



Research Paper

Mindfulness Meditation Moderates the Relationship between Five Prohibitions of Buddhism and Subjective Wellbeing: A Survey of Vietnamese Adult

Nguyen Nghi Thanh¹, Ha Noi University of Home Affairs, Vietnam

Tran Quyet Thang, Ha Noi University of Home Affairs, Vietnam

Ha Thi Thu Huong, Ha Noi University of Home Affairs, Vietnam

Nguyen Cong Uyen, Ha Noi University of Home Affairs, Vietnam

ABSTRACT: Vietnam is a country of religious diversity, in which Buddhism has the most significant participation. In addition to practicing the Five Precepts, many Vietnamese people have registered for active mindfulness meditation classes recently. This fact has received significant attention from scientists to add to the evidence of previous studies. Enrich the research literature, so the study explores the role of mindfulness meditation practice as a moderator of the relationship between five precepts practice and subjective perception well-being of Vietnamese adults. This study was conducted through a cross-sectional survey using an intentional sampling technique ($n=200$). Multivariable linear regression analysis and moderator regression were applied to prove the hypotheses. Research results show a positive and meaningful relationship between practicing mindfulness meditation, practicing the five precepts and feeling subjective happiness. In particular, mindfulness meditation acts as a moderating variable between the practice of the five precepts and the subjective feeling of happiness.

KEYWORDS: Mindfulness (SMM), Five precepts, Subjective well being (WEMWBS), Vietnamese.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Mindfulness is a type of meditation that focuses on being deeply aware of what is feeling and feeling in the present moment, without explanation or judgment. Mindfulness has its roots in Buddhist teachings and is a Buddhist practice with faith, effort, concentration, and wisdom (Malinowski, 2013). Key practices relax the body and mind and help reduce stress, increase focus, improve performance and life satisfaction (Soontaraporn Techapalokul, 2019; Zelikson, 2016; Klussman, Curtin, Langer, & Nichols, 2020, Claire Crowley, Laura Ring Kapitula, & Dana Munk, 2020, Akin, Umran, Akin, & Ahmet, 2015). Subjective well-being (SWB) is a scientific term for happiness and life satisfaction - thinking and feeling that your life is going well, not badly (Delle Fave, Fausto), & Marta, 2011; Ryan & Deci, 2001). The Five Precepts are the five prohibitions that Buddha invented to prevent evil thoughts, bad speech, and unrighteous actions. The five commandments are: Do not kill; No theft or robbery; Do not commit adultery; Do not lie; Do not drink alcohol (Khantipalo Bhikkhu, 1994).

Past studies have found that people with high subjective well-being appear to be healthier and more productive than those with chronic stress, depression, or anger. So happiness does not just feel good. It is suitable for people and those around them (Kushlev, Radosic, Diener, & Diener, 2020). Not only that, life satisfaction and subjective well-being or subjective well-being were positively associated with many measures of religion and religion, except for religious practice in other national contexts (Lun & Bond, 2013). To a small extent, personal religion was also found to mediate the relationship between stressors and life satisfaction (Fabricatore, Handal & Fenzel, 2000). Personal religion is conceptualized as an inherent resource for maintaining life satisfaction in the face of stressors (Fabricatore, Handal & Fenzel, 2000). Religion can bring a

¹ Dr. Nguyen Nghi Thanh, Ha Noi University of Home Affairs, Vietnam, Email: thanhnndhnhv@gmail.com

sense of meaning to life, provide a sense of purpose, and allow people to have a consistent understanding of many events in their lives (Exline, 2002; Jonas & Fischer, 2006; Paloutzian, 2017; Seitz & Angel, 2014).

