required of modern executives and to propose how these competencies can be applied to develop executives at all organizational levels. The goal is to enable executives to manage and develop strategies effectively, in a timely manner, and to respond to disruptions, thereby fostering a sustainable competitive advantage for the organization.

This study employs the Concurrent Triangulation method to obtain complementary results. The first component involves a qualitative study based on in-depth interviews with senior executives and human resources experts, followed by group discussions. The findings from these interviews serve as a framework for the discussions. The second component involves a quantitative survey, using a questionnaire to gather data from executives and employees in government organizations, educational institutions, and both business and private sectors. The data are then analyzed using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA).

The research team integrates the findings from both components to discuss the results in relation to the study's objectives. The aim is to provide recommendations and guidelines for applying these research outcomes to the development of executive competencies.

Literature Review

Leadership

Leadership is an inspirational process that motivates people to work hard to accomplish significant tasks. The fundamental question is: "Who is a leader?" The most widely accepted answer is that a leader is anyone who influences individuals and groups within an organization and guides them toward achieving set goals (Meraku, 2017). Leadership plays a crucial role throughout the lifespan of an organization (Nicolaides & Duho, 2019), particularly in challenging situations. Organizational leaders help employees adapt to new realities and perform their duties according to changing conditions.

Exhibiting strong leadership has a profound impact on the performance, behavior, and mental well-being of followers (Aslam, Saleem, Kumar, & Parveen, 2022). In environments where organizations are rapidly evolving and becoming more complex, effective leadership is essential for guiding executives through various situations with efficiency. Executives who possess clear vision and strategy can inspire motivation and drive positive change within the organization.

However, leadership remains a complex and multifaceted process that varies across contexts. Despite its complexity, it is widely believed that effective leadership can influence follower behavior, motivate organizational members to achieve their goals, foster cooperative relationships, and promote teamwork, all of which are critical for organizational success (Anuyahong, Pengnate, & Rattanapong, 2023).

Change Management

In today's unpredictable business environment, effective change management is crucial for organizations to thrive and remain competitive. Change is a continuous and inevitable aspect of organizational life, and the ability to manage it effectively requires strong management skills and clear guidelines. It is the responsibility of executives to interpret changes in the external environment and adjust organizational strategies to align with these shifts (Okolie & Memeh, 2022).

Phillips and Klein (2023) report that change management plays a key role in helping employees accept new developments within the organization. Executives must implement various strategies to increase acceptance of change and reduce potential barriers. Successful change management is essential for overcoming resistance and fostering innovation within an organization.

Organizations that fail to adapt quickly may face crises, but those that can respond actively to change can turn these challenges into opportunities for growth (Sung & Kim, 2021).

Technology and Innovation Literacy

Organizations that fail to respond to technological advancements in a timely manner will inevitably face failure or, in the worst case, jeopardize their survival. However, the true challenge of change lies not solely in adopting technology, but in effectively integrating it into the workplace. This integration is not limited to hardware and software; it involves the ability of human resources to adapt and learn to use new technology (Nikou, Reuver, & Kanafi, 2022).

Technological literacy refers to individuals' abilities to effectively utilize the innovations and advancements developed in various scientific fields. Previous research suggests that critical thinking and decision-making skills are closely tied to information and communication technology (ICT) tools, such as data analysis and information management. Understanding IT and digital knowledge is essential for preparing to meet the challenges of Industry 4.0 and beyond (Santoso & Lestari, 2019).

Herman, Maknun, Barliana, and Mardiana (2019) further emphasize that technological literacy involves the ability to use, manage, evaluate, and understand technology. This not only enhances individual work efficiency but also improves organizational effectiveness (Nikou, Reuver, & Kanafi, 2022). Similarly, innovation literacy, closely linked to creativity and technology, is vital for organizational development.

Alsuwaidi and Omar (2020) reported that innovation literacy includes the ability of executives to coordinate resources within the organization, fostering a culture of creativity and improvement. This, in turn, allows organizations to embrace change and create opportunities for experimentation with new ideas. Bag, Gupta, Choi, and Kumar (2021) add that encouraging executives to think outside the box and propose new ideas, methods, or technological solutions fosters creativity. This approach enables organizations to recover quickly and adapt to new challenges.

