

# Mindfulness as a Lived Tradition: Emotion Regulation and Psychological Well-being in a Non-Western Context

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## Abstract

The present study explores the association between dispositional mindfulness, emotion regulation strategies, and psychological well-being (PWB) among meditators of a Buddhist community from Sikkim, India, where mindfulness is a lived spiritual tradition. The study incorporated a cross-sectional design with 113 self-identified Buddhist practitioners (M = 28.88 years; 47.8% males, 52.2% females). The participants were categorized as less experienced ( $\leq 1$  year; n = 80) and more experienced ( $> 1$  year; n = 33) meditators. The measures included: The Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ-15), The Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) and Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWB). Statistical analyses utilised Pearson correlation, linear regressions, facet-level regressions and t-tests. Dispositional mindfulness reported positive correlation with cognitive reappraisal, positive relations, and purpose in life, and a negative correlation with expressive suppression. Dispositional mindfulness also reported significant prediction of emotion regulation strategies of cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression and psychological well-being dimensions. Comparison of means reported more experienced meditators with higher dispositional mindfulness, autonomy, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. Buddhist practice fosters dispositional mindfulness which further enhances psychological flourishing, meaning, and relational harmony aligned with *karuṇā* (compassion), *mettā* (loving-kindness), and *anattā* (non-self). With an integration of Buddhist philosophy with Western psychology, current study puts forth mindfulness as a holistic path to well-being and liberation (*dukkha*-free awareness), rather than a purely secular cognitive skill.

**Keywords:** Dispositional Mindfulness, Emotion Regulation, Psychological Well-being, Cross-cultural Psychology, Traditional Context

## Background of the Study

Research on mindfulness has been growing at a very fast pace over the past 20 years, with its contribution in clinical psychology and neuroscience (Kabat-Zinn, 2003; Segal et al., 2013). Although, the frequency of research, a strong criticism lies in the fact that the process of secularizing mindfulness has put risk of decontextualizing mindfulness from its soteriological roots in Buddhism (Purser & Loy, 2013). This problem is severe due to its over-reliance on Western samples, which has produced a knowledge that frequently overlooks the wide extent of human experiences and various cultural foundation which may not be generalizable (Henrich et al., 2010). An over emphasis of research on Western converts employs mindfulness as more of a therapeutic approach which dominates the current literature on Buddhist psychology. It leaves a crucial knowledge gap in terms of understanding these psychological processes and its work in an actual Buddhism dominated community where mindfulness is a living, culturally embedded tradition rather than an adopted practice. This study attempts to uncover a culturally layered work which is holistically grounded in terms of understanding dispositional mindfulness and its functions when it is a lived tradition rather than an adopted practice. By concentrating on such a context, we directly address the generalizability crisis in psychology. Moreover, the inclusion of regular meditation practitioners provides a very unique prospect in understanding the spiritual impact of such a practice on this very popular psychological variable.

The Eightfold Path, a Buddhist concept which offers a comprehensive framework for moral behavior (*śīla*), mental discipline (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*), does not consider mindfulness (*sati*) to be just a psychological therapeutic technique. It is a lived spiritual practice that entwines the very fabric of everyday living across many Buddhist population (Rahula, 1974). The Four Noble Truths, which extensively describes the nature of suffering (*dukkha*), its causes of lingering, clinging and craving and further its cessation together with the means to achieve it, are inextricably linked to this path. In such a holistic framework, a practice of mindfulness nudges a deep understanding of reality's interconnectedness and impermanence or *anicca*, which often goes beyond the delusion of a distinct, fixed self or *anattā*. (Thera, 1962).

According to the traditional Buddhist perspective, mindfulness-based practices are designed in a way to change the very way of interaction with experience, reduced suffering by addressing the causes of distress rather than merely trying to assert control on emotions. This would lead to true liberation with a deep sense of well-being. The examination of dispositional mindfulness, emotion regulation strategies, and psychological well-being with reference to a community where these concepts are embedded in the very traditions of everyday living can provide a deeper understanding of this philosophical framework.

The psychological correlates of dispositional mindfulness which is a person's trait-level propensity towards present moment awareness in daily life, are examined in order to fill this research gap. The sample of interest has been derived from Sikkim, a state in the Indian Himalayas. Sikkim has its roots deep in Vajrayana Buddhism, whose practices are ingrained in the very culture. Studying dispositional mindfulness in this cultural context would offer a unique chance to explore its role in a community with a cultural and spiritual worldview. Moreover, the role of consistent meditation practice can give noble insights into the same (Brown & Ryan, 2003). Further, the study also aims to investigate how this fundamental characteristic relates to psychological well-being and emotion regulation providing a cross-cultural validity with reference to this population.

