



HAPPINESS AND BUDDHISM AMONG YOUNG GENERATION (Z) IN THAILAND

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Abstract

Background and Objective: This research investigates the impact of religiosity and religious activities on the happiness of the young generation (Ages 11-26) of Buddhists in Thailand. It aims to analyze the relationship between these religious aspects and the happiness levels among the young generation of Buddhists in Thailand. This study hypothesized that practicing Buddhist principles (Religiosity) and participating in religious activities influenced the happiness of the young generation of Buddhists in Thailand.

Methodology: A quantitative approach was utilized, analyzing secondary data from a national survey that included a sample of 1,880 young Buddhists in Thailand. The study was structured in two main sections: A summary of demographic characteristics and the results of hypothesis testing. The demographic data was summarized to understand the profile of the participants, including gender, age, marital status, education, employment, and nationality. Hypothesis testing was then conducted to evaluate the impact of religiosity and religious activities on happiness.

Main Results: The demographic revealed that the majority of participants were Thai (94%), female (54%), aged 21-26 (56%), and predominantly single (71%). Most had primary education and were employed in agriculture (80%). Hypothesis testing results indicated that Hypothesis 1: Religiosity significantly supports happiness among the young generation of Buddhists, showing that higher levels of religiosity, including praying, listening to sermons, observing the five precepts, meditation, becoming a nun, and participating in New Year prayers were associated with higher happiness. Hypothesis 2: Religious activity plays a role in supporting happiness among the young generation of Buddhists, showing that higher levels of religious activity, including incorporating religious teachings into daily living, using religious principles to solve life problems, maintaining belief in religious faith, and practicing according to religious doctrines were associated with higher happiness.

Involvement to Buddhadhamma: This research investigates the relationship between Buddhist practices, both religiosity and religious activity and happiness among the young generation of



Buddhists in Thailand. The findings provide empirical evidence that engaging in Buddhist practices significantly enhances well-being and happiness, highlighting Buddhism's potential to improve quality of life. These insights align with the principles of Applied Buddhism, which integrates traditional Buddhist teachings with modern knowledge and innovations. For example, the application of Buddhist management, economics with the Four Noble Truths, and development processes reflects how religious principles can address contemporary challenges. Additionally, Buddhist practices such as youth development camps, classroom management, and religious rituals promote wisdom and morality, further supporting mental well-being among the young generation. These findings can inform policy-making, emphasizing the importance of spiritual happiness in fostering psychological well-being and sustainability.

Conclusions: The study highlighted the significant role of religiosity and religious activities in fostering happiness among young Buddhists in Thailand. It suggested that these aspects not only contributed to individual well-being but also promoted community harmony and resilience. The results underscored the importance of religious practices in providing a sense of purpose, comfort, and support, reflecting the integral role of Buddhism in the lives of the young Thai Buddhist population.

Keywords: Happiness, Buddhist Among, Young Generation (Z)

Introduction

Buddhism plays a crucial role in Thai society, as the majority of the population, approximately 94%, adheres to this religion. The benefits of embracing and practicing Buddhist principles have a profound impact on individuals of all ages, contributing to the well-being of both oneself and the collective harmony within society (Lewis et al., 2000); (Francis, 1998). Buddhism teaches ethical conduct and virtuous living, promoting qualities that lead to goodness and the avoidance of wrongdoing. This, in turn, has positive effects on individuals and contributes to peaceful coexistence within the community (Childs, 2010); (Can Oz et al., 2022). The practice of Buddhist teachings extends across all life stages, imparting valuable lessons that shape behavior and foster moral development. The significance of Buddhism is evident in its impact on the quality of life and the instillation of values in daily life (Grim, 2011); (Cranney, 2013); (Fincham, 2022). Engaging in activities that cultivate mindfulness, tranquility, and moral values, Buddhism contributes to the overall well-being of individuals (Lewis et al., 2000). The teachings emphasize the importance of inner peace, promoting a sense of calmness that extends to interpersonal relationships and community life (Robinson, 2010). Furthermore, Buddhism is transmitted and perpetuated through cultural traditions and ways of life, becoming an integral part of Thai culture. This cultural continuity ensures that the values and principles of Buddhism are passed down through generations, influencing societal norms and behavior.

Currently, issues related to religion and culture, especially among the younger generation, are a significant cause for concern and alarm. That was attributed to societal changes, economic developments, technological advancements, and the influence of foreign cultures (Onthaisong,



2020). These factors profoundly impacted the behaviors and attitudes of the new generation. The assimilation of Western values and cultures has led to cultural and belief shifts, resulting in various societal problems among the younger generation in Thailand. These include a lack of adherence to traditional Thai values (Chaiphugdee, 2021). The adoption of behaviors such as smoking, alcohol consumption, gambling, risky sexual behaviors, substance abuse, and a disregard for parental guidance (Phuprasom, 2022); (Pongphumma, 2017). Additionally, there is a growing indifference towards religion and a perception that moral and ethical values may not hold significant importance (Phra Srirajamongkolpandit et al., 2022); (Onthaisong, 2020). The consequences of these shifts in cultural and belief systems contribute to the deterioration of mental health and moral values among the younger generation. Currently, the scenario between Buddhism and youth, particularly a crisis of faith among the youth towards the religious system, is intensified by the rapid dissemination of information through social media, often focusing on negative aspects. The propagation of negative information has resulted in a distortion of beliefs in Buddhism, presenting a challenge to ethical values within society and reflecting a moral decline in the modern era. It may also be attributed to societal shifts that emphasize individual freedom and a departure from traditional beliefs, with some individuals adopting alternative beliefs or identifying as secularists. Contributing factors to this issue encompass insufficient education, a dearth of positive role models within the religious community, and societal influences that favor scientific and technological progress.

