



## The Concept of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Lecturer Competencies in Higher Educational Institutions in Thailand

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### Abstract

This study aims to describe the concept of 21<sup>st</sup>-century lecturer competencies in higher educational institutions in Thailand through a literature review. The higher educational institutions in Thailand recognize the importance of designing frameworks of lecturer competencies in the institutions to be guidelines for the lecturers to perform their duties under the standard of the institutions and the context of educational management in the 21st century. Competency means the ability, skills, as well as qualifications of a person to be accepted for a certain profession or occupation, and is important for enhancing a person to perform their work to successfully achieve the target goal of the organization. Besides, competency is a guideline for any profession since it is specifically set for a specific profession. Competency standard framework for each of professions is important for human resource management, holistically, in the efficiency and effectiveness of the staff in organizations. Moreover, it is also a guideline to develop skills and ability in working to be accepted as a professional standard, organizational standard, national standard, and international standard. Competency is made up of the following elements: 1) Skill, 2) Knowledge, 3) Self-image/Attributes, 4) Traits, and 5) Motive. There are four competencies of the lecturers in the higher education institutes under the context of educational management in the 21st century, including 1) Instructional management competency, 2) Knowledge competency, 3) academic innovative competency, and 4) self-practice competency.

**Keywords:** Lecturer, Competency, Lecturer's Competencies, Higher Educational Institutions

### 1. Introduction

The context of educational management in the 21st century focuses on the learners' outcome, in which lecturers are the important driving mechanism. When the context of educational management changes; the skills, knowledge, and abilities of the lecturers need to be developed following the new context. The higher education institutions started setting the competencies for the lecturers in their institutions and later when the Office of Higher Education Commission (2018) was established, there are guidelines to enhance the quality of educational management of teachers in the Higher educational institutions and guidelines for creating competency frameworks for their lecturers. The advantage of having the competency standard for the lecturers in the higher educational institutions is to provide the lecturers understanding regarding the ways or regulations or guidelines to work under the new context based on the standards as a path to produce the graduates in the 21st century who have the 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills, namely, critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, information literacy, media literacy, technology literacy, flexibility, leadership, initiative, productivity, and social skills (Stauffer, 2020). This article comprised definition, importance, elements, types of competencies, concepts of lecturer's competencies in higher educational institutions, and conclusion from the literature review.

### 2. Definition of competency

Competency is referred to the ability or characteristics of a person doing a specific career, and it is variously defined by scholars and organizations as follows.

Office of the Education Council, Ministry of Education (2013) defined "competency" as the working ability gained from using knowledge, skills, and desirable qualifications.

Organization for economic cooperation and development (2016) proposed that "competency" is the ability to mobilize knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values alongside a reflective approach to the process of learning to engage with and act in the world.



Prasetio, Azis, Fadhilah, and Fauziah (2017) stated that “competency” is described as a range of knowledge and behavior that must be possessed by teachers or lecturers to do their duties. Teacher competency includes their knowledge, skills, and behavior.

Maaleki (2018) mentioned that “competency” is a series of knowledge, abilities, skills, experiences, and behaviors, which leads to the effective performance of an individual’s activities.

Madjid (2020) suggested that “competency” is a set of capabilities that must be own by a teacher or lecturer and includes knowledge, skills, and behavior.

Smestad & Gillespie (2020) stated that “competency” is related to attitudes, knowledge, and skills.

Faltermeier (2021) defined “competency” as the abilities of the individual to put ideas into practice, including knowledge, behavior, skill, and attitude.

Wikipedia (2021) defined “competency” as the set of demonstrable characteristics and skills that enable and improve the efficiency or performance of a job.

According to the definitions of “competency” mentioned above, it can be summarized that “competency” means knowledge, ability, skills, including individual characteristics accepted in working in a certain field of career. Competency is important for driving a person to work to successfully achieve the target goal of the organization. Moreover, competency is also a guideline for doing any career that was set by a group of people doing that kind of career. Consequently, the competency of the lecturers must be identified as knowledge, ability, skills, and other characteristics needed for supporting them to be successful in doing their duties to achieve the target goals of the Higher educational institutions.