Several studies have shown that religion has a significant relationship with subjective well-being in different ways and degrees. *Subjective well-being* is defined as a person's cognitive and affective assessments of their current life (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999). "Happy" people are more likely to be healthier and live longer, have better social relationships, and be more productive at work (Layard, 2006). Not all religious people are happy (Kwon & Kim, 2014). Some people who engage in regular religious activities have relatively low levels of subjective well-being (Gallup Korea, 2015). In religious countries, religious people report being treated with more respect, partly explaining their happiness and life satisfaction (Stavrova, Fetchenhauer & Schlösser, 2013). In other words, people with high levels of subjective well-being appear to be healthier and more productive than those with chronic stress, depression, or anger (Kahneman & Deaton, 2010). Religious people have higher subjective well-being in religious countries but not in non-religious countries. Thus, it seems that the benefits of religion on social relationships and subjective well-being depend on the characteristics of society (Diener, Tay & Myers, 2011). The degree of religious involvement is associated with differences in subjective well-being, life satisfaction, and life direction (Ellison, 1991; Kogan, Luo, Murry, & Brody, 2005; Lim & Putnam, 2010; Steger & Frazier, 2005).

Vietnam is a multi-religious country including Buddhism, Catholicism, Protestantism, Islam, Hinduism and indigenous religions such as Hoa Hao, Tu An Hieu Nghia, Buu Son Ky Huong, Pure Land Buddhist Association. Vietnamese Buddhists account for only 14.9% of the country's population (General Statistics Office of Vietnam, 2019). For Vietnamese who are Buddhist followers, practicing the five precepts is a Buddhist tradition. Mindfulness meditation is gaining popularity as socioeconomic life is stressful. The objective of this study is to fill the theoretical gap on the role of righteous faith practice in the practice of the five precepts and the subjective well-being of previous studies and to provide additional evidence on the role of regulation of mindfulness practice in the relationship between practicing the five precepts and perceived subjective well-being of Vietnamese people.

II. LITERATURE REVIEWS

Mindfulness:

According to Malinowski (2013), mindfulness has its roots in Buddhist teachings and is one of the five Buddhist practices: faith, effort, concentration, and wisdom. Alternatively, mindfulness as responsive attention and awareness of events and experiences as they occur in the present moment (Brown & Ryan, 2003), a state of mind characterized by awareness and attention in the present moment, reducing negative feelings and enhancing positive emotions (Singh, 2018), human mindfulness (Siegel, Germer & Olendzki, 2011), personal self-experience (Furthermore, Kabat-Zinn, 2003; 2008). Mindfulness is a continual process of drawing new and original distinctions between stimuli regardless of whether current stimuli are perceived as trivial or important (Langer (1989; 1992).

Mindfulness has many benefits. Mindfulness increases life satisfaction, emotional intelligence, openness to experience, attention, impulsivity, and receptivity to experience (Brown & Ryan, 2003), positively correlated with self-monitoring, self-awareness, social anxiety, depression, reducing neurosis and overcoming poor psychological well-being (Brown & Ryan, 2003), life satisfaction (Kong, Wang & Zhao, 2014), compassion, empathy and happiness (Birnie, Speca, & Carlson, 2010). The mindfulness trait is thought to predict autonomous functioning in daily life, and the state of mindfulness is linked to the temporal and experiential positive influence of present life (Brown & Ryan, 2003). The findings demonstrated that both coping ability and subjective well-being are positively predicted by mindfulness (Akın Ümran & Akın Ahmet, 2015).

Five precepts:

The Five Precepts are the five prohibitions that Buddha invented to prevent evil thoughts, impaired speech, and unrighteous actions. The five commandments are: do not kill; no theft; not commit adultery; do not lie; Not to drink alcohol, practiced based on compassion, equality in terms of eliminating individual sins and bringing order and happiness to society (Khantipalo Bhikkhu, 1994), is the ethical code of Buddha Buddhism (Khantipalo Bhikkhu (1994), which is the essence of all good qualities and the completion of the higher stages of concentration and wisdom, upholds whatever wholesome state one already has. Soontaraporn Techapalokul, 2019). Obeying the five precepts means committing to abstaining from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying and idleness, and drinking and getting drunk; meditation includes attention mindfulness to a breath or a walk (Ariyabuddhiphongs, 2009).

Subjective well-being:

Subjective well-being is an individual's self-assessment of his perceptions and feelings about life. Subjective well-being refers to individuals' subjective feelings of happiness and satisfaction in their lives. They

think and feel that their lives are going well (Delle Fave, Fausto, & Marta, 2011; Diener, Lucas, & Oishi, 2002; Ryan & Deci, 2001) to maximize pleasure avoid or minimize pain (Waterman, 1993).