The impact of parental upbringing, societal socialization, or the influence of mainstream trends can further create a rift between the new generation and their religious beliefs. Specifically, young individuals who lack life experiences and accurate knowledge about their faith encounter difficulties in accessing and understanding the true essence of their beliefs, compounded by challenges in passing down these values to their own offspring. The issues discussed present a comprehensive overview of challenges associated with the religious beliefs of the new generation. Gaps and difficulties in understanding and questioning authentic religious principles may lead to perspectives that don't fully appreciate the value of these beliefs (Lewis et al., 2000); (Francis, 1998). The overarching question is how Buddhism influences individuals and society in terms of well-being and whether it genuinely contributes to happiness for the new generation (Estrada et al., 2019). Doubts are raised about the benefits and importance of Buddhism, with a focus on its impact on mental well-being (Fincham, 2022), improved health, and the creation of happiness, especially among young people in contemporary society (Zotti et al., 2016); (O'Sullivan & Lindsay, 2023); (Childs, 2010). This prompts the researchers to formulate a hypothesis for testing in this study: Whether the practice of Buddhist principles (Religiosity) affects the happiness of young people who respect it and how activities related to Buddhism (Religious activity) influence the happiness of the younger generation.

This study aims to explore the relationship between happiness and Buddhism by analyzing and testing happiness levels concerning religiosity and religious activities in the young generation. This research seeks to offer valuable information for understanding the impact of Buddhist



principles and practices on well-being (Singh et al., 2020); (Khaitan & Norton, 2019). The findings of this research could provide valuable insights for educators, parents, and policymakers in tailoring approaches to religious education and socialization (Argyle, M. & Hills, P., 2000); (Hackney & Sanders, 2003). Understanding the positive impact of Buddhist principles on the happiness of the young generation may inform the development of educational programs that promote holistic health or happiness, encompassing both spiritual and emotional dimensions.

Objective

This study hypothesizes that practicing Buddhist principles in the role of religiosity (R) and the role of religious activities (A-D) in enhancing influence the happiness among the younger generation of Buddhists. The research aims to analyze the relationship between these religious aspects and religious activities and the happiness levels of the young generation of Buddhists in Thailand.

Methodology

Participants and procedure

This study utilized secondary data from the 2018 Survey of the Social and Cultural Situation and Mental Health conducted by the National Statistical Office (NSO). Data were collected from across Thailand, with population size used as a stratifying variable. Population size was determined by proportional allocation, and data were collected from households in each province. The data collection was carried out through face-to-face interviews using a structured questionnaire. The initial sample consisted of 1,885 individuals selected for the study. This research has a conceptual framework as shown in Figure 1.

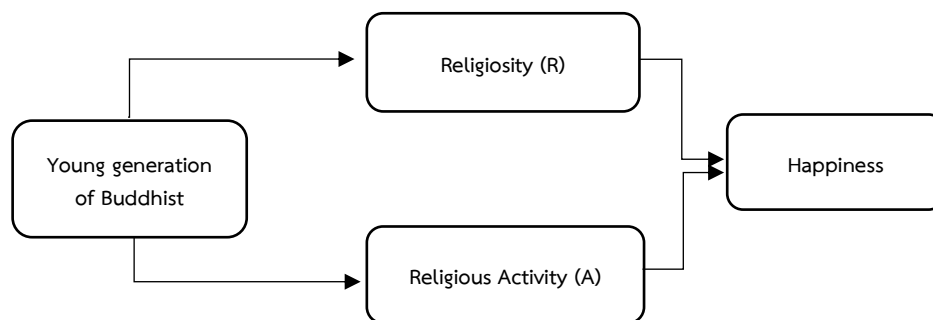


Figure 1 Conceptual framework of the research this research explores two types of variables: Independent variables, including religiosity (R) and religious activities (A-D), and the dependent variable, happiness (H), among young Buddhists in Thailand.

Variables and Measurements

All of the definitions and measurements of the variables are included in Table 1. There are the participants' and Demographic factors including 1) Sex 2) Age 3) Education 4) Marital status 5) Occupation 6) Nationality and independent variables such as 1) Religiosity (R), including R1:

Praying, R2: Offer food to the monks, R3: Listening to sermon & Dhamma reading, R4: Five precepts, R5: Meditation, R6: Ordination ceremony (Become a Monk), R7: Nun (Become a Nun), R8: Benefit of the praying, R9: Praying for new year celebration, R10: Place of new year praying and 2) Religious activity (A), including A1: Necessary of religious teaching for living, A2: Using religious teaching for life problem solution, A3: Belief in religious faith, A4: Practice according religious principle.