Business Acumen

Business acumen is an essential skill for professionals who wish to continue advancing in their careers (Rafter, Sassenberg, & Bamford-Wade, 2021). This skill set includes a deep understanding of business and industry trends, which is crucial for driving long-term competitive advantage and fostering innovation (Schultz & Nel, 2020). Makhele and Barnard (2020) also describe business acumen as the ability to make quick and accurate business judgments and decisions. Individuals with strong business acumen tend to apply their intellectual abilities to analyze ideas more thoroughly than the average person.

According to Grilli (2022), those with business acumen often develop more innovative strategies compared to others. In industries that require extensive knowledge and offer opportunities for growth, success depends on recognizing individuals within the organization who possess a deep understanding of both technology and marketing, often gained through work experience.

Similarly, Ragas (2019) concludes that business acumen involves having a comprehensive knowledge of business functions, key stakeholders, and markets critical to an organization's success. This knowledge enables individuals to evaluate business performance and provide informed strategic recommendations to senior management, ultimately influencing organizational decision-making.

Communication

The ability to communicate effectively is crucial for diverse teams, especially in international environments, where communication skills are developed over time through practice (Chatman, Johnson, White, & Bell, 2020). In complex contexts, Meirinhos, Cardoso, Neves, Silva, and Rêgo (2023) report that communication studies provide guidance and help influence individuals towards achieving common goals. Understanding communication as both a strategic and operational management tool is essential for enhancing organizational performance and efficiency.

Effective employee engagement can only be achieved when strong interpersonal communication skills become a core component of organizational performance. Musheke and Phiri (2021) emphasize that a sound communication strategy is vital for business survival, as communication links decision-makers with all employees. Poor communication, on the other hand, often leads to conflict within organizations.

Arendt, Verdorfer, and Kugler (2019) note that leaders and followers continuously interact through communication. High—quality relationships are typically characterized by cooperative communication, while low—quality relationships often involve top—down, authoritarian communication, leading to higher levels of interpersonal dominance and less collaborative decision-making.

The manner in which leaders communicate with their followers is, therefore, crucial to fostering the quality of relationships, as well as influencing relationship and work outcomes. Communication can take various forms, including formal meetings, informal conversations, and company—wide announcements (Ramirez—Lozano, Peñaflor-Guerra, & Sanagustín-Fons, 2023).

Strategic Thinking

Strategic thinking is a mental process that involves creativity and observation (Smriti, Dhir, & Dhir, 2021). This allows executives to assess current environmental realities and anticipate future challenges, reducing the impact of complexity and change. Executives adopt proactive approaches to adapt to environmental shifts, investing strategically where opportunities exist and addressing threats using the organization's available resources (Shamkhi & Saleh, 2023). For this reason, executives are required to possess creative vision, act as systematic analysts, and make dynamic decisions to steer their organizations toward long-term success (Al-Abbadia, Alsmairat, Alshawabkeh, & Rumman, 2024).

Rodrigues, Ferreira, and Neves (2021) found that many academics agree that strategic thinking refers to the ability of executives to envision the future and develop strategies that provide their organizations with a competitive advantage. Aaltola (2019) further emphasized that strategic thinking is an essential skill for all executives, suggesting that the more strategic thinkers an organization has, the better equipped it will be to adapt to changes in the business environment.

Conclusion of Literature Review

The reviewed literature on leadership, change management, technology and innovation literacy, business acumen, communication, and strategic thinking underscores the critical competencies modern executives must possess to lead effectively in a fast-changing global environment. Strong leadership enables employees to adapt to evolving organizational realities, while effective change management equips organizations to navigate disruptions and capitalize on innovation. Furthermore, leveraging technological expertise and fostering innovation literacy, combined with robust business acumen, ensures that executives can make informed, strategic decisions that drive long—term organizational success.

Effective communication, both as a strategic tool and a means to build cooperative relationships, is essential for fostering employee engagement and ensuring organizational efficiency. Additionally, strategic thinking empowers executives to anticipate future challenges and seize emerging opportunities, facilitating proactive decision-making that sustains competitive advantage.

