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MINDFULNESS INNOVATION APPROACH TO DEVELOPING HAPPINESS INDICATORS FOR PERSONNEL AT INTERNATIONAL BUDDHIST STUDIES COLLEGE

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Abstract This study examines a Mindfulness Innovation framework for developing happiness indicators among personnel at the International Buddhist Studies College (IBSC). Grounded in Theravāda, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna (TMV) Buddhist traditions, it addresses the need for work-life balance and well-being strategies in an international academic setting. The objectives were to identify mindfulness-based happiness indicators for IBSC personnel, evaluate the impact of mindfulness innovations on stress reduction and happiness within TMV frameworks, and assess the overall effectiveness of this innovation approach in developing happiness indicators. A mixed-methods design was used, combining qualitative interviews with 10 key informants from Thailand, Bhutan, Vietnam, Korea, and Hungary and a quantitative pilot intervention. Tools included structured questionnaires, interview guides, and observational checklists. Pre- and post-intervention measures of emotional resilience, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction were analyzed via paired-samples t-tests. The 5-day mindfulness intervention drew on TMV practices; an example pilot course significantly increased participants' self-reported happiness (mean score 4.08 to 4.26, $p<.01$). Thematic analysis of interviews identified core happiness dimensions that were both culturally-specific and universal across traditions. The findings empirically support a culturally sensitive model of mindfulness-based well-being: TMV-inspired practices improved well-being in a diverse academic community, producing validated happiness indicators tailored to the IBSC context. This contributes to Buddhist and organizational psychology by linking traditional Buddhist wisdom with employee happiness science, offering an evidence-based model to foster a balanced, supportive academic environment..

Keywords Mindfulness Innovations; Happiness Indicators; TMV framework

INTRODUCTION

Modern organizations face rising stress and burnout among employees. In higher education, international faculty and staff often juggle demanding workloads across cultures. The International Buddhist Studies College (IBSC) of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University is a global community with lecturers and students from multiple countries. In the university environment, the high-pressure atmosphere frequently challenges employees' ability to maintain a healthy work-life balance. This balance is crucial for both personal well-being and professional satisfaction

(Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Inquires about mindfulness-based happiness indicators, impact of mindfulness practices on stress reduction and happiness in various Buddhist traditions, and the relationship between mindfulness innovation practice and work-life balance.

This setting generates a unique opportunity and challenge to promote happiness and well-being through Buddhist mindfulness practices. Buddhism teaches that true happiness (sukha) emerges from inner transformation rather than external conditions. Mindfulness (sati) present-moment awareness is central to this transformation (Arbel, 2016). By observing thoughts and feelings without attachment, practitioners cultivate insight and serenity. In institutional settings, integrating mindfulness can address work-life imbalance and create supportive environments that enhance emotional balance, productivity, and fulfillment.

Building on this insight, the present research introduces the concept of mindfulness innovation: adapting mindfulness practices across Theravāda, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna Buddhism to modern organizational challenges. Rather than adopting one tradition alone, this innovation approach creatively blends techniques from all three "TMV" schools to foster individual growth and a balanced work-life experience (Brahmapundit & Harvey, 2015). The study aims to operationalize this innovation by developing and validating happiness indicators measurable aspects of subjective well-being for IBSC personnel. These indicators include emotional equilibrium, job satisfaction, social connectedness, and sense of purpose.

These objectives were investigated via a sequential mixed-methods design. In Phase 1, in-depth interviews with 10 key informants from the five IBSC-affiliated MOUs countries were used to generate candidate indicators and themes. In Phase 2, a five-day pilot mindfulness course was delivered (incorporating TMV practices) with 20 student participants; pre- and post-surveys measured changes in resilience, life satisfaction, and job satisfaction. In Phase 3, findings were triangulated to produce an empirically validated set of happiness indicators. Data collection tools included structured questionnaires, interview guides, and observational checklists. Quantitative data were analyzed by paired-samples t-tests to detect pre/post changes, and qualitative data were coded thematically. The expected outcome was a set of culturally sensitive happiness indicators aligned with Buddhist mindfulness practices, offering a model for supportive, thriving academic communities.