Table 1 Measurement of the valuables

VARIABLES	DEFINITION	MEASUREMENT	OPTIONS
Demographic	Demographic characteristics	1. Sex	1) Male 2) Female
		2. Age	1) Ages 11-15 2) Ages 16-20 3) Ages 21-26
		3. Education	1) Non-educated 2) Pre-primary 3) Primary 4) Pre-secondary 5) Secondary 6) Vocational 7) Diploma 8) Bachelor
		4. Marital status	1) Single 2) Married
		5. Occupation	1) Agriculture 2) Basic general 3) Others
		6. Nationality	1) Thai 2) Burmese 3) Cambodian
Buddhist	Religiosity (R)	R1: Praying	(10 Scales of Questionnaire)
		R2: Offer food to the monks	1 = Never
		R3: Listen to sermon & Dhamma reading	2 = Occasional vent, such as new year
		R4: Five precepts	3 = Only Buddhist religious days
		R5: Meditation	4 = In the religious months
		R6: Ordination ceremony (Become a Monk)	(3 Months of Khaopansa) 5 = Holy religious day
		R7: Nun (Become a Nun)	6 = 11 days per year
		R8: Benefit of the praying	7 = 3 days per month
		R9: Praying for new year cerebation	8 = Every weekend 9 = Someday
		R10: Place of new year praying	10 = Everyday
	Religious activity (A-D)	A: Necessary of religious teaching for living	
B: Using religious teaching for life problem solution			
C: Belief in religious faith			
D: Practice according religious principle			
Dependent variable		Happiness (H)	0 = Less 1 = More



Data Analysis

This study employed SPSS software to analyze the data and test the research hypotheses using an independent sample T-test. The research questions were: Do religiosity and religious activity play a significant role in supporting more and less happiness equally among the young generation of Buddhists? Two research hypotheses were also included: H1: Does religiosity play a substantial role in supporting more and less happiness equally among the young generation of Buddhists? H2: Religious activity plays a vital role in helping the young generation of Buddhists achieve more happiness. In this case, the grouping variable is the religiosity and religious activity level, and the test variable is the happiness level.

Results and Discussion

The research findings were presented in four sections as follows,

1. Summary of demographic characteristics of the target group
2. Overall summary of hypothesis testing results
3. Findings related to research **objective 1**: The role of religiosity (R) in enhancing happiness among the younger generation of Buddhists
4. Findings related to research **objective 2**: The role of religious activities (A-D) in enhancing happiness among the younger generation of Buddhists

1. Summary of demographic characteristics of the target group

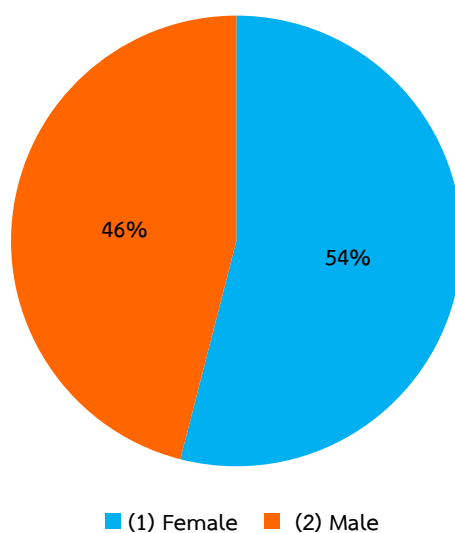


Figure 2 Summary of genders distribution

Figure 2: Illustrates the gender distribution within the studied target group; The analysis indicated that the majority were females (54%), with males making up the remaining portion (46%).

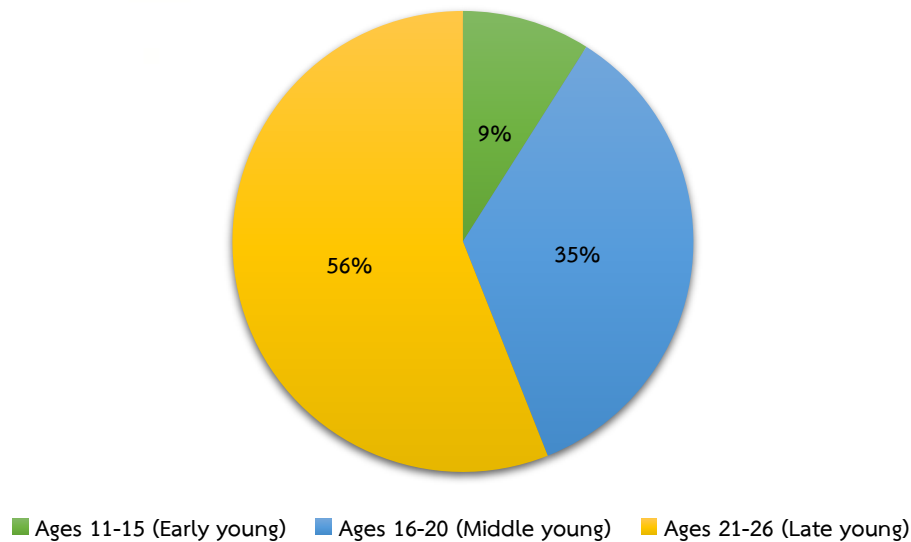


Figure 3 Summary of age distribution

Figure 3: Illustrates the age distribution within the studied target group; The analysis indicated that the majority were ages 21-26 (Late Young), with 56%, ages 11-15 (Early Young), with 9%, and ages 16-20 (Middle Young), with 35%.