People's subjective well-being is influenced by internal factors, such as personality and outlook, and external factors, such as the society in which they live (McGue, Bacon, & Lykken, 1993). Many factors influence subjective well-being, such as a person's innate temperament, the quality of their social relationships, the society they live in, and their ability to meet basic needs (Das. et al., 2020; Diener, Oishi, Shigehiro, & Lucas, 2003; DeNeve, Kristina, 1999). A person with a high level of life satisfaction is considered to have high subjective well-being (Waterman, 1993). A person with a high level of life satisfaction is considered to have a high level of subjective well-being (Koenig, McCullough, 2001).

When psychologists measure subjective well-being, they are measuring how people think and feel about their lives. The panel of variables measuring subjective well-being include satisfaction, positive life and negative influence. These independent factors should be measured and studied separately (Andrews & Withey, 1976, Lucas et al., 1996).

Relationship between Five precepts and Subjective well-being:

There is a gender relationship with subjective well-being with the practice of the five precepts (Ariyabuddhiphongs & Jaiwong, 2010). Practicing the five precepts has a positive relationship with life satisfaction (Ariyabuddhiphongs, 2009), ethical living (Ariyabuddhiphongs & Hongladarom, 2011), bringing benefits to individuals living a peaceful, harmonious life socially and in a friendly manner (Ven. Nyanika, 2021). Practicing the five precepts is the peace and happiness of family members and spreading to society (Kanda Pongpha & Pharamaha Chitnaretas Wuthidhammo, 2016), establishing healthier inner relationships, more effective actions and mind peace of mind (Rick Hanson, 2009).

Relationship between Mindfulness and Subjective well-being:

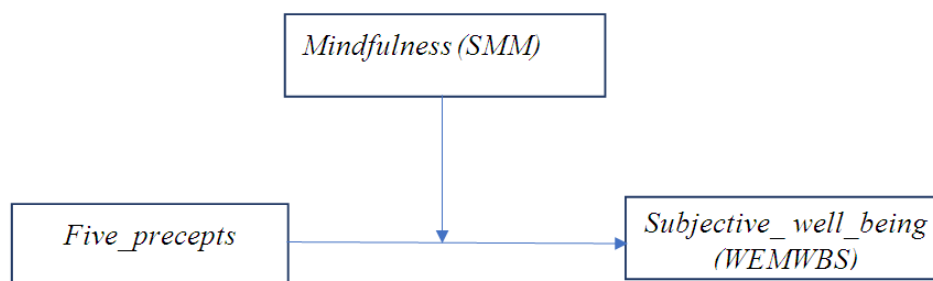
Participants who practiced mindfulness meditation had high subjective well-being scores (Walsh, Saab, & Farb, 2016), associated with better life habits, lower stress levels, and reduced adverse effects polar (Rosini, Nelson, Amanda, & Dinzeo, 2017).

There are very few studies on the relationship between mindfulness meditation practice and the five precepts. Some studies have found that the degree to which a Buddhist engages in observance of the five precepts and meditation is related to life satisfaction (Ariyabuddhiphongs, 2009), perceived happiness in life and cure (Hackney & Sanders, 2003), which adjusts for the relationship between age and multiple indicators of subjective health (Allen, Henderson, & Mancini et al., 2017). The findings suggest that cultivating mindfulness can be a proactive tool to promote subjective health and well-being in an ageing and age-diverse workforce (Allen, Henderson, & Mancini et al., 2017).

The apparent correlation between mindfulness, perceived stress, and subjective well-being across different primary care professional categories and time in the same job position suggest specific gaps that need to be addressed determined through employee cognitive development, stress prevention, and well-being interventions (Allen, Henderson, & Mancini et al., 2017).

From the research overview, the authors have built a research model about what as shown in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1. The Research Model



In the above research model, the independent variables Mindfulness and Five- precepts affect the dependent variable Subjective_ well_being and Mindfulness moderates the relationship between Five_ precepts and Subjective_ well_being to different extents. It is the task that the author needs to study to clarify the relationship between these variables.