This research article synthesizes the core teachings, methodology, data analysis, and conclusions of the study. It situates the findings within Buddhist scholarship on mindfulness as well as educational organization research on employee happiness and well-being. The work highlights how mindfulness innovations of TMV wisdom can be systematically applied in an educational institution to reduce stress and enhance happiness, and how empirical research can guide such innovation.

METHODS

This study employed a convergent mixed-methods design integrating qualitative and quantitative phases. All phases were conducted between 2024 and 2025 at IBSC, MCU, Thailand, with voluntary participation from IBSC personnel, including lecturers, staff, and students.

The qualitative phase consisted of in-depth interviews with ten key informants from five countries affiliated with IBSC (Thailand, Vietnam, Bhutan, Korea, and Hungary). Informants were purposively selected based on their experience with mindfulness practices and cross-cultural engagement. Interview questions explored participants' perceptions of mindfulness, happiness, and stress within the IBSC context. All interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and translated where necessary. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify salient themes, conceptual distinctions across Theravāda, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna traditions, and preliminary indicators of happiness.

The quantitative phase involved the development and implementation of a five-day pilot mindfulness program, titled Mindfulness Innovation and Happiness (MIH), designed on the basis of qualitative findings. The program was delivered to twenty student participants, including a control subgroup, and integrated insight meditation (Theravāda), compassion-based practices (Mahāyāna), and visualization techniques (Vajrayāna) through daily sessions. Participants completed pre- and post-intervention surveys. Quantitative measures included a modified 15-item Oxford Happiness Questionnaire, a five-item Life Satisfaction Scale, an eight-item Job (Role) Satisfaction scale, and a six-item Emotional Resilience Scale. All instruments used five-point Likert scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), and demonstrated high internal reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha \approx .82$). Demographic data and information on meditation frequency were also collected.

The final phase focused on the development and validation of happiness indicators through data triangulation. Findings from the qualitative and quantitative phases were integrated and discussed in focus group workshops with five IBSC faculty members. These sessions were used to refine and confirm key indicators, such as compassion, equanimity, and sense of purpose. The final set of indicators was approved by both the expert participants and the research team.

Quantitative data were entered into Excel and analyzed using paired-samples *t*-tests with a significance threshold of $p < .05$ to examine pre- and post-intervention changes in resilience, satisfaction, and life satisfaction. Qualitative data analysis followed an iterative process, beginning with open coding of interview transcripts to establish an initial coding framework, followed by axial coding to cluster related concepts such as mindful listening, stress tolerance, and collective harmony. Triangulation was used to ensure alignment between emergent qualitative themes and quantitative constructs. This mixed-methods design enabled mutual validation between narrative accounts and survey results.

The twenty participants in the pilot program were full-time IBSC students from diverse cultural backgrounds, with a mean age of 30 years (SD = 5). Ten participants were international students (from Vietnam, Bhutan, Korea, and Hungary), and ten were Thai nationals. All participants had prior exposure to meditation through IBSC courses. The ten interview informants included senior IBSC scholars aged between 35 and 60 years, each with between five and twenty-five years of experience in Buddhist academic and contemplative practice.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Concept of Mindfulness in Theravāda, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna Buddhism

Buddhism, a spiritual tradition originating in ancient India, is practiced worldwide through its diverse schools: Theravāda, Mahayāna, and Vajrayāna. These schools, while rooted in the fundamental teachings of the Buddha, adopt distinct methodologies for doctrine, practice, and philosophy. This paper delves into the distinctive characteristics of each tradition, examining their conceptual frameworks, spiritual practices, and interpretations of the path to enlightenment. Theravāda, commonly known as the "Path of the Elders," is regarded as the most conservative branch of Buddhism (Sujato, 2022). Primarily practiced in Sri Lanka, Thailand, Myanmar, Laos, and Cambodia, it is grounded in the Pāli Canon, which is considered the earliest extant recording of the Buddha's teachings. Theravada teachings emphasize the attainment of personal liberation, known as nibbana, through the cultivation of ethical conduct (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*). Theravāda holds the enlightened being (*arahant*) as the ideal figure, embodying the realization of liberation by eradicating defilements (kilesā) (Gethin, 1998).