These findings directly support the objectives of this research, which seeks to identify and develop the key competencies required for executives to excel in increasingly complex and dynamic business environments. The literature provides a strong foundation for understanding the competencies that drive organizational success and highlights the need for a comprehensive competency model. This model will not only aid in the development of current and future executives but also help organizations maintain a sustainable competitive edge in the global marketplace.

Methodology

Sample and data collection

The key informants for this study were individuals with knowledge, skills, and experience in competencies required for future executives. The sample consisted of: 1) 13 senior executives and human resources experts. Data were collected using in-depth, semi-structured interviews, with open-ended questions allowing each interviewee to express their views over approximately 60

minutes. The data from these interviews were then analyzed for content; 2) 14 experts and academics were invited to participate in group discussions on ongoing issues to validate the content analysis results.

For the confirmatory analysis, a sample of executives and employees from government sectors, educational institutions, businesses, and private sectors in Thailand was targeted, with an intended sample size of 400 individuals. Participation in the questionnaire was voluntary, and assurances were given that all data would remain confidential and anonymous. Questionnaires were distributed to both public and private organizations in Thailand that had consented to data collection. At the end of the collection period, 345 usable responses were received, representing a response rate of 86.25%, which is more than sufficient for data analysis and exceeds the threshold for multivariate analysis, which requires a sample size of more than 300 participants (Comrey & Lee, 1992).

The majority of respondents were between 25-40 years old (47.2%), held a bachelor's degree or equivalent (53.3%), and had over 10 years of work experience (41.4%). In terms of organizational roles, 125 respondents (36.2%) were operational executives (front-line managers), 89 (25.8%) were middle managers, and 36 (10.4%) were top executives. Additionally, 95 respondents (27.5%) held other positions such as lecturers, academics, and operational staff.

Measures

The questionnaire was developed and adapted from the work of Sirapatsorn Wongthongdee et al. (2021) and was refined to ensure a high level of internal consistency. For this study, six elements were defined and measured using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). These elements included: 1) Leadership (5 items), 2) Change Management (5 items), 3) Technology and Innovation Literacy (6 items), 4) Business Acumen (4 items), 5) Communication (5 items), and 6) Strategic Thinking (6 items). All items in the questionnaire were reviewed and approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of Dhurakij Pundit University, Thailand, on 30 July 2023 (α = 0.957), indicating a high level of reliability.

Data Analysis Method

Content analysis was employed to examine the findings from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Additionally, a statistical software program was used to assess the consistency of the measurement model developed by the research team. This involved secondary confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to determine whether the measurement model aligned with the empirical data.

Results

The findings from the content analysis, derived from in-depth interviews, group discussions, and the overall averages from the questionnaires, are presented in Table 1. These results provide a comprehensive view of the competencies identified and validated through both qualitative and quantitative data.

Table 1
Summary of the findings from in-depth interviews, group discussion and the overall average from the questionnaire

Findings from in-depth interviews for 6 competencies (Interview from 11 Oct. 2023 – 8 Dec. 2024)	**Finding from focus group discussion for 6 competencies (Group Discussion as of 2 February 2024)**	**Finding from Stakeholders surveyed questionnaires: 6 competencies (Data collected in October 2023) (n = 345)**
1. Leadership (Leadership) (n = 13) 2. Knowledge and understanding of change of global trends and geopolitics (Geopolitics) (n = 10) 3. Digital knowledge, understanding and skills (Digital Literacy) (n = 9) 4. Business acumen (Acumen) (n = 5) 5. Hard and Soft Skills in Various Languages (Multi-Language Literacy) (n = 3) 6. Strategic forecasting, proactive work, listen and collect ideas to expand and elevate from available resources (Strategic Estimation, Proactive, Smart Listening, Expansion and Leveraging) (n = 3)	1. Leadership (Leadership) (n = 13) 2. Knowledge and understanding of change in diversity, global trends and geopolitics (Diversity & amp; Geopolitics) (n = 9) 3. ability to manage change (Transformational Leadership) (n = 8) 4. Digital knowledge, understanding and skills (Digital Literacy) (n = 6) 5. Hard and Soft Skills in various languages (Multi-Language Literacy) (n = 5) 6. Two-way communication that creates understanding and reaches subordinates well (Two-way communication) (n=4)	1. Leadership ($\bar{x}$ = 4.11) 2. Change Management ($\bar{x}$ = 4.09) 3. Knowledge about innovation and technology (Technology and Innovation Literacy) ($\bar{x}$ = 4.05) 4. Knowledge of the organization (Business Acumen or Knowledge of Organization) ($\bar{x}$ = 4.12) 5. Communication ($\bar{x}$ = 4.14) 6. Strategic Thinking ($\bar{x}$ = 4.07)