### 3. Importance of professional competency framework

Creating a professional competency framework is advantageous for the organizations in human resource management such as staff recruitment, working performance evaluation, development of human resources, motivating staff, providing career guidance, and planning careers for staff. Also, setting professional competency helps to specify the guidelines to develop the working ability of staff to be internationally accepted (Kasipa, 2008). Professional competency setting also helps to upgrade the quality of production to be able to compete with foreign countries and enhance the quality of human power to have the opportunity in a career path (Wattananarong, 2011). Designing a professional competency framework will help increase staff’s ability to be ready for ASEAN and also increase economic value for the country sustainably (Yawirach, 2015). Competencies allow employers to see how top performers achieve success, instead of simply seeing what they did achieve. By mapping out the skills and behaviors required for success within an organization as well as an employer can keep track of an individual’s ability in each area (Leishman, 2018). Set individual competency will help increase the level of competitive ability of the nation (Professional Qualifications Institute, 2019). The competency model can help the organizations align their initiatives to their overall business strategy: career paths, performance management, selection, succession planning, training, and development (Wikipedia, 2021).

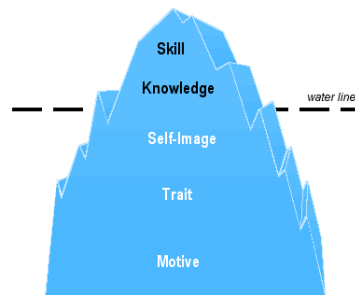
To set professional competency is necessary for human resource management as a whole in the aspect of efficiency and effectiveness of staff in organizations. Furthermore, it is a guideline to develop skills and ability to perform work to be accepted as the preset standards at the professional level, organizational level, national level, and international level.

### 4. Elements of competency

McClelland (1973) explained the elements of competency using the Iceberg Model, a classic theory that is always referenced. The Iceberg Model is comprising 2 parts; the first part, above the water, is visible whereas the second part, below the water, cannot be seen. McClelland compared the Iceberg Model with human competency that the part above the water is like the competency of people that can be observed. On the other, the part below the water needs more time or more interaction hidden competency appears. According to this Iceberg Model, the competency is composed of 5 elements including 1) Skill refers to a person competency or ability to do something until becoming skillful, 2) Knowledge refers to a person’s data or knowledge, 3) Self Image / Attributes refers to characteristics, manners, thinking, attitudes, and norms, 4)



Traits refers to physical appearance normally acted out by a person, and 5) Motive refers to stimulus or motivation in a certain circumstance. The Iceberg Model is shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1** Iceberg Model by McClelland (1973)

Therefore, the professional competency designation identifies the potential of the person that can be observed, such as knowledge and professional skills. Besides, the potential of the person that cannot be noticed but requires time or interaction, the latent potential in the person, thus appears, such as personality, attitude, and motivation. The composition of such competencies is present in all types of professional competencies.

## 5. Types of competency

Types of competency are explained variously in different professional fields such as Kongkasawat (2007), Tananan (2010), Phuwitayapan (2016), Tanormchart & Suwanset (2016), and Wekipedia (2021) which can be summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1** The comparison of types of competency

| References                    | Types of Competency                          |  |   |
|-------------------------------|--|--|---|
|                               | Core Competency                              | Functional/Job/Professional/<br>Technical Competency | Managerial Competency   |
| Kongkasawat (2007)            | Core Competency                              | Functional Competency                                | Leadership Competency<br>Social Competency<br>Personal Competency |
| Tananan (2010)                | Core Competency                              | Functional Competency                                | Managerial Competency   |
| Phuwitayapan (2016)           | Core Competency                              | Functional Competency                                | Managerial Competency   |
| Tanormchart & Suwanset (2016) | Core Competency                              | Functional Competency                                | Managerial Competency   |
| Wikipedia (2021)              | Core Competency<br>Organizational Competency | Functional Competency<br>Technical Competency        | Managerial Competency<br>Behavioral Competency                    |

From Table 1, it can also be noted that competency can be divided into 3 types as follows:

1) Core Competency is a basic characteristic that all staff in the organizations need to have such as organizational culture, mission, vision, strategies, and norms, which help support the organizations to achieve the target goals.