Asserting control of emotions in order to lessen suffering which is brought on by afflictive states (*kleshas*) is a primary goal of Buddhist practice. Therefore, it is also hypothesized that people who exhibit more dispositional mindfulness are deemed to exhibit more adaptive patterns of regulating one's emotions. Cognitive Reappraisal is one such process where rephrasing of situation is done to change its emotion oriented impact. It has a strong resonance with Buddhist teachings on grounds of observing feelings without getting overwhelmed by them. Expressive suppression, on the other hand, is often seen as an incompetent reaction and has been frequently associated with worse results (Gross & John, 2003).

The aim of the Buddhist path is *nirvāṇa*, which is a state of lasting well-being and liberation, often consistent with eudaimonic flourishing which goes beyond emotion regulation. This framework can be analysed by Ryff's (1989) concept of psychological well-being (PWB). Dispositional mindfulness's quality of non-judgmental awareness promotes social harmony, flourishing, and a tendency towards living a purposeful life. According to the Buddhist setting, the awareness that is developed through mindfulness practice is often focused on cultivating loving-kindness (*mettā*), which is bound to improve positive relations with one's community.

Present study attempts a unique contribution by evaluating these hypotheses in a non-Western, culturally Buddhist sample. Together with generating vital information from a marginalized group, a complex discussion between conventional Buddhist knowledge and Western psychological science is fostered as well. The results provide a foundation for a cross-cultural viewpoint, thus illuminating subtle association among dispositional mindfulness and psychological well-being in a community where it is taken as a way of life rather than a mere therapeutic approach.

Regular meditation is the key to cultivate and develop dispositional mindfulness in a living Buddhist tradition. Research has shown that dispositional mindfulness is a derivative of such regular practice (Brown & Ryan, 2003), thus making it important to evaluate it in terms of practice duration. Understanding the extensive use of these practices which are deemed to affect trait mindfulness and various aspects of

psychological well-being, can facilitate a better insight into how these constructs develop within an indigenous context.

In order to expand the theoretical and practical understanding of mindfulness, latest research consistently emphasizes the importance of studying it in its varied cultural contexts, particularly non-Western ones. Recent studies have evaluated the role of mindfulness towards fostering good mental health and well-being in varied cultural settings, going beyond the secularized applications which are typical in the West. Studies have examined the ways in which traditional practices are associated with mindfulness, with fostering resilience and well-being in indigenous communities. This is done in order to illustrate the significance of ecological and cultural embeddedness (Tsatsou, 2024). Culturally-laced approaches to mindfulness are essential for understanding its mechanisms as related to emotion regulation in diverse populations (Guendelman et al., 2017; Van Doren et al., 2021). A need for more complex, culturally aware investigation of mindfulness would support the current study's goal to combine conventional wisdom with modern psychological research in order to understand flourishing at a global level.

Thus the hypotheses of the study are:

*H1.* Dispositional mindfulness will be positively associated with cognitive reappraisal and negatively associated with expressive suppression, demonstrating the Buddhist principle that awareness transforms affective experience through insight (*vipassanā*) rather than through avoidance or suppression of emotional states.

*H2.* The relationships among dispositional mindfulness, emotion regulation, and psychological well-being are expected to reflect the unique cultural and spiritual foundations of mindfulness in a Buddhist setting (*śīla* and *paññā*).

*H3.* Dispositional mindfulness will have a positive association with eudaimonic dimensions of psychological well-being that emphasize relational harmony and purpose (positive relations with others, purpose in life) than with more individualistic dimensions (autonomy, self-acceptance).

*H4.* Greater meditation experience will be associated with higher levels of dispositional mindfulness and enhanced psychological well-being, particularly in facets emphasized within Buddhist contemplative practice, like environmental mastery, positive relations with others, and purpose in life.

## Methodology

### Research Design

A quantitative research design with cross-sectional approach was implemented in this study three main objectives using a correlational design. First the study aims to investigate the bivariate relationships between dispositional mindfulness, emotion regulation strategies (cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression), and the six facets of psychological well-being (autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relationships with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance). Secondly, it aims to ascertain the degree to which dispositional mindfulness could statistically predict emotion regulation strategies and psychological well-being. Third, it seeks to understand the difference in levels of the study variables in relation to experience in meditation practice.