Hypotheses

Based on the research model, the following hypotheses were formed:

- H1. Mindfulness has a positive and significant relationship with subjective well-being.
- H2. The five precepts have a positive and significant relationship with subjective well-being.
- H3. The five pre-relationships between mindfulness and perceived subjective well-being.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

Surveyed Area:

The study was conducted at pagodas and temples in Hanoi in March 2020. It has more than 200 temples and shrines. Participating in the survey are elderly Hanoians who have attended meditation courses at pagodas and mindfulness meditation centers. At the beginning of the year, they usually go to temples or pagodas to pray for peace and luck for the family and practice the five precepts.

Research Samples and Methods:

To carry out this study, the authors conducted a survey, collecting opinions of the study participants in two steps: preliminary investigation and formal investigation.

Preliminary investigation:

The research team used a qualitative method by in-depth interviews with educational and psychologist researchers to adjust the research scale and improve the questionnaire to suit the characteristics of the survey area close. The questionnaire was built based on the results of the research overview and experts' opinions, including two parts: Part 1 collects demographic information of study participants such as age, gender, and occupation, and Part 2 collects information about study participants, including the results of mindfulness practice, five-element practice and subjective well-being. Collect information about mindfulness practices using The State Mindfulness of Mind Scale (MSM). MSM was developed by (Analayo 2004; Bodhi, 1993; Bishop et al., 2004), based on previous research on mindfulness and related constructs (e.g., Langer, 1989). Researchers (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Messick, 1995), Haynes, Richard, & Kubany, 1995), and more recently Galia Tanay & Amit Bernstein (2013), respectively, developed this measure. MSM consists of two factors, State Mindfulness of Mind = 15 items and State Mindfulness of Body = 6 items. In this study, the research team inherited the factor State Mindfulness of Mind = 15 items. Because it did not match the research objective, the State Mindfulness of Body factor was withdrawn from the questionnaire. Subjective well-being data collection was used the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) = 15 items (Tennant, Hiller, Fishwick et al., 2007). The collection of information on the practice of the five precepts was built on the ideas of Ariyabuddhipongs & Jaiwong (2010). We built a questionnaire to get 10,000 USD, and would they accept the following tasks?: 1 . Do cattle slaughter for one year; 2. Sell their employer's secrets to a company that competes with the company they work for; 3. Having sex with a stranger; 4. If given the opportunity, will give false information to a bank or a financial company so that someone can borrow 100,000 USD; 5. Drink alcohol continuously every day for a year. A 5-point Likert scale was used, ranging from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree.

The English questionnaire was translated into Vietnamese by two professional interpreters. The translation process is carried out according to the rules to adapt between Vietnamese cultures. A single Vietnamese version was created after discussion and consensus between the translators and the principal investigator. A professional bilingual expert in education contributed to this version to create a final version. This final version was pre-tested on 40 participants selected to represent age, sex, and training significantly demographically. During the assessment, participants were asked to complete this final version. Minor corrections followed it to improve the question structure for better understanding, and the final Vietnamese version was completed using the official survey.

Official investigation:

A selection of students from universities in Hanoi participated in the study. They are the ones who have followed the mindfulness guidelines from instructors, monks, and experts on mindfulness practices. The questionnaire was sent directly to the respondents by the non-random sampling method. As a result, 200 good votes were obtained, achieving a response rate of 100% Demographic information of study participants (Table 1).

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of survey participants

		Occupation							
		Manager		Small bussiness		Teacher		Worker	
		Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
Age	23-30 years	22	34,9%	12	19,0%	16	25,4%	13	20,6%

	31-40 years	13	31,0%	7	16,7%	13	31,0%	9	21,4%
	41-50 years	8	17,0%	11	23,4%	12	25,5%	16	34,0%
	Above 50 years	12	25,0%	12	25,0%	9	18,8%	15	31,2%
Gender	Female	23	25,3%	17	18,7%	23	25,3%	28	30,8%
	Male	32	29,4%	25	22,9%	27	24,8%	25	22,9%
Education	Bachelor	15	25,4%	13	22,0%	17	28,8%	14	23,7%
	College	12	23,5%	9	17,6%	18	35,3%	12	23,5%
	Worker	28	31,1%	20	22,2%	15	16,7%	27	30,0%

IV. RESEARCH RESULTS

The R Programming language is used to analyze the reliability of the scale and the discovery factor. The analysis results suggest removing and merging some observed variables to help the scale evaluate concepts more accurately.