2) Functional/Job/Professional/Technical Competency is a characteristic and qualification of a person specified for a specific position including knowledge, skills, and abilities such as negotiation, presentation, sales, and personality.

3) Managerial Competency is a characteristic of managerial skill for operating the organizations to meet the target goals effectively. This type of competency includes leadership skills, governing or commanding, planning, problem-solving, decision making, controlling, and persuading for instance.

## 6. The Concept of Lecturer Competencies in Higher Educational Institutions

Krutka (2015) stated that the lecturers' competencies in the higher educational institutions comprised instructional management competency, researching competency, community service competency, and cultural art maintaining competency.

Prueksunan (2015) regarded that the lecturers in the higher education institutes should have 3 competencies. First, Basic Competencies relate to the spirit of being human and being a teacher. Secondly, Managerial Competencies relate to planning and management of life. Lastly, Learning and teaching technique competency.

Ketchararat & Others (2015) examined desirable competencies of Kasetsart University lecturers and found that the desirable competencies of the lecturers included curriculum and instructional competency, research competency, academic service competency, and arts and culture preservation competency.

Prince of Songkla University (2015) created PSU Teaching Professional Standards Framework (PSU-TPSF) specifying competencies of the lecturers into 3 aspects: 1) Professional Knowledge including knowledge in teaching content and appropriate teaching methods for learners, 2) Professional Practice in instructional management, and 3) professional development to create values for the community.

Office of Higher Education Commissions (2018) designed a conceptual framework for the quality of instructional management of the lecturers of the higher educational institutions to be composed of 3 elements as follows. 1) Knowledge comprised two dimensions including knowledge in the field of teaching and knowledge in teaching and learning. 2) Competencies of instruction comprised 4 dimensions including designing and planning learning activities for learners, performing learning activities effectively, enhancing the learning atmosphere and supporting learners' learning, and assessment and evaluation of learners' learning achievement including providing feedback information. 3) Values comprised 2 dimensions including values of teaching professional development and self-development continuation and ethics of teaching profession.

King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi (2018) developed KMUTT PSF (KMUTT Professional Standards Framework – Learning and Teaching) to identify the competencies of the lecturers, which comprises 3 domains; 1) Knowledge referring to instructional knowledge, 2) Area of Activity referring to enhancing the learners' engagement, and 3) Values referring to recognizing the values and importance of the learners.

Madjid (2020) mentioned that the competency required of a teacher, consisting of four elements, namely, professional competency, pedagogic competency, personal competency, and social competency.

The United Kingdom Professional Standards Framework-UKPSF (2020) concerned about the standard of the lecturers' competencies to be composed of 3 aspects including 1) areas of activity, the competency of instructional management and teaching techniques, 2) core knowledge, the competency of the content of subjects and knowledge transfer, and 3) professional values, the competency of recognizing values and importance of learners, communities, and societies.

Vrije University Amsterdam (2020) stated that the competencies of the higher educational institutes comprise competencies of didactic flexibility, social flexibility, developing teaching, cooperation, and conscious lectureship.

Australian Professional Standards for Teachers – Australia PST (n.d.) classified the competencies of the teachers into 3 aspects including 1) Professional Knowledge, recognition of differences of the learners and content of the curriculum and instructional techniques, 2) Professional Practice including instructional planning, learning design, learning atmosphere creation, assessment, and evaluation of learning achievement



and giving the learners' feedback, and 3) Professional Engagement, competency in participating with groups, creating a relationship with others such as colleagues, the learners' parents, different professions, communities, and societies.

