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Development and validation of Buddhist Religiosity Scale: An emic and etic approach

Submitted by

Tan (Barry) Tse

In fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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School of Social and Health Sciences

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Such is life. And such is the path.

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Abstract

This thesis presents the conceptualisation, development, and psychometric validation of the Buddhist Religiosity Scale (BRS-22), a novel instrument designed to measure religiosity among Buddhists across different traditions. Traditional religiosity measures—typically derived from Western, theistic frameworks—fail to account for the distinct philosophical foundations and non-theistic orientation of Buddhism. These frameworks often rely heavily on belief in a deity, ritual observance, and institutional affiliation—constructs that are not central to Buddhist doctrines or practices. This mismatch has resulted in a persistent measurement gap in the psychology of religion and spirituality, particularly with respect to assessing religiosity in Buddhist populations. Addressing this lacuna, the present study developed an emically grounded yet etically validated scale that authentically captures Buddhist religiosity in a doctrinally coherent, culturally inclusive, and psychometrically sound manner.

The thesis adopts a multi-phase, mixed-method design comprising four major components. In Chapter 2, a scoping review of existing Buddhist religiosity measures was conducted. This review revealed significant conceptual and methodological limitations in available tools. Many existing measures lacked grounding in core Buddhist doctrines, focused narrowly on specific traditions (e.g., Mahayana), or borrowed constructs from Abrahamic religious paradigms. As a result, these scales risked conceptual distortion and limited generalisability across the broader Buddhist landscape. To further explore the limitations of non-Buddhist religiosity measures, Chapter 3 described a measurement invariance analysis on three widely used religiosity scales that are often applied in Buddhist contexts. The results confirmed their unsuitability for capturing uniquely Buddhist constructs and further supported the need for a dedicated instrument.

To develop the conceptual framework for the BRS, Chapter 4 reports on a qualitative study involving in-depth interviews with 14 senior Buddhist scholars and practitioners from diverse regions representing Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana traditions. The interviews explored participants' understandings of what constitutes "Buddhist religiosity" in theory and practice. Six primary conceptual domains emerged: doctrinal knowledge and adherence, ethical conduct, meditative concentration, wisdom, the process of Learning, Thinking, and Practising the Dharma (LTP), and internalised transformation or Embodiment. Two additional conceptual categories— "Intentionality" and "Body, Speech, and Mind"—were included in the item development stage to explore their potential factor structure. Based on this framework, 59 initial items were generated and reduced to 56 items after internal discussion, ensuring conceptual clarity and lay accessibility.

Chapter 5 presents the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) phase. A diverse sample of Buddhist-identifying individuals (*N* = 495) from five Asian regions—Mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, and Singapore—participated in this phase. The analysis employed maximum likelihood extraction with Promax rotation, and parallel analysis was used to determine the number of factors to retain. The final EFA solution revealed a two-factor model: (1) Learning, Thinking, and Practising (LTP), which captured engagement with Buddhist teachings through study, contemplation, and application, and (2) Embodiment, which reflected ethical conduct, meditative integration, and doctrinal internalisation. These factors explained 57.3% of the total variance. Subsequent psychometric evaluation demonstrated strong internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha > .90 for both factors), and construct validity was supported via convergent and discriminant correlations with the Non-Attachment Scale (NAS-7), the Centrality of Buddhist Religiosity Scale (CBRS), the Religious Meaning Scale (RMS), and the Degrees of Belief in God Scale (DBIGS). Criterion-related validity was assessed using correlations with behavioural (Dictator Game) and psychological outcomes (life satisfaction and anxiety).

Chapter 6 details the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) conducted with an independent sample (*N* = 493) to validate the two-factor structure derived from EFA. CFA results confirmed the good fit of the two-factor correlated model (CFI = 0.943, TLI = 0.937, RMSEA = 0.047, SRMR = 0.040), with all item loadings above .50. A second-order model was also tested, positioning LTP and Embodiment as subdimensions of a higher-order latent factor—Buddhist religiosity. This model also demonstrated a satisfactory fit, supporting the theoretical coherence of the scale. Further validation analyses demonstrated strong convergent validity through high factor loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and discriminant validity through low factor correlations and cross-construct independence.

Incremental validity was assessed via hierarchical regression analyses to evaluate whether the BRS-22 predicted psychological and behavioural outcomes beyond existing religiosity-related constructs. The BRS accounted for additional variance in prosocial behaviour (Dictator Game), life satisfaction (SWLS), and anxiety (GAD-7), even after controlling for CBRS, NAS-7, and RMS. While its contribution over CBRS was limited in some cases, the BRS consistently added predictive power beyond NAS-7 and RMS, suggesting that it captures unique dimensions of Buddhist religiosity with psychological relevance.

Chapter 7 discusses the broader significance and implications of the BRS-22. One of the major strengths of this instrument lies in its dual emphasis on doctrinal fidelity and cross-tradition applicability. The scale avoids incorporating culturally bound or sectarian elements such as folk

rituals or deified worship practices that are common in some localised expressions of Buddhism. Instead, it centres on universal principles—such as mindfulness, ethical conduct, wisdom, and the reduction of greed, hatred, and delusion—that are foundational across Buddhist traditions. This makes the BRS-22 suitable for cross-cultural and cross-traditional research while remaining firmly anchored in Buddhist doctrine.

Despite its strengths, the study acknowledges several limitations. The BRS-22 was validated only in English and Chinese, limiting generalisability to populations that speak other languages such as Thai, Vietnamese, or Burmese. The study did not include test-retest reliability, which is essential for determining the temporal stability of the scale. Moreover, although measurement invariance was established across traditions, the sample predominantly comprised lay practitioners from urban settings, limiting insight into monastic or rural populations.

The BRS-22 stands as a theoretically coherent and psychometrically robust instrument that addresses long-standing gaps in the measurement of Buddhist religiosity. Its integration of emic perspectives and etic validation renders it both doctrinally grounded and broadly applicable across traditions and cultural contexts. Future work may extend its utility by translating and adapting the scale into additional languages, evaluating its test-retest reliability, and applying it in longitudinal and intervention studies. Further dialogue with Buddhist scholars could enrich its doctrinal precision and ensure its continued relevance without necessitating redevelopment, supporting its use in diverse psychological, sociological, and spiritual research settings.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The study of religiosity has long been dominated by frameworks rooted in Judeo-Christian traditions, reflecting the historical and cultural contexts in which many of these conceptual models were first developed. Early attempts to define and measure religiosity frequently centred on theistic beliefs, doctrinal commitment, and institutional participation, with an implicit assumption that these were universal markers of religious experience (Baumsteiger & Chenneville, 2015; Cardwell, 1971; Christiano, 2001; Estus & Overington, 1970; Hood Jr. et al., 2018; Poplavsky, 2023). However, such perspectives fail to account for religious traditions that do not conform to these paradigms, particularly those in which spiritual engagement is not necessarily predicated on belief in a deity or adherence to a rigid set of doctrines (Smith & Froese, 2008). Buddhism, as a non-theistic tradition with diverse doctrinal and practice-based variations, presents a unique challenge to existing religiosity measures. Its emphasis on meditative practices, ethical cultivation, and experiential wisdom as pathways to spiritual development requires a more nuanced approach to measurement, one that transcends traditional belief-centric models.

Despite increasing scholarly interest in religious diversity and spirituality, the field of religiosity research continues to lack measurement tools that adequately capture the distinctive dimensions of Buddhist religious life. The most commonly used religiosity scales, such as the Duke University Religiosity Index (DUREL; H. G. Koenig & Büssing, 2010), the Religious Commitment Inventory (RCI-10; Worthington et al., 2003), or the Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS; Huber & Huber, 2012), primarily assess religiosity through dimensions such as belief in God, attendance at religious services, and engagement in prayer. While useful for studying monotheistic traditions, these constructs fail to account for Buddhism's nontheistic orientation and its emphasis on practice over belief. Consequently, there remains a gap in the literature regarding the accurate measurement of Buddhist religiosity, particularly in a manner that reflects its doctrinal diversity.

This thesis aims to address this gap by developing and validating a Buddhist Religiosity Scale (BRS), a psychometric instrument designed to measure religiosity in a way that is both culturally relevant and doctrinally appropriate for Buddhist practitioners across different Buddhist traditions. The primary research question guiding this study is:

> ***How can a Buddhist Religiosity Scale better capture the religious experience of Buddhists compared to existing measures?***

To address this question, the study systematically examined the current status of religiosity scales utilised with Buddhist samples and conducted measurement non-invariance analyses on

several common scales to determine their applicability to the Buddhist population. In light of the recognised necessity for a scale tailored to assess Buddhist religiosity, a series of qualitative interviews was conducted to elucidate the fundamental dimensions of this construct. These interviews aimed to gather nuanced insights to inform the scale, thereby advancing the scholarly understanding of Buddhist religiosity. The research then proceeded through quantitative psychometric evaluations, including factor analysis and validity testing, to ensure the reliability and accuracy of the proposed scale. Through a meticulous process of scale development, this study aimed to refine the conceptualisation of Buddhist religiosity, ensuring that it resonates with the fundamental elements of Buddhist traditions while maintaining methodological rigour. In doing so, the study has made a significant contribution to the fields of Psychology of Religion and Spirituality (PRS) as well as to the broader empirical research discourse on religious diversity.

The findings and outcomes of this research hold significant implications for scholars and practitioners alike. For researchers, the introduction of a Buddhist Religiosity Scale provides a more valid and culturally sensitive tool for investigating religiosity in Buddhist populations, moving beyond Western-centric models that may impose inappropriate categories onto non-theistic traditions. For practitioners, a refined conceptual framework for understanding Buddhist religiosity may offer insights into how religious engagement manifests across different Buddhist schools and traditions. Ultimately, this research aims to bridge a critical gap in religiosity studies, fostering a more inclusive and comprehensive approach to the empirical study of religion.

1.1 Research Context and Rationale

The academic study of religiosity has evolved significantly over the past century, with early scholarship primarily influenced by theological perspectives and later transitioning into empirical inquiry. One of the earliest systematic attempts to study religiosity in psychological terms can be traced to William James, whose seminal work, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1917/2014), emphasised subjective religious experiences and the diversity of religious expression. Around the same time, Edwin Starbuck (1899) introduced survey-based research on religious development, setting the foundation for later empirical studies. In the mid-20th century, Gordon Allport advanced the study of religious motivation through his intrinsic-extrinsic religiosity framework, distinguishing between religion that is deeply internalised and religion that is instrumental or socially motivated (Allport, 1950; Allport & Ross, 1967). These early frameworks significantly shaped subsequent research, leading to the development of multidimensional religiosity models, such as Glock's (1962) five-dimensional approach and later refinements by researchers (H. G. Koenig et al., 2015).

Despite these advancements, most measures of religiosity have been constructed within a monotheistic and primarily Christian context, with assumptions that may not be universally applicable. The majority of established scales evaluate religiosity through dimensions such as belief in a deity, frequency of prayer, institutional participation, and scriptural engagement (Hill & Pargament, 2003). While these dimensions capture aspects of religiosity for adherents of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism, they present challenges when applied to traditions such as Buddhism, which does not require belief in a creator god and often emphasises ethical practice, meditation, and wisdom cultivation over doctrinal adherence. This issue of cultural bias in religiosity scales has been increasingly recognised, prompting efforts to develop more contextually sensitive instruments, particularly for non-Western religions (H. G. Koenig & Büssing, 2010; Krauss et al., 2005). However, Buddhism remains notably underrepresented in these efforts, and no widely accepted religiosity scale specifically designed for Buddhists has been developed.

The need for more inclusive religiosity measures has grown more urgent in recent years due to globalisation and the increasing pluralism of religious identities (Frisk & Nynäs, 2017). The expansion of religious diversity, coupled with shifts towards individualised spirituality, has led to greater interest in traditions such as Buddhism and Hinduism, particularly in secularised Western societies. As Buddhist teachings and practices are increasingly adopted outside of their traditional cultural contexts, researchers have begun to question whether current conceptualisations of religiosity adequately reflect the lived experiences of Buddhist practitioners. Moreover, the influence of neoliberalism and secularisation has further complicated traditional understandings of religiosity, shifting focus away from institutional affiliation and towards personal spiritual experience and ethical orientation (Emmons & Paloutzian, 2003). These developments suggest that a one-size-fits-all approach to measuring religiosity is no longer viable and that a Buddhist-specific scale is necessary to capture the distinct spiritual dimensions of Buddhist practice.

While previous studies have attempted to measure religiosity in diverse religious traditions, most existing scales remain insufficient for assessing Buddhist religiosity in its full complexity. Scales such as the DUREL (H. G. Koenig & Büssing, 2010), the RCI-10 (Worthington et al., 2003), and the CRS (Huber & Huber, 2012) all assume theistic structures that prioritise belief, institutional participation, and religious identity. Although these scales have been successfully adapted for Christian and Islamic contexts, their applicability to Buddhism is questionable at best, given that Buddhist religiosity does not necessarily align with these dimensions. Furthermore, even when religiosity measures include broader categories such as religious experience or ethical orientation, they often fail to account for key Buddhist concepts such as non-attachment, impermanence, and the role of meditative insight in spiritual development.

This study addresses this critical gap in religiosity research by developing a Buddhist Religiosity Scale (BRS) that accurately reflects the doctrinal and practical dimensions of Buddhist religiosity. By systematically evaluating the limitations of existing religiosity measures and proposing an alternative that aligns with Buddhist traditions, this research contributes to both the empirical study of religion and the broader discourse on religious diversity and measurement validity. The findings of this study have implications not only for religious scholars and psychologists but also for Buddhist practitioners and spiritual communities, offering a tool that enhances understanding of how religiosity manifests in diverse Buddhist populations. In doing so, this research helps to bridge a significant gap in religiosity measurement, ensuring that Buddhist spirituality is represented with the same methodological rigour applied to other religious traditions.

1.2 Conceptualising Religiosity and Buddhist Religious Experience

In this thesis, "religion" is understood as the broader institutional and cultural system encompassing shared doctrines, rituals, and social identities, whereas "religiosity" refers to the degree and manner of individual adherence, participation, and experiential engagement within that system. This study focuses on religiosity as an individual-level construct that can be empirically operationalised and measured through psychometric modelling, following established frameworks in the psychology of religion (Glock & Stark, 1970; Hill & Hood, 1999; Paloutzian & Park, 2021).

The study of religiosity has traditionally revolved around defining and measuring the degree to which individuals engage with religious beliefs, practices, and experiences. However, the conceptualisation of religiosity is far from uniform, and scholars have long debated its essential components. One of the earliest and most influential definitions was provided by William James, who described religion as *"the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine"* (James, 1917/2014). This definition captured the idea of religion from the angle of an individual's affective, behavioural, and cognitive faculties in relation to the concept of the "divine," which James elucidated in the ensuing paragraph that the "divine" should not be narrowly confined to the concept of God, but accommodating religions such as Buddhism where the divine entity could be something other than a creator God. While valuable in highlighting the experiential nature of religious life, it has also been criticised for its broad and highly individualistic framing, which does not fully capture the social, doctrinal, and institutional aspects of religiosity (Miedema, 2004; Ruetenik, 2005). More recent scholarship has attempted to refine religiosity as a multidimensional construct, allowing for a more comprehensive approach to its measurement (H. G. Koenig et al., 2015). Nevertheless, a universal definition of what constitutes religiosity remains elusive (Harris et al., 2018; Paloutzian, 2017; Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005).

One of the most widely used frameworks is Glock's (1962) five-dimensional model, which defines religiosity through the following components: (1) ideological (beliefs), (2) ritualistic (practices), (3) experiential (feelings), (4) intellectual (knowledge), and (5) consequential (how religiosity influences life decisions). In Glock's schema, the belief dimension covers the core ideologies of religion, ranging from the existence of a higher power to the underlying purpose of humankind, highlighting the variance in belief intensity and its centrality in an individual's life. Practices, or the ritualistic behaviours inherent to religion, from worship attendance to fasting, underscore the actions that define and express one's faith. Feelings delve into the emotional and experiential aspects of religion, emphasising how religious convictions shape emotional well-being and spiritual experiences. Knowledge focuses on understanding and awareness of one's faith, differentiating between the depth of belief and the extent of religious education. Finally, the effects or consequential dimension examines the impact of religious beliefs on personal behaviour and moral choices, extending beyond formal religious practices to influence everyday life. Glock's multidimensional approach not only enriches the understanding of religiousness but also paves the way for subsequent researchers' views on the dimensionality of religiosity.

In a relatively recent review of various definitions of religiosity and their measures, Koenig and colleagues (2015) concluded that religiosity entails at least ten dimensions, including belief, religious motivation, organisational religious activities, non-organisational activities, attachment to God, trust in God, religious experience, religious coping, religious maturity, and history of exposure to religion. Koenig's perspective incorporated the five dimensions provided by Glock and broadened its scope. For instance, Glock's dimension of "feelings" could be seen as a precursor to Koenig's "religious experience" and "attachment to God". Similarly, "practice" in Glock's model could relate to Koenig's "organisational religious activities" and "non-organisational activities". Koenig's additional dimensions, like "religious motivation" and "trust in God" introduce more nuanced aspects of religiosity that reflect a deeper psychological engagement with religion beyond the foundational elements identified by Glock.

Both the five dimensions proposed by Glock and the ten dimensions suggested by Koenig and colleagues can also be viewed through a hierarchical lens proposed by Tsang and McCullough (2003), which sees the various dimensions working at two levels: dispositional and instrumental. The dispositional level of religiosity includes dimensions such as attachment and experience. Other elements would be considered operating at the instrumental level, including religious coping, trust, and involvement in religious activities. In their hierarchical model of religiosity, dispositional-level religiosity is the fundamental element in which instrumental-level religiosity is manifested.

More recently, Hillenbrand (2020) defined religiosity as including the elements of beliefs and behaviours of individuals toward transcendence expressed in the intensity and contents of their faith (believing), religious practices (behaving), and religious affiliation (belonging). Her definition includes the magnitude and contents of the three most commonly used dimensions of religiosity, often known as the 3Bs. These three dimensions, "believing", "behaving", and "belonging", which were initially known as belief, practice, and affiliation, are traditionally used by sociologists (Bjarnason, 2007; McAndrew & Voas, 2011; Voas, 2007). Recently, Saroglou and his collaborators (2011; 2020) have proposed an additional "B," "Bonding," reflecting the emotional and aesthetic experiences of ritualistic and symbolic exposures in one's religious life, expanding the 3Bs to 4Bs.

Early definitions of religiosity consistently include affiliations or an institutionalised entity that dictates or regulates followers' behaviours and sets forth a system of beliefs. This starkly contrasts with the secularisation movements brought about by the rise of neoliberalism, where institutionalised religions have become less relevant to more individualised concerns, ushering in the rise of the concept of non-religious spirituality (Metcalf-White, 2020). On one end of the spectrum between institutionalised religion and personal spirituality, Shafranske and Malony (1990) posit that religiosity should be defined as adherence to the practices and beliefs of an organised church or religious institution. This definition shows an institutionalised religious focus, assuming and emphasising the universality of institutionalised religious practices and using institutionalised rules and expectations as the yardstick for judging one's religiosity. At the other end of the spectrum is spirituality, a concept that differs from religiosity in that it does not reflect the institutionalised aspect of religion but offers a similar experience that is close to religious faith. Spirituality can involve various mystical tendencies, such as experiences of transcendence, connection with the divine, exploration of the inner self, and seeking meaning and purpose in life (Wixwat & Saucier, 2021; Zinnbauer et al., 1997).

When exploring the relationships, divergence, and convergence of spirituality and religiosity concepts, Pargament (1999b) posits spirituality as the central function of religion. This is because people's thoughts, behaviours, and emotions are engaged in order to find, conserve, and transform a sense of sacredness during their lives. This is supported by a study Fave et al. (2013) conducted in seven Western countries, in which the researchers found that religion is closely associated with spirituality, but spirituality need not be associated with religion. The current interest in the "spiritual but not religious" population, which constitutes approximately 20% of the population in the US, affirms the significance of interest in the non-religious movement and a personal connection with nature or the divine (Carey, 2017; Fuller, 2001). It is unclear, however, whether the concept of spirituality is an appropriate replacement for religiosity regarding nontheistic religions such as

Buddhism, even if there is less emphasis on the role of the founder of the religion, institutionalised rules, or religious activities.

As stated previously, scholars generally distinguish between religion as a sociocultural and institutional system and religiosity as the degree of an individual's belief, commitment, and participation in that system (Hill & Hood, 1999; Paloutzian & Park, 2021). Within this framework, Buddhism may be understood as a doctrinal and cultural tradition encompassing a wide range of schools and practices (Keown, 2013; Poceski, 2014), while Buddhist religiosity refers to an individual's lived engagement with and adherence to the teachings and practices that define the Buddhist path (Nguyen et al., 2021). This study therefore focuses on the measurable dimensions of personal religiosity, rather than institutional or sectarian aspects of Buddhism.

In the context of Buddhist religiosity, while the above-mentioned models have provided significant advancements in measuring religiosity across different contexts, they have predominantly been developed for monotheistic religions, particularly Christianity, and may not be easily transferable to traditions such as Buddhism. A key limitation of these existing frameworks is their heavy reliance on theistic assumptions, particularly the notion that religiosity is defined by belief in a deity, worship, and adherence to scriptural doctrine. In contrast, Buddhism presents a fundamentally different approach to religiosity, one that does not centre on divine worship or doctrinal absolutism but instead emphasises meditative practice, ethical cultivation, and wisdom as pathways to spiritual development (Keown, 2013; Poceski, 2014). While some schools of Buddhism incorporate devotional elements, such as Pure Land Buddhism's reverence for Amitabha Buddha or certain forms of Tibetan Buddhism's deity visualisation practices, these do not align with the God-centred structures of Western religiosity scales.

An additional conceptual challenge is the misclassification of Buddhism as an atheistic tradition. Although Buddhism does not advocate for a creator deity in the way that Christianity, Islam, or Hinduism do, scholars have argued that it is more accurately described as nontheistic rather than atheistic (Herbrechtsmeier, 1993; Kapstein, 2016; Keown, 2013; Southwold, 1978). Unlike atheism, which actively denies the existence of deities, Buddhism maintains a complex metaphysical framework that includes supernatural beings, celestial realms, and karmic causality while refraining from centring spiritual practice around divine worship. This distinction is crucial when considering how Buddhist religiosity is measured, as it suggests that Buddhist practitioners may demonstrate high levels of religiosity without adhering to a belief in a supreme being, a dimension that many conventional religiosity scales fail to accommodate.

Another defining characteristic of Buddhist religiosity is its practice-oriented nature, which places a strong emphasis on meditation, ethical conduct, and mindfulness-based engagement with the world. The Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path form the doctrinal foundation of Buddhist practice, with core principles such as non-attachment, impermanence, and self-transcendence guiding spiritual development. Furthermore, key meditative practices, including Vipassana (insight meditation) and Samatha (concentration meditation), serve as essential means of cultivating religious experience (Gethin, 1998). These forms of engagement differ markedly from the prayer-based and worship-centred practices emphasised in many theistic traditions. Moreover, Buddhism's lack of centralised authority and institutional uniformity further complicates measurement, as religious participation is often self-directed and highly personalised, differing from the structured, congregation-based engagement common in many monotheistic faiths.

Considering these fundamental differences, it becomes evident that existing religiosity scales do not effectively capture the Buddhist religious experience. The prevalent reliance on belief-centric models results in inaccurate assessments of Buddhist religiosity, as practitioners may score low on traditional religiosity scales despite their deep commitment to their spiritual path. This misalignment underscores the necessity for a Buddhist-specific religiosity scale that fully reflects the philosophical, doctrinal, and practice-based dimensions of Buddhist spirituality.

This study seeks to address these challenges through the development of a Buddhist Religiosity Scale (BRS) that provides a culturally appropriate and doctrinally sound framework for measuring religiosity within Buddhist traditions. By encompassing meditative experience, ethical commitment, doctrinal engagement, and other important elements, this scale aims to offer a more accurate and meaningful assessment of Buddhist religiosity than existing measures allow. In doing so, it contributes to the broader discourse on religious diversity in psychological measurement, challenging Western-centric assumptions about what constitutes religiosity and ensuring that Buddhist spiritual practices are represented with the same methodological rigour as those of other traditions.

From an epistemological standpoint, this study adopts an emic orientation that privileges the lived understanding and experiential expressions of Buddhist practitioners over doctrinal or text-based accounts (Dengah II, 2017; Mostowlansky & Rota, 2020). Conventional religiosity measures, predominantly shaped by Western theological assumptions (H. G. Koenig et al., 2015). risk imposing "imposed etics" that overlook locally meaningful dimensions of practice and experience (S. X. Chen, 2010). Following the methodological logic of emic-to-etic development (Ford et al., 2015; Galperin et

al., 2022), this study seeks to identify the shared experiential and practice-based dimensions of Buddhist religiosity as they are lived and interpreted by contemporary Buddhists.

1.3 Buddhism in Context: Doctrinal and Cultural Diversity

Buddhism, as the world's fourth-largest religion, is followed by approximately 7.1% of the global population (Pew Research Center, 2012), after Christianity (31.5%), Islam (23.2%), and Hinduism (15.0%). As of 2010, there were approximately 488 million Buddhists worldwide, with a significant majority (98.7%) residing in Asia. Outside of Asia, there are smaller Buddhist communities in North America (3.9 million) and Europe (1.3 million). China has the world's largest Buddhist population, accounting for about 50% of all Buddhists. Other major contributing countries to the Buddhist populations include Thailand (13%), Japan (9%), and Myanmar (8%), with smaller yet substantial numbers in Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Cambodia, South Korea, India, and Malaysia. Seven countries have Buddhist-majority populations: Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Laos, and Mongolia.

The classification of Buddhism as either a religion or a spirituality has long been debated, reflecting differences in how scholars and practitioners understand its doctrinal, institutional, and experiential aspects (Almond, 1988; Feldmann, 2016; Givel, 2015; Johansen & Gopalakrishna, 2006; Marques, 2010; Sablin, 2018). Buddhism has often been described both as a religion and as a spiritual or philosophical tradition. This dual character reflects its historical evolution and cultural adaptability. In many societies, Buddhism functions as an organised religion with established rituals, doctrines, and monastic institutions, while in others it is primarily understood as a path of ethical cultivation and inner transformation. Rather than viewing these perspectives as contradictory, they are better regarded as complementary expressions of a tradition that encompasses both institutional and experiential dimensions. In this study, Buddhism is treated as a religion in the broad sociocultural sense, encompassing a coherent system of beliefs, practices, and moral principles through which individuals pursue liberation. This provides a consistent conceptual basis for examining Buddhist religiosity while acknowledging the diversity of ways it is lived and interpreted across traditions and cultural contexts.

In contemporary contexts, however, many individuals engage with Buddhist-derived practices, such as mindfulness or zazen, without identifying as Buddhist or understanding their practice as religious. This phenomenon has been described by scholars as "Buddhish" engagement (McMahan, 2008), referring to the selective and often secular appropriation of Buddhist ideas within therapeutic, educational, or self-development frameworks. While such adaptations reflect the global diffusion and flexibility of Buddhist teachings, they differ from Buddhist religiosity as understood

within the canonical and soteriological frameworks of the tradition. In these secularised forms, Buddhist concepts are frequently reinterpreted as psychological techniques or lifestyle practices, sometimes detached from their ethical and doctrinal underpinnings. Recognising this distinction is essential for clarifying what constitutes *religiosity* within the Buddhist context, where spiritual cultivation remains embedded in a coherent path of ethical discipline, meditative training, and insight directed toward liberation from suffering.

Buddhism exhibits a remarkable degree of doctrinal and cultural diversity, shaped by its long historical evolution and geographic spread across Asia and beyond. Unlike many other world religions that maintain strong institutional structures and a centralised canon of beliefs, Buddhism is characterised by fluidity, adaptability, and doctrinal pluralism. As it spread across different regions, it encountered pre-existing cultural and religious traditions, resulting in distinctive schools and interpretations. This diversity presents a particular challenge for measuring Buddhist religiosity, as the way religiosity manifests within Buddhism varies significantly across traditions and contexts.

Buddhism is sometimes perceived as a system of philosophy or a way of life, more so than a religious faith in the conventional sense (Plamintr, 1994). Distinguishing itself from the monotheistic traditions of the Abrahamic faiths by emphasising not having a creator god, Buddhism is neither atheistic, in which it acknowledges divine beings, but they are not omnipotent creators or ultimate arbiters of fate; rather, they too are subject to the laws of karma and rebirth (Harvey, 2019). And yet, unlike the polytheism of Hinduism or Taoism, Buddhist deities are not objects of worship but figures of reverence and inspiration, embodying ideals to which practitioners can aspire (Qiu et al., 2023). This reverence is encapsulated in the veneration of the Triple Gem: the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha, emphasising a personal commitment to the path over institutional allegiance.

In Buddhist practices, rituals and collective worship are observed within various religious settings, including temples and monasteries, by both lay practitioners and ordained clergy (Plamintr, 1994). However, a distinguishing characteristic of Buddhism, as compared to many other religious traditions, is that these practices are not considered obligatory for adherents. This voluntary aspect reflects the emphasis on individual spiritual development and personal exploration within the Buddhist path (Hood Jr. et al., 2018). Consequently, the significance of and participation in religious institutions are comparatively less pronounced in Buddhism. A study conducted among Buddhist adolescents in Hong Kong even revealed that these teenagers often lack references to any divine being, and their commitment or identification with specific Buddhist communities is generally inconsistent and minimal (Yeung & Chow, 2010).

Historically, Buddhism originated in northern India in the 5th to 4th century BCE, with the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama, who came to be known as the Historical Buddha (Gethin, 1998; Harvey, 2013; Poceski, 2014). His teachings, known as the Dharma, formed the foundation of Buddhist thought, including key concepts such as impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anatta*). However, soon after the Buddha's passing, Buddhist communities began to develop their own interpretations of his teachings, leading to divergent philosophical schools and distinct monastic lineages. By the time Buddhism spread beyond India, doctrinal and cultural variations had already taken root, eventually giving rise to the three major traditions that exist today: Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana. Each tradition represents a unique evolutionary path that Buddhism has taken as it spread from its birthplace to different corners of the globe. These traditions, which are commonly followed and revered, accentuate the adaptability and breadth of Buddhism, reflecting its ability to intersect with various cultures, philosophical inquiries, and spiritual practices. As we explore the nuances of these traditions, it becomes clear that Buddhism's essence is as much about its internal diversity as it is about its distinct differences from other world religions.

1.3.1 The Three Traditions of Buddhism

The Theravada tradition, primarily found in Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia, is often considered the most conservative school, as it adheres closely to the Pali Canon, the oldest recorded Buddhist scriptures (Gombrich, 2009). It places significant emphasis on monastic life, scriptural study, and personal meditation practice, particularly Vipassana (insight meditation) as a means of achieving enlightenment. Lay practitioners engage in merit-making activities, such as supporting the monastic community, but doctrinally, the emphasis remains on individual spiritual progress rather than collective salvation. Given its scriptural orientation and monastic focus, Theravada religiosity is often referred to as followers' adherence to the precepts, engagement in meditation, and participation in devotional acts (Keown, 2013).

In contrast, the Mahayana tradition, which emerged several centuries after the Buddha's passing, encompasses a broader range of scriptural texts, philosophical innovations, and devotional practices (Sheng Yen, 2007). Dominant in China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam, Mahayana Buddhism introduced the ideal of the bodhisattva, an enlightened being who forgoes final nirvana to assist others in attaining liberation. This doctrinal shift brought about new forms of religious practice, including chanting, Pure Land devotion, and ritual-based meditation practices, such as those found in Zen or Chan Buddhism (Lai, 2003; McMahan, 2008). As a result, Mahayana religiosity, similar to the Theravada tradition, is often expressed through devotional, meditative, and ethical dimensions, challenging conventional religiosity measures that primarily assess belief in a deity or institutional participation.

The Vajrayana tradition, found mainly in Tibet, Bhutan, Nepal, and Mongolia, represents the most esoteric and ritual-heavy form of Buddhism. Emerging as a distinct tradition around the 7th century CE, Vajrayana incorporates tantric practices, deity visualisation, and mantra recitation as central components of its spiritual path (Gomez, 2002; Thero, 2019). These practices, alongside teacher-disciple transmission (guru-yoga), create a highly ritualistic form of religiosity that is difficult to quantify using conventional scales. Given its unique doctrinal and ritual elements, measuring religiosity within Vajrayana Buddhism requires perhaps an approach that considers ritual efficacy, initiatory practices, and symbolic engagement with Buddhist cosmology.

Beyond these three major traditions, Buddhism's adaptability has led to extensive syncretism with indigenous religious traditions across different cultures (Hongsuwan, 2005). In Tibet, elements of Bon shamanism were integrated into Buddhist cosmology (Tashi, 2023), while in China, Japan, and Korea, Confucian and Daoist influences shaped Mahayana Buddhism into forms that emphasised ancestral veneration, monastic discipline, and meditation schools such as Chan and Zen (Poceski, 2014; Qiu et al., 2023). Likewise, in Southeast Asia, Theravada Buddhism absorbed animistic and spirit-worship traditions, leading to hybrid forms of practice that blend Buddhism with folk beliefs and supernatural elements (Ames, 1964; Hongsuwan, 2005). These cultural adaptations complicate the measurement of Buddhist religiosity, as practitioners in different regions may engage in localised practices that do not neatly fit into doctrinally "pure" categories.

1.3.2 Internal Doctrinal and Cultural Diversity

The internal diversity of Buddhism is further highlighted by the development of various schools and lineages within each of the three vehicles. These schools, distinguished by their doctrinal emphases, primary canonical texts, and specific meditative and ritualistic practices, highlight the rich tapestry of Buddhist thought and practice. For instance, within Mahayana Buddhism in China, the existence of ten schools—*Tiantai* (天台宗), *Avatamasaka* (华严宗), *Chan* (禅宗), *Pure Land* (净土宗), *Consciousness-Only* (唯识宗), *Three Treatises* (三论宗), *Vinaya* (律宗), *Esoteric* (密宗), *Nirvana* (涅槃宗), and *Chengshi* (成实宗) schools—illustrates this doctrinal diversity (Harvey, 2013). The *Pure Land* and *Chan* schools, in particular, have enjoyed widespread popularity and influence to this day (Poceski, 2014). Within the *Chan* tradition, it has branched into *Linji* (临济宗), *Caodong* (曹洞宗), *Yunmen* (云门宗), *Weiyang* (沩仰宗), and *Fayan* (法眼宗) five distinct lineages (Poceski, 2012). Similarly, within the Vajrayana tradition, four primary schools—*Nyingma-pa*, *Kagyu-pa*, *Sakya-pa*, and *Gelug-pa*—represent the diverse expressions of Vajrayana Buddhism within the Tibetan Buddhist system (Apple, 2014).

As Buddhism continued to spread and interact with various cultures and countries, new schools and adaptations emerged, demonstrating the fluidity and adaptability of Buddhist practice. The Chan school, for example, evolved into *Zen* in Japan, retaining only the *Rinzai* (*Linji* in Chan) and *Soto* (*Caodong* in *Chan*) lineages of the original five; each underwent local adaptations. Similarly, *Chan*'s transformation into *Seon* in Korea and *Thien* in Vietnam illustrates the dynamic nature of Buddhist transmission and adaptation. Throughout this process, local rituals and even folk beliefs were amalgamated.

The transmission of Mahayana Buddhism from China to Korea and Japan exemplifies the dynamic evolution of Buddhist practice, yet it has also sparked controversies among orthodox Buddhists. Notable among these is the deviation from the strict celibacy rule prescribed in the Vinaya code, which allowed ordained monks in Japan to marry and establish families, a departure from traditional monastic discipline (Matsuo, 2007). Similarly, the establishment of *Nichiren* Buddhism (日蓮正宗) and its offshoot, *Soka Gakkai* (創価学会), foregrounded the worship of the founder and an exclusive reverence for the Lotus Sutra, challenging broader scriptural inclusivity. In addition, *Shin* Buddhism, or *Jodo Shin-shu* (浄土真宗), has faced criticism for its doctrine of "Other Power" (*tariki*), which seems to contradict the Buddhist emphasis on self-effort and the rejection of salvation by external deities, an interpretation used to mitigate wartime guilt during periods of Japanese aggression in World War II (Ives, 2002; Porcu, 2017).

1.3.3 Contemporary Developments

The advent of Buddhism in the Western context, characterised by a conglomerate of doctrinal teachings and practices, reflects the influence of large-scale migrations and the 20th-century counterculture's fascination with Eastern spirituality (Jacoby & Terrone, 2012; Wallace, 2002). Early Theravada missionaries, adhering to traditional meditative practices, established numerous centres in Europe and the US. As McMahan (2002, 2004, 2008) puts it, Buddhism constantly "de-religions" itself, appealing and staying relevant to the more scientifically oriented minds of the modern era. Because of the intentional "de-religion" efforts, some practitioners and followers of the Theravada tradition may even refrain from identifying themselves as Buddhists, as do the religion's followers. Some would see Buddhism as more of a philosophy or way of life than a religion. Nurtured in such an environment and trying to stay current and culturally relevant to Western followers, some schools promote ideas and philosophies such as "engaged Buddhism", which focuses on external engagement and detracts from the core Buddhist goal of personal liberation and enlightenment (Zielke, 2023).

Followers of secular Buddhism (Batchelor, 2012, 2017; Higgins, 2012) are on the rise. The secularisation strips Buddhism of its metaphysical cosmology that sustained its status as a religion. Some may even suggest that the nontheistic nature of Buddhism is in constant negotiation with secularism, redefining what is secular and what belongs to religion (McMahan, 2017). At the same time, others argue for the co-existence of parallel worlds of new converts and traditional Buddhists from the East (Gregory, 2001; Hickey, 2010). Nevertheless, the prominence of such developments in the West may obscure the fact that most Buddhists residing in Asia adhere to more orthodox practices (Pew Research Center, 2012). This noticeable trend toward the secularisation or "de-religionisation" of Buddhist practices has led many to engage with Buddhist philosophy, often without explicit recognition of its religious origins. This phenomenon is particularly evident in the widespread adoption of mindfulness practices over the last decade, spearheaded by organisations such as the Goenka *Vipassana* meditation centres, which present Buddhist principles devoid of their religious context (McMahan, 2008). Individuals participating in mindfulness practices engage with Buddhist teachings at a fundamental level, albeit with a primary focus on personal development rather than spiritual enlightenment or the pursuit of Nirvana (Emmons, 2005; Feldman & Kuyken, 2019).

Jon Kabat-Zinn, a key figure in the secular mindfulness movement, has expressed the belief that assigning specific labels to the teachings that underlie mindfulness practices detracts from the fundamental and universal goals of the movement of mindfulness (Kabat-Zinn, 2011). This particular approach has faced criticism from certain groups, who refer to these practices as “Stealth Buddhism” (C. G. Brown, 2016), suggesting that they introduce Buddhist principles into secular contexts. Criticism is especially strong in the educational context, where programmes such as MindUP, designed for K-8 classrooms, are being accused of “smuggling” Buddhist practices to students without acknowledging their origins (Purser, 2020). Despite these criticisms, the mindfulness movement has gradually integrated more overt Buddhist practices into its second-generation mindfulness-based interventions, thereby blurring the distinctions between secular wellness practices and religious teachings (Van Gordon et al., 2015; Van Gordon & Shonin, 2019). Nevertheless, the scientific verification of these second-generation mindfulness interventions remains a subject of contention among scholars (Ran et al., 2019).

In recent developments, the emergence of secular Buddhism (Batchelor, 2012, 2017) represents a contemporary iteration of Buddhist adaptation, blending traditional teachings with modern interpretations and applications across varied cultural, temporal, and societal contexts (Sharapan, 2022). This synthesis of ancient wisdom with contemporary life has introduced both opportunities and challenges in articulating a cohesive core concept of Buddhist religiosity. Thus,

distilling the essence of Buddhism into a singular, all-encompassing concept remains a formidable task, reflecting the depth and breadth of the Buddhist tradition in its historical and contemporary manifestations. This inherent complexity necessitates a nuanced understanding of Buddhism's core teachings and their applicability in today's multifaceted global landscape, underscoring the essential yet challenging pursuit of comprehensively defining Buddhist religiosity.

Given this rich doctrinal and cultural diversity, it is evident that a one-size-fits-all approach to measuring Buddhist religiosity is inadequate. A meaningful religiosity scale must accommodate both the doctrinal distinctiveness of Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana traditions, as well as the cultural and regional adaptations of Buddhist practice. Furthermore, it must recognise the emergence of contemporary, non-traditional forms of engagement with Buddhism, particularly in Western and secular contexts. This study, therefore, seeks to bridge these complexities by developing a measurement tool that is adaptable across Buddhist traditions and cultural expressions. In doing so, it acknowledges that Buddhist religiosity cannot be assessed solely through institutional participation, doctrinal adherence, or theistic belief systems but must instead incorporate dimensions of practice, ethical engagement, and meditative experience.

1.4 Conclusion

The profound diversity within Buddhism, shaped by its extensive historical evolution and widespread geographical dissemination, presents a unique set of challenges for scholars in religious studies. Central to these challenges is Buddhism's doctrinal foundation, which distinctly lacks a creator deity, minimises the role of institutionalised religious activities, and varies significantly in focus across its numerous traditions, schools, and lineages. Such characteristics fundamentally question the validity and applicability of conventional religiosity constructs, which are predominantly derived from a Judeo-Christian framework.

This thesis critically assesses the extent to which current scholarship on religiosity has effectively acknowledged and addressed the distinct nature of Buddhist philosophy and practice. Furthermore, it scrutinises the methods and metrics presently used in religious studies to determine whether they adequately capture the essence of Buddhist beliefs and values.

To contribute to this scholarly discourse, the core endeavour of this dissertation is the formulation of a Buddhist Religiosity Scale (BRS)—a psychometric instrument designed to encapsulate Buddhism's unique doctrinal and philosophical underpinnings. This approach offers a nuanced and culturally sensitive alternative to existing religiosity measures, ensuring that Buddhism is not assessed through the lens of theistic or institution-centred models that are more suited to Abrahamic traditions. By doing so, the study enhances the accuracy and depth of religiosity

research, ensuring that Buddhist spirituality is measured in a way that respects its fundamental doctrinal and practice-based components.

1.4.1 Thesis Structure Overview

This thesis is organised into seven chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the research background, conceptual framework, aims, and significance of the study. Chapter 2 presents the scoping review of existing measures of religiosity and spirituality, highlighting conceptual and methodological gaps that motivated the development of the Buddhist Religiosity Scale (BRS). Chapter 3 outlines the analytic framework and measurement invariance procedures applied to existing religiosity scales. Chapter 4 reports the qualitative phase, including item generation based on interviews with Buddhist monastics and scholars. Chapter 5 describes the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) conducted to establish the preliminary factor structure of the BRS. Chapter 6 presents the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and validation of the final BRS-22 model, including non-sectarian and linguistic invariance tests. Chapter 7 discusses the theoretical implications, practical applications, limitations, and directions for future research.

The current chapter has introduced the research problem by highlighting the limitations of existing religiosity scales in capturing Buddhist religiosity due to their theistic orientation and Western-centric assumptions. The discussion established the need for a Buddhist Religiosity Scale (BRS) that adequately reflects the doctrinal, philosophical, and practice-based dimensions of Buddhism, while being applicable across Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana traditions. By addressing this critical gap in religiosity measurement, this study contributes to both the empirical study of religion and the broader discourse on religious diversity and psychometric validation.

Chapter 2 presents a scoping review that was first conducted in late 2021, with an update in late 2023, examining existing religiosity scales used in studies involving Buddhist populations. The findings indicate that most scales deployed in Buddhist-related research were developed in the West, predominantly reflecting Judeo-Christian conceptualisations of religiosity. While some Buddhist-specific religiosity scales were identified, mainly in Chinese-language literature, these were largely sectarian and tailored to specific Buddhist schools rather than universally applicable across traditions. This review highlights the need for a non-sectarian Buddhist religiosity scale.

Chapter 3 investigates the applicability of existing religiosity scales by conducting measurement non-invariance analyses across Buddhist and Christian samples. The study tests several widely used religiosity scales and finds that none of the tested measures maintains full invariance across religious traditions. This suggests that existing religiosity scales do not function

equally for Buddhists and Christians, reinforcing the need for a Buddhist-specific scale that accurately captures non-theistic spiritual dimensions.

Chapter 4 adopts a qualitative approach, engaging in in-depth interviews with Buddhist masters and scholars to define how Buddhist religiosity should be conceptualised and measured. This doctrine-driven approach seeks to establish a model that is applicable across all three major Buddhist traditions while remaining non-sectarian. The findings lead to the development of a Buddhist religiosity model, which serves as the theoretical foundation for scale development.

Chapter 5 details the quantitative development and validation of the Buddhist Religiosity Scale (BRS). A 56-item preliminary scale was developed based on the qualitative findings from Chapter 4. Using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) on a sample of N = 495 from China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, and Singapore, the study refined the scale, leading to a final 22-item, two-dimensional version (BRS-22). Various validity tests were conducted to ensure the scale's robustness and reliability.

Chapter 6 further evaluates the BRS-22 through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) on a second sample of N = 493 from the same five countries/regions. The results confirm that the BRS-22 maintains strong psychometric properties, supporting its two-dimensional structure and demonstrating its applicability across Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana traditions. Additionally, validity assessments, including convergent validity, discriminant validity, and incremental validity, affirm that the scale effectively measures Buddhist religiosity without relying on theistic constructs.

Finally, Chapter 7 contextualises the research findings, discussing the theoretical contributions, methodological advancements, and practical applications of the BRS-22. The study's limitations are acknowledged, and recommendations for future research are provided, including further cross-cultural validation and potential adaptations of the BRS-22. The implications of this research extend beyond religiosity measurement, influencing studies in Buddhist psychology, religious diversity, and spirituality research.

This structured approach ensures that the research progresses systematically, from identifying the conceptual and methodological gaps in existing religiosity measures to developing and validating an empirically grounded Buddhist Religiosity Scale. Beyond its theoretical contributions, this study addresses a longstanding limitation in religiosity measurement, providing a culturally and doctrinally appropriate tool for studying Buddhist religiosity within the PRS and other Buddhist-related empirical research fields. The BRS-22 offers a validated and cross-tradition scale that reflects the unique dimensions of Buddhist religious experience, ensuring a more precise and meaningful assessment of religiosity across Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana traditions.

Chapter 2: Scoping Review

Building on the recognition of the diversity of Buddhism and the challenges it presents to traditional constructs of religiosity, Chapter 2 embarks on a critical investigation into the current landscape of religiosity measurements in the realm of Buddhist beliefs and practices. This inquiry is motivated by the realisation that conventional measures of religiosity, which are predominantly influenced by a Judeo-Christian[1] framework, may not adequately capture the intricate facets of Buddhist spirituality and religious observance. Consequently, the primary objective of this chapter is to undertake a comprehensive review of the methodologies and instruments utilised to evaluate Buddhist religiosity, analysing their underlying theoretical bases and their alignment with the fundamental tenets of Buddhism. Through this analysis, the chapter identifies the existing deficiencies in the evaluation of religiosity that fail to account for the distinctive characteristics of Buddhist ideology and conduct.

Scholars in the field of psychology have long recognised the importance of broadening the scope of religiosity research by incorporating perspectives from religious traditions outside of the Judeo-Christian spectrum. However, despite these calls for inclusivity, measurement advancements in the field of Psychology of Religion (PR) have not adequately reflected this diversification. A seminal systematic review by Hill and Hood Jr. (1999) identified 125 religiosity measurement scales, a figure subsequently expanded to 177 by Cutting and Walsh (2008). These compilations reveal a strong reliance on Judeo-Christian conceptualisations of religiosity, with empirical validations of these scales primarily conducted among White, European, industrialised, rich, and democratic (WEIRD) populations—a demographic bias that has been widely criticised for its assumed universality in psychological constructs (Henrich et al., 2010).

[1] The term “Judeo-Christian” is commonly used to describe the shared theological and historical foundations of Judaism and Christianity. While the two traditions differ significantly in doctrine and religious practice, they share core scriptural texts (i.e., the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament), moral frameworks, and monotheistic beliefs that distinguish them from non-Abrahamic traditions such as Buddhism. However, it is important to note that most existing religiosity measures have been developed primarily within Christian contexts, often reflecting Christian theological assumptions, institutional structures, and devotional practices rather than equally incorporating Jewish religious frameworks (Glock & Stark, 1970; Hill, 2013). This study acknowledges these nuances while using “Judeo-Christian” in its widely accepted sense to describe religiosity constructs shaped by these monotheistic traditions.

In their landmark review of measurement scales for religiosity, Hill and Hood Jr. (1999) openly acknowledge the inherent limitations of these scales in their introduction to measurements in the psychology of religion, highlighting a noticeable lack of representation among ethnic minorities, a discernible Christian bias in the construction of the scales, and the absence of scales explicitly designed to measure religiosity in non-Christian forms. In the two decades following Hill and Hood Jr.'s review, scholars such as Hill and Pargament (2003), Moberg (2002, 2005), and Berry et al. (2011) have echoed the call for greater inclusivity and diversity in religiosity measures. They have scrutinised the suitability of existing scales to universally represent religiosity, thereby challenging the field to reassess the validity of these tools across varied religious and cultural contexts, such as Buddhism. This critique sheds light on a significant gap in the field's approach to measuring religious experience and expression, suggesting a pressing need for a methodological recalibration that embraces the full range of global religious diversity.

2.1 Measuring Non-Judeo-Christian Religiosity

Belzen (2010) delineated two distinct methodological approaches in assessing religiosity: the etic or cross-cultural approach, which employs a uniform scale to compare different faiths, and the emic or cultural psychology approach, which interprets religious phenomena through the lens of the indigenous culture. The etic approach, exemplified by the scales discussed in Hill and Hood Jr.'s (1999) review, allows for standardised comparisons but is criticised for its lack of cultural specificity and sensitivity. In contrast, the emic approach is in line with the perspectives of cultural psychologists such as Triandis et al. (1973), who promote an interpretive framework based on local cultural understanding. Despite the prevalence of the etic approach in the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality (PRS), scholars acknowledge the significant challenge of developing a universal scale capable of accommodating the differences among religions (Hill & Pargament, 2003; Moberg, 2002). Hence, locally developed indigenous measures of different faiths may be more appropriately positioned to reflect religious diversity. This would challenge the adequacy of scales designed based on assumptions common for theistic religions – a challenge inherent in a purely etic approach to religiosity.

In a recent systematic review exploring religiosity scales through an emic lens, Wang and Tan (2021) uncovered a modest number of indigenous scales for non-Judeo-Christian traditions, including four Buddhist, one Hindu, and 19 Muslim religiosity scales. Yet, even within this subset, the representation of non-monotheistic religions like Hinduism and Buddhism – each with its unique theological constructs – remains significantly underrepresented. Of the four Buddhist scales identified, their foci reflect only partial aspects of Buddhism rather than general Buddhist religiosity per se. These scales are the Buddhist Coping Scale (BCOPE) by Phillips et al. (2012), the Buddhist

Patience Questionnaire by Deng et al. (2019), the Nonattachment Scale by Sahdra et al. (2010), and the Self-Other Four Immeasurables (SOFI) by Kraus and Sears (2008). However, none of these scales holistically measure Buddhist religiosity, instead focusing on isolated facets of the tradition.

This conspicuous absence of a comprehensive scale tailored to Buddhist religiosity raises pivotal questions for the PRS field. What instruments, if any, are currently being employed to measure the religiosity of Buddhist adherents? Do these instruments adequately reflect Buddhism's doctrinal nuances? If PRS scholarship aims to gauge the religiosity of Buddhist populations authentically, it is imperative to grapple with these questions and address the doctrinal disparities with meticulous consideration.

2.2 The Present Research

The preceding discourse has underscored the inadequacies inherent in the application of ostensibly universal religiosity measures to Buddhist subjects and the conspicuous absence of scales explicitly tailored for this cohort. Presently, the actual measures and conceptualisations of religiosity employed in the study of Buddhist religiousness remain nebulous. Therefore, the first step in improving the assessment of Buddhist religiosity is to review the existing scholarly landscape thoroughly. While Wang and Tan (2021) provide a broad overview of non-Christian religiosity scales, their analysis primarily focuses on cataloguing available instruments rather than evaluating their empirical application. In contrast, the present study examines how these scales have been utilised in research involving Buddhist participants, assessing their theoretical alignment with Buddhist beliefs and their methodological suitability across different traditions. This approach ensures a more critical and application-focused review, identifying not only what scales exist but also how effectively they capture Buddhist religiosity.

To provide a structured outline for this investigation, the following research questions have been formulated:

- What are the common measures used to assess religiosity in Buddhists?
- How often are measures of religiosity tailored to Judeo-Christian faiths used with Buddhists?
- What specific aspects of religiosity are studied in relation to Buddhists?

This study is inherently exploratory and does not aim to evaluate the psychometric properties of existing scales. Instead, it seeks to identify gaps within the field of PRS and to encourage future research, particularly in developing a Buddhist-centric religiosity scale. Consequently, a critical review founded on a scoping review methodology is considered to be the

most appropriate for our research objectives. This approach also conforms with the methodological framework put forward by Munn et al. (2018).

2.3 Method

The methodological framework for this review is predicated on the guidelines delineated by the Joanna Briggs Institute's guideline (Peters et al., 2020; Peters et al., 2021), ensuring adherence to the updated PRISMA protocol for scoping (Tricco et al., 2018). This protocol mandates a comprehensive and systematic approach to the identification, selection, and synthesis of research, thereby optimising the reliability and validity of the review process.

2.3.1 Search Strategy and Process

A comprehensive systematic literature review was undertaken on April 11, 2021, and subsequently updated on October 11, 2023. This review encompassed an extensive search across three English-language databases—ProQuest, Scopus, and JSTOR—alongside two Chinese databases, namely CNKI and PerioPath. The inclusion of Chinese databases is pivotal due to the preponderance of the Chinese-speaking population within the global Buddhist community and China's historical role as a crucible for the convergence and dissemination of the three core Buddhist traditions– Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana, each with significant followings (Gomez, 2002). The omission of studies published in the Chinese language might limit our understanding of the current state of affairs in the measurement of the religiosity of Buddhists in Chinese scholarly publications. The search terms employed for this inquiry across the specified databases are listed in Table 1.

The screening and selection of articles involved a team of three researchers, two of whom were proficient in both English and Chinese, to ensure a comprehensive review across papers in English and Chinese[2]. Following the protocol outlined in the scoping review guidelines by Peters et al. (2020), a two-reviewer consensus was required for decisions on the inclusion or exclusion of articles. Discrepancies were resolved through discussion among the three researchers.

The research team developed a comprehensive checklist to ensure consistent application of the screening criteria during the initial phase of title and abstract review. Inclusion criteria mandated

[2] This scoping review was undertaken as part of a broader research project led by the author. While conducted in collaboration with other researchers, their involvements were limited to conduct partial screening of extracted articles, and either to veto or consent to the inclusion of selected articles.

that the selected articles be empirical studies with a focus on utilising quantitative measurements. Furthermore, the studies were expected to explore various dimensions of Buddhist religiosity beyond mere identification of religious affiliation, enabling an in-depth examination of religiosity as a reflection of one's religiousness. Additionally, the included studies were required to present specific data pertaining to Buddhists as a distinct subgroup, aligning with the anticipation of the presence of Buddhists in the samples. Notably, the review encompassed doctoral and master's level research theses, given their potential to feature original research that may not have been disseminated in scholarly journals but has undergone rigorous academic scrutiny.

The search and screening processes aimed to gather a wide range of literature to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the religiosity scales used in research with Buddhist participants. The objective was to encompass a diverse set of studies to identify trends, frequency, and specific characteristics of the religiosity assessments employed in studies involving Buddhist communities.

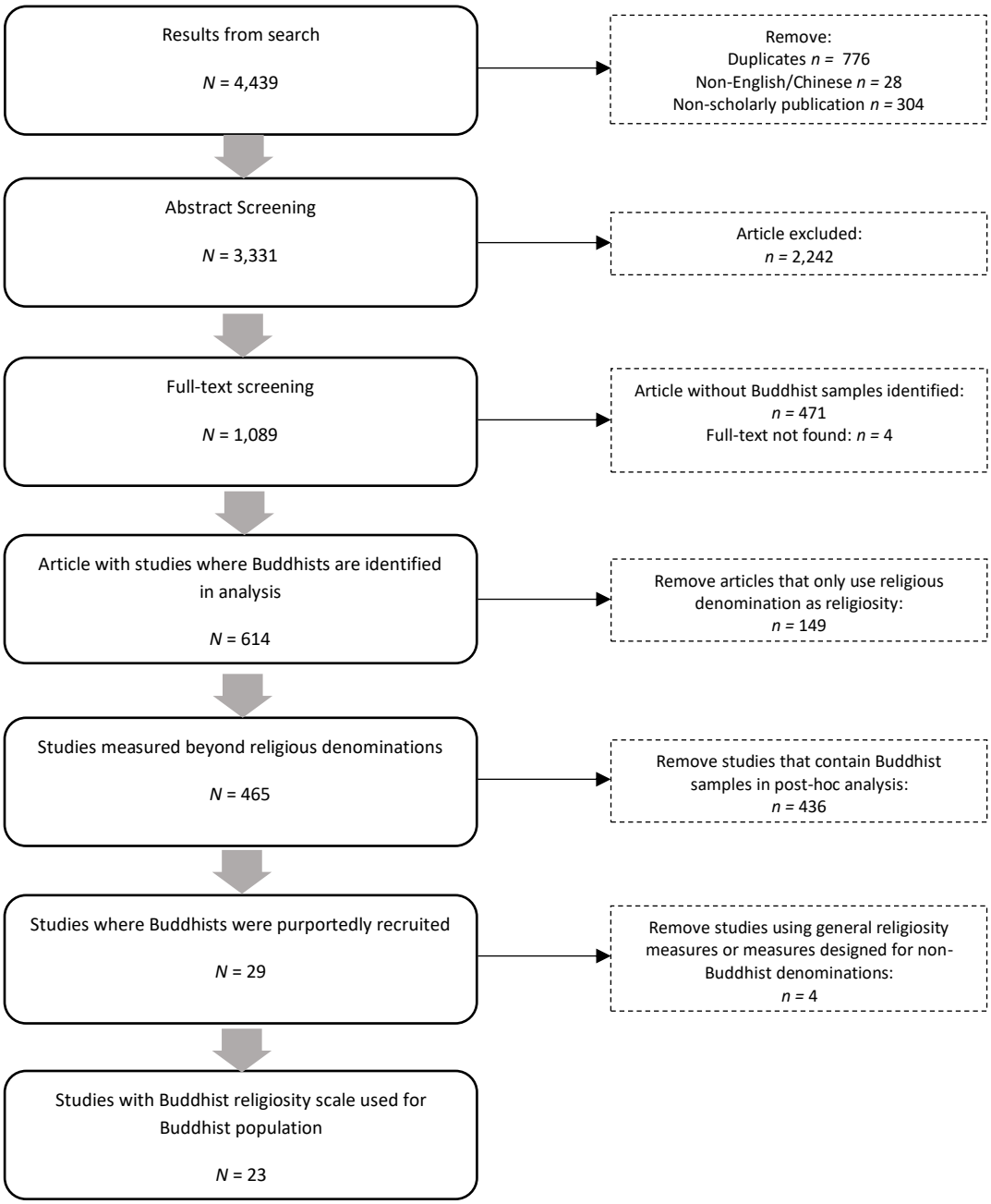
Table 1 Search String used for Database Search

Databases	ProQuest	Scopus	JSTOR	CNKI	PerioPath
Search String	(buddhi*) AND noft (religiosity OR religiousness)	(ALL (buddhi*) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (religiosity OR religiousness))	(buddhi*) AND (ab:(religiosity OR religiousness) OR ti:(religiosity OR religiousness))	(TKA='佛教徒' OR FT='佛教徒') AND (TKA='宗教性' OR TKA='虔诚度')	（所有欄位：佛教徒） AND （所有欄位：宗教性）

2.4 Results

The searches yielded an initial *N* = 4,439 articles, with *N* = 4,197 from the English databases and *N* = 242 from the Chinese language databases. Upon removing duplicates, non-English/Chinese language works, and non-scholarly articles, a total of *N* = 3,331 articles remained eligible for abstract screening. This phase resulted in *N* = 2,242 articles being excluded based on their abstracts, which left *N* = 1,089 articles for full-text evaluation. During this stage, a further *N* = 471 articles were discarded because they did not feature Buddhists as an identifiable subgroup for analysis, and four articles were categorised as "Full-Text Not Available" after attempts to obtain them from the article authors. As a result, *N* = 614 articles were found to include Buddhists in their analysis. However, out of these, *N* = 149 articles were excluded because they only used religious denominations as a proxy for religiosity without attempting to measure the actual level of religiousness among participants. Ultimately, *N* = 465 articles were considered eligible for further review as they utilised religiosity scales among Buddhist samples. (Please refer to Figure 1 for the PRISMA flow chart.)

Figure 1 PRISMA Flow Chart of Scoping Review Search and Selection Process



2.4.1 Measurements Used with Buddhist Samples

This review aimed to explore current methods for measuring Buddhist religiosity. Our systematic scoping review revealed that 24.27% of religiosity studies involving Buddhists only recorded religious denomination as their definition of "religiosity." As shown in Table 2, among the remaining 75.73% of studies employing more comprehensive measures, only 4.72% specifically recruited Buddhist samples. Fewer studies (3.75%) used religiosity scales explicitly developed for Buddhists.

We identified 465 scholarly articles where researchers employed measures of religiosity extending beyond mere Buddhist affiliation. Among these articles, 77 established and empirically validated religiosity scales were collectively used 340 times.

A more granular analysis reveals that the 10 most frequently used scales—accommodating for a tie at the 10th position, effectively making it 11 scales—constituted 60.89% of the total instances of scale usage (see Table 3). This prevalence indicates a central tendency in the approaches used to measure Buddhist religiosity.

Table 2 Current Status of Measuring Religiosity of Buddhists

	Number of Studies	% of Total
Buddhist included in sample	614	100.00
Measured beyond affiliation	465	75.73
Measured using religiosity scale	340	55.47
Buddhist purportedly recruited	29	4.72
Buddhist scale used	23	3.75

Table 3 Ten Most Frequently Used Religiosity Scales on Buddhist Samples

Scales	Frequency	% of Total studies using validated scales (*N* = 340)
Duke University Religiosity Index (DUREL; H. G. Koenig & Büssing, 2010)	42	12.35
Brief/Multidimensional Measure of Religiousness/Spirituality (MMRS and BMMRS; Fetzer Institute, 1999)	31	9.12
Religious Orientation Scale (ROS; Allport & Ross, 1967)	27	7.94
Intrinsic/Extrinsic-Revised Scale (I/E-Revised; Gorsuch & McPherson, 1989)	22	6.47
Daily Spiritual Experience Scale (DSES, a subscale of MMRS; Underwood & Teresi, 2002)	18	5.29
Religious Commitment Inventory (RCI-10; Worthington et al., 2003)	14	4.12
Centrality of Religion Scale (CRS; Huber & Huber, 2012)	13	3.82
Intrinsic Religious Motivation Scale (Hoge, 1972)	11	3.24
Assessment of Spirituality and Religious Sentiments (ASPIRES; Piedmont et al., 2008)	11	3.24
Quest Scale (Batson & Schoenrade, 1991)	9	2.65
Religious Coping Inventory (RCOPE; Pargament et al., 2000)	9	2.65

2.4.2 Key Religiosity Scales Identified

DUREL. The Duke University Religiosity Index (DUREL), a 5-item instrument devised by Koenig and Büssing (2010), emerged as the predominant scale in measuring religiosity involving Buddhist samples. It appeared in 42 of the 340 studies reviewed that employed validated scales, accounting for 12.35% of the total. This scale, despite its brevity, is systematically divided into three distinct subscales: organisational religious activity (ORA), non-organisational religious activity (NORA), and intrinsic religiosity (IR).

MMRS/BMMRS. The Multidimensional Measure of Religiousness/Spirituality (MMRS), an 88-item scale established by the Fetzer Institute (1999), was the second most frequently used instrument in this review, featured in 31 instances, or 9.12% of the total scale usage. When including the Daily Spiritual Experience Scale (DSES) as a subscale of the MMRS and the 29-item brief version BMMRS (Fetzer Institute, 1999), the cumulative usage of the MMRS/BMMRS suite would escalate to 49 instances. This figure corresponds to 14.41% of the 340 incidents where validated scales were

deployed, making the MMRS/BMMRS composite the most predominant measure within the validated scales used.

I-E Scales: ROS, I/E-Revised Scale, Intrinsic Religious Motivation Scale, Quest Scale, Age-Universal I-E Scale. The current review highlights the enduring influence of the intrinsic-extrinsic (I-E) motivation paradigm in measuring religious orientation (Hall et al., 2008), a concept that hails from the foundational work of Allport (1950). In our review, we consolidated the various scales to evaluate the I-E paradigm, including ROS (Allport & Ross, 1967), I/E-Revised Scale (Gorsuch & McPherson, 1989), Intrinsic Religious Motivation Scale (Hoge, 1972), Quest Scale[3] (Batson & Schoenrade, 1991), and Age-Universal I-E Scale (Gorsuch & Venable, 1983), and they were used 27 (7.94%), 22 (6.47%), 11 (3.24%), 9 (2.65%), and 1 (0.29%) time, respectively. Collectively, the I-E scales were applied in 70 instances, constituting 20.59% of studies employing validated scales.

DSES. The Daily Spiritual Experience Scale (DSES) is a 16-item instrument developed by Underwood and Teresi (2002). It ranked the fifth most commonly used scale for assessing religiosity among Buddhists, particularly in relation to spiritual experiences in daily life. Initially developed through qualitative methods that involved interviewing followers from a diverse religious traditions. To date, the DSES has been utilised in 18 studies reviewed, representing approximately 5.30% of all scales deployed. Furthermore, it is also a widely recognised subscale within the MMRS/BMMRS frameworks.

RCI-10. Within this review, the RCI-10 (Worthington et al., 2003) was employed 14 times, or 4.12% of all scales used, highlighting its utility and prevalence as a measure of religious commitment in the research domain. This 10-item scale assesses the extent to which individuals adhere to their religious values, beliefs, and practices and how they integrate these elements into their daily lives. It evaluates two dimensions: intrapersonal and interpersonal religious commitments. The scale is

[3] Although the Quest scale (Batson & Schoenrade, 1991) was initially developed as an alternative to Allport and Ross's (1967) intrinsic-extrinsic (I-E) religiosity model, it remains conceptually and empirically linked to the broader I-E paradigm. While Quest differs from intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity in its emphasis on existential openness and religious questioning, several studies suggest it shares meaningful overlaps with intrinsic religiosity, particularly in its internalised and personally significant engagement with religion (Cook et al., 2014; Halama, 2002). Furthermore, some scholars argue that Quest may not be a unidimensional construct and that certain subdimensions align more closely with intrinsic religiosity than previously assumed (Miner, 2008). Given these conceptual and empirical relationships, this study consolidates Quest within the I-E framework for comparative purposes while acknowledging its distinctiveness as a construct.

designed for use in research and counselling settings across a variety of populations, encompassing diverse faiths such as Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism.

Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS). The Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS), developed by Huber and Huber (2012), is a modern addition to the suite of multidimensional religiosity measurement tools. In this review, this CRS appeared in 13 studies, accounting for 3.82% of the total studies. It is noteworthy that eight of these applications took place between 2021 and 2023, highlighting a growing popularity in recent years. The CRS evaluates the significance of religious meanings in relation to an individual's personality and daily life. It measures the overall intensity of religiosity across five core dimensions: intellect, ideology, public practice, private practice, and religious experience. In this review, CRSs of varying lengths are considered collectively.

ASPIRES. The Assessment of Spirituality and Religious Sentiments (ASPIRES) scale, developed by Ralph Piedmont (2012), is a comprehensive instrument designed to assess both spirituality and religious sentiments. It appeared 11 times in the present review, representing 3.24% of the studies. The ASPIRES scale measures spirituality and religiosity as motivational constructs that influence personal meaning, purpose, and connection to the transcendent. It aims to provide a universal framework for understanding spirituality and religious sentiments across different cultures and faiths.

Religious Coping Scale (RCOPE). The Religious Coping Scale (RCOPE) appeared nine times in our review, combining the RCOPE (Pargament et al., 2000) and its brief version B-RCOPE (Pargament et al., 2011). An intriguing trend emerged: up until April 2021, four studies employed these scales with Buddhist samples, but within a short span of time.

Four Basic Dimensions of Religiousness Scale (4BDRS). Although not among the top 10 most used scales, our review identified three studies that used and examined the 12-item 4BDRS, which aims to provide an inclusive measure applicable to both Judeo-Christian and non-Judeo-Christian faiths, developed by Saroglou and colleagues (2011; 2020). It is a multidimensional tool designed to measure religiousness across four core dimensions: Believing, Bonding, Behaving, and Belonging. It is designed to be universal and applicable across different religious traditions and cultural contexts.

2.4.3 Scales Used Specifically with Buddhist Samples

The current review identified 29 articles documenting studies specifically conducted with Buddhists (see Table 4 for details). Among these, six studies did not employ Buddhist-specific religiosity scales. Two of these studies adopted existing scales directly, while four modified existing scales to adapt them for measuring the religiosity of Buddhists.

Among the remaining 23 studies, 13 used scales designed for Theravada Buddhists, all of which were conducted in Thailand, Myanmar, or the UK. Five studies used scales incorporating elements of Mahayana Buddhism, administered in China and Vietnam. Only one study developed and administered a questionnaire for followers of Vajrayana Buddhism in China. The remaining studies did not specify the scale or the targeted Buddhists' doctrinal orientation.

Furthermore, out of the 29 studies with purported Buddhist samples, eight (27.59%) were conducted in countries where Christianity or Hinduism was the dominant religion, with Buddhism accounting for only a niche following, primarily in Western societies.

2.4.4 Theravada Religiosity Scales

Eight Theravada Buddhist religiosity scales were found in the review being used in 11 studies. These include: Buddhist Beliefs and Practices Scale (Emavardhana & Tori, 1997), Religious Beliefs and Practices of Buddhism Questionnaire by Bhanthumnavin and Vanindananda developed in 1997 but used and documented by Sooksawat et al. (2013), Thanissaro Scale of Attitude towards Buddhism (TSAB; Thanissaro, 2011) and TSAB-R (Thanissaro, 2016b), Burmese Buddhist Religiosity Scale (BBRS; Stanford & Jong, 2019), and other unnamed scales (Ariyabuddhiphongs, 2009; Chamratrithirong et al., 2010; Elliott, 2014).

2.4.5 Mahayana Religiosity Scales.

Five Mahayana Buddhist religiosity scales were identified. All were developed in China, with one exception covering Vietnam as well as China. These include the Centrality of Buddhist Religiosity Scale (CBRS; Nguyen et al., 2021), Buddhism Relative Questionnaire (H. Y. Hu et al., 2011), Buddhist Religiosity Evaluation Scale (Xue, 2011), Chinese Buddhist Religiosity Scale (Bao, 2013), and Buddhist Religiousness Motivation, Cognition and Behavioral Scale (Dang, 2015).

2.4.6 Vajrayana Religiosity Scale

The current scoping review did not uncover studies using a dedicated Buddhist religiosity scale that measured Vajrayana Buddhist religiosity. The only study targeting Vajrayana Buddhists was conducted in Tibet (Holbrook & Sousa, 2013).

2.4.7 Scales Covering Some Aspects of Buddhist Religiosity

Several scales were identified that cover certain aspects of Buddhist religiosity. These include the Oneness Beliefs Scale (Garfield et al., 2014), the Buddhist Aesthetic Scale (Song & Qin, 2019), the Test of Existential Motivation scale (Shumskiy & Klimochkina, 2018), and an 18-item Buddhism Measure (Pace, 2012).

Table 4 List of studies with Buddhists specifically recruited

No.	Authors	Year	New / Tested / Adaptation / Adoption*	Country of Study	Buddhist scale	Beyond Affiliation	School of Buddhism
1	Ariyabuddhiphongs	2009	New	Thailand	Y	Y	Theravada
2	Bao	2013	New	China	Y	Y	Mahayana
3	Chamratrithirong et al,	2010	New	Thailand	Y	Y	Theravada
4	Dang	2015	New	China, Vietnam	Y	Y	Mahayana
5	DongZhi et al.	2023	Adaptation	China	Y	N	
6	Elliott	2014	New	Thailand	Y	Y	Theravada
7	Emavardhana & Tori	1997	New	Thailand	Y	Y	Theravada
8	Garfield et al.	2014	New	USA	Y	Y	Not Specified
9	Holbrook & Sousa	2013	New	China	Y		Vajrayana
10	Hu et al.	2011	New	China	Y	Y	Mahayana
11	Ju et al.	2018	Adoption	China		Y	
12	Krauss et al.	2007	Adoption	Malaysia		Y	
13	Le	2023	New	Vietnam	Y	Y	Mahayana
14	Nguyen et al.	2021	Adaptation	Vietnam	Y	Y	Mahayana
15	Pace	2012	New	USA, Canada, Australia, UK, India, others	Y	Y	Not Specified
16	Shumskiy & Klimochkina	2018	New	Russia	Y		All except Zen
17	Song & Qin	2019	New	China	Y	Y	Not Specified
18	Sooksawat et al.	2013	Tested	Thailand	Y	Y	Theravada
19	Stanford & Jong	2019	New	Myanmar	Y	Y	Theravada
20	Stanford & Whitehouse	2021	Tested	Myanmar	Y	Y	Theravada
21	Thanissaro	2011	New	UK	Y	Y	Theravada
22	Thanissaro	2016a	Tested	UK	Y	Y	Theravada
23	Thanissaro	2016b	New	UK	Y	Y	Theravada
24	Thanissaro	2017	Tested	UK	Y	Y	Theravada
25	Thanissaro	2018	Tested	UK	Y	Y	Theravada
26	Tungjitcharoen & Berntsen	2021	Adoption	USA and other countries		Y	

27	Wang et al.	2023	New	China	Y	Y	Mahayana
28	Xue	2011	New	China	Y	Y	Mahayana
29	Zhao et al.	2022	Adaptation	China		Y	

*New indicates a scale that was used for the first time; Tested denotes a scale validated in previous studies; Adaptation signifies the scale was modified from other scales but not tested; and Adoption means a scale used without any change but not tested in the specific population context.

2.5 Discussion

This discussion provides a detailed examination of the various scales identified in terms of their relevance, applicability, and the extent to which they encapsulate Buddhist religiosity's multifaceted nature. This discussion is vital to understanding the current status of how Buddhist religiosity is captured and highlighting areas where additional scale development or validation may be necessary to ensure that the measures of religiosity are appropriately tailored to Buddhist contexts.

2.5.1 DUREL

The high frequency of usage of the DUREL reflected in our review is likely attributable to its concise five-item format, comprising one item each for religious attendance ("*How often do you attend church or other religious meetings?*") and private religious practices ("*How often do you spend time in private religious activities, such as prayer, meditation or Bible study?*"), and three items assessing intrinsic religiousness, measuring the extent to which these items are true, such as, "*In my life, I experience the presence of the Divine (i.e., God)*" (H. G. Koenig & Büssing, 2010). Despite its brevity, the DUREL has been a subject of critique, with some arguing that its tripartite dimensions fail to effectively discern between religious and non-religious individuals (Hall et al., 2008).

In an international study spanning 27 countries and employing DUREL in 20 different languages, scalar measurement invariance was confirmed across 13 sample sets for a one-factor structure and in 11 sample sets for a two-factor structure (Toscanelli et al., 2022). These findings advocate for the DUREL's utility in cross-cultural research considering aggregate scores. However, it is noteworthy that the scale's efficacy across different religious cohorts was not reflected. The relevance of items asking about church attendance and the presence of the divine to a nontheistic religion, which downplays the importance of congregation and institutional activities, remains questionable.

2.5.2 MMRS/BMMRS

The 88-item MMRS and its abridged version, the 38-item Brief Multidimensional Measure of Religiousness/Spirituality (BMMRS), are designed to reflect 12 domains of religiosity/spirituality (Fetzer Institute, 1999). These domains include religious support, spiritual perspective, religious attendance, experience of the transcendent, religious coping, beliefs, religious and spiritual history, denominational commitment, religious identity, intrinsic religiosity, belonging, and participation in religious activities. Each domain within the MMRS is encapsulated by subscales ranging from one to six items, offering comprehensive insight into multiple dimensions of religious experience.

The utilization of the MMRS and BMMRS is characterized by their modular application; they can be administered in full, as brief instruments, or by discrete subscales to suit various research needs. Despite this flexibility, empirical investigations into the psychometric soundness of the MMRS are not exhaustive. This is evidenced by the findings of Piedmont et al. (2006), who discerned a three-dimensional structure using principal component analysis, as opposed to the seven dimensions identified by Masters et al. (2009) in their study with a US collegiate cohort. Such discrepancies signal that the empirical validation of the MMRS, when used as an integrated instrument, remains inconclusive.

In contrast, the BMMRS has garnered wider validation across various populations and cultural contexts, attesting to its adaptability across different cultural and linguistic landscapes. However, the work of Cohen et al. (2022) has raised concerns regarding the application of the BMMRS in non-Western and non-Christian contexts. In their cross-cultural examination involving US and Indian participants from multiple ethnic backgrounds and religions (Christian, Hindu, Muslim), they highlighted the potential limitations of imposing Western-centric religiosity measures such as the BMMRS on diverse religious traditions. When assessed in the context of Buddhism, certain domains, such as religious attendance and participation in religious activities, may not be entirely applicable.

2.5.3 I-E Scales: ROS, I/E-Revised Scale, Intrinsic Religious Motivation Scale, Quest Scale, Age-Universal I-E Scale

These scales are discussed together due to their intrinsic-extrinsic orientation, which can be traced back to the 20-item ROS developed by Allport and Ross (1967). Sample items from the ROS include, "*What religion offers me most is comfort when sorrows and misfortune strike.*" (extrinsic) and "*My religious beliefs are what really lie behind my whole approach to life.*" (intrinsic). However, the ROS has been critiqued for presenting intrinsic and extrinsic orientations as binary opposites (Kirkpatrick & Hood, 1990), and for issues with its application and efficacy. The high reading level required by ROS items poses problems for special adult populations and children, while conditional items challenge nonreligious respondents, affecting the reliability of the Extrinsic Scale compared to the adequate reliability of the Intrinsic Scale (Hill & Hood Jr., 1999). Despite these issues, the ROS remains widely used in assessing religious orientations and beliefs.

To improve language comprehension and predictive validity issues, Hoge (1972) developed the 30-item Intrinsic Religious Motivation Scale, which showed stronger reliability and correlation with intrinsic motivations. The Age-Universal I-E Scale (Gorsuch & Venable, 1983) was also developed to revise the language used in the 20-item scale, making it more accessible. While less common, this

scale was administered to Buddhists as well. Gorsuch and McPherson (1989) expanded the extrinsic dimension into two distinct facets, personal and social, and developed the I/E-Revised Scale. However, the scale was criticized for splitting extrinsic motivation without a strong theoretical basis (Kirkpatrick & Hood, 1990). Batson and Schoenrade (1991) reconceptualized intrinsic religiosity with the development of the Quest Scale.

This enduring prominence of the I-E paradigm, established in the early 20th century, accounts for its widespread application. However, empirical validations of these scales across diverse religious adherents are notably limited. Only the Quest Scale and the extrinsic dimension of ROS have been empirically validated with Muslim populations in Iran (Ghorbani et al., 2007). There is an evident gap in validation for these scales when applied to Buddhist contexts, raising concerns about their suitability and accuracy in capturing the unique aspects of Buddhist religiosity. Specifically, the nature of religiosity orientation measured by these scales may not fully align with Buddhist religiosity, which does not centre on belief in a deity and emphasizes practices like mindfulness, nonattachment, and the Noble Eightfold Path. Therefore, these scales may fail to account for the unique aspects of Buddhist religious experience and practice.

2.5.4 DSES

Underwood (2011) has provided a comprehensive synthesis of validity tests from over 150 studies, underscoring the robust empirical support for DSES. The scale's application has spanned a multitude of cultural landscapes, as evidenced by its inclusion in research conducted in regions as diverse as China, Romania, Pakistan, and India (Ashraf et al., 2021; Kumari & Joshi, 2020; Ng et al., 2009; Popescu et al., 2022). Such widespread use attests to the DSES's versatility and relevance in cross-cultural settings, which is significant in the context of globalization and increasing diversity of religious expression. The initial development of the DSES involved qualitative interviews to refine items and ensure construct validity across different populations. However, the scale's emphasis on experiences of God's love and presence may reflect a predominantly theistic perspective (H. G. Koenig et al., 2015), which might not fully apply to non-theistic religions such as Buddhism. Additionally, the DSES has not been validated with targeted Buddhists despite extensive validation studies across cultures and countries.

2.5.5 RCI-10

The Religious Commitment Inventory (RCI-10), a succinct 10-item instrument crafted by Worthington et al. (2003), is a widely used scale designed for evaluating religious commitment in individuals. This scale consists of 10 items, divided into two subscales: Intrapersonal and Interpersonal. The Intrapersonal subscale comprises six items that assess the degree to which

individuals personally adhere to their religious beliefs and integrate them into their daily lives. Example items include "*My religious beliefs lie behind my whole approach to life*" (RCI 1) and "*It is important to me to spend periods of time in private religious thought and reflection*" (RCI 3). Additionally, the item "*I often read books and magazines about my faith*" (RCI 6) exemplifies the personal engagement aspect measured by this subscale.

In contrast, the Interpersonal subscale consists of four items that evaluate the extent of individuals' engagement in religious activities and relationships within their religious community. Example items from this subscale include "*I enjoy spending time with others of my religious affiliation*" (RCI 8) and "*I make financial contributions to my religious organization*" (RCI 10). These items reflect the social and communal dimensions of religious commitment.

Initial empirical investigation indicated the scale to have good reliability ($\alpha = .88$) and demonstrated good construct and criterion validities in different samples (Worthington et al., 2003). However, Buddhist participants, on average, registered lower scores compared to adherents of other faith traditions, a trend that persisted even when comparisons were confined to Asian American individuals of varied religious backgrounds. In the initial study, the two subscales showed high correlation ($r = .72$, $p < .03$), and a subsequent study focusing on a predominantly non-religious cohort of Chinese university students (Z. Z. Wang et al., 2016) revealed an even higher degree of intercorrelation between the two subscales of the RCI-10 ($r = .82$, $p < .01$). This suggests that the subscales may not be distinctly independent but rather exhibit substantial overlap in the constructs they purport to measure.