Theravāda Meditation emphasizes the cultivation of insifht meditation (*vipassanā*) and calming meditation (*samath*). These practices are designed to enhance concentration and provide insight into the fundamental principles of impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and the absence of an independent self (*anattā*). The ultimate objective of Theravāda is the attainment of individual enlightenment, which is realized through unwavering adherence to the Buddha's authentic teachings and a disciplined meditative practice.

Mahāyāna Buddhism emerged as a reform movement around the 1st century CE, offering a broader and more inclusive path to enlightenment. It is prevalent in East Asia, including China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam. The concept of the Bodhisattva is the hallmark of Mahāyāna Buddhism (Nagarjuna, 1995). Unlike Theravāda's focus on individual liberation, Mahāyāna emphasizes universal salvation, where a Bodhisattva vows to attain enlightenment not only for oneself but for all sentient beings. Mahāyāna introduces profound philosophical concepts, such as emptiness (*Śūnyatā*) and Buddha-nature (*Tathāgatagarbha*). Emptiness (*Śūnyatā)* asserts that all phenomena lack inherent existence

and arise dependently, while Buddha-nature (*Tathāgatagarbha)* asserts that all beings inherently possess the potential for enlightenment (Williams, 1989). In addition to meditation, Mahāyāna Buddhism emphasizes practices such as chanting, and the veneration of Buddhas and bodhisattvas such as Amitabha and Avalokiteshvara. Mahāyāna's approach is characterized by its emphasis on compassion (*karunā*), interdependence, and the aspiration to attain Buddhahood for the benefit of all sentient beings.

Vajrayāna, a branch of Buddhism, is closely associated with Tibetan Buddhism and is considered the esoteric tradition. It emerged from Mahāyāna Buddhism but incorporates distinctive tantric elements that expedite the path to enlightenment. Vajrayāna tantric practice utilizes rituals, mantras, sacred gestures (*mudras*), and sacred diagrams (*mandalas*) as transformative tools. These practices are grounded in the principle that ordinary experiences can be transmuted into pathways to enlightenment (Brahmapundit & Harvey, 2015). Vajrayāna places substantial emphasis on the teacher-student relationship. The guru, or lāma, is regarded as indispensable for guiding practitioners through the intricate tantric path (Berzin, 1985).

Central to Vajrayāna practice is deity yoga, wherein practitioners visualize themselves as a deity, embodying its enlightened qualities. This method establishes a connection between ordinary existence and the realization of one's inherent Buddha-nature. Vajrayāna relies on tantric texts, such as the Guhyasamāja Tantra and the Hevajra Tantra, which provide comprehensive instructions on esoteric practices. Vajrayana's unique characteristic lies in its emphasis on direct and expedient methods of transformation, making it the most ritualistic and symbolically rich tradition within Buddhism.

In summary, all three traditions value mindfulness but emphasize different aspects: Theravāda focuses on present-moment insight and non-attachment, Mahāyāna on compassionate awareness and universal altruism, and Vajrayāna on ritualized transformation and deity meditation. Each tradition thus offers unique techniques for stress reduction and happiness enhancement. Through acknowledging these distinctions, one can see how combining practices from mindfulness innovations of TMV might provide a rich toolkit for individual happiness and well-being in modern educational settings.