### Participants

The study was conducted on 113 self-identified Buddhists of Sikkim, a state in Northeast India where Vajrayana Buddhism is a significant cultural and religious tradition. The mean age was reported at 28.88 years ( $SD = 8.23$ , range = 20-52) with 54 (47.8%) males and 59 (52.2%) females.

The participants were further divided into two groups in terms of meditation practice with a less experienced group with up to a year of practice ( $n = 80$ , 70.8%) and a more experienced group with more than a year of practice ( $n = 33$ , 29.2%). The sample was inclusive of highly educated individuals with 19.5%

with post graduate, 10.6% with M.Phil/PhD, 44.2% with graduate degree, and 25.7% with secondary or higher secondary school degree.

## Measures

*The Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire or FFMQ-15 (Baer et al., 2006)*: This 15-item self-report questionnaire assesses mindfulness in relation to everyday thoughts, experiences, and behaviours. A five-point Likert scale with 1 representing "never or very rarely true" and 5 representing "very often or always true" can be used to rate the answers to the questions. The alpha coefficients of the scale range from .75 to .91, indicating a good internal consistency reliability. Observation, description, acting with awareness, non-judging of inner experience, and non-reactivity to inner experience are the five subscales of this questionnaire.

*The Emotion Regulation Questionnaire or ERQ (Gross & John, 2003)*: This 10-item self-report test consists of two subscales: expressive suppression and cognitive reappraisal. On a seven-point Likert scale, 1 represents "strongly disagree," 7 represents "strongly agree," and 4 represents a neutral response. According to reports, the overall scale's Cronbach's alpha is  $\geq .70$ . Additionally, the subscales show acceptable to excellent reliability, with  $\alpha = .76-.80$  for expressive suppression and  $\alpha = .89-.90$  for cognitive reappraisal.

*Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scales (PWB; Ryff, 1989)*: Autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relationships with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance are the six dimensions of well-being that are evaluated by this 42-item self-report questionnaire. A 6-point Likert scale is used for responses ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 6 ("strongly agree"). The scale exhibits a test-retest reliability of .82. Additionally, its subscales show satisfactory internal consistency, as indicated by Cronbach's alpha coefficients: .71 for self-acceptance, .77 for positive relations with others, .78 for autonomy, .77 for environmental mastery, .70 for purpose in life, and .78 for personal growth.

## Procedure

The participants of the study were recruited from community organizations and social networks in Sikkim using purposive convenience sampling. The participants were sensitized about the purpose of the study, with briefing about the procedure, and ethical rights. An informed consent was given by all the participants prior to conduction. Data were collected using online survey administered in English, with clarifications provided when necessary. The session lasted approximately 25–30 minutes, where demographic form was provided followed by the standardized measures. Surveys were conducted individually in a quiet setting. Anonymity was ensured by not collecting identifying information of any of the participants. The ethical approval was obtained from Research Ethics Committee of Sikkim Manipal University. The procedures of the study align with the Declaration of Helsinki. The collected data were stored securely and later entered into SPSS for analysis.

## Results

The statistical analyses performed to investigate the association between dispositional mindfulness, emotion regulation, and psychological well-being are presented in four parts sequentially. It includes descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations among all variables linear regression analyses testing the predictive capacity of dispositional mindfulness; an independent samples t-test for comparison of means between participants with lower and higher levels of meditation experience; and multiple linear regression testing the predictive capacities of various facets of dispositional mindfulness.

Descriptive statistics followed by Pearson product-moment correlations are reported in Table 1. A significant positive correlation of dispositional mindfulness was derived with cognitive reappraisal ( $r = .33$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and psychological well-being dimensions of environmental mastery ( $r = .47$ ,  $p < .01$ ), personal growth ( $r = .32$ ,  $p < .01$ ), positive relations with others ( $r = .66$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and purpose in life ( $r = .48$ ,  $p < .01$ ). A significant negative correlation was reported with expressive suppression ( $r = -.22$ ,  $p < .05$ ). An absence of significant correlations was observed between dispositional mindfulness and autonomy ( $p = .10$ ) or self-acceptance ( $p = .95$ ).

The predictive capacity of dispositional mindfulness towards emotion regulation and psychological well-being was found using a collection of eight simple linear regression analyses as seen in Table 2. Dispositional mindfulness significantly predicted six of the eight dependent variables.