Analyzing the Reliability of the Scales:

They are testing the scales through Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient to identify and remove junk variables to avoid creating misleading factors when analyzing exploratory factor analysis. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient has a variable value in the interval [0,1]. If a measurement variable has a total correlation coefficient of Corrected Item - Total Correlation ≥ 0.3 , that variable meets the requirements (Cronbach, 1951; Taber, 2018). The verification criterion is that the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient must be greater than 0.6, and the correlation coefficient of the sum variable in each scale must be greater than 0.3 (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). Table 2 shows that the scales of the factors are all standard. Therefore, all the scales of the factors are reliable and used for subsequent factor analysis.

Table 2. Summary of Reliability and Relative Minimum Variables of Scales

Scales	Number of variables observed	Reliability coefficients (Cronbach Alpha)	The correlation coefficient of the smallest total variable
WEMW	14	0.808	0.535
SMM	15	0.814	0.555
Five_Precepts1	5	0.804	0.559

After testing Cronbach's Alpha, the author uses exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to preliminary evaluate the scales' unidirectional, convergent, and discriminant values. EFA was used by extracting the Principal Components Analysis Factor and Varimax rotation to group the factors. With a sample size of 200, the factor loading factors of the observed variables must be greater than 0.5; variables converge on the same factor and are distinguished from other factors. In addition, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin coefficient (KMO) is an index used to consider the adequacy of factor analysis that must be in the range $0.5 \leq KMO \leq 1$ (Cerny & Kaiser, 1977; Kaiser, 1974). The analysis results in Table 3 show that all factor loading coefficients of the observed variables are greater than 0.5; Bartlett test with Sig meaning. = 0.000 with KMO coefficient = 0.92. All 24 items using EFA are extracted into three factors with Eigenvalues greater than one and Cumulative variance percent = 51%. Thus, the research model consisting of 2 independent variables and one dependent variable is used for linear regression analysis and subsequent hypothesis testing.

Table 3. Exploratory factor analysis

Call: principal(r = data1, nfactors = 3, rotate = "varimax")
 Standardized loadings (pattern matrix) based upon correlation matrix