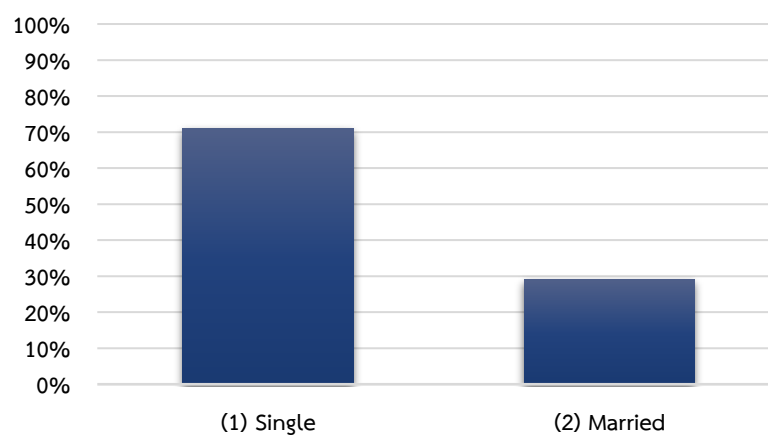


Figure 4 Summary of Marital status distribution

Figure 4: Illustrates the distribution of marital status within the studied target group; The analysis indicated that the majority were single with 71%, and married with 29%.

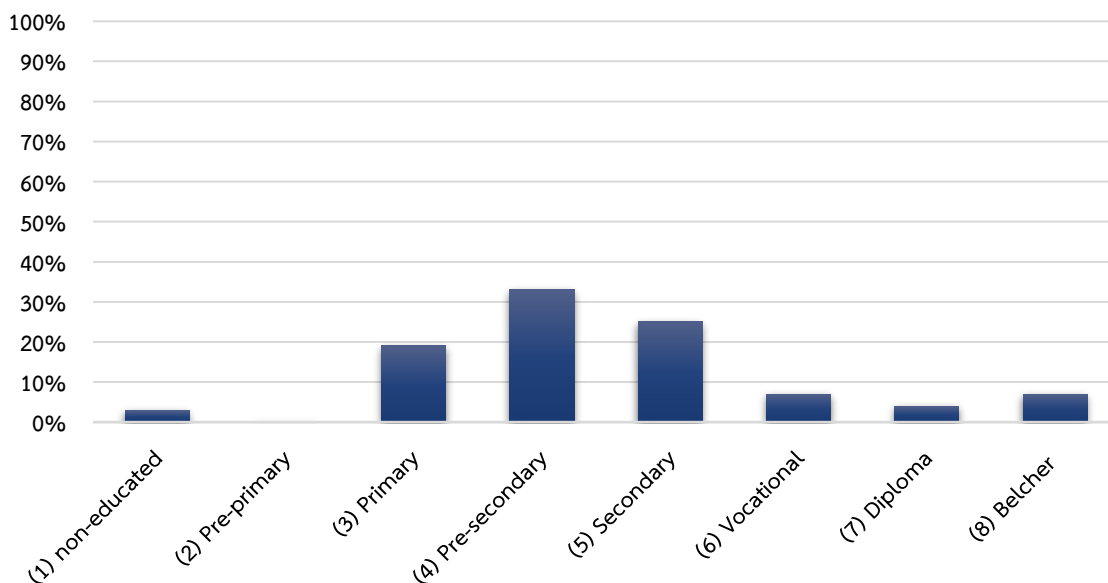


Figure 5 Summary of education distribution

Figure 5: Illustrates the education distribution within the studied target group; The analysis indicated the following distribution: Primary level of education with 0%, non-educated with 3%, pre-primary with 0.2%, primary with 19%, pre-secondary with 33%, secondary with 25%, vocational with 7%, diploma with 4%, and bachelor's degree with 7%.

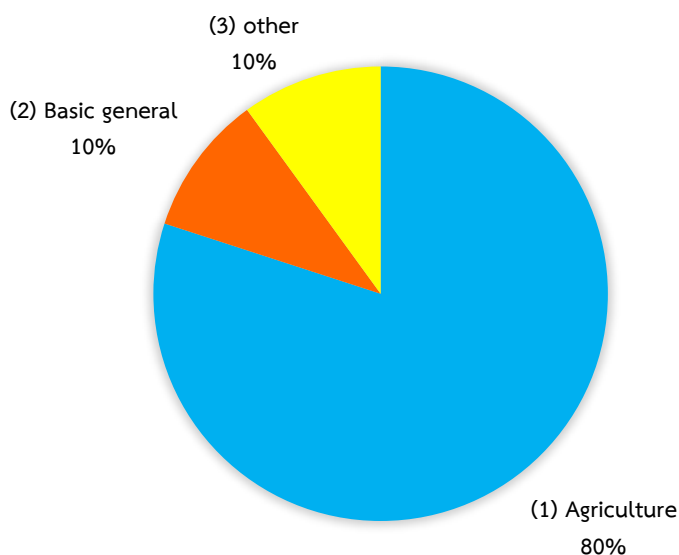


Figure 6 Summary of occupation distribution

Figure 6: Illustrates the occupation distribution within the studied target group; The analysis indicated that the majority were involved in agriculture with 80%, followed by basic general occupations with 10%, and other occupations with 10%.