For emotion regulation, dispositional mindfulness was reported to be a significant predictor of higher scores on cognitive reappraisal ( $B = 0.124, p < .01$ ), accounting for 11% of the variance ( $R^2 = .11$ ), and lower scores on expressive suppression ( $B = -0.062, p < .05$ ), which accounted for 5% of the variance ( $R^2 = .05$ ). The largest effect was reported for psychological well-being dimension of positive relations with others, where dispositional mindfulness accounted for 43% of the variance ( $R^2 = .43, B = 0.163, p < .01$ ). Further, dispositional mindfulness also significantly predicted purpose in life, explaining 23% of its variance ( $R^2 = .23, B = 0.126, p < .01$ ), environmental mastery, explaining 22% of its variance ( $R^2 = .22, B = 0.120, p < .01$ ), and personal growth, explaining 10% of its variance ( $R^2 = .10, B = 0.085, p < .01$ ). As seen in the correlational analysis, dispositional mindfulness did not emerge as a significant predictor for autonomy ( $p = .10$ ), or self-acceptance ( $p = .95$ ).

When evaluating the differences based on the length of practice of meditation, participants were divided into a less experienced group ( $n = 80$ ) and a more experienced group ( $n = 33$ ). Independent samples t-test was conducted for the comparison of the mean scores of these two groups. The detailed results are presented in Table 3. It was reported that the more experienced group ( $M = 141.69, SD = 13.38$ ) had a significantly higher dispositional mindfulness than the less experienced group ( $M = 129.03, SD = 16.08$ ),  $t(111) = -3.99, p < .001$ . The more-experienced group also reported significantly higher on five of the six dimensions of psychological well-being. The largest difference was observed in positive relations with others and environmental mastery. Further, significant differences were reported for autonomy ( $t(111) = -3.76, p < .001$ ), purpose in life ( $t(111) = -3.03, p = .003$ ), and self-acceptance ( $t(111) = -3.20, p = .002$ ).

The findings for self-acceptance presented a key contrast to the regression analysis. More years of meditation practice was significantly associated with higher levels of self-acceptance ( $M = 27.75$ ) when seen against lesser experienced meditators ( $M = 26.09$ ). No statistically significant differences were derived between the two experience groups on the measures of cognitive reappraisal, expressive suppression, or personal growth.

For a deeper insight into facet level effects, eight multiple regression analyses were carried out in order to determine which particular aspects of dispositional mindfulness were responsible for the relationships that were derived earlier. For prediction, the five mindfulness facets - observing, describing, acting with awareness, non-judging of inner experience, and non-reactivity to inner experience - were simultaneously entered into each model to predict each of the eight dependent variables. This approach made it possible to evaluate each facet's unique predictive contribution while accounting for the others. Table 4 provides a summary of the findings.

The overall model reported that cognitive reappraisal was explained by 35.2% of the variance (adjusted  $R^2 = .35$ ) and was highly significant,  $F(5, 107) = 13.17, p < .001$ . Three facets stood out as distinct predictors with acting with awareness ( $\beta = .27, p = .004$ ) and observing ( $\beta = .35, p = .001$ ) as significant positive predictors, whereas non-judging of inner experience ( $\beta = -.33, p = .002$ ) as a significant negative predictor. The overall model further derived a highly significant prediction for expressive suppression, explaining 20.5% of the variance (adjusted  $R^2 = .21$ ),  $F(5, 107) = 6.78, p < .001$ . The outcomes reported describing ( $\beta = -.41, p < .001$ ), and acting with awareness ( $\beta = -.34, p = .001$ ) as strong negative predictors, whereas observing ( $\beta = .28, p = .014$ ), and non-judging of inner experience ( $\beta = .37, p = .002$ ) as positive predictors.

The model analysing psychological well-being also reported some interesting results. The five facets taken together had no predictive capacity towards autonomy, as the model was not statistically significant,  $F(5, 107) = 1.97, p = .09$ . The environmental mastery model on the other hand was derived to be highly predictive, explaining 49% of the variance (adjusted  $R^2 = .49$ ),  $F(5, 107) = 22.63, p < .001$ . Four of the five facets were derived to be significant unique predictors: non-judging of inner experience ( $\beta = -.46, p < .001$ ) as a strong negative predictor, whereas describing ( $\beta = .29, p = .001$ ), acting with awareness ( $\beta = .42, p < .001$ ), and non-reactivity to inner experience ( $\beta = .25, p = .006$ ) as positive predictors.