Mindfulness Innovation

The Mindfulness Innovation approach used here means creatively adapting Buddhist mindfulness practices from all three traditions to contemporary challenges in organizational life. It is not innovation in the sense of mere novelty, but rather aligning ancient meditative disciplines with modern needs. As defined by the study, Mindfulness Innovation incorporates mindfulness practices of the three Buddhist schools TMV to address contemporary challenges within organizational settings, fostering an environment

that supports personal growth and work-life balance. In practice, this might involve blending Theravāda *vipassanā* instruction with Mahāyāna loving-kindness exercises and Vajrayāna visualization techniques in a single program. The goal is to create a supportive, balanced work culture, for example, teaching staff a short daily loving-kindness (*mettā*) practice to enhance collegial relationships, while offering stress-awareness workshops drawn from insight meditation (*Vipassanā)*. The innovation aspect lies in tailoring and sequencing these practices for non-monastic adults with busy schedules. With testing and refining these blended programs empirically, the research aims to demonstrate an evidence-based model of mindfulness suited to diverse practitioners in this case, the multi-cultural IBSC personnel.

This innovative framing also implies that traditional mindfulness is not static. Buddhist scholarship itself has recognized the evolution of mindfulness concepts over centuries (Chems-Maarif et al., 2015). In the Western countries especially, modern MBSR and secular mindfulness have already shown how Buddhist awareness training can be reinterpreted for health and work settings. The Mindfulness Innovation approach goes further by explicitly using the TMV framework as a guide: it acknowledges that Theravāda's ethical foundations, Mahāyāna's compassion orientation, and Vajrayāna's transformative methods each contribute distinct *innovative* practices for stress relief and joy.

Numerous studies have shown that practicing mindfulness innovations has a positive impact on overall well-being and personal happiness. Research conducted in various meditation innovations has demonstrated that mindfulness interventions lead to reduced stress levels, improved work-life balance, personal development, and increased life satisfaction among employees.

Pramaha Hansa Dhammahaso (2011) has discussed about types of happiness in a book named "Buddhism and Modern Sciences" It can be inferred that the life with good health according to Buddhism must associate with both kinds of happiness: (1) Physical happiness (kāyika-sukha) is the happiness that results from physical components can perform the normal function, not malfunction, such as seeing beautiful pictures; hearing pleasurable sounds; smelling odorous; tasting delicious taste; and touching tangible soft. They are called the contact from sensual pleasures (Kāmaguṇa), (ear, nose, nose, tongue, body), (2) Mental happiness (cetasika-sukha) means that the mind is delighted, cheerful, not bothered by the power of defilement in mental doors: greed, hatred and delusion, the cause of sorrow and grief. The mental happiness is the state of mind that is usually bright, cheerful, not dull with the mind-objects that comes to mind.

Todd Lewis and Gary DeAngelis (2017) have mentioned about happiness and a tool for achievement in a book named "Teaching Buddhism: New Insights on Understanding and Presenting the Traditions" which can be claimed that sukha is more associated with mental development than with any form of material acquisition. The most important tool to

achieve this mental stage is through training of the mind through meditation to reach the stage of paññā (wisdom or insight) the ability to understand reality clearly, everything according to its own nature. Therefore, paññā is instrumental in being relieved from pain. With no pain, it will be sukha or wellness of the mind, despite the inevitable decline of the mortal body. An individual who perfects his or her paññā may experience enlightenment.

Venerable Mahāsi Sayadaw (2013) has stated about kinds of happiness in a book named "On the Nature of Nibbāna". From the book, it can be concluded that there are two kinds of happiness, sensual and non-sensual. When six sense-objects supply satisfaction or pleasure, it is called vedayita sukha, happiness derived from the senses. While peace and happiness not derived from sensual pleasures constitute avedayita sukha. True bliss is santi sukha, bliss of peace and serenity. You may think that sensual pleasures give you happiness, but that is not true happiness. No real peace and happiness is possible unless a man is freedom the selfish desire and egoism caused by the threefold craving. It is the way out of this craving the attainment of eternal peace that is taught by the Buddhist doctrine of nibbāna as the supreme destiny awaiting all humanity.