Despite its usage, the findings from Worthington and colleagues' initial study on the RCI-10 raised questions about the scale's sensitivity and applicability to Buddhist populations, given their lower score pattern compared to other faith followers. The high intercorrelation between subscales in a separate study further suggests the need for caution when interpreting the results among populations with varying levels of religious involvement, including Buddhism's nontheistic beliefs.

2.5.6 Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS)

The CRS assesses five dimensions of religiosity: public practice, private practice, religious experience, religious ideology, and religious intellectualism. This scale exists in various lengths to accommodate different research needs and contexts. The Abrahamic-focused versions, tailored for Christianity or Islam, include the 5-item, 10-item, and 15-item versions (CRS-5, CRS-10, CRS-15). To enhance its utility in interreligious studies, additional items are integrated, forming the CRSi-7, CRSi-14, and CRSi-20 scales. The theoretical foundation of the CRS is rooted in Allport and Ross's (1967) concepts of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, as well as Glock's (1962) delineation of religious life

expressions (Zwingmann et al., 2011). Recently, the scales were tested in Hong Kong with teachers, finding that the CRS-5 had a better model fit than the CRSi-7 and CRS-15 in CFA (Lee & Kuang, 2020). This CRS-5 has a better model fit than CRSi-7 and CRS-15 in the confirmatory factor analyses. The CRS scale has been recently adapted into a Centrality of Buddhist Religiosity Scale (Nguyen et al., 2021).

2.5.7 ASPIRES

This 35-item measure encompasses two major components: Religious Sentiments (RS) and Spiritual Transcendence (ST). The RS component focuses on the importance of religious beliefs and practices in an individual's life, while the ST component operationalises spiritual transcendence as an individual's innate capacity to construe a broad sense of personal meaning.

In addition to the long version, the ASPIRES scale has a condensed variant, the 13-item short-form version (ASPIRES-SF). This short form features four items gauging behavioural frequency for Bible/religious text reading, religious literature reading, praying, and attending religious services (Piedmont et al., 2008). The remaining nine items reflect only the ST dimension's three facets. The scale has been used in various cultural contexts, including testing on Christian and Buddhist populations in Sri Lanka (Piedmont et al., 2009). The results showed that Buddhists scored lower in religious practices and involvement compared to Christians, which aligned with the contemplative aspect of Buddhism. This finding also reflected the potential accuracy issue of ASPIRES in reflecting the true level of spiritual transcendence or religious sentiment of Buddhists. The study only performed CFA to demonstrate the scale's structural validity, ascertaining the structural integrity of the model across different faith followers.

2.5.8 Religious Coping Scale (RCOPE)

The Religious Coping Scale (RCOPE), developed by Pargament and colleagues (2000), is a tool designed to assess the diverse ways in which individuals use religion to cope with stress, crises, and life challenges. It captures both positive and negative religious coping strategies, reflecting the multifaceted role of religion in human psychological adaptation. The scale exists in three versions: the full 105-item RCOPE, the 63-item RCOPE Short Form, and the 14-item Brief RCOPE (BRCOPE).

RCOPE is structured into 21 subscales, categorising religious coping mechanisms into two overarching dimensions: Positive Religious Coping (PRC) that reflects a secure relationship with the divine, characterised by seeking spiritual meaning, comfort, and guidance in religious beliefs and practices; Negative Religious Coping (NRC) that captures spiritual struggles and maladaptive religious responses, including feelings of divine punishment, religious discontent, and interpersonal spiritual conflict (Talik, 2013). The scale is designed to mirror the complex role of religion in coping processes. RCOPE is distinctive in its ability to differentiate between adaptive and maladaptive religious coping

strategies, offering insights into how individuals of various faith traditions manage psychological distress through religious means.

Internationally, the RCOPE has been widely employed to explore both the beneficial and detrimental religious coping. The Brief Religious Coping (B-RCOPE) inventory, a condensed 14-item version, has been particularly recognised for its reliability and validity in assessing faith-based responses to significant life stressors (Pargament et al., 2011). The notable increase in its application from 2021 to 2023 may be attributed to the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which heightened scholarly interest in religious coping mechanisms across diverse populations, including Buddhist practitioners.

Despite its extensive application across religious traditions, only the B-RCOPE has been used in studies involving Buddhist samples (for example, X. Hu & Cheng, 2021), and specific validation studies within Buddhist populations remain limited. This gap is partially addressed by the Buddhist Coping Scale (BCOPE) by Phillips et al. (2012), which was developed to reflect Buddhist-specific coping strategies, incorporating elements such as mindfulness, meditation, dharma, impermanence, not-self, and inter-being. While both B-RCOPE and BCOPE explore religious coping, the latter offers a more culturally and doctrinally aligned approach to Buddhist contexts, suggesting that general religiosity scales may not fully capture how Buddhist practitioners engage in coping processes.

2.5.9 Four Basic Dimensions of Religiousness Scale (4BDRS)

Developed by Saroglou (2011), this 12-item scale was built on and modified from the traditional sociological approach of measuring religiosity using the three Bs – Believing, Behaving, and Belonging, known initially as Belief, Practice, and Affiliation (Bjarnason, 2007; McAndrew & Voas, 2011; Voas, 2007). An additional dimension of Bonding was included to reflect the emotional and aesthetic experience from ritualistic and symbolic exposures. Initial tests using the scale were promising across different cultures (Saroglou et al., 2020). In terms of cross-religion application of the scale, the scale measurement invariance was established among Christians and Muslims in Indonesia (Aditya et al., 2021). However, another confirmatory analysis of the factors using samples from India suggested that the 4BDRS model fits better with faith followers whose religion requires regular attendance at places of worship (Kumar et al., 2021). When viewed in the context of Buddhism, where regular places of worship are not required, this finding would suggest a potential issue of the model's fit with Buddhists on the Bonding dimension, which includes religious rituals and activities. For example, Buddhists may not find items like "*I like religious ceremonies*" or "*In religion, I enjoy belonging to a group/community*" fully relevant to their tradition.

Other potential aspects of Buddhism could challenge the fundamental assumptions on which the 4BDRS is built. For example, an anthropological study in Northern Thailand found that Theravada Buddhists rely less on external forces and have stronger self-agency than Christians (J. Cassaniti, 2012). This suggests that Buddhists might be less demanding of the Belief aspect of the model. This phenomenon could be particularly true for Theravada Buddhists, where one of the most often cited scriptures, the *Kalama Sutta*, documents the Buddha's rationalistic approach to recognising truth through logic and experiential evidence rather than faith (Galadari, 2020; Homduangsri, 2012).

2.5.10 Scales Used Specifically with Buddhist Samples

Several studies have attempted to adapt religiosity scales for Buddhist populations, often modifying existing instruments originally developed for other religious traditions.

One such study tested a Muslim religiosity scale—the Muslim Religiosity-Personality Inventory (MRPI)—among followers of different faiths, including Buddhists (Krauss et al., 2007). The MRPI consists of two subscales: "Islamic Worldview" and "Religious Personality" (Krauss et al., 2006). Given its explicit Islamic orientation, the "Islamic Worldview" subscale was omitted, and only the "Religious Personality" subscale was adapted for broader religious applicability. The adaptation process incorporated expert feedback and interviews with religious leaders from Buddhist, Hindu, Protestant, Catholic, and Sikh traditions to refine the scale for non-Muslim respondents. The revised 102-item scale was then tested in four Malaysian states with Malay, Chinese, and Indian participants, ultimately yielding a three-factor structure. This study aimed to develop a religiosity measure that could transcend specific religious affiliations, with the inclusion of Buddhist participants reflecting Malaysia's religious diversity.

A separate study focused on adapting the Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRSi-20) into Chinese for use among Tibetan Buddhists and Han Chinese (Ju et al., 2018). The adaptation involved minor cultural modifications, such as broadening the concept of the divine to include supernatural beings and substituting prayer with meditation to align with Buddhist traditions. The results showed moderate to good internal reliability (α = .66 to .84) among Han Chinese but only moderate reliability (α = .60 to .70) for Tibetan Buddhists, suggesting that the adapted CRSi-20 may have limited relevance for Buddhist populations.

Another study employed the shorter, 7-item version of the Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRSi-7) to investigate autobiographical memory linked to religious belief among Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Muslims, and Jews (Tungjitcharoen & Berntsen, 2021). While the CRSi-7 demonstrated good reliability across the overall sample (α = .72), the study did not conduct separate

reliability analyses for Buddhist participants, making it unclear whether the scale adequately captured Buddhist religiosity.

In China, researchers customised items to suit Buddhist respondents, such as referencing "Buddha" for belief intensity (Zhao et al., 2022) or incorporating specific Buddhist practices like temple visits, sutra chanting, and vegetarian diets (Z. Wang et al., 2023). Recently, DongZhi, and colleagues (2023) studied rural Tibetans' daily and high-cost religious activities such as local pilgrimage, counting beads, prostration, aromatic plant burning, and fasting. Their religiosity questionnaire was adapted from the questionnaire used by Power (2017).

A relatively comprehensive Buddhist-oriented scale was found in a study on Vietnamese Buddhist adolescents (Le, 2023). This scale developed questions based on Buddhist teachings, faith in Karma and Buddha, adherence to essential Buddhist rules, and prosocial behaviours promoted in Buddhism, like caring for elders and charitable activities. However, the scale development was not reflective of an empirical-based approach nor a strong theoretical framework but merely used doctrinal teachings to generate items without clear justification on how the three dimensions were derived; it also did not undergo any psychometric evaluation to ensure validity and reliability. In other words, the scale lacked adequate scientific support.

2.5.11 Theravada Religiosity Scales

The review found eleven Theravada Buddhist religiosity scales, which form the bulk of the designated religiosity scales used on Buddhists.

Buddhist Beliefs and Practices Scale. Of all 11 unique scales, the Buddhist Beliefs and Practices Scale by Emavardhana and Tori (1997) was the earliest. This 11-item scale, however, did not follow a systematic scale development approach but was mainly developed for the authors' study. These items were independent variables intended to reflect how Vipassana practitioners' sense of self and ego defence changed due to their participation in a seven-day retreat. Hence, it intentionally included items such as "*I believe in the doctrine of no-soul*", "*The teachings of the Buddha are very important in my life,"* and "*I observe the five precepts*" to reflect the needed beliefs and behaviours of their Buddhist participants.

Religious Beliefs and Practices of Buddhism Questionnaire. In the same year, 1997, a Religious Beliefs and Practices of Buddhism Questionnaire was developed by Thai scholars Bhanthumnavin and Vanindananda. However, the report and the original scale are not accessible. That said, the scale was used and documented in another study by Sooksawat et al. (2013) , who studied chronic lower back pain patients and found the scale scores accounted for only a 6% variance in the psychological stress of the patients. The scale has 30 items equally divided into three subscales

– teaching, practice, and lifestyle. The teaching subscale (α = .83) records participants' agreements with Buddhist doctrines, such as taking refuge in the Triple Gem, believing in Karma and Samsara, etc.; the practice subscale (α = .78) measures behavioural activities such as giving, following precepts, and meditation and prayer; and the lifestyle subscale (α = .85) looks at how one performs daily activities with Buddhist principles. Unfortunately, the authors did not offer further information or sample items about the scale.

Thanissaro Scale of Attitude towards Buddhism (TSAB). Amongst all scales used with Theravada Buddhists, the Thanissaro Scale of Attitude towards Buddhism (TSAB), with two subscales reflecting the dimensions of "intellectual" and "affective," respectively, is the most frequently used Buddhist scale in the current review (Thanissaro, 2011). The scale's initial debut in 2011 was for a study measuring attitudes towards Buddhism and Sikhism amongst teens in the UK. However, almost all subsequent papers that used this scale were from studies conducted by the scale developer and administered to teenagers from the UK of different parental heritages. Some of these papers used the same survey data first reported in a 2016 paper (Thanissaro, 2016a, 2017, 2018). The 24-item scale, both the original TSAB and the revised TSAB-R (Thanissaro, 2016b), have only been used in the cultural context of Western Buddhists and mainly for the teenage population. The items kept on the scale showed clear Theravada orientation, such as items seven and eight implying engaging in temporary monkhood – a common tradition in Theravada Buddhism around Southeast Asia. So far, TSAB or TSAB-R has not been appropriately tested for its psychometric properties in Buddhist-dominated countries from a more traditional Theravada background or amongst populations other than teens.

Burmese Buddhist Religiosity Scale (BBRS). The BBRS is the most recent scale developed for Buddhists in Myanmar (Stanford & Jong, 2019) and was used again in a more recent study by Stanford and Whitehouse (2021). It is worth noting that the scale was tested for convergent validity using TSAB-R, which is a scale yet to be validated outside of the UK and with a population other than teens. The researchers took an anthropological stance in their method, adhering to an emic approach to defining Buddhist religiosity from the perspective of the indigenous people rooted in their unique local cultures. For cultural comparability, the construction of the scale was an extensive adaptation of the CRS, relying on the five dimensions as the framework for scale construction. However, contrary to expectation, the final 30-item scale departed drastically from the five-dimensional model of CRS in its factor solutions.

The BBRS incorporates many animistic local folk beliefs, such as "*Nat Propitiation*" (*nats* being spirits worshipped in Burmese folk religion), local astrological beliefs and practices,

involvement in esoteric practices, and belief in supernatural agents, such as engagement with "*weikza*," who is believed to possess magical powers. The authors argued for including local folk beliefs in the scale and supported their findings of the BBRS reflecting two distinct dimensions, similar to the "little" and "great" traditions suggested by Ames (1964) in his study of Sri Lankan religions. In Ames' framework, the "little" tradition takes care of the worldly and mundane, while the "great" tradition looks after the interest of transcendence and the afterlife. Both dimensions include animistic elements as well as Theravada Buddhist religiosity items.

The scale in question is not a purely Buddhist measurement of religiosity; instead, it represents a Burmese variation that integrates elements of local animistic beliefs. This approach offers a distinctive perspective on the practice and understanding of Buddhism within the cultural framework of Myanmar, highlighting the syncretism of religious customs in the region. However, the incorporation of local folk beliefs into the BBRS limits its applicability beyond Myanmar.

Other Theravada Religiosity Scales. Several other Buddhist scales were developed for use with Theravada Buddhists. However, many of these scales were based on an etic approach, heavily relying on non-Buddhist scales in their conceptualisation. For example, the scale used in Chamratrithirong et al. (2010) demonstrates this reliance. Additionally, some scales utilised only partial doctrinal content, focusing on specific aspects such as the concept of giving, adherence to the five precepts, and meditation in their assessment of religiosity, as seen in the scale by Ariyabuddhiphongs (2009).

Alternatively, the frequency of practices and rituals was often used as a proxy to reflect religiosity. For instance, the scale developed by Elliott (2014) employed this method. These approaches, while providing some insight, may not fully capture the comprehensive nature of Theravada Buddhist religiosity, as they often overlook the broader doctrinal and philosophical underpinnings of the tradition.

2.5.12 Mahayana Religiosity Scales

Five Mahayana Buddhist religiosity scales were identified. Three of the Mahayana scales found were developed in China, one developed using samples from both Vietnam and China, and one tested only in Vietnam.

Centrality of Buddhist Religiosity Scale (CBRS). Of the five Mahayana Buddhism-oriented religiosity scales, the CBRS is an adaptation of the CRS for the Vietnamese Mahayana Buddhists (Nguyen et al., 2021). The CBRS measures the same five dimensions captured by the CRS and strongly correlates with intrinsic religiosity, using an adapted scale based on Gorsuch and McPherson (1989). This study validated the CBRS-5, CBRS-10, and CBRS-15. As the names suggest, these scales are

modelled on CRS-5, CRS-10, and CRS-15, with Buddhist elements replacing the traditional mentions of gods and the divine. However, a major methodological flaw in this study lies in the sample screening criteria. The study only sampled those who participated in Buddhist community activities, religious ceremonies, lectures by Buddhist monks, and practice of taught teachings. These criteria may have forced responses to fit into the five original dimensions of CRS—intellect, ideology, experience, private practice, and public practice—rendering the validation study's outcome questionable.

Buddhism Relative Questionnaire. The earliest attempt at developing a Mahayana Buddhist religiosity measurement was by Hu et al. (2011) with the Buddhism Relative Questionnaire (佛教相关问卷). The scale used BMMRS as its six-dimensional foundation, constructing 29 items covering Daily Experience (日常体验), Buddhism Belief (佛教信念), Buddhism Coping (佛教应对), Buddhism Practice (佛教修行), Life Style (生活方式), and Buddhism Support (佛教支持). Despite its promising validity and reliability on various psychometric indicators, the sample size of N = 145 for the test of construct validity using principle component analysis (PCA) appears inadequate. In justifying its content validity, the research team argued that contents were discussed and modified based on contributions from devout lay Buddhists using Dharma doctrines, *Vinaya* (precepts), and Buddhist scriptures. They defer the final verdict on content validity to the authority of the China Buddhist Association. While the intention to develop a Buddhist religiosity measure indigenous to Chinese Buddhists is commendable, the research quality and the scholarly rigor in constructing the scale seem insufficient.

Buddhist Religiosity Evaluation Scale. Xue (2011) developed the Buddhist Religiosity Evaluation Scale, a 9-item instrument encompassing three dimensions—Affective Experience (情感体验), Rational Agreement (理性认同), and Participative Behavior (行为参与)—to assess religiosity among Buddhists. The scale's development was grounded in an emic approach, reflecting the intrinsic cultural perspective, and was systematically constructed using observational data and key dimensions derived from unstructured interviews with a diverse sample of 20 Buddhists, including ordained monks and nuns, and lay followers of both genders.

The initial scale underwent quantitative testing for its psychometric properties and construct validity. It demonstrated high internal consistency with an α = .879. Regarding construct validity, the scale's initial Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) indicated a Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) of 0.240. Post-item refinement, the RMSEA improved significantly to 0.023, suggesting an adequate to good fit of the revised model. Furthermore, the revised model's fit indices, including the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), and Incremental Fit Index (IFI), all

exceeded the threshold of 0.90 after refinement, providing some support for the scale's construct validity.

However, it is important to acknowledge the limitations in the subsequent multivariate analyses. The statistical power of these analyses might have been compromised due to a relatively small sample size of $N = 62$, affecting the generalizability of the findings. While the scale showed promising psychometric properties, the researcher did not test the scale for its convergent, divergent, concurrent, predictive, and incremental validities. In addition, the scale includes items only applicable to Mahayana Buddhists, such as "*I burn incense, recite Buddha's name or meditate every day,*" which are common for Pure Land School followers; or ideas that are potentially misunderstood by lay Buddhists who might aggressively promote the teaching of Dharma, such as "*I am passionate about promoting Buddhism and wanting others to take refuge in it.*"

Chinese Buddhist Religiosity Scale. Developed by Bao (2013), this 33-item instrument assesses the religiosity of Chinese Buddhists across four dimensions: Belief in Dharma (佛法信仰), Practices (修持实践), Religious Experience (宗教体验), and Value Pursuits (价值追求). These dimensions were conceptualised based on an analysis of foundational Buddhist teachings and reflect the core aspects of Buddhist religiosity. The researcher paid close attention to the cultural and religious appropriateness of the items, ensuring they were representative of the Buddhist faith and its practices. The scale underwent a rigorous development process, which included consultations with Buddhist scholars and practitioners to refine the items and ensure their relevance and accuracy. However, the scale contains items only emphasised in Mahayana Buddhism, such as "*I have seen/heard the image/voice of a Buddha or Bodhisattva many times out of thin air*" under the Religious Experience dimension.

The scale demonstrated strong psychometric properties, with an overall internal reliability α =.918, indicating high reliability. Regarding validity, CFA was performed with a sample size of $N = 247$. Results supported the four-dimensional structure of the scale, with fit indices suggesting an adequate model fit: the chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio $\chi^2/df = 2.34$, RMSEA = 0.079, CFI = 0.94, IFI = 0.94, Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI) = 0.94, and the Parsimony Goodness of Fit Index (PGFI) = 0.66. These results indicate that the scale's structure is coherent and well-supported by the data. However, the modest sample size for the CFA may limit the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, while the scale showed good empirical validity through its significant positive correlation with the criterion of precepts, further examination of other types of validity, such as convergent, divergent, concurrent, predictive, and incremental validities, is needed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the scale's psychometric properties.

Buddhist Religiousness Motivation, Cognition and Behavioral Scale. Validated in China and Vietnam, the Buddhist Religiousness Motivation, Cognition and Behavioral Scale (佛教信仰动机、认知和行为量表) was developed by Dang (2015), an ordained Vietnamese nun from the Mahayana tradition. The initial item pool was developed using literature reviews and open-ended questionnaires sent to online Buddhist discussion forums in China and Vietnam. The scale contains three subscales measuring (1) Motivation, (2) Knowledge, and (3) Behaviours, and each subscale contains three dimensions. These three subscales correspond to the first three of Buddhism's four-step sequence of practices: Faith, Comprehension, Behaviour/Practice, and Attainment (信、解、行、证) found in scriptures of various traditions, such as the *Avatamsaka Sutra* (《华严经》) from the Mahayana tradition and three of the five Nikayas (Digha 长部, Majjhima 中部, and Anguttara 增支部) which are the foundational scriptures of the Theravada Pali Canon, as well as the *Visuddhimagga* (《清净道论》), a comprehensive Theravada commentary elucidating the path to enlightenment through the cultivation of moral discipline (*Sila*), concentration (*Samadhi*), wisdom (*Panna*). The final scale contains 54 items made up of 20 items, 16 items, and 18 items from the three subscales of Motivation, Knowledge, and Behaviours, respectively. This scale is developed and validated using sufficiently large sample sizes (N = 1,119) in the study.

Further analysis using various fit indices provided affirmative evidence for the structural validity of the dimensions encapsulated within each subscale. The Motivation subscale demonstrated excellent fit indices, with a χ^2/df ratio of 3.927, an RMSEA of 0.053, and CFI and NNFI values exceeding the .97 threshold, indicative of a well-fitting model. The Knowledge subscale, while showing slightly higher RMSEA at 0.0734, still maintained acceptable fit indices, suggesting the model is a reasonable representation of the data. The Behaviour subscale exhibited the most favourable χ^2/df ratio of 2.728 and an RMSEA within the acceptable range, underlining its strong psychometric performance. It is important to note that while each subscale exhibited satisfactory psychometric properties when assessed independently, the collective psychometric assessment of the entire scale remains unchecked. The intercorrelations among the subscales were examined, yet the composite scale has not undergone a comprehensive psychometric evaluation. This limitation suggests that interpretations should be made with caution, focusing on the individual subscales' performance rather than the scale as a unified measure. In addition, since the study used the same data set for both the EFA and the CFA, there could be potential confirmation bias, a lack of cross-validation, and overfitting of the model, inflating the goodness-of-fit indices and giving a false sense of model accuracy or robustness (Van Prooijen & Van Der Kloot, 2001).

The inherent problem with this scale is its skew towards Mahayana Buddhism. For example, the Motivation subscale is laced with items specific to beliefs in the Pure Land school of Buddhism, such as rebirth in the Amitabha Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss. Similar issues also exist in the Knowledge and Behaviours subscales, such as the mention of practices and concepts such as the "Ten Wholesome Actions" expounded only in the *Buddhabhasita Dasabhadra Karmamnarga Sutra* (《佛说十善业道经》), a scripture followed only in Mahayana Buddhism. This sectarian bias limits the scale's relevance primarily to adherents of Mahayana Buddhism, particularly those within the Pure Land School. Additionally, a notable shortcoming is that, like the previous two Buddhist religiosity scales, the research conducted for the scale's development did not thoroughly support its various validities; only confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was employed to substantiate its construct validity.

2.5.13 Vajrayana Religiosity Scale

The current scoping review did not uncover meaningful studies using a dedicated Buddhist religiosity scale that measured Vajrayana Buddhists' religiosity level. The only study targeting Vajrayana Buddhists was conducted in Tibet (Holbrook & Sousa, 2013). However, the so-called religiosity was only measured by a single question: "*How important for you is your Tibetan Buddhist faith?*"

2.5.14 Scales Covering Buddhist Religiosity Elements

Whilst not reflecting Buddhist religiosity in its entirety, these scales were also developed without clear doctrinal orientations. A typical example is the Oneness Beliefs Scale (Garfield et al., 2014). The researchers intended it to be used for cross-religious comparison purposes. In addition, another one developed in China to measure the aesthetic values of Buddhism is the Buddhist Aesthetic Scale (Song & Qin, 2019), which measures the three factors: value, acumen, and response. Amongst the non-specific religiosity scales for Buddhists, the Test of Existential Motivation scale developed by Shumskiy and Klimochkina (2018) in Russia stands out. This scale claims to be suitable for all Buddhists except those following the Zen school, which is distinguished by its arguably pure philosophical orientation. It covers existential motivation, making it applicable to different religions. The scale was initially tested with both Buddhists and Muslims.

Amongst the few scales that did not specify their sectarian orientation, the 18-item Buddhism Measure, reflecting six dimensions of Ethics, Doctrinal Knowledge, Affiliation, Community of Followers, Practice, and General Personal Consequences of Buddhism, is perhaps the most unusual (Pace, 2012). The scale was developed to reflect the religiosity of Buddhists in the context of materialism in consumer behaviours. It was built on literature more common among business researchers and is used mainly by business scholars.

2.5.15 Important Scales Not Captured

During the full-text review, two measurement scales were excluded due to their lack of explicit identification of Buddhist subjects in their analyses. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that the development of these scales incorporated elements informed by Buddhist religiosity concepts.

Three Teachings of East Asia (TTEA) Inventory. The TTEA Inventory, formulated by Lin and colleagues (2021), is designed to evaluate the ideologies of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism. This scale underwent validation across three languages—Chinese, Japanese, and English—and within five cultural groups: Chinese, Taiwanese, Japanese, White Americans, and Asian Americans. The development process began with a 122-item pool, identifying 18 stable dimensions, which were subsequently condensed into a 61-item final inventory. An abbreviated 36-item version was later derived during the study. Notably, the TTEA's development predominantly employed a top-down doctrinal methodology by the researchers. One significant limitation was the administration of the scale to general populations instead of adherents of the three ideologies. However, it can be argued that the scale's primary objective is to assess the extent of agreement with these ideologies as value systems rather than to measure religiosity, thereby rendering the specific testing on followers of these ideologies less consequential.

Indic Religiosity Scale (IRS). Developed by Jayakumar and Verma (2020), this scale aims to measure the commonalities among Indic religions, specifically Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism, and Buddhism. The resultant construct comprises 15 items distributed across five factors: (1) Way of Life, (2) Belief in Rebirth/Karma/Destiny, (3) Existence of Supreme Power, (4) Importance of Prayer, and (5) Purposeful Life. The development process involved consultation with experts from each of these religious traditions. However, the validation of the scale was confined to Indian nationals, with no explicit confirmation of Buddhist participation. From the data, the sample included only ten Buddhists out of a total $N = 557$, which precludes further analysis for the Buddhist subgroup. Additionally, the scale has been validated exclusively within the Indian context.

2.5.16 The State of Affairs in Measuring Buddhist Religiosity

In recent years, religiosity studies have increasingly included Buddhists in their samples, whether intentionally or as a natural consequence of growing religious diversity in various societies. This is particularly evident in countries like the United States, where different forms of Buddhism have flourished, leading to new movements and cross-influences between traditions. Similar trends are also occurring in other Western countries (Fulton, 2011; McMahan, 2002, 2017; Wallace, 2002).

Of all the religiosity scales employed in these studies involving Buddhists, most were direct applications of existing scales developed for Judeo-Christian populations. This approach may not

seem alarming, given the initial focus of the PRS field on Western populations where Judeo-Christian faiths dominated. Moreover, the etic approach, which compares cultures using models and frameworks developed in the West, has been the mainstream method for cross-cultural comparisons (Triandis et al., 1973). However, this approach risks the irrelevance of certain measurements and variables when transported to different cultural contexts (Helfrich, 2016). Despite some overlapping response ranges validating these instruments to a degree, culturally specific variables are often neglected.

The high usage frequency of DUREL, MMRS/BMMRS, and the motivation-based scales may suggest that researchers commonly accept these scales when used in cross-cultural and cross-religion studies. However, it is uncertain whether Buddhists respond to these scales in the same way as followers of Judeo-Christian faiths. In other words, the ability of these scales to pass the test of measurement invariance with Buddhist populations remains uncertain. Although some measurement invariance tests have been conducted, these primarily compared Christians and non-Christians without specifically addressing Buddhists (Z. Chen et al., 2012; Lemos et al., 2019). Thus, rigorous tests and validation of these scales within different religious groups, including Buddhists, are long overdue.

Even scales intentionally developed for Buddhist samples often carry a sectarian bias in their construction. This bias likely stems from the highly diversified nature of Buddhist teachings, where the three major schools each have their own doctrinal focus. For instance, the Theravada scales developed by Thanissaro (2011, 2016b) might have attempted but ultimately failed to encompass the various schools' differences, as their items contain explicit traditional Theravada practices. The application of Thanissaro scales beyond British teens, where they were first developed, remains uncharted. Other Theravada scales also borrowed theoretical frameworks from existing Western-developed religiosity scales, raising questions about their construct validity within the Theravada context. Attempts to include local peculiarities, as seen in Stanford and Jong (2019), often diluted the Buddhist components of the scales by incorporating animistic local practices and beliefs.

Of the five Mahayana Buddhism religiosity scales identified, one is an elaborated adaptation of the CRS to create a CBRS (Nguyen et al., 2021), which has a biased research design favouring the CRS framework. Another three scales lacked statistical robustness due to small sample sizes in their confirmatory factor analyses and inadequate psychometric evaluations. The only Mahayana religiosity scale developed based on Buddhist doctrinal frameworks and validated adequately for use in China and Vietnam is the scale by Dang (2015), but it still suffers from inadequate psychometric

evaluations. Furthermore, the current review highlights a significant gap in the measurement of Vajrayana Buddhism religiosity, with no dedicated scales identified.

Scales developed based on a purely indigenous understanding of Buddhism within local cultures are nearly non-existent. The closest attempts often ended up mixing Buddhist elements with non-Buddhist elements, undermining the creation of a pure Buddhist religiosity scale. The variety of Buddhist traditions presents a challenge, as existing scales were all developed with a sectarian bias. Consequently, no common scale can apply across all Buddhist traditions, a challenge that warrants dedicated scholarly effort to address.

2.6 Conclusion

As the world's fourth-largest religion, Buddhism has increasingly drawn the attention of theologians and scholars in the field of PRS, particularly within Western academic discourse. However, efforts to measure Buddhist religiosity remain constrained by the predominant use of scales developed within Judeo-Christian and broader Abrahamic traditions. These scales inherently presuppose monotheistic belief structures, institutional participation, and doctrinal commitment, which contrast sharply with Buddhism's nontheistic, practice-oriented nature. Given these conceptual mismatches, it is crucial to develop measurement tools that more accurately capture Buddhist religiosity, ensuring that research in PRS is methodologically inclusive and reflective of diverse religious traditions.

The findings of this review reflect the widespread use of Judeo-Christian-based religiosity measures in studies involving Buddhist participants, despite the potential validity concerns these instruments introduce. That researchers have largely not problematised this issue does not imply the absence of measurement challenges but rather suggests a lack of systematic investigation into the measurement invariance of these scales across faith traditions. This omission is significant, as applying conceptually misaligned religiosity scales to Buddhist populations may lead to skewed interpretations of religious commitment and practice, reinforcing the implicit biases of existing models. Addressing this gap requires a critical reassessment of the suitability of commonly used religiosity scales and a more rigorous approach to evaluating their applicability across religious traditions.

A key limitation identified in this review is that most existing religiosity measures—including those explicitly developed for Buddhist populations—primarily adopt an etic approach. While etic methodologies allow for cross-cultural comparisons, they frequently fail to account for culturally specific dimensions of religious belief and practice. In the context of Buddhism, an etic approach often neglects the doctrinal and philosophical intricacies unique to Buddhist religiosity, resulting in

measurement tools that only partially capture the religious experiences of Buddhist practitioners. Consequently, a shift towards an emic approach is necessary, one that draws directly from Buddhist traditions, teachings, and lived experiences to develop a more culturally congruent religiosity scale.

One of the most significant challenges in constructing such a scale lies in reconciling the doctrinal diversity among the three major Buddhist traditions—Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana. Existing Buddhist religiosity scales often exhibit sectarian biases, privileging specific doctrinal emphases at the expense of broader applicability. For instance, some scales centre on devotional and ritualistic practices, whereas others prioritise faith and doctrinal understanding, reflecting only select aspects of Buddhist religiosity. To develop a universally applicable, non-sectarian Buddhist religiosity scale, researchers must navigate these theological variations and potential doctrinal tensions, ensuring that the instrument is inclusive, representative, and valid across different Buddhist traditions.

A critical question that emerges from this review is whether the most widely used religiosity measurements are truly effective and valid when applied to Buddhist populations. Before committing to the development of a new Buddhist-oriented religiosity scale, it is essential to assess whether the limitations of existing instruments warrant a completely novel measure. The next step in this process is to examine whether commonly used religiosity scales demonstrate measurement invariance when applied to Buddhists. By investigating whether these instruments function equivalently across religious traditions, the next chapter aims to determine whether existing measures of religiosity impose conceptual biases or structural limitations that compromise their applicability to Buddhist populations. The findings will provide the empirical foundation for evaluating whether a Buddhist-specific religiosity scale is necessary.

In conclusion, the field of PRS must prioritise the development of psychometrically sound and culturally sensitive religiosity scales that accurately reflect Buddhist religiosity. Without such efforts, the empirical study of Buddhist religiosity risks remaining misaligned with the actual lived experiences of its practitioners. Addressing this methodological gap will not only enhance the validity and reliability of religiosity research in Buddhist populations but will also contribute to a more comprehensive, globally relevant understanding of religious and spiritual experiences. By expanding beyond Western-centric models of religiosity, this research can foster a more inclusive scholarly landscape, ensuring that Buddhist religiosity is studied with the same methodological rigour applied to other religious traditions.

Chapter 3: Measurement (Non)Invariance of Religiosity Scale with Buddhist Samples

The preceding scoping review of the existing literature on the various instruments used to measure the religiosity level of Buddhists has pointed out a strong skew towards using religiosity scales developed based on the Judeo-Christian tradition. Despite the availability of a handful of scales developed or modified to measure Buddhist religiosity, they contain clear sectarian biases or were inadequately tested psychometrically. When Judeo-Christian-based scales were deployed amongst Buddhists, their validity can be questionable at best or suffer from poor cross-religious validity as a result of a potential mismatch of doctrinal ideologies, most notably the idea of a creator God and the expectations of congregational involvement. This discrepancy warrants the necessity to explore potential measurement non-invariance, which is documented in this chapter.

In evaluating the suitability of these instruments, this chapter employs a dual framework: (1) statistical evidence of measurement invariance, and (2) conceptual and doctrinal appropriateness. While the former assesses whether constructs are measured equivalently across religious groups, the latter considers whether the underlying items reflect assumptions—such as theism, institutional affiliation, or worship practices—that may not resonate across traditions. These conceptual limitations may render a statistically invariant scale still unsuitable for comparative research if its construct validity is not religiously inclusive or culturally transferable.

Hence, the research question for this stage of the research is:

Are common measurements of religiosity, developed primarily for Judeo-Christian contexts, psychometrically valid and invariant when applied to Buddhist populations?

In order to answer our research question, measurement invariance between Christian and Buddhist participants will be explored using common religiosity scales. In psychometric scale validation and constructions, measurement invariance testing is an analytical technique examining whether the measured constructs have the same meaning across different groups, contexts, or time points (S. T. H. Lee, 2018). In other words, it tests whether the same construct is measured in the same way across different conditions or populations. Measurement invariance testing ensures that the interpretation of results is valid and reliable across groups and conditions, which is important for making comparisons and drawing meaningful conclusions.

3.1 Measurement Invariance

Measurement invariance testing is a critical step in assessing whether a religiosity scale functions equivalently across different religious groups, ensuring that observed differences in responses reflect genuine disparities in religiosity rather than measurement artifacts. This study

examines measurement invariance between Christian and Buddhist populations to determine whether existing religiosity scales, which have been predominantly developed within Christian contexts, maintain conceptual and structural validity when applied to Buddhists.

The first level, configural invariance, assesses whether the same underlying factor structure holds across both groups. Establishing configural invariance indicates that Christians and Buddhists conceptualise religiosity in structurally comparable ways, meaning that the same set of latent constructs underlies the scale across both populations. If configural invariance is not supported, it suggests that the fundamental dimensions of religiosity differ between the two groups, raising concerns about the appropriateness of using a shared measurement model.

The next level, metric invariance, examines whether the strength of the relationship between individual scale items and their respective latent constructs is equivalent across groups. If metric invariance is achieved, it indicates that the scale items contribute to the underlying constructs in a similar manner for both Christians and Buddhists. However, if metric invariance is violated, it suggests that certain items carry different levels of conceptual importance in each group, implying that the scale measures religiosity with different emphases or weightings depending on religious affiliation.

Scalar invariance further tests whether the item intercepts—baseline levels of item responses—are equivalent across groups. This level of invariance is essential for making valid comparisons of latent means, as it ensures that any observed mean differences in religiosity scores are due to actual differences in religious engagement rather than systematic biases in response tendencies. If scalar invariance is not supported, comparisons of religiosity scores between Christians and Buddhists may be confounded by differences in how respondents from each group interpret and respond to the scale items.

Finally, strict invariance represents the most stringent level of measurement equivalence, requiring that residual variances (measurement errors) are consistent across groups. If strict invariance is achieved, it confirms that the scale measures religiosity with the same level of precision for both Christians and Buddhists, enabling reliable comparisons of latent variances and means. Failure to establish strict invariance, however, suggests that extraneous factors influence responses differently in each group, introducing additional error variance that may affect the reliability of group comparisons.

Achieving these levels of invariance sequentially strengthens the validity of cross-group comparisons. While configural and metric invariance are often sufficient for analysing relationships between variables, scalar invariance is necessary for meaningful comparisons of latent means.

Several statistical methods have been developed to test measurement invariance; in this study, multigroup confirmatory factor analysis (MGCFA) is employed, which takes a stepwise approach to testing the fit of construct, factor loading, and residuals (Putnick & Bornstein, 2016; Vandenberg & Lance, 2000; Widaman & Reise, 1997). This method allows researchers to compare the factor structure, factor loadings, and item intercepts across different groups while controlling for measurement error and other confounding variables. It ensures that any observed differences in religiosity scores reflect true differences in the underlying constructs rather than artifacts of the measurement process.

3.2 Hypotheses

This study examines the measurement invariance of three commonly used religiosity scales across Christian and Buddhist groups: these include the Duke University Religion Index (DUREL; H. G. Koenig & Büssing, 2010), the Religious Commitment Inventory (RCI; Worthington et al., 2003), and the Spiritual Experience Index-Revised (SEI-R, Genia, 1997). It is hypothesised that these scales will not demonstrate full measurement invariance, reflecting conceptual and structural differences in how religiosity is experienced and understood in the two traditions. Specifically:

H1: The DUREL will not demonstrate full measurement invariance (i.e., configural, metric, scalar, and strict) across Christian and Buddhist groups.

H2: The RCI will not demonstrate full measurement invariance across Christian and Buddhist groups.

H3: The SEI-R will not demonstrate full measurement invariance across Christian and Buddhist groups.

Each hypothesis reflects the expectation that at least one level of invariance will not be satisfied, indicating that the constructs measured by these scales are not interpreted or manifested in equivalent ways between the two religious populations.

3.3 Method

This study was granted ethical approval (No. H8833) by James Cook University's Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) to obtain existing datasets containing religiosity data from both Buddhist and Christian participants for re-analysis. Based on the findings of the scoping review, four studies were identified as having sufficiently large sample sizes of Judeo-Christian and Buddhist participants, making them suitable for subgroup analyses. Correspondence emails were sent to the data owners listed as corresponding authors in these studies, with two follow-up emails sent if no response was received.

Of the four data owners contacted, three responded. One provided the dataset for further analysis, another was unable to share data due to the principal investigator's departure from their institution, and the third ceased communication after the initial exchange. Additionally, two datasets used in this study were obtained from one of the advisors of this research, with consent from the original data owners to conduct measurement invariance analyses.

Measurement invariance was assessed using multigroup confirmatory factor analysis (MGCFA), following best practices outlined by Putnick and Bornstein (2016). This approach evaluates whether the underlying constructs of a religiosity scale are conceptualised consistently across Christian and Buddhist groups. Given the study's objective, MGCFA was applied to determine whether measurement properties remain stable across religious traditions and to identify potential biases in existing religiosity measures.

To ensure adequate statistical power, datasets were aggregated where necessary, provided that all samples originated from comparable demographic sectors within the same national context. The analysis proceeded sequentially, testing configural, metric, scalar, and strict invariance step by step until a level of non-invariance was detected. While most scales were tested up to scalar invariance, at least one scale was examined for strict invariance, ensuring that measurement error was also consistent across groups.

Data analysis was conducted using JASP Version 0.16.4 (JASP Team, 2022), leveraging its Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) feature, running MGCFA via the R *lavaan* SEM package (Rosseel, 2012). Four nested models were tested for each scale:

First, configural invariance was assessed to determine whether the same factor structure was present across groups. This step ensured that the same set of items measured the underlying construct for both religious populations. If configural invariance was supported, metric invariance was tested to examine whether the factor loadings were equivalent across groups, indicating that items contributed similarly to the latent construct for both Christians and Buddhists. If metric invariance was established, scalar invariance was assessed to evaluate whether item intercepts were equal, allowing for meaningful mean comparisons between groups. Lastly, strict invariance was tested for at least one scale, ensuring that residual variances were equivalent across religious groups and that any observed differences in scores were due to genuine differences in religiosity rather than measurement inconsistencies.

The model fit was initially assessed using Chi-square analysis to determine whether the responses of Buddhist and Christian participants aligned with the proposed model. Due to Chi-square's sensitivity to sample size and model complexity, additional Alternative Fit Indices (AFIs)

were included in the evaluation. In accordance with consistent recommendations from various scholars (G. W. Cheung & Rensvold, 2002; Hooper et al., 2008; Kline, 2016), commonly recognised AFIs such as the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Standardised Root Mean-square Residual (SRMR) were utilised.

Beyond relying on Chi-square significance (Marsh & Hocevar, 1985; Reise et al., 1993), measurement invariance was assessed using incremental fit index changes, following the guidelines proposed by Chen (2007). Invariance was established if the following criteria were met:

- A change in CFI (ΔCFI) of less than -0.01,
- A change in RMSEA (ΔRMSEA) of less than 0.015, and
- A change in SRMR (ΔSRMR) of less than 0.030 for metric invariance or less than 0.015 for scalar and strict invariance.

3.4 Study 1-1: Measurement Invariance of DUREL

The DUREL (H. G. Koenig & Büssing, 2010) consists of 5 items used to measure three dimensions of religiosity:

1. Organizational Religious Activity (ORA): Refers to participation in activities organized by a religious institution, such as attending services, classes, or events. This is measured by a single question, "*How often do you attend church, or other religious services?*"
2. Non-Organizational Religious Activity (NORA): Refers to private religious practices, such as prayer or meditation, reading religious texts, or listening to religious broadcasts. This is measured by another single question, "*How often do you spend time in private religious activities, such as prayer, meditation, or study of religious scriptures?*"
3. Intrinsic Religiosity (IR): Refers to the degree to which an individual is personally committed to their religion, finds it to be personally meaningful and important, and seeks to integrate it into their daily life. This dimension is reflected through three agree-disagree statements: "*In my life I experience the presence of the Divine*." "*My religious beliefs are what really lie behind my whole approach to life*." "*I try hard to carry my religion over into all other dealings in life*."

The DUREL scale assesses respondents' engagement using five items, utilising a 6-point frequency scale ranging from "never" to "more than once a day." The individual item scores are subsequently aggregated to derive three subscale scores that correspond to each dimension of religiosity, in addition to an overall score that encapsulates the respondents' total religious involvement.

Since its debut, DUREL has been extensively studied across various cultural contexts, demonstrating robust psychometric properties. The Croatian version (DUREL-hr) showed high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from α = .883 for the total scale to α = .940 for the intrinsic subscale, indicating its reliability and validity for use in Croatian language studies on religiousness and health (Murgić et al., 2018). Similarly, the Iranian adaptation of DUREL confirmed its reliability and validity, with Cronbach's alpha ranging from α = .866 to .921 and intraclass correlation coefficients (*ICC*) from .937 to .991. The strong correlations between DUREL and the Santa Clara Strength Faith questionnaire (SCSORF) further supported its convergent validity, and factor analyses confirmed a one-dimensional structure (Saffari et al., 2013). The Portuguese version (PDUREL) also demonstrated high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values from α = .733 for the total scale to α = .758 for the intrinsic subscale and significant correlations among subscales, indicating discriminant validity without redundancy (Lucchetti et al., 2012).

However, despite validations in different cultural contexts and languages showing promising versatility and psychometric strengths, the robustness of some studies is questionable due to their reliance on small sample sizes for their CFAs or PCAs. For instance, the Arabic version was validated using extremely limited samples with only *N* = 20, the Ukrainian version with *N* = 21, the Japanese version with *N* = 53, and the Tagalog version with *N* = 36 (Toscanelli et al., 2022). Such small sample sizes can significantly affect the reliability and generalisability of factor analytic results. Specifically, they can lead to unstable factor solutions, inflate fit indices, and reduce the power to detect model misspecifications (MacCallum et al., 1999). Additionally, the more pressing issue with the current validation and invariance studies on DUREL is its single-minded focus on regions and languages, not on the scale's applicability to different faith followers. This aligns with our findings from Chapter 2, emphasising the scale's limitations in non-theistic religious contexts.

3.4.1 Method

Data were sourced from Yeo (2020) and Chong (2021). Both studies used DUREL to capture participants' levels of religiosity. The two studies were conducted in Singapore using the English version of DUREL. The Yeo dataset contained *N* = 71 participants, with *n* = 26 identified as Buddhists. Chong included *N* = 132 participants, of whom *n* = 41 were Buddhists. A summary of the religious affiliations of participants in the combined dataset is provided in Table 5.

Data sets from the two studies were combined to yield a total sample size of *N* = 202. Only DUREL item scores and participants' religious denominations were extracted for analysis. Of the combined samples, *N* = 67 participants were identified as Buddhists. The DUREL scale used in the

current analysis achieved a high Cronbach's alpha of .901, indicating internal reliability amongst the items.

Table 5 Frequencies for Religion of DUREL datasets

Religion	Frequency	Percent
Buddhist	67	33.2
Christian	135	66.8
Missing	0	0.0
Total	202	100.0

3.4.2 Results

Configural Invariance. The configural invariance is tested based on DUREL's most commonly accepted three-factor structure, in which there are three items under the IR factor while ORA and NORA each have only one item. Based on the Chi-square obtained from the two groups, the model has a good fit for both Buddhists and Christians with χ^2 (8, *N* = 202) = 8.90, *p* = .351, indicating the two groups did not respond differently and carry a similar pattern of free and fixed loadings at the model level. Additional goodness-of-fit indicators are also in line with the result of the Chi-square analysis (CFI = 0.998; TLI = 0.995; RMSEA = 0.033; SRMR = 0.02). This means the basic organisation of the DUREL's model constructs is supported in both the Buddhist and Christian groups.

Metric Invariance. When factor loadings are controlled, χ2 (10, N = 202) = 10.12, *p* = .430 with both groups' responses remaining without significant difference, and this is confirmed by the various AFIs (CFI = 1; TLI = 0.999; RMSEA = 0.011; SRMR = 0.026). When determining if the factor-loading constrained model provides a better explanation of how the two groups behave, the changes in various indices also support the presence of measurement invariance ($\Delta\chi$2 (2, N = 202) = 1.22, *p* = 0.543; ΔCFI = 0.002; ΔTLI = 0.004; ΔRMSEA = -0.022; ΔSRMR = 0.006). This confirms that the model's overall structure remains intact when compared across the two religious groups.

Scalar Invariance. At the scalar level, where both factors-loadings and item-intercepts are equivalent between the two groups, we found that χ^2 (15, *N* = 202) = 144.43, *p* < .05 indicating the two groups responded differently. AFIs also indicated that the observed did not fit with this constrained model (CFI = 0.688; TLI = 0.584; RMSEA = 0.292; SRMR = 0.73). The data demonstrated measurement non-invariance at the scalar level ($\Delta\chi^2$ (5, *N* = 202) = 134.31, *p* < .05; ΔCFI = -0.312; ΔTLI = -0.415; ΔRMSEA = 0.281; ΔSRMR = 0.704). This result indicated that the group means between Buddhists and Christians cannot be compared when using DUREL.

Table 6 DUREL Measurement Invariance

Model	*χ2 (df)*	*χ2 /df*	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR	*Δχ2 (df)*	ΔCFI	ΔTLI	Δ RMSEA	Δ SRMR
M1: Configural	8.896 (8)	1.112	0.998	0.995	0.033	0.02					
M2: Metric	10.115 (10)	1.012	1	0.999	0.011	0.026	1.22 (2)	0.002	0.004	-0.022	0.006
M3: Scalar	144.426 (15)	9.628	0.688	0.584	0.292	0.73	134.311 (5)	-0.312	-0.415	0.281	0.704

3.4.3 Discussion

The results of this study reveal a partial measurement invariance of the DUREL across Buddhist and Christian groups. While configural and metric invariance were supported, indicating that the underlying factor structure and the strength of the relationship between observed variables and latent constructs are consistent between groups, scalar invariance was not achieved. This finding suggests that the item intercepts differ between religious groups, and as a result, direct comparisons of latent means on the DUREL between Buddhists and Christians are not meaningful.

This pattern of partial invariance aligns with existing literature on the limitations of applying the DUREL across cultural or religious contexts. As discussed earlier in this chapter and reinforced by Toscanelli et al. (2022), even when the DUREL demonstrates internal consistency within specific cultural groups, its broader structural invariance across contexts is far from guaranteed. In particular, its conceptual foundations, being centred around beliefs and practices common to theistic traditions, may not fully translate to non-theistic or differently organised religious systems like Buddhism. This is especially evident in the scalar non-invariance observed here, which likely reflects differences in how Buddhists and Christians interpret and respond to items related to divine presence and religious centrality.

The failure to achieve scalar invariance adds empirical weight to the conceptual critiques discussed in Chapter 2, where the applicability of Western religiosity frameworks to Buddhist contexts was challenged. This study reinforces the need for religion-specific instruments that reflect not just the practices but the philosophical underpinnings of each tradition. The DUREL, while widely used, may require substantial adaptation or reconceptualisation to be validly employed in Buddhist samples, particularly when the goal is to compare religiosity levels across faith groups.

Overall, these findings illustrate the challenges of applying general religiosity measures across fundamentally different religious traditions. They also emphasise the importance of ensuring

that instruments are not only linguistically but philosophically and theologically valid when used outside their original cultural context.

3.5 Study 1-2: Measurement Invariance of RCI

3.5.1 Method

The data was obtained from the corresponding author of a Taiwanese study conducted by Huang and Wang (2019), with data collected from religious organisations in Taiwan. Four organisations were involved in the study, all major establishments known for their influence amongst their followers. There were two Buddhist organisations and two Christian churches. A total of *N* = 400 participants took part in the study.

The study used the RCI-10 (Worthington et al., 2003), a two-dimensional 10-item scale, as the basis for modifying and reducing it to a 7-item scale. The resulting scale includes five items related to the Intrapersonal Religious Commitment (items 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6) and two items (items 4 and 7) related to the Interpersonal Religious Commitment dimension. The language of the study was Chinese, and the scale was translated by the researchers and back-translated to ensure meaning consistency. Only religion affiliations and RCI data were extracted for analysis. The reliability of the modified RCI in this study was good, with Cronbach's alpha at .885. This is on par with the α = .88 that Worthington and colleagues (2003) demonstrated when they introduced RCI-10.

The seven items used in this study included:

1. *I often read books and magazines about my faith.* (RCI 6)
2. *I spend time trying to grow in understanding of my faith.* (RCI 2)
3. *Religion is especially important to me because it answers many questions about the meaning of life.* (RCI 5)
4. *I enjoy spending time with others of my religious affiliation.* (RCI 8)
5. *Religious beliefs influence all my dealings in life.* (RCI 4)
6. *It is important to me to spend periods of time in private religious thought and reflection.* (RCI 3)
7. *I enjoy working in the activities of my religious affiliation.* (RCI 9)

Three of the original RCI-10 items were excluded. These were "*My religious beliefs lie behind my whole approach to life*" (RCI 1), "*I keep well informed about my local religious group and have some influence in its decisions*" (RCI 7), and "*I make financial contributions to my religious organization*" (RCI 10) from the original scale.

Table 7 Frequencies for Religion of RCI dataset

Religion	Frequency	Percent
Buddhist	200	50.0
Christian	200	50.0
Missing	0	0.0
Total	400	100.0

3.5.2 Results

Configural Invariance. The two-factor model, with five items for Intrapersonal Religious Commitment and two items for Interpersonal Religious Commitment, was examined at the configural level for measurement invariance. Based on the Chi-square obtained from the two groups, the model has a good fit for both Buddhists and Christians with $\Delta\chi^2$ (26, *N* = 400) = 63.94, *p* < .05, indicating the two groups responded somewhat differently. As we rely on more than Chi-square for our assessment of the model fit, such differences are not a major cause of concern at the configural level. Additional goodness-of-fit indicators, however, largely confirmed the goodness-of-fit except for RMSEA larger than the required < 0.80 criterion (CFI = 0.972; TLI = 0.955; RMSEA = 0.085; SRMR = 0.031). This means the basic organisation of the RCI constructs may need minor adjustments when applied across the Buddhist and Christian groups.

Metric Invariance. Controlling for factor-loadings of the RCI model, we found that χ^2 (31, *N* = 400) = 73.83, *p* < .05. Both religious groups still behaved differently. However, the various AFIs largely confirmed invariance existed, except for the RMSEA still larger than the 0.08 threshold (CFI = 0.969; TLI = 0.958; RMSEA = 0.083; SRMR = 0.049). When determining if the factor-loading constrained model provides a better explanation of how the two groups behave, the changes in various indices also support the presence of measurement invariance ($\Delta\chi^2$ (5, *N* = 400) = 9.88, *p* = .079; ΔCFI = -0.003; ΔTLI = 0.003; ΔRMSEA = -0.002; ΔSRMR = 0.018). Despite the issue with model fit, in accordance with the criteria suggested by Chen (2007), measurement invariance is, however, established.

Scalar Invariance. When both factors-loadings and item-intercepts are equivalent between the two groups, the model has a χ^2 (38, *N* = 400) = 78.83, *p* < .05. The two religious groups did not fit the model. However, the AFIs at the scalar level confirmed the fit nonetheless (CFI = 0.97; TLI = 0.967; RMSEA = 0.073; SRMR = 0.052). When determining if the factor-loading constrained model provides a better explanation of how the two groups behave, the changes in various indices also support the presence of measurement invariance ($\Delta\chi^2$ (7, *N* = 400) = 5.01, *p* = .659; ΔCFI =0.001; ΔTLI

= 0.009; ΔRMSEA = -0.01; ΔSRMR = 0.003). Still, measurement invariance is established while plagued by model fit issues.

Strict Invariance. At this most stringent test, where residuals are constrained across both religious groups, the model has a χ^2 (43, *N* = 400) = 87.76, *p* < .05. The two religious groups again behaved differently, but as planned, AFIs were used as the determining factors. The AFIs at the Strict Invariance level, however, confirmed the model fit (CFI = 0.967; TLI = 0.968; RMSEA = 0.072; SRMR = 0.053). Changes in several indices support the presence of measurement invariance when determining whether the residual constrained model provides a superior explanation of how the two groups behave ($\Delta\chi^2$ (5, *N* = 400) = 8.92, *p* = .112; ΔCFI = -0.003; ΔTLI = 0.001; ΔRMSEA = -0.001; ΔSRMR = 0.001). Consequently, measurement invariance is established despite initial model fit issues discovered through chi-square analysis.

Table 8 RCI Measurement Invariance

Model	*χ2 (df)*	*χ2 /df*	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR	*Δχ2 (df)*	ΔCFI	ΔTLI	ΔRMSEA	ΔSRMR
M1: Configural	63.942 (26)	2.459	0.972	0.955	0.085	0.031					
M2: Metric	73.825 (31)	2.381	0.969	0.958	0.083	0.049	9.883 (5)	-0.003	0.003	-0.002	0.018
M3: Scalar	78.834 (38)	2.075	0.97	0.967	0.073	0.052	5.009 (7)	0.001	0.009	-0.01	0.003
M4: Strict	87.758 (43)	2.041	0.967	0.968	0.072	0.053	8.924 (5)	-0.003	0.001	-0.001	0.001

3.5.3 Discussion

The original Religious Commitment Inventory (RCI-10) was developed by Worthington et al. (2003) as a brief, psychometrically sound measure of religious commitment applicable across faiths. It consists of two subscales: intrapersonal religious commitment, capturing the personal significance of religious belief and practice, and interpersonal religious commitment, reflecting active engagement with religious communities. In our study, a culturally adapted 7-item version was used, excluding three items —RCI1 ("*My religious beliefs lie behind my whole approach to life*"), RCI7 ("*I keep well informed about my local religious group and have some influence in its decisions*"), and RCI10 ("*I make financial contributions to my religious organization*")—due to their perceived lack of cultural relevance for Buddhist populations in Taiwan.

The modified RCI-7 demonstrated full measurement invariance (configural, metric, scalar, and strict) across Buddhist and Christian groups. However, several issues challenge its suitability as a

valid cross-religious measure. First, although statistical invariance was achieved, this does not guarantee conceptual equivalence (Van de Schoot et al., 2017). The omitted items in particular reflect domains—such as financial giving, local congregational involvement, and overarching theistic worldview—that may be normative within Christian traditions but are far less emphasised, or differently conceptualised, in many Buddhist contexts (H. G. G. Koenig, 2024). Their exclusion, while necessary for cultural fit, also alters the original construct of "religious commitment" as defined by the scale's authors.

Moreover, prior evidence reinforces the concern that Buddhists engage differently with items in the RCI. In Worthington et al.'s original validation, Buddhist participants scored significantly lower than Christians on the RCI-10 (M = 21.3 vs. M = 28.0; $p < .01$), suggesting the scale's content aligns more closely with Christian conceptualisations of religiosity. These score differences reflect not only lower religious intensity but also potential mismatches in how religious engagement is culturally framed and lived (Pargament, 2002). For example, collective institutional participation and explicit doctrinal commitment—core elements of RCI—may not resonate equally with Buddhist practitioners, who often engage in personalised, less institutionalised forms of practice (J. L. Kristeller & Rikhye, 2008).

In addition, our model fit indices at the configural and scalar levels (e.g., RMSEA > 0.08) indicate marginal misfit, suggesting that the latent construct structure may not be entirely equivalent across traditions even when invariance thresholds are technically met (T. A. Brown, 2015; F. F. Chen, 2007). This raises concerns about relying on the scale to make meaningful comparisons of religious commitment between Buddhists and Christians, especially given the exclusion of key original items that likely carry theological weight in Christian contexts.

In light of these findings, the RCI appears to retain conceptual biases even in its modified form that limit its cross-religious generalisability. While the statistical evidence may support invariance, the underlying construct validity across traditions remains questionable. Future cross-faith research would benefit from instruments designed with more doctrinally agnostic indicators or from measures developed through inclusive, emic approaches (Hill & Hood, 1999). As such, the RCI is not recommended for comparative use between Buddhist and Christian populations without substantial adaptation and revalidation.

3.6 Study 1-3: Measurement Invariance of SEI-R

The SEI-R is a 23-item scale that measures faith and spiritual journey without imposing any particular faith as part of the questions (Genia, 1997). The scale is a revised version of the original Spiritual Experience Index (Genia, 1991), which was shortened and revised into two subscales

through factor analysis: Spiritual Support (SS) with 13 items and Spiritual Openness (SO) with 10 items, where three are reversely coded. The SEI-R typically uses a 6-point Likert scale, though the current study used an 8-point scale. Despite this deviation, the overall purpose and results of our analysis remain relevant.

The SEI-R has been widely used to assess spiritual maturity and adaptive spiritual functioning across various religious and spiritual beliefs. Higher SEI-R scores have been associated with lower dogmatism and intolerance of ambiguity, as well as moderately related to higher religious participation and positively correlated with intrinsicness and quest (Reinert & Bloomingdale, 2000). However, several criticisms have been noted, including inconsistent scale composition and performance, vague items with low face validity, factor determination using a scree plot, potential for multiple item interpretations, and a curvilinear relationship between the two subscales complicating result interpretations (Eyer et al., 2018).

3.6.1 Method

Raw data were obtained for a study on the effect of religious priming on prejudice among Singaporean Christians and Buddhists (Ramsay et al., 2014). The study captured data at two separate time points, one before and one after priming interventions. Only the post-priming manipulation data were obtained as they contained measures of individual religiosity.

Along with other scales, this study used the 23-item Spiritual Experience Index – Revised (SEI-R) scale (Genia, 1997) to measure participants' level of spirituality and their religiosity in the cases of those with religious faith. The scale is divided into the subscales of Spiritual Support (SS) and Spiritual Openness (SO). An example of items under the SS subscale, such as SS-02, "*My faith gives my life meaning and purpose*", an example of SO would be SO-08, "*My spiritual beliefs change as I encounter new ideas and experiences.*" There are three reversed items under SO, they were checked in the data to ensure that response directions were aligned. However, the scoring of the scale deviated from the original version, where an 8-point Likert scale was used instead of the original 6-point Likert scale.

The dataset contained several cases of missing data, which can be considered missing completely at random (MCAR), where the omission was unrelated to other factors. Given that the total sample size was $N = 128$ and split between Christians and Buddhists (see Table 9), heeding the American Psychological Association's advice on the treatment of missing data, listwise or pairwise deletion should be avoided (Wilkinson & Task Force on Statistical Inference, American Psychological Association, Science Directorate, 1999). As such, mean value imputation was applied following conventions of missing data treatments (Brick & Kalton, 1996; Mirzaei et al., 2022).

In the current test, the overall SEI-R scale and the SS subscales achieved Cronbach's alpha of .767 and .867, respectively. However, the SO scale only scored a Cronbach's alpha of .289, indicating poor internal reliability.

Table 9 Frequencies for SEI-R dataset

Religion	Frequency	Percent
Buddhist	64	50.0
Christian	64	50.0
Missing	0	0.0
Total	128	100.0

3.6.2 Results

Configural Invariance.

Examination of the SEI-R scale's configural invariance across Singaporean Christians and Buddhists yielded a significant $\chi^2(458) = 739.031$, $p < .001$. The χ^2/df ratio was 1.61, within acceptable limits, but other indices suggested inadequate fit. The CFI (0.629) and TLI (0.590) fell short of the 0.90 benchmark. The RMSEA (0.098) and SRMR (0.112) also exceeded the 0.08 and 0.06 thresholds, respectively, indicating a substantial misfit.

The low $\alpha = .289$ for the SO subscale particularly suggests that the measure may not be consistently capturing the intended construct within the Buddhist group.

The assessment of configural invariance was conducted on the 23-item scale, which is structured around two factors: the first comprising 13 items designated for the SS and the remaining 10 items for the SO factors. Findings cast doubt on the SEI-R scale's suitability for cross-religious comparisons between the Christian and Buddhist populations in Singapore. The presence of significant non-invariance at this level implies that the SEI-R does not measure the constructs of spirituality and religiosity equivalently across these groups. These results, especially the compromised internal consistency of the SO subscale within the Buddhist sample, indicate a pressing need for scale revision or the development of an alternative measure for a more accurate assessment of these constructs.

Table 10 SEI-R Measurement Invariance

Model	*χ2 (df)*	*χ2 /df*	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR
M1: Configural	739.031 (458)	1.6136048	0.629	0.59	0.098	0.112

3.6.3 Discussion

The initial validation (Genia, 1997) of the SEI-R demonstrated excellent internal consistency (α = .89 for the overall scale, α = .95 for SS, and α = .79 for SO). However, our study revealed markedly lower reliability scores: α = .767 for the overall scale, α = .867 for SS, and α = .289 for SO. Several factors may contribute to this discrepancy.

The modification from a 6-point to an 8-point Likert scale in this study could have influenced the observed reduction in internal consistency. An increased range of response options may lead to greater variability in responses, potentially diluting the internal coherence of the items (Cai et al., 2016). This is particularly relevant for abstract concepts such as spiritual openness, where additional scale points may introduce interpretative variability. Additionally, the characteristics of the sample, which included both Buddhists and Christians, may have introduced variability. Differences in religious beliefs and practices between these groups could affect how participants interpret and respond to the scale items, impacting overall consistency. The distinct ways in which Buddhists and Christians experience spirituality and religiosity may challenge the SEI-R's uniform applicability.

Inherent issues within the SO subscale, as identified in previous critiques, likely play a significant role in the lower reliability observed. The SO subscale has been noted for vague content and low face validity, with some items having multiple interpretations, leading to inconsistent responses. Moreover, the curvilinear relationship between the SO and SS subscales complicates the accurate measurement of spiritual openness.

Further, in a validation study of the Santa Clara Strength of Religious Faith Questionnaire (SCSORF), the SEI-R was used to measure spirituality (Freiheit et al., 2006). This study found a strong correlation (r = 0.89) between SCSORF and the SS subscale but no significant relationship with the SO subscale. This suggests that the SEI-R may not fully reflect the strength of one’s religious faith, particularly in the context of formal religious practices, as also noted by Reinert and Bloomingdale (2000).

Although past literature supports the notion that the SEI-R has limitations in representing the religiosity of religious followers, including Christians, the current variance non-invariance at the configural level observed in the current analysis does not lend support to accentuate the problem. Our findings would remain, at best, indicative but inconclusive due to the underpowered sample size.

3.7 Overall Discussion

The present chapter undertakes a thorough examination of the measurement invariance of DUREL, RCI, and SEI-R within Buddhist and Christian populations. This investigation is of paramount

importance due to the significant doctrinal distinctions that exist between these two religious traditions, particularly in relation to fundamental concepts such as the existence of a creator deity and the significance attributed to communal worship and congregational activities. Additionally, it is essential to evaluate whether the existing psychometric scales, which have been predominantly developed within a Judeo-Christian context of religiosity, adequately reflect the levels of religiosity among practitioners of Buddhism. Such assessment aims to avoid unnecessary redundancy in scale development by ensuring that these instruments are relevant and effective across diverse religious frameworks.

3.7.1 Measurement Invariance of DUREL, RCI, and SEI-R

The DUREL scale exhibited metric invariance but did not achieve scalar invariance. This indicates that while the fundamental structure and factor loadings of the DUREL are consistent across Buddhists and Christians, the item intercepts are not equivalent. As a result, participants from these groups interpret and endorse the items differently at the scalar level. This finding is consistent with previous critiques and highlights the importance of considering doctrinal and cultural contexts when applying this scale to non-theistic religions such as Buddhism.

The RCI-10 scale, which has been modified into a 7-item version in the study analysed in the current research, demonstrated configural, metric, scalar, and strict invariance, although some issues with model fit were observed. These findings indicate that the revised RCI can effectively measure religious commitment among both Buddhist and Christian groups. However, the exclusion of three items from the original RCI-10, deemed less relevant to Buddhists, reflects the challenges involved in adapting scales for different religious contexts and emphasises the need for culturally sensitive modifications.

The SEI-R scale failed to establish configural invariance, which suggests that the constructs of spirituality and religiosity are not assessed equivalently among followers of Buddhism and Christianity. Notably, the SO subscale demonstrated particularly low reliability, coupled with significant non-invariance at the configural level. These findings indicate intrinsic challenges associated with the application of this scale across these distinct religious groups. Consequently, they reflect the urgent necessity for either a comprehensive revision of the SEI-R or the creation of a novel scale specifically designed to accommodate Buddhist contexts effectively.

3.7.2 Implications and Future Directions

The findings derived from the examination of the three scales suggest that, although certain existing measures of religiosity may be suitably adapted for Buddhist populations, substantial limitations and challenges persist. The lack of full measurement invariance observed in the DUREL

and SEI-R scales highlights the doctrinal and cultural discrepancies associated with implementing instruments that were originally formulated within a Judeo-Christian framework in Buddhist contexts. This situation underlines the imperative need for the development of a Buddhist Religiosity Scale that employs a hybrid approach, integrating both emic (insider) and etic (outsider or comparative) perspectives, while adhering to rigorous standards of scale validity and reliability.

Establishing a culturally attuned and psychometrically sound measure of Buddhist religiosity is paramount. Such an instrument would not only facilitate more precise cross-religious comparisons but would also enhance our comprehension of the distinctive elements of Buddhist spirituality and religious experience, thereby contributing significantly to the field of religious studies.

3.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has systematically engaged in an examination of the measurement invariance concerning three prevalent religiosity scales—specifically, the DUREL, the RCI, and the SEI-R—when applied to samples from Buddhist populations. The findings indicate that while the RCI-10, in its modified iteration, demonstrates potential for cross-religious applicability, both the DUREL and SEI-R encounter substantial challenges. These results underscore the intrinsic difficulties associated with the application of scales rooted in Judeo-Christian contexts to Buddhist communities, thereby highlighting the pressing necessity for the development of a dedicated Buddhist Religiosity Scale.

In light of this identified need, the ensuing chapters will focus on constructing such a scale, encompassing the formulation of a theoretical framework, the development of scale items, the validation process, and the finalisation of the scale. The groundwork for this initiative has been laid in Chapter 1, which established, based on the doctrinal divergences between Buddhism and Judeo-Christian traditions as well as their distinct emphases, the imperative to accurately measure Buddhist religiosity. Furthermore, Chapter 2 provided a comprehensive scoping review that elucidated the scales employed in research involving Buddhists. This review revealed that the majority of studies pertaining to Buddhist populations have not utilised a dedicated Buddhist religiosity scale. Even in instances where such scales have been implemented, their sectarian biases and insufficient psychometric rigour have accentuated the demand for a robust, psychometrically sound instrument that is applicable across all Buddhist denominations.

The evidence presented in this chapter compellingly demonstrates that common religiosity or spirituality scales, developed within Judeo-Christian paradigms, do not exhibit the same psychometric properties when administered to Buddhist subjects. Collectively, these findings advocate for the necessity of a dedicated, non-sectarian Buddhist religiosity scale. The endeavour to

establish such a scale is poised to significantly enhance the field of psychology of religion, enabling more accurate and meaningful comparisons across various religious traditions while deepening our comprehension of the spiritual and religious experiences of individuals within Buddhist communities.

Chapter 4: Defining Buddhist Religiosity and Its Dimensions

Chapter 3 reinforced these concerns through a series of measurement invariance tests comparing Buddhist and Christian responses to three widely used religiosity scales: the Duke University Religion Index (DUREL; H. G. Koenig & Büssing, 2010), the Religious Commitment Inventory (RCI; Worthington et al., 2003), and the Spiritual Experience Index-Revised (SEI-R; Genia, 1991). The analyses revealed significant non-invariance across groups, suggesting that the constructs embedded within these scales are not equivalently interpreted or experienced by Buddhists. These findings underscore the fundamental inappropriateness of applying Judeo-Christian instruments to measure Buddhist religiosity without adaptation or critical scrutiny.

Given these epistemological and methodological shortcomings, this chapter seeks to address the following research questions:

1. How is Buddhist religiosity conceptualised by contemporary Buddhist scholars and practitioners across the three major traditions—Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana?
2. What are the shared and distinctive dimensions of Buddhist religiosity that can inform the development of a non-sectarian, culturally valid measurement scale?

To answer these questions, this chapter presents findings from a qualitative study involving in-depth interviews with scholars and senior monastic practitioners representing all three traditions. Through reflexive thematic analysis, the study aims to identify common definitions, principles, and dimensions of Buddhist religiosity as understood from within the tradition itself. The goal is to produce a conceptual foundation for an emically grounded, non-sectarian Buddhist Religiosity Scale (BRS) that can later be validated psychometrically.

By foregrounding insider perspectives and grounding the analysis in Buddhist doctrinal logic, this chapter represents a critical step in moving beyond the limitations of Western-centric models.

4.1 Definitions of Buddhist Religiosity

Establishing a clear and workable definition of Buddhist religiosity is essential for its accurate conceptualisation and measurement. Yet, as discussed in previous chapters, scholarship remains limited in offering a definition that is both doctrinally grounded and operationally useful for empirical research. Classical interpretations, such as Rahula's (1974) exposition on the "Buddhist attitude of mind," emphasise personal responsibility, inner transformation, critical inquiry, and compassion as central to the Buddhist path. These elements suggest a religiosity that is reflective, ethically engaged, and experientially oriented. However, such depictions are primarily theological and lack the specificity needed for empirical operationalisation. This qualitative phase builds upon the conceptual

groundwork outline in Chapter 1 by examining how Buddhist religiosity is understood and articulated by contemporary Buddhist scholars and practitioners across traditions.

The challenge lies in translating doctrinal ideals such as enlightenment, non-attachment, or compassion, into measurable constructs that can be reliably assessed across populations and traditions. These concepts are inherently abstract, context-dependent, and variably interpreted among different schools of Buddhism. Moreover, the diversity within Buddhist traditions further complicates the search for a single, unified definition of religiosity. While core principles are shared across traditions, their expressions differ significantly between Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana schools, and even more so in culturally adapted contexts.

A review of 29 empirical studies involving Buddhist samples (identified in Chapter 2) reveals that the concept of "Buddhist religiosity" is often left undefined or only loosely described. Only ten studies explicitly defined the term, and these varied considerably in focus. Broadly, the definitions fall into four categories: (1) behavioural and practice-oriented, (2) doctrinal and ideological, (3) syncretic, and (4) goal-oriented. Table 11 summarises these studies and the definitions employed.

These categories reflect differing assumptions about what constitutes Buddhist religiosity. Behavioural definitions emphasise visible practices such as meditation, almsgiving, and adherence to precepts. Doctrinal definitions focus on alignment with Buddhist teachings, including faith, understanding, and religious knowledge. Syncretic definitions highlight the integration of local cultural elements, such as folk beliefs or spirit worship, into Buddhist life, while goal-oriented definitions emphasise the pursuit of spiritual liberation and the aspiration to benefit all beings.

However, each approach poses its own limitations. Behavioural definitions risk conflating cultural practices with religious ones and may overlook inner orientation. Doctrinal frameworks can be overly rigid and tradition-specific, limiting cross-sectarian applicability. Syncretic definitions blur the lines between Buddhist religiosity and local cultural identity, potentially diluting doctrinal clarity. Goal-oriented definitions, while aspirational, tend to be too abstract for empirical research.

Given these limitations, the current study adopts an emic approach, seeking to define Buddhist religiosity based on insights drawn directly from learned insiders across the three major traditions. By grounding the definition in lived experience and doctrinal coherence, this approach aims to develop a conceptualisation that is both inclusive and applicable across sectarian and cultural lines. The following section reviews how Buddhist religiosity has been defined in prior research before presenting the qualitative findings derived from interviews with Buddhist scholars and monastics.

Table 11 Definition used in Buddhist Religiosity Studies

No.	Authors	Publication Year	Definition of Buddhist Religiosity	Definition Type
1	Ariyabuddhiphongs	2009	• Buddhist religiousness was defined in the paper as the extent to which Buddhists in Thailand engage in giving, observe the Five Precepts, and practice meditation, which are the three activities prescribed by the Buddhas for Buddhists.	Behavior and Practice-oriented
2	Bao	2013	• Religiousness is defined as "the extent to which the personality traits of individual believers conform to their identity and social and doctrinal prescriptions." This includes knowledge, experiences,	Doctrinal and Ideological
3	Chamratrithirong et al,	2010	• No definition	
4	Dang	2015	• No definition given, but the author measured religiosity using the three dimensions of "motivation to follow Buddhism, knowledge, and behavior" which reflect the "faith, understanding, and practice" three of the four-step approach in practicing Mahayana Buddhism (Y. Chen, 2007).	Doctrinal and Ideological
5	DongZhi et al.	2023	• No definition	
6	Elliott	2014	• No definition	
7	Emavardhana & Tori	1997	• No definition	
8	Garfield et al.	2014	• Buddhist Religiosity was defined in the research paper through the use of specific Buddhist practices such as mindfulness, concentration, and meditation that focus on shifting from identification with self-centered 'ego' concerns to a sense of shared existence with other beings.	Behavior and Practice-oriented
9	Holbrook & Sousa	2013	• No definition	
10	Hu et al.	2011	• No definition	
11	Ju et al.	2018	• No definition	
12	Krauss et al.	2007	• No definition	
13	Le	2023	• Buddhist religiosity was defined as comprising three core dimensions: religious understanding, faith, and practice.	Doctrinal and Ideological
14	Nguyen et al.	2021	• The paper defines Buddhist Religiosity as a psychological construct that encompasses five core dimensions: intellect, ideology, public practice, private practice, and religious experience, as in the Centrality of Religiosity model by Huber and Huber (2012).	Doctrinal and Ideological
15	Pace	2012	• No definition	
16	Shumskiy & Klimochkina	2018	• No definition	
17	Song & Qin	2019	• No definition	

18	Sooksawat et al.	2013	•	Definition of Buddhist religiosity includes belief in Buddhist teachings, Buddhist practice, and Buddhist	Behavior and Practice-oriented
19	Stanford & Jong	2019	•	Burmese Buddhism religiosity including aspects of Great tradition Theravada as well as Little tradition *Nat* worship, astrology, and devotion to *Weikza*.	Syncretic
20	Stanford & Whitehouse	2021	•	Same as item 19	Syncretic
21	Thanissaro	2011	•	No definition	
22	Thanissaro	2016a	•	No definition	
23	Thanissaro	2016b	•	No definition	
24	Thanissaro	2017	•	No definition	
25	Thanissaro	2018	•	No definition	
26	Tungjitcharoen & Berntsen	2021	•	No definition	
27	Wang et al.	2023	•	No definition	
28	Xue	2011	•	To conduct oneself according to the teachings of the Dharma, and to liberate oneself from birth and death and benefit all other sentient beings through the practice of the Dharma.	Goal-oriented
29	Zhao et al.	2022	•	No definition	

4.1.1 Behavioral and Practice-Oriented Definitions

Several studies define Buddhist religiosity primarily through observable actions and routine practices that reflect engagement with the tradition. For example, Ariyabuddhiphongs (2009) characterises Buddhist religiosity by the extent to which individuals participate in the three core activities prescribed in Theravada Buddhism: almsgiving (*dana*), observance of the Five Precepts (*sila*), and meditation (*bhavna*). This behavioural emphasis aligns closely with traditional models of lay Buddhist practice, especially within Southeast Asian contexts.

Sooksawat et al. (2013) similarly frame Buddhist religiosity as comprising belief in Buddhist teachings, active religious practice, and a lifestyle consistent with Buddhist values. Garfield et al. (2014) approached the concept through practices like mindfulness, concentration, and meditation, particularly in the context of reducing self-centred thinking and cultivating interconnectedness. These behaviours are interpreted as expressions of religiosity insofar as they contribute to spiritual development and ethical living.

Such definitions offer pragmatic value by focusing on measurable and observable behaviours that are central to Buddhist practice. However, they may risk oversimplifying the concept of religiosity by equating outward practice with inner commitment. In addition, the behaviours highlighted tend to reflect dominant interpretations within particular traditions (e.g., Theravada), potentially excluding practices more common in other Buddhist traditions. While useful for

operationalisation, behavioural definitions alone may not fully capture the internal doctrinal, or experiential aspects of Buddhist religiosity.

4.1.2 Doctrinal and Ideological Definitions

Other studies conceptualise Buddhist religiosity through the lens of doctrinal alignment and ideological commitment. These definitions emphasise the degree to which individuals internalise and embody Buddhist teachings in their beliefs, values, and understanding of the world. Bao (2013), for instance, defines religiousness as the extent to which an individual's personality traits conform to both doctrinal prescriptions and social expectations. This definition encompasses knowledge, behaviours, experiential depth, and a pursuit of values consistent with Buddhist teachings.

Nguyen et al. (2021) adopt a psychological construct approach, framing Buddhist religiosity as comprising five dimensions: intellect, ideology, public and private practice, and religious experience. These dimensions are drawn from the Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS) developed by Huber and Huber (2012), originally within a Judeo-Christian context. While the CRS offers a multidimensional structure, its theistic assumptions and emphasis on belief may limit its applicability to Buddhist contexts, particularly those within non-theistic traditions such as Theravada.

Other scholars approach doctrinal definitions through sect-specific conceptualisations. Le (2023) and Dang (2015) both draw on the Mahayana Buddhist framework of "Faith, Knowledge/Understanding, and Behaviour/Practice" (信解行), based on the four-step pedagogical model for religious cultivation (Y. Chen, 2007). Le (2023) identifies three core dimensions—faith, understanding, and practice—as foundational elements of Buddhist religiosity, reflecting both cognitive and behavioural aspects. Similarly, Dang (2015) applies these dimensions to operationalise Buddhist religiosity in Mahayana contexts, reinforcing the doctrinal emphasis on the integration of knowledge and action

While doctrinal and ideological definitions provide a conceptually rich basis for understanding Buddhist religiosity, they also present challenges. These approaches often assume familiarity with particular philosophical frameworks and may not be easily applicable across different Buddhist traditions. Furthermore, they risk privileging orthodoxy over lived experience, potentially excluding forms of religiosity that are more eclectic, syncretic, or experientially driven.

4.1.3 Syncretic Definitions

Some researchers define Buddhist religiosity by acknowledging the integration of Buddhist doctrine with local cultural and spiritual traditions, resulting in syncretic forms of religious

expression. This approach recognises that, in many cultural settings, Buddhism does not exist in isolation but is practised alongside other belief systems, rituals, and cosmologies.

Stanford and Jong (2019), as well as Stanford and Whitehouse (2021), offer definitions of Buddhist religiosity that exemplify this syncretic perspective in the context of Burmese Buddhism. Their studies incorporate elements of both the "Great Tradition" of formal Theravada Buddhism and the "Little Tradition," which includes indigenous practices such as *Nat* worship, astrology, and veneration of *Weikza*—mystical adepts believed to possess supernatural powers. These studies utilise a scale initially developed by Thanissaro (2011), which includes traditional Theravada practices, yet extends to accommodate these culturally embedded elements.