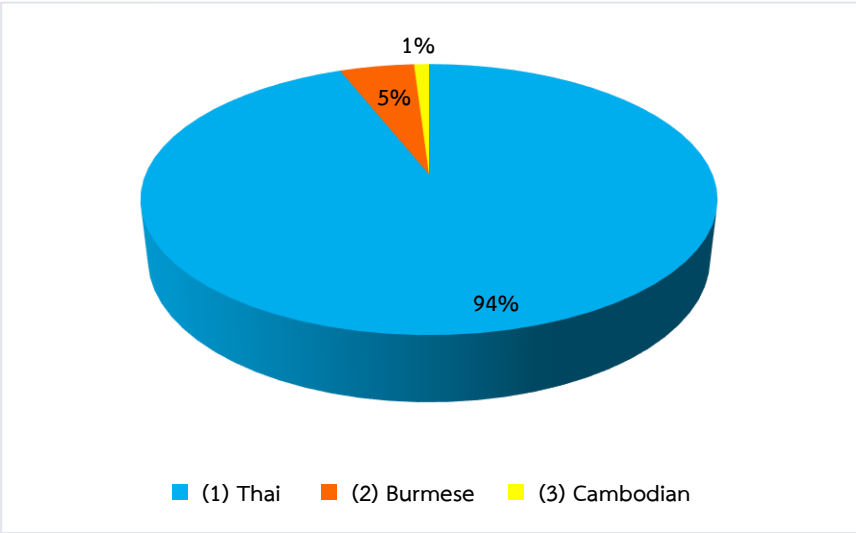


Figure 7 Summary of Nationality distribution

Figure 7: Illustrates the nationality distribution within the studied target group; The analysis indicated that the majority were Thai with 94%, followed by Burmese with 5%, and Cambodian with 1%.

The finding of the happiness on religiosity (R) and religious activity (A-D) among the young generation of Buddhists ages 11-26 in Thailand, the findings indicated that the studied group was predominantly female (54%), aged 21-26 (56%), and mostly single (71%), with primary education being the highest level attained. Most worked in agriculture (80%), and most were Thai nationals (94%). The study focused on the demographic characteristics of this young generation in Thailand, and the sample predominantly consisted of Thai nationals who were single with families engaged in agriculture. Most had primary-level education, were female, and aged 21 years and older. The findings suggested that these young individuals might still be in their early teens, in a learning phase, and might lack extensive life experience. This lack of maturity and experience could impact their understanding and engagement with religiosity. Future research should aim for a more diverse sample in terms of educational attainment and occupational fields to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the influence of religiosity and religious activities on happiness.

2. Overall summary of hypothesis testing results

To analyze the data and test the research hypotheses using an independent sample T-test, the grouping variables were religiosity (R) and religious activity (A-D), and the test variable was happiness (H).

Research questions

RQ1: Does religiosity (R) play a significant role in supporting more and less happiness equally among young generation of Buddhists?

RQ2: Does religious activity (A-D) play a significant role in supporting more happiness among young generation of Buddhists?



Research hypothesis

H1: Religiosity plays (R) a significant role in supporting more happiness among young generation of Buddhists.

H2: Religious activity (A-D) plays an important role in supporting more happiness among young generation of Buddhists.

Table 2 Summary of hypothesis testing results

Research hypothesis	More happiness (+)		Less happiness (-)		t	Sig.
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
H1: Religiosity plays (R) a significant role in supporting more happiness among young generation of Buddhists.	3.0491	1.03691	3.4418	1.13448	6.845***	0.000
H2: Religious activity (A-D) plays an important role in supporting more happiness among young generation of Buddhists.	4.6783	.63026	4.7923	.57759	3.720***	0.000

Note: *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001

Table 2 illustrated the summary of results for hypothesis testing of happiness based on religiosity (R) and religious activity (A-D) among the young generation of Buddhists in Thailand. The data revealed significant findings regarding the role of religiosity and religious activities in influencing happiness levels among this demographic.

For Hypothesis 1 (H1), which posited that religiosity (R) played a significant role in supporting greater happiness, the mean happiness scores for individuals with higher religiosity were 3.0491 (S.D. = 1.03691) compared to 3.4418 (S.D. = 1.13448) for those with lower religiosity. The t-value was 6.845***, which was statistically significant (p < 0.001). This suggested a substantial difference in happiness levels based on religiosity among the young generation of Buddhists, supporting the hypothesis that higher religiosity was associated with greater happiness.