The model predicting personal growth was explained by 25% of the variance (adjusted  $R^2 = .25$ ) and was significant,  $F(5, 107) = 8.47, p < .001$ . Two facets were reported as significant predictors: non-judging of inner experience ( $\beta = .55, p < .001$ ) and observing ( $\beta = .49, p < .001$ ).

Further, the positive relations with others facet of psychological well-being was explained by 49% of the variance (adjusted  $R^2 = .49$ ) and was highly significant,  $F(5, 107) = 22.89, p < .001$ . Significant unique predictors included describing ( $\beta = .31, p < .001$ ), acting with awareness ( $\beta = .38, p < .001$ ), and non-reactivity to inner experience ( $\beta = .28, p = .002$ ). The model predicting purpose in life was explained by 45% of the variance (adjusted  $R^2 = .45$ ) and was highly significant,  $F(5, 107) = 19.11, p < .001$ . Reporting a complex pattern, all five facets were found to be significant predictors: describing, acting with awareness, and non-reactivity to inner experience as positive predictors, whereas observing and non-judging of inner experience as negative predictors.

Finally, the model for self-acceptance was explained by 11% of the variance (adjusted  $R^2 = .11$ ) and was significant,  $F(5, 107) = 3.70, p = .004$ . Three facets were reported as significant unique predictors: describing ( $\beta = -.35, p = .002$ ) as a negative predictor, while non-reactivity to inner experience ( $\beta = .40, p = .001$ ) and non-judging of inner experience ( $\beta = .29, p = .02$ ) as positive predictors. Notably, this facet-level analysis revealed relationships that were not apparent when examining total mindfulness scores.

**Table 1**

*Descriptive Statistics and Pearson Correlations Among Study Variables*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Dispositional Mindfulness	132.73	16.34	—								
2. Cognitive Reappraisal	31.02	6.17	.33**	—							
3. Expressive Suppression	19.15	4.70	-.22*	-.15	—						
4. PWB Autonomy	27.81	4.07	.16	.01	-.28**	—					
5. PWB Environmental Mastery	32.74	4.22	.47**	.13	-.27**	.21*	—				
6. PWB Personal Growth	22.41	4.36	.32**	.28**	-.17	.29**	-.24**	—			
7. PWB Positive Relations with Others	29.42	4.06	.66**	.22*	-.25**	-.01	.55**	.53**	—		
8. PWB Purpose in Life	27.07	4.27	.48**	.27**	-.41**	.16	.66**	-.08	.35**	—	
9. PWB Self-Acceptance	26.58	3.98	-.01	.01	.05	.07	-.04	-.04	.06	-.19*	—

Note. *N* = 113. PWB = Psychological Well-being.

\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ .

**Table 2**

*Summary of Simple Linear Regression Analyses Predicting Outcomes from Dispositional Mindfulness*

Dependent Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>F</i>
Cognitive Reappraisal	0.124	0.034	.328	.11	13.41**
Expressive Suppression	-0.062	0.027	-.217	.05	5.47*
PWB Autonomy	0.039	0.023	.156	.02	2.78
PWB Environmental Mastery	0.120	0.022	.466	.22	30.86**
PWB Personal Growth	0.085	0.024	.317	.10	12.43**
PWB Positive Relations with Others	0.163	0.018	.657	.43	84.44**
PWB Purpose in Life	0.126	0.022	.481	.23	33.44**
PWB Self-Acceptance	-0.002	0.023	-.006	.00	0.00

Note. *N* = 113. PWB = Psychological Well-being.  
 \* *p* < .05. \*\* *p* < .01.

**Table 3**

*Independent Samples T-Test Comparing Less Experienced and More Experienced Meditators*

Variable	Less Experienced ( <i>n</i> =80) <i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )	More Experienced ( <i>n</i> =33) <i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )	<i>t</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>P</i>
Dispositional Mindfulness	129.03 (16.08)	141.69 (13.38)	-3.99	111	<.001
Cognitive Reappraisal	30.87 (6.51)	31.33 (5.30)	-0.35	111	.728
Expressive Suppression	19.12 (4.99)	19.21 (3.82)	-0.09	111	.929
PWB Autonomy	26.87 (4.17)	30.00 (2.88)	-3.76	111	<.001
PWB Environmental Mastery	31.68 (4.17)	35.51 (3.65)	-3.85	67.16	<.001
PWB Personal Growth	22.51 (4.62)	22.15 (3.80)	0.40	111	.691
PWB Positive Relations with Others	27.97 (3.7)	33.36 (2.63)	-4.59	111	<.001
PWB Purpose in Life	26.33 (4.38)	28.90 (3.74)	-3.03	111	.003
PWB Self-Acceptance	26.09 (4.14)	27.75 (2.87)	-3.2	111	.002