It is noteworthy, however, that Thanissaro himself did not explicitly define "Buddhist religiosity" in his writings, despite the scale's application across multiple empirical studies, including those conducted in the United Kingdom. This omission underscores a broader issue within the literature: even when measurement tools are widely employed, the underlying concept they intend to measure is not always clearly articulated.

Syncretic definitions reflect the lived religious realities of many Buddhist communities, particularly in regions where Buddhism has historically coexisted with animist, shamanistic, or astrological traditions. By incorporating these localised beliefs and practices, syncretic definitions offer a more inclusive and context-sensitive view of religiosity. However, they also raise important questions about definitional boundaries, specifically where "Buddhist religiosity" ends and culturally specific spiritual traditions begin. This ambiguity complicates efforts to develop universally applicable scales and may obscure distinctions between core doctrinal principles and culturally contingent expressions of faith.

4.1.4 Goal-Oriented Definitions

A less commonly adopted but spiritually significant approach to defining Buddhist religiosity is the goal-oriented perspective. This framework emphasises the ultimate aims of Buddhist practice, rather than specific doctrinal beliefs or ritual behaviours. One notable example is found in the work of Xue (2011), who defines Buddhist religiosity as conducting oneself in accordance with the Dharma with the objective of attaining liberation from the cycle of birth and death, while also striving to benefit all sentient beings. This definition situates religiosity within the broader soteriological goals of Buddhism, highlighting the aspirational dimensions of practice and its ethical implications.

This conceptualisation reflects the transformative potential of Buddhist religiosity, where the emphasis is placed not merely on belief or practice in isolation, but on their role in facilitating spiritual progress toward enlightenment. It reflects the Mahayana emphasis on altruism and

universal liberation, as well as the Theravada and Vajrayana traditions' shared focus on transcendence through disciplined practice.

However, while goal-oriented definitions capture the deeper purpose that animates Buddhist life, they present certain challenges for operationalisation. Such definitions often lack concrete behavioural indicators and may be too abstract for empirical measurement. Concepts like liberation or benefiting sentient beings, though central to Buddhist soteriology, are difficult to translate into measurable constructs within psychometric frameworks. Nevertheless, they highlight an important dimension of Buddhist religiosity that is often overlooked in scales grounded solely in observable behaviours or doctrinal adherence.

4.1.5 Issues with Current Definitions

Although the reviewed studies offer diverse perspectives on Buddhist religiosity, each definitional approach presents notable limitations that restrict their comprehensiveness and applicability across Buddhist contexts. Doctrinal and ideological definitions, while grounded in Buddhist teachings, often emphasise rigid adherence to particular interpretative frameworks. This can inadvertently exclude lived expressions of religiosity that are shaped by personal experience, cultural variation, or ecumenical interpretations. As such, these definitions may fail to capture the diversity of religious life across different Buddhist communities.

Behavioural and practice-oriented definitions, by contrast, focus on observable rituals and actions, such as meditation, generosity, or moral observance. While useful for empirical measurement, they may conflate culturally specific practices with doctrinal essentials. For instance, acts like merit-making or particular festival observances may carry different significance across traditions, and their inclusion in a measurement tool may overrepresent regional or sectarian features while underrepresenting core doctrinal commitments.

Syncretic definitions, which integrate local customs and non-Buddhist elements—such as spirit worship or astrology—reflect the lived religious realities in some cultural contexts. However, these approaches risk diluting the conceptual integrity of Buddhist religiosity by incorporating elements that fall outside mainstream doctrinal frameworks. As a result, they complicate the development of a scale intended to reflect a universally applicable and doctrinally coherent understanding of Buddhist religiosity.

Goal-oriented definitions, such as that proposed by Xue (2011), shift the focus from practices or beliefs to the aspirational ends of religious life, namely liberation and altruism. Although spiritually resonant, this perspective can be too abstract for empirical operationalisation. Its generality may

obscure the distinct attitudes, behaviours, and experiences through which such goals are pursued in everyday Buddhist practice, thereby limiting its usefulness in scale development.

Taken together, these definitional approaches reflect the challenges of conceptualising Buddhist religiosity in a manner that is both doctrinally grounded and empirically viable. Many studies either lack an explicit definition or adopt frameworks insufficiently sensitive to the internal diversity of Buddhist traditions. The evident gap between doctrinal formulations, empirical practices, and methodological rigour calls for an approach that draws directly from the voices of Buddhist experts across traditions. To address these challenges, the present study adopts an emic approach, engaging Buddhist scholars and monastics from the Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana traditions. This strategy aims to produce a definition and conceptual framework of Buddhist religiosity that is culturally grounded, doctrinally inclusive, and suitable for subsequent empirical validation.

4.2 Research Methodology

This study employed an inductive approach using qualitative research to explore and articulate the core dimensions of Buddhist religiosity. The complexity and diversity of religious experiences within Buddhism require a method that allows for an in-depth understanding of individual perspectives across different traditions. The qualitative method is well-suited for this purpose, as it emphasises capturing the nuanced and subjective meanings that individuals ascribe to their religious experiences. By adopting this approach, the study aims to engage deeply with the cultural and doctrinal nuances inherent in the three key Buddhist traditions.

4.2.1 Research Paradigm and Theoretical Approach

This research is anchored in a set of philosophical assumptions that collectively shape its design, implementation, and interpretation. These include the research paradigm, ontological and epistemological positions, and the adoption of an emic approach—all of which reflect a commitment to understanding Buddhist religiosity through the lived experiences and doctrinal frameworks of Buddhist practitioners themselves.

Research Paradigm. This study is grounded in a constructivist paradigm, which posits that knowledge and reality are co-constructed through individual and collective experiences (Ponterotto, 2005; Spencer et al., 2020). The constructivist approach is especially relevant to the present inquiry, which seeks to explore how Buddhist religiosity is understood by practitioners from within the tradition. This paradigm acknowledges that multiple, equally valid realities exist, shaped by participants' socio-cultural contexts, historical backgrounds, and personal engagement with the Dharma (Kamal, 2019; Spencer et al., 2020).

Ontological Position. Ontologically, the study adopts a relativist stance, recognising that reality is not objective and fixed but is instead socially and culturally constructed (O'Reilly & Kiyimba, 2015). Within the context of Buddhism, this acknowledges the doctrinal, ritualistic, and experiential variations found across the Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana traditions. Rather than seeking a singular, universal expression of Buddhist religiosity, this view embraces the multiple ways in which religiosity may be expressed, understood, and embodied within each tradition.

Epistemological Position. Epistemologically, the study aligns with a constructivist-interpretivist position (Ponterotto, 2005), which affirms that knowledge is co-created through interaction between researcher and participant. This approach values the insights of learned Buddhist scholars and monastics as legitimate and authoritative contributions to understanding religiosity. It treats participants not merely as sources of data but as co-constructors of knowledge, especially given their embeddedness in the lived doctrinal and cultural contexts of Buddhism.

Interconnection Between Paradigm, Ontology, and Epistemology. Maintaining coherence between the study's philosophical positions and methodological execution is critical for ensuring research integrity. The constructivist paradigm, relativist ontology, and interpretivist epistemology collectively support a methodology that privileges participants' subjective experiences while remaining attentive to the socio-cultural and doctrinal contexts in which these experiences are formed (Kamal, 2019; Spencer et al., 2020). Reflexivity was applied throughout the research process to account for the influence of the researcher's own positioning and interpretations.

An Emic Approach. Consistent with the above philosophical assumptions, this study employs an emic approach (F. M. Cheung et al., 2011; Mostowlansky & Rota, 2020), privileging insider perspectives on religiosity. Rather than imposing external frameworks or adapting pre-existing Judeo-Christian measures, this study centres on how religiosity is understood by Buddhist masters and scholars themselves. In-depth interviews were conducted to gather thick descriptions and nuanced interpretations of how religious life is defined and practised across Buddhist traditions.

This approach also directly addresses ongoing methodological debates in the study of religion, particularly regarding the insider-outsider distinction (Dueck & Johnson, 2016). By anchoring the development of a conceptual framework in the voices of Buddhist insiders, the study increases the cultural validity and authenticity of its findings. It also ensures that future measurement tools derived from this research are grounded in the lived religious experiences of practitioners rather than theoretical or etic abstractions.

4.2.2 Research Design

Rationale for a qualitative design. This study adopted a qualitative research design informed by a constructivist paradigm, which acknowledges the co-construction of meaning between researcher and participant. Given the doctrinal diversity and lived complexity of Buddhist religiosity, a qualitative approach was essential to capture the emic perspectives of monastics and scholars across the Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana traditions (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Decoo, 2022). The aim was not to test predefined hypotheses but to explore how religiosity is conceptualised and articulated by those embedded within the tradition.

In-depth interviews as the core method. In-depth interviews were selected as the primary method of data collection, allowing for flexible yet focused engagement with participants (Decoo, 2022). This approach enabled the research to delve into participants' personal interpretations (O'Reilly & Kiyimba, 2015), doctrinal reflections, and culturally situated understandings of religiosity. The interview guide (Appendix C) was developed by the principal investigator and reviewed by a member of the supervisory panel with qualitative expertise to ensure alignment with the research objectives (Fossey et al., 2002).

Alignment with thematic analysis. Thematic Analysis (TA), as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2022), served as the analytic framework for this study. Reflexive TA was particularly suitable as it accommodates both inductive insights drawn from the data and deductive considerations grounded in doctrinal logics. This method allowed for rich thematic exploration while maintaining coherence with the research questions, particularly in identifying core definitions and dimensions of Buddhist religiosity.

Emic position and cultural sensitivity. An emic orientation guided the entire research process. As outlined in Chapter 2, previous efforts to measure Buddhist religiosity have often imposed etic constructs derived from Western or Abrahamic religious frameworks. In contrast, this study sought to prioritise the voices of those embedded in Buddhist traditions, drawing on doctrinally informed and experientially grounded insights. This design supports the broader aim of developing a non-sectarian, culturally valid measurement model rooted in Buddhist philosophical and spiritual worldviews (F. M. Cheung et al., 2011; Mostowlansky & Rota, 2020).

Ethical Approval. This study received ethics approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) of James Cook University (approval number: H8832). All procedures involving human participants were conducted in accordance with institutional and international ethical guidelines. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. Potential participants who expressed openness to participate were sent a formal information sheet and

consent form outlining the study's aims, procedures, risks, and the voluntary nature of their involvement.

4.2.3 Participants

Sampling approach and inclusion criteria. Purposive sampling was employed to strategically ensure the inclusion of participants with deep knowledge of Buddhist doctrinal teachings and active engagement within Buddhist communities. Participants were selected to reflect doctrinal understanding and experiential insight rather than demographic representation. Eligible individuals included senior monastics, Buddhist scholars, and meditation teachers with formal affiliations to one of the three major Buddhist traditions: Theravada, Mahayana, or Vajrayana. Participants also needed to be actively involved in teaching, leading, or advising within their communities at the time of the study.

Based on these parameters, an initial list of 44 potential participants was compiled, identified through academic publications, online Dharma teaching platforms, institutional affiliations, and personal recommendations. This list included individuals across Asia, Europe, North America, and Oceania. Outreach was conducted through personalised invitation emails and formal letters, followed by up to two reminder messages in cases of non-response.

Final sample. Of the 44 individuals contacted, 14 agreed to participate in the study. The final interviews were conducted over a five-month period between October 2023 and March 2024. While the intention had been to include as many knowledgeable participants as possible, the final sample size was shaped by willingness to participate, scheduling feasibility, and ethical requirements. This number is consistent with accepted norms in qualitative inquiry, where depth of engagement and thematic saturation are prioritised over statistical representation (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Guest et al., 2006; Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). This sample size was epistemologically and methodologically appropriate for the emic phase of scale development, as the 14 information-rich experts provided doctrinal and experiential saturation across the three Buddhist traditions. The purpose of this phase was to establish the common conceptual core of Buddhist religiosity that transcends sectarian boundaries, rather than to validate or compare tradition-specific doctrinal differences.

These 14 participants represented a range of perspectives across all three major traditions and came from various national and cultural backgrounds. Their professional identities included senior monks and nuns, university professors of Buddhism, and experienced meditation instructors. Their inclusion offered both doctrinal depth and practical lived experience, which were essential to the study's aim of developing a non-sectarian conceptualisation of Buddhist religiosity.

Reflections on diversity and balance. Although the sampling strategy did not aim for proportional representation across regions or traditions, the final composition reflected diverse insights from participants based in China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, the United States, and Australia. The distribution of participants across Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana traditions helped mitigate sectarian bias and ensured that the eventual findings could be interpreted as broadly representative of the doctrinal diversity within global Buddhism.

Table 12 presents an overview of the final sample. While specific demographic identifiers are withheld to protect confidentiality, the table includes information about participants' traditions, country of affiliation, and professional roles. This composition reflects the goal of gathering informed, tradition-rooted perspectives on the nature of Buddhist religiosity.

Table 12 Sample Structure of Qualitative Interviews

Buddhist Traditions	Theravada	Mahayana	Vajrayana
Sample sizes	*n* = 4	*n* = 6	*n* = 4
Ordained monastics	*n* = 4	*n* = 6	*n* = 3
Teaching In Academia	*n* = 2	*n* = 3	*n* = 2
Residential location	Canada, Hong Kong, Thailand, Vietnam	Singapore (*n* = 2), Hong Kong (*n* = 2), Australia, USA	USA (*n* = 3), India
Education	Doctoral (*n* = 3) Bachelor (*n* = 1)	Doctoral (*n* = 4) Masters (*n* = 2)	Doctoral (*n* = 3) Masters (*n* = 1)
Dharma Training	Myanmar, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Thailand	China, Hong Kong (*n* = 2), Taiwan (n = 3)	India (*n* = 2), Taiwan, USA
Male-Female ratio	4:0	4:2	3:1

Note. Sample sizes refer to the number of participants who participated in the study. Dharma Training indicates where the participants received their dharma training.

Table 13 provides a detailed overview of the 14 participants included in this study, offering important contextual information that frames their contributions to the qualitative inquiry. Each participant is identified by a number, assigned sequentially based on the order of their interviews, rather than by tradition or country. The table outlines their respective Buddhist tradition (Theravada, Mahayana, or Vajrayana), country of residence, and whether they were monastic or lay scholars. This

diverse representation ensures the inclusion of doctrinal insights as well as practical perspectives across different cultural contexts and roles within the Buddhist community.

Table 13 Profile of Participants

Participant #	Tradition	Location	Role
1	Theravada	Vietnam	Monastic
2	Mahayana	Singapore	Monastic
3	Theravada	Canada	Monastic/Scholar
4	Vajrayana	USA	Monastic
5	Mahayana	Singapore	Monastic
6	Theravada	Hong Kong	Monastic
7	Mahayana	Australia	Monastic/Scholar
8	Mahayana	USA	Monastic/Scholar
9	Mahayana	Hong Kong	Monastic/Scholar
10	Vajrayana	India	Monastic/Scholar
11	Vajrayana	USA	Monastic
12	Mahayana	Hong Kong	Monastic/Scholar
13	Vajrayana	USA	Scholar
14	Theravada	Thailand	Monastic/Scholar

Participants came from various countries across Asia and the West, including Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, Thailand, China, Canada, the United States, and Australia. They learned Buddhism at major Buddhist centres such as Sri Lanka, India, Thailand, Myanmar, China (Hong Kong and Taiwan), and the United States, reflecting both traditional and contemporary expressions of Buddhism. The composition also includes a balance between male and female participants and between those with academic training and those grounded in monastic or practice-based lineages. Such diversity was instrumental in achieving a robust exploration of shared elements of Buddhist religiosity, while also attending to nuances that may be shaped by tradition, geography, or role within the religious community.

This rich variation across traditions and personal backgrounds supports the study's objective of identifying cross-traditional themes that may inform the development of a non-sectarian and culturally valid measure of Buddhist religiosity.

4.2.4 Data Collection

In-depth interviews were employed to collect qualitative data. An interview guide (Appendix C), developed by the principal investigator and reviewed by a member of the supervisory panel with qualitative expertise, was used to provide thematic focus while allowing flexibility for participants to elaborate on key issues in their own terms (Bryman, 2012; Mason, 2010). Interviews were conducted in an in-depth, semi-structured format by the principal investigator. This format supported a balance between consistency across interviews and responsiveness to the unique expertise and perspectives of each participant.

Before interviews were scheduled, participants who indicated interest were provided with an information sheet detailing the nature, aims, and scope of the study (Appendix A), followed by a research background summary and consent form (Appendix B). These documents clarified the voluntary nature of participation, confidentiality measures, and the participant's right to withdraw at any time. Written informed consent was obtained prior to data collection.

Thirteen interviews were conducted via videoconferencing platform Zoom (https://zoom.us), and one interview was conducted in person based on the participant's preference and availability. All interviews were audio-recorded with consent and subsequently transcribed verbatim. For non-English interviews, professional translation services were used, with the original language retained in selected excerpts where relevant. The duration of interviews ranged from 38 to 97 minutes, with an average length of 64 minutes and a median of 61 minutes.

Participants were invited to reflect on the nature of Buddhist religiosity, its defining features, and its practical manifestations across traditions. The questions explored the doctrinal, experiential, and ethical dimensions of religiosity, with the flexibility to allow participants to introduce additional themes they considered significant. The open-ended structure ensured that responses emerged organically from participants' perspectives rather than being shaped by pre-defined theoretical frameworks.

4.2.5 Data Analysis

Data were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis (TA), as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2020, 2022). This approach was selected for its flexibility and suitability in capturing complex and nuanced meanings within qualitative data, particularly within a constructivist-interpretivist paradigm. Reflexive thematic analysis recognises the active role of the researcher in identifying and interpreting patterns of meaning, rather than assuming that themes are passively discovered. The choice of using reflexive TA as our analytical approach was driven by its adaptability and its ability to support a detailed exploration of the data within a constructivist framework. According to constructivism, knowledge arises from social interaction and is inherently subjective and contextual

(Hong, 2009). Reflexive TA supports this perspective by facilitating a nuanced exploration of how participants conceptualise and articulate their understanding of Buddhist religiosity, allowing for an in-depth examination of how these interpretations are shaped by and reflect their unique cultural and doctrinal contexts.

Interview recordings were transcribed verbatim following each session using Sonix (https://sonix.ai), an AI-powered transcription platform capable of handling multiple languages, including English, Mandarin, and Cantonese. The platform was selected for its capacity to preserve linguistic nuances, particularly in Cantonese, where it retained classical Chinese characters not commonly used in modern writing. These transcripts were then meticulously reviewed and revised against the original audio recordings to ensure accuracy. No edits were made to participant expressions, thus preserving the authenticity of voice and meaning in line with qualitative best practices (Levitt, 2020).

For interviews conducted in Mandarin or Cantonese, the transcripts were translated into English by the principal investigator, with deliberate care taken to maintain the conversational tone and original intent of the participants' statements. This process aimed to strike a balance between linguistic fidelity and clarity for English-language analysis. All final English-language transcripts, including those originally conducted in Chinese, were uploaded into Delve (https://delvetool.com), an online qualitative data analysis platform, to facilitate systematic coding and theme development.

The analytic process followed Braun and Clarke's six-phase model (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2022). In the first phase, the principal investigator engaged in repeated readings of the transcripts, making reflective notes and preliminary observations. In the second phase, initial codes were generated across the dataset, capturing both semantic and latent meanings. Coding was conducted manually within the Delve platform to support an iterative, close engagement with the data. In the third phase, codes were sorted into candidate themes, which were further refined in the fourth phase for internal consistency and distinction across themes. The fifth phase involved naming and defining themes to encapsulate their core content clearly and concisely. Finally, in the sixth phase, the themes were woven into a coherent narrative that addressed the study's research questions and theoretical aims.

This approach to reflexive TA ensured a transparent, systematic, and rigorous analysis, facilitating authentic interpretations of how Buddhist religiosity was defined and elaborated. The doctoral research advisor's involvement in critical stages of the analysis also enhanced the credibility of the findings and authentically reflected the participants' experiences and contextual realities (Fossey et al., 2002). To further enhance analytical rigour, the development of themes was discussed

periodically with members of the supervisory panel, particularly the advisor with qualitative expertise. A reflexive journal was maintained to document analytic decisions, evolving interpretations, and the influence of the researcher's positionality. This process ensured that findings remained grounded in the data while transparently acknowledging the interpretative role of the researcher.

4.2.6 Researcher's Role and Positionality

The principal investigator (PI) occupies a dynamic insider-outsider position in this research. As a long-time practising Buddhist with formal doctrinal training across the Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana traditions, the PI was well-positioned to engage meaningfully with the theological and experiential content shared by participants. This background enabled not only rapport-building and mutual trust during interviews but also provided the interpretive competence needed to grasp subtle doctrinal nuances and accurately represent participants' views. In particular, the PI's doctrinal familiarity supported the study's aim of developing a non-sectarian conceptualisation of Buddhist religiosity grounded in traditional teachings and real-world expressions. While this insider status offered certain advantages, the PI also recognised the complexity and diversity of Buddhist lived experiences across national, sectarian, and cultural lines. As such, reflexivity was maintained throughout the research process to remain sensitive to perspectives beyond the PI's own religious and cultural standpoint.

Recognising the complexity of positionality, this study approached researcher identity as fluid and intersectional, consistent with calls in the literature to deconstruct binary insider-outsider distinctions (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009; Greene, 2014). As noted by Bukamal (2022), insider research in religious or identity-based domains necessitates continuous reflection on how researcher proximity may simultaneously open and limit interpretive possibilities. For example, while shared religious vocabulary may foster deeper insight into participants' meaning-making, it also risks introducing interpretive assumptions or overidentification. To mitigate this, the PI adopted a reflexive stance throughout the research process, maintaining a research journal to document emotional and intellectual responses to the data and practising what Olukotun et al. (2021) describe as self-reflexive praxis—a critical awareness of how one's beliefs, assumptions, and experiences shape data interpretation.

This reflective orientation was especially important given the study's emic aims: to derive a definition of Buddhist religiosity grounded in the perspectives of scholars and monastics from within the tradition. In accordance with Decoo (2022), who argues that insider research within religious contexts must acknowledge the dynamic and intersectional nature of researcher identity, the PI

consistently interrogated his own assumptions and doctrinal leanings during data collection and analysis. Rather than claiming a neutral stance, the PI adopted what Greene (2014) characterises as a position of "critical proximity," using shared familiarity as an interpretive asset while intentionally surfacing points of divergence. The goal was not to erase the influence of the PI's insider knowledge but to clarify its presence and role in shaping both questions and interpretations.

Power dynamics were also carefully considered, particularly in interviews with highly respected religious authorities. While shared religious background provided a common language, the asymmetries in age, scholarly authority, or ordination status could shift the relational dynamic. To address this, the PI employed a collaborative interviewing style that positioned participants as knowledge holders and the PI as a facilitator of reflection, consistent with the postcolonial and feminist-informed approaches described by Olukotun et al. (2021). Moreover, as Decoo (2022) emphasises, acknowledging one's partial insider status means actively inviting perspectives that challenge or complicate one's own assumptions. This was achieved through open-ended questioning, repeated member checking during interviews, and the use of follow-up prompts to explore perspectives divergent from the PI's own.

Finally, researcher positionality was also interrogated during the analysis phase. The PI reviewed transcripts multiple times, each time shifting between descriptive and interpretive lenses to ensure that emergent themes were grounded in participant perspectives rather than preconceived conceptual frameworks. The use of Delve as a qualitative analysis platform allowed coding to be conducted iteratively, and the PI regularly returned to full excerpts to ensure contextual integrity. This approach resonates with Greene's (2014) recommendation that insider researchers actively guard against premature familiarity or interpretive shortcuts. The PI's insider-outsider stance was not treated as a methodological limitation but as a site of ongoing critical reflection, leveraged to enhance depth, trustworthiness, and doctrinal sensitivity in the research process.

4.3 Results

This section presents the final thematic structure that emerged from the qualitative interviews with senior Buddhist scholars and practitioners across the Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana traditions. As detailed in the previous section, the analytic process began with an inductive phase of coding that generated a wide array of themes reflecting diverse doctrinal, behavioural, and experiential dimensions of Buddhist religiosity. A full account of this initial exploratory structure is provided in Appendix D, which includes the preliminary codes, sub-codes, and thematic categories developed during the first cycle of analysis.

In order to advance toward a conceptually coherent and cross-traditionally valid framework, a subsequent phase of deductive refinement was undertaken. This involved the reorganisation and integration of initial codes based on their doctrinal centrality, recurrence across traditions, and relevance to the two guiding research questions:

1. What defines Buddhist religiosity across traditions?
2. What are the potential dimensions of Buddhist religiosity for measurement purposes?

Themes that were redundant, tradition-specific, or insufficiently distinct were merged, reclassified, or excluded. The retained elements were organised into a revised set of overarching dimensions that capture the foundational structure of Buddhist religiosity and reflect its key psychological, behavioural, and ethical components. These final dimensions are summarised in Table 14.

Table 14 Revised Themes

Research Questions	Superordinate Themes	Sub-themes	Codes
Defining Buddhist Religiosity	Buddhism Core (What Buddhism Stands for?)	• Nirvana / Cessation of Suffering / Liberation from Samsara	• Uniqueness of Buddhism • Happiness • Renunciation from the world
		• Karma	• Causality
		• Dependent Origination	• Non-duality • Non-self
		• Dharma seals	• Impermanence / Suffering / Non-self
		• Non-duality	
	Cultural Façade (What should not be considered?)	• Cultural elements need to be separated from Dharma teaching	• External behaviors
		• Bonding	• Rituals / collective practices
		• What is not Buddhism	• Skillful means • Adaptation • Attire and customs • Vegetarianism • “Hilltopism”/Sectarianism
		• New Buddhism	• Secular Buddhists • Radical/Engaged Buddhism

	Buddhist Definition (Who should be considered Buddhists?)	• Following Buddha's teaching	• Ultimate goals in following Buddha's footsteps • Four Noble Truth • Rebirth / Reincarnation • Meaning of Triple Gem
Potential Dimensions of Buddhist Religiosity	Practice - Behavioural and Belief	• Hearing, Contemplating, Practicing Dharma • Precepts, Concentration, Wisdom • Noble Eightfold Path • Body, Speech, Mind	
	Result - Attainment	• Rational over emotional • Doctrinal knowledge & Adherence • Spectrum of Buddhist Attainment	• A faith based on personal verification • Hearing, Contemplating, Practicing Dharma • Precepts, Concentrations, Wisdom • Noble Eightfold Path • Body, Speech, Mind
	Conceptual Understanding of Dharma	• Systematic approach for suffering cessation • Intentionality	• Rational over emotional • Doctrinal Knowledge & Adherence • Spectrum of Buddhist Attainment
	Embodiment - Buddhist Quality	• Cessation of suffering	• Systematic approach for suffering cessation • Intentionality

The thematic structure outlined in Table 14 is unpacked in the following sections, beginning with the foundational assumptions that participants identified as distinctive to Buddhism.

4.3.1 The Unique Aspects of Buddhism

The inquiry into the nature of Buddhist religiosity began with a foundational question posed to all participants: *"What is unique about Buddhism?"* Responses across the traditions of Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana showed remarkable consistency. Participants unanimously identified the cessation of suffering and the pursuit of liberation or enlightenment as Buddhism's defining aims. This core objective, coupled with an emphasis on personal effort and individual responsibility, was seen as a distinguishing characteristic of Buddhism compared to monotheistic or polytheistic religions that rely on divine intervention.

Notably, the nontheistic orientation of Buddhism was repeatedly mentioned as a key distinction. In contrast to traditions that posit the existence of a creator god or supreme being who determines the spiritual fate of adherents, Buddhism is grounded in the principle that liberation must be achieved through one's own efforts. The Buddha is seen not as a saviour who grants grace or Salvation, but as a teacher who provides a path to be followed. As such, participants emphasised that the core of Buddhist religiosity is inherently experiential and process-oriented, centred on self-cultivation and the eradication of suffering through insight and disciplined practice.

These shared premises formed the underlying logic of how various aspects of Buddhism were subsequently discussed. Throughout the interviews, participants consistently returned to these core ideas when elaborating on doctrines, practices, and the meaning of being a Buddhist. Regardless of the topic, the central thread running through the discussions was the goal of spiritual transformation—achieved not through faith alone but through active engagement in a path oriented toward ethical conduct, meditative development, and wisdom. The focus on internal change and the progressive diminishment of suffering served as an anchor for defining Buddhist religiosity across all traditions.

In this way, the responses reflected a broad yet cohesive understanding of what makes Buddhism distinctive. Rather than defining the religion solely through its rituals, doctrines, or institutional features, participants placed the emphasis on its soteriological aim—liberation from suffering—and the methods by which that aim is to be realised. This orientation, prioritising personal insight and ethical refinement over external belief or identity markers, emerged as a shared foundation for articulating what it means to be religious in a Buddhist context.

4.3.2 The Core of Buddhism

Building upon these shared premises, participants articulated a strikingly coherent view of Buddhism's foundations and transformative aim. Contrary to expectations of sectarian divergence, participants across the Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana traditions consistently framed Buddhism as a path oriented toward the cessation of suffering—liberation from the cycle of rebirth (*Samsara*) and attainment of Nirvana (*Nibbana*). The arising of suffering from conditioned existence, and the pursuit of its cessation through disciplined practice, was repeatedly affirmed as the core objective of the Buddhist path.

The Centrality of Suffering in Buddhist Philosophy. This shared emphasis on the cessation of suffering as Buddhism's core objective reveals a foundational doctrinal unity that transcends sectarian boundaries. All participants viewed the teachings of the Buddha as a systematic path for addressing the reality of suffering, its causes, and the means for its cessation. Rather than

highlighting doctrinal nuances or sectarian doctrines, participants pointed to the transformative goal of liberation as the unifying heart of the tradition.

Participant 9 (Mahayana) articulated this succinctly:

> Actually, for Buddhists, the first and core issue is whether they want to end their suffering and attain happiness (离苦得乐). [The Buddha] said that "my religion is about liberation from suffering and attainment of happiness, so do you have a sincere belief in this concept of 'liberation from suffering and attainment of happiness"? That means "liberation from suffering and attainment of happiness" is the core concept.

Participants also referenced the Four Noble Truths as the doctrinal structure that articulates this aim. These truths outline (1) the reality of suffering (*dukkha*), (2) its origin, (3) its cessation, and (4) the path leading to its cessation. However, several participants expressed concern that Buddhist teachings are often misrepresented or misunderstood, particularly when the emphasis rests disproportionately on the first two truths—suffering and its causes—without adequate attention to the Third and Fourth Truths, which emphasise cessation and the path to liberation.

As Participant 8 (Mahayana) reflected:

> The result [of emphasising suffering and how suffering arises] is that we only talk about suffering, suffering, suffering, suffering, and people who come to learn from us sometimes emphasise, amplify that, and also talk about a lot of suffering… But the main thing you come to see the doctor is to get rid of that stomach pain. Isn't it that you have to get to the Third Truth about the cessation of suffering? Everyone, including Westerners, comes to Buddhism and talks about suffering. Life is suffering, right? I said you got to move to the 3rd one, right? The way you need to attend to the happiness, the happiness, the bliss is Nirvana.

This analogy, likening the Buddha to a physician and the teachings to a therapeutic prescription, reinforces the pragmatic, solution-focused nature of Buddhist philosophy. The emphasis, participants argued, should not be on merely acknowledging the presence of suffering but on actively pursuing its cessation.

In this framework, the essence of Buddhist religiosity is not the passive acceptance of suffering as an existential fact, but the committed effort to understand and overcome its causes. The teachings provide a clear path, rooted in ethical conduct, mental discipline, and wisdom, by which suffering can be gradually diminished and ultimately eliminated. Participants from all traditions

aligned in their view that this soteriological orientation, rather than ritual or belief alone, lies at the heart of Buddhism and defines what it means to live a religious life as a Buddhist.

The Three Poisons: Roots of Suffering. Participants across all three Buddhist traditions consistently pointed to the Three Poisons—greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and ignorance (*moha*)—as the primary sources of suffering. These mental afflictions, deeply rooted in the human psyche, were described as distortions that perpetuate samsaric existence and obstruct the path to liberation. The reduction or eradication of these defilements was emphasised as essential to Buddhist practice, though participants also acknowledged the challenges inherent in doing so, especially given their subjective and internal nature.

As Participant 12 (Mahayana) explained:

> The self-evaluation I am talking about is to examine our level of awakening to our own greed, anger, and ignorance regularly. This is the standard of Buddhism. After learning Buddhism, if our greed, anger, and ignorance are gradually decreasing, then we are progressing… However, this external behaviour does not necessarily reflect our internal state. Therefore, it is difficult for others to accurately evaluate us. To evaluate ourselves accurately, we must examine our own level of greed, anger, and ignorance.

This emphasis on self-awareness reflects the centrality of introspection in Buddhist practice. Participants indicated that while certain external behaviours might reflect internal progress, the true gauge of transformation lies in one's capacity to identify, reduce, and ultimately eliminate these internal poisons through consistent practice.

Each poison is linked to a specific misperception of reality. Greed arises from attachment to impermanent things and the mistaken belief that they can provide lasting satisfaction. Hatred is rooted in aversion, often fueled by the illusion of a stable and separate self under threat. Ignorance, considered the most fundamental of the three, is the failure to understand the true nature of existence—particularly the principles of impermanence, non-self, and dependent origination. Together, these defilements perpetuate suffering by distorting perception and reinforcing habitual patterns of craving and aversion.

Participants further noted that progress in the Dharma could be measured by the visible and subtle reduction of these mental defilements over time. This emphasis aligns with the broader Buddhist goal of transforming the mind—not simply through external conformity to rituals but through sustained inner cultivation.

The reflections provided by participants illustrate that in Buddhist religiosity, spiritual maturity is closely tied to the extent of one's internal transformation. The reduction of greed, hatred, and ignorance is not only a marker of doctrinal understanding but also a measure of authentic religious practice and progress. As such, the Three Poisons are central to both the doctrinal and practical dimensions of Buddhist religiosity.

Impermanence and Non-Self: The Misconceptions of Existence. The three poisons are deeply rooted in two fundamental misperceptions identified by all three traditions: the belief in permanence and the belief in a self. Participants repeatedly emphasised that these misconceptions underlie much of human suffering. From a Buddhist perspective, the mistaken belief that phenomena—especially the self—are fixed, enduring, or possess inherent substance leads to attachment, aversion, and ignorance. These delusions then serve as the fertile ground for the emergence of greed, hatred, and ignorance.

Participant 13 (Vajrayana) articulated this with clarity:

> To really know at a deeper… at a pretty deep level that everything is impermanent, you know, that everything is impermanent. And as part of that, that there's no solid self in here… And it's my belief that things are solid or should be solid or should be permanent—that causes me a lot of suffering. But the reality is that nothing is permanent… And happiness comes from more understanding that everything is impermanent and beginning to line your life up partly with that truth.

This deep insight into the nature of impermanence is not merely philosophical—it is foundational to transforming suffering. Participants indicated that without recognising the transient, conditioned nature of all things, individuals remain ensnared by attachment and clinging, mistaking what is fleeting for what is enduring.

The doctrine of non-self (anatta/anatman) was regarded as even more conceptually challenging. Multiple participants acknowledged that the idea of non-self remains difficult to grasp, especially in cultural contexts that prioritise individual identity and autonomy. However, its centrality to Buddhist thought was repeatedly affirmed. As Participant 12 (Mahayana) stated:

> So, the biggest difference between Buddhism and other major world religions is actually one thing: "anatta," or "no-self"'… In Buddhism, there is "no-self." According to Buddhism, a person is made up of 'five aggregates' that are all "empty." Therefore, there is no real "self."… But 'no-self' does not mean complete nothingness.

While the conceptual depth of non-self can be unsettling, as illustrated by Participant 11's (Vajrayana) anecdote of a monastic practitioner abandoning his path after glimpsing the truth of

emptiness, other participants emphasised its liberatory potential. Realising non-self was seen as a turning point that led to the cessation of ego-driven suffering.

Participant 3 (Theravada) offered a clarifying explanation:

> Vipassana… then you will probably understand [non-self], but it doesn't mean that you don't have responsibility for anything… Like telling you to do good… It's not you yourself that want to do good. Because a lot of factors coming around that makes you make this decision.

This quote reflects the notion of conditioned arising: actions arise not from a fixed agent but from a confluence of causes and conditions. Recognising this helps to dissolve the illusion of a separate self while retaining moral accountability.

Altogether, participants emphasised that grasping the truths of impermanence and non-self is crucial not only for theoretical understanding but for practical transformation. These insights provide the framework for reducing the three poisons and progressing on the path. The ability to embody these truths, rather than merely understand them intellectually, was framed as a key indicator of Buddhist religiosity and spiritual maturity.

The Three and Four Dharma Seals. The findings thus far have illuminated how Buddhists, through the lens of core teachings, are expected to perceive the true nature of existence. At the centre of these teachings are the Three Dharma Seals (三法印): impermanence, non-self, and suffering. These concepts form the evaluative criteria for what constitutes the authentic Dharma. They are often described as the signature of the Buddha's teachings—any teaching that aligns with these principles can be considered a genuine expression of Buddhism.

In Theravada Buddhism, the Three Dharma Seals are widely regarded as foundational. They encapsulate the essential truths of existence as taught by the historical Buddha. These include the understanding that all conditioned phenomena are impermanent, that there is no enduring or independent self, and that existence marked by attachment and ignorance is inherently unsatisfactory or dukkha.

While not dismissing these principles, Mahayana and Vajrayana traditions often expand upon them by recognising a Fourth Dharma Seal: Nirvana is peace or the cessation of dualistic conceptualisation (涅槃寂靜). This fourth seal highlights the transformative culmination of practice—a state beyond conceptual fabrication, beyond both suffering and happiness as we commonly understand them. It signals the realisation of ultimate reality and underscores the path's destination.

In Mahayana's thought, the fourth seal is frequently associated with emptiness (*sunyata* 空性)—a concept asserting that all phenomena lack inherent, independent existence. Rather than a

nihilistic void, emptiness describes a dynamic interdependence of all things. This aligns with the concept of dependent origination (*pratityasamutpada* 緣起), which is foundational in all Buddhist traditions. Mahayana extends this to say that since all things arise dependently, they are empty of a permanent essence.

One Theravada participant explained:

> In fact, emptiness is mentioned in the original scriptures. It's just that its importance or emphasis is far less than some of the later denominations… So, what is "empty"? It's 'empty of self-nature'! In fact, there is no independent substantial existence. This is exactly the principle of *anatta* [non-self]. They are equivalent. (Participant 6, Theravada)

Mahayana and Vajrayana traditions further introduce the concept of non-duality (不二), which dissolves the distinctions commonly made between concepts like samsara and nirvana, good and bad, and self and other. This idea implies that liberation is not attained by escaping from the world but through a profound shift in perception. By seeing through dualities, one uncovers the true nature of reality.

As one Mahayana participant elaborated:

> You would say that samsara and nirvana in Theravada are two different points. You get out of samsara to go into nirvana. In Mahayana and Vajrayana, they'll just be two sides of the same coin… It's just that one moment of thought, and that's either you're in Pure Land or back in samsara. (Participant 7, Mahayana)

While Theravada scholars may not explicitly speak of non-duality in the same terms, some acknowledge that the realisation of the Three Dharma Seals naturally leads to nirvana, which may be interpreted as an implicit fourth seal. In this way, despite differences in doctrinal emphasis, the shared aim remains: to realise the truth of existence and be liberated from suffering.

Ultimately, the divergence in framing the Dharma Seals reflects variations in doctrinal expansion and pedagogical emphasis rather than contradictory views. Mahayana and Vajrayana traditions use the Four Dharma Seals to incorporate broader philosophical insights, while Theravada remains more concise in formulation but equally comprehensive in its application.

4.3.3 Distinctions between Buddhism Core and Cultural Façade

Although it is clear that the various traditions within Buddhism share the same core when it comes to fundamental teachings, there is no denying that different traditions do have their unique characteristics. Mahayana and Vajrayana participants discussed the Bodhisattva path as a central feature of their traditions, while Vajrayana scholars placed strong emphasis on unconditional trust and faith in their gurus. This presents a critical challenge in determining how these differences should be interpreted and understood. Participants generally approached these distinctions from a cultural

and historical perspective, suggesting that they are adaptations rather than doctrinal divergences from the core teachings.

Theravada Buddhism's Focus on Original Teachings. Theravada Buddhism emphasises strict adherence to the original teachings of the historical Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama, dating back to around 500 BCE. The path to liberation in the Theravada tradition is seen as resting on rigorous practice of the Noble Eightfold Path, with strong emphasis on self-effort in eradicating mental defilements. Consequently, explanations of Buddhism among Theravada participants often centred on the Three Dharma Seals: impermanence, non-self, and suffering. These seals are regarded as the hallmark of the Buddha's authentic teachings, representing the fundamental truths of existence that all Buddhists are expected to understand and embody.

The Role of Skillful Means (*Upaya*) in Mahayana and Vajrayana. As Buddhism evolved and spread beyond its Indian origins, historical developments and cultural interactions led to the emergence of Mahayana and Vajrayana traditions. Mahayana Buddhism expanded on earlier teachings by incorporating beliefs in deities and other elements from local traditions along its transmission routes. This inclusivity is characteristic of Mahayana Buddhism, which integrates diverse practices and philosophies while retaining core principles of the Dharma. The concept of "skillful means" (*upaya*) was repeatedly emphasised by Mahayana and Vajrayana participants as a doctrinal basis for such adaptability. This concept enabled the Dharma to be applied flexibly in ways most relevant and accessible to the cultural context and spiritual maturity of local populations.

> Although it is clear that the various traditions within Buddhism share the same core when it comes to the fundamental teachings, there is no denying that different traditions do have their unique characteristics. Mahayana participants discuss the Bodhisattva path, which is a key component of their tradition, while Vajrayana scholars place strong emphasis on unconditional trust and faith in their gurus. This presents a critical challenge in determining how these differences should be interpreted and understood. Participants generally approach these differences from a cultural and historical perspective, suggesting that they are adaptations rather than divergences from the core teachings. (Participant 13, Vajrayana)

Unique Characteristics of Mahayana and Vajrayana. Mahayana Buddhism places greater emphasis on additional doctrinal elements, such as the Bodhisattva path and the concept of emptiness. It also expands the concept of the Three Dharma Seals to the Four Dharma Seals, adding the seal of Nirvana as a critical criterion that teachings must ultimately lead to liberation.

Vajrayana Buddhism, which originated as an esoteric form of practice in India, was transmitted to Tibet during a time when Tantric beliefs were widespread. Upon arriving in Tibet, it integrated with the indigenous Bon religion, evolving into what is now known as Tibetan Buddhism. Participants described how Vajrayana Buddhism emphasises not only doctrinal understanding and

mastery but also esoteric practices, tantric rituals, and the teacher-student relationship, particularly for more advanced practitioners.

Participant 10, a senior figure in the Gelugpa lineage, noted that while doctrinal knowledge and practice are central at beginner and intermediate levels, the teacher's role becomes indispensable at the advanced stage. He likened this to people only appreciating Albert Einstein after developing sufficient academic maturity, whereas younger students might prefer a more charismatic teacher. Despite the added ritual and lineage elements, the Vajrayana tradition continues to uphold the core teachings of impermanence, non-self, and suffering.

The Influence of Cultural and Historical Contexts. The distinctions between Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana Buddhism can largely be understood through Buddhism's historical spread and subsequent cultural adaptation. As the religion moved into new regions such as Burma, China, Korea, Japan, and Tibet, it encountered local belief systems and social structures. These encounters led to the incorporation of regional customs into Buddhist practices, resulting in the rich diversity observed today. While Christianity also diversified across multiple societies, languages, and denominations, portions of it, particularly Roman Catholicism, developed under more centralised institutional authorities such as the Vatican. In contrast, Buddhism evolved without a single overarching ecclesiastical body, allowing doctrinal differences and cultural variations to flourish. This decentralised development has contributed to Buddhism's adaptability and its capacity to thrive in diverse cultural environments.

> Because Buddhism is a religion that has developed for more than 2500 years, with so many sects and traditions that span such a large cultural and geographic space. It is bound to have very big differences. The differences in its teachings are far greater than those in the Catholic Church or Christianity. Because it does not have an institution like a church to make an authoritative interpretation, that is, between different sects of Buddhism. They develop independently, so the differences between them are actually greater than those between some sects of Christianity, but at least within Christianity, everyone is looking at the same Bible, right? But in Buddhism, it's different if you take one Sutta and I take another. (Participant 6, Theravada)

Cultural Adaptations vs. Core Teachings. Despite these variations in practice and ritual, all Buddhist traditions in this study were seen as adhering to a common doctrinal core rooted in the teachings of the Buddha. Differences among Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana should therefore be viewed as cultural façades—adaptations to local conditions rather than fundamental departures from the Dharma. One participant from the Mahayana tradition offered a particularly detailed explanation of how many contemporary rituals and practices have been shaped by historical circumstances rather than the original teachings. He argued for a return to the foundational

principles laid out by the Buddha and cautioned against mistaking culturally contingent practices for doctrinal essentials.

> Okay, of course, what I'm talking about will be in accordance with the Buddhist teachings… the core of Buddhism is precepts, concentration, and wisdom… However, now Buddhism has divided it up… Does it mean that you don't need to cultivate wisdom if you cultivate concentration today? Does it mean that you don't need to cultivate precepts if you cultivate wisdom? Why do you need to separate them and make them independent? Can you see that our Buddhism has always been evolving? Is this the Buddha's original intention?… The Buddha did not encourage mantras… fire offerings… These are things that non-Buddhists do. Even before the establishment of Buddhism, there were already such practices, but now we in Buddhism have adopted them… Are we becoming more like the Buddha or more like non-Buddhists? (Participant 5, Mahayana)

This view reflects a recurring theme across interviews: that Buddhist religiosity must be grounded in doctrinal authenticity while remaining sensitive to cultural expressions. Participants widely agreed that while outward practices and institutional expressions of Buddhism may vary. The essential teachings, centred on the cessation of suffering, ethical conduct, and mental cultivation, form the unifying basis of the tradition.

4.3.4 Defining Buddhist

The teachings of the Buddha are universally recognised as a pathway to the cessation of suffering, grounded in a profound understanding of impermanence and non-self. These concepts are further embodied through the realisation of emptiness and the non-dual nature of all phenomena. However, while these philosophical aims articulate the ultimate goal of achieving Nirvana or complete liberation, they remain conceptual in nature. This raises a practical question: how can one identify who qualifies as a Buddhist? This study uncovered three interpretative positions in response to that question: (1) the orthodox view, (2) the liberal reinterpretation of taking refuge, and (3) a more humanistic framing that emphasises Buddhism as a guiding life philosophy.

The Orthodox Perspective: Taking Refuge in the Triple Gem. In the orthodox view, becoming a Buddhist is a formal process that begins with taking refuge in the Triple Gem — the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. This act symbolises a conscious commitment to follow the Buddhist path and seek liberation through the guidance of these three pillars. Participants who held this view emphasised that refuge-taking is not merely symbolic but represents an official entry point into Buddhist identity. It indicates a practitioner's intention to regard the Buddha as the ultimate teacher, the Dharma as the ultimate truth, and the Sangha as the community supporting the path to liberation.

> Monks are the refuge of sentient beings or a mentor. So, I think the simplest thing is to start with the Triple Gem — Buddha, Dharma, Sangha. That is, whether a Buddhist believes in the Triple Gem, whether he believes in the Buddha, Dharma, or Sangha as a refuge object. Because Buddhists must take refuge, take refuge in the Triple Gem. If you are willing to take refuge in the Triple Gem, then you are a true Buddhist… I believe this is indispensable… If you want to define it by definition, according to what the Buddha said, take refuge in the Triple Gem first! If you have taken refuge in the Triple Gem, then you are a Buddhist. (Participant 9, Mahayana)

For many participants, this act of taking refuge is analogous to enrolling in a school—a formal step that signifies the beginning of a transformative educational journey.

The Liberal Interpretation: Internalising the Triple Gem. Other participants advocated for a more liberal view, seeing the Triple Gem not only as external entities but as symbolic of internal qualities. This "Internal Triple Gem" view posits that one takes refuge in the enlightened nature of the mind (Buddha), in true understanding and right view (Dharma), and in purity and moral integrity (Sangha). This perspective aims to address the challenges posed by the Buddha's *parinibbana*, the diversity of scriptural interpretations across traditions, and inconsistencies in the conduct of monastic communities.

> Now, talking about the Triple Gem as our inner refuge, the Buddha is no longer here, so how can we rely on him? Where can we find him? So, what about the Sangha? Now, you don't even know who the saints are, but how can you rely on them? Even if you talk about the Dhamma, every school says that its own teachings are true and its own scriptures are true. So, who do you believe?… I think there is an internal Triple Gem for a person. What is the internal Triple Gem? Have you heard of the Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch?… It is the self-nature Triple Gem spoken by Huineng, the Sixth Patriarch. (Participant 6, Theravada)

While rooted in Mahayana texts, this interpretation was echoed across traditions, suggesting a more introspective view of Buddhist identity.

The Humanistic Approach: Dharma as Life's Guiding Principles. The most inclusive view was put forth by participants promoting Humanistic Buddhism or those engaged in Dharma propagation in the West. They framed Buddhism as a practical philosophy and spiritual path rather than a religious identity per se. In this view, being a Buddhist means accepting the Buddha's teachings as moral and practical guidance for life, not necessarily requiring formal affiliation or belief in metaphysical doctrines.

> So, the reason we say Buddhists… take refuge… is to say that whenever we encounter any problems, difficult decisions to make in our lives, we know to check back with the Buddhist teachings… That's taking refuge. But second, the trainings are to hear the Dharma, to

> contemplate the Dharma, and to practise the Dharma. And the most important being in the practice. The Chinese word for Buddhism is 'Fo Jiao' (佛教), which means the teaching of the Buddha. So, a Buddhist is somebody… who will consider the teachings of the Buddha in guiding their actions, their speech, and their thoughts. (Participant 7, Mahayana)

However, even in this more liberal view, there was consensus that fundamental acceptance of the principles of karma and rebirth remained indispensable. This marked a boundary distinguishing Humanistic Buddhism from Secular Buddhism, which some participants criticised for removing doctrinal essentials. Likewise, movements such as Radical Dharma, which challenged the Middle Path with activist-oriented reinterpretations, were also regarded as deviating from Buddhist orthodoxy.

> This is something where I have a little bit of difficulty with… there's a group called Secular Buddhists. They do not believe in karma and… So, this is the reason why… how do you define Buddhist? I just have to go back to what people call themselves because I wouldn't call them Buddhist, but they call themselves Buddhist. (Participant 7, Mahayana)

> The Buddha was a prince… already considered a very high achievement… but he was not satisfied with only secular life. So I often think these foreigners are very interesting, they have another Buddhism, secular Buddhism, right? Buddha wanted to transcend, and now he [Stephen Batchelor] is reversing back. There is another one they call Radical Dharma… Why would Dharma have 'Radical Dharma'? Don't you have to be rid of both extremes? (Participant 8, Mahayana)

A Working Definition of "Being a Buddhist". If one seeks the lowest common denominator across the range of perspectives, the humanistic definition appears to be the most inclusive. Within this framework, a Buddhist is someone who adopts the teachings of the Buddha as life-guiding principles. This definition emphasises two intertwined components: (1) a basic understanding of the Buddha's teachings (Dharma), and (2) a demonstrable effort to apply those teachings in one's daily life. In short: knowing the path and walking the path.

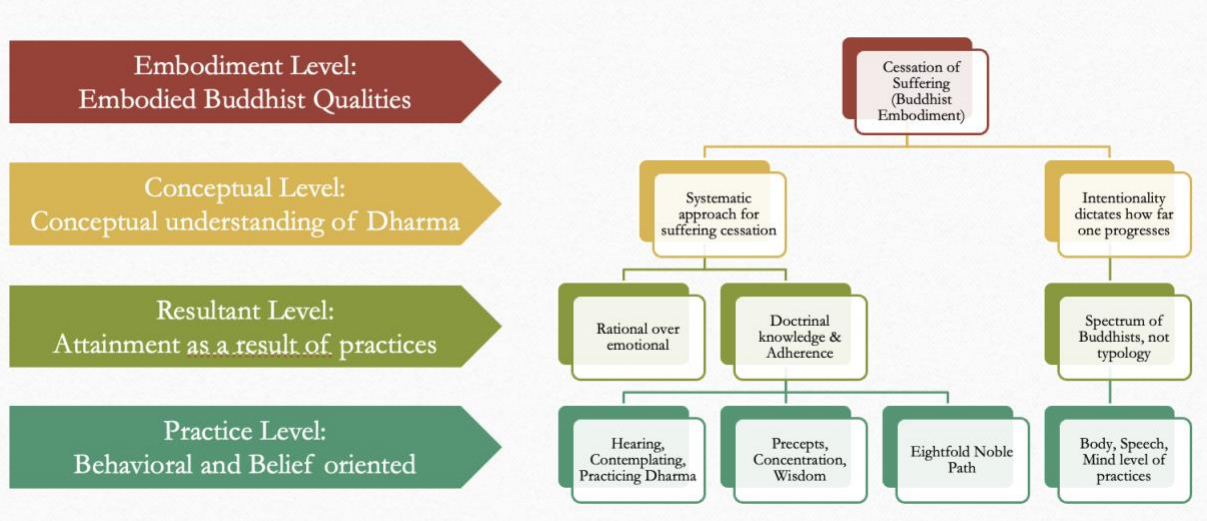
In a particular Dharma community referenced by a participant, the membership was characterised by significant diversity in terms of ethnic, social, and religious backgrounds. Despite this heterogeneity, individuals within the community were collectively recognised as Buddhists due to their consistent engagement with Dharma practice and their embodiment of the ethical and spiritual values inherent in Buddhist teachings. This emphasises the inclusive nature of Buddhist identity, which transcends cultural and socioeconomic divisions through a shared commitment to Dharma principles.

4.3.5 Thematic Synthesis: What Being a Buddhist Entails

While foundational knowledge of Buddhist principles and doctrines is universally regarded as essential, the practical expressions of Buddhist religiosity vary considerably across traditions and cultural contexts. Sectarian-specific practices, shaped by historical transmission and cultural integration, have produced a diverse array of rituals, pedagogies, and interpretive emphases. Given this diversity, it is important to synthesise these variations into an overarching structure that is both doctrinally coherent and inclusively representative of cross-traditional perspectives.

Drawing on participants' insights, ten inductive themes were identified that reflect core dimensions of the Buddhist path. These were organised into four superordinate levels, forming a conceptual hierarchy that progresses from observable practices to the internal embodiment of Buddhist virtues. This structure, informed by participants' reflections on the gradual deepening of religious understanding and transformation, is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Hierarchy of Buddhist Religiosity Themes



At the foundation is the Practice Level, encompassing both behavioural and belief-oriented commitments that initiate the practitioner into Buddhist life. These include hearing, contemplating, and practising the Dharma (闻思修), the Three Studies—precepts (*sila*), concentration (*samadhi*), and wisdom (*panna*)—the Noble Eightfold Path, and the training of body, speech, and mind.

Above this lies the Resultant Level, which captures the attainments that arise as a result of sustained practice. These include the development of doctrinal knowledge, a rational rather than emotional engagement with the world, and progression along a spectrum of Buddhist religious expression and internal transformation.

The Conceptual Level represents a reflective understanding of the Dharma as an interconnected, systematic teaching aimed at the cessation of suffering. Themes at this level include

the practitioner's grasp of the Buddhist path as a structured system and the role of intentionality in determining one's spiritual trajectory.

At the apex lies the Embodiment Level, which encompasses qualities that reflect deep internalisation of Buddhist teachings. These include compassion, wisdom, inclusivity, reduction in the three poisons, emotional clarity, and selflessness. These qualities were often described as traits that naturally emanate from accomplished practitioners, discernible not necessarily through external ritual performance but through the "vibe" or presence they give off, subtle yet powerful signs of their transformation.

This hierarchical structure (see Figure 2) demonstrates how Buddhist religiosity, as understood by senior monastic scholars and teachers, is more than mere participation in ritual or subscription to belief. Rather, it unfolds as a progressive journey in which behavioural adherence facilitates doctrinal understanding, which in turn informs deeper personal transformation and ultimately manifests in the lived embodiment of the Dharma.

4.3.6 Practice Level Themes

This foundational level encompasses themes related to the behavioural and belief-oriented aspects of Buddhist religiosity. According to participants, these are essential practices that initiate and support one's journey on the Buddhist path. While these themes appear doctrinally grounded, they are often manifested through concrete actions and are among the most observable components of Buddhist life. At this level, four key themes were identified:

- Hearing, Contemplating, and Practising Dharma (闻思修)
- The Three Studies: Precepts, Concentration, and Wisdom (戒定慧三学)
- The Noble Eightfold Path (八正道)
- Practices Targeting the Body, Speech, and Mind (身口意)

Each of these themes reflects a systematic and progressive structure of spiritual development, and they constitute the foundational activities through which Buddhists strive to reduce suffering, cultivate virtue, and move toward liberation.

Hearing, Contemplating, and Practising Dharma (闻思修). The practice of hearing, contemplating, and practising the Dharma constitutes a well-established framework in Buddhist teaching for learning and internalising the teachings. This tripartite approach corresponds closely with the Four Factors of Stream Entry: associating with virtuous teachers (亲近善士), listening to the true Dharma (听闻正法), reflecting on key teachings (如理作意), and practising accordingly (法隨法

行). Together, they form a structured and experiential pathway through which practitioners come to understand and live by the Buddha's teachings.

Participants emphasised that hearing the Dharma from reputable and knowledgeable teachers is the initial and necessary step in one's Buddhist education. However, listening alone is not sufficient. The next step is contemplating, where practitioners actively reflect on the teachings, draw connections with other doctrinal ideas, and examine their applicability to their own lives. Finally, practising entails translating understanding into daily conduct, allowing the teachings to be verified and tested through real-world experiences.

As one participant from the Theravada tradition explained:

> Okay, okay, so it's all about listening and learning. It's a process of hearing the teachings. These can be considered concrete actions we take when learning Buddhism. You have to use these actions to connect with the people who can teach you Buddhism or those sources of teachings. It's necessary; otherwise, how can you learn those teachings, and from where? After listening and learning, you have to think for yourself. And then you have to go and practice and verify it. That's how you complete the whole path of practice! (Participant 6, Theravada)

Another participant from the Vajrayana tradition highlighted the necessity of mindful integration:

> But like I said, we also can't simply read our way to enlightenment. We also have to sit and reflect on those teachings and then also observe our mind and see where our thoughts, which then lead our speech and our actions, see where our thoughts are in line with the teachings and where they deviate, where we're off the track, and then we just bring ourselves back into focus, back in line with the Buddha's teachings. (Participant 11, Vajrayana)

This theme captures a recurrent idea across traditions: that authentic Buddhist religiosity is not about passive belief, but about engaging the Dharma in a dynamic process of listening, internal reflection, and embodied application.

The Three Studies: Precepts, Concentration, and Wisdom (戒定慧三学). The Three Studies—Precepts (*sila*), Concentration (*samadhi*), and Wisdom (*panna*)—form a central triad of Buddhist cultivation, providing a systematic path through which practitioners purify their conduct, develop mental clarity, and ultimately attain liberating insight. These three are not discrete, sequential steps but mutually reinforcing aspects of practice, often described as interdependent and co-arising. Their importance was echoed by participants across all three traditions, who stressed that without ethical discipline, one cannot attain the mental calm necessary for developing wisdom.

One Theravada participant explained the hierarchy of cultivation as follows:

> But the ones who have meditation, they must have built a meditation on the basis of *sila* – morality. So the second one must be present before the second one can be developed, right? And the third one, the wisdom, is the highest one. Right. The higher one must be penetrated through the second one and first one. Right. So when you get to the three, the three come together as one. In that sequence! (Participant 3, Theravada)

Precepts (*sila*) represent the ethical foundation of Buddhist life, typically codified in the Five Precepts for laypeople and additional precepts for monastics. These guidelines—such as abstaining from killing, stealing, lying, sexual misconduct, and intoxicants—are more than moral rules; they serve to stabilise the mind and promote social harmony. Participants highlighted their immediate practical value in daily life:

> I see the practical side of those precepts because when you avoid doing that [prohibited by precepts], you avoid sleeping with other people's wives [or] husbands, avoid killing, avoid drinking, avoid lying. It brings to [you] immediately what you want. So that is a practical side. (Participant 1, Theravada)

Another Mahayana teacher offered a metaphorical reflection on precepts as a first line of spiritual protection:

> So, most people experience suffering. Therefore, this part of "precepts" can at least protect us. For example, if someone has an accident on the road and is bleeding heavily, what should they do before the ambulance arrives? Stop the bleeding. Yes, at this time, we must first stop the bleeding ourselves, so that the blood does not [bleed], and then wait for the ambulance to arrive. (Participant 5, Mahayana)

Concentration (samadhi) is the second study and refers to the cultivation of a focused and undistracted mind. It is mainly achieved through meditative practices that bring about tranquility and sustained attention. Concentration supports clarity and steadiness, allowing insight to arise without mental turbulence.

Wisdom (*panna*) is the culmination of this triad and represents the realisation of the truths expounded in the Dharma, especially those relating to impermanence, non-self, and dependent origination. Unlike conceptual knowledge, wisdom in Buddhism is experiential and transformative, cultivated through ethical living and sustained contemplation.

A participant from the Mahayana tradition drew connections between ethical purity, meditative clarity, and the ability to perceive reality clearly:

> So, a person has wisdom. What has the person become? This person can see the whole environment very clearly. Because only when you can see clearly can you then reflect on actions. Why are you able to see clearly? It's like the surface of a lake is very calm. You

> possess a very meditative mind, and you can see very clearly. And your meditative mind comes from your daily life. (Participant 8, Mahayana)

The Three Studies were described as a comprehensive framework applicable across all traditions and contexts, offering a systematic method for both lay and monastic practitioners. Their presence in this theme demonstrates that regardless of one's doctrinal alignment, ethical conduct, mental cultivation, and insight remain core to the lived experience of Buddhist religiosity.

The Noble Eightfold Path (八正道). The Noble Eightfold Path (*Ariya Atthangika Magga*; 八正道) is a foundational teaching that encapsulates the practical framework for achieving the cessation of suffering. It represents the Fourth Noble Truth and provides a roadmap for ethical living, mental cultivation, and wisdom development. As Participant 3 (Theravada) put it: "Suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the way leading to the end of suffering. So the Noble Eightfold Path is paving the last, the fourth one, and the Fourth one Noble Eightfold Path is the Middle Path."

Each factor of the Eightfold Path contributes to the overall spiritual transformation expected of a Buddhist practitioner. The path is traditionally grouped into three broad categories: ethical conduct (*sila*), mental discipline (*samadhi*), and wisdom (*panna*),

Right View (*Samma Ditthi*; 正見) serves as the foundation. It involves understanding the Four Noble Truths and recognising suffering, its origin, cessation, and the path leading to it. Participant 6 (Theravada) explained: "Right view means the Four Noble Truths, which can be considered the root of all the lineages in Mahayana. So, if you really believe in the Four Noble Truths, at least this is something."

Right Intention (*Samma Sankappa*; 正思維) refers to cultivating intentions grounded in renunciation, goodwill, and harmlessness. These intentions guide practitioners to act with clarity and compassion. As another participant elaborated:

> Do you know the three things that make up "right intention"? The first is "renunciation," which actually means wisdom, or our thoughts and intentions. "Right reflection" refers to our motives, or correct motives, which is Right Intention. So "renunciation" means that our motives should be detached from desire… The second one is "fearlessness," which means that we should not have fear or anger towards anyone… And the last one is "non-violence," which means not harming any sentient beings. (Participant 6, Theravada)

Right Speech (*Samma Vaca*; 正语) focuses on the ethical use of language—avoiding falsehood, divisive speech, harsh words, and idle chatter. It fosters trust and harmony in interpersonal relationships and is seen as a natural extension of inner discipline and mindfulness.

Right Action (*Samma Kammanta*; 正业) refers to acting in ways that do not cause harm. It typically includes refraining from killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct. For many participants, Right Action was a direct reflection of their understanding of precepts and ethical behaviour.

Right Livelihood (*Samma Ajiva*; 正命) involves choosing a profession that does not cause harm to others. One Vajrayana practitioner explained the importance of alignment between professional life and values: "We don't want to be in a position where all day we're in conflict with the values of what's going on around us… I want to be at least in an environment where I can support the mission, support the value." (Participant 13, Vajrayana)

Right Effort (*Samma Vayama*; 正精进) calls for cultivating wholesome states of mind and avoiding unwholesome ones. This includes preventing the arising of negative mental states and strengthening those that are positive and beneficial.

Right Mindfulness (*Samma Sati*; 正念) involves awareness of one's body, feelings, thoughts, and mental states. It is often linked with maintaining present-moment attention and fostering insight. Participant 5 (Mahayana) likened mindfulness to stabilising the mind during a crisis: "We need to use 'right mindfulness' to calm our mind and stay calm until we reach the hospital."

Right Concentration (*Samma Samadhi*; 正定) culminates the path by enabling deeper meditative absorption and clarity of mind. It facilitates the development of wisdom and supports the transformative journey towards liberation.

Together, the Eightfold Path is not merely a checklist of actions but a dynamic system where each component reinforces the others. As Participant 9 (Mahayana) aptly stated: "So, if you lack right view, you lack compassion, then how can you do it like that? Therefore, the definition of mindfulness… the definition of mindfulness, do you say it is for Buddhists?" This rhetorical reflection highlights the interdependency of ethical clarity, mental discipline, and spiritual vision in Buddhist religiosity.

Body, Speech, and Mind Training (身口意). The training of body, speech, and mind (*kaya*, *vaca*, *citta*; 身、口、意) is a cornerstone of Buddhist practice. These three spheres—actions, words, and thoughts—are the primary channels through which karma is generated. Accordingly, the purification and cultivation of these domains is seen as foundational to progressing on the path toward liberation. Their interdependence forms a coherent ethical and contemplative framework, shaping how one engages with the world both internally and externally.

Training of the body (*kaya*) centres on ethical conduct and physical restraint. This includes adherence to the precepts (*sila*), which are not viewed merely as prohibitions but as positive

commitments that guard against harm. One participant explained that precepts can function like emergency first aid, saying that:

> As long as we have not liberated ourselves from birth and death, we will definitely have a relationship with karma… this part of 'precepts' can at least protect us. For example, if someone has an accident on the road and is bleeding heavily, what should they do before the ambulance arrives? Before being sent to the hospital… what should we do? Stop the bleeding. Yes, at this time, we must first stop the bleeding ourselves, so that the blood does not [bleed], and then wait for the ambulance to arrive. (Participant 5, Mahayana)

This analogy reinforces the idea that bodily discipline, while not the end goal, serves a critical role in stabilising the practitioner until deeper insight is attained.

Training of speech (*vaca*) focuses on mindful and ethical communication. Right speech in Buddhist ethics involves abstaining from lying, divisive talk, harsh words, and idle gossip. It is understood that speech arises from the mind and thus reflects internal states. As one participant put it, "The words we speak and the things we do all come out of our minds" (Participant 8, Mahayana). This points to the intimate link between thought and verbal conduct, emphasising that ethical speech requires ongoing mindfulness and self-awareness.

Training of the mind (*citta*) is regarded as the most essential of the three, given that it governs both bodily and verbal actions. Mental cultivation encompasses mindfulness, meditative focus (*samadhi*), and insight (*panna*), all directed toward weakening the three poisons—greed, hatred, and ignorance. The primacy of intention is captured by one participant who observed:

> You never thought of killing, did you? You never thought of robbing, and you never thought of violating someone's body. Inside your head, if you purify the source—if there are no such thoughts inside your head—you will not do it… In Buddhism, your body, speech, and mind, the 'mind' leads your words and leads your actions. (Participant 8, Mahayana)

This illustrates the Buddhist understanding that mental purification is the basis for all other forms of ethical practice. When the mind is defiled, ethical behaviour becomes unsustainable; conversely, when the mind is clear and grounded, speech and action naturally align with the Dharma.

Together, these three domains form a mutually reinforcing system of self-cultivation. Ethical behaviour (body and speech) supports the development of mental clarity, while mental discipline fortifies one's capacity to act and speak wisely. This synergy between body, speech, and mind is foundational in transforming not only individual karma but also one's capacity to embody the teachings of the Buddha in everyday life.

4.3.7 Resultant Level Themes.

At this level of analysis, the focus turns to the effects or outcomes resulting from foundational Buddhist practices. These "resultant level" themes capture observable

transformations—both internal and external—that reflect a practitioner's progress along the path. Specifically, the themes of "rational over emotional", "doctrinal knowledge and adherence", and "Buddhist spectrum" illustrate how practice manifests as behavioural change, ethical refinement, and conceptual clarity.

Rational over Emotional. One recurrent theme in the interviews is the portrayal of Buddhism as a rational, grounded, and pragmatic path. Participants across traditions repeatedly described Buddhism as realistic and logical in its framing of suffering and its cessation. One Mahayana teacher succinctly stated: "In fact, the Buddha talked about reality, THE 'reality.' The realities in the world are not two extremes… No, Buddhism is realistic" (Participant 8, Mahayana). This emphasis on realism is deeply tied to the Middle Path (中道), which avoids both self-indulgence and self-mortification and instead encourages thoughtful engagement with the world as it is.

Mental discipline is at the core of this rational approach. A Theravada participant observed that, "[It is] okay if we do not believe in the metaphysics, but it is more important that we use the teaching to train our mind, to be focused, to be clear of everything happening around us within our mind" (Participant 14, Theravada). This statement echoes the view that Buddhism is less about dogma and more about psychological transformation and clarity.

Ethical conduct and the understanding of karmic consequences further underscore Buddhism's rational dimension. These are not mystical claims but are framed as observable, cause-and-effect relationships. As Participant 1 (Theravada) recounted:

> So, from then on, I got to know a real Buddhism, a Buddhism that focused on training the mind, how it's not about praying and chanting to, you know, all kinds of bodhisattva and Guanyin and who knows what… I went, and I studied Buddhism psychology named Abhidhamma… I think Buddhism… should cater [to] the understanding of your mind [on] how to deal with the problem[s] in life. (Participant 1, Theravada)

The *Kalama Sutta* was also cited as a doctrinal foundation for Buddhism's rational stance. In this teaching, the Buddha encourages individuals to examine claims critically, rather than relying solely on tradition or authority. Participant 6 (Theravada) explained that faith should arise from experiential understanding: "What I am talking about is how we can establish this faith. We need to focus on our own practice, and verify and experience it ourselves."

Doctrinal Knowledge and Adherence. A second critical theme at this level is the importance of doctrinal knowledge and one's fidelity to Buddhist teachings. While experiential learning is essential, participants stressed that understanding the Dharma, particularly core teachings such as

the Four Noble Truths, the Three Dharma Seals, and dependent origination, is indispensable for genuine progress.

As Participant 3 (Theravada) explained:

> Down to the very essence. This will be the Nibbana of the ones who are practising the Buddhist doctrines. The precepts know the virtue of morality. Right? And that will be the main one, the core of what Buddhism, Buddha's teachings [are] all about. But on the [other] hand, maybe this requires pretty much a lot of understanding of doctrines… and practice. (Participant 3, Theravada)

This quotation affirms that doctrinal knowledge is not simply academic or optional—it is fundamental to living out the path. Practitioners who internalise and apply Buddhist principles are better equipped to discern the true spirit of the teachings and avoid being misled by cultural accretions or superficial practices.

This theme is tightly interwoven with others already identified, such as "Hearing, Contemplating, and Practising Dharma" and "Precepts, Concentration, Wisdom", in that doctrinal understanding develops *through* disciplined practice. It is the cumulative outcome of long-term engagement with the teachings and not merely intellectual assent.

Buddhist Spectrum. The third theme in this category is the idea of a *spectrum* of attainment. Participants rejected a binary view of who is or is not a "true" Buddhist. Instead, they described a continuum of engagement and transformation that reflects the varying degrees to which individuals have internalised and practised the Dharma.

For example, one Vajrayana participant contrasted two types of practitioners:

> And then you have the person who is super busy and only has time for a little bit of practice in the morning and maybe a little study in the evening. But they're really taking what they're learning and trying to put it into practice… I would say that person has a higher degree of religiosity than the person who appears to be very devout, very involved with notice. (Participant 11, Vajrayana)

This insight shifts the focus from external markers of religiosity, such as ritual participation or affiliation, to the depth of inner transformation and behavioural integrity. It also aligns with the findings on embodiment, where the degree of internalised practice becomes the measure of one's Buddhist religiosity.

The "Buddhist spectrum" theme also implies that attainment is not a fixed status but a dynamic process. As such, the emphasis falls not on identifying a final category of being Buddhist but on recognising and encouraging continual movement along the path, shaped by intentionality, understanding, and sustained effort.

4.3.8 The Conceptual Level Themes

At the conceptual level, Buddhist practitioners begin to engage with the structural underpinnings of their spiritual journey. This level reflects a deeper internalisation of Buddhist teachings—not only in terms of knowledge but also through insight into how those teachings interrelate to form a coherent path toward the cessation of suffering. Two key themes emerge here: the importance of a "systematic approach" to practice and the role of "intentionality" in shaping one's spiritual progress.

Systematic Approach to the Cessation of Suffering. Across traditions, participants articulated that the path to liberation is not arbitrary or mystical, but systematic. This rational structure reinforces the idea that Buddhist practice is both methodical and internally consistent. As expressed earlier in "Precepts, Concentration, Wisdom," and the "Noble Eightfold Path," foundational teachings are not merely lists of principles but interconnected components that work together in a logical progression. Participant 5 (Mahayana) explained:

> In the Kalama Sutra, the Buddha did not teach us this. Alright. When it comes to "faith," in fact, Buddhism does not ask us to talk about "faith." What Buddhism talks about is the "faith" of "faith in the heart." This is to establish the faith that arises when you understand Buddhism. Then, it will play a role, and even, we call it "certainty," which is a kind of established "right view." After having the correct knowledge and view of Buddhism, this is called 'continuing' in 'continuous diligence.' That is not the "faith" of "belief." (Participant 5, Mahayana)

This comment illustrates that in Buddhism, faith is not blind adherence but confidence rooted in personal understanding and realisation. The logical flow from hearing the Dharma to contemplating it and then testing it through lived experience exemplifies the systematic character of Buddhist religiosity.

In describing their journey, participants often reflected on how their understanding of the teachings evolved through structured practice. There was a clear recognition that transformation does not occur randomly, but through sustained alignment with well-established frameworks. Doctrinal coherence and sequential cultivation emerged as strong indicators of meaningful progress.

Intentionality. The second theme, *intentionality*, centres on the idea that the practitioner's original purpose or resolve sets the direction and depth of their engagement. Unlike general motivation, which might be reactive or circumstantial, intentionality is a deliberate, goal-oriented orientation toward the Buddhist path. As Participant 7 (Mahayana) put it: "The goal is not in the sitting. The goal is not in the chanting. So, each practitioner will have to find your goal." Some practitioners aim for liberation from suffering or the realisation of non-self, while others engage in practice to cultivate merit, calm the mind, or resolve karmic burdens. These differing intentions not only shape behaviour but also determine the types of teachings and practices they are drawn to. As

the same participant continued: “Some people’s goals are liberation. Liberation from suffering. That’s the Buddhist. That’s the traditional Buddhist project. Some people’s goal may not be that… some people go like me, is to debug my karma.”

Intentionality also plays a clarifying role in how participants define what it means to be Buddhist. The seriousness and clarity of one’s intention inform how faithfully one follows the path, how deeply one reflects on doctrine, and how effectively one embodies the Dharma. Thus, at the conceptual level, progress is measured not only by outward practice but also by an increasing internal coherence. Practitioners begin to discern how their intentions shape their experience and how the system of practice supports the gradual unveiling of insight. The convergence of structured engagement and clear intentionality forms the cognitive scaffolding that supports deeper embodiment of Buddhist religiosity.

4.3.9 Embodiment Level Theme

The final level of Buddhist religiosity in this study concerns embodiment—how the teachings and practices of Buddhism manifest as lived qualities in a practitioner’s behaviour, presence, and disposition. This level reflects the fullest integration of doctrinal knowledge, intentional effort, and disciplined practice. Embodiment goes beyond formal affiliation or ritual observance; it represents the degree to which one has internalised the Dharma and expresses it consistently in body, speech, and mind. Participants frequently described this as something intuitive or perceptible—an aura or “vibe” that seasoned practitioners naturally give off.

Across the traditions, participants articulated a shared understanding of what embodied religiosity looks like. Compassion and lovingkindness, for instance, were universally viewed as core qualities, not only in doctrinal terms but also in their visible enactment through daily interactions. These traits were often described alongside rationality, emotional calmness, inclusivity, and non-attachment—virtues seen as emerging from serious and long-term engagement with Buddhist teachings. Importantly, these were not treated as goals to be separately pursued but as by-products of authentic spiritual maturation.

The reduction of the three poisons—greed, hatred, and ignorance—was a particularly prominent indicator of embodiment. This triad, deeply rooted in Buddhist philosophy, was seen as the inner work that sustains outward transformation. Participant 12 (Mahayana) reflected on this point by emphasising that, “To evaluate ourselves accurately, we must examine our own level of greed, anger, and ignorance.” This self-monitoring was framed not as a passive observation but as a disciplined and ongoing form of introspection, through which one’s own progress can be honestly assessed.

Participants also described clarity of mind as both a sign and a support of embodiment. A composed and focused mind, cultivated through practice, allows individuals to act ethically and

wisely even in complex situations. Participant 14 (Theravada) linked this inner clarity with practical outcomes in life and work, noting:

> That's why when they decide they can make their mind calm, they can concentrate on their life or their business. They will have a good idea, or they're my view, clear to think about how they can run their business. That power does not come from only mantra or sutta, but comes from their mind. Keep calm or have the consciousness. Then when you clear inside, you will think anything more and more and want to develop again and again. (Participant 14, Theravada)

Another recurring theme was transformation—specifically, the reduction of unwholesome mental states and the cultivation of wholesome ones. Participant 4 (Vajrayana) articulated this succinctly, stating that embodiment "means to transform your mind, to transform negative qualities… and to cultivate beneficial ones." For this participant and others, the evidence of genuine Buddhist religiosity lay in how the teachings reshaped one's character over time. Rituals and knowledge alone were considered insufficient if they did not lead to visible ethical transformation and inner peace.

Embodiment was also associated with a broader emotional stability and equanimity. Rather than being reactive or swayed by external pressures, embodied practitioners were described as calm, patient, and mindful. Several participants highlighted this quality as a reliable marker of spiritual maturity. As Participant 8 (Mahayana) noted, "The words we speak and the things we do all come out of our minds. So, what was your intention like?" In this view, the mind is the wellspring of action, and its purification is central to walking the path with integrity.

A less expected yet consistent theme was "optimism." Despite Buddhism's emphasis on suffering, participants noted that practitioners who embody the teachings tend to radiate hope, resilience, and confidence in the possibility of liberation. This optimism was not naïve but grounded in experiential understanding—that suffering, while inevitable, can be transcended through the path laid out by the Buddha. As such, embodiment reflects a mature religiosity that integrates wisdom and compassion with a deep faith in human potential.

Overall, the embodiment of Buddhist religiosity, as described by participants, encompasses a spectrum of internal qualities and outward expressions. These are not merely the result of learning doctrines or engaging in rituals but are cultivated through deliberate practice and inner work. Through this lens, religiosity is not what one claims to believe or do, but what one becomes. It is a dynamic process of transformation, marked by the tangible presence of ethical, emotional, and cognitive qualities that are consistently aligned with the Dharma.

4.4 Discussion

This study sought to explore and clarify how Buddhist religiosity is conceptualised across the three principal Buddhist traditions: Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana. Drawing on in-depth interviews with senior practitioners and scholars, the study revealed a surprising degree of consensus in participants' understanding of the foundational purpose and core tenets of Buddhism. Despite substantial variation in rituals, cultural expressions, and textual emphases, a doctrinal throughline unites these traditions, particularly in their shared goal of transcending suffering and attaining enlightenment. These findings offer a timely opportunity to revisit and critically evaluate how Buddhist religiosity has been traditionally defined and operationalised in both academic and empirical research.

At the heart of this convergence lies a widely shared understanding: that Buddhism is fundamentally a path aimed at the cessation of suffering and liberation from the cycle of rebirth (samsara). This view is consistent with canonical interpretations of Buddhist doctrine, especially the Four Noble Truths and the law of dependent origination, which identify craving and attachment to the illusion of a permanent self as the root of existential suffering (Binh & Mahatthanadull, 2019; Keown, 2013). That such a doctrinal foundation is echoed across all three traditions—each with its own historical developments and localised expressions—affirms the durability and universality of the Buddha's original insight. It also strengthens the case for proposing a non-sectarian, doctrinally grounded definition of Buddhist religiosity.

A particularly salient insight from the data is the emphasis on practice as the defining expression of religiosity within Buddhism. This contrasts with many theistic traditions, particularly within the Judeo-Christian heritage, where faith is often centred on trust in a divine being or the authority of revealed truths. While such faith can encompass trust, relationship, obedience, and existential commitment—not merely emotional devotion—Buddhist conceptualisations of faith (*sraddha*) are oriented differently. Here, faith is understood as confidence in the efficacy of the path: belief in the Buddha's awakening, in the law of karma, and in the possibility of liberation through one's own effort (Yinshun, 2008). Rather than replacing experiential engagement, this form of faith functions as a motivational and epistemic stance—a provisional trust that is ultimately confirmed through personal realisation.

The role of faith in Buddhist religiosity remains a complex issue, particularly when considering variations across traditions. In Mahayana Buddhism, for example, faith assumes a more prominent role, especially within Pure Land practice, where belief in the salvific power of Amitabha Buddha and rebirth in the Western Pure Land forms a central tenet (Sheng Yen, 2007). However, even in such contexts, faith is not viewed as sufficient on its own. Rather, it is cultivated to motivate the

practitioner's own ethical and meditative practices. This highlights that within Buddhism, faith operates more as a facilitative mechanism than a doctrinal endpoint.