Similarly, Hypothesis 2 (H2) suggested that religious activity (A-D) played an important role in supporting greater happiness. The mean happiness scores for individuals with more engagement in religious activities were 4.6783 (S.D. = 0.63026), compared to 4.7923 (S.D. = 0.57759) for those with less engagement. The t-value was 3.720***, which was also statistically significant (p < 0.001). It indicated that greater participation in religious activities was associated with higher happiness levels among the young generation of Buddhists.

In conclusion, the data supported the initial hypotheses, indicating that both religiosity (R) and religious activity (A-D) played significant roles in influencing happiness levels among the young generation of Buddhists in Thailand. These findings highlighted the importance of religious beliefs and practices in contributing to overall well-being and happiness among this demographic.

3. Findings related to research objective 1: The role of religiosity (R) in enhancing happiness among the younger generation of Buddhists

Table 3 Results for Hypothesis 1 (Religiosity: R)

H1: Religiosity plays (R) a significant role in supporting more happiness among young generation of Buddhists	More happiness (+)		Less happiness (-)		t	Sig.
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
R1: Praying	4.28	3.299	4.91	3.296	3.711***	0.000
R2: Offer food to the monks	6.88	2.971	7.10	2.719	1.502	0.133
R3: Listen to sermon & Dhamma reading	5.44	3.670	6.19	3.430	4.186***	0.000
R4: Five precepts	2.99	2.934	3.94	3.384	5.597***	0.000
R5: Meditation	2.79	2.844	3.97	3.382	7.059***	0.000
R6: Ordination ceremony (Become a monk)	1.11	.853	1.12	.908	0.284	0.777
R7: Nun (Become a Nun)	1.18	1.102	1.41	1.802	2.780**	0.006
R8: Benefit of the praying	2.89	1.443	2.90	1.656	0.140	0.889
R9: Praying for new year cerebation	1.91	.280	1.82	.384	-5.034***	0.000
R10: Place of new year praying	1.02	.131	1.04	.203	2.221*	0.027
Overall	3.0491	1.03691	3.4418	1.13448	6.845***	0.000

Note: *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001

Table 3 Illustrated the summary of results for Hypothesis 1 (H1), which examined the role of religiosity (R) in influencing happiness among the young generation of Buddhists in Thailand. The data revealed significant findings regarding various religious practices and their impact on happiness levels.

3.1 Significant Results

R1: Praying: The mean happiness score for those with more happiness was 4.28 (S.D. = 3.299), while for those with less happiness, it was 4.91 (S.D. = 3.296). The t-value was 3.711***, which was statistically significant (p < 0.001).

R3: Listening to Sermons and Dhamma Reading: The mean happiness score for more happiness was 5.44 (S.D. = 3.670), while for less happiness it was 6.19 (S.D. = 3.430). The t-value was 4.186***, which was statistically significant (p < 0.001).

R4: Observing the Five Precepts: The mean happiness score for more happiness was 2.99 (S.D. = 2.934), compared to 3.94 (S.D. = 3.384) for less happiness. The t-value was 5.597***, which was statistically significant (p < 0.001).



R5: Meditation: The mean happiness score for more happiness was 2.79 (S.D. = 2.844), while for less happiness it was 3.97 (S.D. = 3.382). The t-value was 7.059***, which was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$).

R7: Becoming a Nun: The mean happiness score for more happiness was 1.18 (S.D. = 1.102), compared to 1.41 (S.D. = 1.802) for less happiness. The t-value was 2.780**, which was statistically significant ($p < 0.01$).

R9: Praying for New Year Celebration: The mean happiness score for more happiness was 1.91 (S.D. = 0.280), compared to 1.82 (S.D. = 0.384) for less happiness. The t-value was -5.034***, which was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$).

R10: Place of New Year Praying: The mean happiness scores were very close, with 1.02 (S.D. = 0.131) for more happiness and 1.04 (S.D. = 0.203) for less happiness. The t-value was 2.221*, which was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

3.2 Not Significant Results

R2: Offering Food to the Monks: The mean happiness score for those with more happiness was 6.88 (S.D. = 2.971), compared to 7.10 (S.D. = 2.719) for those with less happiness. The t-value was 1.502, which was not statistically significant ($p = 0.133$). This result might be attributed to teenagers having less experience with giving alms and perceiving it as a routine part of Thai society, thus not feeling deeply moved by this activity.

R6: Ordination Ceremony (Becoming a Monk): The mean happiness scores were very close, with 1.11 (S.D. = 0.853) for those with more happiness and 1.12 (S.D. = 0.908) for those with less happiness. The t-value was 0.284, which was not statistically significant ($p = 0.777$). This result may be due to the low incidence of ordination among teenagers and their limited experience with such activities.

R8: Benefit of Praying: The mean happiness scores were almost identical, with 2.89 (S.D. = 1.443) for those with more happiness and 2.90 (S.D. = 1.656) for those with less happiness. The t-value was 0.140, which was not statistically significant ($p = 0.889$). Teenagers, having limited experience with praying and meditation, may not yet perceive significant benefits from these practices.