Note. PWB = Psychological Well-being. *M* = Mean. *SD* = Standard Deviation.  
*df* for PWB Environmental Mastery reflects correction for unequal variances.

**Table 4**  
*Summary of Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting Outcomes from the Five Facets of Mindfulness*

Dependent Variable	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	F(5, 107)	Observing ( $\beta$ )	Describing ( $\beta$ )	Acting with Awareness ( $\beta$ )	Nonjudging of inner experiences ( $\beta$ )	Nonreactivity to inner experiences ( $\beta$ )
Cognitive Reappraisal	.35	13.17** *	.346**	.157	.274**	-.331**	-.010
Expressive Suppression	.20	6.78***	.282*	-.413***	-.343**	.371**	.172
PWB Autonomy	.04	1.97	-.155	.235	.189	-.220	-.035
PWB Environmental Mastery	.49	22.63** *	-.121	.291**	.423** *	-.457***	.249**
PWB Personal Growth	.25	8.47***	.489***	.038	-.044	.545***	-.075
PWB Positive Relations with Others	.49	22.89** *	.050	.312**	.376** *	-.081	.284**
PWB Purpose in Life	.45	19.11** *	-.228*	.501***	.203*	-.329**	.249**
PWB Self-Acceptance	.11	3.70**	.124	-.349**	-.177	.288*	.401**

Note. PWB = Psychological Well-being.  $\beta$  = standardized beta coefficient.

\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

## Discussion

Current study explored the association between dispositional mindfulness, emotion regulation techniques, and psychological well-being (PWB) with reference to a specific sample of self-identified Buddhist practitioners from Sikkim, India. A major knowledge gap in the mindfulness research has been addressed by highlighting a unique population where Buddhism is a vibrant, culturally embedded tradition. The results reported subtleties at both the overall mindfulness and facet-level analyses, although generally supporting the proposed positive associations between dispositional mindfulness and adaptive psychological outcomes.

The suggested hypotheses were supported by correlational analyses. Expressive suppression was found to be negatively correlated with dispositional mindfulness, while cognitive reappraisal was positively correlated. This supports previous research derivatives that suggests mindfulness to promote a more adaptive approach to emotional regulation by promoting re-evaluation of emotional stimuli instead of suppression (Gross & John, 2003; Teasdale et al., 2002). The advantages of dispositional mindfulness for fostering eudaimonic well-being are highlighted by the strong positive correlations derived with psychological well-being dimensions of purpose in life, positive relations with others, personal growth, and environmental mastery (Ryff, 1989). These results support the idea that mindfulness in a Buddhist context fosters traits that improve an individual's sense of meaning, a focus on personal growth, and connection to the world. The non-significant relationship derived between overall dispositional mindfulness and autonomy or self-acceptance is an intriguing finding. This stands in contrast to Western-centric perspectives on mindfulness, which frequently posits self-acceptance and individual autonomy as important derivatives (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). The focus moves away from strictly individualistic definitions of autonomy or self-acceptance as seen through a Western lens to a culturally Buddhist setting where interdependence and communal harmony may be more important. This emphasizes the crucial need for cultural framework in determining how psychological constructs manifest and have a significant impact.

The predictive ability of dispositional mindfulness when clarified by the regression analyses supports the notion that mindfulness promotes better emotion regulation techniques as derived by its strong predictive ability for cognitive reappraisal and its negative prediction of expressive suppression which are in alignment with recent research findings (Zhou et al., 2023). Strong predictive capacity towards psychological well-being facets of positive relations with others, purpose in life, and environmental mastery were derived as well in the study. A significant variance explained in positive relations with others and purpose in life, describe dispositional mindfulness, as rooted in a cultural and spiritual worldview. This perspective significantly influences people's ideology towards having a strong purpose in life and their immediate connection to others. These findings resonate with recent research that support the advantages of mindfulness in cultivating a regulation of emotions and enhancing well-being in a variety of demographics (Hou et al., 2022)). This is also in parallel with Buddhism's emphasis on interconnectedness and compassion (*mettā*), which inherently promotes wholesome social ties and fosters purpose that extends beyond the egoistic self.