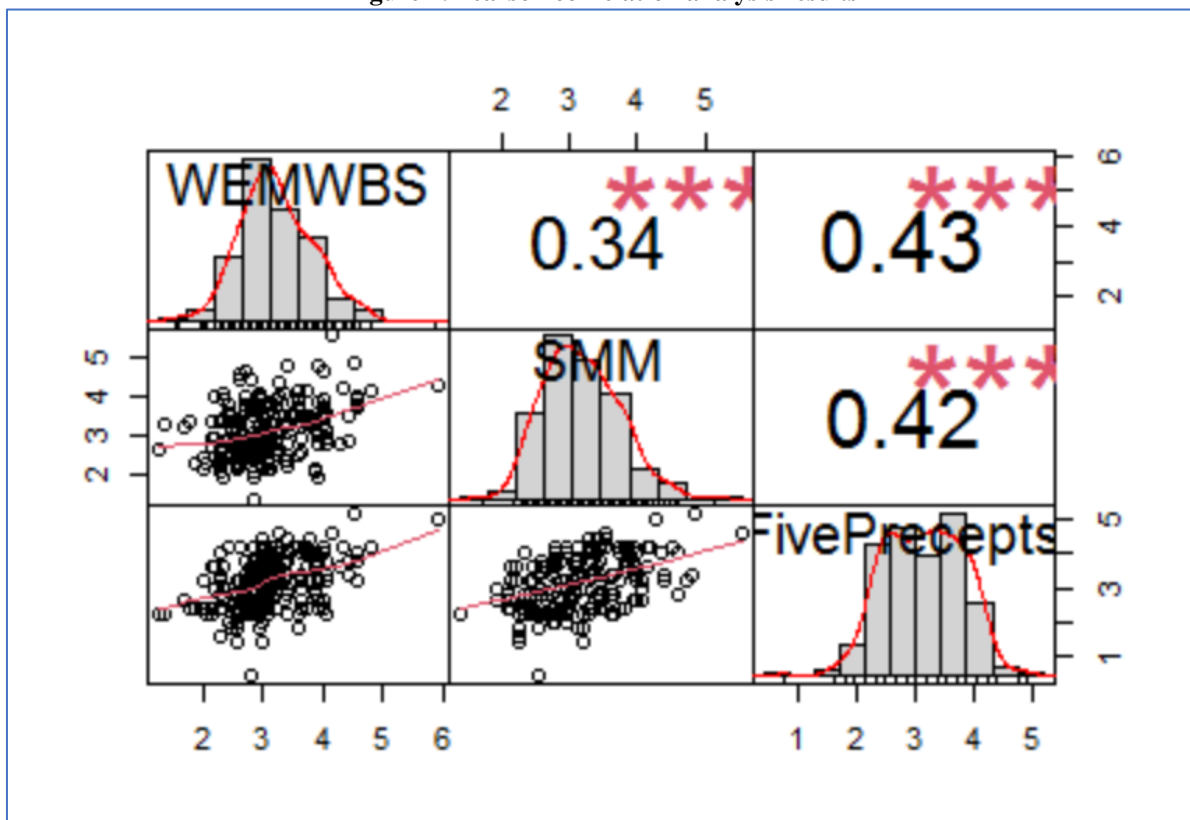
	item	RC1	RC2	RC3	h2	u2	com
WEMWBS9	9	0.72			0.52	0.48	1.0
WEMWBS11	11	0.70			0.50	0.50	1.0
WEMWBS14	14	0.68			0.52	0.48	1.2
WEMWBS3	3	0.68			0.51	0.49	1.2
WEMWBS6	6	0.68			0.52	0.48	1.3
WEMWBS8	8	0.68			0.49	0.51	1.1
WEMWBS2	2	0.67			0.47	0.53	1.1
WEMWBS4	4	0.66			0.46	0.54	1.1
WEMWBS10	10	0.65			0.47	0.53	1.2
WEMWBS7	7	0.65			0.43	0.57	1.1
WEMWBS13	13	0.64			0.45	0.55	1.2
WEMWBS1	1	0.63			0.43	0.57	1.2
WEMWBS12	12	0.60			0.39	0.61	1.2
WEMWBS5	5	0.55			0.36	0.64	1.4
SMM4	18		0.72		0.54	0.46	1.1
SMM10	23		0.72		0.52	0.48	1.0
SMM3	17		0.69		0.50	0.50	1.1
SMM2	16		0.69		0.49	0.51	1.1
SMM7	21		0.68		0.50	0.50	1.2
SMM14	27		0.67		0.47	0.53	1.1
SMM12	25		0.65		0.43	0.57	1.0
SMM5	19		0.64		0.46	0.54	1.2
SMM11	24		0.64		0.43	0.57	1.1
SMM15	28		0.63		0.43	0.57	1.2
SMM6	20		0.62		0.41	0.59	1.1
SMM1	15		0.62		0.46	0.54	1.4
SMM13	26		0.62		0.40	0.60	1.1
SMM9	22		0.60		0.41	0.59	1.3
FivePrecepts3	31			0.74	0.64	0.36	1.3
FivePrecepts4	32			0.73	0.59	0.41	1.2
FivePrecepts5	33			0.70	0.54	0.46	1.2
FivePrecepts2	30			0.66	0.52	0.48	1.4
FivePrecepts1	29			0.64	0.51	0.49	1.5

Fit based upon off diagonal values = 0.98

Pearson correlation analysis

The author uses Pearson correlation analysis to analyze the correlation between quantitative variables. Figure 2 shows that, at the 5% level of significance, the correlation coefficient shows that the relationship between the dependent and independent variables is statistically significant (Sig. < 0.05). The magnitude of the correlation coefficients ensures that multicollinearity does not occur. Therefore, other statistics can be used to verify the relationship between variables.

Figure 2. Pearson correlation analysis results



Regression Analysis:

Next, the author conducts multivariable linear regression analysis on the relationship between two independent variables SMM, FivePrecepts and a dependent variable, WEMWBS and Moderation regression Analysis, to determine the SMM variable that moderates the relationship between variables. FivePrecepts and the WEMWBS variable. Table 4 shows that model1 has $R^2 = 0.217$ and model2 has $R^2 = 0.241$, showing that the built linear regression model fits the data set model1 = 0.217 % and model 2 = 0.241%, respectively. Both models show that the two independent variables have no statistical significance on the dependent variable.