The results of the analysis using Bartlett's test revealed that all variables were significantly related to one another at the .05 level. When testing the suitability of the variables for confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure, the overall KMO value was found to be .940. For individual variables, the Measure of Sampling Adequacy (MSA) values ranged from .923 to .962, all of which are greater than the .50 threshold (Hair et al., 2019). Therefore, it can be concluded that the variables were appropriate for use in confirmatory factor analysis. The detailed results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Input Validation (Correlation, Bartlett's test, and KMO)

Variables	LEA	CHA	TEC	BUS	COM	STR
1. Leadership (LEA)	1					
2. Change Management (CHA)	.820*	1				
3. Technology and Innovation Literacy (TEC)	.733*	.721*	1			
4. Business Acumen (BUS)	.798*	.814*	.720*	1		
5. Communication (COM)	.805*	.813*	.755*	.779*	1	
6. Strategic Thinking (STR)	.843*	.845*	.751*	.804*	.839*	1
MSA	.940	.932	.962	.948	.939	.923
Bartlett's test = 2184.034, Sig. = .000, KMO = .940, MSA .923 to .962						

Note. *All Correlation are Significant at the .01 Level (2-tailed).

The examination of the measurement models for all six variable elements—Leadership, Change Management, Technology and Innovation Literacy, Business Acumen, Communication, and Strategic Thinking—revealed that all models were consistent with the empirical data. The detailed results for each of the six models are presented in Table 3.

Table 3
Goodness of Fit Indices for the Measurement Models of Six Variables

Measurement Model	Goodness of Fit Indices	Fitness
Leadership	Relative c^2 = 2.151, p-value = .072, GFI = .991, NFI = .991, TLI = .988, CFI = .995, RMSEA = .058, RMR = .008	Acceptable
Change Management	Relative c^2 = .821, p-value = .482, GFI = .997, NFI = .998, TLI = 1.001, CFI = 1.000, RMSEA = .000, RMR = .004	Acceptable
Technology and Innovation Literacy	Relative c^2 = 1.714, p-value = .090, GFI = .987, NFI = .987, TLI = .990, CFI = .995, RMSEA = .046, RMR = .010	Acceptable
Business Acumen	Relative c^2 = .517, p-value = .596, GFI = .999, NFI = .999, TLI = 1.004, CFI = 1.000, RMSEA = .000, RMR = .003	Acceptable
Communication	Relative c^2 = 2.118, p-value = .096, GFI = .993, NFI = .996, TLI = .992, CFI = .998, RMSEA = .057, RMR = .006	Acceptable
Strategic Thinking	Relative c^2 = 1.997, p-value = .076, GFI = .991, NFI = .994, TLI = .990, CFI = .997, RMSEA = .054, RMR = .006	Acceptable
Fit Criteria*: Relative $x^2 \geq 3$, GFI ≥ .90, NFI ≥ .95, TLI ≥ .95, CFI = ≥ .95, RMSEA < .06, RMR < .05		

Note. * (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Joreskog & Sorbon, 1984 ; Kline, 1998; Schreiber, Stage, King, Nora, & Barlow, 2006; Schumacker & Lomax, 2004).

The second—order confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to examine the factor loadings of the six variables. The consistency indices were as follows: Relative x^2 = 1. 232, p-value = . 270, GFI = .9 89, NFI = .99 5, TLI = .99 8, CFI = .99 9, RMSEA = .0 26, RMR = .004. Based on these results, we conclude that all six variables are suitable and appropriate for further analysis using second-order confirmatory factor analysis.

The results of analysis of weight values (factor loading) of 6 variables, with the second confirmatory factor analysis, were found that the index of consistency was as follows: Relative x^2 = 1. 679, p-value = . 000, GFI = .9 05, NFI = .9 43, TLI = .9 69, CFI = .9 76, RMSEA = .0 44, RMR = .016 These results indicate that the competency model for future executives, developed by the research team, aligns well with the empirical data.