The overall mean happiness scores for individuals with higher religiosity were 3.0491 (S.D. = 1.03691), compared to 3.4418 (S.D. = 1.13448) for those with lower religiosity, with a t-value of 6.845, which was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). It indicated a substantial difference in happiness levels based on religiosity among the young generation of Buddhists, supporting the hypothesis that higher religiosity is associated with greater happiness.

In conclusion, the data supported Hypothesis 1, showing that various aspects of religiosity, such as praying, listening to sermons, observing the Five Precepts, meditation, becoming a nun, and participating in New Year praying practices played significant roles in influencing happiness levels among the young generation of Buddhists in Thailand. These findings highlighted the importance of religious beliefs and practices in contributing to overall well-being and happiness among this demographic.

The findings on happiness related to religiosity (R) were as follows: Based on the testing results for the relationship between happiness and religiosity among the young generation of Buddhists (Q1), the first hypothesis (H1) suggesting a significant role of religiosity (R) in supporting more happiness was supported by the data (H1 = Supported), which indicated a significant influence of religiosity on supporting happiness levels among the young generation of Buddhists. The findings suggested that practicing religiosity did not necessarily result in greater happiness among the young generation of Buddhists. Notably, praying, listening to sermons, observing the Five Precepts, meditation, becoming a nun, and praying New Year were significantly associated with higher happiness levels among this demographic. The findings demonstrated that engaging in specific religious practices such as praying, listening to sermons, observing the Five Precepts, practicing meditation, and participating in New Year celebrations through prayer was closely linked to higher happiness levels among the young generation of Buddhists. This strong correlation between religiosity and happiness aligned with previous research, which similarly indicated that praying, meditating, or even praying during New Year festivals positively impacted mental health and increased the happiness of practitioners (Esat et al., 2021); (Abdel Khalek, 2015); (Winzer et al., 2018), bolstering the validity and reliability of the study's results. Additionally, research on different religious contexts, including Islam and Christianity, supported the consistent positive relationship between religiosity and happiness, highlighting the universality of this phenomenon. Overall, the comprehensive analysis and empirical evidence presented in the research emphasized the vital role of religiosity in enhancing happiness among the young generation of Buddhists in Thailand.

4. Findings related to research objective 2: The role of religious activities (A-D) in enhancing happiness among the younger generation of Buddhists

Table 4 Results for Hypothesis 2 (Religious Activity: A-D)

H2: Religious activity (A-D) plays an important role in supporting more happiness among young generation of Buddhists	More happiness (+)		Less happiness (-)		t	Sig.
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
A: Necessary of religious teaching for living	1.09	0.396	1.03	0.227	-4.135***	0.000
B: Using religious teaching for life problem solution	3.01	1.088	2.65	1.077	-6.424***	0.000
C: Belief in religious faith	7.85	1.566	8.08	1.342	3.117**	0.002
D: Practice according religious principle	6.76	1.505	7.41	1.323	9.120***	0.000
Overall	4.6783	.63026	4.7923	.57759	3.720***	0.000

Note: *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001



Table 4 illustrated the summary of results for Hypothesis 2 (H2), which examined the role of religious activity (A-D) in influencing happiness among the young generation of Buddhists in Thailand. The data revealed significant findings regarding various religious activities and their impact on happiness levels.

A: Necessity of religious teaching for a living

The mean happiness score for those with more happiness was 1.09 (S.D. = 0.396), while for those with less happiness, it was 1.03 (S.D. = 0.227). The t-value was -4.135***, which was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$).

B: Using religious teaching for life problem solution

The mean happiness score for those with more happiness was 3.01 (S.D. = 1.088), compared to 2.65 (S.D. = 1.077) for those with less happiness. The t-value was -6.424***, which was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$).

C: Belief in religious faith

The mean happiness score for those with more happiness was 7.85 (S.D. = 1.566), compared to 8.08 (S.D. = 1.342) for those with less happiness. The t-value was 3.117**, which was statistically significant ($p < 0.01$).

D: Practice according to religious principles

The mean happiness score for those with more happiness was 6.76 (S.D. = 1.505), compared to 7.41 (S.D. = 1.323) for those with less happiness. The t-value was 9.120***, which was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$).

The overall mean happiness scores for individuals engaged in more religious activity were 4.6783 (S.D. = 0.63026), compared to 4.7923 (S.D. = 0.57759) for those with less engagement. The t-value was 3.720***, which was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). That suggested a substantial difference in happiness levels based on religious activity among the young generation of Buddhists, supporting the hypothesis that higher engagement in religious activities was associated with greater happiness.

In conclusion, the data supported Hypothesis 2, indicating that various aspects of religious activity, particularly the necessity of religious teaching for living, using religious teachings for life problem solutions, belief in religious faith, and practicing according to religious principles, played significant roles in influencing happiness levels among the young generation of Buddhists in Thailand. These findings highlighted the importance of religious activities in contributing to overall well-being and happiness among this demographic.

The findings on happiness related to religious activity (A-D) were as follows: Based on the results for research question (Q2) regarding religious activities (A-D) among the young generation of Buddhists, the second hypothesis (H2) suggesting a significant impact of these religious activities on happiness was supported by the data (H2 = Supported). The findings revealed significant differences in supporting happiness levels between groups across all religious activities. Notably, (A) the necessity of religious teaching for living, (B) using religious teaching for life problem solutions,



(C) belief in religious faith, and (D) practicing according to religious principles all showed statistically significant distinctions.