By contrast, Theravada Buddhism typically places less emphasis on devotional faith and more on rigorous personal cultivation. This tradition holds that transformation is primarily achieved through the disciplined application of the Noble Eightfold Path, with particular emphasis on moral conduct, mindfulness, and wisdom (Bodhi, 1999a; Rahula, 1974). While expressions of reverence toward the Buddha and Sangha are not absent in Theravada contexts, they are not regarded as transformative in and of themselves. Participants from the Theravada tradition in this study repeatedly stressed the need for experiential insight, moral purification, and mental discipline as the cornerstones of authentic religiosity.

It is likely that the increasing prominence of ritual, devotional iconography, and mythic cosmologies in Mahayana and Vajrayana traditions has contributed to the perception of Buddhism as faith-centred. These developments include the worship of Bodhisattvas, reliance on esoteric transmissions, and an expanding body of scriptures that include later Mahayana sutras (Jayadi, 2019; Keown, 2013). However, key thinkers within Mahayana Buddhism, such as Venerable Sheng Yen (2007) and Yinshun (2021b), have consistently reiterated that faith must ultimately be embodied through practice. Without personal cultivation, faith remains inert and ineffective in producing the kind of transformation envisioned by the Dharma.

Given this doctrinal consistency, it is unsurprising that participants across all three traditions emphasised a shared core of Buddhist religiosity rooted in experiential learning, ethical conduct, and mental cultivation. These elements, rather than external rituals or nominal identification, were seen as the hallmarks of a committed practitioner. Participants routinely described the process of integrating Buddhist teachings into daily life as central to their religious identity. Such convergence across traditions provides a strong empirical foundation for developing a multidimensional yet doctrinally faithful conceptualisation of Buddhist religiosity.

4.4.1 Convergence of Core Buddhist Teachings

The findings of this study reveal a remarkable convergence in the doctrinal understanding of Buddhism across the Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana traditions. Despite the differences in cultural expression, ritual forms, and theological elaborations, participants across all traditions consistently emphasised that the fundamental purpose of Buddhism is to end suffering and attain liberation from samsara. This shared orientation toward the cessation of dukkha reflects the centrality of the Four Noble Truths in all traditions, regardless of their historical developments or geographic spread. Such doctrinal continuity underscores that, while practices may diverge, the foundational goal of Buddhist religiosity remains consistent.

A unifying thread across traditions is the identification of the Three Poisons—greed (*lobha*, 贪), hatred (*dosa*, 嗔), and ignorance (*moha*, 痴)—as the root causes of suffering. These mental afflictions are universally recognised in Buddhist thought as the core obstacles that perpetuate the cycle of rebirth and hinder spiritual liberation. Participants in this study referenced these defilements as central to their understanding of Buddhist practice, emphasising the need to uproot them through ethical conduct, meditation, and insight. This shared emphasis points to a doctrinal coherence that transcends sectarian boundaries and affirms a common moral psychology within the Buddhist worldview (Wayman, 1957).

Another area of strong doctrinal alignment lies in the understanding of impermanence (*anicca*) and non-self (*anatta*), which participants referenced repeatedly as foundational to their religious views. Across all traditions, these two characteristics were described as essential insights that reshape the practitioner's relationship to self, others, and the world. Even where Mahayana and Vajrayana traditions expand on these ideas through concepts such as emptiness (*sunyata*) and non-duality, they do not reject the earlier teachings but rather build upon them to provide a more nuanced and context-sensitive interpretation. The continued centrality of these doctrines confirms that their relevance is not limited to any one tradition but remains at the heart of Buddhist soteriology (Deegalle, 2018; Sheng Yen, 2007).

The concept of the Dharma Seals—doctrinal markers used to determine whether a teaching can be considered authentically Buddhist—offers another example of both unity and expansion. Theravada tradition generally adheres to the Three Dharma Seals: impermanence, non-self, and suffering. Mahayana and Vajrayana traditions, however, often refer to the Four Dharma Seals, with the addition of Nirvana as a transcendent truth, or the seal of emptiness or non-duality, depending on interpretation. While these variations exist, they do not contradict the earlier three seals but aim to deepen their practical and philosophical implications. As scholars such as Veidlinger (2010) and Lu (2022) have argued, these four elements offer interpretive frameworks that highlight either the universality of enlightenment potential (Buddha-nature) or the non-dual nature of reality.

This shared doctrinal foundation provides compelling support for a non-sectarian and integrative definition of Buddhist religiosity. Although each tradition maintains its own ritual practices, scriptural emphases, and pedagogical methods, the underlying goal of liberation, the mechanisms of suffering, and the principles guiding moral and mental cultivation are largely the same. This convergence affirms that Buddhist religiosity is not simply a matter of belief or outward observance, but a process grounded in lived experience and practical wisdom. As such, it is possible to conceptualise Buddhist religiosity in a way that respects the internal diversity of traditions while acknowledging their common doctrinal core.

4.4.2 Defining Buddhist

The findings of this study highlight the diversity and complexity involved in defining what it means to be a Buddhist. Rather than a singular, universally accepted definition, the study uncovered three broad perspectives—orthodox, liberal, and humanistic—each offering a distinct conceptualisation of Buddhist identity. These perspectives reflect not only doctrinal standpoints but also the lived realities of practitioners situated in different historical, cultural, and institutional contexts. As Buddhism continues to evolve and spread globally, these varying views on what defines a Buddhist become increasingly relevant for scholars and practitioners alike.

Orthodox Perspective. The orthodox perspective posits that the act of formally taking refuge in the Triple Gem—the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha—constitutes the definitive entry point into the Buddhist path. This ritual, prevalent across Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana traditions, symbolises a formal commitment to follow the teachings of the Buddha and is often regarded as the minimum requirement for one to be considered a Buddhist. As Bodhi (1981) and Gethin (1998) explain, this ritual serves as the doctrinal threshold that initiates the practitioner into the religious community and underpins subsequent ethical and meditative practices. Participants who held this view frequently likened taking refuge to formal enrolment in a school, marking the beginning of structured learning and spiritual development.

However, the exclusive reliance on this ritual has been critiqued for its institutional bias and potential exclusion of individuals who deeply engage with Buddhist principles without formal affiliation. As McMahan (2008) notes, in modern Western contexts, many individuals identify with Buddhism primarily through personal practice or philosophical alignment, rather than through ritual initiation. This decoupling of belief and formal ritual reflects broader shifts in global religious identities, where spiritual autonomy and internal conviction often take precedence over formal institutional belonging. Consequently, some participants expressed discomfort with using ritual adherence as the sole criterion for Buddhist identity, arguing that such an approach does not account for sincere practitioners outside traditional religious structures.

Liberal Perspective. The liberal interpretation reframes the concept of the Triple Gem as an internal process of aligning oneself with the ideals of awakening (觉), orthodoxy (正), and purity (净)—qualities embodied in the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, respectively. Drawing from texts such as the *Platform Sutra* (Huineng & Porter (Red Pine), 2006), this approach posits that the ultimate refuge lies within the practitioner's own mind and moral cultivation, rather than in external rituals or institutions. According to this view, taking refuge is not a ceremonial act but a commitment to personal transformation guided by insight and ethical clarity. Participants advocating this position often referenced the unreliability of contemporary religious institutions and the absence of the

historical Buddha, suggesting that internal refuge offers a more authentic and sustainable form of Buddhist practice.

This perspective aligns with broader trends in individualised spirituality, especially within Chan and Zen traditions, where direct experience and introspection are prioritised over scriptural authority or hierarchical guidance. As Loy (2015) observes, the shift towards inward-looking forms of religiosity reflects both the psychological and philosophical appeal of Buddhism to modern seekers. Nevertheless, some scholars caution that overemphasising internalisation may risk marginalising the communal and ritual dimensions that have historically sustained Buddhist traditions (Gombrich, 2006). Without shared practices and symbols, the cohesion and transmission of Buddhist teachings may become fragmented, raising concerns about continuity and orthodoxy.

Humanistic Perspective. The third and most inclusive framework is the humanistic approach, which defines a Buddhist as someone who uses the Dharma as a guiding framework for daily life. Rooted in the ideas of Hsing Yun (1998) and echoed by participants engaged in global Dharma propagation, this view maintains that the essence of being a Buddhist lies in ethical conduct, compassionate action, and personal growth through the application of Buddhist principles. Rather than insisting on belief in specific doctrines or participation in rituals, this perspective values the practitioner's commitment to self-improvement and altruism as core indicators of religiosity. For many contemporary practitioners, particularly in multicultural or secular societies, this definition resonates strongly and offers a pragmatic entry point into Buddhist life.

Nonetheless, this humanistic model is not without its doctrinal tensions. Several participants were critical of movements like Secular Buddhism (Batchelor, 2017), which tend to strip Buddhism of its metaphysical and soteriological elements, such as karma, rebirth, and enlightenment, thus weakening its doctrinal core. These critiques concern that excessive accommodation to modern sensibilities may result in a version of Buddhism that is ethically appealing but spiritually diluted (Sheng Yen, 2007; Wright, 2020). As one participant remarked, belief in karma and the cycle of rebirth is not merely an optional aspect of Buddhist thought but a foundational framework without which the path to liberation loses coherence and urgency.

Taken together, these three perspectives illustrate that Buddhist identity is multifaceted, encompassing both internal conviction and external affiliation, doctrinal fidelity and ethical embodiment. While the orthodox perspective offers a clear institutional definition, the liberal and humanistic views open space for broader, more inclusive interpretations that reflect the pluralistic nature of contemporary Buddhism. Yet across all three perspectives, there is a consistent emphasis on learning, practising, and embodying the Buddha's teachings. Whether framed through ritual, internal transformation, or ethical action, the key determinant of Buddhist religiosity lies in the extent to which a practitioner integrates the Dharma into their worldview and way of life.

4.4.3 Proposed Definition of Buddhist Religiosity

To address the first research question concerning the definition of Buddhist religiosity, the researcher proposes a non-sectarian and doctrinally grounded definition that captures both the shared intentions and the embodied practices across the Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana traditions. The findings from participant interviews converge on the view that the primary goal of Buddhist religiosity is the cessation of suffering and the realisation of enlightenment. Despite differences in ritual, emphasis, and expression, all traditions maintain that this goal is achievable through adherence to a prescribed path, comprising doctrinal understanding, ethical conduct, and mental cultivation. This convergence provides a solid foundation upon which to construct a cross-tradition definition of Buddhist religiosity.

The proposed definition is as follows:

> *Buddhist religiosity* is the degree of adherence to and progress along the prescribed path leading to the cessation of suffering and the realisation of enlightenment.

Each component of this definition holds both empirical and doctrinal significance. The phrase *"*degree of adherence and progress*"* reflects the measurable aspect of religiosity, encompassing both behavioural practices and internal transformations that signify a practitioner's engagement with the Dharma. *"*The prescribed path*"* refers to the cumulative body of teachings—especially the Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold Path, and the Three Studies (Precepts, Concentration, and Wisdom)—which are universally recognised across Buddhist traditions as essential frameworks for spiritual development. Lastly, *"*the cessation of suffering and the realisation of enlightenment*"* represents the soteriological aim that grounds all authentic Buddhist practice, distinguishing it from merely philosophical or cultural affiliations.

While this definition emphasises adherence and progress along a prescribed path, this framing should not be interpreted as excluding traditions that emphasise sudden or non-gradual enlightenment, such as Chan, Zen, or Dzogchen. Contemporary Buddhist scholarship increasingly understands the "sudden–gradual" distinction as a hermeneutical and pedagogical framework rather than a rigid doctrinal divide (Flavio A., 2019; Kim & Kim, 2024; R. Zhang, 2020). Even within these traditions, religious engagement typically involves disciplined practice, ethical conduct, and contemplative cultivation. Accordingly, the BRS conceptualisation of Buddhist religiosity, focusing on engagement with and embodiment of the Dharma, applies across both gradual and sudden orientations, as it concerns the lived religious life rather than metaphysical descriptions of enlightenment.

Importantly, this definition does not rely on external identifiers, such as monastic status or ritual participation, as exclusive indicators of religiosity. Instead, it emphasises a practitioner's

alignment with the path and tangible progression along it. This includes both outward behaviour and inward transformation—two domains that, in Buddhist teachings, are inherently interdependent. For example, ethical conduct (*sila*) supports meditative stability (*samadhi*), which in turn enables the cultivation of wisdom (*panna*). This holistic framework is evident across traditions, from the emphasis on personal effort in Theravada (Rahula, 1974) to the integration of skillful means and Bodhisattva ideals in Mahayana (Yinshun, 2008), and the esoteric transmissions and visualisation practices in Vajrayana (Tsongkhapa, 1991).

Furthermore, this definition maintains doctrinal integrity while allowing for operationalisation in empirical research. By using *"*adherence to and progress along the prescribed path*"* as a conceptual anchor, it becomes possible to assess Buddhist religiosity in terms of both knowledge and embodiment of core teachings. A practitioner's level of doctrinal understanding, their commitment to ethical conduct, their engagement in meditative or devotional practices, and their transformation in response to these efforts can all serve as indicators of religiosity. These indicators can be adapted to suit different sectarian contexts without losing sight of the doctrinal essence of Buddhism, thus allowing for inclusive yet theologically robust measurement.

Another advantage of this definition is that it helps resolve long-standing tensions between behavioural, doctrinal, and philosophical interpretations of religiosity. Prior models, particularly those developed in the context of Mahayana or Western Buddhist communities (e.g., Dang, 2015; Le, 2023), have often overemphasised belief components or relied heavily on tradition-specific practices. This poses problems for cross-tradition applicability and risks neglecting the core doctrinal aims shared across Buddhism. In contrast, the definition proposed here centres the universal Buddhist goal of liberation from suffering while accommodating diverse modes of practice and levels of spiritual development.

In summary, this definition offers a coherent, inclusive, and doctrinally aligned way to conceptualise Buddhist religiosity. It preserves the integrity of the tradition by grounding itself in the Buddha's teachings, while also providing a pragmatic structure for measuring religiosity among contemporary practitioners. By emphasising the shared end goal and the integrated path toward it, this approach affirms the spiritual unity underlying the diverse expressions of Buddhism observed across traditions.

Addressing Doctrinal and Ideological Concerns. One of the most significant challenges in defining Buddhist religiosity lies in preserving doctrinal fidelity while accounting for the rich diversity of interpretations across Buddhist traditions. Many existing definitions, particularly those developed from a sectarian perspective, tend to prioritise specific doctrines or practices that may not be universally applicable. For example, Mahayana definitions often foreground devotion to celestial Buddhas or Bodhisattvas, while Theravada definitions centre on self-effort and individual liberation

through insight. These variations, while legitimate within their own traditions, can obscure the shared philosophical foundations that unite Buddhist schools and limit the applicability of such definitions in broader or cross-traditional contexts.

To address this issue, the proposed definition, “the degree of adherence to and progress along the prescribed path leading to the cessation of suffering and the realisation of enlightenment”, intentionally draws upon universally accepted doctrinal principles. These include the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path, which are recognised as foundational across Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana traditions. By grounding the definition in these core teachings, it maintains doctrinal integrity while creating space for diversity in interpretation and practice. This approach circumvents the limitations of narrowly sectarian definitions by focusing on what is commonly accepted as the Buddha’s essential message, regardless of cultural or historical context.

Moreover, the concepts of “adherence” and “progress” introduce a developmental and process-oriented lens through which to understand religiosity. Rather than viewing religiosity as a fixed identity or static measure of belief, the definition acknowledges the practitioner’s ongoing engagement with the path. This dynamic framing aligns with traditional Buddhist teachings, which emphasise gradual cultivation, transformation, and personal effort over time. In doing so, the definition captures both the internal commitment and the external expression of religiosity as interdependent and mutually reinforcing dimensions.

This framework also resolves a common tension in the literature between doctrinal purity and practical inclusivity. It avoids reducing Buddhist religiosity to behavioural markers alone—such as temple attendance or meditation frequency—which, while important, may not reflect the depth of one’s spiritual understanding or alignment with the Dharma. At the same time, it does not rely solely on metaphysical beliefs, which may vary in emphasis across schools. Instead, by linking religiosity to adherence to and movement along a shared soteriological path, the definition integrates doctrinal content with lived experience, offering a robust foundation for both theoretical and empirical inquiry across traditions.

Integrating Behavioural and Practice-Oriented Perspectives. In existing literature, several definitions of Buddhist religiosity have centred predominantly on observable behaviours and religious activities. These include regular meditation, chanting, observing precepts, attending religious services, and making offerings—practices that are often measured to assess religiosity (e.g., Ariyabuddhiphongs, 2009; Sooksawat et al., 2013). While these behavioural dimensions offer tangible indicators of religious engagement, they may not sufficiently capture the cognitive, emotional, or spiritual transformations that Buddhism regards as essential. In other words, the outward expression of religiosity does not always reflect the depth of internal understanding or

spiritual progress, particularly when religious acts are performed out of habit, social expectation, or cultural tradition rather than conscious adherence to the path.

The proposed definition extends beyond these behavioural measures by incorporating both adherence to core teachings and progress along the path, which are central to Buddhist soteriology. This dual focus ensures that religiosity is not only identified through what a practitioner does but also through how and why they do it. For example, meditation performed with the intention of cultivating mindfulness and insight aligns with the Noble Eightfold Path and demonstrates meaningful progress. In contrast, identical behaviours done without understanding or intention may not signify religiosity in the Buddhist sense. Thus, the definition bridges the gap between behaviour and meaning, reflecting a more nuanced and authentic picture of Buddhist religious life.

Additionally, the proposed definition allows for the recognition of religiosity at different stages of development. A practitioner newly introduced to Buddhism may exhibit strong commitment through behavioural engagement but limited doctrinal understanding, whereas an advanced practitioner may demonstrate fewer outward signs but possess profound internal realisation. By acknowledging both adherence and progress, the definition captures this variability and offers a developmental model of religiosity consistent with traditional teachings on gradual cultivation (Bodhi, 1999a; Keown, 2013). This inclusivity ensures that religiosity is not confined to any one stage but remains applicable across the full spectrum of practitioner experiences.

Moreover, this integrative perspective resonates with the threefold training of precepts, concentration, and wisdom (*sila*, *samadhi*, *panna*), which together form the basis of Buddhist practice. Observing ethical behaviour (precepts), cultivating mental discipline (concentration), and developing insight (wisdom) are all critical, but it is their integration that leads to liberation. Measuring only behavioural compliance with precepts or participation in rituals misses this holistic interaction. The proposed definition implicitly encompasses all three dimensions by linking observable behaviour with internal transformation, in line with both doctrinal teachings and the lived realities of Buddhist practitioners.

Maintaining Doctrinal Integrity within a Humanistic Approach. Humanistic Buddhism, as popularised by Hsing Yun and the Fo Guang Shan movement, places emphasis on applying Buddhist teachings in everyday life, promoting ethical conduct, social harmony, and personal development (Hsing Yun, 1998). This approach prioritises practicality and compassion, presenting Buddhism as a way of life rather than merely a religious affiliation. It is particularly effective in modern, secular societies where ritualistic religiosity may be less appealing. However, while this perspective enhances accessibility, it also raises important concerns regarding the preservation of doctrinal depth and fidelity to the original teachings of the Buddha.

The core challenge lies in balancing practical applicability with doctrinal rigour. In some expressions of Humanistic Buddhism, the central tenets of karma, rebirth, and the ultimate goal of enlightenment risk being overshadowed by the emphasis on moral behaviour and social engagement. Critics such as Wright (2020) argue that when these foundational beliefs are downplayed, the transformative power of Buddhism may be diminished, leading to a form of cultural Buddhism devoid of its soteriological aims. This concern is especially relevant when considering the widespread adoption of mindfulness practices in secular contexts, where essential doctrinal elements are often omitted.

Participants in the present study who align with Humanistic Buddhism acknowledged the tension between accessibility and doctrinal fidelity. Several highlighted the importance of upholding key teachings, such as the cycle of rebirth and the karmic consequences of actions, even within a humanistic framework. For them, a Buddhist is not simply someone who leads an ethical life, but someone who engages with the Dharma in a way that reflects the teachings of the Buddha regarding suffering and liberation. This perspective aligns with the view that Buddhism is not only about living ethically but also doing so within a framework that leads to enlightenment, in accordance with the Noble Eightfold Path.

The proposed definition of Buddhist religiosity offers a framework that accommodates the humanistic emphasis on practice while safeguarding doctrinal integrity. Focusing on adherence to and progress along the prescribed path it ensures that key soteriological goals—such as the cessation of suffering—remain central. This allows for the recognition of humanistic interpretations of Buddhism, provided that they retain core doctrinal commitments. In this way, the definition provides an inclusive yet doctrinally grounded approach to measuring religiosity, one that is particularly suited for contemporary applications while remaining faithful to traditional Buddhist goals.

Enhancing Empirical Research and Operationalisation. A persistent challenge in Buddhist studies has been the difficulty of operationalising abstract and deeply experiential concepts such as enlightenment, non-self, and the cessation of suffering. These notions are central to Buddhist doctrine, yet they are inherently subjective and often resist quantification using conventional empirical tools. Previous attempts to measure Buddhist religiosity have often relied on behavioural proxies, such as frequency of meditation or temple attendance, which may fail to capture the internal dimensions of spiritual transformation (Ariyabuddhiphongs, 2009; Sooksawat et al., 2013). As such, there is a need for a more nuanced and holistic framework that incorporates both external practices and internal developmental progress.

The proposed definition: “the degree of adherence to and progress along the prescribed path leading to the cessation of suffering and the realisation of enlightenment” addresses this gap by integrating observable behaviours with doctrinally informed benchmarks. It provides a structure that

can accommodate different stages of spiritual maturity, recognising that individuals may engage with the Dharma at varying levels of depth. Importantly, it also acknowledges that the internalisation of Buddhist teachings, such as Right View and Right Intention, may not be directly observable but are essential components of genuine religiosity. This dual emphasis on adherence and progress ensures that both the process and outcome of spiritual development are captured.

Operationalising this definition in empirical research involves identifying measurable indicators of both practice and progress. For example, researchers might assess levels of ethical conduct, mindfulness, and meditative stability as proxies for adherence while using measures of reduced attachment, increased insight, or compassionate action as indicators of progress. Depending on the context and objectives of the study, these elements could be assessed through self-report scales, behavioural observations, or qualitative interviews. The inclusion of multiple data sources would help triangulate findings, enhancing both validity and reliability.

Furthermore, the definition supports longitudinal research designs, allowing for the tracking of spiritual development over time. This is particularly valuable in examining how individuals evolve in their religiosity, moving from initial exposure to deeper levels of commitment and understanding. It also enables comparative studies across different Buddhist traditions and cultural contexts, as the core dimensions remain relevant regardless of sectarian affiliation. By grounding empirical research in a definition that is both doctrinally rigorous and pragmatically flexible, this framework has the potential to advance the measurement and understanding of Buddhist religiosity significantly.

4.4.4 Hierarchical Themes of Buddhist Religiosity

This section interprets the hierarchical model of Buddhist religiosity that emerged from participants' narratives (Section 4.3.5). To evaluate its internal coherence and theoretical soundness, the discussion draws on Buddhist doctrinal literature and authoritative scholarly commentaries. The goal is not to introduce additional frameworks, but to demonstrate that the thematic structure identified in the data aligns meaningfully with foundational principles in Buddhist thought.

The findings of this study suggest a multidimensional conceptualisation of Buddhist religiosity represented by a four-level hierarchical model. These levels—Practice, Resultant, Conceptual, and Embodiment—together reflect the process of engaging with the Dharma and the transformational outcomes it produces. At the highest level, Embodiment, lies Buddhism's ultimate goal: the cessation of suffering. This goal reflects the doctrinal consensus across Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana traditions and underscores the soteriological nature of Buddhist religiosity.

The Practice Level encompasses the core activities through which Buddhists engage with the teachings, including hearing, contemplating, and practising the Dharma (Yinshun, 2021a). This level also includes the structured development of morality (precepts), mental discipline (concentration), and insight (wisdom)—collectively known as the Three Studies. These form the essential framework

for the Noble Eightfold Path, which itself is a practical and doctrinally integrated model of spiritual progress. These three systems—Hearing/Contemplating/Practising, the Three Studies, and the Noble Eightfold Path—serve as complementary routes to doctrinal embodiment and are not mutually exclusive.

The Resultant Level captures the observable effects of sustained Dharma practice. This includes a practitioner's increased rational engagement with reality and growing alignment with doctrinal knowledge and ethical behaviour (Poon, 2020). These effects can be seen as cognitive, affective, and behavioural transformations that occur over time, and which collectively reflect an individual's internalisation of the Dharma. As such, the Resultant Level connects the foundational practices of the previous level with the deeper understanding and embodiment of Buddhist teachings.

The Conceptual Level includes abstract themes such as intentionality, the continuum of Buddhist identification (e.g., lay follower, devout practitioner, renunciant), and structured frameworks used to guide spiritual development. While these themes do not directly constitute practice or outcomes, they help explain and organise the practitioner's journey. This level provides a reflective lens through which individuals interpret and make sense of their practice, including their motivations, the frameworks they adopt, and the ways in which they conceptualise progress.

Despite being presented in a hierarchical structure, these four levels should not be interpreted as a rigid, sequential process. Such a view would contradict the Buddhist principle of dependent origination (*paṭiccasamuppada*), emphasising the interdependence and co-arising nature of all phenomena (Yinshun, 2008). In practice, engaging with any aspect of the Dharma often simultaneously activates developments across multiple levels. For example, practising mindfulness (Practice Level) may lead to increased clarity and compassion (Resultant Level), a deeper understanding of the Dharma (Conceptual Level), and a more embodied expression of equanimity and detachment (Embodiment Level).

Therefore, the hierarchical levels identified in this study are best viewed as mutually reinforcing dimensions rather than as a linear path. This conceptualisation aligns more closely with the lived experiences of Buddhist practitioners, who often describe their journey as iterative and holistic. It also reflects the integrative nature of Buddhist practice, where learning, reflection, and transformation continuously influence one another. The model, illustrated in Figure 2 of this thesis, provides a visual representation of these relationships and serves as a foundation for identifying empirically measurable dimensions of Buddhist religiosity.

4.4.5 Interlocking Themes at the Practice Level

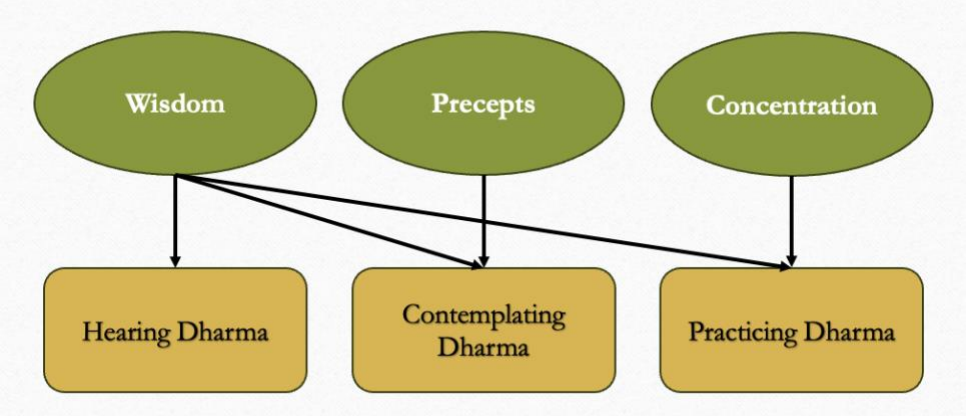
This section elaborates on the themes comprising the Practice-Level of the model identified in the Results section. By drawing on doctrinal frameworks and key Buddhist commentaries, the

discussion clarifies how these practical dimensions relate to and reinforce each other, further substantiating the coherence of the hierarchical model.

The Practice Level encompasses a suite of interrelated doctrinal frameworks that serve as the bedrock for Buddhist spiritual development. These include the Three Studies (precepts, concentration, and wisdom), the routine of hearing, contemplating, and practising the Dharma, and the Noble Eightfold Path. Rather than functioning as isolated components, these constructs are inherently interwoven, reinforcing the others in a cyclical and iterative process. Together, they provide a comprehensive approach to ethical living, meditative discipline, and wisdom cultivation—core objectives of Buddhist religiosity.

Among these, the Three Studies function as prerequisites and outcomes within the practitioner's journey. Cultivating precepts (*sila*) establishes a foundation of ethical restraint, which supports the development of concentration (*samadhi*). This concentration, in turn, enables the deep wisdom (*panna*) necessary for insight into the nature of reality. As depicted in Figure 3, the Three Studies are not discrete steps but operate concurrently, with wisdom pervading and enriching ethical and meditative domains. Their mutual reinforcement exemplifies the holistic nature of Buddhist practice, in which transformation occurs through an integrated refinement of body, speech, and mind.

Figure 3 The Three Studies and Hearing, Contemplating, and Practicing

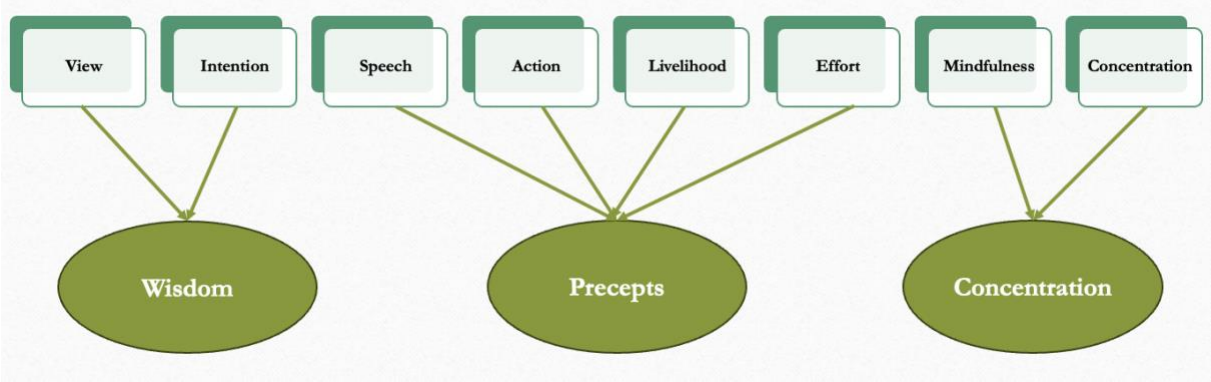


This doctrinal interdependence is further illustrated by the threefold process of hearing, contemplating, and practising (闻思修). As articulated by Venerable Yinshun (2008), this process corresponds to the stages of acquiring, processing, and embodying the Dharma. Hearing refers to the discernment of authentic teachings; contemplation involves analytical engagement and internalisation, and practising entails embodying those insights through ethical and meditative discipline. These stages directly align with the Three Studies: hearing supports the development of

the right view (wisdom), contemplation encourages mindful discipline (concentration), and practice actualises ethical restraint (precepts). Each component of the process facilitates the realisation of the other, forming a virtuous cycle of deepening understanding and commitment.

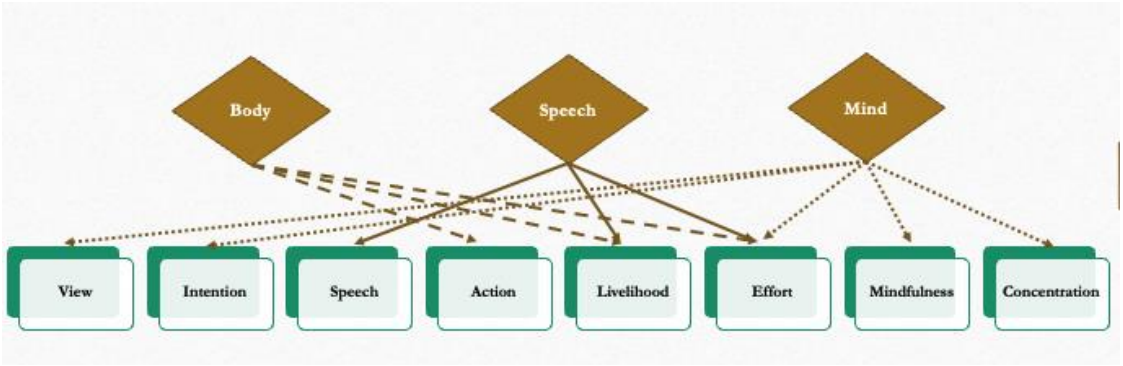
The Noble Eightfold Path, representing the Buddha's core prescription for the cessation of suffering, also maps directly onto the Three Studies. As illustrated in Figure 4, this path is categorised into three functional groupings. "Right view" and "right intention" correspond to the domain of wisdom; "right speech", "right action", "right livelihood", and "right effort" fall under precepts; and "right mindfulness" and "right concentration" align with concentration. This alignment underscores the coherence of Buddhist soteriology, wherein ethical, meditative, and cognitive dimensions are all necessary and interdependent aspects of spiritual development.

Figure 4 The Noble Eightfold Path and the Three Studies



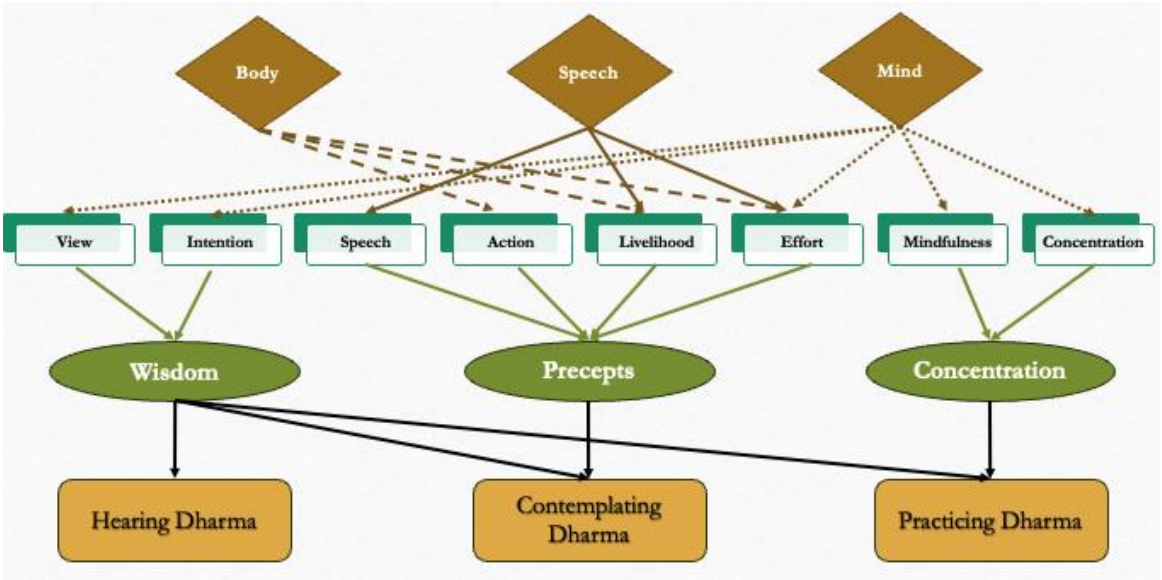
Further refining the scope of practice, Buddhist teachings traditionally frame all human activity through the three channels of body, speech, and mind (身口意). These represent the mediums through which Dharma habits are both expressed and cultivated. As Venerable Sheng Yen (2007) and Bodhi (1999b) explain, transformation across these three domains signals a deepening internalisation of Buddhist principles. Actions (body), communication (speech), and thought patterns (mind) must all be purified in accordance with the Dharma for a practitioner to make meaningful progress on the path. This tripartite framework maps effectively onto the components of the Noble Eightfold Path, suggesting an embodied realisation of Buddhist teachings across all levels of experience. The conceptual mapping is illustrated in Figure 5.

Figure 5 Body Speech Mind and Eightfold Path



Collectively, these frameworks underscore the structural integrity and internal consistency of Buddhist practice. While each offers a distinct vantage point, their overlap demonstrates a robust doctrinal coherence. The interrelationships among these themes are synthesised in Figure 6, which presents an integrated view of the Practice Level. This synthesis highlights how various conceptual, ethical, and behavioural elements reinforce one another to shape the lived experience of Buddhist religiosity. Though each framework may be used independently in certain contexts, their collective usage offers a more nuanced and holistic representation of Buddhist practice in action.

Figure 6 Practice Level Themes' Connections



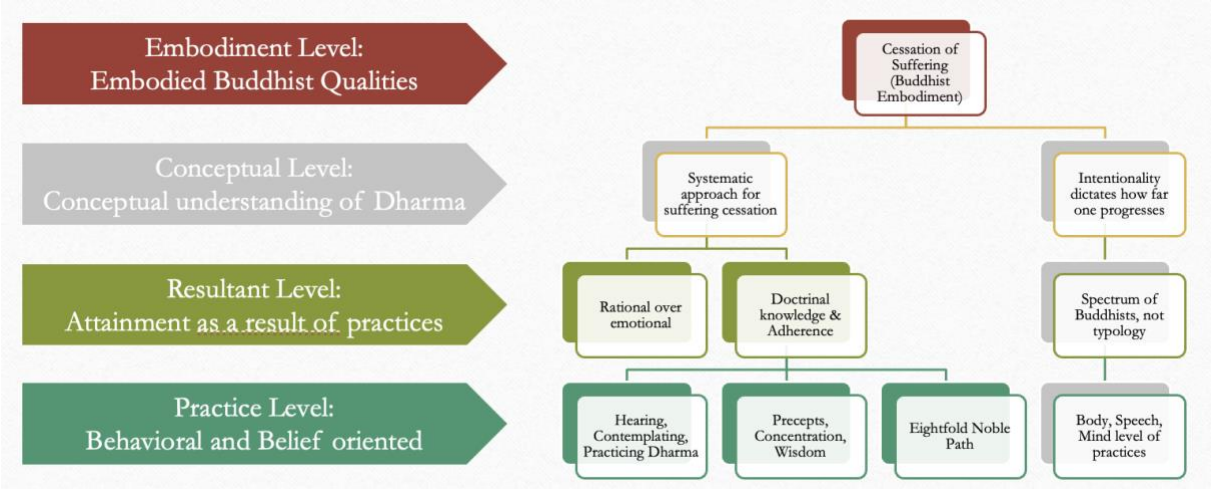
4.4.6 Dimensions of Buddhist Religiosity

This study identified ten core themes that collectively articulate both the process and the goal of Buddhist religiosity. However, not all ten themes are equally suitable for operationalisation as measurable dimensions. Instead, a subset of these themes has been selected based on their doctrinal salience, practical relevance, and theoretical coherence. The proposed dimensions are grounded in the three hierarchical levels—Practice, Resultant, and Embodiment—while the Conceptual Level, serving primarily as a summarising and interpretive scaffold, is excluded from direct

operationalisation. This selection preserves conceptual parsimony while remaining faithful to core teachings and practices.

The Embodiment Level, which reflects the cessation of suffering and the attainment of enlightenment, is retained as it represents the soteriological end goal of all Buddhist traditions. The Practice Level remains crucial for understanding how Buddhists engage with the Dharma in everyday life through the cultivation of ethical conduct, meditative concentration, and wisdom (the Three Studies). The Resultant Level reflects cognitive and doctrinal developments that arise from sustained engagement with the Buddhist path. In contrast, themes that serve more as descriptors of intention or identity, such as “Intentionality”, “Buddhist Spectrum”, and “Body, Speech, and Mind”, could be subsumed under and expressed through the more comprehensive frameworks of the Three Studies and the Noble Eightfold Path.

Figure 7 Themes to be Used as Proposed Dimensions



As illustrated in Figure 7, these decisions are visually mapped, with highlighted themes indicating inclusion and greyed-out areas denoting potential for exclusion from the proposed dimensions. “Intentionality” and “Buddhist Spectrum”, if excluded, would reflect the methodological emphasis on doctrinal and practice-based religiosity rather than on personal identification or motivational stance. Similarly, “Body, Speech, and Mind”, if excluded, is conceptually encompassed by the Practice Level themes and thus does not necessitate a distinct dimensional representation. This approach is consistent with the principle of dependent origination, whereby phenomena are not isolated but arise in interdependence, allowing for theoretical parsimony without loss of conceptual depth.

While the conceptual framework distinguishes between Practice, Resultant, and Embodiment levels for analytical clarity, these levels should not be interpreted as hierarchical or sequential. In accordance with the Buddhist doctrine of dependent origination, all aspects of Buddhist religiosity arise in mutual dependence and co-condition one another. The cultivation of

ethical conduct, meditative discipline, and wisdom does not occur in a linear sequence but as interdependent processes that reinforce each other. Likewise, the experiential realisation of cessation and enlightenment is not a separate or terminal stage but an emergent quality of this interdependent practice. Thus, the structural presentation of levels in this study serves an explanatory purpose rather than implying spiritual hierarchy or temporal progression. When Buddhist religiosity manifests, its elements arise together through reciprocal causality.

At the Conceptual Level theme, the "Systematic approach for suffering cessation" is best understood as a cognitive construct that emerges through reflection on one's engagement with the Resultant and Practice Levels. Rather than functioning as a direct behavioural or experiential indicator, this theme encapsulates how practitioners organise and make sense of their path toward liberation. While it may not constitute a measurable dimension of religiosity in itself, it provides a valuable meta-framework for understanding how doctrinal knowledge, rational reasoning, and practice converge within a practitioner's worldview. In this way, the Conceptual Level enhances interpretive clarity without complicating the dimensional structure necessary for empirical assessment.

Based on these considerations, six key dimensions are proposed to define and measure Buddhist religiosity:

1. Cessation of Suffering
2. Rationality
3. Doctrinal Knowledge and Adherence
4. Hearing, Contemplating, Practising Dharma
5. Precepts, Concentration, Wisdom
6. Noble Eightfold Path

The first dimension—Cessation of Suffering—captures the telos of Buddhist practice and serves as an aspirational benchmark. The next two dimensions— "Rationality" and "Doctrinal Knowledge and Adherence"—reflect the internalised results of sustained engagement with Buddhist teachings. The final three dimensions—"Hearing, Contemplating, Practising Dharma", "Precepts, Concentration, Wisdom", and the "Noble Eightfold Path"—represent the procedural foundations of Buddhist religiosity. Together, these dimensions integrate both goal-oriented and process-oriented aspects of practice, reflecting a holistic view that is faithful to traditional doctrines while adaptable for empirical measurement.

This structure aligns with the study's overarching aim: to conceptualise Buddhist religiosity in a way that is doctrinally sound, theoretically coherent, and practically measurable. It provides a scaffold for the subsequent development of a Buddhist Religiosity Scale that can be used across

traditions while maintaining sensitivity to doctrinal diversity and contextual variations. By anchoring these dimensions in canonical teachings and lived practice, the study ensures that the measurement of Buddhist religiosity is grounded in both authenticity and applicability.

While “Intentionality” and “Body, Speech, and Mind” emerged as valid themes in the qualitative analysis, they were not included in the core conceptual framework due to their broader descriptive nature and their conceptual subsumability under more doctrinally grounded dimensions. For example, “Body, Speech, and Mind” is deeply integrated within the Three Studies, while “Intentionality” may be reflected within ethical cultivation or rational engagement. Their exclusion at the theoretical stage reflects a decision to prioritise parsimony and doctrinal coherence in defining the principal dimensions of Buddhist religiosity.

Nonetheless, these themes were retained during the item generation phase and included in the exploratory factor analysis (EFA). This reflects the open, inductive nature of EFA, which allows for the empirical discovery of latent constructs that theoretical models may not fully anticipate. If these themes demonstrate strong factor structure and internal coherence, their empirical inclusion could prompt a reconsideration of their dimensional status. This approach maintains theoretical integrity while allowing empirical insights to inform refinement of the final scale.

4.4.7 Conclusion

This chapter has presented a detailed exploration of Buddhist religiosity through a multi-traditional lens, with the aim of identifying and defining its conceptual and practical dimensions. Drawing from qualitative data gathered from scholars and practitioners across Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana traditions, the study highlighted a shared core understanding of Buddhism that transcends sectarian boundaries. The analysis focused not only on doctrinal consistencies but also on lived practices and interpretative frameworks, all of which revealed a coherent soteriological aim: the cessation of suffering and the attainment of enlightenment. While each tradition presents distinct doctrinal emphases and ritual practices, this study found that these differences are often expressions of cultural adaptation rather than deviations from the Buddha’s core teachings.

A central contribution of this chapter is the identification of six dimensions of Buddhist religiosity. These dimensions—"Cessation of Suffering”, “Rationality”, “Doctrinal Knowledge and Adherence”, “Hearing, Contemplating, Practising Dharma”, “Precepts, Concentration, Wisdom”, and the “Noble Eightfold Path”—were selected based on their foundational relevance across traditions and their empirical potential for measurement. This framework bridges the gap between abstract doctrinal ideals and practical, observable behaviours, offering a unified approach to understanding Buddhist religiosity that is both theoretically grounded and applicable to research. Importantly, the dimensions reflect the integration of process-oriented practices with result-oriented outcomes, thus encapsulating the transformative journey that characterises Buddhist religious life.

The proposed definition: “the degree of adherence to and progress along the prescribed path that leads to the cessation of suffering and the realisation of enlightenment” emerges from this conceptual structure. This definition was developed with attention to doctrinal rigour, inclusivity across traditions, and empirical viability. It serves as a unifying criterion for operationalising Buddhist religiosity in a manner that honours its complexity without oversimplification. By centring the definition on shared practices and aspirations rather than institutional affiliations or culturally specific expressions, the study addresses a key limitation in previous religiosity measures that often fail to capture the essence of Buddhism in its traditional and lived forms.

This chapter has laid a critical foundation for the next stage of this research: the development and validation of a Buddhist Religiosity Scale. Such a scale will enable systematic inquiry into Buddhist religiosity across diverse populations, providing a robust tool for empirical research in psychology, religious studies, and related disciplines. While acknowledging the diversity of Buddhist expressions worldwide, the framework presented here affirms that it is possible to articulate a cohesive and doctrinally sound structure for understanding religiosity within Buddhism. Ultimately, this approach aspires to foster greater conceptual clarity and methodological rigour in the study of religion, while remaining faithful to the spirit and intent of the Buddha’s teachings.

4.4.8 Limitations

While this study offers a meaningful contribution to the conceptualisation of Buddhist religiosity, several limitations should be acknowledged to provide transparency and contextualise the findings. The first limitation concerns the relatively small sample size of fourteen participants. Although qualitative research does not seek generalisability in the same way as quantitative studies do, the limited number may restrict the representativeness of the full diversity of Buddhist expressions across geographical regions and traditions. However, this sample was purposively selected for its doctrinal depth and diversity, ensuring thematic saturation was achieved and that the core perspectives from Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana were meaningfully represented.

Second, the study intentionally focused on doctrinally consistent and traditional expressions of Buddhism, excluding syncretic, folk, or popular practices prevalent in many regions. This methodological decision was made to avoid diluting the core teachings of Buddhism and to provide a conceptually rigorous foundation for defining and measuring Buddhist religiosity. Nevertheless, this focus could be seen as a limitation when applied to real-world Buddhist communities, where hybridised or culturally specific practices often play a prominent role in religious life. Future research may benefit from exploring how syncretism interacts with doctrinally grounded religiosity, particularly in multicultural or diasporic contexts.

A third limitation concerns the exclusion of themes such as “Intentionality” and the “Buddhist Spectrum” of identity from the proposed set of measurable dimensions. These elements

were recognised as meaningful aspects of religiosity in the qualitative phase, particularly in how participants described their orientation toward the path and their evolving sense of Buddhist affiliation. However, they were not retained in the final model of dimensions for psychometric development, as they proved more variable, context-dependent, and less readily anchored in shared doctrinal or practice-based indicators. This decision reflects a methodological focus on constructs that are both widely recognised across traditions and more easily operationalised for scale development. Nevertheless, these omitted elements remain significant for understanding lived religiosity and would be well suited for exploration in follow-up qualitative or mixed-methods research.

Another notable challenge relates to linguistic and cultural interpretation. Participants spoke in different languages and used culturally nuanced terminology, which introduced the risk of interpretative distortion during transcription and translation. While considerable care was taken to preserve the fidelity of the participants' meanings, including iterative validation of transcripts and consultation with Buddhist scholars, subtle differences in cultural understanding or doctrinal emphasis may have affected the interpretation. This issue is especially pertinent in translating key Buddhist concepts that may not have direct equivalents in English or may carry different connotations across traditions.

Finally, while the six proposed dimensions and the associated definition of Buddhist religiosity offer a theoretically robust framework, their empirical applicability remains to be tested. This study has not yet validated the construct quantitatively, and subsequent chapters will address this gap by developing, refining, and psychometrically evaluating a Buddhist Religiosity Scale. Such efforts would also benefit from cross-cultural and cross-traditional testing to ensure the dimensions are relevant and applicable across the broader spectrum of global Buddhist practice.

Chapter 5: Development and Exploratory Factor Analysis of BRS

The study of religiosity within the Buddhist context presents unique challenges for researchers due to the heterogeneity of its beliefs, practices, and cultural manifestations. Unlike many other world religions, Buddhism lacks a singular authoritative doctrine and is expressed through diverse traditions such as Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana (Santina, 1997). This diversity complicates attempts to assess Buddhist religiosity in a standardised or generalisable manner. As such, a rigorous and inclusive approach is necessary to capture the universal doctrinal foundations and spiritual objectives shared across these traditions. In response, this study introduces the Buddhist Religiosity Scale (BRS), an original instrument developed to reflect the conceptual and practical aspects of Buddhist religiosity in a non-sectarian and multidimensional way.

The conceptualisation of Buddhist religiosity developed through this inquiry incorporates both observable behaviours and internal mental states. It reflects not only ritual and doctrinal adherence but also the realisation and embodiment of the Dharma in daily life. The BRS was, therefore, designed to measure both doctrinal engagement and transformational progress, capturing ethical conduct, mental cultivation, and wisdom as key indicators of religiosity. This dual emphasis enables a more holistic and doctrinally consistent assessment of Buddhist religiosity.

This chapter extends the preceding work by detailing the development and psychometric evaluation of the BRS. It outlines the process by which the six constructs were operationalised into items, the procedures for data collection and analysis, and the results of the exploratory factor analysis (EFA). Specifically, this chapter addresses the research question: What are the psychometric properties, specifically the factor structure, reliability, and validity, of the Buddhist Religiosity Scale?

5.1 Method

5.1.1 Item Generation and Scale Development

The development of the Buddhist Religiosity Scale (BRS) was grounded in the conceptual and qualitative foundations established in Chapter 4 and generated inductively from qualitative data and Buddhist doctrinal synthesis, rather than adapted from existing religiosity scales reviewed in Chapter 2, which were examined primarily to identify conceptual limitations in prior measures. This approach reflects the emic orientation of the study, which privileges lived meanings and doctrinal coherence over the adaptation of previously developed scales. Based on in-depth interviews with Buddhist scholars and practitioners from the Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana traditions, eight key conceptual domains were identified. These domains aim to reflect the multifaceted nature of Buddhist religiosity across traditions and serve as the theoretical basis for item construction. While these domains will be evaluated for empirical distinctiveness through exploratory factor analysis

(EFA), they are treated at this stage as proposed constructs to be examined for dimensionality (Torres Irribarra & Arneson, 2023).

Six of the constructs: “Cessation of Suffering”, “Rational Belief”, “Doctrinal Knowledge and Adherence”, “Hearing, Contemplating, and Practising Dharma”, “Precepts, Concentration, and Wisdom”, and “Noble Eightfold Path” were drawn directly from the qualitative findings in Chapter 4. Two additional constructs, which were initially eliminated as potential constructs to be represented in Chapter 4, “Intentionality” and “Body, Speech, and Mind”, were added following further theoretical reflection. These additions aimed to capture subtle yet potentially meaningful distinctions in the ways individuals internalise and enact Buddhist teachings. Their inclusion reflects an exploratory spirit and commitment to ensuring a comprehensive representation of the Buddhist religiosity construct.

“Intentionality” emerged as a relevant construct from participants’ descriptions of varying motivations and levels of commitment to Buddhist practice. While some aimed for full liberation from Samsara, others described goals aligned more with day-to-day ethical living or merit-making. Although challenging to operationalise, intentionality is conceptually significant, capturing the practitioner’s internal orientation and long-term aspirations. Ten items were developed to reflect differing levels and expressions of intentional commitment.

The construct of “Body, Speech, and Mind” was included to test whether ethical regulation in these three spheres might form a distinct factor. While conceptually overlapping with the Noble Eightfold Path and the Three Studies (*sila, samadhi, panna*), this domain emphasises the practitioner’s efforts to govern conduct, speech, and mental patterns. By exploring it separately, the study aimed to assess whether these practices cluster uniquely in factor analysis. Three items were written, one for each of the body, speech, and mind.

“Embodiment” refers to how individuals express Buddhist ethical values, such as compassion, mindfulness, equanimity, and non-harming, in daily life. This construct was strongly reflected in participant narratives as a sign of deep internalisation of the Dharma. Items such as *I consistently embody compassion and loving-kindness in my interactions with others,* and *I have developed a healthy sense of non-attachment, recognising the impermanence of all things,* were designed to measure this. A total of 15 items were created to explore this domain.

“Doctrinal Knowledge and Adherence” includes nine items assessing the extent to which individuals understand and apply core Buddhist teachings. These include knowledge of impermanence, non-self, dependent origination, and the Four Noble Truths. This domain reflects the cognitive dimension of religiosity—what one knows and believes doctrinally. It is conceptually

related but distinct from “Rational Belief”, which focuses on how practitioners accept teachings, whether by critical evaluation or deference to authority.

“Rational Belief,” comprising five items, investigates individuals' stances toward Buddhist teachings. Some items reflect critical engagement, while others explore uncritical acceptance or reliance on external authority. This domain addresses the epistemological orientation of practitioners toward the Dharma. For instance, an item like *I believe in accepting teachings without questioning them* captures a more traditional, faith-oriented approach to belief.

The “Noble Eightfold Path” construct is represented through eight items, one corresponding to each aspect of the path. These items explore how well practitioners are engaging with right view, intention, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, and concentration. Together, they serve to assess the breadth of practice in ethical conduct, mental discipline, and wisdom. This domain is doctrinally foundational and reflects the structured framework for progressing toward liberation.

“Precepts, Concentration, and Wisdom” consists of three items capturing adherence to the Three Studies. Each item assesses one of the three components, which together support the cultivation of insight and ethical integrity in Buddhism. These are considered the fundamental modes of training for all Buddhists, irrespective of tradition. Including them separately allows for an evaluation of whether they form a cohesive construct in the EFA process.

Lastly, the domain “Hearing, Contemplating, and Practicing Dharma” was developed to capture the traditional sequence through which practitioners engage with Buddhist teachings. This approach—receiving teachings, reflecting on them, and putting them into action—was highlighted in several participant narratives. Three items were written to represent each stage in this triadic engagement. This domain reflects the process of integrating doctrinal knowledge into lived practice.

An initial pool of 59 items was generated across these eight constructs, with 12 reverse-worded items included to reduce acquiescence bias. The items were developed through collaborative discussion with advisory panel members and refined for clarity, language accessibility, and avoidance of double-barrelled constructions. No direct feedback was obtained from external Buddhist scholars or practitioners at this stage. After this internal review process, the total item pool was reduced to 56, with nine reverse-coded items retained for analysis.

Table 15 presents the full list of 56 items, organised according to their originating construct. These items formed the basis of the exploratory factor analysis presented in the following sections.

Table 15 Initial 56 Items for BRS

"Embodiment"	**"Intentionality"**	**"Doctrinal Knowledge & Adherence" AND "Rational Belief"**	**"Body, Speech, Mind" AND "Eightfold Path"**	**"Precepts, Concentration, Wisdom" AND "Hearing, Contemplating, Practicing Dharma"**
1_1 I consistently embody compassion / loving-kindness in my interactions with others.	2_1 I am strongly motivated to cultivate wisdom in order to achieve liberation/enlightenment.	3_1 I believe that everything in the world is impermanent and subject to change.	4_1 My physical actions will result in consequences corresponding to the level of wholesomeness and unwholesomeness of these actions.	5_1 Adhering to precepts and moral disciplines has helped me refrain from committing unwholesome acts and thoughts.
1_2 I actively engage in analytical and rational thinking to deepen my understanding of Buddhist teachings.	2_2 I have a sincere intention to practice meditation as a means to alleviate suffering to achieve inner peace.	3_2 I agree that there is no permanent, unchanging self or soul.	4_2 I find it very hard to refrain from lying, harsh speech, divisive speech, and idle talk. **[R]**	5_2 I have been meditating regularly using the methods I have been taught.
1_3 I am open-minded and inclusive, embracing diversity and accepting others as they are.	2_3 I am committed to developing compassion and loving-kindness towards all beings as part of my chosen path.	3_3 I understand and accept the concept of dependent origination, where everything arises due to interdependent causes and conditions.	4_3 As long as we have behaved wholesomely, it does not matter if I have some unwholesome thoughts. **[R]**	5_3 I am able to see through complexity with mental clarity.
1_4 I regularly engage in introspection to cultivate self-awareness and insight into my thoughts and emotions.	2_4 I strongly believe in the importance of ethical conduct and strive to live a morally upright life.	3_4 I believe not all our actions have consequences and shape our present and future experiences. **[R]**	4_4 I have made progress gaining deeper insight into the nature of existence, suffering, arising of suffering, cessation of suffering and the path to the cessation of suffering.	5_4 I just practice without needing to learn about the dharma teaching behind it. **[R]**
1_5 I have made significant progress in reducing greed, hatred, and ignorance in my thoughts and actions.	2_5 I am dedicated to studying and reflecting on the teachings of the Buddha to deepen my understanding of the path to liberation/enlightenment.	3_5 I agree that ultimate reality is characterized by emptiness, that all phenomena lack inherent existence or substantiality.	4_5 I am actively aligning my thoughts and motivations with compassion, non-harming, and renunciation.	5_5 One needs to memorize and recite sutras and the meaning will show itself when the time is right. **[R]**
1_6 I regularly practice the Four Immeasurables (Brahmavihara) of loving-kindness, compassion, empathetic joy, and equanimity.	2_6 I have a genuine aspiration to let go of attachments and desires that cause suffering and hindrances in my life.	3_6 I don't believe in the idea of rebirth or consciousness continues beyond death and takes on new forms in subsequent lives. **[R]**	4_6 I am consistently using words that are truthful, kind, and beneficial to myself and others.	5_6 I have been putting what I learned about dharma into my daily life.
1_7 I am committed to living a life of non-harming, seeking to minimize harm to all living beings.	2_7 I am willing to engage in selfless service and contribute to the welfare of others as part of my practice.	3_7 I understand the significance and meaning of the Triple Gem, consisting of the Buddha, the Dharma (teachings), and the Sangha (community).	4_7 I am making efforts to refrain from harmful behaviors such as killing, stealing, and engaging in sexual misconduct.	
1_8 I have developed a healthy sense of non-attachment, recognizing the impermanence of all things.	2_8 I feel a deep sense of gratitude towards the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, and recognize their role in guiding me towards liberation/enlightenment.	3_8 I agree with the Four Noble Truths, that life is characterized by suffering, suffering arises from craving and attachment, there is a way to end suffering, and the Noble Eightfold Path leads to the cessation of suffering.	4_8 I am dedicated to earning a living via means that is ethical and wholesome.	

1_9 I frequently experience calmness and mental clarity through meditation and mindfulness practices.	2_9 I am open to continuously learning and growing on my spiritual journey, seeking guidance from qualified teachers and spiritual mentors.	3_9 I understand that liberation and enlightenment are possible through practicing concentration, mindfulness, and cultivating wisdom and compassion.	4_9 I am actively working on applying sustained effort to let go of unwholesome states and develop wholesome qualities.
1_10 I consistently strive to remain present in the moment / being mindful in all activities.	2_10 I am committed to integrating the principles of Buddhism into all aspects of my life, including work, relationships, and daily activities.	3_10 I believe in accepting teachings without questioning them. **[R]**	4_10 I am making progress in cultivating present-moment awareness and a non-judgmental observation of my experiences.
1_11 I embody selflessness by placing the needs of others before my own.		3_11 I value received knowledge and teachings over personally testifying. **[R]**	4_11 I am consistently developing a focused and tranquil mind through meditation and mental absorption practices.
1_12 I believe in the potential for positive change and growth in all things.		3_12 I believe in the importance of discerning between right and wrong based on ethical principles rather than blind faith.	
1_13 I actively extend compassion and loving-kindness to myself, recognizing the importance of self-care.		3_13 I consider the intentions and consequences of actions to be crucial in determining their moral worth.	
1_14 I regularly practice letting go of attachments to material possessions, relationships, and expectations.		3_14 I believe that external authorities should have the final say in making decisions. **[R}**	
1_ 15 I cultivate a sense of inner peace and contentment through my practice.			

Note: [R] indicates this item should be reverse-coded

5.1.2 Translation Process

To ensure accessibility and relevance across cultural and linguistic contexts, the Buddhist Religiosity Scale (BRS) was translated from English into both Simplified and Traditional Chinese. This decision was made to accommodate participants who preferred Chinese-language materials, particularly those from regions such as Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. The initial translation into Chinese was undertaken by the researcher, who possesses extensive knowledge of Buddhist terminology and doctrinal knowledge. This allowed for a context-sensitive rendering of items that retained fidelity to both the semantic content and the religious meaning of the original items.

To enhance the accuracy and conceptual equivalence of the translated items, a back-translation procedure was conducted. A bilingual associate based in Hong Kong, who holds master's degrees in both Buddhist Studies and Counselling Psychology, carried out the back-translation from Chinese to English. Given this individual's combined academic training and cultural familiarity with Buddhist traditions, they were well-positioned to identify subtle discrepancies and ensure terminological and cultural appropriateness. The back-translated items were then reviewed in comparison with the original English items to detect any semantic inconsistencies or unintended shifts in meaning.

Where discrepancies or ambiguities were identified, minor revisions were made to ensure that the translated items aligned closely with the intended meaning of the English originals. Special care was taken to maintain consistency in doctrinal language and the tone appropriate to each construct, particularly those with nuanced implications in Buddhist thought. This iterative refinement process ensured that the scale items were clear, culturally appropriate, and semantically equivalent across all three versions of English, Traditional Chinese, and Simplified Chinese. The final translated versions are presented in full in Appendix E.

5.2 Procedure and Participants for EFA

5.2.1 Study Design

This phase of the research marked the first quantitative evaluation of the Buddhist Religiosity Scale (BRS), focusing on its latent structure and psychometric performance. Building upon the theoretical foundations and qualitative findings discussed in Chapter 4 and translated into items as documented in Section 5.1.1, the goal here was to empirically examine whether the proposed constructs held together meaningfully as measurable factors. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was deemed the most appropriate method, given that the underlying structure of the scale was still under investigation and had not yet been statistically validated.

The EFA served as a data-driven approach to identify patterns among the 56 items and detect latent constructs within a diverse Buddhist population. Importantly, the analysis also informed which items should be retained, revised, or removed, allowing for greater conceptual clarity in the emerging scale. This method aligns with best practices in scale development, particularly when theory provides guidance but does not predetermine the number or nature of factors (DeVellis, 2017; Fabrigar et al., 1999). Through this process, the BRS could be refined for future confirmatory testing and broader application.

Based on standard psychometric guidelines, a sample size of $N = 500$ was targeted. Specifically, DeVellis (2017) suggests a minimum of five to ten participants per item, and Tabachnick and Fidell (2019) recommend larger samples in anticipation of lower commonalities or weaker factors. Given the 56-item pool, this sample size was considered adequate to generate stable and interpretable factor solutions. Ultimately, 495 usable responses remained after quality screening, providing sufficient data for robust factor extraction and validation.

Participants were recruited from Mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, and Singapore—regions that collectively represent over half of the global Buddhist population (Pew Research Center, 2012). These locations were chosen for their doctrinal diversity, encompassing all three major Buddhist traditions: Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana. The broad geographic and cultural sampling allowed the BRS to be validated in real-world contexts where Buddhist religiosity is both deeply embedded and varied. All participants in this study were required to self-identify as Buddhists. The survey question on Buddhist affiliation asked which Buddhist school had "influenced them the most", allowing participants to indicate their dominant orientation without implying exclusive identification. This approach ensured that the scale could serve as a generalisable and non-sectarian measure of Buddhist religiosity.

5.2.2 Procedures

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the James Cook University Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval Number: H9272) on 17 November 2023, prior to the commencement of data collection. All research activities complied with the Australian National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (National Health and Medical Research Council et al., 2018). Participants were informed of their rights, including the right to withdraw at any time, and all responses were collected anonymously to ensure confidentiality. The study was conducted entirely online using Qualtrics, the university's licensed survey platform.

Quotas were established in advance to ensure balanced sampling across the five key regions: Mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, and Singapore. These quotas helped ensure adequate

representation of different Buddhist traditions and cultural contexts. The survey was made available in three language writings—English, Traditional Chinese, and Simplified Chinese—to accommodate the linguistic preferences of participants. These translated versions were finalised following the translation and back-translation process outlined earlier.

The survey was launched on 5 December 2023 and remained live until 6 December 2023. Recruitment was managed via Cint, a global online panel provider that maintains large, diverse participant pools in each of the target regions. Participants received a unique, single-use link to access the questionnaire, which automatically directed them to the appropriate language version based on their regional and linguistic profile. Completion times and response quality were monitored to safeguard data integrity.

All responses were screened for quality assurance prior to analysis. Cases were flagged and removed if participants exhibited "straight-lining" (i.e., selecting the same response for a sequence of items) or completed the survey in an implausibly short time. Only data that passed these quality checks were included in the final dataset. After cleaning, a total of 495 responses were retained and used for subsequent analyses. Data were analysed using JASP version 0.18.3 (JASP Team, 2024a), an open-source statistical software package that is well suited for psychometric evaluation and factor analysis.

5.2.3 Measures

The development and validation of the Buddhist Religiosity Scale (BRS) were supported by multiple psychometric assessments. To evaluate its validity, this study incorporated a range of established instruments that align with theoretical constructs relevant to Buddhist religiosity. These included measures used to assess convergent and discriminant validity (as indicators of construct validity), as well as measures for predictive and concurrent validity (to evaluate criterion validity). Each measure was selected based on its theoretical relevance to the BRS, its empirical track record, and its cultural applicability to the population under study.

The following subsections detail the specific instruments employed in the validation process. Each description includes the theoretical rationale for inclusion, the structure and response format of the scale, and internal consistency estimates (Cronbach's alpha) obtained from the current study. These validity indicators provide a robust framework for evaluating the scale's psychometric soundness and ensuring that it captures both the conceptual and practical dimensions of Buddhist religiosity. The inclusion of both psychological and behavioural measures strengthens the overall validity assessment by reflecting both subjective experience and observable tendencies.

Buddhist Religiosity Scale (BRS). The BRS was developed to capture a wide range of doctrinal, behavioural, and experiential aspects of Buddhist religiosity. It comprises 56 items designed to reflect eight conceptual domains derived from earlier qualitative research, which collectively represent internalised belief systems and external practices. These domains include: "Embodiment," "Intentionality," "Doctrinal Knowledge and Adherence," "Rational Belief," "Body, Speech, and Mind," "Noble Eightfold Path," "Precepts, Concentration, and Wisdom," and "Hearing, Contemplating, and Practising Dharma." The items aim to assess both adherence to core teachings and the degree to which individuals enact Buddhist values in their everyday lives. Sample items include "I consistently embody compassion and loving-kindness in my interactions with others", and "I believe that everything in the world is impermanent and subject to change". These items reflect both practical conduct and doctrinal understanding—two integral aspects of Buddhist religiosity.

Participants responded to each item using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*), with higher scores indicating greater Buddhist religiosity. The use of a 7-point scale was guided by evidence supporting its superior psychometric sensitivity compared to 4- or 5-point formats, especially in detecting nuanced differences in attitudes and behaviours (Leung, 2011). The scale was developed in English and translated into Simplified and Traditional Chinese to enhance accessibility and cultural inclusivity.

Construct Validity Measures. Construct validity refers to the extent to which a scale measures the theoretical construct it purports to assess. In the present study, construct validity for the BRS was evaluated through both convergent and discriminant validity procedures. Convergent validity assesses whether the BRS correlates positively with conceptually similar constructs, while discriminant validity tests whether the BRS does not correlate highly with constructs that are theoretically distinct or unrelated.

To assess these forms of validity, several established psychometric instruments were administered alongside the BRS. The scales selected for convergent validity are grounded in Buddhist teachings and values, while those used for discriminant validity are drawn from domains that diverge from Buddhist principles, particularly monotheistic or externally oriented belief systems. The use of multiple sources for validation strengthens the BRS's empirical foundation and contributes to its overall psychometric robustness.

***Convergent Validity Measures*.** Two scales were selected to assess convergent validity: the Non-Attachment Scale (NAS; Devine et al., 2022; Elphinstone et al., 2020) and the Centrality of Buddhist Religiosity Scale (CBRS; Nguyen et al., 2021). Both instruments have demonstrated strong psychometric properties and conceptual overlap with Buddhist religiosity, making them suitable for

evaluating the convergent validity of the BRS. These scales target key features of Buddhist belief and practice, such as non-attachment and the centrality of Dharma in daily life, which are expected to correlate positively with the dimensions assessed by the BRS.

The shortened 7-item version of the Non-Attachment Scale, NAS-7 (Sahdra et al., 2016), was used to assess the degree to which individuals are able to let go of material and psychological attachments. The scale measures the ability to let go of material and psychological attachments with an α = .83 in the original study. It also showed significant positive correlations with measures of mindfulness and decentring, and negative correlations with depression, anxiety, and stress (Feliu-Soler et al., 2016). Non-attachment is a cornerstone of Buddhist doctrine and is directly linked to the concept of Emptiness, one of the Three Dharma Seals. Sample items from this scale include "I can let go of regrets and feelings of dissatisfaction about the past", and "I can take joy in others' achievements without feeling envious". Responses are scored on a 6-point Likert scale from 1 (*disagree strongly*) to 6 (*agree strongly*), with higher scores indicating greater non-attachment. In the present sample, internal consistency was strong, with α = .851.

The CBRS (Nguyen et al., 2021) is a Buddhist adaptation of the Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS; Huber & Huber, 2012). It measures the central role of Buddhist beliefs and practices in an individual's life across multiple domains. The CBRS consists of 15 items, originally measured using a mix of 5-point, 6-point, and 8-point scales, all of which were recoded into a unified 5-point scale for analysis. A sample item would be: "How much do you believe in reincarnation?" Another example is "How important is the Buddhist Sangha for you?" Higher scores indicate a stronger centrality of Buddhist religiosity. The CBRS demonstrated excellent internal consistency in this study (α = .958), supporting its use as a benchmark for assessing convergent validity.

Discriminant Validity Measures. To establish discriminant validity, two instruments were employed that measure religious beliefs and orientations conceptually distinct from Buddhist religiosity. These included a modified version of the Degrees of Belief in God Scale (DBIGS; Maiello, 2005) and selected items from the Religious Meaning Scale (RMS; Pargament, 1999a). Both scales were adapted to replace references to "God" with "Buddha/Bodhisattva," ensuring that participants from Buddhist backgrounds could respond meaningfully while preserving the original theistic assumptions underlying the items.

The modified DBIGS consisted of six items assessing belief in the supernatural qualities of Buddha or Bodhisattvas, such as omnipotence. Some items read: "I believe Buddha/Bodhisattva is almighty, and I believe Buddha/Bodhisattva is my protection". Responses were captured using a dichotomous format: 1 for "*Agree*" and 0 for "*Disagree*." This structure allowed for clear

differentiation between participants whose beliefs aligned with traditional Buddhist non-theism and those who viewed Buddhist figures through a more theistic lens. As expected, weaker correlations with the BRS would support the scale's discriminant validity.

Additionally, five items from the RMS were adapted to reflect Buddhist contexts. These items originally measured the extent to which individuals found meaning in life through divine will. In adapting these for the current study, references to "God" were replaced with "Buddha/Bodhisattva," while retaining the underlying theological assumptions that are typically inconsistent with core Buddhist doctrines. Some sample items include: "My purpose in life reflects what I believe Buddha/Bodhisattva wants for me*",* and "My mission in life is guided/shaped by my faith in Buddha/Bodhisattva". Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The adapted RMS scale demonstrated good internal reliability in this study (α = .862), providing a sound basis for testing discriminant validity.

Criterion Validity Measures. Criterion validity refers to the extent to which a scale correlates with outcome variables that are theoretically or empirically expected to relate to the construct being measured. In this study, criterion validity was assessed using both predictive and concurrent strategies to evaluate the relationship between Buddhist religiosity, as measured by the BRS, and observable behavioural or psychological outcomes.

Predictive validity was examined using a behavioural economics paradigm—the Dictator Game—to assess generosity and altruistic behaviour. Concurrent validity, on the other hand, was tested by examining correlations between the BRS and psychological constructs such as life satisfaction and anxiety, which are conceptually linked to Buddhist teachings on the reduction of suffering and promotion of inner peace.

***Predictive Validity Measures*.** To evaluate predictive validity, this study utilised a modified version of the Dictator Game (Forsythe et al., 1994), a behavioural economics tool commonly used to assess prosocial behaviour. Participants were asked to imagine they had received the equivalent of $1,000 in their local currency and could choose how much of this amount to donate to a charity organisation. The instructions clarified that donations could range from $0 to $1,000 in increments of $1. This setup was designed to reflect real-world generosity without invoking explicit religious framing, thereby reducing the risk of demand characteristics or priming effects.

The use of the Dictator Game in this context aligns with Buddhist teachings on compassion and selfless giving. Participants who scored higher on the BRS were expected to donate more, reflecting a stronger internalisation of Buddhist ethical values. This method has previously been

applied in similar cultural contexts, including a Japanese replication (Ogawa & Ida, 2015), and was considered appropriate for assessing altruistic intent among Buddhists.

The descriptive statistics for this measure showed a mean donation amount of M = 611.73 (SD = 324.08), with a median of 600 and a modal response of 500. The distribution of donation amounts was slightly left-skewed (Skewness = −0.395, SE_{Skewness} = 0.11), and kurtosis was −1.073 (SE_{Kurtosis} = 0.219), indicating a relatively flat distribution. The donation range extended from 0 to 1,000 units, reflecting considerable variability in prosocial preferences among participants. This variability was critical in allowing meaningful correlations to be examined between BRS scores and actual behaviour in the game.

***Concurrent Validity Measures*.** Concurrent validity was assessed through correlations between BRS scores and participants' psychological well-being, using two well-established instruments: the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS; Diener et al., 1985) and the Generalised Anxiety Disorder 7-item scale (GAD-7; Spitzer et al., 2006). These constructs were chosen because Buddhist teachings explicitly target the reduction of psychological suffering and the cultivation of equanimity and contentment.

The SWLS (Diener et al., 1985) measures general life satisfaction and consists of five items, including statements such as "In most ways, my life is close to my ideal". Responses are rated on a 7-point Likert scale, from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*), with higher scores indicating greater satisfaction with life. Given Buddhism's emphasis on contentment and liberation from suffering, it was hypothesised that higher BRS scores would positively correlate with SWLS scores. The internal consistency of the SWLS in this study was excellent, with α = .916.

The GAD-7 (Spitzer et al., 2006) was employed to assess symptoms of generalised anxiety. This scale contains seven items, including "Not being able to stop or control worrying", with responses scored on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (*not at all*) to 3 (*nearly every day*). Higher scores reflect greater levels of anxiety. In line with Buddhist principles that emphasise mindfulness, non-attachment, and emotional regulation, it was anticipated that BRS scores would show a negative correlation with GAD-7 scores. The GAD-7 also demonstrated excellent internal reliability in this study, with α = .957.

Together, these concurrent measures helped to evaluate whether adherence to Buddhist religiosity, as operationalised by the BRS, is associated with improved psychological outcomes. The expected relationships offer support for the scale's validity within the broader framework of Buddhist doctrinal aims.

Translation and Adaptation of Measures. Given the linguistic and cultural diversity of the participant pool, validated Chinese versions of the measures were used whenever available to ensure conceptual equivalence and comprehension across language groups. The use of translated instruments was particularly important in this study, which recruited participants from regions where Chinese is a primary language, such as Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. Ensuring linguistic fidelity across all instruments helped maintain the integrity of cross-cultural comparisons and reduced potential bias arising from misinterpretation.

For NAS, the validated Chinese translation by Chao and Chen (2013) was employed. This version has been previously tested for psychometric soundness within Chinese-speaking populations and retains conceptual alignment with the original English items. Similarly, for SWLS, the official Chinese version developed and validated by Dr. Mantak Yuan of the University of Hong Kong was used. The GAD-7, measuring anxiety symptoms, also relied on an established Chinese version validated by He et al. (2010), which has demonstrated strong psychometric properties in previous clinical and non-clinical Chinese samples.

However, for some scales, such as the CBRS, DBIGS, and the adapted items from the RMS, no previously validated Chinese translations were available. In these cases, a systematic translation and back-translation procedure was implemented, mirroring the approach used for the BRS. The CBRS, which was adapted from the CRS, drew on the closest validated Chinese version of the CRS provided by Lee and Kuang (2020), which served as a reference point for translation. Necessary adjustments were made to tailor the items to a Buddhist context, ensuring theological and philosophical appropriateness. For the DBIGS and the adapted RMS items, where no prior Chinese adaptations existed, the PI first translated the items into Chinese. These translated versions were then subjected to a back-translation process conducted by a bilingual scholar with expertise in psychology and Buddhist studies.

5.2.4 Participants

Eligibility was restricted to adults aged 18 years and above who self-identified as Buddhists, regardless of whether they had taken formal refuge. This inclusion criterion was designed to ensure broad representativeness across varying levels of formal religious affiliation, which reflects contemporary forms of Buddhist engagement observed in diverse cultural contexts. By incorporating both formally committed and informally engaged practitioners, the study aimed to better capture the nuances of Buddhist religiosity beyond sectarian or institutional boundaries.

A total of 516 participants completed the online questionnaire for the EFA phase of this study. After applying these quality control filters, the final analytic sample comprised N = 495 valid

responses, which provided a robust dataset for subsequent psychometric analyses, exceeding the minimum recommended item-to-participant ratio of 1:5 (Costello & Osborne, 2005). This sample size also ensured sufficient statistical power to detect stable and meaningful factor patterns.

Of the 495 adults participated in the study, their age ranged from 20 to 66 years (*M* = 36.33, *SD* = 8.96). The sample was approximately gender-balanced (52.3% male, 47.5% female, 0.2% non-binary), and participants were drawn from five regions: Mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, and Singapore (see Table 16 for details).

Table 16 Gender Distributions

Residence	Male	Female	Non-binary	Total
China	19	81	0	100
Hong Kong	51	39	1	91
Taiwan	47	49	0	96
Malaysia	61	37	0	98
Singapore	81	29	0	110
Total	**259**	**235**	**1**	**495**

Participants self-identified as Buddhists, including both those who had formally taken refuge (44.4%) and those who engaged with Buddhist teachings without formal refuge (55.6%). The traditions represented included Mahayana (31.1%), Theravada (19.8%), Vajrayana (16.6%), as well as smaller numbers from secular, non-sectarian, and “don’t know” categories (see Table 17 for details). This diverse and regionally balanced sample reflects the varied expressions of Buddhist religiosity in East and Southeast Asia.

Table 17 Buddhist Traditions Distributions

Buddhist Tradition	China	Hong Kong	Taiwan	Malaysia	Singapore	Total
Theravada	12	15	18	16	37	98
Mahayana	39	28	32	24	31	154
Vajrayana	17	29	11	18	7	82
Non-sectarian	2	2	5	5	6	20
Secular	20	4	10	7	3	44
Don’t know (DK)	0	0	6	11	13	30
Not applicable (NA)	10	13	14	17	13	67
Total	**100**	**91**	**96**	**98**	**110**	**495**

5.2.5 Exploratory Factor Analysis and Psychometric Evaluation Approach

The Buddhist Religiosity Scale (BRS) was subjected to a rigorous psychometric evaluation using EFA. This stage aimed to identify the scale's underlying factor structure and determine whether the item pool cohered into theoretically meaningful and empirically valid constructs.

To ensure the dataset was appropriate for factor analysis, standard tests of normality and sampling adequacy were conducted. The skewness and kurtosis of each item were inspected to verify the assumption of approximately normal distribution. Consistent with guidelines proposed by George and Mallery (2024), skewness values between −2 and +2 and kurtosis values between −3 and +3 were considered acceptable. Although EFA is generally robust to moderate deviations from normality, ensuring the items met acceptable distributional parameters was essential for maintaining the reliability of the factor extraction method (Kasper & Ünlü, 2013). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were employed to assess whether the dataset was suitable for EFA. A KMO ≥ .70 was required, indicating that partial correlations between items were sufficiently small to justify factor analysis. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was expected to return a significant result, thereby confirming that the item correlation matrix was not an identity matrix. Both tests yielded results within the acceptable thresholds, supporting the dataset's suitability for factor extraction.

Factor extraction was conducted using the Maximum Likelihood (ML) method, accompanied by Promax rotation, an oblique rotation technique. ML was chosen for its ability to estimate model fit and provide confidence intervals for loadings, especially appropriate for large samples and continuous data. Promax rotation was used to allow factors to correlate, which reflects the theoretical assumption that psychological constructs, particularly those related to religiosity, are often interrelated (Coan, 1959). This approach enabled the identification of an interpretable and realistic factor solution aligned with the interconnected nature of Buddhist beliefs and practices.

A parallel analysis was performed to determine the number of factors to retain. Unlike the traditional eigenvalue-greater-than-one rule or visual scree plot inspection, the parallel analysis compares actual eigenvalues with those generated from random data, offering a more robust basis for factor retention (Wood et al., 2015). This technique reduces the risk of over-extracting or under-extracting factors (Raîche et al., 2013), a common issue in psychological measurement development. The parallel analysis provided empirical justification for retaining only those factors that genuinely reflected meaningful structure in the data.

Item retention followed a systematic and iterative process. Items were retained if they exhibited a primary loading of .30 or higher, a standard threshold indicating that an item contributes meaningfully to its respective factor (Field, 2013; Hair et al., 2010). In cases where items were loaded

on multiple factors, a cross-loading differential of at least .20 was required to retain the item, ensuring clarity of factor interpretation (Comrey & Lee, 1992; Y. Li et al., 2020). Items that failed to meet these criteria were removed sequentially, and the EFA was rerun iteratively after each removal to reassess the structure and confirm that the factor solution remained stable.