**Table 2** The Comparison of the Concept of Lecturer Competencies in Higher Educational Institutions

| <b>References</b>                                | <b>Instructional Management Competency</b>                   | <b>Knowledge Competency</b>  | <b>Academic Innovative Competency</b>   | <b>Self-Practice Competency</b>   |
|--|--|--|---|---|
| Kruta (2015)                                     | Instructional Management Competency                          |  | Research Competency<br>Academic Service Competency for Society                                    | Arts & Culture Preservation Competency  |
| Pruksunan (2015)                                 | Technical Competency (Instructional Management)              |  |   | Managerial Competency (Planning & Life Management)<br>Core Competency (Consciousness of Human Being & Teacher Duty) |
| Ketchararat & Others (2015)                      | Curriculum & Instructional Competency                        |  | Research Competency<br>Academic Service Competency  | Arts & Culture Preservation Competency  |
| PSU-TPSF (2015)                                  | Instructional Management Skill Competency                    | Knowledge Competency (Knowledge of Subject & Knowledge of Teaching Techniques) | Self-Development to Create Values for Curriculum Competency                                       |   |
| Office of the Higher Education Commission (2018) | Instructional Management Competency                          | Instructional Management of Professional Field & Instructional Field           | Norms & Value competency<br>Professional Development Competency<br>Professional Ethics Competency |   |
| KMUTT-PSF (2018)                                 | Creating Learners' participation Valuing Learners Competency | Pedagogy Competency  |   |   |
| Madjid (2020)                                    | Professional Competency                                      | Pedagogic Competency   | Personal Competency<br>Social Competency  |   |

**Table 2** The Comparison of the Concept of Lecturer Competencies in Higher Educational Institutions (Cont.)

| <b>References</b>       | <b>Instructional Management Competency</b>   | <b>Knowledge Competency</b>   | <b>Academic Innovative Competency</b>   | <b>Self-Practice Competency</b> |
|-------------------------|--|---|---|---------------------------------|
| UKPSF (2020)            | Instructional Management & Teaching Techniques Competency<br>Valuing Learners, Community & Social Competency | Knowledge of Subject & Pedagogy Competency                                  |   |                                 |
| Vrije University (2020) | Instructional Competency   |   | Self-Development in Teaching Profession<br>Social Competency<br>Cooperation Competency<br>consciousness<br>Lectureship Competency |                                 |
| Australia PST (n.d.)    | Practice, Teaching Plan, Learning Design, Learning Environment, Learning Evaluation Competency               | Knowledge of Learners' Differences, Subject, Teaching Techniques Competency | Cooperation Competency<br>Relationship with Others, Community and Society Competency  |                                 |

It can be concluded that competencies of the lecturers of the higher education institutes can be classified into 4 core competencies, namely, 1) instructional management competency that relates to learning design, knowledge transferring, assessment and evaluation, and giving advice, 2) knowledge competency that relates to instructional knowledge including diversity of learners and knowledge in the field of teaching, 3) academic innovative competency that relates to research and development, academic work creation, and academic services, and 4) self-practice competency that relates to social skill, professional ethics, and arts and culture preservation, as shown in Table 2.

## 7. Conclusion

At present, many higher educational institutions in Thailand are starting to define more concrete lecturer competencies where an emphasis is on functional competency. The lecturers' competencies established in each institution are consistent across all institutions. However, there will be some names of competencies that differ. All institutions will place a top priority on instruction management competency, followed by knowledge competency, academic innovative competency, and self-practice competency, respectively. For foreign higher educational institutions, social competency or competency in building relationships with the communities is a key competency, which is different from the higher educational institutions in Thailand where such competencies are considered secondary competencies as can be seen from Table 2.

Based on the literature review, it can be said that the lecturers' competencies in the higher educational institutions in Thailand under the context of 21st-century education management consist of 4 core competencies:



1. Instructional management competency relates to the following secondary competencies: learning design, knowledge transfer, measurement & evaluation, and counseling competency.
2. Knowledge competency relates to the following secondary competencies: knowledge of pedagogy including diversity of learners, and knowledge of pedagogy.
3. Academic innovative competency relates to the following secondary competencies: research & development, academic work creation, and academic services.
4. Self-practice competency relates to the following secondary competencies: self-development, social skills, morals and ethics, and arts and culture preservation.

These four core competencies mentioned above are the core competency required by the lecturers in the higher educational institutions in Thailand to be in line with the new century education management that focuses on the learners' outcomes.

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