The findings indicated that religious activities (A-D) had a confirmed impact on increased happiness levels among the young generation of Buddhists. Future research and policy frameworks should aim to specify and distinguish these religious activities to understand better their individual contributions to the well-being of the young generation of Buddhists. Based on previous research findings, the evidence clarified the reasons for the increased levels of happiness. Previous studies indicated that religious activity had a positive correlation with happiness across all ages of the population. Hence, the findings of the study were aligned with prior research, showing a consistent trend.

This was elucidated as follows: For the elderly, a noteworthy correlation was uncovered between religious activities, such as attitudes toward religious beliefs (Esat et al., 2021); (Abdel Khalek, 2015), the significance of religious teachings in daily life, the application of religion in problem-solving, and mental health. The discovery regarding spiritual beliefs as a religious activity showed a significant association with elevated happiness levels among all Thai individuals. This finding was supported by Winzer's (2018) research. However, what was noteworthy for the young generation was that activities contributing to the happiness of new-generation youth were correlated with social activities and participation in family or societal events. For instance, engaging in religious activities such as chanting prayers with family allowed youth to bond with their families and friends, contributing to a sense of joy (Nell & Rothmann, 2018). Since most youths in the new generation had limited life experience and had not yet independently addressed various challenges in life, they remained under the care of their families. Therefore, training and education in schools, based on the curriculum and teacher guidance, provided an understanding of the importance and values of Buddhism through learning activities (French & Joseph, 1999). This, in turn, affected their thoughts, knowledge, and understanding. It was not surprising that the study found that religious activities and participation in various religious events impacted the emotional well-being of the new young generation.

Originality and Body of Knowledge

The findings indicated that both religiosity (A) and religious activity (A-D) significantly contributed to happiness among the young generation of Buddhists in Thailand.

1. Religiosity (R): The results of the study on the relationship between happiness and religiosity among young Buddhists supported the first hypothesis, indicating that religiosity played a significant role in enhancing happiness. The findings also suggested that engaging in religious practices did not always guarantee increased happiness. Specifically, activities such as praying, listening to sermons, observing the five precepts, meditating, becoming a nun, and participating in New Year prayers were significantly linked to higher levels of happiness among young Buddhists.

2. Religious Activity (A-D): The results of the study regarding religious activities (A-D) among the young generation of Buddhists supported the second hypothesis, indicating a significant

impact of these activities on happiness. The findings revealed notable differences in happiness levels across various religious activities. Specifically, (A) the necessity of religious teaching for living, (B) using religious teaching to solve life problems, (C) belief in religious faith, and (D) practicing according to religious principles all demonstrated statistically significant distinctions. The findings confirmed that these religious activities (A-D) positively influenced happiness levels among young Buddhists.



Figure 8 Religiosity (A) and religious activity (A-D) as factors influencing happiness.

Figure 8: Illustrated religiosity (R) and religious activity (A-D) as factors influencing and significantly contributing to happiness among the young generation of Buddhists in Thailand. Factors influencing happiness for Religiosity (R) included 1.1) Praying, 1.2) Listening to Sermons, 1.3) Observing the Five Precepts, 1.4) Meditation, 1.5) Becoming a nun, and 1.6) New Year Praying practices, and for Religious Activity (A-D) included 2.1) Necessity of religious teaching for living, 2.2) Using religious teachings for life problem solutions, 2.3) Belief in religious faith, and 2.4) Practicing according to religious principles.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study examined the influence of religiosity (R) and religious activity (A-D) on the happiness of the young generation (Ages 11-26) in Thailand. The sample was predominantly female (54%), mostly aged 21-26 (56%), single (71%), and primarily engaged in agriculture (80%). The results supported two hypotheses: Higher religiosity and increased religious activities were significantly associated with greater happiness. Specific aspects of religiosity, such as praying, listening to sermons, observing the Five Precepts, meditation, becoming a nun, and New Year



praying practices, were significantly associated with higher happiness levels. The second hypothesis (H2: Religious Activity (A-D)) proposed that religious activity played a pivotal role in fostering greater happiness among the young generation of Buddhists. Specific religious activities, such as the necessity of religious teaching for living, using religious teachings to solve life problems, belief in religious faith, and practicing according to religious principles, were significantly linked to higher happiness, highlighting the positive role of religious engagement in enhancing well-being among young Buddhists. In conclusion, the data supported both initial hypotheses, indicating that both religiosity (R) and religious activity (A-D) played significant roles in influencing happiness levels among the young generation of Buddhists. The findings emphasized the importance of religious beliefs and practices in enhancing the well-being of young Buddhists in Thailand. Religiosity and religious activities were key factors in boosting happiness levels. It had recommended that the Ministry of Education develop a framework to integrate religious teachings into the curriculum, focusing on practical activities like praying, meditation, and applying Buddhist principles to life challenges. Schools should actively create programs to promote spiritual happiness, while the National Office of Buddhism should prioritize youth-oriented initiatives, promoting happiness through religious engagement as a national agenda.

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