Following item refinement, the internal consistency of each retained factor was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha. A value of $\alpha \geq .70$ was considered acceptable, indicating that the items within each factor reliably measured the same underlying construct (Hunsley & Mash, 2007; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). These reliability estimates provided further evidence for the scale's psychometric soundness, supporting its use in subsequent research and measurement applications.

Validity Assessments. Validity for the BRS was assessed across multiple dimensions, including construct, criterion, and incremental validity. Construct and criterion validity were examined through correlation analyses with conceptually related and unrelated measures, as detailed in Section 5.2.3. Convergent validity was evaluated using the NAS-7 and the CBRS, both of which share core principles with Buddhist teachings. Discriminant validity was assessed using the adapted DBIGS and the RMS, which reflect belief systems that contrast with Buddhist doctrine. Predictive and concurrent validity were tested using behavioural (Dictator Game) and psychological (SWLS, GAD-7) outcomes to explore how BRS scores relate to observable and experiential indicators aligned with Buddhist goals.

In addition to these analyses, incremental validity was assessed to determine whether the BRS could predict outcomes above and beyond existing measures. Hierarchical multiple regression analyses were conducted in which established scales—CBRS, NAS-7, and RMS—were entered as predictors in Step 1, followed by the BRS in Step 2. Criterion variables included participants' life satisfaction (SWLS), generalised anxiety symptoms (GAD-7), and prosocial behaviour (Dictator Game donation amount). The incremental contribution of the BRS was evaluated by examining the change in explained variance between steps.

5.3 Results

5.3.1 Exploratory Factor Analysis

Test of Normality and Data Adequacy. Before conducting the confirmatory factor analysis, the distribution of responses for each of the 56 BRS items was assessed to identify any serious deviations from univariate normality. Skewness values ranged from -1.64 to 1.21, while kurtosis values ranged from -0.46 to 3.76. Although some items showed minor deviations, particularly a tendency toward negative skewness, this pattern reflected a high endorsement of Buddhist principles and was not unexpected. A few items also exceeded the conventional kurtosis threshold of

3.0; however, none demonstrated problematic outliers or distributional irregularities that would compromise model estimation. Overall, the item-level distributions were deemed sufficiently normal for the application of maximum likelihood estimation in CFA. Detailed descriptive statistics for all items are provided in Table 18.

To evaluate the overall suitability of the data for factor analysis, the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were conducted. The KMO statistic was exceptionally high at 0.980, with individual item MSA values ranging from 0.976 to 0.988, indicating excellent sampling adequacy. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was also significant, $\chi^2(1540) = 3547.89$, $p < .001$, confirming that the inter-item correlations were sufficiently strong to justify factor analysis. Together, these results supported the appropriateness of the data for confirmatory factor analysis.

EFA on 56 Items. An EFA was conducted on the 56 items using ML as the factoring method with Promax rotation. Parallel analysis was employed to determine the number of factors to retain instead of relying on the scree plot or the Kaiser criterion. The parallel analysis suggested a three-factor solution for the data. Based on this recommendation, the analysis proceeded, focusing on examining the factor loadings where .3 was used as the minimal loading level for the items to be included and determining whether the model fit could be improved through item reduction in subsequent iterations. However, all reverse-coded items consistently loaded on the same factor; with subsequent iterations, a single factor was formed for all reverse-coded items that do not conform to the conceptual development of the anticipated dimensions. As such, all nine reverse-coded items were removed from our EFA, resulting in 47 items in total.

EFA on 47 Items. Table 19 presents the initial factor loadings for the three-factor solution. However, several items displayed cross-loadings or low communalities, indicating they may not contribute meaningfully to a clear factor structure. 15 items were flagged for removal, including items 1_2, 1_4, 1_6, 1_7, 1_10, 1_13, 1_14, 1_15, 2_3, 3_1, 3_3, 3_9, 3_12, 4_1 and 4_10, leaving 32 items in the next iteration. These revisions aim to improve the clarity and parsimony of the model.

Table 18 Test of Normality of 56 Items

	1_1	1_2	1_3	1_4	1_5	1_6	1_7	1_8	1_9	1_10	1_11	1_12	1_13	1_14	1_15
Mean	5.796	5.679	5.887	5.723	5.653	5.713	5.752	5.655	5.719	5.735	5.695	5.842	5.853	5.717	5.816
Std. Deviation	1.214	1.227	1.081	1.137	1.209	1.212	1.121	1.143	1.14	1.08	1.238	1.081	1.088	1.153	1.061
Skewness	-1.64	-1.163	-1.404	-1.116	-1.074	-0.978	-1.119	-0.967	-1.072	-0.958	-0.954	-1.168	-1.354	-1.144	-1.148
Std. Error of Skewness	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11
Kurtosis	3.699	1.884	3.474	1.788	1.523	0.961	1.935	1.134	1.423	1.301	0.729	2.3	3.083	1.622	2.255
Std. Error of Kurtosis	0.219	0.219	0.219	0.219	0.219	0.219	0.219	0.219	0.219	0.219	0.219	0.219	0.219	0.219	0.219

	2_1	2_2	2_3	2_4	2_5	2_6	2_7	2_8	2_9	2_10
Mean	5.729	5.663	5.717	5.853	5.697	5.733	5.642	5.675	5.768	5.745
Std. Deviation	1.163	1.162	1.084	1.038	1.149	1.069	1.197	1.133	1.124	1.135
Skewness	-1.112	-1.091	-1.028	-0.956	-1.171	-0.989	-1.168	-1.07	-1.147	-1.267
Std. Error of Skewness	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11
Kurtosis	1.63	1.48	1.425	1.485	2.075	1.324	1.964	1.706	2.019	2.481
Std. Error of Kurtosis	0.219	0.219	0.219	0.219	0.219	0.219	0.219	0.219	0.219	0.219

	3_1	3_2	3_3	3_4	3_5	3_6	3_7	3_8	3_9	3_10	3_11	3_12	3_13	3_14
Mean	5.921	5.638	5.743	2.527	5.719	3.093	5.596	5.636	5.675	2.594	2.784	5.818	5.788	2.412
Std. Deviation	1	1.296	1.018	1.395	1.158	1.801	1.202	1.181	1.149	1.463	1.548	1.081	1.062	1.298
Skewness	-1.403	-1.297	-0.866	1.213	-0.884	0.731	-1.025	-1.029	-0.93	1.097	0.841	-1.36	-1.148	1.193
Std. Error of Skewness	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11
Kurtosis	3.764	1.908	1.161	1.371	0.637	-0.462	1.429	1.432	1.101	0.837	-0.071	3.197	2.148	1.692
Std. Error of Kurtosis	0.219	0.219	0.219	0.219	0.219	0.219	0.219	0.219	0.219	0.219	0.219	0.219	0.219	0.219

	4_1	4_2	4_3	4_4	4_5	4_6	4_7	4_8	4_9	4_10	4_11
Mean	5.743	3.111	3.028	5.543	5.679	5.745	5.824	5.81	5.778	5.667	5.804
Std. Deviation	1.198	1.748	1.599	1.164	1.102	1.106	1.102	1.087	1.051	1.108	1.108
Skewness	-1.412	0.67	0.657	-0.907	-0.924	-1.035	-1.006	-1.239	-0.828	-1.117	-1.025
Std. Error of Skewness	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11
Kurtosis	2.795	-0.515	-0.341	1.031	1.245	1.733	1.289	2.626	0.83	1.899	1.355
Std. Error of Kurtosis	0.219	0.219	0.219	0.219	0.219	0.219	0.219	0.219	0.219	0.219	0.219

	5_1	5_2	5_3	5_4	5_5	5_6
Mean	5.826	5.63	5.689	3.053	2.669	5.715
Std. Deviation	1.025	1.171	1.159	1.705	1.48	1.135
Skewness	-1.107	-0.973	-0.954	0.712	0.944	-1.224
Std. Error of Skewness	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11
Kurtosis	2.052	1.079	0.941	-0.418	0.382	2.288
Std. Error of Kurtosis	0.219	0.219	0.219	0.219	0.219	0.219

Table 19 Factor Solution of 47 Item BRS

Factor Loadings

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Uniqueness
5_6 I have been putting what I learned about dharma into my daily life.	0.913			0.285
2_5 I am dedicated to studying and reflecting on the teachings of the Buddha to deepen my understanding of the path to liberation/enlightenment.	0.742			0.365
3_7 I understand the significance and meaning of the Triple Gem, consisting of the Buddha, the Dharma (teachings), and the Sangha (community).	0.736			0.378
2_8 I feel a deep sense of gratitude towards the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, and recognize their role in guiding me towards liberation/enlightenment.	0.722			0.391
1_9 I frequently experience calmness and mental clarity through meditation and mindfulness practices.	0.665			0.397
5_2 I have been meditating regularly using the methods I have been taught.	0.626			0.424
2_10 I am committed to integrating the principles of Buddhism into all aspects of my life, including work, relationships, and daily activities.	0.622			0.408
1_8 I have developed a healthy sense of non-attachment, recognizing the impermanence of all things.	0.611			0.431
4_11 I am consistently developing a focused and tranquil mind through meditation and mental absorption practices.	0.610			0.388
5_3 I am able to see through complexity with mental clarity.	0.548			0.466
2_6 I have a genuine aspiration to let go of attachments and desires that cause suffering and hindrances in my life.	0.548			0.382
1_6 I regularly practice the Four Immeasurables (Brahmavihara) of loving-kindness, compassion, empathetic joy, and equanimity.	0.543	0.358		0.409
2_9 I am open to continuously learning and growing on my spiritual journey, seeking guidance from qualified teachers and spiritual mentors.	0.532			0.396
3_8 I agree with the Four Noble Truths, that life is characterized by suffering arises from craving and attachment, there is a way to end suffering, and the Noble Eightfold Path leads to the cessation of suffering.	0.531			0.421
1_2 I actively engage in analytical and rational thinking to deepen my understanding of Buddhist teachings.	0.496	0.592		0.309
4_4 I have made progress gaining deeper insight into the nature of existence, suffering, arising of suffering, cessation of suffering and the path to the cessation of suffering.	0.491			0.393
2_7 I am willing to engage in selfless service and contribute to the welfare of others as part of my practice.	0.483			0.457
3_9 I understand that liberation and enlightenment are possible through practicing concentration, mindfulness, and cultivating wisdom and compassion.	0.454		0.316	0.446
3_5 I agree that ultimate reality is characterized by emptiness, that all phenomena lack inherent existence or substantiality.	0.444			0.470
1_11 I embody selflessness by placing the needs of others before my own.	0.409			0.445
1_14 I regularly practice letting go of attachments to material possessions, relationships, and expectations.	0.368	0.392		0.474
2_2 I have a sincere intention to practice meditation as a means to alleviate suffering to achieve inner peace.	0.364			0.435
4_10 I am making progress in cultivating present-moment awareness and a non-judgmental observation of my experiences.	0.363		0.392	0.400
1_10 I consistently strive to remain present in the moment / being mindful in all activities.	0.363	0.391		0.410
1_15 I cultivate a sense of inner peace and contentment through my practice.	0.350	0.371		0.369
2_3 I am committed to developing compassion and loving kindness towards all beings as part of my chosen path.	0.324		0.316	0.396
4_5 I am actively aligning my thoughts and motivations with compassion, non-harming, and renunciation.	0.315		0.520	0.473
2_4 I strongly believe in the importance of ethical conduct and strive to live a morally upright life.	0.310			0.422
4_9 I am actively applying sustained effort to let go of unwholesome states and develop wholesome qualities.	0.307		0.558	0.430
1_7 I am committed to living a life of non-harming, seeking to minimize harm to all living beings.	0.306	0.372		0.500
1_3 I am open-minded and inclusive, embracing diversity and accepting others as they are.		0.702		0.506
1_1 I consistently embody compassion / loving-kindness in my interactions with others.		0.693		0.460
3_1 I believe that everything in the world is impermanent and subject to change.		0.565	0.447	0.420
1_4 I regularly engage in introspection to cultivate self-awareness and insight into my thoughts and emotions.		0.558		0.374
1_13 I actively extend compassion and loving-kindness to myself, recognizing the importance of self-care.		0.519		0.468
1_5 I have made significant progress in reducing greed, hatred, and ignorance in my thoughts and actions.		0.507		0.411
4_1 My physical actions will result in consequences corresponding to the level of wholesomeness and unwholesomeness of these actions.		0.455	0.418	0.509
1_12 I believe in the potential for positive change and growth in all things.		0.437		0.540
2_1 I am strongly motivated to cultivate wisdom in order to achieve liberation/enlightenment.		0.395		0.375

Factor Loadings

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Uniqueness
3_12 I believe in the importance of discerning between right and wrong based on ethical principles rather than blind faith.		0.331	0.462	0.533
3_3 I understand and accept the concept of dependent origination, where everything arises due to interdependent causes and conditions.		0.329	0.358	0.474
5_1 Adhering to precepts and moral disciplines has helped me refrain from committing unwholesome acts and thoughts.		0.323		0.420
4_8 I am dedicated to earning a living via means that is ethical and wholesome.			0.583	0.438
3_13 I consider the intentions and consequences of actions to be crucial in determining their moral worth.			0.552	0.438
4_7 I am making efforts to refrain from harmful behaviors such as killing, stealing, and engaging in sexual misconduct.			0.466	0.601
3_2 I agree that there is no permanent, unchanging self or soul.			0.422	0.636
4_6 I am consistently using words that are truthful, kind, and beneficial to myself and others.			0.378	0.482

Note. Applied rotation method is promax.

Subsequent Iterations: From 32 Items to a Two-Factor Solution. After reducing the item pool to 32 items in the second iteration, subsequent EFAs were conducted to further refine the factor structure. In the second iteration, a two-factor solution emerged, but six items (1_1, 2_1, 2_2, 2_4, 4_6, 5_1) cross-loaded on both factors with factor loading differential lower than 2. After removing these six items, the remaining 26 items returned another 2-Factor solution with three more cross-loading (3_13, 4_7, and 4_8) without significant loading difference

In the fourth iteration of EFA, after removing the three cross-loaded items, a clean two-factor solution emerged from the 23 remaining items. The resulting factor solution has 16 items loaded on Factor 1 and seven items on Factor 2. Of these seven items, all but item 3_2 (*"*I agree that there is no permanent, unchanging self or soul*"*) came from what was originally conceptualised as the "Embodiment" dimension. In order to keep the factor a pure reflection of the Embodiment dimension, 3_2 was further removed, and the 22-item BRS was derived following the systematic EFA and item retention procedures.

Psychometric Properties of 22-item BRS. The final analysis revealed a two-factor structure, which captures key dimensions of Buddhist religiosity. The EFA result is presented in Table 20.

Table 20 22-item BRS Factor Loadings

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Uniqueness
5_6 I have been putting what I learned about dharma into my daily life.	0.920		0.306
3_7 I understand the significance and meaning of the Triple Gem, consisting of the Buddha, the Dharma (teachings), and the Sangha (community).	0.873		0.372
2_8 I feel a deep sense of gratitude towards the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, and recognize their role in guiding me towards liberation/enlightenment.	0.769		0.400
5_2 I have been meditating regularly using the methods I have been taught.	0.737		0.432
2_5 I am dedicated to studying and reflecting on the teachings of the Buddha to deepen my understanding of the path to liberation/enlightenment.	0.715		0.373
2_10 I am committed to integrating the principles of Buddhism into all aspects of my life, including work, relationships, and daily activities.	0.712		0.402
4_11 I am consistently developing a focused and tranquil mind through meditation and mental absorption practices.	0.685		0.389

3_8 I agree with the Four Noble Truths, that life is characterized by suffering arises from craving and attachment, there is a way to end suffering, and the Noble Eightfold Path leads to the cessation of suffering.	0.684		0.419
2_9 I am open to continuously learning and growing on my spiritual journey, seeking guidance from qualified teachers and spiritual mentors.	0.667		0.397
2_6 I have a genuine aspiration to let go of attachments and desires that cause suffering and hindrances in my life.	0.656		0.385
4_9 I am actively applying sustained effort to let go of unwholesome states and develop wholesome qualities.	0.653		0.499
3_5 I agree that ultimate reality is characterized by emptiness, that all phenomena lack inherent existence or substantiality.	0.629		0.481
5_3 I am able to see through complexity with mental clarity.	0.621		0.465
4_4 I have made progress gaining deeper insight into the nature of existence, suffering, arising of suffering, cessation of suffering and the path to the cessation of suffering.	0.597		0.389
4_5 I am actively aligning my thoughts and motivations with compassion, non-harming, and renunciation.	0.584		0.518
2_7 I am willing to engage in selfless service and contribute to the welfare of others as part of my practice.	0.562		0.454
1_3 I am open-minded and inclusive, embracing diversity and accepting others as they are.		0.914	0.415
1_4 I regularly engage in introspection to cultivate self-awareness and insight into my thoughts and emotions.		0.675	0.35
1_13 I actively extend compassion and loving-kindness to myself, recognizing the importance of self-care.		0.629	0.466
1_1 I consistently embody compassion / loving-kindness in my interactions with others.		0.603	0.527
1_5 I have made significant progress in reducing greed, hatred, and ignorance in my thoughts and actions.		0.585	0.401
1_12 I believe in the potential for positive change and growth in all things.		0.502	0.546

Note. Applied rotation method is Promax. Items with R-adj marked in bracket indicted that the results were reverse-coded and had been reversed back for analysis.

The first factor, labelled "Learning, Thinking, Practicing Dharma (LTP)," consists of 16 items. This factor represents the active engagement with Buddhist teachings, including the practical application of Dharma in daily life, meditation practices, and a deep understanding of Buddhist doctrine. Items in this factor range from practical integration, such as "I have been putting what I learned about dharma into my daily life*"* (loading = .920), to the philosophical grounding of Buddhist beliefs, as reflected in “I agree with the Four Noble Truths, that life is characterized by suffering arises from craving and attachment, there is a way to end suffering, and the Noble Eightfold Path leads to the cessation of suffering” (loading = .684). The loadings for these items are consistently high, ranging from .562 to .920, demonstrating strong associations with this factor. The uniqueness values for the items in this factor, ranging from .306 to .518, suggest that while the items collectively reflect a common theme, each retains a degree of individuality.

The second factor, "Embodiment," includes six items and focuses on Buddhist principles’ internalisation and outward expression. This factor captures the more personal, affective dimension of religiosity, reflecting how individuals embody Buddhist values in their actions and relationships. For example, "I am open-minded and inclusive, embracing diversity and accepting others as they are" (loading = .914) shows the highest loading, emphasising inclusivity as a key part of Buddhist embodiment. Other items, such as "I consistently embody compassion/loving-kindness in my interactions with others" (loading = .603), reflect the enactment of compassion and ethical

behaviour, which are central to Buddhist practice. The uniqueness values for the items in this factor range from .350 to .546, indicating that each item contributes uniquely to the factor while still reflecting a shared underlying construct.

In this study, the term "Embodiment" follows its Buddhist doctrinal usage, referring to the internalisation and lived expression of the Dharma through one's thoughts, speech, and actions, rather than to somatic or physiological manifestations, which are often implied by the term in clinical or psychological contexts. It denotes the ethical and behavioural manifestation of one's insight and practice, expressing the degree to which Buddhist principles are integrated into daily conduct. This construct is conceptually distinct from "realisation of enlightenment" as used in the definition of Buddhist religiosity, which refers to the soteriological attainment of awakening (证悟) rather than to cognitive insight (悟) or embodied practice. While realisation of enlightenment represents the ultimate goal of the Buddhist path, *Embodiment* reflects the observable enactment of Dharma within the continuum of practice and personal transformation.

The correlation between the two factors is .791, suggesting a strong and significant relationship. This indicates that individuals actively engaged in learning and practising Dharma are also likely to embody Buddhist values in their daily lives. This relationship is conceptually coherent, as the active pursuit of Buddhist teachings is expected to lead to personal transformation.

In terms of factor characteristics, two factors emerged that together explained a substantial portion of the variance in the data. The first factor accounted for the largest share, capturing over 40% of the variance, while the second contributed an additional 17%. Combined, these two factors explained 57.3% of the total variance, supporting the scale's conceptual coherence and psychometric adequacy. Detailed eigenvalues and proportion of explained variance for both the unrotated and rotated solutions are presented in Table 21.

Table 21 Factor Characteristics of 22-Item BRS

		Unrotated solution			Rotated solution		
	Eigenvalues	**SumSq. Loadings**	**Proportion var.**	**Cumulative**	**SumSq. Loadings**	**Proportion var.**	**Cumulative**
Factor 1	12.346	11.925	0.542	0.542	8.849	0.402	0.402
Factor 2	1.113	0.688	0.031	0.573	3.764	0.171	0.573

The model fit indices further support the robustness of the two-factor solution. The chi-squared value, $\chi^2(188) = 335.468$, $p < .001$, indicates a significant model fit. The RMSEA of 0.040 (90% CI [0.033, 0.047]) and the SRMR of 0.023 are both within acceptable ranges, indicating a good fit

between the model and the observed data. Additionally, the TLI (0.975) and CFI (0.979) are well above the recommended threshold of 0.90, suggesting that the model is a reliable representation of the underlying construct. The BIC of -830.989 further confirms the adequacy of the model.

The 22-item BRS demonstrates strong psychometric properties, capturing two distinct but related aspects of Buddhist religiosity. The first factor reflects the practical and intellectual engagement with Buddhist teachings, while the second focuses on embodying Buddhist values and ethical behaviour. The high correlation between the two factors suggests a cohesive construct of religiosity, where active practice and personal transformation are deeply intertwined. The model fit indices provided further evidence that the scale offers a valid and reliable measure of Buddhist religiosity. This two-factor structure provides a nuanced understanding of how individuals both engage with and internalise Buddhist teachings, offering a valuable tool for measuring religiosity in this context.

5.3.2 Scale Reliability of the 22-Item BRS

Overall Reliability of BRS Scale and Subscales. Table 22 details that the overall reliability of the 22-item BRS was excellent, with α = .962, 95% CI [0.957, 0.967]. This indicates a high level of internal consistency, suggesting that the items in the BRS cohesively measure the construct of Buddhist religiosity. For Factor 1, which is labelled "Learning, Thinking, Practicing Dharma (LTP)," the 16 items within this factor showed high internal consistency with α =.956, 95% CI [0.950, 0.962]. This means that the items within this factor are highly consistent and effectively measure the underlying construct. For Factor 2, labelled "Embodiment," the internal consistency was slightly lower but still strong, with α = .874, 95% CI [0.856, 0.891]. These values emphasise the reliability of both factors in measuring their respective constructs.

Table 22 Reliability of BRS, LTP, and Embodiment

Frequentist Scale Reliability Statistics

Estimate	BRS Cronbach's α	BRS LTP Cronbach's α	BRS Embodiment Cronbach's α
Point estimate	0.962	0.956	0.874
95% CI lower bound	0.957	0.950	0.856
95% CI upper bound	0.967	0.962	0.891

Individual Item Reliability.

Factor 1: Learning, Thinking, Practicing Dharma (LTP). The reliability of the individual items within Factor 1 was assessed using item-rest correlations, which measure the correlation between each item and the sum of the remaining items in the same factor. The item-rest correlations ranged from .693 to .801, indicating that all items have a strong relationship with the overall factor. For example, "I have been putting what I learned about dharma into my daily life" (Item 5_6) had the highest item-rest correlation (r = .801), reflecting its significant contribution to the overall factor. Other items, such as "I am open to continuously learning and growing on my spiritual journey" (Item 2_9), also had high item-rest correlations (r = .760), further supporting the cohesiveness of the items.

The calculations of Cronbach's alpha if item deleted values indicated that no single item disproportionately influenced the overall reliability. These values ranged from .952 to .955, suggesting that removing any item would not significantly impact the reliability of the factor. For example, removing "I am actively applying sustained effort to let go of unwholesome states and develop wholesome qualities" (Item 4_9) would lead to a slight decrease in Cronbach's alpha from 0.956 to 0.954, indicating that this item contributes meaningfully to the factor.

Factor 2: Embodiment. For Factor 2, the item-rest correlations ranged from .614 to .742, suggesting strong internal consistency within this factor as well. "I regularly engage in introspection to cultivate self-awareness and insight into my thoughts and emotions" (Item 1_4) had the highest item-rest correlation (r = .742), indicating its strong alignment with the factor. Other items, such as "I am open-minded and inclusive, embracing diversity and accepting others as they are" (Item 1_3), also contributed significantly (r = .677).

The Cronbach's alpha if item deleted values for Factor 2 remained stable, ranging from .841 to .863. This stability supports the balanced contribution of each item to the factor's overall reliability. For instance, removing "I believe in the potential for positive change and growth in all things" (Item 1_12) would result in an increase in Cronbach's alpha to .863, but the item's lower item-rest correlation (r = .614) still indicates its relevance to the factor. Table 29 details the results of the calculation for Cronbach's alpha if items are deleted.

Implications for Scale Reliability. The high internal consistency for both factors, as reflected in Cronbach's alpha values, supports the theoretical structure of the 22-item BRS. The excellent reliability of LTP (α = .956) indicates that the items related to learning, thinking, and practising Dharma cohesively capture the intended construct. Similarly, the strong reliability of Embodiment (α = .874) shows that the items measuring the embodiment of Buddhist values are robust and well-aligned.

The strong item-rest correlations across both factors, with values consistently above .6, further confirm that each item contributes significantly to the overall factor structure. Additionally, Cronbach's alpha, if item deleted analysis, reveals that removing any single item would have minimal impact on the overall reliability, indicating that each item contributes effectively to the measurement of Buddhist religiosity.

5.3.3 Validity of the 22-Item BRS

The 22-item Buddhist Religiosity Scale (BRS) was assessed through multiple analyses, focusing on construct, criterion, and incremental validity. Each type of validity provided insights into the BRS's effectiveness in measuring Buddhist religiosity and its relationship with other psychological and behavioural constructs. Construct and criterion validities are tested using correlations between the scores of the various scales (see Table 23 for details).

In terms of incremental validity, hierarchical multiple regression analyses were conducted to evaluate the BRS's unique contribution in explaining variance in key outcome variables that are theoretically and empirically linked to Buddhist religiosity. These outcome variables included the amount of money donated in the Dictator Game, reflecting prosocial behaviour as a manifestation of altruism and compassion; scores on the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS), indicating overall life satisfaction as a marker of psychological well-being; and the Generalised Anxiety Disorder-7 (GAD-7), which captures anxiety levels as an indicator of mental health status. Each of these variables offers a distinct lens through which the influence of Buddhist religiosity on human thoughts, feelings, and behaviours can be examined. By comparing the predictive power of the BRS with that of existing measures such as the CBRS, NAS-7, and RMS, this analysis seeks to establish the BRS's incremental contribution to understanding psychological outcomes in the context of Buddhist practice and belief.

Construct Validity.

Convergent Validity. Correlations between the BRS and theoretically related constructs were examined to establish convergent validity. The BRS was expected to correlate positively with the NAS-7 and the CBRS, as these scales measure constructs aligned with Buddhist principles, such as detachment and the centrality of Buddhist religiosity. The results showed strong positive correlations between the BRS and NAS-7 (r = .747, p < .001), as well as with the aggregate CBRS scores (r = .723, p < .001) and the scale's various dimensions (r = .599 to .687, p < .001). These strong correlations support the convergent validity of the BRS, suggesting that it accurately captures key aspects of Buddhist religiosity in line with nonattachment and centrality of Buddhist practices.

Table 23 Pearson's Correlation of Scales and Dimensions

Variable	BRS LTP	BRS Embodi-ment	BRS	Dictator Game Prosociality	NAS-7	CBRS-Ide	CBRS-Serv	CBRS-Priv	CBRS-Int/Exp	CBRS	DBIGS	RMS	SWLS
1. BRS LTP	—												
2. BRS Embodiment	0.802***	—											
3. BRS	0.985***	0.892***	—										
4. Dictator Game Prosociality	0.343***	0.283***	0.340***	—									
5. NAS-7	0.740***	0.659***	0.747***	0.269***	—								
6. CBRS-Ide	0.622***	0.525***	0.621***	0.345***	0.568***	—							
7. CBRS-Serv	0.607***	0.489***	0.599***	0.376***	0.488***	0.635***	—						
8. CBRS-Priv	0.667***	0.546***	0.660***	0.416***	0.551***	0.625***	0.807***	—					
9. CBRS-Int/Exp	0.707***	0.533***	0.687***	0.386***	0.572***	0.680***	0.802***	0.773***	—				
10. CBRS	0.736***	0.584***	0.723***	0.427***	0.609***	0.786***	0.907***	0.901***	0.946***	—			
11. DBIGS	0.304***	0.195***	0.285***	0.192***	0.239***	0.470***	0.417***	0.386***	0.436***	0.472***	—		
12. RMS	0.655***	0.498***	0.637***	0.336***	0.573***	0.709***	0.678***	0.665***	0.755***	0.788***	0.560***	—	
13. SWLS	0.541***	0.481***	0.546***	0.330***	0.600***	0.525***	0.558***	0.576***	0.627***	0.648***	0.319***	0.646***	—
14. GAD-7	-0.096*	-0.122**	-0.108*	-0.110*	-0.060	-0.080	-0.046	-0.058	0.013	-0.035	-0.047	-0.042	-0.104*

Note. BRS = Buddhist Religiosity Scale; BRS LTP = BRS Learning, Thinking, and Practising; BRS Embodiment = BRS Embodiment; NAS-7 = Non-Attachment Scale 7-item version; CBRS = Centrality of Buddhist Religiosity Scale; CBRS-Ide = CBRS Ideology; CBRS-Serv = CBRS Public Practise; CBRS-Priv = CBRS Private Practise; CBRS-Int/Exp = CBRS Intellect / Experience; DBGS = Degree of Belief in God Scale; RMS = Religious Meaning Scale; SWLS = Satisfaction with Life Scale; GAD-7 = General Anxiety Disorder 7-item Scale.
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Discriminant Validity. Discriminant validity was assessed by examining the correlations between the BRS and constructs theoretically distinct from Buddhist religiosity, including the Degrees of Belief in God Scale (DBIGS) and the Religious Meaning Scale (RMS). The BRS showed a moderate correlation with DBIGS (r = .285, p < .001), indicating that while there is some overlap, the BRS captures a unique aspect of religiosity specific to Buddhism, distinct from general theistic beliefs. Unexpectedly, the BRS showed a strong correlation with the RMS (r = .637, p < .001), though the slightly lower correlation with the Embodiment factor of the BRS (r = .498, p < .001) could still suggest that the BRS captures a different dimension of religiosity that differs from the divine reliance in the Judeo-Christian notion of religious meaning where RMS was derived. These findings provide evidence of discriminant validity, as the BRS focuses more on Buddhist-specific constructs than on broader religious beliefs.

Criterion Validity.

Predictive Validity. Predictive validity was evaluated by correlating BRS scores with prosocial behaviours, as measured by the Dictator Game. Higher BRS scores were expected to predict greater generosity, reflecting the Buddhist emphasis on compassion and altruism. The BRS showed a moderate positive correlation with the amount given in the Dictator Game (r = .340, p < .001), supporting its predictive validity. This suggests that individuals with higher Buddhist religiosity, as measured by the BRS, are more likely to engage in altruistic behaviours, a core component of Buddhist practice.

Concurrent Validity. Concurrent validity was assessed by examining correlations between the BRS and measures of life satisfaction (SWLS) and anxiety (GAD-7). Strong positive correlations were found between the BRS and life satisfaction (r = .546, p < .001), indicating that higher levels of Buddhist religiosity are associated with greater life satisfaction. This aligns with Buddhist teachings on contentment and well-being. Conversely, the BRS showed weak negative correlations with anxiety (r = -.108, p < .05), suggesting that individuals with higher Buddhist religiosity may experience lower levels of anxiety. These results are consistent with the understanding that Buddhist religiosity may contribute to enhanced well-being and reduced psychological distress.

Incremental Validity. Incremental validity was assessed using hierarchical multiple regression analyses to determine whether the BRS explained additional variance in prosocial behaviour, life satisfaction, and anxiety beyond what was explained by other established measures, namely the CBRS, NAS-7, and RMS. In each analysis, the established scales were entered into the model first, followed by the BRS to assess its unique contribution to predicting these outcome

variables. The summary of results from the hierarchical multiple regression analyses is detailed in Table 24.

Table 24 Incremental Validity of BRS

	CBRS	BRS	NAS-7	BRS	RMS	BRS
	R^2	ΔR^2	R^2	ΔR^2	R^2	ΔR^2
Dictator Game	0.183***	0.002	0.072***	0.044***	0.113***	0.027***
SWLS	0.420***	0.013***	0.359***	0.022***	0.417***	0.031***
GAD-7	0.001	0.014**	0.004	0.009*	0.002	0.011*

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

Prosocial Behaviour (Dictator Game). Incremental validity analyses examined whether the BRS explained unique variance in prosocial behaviour beyond existing measures. When the CBRS was entered first, it accounted for 18.3% of the variance in Dictator Game donations ($R^2 = .183$, $p < .001$), but adding the BRS did not significantly improve the model ($\Delta R^2 = .002$, $p = .272$), indicating that the BRS did not add incremental value over and above CBRS in this context. However, when NAS-7 was used as the first predictor ($R^2 = .072$, $p < .001$), the BRS significantly increased explained variance by 4.4% ($\Delta R^2 = .044$, $p < .001$). Similarly, when RMS was entered first ($R^2 = .113$, $p < .001$), the BRS contributed an additional 2.7% of explained variance ($\Delta R^2 = .027$, $p < .001$). These results suggest that while the BRS overlaps with the CBRS in capturing altruism, it contributes uniquely beyond nonattachment and religious meaning scales.

Life Satisfaction (SWLS). The BRS demonstrated robust incremental validity in predicting life satisfaction as measured by the SWLS. When CBRS was entered first, it explained 42.0% of the variance ($R^2 = .420$, $p < .001$), and the addition of the BRS added a statistically significant 1.3% ($\Delta R^2 = .013$, $p < .001$). When NAS-7 was used first ($R^2 = .359$, $p < .001$), the BRS increased explained variance by 2.2% ($\Delta R^2 = .022$, $p < .001$). A similar pattern emerged when RMS was used as the initial predictor ($R^2 = .417$, $p < .001$), with the BRS contributing an additional 3.1% ($\Delta R^2 = .031$, $p < .001$). These results underscore that the BRS captures aspects of Buddhist religiosity relevant to well-being, beyond what is explained by nonattachment or generic religious meaning.

Anxiety (GAD-7). While the explained variance in anxiety was modest, the BRS still demonstrated small but statistically significant incremental contributions. When CBRS was the first predictor, it explained only 0.1% of variance in GAD-7 scores ($R^2 = .001$, $p = .436$), yet the BRS added 1.4% of additional variance ($\Delta R^2 = .014$, $p = .008$). Similarly, NAS-7 explained 0.4% ($R^2 = .004$, $p = .183$), and the BRS added 0.9% ($\Delta R^2 = .009$, $p = .035$). When RMS was the first predictor ($R^2 = .002$, $p = .355$), the BRS contributed 1.1% more variance ($\Delta R^2 = .011$, $p = .019$). Although small in magnitude,

these effects suggest that the BRS captures experiential or ethical dimensions of Buddhist religiosity modestly associated with lower anxiety.

5.4 Discussion

The Buddhist Religiosity Scale (BRS) demonstrated its theoretical robustness through a series of exploratory factor analyses (EFA), as well as multiple reliability and validity tests. The resulting factors—Learning, Thinking, and Practising Dharma (LTP) and Embodiment—align with the proposed definition of Buddhist religiosity, which is defined as: *the degree of adherence to and progress along the prescribed path that leads to the cessation of suffering and realisation of enlightenment*. Specifically, the LTP factor represents the "adherence and progress along the prescribed path," while the Embodiment factor reflects how deeply a practitioner has internalised the qualities expected of a realised Buddhist.

5.4.1 Doctrinal Fit of BRS

From a doctrinal perspective, the LTP factor incorporates six items originally conceptualised under the Intentionality dimension, which addressed various goals of Buddhist practice, from attaining liberation to improving one's life. However, because these items were framed within the context of specific Buddhist practices, such as showing respect to the Triple Gem or letting go of attachment, participants may have interpreted them as practical behaviours rather than abstract goals. Furthermore, three items from the Doctrinal Knowledge & Adherence dimension were included in the LTP factor. These items capture core Buddhist teachings that practitioners are expected to follow, including key doctrinal concepts such as Emptiness (空), the Triple Gem (三宝), and the “Four Noble Truths” (四圣谛), which emphasise the central role of suffering (Gombrich, 2009; Rahula, 1974; Yinshun, 2008).

Additionally, four items reflecting the “Eightfold Path”—namely Right View (正见), Right Intention (正思维), Right Effort (正精进), and Right Concentration (正定)—were retained in the LTP factor. In particular, the Right View and Right Intention are considered essential in guiding the correct practice of Dharma (Bodhi, 1999b). Interestingly, only the Concentration and Wisdom elements from the Precepts, Concentration, and Wisdom dimensions were included in the LTP factor, with Precepts being excluded. This is consistent with the Mahayana Buddhist emphasis on the balanced mastery of concentration and wisdom (定慧等持), which some Buddhist masters view as essential for attaining enlightenment (Sheng Yen, 2007; Yinshun, 2008, 2013). Adherence to Precepts, in this context, is seen as a supportive condition for the development of concentration. Lastly, the only item representing Practising Dharma from the Hearing, Contemplating, and Practising Dharma dimension was also retained in the LTP factor.

Table 25 BRS Items and Original Theoretical Dimensions

Item #	Item Description	Factor	Original Theoretical Dimension
1_1	I consistently embody compassion / loving-kindness in my interactions with others.	Embodiment	Embodiment
1_3	I am open-minded and inclusive, embracing diversity and accepting others as they are.	Embodiment	Embodiment
1_4	I regularly engage in introspection to cultivate self-awareness and insight into my thoughts and emotions.	Embodiment	Embodiment
1_5	I have made significant progress in reducing greed, hatred, and ignorance in my thoughts and actions.	Embodiment	Embodiment
1_12	I believe in the potential for positive change and growth in all things.	Embodiment	Embodiment
1_13	I actively extend compassion and loving-kindness to myself, recognizing the importance of self-care.	Embodiment	Embodiment
2_5	I am dedicated to studying and reflecting on the teachings of the Buddha to deepen my understanding of the path to liberation/enlightenment.	LTP	Intentionality (Hearing, Contemplating, Practicing Dharma)
2_6	I have a genuine aspiration to let go of attachments and desires that cause suffering and hindrances in my life.	LTP	Intentionality (Doctrinal Knowledge & Adherence)
2_7	I am willing to engage in selfless service and contribute to the welfare of others as part of my practice.	LTP	Intentionality (Doctrinal Knowledge & Adherence)
2_8	I feel a deep sense of gratitude towards the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, and recognize their role in guiding me towards liberation/enlightenment.	LTP	Intentionality (Doctrinal Knowledge & Adherence)
2_9	I am open to continuously learning and growing on my spiritual journey, seeking guidance from qualified teachers and spiritual mentors.	LTP	Intentionality (Hearing, Contemplating, Practicing Dharma)
2_10	I am committed to integrating the principles of Buddhism into all aspects of my life, including work, relationships, and daily activities.	LTP	Intentionality (Hearing, Contemplating, Practicing Dharma)
3_5	I agree that ultimate reality is characterized by emptiness, that all phenomena lack inherent existence or substantiality.	LTP	Doctrinal Knowledge & Adherence
3_7	I understand the significance and meaning of the Triple Gem, consisting of the Buddha, the Dharma (teachings), and the Sangha (community).	LTP	Doctrinal Knowledge & Adherence
3_8	I agree with the Four Noble Truths, that life is characterized by suffering arises from craving and attachment, there is a way to end suffering, and the Noble Eightfold Path leads to the cessation of suffering.	LTP	Doctrinal Knowledge & Adherence
4_4	I have made progress gaining deeper insight into the nature of existence, suffering, arising of suffering, cessation of suffering and the path to the cessation of suffering.	LTP	Eightfold Path
4_5	I am actively aligning my thoughts and motivations with compassion, non-harming, and renunciation.	LTP	Eightfold Path
4_9	I am actively applying sustained effort to let go of unwholesome states and develop wholesome qualities.	LTP	Eightfold Path
4_11	I am consistently developing a focused and tranquil mind through meditation and mental absorption practices.	LTP	Eightfold Path
5_2	I have been meditating regularly using the methods I have been taught.	LTP	Precepts, Concentration, Wisdom
5_3	I am able to see through complexity with mental clarity.	LTP	Precepts, Concentration, Wisdom
5_6	I have been putting what I learned about dharma into my daily life.	LTP	Hearing, Contemplating, Practicing Dharma

Table 25 outlines the 22 BRS items, their corresponding factors, and their original theoretical dimensions. Items originally classified under Intentionality were reassigned to dimensions that align

more closely with doctrinal practice, such as “Doctrinal Knowledge & Adherence” or “Hearing, Contemplating, and Practicing Dharma”. As discussed in Chapter 4, Intentionality, located at the conceptual level of Buddhist religiosity, is inherently challenging to operationalise. The factor solution confirmed this, as Intentionality items were distributed across other dimensions within the LTP factor. Nonetheless, the theoretical importance of Intentionality is not diminished by this reclassification. Rather, the corresponding items reflect practical dimensions of Buddhist religiosity that integrate well into existing doctrinal categories, particularly “Doctrinal Knowledge & Adherence” (6 items), the “Eightfold Path” (4 items), “Hearing, Contemplating, and Practicing Dharma” (4 items), and “Concentration and Wisdom” (2 items).

The Embodiment factor, meanwhile, remains consistent, containing exactly the six items originally conceptualised within the Embodiment dimension. This aligns with the theoretical view that religious commitment is not only expressed through belief and practice but also through the embodied enactment of ethical and emotional dispositions. In this sense, embodiment reflects an internalised transformation of being, as suggested by Pagis (2010), who proposed that meditative and spiritual practices lead to a reflexive form of bodily awareness that integrates experience, thought, and ethical orientation. Glenberg (2010) similarly argued that cognition is grounded in bodily states and action systems, meaning that genuine understanding, particularly of moral or spiritual principles, is enacted through embodied engagement with the world.

However, the factor solution did not retain any items from the “Rational Belief” (智信) or “Body, Speech, Mind” (身口意) dimensions. Rational Belief, which was initially conceived as the outcome of practising Dharma, encompasses the development of a dialectical understanding of Buddhist concepts and adherence to strict logical reasoning (B. Chen, 2016; de Silva, 2011; Goleman, 2003; Sheng Yen, 2007; Yinshun, 2013). The absence of items from this dimension in the factor solution is likely due to the difficulty of operationalising such abstract, conceptual constructs. However, the essence of “Rational Belief”—namely, the practices and insights that lead to this rational understanding—has largely been captured within other retained dimensions.

Similarly, the “Body, Speech, and Mind” dimension did not emerge in the factor solution, likely for similar reasons. This dimension, as conceptualised in Chapter 4, represents the three primary areas targeted by Dharma practices. However, rather than detailing how these aspects are to be practised, “Body, Speech, and Mind” refers to the broader context within which Buddhist practices operate (Sheng Yen, 2007). The methods of practice are better reflected in dimensions such as “Precepts, Concentration, Wisdom”, the “Eightfold Path”, and “Hearing, Contemplating, and Practicing Dharma”. Hence, while “Body, Speech, Mind” plays a critical role in shaping the overall

framework of practice, the specific mechanisms through which these elements are cultivated are captured in the other dimensions of the BRS.

5.4.2 Reliability and Factor Structure of the BRS

In terms of reliability, the BRS demonstrated very high internal consistency, with α = .962—significantly higher than the majority of the other scales utilised in this study. Notably, only the CBRS and the GAD-7 scale approached similar levels of internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values of .958 and .957, respectively. While a high Cronbach's alpha is generally indicative of strong internal consistency, values approaching or exceeding .95 can sometimes signal potential issues of item redundancy (Taber, 2018). Redundant items can inflate reliability estimates without necessarily improving the precision or accuracy of the construct measurement.

At the factor level, the reliability results were more nuanced. The Learning, Thinking, and Practising Dharma (LTP) factor, which accounted for 40.2% of the variance, yielded a similarly high Cronbach's alpha of .956. This high value, particularly when combined with the fact that the LTP factor encompasses items derived from multiple conceptual dimensions, raises the possibility that semantic overlap between items may have contributed to the elevated alpha. In contrast, the Embodiment factor demonstrated a more moderate and acceptable α = .874, explaining 17.1% of the variance. The reasonable alpha level of the Embodiment factor suggests that, despite the high overall internal consistency of the BRS, the scale remains effective in capturing distinct aspects of Buddhist religiosity across its two factors. Together, these findings indicate that while the BRS is highly reliable, care must be taken in interpreting the high alpha values, particularly for the LTP factor, to ensure that the scale is not excessively homogeneous or redundant.

Beyond its reliability, the statistical fit of the 2-factor BRS model further supports its psychometric soundness. However, recent methodological critiques, such as those by Bader and Moshagen (2022), highlight potential issues with 2-factor models. Specifically, they caution that models with more free parameters—those estimated from the data, such as factor loadings, variances, covariances, and error terms—may exhibit artificially improved fit statistics. In other words, a model may appear to fit well not because it accurately reflects the underlying data structure, but because it has greater flexibility to conform to the data due to the number of free parameters. To address this potential issue, Bader and Moshagen emphasise the importance of evaluating a range of goodness-of-fit indices, including the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), to ensure that a model's fit is both statistically sound and theoretically meaningful.

In accordance with recommendations by Bader and Moshagen (2022), the goodness-of-fit indices for the 22-item BRS (as detailed in Table 25) provide robust evidence for a well-fitting model. The RMSEA value of 0.040, with a 90% confidence interval ranging from 0.033 to 0.047, falls below the commonly accepted threshold of 0.05, indicating a very good fit between the model and the data. Additionally, the Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) of 0.023 is well within the accepted limit of 0.08, suggesting that the residuals between the observed and model-implied variance-covariance matrices are minimal, further supporting the model's adequacy. The TLI value of 0.975 surpasses the 0.90 benchmark, indicating that the model is both parsimonious and well-fitting while adjusting for model complexity. Similarly, the CFI value of 0.979, also above the 0.90 threshold, provides strong evidence that the model fits the data well compared to a null model, with values closer to 1 indicating a better fit. Lastly, the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) value of -830.989, while primarily used for model comparison, suggests a highly favourable model fit, with lower BIC values indicating a better fit relative to the complexity of the model. The negative BIC value further underscores the efficiency of the 22-item, 2-factor model.

Based on the combined goodness-of-fit indices (RMSEA, SRMR, TLI, CFI, and BIC), the 22-item BRS with its 2-factor structure demonstrates a robust fit to the data. Each index falls within acceptable or excellent ranges, suggesting that the model is well-specified, both statistically and theoretically, for capturing the multidimensional construct of Buddhist religiosity. Despite the strong fit, it remains important to consider potential limitations related to item redundancy and the high reliability of the LTP factor.

5.4.3 Using Dictator Game for Predictive Validity of BRS

The BRS scale showed a moderate but significant positive relationship with the Dictator Game (r = .322, p < .001) in our analysis of its predictive validity. The correlation between BRS and the prosociality measured using the experimental natured Dictator Game may not appear strong, but investigations into how religiosity affects prosociality in the Dictator Game have garnered significant attention in recent psychological and economic research. This interest stems from the potential of religiosity to influence altruistic behaviours, which are often assessed in experimental settings like the Dictator Game. Research indicates that religiosity can enhance prosocial behaviour, especially when religious concepts are salient. For instance, Duhaime (2015) demonstrated that invoking religious salience, such as through reminders of religious tenets, can significantly increase prosocial actions in economic games, including the Dictator Game. Similarly, Zhang et al. (2020) found that priming participants with religious words before engaging in the Dictator Game led to increased altruistic behaviour, particularly among individuals who identified as non-religious or agnostic. This

suggests that the mere activation of religious concepts can foster a sense of obligation or empathy, thereby enhancing prosocial tendencies.

However, the relationship between religiosity and prosocial behaviour is not universally straightforward. Galen et al. (2022) found that while religious individuals may display greater prosociality in some contexts, this does not necessarily translate to a generalized increase in altruistic behaviour across all scenarios. This complexity is further underscored by the work of Hafiza et al. (2018), which indicates that while religiosity generally promotes prosocial attitudes, the degree of influence can vary based on individual differences and social dynamics. In addition, many of the supportive results of the strong relationships were based on priming or invoking religious salience among agnostics and non-religious (J. Zhang et al., 2020), or Abrahamic religion followers (Duhaime, 2015), while the current study did not involve any priming or intentional solicitation of religious values when the Dictator Game was administered, and conducted amongst those who follow Buddhist teachings as the effectiveness of religiosity in predicting prosocial behaviours may be influenced by cultural and contextual factors such as religious traditions and cultural settings (Blogowska et al., 2013).

Similar to the relationship with BRS, the Dictator Game also showed a moderate but significant relationship with CBRS (r = .381, p < .001). Owing to the recent debut of the CBRS, no prior study is available to shed light on whether Buddhist religiosity, as measured by CBRS, should correlate positively with the prosocial measure of the Dictator Game. However, a recent study from Hong Kong (Wong & Chui, 2022) demonstrated a small but significant positive relationship (r = .13, p < .01) between the CRS (Huber & Huber, 2012) and prosociality measured by the Prosocialness Scale (Caprara et al., 2005). This result was lower than the current study's correlation between CBRS and prosociality and between BRS and prosociality.

5.4.4 Weak Discriminant Validity with RMS

Initially intended as a measure of discriminant validity, the RMS (Pargament, 1999a) did not differentiate itself clearly from the BRS, with the two having a strong correlation of r = .739, p < .001; a similarly high correlation of r = .777, p < .001 was also found between RMS and CBRS too. Although the RMS was initially designed to capture a Christian or theistic perspective on life's meaning, the modifications made, replacing "God" with "Buddha/Bodhisattva", align these items with Buddhist religiosity. For instance, the Buddhist framework allows practitioners to derive meaning and guidance from their understanding of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha (Triple Gem). As some forms of Buddhism, such as Pure Land Buddhism, also emphasise faith, devotion, and purpose in practice (Mcrae, 1995; Sheng Yen, 2007), the modified RMS items naturally overlap with the attitudes

captured by the BRS. For example, the item in the modified RMS used in this study, “The goals of my life grow out of my understanding of Buddha/Bodhisattva,” closely resonates with Buddhist teachings on cultivating a path toward enlightenment or being reborn in the Western Pure Land for the followers of Pure Land Buddhism.

Furthermore, replacing "God" with "Buddha/Bodhisattva" may have inadvertently adapted the RMS to bring it closer to reflect core aspects of Buddhist religiosity measured by the BRS. While the RMS was initially designed for a monotheistic tradition, the Buddhist interpretation of Buddha/Bodhisattva as both a guide and a source of spiritual authority (Keown, 2013; Yinshun, 2008) aligns well with the focus of the BRS on "adherence to and progress along the prescribed path" toward enlightenment. This overlap between the constructs measured by the two scales dilutes the capacity of the RMS to serve as a true discriminant validity test. For example, the item "My purpose in life reflects what I believe Buddha/Bodhisattva wants for me" could reflect the Buddhist focus on aligning one's purpose with the path to cessation of suffering, which the BRS also emphasises. Therefore, high correlations between these items are not surprising, as they both reflect, to a different extent, key aspects of Buddhist religiosity.

The original intention of using five items from the RMS that suggest a strong reliance on God did not clearly reflect the discriminant validity of BRS. Apart from the potential interpretation issues of the five items suggested in the preceding paragraph, another possibility lies in the intentional omission of faith elements in the BRS, as it is not a common doctrinal element for all Buddhist traditions. However, such reliance and adherence to the words of the divine may still persist even in Theravada when the teachings tend to be more rational, emphasising self-reliance is stronger very much due to subsequent cultural influences from other faiths, as Buddhism interacts with different cultures where elements of faith and devotion may have been integrated into the practice (Santina, 1997). The RMS’s stronger correlation with the LTP factor in BRS demonstrated that Buddhist practices could have a closer relationship with the level of faith, reliance, and devotion Buddhists give to the divine entities of Buddha or Bodhisattva.

5.4.5 Comparison of BRS and CBRS

As BRS has demonstrated incremental validity over CBRS in predicting the level of satisfaction with life and general anxiety and demonstrated very similar relationship patterns with the measures of non-attachment, degrees of belief in God, and religious meaning, the two scales warrant a closer examination of the correlations between their respective factors to provide a more nuanced understanding of their similarities and differences. The BRS captures both the cognitive engagement with Buddhist teachings and the internalised, transformative aspects of religious

practice through its two factors: Learning, Thinking, and Practising Dharma (LTP) and Embodiment. In contrast, the CBRS measures religiosity across five dimensions (Nguyen et al., 2021), similar to what is captured by the CRS (Huber & Huber, 2012): Intellect (Int), Ideology (Ide), Public Practice (Serv), Private Practice (Priv), and Experience (Exp). While both BRS and CBRS assess core elements of Buddhist religiosity, the BRS further captures personal transformation and the embodiment of Buddhist principles.

As reflected in Table 29, the correlations between the BRS factors (LTP and Embodiment) and the CBRS subscales reveal significant relationships but also highlight the broader scope of the BRS. The Intellect/Experience (Int/Exp) subscale CBRS-Int/Exp, which assesses both religious knowledge and personal spiritual experiences, correlates strongly with the LTP factor (r = .744, p < .001) and with the overall BRS (r = .737, p < .001). This high correlation suggests that both scales effectively capture intellectual engagement with Buddhist teachings and the personal experiences derived from religious practice. However, the correlation with the Embodiment factor (r = .594, p < .001) is lower, indicating that while both scales assess religious knowledge and experiences, the BRS uniquely captures the extent to which these experiences are internalised and reflected in one's behaviour—a dimension that the CBRS-Int/Exp does not fully address but one that is critical as a reflection of how Buddhism has transformed the followers (Gnanarama, 2000; Keown, 2013).

The Ideology dimension, CBRS-Ide, which focuses on personal beliefs regarding sacred realities, also strongly correlates with the BRS. It correlates with LTP at r = .664 (p < .001) and with the overall BRS at r = .666 (p < .001). These correlations indicate substantial overlap in how both scales measure belief in core Buddhist concepts, such as the liberation from Samsara. However, the correlation with the Embodiment factor is lower (r = .565, p < .001), suggesting that the CBRS-Ide primarily captures the doctrinal aspects of belief, while the BRS extends to how these beliefs are embodied in practice.

The Public Practice dimension of CBRS-Serv, which measures participation in communal religious activities, also correlates with both BRS factors, showing a correlation of r = .652 (p < .001) with LTP and r = .534 (p < .001) with Embodiment. The overall correlation with the total BRS is r = .647 (p < .001). Like the CBRS-Serv, the CBRS-Priv, which pertains to individual religious activities such as meditation and prayer, shows the strongest correlation with LTP (r = .703, p < .001) and with the overall BRS (r = .703, p < .001). This indicates a significant overlap in measuring personal engagement with religious practices. However, the lower correlation with Embodiment (r = .581, p < .001) highlights the BRS's unique ability to assess private practice and how it translates into personal growth and transformation. Together, these correlations suggest that while CBRS-Serv and

CBRS-Priv measure participation in religious practices, the BRS provides a more comprehensive assessment not by the frequency or importance of religious practice and engagement but by the extent to which they contribute to personal transformation, emphasising results as well as the process (Bodhi, 1981; Santina, 1997), as reflected in the definition of Buddhist Religiosity, used in the development of BRS.

Even when comparing at the total scale level, the aggregate CBRS demonstrates the highest correlations with both BRS factors and the total BRS, with $r = .792$ ($p < .001$) for the total BRS, $r = .647$ ($p < .001$) with Embodiment, and $r = .790$ ($p < .001$) with LTP. While these high correlations indicate that both scales capture core aspects of Buddhist religiosity, the lower correlation with Embodiment suggests that the CBRS focuses more on observable practices and doctrinal knowledge, while the BRS assesses a deeper level of personal internalisation and transformation.

In contrast to the CBRS, the BRS provides a broader and more nuanced assessment of Buddhist religiosity. While the CBRS effectively captures key dimensions of religious centrality, such as ideology, knowledge, and practice, the BRS enhances this framework by incorporating the extent to which these beliefs and practices are embodied and integrated into personal growth and spiritual transformation. By emphasising embodiment, the BRS offers a deeper insight into how Buddhist teachings are internalised, making it a more comprehensive and reliable measure of adherence to and progression along the Buddhist path. This dimension of embodiment reflects the degree to which individuals have assimilated the teachings of the Buddha into their daily lives, which represents a critical aspect of Buddhist religiosity (Bodhi, 1981, 1999a). Thus, the BRS stands as a more holistic and accurate tool for assessing the nature of Buddhist religiosity, offering a richer understanding of both the cognitive and transformative elements of Buddhist practice.

5.5 Limitations

While the development and EFA of the BRS have yielded a robust two-factor solution, several limitations must be acknowledged to provide a comprehensive understanding of the scale's applicability. Firstly, although the sample size was sufficient for conducting the EFA, the participants were exclusively drawn from Asian countries. This geographical limitation may affect the generalizability of the findings to Western Buddhists or other non-Asian populations. Buddhism, as practised in the West, often involves distinct interpretations and practices that may not be fully captured by a scale developed solely from data in Asian contexts.

Additionally, while the two-factor structure of Learning, Thinking, and Practising (LTP) and Embodiment was confirmed through multiple iterations and is considered robust, a key aspect of the scale development process was omitted: conducting a face validity check with Buddhist scholars and

practitioners. This step is crucial in ensuring that the items not only measure the intended constructs but also reflect the key principles of Buddhist religiosity as recognised by experts. A formal consultation with experts in Buddhism during the item development stage would have strengthened the scale's content by confirming that the items accurately represented core Buddhist teachings and practices. Engaging with these experts would have added another layer of validation, ensuring that the scale resonates with both doctrinal and practical aspects of Buddhism.

Moreover, although strict criteria were applied in the item selection process to ensure a clear and interpretable factor structure, the exclusion of items with cross-loadings or lower loadings may have inadvertently removed nuanced aspects of Buddhist religiosity. These excluded items might still offer valuable insights, particularly when tested on broader or more diverse populations. Future iterations of the scale could consider revisiting these items to evaluate their potential contribution to further enhancing the understanding of Buddhist religiosity.

Finally, the findings presented in this chapter, based on Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), have not yet been tested with Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). While the EFA results provide strong initial support for the two-factor structure of the BRS, CFA is needed to further confirm the factor structure's validity and ensure the model fits across different samples. Future studies should prioritise conducting CFA to verify the stability and generalizability of the scale.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter details the development and initial validation of the BRS, a new measure designed to assess the multifaceted nature of Buddhist religiosity. Through a systematic item generation and refinement process, followed by a series of EFAs, the BRS was found to comprise two distinct factors: Learning, Thinking, and Practising (LTP) and Embodiment. These factors reflect the core aspects of Buddhist religiosity as defined in earlier qualitative research, aligning with both doctrinal teachings and empirical understandings of how Buddhist principles manifest in adherents' lives.

The first factor, LTP, encompasses the cognitive and behavioural dimensions of religious practice, capturing how individuals engage with Buddhist teachings intellectually, as well as how they implement these teachings in their daily lives through meditation, ethical conduct, and mindfulness. This factor includes items that assess one's understanding of central Buddhist doctrines, such as the Four Noble Truths and Emptiness, as well as one's dedication to the Noble Eightfold Path and the cultivation of wisdom and concentration. The second factor, Embodiment, captures how these practices and beliefs translate into the internalisation of Buddhist virtues, such as compassion,

selflessness, and equanimity, reflecting the extent to which practitioners have integrated the core teachings of Buddhism into their personal identity and emotional life.

The psychometric evaluation of the BRS indicated strong reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values above the generally accepted thresholds for both the overall scale and its subscales. Notably, the overall BRS showed a Cronbach's alpha of .962, while the LTP and Embodiment factors demonstrated values of .956 and .874, respectively. These results provide evidence for the internal consistency of the scale, suggesting that the items within each factor are closely related and measure coherent underlying constructs.

In terms of validity, the BRS was shown to have strong convergent validity, with significant correlations between the BRS and both the NAS-7 and the CBRS. These relationships reflect the alignment between the BRS and other established measures of Buddhist religious commitment and detachment from worldly concerns, both key aspects of Buddhist philosophy. Discriminant validity was partially supported, though the unexpectedly high correlation between the BRS and items from the RMS suggests that some items, when modified to reflect Buddhist terminology, may overlap conceptually with broader themes of religiosity, potentially limiting their ability to distinguish specifically Buddhist practices from general religious engagement.

The findings also highlighted the incremental validity of the BRS, demonstrating that it adds unique predictive power over other established measures of Buddhist religiosity. In predicting prosocial behaviours, life satisfaction, and anxiety, the BRS consistently explained additional variance beyond the CBRS, NAS-7, and RMS, supporting its utility as a more comprehensive tool for understanding how Buddhist religiosity manifests in real-world outcomes. This is particularly evident in its capacity to predict prosocial behaviour (e.g., through the Dictator Game) and life satisfaction (as measured by the SWLS), suggesting that the BRS captures aspects of Buddhist practice that are directly tied to behavioural and psychological well-being.

Moving forward, the next phase of the research will focus on confirmatory analyses, using CFA to validate the factor structure identified in this chapter. This step will be critical in ensuring that the BRS is not only reliable but also valid across diverse Buddhist populations. Additionally, further tests of discriminant validity and item refinement may be necessary to ensure that the BRS captures the distinct features of Buddhist religiosity, as initially conceptualised, while avoiding overlap with broader religious or spiritual constructs.

Chapter 6: Confirmatory Factor Analysis of BRS

This chapter presents the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of the Buddhist Religiosity Scale (BRS), aiming to validate the factor structure identified in the exploratory analysis described in Chapter 5. The earlier EFA yielded a two-factor solution comprising *Learning, Thinking, and Practising* (LTP) and *Embodiment*, both of which demonstrated strong conceptual coherence and robust psychometric performance. These two domains represent essential facets of Buddhist religiosity: the active engagement with the teachings of the Buddha, and the internalised manifestation of these teachings in ethical conduct and lived experience. Together, they provide a comprehensive framework for understanding how Buddhist religiosity is both cultivated and expressed.

CFA provides a model-driven approach to evaluating whether this hypothesised two-factor structure can be replicated in an independent sample. By testing the fit between observed data and a theoretically specified model, CFA allows for a rigorous assessment of structural validity. It further facilitates an examination of individual item loadings, latent factor correlations, and overall model fit using indices such as the CFI, TLI, RMSEA, and SRMR. Following the guidelines proposed by Kline (2016) and Hair et al. (2010), this chapter evaluates both the adequacy of the factor structure and the validity of the construct as a whole.

In addition to testing the correlated two-factor structure, a second-order model is also evaluated in which both LTP and Embodiment are conceptualised as subdimensions of a higher-order latent factor—*Buddhist Religiosity*. This hierarchical model aligns with the conceptual framework developed in Chapter 4, where the process of engaging with the Dharma is understood to be inseparable from its ethical and experiential realisation.

To guide the CFA, the following hypotheses were formulated:

- **H1:** The two-factor correlated model of the Buddhist Religiosity Scale (BRS), comprising LTP and Embodiment, will demonstrate acceptable model fit indices.
- **H2:** A second-order factor model, in which both LTP and Embodiment load onto a higher-order factor representing Buddhist Religiosity, will demonstrate acceptable model fit.
- **H3:** The BRS will demonstrate acceptable convergent and discriminant validity based on standard psychometric criteria.

These hypotheses allow for a rigorous evaluation of both the factorial structure and the construct validity of the BRS. The next sections present the methodology and results of the CFA conducted to assess these hypotheses.

6.1 Methods

6.1.1 Participants and Procedures

The current sample consisted of 493 participants, distinct from the EFA sample. As shown in Table 26, the gender distribution was nearly balanced, with slightly more male (53.14%) than female participants (46.65%), and one individual preferring not to disclose their gender. The age of participants ranged from 19 to 63 years (*M* = 37.34, *SD* = 9.10), reflecting a broad adult demographic.

Geographically, participants were drawn from five primary regions: Mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, and Singapore. Each region contributed approximately one-fifth of the total sample, indicating intentional sampling across diverse East and Southeast Asian cultural contexts.

Regarding religious background, the sample was nearly evenly split between individuals who had formally taken refuge in Buddhism and those who had not. Participants also reported affiliation with a range of Buddhist traditions. The largest group identified with Mahayana Buddhism, followed by Theravada and Vajrayana traditions. Smaller segments were identified as secular Buddhists or non-sectarian, while a few did not specify a particular tradition. This diverse composition enhances the representativeness of Buddhist perspectives included in the analysis.

Table 26 Sample Demographics of CFA Study

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	262	53.14
	Female	230	46.65
	Prefer not to disclose	1	0.2
Age	Mean (SD)	37.34 (9.10)	—
	Range	19 - 63	—
Buddhist Status	Taken Formal Refuge	245	49.7
	Not Taken Formal Refuge	248	50.3
Region	China (Mainland)	99	20.08
	Hong Kong	99	20.08
	Taiwan	98	19.88
	Malaysia	99	20.08
	Singapore	98	19.88
Buddhist Tradition	Theravada	105	21.3
	Mahayana	205	41.58
	Vajrayana	98	19.88
	Non-sectarian	17	3.45
	Secular Buddhist	41	8.32
	Prefer not to specify / Unsure	27	5.48
Questionnaire Language	English	117	23.73
	Simplified Chinese	210	42.60
	Traditional Chinese	166	33.67

Note. SD = Standard Deviation; *M* = mean. Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

6.1.2 Data Collection and Procedures

Data for this CFA sample were gathered on April 12, 2024, using the same methodology as the EFA study. Participants recruited using the same country access panels managed by Cint (https://www.cint.com) completed an online survey via Qualtrics to collect responses on the BRS together with other measures. The collection protocol remained consistent with the initial sample to maintain comparability between the datasets and ensure the accuracy and relevance of the factor structure validation. A total of N = 501 participants completed the survey, but eight were disqualified during data cleaning for data quality reasons. This resulted in the final sample of *N* = 493 for CFA analysis.

6.1.3 Measures

The majority of scales employed in this CFA study remain consistent with those utilised during the EFA phase, enabling a direct comparison between the exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses. However, following the EFA, the BRS has been streamlined from 56 items to 22 items (BRS-22) to reflect the refined factor structure. Additionally, because the Religious Meaning Scale (RMS; Pargament, 1999a) has limited effectiveness in distinguishing from BRS-22, the Duke University Religion Index (DUREL; H. G. Koenig & Büssing, 2010) has been introduced in the current study to provide a further understanding of how well the BRS-22 can differentiate itself from scales based on Judeo-Christian beliefs. Moreover, acknowledging the experimental nature of the Dictator Game and its limited correlation with the BRS-22, the Prosocialness Scale for Adults (PSA; Caprara et al., 2005) has been included to offer a more closely aligned, self-reported assessment of prosocial behaviours. Following the same approach in the EFA study, the Dictator Game and PSA were conducted prior to religiosity scales to minimise potential priming effects from religious cues, which could unnecessarily include the strength of correlation between scales on prosociality and the BRS-22 (Duhaime, 2015). Below are the detailed descriptions of each measure, including their psychometric properties and recent reliability estimates.

The BRS-22, a reduced 22-item version of the original 56-item BRS, was derived based on EFA findings presented in the preceding chapter. Items are renamed to reflect the respective factors to which they belong. The reliability estimates for the scale indicate excellent internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values of .857 for Embodiment, .909 for LTP, and .937 for the overall scale. Table 27 contains the list of 22 items tested.

Table 27 BRS-22 Item List

Items	Descriptions
BRS-E1	I consistently embody compassion / loving-kindness in my interactions with others.
BRS-E2	I am open-minded and inclusive, embracing diversity and accepting others as they are.

BRS-E3	I regularly engage in introspection to cultivate self-awareness and insight into my thoughts and emotions.
BRS-E4	I have made significant progress in reducing greed, hatred, and ignorance in my thoughts and actions.
BRS-E5	I believe in the potential for positive change and growth in all things.
BRS-E6	I actively extend compassion and loving-kindness to myself, recognizing the importance of self-care.
BRS-LTP1	I am dedicated to studying and reflecting on the teachings of the Buddha to deepen my understanding of the path to liberation/enlightenment.
BRS-LTP2	I have a genuine aspiration to let go of attachments and desires that cause suffering and hindrances in my life.
BRS-LTP3	I am willing to engage in selfless service and contribute to the welfare of others as part of my practice.
BRS-LTP4	I feel a deep sense of gratitude towards the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, and recognize their role in guiding me towards liberation/enlightenment.
BRS-LTP5	I am open to continuously learning and growing on my spiritual journey, seeking guidance from qualified teachers and spiritual mentors.
BRS-LTP6	I am committed to integrating the principles of Buddhism into all aspects of my life, including work, relationships, and daily activities.
BRS-LTP7	I agree that ultimate reality is characterized by emptiness, that all phenomena lack inherent existence or substantiality.
BRS-LTP8	I understand the significance and meaning of the Triple Gem, consisting of the Buddha, the Dharma (teachings), and the Sangha (community).
BRS-LTP9	I agree with the Four Noble Truths, that life is characterized by suffering, suffering arises from craving and attachment, there is a way to end suffering, and the Noble Eightfold Path leads to the cessation of suffering.
BRS-LTP10	I have made progress gaining deeper insight into the nature of existence, suffering, arising of suffering, cessation of suffering and the path to the cessation of suffering.
BRS-LTP11	I am actively aligning my thoughts and motivations with compassion, non-harming, and renunciation.
BRS-LTP12	I am actively working on applying sustained effort to let go of unwholesome states and develop wholesome qualities.
BRS-LTP13	I am consistently developing a focused and tranquil mind through meditation and mental absorption practices.
BRS-LTP14	I have been meditating regularly using the methods I have been taught.
BRS-LTP15	I am able to see through complexity with mental clarity.
BRS-LTP16	I have been putting what I learned about dharma into my daily life.

The same set of measures introduced in Chapter 5 was employed in the current phase of confirmatory analysis. These include the Centrality of Buddhist Religiosity Scale (CBRS), Non-Attachment Scale (NAS-7; Sahdra et al., 2016), Religious Meaning Scale (RMS; Pargament, 1999a), Degrees of Belief in God Scale (DBIGS; Maiello, 2005), Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS; Diener et al., 1985), Generalised Anxiety Disorder Scale (GAD-7; Spitzer et al., 2006), and the Dictator Game. Section 5.2.3 of Chapter 5 provides full descriptions of each scale, its conceptual rationale, item formats, and scoring procedures.

For the present CFA sample, internal consistency reliability was reassessed. The RMS achieved an α = .820, the SWLS was .879, the NAS-7 was .806, the CBRS was .935, and the GAD-7

demonstrated excellent reliability at .950. No changes were made to scale items or scoring procedures between the EFA and CFA phases.

The Dictator Game (Forsythe et al., 1994; Ogawa & Ida, 2015), as previously described, was used again to assess prosocial behaviour. This behavioural index was used to test predictive and incremental validity without religious priming, maintaining the same procedure and instructions as previously outlined.

Additional Measures. Two additional measures were deployed in the current phase to help gain a deeper and more nuanced understanding of how BRS-22 perform psychometrically.

Prosocialness Scale for Adults. The Prosocialness Scale for Adults (PSA), developed by Caprara et al. (2005), is a 16-item scale that evaluates individuals' prosocial tendencies, such as helping, empathy, and sharing. It uses a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*Never/Almost Never*) to 5 (*Always/Almost Always*). A sample item from the scale is, *I try to help others.* This scale provides a self-reported measure of prosocial behaviour, enabling a comparison with other religiosity scales. The validated Chinese version by Zhan et al. (2023), however, reduced the scale to a 12-item version based on its validation results among Chinese college students. However, despite the fact that the Chinese version only confirmed 12 items from its original 16, our current study adhered to the original version when deployed in Chinese-speaking communities, given the fact that our current study aimed at adult populations across different countries with large age variations. In the present study, the PSA showed high reliability in this study, with a α = .925.

Duke University Religion Index. The Duke University Religion Index (DUREL), developed by Koenig and Büssing (2010), measures three dimensions of religiosity—Organizational Religious Activity (ORA), Non-Organizational Religious Activity (NORA), and Intrinsic Religiosity (IR). ORA is assessed through a single item rated on a 6-point Likert scale from 1 (*Never*) to 6 (*More than once a week*), reflecting the frequency of attendance at organised religious events. NORA is measured by one item that uses a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*Never or rarely*) to 6 (*More than once a day*), capturing the frequency of private religious practices. The IR dimension comprises three items rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*Definitely untrue*) to 5 (*Definitely tru*e), which assesses personal beliefs and internal religious commitment. An example IR item is, “In my life, I experience the presence of the Divine”. In this study, DUREL served as a discriminant validity check for BRS-22 against traditional religiosity constructs, showing good internal consistency with a α = .777.

6.1.4 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Model Specification. The CFA aimed to validate the two-factor structure of the BRS-22 identified in the prior EFA, which delineated two latent factors: Learning, Thinking, and Practicing

(LTP) and Embodiment. Each factor was represented by items specific to the theoretical constructs they intended to measure. The two-factor model included direct paths from each latent factor to the associated observed items, which were allowed to covary in alignment with standard CFA practices.

To further explore the BRS-22's hierarchical nature, a second-order CFA model was conducted. In this model, a higher-order factor—representing overall Buddhist religiosity—was specified to load onto the two first-order factors, LTP and Embodiment. This suggests that while these factors measure distinct dimensions of Buddhist religiosity, they collectively contribute to an overarching religiosity construct. This second-order model examined whether the two dimensions can be combined into a cumulative score representing a global Buddhist religiosity score or whether they function better as independent, discrete constructs.

Assumptions of CFA. Before conducting the CFA, several assumptions were evaluated to confirm the suitability of the data for this analysis. First, the sample size of 493 participants was well above the minimum recommended for CFA, which typically necessitates at least five to ten participants per estimated parameter (DeVellis, 2017). This sample size was thus deemed sufficient for the complexity of the models tested, ensuring stable and interpretable estimates. Regarding multivariate normality, skewness and kurtosis statistics were reviewed for each item. Most items fell within acceptable ranges, suggesting reasonable univariate normality. Given the sensitivity of CFA to deviations from multivariate normality, the robust Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MLE) method was employed to account for any potential non-normality (Kyriazos, 2018).

Another key assumption of CFA is linearity, which posits that relationships between items within the same factor should be linear (Bader & Moshagen, 2022). To confirm this, scatterplots of selected item pairs within each factor were inspected to check for approximate linear relationships. The presence of linear relationships supports the assumption that changes in one item are proportionally related to changes in another, as expected under CFA. If the scatterplots indicate no substantial deviations from linearity, the relationships among items are consistent with the theoretical structure being tested.

In addition to scatterplots for a few representative item pairs, a correlation matrix was analysed as a supplemental check on linearity. Strong, positive correlations among items within the same factor indicate that the items likely measure the same underlying construct and further support the assumption of linearity (Fabrigar et al., 1999). These methods provide evidence that the data's structure is suitable for CFA, allowing for reliable interpretation of the factor loadings and overall model fit.

6.1.5 Fit Indices and Evaluation Criteria

Fit Indices. To evaluate the adequacy of the CFA models, a series of fit indices were examined based on recommended thresholds for acceptable model fit in confirmatory factor analysis. The Chi-Square (χ^2) Test was used as a primary measure, evaluating the overall model fit by comparing the hypothesised model to a saturated one (S. S. Wang et al., 2017). Although a non-significant Chi-Square value indicates a good fit, it is sensitive to sample size, often resulting in significant values for larger samples. Thus, additional fit indices were considered for a more robust assessment. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was assessed, with values below 0.05 indicating good fit, values between 0.05 and 0.08 representing reasonable fit, and values above 0.10 suggesting poor fit (Y. Li et al., 2020; S. S. Wang et al., 2017). The Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) was also reviewed, with a cutoff of less than 0.08, indicating an acceptable model fit. RMSEA and SRMR offer insights into the absolute fit of the model, capturing the extent to which the specified model reproduces the observed correlations (F. F. Chen, 2007).

The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), also known as the Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI), were employed to evaluate incremental fit by comparing the hypothesised model with a baseline model. Values above 0.90 for CFI and TLI suggest an acceptable fit, while values above 0.95 indicate an excellent fit (Van Prooijen & Van Der Kloot, 2001). These indices are less affected by sample size (S. S. Wang et al., 2017) and measure how well the model improves upon a null model, helping to contextualise the fit within the observed data. Finally, the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) was used for model comparison (S. S. Wang et al., 2017). Although BIC has no absolute threshold, lower values generally suggest a better fit when comparing competing models. By incorporating a penalty for model complexity, BIC is particularly useful in distinguishing between the two-factor CFA model and the second-order CFA model to determine which model best represents the BRS-22 structure.

These fit indices were collectively used to evaluate the factor structure, balancing absolute, incremental, and comparative fit measures. Meeting the established thresholds for these indices would indicate that the CFA model adequately represents the underlying latent structure of the BRS-22, affirming its validity and reliability.

6.1.6 Reliability and Validity Assessment for CFA

In addition to the conventional validity tests planned for this study, internal reliability and validity measures were evaluated for the BRS-22 using CFA. This approach serves two primary purposes: it provides insights into the internal consistency and latent construct validity of the identified factors before comparing the BRS-22 with other external scales in subsequent validity testing. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha (α) and McDonald's omega (ω) coefficients,

both of which offer robust measures of internal consistency (Hunsley & Mash, 2007). These indicators ensure that the items within each factor, as well as the total scale, demonstrate a cohesive measurement of the intended constructs.

For validity, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was calculated to evaluate the convergent validity of each factor, with an AVE of 0.50 or higher suggesting that the factor explains at least half of the variance in its indicators (Baharum et al., 2023). This threshold serves as a preliminary check to determine whether the constructs adequately capture the shared variance of their respective items. While AVE is a commonly recommended approach within CFA, these internal validity measures do not replace conventional validation methods, such as comparisons with other scales, that assess broader forms of validity, such as convergent and discriminant validity in relation to other constructs.

Thus, conducting AVE-based validity tests alongside the internal reliability checks provides an initial assessment of how well the BRS-22 factors function as distinct dimensions of Buddhist religiosity. Following CFA and second-order CFA evaluations, the study will proceed with traditional validity testing using external scales, as outlined in Chapter 5, to compare BRS-22 against other related measures. This multifaceted approach enhances the robustness of the validation process and allows for a comprehensive psychometric evaluation of the BRS-22.

6.1.7 Measurement Invariance as a Non-sectarian Scale

The BRS-22 is intended to be a non-sectarian scale that fits to measure Buddhist religiosity across different Buddhist traditions. The study assessed measurement invariance to determine the model fit for Buddhists from various traditions. Three models were constructed for this purpose: Model 1 tested configural invariance, Model 2 tested metric invariance, and Model 3 tested scalar invariance. Each model was considered a nested model, with progressively more constraints added.

In this study, we tested the model fit and incremental improvements through the same approach used in Chapter 3. Firstly, we employ chi-square analysis to determine the fit of responses from the three different Buddhist traditions with the model. Additionally, we utilise Alternative Fit Indices (AFIs) such as the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Standardized Root Mean-square Residual (SRMR) to further investigate the model fit. This approach is adopted due to the sensitivity of chi-square to sample sizes and the number of factors involved in the model (G. W. Cheung & Rensvold, 2002; Hooper et al., 2008; Kline, 2016).

In our assessment of the measurement invariance for BRS-22, we have extended our analysis beyond the traditional methodology, which typically focuses solely on the significance of the Chi-square in the subsequent nested model (Marsh & Hocevar, 1985; Reise et al., 1993). In our analysis,

we examined alterations in AFIs as per the recommendations proposed by Chen (2007). Specifically, we utilised the criteria of a change greater than -0.01 in CFI, in combination with changes in RMSEA of less than 0.015 and SRMR of less than 0.030 for metric invariance, or less than 0.015 for scalar invariance, when conducting our evaluations.

6.1.8 Measurement Invariance of Language Versions

Given that the BRS-22 was administered in both English and Chinese, it was important to establish whether the instrument functioned equivalently across language versions. This step ensures that any observed differences in scores between groups are not artefacts of linguistic or cultural translation, but rather reflect true variations in the underlying construct of Buddhist religiosity (Van de Vijver & Leung, 2000). Accordingly, the present study assessed measurement invariance (MI) between the English, the Simplified Chinese, and the Traditional Chinese versions of the BRS-22 using the same criteria introduced in Chapter 3 and employed in the non-sectarian analyses.

Establishing measurement invariance across the English and Chinese versions of the BRS-22 supports the interpretation that the scale measures the same latent construct of Buddhist religiosity in both linguistic contexts. This result reinforces the cross-cultural and cross-linguistic validity of the instrument and ensures that comparisons of mean scores across language groups are meaningful and psychometrically defensible.

6.1.9 Statistical Software

The CFA was conducted using JASP software version 0.19.1 (JASP Team, 2024b), an open-source statistical platform with adequate analytical capabilities that support structural equation modelling, including confirmatory factor analysis. JASP was chosen for its comprehensive fit index reporting and the availability of advanced features, such as the capability to specify and estimate second-order CFA models. JASP provides robust maximum likelihood estimation to account for any deviations from normality in the data, ensuring reliable parameter estimates and fit indices. Measurement invariance tests are performed using the structural equation modelling feature within JASP.

6.2 Results

6.2.1 Dataset Appropriateness for CFA

To assess the dataset's appropriateness for CFA, the distribution of each item was first examined for normality. Skewness and kurtosis statistics were calculated, as extreme non-normality can compromise the validity of CFA results. As indicated in Table 28, the analysis revealed that most items exhibited minor deviations from normality, with skewness values ranging from -1.64 to 1.21 and kurtosis values from -0.46 to 3.76. Although a few items displayed slight positive kurtosis, such

as the item, “I believe that everything in the world is impermanent and subject to change,” which had a kurtosis value of 3.764, these deviations remain within acceptable limits for CFA, suggesting the data sufficiently meets the normality assumption.