Bhadantacariya Buddhaghosa (2010) has expounded about the etymological definition of dukkha in his great work named "The Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga)" which can be understood that dukkha [suffering] the word du ("bad") is met with in the sense of vile (*kucchita*); for they call a vile child a du-putta ("bad child"). The word kham ("-ness"), however is met with in the sense of empty (*tuccha*), for they call empty space "kham." And the first truth is vile because it is the haunt of many dangers, and it is empty because it is devoid of the lastingness, beauty, pleasure, and self-conceived by rash people. So, it is called *dukkham* ("badness" = suffering, pain), because of vileness and emptiness. Furthermore, Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli has explained the reason for translating the term "happiness" as follow: In loose usage pīti (happiness) and sukha (pleasure or bliss) are almost synonyms. They become differentiated in the jhāna formulas.

Phramaha Singhathon Narasabho (2000) provides practitioners guides to Buddhist meditation methods, Meditation: A Guide to a Happy Life attempt to interpret and re-examine the theories and the practice, the advantages as well as the levels of attainment regarding Buddhist meditation. It can also be regarded as a comprehensive and authoritative work on Buddhist ways of practice following all aspects of both *samatha-bhāvanā* (tranquility meditation) and *vipassanā-bhāvanā* (insight meditation), which are known as the fundamental principles and teaching of the Lord Buddha, as found in the Pāli Canon. It seems in the more academic research presented by Singhathon Narasabho on Buddhist meditation that he has adopted a critical and comparative method to illustrate the fundamental principles and benefits of the practice of Buddhist meditation. Through Buddhist practices he greatly expects this book would be the best guide for all practitioners to follow in the hope of success in practice leading to the final goal of Buddhism: *Nibbāna*.

Venerable Rāhula (1999) mentioned mental well-being in the book of "What the Buddha Taught". The first chapter of the book outlines basic attitudes of Buddhist culture, the necessity of critical inquiry (Kālamasutta), non-violence, tolerance and the distinction of 'faith' not as belief but as trust and intelligent devotion. Then the Four Noble Truths appear to be the theme of chapters 2 through 5. Chapter 6 discusses *anattā* and points out the mistranslating common instances of *attā* (as in 'myself' or 'yourself') as 'Self'. Chapter 7 concerns mental development (*bhāvanā*). In this chapter. he described differences between concentration and insight meditation. and proposes a simple guide for the practice of mindfulness of breathing, Ānāpānasati. The remainder of the book involves translations of selections from the Pāli Canon, e.g., "*Dhammacakkappavattanasutta*: Discourse on Setting in Motion the Wheel of Truth," "Mettā sutta: Discourse on Loving Kindness," "Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta: Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness," These are excellent initial texts of Buddhist ideas.

Research in organizational psychology has increasingly documented the benefits of mindfulness for employees, particularly in terms of well-being within organizations. One meta-analysis found that workplace mindfulness training produces medium-to-large improvements in well-being and stress reduction (Hedge's $g \approx 0.5$). For example, Bartlett et al. (2019), synthesized 23 randomized trials and reported that after training, perceived stress significantly decreased and well-being significantly increased ($g \approx 0.46$, $p < .01$). Similarly, Sentin et al. (2025), surveyed 205 employees and found that higher mindfulness is linked to lower perceived stress, which in turn boosts employee well-being and reduces turnover intentions. In line with these, Hülsheger et al. (2013), demonstrated that a brief workplace mindfulness course led to significantly lower emotional exhaustion (Hedge's $g=0.46$) and higher job satisfaction ($g=0.50$) among participants relative to controls. These findings emphasize that mindfulness is a powerful personal resource that enhances emotional regulation and overall job satisfaction in work settings.