In other words, the competencies of future executives include: Competency in Strategic Thinking, which had the highest factor loading, followed by Competency in Leadership, and Competency in Change Management, which had the same factor loading as Competency in Communication. Competency in Technology and Innovation Literacy ranked next, while Competency in Business Acumen had the lowest factor loading. The β values ranged between .96 and .87, all of which meet the appropriate threshold of greater than 0.5, as per Kline's criteria (2016). Further details are provided in Table 4 and Figure 1.

Table 4
Results of the Second-Order Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Competencies of Future Executives

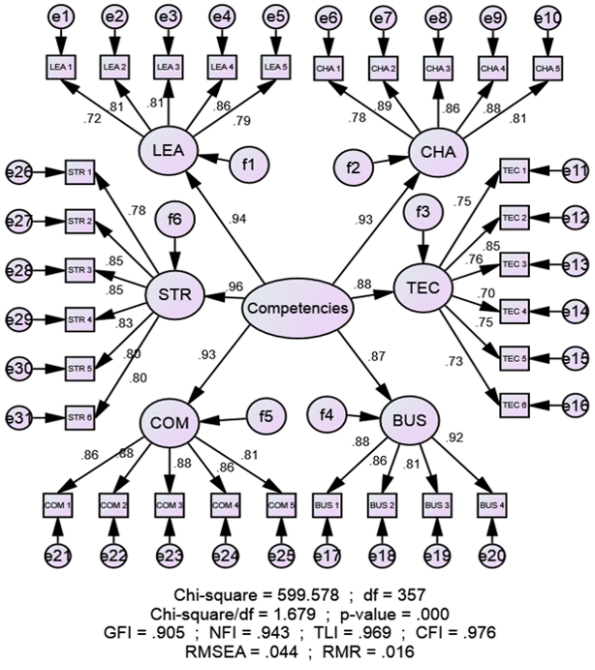
Variables/Items	Abbreviations	β	b	SE	r^2
Leadership	**LEA**	**.94**	**.92** *	**.049**	**.892**
1. Able to identify personal mistakes and corrective actions.	LEA 1	.72	.82 *	.056	.518
2. Able to communicate and motivate team members to stay enthusiastic about their work.	LEA 2	.81	.92 *	.048	.662
3. Able to lead a team and provide constructive feedback.	LEA 3	.81	.91 *	.047	.659
4. Able to create value and credibility for both team members and external stakeholders.	LEA 4	.86	1.00		.736
5. Able to offer advice and recommendations to correct work of both internal and external members.	LEA 5	.79	.92 *	.050	.631
Change Management	**CHA**	**.93**	**1.00**		**.867**
1. Able to analyze and predict global trends and directional shifts.	CHA 1	.78	.83 *	.045	.605
2. Able to set clear short- and long-term goals.	CHA 2	.89	1.00 *		.787
3. Able to adjust organizational structure to be agile and responsive to current changes.	CHA 3	.86	.89 *	.039	.738
4. Able to manage change and adapt organizational strategies.	CHA 4	.88	.96 *	.048	.777