The item correlation matrix (Table 29) for the BRS-22 demonstrated mostly moderate to strong correlations within the Embodiment (BRS-E) and Learning, Thinking, and Practising (BRS-LTP) subscales, with significant inter-item correlations supporting the internal consistency of these constructs. For instance, BRS-E items were highly interrelated, such as BRS-E1 and BRS-E4 (r = .582, p < .001), suggesting cohesive measurement of the Embodiment construct. Similarly, BRS-LTP items displayed high inter-item correlations, including BRS-LTP1 and BRS-LTP7 (r = .713, p < .001), while items like BRS-LTP9 exhibited lower correlations, potentially capturing unique aspects within the subscale. Cross-subscale correlations, such as BRS-E1 with BRS-LTP1 (r = .735, p < .001), indicated meaningful associations between Embodiment and Learning, Thinking, and Practicing, reinforcing the interconnected nature of these constructs. Overall, the correlation matrix highlighted the coherence of the items within and between subscales, supporting the appropriateness of the dataset for confirmatory factor analysis.

Lastly, the linearity assumption was examined by inspecting scatterplots for pairs of items to confirm linear relationships. BRS-E2, BRS-E4, BRS-E6, BRS-LTP3, BRS-LTP7, and BRS-LTP10 were selected as random sample scatterplots for inspections. As illustrated in Figure 8, the scatterplots indicated no substantial deviations from linearity, supporting the presence of linear relationships among the items. This confirmation of linearity is essential, as it ensures that the factor analysis results will be both interpretable and reliable. Collectively, these assessments support the adequacy of the dataset for CFA, validating its underlying structure for further analysis.

Table 28 Item Normality Test

	BRS-E1	BRS-E2	BRS-E3	BRS-E4	BRS-E5	BRS-E6
Mean	5.667	5.779	5.811	5.686	5.856	5.945
Std. Deviation	1.104	1.083	1.059	1.065	1.045	0.993
Skewness	-0.98	-1.114	-1.052	-0.714	-1.214	-0.952
Std. Error of Skewness	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11
Kurtosis	2.175	1.916	1.7	0.419	2.613	1.406
Std. Error of Kurtosis	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22
Shapiro-Wilk	0.86	0.851	0.852	0.881	0.838	0.843
P-value of Shapiro-Wilk	1.390×10^{-20}	3.571×10^{-21}	3.909×10^{-21}	4.995×10^{-19}	4.999×10^{-22}	1.108×10^{-21}

	BRS-LTP1	BRS-LTP2	BRS-LTP3	BRS-LTP4	BRS-LTP5	BRS-LTP6	BRS-LTP7	BRS-LTP8
Mean	5.761	5.596	5.836	5.801	5.819	5.882	5.793	5.396
Std. Deviation	1.095	1.181	1.04	1.052	1.031	0.972	1.025	1.455
Skewness	-1.11	-0.863	-0.79	-0.858	-0.851	-0.855	-1.055	-0.889
Std. Error of Skewness	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11
Kurtosis	2.18	0.709	0.647	0.766	1.087	1.318	2.155	0.322
Std. Error of Kurtosis	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22
Shapiro-Wilk	0.853	0.88	0.864	0.864	0.862	0.854	0.853	0.88
P-value of Shapiro-Wilk	4.484×10^{-21}	4.183×10^{-19}	2.669×10^{-20}	2.934×10^{-20}	2.105×10^{-20}	5.808×10^{-21}	4.470×10^{-21}	4.558×10^{-19}

	BRS-LTP9	BRS-LTP10	BRS-LTP11	BRS-LTP12	BRS-LTP13	BRS-LTP14	BRS-LTP15	BRS-LTP16
Mean	5.014	5.686	5.842	5.789	5.87	5.728	5.791	5.978
Std. Deviation	1.685	1.093	1.014	1.052	1.087	1.089	1.076	1.094
Skewness	-0.867	-0.569	-0.831	-0.781	-1.017	-0.904	-0.973	-1.331
Std. Error of Skewness	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11
Kurtosis	-0.054	-0.301	0.919	0.71	1.018	1.264	1.172	2.526
Std. Error of Kurtosis	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22
Shapiro-Wilk	0.881	0.884	0.859	0.869	0.847	0.869	0.859	0.813
P-value of Shapiro-Wilk	4.670×10^{-19}	9.013×10^{-19}	1.176×10^{-20}	6.488×10^{-20}	1.860×10^{-21}	5.796×10^{-20}	1.259×10^{-20}	1.793×10^{-23}

Table 29 Correlation Matrix

Pearson's Correlations

Variable	BRS-E1	BRS-E2	BRS-E3	BRS-E4	BRS-E5	BRS-E6
1. BRS-E1	—					
2. BRS-E2	0.568***	—				
3. BRS-E3	0.458***	0.467***	—			
4. BRS-E4	0.582***	0.493***	0.438***	—		
5. BRS-E5	0.552***	0.558***	0.464***	0.526***	—	
6. BRS-E6	0.471***	0.516***	0.475***	0.447***	0.490***	—

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

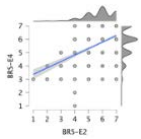
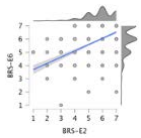
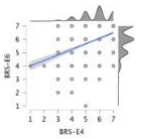
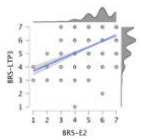
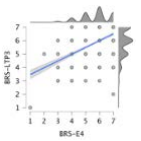
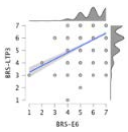
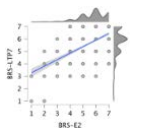
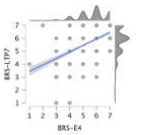
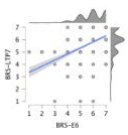
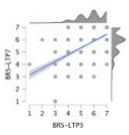
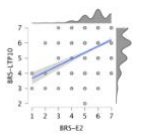
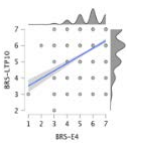
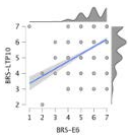
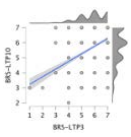
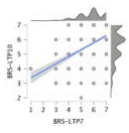
Variable	BRS-E1	BRS-E2	BRS-E3	BRS-E4	BRS-E5	BRS-E6
7. BRS-LTP1	0.735***	0.608***	0.534***	0.542***	0.588***	0.567***
8. BRS-LTP2	0.547***	0.643***	0.534***	0.526***	0.549***	0.515***
9. BRS-LTP3	0.572***	0.464***	0.528***	0.517***	0.530***	0.501***
10. BRS-LTP4	0.514***	0.572***	0.485***	0.517***	0.608***	0.513***
11. BRS-LTP5	0.538***	0.494***	0.449***	0.509***	0.576***	0.494***
12. BRS-LTP6	0.458***	0.464***	0.492***	0.425***	0.512***	0.547***
13. BRS-LTP7	0.683***	0.556***	0.449***	0.523***	0.494***	0.478***
14. BRS-LTP8	0.352***	0.385***	0.307***	0.273***	0.297***	0.300***
15. BRS-LTP9	0.060	-0.060	0.025	0.049	0.049	0.021
16. BRS-LTP10	0.455***	0.418***	0.407***	0.452***	0.443***	0.429***
17. BRS-LTP11	0.491***	0.448***	0.425***	0.477***	0.510***	0.492***
18. BRS-LTP12	0.410***	0.436***	0.388***	0.447***	0.483***	0.471***
19. BRS-LTP13	0.360***	0.438***	0.425***	0.430***	0.461***	0.532***
20. BRS-LTP14	0.364***	0.423***	0.354***	0.433***	0.439***	0.499***
21. BRS-LTP15	0.436***	0.386***	0.422***	0.405***	0.467***	0.484***
22. BRS-LTP16	0.379***	0.394***	0.330***	0.357***	0.374***	0.427***

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Variable	BRS-LTP1	BRS-LTP2	BRS-LTP3	BRS-LTP4	BRS-LTP5	BRS-LTP6	BRS-LTP7	BRS-LTP8	BRS-LTP9	BRS-LTP-10	BRS-LTP11	BRS-LTP12	BRS-LTP13	BRS-LTP14	BRS-LTP15	BRS-LTP16
7. BRS-LTP1	—															
8. BRS-LTP2	0.558***	—														
9. BRS-LTP3	0.598***	0.500***	—													
10. BRS-LTP4	0.604***	0.594***	0.554***	—												
11. BRS-LTP5	0.574***	0.579***	0.553***	0.508***	—											
12. BRS-LTP6	0.548***	0.532***	0.564***	0.529***	0.520***	—										
13. BRS-LTP7	0.713***	0.555***	0.559***	0.527***	0.544***	0.479***	—									
14. BRS-LTP8	0.367***	0.350***	0.284***	0.330***	0.319***	0.319***	0.379***	—								
15. BRS-LTP9	0.069	-0.025	0.108*	0.018	0.096*	0.052	0.051	0.239***	—							
16. BRS-LTP10	0.526***	0.396***	0.484***	0.499***	0.427***	0.458***	0.453***	0.354***	0.155***	—						
17. BRS-LTP11	0.510***	0.471***	0.521***	0.523***	0.521***	0.492***	0.461***	0.406***	0.137**	0.481***	—					
18. BRS-LTP12	0.487***	0.504***	0.474***	0.510***	0.469***	0.536***	0.472***	0.284***	-0.002	0.497***	0.434***	—				
19. BRS-LTP13	0.466***	0.427***	0.488***	0.486***	0.498***	0.537***	0.454***	0.262***	0.052	0.492***	0.496***	0.566***	—			
20. BRS-LTP14	0.492***	0.474***	0.425***	0.494***	0.503***	0.519***	0.419***	0.290***	0.049	0.531***	0.478***	0.55***	0.578***	—		
21. BRS-LTP15	0.473***	0.464***	0.476***	0.412***	0.505***	0.519***	0.460***	0.258***	0.082	0.417***	0.495***	0.468***	0.481***	0.501***	—	
22. BRS-LTP16	0.455***	0.404***	0.349***	0.448***	0.411***	0.422***	0.393***	0.378***	0.085	0.424***	0.459***	0.395***	0.471***	0.503***	0.430***	—

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Figure 8 Sample Scatterplots of BRS-22 items' correlations

	BRS-E2	BRS-E4	BRS-E6	BRS-LTP3	BRS-LTP7	BRS-LTP10
BRS-E2						
BRS-E4						
BRS-E6						
BRS-LTP3						
BRS-LTP7						
BRS-LTP10						

6.2.2 CFA Model Fit

The fit of the two-factor model for the BRS-22 was assessed through multiple fit indices. The Chi-Square (χ^2) test indicated a significant result, $\chi^2(208) = 763.662$, $p < .001$, suggesting that the model does not perfectly fit the data. However, the Chi-Square test is known to be sensitive to sample size, often resulting in significance with large samples. Therefore, additional fit indices were examined to provide a comprehensive assessment of the model's fit.

The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was found to be 0.074, with a 90% confidence interval ranging from 0.068 to 0.079. This value lies within the acceptable range of 0.05 to 0.08, indicating a reasonable fit. Additionally, the Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) was 0.044, well below the 0.08 threshold, which supports a good fit for the model in terms of reproducing observed correlations.

For incremental fit, the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) was calculated to be 0.906, meeting the criterion for an acceptable fit (CFI > 0.90). The Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) yielded a value of 0.895, which is slightly below the acceptable threshold of 0.90. Despite this, the CFI and TLI collectively suggest the model fits adequately, although there is slight room for improvement indicated by the TLI. Finally, the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) was 27869.427. While BIC does not have a specific threshold for evaluation, it is useful in model comparison, with lower values indicating a better fit when comparing competing models.

Overall, these indices suggest that the two-factor model provides a satisfactory representation of the data, with several fit indices meeting or approaching recommended thresholds. A summary of the fit indices is presented in Table 30 below:

Table 30 Model Fit Indices

Fit Index	Value	Threshold
χ^2 (df = 208)	763.662	Non-significant preferred, often significant in large samples
RMSEA	0.074	0.05 - 0.08 for reasonable fit
SRMR	0.044	< 0.08 for good fit
CFI	0.906	> 0.90 for acceptable fit
TLI	0.895	> 0.90 for acceptable fit
BIC	27869.427	Lower values preferred for model comparison

6.2.3 Factor Loadings

As shown in Table 31, all items for the Embodiment factor demonstrated strong loadings, ranging from .648 to .746, indicating solid alignment with the latent construct. The LTP factor also showed generally strong item loadings between .585 and .807. Notably, two items (BRS-LTP8 and

BRS-LTP9) exhibited lower loadings at .463 and .082, respectively, suggesting weaker contributions to the factor. These results support the internal consistency of the constructs, with a few exceptions noted for further interpretation.

Table 31 Factor Loadings

						95% Confidence Interval		
Factor	Indicator	Estimate	Std. Error	*z*-value	*p*	Lower	Upper	Std. Est. (all)
Embodiment	BRS-E1	0.823	0.043	18.989	0.000	0.738	0.908	0.746
	BRS-E2	0.783	0.043	18.181	0.000	0.698	0.867	0.724
	BRS-E3	0.685	0.043	15.767	0.000	0.600	0.771	0.648
	BRS-E4	0.736	0.043	17.116	0.000	0.652	0.820	0.691
	BRS-E5	0.769	0.041	18.685	0.000	0.688	0.850	0.737
	BRS-E6	0.697	0.040	17.521	0.000	0.619	0.775	0.702
LTP	BRS-LTP1	0.882	0.041	21.443	0.000	0.802	0.963	0.807
	BRS-LTP2	0.870	0.046	18.836	0.000	0.780	0.961	0.737
	BRS-LTP3	0.758	0.041	18.591	0.000	0.678	0.838	0.730
	BRS-LTP4	0.786	0.041	19.223	0.000	0.706	0.866	0.748
	BRS-LTP5	0.753	0.040	18.613	0.000	0.673	0.832	0.731
	BRS-LTP6	0.696	0.038	18.110	0.000	0.621	0.771	0.717
	BRS-LTP7	0.760	0.040	18.996	0.000	0.681	0.838	0.742
	BRS-LTP8	0.674	0.063	10.638	0.000	0.549	0.798	0.463
	BRS-LTP9	0.138	0.078	1.777	0.076	-0.014	0.290	0.082
	BRS-LTP10	0.711	0.045	15.954	0.000	0.624	0.799	0.651
	BRS-LTP11	0.698	0.041	17.201	0.000	0.619	0.778	0.690
	BRS-LTP12	0.705	0.043	16.588	0.000	0.622	0.789	0.671
	BRS-LTP13	0.729	0.044	16.567	0.000	0.643	0.815	0.671
	BRS-LTP14	0.725	0.044	16.394	0.000	0.638	0.811	0.666
	BRS-LTP15	0.695	0.044	15.809	0.000	0.609	0.781	0.647
	BRS-LTP16	0.639	0.046	13.946	0.000	0.549	0.729	0.585

6.2.4 Factor Covariance and Residual Variance

The covariance between the Embodiment and LTP latent factors was high (r = .981, SE = 0.009, z = 107.16, p < .001), with a 95% confidence interval ranging from 0.963 to 0.999. This near-perfect positive relationship indicates strong conceptual overlap, though the two dimensions remain theoretically distinct within the BRS-22.

Residual variances provided insight into the degree of alignment between individual items and their respective latent constructs (see Table 32). Most Embodiment items showed moderate to strong alignment, with standardised residual variances ranging from 0.443 to 0.580. In the LTP factor, residual variances were more variable; notably, items related to doctrinal beliefs (BRS-LTP8 and BRS-LTP9) demonstrated the highest unexplained variance (0.785 and 0.993, respectively), suggesting weaker alignment with the latent construct and potential targets for refinement.

Table 32 Residual Variance of BRS-22

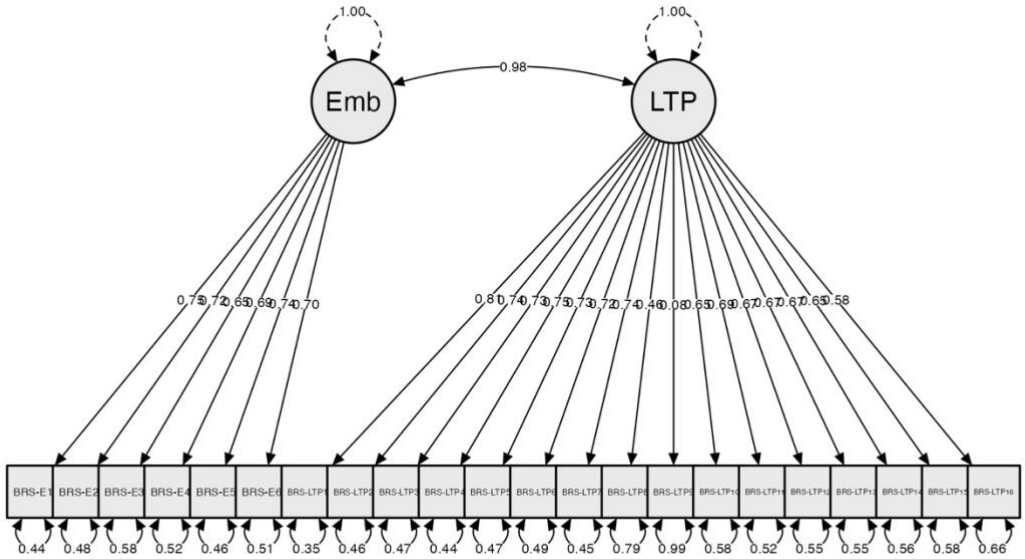
Residual variances

					95% Confidence Interval		
Indicator	Estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p	Lower	Upper	Std. Est. (all)
BRS-E1	0.538	0.038	14.156	0.000	0.464	0.613	0.443
BRS-E2	0.557	0.039	14.346	0.000	0.481	0.634	0.476
BRS-E3	0.649	0.043	14.927	0.000	0.564	0.734	0.580
BRS-E4	0.591	0.040	14.616	0.000	0.512	0.670	0.522
BRS-E5	0.497	0.035	14.324	0.000	0.429	0.565	0.457
BRS-E6	0.499	0.034	14.672	0.000	0.433	0.566	0.507
BRS-LTP1	0.418	0.030	14.042	0.000	0.359	0.476	0.349
BRS-LTP2	0.636	0.043	14.684	0.000	0.551	0.720	0.456
BRS-LTP3	0.504	0.034	14.756	0.000	0.437	0.570	0.467
BRS-LTP4	0.487	0.033	14.651	0.000	0.422	0.552	0.441
BRS-LTP5	0.494	0.033	14.756	0.000	0.429	0.560	0.466
BRS-LTP6	0.459	0.031	14.801	0.000	0.398	0.520	0.486
BRS-LTP7	0.471	0.032	14.632	0.000	0.408	0.534	0.449
BRS-LTP8	1.660	0.107	15.474	0.000	1.449	1.870	0.785
BRS-LTP9	2.814	0.179	15.695	0.000	2.463	3.166	0.993
BRS-LTP10	0.687	0.046	15.074	0.000	0.598	0.777	0.576
BRS-LTP11	0.538	0.036	14.941	0.000	0.467	0.609	0.524
BRS-LTP12	0.606	0.040	14.984	0.000	0.527	0.686	0.549
BRS-LTP13	0.649	0.043	14.962	0.000	0.564	0.734	0.550
BRS-LTP14	0.659	0.044	14.964	0.000	0.572	0.745	0.557
BRS-LTP15	0.672	0.045	15.089	0.000	0.585	0.760	0.582
BRS-LTP16	0.786	0.052	15.253	0.000	0.685	0.887	0.658

The analysis of residual variances highlights the overall effectiveness of most items in representing their respective latent factors, while also pinpointing specific items, such as BRS-LTP8 and BRS-LTP9, that exhibit higher levels of unexplained variance. This suggests that these items may benefit from re-evaluation to ensure they accurately capture the intended aspects of the LTP construct, ultimately contributing to the model's overall fit. By identifying these areas, the findings provide direction for potential improvements to the BRS-22 in future research iterations, aimed at enhancing the scale's validity and reliability.

To provide a visual representation of the CFA model for the BRS-22, Figure 9 below illustrates the two-factor structure consisting of Embodiment and LTP as latent constructs. Each factor is depicted with its corresponding items, highlighting the standardised factor loadings derived from the analysis. The model also displays the correlation between the Embodiment and LTP factors, further confirming the distinct but interrelated nature of these constructs.

Figure 9 Two-Factor CFA Model of BRS-22



6.2.5 Reliability and Validity of the CFA Model

As shown in Table 33, the reliability of the BRS-22 was assessed using both Cronbach's alpha (α) and McDonald's omega (ω) coefficients, demonstrating strong internal consistency for both factors and the overall scale. Specifically, the Embodiment factor showed a reliability of ω = .859 and α = .857, indicating robust internal consistency. Similarly, the LTP factor exhibited a high reliability with ω =.894 and α =.909. The total scale also reflected excellent reliability, with ω =.936 and α = .937, suggesting that the BRS-22 is a reliable measure of Buddhist religiosity across its two dimensions.

To evaluate the convergent validity of the scale, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was calculated for each factor. The Embodiment factor yielded an AVE of 0.503, which meets the commonly recommended threshold of 0.50, indicating that more than half of the variance in the Embodiment items is explained by the latent construct. This finding supports adequate convergent validity for the Embodiment factor. However, the LTP factor yielded an AVE of 0.397, falling below the 0.50 threshold. This lower AVE value suggests that the LTP factor captures slightly less than half of the variance in its items, potentially indicating a need for further refinement of this factor to enhance its convergent validity.

Table 33 CFA Factor Reliability and Validity of BRS-22

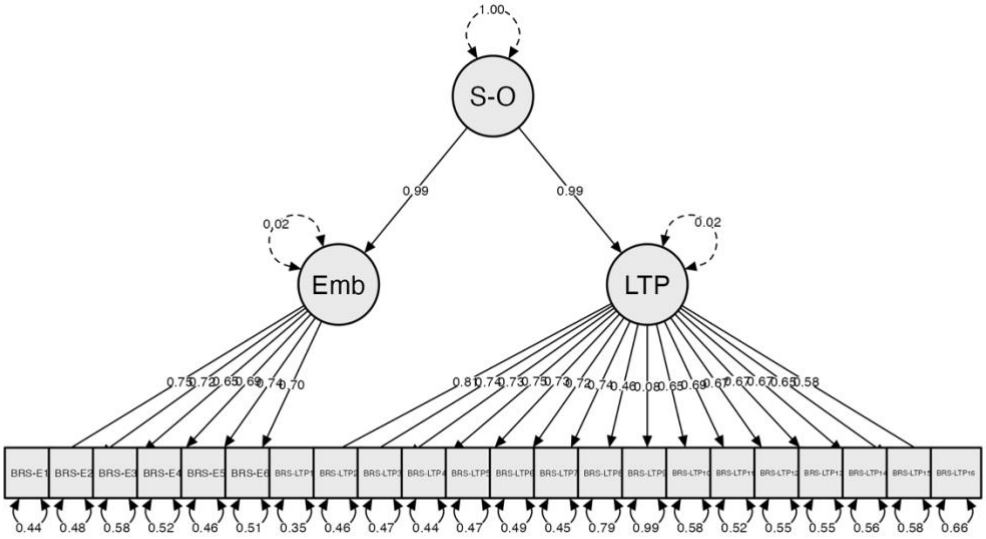
Factor	Cronbach's α	McDonald's ω	AVE
Embodiment	0.857	0.859	0.503
LTP	0.909	0.894	0.397
Total Scale	0.937	0.936	—

Overall, these results provide evidence of strong reliability for both factors and the total scale, while the convergent validity appears adequate for Embodiment but may require further consideration for LTP. These findings underscore the BRS-22's utility in measuring Buddhist religiosity, with room for future refinement to enhance the validity of all factor components.

6.2.6 Second-Order CFA

A second-order CFA was conducted to examine the higher-order structure of the BRS-22. This analysis tested whether the two primary factors, Embodiment and LTP, could be represented by a single second-order factor. This approach aimed to validate the hierarchical nature of the BRS-22, hypothesising an overarching construct of Buddhist religiosity that encompasses both sub-dimensions. Figure 10 provides a visual representation of the second-order model.

Figure 10 Second-Order CFA for BRS-22



Model fit for the second-order CFA was evaluated using multiple indices, beginning with the Chi-Square test, which yielded a significant result, $\chi^2(207) = 763.662$, $p < .001$. As expected, the sensitivity of the Chi-Square test to sample size resulted in a significant value, which is common in larger samples. Additional fit indices were used to provide a more comprehensive assessment. The RMSEA was 0.074, with a 90% confidence interval of 0.068 to 0.080, indicating a reasonable fit to the data. The SRMR was 0.044, falling below the threshold of 0.08 and suggesting a good fit. Incremental fit indices also demonstrated adequacy, with the CFI at 0.906 and the TLI at 0.895, both approaching acceptable thresholds.

For further comparison, Table 34 provides a summary of fit indices for the two-factor CFA and second-order CFA models. Notably, the fit indices for both models were identical, except for the BIC. The two-factor model yielded a BIC of 27,869.427, while the second-order model resulted in a slightly higher BIC of 27,875.628. This marginal difference in BIC suggests a slight preference for the two-factor model, as lower BIC values indicate a more parsimonious fit.

Table 34 Model Fit Indices for Two-Factor CFA and Second-Order CFA

Fit Index	**Two-Factor CFA Model**	**Second-Order CFA Model**
χ^2 (*df*)	763.662 (208)	763.662 (207)
RMSEA	0.074	0.074
SRMR	0.044	0.044
CFI	0.906	0.906
TLI	0.895	0.895
BIC	27,869.427	27,875.628

As presented in Table 35, the parameter estimates in the model confirmed that both Embodiment and LTP factors loaded significantly onto the second-order factor, with standardised loadings of .990 and .991, respectively. This reflects the strong relationship of each first-order factor to the overarching construct of Buddhist religiosity. Additionally, reliability estimates for the second-order factor were excellent, with a coefficient ω of .926.

Table 35 Second-order Factor Loadings

						95% Confidence Interval		
Factor	Indicator	Estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p	Lower	Upper	Std. Est. (all)
Second-Order	Embodiment	7.064	103.097	0.069	0.945	-195.002	209.131	0.990
	LTP	7.245	111.095	0.065	0.948	-210.497	224.988	0.991

The analysis of residual variances demonstrated that most items on both the Embodiment and LTP factors explained a substantial portion of their respective variances. However, items BRS-LTP8 and BRS-LTP9 displayed lower R^2 values of .215 and .007, respectively. These findings suggest that while the second-order CFA provides an adequate model fit, certain items may require further refinement in future iterations of the scale.

Overall, the identical fit indices for both models, apart from BIC, indicate that they are comparable in their representation of the BRS-22 structure. The marginally lower BIC of the two-factor model suggests a preference based on parsimony. However, both models meet the accepted

thresholds for model fit, supporting the use of the BRS-22 either as distinct sub-dimensions of Embodiment and LTP or as a unified higher-order construct of Buddhist religiosity.

6.2.7 Validity of the BRS-22

The validity of the BRS-22 was comprehensively evaluated using construct, criterion, and incremental validity tests. In this confirmatory phase, additional scales such as the Duke University Religion Index (DUREL) and the Prosocialness Scale for Adults (PSA) were incorporated alongside previously used measures to extend the BRS-22's comparative and discriminant capabilities, especially against constructs rooted in Judeo-Christian belief systems.

Construct Validity.

Convergent Validity. Convergent validity was examined by assessing correlations between the BRS-22 and scales that measure constructs theoretically aligned with Buddhist principles, particularly non-attachment and centrality of religiosity. As seen in Table 36, the BRS-22 demonstrated strong correlations with the Non-Attachment Scale (NAS-7) and the Centrality of Buddhist Religiosity Scale (CBRS), reinforcing its alignment with Buddhist religious constructs. The BRS-22 correlated positively with the NAS-7 (r = .818, p < .001), suggesting a meaningful relationship with non-attachment, a core Buddhist tenet. High correlations were also observed with CBRS dimensions, such as Ideology (r = .756, p < .001), Intellect/Experience (r = .754, p < .001), and the overall CBRS (r = .799, p < .001), which indicate that the BRS-22 effectively captures the centrality of Buddhist beliefs and practices.

Discriminant Validity. The discriminant validity of the BRS-22 was assessed against the Religious Meaning Scale (RMS) and the Duke University Religion Index (DUREL), which capture broader religious constructs and traditional Judeo-Christian belief orientations. The BRS-22 showed moderate correlations with the DUREL's total score (r = .751, p < .001) and the RMS (r = .753, p < .001), reflecting that while the BRS-22 shares common ground with general religiosity, it remains distinct in its specific focus on Buddhist principles. These findings reflect that while the BRS-22 encompasses some overlapping aspects with general religious meaning, its core remains rooted in the unique elements of Buddhist religiosity, suggesting effective discriminant validity from non-Buddhist religious constructs.

Criterion Validity.

Predictive Validity. The predictive validity of the BRS-22 was examined by correlating its scores with prosocial behaviours measured by the Dictator Game and the PSA. The BRS-22 showed a moderate correlation with the PSA (r = 0.694, p < .001), indicating a relationship between Buddhist

religiosity and prosocial tendencies, such as helping and empathy. The correlation with the Dictator Game, although positive, was lower (r = 0.266, p < .001), aligning with previous findings that Buddhist religiosity moderately predicts altruistic behaviour in controlled scenarios but may be better captured through self-reported prosocial behaviour scales like the PSA.

Concurrent Validity. To evaluate concurrent validity, correlations between the BRS-22 and measures of life satisfaction (SWLS) and anxiety (GAD-7) were calculated. The BRS-22 correlated strongly with the SWLS (r = .683, p < .001), indicating that higher Buddhist religiosity is associated with increased life satisfaction. Additionally, a negative correlation with the GAD-7 (r = -.048), this relationship was not statistically significant. Therefore, no conclusive relationship between Buddhist religiosity and anxiety can be established based on this analysis. This lack of significant correlation suggests that, in this sample, Buddhist religiosity, as measured by the BRS-22, does not have a clear or consistent association with reduced anxiety levels.

Incremental Validity of the BRS-22. Incremental validity was assessed through hierarchical multiple regression analyses to determine whether the BRS-22 explained additional variance in prosocial behaviour (as measured by the Dictator Game and PSA), life satisfaction (SWLS), and anxiety (GAD-7) beyond established measures, including the Centrality of Buddhist Religiosity Scale (CBRS), Nonattachment Scale (NAS-7), Religious Meaning Scale (RMS), and the Duke University Religion Index (DUREL). In each analysis, the established scales were entered first, followed by the BRS-22, to evaluate its unique contribution to predicting these outcome variables. Table 37 summarises the results from the hierarchical multiple regression analyses performed for the purpose.

Table 36 Scale Correlation Matrix

Variable	Mean LTP	Mean Embodi-ment	Mean BRS-22	Dictator Game Prosociality	Mean PSA	Mean NAS-7	Mean CBRS-Ide	Mean CBRS-Serv	Mean CBRS-Priv	Mean CBRS-Int/Exp	Mean Aggregate CBRS	DUREL-ORA	DUREL-NORA	DUREL-IR	DUREL Total	Total DBIGS	Mean RMS	Mean SWLS
1. Mean LTP	—																	
2. Mean Embodiment	0.846***	—																
3. Mean BRS-22	0.987***	0.920***	—															
4. Dictator Game Prosociality	0.277***	0.211***	0.266***	—														
5. Mean PSA	0.661***	0.696***	0.694***	0.127**	—													
6. Mean NAS-7	0.799***	0.773***	0.818***	0.251***	0.622***	—												
7. Mean CBRS-Ide	0.740***	0.710***	0.756***	0.182***	0.584***	0.669***	—											
8. Mean CBRS-Serv	0.634***	0.582***	0.639***	0.292***	0.452***	0.548***	0.574***	—										
9. Mean CBRS-Priv	0.627***	0.560***	0.628***	0.278***	0.460***	0.584***	0.581***	0.752***	—									
10. Mean CBRS-Int/Exp	0.756***	0.665***	0.754***	0.315***	0.591***	0.665***	0.659***	0.729***	0.708***	—								
11. Mean Aggregate CBRS	0.795***	0.719***	0.799***	0.316***	0.604***	0.709***	0.780***	0.871***	0.876***	0.926***	—							
12. DUREL-ORA	0.570***	0.494***	0.566***	0.359***	0.379***	0.462***	0.474***	0.584***	0.588***	0.622***	0.661***	—						
13. DUREL-NORA	0.497***	0.385***	0.480***	0.307***	0.296***	0.398***	0.367***	0.537***	0.611***	0.576***	0.615***	0.662***	—					
14. DUREL-IR	0.708***	0.684***	0.725***	0.222***	0.573***	0.633***	0.667***	0.641***	0.571***	0.701***	0.742***	0.489***	0.376***	—				
15. DUREL Total	0.749***	0.672***	0.751***	0.345***	0.543***	0.638***	0.650***	0.730***	0.719***	0.789***	0.839***	0.822***	0.772***	0.842***	—			
16. Total DBIGS	0.361***	0.316***	0.359***	0.159***	0.321***	0.350***	0.365***	0.277***	0.240***	0.325***	0.344***	0.297***	0.231***	0.332***	0.360***	—		
17. Mean RMS	0.750***	0.677***	0.753***	0.199***	0.601***	0.669***	0.686***	0.581***	0.570***	0.708***	0.735***	0.493***	0.393***	0.678***	0.671***	0.331***	—	
18. Mean SWLS	0.676***	0.624***	0.683***	0.209***	0.498***	0.609***	0.563***	0.544***	0.541***	0.668***	0.676***	0.471***	0.429***	0.590***	0.628***	0.229***	0.711***	—
19. Total GAD-7	-0.012	-0.130**	-0.048	0.029	-0.101*	-0.127**	-0.039	0.028	0.052	0.030	0.026	0.008	-0.021	0.020	0.006	-0.023	-0.057	-0.04

Note. PSA = Prosocialness Scale for Adult; DUREL = Duke University Religiosity Index; DUREL ORA = DUREL Organised Religious Activity; DUREL NORA = DUREL Non-Organised Activity; DUREL IR = DUREL Intrinsic Religiosity; BRS = Buddhist Religiosity Scale; BRS LTP = BRS Learning, Thinking, and Practising; BRS Embodiment = BRS Embodiment; NAS-7 = Non-Attachment Scale 7-item version; CBRS = Centrality of Buddhist Religiosity Scale; CBRS-Ide = CBRS Ideology; CBRS-Serv = CBRS Public Practise; CBRS-Priv = CBRS Private Practise; CBRS-Int/Exp = CBRS Intellect / Experience; DBGS = Degree of Belief in God Scale; RMS = Religious Meaning Scale; SWLS = Satisfaction with Life Scale; GAD-7 = General Anxiety Disorder 7-item Scale.
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table 37 Incremental Validity of BRS-22

Criterion Variable	Initial Predictor	R^2	ΔR^2 (BRS-22)	Total R^2	Significance Level (ΔR^2)
Dictator Game	CBRS	0.100	0.001	0.101	
	NAS-7	0.063	0.011	0.074	*
	RMS	0.039	0.032	0.071	***
	DUREL	0.119	0.000	0.119	
Prosocialness Scale for Adults (PSA)	CBRS	0.217	0.014	0.231	**
	NAS-7	0.155	0.017	0.172	**
	RMS	0.205	0.006	0.211	
	DUREL	0.148	0.018	0.166	**
Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)	CBRS	0.457	0.056	0.513	***
	NAS-7	0.371	0.102	0.473	***
	RMS	0.505	0.050	0.555	***
	DUREL	0.394	0.102	0.496	***
Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD-7)	CBRS	0.001	0.013	0.014	*
	NAS-7	0.016	0.009	0.025	*
	RMS	0.003	0.000	0.003	
	DUREL	0.000	0.006	0.006	

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

Prosocial Behaviour (Dictator Game and PSA). The BRS-22 was evaluated for its ability to predict prosocial behaviour, operationalised through both the Dictator Game and the PSA.

Dictator Game:

When the CBRS was entered as the first predictor, it accounted for 10.0% of the variance in Dictator Game scores ($R^2 = .100$, $p < .001$). Adding the BRS-22 did not significantly increase the explained variance ($\Delta R^2 = .001$, $p = .595$), indicating that BRS-22 provides limited additional predictive power beyond CBRS in this context. In contrast, when NAS-7 was entered as the initial predictor, it explained 6.3% of the variance ($R^2 = .063$, $p < .001$). The addition of the BRS-22 significantly improved the model, adding 1.1% to the explained variance ($\Delta R^2 = .011$, $p = .015$), suggesting that BRS-22 captures unique aspects of Buddhist religiosity related to prosociality that are not fully represented by nonattachment. Similarly, RMS explained 3.9% of the variance ($R^2 = .039$, $p < .001$), and the addition of the BRS-22 further contributed 3.2% of the variance explained ($\Delta R^2 = .032$, $p < .001$). This suggests that BRS-22 provides unique insights into prosocial behaviour, supplementing the aspects of religious meaning measured by RMS. When DUREL was the initial predictor, it accounted for 11.9% of the variance in the Dictator Game ($R^2 = .119$, $p < .001$). However, adding the BRS-22 did not

significantly increase the explained variance (ΔR^2 = .000, p = .793), indicating limited incremental validity over traditional religious activity measures.

Prosocialness Scale for Adults (PSA):

In predicting PSA scores, the CBRS explained 21.7% of the variance (R^2 = .217, p < .001). Adding the BRS-22 resulted in a statistically significant increase, accounting for an additional 1.4% of the variance (ΔR^2 = .014, p = .009), demonstrating BRS-22's unique predictive power beyond centrality of Buddhist religiosity in prosocial tendencies. When NAS-7 was entered first, it accounted for 15.5% of the variance (R^2 = .155, p < .001). With the BRS-22 included, the model improved significantly, explaining an additional 1.7% of the variance (ΔR^2 = .017, p = .006). This result indicates that BRS-22 enhances the understanding of prosocial tendencies beyond nonattachment. For RMS, which accounted for 20.5% of the variance in PSA (R^2 = .205, p < .001), adding the BRS-22 further increased the explained variance by 0.6% (ΔR^2 = .006, p = .075), though this was not statistically significant. This suggests that the incremental contribution of BRS-22 over religious meaning in predicting PSA may be modest. Finally, DUREL explained 14.8% of the variance in PSA (R^2 = .148, p < .001). With the addition of the BRS-22, the model explained 1.8% more of the variance (ΔR^2 = .018, p = .004), underscoring BRS-22's role in providing additional insights into prosociality not fully captured by traditional religious activity.

Life Satisfaction (SWLS). The BRS-22's incremental validity in predicting life satisfaction, as measured by the SWLS, was assessed. When CBRS was entered first, it explained 45.7% of the variance (R^2 = .457, p < .001). Adding BRS-22 led to a statistically significant increase, contributing an additional 5.6% of variance explained (ΔR^2 = .056, p < .001), suggesting that BRS-22 captures additional dimensions of life satisfaction beyond the centrality of Buddhist religiosity. Similarly, NAS-7 explained 37.1% of the variance in life satisfaction (R^2 = .371, p < .001). With BRS-22 included, the explained variance rose by 10.2% (ΔR^2 = .102, p < .001). This significant increase demonstrates BRS-22's relevance to life satisfaction, capturing aspects of Buddhist religiosity beyond nonattachment alone. For RMS, explaining 50.5% of the variance in SWLS (R^2 = .505, p < .001), adding BRS-22 resulted in an additional 5.0% variance explained (ΔR^2 = .050, p < .001), highlighting BRS-22's capacity to enhance understanding of life satisfaction beyond religious meaning. DUREL, which explained 39.4% of the variance in life satisfaction (R^2 = .394, p < .001), saw an increase of 10.2% with the addition of BRS-22 (ΔR^2 = .102, p < .001). This underscores BRS-22's broader reach in capturing life satisfaction linked to Buddhist religiosity not fully represented by traditional religious activities.

Anxiety (GAD-7). In predicting anxiety as measured by the GAD-7, the NAS-7 alone explained 1.6% of the variance (R^2 = .016, p = .005). When the BRS-22 was added to the model, it provided a

modest but statistically significant increase in explained variance, contributing an additional 0.9% (ΔR^2 = .009, p = .030). This result suggests that, while the relationship between Buddhist religiosity and anxiety may be generally limited, the BRS-22 captures aspects of Buddhist practice and belief that extend beyond nonattachment and may relate to anxiety reduction. However, the overall predictive power remains low, indicating that GAD-7 may not be an ideal measure for assessing the influence of Buddhist religiosity on anxiety.

Measurement Invariance Across Buddhist Traditions. To assess the BRS-22's applicability as a non-sectarian measure across different Buddhist traditions and regional cultural contexts, measurement invariance (MI) was evaluated among Buddhist traditions (Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana). Detailed model indices are summarised in Table 38.

Table 38 Measurement Invariance of BRS-22 Across Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana Followers

Buddhist Traditions

Model	*χ2 (df)*	*χ2 /df*	*CFI*	*TLI*	*RMSEA*	*SRMR*	Compari-son	*Δχ2 (df)*	*ΔCFI*	*ΔTLI*	*ΔRMSEA*	*ΔSRMR*
M1: Configural	1,555.411 (624)	2.493	0.802	0.780	0.105	0.073						
M2: Metric	1,600.277 (664)	2.410	0.800	0.792	0.102	0.086	M1	44.866 (40)	-0.002	0.012	-0.003	0.013
M3: Scalar	1667.406 (708)	2.355	0.796	0.800	0.100	0.091	M2	67.129 (44)	-0.004	0.008	-0.002	0.005

Configural Invariance. The analysis began with the assessment of configural invariance, which tests whether the overall factor structure of the BRS-22 is consistent across the three Buddhist denominations (Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana). This unconstrained model showed mixed results: the CFI was 0.802, below the generally accepted threshold of 0.90, and the RMSEA was 0.105, above the ideal cutoff of 0.08, both suggesting some degree of model misfit. However, the SRMR was 0.073, which falls within the acceptable range (≤ 0.08), indicating that the predicted correlations between observed variables align reasonably well with the data. This pattern of results suggests that, while the basic factor structure holds across groups at a superficial level (as indicated by the acceptable SRMR), the poorer CFI and RMSEA indicate that there may be inconsistencies in how the items relate to the latent factors across the groups. This implies that the factor loadings and covariances may not be entirely stable across the Buddhist denominations. Thus, configural invariance is marginally supported: the model captures the overall structure of the BRS-22 across groups to some extent, but discrepancies in CFI and RMSEA suggest that this structure might not be entirely equivalent across Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana Buddhists. These findings warrant

caution in interpreting configural invariance, as SRMR alone may not fully reflect latent structure differences.

Metric Invariance. The second step of the measurement invariance testing involved evaluating metric invariance, where the factor loadings were constrained to be equal across the three Buddhist traditions: Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana. The model fit for this stage yielded a chi-square value of 1,600.277 with 664 degrees of freedom, and a statistically significant chi-square difference ($\Delta\chi^2$) of 44.866 over 40 degrees of freedom when compared to the configural model. This significance suggests some deviation in fit when constraining the factor loadings, yet further examination of alternative fit indices provides a more nuanced perspective. The CFI decreased slightly from 0.802 to 0.800, a change of ΔCFI = -0.002, which remains within the acceptable threshold of less than -0.01, indicating minimal impact on model fit. Additionally, the TLI increased slightly from 0.780 to 0.792, suggesting an improved fit in terms of this particular index. Similarly, the RMSEA showed a minor improvement, decreasing from 0.105 to 0.102 ($\Delta RMSEA$ = -0.003), while the SRMR increased modestly from 0.073 to 0.086, still within acceptable bounds ($\Delta SRMR$ = 0.013).

Overall, these small changes in the fit indices collectively support metric invariance for the BRS-22 across the Buddhist traditions. This means that the factor loadings – or the relationship between items and their respective factors – are consistent across Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana groups. Therefore, the latent constructs measured by the BRS-22 can be interpreted similarly across these denominations, allowing for meaningful comparison of the factors themselves across the groups.

Scalar Invariance. The analysis proceeded to test scalar invariance by adding constraints on the item intercepts, to examine whether they are equivalent across the groups. The scalar model yielded a chi-square value of 1,667.406 with 708 degrees of freedom, resulting in a significant $\Delta\chi^2$ of 67.129 over 44 degrees of freedom when compared to the metric model. This significant chi-square difference indicates that full scalar invariance is not strictly supported across the Buddhist traditions. However, an inspection of the alternative fit indices provides additional insights. The CFI decreased slightly from 0.800 to 0.796 (ΔCFI = -0.004), which remains within the acceptable threshold of -0.01, suggesting that the decrease in fit is relatively minor. Additionally, the TLI showed a slight increase from 0.792 to 0.800, indicating a minor improvement. The RMSEA decreased marginally from 0.102 to 0.100 ($\Delta RMSEA$ = -0.002), which suggests an improvement in the model's error of approximation. Finally, the SRMR increased slightly to 0.091 from 0.086 ($\Delta SRMR$ = 0.005), remaining within an acceptable range.

These findings indicate partial scalar invariance for the BRS-22 across Buddhist traditions. The significant $\Delta\chi^2$ suggests some variation in the item intercepts across groups, meaning that participants from different traditions may not respond to the scale items in exactly the same way, even if they share the same latent factor scores. However, since the Δ*CFI* and other incremental fit indices remain within acceptable limits, the model supports some level of scalar invariance. Consequently, while the latent means of the BRS-22 factors can be compared across the groups, such comparisons should be made cautiously, acknowledging that certain item intercepts may differ between the traditions.

Measurement Invariance Across Language Versions. To examine whether the BRS-22 functions equivalently across different language versions, MI testing was conducted between the English, Traditional Chinese, and Simplified Chinese versions of the scale with results detailed in Table 39.

Table 39 Measurement Invariance of BRS-22 Across Language Versions

Language Versions

Model	*χ2 (df)*	*χ2 /df*	*CFI*	*TLI*	*RMSEA*	*SRMR*	Compari-son	*Δχ2 (df)*	*ΔCFI*	*ΔTLI*	*ΔRMSEA*	*ΔSRMR*
M1: Configural	1,555.1 624	2.493	0.879	0.862	0.057	0.068		-				
M2: Metric	1,692.7 664	2.425	0.878	0.866	0.057	0.072	M1	137.60 40	-0.001	0.004	0.000	0.004
M3: Scalar	1900.2 708	2.466	0.875	0.867	0.058	0.074	M2	207.50 44	-0.003	0.001	0.001	0.002
M4: Strict	2245.2 752	2.619	0.861	0.858	0.061	0.079	M3	345.00 44	-0.014	-0.009	0.003	0.005

Configural Invariance. The configural model (χ^2/df = 2.493; CFI = 0.879; TLI = 0.862; RMSEA = 0.057; SRMR = 0.068) demonstrated acceptable fit, indicating that the four-factor structure of the BRS-22 is conceptually equivalent across the English, Traditional Chinese, and Simplified Chinese versions. This supports the assumption that participants in all three language groups interpret the underlying constructs in a comparable manner.

Metric Invariance. When factor loadings were constrained to equality across language groups, the fit indices remained virtually unchanged (ΔCFI = −0.001; ΔRMSEA = 0.000; ΔSRMR = +0.004), all well within the criteria used. This indicates that the relationships between observed items and their latent factors are statistically equivalent across the three language versions. The

findings therefore support metric invariance, allowing meaningful comparison of factor covariances and regression slopes across linguistic groups.

Scalar Invariance. Imposing equality constraints on item intercepts resulted in minimal change to the fit indices (ΔCFI = −0.003; ΔRMSEA = +0.001; ΔSRMR = +0.002), also within acceptable thresholds. This supports scalar invariance, demonstrating that participants with equivalent latent factor scores would be expected to produce similar observed mean scores, regardless of language version. Consequently, latent mean comparisons can be made confidently across samples using English and Chinese versions.

Strict Invariance. When residual variances were constrained to equality across groups, model fit declined slightly (CFI = 0.861; RMSEA = 0.061; SRMR = 0.079), with ΔCFI = −0.014 exceeding the recommended threshold of −0.01, while changes in RMSEA (+0.003) and SRMR (+0.005) remained well within acceptable limits. These results suggest that full strict invariance is not achieved; however, given the small magnitude of fit deterioration and the overall stability of the alternative fit indices, partial strict invariance can be inferred. This indicates that while some residual variances differ slightly across language versions, likely reflecting translation- or response-style-related variability, the vast majority of item residuals are consistent across groups. Therefore, the BRS-22 can be regarded as exhibiting partial strict invariance across the English, Traditional Chinese, and Simplified Chinese versions.

6.3 Discussion

The current study employed multiple statistical analyses to evaluate the reliability, validity, and measurement invariance of the 22-item Buddhist Religiosity Scale (BRS-22). Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) confirmed the two-factor structure of the BRS-22, supporting the dimensions of Embodiment and Learning, Thinking, and Practicing (LTP). The "Embodiment" factor reflects how individuals internalised Buddhist teachings, while the LTP factor represents Buddhist religiosity's cognitive and intellectual aspects. In a sense, the Embodiment factor reflects the extent to which one has successfully attained the desired goal of being a Buddhist. In contrast, the LTP factor encapsulates how well they have adhered to understanding the Buddhist teachings and putting them into practice.

6.3.1 Psychometric Properties

Psychometrically, the scale's reliability is well-supported, with both the Embodiment and LTP factors demonstrating strong internal consistency, evidenced by Cronbach's alpha values of 0.857 and 0.909, respectively. The overall BRS-22 scale achieved an alpha of 0.937, reflecting excellent reliability. The slightly lower alpha for the Embodiment factor, which contains six items, compared to

the 16-item LTP factor and the full 22-item BRS-22, may reflect fewer items within this subscale. While Cronbach's alpha can increase with the number of items due to aggregation, these high values also indicate strong inter-item correlations (Cronbach, 1951).

In evaluating the model fit, Schermelleh-Engel et al. (2003) suggest that RMSEA values below 0.08 indicate an acceptable fit, with values between 0.05 and 0.08 deemed adequate. The RMSEA for this model was 0.074, which aligns with this guideline and suggests an acceptable fit to the data. Additionally, the SRMR value of 0.044 falls well below the threshold of 0.05, indicative of a good fit according to Schermelleh-Engel et al.'s (2003) criteria, as values less than 0.05 are typically interpreted as signifying strong model fit. Regarding the CFI, Schermelleh-Engel et al. (2003) also propose that values above 0.90 indicate an acceptable fit, while values above 0.95 represent a good fit. The CFI for this model was 0.906, suggesting that the fit is acceptable but could be closer to the ideal with further refinement.

Taking these indices together, the combination of RMSEA, SRMR, and CFI values provides a comprehensive view of model fit, demonstrating a generally reasonable fit. The RMSEA and CFI indicate an acceptable fit, while the excellent SRMR value further supports the model's structural validity. Overall, these findings affirm that the two-factor BRS-22 is sound, though slight improvements in model refinement could potentially elevate the CFI to meet a higher standard of model fit.

While the two-factor model demonstrated an acceptable fit, there is still room for improvement. Specifically, some items displayed relatively low factor loadings, which could impact the model's validity and interpretability. According to Li et al. (2020), factor loadings below 0.4 are generally considered low in CFA as they suggest weaker relationships between the observed variables and their underlying latent constructs. In the current analysis, two items—BRS-LTP8 (0.463), "I understand the significance and meaning of the Triple Gem, consisting of the Buddha, the Dharma (teachings), and the Sangha (community)," and BRS-LTP9 (0.082), "I agree with the Four Noble Truths, that life is characterised by suffering, suffering arises from craving and attachment, there is a way to end suffering, and the Noble Eightfold Path leads to the cessation of suffering"—showed lower than ideal loadings within the LTP factor. Although BRS-LTP8 is just above the low-loading threshold, BRS-LTP9 falls significantly below 0.4, indicating a weak association with the LTP factor.

Roberts et al. (2020) suggest that the abstract and complex nature of certain items can lead to lower factor loadings. In this case, the phrasing of BRS-LTP8 and BRS-LTP9 may be somewhat convoluted, potentially affecting how respondents interpret and respond to these items. The

inclusion of detailed explanations within the item wording might obscure the intended meaning, which could weaken the items' associations with the underlying LTP factor. Despite these low loadings, the inclusion of these items, such as the Triple Gem and the Four Noble Truths, remains important for the theoretical integrity of the LTP factor, as they capture doctrinally fundamental aspects of Buddhism identified in our earlier qualitative phase as well as supported by Buddhist literature (Bodhi, 1981; Gnanarama, 2000; Yao & McClellan, 2019). Removing these items could compromise the conceptual richness and intended meaning of the LTP factor. Nevertheless, the weak factor loadings signal potential areas for refinement. Further evaluation of these items may help to enhance the overall model fit and ensure that the scale accurately represents the constructs it is intended to measure.

The second-order CFA model introduced a higher-order factor that encompassed both Embodiment and LTP, conceptualising Buddhist religiosity as a unified construct. Notably, fit indices remained identical to the two-factor model, with RMSEA at 0.074, SRMR at 0.044, and CFI at 0.906, indicating comparable adequacy between models. However, the slightly higher BIC for the second-order model (27,875.628 compared to 27,869.427 for the two-factor model) suggests a marginal preference for the two-factor model based on parsimony. Nevertheless, standardised loadings of Embodiment (0.990) and LTP (0.991) onto the second-order factor indicate a robust association with the overarching construct of Buddhist religiosity. This model supports the interpretation of Buddhist religiosity as a holistic entity, encompassing both introspective qualities and active engagement with Buddhist teachings.

The choice between the two models depends on the intended application of the BRS-22. If the scale is intended to distinguish between specific aspects of Buddhist religiosity, such as the affective (Embodiment) and the cognitive-behavioural (LTP) dimensions, the two-factor model may be more appropriate. This model enables a nuanced analysis of how individuals embody and intellectually engage with Buddhist teachings. However, if the purpose is to assess a unified construct of Buddhist religiosity that integrates these dimensions, the second-order model provides a compelling structure.

Considering that the BRS-22 was designed as a non-sectarian measure, applicable across Buddhist traditions, the second-order model may offer a broader, more holistic view that resonates with diverse interpretations of Buddhism. This unified perspective could support the assessment of general Buddhist religiosity, accommodating variations in specific practices and beliefs across traditions. On the other hand, the two-factor model allows for a deeper exploration of the distinct

facets of religiosity that may vary across individuals or groups, such as between those who prioritise compassionate action versus those focused on doctrinal study.

6.3.2 Convergent Validity with Related Scales

The convergent validity of the BRS-22 was demonstrated through significant correlations with the Nonattachment Scale (NAS-7) and the Centrality of Buddhist Religiosity Scale (CBRS), aligning the BRS-22 with theoretically related constructs. Since the development of NAS by Sahdra et al. (2010), no study has investigated or ascertained whether Buddhists display higher levels of non-attachment. All were either qualitatively derived or implied as a result of the theoretical backdrop of the scale. Our current study acted as the pioneering research to demonstrate a strong relationship between Buddhist religiosity and the Buddhist-derived concept of non-attachment, garnering a positive significant correlation of 0.818, 0.799, and 0.773, respectively, for BRS-22, the LTP factor, and the Embodiment factor. These were by far the highest correlated scales and dimensions of all scales tested. The CBRS by Nguyen et al. (2021) showed a significant positive relationship of 0.709, and between 0.548 and 0.669 for the four subscales of CBRS with NAS-7. Regarding BRS-22's correlation with the CBRS, as both scales are meant to measure Buddhist religiosity, the scales, as expected, correlated positively and significantly with 0.799 between the scale means. However, there is no benchmark for us to gauge if such a level of correlation can be considered high, given that the scale has had no subsequent deployment since its initial validation study in 2021.

Looking at the three-way correlational relationships between BRS-22, NAS-7, and CBRS, it is clear that BRS-22 seems to have a stronger overlap with the non-attachment measure of NAS-7. The BRS-22 scale's stronger correlation with the NAS-7, compared to its slightly lower correlation with the CBRS, can be attributed to the differing focuses and nature of the items in these scales.

Conceptual Alignment with NAS-7. The NAS-7 and BRS-22 scales both emphasise internal qualities central to Buddhism, such as non-attachment, mindfulness, and personal growth. This alignment is evident in NAS-7 items like "I can let go of regrets and feelings of dissatisfaction about the past," which resonate with BRS-22 items that encourage releasing attachment (BRS-LTP2) and self-compassion (BRS-E1 and BRS-E6). Both scales reflect an internal, introspective approach to spirituality or religiosity, prioritizing self-reflection and personal insight over external rituals, a focus that aligns closely with Buddhist teachings (Keown, 2013; J. Kristeller & Rapgay, 2013; Rahula, 1974). The scales also share an emphasis on individual well-being and self-cultivation, which are achieved through mindfulness and non-attachment. This mirrors Buddhism's focus on self-transformation through meditation and emotional resilience, where cultivating a balanced mind is central to alleviating suffering (Gnanarama, 2000; J. Kristeller & Rapgay, 2013; Rahula, 1974). Additionally, the absence of external rituals or beliefs in both scales aligns with Buddhist teachings that encourage

looking inward for religious growth rather than relying on external forms of religiosity (Bodhi, 1981; Deegalle, 2018; J. Kristeller & Rapgay, 2013; Santina, 1997).

Overall, the conceptual alignment between NAS-7 and BRS-22 reflects their shared focus on personal transformation and internalised Buddhist principles. By emphasising introspective practices rather than explicit doctrinal references, both scales capture a Buddhist approach to religiosity centred on self-awareness and emotional resilience, supporting their high correlation and compatibility.

Difference in Focus with CBRS. The CBRS, by design, assesses behaviours and beliefs that align with traditional religious practices and external expressions of Buddhist religiosity. Its items are categorised into dimensions such as Ideology (belief in core Buddhist doctrines), Private Practice (frequency of meditation, chanting, and prayer), Service (importance of religious practices and community), and Experience (sense of connection with the Buddha and Bodhisattvas). For instance, items like “How often do you pray, chant or meditate?” and “How often do you feel Buddha and Bodhisattvas surrounding you?” capture engagement in ritualistic practices and supernatural experiences rather than internal psychological states.

In contrast, the BRS-22 emphasises introspection and focuses on how Buddhist principles influence personal attitudes and self-directed practices. While the BRS-22 includes items related to doctrinal understanding and spiritual practices, they are framed to highlight individual growth and development, rather than ritualistic or doctrinal adherence. This emphasis on personal transformation aligns with the Buddhist focus on inner cultivation, as seen in items like BRS-LTP2 (“I have a genuine aspiration to let go of attachments and desires that cause suffering and hindrances in my life”).

The original CBRS development study includeed a diverse sample of nuns, monks, lay practitioners, and unofficial followers of Buddhism, and participants were required to meet specific criteria reflecting communal and ritualistic involvement, such as participating in Sangha activities, attending Buddhist ceremonies, and listening to lectures from monks (Nguyen et al., 2021). This selection approach inherently emphasises a communal, externalised form of religiosity, which naturally reflects the traditional dimensions measured by the CBRS. Additionally, since the CBRS was developed in Vietnam, where Mahayana Buddhism predominates, the scale’s focus on ritualistic practices and communal experiences aligns well with Mahayana principles, which often emphasise devotional and community-oriented aspects of religious life (Jayadi, 2019; Sheng Yen, 2007).

In contrast, the current CFA study included individuals who identified as Buddhists and had either taken refuge in the Triple Gem or self-identified as Buddhists, supporting the BRS-22’s focus

on internalised beliefs and personal religiosity. This approach captures a broader scope of Buddhist practices, potentially applicable across different traditions within Buddhism, rather than focusing on specific rituals or communal activities.

By centring on personal attitudes and self-growth, the BRS-22 provides a complementary perspective to the CBRS, capturing internal aspects of Buddhist religiosity that are distinct from the traditional religious practices and communal expressions measured by the CBRS. This distinction emphasises the BRS-22's unique role in assessing Buddhist religiosity that extends beyond ritualistic or doctrinal adherence, thereby offering additional insights into individual well-being and personal development within a Buddhist context.

Nature of Religious Experience. The CBRS captures a more externalised and communal aspect of Buddhist practice, with items measuring the frequency and importance of traditional Buddhist rituals, beliefs in Buddha and Bodhisattvas, and community practices. This approach might align more with cultural or communal expressions of Buddhist religiosity. In contrast, the BRS-22's focus on compassion, self-awareness, and ethical living is more personal and abstract, aligning with NAS-7's focus on personal attributes and self-concept rather than religious rituals.

Furthermore, the CBRS items that reflect supernatural beliefs (e.g., presence of Buddha and Bodhisattvas) and ideological beliefs (e.g., belief in reincarnation and samsara) may not correlate as strongly with the BRS-22, which is less about doctrinal beliefs and more about individual practices that could apply across Buddhist traditions and even secular contexts. This reflects a divergence in how Buddhist principles are operationalised—CBRS captures ritualistic and doctrinal adherence, whereas BRS-22 captures personal interpretation and internalisation.

Summary of Convergent Validity. In summary, the strong correlation between NAS-7 and BRS-22 can be attributed to their shared emphasis on personal transformation, emotional resilience, and non-attachment—all central themes in Buddhist practice that are more introspective in nature. The CBRS, on the other hand, measures more traditional and external aspects of Buddhist practice, such as ritual participation and beliefs in supernatural elements. This difference in focus explains why BRS-22 aligns more closely with NAS-7, as both scales prioritise individual psychological states over traditional religious practices and beliefs. This distinction highlights how BRS-22 is more reflective of internalised Buddhist principles, while CBRS is rooted in external expressions and communal aspects of Buddhism.

6.3.3 Discriminant Validity with Adapted Theistic Religiosity Scales

The BRS-22 scale, designed to capture Buddhist-specific religiosity, was tested for discriminant validity against the RMS (Pargament, 1999a), the DUREL (H. G. Koenig & Büssing, 2010),

and the Degrees of Belief in God Scale (DBIGS, Maiello, 2005). This analysis is essential to understand how well the BRS-22 differentiates from broader measures of religiosity that are not specific to Buddhism.

Relationship between BRS-22 and RMS. The BRS-22 shows a strong correlation with the RMS at $r = 0.753$, suggesting conceptual overlap between these two scales. The original RMS is designed to measure how religious or spiritual beliefs contribute to one's sense of purpose and meaning in life (Pargament, 1999a). Items such as "The goals of my life grow out of my understanding of Buddha/Bodhisattva" and "My purpose in life reflects what I believe Buddha/Bodhisattva wants for me" align with the overarching focus of the BRS-22 on the influence of religious beliefs on personal direction. However, this correlation also reflects the RMS's foundational structure, which, even with the adaptation to Buddhist terminology, retains an inherently theistic perspective that is not fully congruent with Buddhist doctrines (Deegalle, 2018; Keown, 2013).

The RMS was originally developed with a theistic worldview in mind, including items like "The events in my life unfold according to a divine plan" and "Without God, my life would be meaningless," both of which reflect an externalised source of control and purpose. Although these items were modified to refer to Buddha/Bodhisattva in the current study, their original theistic emphasis underscores a fundamental difference between the RMS and the BRS-22. The RMS measures religious meaning as something that is attained through an external relationship with a divine figure, consistent with its origins in monotheistic contexts. This is in contrast to the BRS-22, which centres on self-cultivation, personal responsibility, and inner transformation as primary sources of purpose—reflecting Buddhist doctrines that emphasise the internal, self-directed path to enlightenment.

This distinction highlights a key conceptual gap between the BRS-22 and the RMS. While the BRS-22 captures aspects central to Buddhism, the RMS is less focused on Buddhist-specific doctrinal components and more on the attainment of meaning as an outcome of one's religious beliefs. The RMS's emphasis on attainment rather than the search for meaning (Pargament, 1999a) contrasts with Buddhism's focus on continual self-exploration and self-transformation. Buddhism does not traditionally view meaning as a fixed attainment but as an evolving understanding that arises from deepening insight and internal practice, which is a key aspect the BRS-22 seeks to encapsulate.

Furthermore, the RMS's approach to religious meaning, which focuses on theistic and spiritual items related to divine guidance (Pargament, 1999a), suggests an external reliance on life's purpose. For instance, the item "When I lose touch with Buddha/Bodhisattva, I have a harder time feeling that there is purpose and meaning in life" implies dependency on a connection with a higher power. This contrasts sharply with the BRS-22, which reflects a form of Buddhist religiosity that

prioritises self-reliance and internal transformation over dependency on external figures for guidance. The BRS-22 includes items like BRS-LTP2 ("I have a genuine aspiration to let go of attachments and desires that cause suffering and hindrances in my life"), which emphasises personal responsibility in managing one's own suffering and developing insight without relying on an external divine plan or intervention.

The RMS's background as a tool to assess attained religious meaning highlights a lack of alignment with the introspective and self-driven qualities of Buddhism, which the BRS-22 captures more effectively. As such, the high correlation between the BRS-22 and the RMS may reflect their shared concern with religious purpose and life direction. However, the differences in their foundational constructs underscore that simply adapting a monotheistic religious scale like the RMS for a Buddhist context is insufficient for capturing the nuanced ways in which Buddhist doctrines frame meaning, purpose, and spiritual growth. This critical evaluation suggests that the BRS-22, specifically designed to align with Buddhist principles, provides a more accurate and comprehensive reflection of Buddhist religiosity than the RMS, even with terminological modifications.

In summary, while the RMS provides valuable insights into how religious beliefs contribute to a sense of meaning, its inherent focus on attainment and theistic foundations diverge from the introspective and doctrinal emphasis of the BRS-22. This difference underscores the importance of developing scales like the BRS-22, which authentically reflect the internal and philosophical dimensions of Buddhist religiosity, beyond what modified theistic tools can capture.

Relationship between BRS-22 and DUREL. The BRS-22 also demonstrates substantial correlations with DUREL (H. G. Koenig & Büssing, 2010) subscales, particularly with the Intrinsic Religiosity (IR) component at $r = 0.725$, and the total DUREL score at $r = 0.751$. This significant relationship suggests that the BRS-22 shares commonalities with general religious engagement and personal commitment. The IR component of DUREL, which reflects the internalisation of religion into daily life, aligns well with items in the BRS-22's LTP factor, which focuses on personal dedication to Buddhist principles and practices.

However, the BRS-22 displays weaker correlations with DUREL's Organizational Religious Activity (ORA) and Non-Organizational Religious Activity (NORA) subscales. These subscales capture the frequency of religious practices, both communal and private (H. G. Koenig & Büssing, 2010), but in forms that are less reflective of BRS-22's content. The BRS-22, while indirectly addressing aspects of personal practice, emphasises the internalisation of Buddhist teachings over external acts of religiosity, such as regular communal worship or private prayer. This distinction highlights that BRS-22 is designed to capture the doctrinal and philosophical elements central to Buddhist religiosity, rather than the specific external practices measured by DUREL.

High Correlation between DUREL and CBRS. Interestingly, while designed to assess Buddhist religiosity, the CBRS shows a stronger correlation with the DUREL at $r = 0.839$, even higher than its correlation with the BRS-22. This pattern raises important questions about the nature of the constructs measured by the CBRS and how it aligns with the DUREL, a measure of general religiosity that is not specifically tailored to Buddhism. The high correlation between the CBRS and DUREL suggests that the CBRS might capture elements of religiosity that are broadly similar to those measured by general religiosity scales, such as the DUREL. The CBRS includes items that, while centred on Buddhist practice, are phrased in ways that reflect similar behaviours and attitudes assessed by the DUREL. For example, CBRS items like "How often do you pray to Buddha or practice meditation in daily events?" and "How often do you feel that you are connected to Buddha and Bodhisattvas?" resemble the DUREL's focus on personal religious activity and perceived presence of the divine.

This similarity in item content likely explains the high correlation, as both scales measure the frequency of religious engagement and the subjective importance of spirituality in daily life, which are common dimensions across many religions, not just Buddhism. In contrast, the BRS-22 is specifically tailored to Buddhist doctrinal beliefs and practices, including items that reflect core Buddhist teachings, such as the Four Noble Truths, the concept of non-attachment, and the significance of the Triple Gem. These items go beyond general religious engagement and focus on philosophical principles central to Buddhism (Bodhi, 1999a; Sheng Yen, 2007). As a result, while the BRS-22 captures Buddhist religiosity, it does so with an emphasis on doctrine-specific elements that may not overlap as directly with general religious measures like the DUREL.

Low Correlation with DBIGS. The DBIGS, a scale assessing theistic beliefs in divine intervention and protection, exhibited a lower correlation with the BRS-22, at $r = 0.359$. This finding is expected and aligns with the objectives of discriminant validity, which seeks to confirm that scales measure distinct constructs. The DBIGS items reflect a personal, faith-based belief in Buddha/Bodhisattva's almighty power and salvific role, traits that may align more closely with theistic religions. Conversely, the BRS-22 is built around Buddhist doctrines and philosophical elements that emphasise personal spiritual practices, non-attachment, and the pursuit of enlightenment. This alignment with Buddhist doctrinal rather than theistic components reinforces the BRS-22's focus on Buddhist-specific religiosity, which does not traditionally conceive of Buddha as a protective deity in the same manner as seen in other religious traditions (Gnanarama, 2000). As a result, the low correlation with DBIGS highlights the BRS-22's role in capturing Buddhist spiritual commitments in ways that differ from general theistic beliefs, thus supporting the scale's discriminant validity.

Additionally, it is noteworthy that the DBIGS was developed to capture core beliefs about divine attributes transcending specific religious or cultural backgrounds. These attributes include beliefs in almighty power, salvation, redemption, and divine justice—concepts that are particularly relevant within theistic frameworks. Designed to assess belief intensity in Christian and non-Christian adolescents from diverse cultural backgrounds, the DBIGS has demonstrated robust psychometric properties, including high internal consistency, retest reliability, and strong concurrent validity with other belief measures (Maiello, 2005). However, the initial development of the DBIGS as a measure of non-Christian beliefs did not fully consider non-theistic belief systems, such as Buddhism, which diverge significantly from theistic constructs.

Furthermore, prior research has demonstrated the utility of the DBIGS in capturing a universal dimension of belief in divine attributes across various cultural contexts, where it has been shown to correlate with lower levels of work stress and burnout (Kutcher et al., 2010). However, this only shows its effectiveness in assessing belief intensity within contexts where theistic beliefs are predominant. The BRS-22, which is grounded in non-theistic Buddhist principles, such as the Four Noble Truths and non-attachment, diverges from the theistic dimensions captured by the DBIGS.

Summary of Discriminant Validity. Overall, the BRS-22 demonstrates significant correlations with both the RMS and DUREL, highlighting its overlap with general dimensions of religious purpose and personal commitment. However, despite these connections, the BRS-22 focuses on uniquely Buddhist beliefs and practices, such as the Four Noble Truths and non-attachment. This specificity allows the BRS-22 to capture facets of religiosity that are not addressed by broader or non-sectarian scales, reinforcing its role as a specialised tool for examining Buddhist-specific spiritual experiences and commitments. The comparison with the CBRS adds another layer of insight, as the CBRS shows an even stronger correlation with the DUREL (r = 0.839) than with the BRS-22 (r = 0.709). This high correlation with the DUREL, a general religiosity measure, suggests that the CBRS may capture broader, behaviour-oriented aspects of religious engagement that are common across religious traditions. In contrast, the BRS-22, while overlapping with general measures of religiosity, delves into doctrinal components specific to Buddhism. The addition of the DBIGS further underscores this distinction, as its lower correlation with the BRS-22 supports the scale's focus on Buddhist-specific doctrines rather than theistic beliefs, thereby confirming the BRS-22's role in capturing the unique aspects of Buddhist religiosity.

6.3.4 Predictive Validity of BRS-22

Our initial findings indicated that none of the scales, including the BRS-22, successfully predicted prosocial behaviour as measured by the charity scenario Dictator Game (Ogawa & Ida,

2015) during the EFA phase of scale development. This observation persisted in the current CFA study, where the correlations between the Dictator Game and the scales remained minimal, suggesting that the behaviours elicited in a controlled game setting might not align with the self-reported prosocial tendencies captured by the scales. However, the introduction of the self-report Prosocialness Scale for Adults (PSA, Caprara et al., 2005) revealed a different dimension of predictive validity for the BRS-22.

The BRS-22 showed a substantial positive correlation with the PSA at $r = 0.694$, indicating that individuals who scored higher on Buddhist religiosity, as measured by the BRS-22, also reported more prosocial attitudes and behaviours in everyday life. This could be due to the difference in situational contexts: self-reported measures like the PSA assess prosocial tendencies via subjective evaluations, while the Dictator Game focuses on a single, context-specific decision. Subjectivity in self-reports could make results from other subjective measures more comparable than with the experimental outcome (Hill & Maltby, 2009; Underwood & Teresi, 2002). While the BRS-22 may not predict prosocial behaviours in experimental settings, it shows promise in predicting self-reported prosocial tendencies that reflect the broader, more integrative aspects of Buddhist values.

In the broader literature, religiosity has been shown to have a positive association with prosocial behaviour, particularly among adolescents, as religious teachings often promote values of caring and helping others (K. K. Li & Chow, 2015). Studies further suggest that personal religiosity can predict prosocial actions, with evidence indicating that this link is more pronounced in societies with higher human development indices (R. J. Zhang et al., 2021). However, this relationship is complex. Although religiosity generally correlates with increased prosociality, the effect size is modest, and situational factors, such as the salience of religious beliefs, can influence real-life behaviours (Blogowska et al., 2013; Duhaime, 2015). Additionally, the nature of one's religiosity—whether intrinsic or extrinsic—can impact the degree of engagement in prosocial behaviours, with intrinsically motivated individuals often demonstrating more genuine compassion (K. K. Li & Chow, 2015).

These broader findings contextualise the observed relationship between the BRS-22 and PSA within this study. The BRS-22's focus on Buddhist-specific teachings likely resonates with intrinsic motivations aligned with Buddhist values, which could explain its correlation with self-reported prosocial tendencies. In summary, while the BRS-22 may not capture immediate prosocial decisions in experimental tasks, it effectively predicts broader prosocial attitudes consistent with the internalised principles of Buddhism, reflecting the complex interplay between religious belief systems and prosocial behaviours.

6.3.5 Concurrent Validity of BRS-22

BRS-22 and Life Satisfaction. The concurrent validity of the BRS-22 is supported by its strong positive correlation with life satisfaction, as measured by the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS). Specifically, the BRS-22 exhibits a correlation of $r = 0.683$ with the SWLS, indicating that higher levels of Buddhist religiosity, as assessed by the BRS-22, are associated with greater satisfaction with life. This finding aligns with a substantial body of research indicating that religiosity is frequently associated with psychological well-being across diverse populations and cultural contexts (Joshanloo, 2019; Loewenthal, 2013; Sholihin et al., 2022). For instance, comparative studies in Poland and Brazil have highlighted positive relationships between religiosity and life satisfaction among various Christian denominations, with intrinsic forms of religiosity—those integrated into one's personal values and daily life—showing particularly strong associations with life satisfaction (Porto et al., 2022; Tokarz & Łowicki, 2024). Furthermore, a study in Indonesia found that a single-level increase in self-claimed religiosity was associated with an 8.1% increase in the probability of life satisfaction among Muslims, underscoring the positive impact of religious commitment on well-being across diverse religious traditions (Fauzi, 2022).

The subscale analysis of the BRS-22 further supports these findings. The LTP dimension, which emphasises personal engagement with Buddhist teachings and their integration into daily life, has a significant correlation of $r = .676$ with the SWLS. This suggests that a deep, personal commitment to Buddhist principles and practices, similar to intrinsic religiosity in other faiths, is linked to higher life satisfaction (Thanissaro, 2017). The LTP dimension's focus on personal growth and religious insight resonates with existing literature on the relationship between religiosity and well-being, where intrinsic religiosity has been shown to provide individuals with a sense of purpose and resilience, thus enhancing life satisfaction (Sholihin et al., 2022).

The Embodiment factor of the BRS-22, which includes items related to compassion, self-compassion, and non-attachment, also correlates positively with life satisfaction ($r = .624$, $p < .001$). This finding aligns with Buddhist teachings that emphasize ethical conduct, emotional resilience, and inner peace as pathways to well-being (J. Kristeller & Rapgay, 2013). The role of compassion and mindfulness in promoting mental well-being is well-documented in both Buddhist literature and psychological research, suggesting that these qualities contribute to an overall sense of life satisfaction by fostering positive interpersonal relationships and reducing negative emotions (Joshanloo, 2019).

BRS-22 and Anxiety. The relationship between the BRS-22 and anxiety, as measured by the GAD-7 (Spitzer et al., 2006), offers an interesting lens into the concurrent validity of the BRS-22 in assessing Buddhist religiosity's potential association with mental health outcomes. The BRS-22 shows

a weak, nonsignificant negative correlation with the GAD-7 (r = -.048), suggesting that, on a general level, Buddhist religiosity, as captured by BRS-22, does not have a strong direct association with anxiety. However, the Embodiment subscale of the BRS-22 reveals a modest but significant negative correlation with GAD-7 scores (r = -.130, p < .01). This suggests that participants who report higher levels of embodied Buddhist practices, such as compassion and loving-kindness, experience slightly lower levels of anxiety. However, the modest size of this correlation indicates that while there is a relationship, it is not particularly strong.

This finding aligns with some aspects of the existing literature on religiosity and anxiety. Religiosity is often discussed as a potential protective factor against various anxiety disorders, including Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Panic Disorder, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (Khalaf et al., 2015). For instance, a meta-analysis involving participants from predominantly Arab cultural backgrounds found a consistent negative association between religiosity and anxiety, with correlation coefficients ranging from r = -.16 to r = -.43 (Abdel-Khalek et al., 2019). The association in those studies, however, often reflects the influence of intrinsic religiosity—an internalised commitment to religious beliefs and practices. Intrinsic religiosity has been linked with lower anxiety levels, as it typically enhances an individual's internal locus of control and fosters emotional resilience (Shreve-Neiger & Edelstein, 2004).

However, the literature also contains studies that report no significant relationship between religiosity and anxiety. Shiah et al. (2013) found that, after controlling for demographic factors, social support, and physical health, religiosity did not significantly correlate with anxiety or general mental health. This finding implies that while religiosity can provide social and psychological resources, it may not exert a direct influence on anxiety. In this context, the modest correlation between the Embodiment factor and the GAD-7 in the current study may reflect the influence of specific Buddhist practices, such as compassion and mindfulness, which are internal and self-directed rather than reliant on external validation or support. The absence of a significant overall correlation for the full BRS-22 scale with anxiety aligns with Shiah et al.'s (2013) findings, suggesting that while elements of Buddhist practice may support emotional resilience, they do not uniformly protect against anxiety.

The findings also highlight the role of cultural and doctrinal factors in the relationship between religiosity and anxiety. In Western and some Middle Eastern contexts, intrinsic religiosity—where religious beliefs are internalised and practised as ends in themselves—has been linked to reduced anxiety levels, possibly due to enhanced internal control and reduced existential uncertainty (Shreve-Neiger & Edelstein, 2004). In contrast, Buddhism emphasises acceptance, non-attachment, and mindfulness, fostering an approach that is less about controlling anxiety and more about

understanding and accepting it (Marchand, 2012). The BRS-22, particularly through its Embodiment factor, may reflect these values by emphasising traits such as compassion, which potentially reduce reactivity to anxiety-provoking stimuli rather than anxiety itself.

The significant relationship between the Embodiment factor and the GAD-7 in the current study might also suggest that embodied practices, such as compassion and loving-kindness, foster a sense of inner peace and self-acceptance that can indirectly contribute to lower anxiety levels. However, the broader nonsignificant relationship between the overall BRS-22 and anxiety suggests that Buddhist religiosity, as captured by this scale, does not directly mitigate anxiety in a substantial way. This aligns with findings from Shiah et al. (2013), which suggest that religiosity's influence on mental health is often indirect, working through intermediary factors such as social support or personal attitudes rather than directly reducing symptoms of anxiety.

Summary of Concurrent Validity. Based on the findings in this section, the BRS-22 demonstrates concurrent validity, particularly with life satisfaction, as it aligns well with existing literature on the positive relationship between religiosity and well-being. This connection underscores how Buddhist religiosity, as measured by the BRS-22, supports life satisfaction through intrinsic practices like personal growth and compassion, echoing the way other religious traditions link deeply internalised beliefs to enhanced life satisfaction. While the overall relationship between the BRS-22 and anxiety is weak, the significant association observed within the Embodiment factor suggests that specific Buddhist practices, such as cultivating compassion and self-compassion, may contribute to emotional resilience. These findings collectively affirm the BRS-22's concurrent validity, particularly in relation to life satisfaction, and provide nuanced insights into the relationship between Buddhist religiosity and mental health.

6.3.6 Incremental Validity of BRS-22

In the context of prosocial behaviour, the findings from both the Dictator Game (Ogawa & Ida, 2015) and the PSA (Caprara et al., 2005) highlight different dimensions of prosociality, and the BRS-22 demonstrated incremental validity for both, though to varying degrees. While the BRS-22 added significant explanatory power over NAS-7 (Sahdra et al., 2010) and RMS (Pargament, 1999a) in predicting Dictator Game outcomes, it did not add much over CBRS or DUREL. This suggests that the Dictator Game, as a controlled behavioural measure of altruism, maybe capturing elements of prosociality that overlap more with general religious practices (as measured by CBRS and DUREL) than with the Buddhist-specific dimensions of compassion and non-attachment emphasised by the BRS-22. The lower correlations observed between the Dictator Game and other measures might

reflect that the prosociality measured by this task is more context-dependent and less influenced by intrinsic religious attitudes like those assessed by the BRS-22.

However, when considering the PSA, which assesses habitual, self-reported prosocial tendencies, the BRS-22 contributed significantly above and beyond all alternative scales (CBRS, NAS-7, RMS, and DUREL). This indicates that the Buddhist values encapsulated in the BRS-22 align closely with the prosocial behaviours measured by the PSA. The incremental contribution of the BRS-22 to PSA scores suggests that Buddhist religiosity, as measured by the BRS-22, captures essential aspects of prosocial behaviour that are not fully accounted for by general or non-theistic religious measures like the CBRS and DUREL.

Regarding life satisfaction, the BRS-22 demonstrated significant incremental validity in predicting scores on the SWLS (Diener et al., 1985), above and beyond all the other scales tested. This finding highlights that the BRS-22, with its emphasis on integrating Buddhist principles like mindfulness, compassion, and the pursuit of enlightenment into daily life, contributes unique insights into how Buddhist religiosity supports personal well-being. The LTP dimension of the BRS-22 was particularly strong in this regard, reflecting how active engagement with Buddhist teachings provides individuals with a sense of purpose, meaning, and emotional resilience, which in turn enhances life satisfaction. While other scales like CBRS and DUREL measure general religious engagement, they lack the deep philosophical grounding in Buddhist doctrines like the Four Noble Truths and non-attachment, which the BRS-22 brings to light.