Significant insights about the long-term impacts of mindfulness practice was revealed by the independent samples t-test that put forth differential levels in study variables when contrasted between novice and expert meditators. The notion that regular practice develops dispositional mindfulness derives significant support from the finding that reported more experienced meditators having noticeably higher dispositional mindfulness. Moreover, the experienced group also reported higher scores on self-acceptance and five of the six psychological well-being dimensions. This latter finding is especially intriguing because it contrasts with the initial regression's non-significant correlation between self-acceptance and overall dispositional mindfulness. This indicates the role of prolonged and deeper meditation practice, which develops higher levels of dispositional mindfulness, and also contributes to enhanced self-acceptance, even though baseline dispositional mindfulness may not be a strong predictor of self-acceptance. This complex result implies that regular, long-term practice may have a direct impact on self-acceptance, possibly indicating a deeper integration of non-judgmental awareness that fosters increased self-compassion. In fact, recent systematic reviews confirm that regular mindfulness practices promote dispositional mindfulness and improve long-lasting positive psychological traits, such as self-acceptance and a compassionate view towards oneself (Wimmer et al., 2023).

A deeper understanding in terms of relationships was provided by the facet-level multiple regression analyses, which demonstrated the unique contributions of each aspect of mindfulness. Non-judging of inner experience reported a negative prediction for cognitive reappraisal, whereas acting with awareness and observing reported a positive prediction. The tendency of not judging one's inner experience in this particular cultural context interacts differently with cognitive reappraisal, implying that an excessively passive non-judging stance, without the active engagement of acting with awareness or observing, could result in less active cognitive restructuring. Psychological well-being dimensions of observing and non-judging of inner experience reported positive prediction of expressive suppression, whereas describing and acting with awareness were derived as strong negative predictors. This unique interaction suggests that although actively describing and acting mindfully can lessen suppression, in certain situations, a purely observant or nonjudgmental attitude may foster more expressive suppression. This can be explained as a misuse of non-judgment, where people tend to suppress their feelings instead of processing them because they think it's a nonjudgmental reaction. The various aspects of mindfulness can have unique and occasionally counterintuitive impact on emotion regulation strategies and psychological well-being, which is also reported in the recent research. These effects are frequently mediated by cultural contexts and individual interpretations (Iani et al., 2017).

Further, this aspect of well-being might function differently as per different cultural settings can be understood as autonomy model was not statistically significant at the facet level either. Four facets were highly predictive of psychological well-being aspects of environmental mastery where non-judging of inner experience reported a strong negative prediction, while describing, acting with awareness, and non-reactivity to inner experience were all reported to be positive predictors. Another unique finding is the negative correlation between non-judging of inner experience and environmental mastery. This highlights that a

capacity of asserting control over the immediate surroundings could be affected by an uncritical acceptance of all circumstances, when operating beyond acting with awareness or describing of one's surroundings. Non-judging of inner experience and observing reported significant positive prediction of personal growth. These complex, context-dependent findings support the increasing body of recent research that suggests psychological well-being constructs and their connection to various aspects of mindfulness are deeply impacted by cultural settings (Cheung et al., 2024). This indicates that the ability to observe without passing judgment is much needed for promoting personal growth since it enables people to grow and learn from their experiences operating beyond self-criticism. Describing, acting with awareness, and non-reactivity to inner experience reported a positive prediction of positive relations with others, suggesting the trait's capacity to foster harmonious relationships by facilitating more empathetic engagement, a clearer communication, and more composed reaction to interpersonal difficulties.

Lastly, on evaluating the prediction of psychological well-being at the facet level, describing was a negative predictor, whereas non-reactivity to inner experience and non-judging of inner experience were positive predictors. Further, overall mindfulness was not even a predictor. Latest research highlights these complex and varying effects of individual mindfulness facets on well-being, especially when seen through a viewpoint of various cultural contexts (Johnson et al., 2024). This indicates that maintaining a non-judgmental attitude and avoiding impulsive reactions to internal experiences are utmost needed for self-acceptance. A negative role of describing facet in predicting self-acceptance can be rationalized due to an excessive intellectualization of internal states, which paradoxically may falter true self-acceptance by an over reliance on analytical distance rather than embodying acceptance. This makes a noble insight into how mindfulness is used or experienced. Some of the components of mindfulness may help whereas others may hinder self-acceptance.