Regarding the factors contributing to happiness and their cultural context: Work by Pumkhem et al. (2025), in a Thai academic context highlighted several key factors promoting happiness for working people: emotional regulation, job satisfaction, work-life balance, supportive leadership, and mindfulness. These dimensions align with both Buddhist values e.g. inner balance, compassionate relationships and organizational needs satisfaction and balance. Indeed, fostering supportive leadership and work-life harmony has been shown to reduce stress and improve engagement in many contexts. In our study, these factors provided a starting checklist to look for changes after mindfulness interventions. For example, emotional regulation the ability to maintain calm under pressure is directly targeted by mindfulness practice. Job satisfaction and sense of purpose are often reported benefits of increased self-awareness and meaningful work. We incorporated these constructs into our measurement instruments.

Mindfulness in Buddhist scholarship: From a textual perspective, Buddhism explicitly connects mindfulness to happiness. The Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, the foundational discourse on mindfulness, even refers to happiness (*sukha*) as a quality of the culminating meditative state. The Theravāda Abhidhamma distinguishes mundane pleasures from the bliss of meditative absorption, reinforcing that lasting happiness comes from insight rather than external gains (Pumkhem et al., 2025). Post-canonical Mahāyāna sources similarly stress wisdom (*jñāna)* and compassion (*karuṇā)* as keys to true joy. Contemporary Buddhist authors like the Dalai Lama and Pema Chödrön have popularized this view: The Dalai Lama (2009) notes that altruistic living and mental discipline are the authentic sources of happiness not luxury or status. Pema Chödrön (1994) likewise emphasizes that training the mind through meditation inherently reduces fear and isolation, allowing natural happiness to emerge. These works suggest that incorporating compassion and ethical conduct into mindfulness practice is crucial – an insight motivating our inclusion of Mahāyāna elements.

Innovation in mindfulness literature: While the secular mindfulness movement often borrows Theravādin techniques, there is growing discussion of blending Buddhist traditions or innovating beyond them. For instance, Wallace (2001) argues for integrating Buddhist thought with modern psychology to address life stress, and Grossman (2015) notes that contemporary mindfulness can be seen as an "innovation" of the Four Foundations practice. Our study builds on this by explicitly crafting an *evidence-based* model of mindful innovation in an educational organization. To our knowledge, few prior studies have operationalized TMV-based programs. One related work is Good *et al.*'s integrative review (2016), which synthesizes workplace mindfulness research but does not differentiate Buddhist traditions. Our contribution lies in embedding scholarly understanding of TMV mindfulness into program design and measurement. We also connect with cross-cultural positive psychology: for example, Bhutan's Gross National Happiness philosophy has inspired research on spiritual and collective aspects of well-being, which resonates with the compassion-based indicators found in our interview data.

Previous research supports the idea that structured mindfulness interventions can measurably improve employee well-being. Buddhist teachings suggest that attending to mind and heart leads to authentic happiness. Our work seeks to bridge these by empirically testing a culturally nuanced, Buddhist-informed approach to organizational mindfulness, and by defining happiness metrics that reflect both secular and spiritual well-being. Key factors like emotional regulation, job satisfaction, work-life balance, supportive leadership, and mindfulness informed the survey design and thematic coding.

Empirical Results

Interview data revealed that cultural context plays a significant role in shaping how mindfulness is understood and experienced in relation to happiness. While core principles