In terms of anxiety, as measured by the GAD-7, the BRS-22 showed a modest but significant incremental contribution over NAS-7 in predicting lower levels of anxiety. However, the BRS-22 did not add significantly beyond other measures such as CBRS or DUREL. This pattern may reflect the mixed findings in the broader literature regarding the relationship between religiosity and anxiety, where intrinsic religiosity is sometimes protective, but not always consistently linked to reduced anxiety. In this study, the Embodiment factor of the BRS-22, which includes items related to compassion and loving-kindness, demonstrated incremental validity in explaining anxiety outcomes. This suggests that the compassionate, embodied practices emphasised in Buddhist teachings may offer some resilience against anxiety, although the effect size remains modest. The fact that the BRS-22 adds incrementally over NAS-7, a scale focused on non-attachment, suggests that Buddhist religiosity involves more than just emotional detachment; it includes proactive, compassionate engagement with oneself and others (Purser, 2014; Sooksawat et al., 2013), which may help mitigate anxiety to some degree.

Overall, the incremental validity analyses indicate that the BRS-22 offers valuable insights above and beyond existing measures like CBRS, NAS-7, RMS, and DUREL. While the BRS-22's contributions to predicting prosocial behaviour in the Dictator Game were somewhat limited, it significantly enhanced the prediction of prosociality as measured by the PSA, as well as life satisfaction through the SWLS. The modest incremental validity for anxiety suggests that while Buddhist religiosity, as measured by the BRS-22, plays a role in emotional well-being, its impact on reducing anxiety is less pronounced. These results affirm that the BRS-22 captures unique aspects of Buddhist religiosity that contribute to prosociality and life satisfaction, particularly through its emphasis on compassion, mindfulness, and philosophical engagement with Buddhist teachings.

6.3.7 Using BRS-22 Across Buddhist Traditions

The initial test for configural invariance suggests that the general factor structure of the BRS-22 holds across Buddhist traditions, indicating that the basic conceptual model is compatible across these groups (Vandenberg & Lance, 2000; S. S. Wang et al., 2017). This implies that the scale items are interpreted in a similar way by participants from each tradition, aligning with the BRS-22's intent as a non-sectarian measure of Buddhist religiosity. However, the fit indices indicated some degree of model misfit (e.g., low CFI and elevated RMSEA), suggesting possible subtle differences in how the items relate to their underlying factors across traditions (Bialosiewicz et al., 2013; L. Hu & Bentler, 1999). This finding serves as a reminder of the importance of caution when interpreting configural invariance solely on SRMR fit indices, as the latent structure may not be entirely stable across Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana Buddhists.

Upon moving to metric invariance, the results indicate that factor loadings can be constrained across the three traditions without a substantial drop in model fit. This achievement of metric invariance means that the BRS-22 items have a consistent relationship with their respective latent factors across Buddhist groups. As a result, the interpretation of factor scores (the strength of the relationship between items and their factors) can be considered equivalent among Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana practitioners (Putnick & Bornstein, 2016). This allows for meaningful comparisons of the factors themselves across traditions, supporting the BRS-22's utility as a unified measure of Buddhist religiosity in assessing how factors like LTP and Embodiment are understood within these diverse Buddhist contexts.

When examining scalar invariance, which evaluates the equality of item intercepts across groups, the findings were more mixed. While the chi-square difference test indicated that strict scalar invariance might not hold fully, alternative fit indices suggested only minor changes. This partial scalar invariance suggests that while factor scores can be compared across groups, some

caution is warranted when interpreting the absolute levels of these scores (F. F. Chen, 2007). Specifically, the variation in item intercepts implies that individuals from different traditions may interpret the meaning or intensity of certain items differently, even when they share similar underlying religiosity levels. For instance, items related to specific aspects of Buddhist practice may resonate more strongly with one tradition over another due to differing doctrinal emphases (Zeng et al., 2016). As a result, comparisons of latent means across traditions should recognise potential differences in response tendencies.

Overall, the results suggest that the BRS-22 has demonstrated a level of measurement invariance that allows for meaningful cross-group comparisons, particularly at the factor level. Specifically, partial scalar invariance supports comparisons of the latent factor means—namely, the LTP and Embodiment factors—across the Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana Buddhist traditions. This indicates that differences in these factor-level mean scores between traditions can be interpreted with reasonable confidence. However, due to detected variations in item intercepts, caution is warranted when interpreting item-level responses, as they may not be entirely comparable across groups. Consequently, while factor-level comparisons are appropriate, interpreting the BRS-22 as a total score should be approached with caution, as the aggregation of item-level differences could affect the total score's comparability across traditions.

6.3.8 Using the BRS-22 Across Language Versions

In addition to examining the scale's invariance across Buddhist traditions, it was essential to evaluate the BRS-22's equivalence across its English, Traditional Chinese, and Simplified Chinese language versions. Establishing measurement invariance across languages ensures that the scale assesses the same latent construct of Buddhist religiosity rather than language- or culture-specific artefacts (Van de Vijver & Leung, 2000). In this study, the BRS-22 demonstrated configural, metric, and scalar invariance, as well as partial strict invariance across language groups, confirming that the factor structure, item loadings, and intercepts are statistically equivalent across the three versions. This indicates that the BRS-22 can be confidently used to compare responses across English- and Chinese-literate populations, as the conceptual interpretation of Buddhist religiosity remains consistent across linguistic contexts.

Although the model did not achieve full strict invariance ($\Delta CFI = -0.014$ exceeded the recommended threshold of -0.01), the deterioration in model fit was small, with RMSEA and SRMR changes well within acceptable limits. This result supports partial strict invariance, which is sufficient for cross-group comparisons of latent means and structural relationships (Byrne et al., 1989; Vandenberg & Lance, 2000). The minor non-invariance in residual variances likely reflects subtle

translation and interpretation differences, as well as contextual variation in the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of the respondents. Specifically, the two Chinese versions (Traditional and Simplified) were predominantly completed by participants from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Mainland China, where Mahayana Buddhism is the dominant tradition. Consequently, minor response differences between the English and Chinese samples may partly reflect underlying doctrinal and cultural emphases within the Mahayana tradition, rather than measurement artefacts per se. This finding provides strong support for the scale's cross-linguistic validity, confirming that it functions as a reliable and interpretable instrument in multilingual research settings.

6.4 Limitations

Despite the successful validation of the two-factor structure of the BRS-22 through CFA, several limitations should be noted to ensure transparency and to guide future research efforts. First, although the sample size of 493 participants was sufficient for conducting CFA, it was largely drawn from Asian Buddhist populations. This geographic focus may limit the generalizability of the results to non-Asian Buddhists, such as those practising in Western contexts, where cultural differences may influence religious expression. Future research should validate the BRS-22 with more diverse samples, including Western Buddhists and practitioners from different Buddhist traditions, such as Zen, Theravada, or Vajrayana, to ensure that the scale applies consistently across various cultural and regional contexts. Furthermore, the scale should be validated in clinical samples, especially if the BRS-22 is to be used in conjunction with Buddhist psychotherapeutic interventions. Understanding how Buddhist religiosity functions in clinical settings, particularly in intervention versus control studies, will further establish the utility of the scale.

The current study was also unable to assess test-retest reliability, as it was based on cross-sectional data. Establishing the stability of the BRS-22 over time is essential, particularly if the scale is to be used in clinical settings where Buddhist interventions are applied and tested in intervention versus control groups. Future studies should conduct longitudinal research to test the test-retest reliability of the scale and to determine whether the BRS-22 can reliably capture changes in Buddhist religiosity over time, especially in therapeutic or intervention-based environments.

Although the BRS-22 demonstrated predictive power for prosociality as measured by the PSA, its effect size was substantially smaller when predicting prosocial behaviour in the Dictator Game. This suggests that the scale's predictive validity may be context-dependent. While the BRS-22 was able to establish significant correlations with prosocial behaviour through self-reported measures such as the PSA, it showed weaker predictive power when tested in experimental settings

like the Dictator Game. Future research should further explore how Buddhist religiosity measured by the BRS-22 translates into behavioural outcomes in various experimental and real-world contexts.

An issue that emerged in the analysis was that BRS-LTP8 and BRS-LTP9 did not demonstrate sufficient loading onto the LTP factor. This suggests potential issues with how these items relate to the Learning, Thinking, and Practicing (LTP) construct. Despite their lower loadings, these items were retained in the scale because they represent important and fundamental beliefs in Buddhism. Removing them could result in a loss of critical aspects of Buddhist religiosity. However, more detailed investigations are needed to ascertain the reasons for their lower loadings and to explore whether modifications to the items or the factor structure could improve their performance without compromising the scale's content validity.

Another limitation is the reliance on self-report data, which, while common in social psychology research, is susceptible to biases such as social desirability and self-perception issues (Ananthram & Chan, 2016; Helfrich, 2016; Hill, 2013). Participants may over-report certain behaviours or under-report ethical challenges, especially given Buddhism's emphasis on ethical conduct. Although external validation was supported through predictive measures like the PSA, future studies could benefit from including behavioural measures or qualitative interviews to further validate the self-reported internalisation of Buddhist teachings.

Finally, the second-order model was tested and analysed, and the results indicated that the two factors could indeed be subsumed under a higher-order construct, supporting the use of the BRS-22 overall score in measuring Buddhist religiosity as a global dimension. The measurement invariance testing also supported the use of the overall score across different groups. However, future research should continue to explore how the second-order factor performs in more diverse samples and contexts to confirm its general applicability across demographic or cultural subgroups.

Overall, although the CFA results provide strong support for the factorial validity of the BRS-22, addressing these limitations in future research will enhance the scale's robustness and generalizability across diverse Buddhist populations and clinical contexts. It will also ensure that the BRS-22 remains a valid tool for measuring Buddhist religiosity in both Asian and non-Asian settings, as well as in therapeutic applications where Buddhism is integrated into psychotherapeutic interventions.

6.5 Conclusion

The current study has established the validity of the Buddhist Religiosity Scale (BRS-22) through a detailed CFA. The results confirmed the two-factor structure consisting of Learning, Thinking, and Practicing (LTP) and Embodiment, providing empirical support for the BRS-22 as an

effective measure of Buddhist religiosity. These two factors capture distinct but complementary aspects of Buddhist religious engagement: LTP reflects the cognitive and practical engagement with Buddhist teachings and meditation practices, while Embodiment measures the degree to which these teachings are internalised and expressed through ethical behaviour and mindfulness in daily life.

A significant finding in this study is the successful validation of a second-order model, indicating that the two factors can be integrated into a higher-order construct. This suggests that the BRS-22 can be used at both a detailed level—examining specific dimensions of Buddhist religiosity—and at a broader level, where it provides an overall measure of Buddhist religious engagement. Such flexibility enhances the scale's utility in diverse research contexts, allowing researchers to explore specific religious dimensions or to obtain a global understanding of Buddhist religiosity.

The BRS-22 exhibited robust criterion and predictive validity, particularly in its association with prosociality. The significant correlations with self-reported prosociality, as measured by the PSA, suggest that individuals who score higher on the BRS-22 are more likely to engage in behaviours aligned with Buddhist teachings, such as compassion and generosity. This finding holds considerable implications for the scale's application in both academic research and practical settings, where understanding the interplay between religiosity and prosocial behaviour is essential. Furthermore, the predictive capabilities of the BRS-22 indicate its potential use in intervention studies aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of Buddhist-based therapeutic programs and their influence on ethical and prosocial outcomes.

The results of the Measurement Invariance testing indicate that the BRS-22 is a reliable tool across the three major Buddhist traditions—Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana. This finding is significant as it confirms the scale's applicability across various sectarian contexts, allowing researchers to confidently compare Buddhist religiosity among diverse populations while ensuring the consistency of the scale.

However, a few limitations were observed. First, items BRS-LTP8 and BRS-LTP9 demonstrated lower factor loadings on the LTP construct, suggesting some ambiguity in how respondents interpreted these items. Despite this, these items were retained due to their relevance in covering fundamental Buddhist beliefs. Further investigation is needed to identify whether modifications to item wording or factor placement could enhance their alignment with the LTP factor. Second, due to the cross-sectional nature of this study, test-retest reliability could not be assessed, limiting conclusions about the stability of the scale over time. Establishing test-retest reliability will be crucial, especially if the BRS-22 is to be used in clinical settings to track changes in religiosity in response to therapeutic interventions.

The findings from the current study carry several important implications. The successful validation of the BRS-22 endorses its use as a comprehensive tool for assessing Buddhist religiosity in both research and practical applications. Its robust construct validity, along with its capability to measure religiosity at both the factor and global levels, positions it well for exploring the influence of Buddhist teachings on various psychological outcomes, including mental health, ethical behaviour, and personal well-being. Additionally, the demonstrated predictive validity of the BRS-22 indicates its potential utility in intervention studies to evaluate how variations in Buddhist religiosity may affect prosocial behaviour and psychological growth.

Taken together, the BRS-22 has proven to be a reliable measure of Buddhist religiosity, demonstrating strong factorial and predictive validity. With additional research aimed at refining the lower-performing items and establishing test-retest reliability, this scale holds significant potential for application across various contexts, from cultural studies to clinical interventions, where an understanding of the impact of Buddhist teachings is crucial.

Chapter 7: General Discussions and Conclusions

This chapter synthesises the findings and contributions of the research, situating the Buddhist Religiosity Scale (BRS-22) within the broader landscape of the psychology of religion. The development of the BRS-22 addressed a critical and long-standing gap: the absence of culturally sensitive tools for measuring religiosity within Buddhist contexts. While existing religiosity measures have provided valuable insights into monotheistic traditions, their conceptual foundations often fail to adequately capture the distinctive doctrinal, meditative, and ethical dimensions that are integral to Buddhism. These measures typically centre on constructs such as belief in a deity, institutional participation, and private devotional practices, which are not universally applicable to non-theistic traditions like Buddhism (Cho, 2012).

To address these limitations, this dissertation details the development and validation of the BRS-22, a culturally sensitive and psychometrically robust instrument designed to authentically reflect Buddhist religiosity. Through an iterative process that emphasised emic-etic integration (Ford et al., 2015), the scale incorporates culturally specific insights from Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana traditions while maintaining applicability across diverse cultural contexts. The BRS-22 captures Buddhist religiosity through two central dimensions: Learning, Thinking, Practicing (LTP) and Embodiment. These dimensions reflect the intellectual engagement with Buddhist teachings and the lived application of those teachings through mindfulness, ethical conduct, and compassion. By aligning with the shared core of Buddhist religiosity—doctrinal learning, reflective practice, and ethical embodiment—the BRS-22 offers a culturally authentic and inclusive framework for understanding Buddhist religiosity.

In line with the emic orientation adopted throughout this study, the development of the BRS-22 privileges *lived meanings and doctrinal coherence* rather than the adaptation of existing Western religiosity scales. This approach ensures that the items and dimensions emerged inductively from qualitative insights and Buddhist doctrinal synthesis rather than being retrofitted to previously developed measures. Such an orientation maintains methodological authenticity and doctrinal integrity, allowing the scale to capture religiosity as understood and experienced within Buddhist traditions themselves.

This chapter begins with a general discussion that integrates the study's findings with existing literature and highlights the unique contributions of the BRS-22. It emphasises how the scale addresses methodological gaps in measuring religiosity in non-theistic traditions and demonstrates the transformative potential of culturally grounded research in advancing the psychology of religion. The chapter then explores the theoretical contributions of the BRS-22, including its role in redefining

religiosity within Buddhist contexts and its applicability for cross-tradition research. Practical implications are discussed, particularly in the areas of Buddhist teaching, counselling, and mental health. By offering a structured and culturally sensitive measure of religiosity, the scale enables educators, practitioners, and researchers to deepen their understanding of Buddhist religiosity and its psychological and social dimensions.

Finally, the chapter reflects on the research's limitations and outlines directions for future study. These include expanding the BRS-22's linguistic and cultural validation, establishing its test-retest reliability, and exploring its application in longitudinal studies to track changes in religiosity over time. Such efforts will ensure that the scale remains a dynamic and relevant tool for capturing the complexities of Buddhist religiosity in both academic and applied settings.

By situating the BRS-22 within the broader context of religiosity measurement, this chapter highlights its significance as both a methodological innovation and a practical resource. This dissertation's contributions extend beyond academic inquiry, promoting cultural inclusivity and fostering a deeper understanding of Buddhist traditions and their relevance to contemporary challenges. The BRS-22 bridges doctrinal, cultural, and methodological divides, advancing the psychology of religion in more inclusive and culturally sensitive directions.

7.1 General Discussion

The development of the BRS-22 addresses a long-standing challenge in the psychology of religion: the need for a culturally sensitive and psychometrically robust tool to measure religiosity within Buddhist contexts (Stanford & Jong, 2019). Existing measures of religiosity were mostly and historically developed with a focus on monotheistic traditions. These scales often emphasise constructs such as belief in a deity, institutional worship, and prayer, which align poorly with the non-theistic and practice-oriented nature of Buddhism (Cho, 2012).

Through the scoping review conducted in Chapter 2, the limitations of these Western-oriented instruments became evident. Buddhist religiosity encompasses unique doctrinal, meditative, and ethical dimensions that are not adequately captured by measures developed for other traditions. Core constructs such as impermanence, mindfulness, ethical embodiment, and nonattachment often go unaddressed, leaving researchers with incomplete tools for assessing religiosity in Buddhist populations. Furthermore, many existing scales fail to account for cross-cultural differences in religious practices, posing significant challenges to their applicability in diverse Buddhist contexts.

To address these gaps, the current research adopted an emic-etic approach, combining culturally specific insights with cross-cultural generalizability to develop the BRS-22. The emic phase

involved in-depth qualitative exploration, drawing on Buddhist doctrines, teachings, and practices across Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana traditions. This culturally informed foundation ensured the scale's alignment with core Buddhist principles while avoiding the imposition of external frameworks. The subsequent etic validation phase demonstrated the scale's applicability across traditions, establishing its utility for cross-tradition research.

This general discussion synthesises the process and findings of this study, highlighting the theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions of the BRS-22. It integrates the key stages of scale development—identifying the need for a Buddhist Religiosity Scale, designing the framework through emic insights, and subjecting the scale to rigorous psychometric testing. By reflecting on these contributions, this section situates the BRS-22 within the broader literature on religiosity measurement and underscores its potential to advance the psychology of religion in culturally inclusive ways.

7.1.1 Identifying the Need for a Buddhist Religiosity Scale

The scoping review conducted in this research provided critical evidence for the limitations of existing religiosity measures. Prominent instruments such as the CRS (Huber & Huber, 2012) and the DSES (Underwood & Teresi, 2002) focus on dimensions that are central to monotheistic traditions, such as divine belief, institutional affiliation, and private prayer. While these dimensions are important for understanding religiosity in Abrahamic traditions, they fail to capture the unique doctrinal, philosophical, and behavioural aspects of Buddhism. In particular, constructs like mindfulness, interconnectedness, ethical conduct, and the transformative process of reducing the three poisons (greed, hatred, and ignorance) are central to Buddhist religiosity, but such doctrinal differences with Abrahamic religions remain unaddressed by existing tools (Hill, 2013; Paloutzian & Park, 2005).

The review also highlighted significant challenges associated with measurement invariance when applying existing religiosity scales in non-Western contexts. Many of these instruments assume uniformity in the expression of religiosity, disregarding the cultural and doctrinal diversity inherent in traditions such as Buddhism (Cho, 2012; Triandis & Marin, 1983). This lack of cultural sensitivity not only undermines the validity of findings but also perpetuates Western-centric paradigms in the study of religions that originate in Asia. The issue of Western-centrism was further substantiated in a recent bibliometric analysis of 1,802 articles published across three major English-language religiosity and spirituality journals through March 2022 (Davis et al., 2024). The analysis revealed that 61.63% of studies were conducted in North America and 17.56% in Europe, reflecting the pronounced

geographical bias and the historical dominance of Western perspectives in the study of religiosity and spirituality.

Recognising these gaps, the research set out to develop a scale that integrates emic specificity with etic applicability. The BRS-22 was designed to address the doctrinal, reflective, and ethical dimensions of Buddhism, ensuring its relevance for Buddhist populations while enabling meaningful comparisons across traditions and cultures.

7.1.2 Emic Approach in the Development of the BRS-22

The emic approach was central to the development of the BRS, the initial scale from which BRS-22 was derived, ensuring that the scale authentically reflects the lived experiences and doctrinal principles of Buddhist practitioners. Qualitative interviews with experts, practitioners, and scholars across Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana traditions provided the foundation for identifying the core dimensions of Buddhist religiosity. This phase emphasised the importance of grounding the scale in culturally specific constructs, such as impermanence, nonattachment, and the Eightfold Path, which distinguish Buddhist religiosity from Western paradigms (J. Kristeller & Rapgay, 2013; Yamashina, 2024).

Through the qualitative phase of this study, several dimensions of Buddhist religiosity were identified, reflecting the rich and multi-faceted nature of Buddhist practice and belief. These dimensions include the Practice Level, which highlights behavioural and belief-oriented aspects such as hearing, contemplating, and practising the Dharma, as well as adherence to ethical precepts and integration of the Eightfold Path. The Conceptual Level emerged as a critical dimension, emphasising the understanding of Buddhist doctrines and the systematic reflection on suffering and the cessation of dukkha. The Resultant Level focuses on the transformative outcomes of practice, such as the reduction of emotional turmoil and the attainment of doctrinal knowledge and adherence. At the highest tier, the Embodiment Level represents the lived qualities of mindfulness, compassion, and ethical conduct, reflecting the internalisation of Buddhist teachings. Together, these dimensions point to the overarching goal of Buddhist religiosity: the cessation of suffering and the realisation of enlightenment. These emic findings formed the foundation for developing a culturally grounded framework, ensuring that the BRS-22 authentically reflects the lived realities and doctrinal principles of Buddhist practitioners.

This culturally grounded approach addresses critiques of pseudo-etic instruments, which often impose external frameworks on non-Western traditions without adequately representing their unique features (Boateng et al., 2018; Morgado et al., 2017). By anchoring the BRS-22 in the emic realities of Buddhist religiosity, this research ensures its cultural authenticity and relevance.

7.1.3 Rigorous Testing of the BRS-22

Following its development, the BRS-22 was subjected to extensive psychometric testing to establish its reliability, validity, and cross-cultural applicability. The robustness of these analyses is supported by two large samples (N = 495 and N = 493) drawn from Mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, and Singapore—regions collectively representing more than half of the global Buddhist population (Pew Research Center, 2012). These samples provide a statistically and culturally sound foundation for testing the scale's dimensionality and cross-tradition validity. These processes, detailed in Chapters 5 and 6, involved exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, assessments of internal consistency, and evaluations of convergent and discriminant validity. The results confirmed the scale's two-factor structure—Learning, Thinking, Practicing (LTP) and Embodiment—while supporting the presence of a second-order factor representing overall Buddhist religiosity. These findings highlight the scale's robustness in capturing the shared dimensions of Buddhist religiosity across traditions.

Factor Structure and Dimensionality. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) revealed two primary dimensions of Buddhist religiosity: Learning, Thinking, Practicing (LTP) as the first, and Embodiment as the second. The LTP dimension captures the intellectual and reflective engagement with Buddhist teachings, encompassing activities such as studying doctrinal principles, contemplating their significance, and integrating them into daily life. These practices align closely with traditional Buddhist concepts of hearing the Dharma (*saddhammassavana*), reflecting on the Dharma (*yonisomanasikara*), and practising the Dharma (*dhammanudhammappaṭipatti*) through which Buddhist wisdom should be acquired (J. Kristeller & Rapgay, 2013; Le, 2023; Paloutzian & Park, 2005; Yinshun, 2021b). The Embodiment dimension represents the practical internalisation of Buddhist values, this aligns with Buddhism's emphasis on mindfulness, compassion, and ethical conduct while contributing to the reduction of the three poisons—greed, hatred, and ignorance (J. L. Cassaniti, 2014; Sahdra & Shaver, 2013).

The two-factor solution, while not fully mirroring the multidimensional framework derived from the emic phase, effectively captures the core essence of what is expected of Buddhists following the path toward liberation. The Embodiment factor corresponds closely to the "Embodiment Level" identified in the emic findings, encapsulating the internalisation of Buddhist teachings and the development of qualities such as mindfulness, compassion, and ethical conduct. The LTP factor, on the other hand, integrates aspects from several dimensions identified in the emic phase, including those related to conceptual understanding, behavioural engagement, and resultant practices. While the emic phase offered a detailed and nuanced conceptualisation of Buddhist religiosity, the distinctions between factors may have been too intricate for novice or lay Buddhists,

whose understanding of religiosity tends to be more integrated and holistic. This disparity likely contributed to the consolidation of these elements into a simpler, two-factor structure during the exploratory factor analysis, enhancing the scale's usability and interpretability across diverse respondent groups.

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using separate samples later validated the scale's structure, demonstrating excellent fit indices across samples (RMSEA ≤ 0.06, CFI ≥ 0.95, TLI ≥ 0.95). Furthermore, a second-order CFA confirmed that the two dimensions could be subsumed under a higher-order construct of Buddhist religiosity. This higher-order factor reflects the integrated nature of Buddhist religiosity, where the two factors of LTP and Embodiment are interconnected and mutually reinforcing (DeVellis, 2017; Paloutzian, 2017).

Internal Consistency. The internal consistency of the BRS-22 was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and McDonald's omega, both of which exceeded the recommended thresholds for reliability across subscales ($\alpha > .85$, $\omega > .87$). The composite reliability (CR) scores for the LTP and Embodiment subdimensions also met or exceeded the standard of .70, confirming the internal coherence of the scale's items. These findings demonstrate the robustness of the BRS-22 in reliably measuring the dimensions of Buddhist religiosity, ensuring its suitability for research and applied contexts (Boateng et al., 2018; Clark & Watson, 2019).

Convergent and Discriminant Validity. Convergent validity was evaluated by comparing the BRS-22 with related constructs in existing instruments, such as the Nonattachment Scale (NAS-7) and measures of mindfulness and spiritual well-being. Strong correlations between the BRS-22 and these constructs ($r > .70$, $p < .001$) supported the theoretical alignment of the scale with established dimensions of Buddhist religiosity (Hall et al., 2008; Kato, 2016). For instance, the Embodiment dimension was closely linked to mindfulness and ethical behaviour, reflecting its focus on the practical application of Buddhist values.

Discriminant validity was established by examining weak correlations between the BRS-22 and unrelated constructs, such as general personality traits or measures of secular well-being not specific to Buddhist religiosity. These findings confirm the scale's ability to distinguish between Buddhist religiosity and broader psychological or spiritual constructs, ensuring its specificity and utility in focused research contexts (Clark & Watson, 2019).

Measurement Invariance Across Traditions and Language Versions. One of this study's most significant findings was the demonstration of measurement invariance for the BRS-22 across both Buddhist traditions and language versions. Across the Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana traditions, configural invariance confirmed that the scale measures the same underlying constructs;

metric invariance indicated that respondents from different traditions interpret the scale items consistently, and scalar invariance validated that group-level comparisons of scores are meaningful (DeVellis, 2017; Morgado et al., 2017). This confirms the BRS-22's non-sectarian validity, showing that it captures the common core of Buddhist religiosity across diverse doctrinal and cultural contexts.

In addition, measurement invariance testing across the English, Traditional Chinese, and Simplified Chinese versions of the BRS-22 demonstrated configural, metric, and scalar invariance, with partial strict invariance. These findings indicate that the BRS-22 performs equivalently across linguistic contexts, enabling valid comparison of factor structures and latent means across multilingual Buddhist populations. The minor deviations observed at the strict level likely reflect contextual differences in linguistic expression and cultural background, particularly given that Chinese-language respondents were primarily from regions where Mahayana and Chinese Buddhism predominate (Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Mainland China). These nuances are consistent with sociocultural rather than psychometric sources of variation, reflecting the robustness of the underlying construct.

Taken together, these results establish that the BRS-22 functions as a non-sectarian and cross-linguistically stable measure of Buddhist religiosity, providing a reliable foundation for comparative and cross-cultural research in Buddhist psychology. This broad applicability enhances the scale's scientific utility and supports its use in future studies seeking to explore both the universal and culturally nuanced aspects of Buddhist religiosity.

Construct Validity. Construct validity was thoroughly evaluated, as detailed in Chapter 5, to ensure that the BRS-22 accurately measures the theoretical dimensions of Buddhist religiosity. The two subdimensions, LTP and Embodiment, were rigorously linked to doctrinal principles and practices central to Buddhism. For example, the LTP dimension reflects traditional stages of engaging with the Dharma, such as studying, reflecting, and applying its teachings. Similarly, the Embodiment dimension emphasises mindfulness, compassion, and ethical conduct, which are core markers of progress on the Buddhist path (J. Kristeller & Rapgay, 2013; Le, 2023; Paloutzian & Park, 2005; Yinshun, 2021b).

Although the scale effectively captures these broad dimensions, the direct linkage of BRS-22 subdimensions to specific constructs, such as impermanence, was not explicitly tested in this study. Future research could expand on this by exploring how the scale's subdimensions correlate with these constructs, further deepening its theoretical and empirical foundations.

7.1.4 Challenges and Areas for Refinement

While the BRS-22 demonstrates strong psychometric properties and cross-tradition applicability, several challenges and areas for refinement emerged during its development and validation. These considerations highlight the dynamic and iterative nature of scale development and the complexities inherent in capturing a construct as multifaceted as Buddhist religiosity.

Limitations in Dimensional Coverage. While the BRS-22 captures core dimensions of Buddhist religiosity—LTP and Embodiment—certain nuances of Buddhist practice may be underrepresented. For instance, although the scale reflects participants' level of agreement toward shared doctrinal principles, The BRS-22 does not explicitly incorporate behavioural elements in the way many religiosity scales based on the Western 3Bs framework (Belief, Behaviour, and Belonging) often do, where behavioural markers—such as ritual attendance or organisational participation—are treated as key indicators of religiosity. This absence is not due to the statistical elimination of behavioural items during factor analysis but rather reflects the findings from the qualitative phase (Chapter 4), where scholars and Buddhist masters did not identify behavioural engagement as a core marker of religiosity. Instead, they emphasised internal transformation, ethical embodiment, and alignment with the Dharma as more authentic expressions of religious commitment. In this context, behaviour was seen not as a separate dimension but as an emergent property of internalised understanding and practice. This contrasts with Western frameworks that often treat belief, behaviour, and belonging as discrete and equally weighted components of religiosity.

However, a study computed the behaviours of Buddhist "devoutness" using 13 items focused entirely on behavioural practices, such as chanting mantras, meditation, attending sangha meetings, reading scriptures, or participating in retreats, and found a good correlation between these behaviours and general health outcomes (Wiist et al., 2012). These findings suggest that there may be merit in exploring behavioural measures as an integral aspect of Buddhist religiosity, complementing the current dimensions of BRS-22.

For more orthodox Buddhist scholars and practitioners, the pure non-sectarian focus of the BRS-22 may also present challenges. They might argue that the scale does not adequately reflect certain tradition-specific practices, particularly those with strong behavioural orientations, which are central to specific sectarian expressions of Buddhist religiosity. For example, unique practices such as Vajrayana's esoteric rituals like deity yoga (Gross, 1987), localised practices like deathbed chanting (临终助念) prevalent among Pure Land followers (Sheng Yen, 2007), or the tradition of short-term monastic ordination for Theravada male Buddhists in Southeast Asia (Dhammananda, 2002), are not explicitly represented in the BRS-22. The variability in the salience and emphasis of these practices across traditions suggests that future research could benefit from developing tradition-specific or

sectarian scales. These could complement the BRS-22, which may serve as a foundational module for measuring the shared core of Buddhist religiosity, while additional modules could capture tradition-specific behaviours and practices. Despite these limitations, the BRS-22 effectively captures the universal principles of Buddhism, offering a robust framework that transcends sectarian divides while maintaining fidelity to the shared doctrinal and ethical core of the Dharma.

Cultural and Linguistic Considerations. One of the primary limitations of this study lies in the language diversity of the surveys. The quantitative phase relied on English and Chinese versions of the BRS-22, limiting its applicability to populations fluent in these languages. This linguistic constraint excluded significant Buddhist populations in countries such as Japan, Korea, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka, where the scale needs to be translated into their local languages. This calls for a rigorous approach to translation, following established guidelines for cross-cultural validation, such as back-translation, cognitive interviews, and pilot testing, to ensure that the adapted versions retain their psychometric integrity and cultural relevance (Ford et al., 2015; Hall et al., 2008). Such efforts will enhance the inclusivity and global applicability of the scale, testing its universality as a non-sectarian scale.

Test-Retest Reliability. Another area for improvement is the need to gather more evidence of test-retest reliability data for the BRS-22. Test-retest reliability assesses the stability of a scale's measurements over time, ensuring the scale captures the intended construct (Hunsley & Mash, 2008). For example, longitudinal studies can be used to examine the effects of Buddhist meditation retreats such as Vipassana (内观禅修) in Theravada, the 7-day chanting of Amitabha's name (佛七) under the Pure Land school, or the traditional Chan retreat (禅七) that usually takes place in multiple of 7-day cycles under the Chan school. These would require and benefit from a reliable instrument to measure changes in Buddhist religiosity.

Future studies should prioritise evaluating the BRS-22's temporal stability by administering the scale at multiple time points. This will confirm its reliability in tracking both stability and change, enabling it to serve as a dynamic tool for measuring the impact of Buddhist practices and interventions on psychological well-being (Boateng et al., 2018).

Emphasising the Core of Buddhism. A key strength of the BRS-22 is its grounding in the doctrinal and philosophical core of Buddhism, transcending sectarian differences and cultural variations that have emerged as Buddhism spread across regions. This focus ensures that the scale remains faithful to the universal principles of Buddhism—such as mindfulness, ethical conduct, and the reduction of the three poisons (greed, hatred, and ignorance)—while also avoiding sectarian or culturally specific emphases that may stray from foundational Dharma teachings. By doing so, the

scale enhances its applicability across diverse Buddhist populations and allows for meaningful comparisons across contexts

This focus on the Core of Buddhism addresses one of the main drawbacks of many existing Buddhist religiosity measures that incorporate sectarian or culturally specific practices. For instance, the Burmese Buddhist Religiosity Scale (Stanford & Jong, 2019) conflates folk beliefs or regional customs with Buddhist religiosity, or the studies by Bao (2013) and Dang (2015) that incorporated items unique to the Pure Land School, leading to a fragmented understanding of what Buddhism fundamentally seeks to achieve. By prioritising the core teachings of Buddhism, the BRS-22 establishes itself as a non-sectarian instrument that reflects the shared essence of Buddhist religiosity across traditions.

Nevertheless, this universal focus may be perceived as a limitation in settings where local customs or folk practices are intertwined with Buddhist identity. While these practices hold cultural and historical significance, they often represent adaptations rather than the doctrinal core of Buddhism (Deegalle, 2018; Keown, 2013; McMahan, 2008). The BRS-22 intentionally excludes such cultural additions to maintain its focus on the Dharma's universal principles and doctrinal clarity. Importantly, this approach not only upholds conceptual alignment with foundational Buddhist teachings, but also enhances the scale's practical utility by ensuring its relevance across the broadest possible spectrum of Buddhist practitioners, regardless of tradition or regional context. By prioritising universality, the BRS-22 offers a standardised framework suitable for comparative research across Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana traditions.

Future research could build upon the current foundation by engaging Buddhist scholars and practitioners in ongoing feedback and validation efforts. Rather than revisiting the scale's development from scratch, this would allow for nuanced refinements and context-specific adaptations, ensuring the BRS-22 remains relevant and sensitive to emerging scholarly and practitioner insights while maintaining its doctrinal and psychometric integrity.

Finally, it is worth reiterating that the two-factor framework derived from this study does not imply a linear or hierarchical progression. Consistent with the Buddhist doctrine of dependent origination, the dimensions of Learning-Thinking-Practising (LTP) and Embodiment arise interdependently rather than sequentially. When the conditions for Buddhist religiosity manifest, these dimensions co-arise as mutually supporting expressions of the Dharma, reflecting the non-dual and process-oriented nature of spiritual development in Buddhism.

7.1.5 Integrating Emic and Etic Perspectives

The development of the BRS-22 reflects a deliberate integration of emic and etic approaches, ensuring the scale's cultural authenticity and cross-traditional applicability. Earlier chapters detailed how qualitative insights from Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana traditions grounded the scale in lived Buddhist perspectives (emic), while psychometric testing across these groups established its broader measurement validity (etic). By balancing doctrinal depth with psychometric rigour, the BRS-22 emerges as a non-sectarian instrument capable of capturing shared elements of Buddhist religiosity across diverse contexts. This integration strengthens its relevance for both culturally sensitive research and comparative cross-cultural inquiries.

Addressing Issues of Contamination in Religiosity / Spirituality Scales. The BRS-22 was meticulously designed to measure Buddhist religiosity by grounding its constructs firmly within the doctrinal and practice-oriented framework of Buddhism. This approach directly addresses critiques such as those raised by Koenig and Carey (2024), who warn against the conflation of psychological constructs with religious measures, a conflation that can lead to what they term "contaminated scales." According to Koenig and Carey (2024), many existing religiosity and spirituality scales inadvertently predict outcomes like psychological well-being, resulting in tautological findings and undermining the validity of the measures. The BRS-22, however, sets itself apart through its methodological rigour and commitment to doctrinal authenticity, ensuring that all items are clearly derived from and aligned with core Buddhist principles.

Unlike the generic religiosity measures critiqued by Koenig and Carey (2024), the BRS-22 operationalises constructs like mindfulness and self-compassion as essential components of Buddhist practice rather than psychological states. For example, mindfulness (*Sati*) in the BRS-22 is explicitly aligned with "Right Mindfulness" (*Samma Sati*) from the Noble Eightfold Path, emphasising its role as a core Buddhist practice aimed at cultivating insight into impermanence and the cessation of suffering. Similarly, self-compassion, while prominent in contemporary psychological research, is tied to the Buddhist concept of compassion (*Karuṇa*) and the ethical commitment to reducing suffering for oneself and others. This doctrinal grounding ensures that these constructs are measured as religious practices rather than secular adaptations, avoiding the conflation of religiosity with general well-being outcomes.

The BRS-22 further avoids the methodological pitfalls identified by Koenig and Carey (2024) through its explicit framing of constructs, cultural and doctrinal sensitivity, and clear differentiation between cause and effect. Mindfulness, self-compassion, and ethical embodiment are framed within the BRS-22 not as psychological outcomes but as expressions of religious engagement grounded in Buddhist doctrine. Additionally, the scale's development incorporated insights from Theravada,

Mahayana, and Vajrayana traditions, ensuring that its constructs authentically reflect the lived religious practices of diverse Buddhist communities. Furthermore, items in the BRS-22 are carefully designed to measure religious engagement rather than psychological status. For instance, the item *I consistently develop a focused and tranquil mind through meditation* evaluates a practitioner's alignment with Buddhist meditative practices, not the psychological outcome of peace of mind. This design choice mitigates the risk of tautological relationships when examining correlations between religiosity and well-being.

Future Directions in Emic-Etic Integration. Looking ahead, the integration of emic and etic perspectives in the BRS-22 could be further refined through iterative research and adaptation. For instance, engaging with underrepresented Buddhist populations, such as those in Southeast Asia, Korea, and Japan, could reveal additional dimensions of religiosity that align with the Dharma's core principles. At the same time, ongoing psychometric evaluation and cross-cultural validation will ensure that the scale maintains its universality while remaining responsive to emerging insights.

7.2 Theoretical Contributions

The development and validation of the BRS-22 represent a pivotal advancement in the psychology of religion, addressing critical theoretical gaps in how religiosity is conceptualised and measured, particularly within non-theistic traditions like Buddhism. While existing measures have made significant contributions to understanding religiosity in monotheistic contexts, their applicability to Buddhist religiosity has been limited due to their emphasis on constructs such as divine belief and institutional participation. The BRS-22 redefines religiosity for Buddhist contexts by shifting the focus toward doctrinal understanding, reflective practice, and ethical embodiment, encapsulating the unique dimensions of this tradition.

This section highlights the BRS-22's theoretical contributions in three key areas: redefining religiosity in Buddhist contexts, providing a framework for cross-tradition research, and expanding the broader theoretical understanding of religiosity. By centring its framework on Buddhist principles and practices, the BRS-22 not only advances the scholarly understanding of Buddhist religiosity but also challenges prevailing paradigms in the psychology of religion, fostering a more inclusive and nuanced understanding of religiosity across traditions.

7.2.1 Redefining Religiosity in Buddhist Contexts

The development of the BRS-22 marks a significant departure from traditional approaches to measuring religiosity, particularly in Buddhist contexts. Historically, instruments such as the Religion Orientation Scale (ROS, Kirkpatrick & Hood, 1990), Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS, Huber & Huber, 2012) and the Daily Spiritual Experience Scale (DSES, Underwood & Teresi, 2002) have

provided valuable tools for studying religiosity in monotheistic traditions (Hill, 2013). These scales emphasise constructs like belief in a deity, institutional worship, and private prayer, which align with the theological and devotional frameworks of Abrahamic religions. However, these constructs inadequately represent nontheistic traditions like Buddhism, where religiosity is not predicated on divine belief but rather on doctrinal understanding, reflective practice, and ethical conduct (Hill et al., 2001; Oman, 2013; Pace, 2012). This raises an important question: how should religiosity be defined in the context of Buddhism?

In the study of religiosity, definitions have evolved significantly, reflecting diverse cultural, philosophical, and methodological considerations. When examining various ways religiosity and spirituality are defined, Oman (2013) highlighted the limitations and inherent biases in many contemporary definitions of religiosity, particularly their tendency to prioritise monotheistic and Western paradigms. He advocated for functional and culturally sensitive definitions that account for the full spectrum of religious traditions, including nontheistic ones like Buddhism. Oman emphasised the need for multidimensional definitions that address cognitive, affective, and behavioural dimensions while remaining dynamic and adaptable to various cultural contexts. Such an inclusive perspective is particularly essential for capturing the unique features of Buddhist religiosity, which emphasises doctrinal understanding, reflective practice, and ethical conduct over belief in a deity or institutional affiliation.

Aligned with Oman's (2013) emphasis on multidimensional and culturally sensitive definitions, the BRS-22 redefines religiosity by centring it on the core principles of Buddhism, free from the constraints of monotheistic assumptions. The proposed definition of Buddhist religiosity in the current thesis—*"*the degree of adherence to and progress along the prescribed path that leads to the cessation of suffering and the realisation of enlightenment*"*—captures the functional and process-oriented nature of Buddhist practice. This definition integrates both the process (adherence and progress) and the ultimate goal (cessation of suffering and realisation of enlightenment), providing a culturally authentic framework for understanding Buddhist religiosity.

The BRS-22 aligns with Oman's (2013) framework for multidimensional definitions through its two key dimensions: Learning, Thinking, Practising (LTP) and Embodiment. The LTP dimension reflects the systematic engagement with Buddhist teachings, encompassing doctrinal study, reflective thinking, and practical application, addressing the cognitive and behavioural components highlighted by Oman. The Embodiment dimension, in contrast, captures the lived internalisation of Buddhist principles through mindfulness, compassion, and ethical behaviour, reflecting the affective and ethical dimensions central to Buddhist religiosity. Such an approach to defining Buddhist

religiosity also resonates with William James's classic definition of religion, which he described as "the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine" (James, 1917/2014). James's definition reflects the experiential, actionable, and interpretative aspects of religiosity, emphasising its affective, behavioural, and cognitive dimensions.

In this way, the BRS-22's LTP and Embodiment dimensions not only align with Oman's view of religiosity as dynamic and transformative but reflect the affective, behavioural, and cognitive nature of religiosity proposed by James (1917/2014), these two dimensions also present a holistic framework for understanding how Buddhist religiosity is expressed in practice and lived experience.

Furthermore, the scale's second-order factor structure supports this reconceptualisation, integrating these dimensions into a cohesive model of Buddhist religiosity. By shifting the focus from belief-centric models to a multidimensional construct that includes intellectual, reflective, and ethical components, the BRS-22 challenges the dominance of Western paradigms in the psychology of religion (Hill, 2013; Oman, 2013). This approach echoes Oman's (2013) critique of Western, belief-centric definitions, emphasising that religiosity in nontheistic traditions, to which Buddhism belongs, should be understood in terms of transformative practices and lived experiences rather than theological constructs.

The BRS-22's redefinition of religiosity reflects the centrality of practice and lived experience in Buddhist traditions. Unlike many existing measures that prioritise internal beliefs or institutional affiliations (Hill, 2013; Oman, 2013), the BRS-22 foregrounds the transformational processes inherent in Buddhist practice, such as reducing the three poisons (greed, hatred, and ignorance) and cultivating mindfulness and ethical embodiment. This culturally embedded, functional perspective aligns with core Buddhist teachings while addressing the limitations of monotheistic-centric frameworks, offering a more nuanced and inclusive understanding of religiosity in Buddhist contexts.

7.2.2 A Framework for Cross-Tradition Research

The demonstration of measurement invariance across these traditions underscores the BRS-22's utility for cross-tradition research. Configural, metric, and scalar invariance testing confirmed that the scale consistently measures the same constructs and allows for meaningful comparisons of Buddhist religiosity between groups (S. T. H. Lee, 2018; S. S. Wang et al., 2017). For instance, while Theravada practitioners may focus primarily on meditative practices, Mahayana adherents often emphasise altruistic compassion to a greater extent, and Vajrayana followers may incorporate esoteric rituals into their practices. Despite these differences, the BRS-22 effectively captures the shared elements that unite these traditions, including mindfulness, ethical conduct, and the

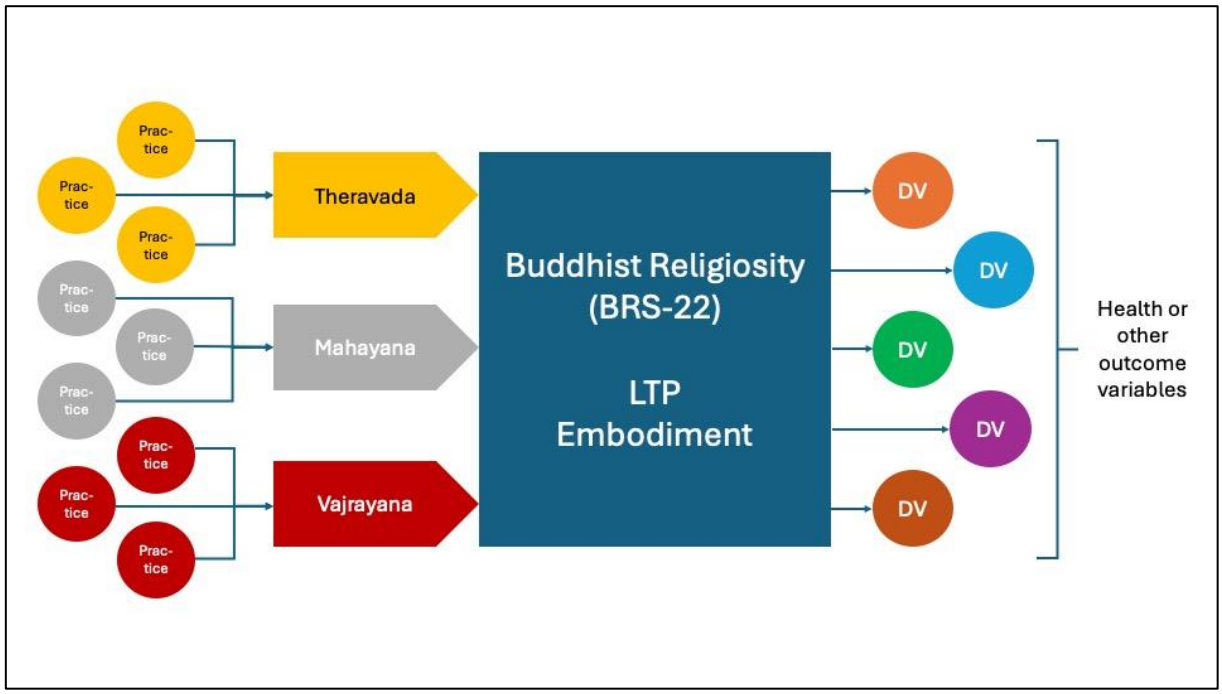
cultivation of wisdom, as well as their adherence to the fundamental attitudes and values of Buddhism. This capacity to balance universal and tradition-specific elements makes the BRS-22 a valuable tool for comparative research. Scholars can use the scale to investigate how shared dimensions of Buddhist religiosity contribute to psychological well-being or social cohesion, while also exploring the distinct emphases of different traditions.

Moreover, the BRS-22 enables researchers to study the interplay between tradition-specific practices and broader religious constructs. For example, it can be used to examine how ritual practices in Vajrayana Buddhism influence the internalisation of mindfulness and nonattachment, or how doctrinal study in Theravada fosters ethical embodiment. By providing a flexible yet rigorous framework, the BRS-22 advances the psychology of religion by making tradition-specific insights accessible within a standardised, cross-tradition model.

To place the non-sectarian nature of BRS-22 into a theoretical context, one can visualise the relationship between BRS-22, the three Buddhist traditions, the tradition-specific practices, and outcome variables, as illustrated in Figure 11. Current religiosity measurements in the field are predominantly tradition-specific, often tied to practices such as Vipassana (e.g., Chiesa, 2010; Pattanashetty et al., 2010) or the chanting of Buddha's name (e.g., Gao et al., 2016, 2019) or mantra (e.g., Dudejia, 2017; Oman & Bormann, 2015). While these studies provide valuable insights into the effects of individual practices on specific outcomes, such as mental health or coping, they fail to provide a holistic, cross-traditional understanding of Buddhist religiosity. This lack of comparability between traditions limits our ability to establish a unified framework for understanding how different practices contribute to the broader construct of religiosity in Buddhism.

The schematic in Figure 11 demonstrates how the BRS-22 bridges this gap. By integrating practices from Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana traditions into a single, cohesive measure of Buddhist religiosity's two overarching dimensions: Learning, Thinking, Practicing (LTP) and Embodiment. Specific practices such as Vipassana in Theravada, the chanting of sutras in Mahayana, or visualisation practices in Vajrayana are represented within the broader structure of the BRS-22. This unified framework ensures that while sectarian differences in practices are respected, they are understood as contributing to a shared construct of Buddhist religiosity.

Figure 11 BRS-22 Framework: Connecting Buddhist Practices, Traditions, and Outcomes



The schematic also highlights how this integrative model of Buddhist religiosity connects with health and other outcome variables. Unlike tradition-specific studies that focus on isolated practices and their direct effects, the BRS-22 facilitates the exploration of how these dimensions of religiosity, rather than individual practices, relate to outcomes such as mental health, well-being, and ethical behaviour. By contextualising specific practices within a larger, unified framework of religiosity, the BRS-22 advances the psychology of religion by offering a comprehensive tool that bridges sectarian divides and aligns with the universal principles of Buddhism.

The BRS-22's contribution to cross-tradition research is particularly timely as Buddhism continues to globalise and adapt to new cultural contexts (McMahan, 2012). Its ability to measure Buddhist religiosity across diverse traditions and settings fosters a deeper understanding of how core principles are maintained or transformed in different environments. This insight is crucial for both preserving the integrity of Buddhist teachings and supporting their application in addressing contemporary psychological, social, and cultural challenges.

7.2.3 Applications of the BRS-22 in Buddhist Teaching and Practice

The BRS-22 offers a groundbreaking approach to understanding and measuring Buddhist religiosity by shifting the focus from belief-centric models to dimensions that emphasise practice, reflection, and internalisation of Buddhist principles. Its two dimensions, LTP and Embodiment, provide a culturally authentic framework that aligns with the non-theistic nature of Buddhism. This

reorientation has significant implications for Buddhist teaching and practice, as well as for fostering psychological well-being.

One of the scale's primary applications lies in its potential as a reflective tool for both Dharma teachers and practitioners. For teachers, the BRS-22 offers a structured way to assess the progress of their students along the Buddhist path. By measuring how well students are engaging with doctrinal learning, applying Buddhist teachings, and embodying core values, the scale can provide valuable insights into areas of strength and opportunities for deeper growth. This allows teachers to tailor their instruction to meet individual needs, ensuring a more effective and personalised learning experience. For practitioners, the BRS-22 serves as a mirror, helping them reflect on their spiritual journey. It offers a concrete measure of how well they are integrating Buddhist teachings into their daily lives. By highlighting specific aspects of practice that require more focus, the scale empowers practitioners to approach their spiritual development with greater intentionality and self-awareness.

In addition to its role in guiding practice, the BRS-22 provides a robust framework for linking Buddhist religiosity to psychological outcomes. Unlike traditional religiosity scales, which emphasise beliefs and congregational activities (Hill, 2013; Jayakumar & Verma, 2020), the BRS-22 reflects practice-oriented embodiments. It allows researchers and teachers alike to explore the connections between adherence to the Buddhist path and outcomes such as resilience, emotional balance, and ethical decision-making. This evidence-based approach not only deepens understanding of the practical benefits of Buddhist religiosity but also reinforces its relevance in addressing contemporary challenges.

Moreover, the scale's ability to unify tradition-specific practices under a common framework facilitates broader applications in Buddhist education and community settings. For instance, it can be used in Buddhist retreat centres, temples, or meditation groups to help participants evaluate their progress and set meaningful goals for further development. By making the transformative processes of Buddhist practice more visible and measurable, the BRS-22 is able to help foster a deeper commitment to spiritual growth and support the preservation of Buddhist teachings in an evolving, globalised context (McMahan, 2012). Perhaps, the scale provides a means to objectively evaluate the doctrinal teachings and practices of Buddhist sects that are currently perceived as controversial by mainstream Buddhist traditions, such as Secular Buddhism (Batchelor, 2012, 2017), or the Radical Dharma movement (Williams et al., 2016). In doing so, the BRS-22 offers an evidence-based framework for assessing how these movements contribute to the religiosity of their followers, promoting a nuanced understanding of their role in contemporary Buddhist practice.

In summary, the BRS-22 bridges the gap between Buddhist teaching, personal practice, and eventual psychological well-being. By providing clear indicators of progress and fostering a reflective approach to learning and embodiment, it enhances the effectiveness of Buddhist education and supports practitioners in aligning their lives with the Buddhist path. Its practical and versatile applications ensure that the scale contributes not only to academic research but also to the lived experiences of Buddhist practitioners worldwide.

7.2.4 Applications of the BRS-22 in Buddhist Counselling and Mental Health Practice

The BRS-22 offers a comprehensive framework for integrating Buddhist principles into counselling and mental health practices, bridging traditional Buddhist counselling methods with contemporary therapeutic approaches. Its dimensions, LTP and Embodiment, align closely with key elements of Buddhist counselling, such as self-cultivation, mindfulness, and the application of Buddhist teachings, as discussed by Lee et al. (2017). This alignment positions the BRS-22 as a valuable tool for both counsellors and mental health professionals working with Buddhist clients or employing Buddhist-based interventions (e.g., Cheng & Tse, 2013; Tirch et al., 2016).

Self-cultivation is a central principle in Buddhist counselling (K. C. Lee et al., 2017), emphasising qualities such as mindfulness, compassion, and equanimity to transform the three poisons—greed, hatred, and ignorance. While these qualities are typically nurtured through reflective dialogue and practice-based guidance, current counselling methods rarely incorporate structured tools to evaluate how thoroughly these principles are being integrated. The BRS-22 does not introduce new doctrinal content; instead, it makes these existing principles assessable in a systematic way. By providing an empirically validated structure, the scale enables practitioners to gauge how well a client is engaging with and embodying the Dharma. For instance, a client might show a strong intellectual grasp of the teachings (reflected in high LTP) yet struggle with their internalisation or expression (reflected in lower Embodiment), revealing patterns that may otherwise go unnoticed. In this way, the BRS-22 complements traditional Buddhist counselling by enhancing reflective depth, and supporting more precise, culturally aligned therapeutic engagement.

The integration of Buddhist teachings, such as the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path, is another significant application in Buddhist counselling (de Silva, 2014; H. G. G. Koenig, 2024). These teachings offer clients cognitive and behavioural strategies to address suffering and achieve mental clarity (de Silva, 2014; K. C. Lee et al., 2017). The BRS-22 reflects the degree to which clients have internalised these teachings, allowing counsellors to tailor interventions that resonate with their spiritual and cultural context. For example, clients experiencing grief may find solace in

teachings on impermanence and karma, which encourage a shift in perspective and promote emotional balance (Tung, 2010).

In addition to its role in Buddhist counselling, the BRS-22 is a valuable resource for integrating spirituality into clinical care more broadly. Koenig (2005) emphasises that religious resources can significantly enhance emotional support and mental health outcomes. The BRS-22 facilitates this integration by providing a structured measure of clients' engagement with Buddhist practices and, in conjunction with other psychological assessment tools, their impact on well-being. It enables mental health professionals to explore how clients' religiosity influences their coping mechanisms, resilience, and interpersonal relationships. This evidence-based approach ensures that interventions are both culturally sensitive and therapeutically effective.

Furthermore, the BRS-22 can serve as a reflective tool for healthcare professionals themselves. Scholars often highlight the importance of understanding clients' spiritual values and practices in delivering compassionate, culturally competent care (Harris et al., 2016; H. G. Koenig, 2005; Saenz & Waldo, 2013). Given that appreciation of dharma requires experiential learning, it is perhaps essential for mental health practitioners using Buddhist-oriented interventions to reflect on their own Buddhist religiosity when it comes to their understanding of how Buddhists would do, reflect, and embody. By using the BRS-22 to assess their own understanding of Buddhist principles, practitioners can enhance their therapeutic presence, build rapport with clients, and ensure their interventions align with clients' beliefs and values.

7.3 Limitations and Future Directions

While the BRS-22 represents a significant contribution to measuring Buddhist religiosity, several limitations should be noted. First, although the scale was validated in both English and Chinese, its linguistic scope does not extend to other major Buddhist-speaking populations, such as those in Thai, Burmese, or Sinhala-speaking communities. Expanding translation efforts will be critical to ensuring cultural inclusiveness and broader applicability. Second, the current study did not assess test-retest reliability. Given the evolving and process-oriented nature of Buddhist practice, future studies should examine the BRS-22's temporal stability to evaluate its utility for longitudinal research and intervention tracking. Third, although measurement invariance was supported across the three major Buddhist traditions, the sample was drawn primarily from urban populations in East and Southeast Asia. Extending validation efforts to rural, monastic, or diasporic communities—particularly across South Asia and the West—would enhance the scale's cross-contextual robustness.

A conceptual limitation also concerns the reliance on self-report in measuring the Embodiment dimension. In Buddhist doctrinal terms, Embodiment denotes the internalisation and

outward manifestation of Dharma through one's thoughts, speech, and actions, distinct from the realisation of enlightenment, which refers to the soteriological attainment of awakening. Although self-perception provides valuable insight into practitioners' experiential religiosity, future studies could complement this with observer-based or peer-evaluations. For instance, reports from friends, family, or sangha members can be used to triangulate how Embodiment is recognised within communities of practice. Such mixed-method approaches would enhance ecological validity and extend the BRS-22's applicability in both research and applied contexts.

Addressing these limitations will not only strengthen the psychometric properties of the BRS-22 but also expand its relevance for global and comparative studies in the psychology of religion. Future research should also explore the scale's application in Buddhist-informed interventions and its responsiveness to spiritual change over time.

7.4 Conclusion

This dissertation has addressed a significant gap in the psychology of religion by developing and validating the Buddhist Religiosity Scale (BRS-22), a culturally sensitive and psychometrically robust instrument that captures the multidimensional nature of Buddhist religiosity. The BRS-22 was carefully designed to reflect the doctrinal, reflective, and ethical dimensions of Buddhism, providing a framework that authentically embodies the lived experiences of practitioners. Its development adhered to the principle of balancing emic and etic perspectives, ensuring that it resonates with the specific characteristics of Buddhist traditions while maintaining broad applicability for cross-tradition and cross-cultural research.

Central to the BRS-22 are two pivotal dimensions: Learning, Thinking, Practising (LTP) and Embodiment. These dimensions represent the intellectual engagement with Buddhist teachings and the internalisation of those teachings through practices of mindfulness, ethical conduct, and compassion. By highlighting the integration of doctrinal understanding with lived experience, the BRS-22 provides a comprehensive perspective on what it truly means to embody the Buddhist faith. This dual emphasis ensures that the scale captures the depth and breadth of Buddhist practice, recognising its transformative potential for spiritual growth and its harmony with the core principles of the Dharma.

The methodological rigour underlying the BRS-22 significantly enhances its reliability and validity, showcasing its effectiveness in measuring Buddhist religiosity across various contexts and traditions. Through comprehensive psychometric testing, which includes factor analysis and validation among Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana populations, the BRS-22 has demonstrated its ability to capture the shared essence of Buddhist religiosity while honouring tradition-specific

nuances. This accomplishment positions the scale as a critical tool for examining how core principles of Buddhism are practised and experienced across diverse cultural and doctrinal environments. Its universality and precision render it a valuable resource for furthering scholarly understanding of religiosity in non-theistic traditions.

The contributions of the BRS-22 extend well beyond its academic implications, offering transformative insights for Buddhist teaching, counselling, and mental health. For educators, the scale provides a structured approach to assess students' engagement with doctrinal learning and their progress in embodying Buddhist principles. By offering a nuanced understanding of these aspects, the BRS-22 enables personalised guidance that supports practitioners in aligning their lives with the Buddhist path. For individual practitioners, the scale acts as a reflective tool for evaluating their spiritual development, fostering greater self-awareness and intentionality in their practice. This capacity for reflection ensures that the BRS-22 serves not only as a measurement tool but also as a valuable resource for facilitating personal growth and ethical living.

In the realm of counselling and mental health, the BRS-22 serves as a bridge between Buddhist principles and therapeutic practices. When used together with other assessment tools, BRS-22 can provide insights into how clients' spiritual engagement contributes to their emotional resilience and overall well-being by capturing the interplay of mindfulness, ethical embodiment, and reflective practice. It establishes a framework for incorporating Buddhist principles into therapeutic interventions, promoting culturally sensitive approaches that align with the client's values and beliefs. Additionally, the BRS-22's capacity to dynamically measure religiosity makes it an essential tool for assessing the impact of Buddhist-inspired interventions, such as meditation retreats or compassion-focused therapies, on psychological outcomes.

This dissertation highlights the significance of cultural authenticity and inclusivity in the exploration of religiosity. By focusing on the doctrinal and ethical core of Buddhism, the BRS-22 challenges the prevailing frameworks that tend to exclude or marginalise non-theistic traditions. It demonstrates the potential of culturally grounded methodologies to deepen our understanding of religious and spiritual phenomena, promoting a more inclusive and nuanced perspective in the psychology of religion. This inclusivity ensures that the BRS-22 functions not only as an academic tool but also as a bridge between diverse traditions, fostering mutual understanding and dialogue in our increasingly globalised world.

In conclusion, the BRS-22 signifies a significant advancement in the psychology of religion, providing a culturally sensitive, theoretically grounded, and psychometrically robust framework for comprehending Buddhist religiosity. By capturing the integration of doctrinal learning, reflective

thinking, and ethical embodiment, it reflects the depth and richness of Buddhist practice in its various forms. The conclusion consolidates the study's emic grounding of item generation, the interdependent view of LTP and Embodiment informed by dependent origination and evidence of cross-tradition and cross-language measurement invariance. Its applications in research, education, and mental health highlight its transformative potential, serving as a resource that connects academic inquiry with lived experience. As Buddhism continues to evolve and adapt within a globalised context, the BRS-22 presents an essential tool for exploring how its core principles are preserved, embodied, and reimagined across diverse cultural and historical landscapes. Moreover, by calling for future studies that complement self-report measures with observer perspectives, the BRS-22 points toward a fuller understanding of how Buddhist religiosity is lived and recognised within communities of practice. The dissertation underscores the value of culturally informed and methodologically rigorous research in enhancing our understanding of religiosity and its contribution to human flourishing.

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Appendix A: Invitation E-mail

Invitation E-mail Text for Study 2

Version to known participants/acquaintances:

Dear XXX,

Hope this e-mail finds you well.

As I might have shared with you earlier, I am currently pursuing my PhD study with the James Cook University's Singapore campus working on a study to define and measure Buddhist religiosity.

I really hope that you will be able to take part in my research where your knowledge in the Theravada/Mahayana/Vajrayana Buddhism will provide vital input to the understanding of how religiosity of a Buddhist can be defined in your tradition. The study will take the form of one-on-one interview to be carried out via ZOOM. The results will be analyzed together with input from other Buddhist knowledge contributors, I will develop a religiosity measurement scale suitable for Buddhists from all the three major schools.

The interview will only take about an hour to discuss with you what you would consider being the elements of a religious Buddhist. All answers will be anonymized in the analysis and reporting process. Your input will not be identified in any research output. If you have any question about this study that I'm doing, do feel free to reach out and I can share with you more details.

If you will be so kind to help me out, do let me know your available (prefer date and time) for the interview. I will set-up a Zoom invite and a link to an official consent form for you to review and give your consent.

Warm regards,

Barry Tse

(Please note that Traditional Chinese Characters will be used instead of Simplified Chinese in the following template when inviting participants from Hong Kong and Taiwan)

XXX 你好！

希望你别来无恙且一切安好。

如你所知，正如我之前曾经与你分享的那样，我目前正在詹姆斯-库克大学新加坡校区攻读博士学位，从事一项研究如何去定义和测量佛教徒宗教性的心理学研究。

我非常希望你能参与到此次研究，你在小乘/大乘/金刚乘佛教方面的知识将为理解该传承中如何定义佛教徒宗教性提供重要的意见和参考。研究将以一对一深度访谈形式通过ZOOM，而你的意见将与其他佛教知识贡献者的意见一起进行分析，通过这些内容，我将制定一个适合三大传承的佛教徒的宗教性测量表。

访谈只需要大约一个小时，与你讨论你认为那些是一个佛教宗教徒的特质和要素。在分析和报告过程中，所有的答案都会被匿名化。你的意见不会在任何研究结果中被识别。如果你对我正在进行的这项研究有任何疑问，请随时联系我，我可以与你分享更多细节。

如果你愿意帮助我，请告诉我你可以接受采访的时间（最好是日期和时间）。我将设置一个 Zoom 会议邀请和一个官方同意书链接，供你审查和点击同意。

祝安康！

Barry Tse

Version use to solicit potential participants:

Dear XXX,

Hope this e-mail finds you well.

Please pardon my unsolicited attempt to initiating contact with you. I am a PhD candidate with the James Cook University's Singapore campus' School of Social and Health Sciences, working on a study to define and measure Buddhist religiosity.

As part of my study, I will be interviewing knowledgeable individuals like yourself who focus on either Theravada/Mahayana/Vajrayana Buddhism to provide vital input to the understanding of how religiosity of a Buddhist can be defined in that tradition. And you have been suggested as someone I should talk to and interview. Rest assure that the interview will be conducted in strictest confidence.

The interview will only take about an hour online to discuss with you via ZOOM to us what you would consider characters and behaviors of a religious Buddhist. All answers will be anonymized in the analysis and reporting process. Your input will not be identified in any research output. For further information on the study, please feel free to ask either me or my primary advisor Associate Professor Jonathan Ramsay (jonathan.ramsay@jcu.edu.au).

If you will be so kind to take part in the study, please provide me your preferred date and time for the interview. And I will set-up a Zoom invite and a link to an official consent form for you to review and give your consent.

Warm regards,

Barry Tse

(Please note that Traditional Chinese Characters will be used instead of Simplified Chinese in the following template when inviting participants from Hong Kong and Taiwan)

XXX 博士/教授/先生/尊者/师父，您好！

请恕本人唐突联系，还望海涵。

容我在此稍作自我介绍并说明此邮件目的。本人是詹姆斯-库克大学（James Cook University）新加坡校区社会与健康科学学院（School of Social and Health Sciences）的博士生，目前正在进行一项宗教心理学研究，目的是要定义和测量佛教的宗教性。

作为研究的一部分，我将需要采访像您这样专注于小乘/大乘/金刚乘的专家/大德，为了解在您传承中如何定义佛教徒的宗教性提供重要参考和意见。因此，我被建议与您取得联系并邀请成为这次研究的采访对象。请放心，采访将在最严格的保密下进行。

采访将只需要大约一个小时并通过网上通过 ZOOM 视频会议平台进行，届时我与您讨论您认为的佛教徒宗教性的特征和行为。在分析和报告过程中，所有的答案将被匿名化。您的意见不会在任何研究结果中被辨识。如欲知悉更多有关这项研究的信息，请随时向我或我的主博士导师乔纳森-拉姆斯（Jonathan Ramsay）副教授（jonathan.ramsay@jcu.edu.au）询问。

如果您愿意参加这项研究，请向我提供您方便的采访日期和时间。我将设置一个 Zoom 邀请和一个官方同意书的链接，供你审查和同意。

祝安康！

Barry Tse

XXX 博士/教授/先生/尊者/師父，您好！

請恕本人唐突聯繫，還望海涵

容我在此稍作自我介紹並說明此郵件目的。 本人是詹姆斯-庫克大學（James Cook University）新加坡校區社會與健康科學學院（School of Social and Health Sciences）的博士生，目前正在進行一項宗教心理學研究，目的是要定義和測量佛教的宗教性。

作為研究的一部分，我將需要採訪像您這樣專注於小乘/大乘/金剛乘的專家/大德，為瞭解在您傳承 中如何定義佛教徒的宗教性提供重要參考和意見。 因此，我被建議與您取得聯繫並邀請成為這次研究的採訪物件。 請放心，採訪將在最嚴格的保密下進行。

採訪將只需要大約一個小時並通過網上通過 ZOOM 視頻會議平臺進行，屆時我與您討論您認為的佛教徒 宗教性的特徵和行為。 在分析和報告過程中，所有的答案將被匿名化。 您的意見不會在任何研究結果中被辨識。 如欲知悉更多有關這項研究的資訊，請隨時向我或我的主博士導師喬納森-拉姆斯（Jonathan Ramsay）副教授（ jonathan.ramsay@jcu.edu.au）詢問。

如果您願意參加這項研究，請向我提供您方便的採訪日期和時間。 我將設置一個 Zoom 邀請和一個官方同意書的連結，供你審查和同意。

祝安康！

Barry Tse

Appendix B: Consent Form

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Title of Study:
Development of Buddhist Religiosity Scale

You are invited to participate in a research study by James Cook University, and this study contributes to a PhD degree. Before you decide whether to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and feel free to ask us if you would like more information or if there is anything that you do not understand. We would like to stress that you do not have to accept this invitation and should only agree to take part if you want to.

Thank you for reading this

1. What is the purpose of the study?

This research aims to develop a Buddhist Religiosity Scale that can be applied to measure Buddhists' religiosity level in a non-sectarian manner. This means the new scale will capture religiosity defined in a way that is relevant to all schools of Buddhism. In order to differentiate itself from existing general religiosity measurements, the scale development will take an emic approach as its first step to reflect dimensions of religiosity specific and relevant to the followers of Buddhism. An emic approach takes a bottom-up direction in the formulation of knowledge. In this case, we are exploring Buddhist religiosity from the perspectives of Buddhists rather than super-imposing any concept of religiosity currently in use.

2. Why have I been chosen to take part?

As a Buddhist scholar and/or expert, your opinions and understanding of the doctrinal aspects of Buddhism will provide invaluable input on how the scales will be constructed and the dimensions measured. We will collectively analyse inputs from various scholars and experts for the construction of the scale.

3. Do I have to take part?

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time without explanation and without incurring any disadvantage.

4. What will happen if I take part?

Once given your consent, the principal researcher will schedule an MS Teams or ZOOM meeting at a time convenient to you for a 60-minute one-on-one interview. The interviews will be recorded and transcribed for the purpose of analysis. Data collected will be stored in a secured server and password-protected computer accessible only to researchers involved in the project. No personal information will be divulged, and your anonymity is assured. The investigator will be available to answer any questions you may have or clarify any issues.

5. Expenses and/or payments

There will be no payments made or any expenses to be incurred by you.

6. Are there any risks in taking part?

You will not be exposed to any risks, hazards or adverse effects as a result of your participation in this study. However, in the unlikely event that you experience any discomfort or disadvantage as part of the research, you are kindly required to make this known to the researcher(s) immediately. We will terminate the interview and encourage you to obtain help and support from one of the following organisations in your area:

Australia	Lifeline Australia Hotline	13 11 14
China	Lifeline Hotline	400 821 1215
	Beijing Suicide Research and Prevention Center Hotline	0800-810-1117 (For Mobile/IP users) 010-8295-1332
Hong Kong	Caritas 24-Hour Crisis Line	18288
	Suicide Prevention Services	2382 0000
Nepal	CMC Nepal	1660 01 85080 (Toll Free)
Singapore	The Samaritans of Singapore	1800 221 4444
	The Institute of Mental Health's 24-hour Helpline	6389 2222
Sri Lanka	CCCline	1333
Taiwan	Taiwan Suicide Prevention Center Hotline	0800 788 995
Thailand	Department of Mental Health Hotline	1323
USA	National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) HelpLine	(800) 950-6264

7. Are there any benefits in taking part?

There are no immediate benefits in taking part in this study. However, the interview allows the sharing of ideas on how Buddhist religiosity should be reflected and characterised from your perspective and contribute to the development of a non-sectarian Buddhist religiosity scale.

8. What if I am unhappy or if there is a problem?

If you are unhappy, or if there is a problem, please feel free to let us know by contacting Mr. Barry Tse, barry.tse@my.jcu.edu.au, and we will try to address the issue. You may also like to contact the Human Research Ethics Committee of James Cook University:

Human Ethics Officer
JCU Connect
James Cook University
Townsville, Qld, 4811
Email: ethics@jcu.edu.au
Ph: +61 7 4781 5011

9. Will my participation be kept confidential?

All information provided will be strictly confidential. Your feedback and contribution will be anonymised in all sharing of the research findings. And all data will be stored securely on a password-

protected computer and university data depository. Only the Principal Investigator, and the advisors will have access to the data. The data will be kept for 5 years before deletion from the server; during this period, only the de-identified transcript will be shared with other researchers for academic purposes.

10. What will happen to the results of the study?

The results of the study may be published and may be used for some other research. You will not be identifiable from the research. However, if you wish to obtain a copy of the final results, please send an e-mail to barry.tse@my.jcu.edu.au.

11. What will happen if I want to stop taking part?

You are free to withdraw at any time, without explanation. The incomplete interview will be omitted from the overall analysis. We would like to emphasise that you are free to turn down the invitation if you wish to do so.

12. Who can I contact if I have further questions?

Principal Investigator:
Barry Tse
James Cook University, Singapore
Tel: +65 6709 3846
Mobile: +65 9109 7365
Email: barry.tse@my.jcu.edu.au

Primary Advisor:
A/P Jonathan Ramsay
School of Social and Health Sciences
James Cook University, Singapore
Tel: +65 6709 3739
Email: jonathan.ramsay@jcu.edu.au

Secondary Advisor:
Dr. Kaiqin Chan
School of Social and Health Sciences
James Cook University, Singapore
Tel: +65 6709 3734
Email: kaiqin.chan@jcu.edu.au

Secondary Advisor:
A/P Frederick Low
School of Social and Health Sciences
James Cook University, Singapore
Tel: +65 6709 3002
Email: frederick.low@jcu.edu.au

Advisor Mentor:
A/P Denise Dillon
School of Social and Health Sciences
James Cook University, Singapore
Tel: +65 6709 3730
Email: denise.dillon@jcu.edu.au

If you have any concerns regarding the ethical conduct of the study, please contact:
Human Ethics, Research Office
James Cook University, Townsville, Qld, 4811
Phone: (07) 4781 5011 (ethics@jcu.edu.au)

参与者须知

研究课题：
佛教宗教性量表的开发

您被邀请参加詹姆斯库克大学的一项研究，而此项研究是博士研究的一个组成部份。在您决定是否参与之前，重要的是您要了解为什么要进行这项研究，以及这项研究将涉及什么。请花时间仔细阅读以下信息，如果您需要更多信息或有任何不明白的地方，请随时向我们询问。我们想强调的是，你不一定要接受这个邀请，只有在你愿意的情况下才应该同意参加。

感谢阅读此文

1. 这项研究的目的是什么？

本研究的目的是制定一个佛教徒宗教性量表，以非宗派的方式来衡量佛教徒的宗教性水平。这意味着新量表将捕捉到与佛教所有宗派相关的宗教性定义。为了区别于现有的一般宗教性测量方法，量表开发的第一步将采取主位研究方法，以反映与佛教信徒具体相关的宗教性维度。主位研究法采取了自下而上的研究方向，在这种情况下，我们从佛教徒的角度探讨佛教的宗教性，而不是将目前使用的任何宗教性概念叠加在佛教徒上。

2. 为什么我被选中参加？

作为一名佛教学者和/专家，您对佛教教义方面的意见和理解将为如何构建量表和测量维度提供宝贵的意见。我们将共同分析来自不同学者和专家的意见，以构建量表。

3. 我必须参加吗？

你的参与完全是自愿的，你可以在任何时候自由退出，不需要解释，也不会产生任何不利影响。

4. 如果我参加了，会发生什么？

一旦得到你的同意，主要研究人员将在你方便的时候安排一次 MS Teams 或者 ZOOM 会议，进行 60 分钟的一对一的采访。访谈将被记录下来，并为分析之目的进行誊写。收集到的数据将被储存在一个安全的服务器和受密码保护的计算机中，只有参与该项目的研究人员才能访问。没有任何个人信息会被泄露，并且保证你的匿名性。调查员将随时回答你的任何问题或澄清任何问题。

5. 费用和/或酬劳

参与者不会有任何酬劳，也不会有任何费用需要承担。

6. 参加活动是否有任何风险？

你不会因为参与本研究而面临任何风险、危险或不利影响。但是，如果您在研究中遇到任何不适或不利，请您立即向研究人员说明。我们将终止采访，并鼓励你从以下组织中获得帮助和支持：

澳洲	Lifeline Australia Hotline	13 11 14

中国大陆区	Lifeline Hotline	400 821 1215
	Beijing Suicide Research and Prevention Center Hotline	0800-810-1117 (For Mobile/IP users) 010-8295-1332
香港区	Caritas 24-Hour Crisis Line	18288
	Suicide Prevention Services	2382 0000
尼泊尔	CMC Nepal	1660 01 85080 (Toll Free)
新加坡	The Samaritans of Singapore	1800 221 4444
	The Institute of Mental Health's 24-hour Helpline	6389 2222
斯里兰卡	CCCline	1333
台湾区	Taiwan Suicide Prevention Center Hotline	0800 788 995
泰国	Department of Mental Health Hotline	1323
美国	National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) HelpLine	(800) 950-6264

7. 参加研究有什么好处吗？

参加这项研究没有直接的好处。然而，通过访谈，您可以从您的角度分享关于如何反映和描述佛教宗教性的想法，并为制定非宗派的佛教宗教性量表做出贡献。

8. 如果我有不满或问题怎么办？

如果您不满意，或有问题，请随时联系 Barry Tse 先生，barry.tse@my.jcu.edu.au，告诉我们，我们会尽力帮助。您也可以联系詹姆斯库克大学的人类伦理道德研究办公室：

人类伦理专员
詹姆斯库克大学
汤斯维尔，昆士兰，邮政编码 4811
电邮：ethics@jcu.edu.au
电话：+61 7 4781 5011

9. 我的参与会被保密吗？

所有提供的信息都将被严格保密。你的反馈和贡献在所有的研究结果分享中都将被匿名。 所有的数据将被安全地储存在有密码保护的计算机和大学数据存储库中。 只有主要研究人员和顾问可以接触到这些数据。数据在从服务器上删除之前将被保存 5 年，在此期间，只有去掉身份识别的访谈笔录可与其他研究人员作学术分享。

10. 研究结果将如何处理？

研究的结果可能会被公布，并可能被用于其他一些研究。你将不会从研究中被识别出来。 然而，如果你想获得最终结果的副本，请发送电子邮件至 barry.tse@my.jcu.edu.au

11. 如果我想停止参与，会发生什么？

你可以在任何时候自由退出，无需解释。不完整的访谈将在整体分析中被省略。 我们想强调的是，如果你想拒绝邀请，你可以自由拒绝。

12. 如果我有进一步的问题，我可以联系谁？

Principal Investigator:
Barry Tse
James Cook University, Singapore
Tel: +65 6709 3846
Mobile: +65 9109 7365
Email: barry.tse@my.jcu.edu.au

Primary Advisor:
A/P Jonathan Ramsay
School of Social and Health Sciences
James Cook University, Singapore
Tel: +65 6709 3739
Email: jonathan.ramsay@jcu.edu.au

Secondary Advisor:
Dr. Kaiqin Chan
School of Social and Health Sciences
James Cook University, Singapore
Tel: +65 6709 3734
Email: kaiqin.chan@jcu.edu.au

Secondary Advisor:
A/P Frederick Low
School of Social and Health Sciences
James Cook University, Singapore
Tel: +65 6709 3002
Email: frederick.low@jcu.edu.au

Advisor Mentor:
A/P Denise Dillon
School of Social and Health Sciences
James Cook University, Singapore
Tel: +65 6709 3730
Email: denise.dillon@jcu.edu.au

如果您对该研究的道德行为有任何担忧，请联系：
人类伦理，研究办公室
詹姆斯-库克大学，汤斯维尔，Qld，4811
电话：+61 7 4781 5011（ethics@jcu.edu.au）

Information Consent Form

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Appendix C: Qualitative Interview Guide

Discussion Guide

BACKGROUND: Based on an extensive systematic literature review conducted last year as part of the preparation of this study, the researcher has found that when Buddhists are measured for their level of religiosity, most previous studies used one of the scales originally designed for Judeo-Christian faiths. The very limited scales developed so far specifically targeted at Buddhists, however, were very sectarian focused, developed based on teachings from one of the three Buddhist schools of Theravada, Mahayana, or Vajrayana. Hence, the researcher is endeavoured to develop a Buddhist Religiosity Scale that transcends sectarian differences. It is hope that this scale can be more accurate in reflecting the level of Buddhist religiosity, and hence more valid in reflecting the effects of Buddhist religiosity in scientific research.

OBJECTIVE: To tap into the knowledge of Buddhism experts who could help define Buddhist religiosity from the perspective of their specific school of Buddhism.