The relationships between dispositional mindfulness and psychological well-being as found in the Sikkimese Buddhist sample transcend well beyond psychological constructs. The findings are consistent with fundamental Buddhist philosophical principles extending even to soteriological and spiritual roots. Subtle practices like *vipassanā* (insight meditation), which are believed to foster a non-reactive observation of mental phenomena and a re-evaluation of experiences rather than habitually being carried away by them, is directly in resonance with current research findings depicting a positive association of dispositional mindfulness with cognitive reappraisal (Thera, 1962). Insights into the transient and artificial nature of *kleshas* (afflictive mental states), naturally lessens their impact of mental state and makes it possible for individuals to respond to emotional stimuli more proficiently. The traditional practices of Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism explain philosophies of *mettā* or loving-kindness and *karuṇā* or compassion, which can be used to understand dispositional mindfulness's strong prediction of positive relations with others and purpose in life. These practices result into more social harmony and a meaningful life which fosters interconnectedness, altruism, and a deeper cultivation of purpose beyond individualistic concerns (Ricard, 2013). An in-depth understanding of the Buddhist philosophy of *anattā* or non-self is reflected in the unique findings about self-acceptance, especially its greater levels as reported in experienced meditators. True self-acceptance can be fostered by letting go of inflexible self-views, as meditation practitioners move past mere self-judgment. It facilitates a more holistic and empathetic relationship with experience (Suzuki, 1970).

## Conclusion

Current study lays a strong foundation highlighting importance of dispositional mindfulness when predicting eudaimonic well-being and adaptive emotion regulation in a culturally embedded Buddhist sample as opposed to typical Western centric findings. The results put noble insights into the significance of taking cultural perspectives into account when researching mindfulness, supporting the cross-cultural validity of psychological models. The findings of facet level analysis demonstrate the intricacies of mindfulness as a comprehensive concept that can harbour distinct elements which contribute differently to different aspects of psychological well-being.

A strong empirical evidence has been derived for the association between psychological well-being, adaptive emotion regulation strategies, and dispositional mindfulness in a non-Western Buddhist setting that is culturally immersive. The results resonate with modern psychological models as well as traditional Buddhist philosophies, linking them to understand concepts like *vipassanā* and *mettā* which can be fostered as psychological strengths. The findings offer more than mere cross-cultural validation; rather go forward to reflect the intricate psychological system of the origin of mindfulness. The intricate, facet-level relationships depict mindfulness more than just a single entity rather a multicomponential construct that makes a distinct contribution to the path of eudaimonic flourishing. This research puts forth a complex, culturally sensitive, and internationally applicable psychology of the human mind by immersing the study of mindfulness within a traditional framework where it is a lived soteriological and spiritual path rather than a secularized therapeutic technique.

## Limitation and Future Directions

Although noble contributions are made, many limitations can also be illuminated. The cross-sectional design deems it cannot completely draw conclusions about causality. The evolution of these relationships over time demands the need for longitudinal research. Furthermore, the complex, culturally unique manifestations of mindfulness and psychological well-being in a Sikkimese Buddhist community may need more validation studies. Although the sample offers an important non-Western centric viewpoint, it is still very highly region-specific. This restricts the generalizability of current research to other Buddhist populations belonging to a different region or other non-Western populations.

Future studies should address these limitations by implementing qualitative research techniques and data collection methods like interviews and focus group discussions. Research can examine how *mettā* practice fosters positive relations with others. Further, the practitioners' subjective understanding and interpretation of concepts like *anattā* or non-self can be understood in light of psychological constructs like self-acceptance. A more comprehensive emic viewpoint, enhancing the etic methodology of standardized surveys could encourage the creation of more culturally validated tools. Future research can directly examine the psychological mechanisms found in Buddhist philosophical framework. Concepts like *karuṇā* could be seen in the light of its mediating role in various relationships between mindfulness and pro-social outcomes.

## Data Availability

Due to participant confidentiality and ethical constraints, the datasets created and analyzed during the current study are not publicly available; however, they can be obtained from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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## Ethics declarations

### Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate

The study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of Sikkim Manipal University. All procedures were conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of the 1964 Declaration of Helsinki and its later amendments.

## Conflict of interest

The authors declare no competing interests.

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