Variables/Items	Abbreviations	β	b	SE	r^2
5. Able to offer advice and recommendations to correct work of both internal and external members.	LEA 5	.79	.92 *	.050	.631
Change Management	**CHA**	**.93**	**1.00**		**.867**
1. Able to analyze and predict global trends and directional shifts.	CHA 1	.78	.83 *	.045	.605
2. Able to set clear short- and long-term goals.	CHA 2	.89	1.00 *		.787
3. Able to adjust organizational structure to be agile and responsive to current changes.	CHA 3	.86	.89 *	.039	.738
4. Able to manage change and adapt organizational strategies.	CHA 4	.88	.96 *	.048	.777
5. Able to prepare the organization for future changes.	CHA 5	.81	.84 *	.042	.656
Technology and Innovation Literacy	**TEC**	**.88**	**.78** *	**.059**	**.770**
1. Able to develop beneficial innovations for the organization and service recipients.	TEC 1	.75	.96 *	.072	.562
2. Able to leverage organizational resources to successfully innovate.	TEC 2	.85	.95 *	.064	.721
3. Able to evaluate and continuously improve organizational innovations.	TEC 3	.76	.91 *	.068	.571
4. Able to appropriately use technology for information search.	TEC 4	.70	1.00		.494
5. Able to use digital tools for collaboration, such as online meetings or cloud sharing.	TEC 5	.75	.95 *	.044	.563
6. Able to protect personal information and ensure others' privacy.	TEC 6	.73	.84 *	.047	.535
Business Acumen	**BUS**	**.87**	**.90** *	**.050**	**.749**
1. Able to analyze organizational data and environments to enhance capabilities.	BUS 1	.88	.92 *	.060	.772
2. Able to improve work processes and cross-functional activities for efficiency.	BUS 2	.86	.91 *	.059	.732
3. Able to foster an organizational culture that supports progress.	BUS 3	.81	.93 *	.064	.654
4. Able to analyze growth opportunities in line with changing global conditions.	BUS 4	.92	1.00		.851
Communication	**COM**	**.93**	**.98** *	**.051**	**.867**
1. Able to be open-minded and promote participation both internally and externally.	COM 1	.86	.94 *	.041	.747
2. Able to communicate important issues clearly to relevant stakeholders.	COM 2	.88	1.00		.782

Variables/Items	Abbreviations	β	b	SE	r^2
3. Able to communicate with transparency and justify actions.	COM 3	.88	.99 *	.041	.773
4. Able to effectively communicate organizational policies and key issues internally and externally.	COM 4	.86	.98 *	.044	.735
5. Able to promote open communication and a positive organizational image.	COM 5	.81	.95 *	.047	.661
Strategic Thinking	**STR**	**.96**	**.99** *	**.052**	**.919**
1. Able to understand organizational strategy, direction, and goals.	STR 1	.78	.84 *	.042	.614
2. Ab Able to communicate strategy and goals to organizational members.	STR 2	.85	1.00		.730
3. Able to propose projects aligned with organizational strategy.	STR 3	.85	.95 *	.046	.727
4. Able to improve operations in line with organizational strategy.	STR 4	.83	.94 *	.047	.695
5. Able to adjust strategy according to environmental changes.	STR 5	.80	.81 *	.044	.639
6. Able to present strategic directions that drive organizational progress.	STR 6	.80	.87 *	.047	.641
Initial CFA Model: Relative x^2= 3.624, p-value = .000, GFI = .777, NFI = .852, TLI = .878, CFI = .888, RMSEA = .087, RMR = .024					
Final Model: Relative x^2 = 1.679, p-value = .000, GFI = .905, NFI = .943, TLI = .969, CFI = .976, RMSEA = .044, RMR = .016					

Note. *p < .001

Figure 1
A Second Order CFA Model



Discussions and Conclusion

The primary objective of this article is to identify the competencies required for future Thai executives, with the aim of incorporating these competencies into practice for the development of executives at all organizational levels. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) indicate that the future executive competency model developed by the research team aligns with empirical data. Specifically, this model measures the competencies of future executives and consists of six key elements (Sirapatsorn Wongthongdee et al., 2021). The competencies are ranked in order of importance based on factor loadings as follows: first, Strategic Thinking competency; second, Leadership competency; followed by Change Management competency, which has the same weight as Communication competency. Next is the Technology and Innovation Literacy competency, and lastly, the Business Acumen competency.

In this article, the elements of the Strategic Thinking competency were analyzed by considering the factor loadings at the level of individual question items. It was found that future executives must possess a thorough and in—depth understanding of strategy. Specifically, they must be able to communicate strategy, direction, and goals to other members of the organization (STR 2; β = .85) and define projects or activities that align with the organizational strategy (STR 3; β = .85). Moreover, possessing Strategic Thinking means that future executives must be able to anticipate future trends and develop strategies that provide their organizations with a competitive advantage (Rodrigues, Ferreira, & Neves, 2021) and drive long-term success (Al-Abbadia, Alsmairat, Alshawabkeh, & Rumman, 2024). This includes creating opportunities and managing threats that the organization may encounter (Shamkhi & Saleh, 2023). Consistent with the qualitative findings, the results from in-depth interviews revealed that a new-era executive must be able to make tactical predictions, proactively adopt strategic initiatives, engage in deep listening, and gather insights to enhance and leverage the organization's available resources.