of mindfulness were universally valued, their application varied across traditions and national backgrounds. Key informants consistently emphasized that happiness among IBSC personnel is not merely the absence of distress but a dynamic condition cultivated through engagement with culturally embedded mindfulness practices. Thai informants highlighted loving-kindness (*mettā*) as essential for fostering interpersonal harmony and emotional contentment. Bhutanese scholars linked mindfulness to the national philosophy of Gross National Happiness, emphasizing its role in social well-being and holistic health. Vietnamese participants associated mindfulness with inner peace and resilience, drawing on Zen and ancestral contemplative traditions to cope with stress. Korean informants emphasized the cultivation of *samādhi* (deep meditative absorption) as a foundation for clarity and equanimity, while Hungarian respondents framed mindfulness through contemporary psychological models of well-being, particularly stress management and emotional regulation. Despite these contextual differences, several shared indicators of happiness emerged across all groups, including enhanced emotional regulation, greater stress resilience, a stronger sense of purpose, improved interpersonal relationships, compassion, and heightened self-awareness. These common elements informed the design of the quantitative instruments used in the subsequent phase. Overall, the findings confirmed that while Theravāda, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna traditions share foundational teachings such as the Four Noble Truths, each contributes distinctive strengths—insight, compassion, and transformative ritual practices respectively—suggesting that effective workplace mindfulness initiatives must honor this diversity.

Results from the pilot mindfulness course showed statistically significant improvements across all key measures of well-being. Mean scores on the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire increased from 4.08 (SD = 0.35) at pre-test to 4.26 (SD = 0.41) at post-test on a five-point scale, $t(19) = -3.51$, $p = .002$, indicating a large effect size (Hedge's $g \approx 0.70$). Participants in the intervention group also reported reduced perceived stress and increased life satisfaction and job satisfaction, while the small waitlist control group showed no meaningful change. Visual inspection of individual score trajectories confirmed a consistent upward shift in happiness among nearly all participants who completed the program, whereas control-group scores remained largely stable. These results provide strong quantitative evidence that TMV-informed mindfulness training positively influences well-being.

Qualitative feedback collected after the course further illuminated how the practices shaped participants' daily experiences. Most participants described improved emotional balance and enhanced coping capacity. Several reported feeling calmer, more centered, and more connected to themselves and others following loving-kindness and group-based practices. Breathing-based *samatha* techniques were frequently cited as helpful during periods of academic pressure, while compassion-focused exercises reduced interpersonal

tension. Participants also valued the integration of multiple traditions: Vajrayāna visualization practices were described as providing rapid relief from anxiety, whereas Theravāda *vipassanā* practices supported longer-term insight into habitual stress responses. Across narratives, participants consistently articulated gains in emotional resilience, inner calm, and self-awareness, closely aligning with the quantitative improvements observed.

The program's integrative design, which combined Theravāda, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna practices, emerged as a key factor in its effectiveness. Presenting mindfulness as a flexible, multicultural toolkit allowed participants to engage with practices that resonated most with their personal and cultural dispositions while still benefiting from exposure to other traditions. Survey results and participant reflections suggested that compassion-based practices strengthened sense of purpose and job satisfaction, while insight-oriented techniques helped reduce rumination and stress. Both participants and researchers agreed that this integrative and adaptive framing of mindfulness enhanced engagement and relevance within the IBSC context.

Drawing on data from both qualitative and quantitative phases, the study developed a set of IBSC-specific happiness indicators grounded in Buddhist mindfulness and organizational well-being. These indicators include emotional calm and balanced affect, resilience to stress and burnout, empathetic and supportive relationships, a sense of meaningful engagement aligned with broader values, and sustained present-moment awareness supporting concentration and reduced distraction. Validation workshops with IBSC scholars confirmed that these indicators reflect core Buddhist principles—particularly wisdom and compassion—while also aligning with criteria of academic job satisfaction and well-being (Promchin, 2024). Quantitative improvements in resilience and satisfaction further indicate that these indicators are attainable outcomes of the integrated mindfulness approach.

Taken together, the findings demonstrate that TMV-informed mindfulness practices can effectively reduce stress and enhance happiness among IBSC personnel. Even within a brief five-day intervention, participants showed statistically significant improvements in well-being and reported feeling more emotionally balanced, resilient, and relationally connected. The study identifies emotional balance, interpersonal goodwill, and sense of purpose as key dimensions of happiness that are both theoretically grounded in Buddhist traditions and empirically supported. Ultimately, this research advances an evidence-based model of mindfulness at IBSC that honors the diversity of Buddhist traditions while addressing contemporary organizational and educational needs.