Table 4. The results of multiple linear regression analysis, Table 4 shows that, with 95% confidence, the hypotheses proposed by the research team are accepted. Specifically, model1 shows that FivePrecepts has the most substantial effect on the WEMWBS variable with $\beta = 0.301$, followed by the SMM variable with $\beta = 0.206$. Model2 shows that the SMM variable moderates the relationship between the FivePrecepts variable and the WEMWBS variable with $\beta = 0.175$, which means that the increase or decrease of the SMM variable makes the relationship between the FivePrecepts variable and the WEMWBS variable also increase or decrease, respectively.

Table 4. The results of multiple linear regression analysis

	Dependent variable:	
	(1)	(2)
	WEMWBS	
SMM	0.199*** (0.069)	
FivePrecepts	0.301*** (0.060)	
SMM		0.172*** (0.060)
fiveprecepts		0.288*** (0.053)
SMM:fiveprecepts		0.175*** (0.066)
Constant	1.532*** (0.226)	3.081*** (0.044)
Observations	200	200
R2	0.217	0.241
Adjusted R2	0.209	0.229
Residual Std. Error	0.600 (df = 197)	0.592 (df = 196)
F Statistic	27.261*** (df = 2; 197)	20.692*** (df = 3; 196)
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Research results show that practicing the five precepts has a positive and significant impact on subjective well-being. This result is similar to the finding of Ariyabuddhiphongs (2009), Hackney & Sanders (2003), Birnie et al. (2010) and Joh (1992) that the extent to which a Buddhist engages in observance of the five precepts and meditation, which is related to life satisfaction, feeling happy in life. The results also show that mindfulness has a positive and significant impact on subjective well-being, similar to the findings of Walsh, Saab, & Farb (2016) and Rosini, Nelson, Amanda, & Dinzeo (2017). Participants who practiced mindfulness meditation had a high subjective well-being score, associated with healthy living habits, lower stress levels, and reduced negative thinking. These results also suggest that cultivating mindfulness can be a proactive tool for enhancing subjective well-being and health.

In particular, the research results also show that mindfulness regulates the relationship between practicing the five precepts and perceived subjective well-being. It is our new finding that has not been found in any other studies yet.

From these results, the following conclusions can be drawn:

Firstly, it is necessary to support them to practice mindfulness to have its effects in life, such as better emotional regulation, reduced stress, reasonable regulation of social relationships, improved memory, improved health mental well-being, and subjective well-being.

Second, encourage the implementation of the five precepts, including (1. Panàtipàtà veramanì: Abstaining from killing; 2. Adinnàdàna veramanì: Avoid theft; 3. Kàmesu micchàcàrà veramanì: Avoid sexual misconduct; 4. Musà and dà veramanì: abstain from lying and 5. Suràmeraya majjappamadatthàna veramanì: Stay away from indulgent drinking) to promote its role in enhancing perceived subjective well-being.

Limitations

As with other empirical studies, there are limitations to this study that should be considered when discussing the results. First, our survey method reflects the respondents' subjective perception of the questions being investigated. Subjective data has some inherent disadvantages that are hard to avoid in surveys (Pakpour, Gellert, Asefzadeh, Updegraff, Molloy & Sniehotta 2016). Our data is collected over a single period of productional data that does not allow a dynamic assessment of changes in students' intentions and related behaviours regarding their college admissions, which may affect their applicability (Xin, Liang, Zhanyou& Hua, 2019). Future research should combine cross-sectional and longitudinal studies.

The intentional sampling method has certain limitations, not fully reflecting population characteristics (Lin et al., 2016; Strong et al., 2018). Our survey was conducted within a cultural context of Vietnam and

therefore requires more general statements that can be made by applying the development research model and research conclusions to other countries and cultures (Sun et al., 2012).

There is also another aspect of mindfulness and the practice of the five precepts that affect subjective well-being. Future studies should explore the moderating variables (individual differences; duration, frequency and style of practice of the five precepts. Furthermore, the low R2 of both models leads to a decrease in opinion. In future studies, it is necessary to increase the research sample size to improve the model.

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Conflict of interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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