Leadership competency is one of the key elements that human resources experts, both from in-depth interviews and group discussions, identified as critical for future executives. When analyzing the weight of individual question items, it was found that future executives must be able to create value and build trust both within the organization and externally (LEA 4; β = .86) whi This finding aligns with the work of Anuyahong, Pengnate, and Rattanapong (2023), who reported that executives with a clear vision and strategy foster motivation within their organizations, influence follower behavior, and inspire organizational members to achieve their goals while maintaining cooperative relationships and teamwork. These insights suggest that leaders with strong Leadership competencies have a profound influence on the credibility, motivation, behavior, and mental well—being of their followers (Aslam, Saleem, Kumar, & Parveen, 2022). Therefore, future executives must possess strong leadership competencies to effectively guide and inspire their teams toward achieving organizational goals.

When analyzing the Change Management competency, it was found that future executives must be capable of clearly defining both short-term and long-term work directions and goals (CHA 2; β = .89) This finding is consistent with Okolie and

Memeh (2022), who emphasized that the ability to forecast and anticipate competition in today's era is a critical skill. Change is a constant in organizational life, and executives must navigate external environmental shifts to align the organization's plans with the best possible approaches. It is the responsibility of executives to interpret and adjust methods to ensure they remain relevant to the organization's evolving environment. This finding aligns with the results from in-depth interviews and focus groups, which concluded that executives must possess knowledge and understanding of change, diversity, global trends, and geopolitics. The research team believes that this broad knowledge base will enable future executives to comprehensively analyze various situations affecting the organization and define strategic short-term and long-term goals accordingly. In essence, intelligent learning and adaptation to change will facilitate sustainable organizational growth and transformation.

When analyzing the Communication competency, it was found that future executives must possess strong communication skills. Specifically, they should be able to convey important issues in a way that is easily understood by those involve (COM 2; β = .88), and communicate and perform duties with transparency, providing clear explanations for their actions (COM 3; β = .88). Chatman, Johnson, White, and Bell (2020) suggested that effective communication skills are developed through regular practice and are essential for team collaboration. Executives must take responsibility for communicating with the teams they lead. In terms of transparency, Musheke and Phiri (2021) highlighted that communication acts as the link between management and employees, and poor communication often leads to conflict within the organization. The research team believes that future executives should prioritize reliable, transparent, and clear communication, free from ambiguities, to foster unity within the organization. Additionally, communication should be conducted in a manner that encourages employee participation (Meirinhos, Cardoso, Neves, Silva, & Rêgo, 2023). This is consistent with the findings from focus groups, which emphasized that future executives must possess strong two—way communication skills to effectively engage with subordinates and foster mutual understanding.

The analysis of the Technology and Innovation Literacy competency revealed that future executives must prioritize and recognize the importance of utilizing organizational resources to develop innovations that provide the greatest benefit (TEC 2; β = .85). This is a particularly challenging area for executives, requiring critical thinking and decision—making skills, especially in the era of digital disruption, where most tools are related to information and communication technology (Santoso & Lestari, 2019). The research team's perspective aligns with the findings of this study, which indicate that most changes and new technologies are implemented through the vision of organizational leaders. If executives are able to make decisions that maximize the use of technology for the organization's benefit, by possessing strong competencies in Technology and Innovation Literacy, they will emerge as practical and effective leaders. This is consistent with the findings of Alsuwaidi and Omar (2020), who reported that executives with Innovation Literacy have the ability to leverage all available organizational resources to enhance and even revolutionize their organizations. These leaders create space for experimentation and new ideas, a concept echoed by Bag, Gupta, Choi, and Kumar (2021), who found that