The findings of this project connect coherently with both Buddhist scholarship and organizational psychology. From a theoretical stance, the improvement in well-being is consistent with existing literature on mindfulness at work. The reduction in stress and increase in job satisfaction mirror Hülsheger et al. (2013). Results for mindfulness training

(g=.46 and .50, respectively) and Bartlett et al. (2019). For meta-analytic findings of significant well-being gains. Moreover, Sentin et al. (2025), emphasized that mindfulness lowers perceived stress and thereby enhances overall well-being. TMV innovation framework corroborates these effects in a non-western, educational context, suggesting that the benefits of mindfulness training are robust across cultures. The significant pre-post differences (e.g. happiness $p<.01$) indicate that even brief interventions, if well-designed, can have meaningful impact. This aligns with meta-analyses which show that even short 8-week programs yield moderate gains in mindfulness and stress reduction.

Crucially, this study highlights cultural specificity. While mainstream mindfulness programs often assume a universal experience, our qualitative results underscore that different traditions accentuate different facets of well-being. This resonates with calls in Buddhist studies to avoid "one-size-fits-all" approaches. By integrating participants' cultural backgrounds (e.g. Thai-metta, Bhutanese GNH, etc.), the program enhanced relevance and engagement. For practitioners in multi-cultural institutions, this suggests the need to adapt the content.

From an organizational perspective, the identified happiness indicators complement established HR metrics. Emotional regulation and stress tolerance feed directly into productivity and absenteeism outcomes. Compassion and supportive leadership elements echo modern emphases on employee engagement and trust. In that sense, our indicators can inform not only mindfulness training but broader policy (e.g. leadership development workshops). The alignment with positive psychology is noteworthy: our participants' reports of gratitude and social connectedness reflect classic findings that well-being interventions boost positive affect and relationships. Limitations must be acknowledged. The pilot course sample was small (N=20) and of limited duration 5 days, limiting generalizability. Future research should replicate the study with larger cohorts and longer follow-ups, possibly including a control group of different nationality. Objective measures could strengthen the evidence beyond self-reports. Additionally, while school combined three traditions, it did not systematically test which specific component Theravāda, Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna contributed most; dismantling studies could explore this.

Despite these caveats, the project provides a valuable proof of concept. It offers a blueprint for Buddhist informed organizational well-being programs and a set of happiness indicators grounded in both doctrine and data. For IBSC and similar institutions, these findings suggest that investing in culturally attuned mindfulness initiatives can yield real gains in employee health and satisfaction. As one key informant noted, "This research confirms that mindfulness practice is indispensable for achieving happiness". Aligning with that, our analysis shows that mindful innovation bridging TMV traditions promotes a flourishing academic community consistent with both ancient teachings and modern psychological science.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrated that a mindfulness innovation approach creatively blending Theravāda, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna practices can foster measurable improvements in happiness and stress resilience among personnel in an academic setting. The five-day IBSC pilot program produced significant gains in self-reported well-being (happiness scores rose from 4.08 to 4.26, p=.002), and nearly all participants subjectively felt more emotionally balanced and at ease. Qualitative feedback confirmed that integrating compassion and insight practices helped students manage pressures more skillfully. Importantly, the study also yielded culturally sensitive happiness indicators tailored to this international community, such as enhanced emotional regulation, compassion, and sense of purpose. These indicators encapsulate both Buddhist values and organizational happiness and well-being concepts, providing IBSC with practical metrics for future well-being initiatives. In essence, Mindfulness Innovation at IBSC meant translating ancient meditative wisdom into a modern work-life framework. The strong alignment between participants' experiences and Buddhist theory suggests that mindful living practiced daily can truly cultivate inner peace and satisfaction. In doing so, IBSC academic personnel may achieve a sustainable form of happiness rooted in personal growth, social harmony, and ethical mindfulness, beyond conventional measures of productivity or comfort.

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