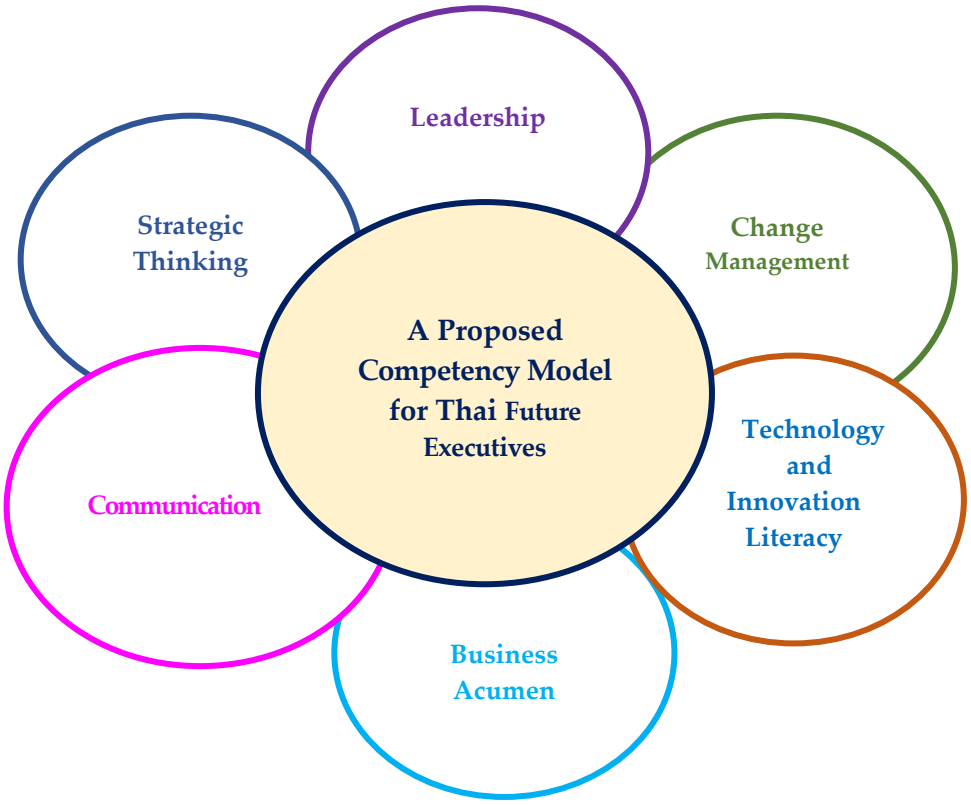
executives who think outside the box and present innovative ideas drive creativity within the organization. In addition, the findings from in-depth interviews and focus groups suggest that future executives should possess knowledge, understanding, and digital skills—often referred to as Digital Literacy—which the research team believes aligns with the overall direction of the study's results.

The analysis of the Business Acumen competency revealed that future executives must be able to predict or analyze growth opportunities for the organization in response to global changes (BUS 4; β = .92). This finding is supported by insights from in—depth interviews and focus groups, which concluded that future executives should possess strong business acumen and the ability to manage change, often linked to Transformational Leadership. As Schultz and Nel (2020) noted, Business Acumen involves a deep understanding of business and industry trends that drive long-term organizational competitive advantage. The ability to identify growth opportunities is possible only when executives possess a thorough understanding of both technology and business strategies, which is often gained through work experience (Grilli, 2022).

Recommendations

The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) conducted in this study allowed for accurate measurement of the various elements within the competency framework for executives. The variables presented in Figure 2 represent key competencies that organizations may define as essential qualifications for modern executives. These competencies can be incorporated into executive development programs both prior to assuming a role and as part of ongoing professional growth. A modular approach could be used, where experts in different competencies are invited to exchange knowledge on effective strategies and best practices for management at all levels. This would enable executives to proactively manage their responsibilities in alignment with current and future challenges. The findings from qualitative interviews, along with the competency model developed by the research team, support each other and demonstrate the robustness of the proposed model. However, to further refine and validate these competencies in different contexts, the research team recommends the following steps for future research. First, future studies should focus on developing measurement models that transform question items into observable indicators. Second, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) should be used to further test relationships between variables, expanding the analysis into structural equation modeling (SEM). Lastly, researchers should ensure an adequate or similar sample size, particularly if conducting multi-group analyses among operational executives, middle managers, and senior executives. This approach would yield more in—depth and comprehensive insights, potentially revealing differences based on roles and responsibilities. Additionally, dividing the sample between government and private sector executives could offer valuable data for comparative analysis.

Figure 2
A Proposed Competency Model for Future Thai Executives



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