This document is designed to help guide the discussion. The conversation will ebb and flow, depending on the respondents' answers. All of the topics will be covered, but not necessarily in the order or in the wording outlined below.

SET-UP AND INTRODUCTIONS - 5 MINUTES

- *Moderator to introduce self as an academic researcher trying to understand participants' perspective*
- *Emphasize that there are no right or wrong answers, it is their perspectives and views that count.*
- *Reiterate that the interview will last around 1 hour.*
- *Moderator to explain that session will be recorded for research purposes, the conversation will be transcribed but their identity removed for record keeping. Obtain verbal approval.*

START RECORDING

- As we are having our conversation, if there is a question you'd prefer not to answer, please just let me know and we'll move on. Feel free to stop me if you feel like to.
- What you will share today will be combined and synthesized with what we are hearing from other people like you. We look for themes and patterns that might be insights into how experts like you would say about the topics we will discuss today.
- When we report on our findings in academic publications, findings are usually pooled together and synthesized. However, there would be time when we will selectively quote the exact wordings or expressions captured in our conversations, but with identity redacted.
- All of the data will be stored in a secured data depository accessible only to researchers on the topic and will be kept for 5 years before deleting. We keep de-identified transcripts of our sessions for no more than 5 years.

Introductions & warm up discussion – 5 minutes

1. Today as you are aware that I will be discussing with you what you would define as Religiosity in the Buddhist context. There are no right or wrong answers, just your opinions.
2. Before we jump into discussing what religiosity is for Buddhists, I would love to hear from you, at a very topline level, what you would consider as the core of Buddhism, and how does it differ from other religions?
    - And you are reflecting the perspective of Theravada/Mahayana/Vajrayana? What aspect of what you have just shared reflects this distinction?

Defining Religiosity for Buddhists – 15 minutes

3. Bearing in mind what you have just mentioned about the core element of Buddhism, how would you define Religiosity for the followers? (Moderator to note down the items mentioned before probing)
    - Probe for:
        - Behavioural aspects
            - Rituals
            - General demeanour etc.
        - Knowledge
        - Precepts to watch
4. Now that we seem to have a variety of requirements for a Buddhist to be considered religious. I just want to tape your brain as to whether there are "levels" of religiosity they would demonstrate? On the items you have suggested, how would these levels be manifested?
    - *Moderator: use the list of items generated previously as probe or reminder to solicit differences in the level of manifestations, by asking:*
        - "When you say a religious Buddhist would…..,
            - what would be a model example of that?
            - what would be merely an acceptable level?
            - what would signify that someone has failed the requirement?"

Religiosity in the traditional context and across Buddhist schools – 15 minutes

5. All too often, we talk about Buddhists walking the path should practice the Three Studies of Observing Precepts (*sila*), Cultivating Concentration (*samadhi*), and Developing Wisdom (*panna*), how would the notion of Buddhist religiosity fit into this traditional framework of practising Buddhism?
6. And in some schools of Buddhism, there are also emphasis on the need of "Hearing", "Contemplating", and "Cultivating" Dhamma. What is your view on that? And how would the notion of religiosity we have talked about fit into this framework?
7. Would the definition apply to follower of other schools of Buddhism? What would be the common denominators? What would be uniquely to the school that you are familiar with?

Comparison with Established Judeo-Christian Religiosity framework – 15 minutes

8. We have been talking about Buddhist religiosity for quite a while now, I just want to get your thoughts on a very common religiosity framework that has been used in psychology and sociology for years. I am not sure if you find the framework relevant, if it is, I would like to know how it is relevant to Buddhist, or if it is not, what are the mis-matches or missing piece:
    - This basic framework is called the 3Bs model, it contains three aspects of religiosity: (1) Belief, (2) Behave, and (3) Belong
    - What is your thought on this model of defining religiosity?
    - Can it be applied to Buddhism?
        - If not, what's missing or where lies the issues?
        - If yes, how would the various items we talked about fit into this model?
9. And very recently, there is a new addition to the 3Bs model which made it becomes 4Bs now. The new "B" is called Bonding which refers to the specific symbolic meanings or languages that bind followers together
    - Would there by corresponding items for Buddhist religiosity? What are they? If not, why not?

WRAP UP – 5 minutes

That's all the questions I have for you today. We've been talking a lot today. Do you have any final thoughts or words of wisdom for me about how best to reflect Buddhist religiosity?

Thank and adjourn.

讨论大纲

背景：根据去年（2021）为准备本研究而进行的广泛的系统性文献综述，研究者发现，当佛教徒被测量其宗教性水平时，大多数以前的研究都使用了最初为犹太教和基督教信仰设计的量表。然而，到目前为止，专门针对佛教徒开发的量表非常有限，它们都是根据小乘、大乘或金刚乘这三个佛教流派的教义分别开发的，比较着重自身教派传统。因此，研究者正意图开发一个能超越教派分别的佛教宗教性量表。希望这个量表能更准确地反映出佛教的宗教信仰水平，从而更有效地反映出佛教宗教信仰在科学研究中的影响。

目标：利用佛教专家的知识，从他们特定的佛教流派的角度帮助定义佛教的宗教性。

本文件旨在帮助指导讨论。 谈话内容将根据受访者的回答而进行并方向不定。 所有的话题都会涉及，但不一定按照以下的顺序或措辞。

设置和介绍 - 5 分钟

- *主持人介绍自己是一名学术研究者，试图了解参与者的观点*
- *强调答案没有对错之分，重要的是他们的观点和看法。*
- *重申面试将持续 1 小时左右。*
- *主持人要解释，为了研究目的，会议将被记录下来，谈话内容将被转录，但为了保存记录，他们的身份将被删除。获得口头批准。*

开始录音/录影

- 在我们的谈话过程中，如果有一个问题你不愿意回答，请告诉我，我们会继续。如果你觉得有必要，可以随时阻止我。
- 你今天将分享的内容将与我们从其他像你一样的人那里听到的内容相结合，并进行综合。 我们寻找主题和模式，这些主题和模式可能是对像你这样的专家对我们今天要讨论的主题的看法的洞察力。
- 当我们在学术出版物中报告我们的发现时，通常会把发现集中起来并进行综合。然而，有时我们会有选择地引用我们谈话中捕捉到的确切措辞或表达，但会对身份进行编辑。
- 所有的数据将被储存在一个安全的数据存储库中，只有该主题的研究人员可以访问，并且在删除前将被保存 5 年。我们保留去掉身份识别的会议记录，时间不超过 5 年。

介绍和热身讨论 - 5 分钟

1. 今天大家都知道，我将与大家讨论在佛教背景下，你们对宗教性的定义是什么。答案没有对错之分，只想知道你的见解。
2. 在我们开始讨论什么是佛教徒的宗教性之前，我很想听听你的意见，从一个比较高的层面上，你认为佛教的核心是什么，它与其他宗教有什么不同？
   - 而你所反映的是小乘/大乘/金刚乘的观点？你刚才的分享在哪方面体现了这种区别？

为佛教徒定义宗教性 - 15 分钟

3. 考虑到你刚才提到的佛教的核心要素，你将如何为信徒们定义宗教性？(主持人在提问前记下所提到的项目）。
   - 探索一下：
     - 行为方面
       - 仪式
       - 一般举止，等等。

- 知识
- 需要注意的戒律

4. 现在，我们似乎对佛教徒被认为是有宗教信仰的各种要求。我只想听听你的想法，他们是否会表现出宗教性的 "等级"？在你所建议的项目上，这些级别会如何体现？
   - 主持人：用之前产生的项目清单作为探究或提醒，通过询问来征求不同层次的表现形式。
     - "当你说一个宗教佛教徒会....。
       - 什么是一个典型的例子？
       - 什么才是可接受的水平？
       - 怎样才表示某人没有达到要求？"

传统背景下的宗教性和不同佛教流派的宗教性--15 分钟

5. 我们经常谈到佛教徒在行走的过程中应该修习三学：戒（*sila*）、定（*samadhi*）和慧（*panna*），佛教的宗教性概念如何融入这个传统的佛教修行框架中？
6. 在一些佛教流派中，也有强调"闻"、"思"和"修"的需要。您对此有什么看法？我们所谈到的宗教性的概念如何融入这个框架中？
7. 这个定义是否适用于其他佛教流派的信徒？有哪些共同点？你所熟悉的学派有什么独特之处？

与既定的犹太-基督教宗教性框架的比较 - 15 分钟

8. 我们讨论佛教的宗教性已经有一段时间了，我只想了解你们对一个非常普遍的宗教性框架的看法，这个框架已经在心理学和社会学中使用多年了。我不知道你是否觉得这个框架有意义，如果有意义，我想知道它与佛教徒有什么关系，或者如果没有关系，有什么错配或缺失的部分。
   - 这个基本框架被称为 3Bs 模型，它包含了宗教性的三个方面：（1）信仰，（2）行为，和（3）归属。
     - 你对这种定义宗教性的模式有什么看法？
     - 它可以适用于佛教吗？
       - 如果不能，缺少什么或问题出在哪里？
       - 如果可以，我们谈论的各种项目如何融入这个模式？
9. 最近，在 3Bs 模式中又增加了一个新的内容，使其成为 4Bs。新的 "B "被称为 "结合"，指的是通过一些具体象征意义或语言，将追随者结合在一起的。
   - 佛教的宗教性是否有相应的一些地方呢？它们是什么？如果没有，为什么没有？

总结 - 5 分钟

这就是我今天给你的所有问题。我们今天已经谈了很多。关于如何最好地反映佛教的宗教性，你有什么更多的想法或智慧之言想要与我分享的吗？

谢谢，访问结束。

Appendix D: Preliminary Thematic Framework from Reflexive Thematic Analysis

This appendix presents the initial thematic framework generated during the first phase of reflexive thematic analysis. Themes were developed inductively through iterative coding of the interview transcripts, capturing diverse expressions of Buddhist religiosity across the Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana traditions. The table below summarises these emergent themes prior to theoretical clustering and dimensional refinement.

Using an inductive thematic approach, initial coding of the interview transcripts yielded 74 discrete codes that captured a wide spectrum of doctrinal expectations, practices, and qualities associated with being a Buddhist. These were subsequently grouped into two hierarchical levels, comprising 47 main codes and 27 sub-codes. Through iterative synthesis and comparison, these codes were further organised into seven higher-order themes. These themes reflect key emphases drawn from across the three traditions and represent both shared doctrinal foundations and distinctive conceptual nuances. The complete relationships between themes, main codes, and sub-codes are presented in the table below.

It is important to note that the themes listed here do not constitute the final conceptual model. Rather, they represent an exploratory mapping of the data, which was subsequently refined through a process of thematic consolidation, theoretical triangulation, and cross-traditional synthesis. This refinement process is discussed in detail in the Results section of Chapter 4, culminating in the hierarchical dimensions presented in Table 14 and Figure 2.

The inclusion of this appendix is intended to provide transparency regarding the analytic process and to allow interested readers to trace the development of the Buddhist Religiosity Scale (BRS-22) from its conceptual origins in participant narratives.

Inductive Themes, Main Codes, and Sub-codes

Themes (*Description*)	Main Codes	Sub-codes
Embodiments as a sign of accomplishments (*Internal activities not visible to others but emanated in behaviors and thoughts. A vibe that Buddhists give to the others, internalized belief and behaviors.*)	• Bodhisattva path • Analytical and Rational • Inclusivity • Reduction in Greed, Anger, and Ignorance • Introspective • Brahma-Vihara • Non-harming • Non-attachment • Emotional calmness and Mental Clarity • Sowing Seeds of Goodness • Present moment focused • Transcend Fear • Self-less • Optimistic	• Compassion & Loving-kindness
Buddhism Core – The most fundamental (*What is the core of Buddhism that sets it*	• Nirvana / Cessation of Suffering / Liberation from Samsara • Not Buddhism • Uniqueness of Buddhism • Happiness	

apart from other religions?)	• Renunciation from the world	
Spectrum of Buddhists (*Who is a Buddhist? How should Buddhists be classified?*)	• Intentionality / Motivation of becoming a Buddhist • New Buddhism • Problem with Buddhist Label • Incomplete refuge • Casual Buddhists • Formally Buddhist	• Body Speech Mind • Secular Buddhists • Radical/Engaged Buddhism • Religiousness Spectrum • Unreligious Buddhists • Bodhicitta
Cultural elements need to be separated from Dharma teaching (*Aspects of Buddhism that are culturally specific*)	• Bonding • Adaptation • Attire and customs • Vegetarianism • "Hilltopism"/Sectarianism	• Rituals • Skillful Means
Buddhist Beliefs (*What do Buddhists need to believe in?*)	• Four Noble Truth • Rebirth / Reincarnation • Meaning of Triple Gem • Rationality over Emotionality • Faith in Buddhism • Basic Doctrinal Knowledge • Buddha Nature • Precept Concentration Wisdom • Ultimate goals • Five Powers	• Karma • No-self • Impermanence • Dependent Origination • Emptiness • Causality / Karma • Middle Path • Non-duality • Six paramitas • Three Dharma Seals • Five Aggregates
Buddhist Behaviors / Practices (*Behaviors expected of Buddhists*)	• Listening, Contemplating, Practicing • Noble Eightfold Path • The Three Studies being the Approach	• Precepts / Good Deeds / Ethics / Morality • Concentration/Contemplation • Prajna / Panna / Wisdom

	• External Behaviors	• Generosity • Behaviors alone not sufficient • Recitations and prostrations • Collective practice not a must but with benefits
Belonging (*The need to belong for the sense of identity being a Buddhist*)	• Congressional affiliation • Unity beyond denominations • Group practice only to enhance practice	

Appendix E: Scale Validation Questionnaire – Exploratory Factor Analysis

Buddhist Religiosity Scale Validation

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title of Study: Validation of Buddhist Religiosity Scale

Researcher: Barry Tse
Contact Information: Tel: + , Email: barry.tse@my.jcu.edu.au

Primary Advisor: A/P Jonathan Ramsay
Contact Information: Tel: , Email: jonathan.ramsay@jcu.edu.au

You are being invited to participate in a research study conducted by James Cook University, Singapore, aiming to develop a Buddhist Religiosity Scale. This scale will measure the level of religiosity among individuals who follow Buddhism, adhere to Buddhist teachings, or incorporate Buddhist principles into their way of life. Before deciding whether to participate, it is important that you understand the study's purpose, procedures, and potential risks and benefits. Please read the following information carefully and ask any questions you may have before making your decision.

Purpose of the Study:
The purpose of this research is to validate a Buddhist Religiosity Scale that assesses the religiosity level of individuals who identify with Buddhism, follow its teachings, or consider Buddhist principles to be integral to their way of life.

Participant Eligibility:
You have been invited to take part in this study because you identify as a Buddhist, follow Buddhist teachings, or consider Buddhist principles to be integral to your way of life.

Voluntary Participation:
Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You are not obligated to participate, and your decision will not affect your relationship with James Cook University or any affiliated parties. You may withdraw from the study at any time without providing a reason and without facing any negative consequences.

Study Procedures:
If you choose to participate, you will complete a survey designed to evaluate your level of Buddhist religiosity. The survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Your responses will be collected electronically, and stored securely on a password-protected computer and university data depository. Only authorised researchers will have access to the data. The collected data will be anonymous, and no personally identifiable information will be requested in the survey.

Risks and Benefits:
Participation in this study involves minimal to no risks. The information you provide is confidential and will not be linked to your identity. While there are no immediate benefits to you, your participation will contribute to the development of a valuable tool for assessing Buddhist religiosity.

Confidentiality & Data Usage:
Your responses will be anonymous. Data will be securely stored for a minimum of five years, and may

be shared with other researchers and/or made publicly available. This is to enable further research on related topics.

Publication and Results:
The study's results may be published in academic journals or used for further research. Your identity will remain anonymous in any publications or reports arising from this study. If you are interested in the results of the study, you can contact the principal investigator by e-mail and request a summary of the results.

Withdrawal:
You are free to withdraw from the study at any point during the survey without providing a reason. Incomplete surveys will be excluded from the overall analysis. However, participants who withdraw from the study after the data has been submitted would not be able to have their data withdrawn due to the anonymous nature of the study.

Funding:
James Cook University financially funds this research study.

Ethics Approval:
This study is approved by the James Cook University Human Research Ethics Committee with the approval number H9272.

Contacts:
If you have questions about the study, you can contact the Principal Investigator, Barry Tse, or any of the advisors listed below. Additionally, if you have concerns about the study's ethical conduct, you can contact the Human Ethics Officer at James Cook University.

Principal Investigator: Barry Tse
Primary Advisor: A/P Jonathan Ramsay
Secondary Advisor: Dr. Kaiqin Chan
Secondary Advisor: A/P Frederick Low
Advisor Mentor: A/P Denise Dillon

Ethics Contact: Human Ethics Officer, Research Office James Cook University, Townsville, Qld, 4811
Phone: (07) 4781 5011 Email: ethics@jcu.edu.au

Hotlines for Support:
In the unlikely event that you experience any unforeseen distress while completing the survey, you can reach out to the following hotlines for assistance:

China:	Lifeline Hotline	400 821 1215
Hong Kong:	Caritas 24-Hour Crisis Line	18288
Malaysia:	Befrienders	03 7627 2929
Singapore:	The Samaritans of Singa	1800 221 4444
Taiwan:	Taiwan Suicide Prevention Center Hotline	0800 788 995

Participant Agreement
By proceeding to the survey questions, I confirm that I have read the provided Participant Information Sheet, understand its contents, and voluntarily agree to participate in the study titled "Validation of Buddhist Religiosity Scale" conducted by James Cook University, Singapore. I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary, and I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without providing a reason and without facing any negative consequences.

Please select the appropriate option to indicate your agreement or non-agreement to participate in the study. Your response will be recorded and treated as your digital signature.

Informed Consent:

YES, I agree	1	
NO, I don't agree	2	Terminate

SCREENING QUESTIONS

S1 What is your current age? (Please enter numeric number)

_____ [Terminate if <18]

S2 Which of the following statements BEST describe your relationship with Buddhism?

I took refuge officially to become a Buddhis	1	
I consider myself a Buddhist but have not taken official refuge	2	
I do not consider myself a Buddhist but I subscribe to some of the Dharma teachings	3	Terminate
I am not a Buddhist and do not subscribe to anything related to Buddhism	4	Terminate

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

D1 Which of the following Buddhist schools has influenced you the most?

Theravada	1	
Mahayana	2	
Vajrayana	3	
Non-sectarian	4	
Secular (non-religion Buddhism)	5	
Don't know / Rather not say	6	

D2 Please indicate your current place of residence:

China (Mainland)	1	Quota n=100
Hong Kong	2	Quota n=100
Taiwan	3	Quota n=100
Malaysia	4	Quota n=100
Singapore	5	Quota n=100

D3 Please indicate your gender

Male	1	
Female	2	
Non-binary / third gender	3	
Prefer not to say	4	

MAIN QUESTIONNAIRE

DICTATOR GAME

Q1 Suppose you have been allotted $1,000 in your local currency. You can share this amount with a charity organization. Please choose the amount of money that you would send to this charity organization. You can select any amount between $0 and $1,000 in $1 increments.

How much would you send to this charity? (Please enter a whole number.)
_____

BUDDHIST RELIGIOSITY SCALE

Q2-1 Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements using 1 to 7, where 1 indicates “Strongly disagree” and 7 indicates “Strongly agree”. You can choose any number in between including 1 and 7:

1. Strongly disagree	2. Disagree	3. Somewhat disagree	4. Neither agree nor disagree	5. Somewhat agree	6. Agree	7. Strongly agree

I consistently embody compassion / loving-kindness in my interactions with others.	1	
I actively engage in analytical and rational thinking to deepen my understanding of Buddhist teachings.	2	
I am open-minded and inclusive, embracing diversity and accepting others as they are.	3	
I regularly engage in introspection to cultivate self-awareness and insight into my thoughts and emotions.	4	
I have made significant progress in reducing greed, hatred, and ignorance in my thoughts and actions.	5	
I regularly practice the Four Immeasurables (Brahmavihara) of loving-kindness, compassion, empathetic joy, and equanimity.	6	
I am committed to living a life of non-harming, seeking to minimize harm to all living beings.	7	
I have developed a healthy sense of non-attachment, recognizing the impermanence of all things.	8	
I frequently experience calmness and mental clarity through meditation and mindfulness practices.	9	
I consistently strive to remain present in the moment / being mindful in all activities.	10	
I embody selflessness by placing the needs of others before my own.	11	
I believe in the potential for positive change and growth in all things.	12	
I actively extend compassion and loving-kindness to myself, recognizing the importance of self-care.	13	
I regularly practice letting go of attachments to material possessions, relationships, and expectations.	14	
I cultivate a sense of inner peace and contentment through my practice.	15	

Q2-2 Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements using 1 to 7, where 1 indicates “Strongly disagree” and 7 indicates “Strongly agree”. You can choose any number in between including 1 and 7:

1. Strongly disagree	2. Disagree	3. Somewhat disagree	4. Neither agree nor disagree	5. Somewhat agree	6. Agree	7. Strongly agree

I am strongly motivated to cultivate wisdom in order to achieve liberation/enlightenment.	1	
I have a sincere intention to practice meditation as a means to alleviate suffering to achieve inner peace.	2	
I am committed to developing compassion and loving-kindness towards all beings as part of my chosen path.	3	
I strongly believe in the importance of ethical conduct and strive to live a morally upright life.	4	
I am dedicated to studying and reflecting on the teachings of the Buddha to deepen my understanding of the path to liberation/enlightenment.	5	
I have a genuine aspiration to let go of attachments and desires that cause suffering and hindrances in my life.	6	
I am willing to engage in selfless service and contribute to the welfare of others as part of my practice.	7	
I feel a deep sense of gratitude towards the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, and recognize their role in guiding me towards liberation/enlightenment.	8	
I am open to continuously learning and growing on my spiritual journey, seeking guidance from qualified teachers and spiritual mentors.	9	
I am committed to integrating the principles of Buddhism into all aspects of my life, including work, relationships, and daily activities.	10	

Q2-3 Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements using 1 to 7, where 1 indicates “Strongly disagree” and 7 indicates “Strongly agree”. You can choose any number in between including 1 and 7:

1. Strongly disagree	2. Disagree	3. Somewhat disagree	4. Neither agree nor disagree	5. Somewhat agree	6. Agree	7. Strongly agree

I believe that everything in the world is impermanent and subject to change.	1	
I agree that there is no permanent, unchanging self or soul.	2	
I understand and accept the concept of dependent origination, where everything arises due to interdependent causes and conditions.	3	
I believe not all our actions have consequences and shape our present and future experiences.	4	
I agree that ultimate reality is characterized by emptiness, that all phenomena lack inherent existence or substantiality.	5	
I don't believe in the idea of rebirth or consciousness continues beyond death and takes on new forms in subsequent lives.	6	
I understand the significance and meaning of the Triple Gem, consisting of the Buddha, the Dharma (teachings), and the Sangha (community).	7	
I agree with the Four Noble Truths, that life is characterized by suffering, suffering arises from craving and attachment, there is a way to end suffering, and the Noble Eightfold Path leads to the cessation of suffering.	8	
I understand that liberation and enlightenment are possible through practicing concentration, mindfulness, and cultivating wisdom and compassion.	9	
I believe in accepting teachings without questioning them.	10	
I value received knowledge and teachings over personally testifying.	11	
I believe in the importance of discerning between right and wrong based on ethical principles rather than blind faith.	12	
I consider the intentions and consequences of actions to be crucial in determining their moral worth.	13	
I believe that external authorities should have the final say in making decisions.	14	

Q2-4 Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements using 1 to 7, where 1 indicates “Strongly disagree” and 7 indicates “Strongly agree”. You can choose any number in between including 1 and 7:

1. Strongly disagree	2. Disagree	3. Somewhat disagree	4. Neither agree nor disagree	5. Somewhat agree	6. Agree	7. Strongly agree

My physical actions will result in consequences corresponding to the level of wholesomeness and unwholesomeness of these actions.	1	
I find it very hard to refrain from lying, harsh speech, divisive speech, and idle talk.	2	
As long as we have behaved wholesomely, it does not matter if I have some unwholesome thoughts.	3	
I have made progress gaining deeper insight into the nature of existence, suffering, arising of suffering, cessation of suffering and the path to the cessation of suffering.	4	
I am actively aligning my thoughts and motivations with compassion, non-harming, and renunciation.	5	
I am consistently using words that are truthful, kind, and beneficial to myself and others.	6	
I am making efforts to refrain from harmful behaviours such as killing, stealing, and engaging in sexual misconduct.	7	
I am dedicated to earning a living via means that is ethical and wholesome.	8	
I am actively working on applying sustained effort to let go of unwholesome states and develop wholesome qualities.	9	
I am making progress in cultivating present-moment awareness and a non-judgmental observation of my experiences.	10	
I am consistently developing a focused and tranquil mind through meditation and mental absorption practices.	11	

Q2-5 Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements using 1 to 7, where 1 indicates “Strongly disagree” and 7 indicates “Strongly agree”. You can choose any number in between including 1 and 7:

1. Strongly disagree	2. Disagree	3. Somewhat disagree	4. Neither agree nor disagree	5. Somewhat agree	6. Agree	7. Strongly agree

Adhering to precepts and moral disciplines has helped me refrain from committing unwholesome acts and thoughts.	1	
I have been meditating regularly using the methods I have been taught.	2	
I am able to see through complexity with mental clarity. (3)	3	
I just practice without needing to learn about the dharma teaching behind it.	4	
One needs to memorize and recite sutras and the meaning will show itself when the time is right.	5	
I have been putting what I learned about dharma into my daily life.	6	

NON-ATTACHMENT SCALE (NAS-7)

Q3 To help us understand your general approach to life and your views about yourself, others, and life in general, tell us the extent to which the following statements reflect your experiences at this point in your life. Select a number from 1 to 6 on the scale provided with each statement to

rate the extent to which you agree with it. Please answer according to what really reflects your experience rather than what you think your experience should be.

1. Disagree Strongly	2. Disagree Moderately	3. Disagree Slightly	4. Agree Slightly	5. Agree Moderately	6. Agree Strongly

I can let go of regrets and feelings of dissatisfaction about the past.	1	
I can enjoy pleasant experiences without needing them to last forever.	2	
I view the problems that enter my life as things/issues to work on rather than reasons for becoming disheartened or demoralized.	3	
I can enjoy my family and friends without feeling I need to hang on to them.	4	
I can take joy in others' achievements without feeling envious.	5	
I do not get "hung up" on wanting an "ideal" or "perfect" life.	6	
When pleasant experiences end, I am fine moving on to what comes next.	7	

CENTRALITY OF BUDDHIST RELIGIOSITY SCALE (CBRS)

Q4-1 Please respond to the following questions according to your personal perception of "Buddha" or "Bodhisattva".

1. Not at all	2. Not very much	3. Moderately	4. Quite a bit	5. Very much so

How much do you believe in Buddha and Bodhisattvas?	1	
How much do you believe in reincarnation?	2	
How much do you believe in freedom from samsara?	3	

Q4-2 Please respond to the following questions according to your personal perception of "Buddha" or "Bodhisattva".

1. Never	2. Less Often	3. Few Times a Year	4. Once to Three Times a Month	5. Once a Week	6. More Than Once a Week

How often do you practice Buddhism?	1	
How important is Buddhist practice for you?	2	
How important is the Buddhist Sangha for you?	3	

Q4-3 Please respond to the following questions according to your personal perception of "Buddha" or "Bodhisattva".

1. Never	2. Less Often	3. Few Times a Year	4. Once to Three	5. Once a Week	6.	7. Once a Day	8.

			Times a Month		More Than Once a Week		Several Times a Day

How often do you pray, chant or meditate?	1	
How important are chanting, praying and / or meditation for you?	2	
How often do you pray to Buddha or practice meditation in daily events?	3	

Q4-4 Please respond to the following questions according to your personal perception of "Buddha" or "Bodhisattva".

1. Never	2. Rarely	3. Occasionally	4. Often	5. Very Often

How often do you think about Buddhism?	1	
How often do you experience events that make you feel that Buddha and Bodhisattvas are present in your life?	2	
How often do you study Buddhist subjects?	3	
How often do you feel that you are connected to Buddha and Bodhisattvas?	4	
How often do you study Buddhist subjects via radio, television, books and magazines, internet, and / or CD?	5	
How often do you feel Buddha and Bodhisattvas surrounding you?	6	

DEGREES OF BELIEF IN GOD SCALE (DBIGS)

Q5 Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following Statements

0. Disagree	1. Agree

I believe Buddha/Bodhisattva is almighty.	1	
I believe Buddha/Bodhisattva gives life meaning.	2	
I believe Buddha/Bodhisattva is my protection.	3	
I believe Buddha/Bodhisattva makes justice prevail.	4	
We ordinary beings need Buddha/Bodhisattva's redemption from our unwholesome karma.	5	
I believe Buddha/Bodhisattva is our salvation from trouble and danger.	6	

RELIGIOUS MEANING SCALE (RMS)

Q6 Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements on the scale below.

1.	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5.

Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree

The goals of my life grow out of my understanding of Buddha/Bodhisattva.	1	
When I lose touch with Buddha/Bodhisattva, I have a harder time feeling that there is purpose and meaning in life.	2	
My mission in life is guided/shaped by my faith in Buddha/Bodhisattva.	3	
My purpose in life reflects what I believe Buddha/Bodhisattva wants for me.	4	
Buddha/Bodhisattva plays a role in how I choose my path in life.	5	

SATISFACTION WITH LIFE SCALE (SWLS)

Q7 Below are five statements that you may agree or disagree with. Using the 1 - 7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by placing the appropriate number on the line preceding that item. Please be open and honest in your responding.

1. Strongly disagree	2. Disagree	3. Slightly disagree	4. Neither agree nor disagree	5. Slightly agree	6. Agree	7. Strongly agree

In most ways my life is close to my ideal.	1	
The conditions of my life are excellent.	2	
I am satisfied with my life.	3	
So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.	4	
If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.	5	

GAD-7

Q8 Please read each statement and select from "Not at all" to "Nearly every day" to indicate how much the statement applied to you over the **past two weeks**.

0. None at all	1. Several days	2. More than half the days	3. Nearly everyday

Feeling nervous, anxious or on edge.	1	
Not being able to stop or control worrying.	2	
Worrying too much about different things.	3	
Trouble relaxing.	4	
Being so restless that it is hard to sit still.	5	
Becoming easily annoyed or irritable.	6	
Feeling afraid as if something awful might happen.	7	

END OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Buddhist Religiosity Scale Validation (Simplified Chinese)

参与者信息和知情同意书

研究题目： 佛教宗教性量表验证

研究员： Barry Tse
联系方式： 电话 ，电子邮件：barry.tse@my.jcu.edu.au

主导师： Jonathan Ramsay 副教授
联系方式： 电话 ，电子邮件：jonathan.ramsay@jcu.edu.au

欢迎您参与由新加坡詹姆斯库克大学进行的研究，旨在开发佛教宗教性量表。此量表将测量那些遵循佛教、秉持佛教教义或将佛教原则融入生活方式的个体的宗教性水平。在决定是否参与之前，了解研究的目的、程序以及可能的风险和益处非常重要。请仔细阅读以下信息，并在做出决定前提出任何问题。

研究目的：
本研究的目的是验证一种佛教宗教性量表，该量表用于评估那些认同佛教、遵循佛教教义或认为佛教原则对他们的生活方式至关重要的个体的宗教性水平。

参与者资格：
您受邀参与本研究，是因为您自认为是佛教徒，遵循佛教教义，或将佛教原则视为您生活方式的重要组成部分。

自愿参与：
参与本研究完全是自愿的。您的参与并非必需，您的决定不会影响您与詹姆斯库克大学或任何附属机构的关系。您可以随时退出研究，无需提供理由，也不会面临任何负面后果。

研究流程：
如果您选择参与，您将完成一个调查问卷，旨在评估您的佛教宗教性水平。本问卷大概需要 20 分钟来完成。您的回答将以电子方式收集，并安全存储在受密码保护的计算机和大学数据存储库中。只有授权的研究人员能够访问这些数据。所收集的数据皆为匿名，调查问卷中不会包含索取任何个人身份信息。

风险和利益：
参与本研究几乎不涉及任何风险。您提供的信息是机密的，不会与您的身份关联。虽然对您来说没有即时的好处，但您的参与将有助于开发一种有价值的工具，用于评估佛教宗教性。

保密性与数据用途：
您的回答将是匿名。个人身份信息不会与您的调查问卷回答一起存储。数据将安全存储最少五年，期间可能与其他研究人员分享数据或被被设作公开数据，目的为促进更多的相关学术研究。

出版与结果：
本研究的结果可能会在学术期刊上发表或用于进一步的研究。您的身份将在任何从本研究中产生的出版物或报告中保持匿名。如若您对研究结果由兴趣，请通过电邮联系主试以索取研究结果摘要。

退出：
您可以随时在问卷回答过程中选择退出，无需提供理由。未完成的访谈将从总体分析中排除。但一旦问卷被提交，因为本次问卷的匿名性质，我们将无法删除问卷。

资金：
詹姆斯库克大学为本次研究提供资金。

伦理审核：
本此研究获得詹姆斯库克大学人类研究伦理委员会的批准，伦理批准号为：H9272

联系方式：
如果您对研究有疑问，您可以联系主要研究员 Barry Tse，或下方列出的任何导师。另外，如果您对研究的道德行为有疑虑，您可以联系詹姆斯库克大学的人类伦理官员。

主试： Barry Tse
主导师： Jonathan Ramsay 副教授
次导师： Kaiqin Chan 博士
次导师： Frederick Low 副教授
顾问导师： Denise Dillon 副教授

伦理联系： 人类伦理官员，研究办公室 詹姆斯库克大学，昆士兰州 Townsville，邮编 4811
电话：(07) 4781 5011 电子邮件：ethics@jcu.edu.au

支持热线： 在极低机率的情况下，如果您在完成调查时遇到任何困扰，您可以联系以下热线寻求帮助：

中国：	Lifeline 热线	400 821 1215
香港：	明爱 24 小时危机热线	18288
马来西亚：	Befrienders	03 7627 2929
新加坡：	新加坡撒玛利亚人协会	1800 221 4444
台湾：	台湾自杀防治中心热线	0800 788 995

参与者同意书：
继续进行调查问卷，我确认我已阅读所提供的参与者信息和同意书，理解其内容，并自愿同意参与由新加坡詹姆斯库克大学进行的题为“佛教宗教性量表验证”的研究。我明白我的参与完全是自愿的，我有权在任何时候退出研究，无需提供理由，也不会面临任何负面后果。 请选择适当的选项，以表示您是否同意参与本研究。您的回答将被记录，并作为您的数字签名处理。

知情同意：

我同意	1	
我不同意	2	终结

SCREENING QUESTIONS

S1 您现在的年龄是多少？ (请输入数字)

_____ [如小于 18，终结]

S2 以下哪种说法最恰当地描述了您与佛教的关系？

我是已正式皈依的佛教徒	1	
我认为自己是一名佛教徒，但尚未正式皈依	2	
我并不认为自己是佛教徒，但我赞同佛法的一些教导	3	终结
我不是佛教徒，也不信奉任何与佛教有关的东西	4	终结

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

D1 以下哪个佛教传统对您影响最大？

上座部 / 南传	1	
大乘	2	
密宗 / 金刚乘	3	
非派别	4	
世俗 （非宗教佛法）	5	
不清楚 / 不愿透露	6	

D2 请注明您目前的居住地：

中国（大陆）	1	配额 n=100
香港/澳门	2	配额 n=100
台湾	3	配额 n=100
马来西亚	4	配额 n=100
新加坡	5	配额 n=100

D3 请注明您的性别

男性	1	
女性	2	
非二元/第三性别	3	
不愿透露	4	

MAIN QUESTIONNAIRE

DICTATOR GAME

Q1 假设你获得了您所在地的货币价值 1000 元。你可以把这笔钱捐给一个慈善机构。请选择您要捐给该慈善组织的金额。您可以选择 0 到 1,000 元之间的任何金额，以 1 元为增量。您将向该慈善机构捐赠多少钱？(请输入整数）

_____

BUDDHIST RELIGIOSITY SCALE

Q2-1 请用 1-7 表示您对以下陈述的同意程度，其中 1 表示 "非常不同意"，7 表示 "非常同意"。您可以选择 1 和 7 之间的任何数字：

1. 非常不同意	2. 不同意	3. 有点不同意	4. 既不同意也不反对	5. 有点同意	6. 同意	7. 非常同意

我在与他人互动时始终体现慈悲。	1	
我积极参与分析和理性思考，以加深对佛教教义的理解。	2	
我心态开放、包容多样性，接纳他人的原貌。	3	
我经常内省，培养自我觉察和对自己的思惟和感受的洞悉力。	4	
我已经在思想和行为中显著减少了贪嗔痴。	5	
我经常修持四无量心（四梵住），即慈、悲、喜、舍。	6	
我致力于过着不伤害生命的生活，努力将伤害降至最低。	7	
我已经养成了对万事无执的健康心态，认识到一切无常。	8	
通过禅修和正念修行，我经常体验到内心的平和及清明。	9	
我始终努力保持活在当下，在行住坐卧中保持觉察。	10	
我置他人的需求于自己之前来体会无我。	11	
我相信万物皆能变善和成长。	12	
我积极地以慈悲待己，认识到自我关怀的重要性。	13	
我经常修行如何放下对于物质财富、人际关系以及期望的执着。	14	
我通过修行培养内心的祥和及知足。	15	

Q2-2 请用 1-7 表示您对以下陈述的同意程度，其中 1 表示 "非常不同意"，7 表示 "非常同意"。您可以选择 1 和 7 之间的任何数字：

1. 非常不同意	2. 不同意	3. 有点不同意	4. 既不同意也不反对	5. 有点同意	6. 同意	7. 非常同意

我坚信需要修慧以获解脱/彻悟。	1	
我真诚期望能通过禅修来实现灭苦和内心祥和。	2	
我决定以对一切众生起慈心与悲心作为我所选择道路一部分。	3	
我坚信道德行为的重要性，并努力过着道德高尚的生活。	4	
我致力于学习和思考佛陀的教诲，以加深对解脱/彻悟之路的理解。	5	
我真心渴望放下那些给我的生活带来痛苦和阻碍的执念和欲望。	6	
作为我修行的一部分，我愿意无私奉献，为他人的福祉做出贡献。	7	
我对佛、法、僧深怀感恩之情，意识到它们在引导我走向解脱/彻悟的道路上的作用。	8	
我愿意在我的修行旅程中不断地学习和成长，寻求具格的导师和灵性指导。	9	
我致力于将佛教教导融入我生活的方方面面，包括工作、人际关系和日常活动。	10	

Q2-3 请用 1-7 表示您对以下陈述的同意程度，其中 1 表示 "非常不同意"，7 表示 "非常同意"。您可以选择 1 和 7 之间的任何数字：

1. 非常不同意	2. 不同意	3. 有点不同意	4. 既不同意也不反对	5. 有点同意	6. 同意	7. 非常同意

我相信世间万物都是无常的，都会经历变化。	1	
我同意没有一个永恒、不变的自我或灵魂存在。	2	
我理解并接受缘起的概念，一切都是由相互依存的因果条件引起的。	3	
我相信并非我们所有的行为都会产生后果，塑造我们当前和未来的体验。	4	
我同意终极现实的特点是空性，一切现象皆无自性或实体性。	5	
我不相信轮回的观念，或心识在死亡后继续存在，并在后续生命中以新的形式出现。	6	
我理解三宝的重要性和意义，这包括佛、法（教义）和僧（僧团）。	7	
我同意四圣谛的教义，即人生以苦为特征，苦源于渴求和执着，有方法可以灭苦，而八正道是灭苦之道。	8	
我理解通过修习止与观，以及培养慧力和慈悲，解脱和彻悟是可能的。	9	
我相信无条件接受教义而不需质疑教义。	10	
我重视所接收到的知识和教诲，而不是去亲自体证。	11	
我相信根据道德原则来辨别是非的重要性，而不是盲信。	12	
我认为行为的作意和后果在决定道德价值时至关重要。	13	
我认为外部权威应该在做出决定时拥有最终话语权。	14	

Q2-4 请用 1-7 表示您对以下陈述的同意程度，其中 1 表示 "非常不同意"，7 表示 "非常同意"。您可以选择 1 和 7 之间的任何数字：

1. 非常不同意	2. 不同意	3. 有点不同意	4. 既不同意也不反对	5. 有点同意	6. 同意	7. 非常同意

我的身行将招致与其善恶相对应的果报。	1	
我发现很难克制自己不妄语、恶口、两舌和绮语。	2	
只要我们的身行是善行，那么我是否有一些恶念则并不重要。	3	
我对存在的本质、苦、苦的生成、苦的止息以及灭苦之道有了更深入的了解。	4	
我积极调适心念，使之符合悲悯、无害和出离的动机。	5	
我始终使用诚实语、和善语、以及自利利他的言辞。	6	
我正在努力不犯如杀、盗、淫等恶行。	7	
我致力于通过道德以及善的方式谋生。	8	
我正在积极并持续努力来摆脱不善的状态，培养善的本质。	9	
我正在努力培养当下的觉知，并以非批判的方式觉察我的体验。	10	
我始终通过修习禅定来达到专注及平和的心。	11	

Q2-5 请用 1-7 表示您对以下陈述的同意程度，其中 1 表示 "非常不同意"，7 表示 "非常同意"。您可以选择 1 和 7 之间的任何数字：

1. 非常不同意	2. 不同意	3. 有点不同意	4. 既不同意也不反对	5. 有点同意	6. 同意	7. 非常同意

持戒和遵守道德规范帮助我止息恶行与恶思惟。	1	
我常依所学法门修习禅定。	2	
我能以清明之心看透繁杂之事。	3	
我只修习所学而无需学习了解背后的法义。	4	
佛经只需通背诵念，其意义在适当时候自然会显现。	5	
我不断地将我所学的佛法应用到我的日常生活中。	6	

NON-ATTACHMENT SCALE (NAS-7)

Q3 为了帮助我们了解您的总体生活态度以及您对自己、他人和整个生活的看法，请告诉我们以下陈述在多大程度上反映了您目前的生活经历。请在每项陈述所提供的量表上选择 1 到 6 的数字，以表示您同意该陈述的程度。请根据真正反映您经历的内容而不是您认为您应该经历的内容作答。

1. 非常不同意	2. 比较不同意	3. 稍微不同意	4. 稍微同意	5. 比较同意	6. 非常同意

对于过去发生的不满和遗憾，我可以释怀。	1	
我能够享受，并把握当下喜悦的感受。	2	
我把生活中的问题当作是需要积极处理的事，而不是让我沮丧难过的事。	3	
我欣赏并喜欢我的家人和朋友，但并不觉得我必须抓住他们不放。	4	
我能为别人的成就感到喜悦，而不会觉得羡慕。	5	
我不固执于不停的追求理想或完美的人生。	6	
当愉快的经验结束时，我可以好好地继续过日子。	7	

CENTRALITY OF BUDDHIST RELIGIOSITY SCALE (CBRS)

Q4-1 请跟据个人对于「佛」或「菩萨」的观感来回应以下题目。

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
完全不重要	不太重要	适当	颇为重要	非常重要

您在多大程度上相信佛、菩萨？	1	
您有多大程度相信轮回转世之说？	2	
您有多大程度相信能从娑婆解脱？	3	

Q4-2 请跟据个人对于「佛」或「菩萨」的观感来回应以下题目。

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
从不	甚少	一年几次	每月一至三次	每周一次	每周多于一次

您多久参修行一次？	1	
您认为佛教修行有多重要？	2	
对您而言，佛教僧团有多重要？	3	

Q4-3 请跟据个人对于「佛」或「菩萨」的观感来回应以下题目。

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.
从不	甚少	一年几次	每个月一至三次	每周一次	每周多于一次	每天一次	每天多次

您多久祈愿，唱诵或者打坐冥想一次？	1	
对您而言，诵念，祈愿与/或打坐冥想有多重要？	2	
在每日里，你有多经常向佛陀祈愿或练习打坐冥想？	3	

Q4-4 请跟据个人对于「佛」或「菩萨」的观感来回应以下题目。

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
从不	甚少	偶尔	时常	经常

您多久思考一次与佛教相关的事情？	1	
您多久经历一次感觉佛菩萨出现在生活中？	2	
您多久学习佛教相关内容一次？	3	
您多久经历一次你与佛菩萨感应道交？	4	
您多久通过媒体（例如电台、电视、书籍杂志、网络、与/或光碟）接收一次有关佛教内容的信息？	5	
您多久一次感应到有佛、菩萨围绕？	6	

DEGREES OF BELIEF IN GOD SCALE (DBIGS)

Q5 请说明您是否同意以下说法：

0. 不同意	1. 同意

我相信佛/菩萨是万能的。	1	
我相信佛/菩萨赋予生命意义。	2	
我相信佛/菩萨保护着我。	3	
我相信佛陀/菩萨使正义得到伸张。	4	
我们凡夫需要佛/菩萨将我们从罪业中救赎。	5	
我相信佛/菩萨是我们摆脱烦恼和危险的拯救者。	6	

RELIGIOUS MEANING SCALE (RMS)

Q6 请在下表中选出您同意或不同意以下声明的程度。

1. 非常不同意	2. 不同意	3. 中立	4. 同意	5. 非常同意

我的人生目标源于我对佛/菩萨的理解。	1	
当我逐渐疏离佛/菩萨时，我就更难感受到人生的目的和意义。	2	
我的人生使命是由我对佛/菩萨的信仰所指引/缔造的。	3	
我的人生目标反映了我认为佛/菩萨对我的期许。	4	
佛/菩萨在我选择人生道路的过程中发挥着作用。	5	

SATISFACTION WITH LIFE SCALE (SWLS)

Q7 请细阅下列五项，并根据在旁 1 至 7 的指标，选上适当的数字，表达你对各项的统一程度。请以开明和城市的态度作答。

1. 非常不同意	2. 不同意	3. 少许不同意	4. 中立	5. 少许同意	6. 同意	7. 非常同意

我的生活大致符合我的理想。	1	
我的生活状况非常圆满。	2	
我满意自己的生活。	3	
直至现在为止，我都能够得到我在生活上希望拥有的重要东西。	4	
如果我能重新活过，差不多没有东西我想改变。	5	

GAD-7

Q8 根据**过去两周**的状况，请您回答是否存在下列描述的状况及频率。

0. 完全不会	1. 好几天	2. 超过一周	3. 几乎每天

感觉紧张，焦虑或急切。	1	
不能够停止或控制担忧。	2	
对各种各样的事情担忧过多。	3	
很难放松下来。	4	
有与不安而无法静坐。	5	
变得容易烦恼或急躁。	6	
感到似乎将有可怕的事情发生而害怕。	7	

问卷结束

Buddhist Religiosity Scale Validation (Traditional Chinese)

參與者資訊和知情同意書

研究題目： 佛教宗教性量表驗證
研究員： Barry Tse
聯絡方式： 電話：+65 6709 3846，電子郵件：barry.tse@my.jcu.edu.au

主導師： Jonathan Ramsay 副教授
聯絡方式： 電話：+65 6709 3739，電子郵件：jonathan.ramsay@jcu.edu.au
歡迎您參與由新加坡詹姆斯庫克大學進行的研究，旨在開發佛教宗教性量表。 此量表將測量那些遵循佛教、秉持佛教教義或將佛教原則融入生活方式的個體的宗教性水準。 在決定是否參與之前，瞭解研究的目的、程式以及可能的風險和益處非常重要。 請仔細閱讀以下資訊，並在做出決定前提出任何問題。

研究目的：
本研究的目的是驗證一種佛教宗教性量表，該量表用於評估那些認同佛教、遵循佛教教義或認為佛教原則對他們的生活方式至關重要的個體的宗教性水準。

參與者資格：
您受邀參與本研究，是因為您自認為是佛教徒，遵循佛教教義，或將佛教原則視為您生活方式的重要組成部分。

自願參與：
參與本研究完全是自願的。 您的參與並非必需，您的決定不會影響您與詹姆斯庫克大學或任何附屬機構的關係。 您可以隨時退出研究，無需提供理由，也不會面臨任何負面後果。

研究流程：
如果您選擇參與，您將完成一個調查問卷，旨在評估您的佛教宗教性水準。 本問卷大概需要 20 分鐘來完成。 您的回答將以電子方式收集，並安全存儲在受密碼保護的計算機和大學數據存儲庫中。 只有授權的研究人員能夠訪問這些數據。 所收集的數據皆為匿名，調查問卷中不會包含索取任何個人身份資訊。

風險和利益：
參與本研究幾乎不涉及任何風險。 您提供的資訊是機密的，不會與您的身份關聯。 雖然對您來說沒有即時的好處，但您的參與將有助於開發一種有價值的工具，用於評估佛教宗教性。

保密性與數據用途：
您的回答將是匿名。 個人身份資訊不會與您的調查問卷回答一起存儲。 數據將安全存儲最少五年，期間可能與其他研究人員分享數據或被被設作公開數據，目的為促進更多的相關學術研究。

出版與結果：
本研究的結果可能會在學術期刊上發表或用於進一步的研究。 您的身份將在任何從本研究中產生的出版物或報告中保持匿名。 如若您對研究結果由興趣，請通過電郵聯繫主試以索取研究結果摘要。

退出：
您可以隨時在問卷回答過程中退出宣告，無需提供理由。 未完成的訪談將從總體分析中排除。但一旦問卷被提交，因為本次問卷的匿名性質，我們將無法刪除問卷。

資金：
詹姆斯庫克大學為本次研究提供資金。

倫理審核：
本此研究獲得詹姆斯庫克大學人類研究倫理委員會的批准，倫理批准號為：H9272

聯繫方式：
如果您對研究有疑問，您可以聯繫主要研究員 Barry Tse，或下方列出的任何導師。 另外，如果您對研究的道德行為有疑慮，您可以聯繫詹姆斯庫克大學的人類倫理官員。

主試： Barry Tse
主導師： Jonathan Ramsay 副教授
次導師： Kaiqin Chan 博士
次導師： Frederick Low 副教授
顧問導師： Denise Dillon 副教授

倫理聯繫： 人類倫理官員，研究辦公室 詹姆斯庫克大學，昆士蘭州 Townsville，郵編 4811 電話：（07） 4781 5011 電子郵件：ethics@jcu.edu.au

支持熱線： 在極低機率的情況下，如果您在完成調查時遇到任何困擾，您可以聯繫以下熱線尋求說明：

中國：	Lifeline 熱線	400 821 1215
香港：	明愛 24 小時危機熱線	18288
馬來西亞：	Befriender	03 7627 2929
新加坡：	新加坡撒瑪利亞人協會	1800 221 4444
臺灣：	台灣自殺防治中心熱線	0800 788 995

參與者同意書：
繼續進行調查問卷，我確認我已閱讀所提供的參與者資訊和同意書，理解其內容，並自願同意參與由新加坡詹姆斯庫克大學進行的題為"佛教宗教性量表驗證"的研究。 我明白我的參與完全是自願的，我有權在任何時候退出研究，無需提供理由，也不會面臨任何負面後果。 請選擇適當的選項，以表示您是否同意參與本研究。 您的回答將被記錄，並作為您的數位簽名處理。

知情同意：

我同意	1	
我不同意	2	終結

篩選問題

S1 您現在的年齡是多少？ （請輸入數位）

_____ [如小於 18，終結]

S2 以下哪種說法最恰當地描述了您與佛教的關係？

我是已正式皈依的佛教徒	1	
我認為自己是一名佛教徒，但尚未正式皈依	2	
我並不認為自己是佛教徒，但我贊同佛法的一些教導	3	終結
我不是佛教徒，也不信奉任何與佛教有關的東西	4	終結

人口統計資訊

D1 以下哪個佛教傳統對您影響最大？

上座部 / 南傳	1	
大乘	2	
密宗 / 金剛乘	3	
非派別	4	
世俗 （非宗教佛法）	5	
不清楚 / 不願透露	6	

D2 請註明您目前的居住地：

中國（大陸）	1	配額 n=100
香港/澳門	2	配額 n=100
臺灣	3	配額 n=100
馬來西亞	4	配額 n=100
新加坡	5	配額 n=100

D3 請註明您的性別

男性	1	
女性	2	
非二元/第三性別	3	
不願透露	4	

主問卷

獨裁者遊戲

Q1 假設你獲得了您所在地的貨幣價值 1000 元。 你可以把這筆錢捐給一個慈善機構。 請選擇您要捐給該慈善組織的金額。 您可以選擇 0 到 1,000 元之間的任何金額，以 1 元為增量。 您將向該慈善機構捐贈多少錢？（請輸入整數）

_____

佛教宗教信仰量表

Q2-1 請用 1-7 表示您對以下陳述的同意程度，其中 1 表示 “非常不同意”，7 表示 “非常同意”。您可以選擇 1 與 7 之間的任何數位：

1. 非常不同意	2. 不同意	3. 有點不同意	4. 既不同意也不反對	5. 有點同意	6. 同意	7. 非常同意

我在與他人互動時始終體現慈悲。	1	
我積极參與分析和理性思考，以加深對佛教教義的理解。	2	
我心態開放、包容多樣性，接納他人的原貌。	3	
我經常內省，培養自我覺察和對自己的思惟和感受的洞悉力。	4	
我已經在思想和行為中顯著減少了貪嗔癡。	5	
我經常修持四無量心（四梵住），即慈、悲、喜、舍。	6	
我致力於過著不傷害生命的生活，努力將傷害降至最低。	7	
我已經養成了對萬事無執的健康心態，認識到一切無常。	8	
通過禪修和正念修行，我經常體驗到內心的平和及清明。	9	
我始終努力保持活在當下，在行住坐臥中保持覺察。	10	
我置他人的需求於自己之前來體會無我。	11	
我相信萬物皆能變善和成長。	12	
我積極地以慈悲待己，認識到自我關懷的重要性。	13	
我經常修行如何放下對於物質財富、人際關係以及期望的執著。	14	
我通過修行培養內心的祥和及知足。	15	

Q2-2 請用 1-7 表示您對以下陳述的同意程度，其中 1 表示 “非常不同意”，7 表示 “非常同意”。您可以選擇 1 與 7 之間的任何數位：

1. 非常不同意	2. 不同意	3. 有點不同意	4. 既不同意也不反對	5. 有點同意	6. 同意	7. 非常同意

我堅信需要修慧以獲解脫/徹悟。	1	
我真誠期望能通過禪修來實現滅苦和內心祥和。	2	
我決定以對一切眾生起慈心與悲心作為我所選擇道路一部分。	3	
我堅信道德行為的重要性，並努力過著道德高尚的生活。	4	
我致力於學習和思考佛陀的教誨，以加深對解脫/徹悟之路的理解。	5	
我真心渴望放下那些給我的生活帶來痛苦和阻礙的執念和慾望。	6	
作為我修行的一部分，我願意無私奉獻，為他人的福祉做出貢獻。	7	
我對佛、法、僧深懷感恩之情，意識到它們在引導我走向解脫/徹悟的道路上的作用。	8	
我願意在我的修行旅程中不斷地學習和成長，尋求具格的導師和靈性指導。	9	
我致力於將佛教教導融入我生活的方方面面，包括工作、人際關係和日常活動。	10	

Q2-3 請用 1-7 表示您對以下陳述的同意程度，其中 1 表示 “非常不同意”，7 表示 “非常同意”。您可以選擇 1 與 7 之間的任何數位：

1. 非常不同意	2. 不同意	3. 有點不同意	4. 既不同意也不反對	5. 有點同意	6. 同意	7. 非常同意

我相信世間萬物都是無常的，都會經歷變化。	1	
我同意沒有一個永恆、不變的自我或靈魂存在。	2	
我理解並接受緣起的概念，一切都是由相互依存的因果條件引起的。	3	
我相信並非我們所有的行為都會產生後果，塑造我們當前和未來的體驗。	4	
我同意終極現實的特點是空性，一切現象皆無自性或實體性。	5	
我不相信輪迴的觀念，或心識在死亡後繼續存在，並在後續生命中以新的形式出現。	6	
我理解三寶的重要性和意義，這包括佛、法（教義）和僧（僧團）。	7	
我同意四聖諦的教義，即人生以苦為特徵，苦源於渴求和執著，有方法可以滅苦，而八正道是滅苦之道。	8	
我理解通過修習止與觀，以及培養慧力和慈悲，解脫和徹悟是可能的。	9	
我相信無條件接受教義而不需質疑教義。	10	
我重視所接收到的知識和教誨，而不是去親自體證。	11	
我相信根據道德原則來辨別是非的重要性，而不是盲信。	12	
我認為行為的作意和後果在決定道德價值時至關重要。	13	
我認為外部權威應該在做出決定時擁有最終話語權。	14	

Q2-4 請用 1-7 表示您對以下陳述的同意程度，其中 1 表示 “非常不同意”，7 表示 “非常同意”。您可以選擇 1 與 7 之間的任何數位：

1. 非常不同意	2. 不同意	3. 有點不同意	4. 既不同意也不反對	5. 有點同意	6. 同意	7. 非常同意

我的身行將招致與其善惡相對應的果報。	1	
我發現很難克制自己不妄語、惡口、兩舌和綺語。	2	
只要我們的身行是善行，那麼我是否有一些惡念則並不重要。	3	
我對存在的本質、苦、苦的生成、苦的止息以及滅苦之道有了更深入的瞭解。	4	
我積極調適心念，使之符合悲憫、無害和出離的動機。	5	
我始終使用誠實語、和善語、以及自利利他的言辭。	6	
我正在努力不犯如殺、盜、淫等惡行。	7	
我致力於通過道德以及善的方式謀生。	8	
我正在積極並持續努力來擺脫不善的狀態，培養善的本質。	9	
我正在努力培養當下的覺知，並以非批判的方式覺察我的體驗。	10	
我始終通過修習禪定來達到專注及平和的心。	11	

Q2-5 請用 1-7 表示您對以下陳述的同意程度，其中 1 表示 “非常不同意”，7 表示 “非常同意”。您可以選擇 1 與 7 之間的任何數位：

1. 非常不同意	2. 不同意	3. 有點不同意	4. 既不同意也不反對	5. 有點同意	6. 同意	7. 非常同意

持戒和遵守道德規範說明我止息惡行與惡思惟。	1	
我常依所學法門修習禪定。	2	
我能以清明之心看透繁雜之事。	3	
我只修習所學而無需學習了解背後的法義。	4	
佛經只需通背誦念，其意義在適當時候自然會顯現。	5	
我不斷地將我所學的佛法應用到我的日常生活中。	6	

不執著量表 （NAS-7）

Q3 為了說明我們瞭解您的總體生活態度以及您對自己、他人和整個生活的看法，請告訴我們以下陳述在多大程度上反映了您目前的生活經歷。 請在每項陳述所提供的量表上選擇 1 到 6 的數位，以表示您同意該陳述的程度。 請根據真正反映您經歷的內容而不是您認為您應該經歷的內容作答。

1. 非常不同意	2. 比較不同意	3. 稍微不同意	4. 稍微同意	5. 比較同意	6. 非常同意

對於過去發生的不滿和遺憾，我可以釋懷。	1	
我能夠享受，並把握當下喜悅的感受。	2	
我把生活中的問題當作是需要積極處理的事，而不是讓我沮喪難過的事。	3	
我欣賞並喜歡我的家人和朋友，但並不覺得我必須抓住他們不放。	4	
我能為別人的成就感到喜悅，而不會覺得羨慕。	5	
我不固執於不停的追求理想或完美的人生。	6	
當愉快的經驗結束時，我可以好好地繼續過日子。	7	

佛教宗教信仰中心性量表 （CBRS）

Q4-1 請跟據個人對於「佛」或「菩薩」的觀感來回應以下題目。

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
完全不重要	不太重要	適當	頗為重要	非常重要

您在多大程度上相信佛、菩薩?	1	
您有多大程度相信輪迴轉世之說?	2	
您有多大程度相信能從娑婆解脫?	3	

Q4-2 請跟據個人對於「佛」或「菩薩」的觀感來回應以下題目。

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
從不	甚少	一年幾次	每月一至三次	每週一次	每周多於一次

您多久參修行一次?	1	
您認為佛教修行有多重要?	2	
對您而言，佛教僧團有多重要?	3	

Q4-3 請跟據個人對於「佛」或「菩薩」的觀感來回應以下題目。

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.
從不	甚少	一年幾次	每個月一至三次	每週一次	每周多於一次	每天一次	每天多次

您多久祈願，唱誦或者打坐冥想一次?	1	
對您而言，誦念，祈願與/或打坐冥想有多重要?	2	
在每日里，你有多經常向佛陀祈願或練習打坐冥想?	3	

Q4-4 請跟據個人對於「佛」或「菩薩」的觀感來回應以下題目。

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
從不	甚少	偶爾	時常	經常

您多久思考一次與佛教相關的事情？	1	
您多久經歷一次感覺佛菩薩出現在生活中？	2	
您多久學習佛教相關內容一次？	3	
您多久經歷一次你與佛菩薩感應道交？	4	
您多久通過媒體（例如電臺、電視、書籍雜誌、網路、與/或光碟）接收一次有關佛教內容的資訊？	5	
您多久一次感應到有佛、菩薩圍繞？	6	

信仰上帝程度量表 （DBIGS）

Q5 請說明您是否同意以下說法：

0. 不同意	1. 同意

我相信佛/菩薩是萬能的。	1	
我相信佛/菩薩賦予生命意義。	2	
我相信佛/菩薩保護著我。	3	
我相信佛陀/菩薩使正義得到伸張。	4	
我們凡夫需要佛/菩薩將我們從罪業中救贖。	5	
我相信佛/菩薩是我們擺脫煩惱和危險的拯救者。	6	

宗教意義量表 （RMS）

Q6 請在下表中選出您同意或不同意以下聲明的程度。

1. 非常不同意	2. 不同意	3. 中立	4. 同意	5. 非常同意

我的人生目標源於我對佛/菩薩的理解。	1	
當我逐漸疏離佛/菩薩時，我就更難感受到人生的目的和意義。	2	
我的人生使命是由我對佛/菩薩的信仰所指引/締造的。	3	
我的人生目標反映了我認為佛/菩薩對我的期許。	4	
佛/菩薩在我選擇人生道路的過程中發揮著作用。	5	

生活滿意度量表 （SWLS）

Q7 請細閱下列五項，並根據在旁 1 至 7 的指標，選上適當的數字，表達你對各項的統一程度。 請以開明和城市的態度作答。

1. 非常不同意	2. 不同意	3. 少許不同意	4. 中立	5. 少許同意	6. 同意	7. 非常同意

我的生活大致符合我的理想。	1	
我的生活狀況非常圓滿。	2	
我滿意自己的生活。	3	
直至現在為止，我都能夠得到我在生活上希望擁有的重要東西。	4	
如果我能重新活過，差不多沒有東西我想改變。	5	

GAD-7

Q8 根據過去兩周的狀況，請您回答是否存在下列描述的狀況及頻率。

0. 完全不會	1. 好幾天	2. 超過一周	3. 幾乎每天

感覺緊張，焦慮或急切。	1	
不能夠停止或控制擔憂。	2	
對各種各樣的事情擔憂過多。	3	
很難放鬆下來。	4	
有與不安而無法靜坐	5	
變得容易煩惱或急躁。	6	
感到似乎將有可怕的事情發生而害怕。	7	

問卷結束

Appendix F: Scale Validation Questionnaire – Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Buddhist Religiosity Scale Wave 2

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title of Study: Validation of Buddhist Religiosity Scale

Researcher: Barry Tse
Contact Information: Tel: , Email: barry.tse@my.jcu.edu.au

Primary Advisor: A/P Jonathan Ramsay
Contact Information: Tel: , Email: jonathan.ramsay@jcu.edu.au

You are being invited to participate in a research study conducted by James Cook University, Singapore, aiming to develop a Buddhist Religiosity Scale. This scale will measure the level of religiosity among individuals who follow Buddhism, adhere to Buddhist teachings, or incorporate Buddhist principles into their way of life. Before deciding whether to participate, it is important that you understand the study's purpose, procedures, and potential risks and benefits. Please read the following information carefully and ask any questions you may have before making your decision.

Purpose of the Study:
The purpose of this research is to validate a Buddhist Religiosity Scale that assesses the religiosity level of individuals who identify with Buddhism, follow its teachings, or consider Buddhist principles to be integral to their way of life.

Participant Eligibility:
You have been invited to take part in this study because you identify as a Buddhist, follow Buddhist teachings, or consider Buddhist principles to be integral to your way of life.

Voluntary Participation:
Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You are not obligated to participate, and your decision will not affect your relationship with James Cook University or any affiliated parties. You may withdraw from the study at any time without providing a reason and without facing any negative consequences.

Study Procedures:
If you choose to participate, you will complete a survey designed to evaluate your level of Buddhist religiosity. The survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Your responses will be collected electronically, and stored securely on a password-protected computer and university data depository. Only authorised researchers will have access to the data. The collected data will be anonymous, and no personally identifiable information will be requested in the survey.

Risks and Benefits:
Participation in this study involves minimal to no risks. The information you provide is confidential and will not be linked to your identity. While there are no immediate benefits to you, your participation will contribute to the development of a valuable tool for assessing Buddhist religiosity.

Confidentiality & Data Usage:

Your responses will be anonymous. Data will be securely stored for a minimum of five years, and may be shared with other researchers and/or made publicly available. This is to enable further research on related topics.

Publication and Results:
The study's results may be published in academic journals or used for further research. Your identity will remain anonymous in any publications or reports arising from this study. If you are interested in the results of the study, you can contact the principal investigator by e-mail and request a summary of the results.

Withdrawal:
You are free to withdraw from the study at any point during the survey without providing a reason. Incomplete surveys will be excluded from the overall analysis. However, participants who withdraw from the study after the data has been submitted would not be able to have their data withdrawn due to the anonymous nature of the study.

Funding:
James Cook University financially funds this research study.

Ethics Approval:
This study is approved by the James Cook University Human Research Ethics Committee with the approval number H9272.

Contacts:
If you have questions about the study, you can contact the Principal Investigator, Barry Tse, or any of the advisors listed below. Additionally, if you have concerns about the study's ethical conduct, you can contact the Human Ethics Officer at James Cook University.

Principal Investigator: Barry Tse
Primary Advisor: A/P Jonathan Ramsay
Secondary Advisor: Dr. Kaiqin Chan
Secondary Advisor: A/P Frederick Low
Advisor Mentor: A/P Denise Dillon

Ethics Contact: Human Ethics Officer, Research Office James Cook University, Townsville, Qld, 4811
Phone: (07) 4781 5011 Email: ethics@jcu.edu.au

Hotlines for Support:
In the unlikely event that you experience any unforeseen distress while completing the survey, you can reach out to the following hotlines for assistance:

China:	Lifeline Hotline	400 821 1215
Hong Kong:	Caritas 24-Hour Crisis Line	18288
Malaysia:	Befrienders	03 7627 2929
Singapore:	The Samaritans of Singa	1800 221 4444
Taiwan:	Taiwan Suicide Prevention Center Hotline	0800 788 995

Participant Agreement
By proceeding to the survey questions, I confirm that I have read the provided Participant Information Sheet, understand its contents, and voluntarily agree to participate in the study titled "Validation of Buddhist Religiosity Scale" conducted by James Cook University, Singapore. I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary, and I have the right to withdraw from the

study at any time without providing a reason and without facing any negative consequences.

Please select the appropriate option to indicate your agreement or non-agreement to participate in the study. Your response will be recorded and treated as your digital signature.

Informed Consent:

YES, I agree	1	
NO, I don't agree	2	Terminate

SCREENING QUESTIONS

S1 What is your current age? (Please enter numeric number)

_____ [Terminate if <18]

S2 Which of the following statements BEST describes your relationship with Buddhism?

I took refuge officially to become a Buddhis	1	
I consider myself a Buddhist but have not taken official refuge	2	
I do not consider myself a Buddhist but I subscribe to some of the Dharma teachings	3	Terminate
I am not a Buddhist and do not subscribe to anything related to Buddhism	4	Terminate

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

D1 Which of the following Buddhist schools has influenced you the most?

Theravada	1	
Mahayana	2	
Vajrayana	3	
Non-sectarian	4	
Secular (non-religion Buddhism)	5	
Don't know / Rather not say	6	

D2 Please indicate your current place of residence:

China (Mainland)	1	Quota n=100
Hong Kong	2	Quota n=100
Taiwan	3	Quota n=100
Malaysia	4	Quota n=100
Singapore	5	Quota n=100

D3 Please indicate your gender

Male	1	
Female	2	
Non-binary / third gender	3	
Prefer not to say	4	

MAIN QUESTIONNAIRE

DICTATOR GAME

Q1 Suppose you have been allotted $1,000 in your local currency. You can share this amount with a charity organization. Please choose the amount of money that you would send to this charity organization. You can select any amount between $0 and $1,000 in $1 increments.

How much would you send to this charity? (Please enter a whole number.)

_____

PROSOCIALNESS SCALE FOR ADULTS (PSA)

PSA The following statements describe a large number of common situations. There are no right or wrong answers; the best answer is the immediate, spontaneous one. Read each phrase carefully and choose the response that reflects your first reaction.

1. Never/Almost Never	2. Rarely	3. Occasionally	4. Often	5. Always/Almost always

I am pleased to help my friends/colleagues in their activities.	1	
I share the things that I have with my friends.	2	
I try to help others.	3	
I am available for volunteer activities to help those who are in need.	4	
I am empathic with those who are in need.	5	
I help immediately those who are in need.	6	
I do what I can to help others avoid getting into trouble.	7	
I intensely feel what others feel.	8	
I am willing to make my knowledge and abilities available to others.	9	
I try to console those who are sad.	10	
I easily lend money or other things.	11	
I easily put myself in the shoes of those who are in discomfort.	12	
I try to be close to and take care of those who are in need.	13	
I easily share with friends any good opportunity that comes to me.	14	
I spend time with those friends who feel lonely.	15	
I immediately sense my friends' discomfort even when it is not directly communicated to me.	16	

22-ITEM BUDDHIST RELIGIOSITY SCALE (BRS-22)

Q2-1 Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements using 1 to 7, where 1 indicates “Strongly disagree” and 7 indicates “Strongly agree”. You can choose any number in between including 1 and 7:

1. Strongly disagree	2. Disagree	3. Somewhat disagree	4. Neither agree nor disagree	5. Somewhat agree	6. Agree	7. Strongly agree

I consistently embody compassion / loving-kindness in my interactions with others.	E1	
I am open-minded and inclusive, embracing diversity and accepting others as they are.	E2	
I regularly engage in introspection to cultivate self-awareness and insight into my thoughts and emotions.	E3	
I have made significant progress in reducing greed, hatred, and ignorance in my thoughts and actions.	E4	
I believe in the potential for positive change and growth in all things.	E5	
I actively extend compassion and loving-kindness to myself, recognizing the importance of self-care.	E6	

Q2-2 Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements using 1 to 7, where 1 indicates “Strongly disagree” and 7 indicates “Strongly agree”. You can choose any number in between including 1 and 7:

1. Strongly disagree	2. Disagree	3. Somewhat disagree	4. Neither agree nor disagree	5. Somewhat agree	6. Agree	7. Strongly agree

I am dedicated to studying and reflecting on the teachings of the Buddha to deepen my understanding of the path to liberation/enlightenment.	LTP1	
I have a genuine aspiration to let go of attachments and desires that cause suffering and hindrances in my life.	LTP2	
I am willing to engage in selfless service and contribute to the welfare of others as part of my practice.	LTP3	
I feel a deep sense of gratitude towards the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, and recognize their role in guiding me towards liberation/enlightenment.	LTP4	
I am open to continuously learning and growing on my spiritual journey, seeking guidance from qualified teachers and spiritual mentors.	LTP5	
I am committed to integrating the principles of Buddhism into all aspects of my life, including work, relationships, and daily activities.	LTP6	

Q2-3 Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements using 1 to 7, where 1 indicates “Strongly disagree” and 7 indicates “Strongly agree”. You can choose any number in between including 1 and 7:

1. Strongly disagree	2. Disagree	3. Somewhat disagree	4. Neither agree nor disagree	5. Somewhat agree	6. Agree	7. Strongly agree

I agree that ultimate reality is characterized by emptiness, that all phenomena lack inherent existence or substantiality.	LTP7	
I understand the significance and meaning of the Triple Gem, consisting of the Buddha, the Dharma (teachings), and the Sangha (community).	LTP8	
I agree with the Four Noble Truths, that life is characterized by suffering, suffering arises from craving and attachment, there is a way to end suffering, and the Noble Eightfold Path leads to the cessation of suffering.	LTP9	
I have made progress gaining deeper insight into the nature of existence, suffering, arising of suffering, cessation of suffering and the path to the cessation of suffering.	LTP10	
I am actively aligning my thoughts and motivations with compassion, non-harming, and renunciation.	LTP11	
I am actively working on applying sustained effort to let go of unwholesome states and develop wholesome qualities.	LTP12	
I am consistently developing a focused and tranquil mind through meditation and mental absorption practices.	LTP13	
I have been meditating regularly using the methods I have been taught.	LTP14	
I am able to see through complexity with metal clarity.	LTP15	
I have been putting what I learned about dharma into my daily life.	LTP16	

NON-ATTACHMENT SCALE (NAS-7)

Q3 To help us understand your general approach to life and your views about yourself, others, and life in general, tell us the extent to which the following statements reflect your experiences at this point in your life. Select a number from 1 to 6 on the scale provided with each statement to rate the extent to which you agree with it. Please answer according to what really reflects your experience rather than what you think your experience should be.

1. Disagree Strongly	2. Disagree Moderately	3. Disagree Slightly	4. Agree Slightly	5. Agree Moderately	6. Agree Strongly

I can let go of regrets and feelings of dissatisfaction about the past.	1	
I can enjoy pleasant experiences without needing them to last forever.	2	
I view the problems that enter my life as things/issues to work on rather than reasons for becoming disheartened or demoralized.	3	
I can enjoy my family and friends without feeling I need to hang on to them.	4	
I can take joy in others' achievements without feeling envious.	5	
I do not get "hung up" on wanting an "ideal" or "perfect" life.	6	
When pleasant experiences end, I am fine moving on to what comes next.	7	

CENTRALITY OF BUDDHIST RELIGIOSITY SCALE (CBRS)

Q4-1 Please respond to the following questions according to your personal perception of "Buddha" or "Bodhisattva".

1. Not at all	2. Not very much	3. Moderately	4. Quite a bit	5. Very much so

How much do you believe in Buddha and Bodhisattvas?	1	
How much do you believe in reincarnation?	2	
How much do you believe in freedom from samsara?	3	

Q4-2 Please respond to the following questions according to your personal perception of "Buddha" or "Bodhisattva".

1. Never	2. Less Often	3. Few Times a Year	4. Once to Three Times a Month	5. Once a Week	6. More Than Once a Week

How often do you practice Buddhism?	1	
How important is Buddhist practice for you?	2	
How important is the Buddhist Sangha for you?	3	

Q4-3 Please respond to the following questions according to your personal perception of "Buddha" or "Bodhisattva".

1. Never	2. Less Often	3. Few Times a Year	4. Once to Three Times a Month	5. Once a Week	6. More Than Once a Week	7. Once a Day	8. Several Times a Day

How often do you pray, chant or meditate?	1	
How important are chanting, praying and / or meditation for you?	2	
How often do you pray to Buddha or practice meditation in daily events?	3	

Q4-4 Please respond to the following questions according to your personal perception of "Buddha" or "Bodhisattva".

1. Never	2. Rarely	3. Occasionally	4. Often	5. Very Often

How often do you think about Buddhism?	1	
How often do you experience events that make you feel that Buddha and Bodhisattvas are present in your life?	2	
How often do you study Buddhist subjects?	3	
How often do you feel that you are connected to Buddha and Bodhisattvas?	4	
How often do you study Buddhist subjects via radio, television, books and magazines, internet, and / or CD?	5	
How often do you feel Buddha and Bodhisattvas surrounding you?	6	

DUREL

DUREL-1 How often do you attend church, mosque, temple, or other religious meetings?

Never	1	
Once a year or less	2	
A few times a year	3	
A few times a month	4	
Once a week	5	
More than once a week	6	

DUREL-2 How often do you spend time in private religious activities, such as prayer, meditation, or study of religious scriptures?

Never or rarely	1	
A few times a year	2	
A few times a month	3	
A few times a week	4	
Once a day	5	
More than once a day	6	

DUREL 3-5 How true is each of the following three statements, in describing you?

1. Definitely untrue	2. Somewhat untrue	3. Neither true nor untrue	4. Somewhat true	5. Definitely true

In my life, I experience the presence of the Divine.	1	
My religious beliefs are what really lie behind my whole approach to life.	2	
I try hard to carry my religion over into all other dealings in life.	3	

DEGREES OF BELIEF IN GOD SCALE (DBIGS)

Q5 Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following Statements

0. Disagree	1. Agree

I believe Buddha/Bodhisattva is almighty.	1	
I believe Buddha/Bodhisattva gives life meaning.	2	
I believe Buddha/Bodhisattva is my protection.	3	
I believe Buddha/Bodhisattva makes justice prevail.	4	
We ordinary beings need Buddha/Bodhisattva's redemption from our unwholesome karma.	5	
I believe Buddha/Bodhisattva is our salvation from trouble and danger.	6	

RELIGIOUS MEANING SCALE (RMS)

Q6 Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements on the scale below.

1. Strongly Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Strongly Agree

The goals of my life grow out of my understanding of Buddha/Bodhisattva.	1	
When I lose touch with Buddha/Bodhisattva, I have a harder time feeling that there is purpose and meaning in life.	2	
My mission in life is guided/shaped by my faith in Buddha/Bodhisattva.	3	
My purpose in life reflects what I believe Buddha/Bodhisattva wants for me.	4	
Buddha/Bodhisattva plays a role in how I choose my path in life.	5	

SATISFACTION WITH LIFE SCALE (SWLS)

Q7 Below are five statements that you may agree or disagree with. Using the 1 - 7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by placing the appropriate number on the line preceding that item. Please be open and honest in your responding.

1.	2. Disagree	3.	4.	5.	6. Agree	7.

Strongly disagree		Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree		Strongly agree

In most ways my life is close to my ideal.	1	
The conditions of my life are excellent.	2	
I am satisfied with my life.	3	
So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.	4	
If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.	5	

GAD-7

Q8 Please read each statement and select from "Not at all" to "Nearly every day" to indicate how much the statement applied to you over the **past two weeks**.

0. None at all	1. Several days	2. More than half the days	3. Nearly everyday

Feeling nervous, anxious or on edge.	1	
Not being able to stop or control worrying.	2	
Worrying too much about different things.	3	
Trouble relaxing.	4	
Being so restless that it is hard to sit still.	5	
Becoming easily annoyed or irritable.	6	
Feeling afraid as if something awful might happen.	7	

END OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Buddhist Religiosity Scale Wave 2 (Simplified Chinese)

参与者信息和知情同意书

研究题目： 佛教宗教性量表验证

研究员： Barry Tse
联系方式： 电话 ，电子邮件：barry.tse@my.jcu.edu.au

主导师： Jonathan Ramsay 副教授
联系方式： 电话 ，电子邮件：jonathan.ramsay@jcu.edu.au

欢迎您参与由新加坡詹姆斯库克大学进行的研究，旨在开发佛教宗教性量表。此量表将测量那些遵循佛教、秉持佛教教义或将佛教原则融入生活方式的个体的宗教性水平。在决定是否参与之前，了解研究的目的、程序以及可能的风险和益处非常重要。请仔细阅读以下信息，并在做出决定前提出任何问题。

研究目的：
本研究的目的是验证一种佛教宗教性量表，该量表用于评估那些认同佛教、遵循佛教教义或认为佛教原则对他们的生活方式至关重要的个体的宗教性水平。

参与者资格：
您受邀参与本研究，是因为您自认为是佛教徒，遵循佛教教义，或将佛教原则视为您生活方式的重要组成部分。

自愿参与：
参与本研究完全是自愿的。您的参与并非必需，您的决定不会影响您与詹姆斯库克大学或任何附属机构的关系。您可以随时退出研究，无需提供理由，也不会面临任何负面后果。

研究流程：
如果您选择参与，您将完成一个调查问卷，旨在评估您的佛教宗教性水平。本问卷大概需要 20 分钟来完成。您的回答将以电子方式收集，并安全存储在受密码保护的计算机和大学数据存储库中。只有授权的研究人员能够访问这些数据。所收集的数据皆为匿名，调查问卷中不会包含索取任何个人身份信息。

风险和利益：
参与本研究几乎不涉及任何风险。您提供的信息是机密的，不会与您的身份关联。虽然对您来说没有即时的好处，但您的参与将有助于开发一种有价值的工具，用于评估佛教宗教性。

保密性与数据用途：
您的回答将是匿名。个人身份信息不会与您的调查问卷回答一起存储。数据将安全存储最少五年，期间可能与其他研究人员分享数据或被被设作公开数据，目的为促进更多的相关学术研究。

出版与结果：
本研究的结果可能会在学术期刊上发表或用于进一步的研究。您的身份将在任何从本研究中产生的出版物或报告中保持匿名。如若您对研究结果由兴趣，请通过电邮联系主试以索取研究结果摘要。

退出：
您可以随时在问卷回答过程中选择退出，无需提供理由。未完成的访谈将从总体分析中排除。但一旦问卷被提交，因为本次问卷的匿名性质，我们将无法删除问卷。

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伦理审核：
本此研究获得詹姆斯库克大学人类研究伦理委员会的批准，伦理批准号为：H9272

联系方式：
如果您对研究有疑问，您可以联系主要研究员 Barry Tse，或下方列出的任何导师。另外，如果您对研究的道德行为有疑虑，您可以联系詹姆斯库克大学的人类伦理官员。

主试： Barry Tse
主导师： Jonathan Ramsay 副教授
次导师： Kaiqin Chan 博士
次导师： Frederick Low 副教授
顾问导师： Denise Dillon 副教授

伦理联系： 人类伦理官员，研究办公室 詹姆斯库克大学，昆士兰州 Townsville，邮编 4811
电话：(07) 4781 5011 电子邮件：ethics@jcu.edu.au

支持热线： 在极低机率的情况下，如果您在完成调查时遇到任何困扰，您可以联系以下热线寻求帮助：

中国：	Lifeline 热线	400 821 1215
香港：	明爱 24 小时危机热线	18288
马来西亚：	Befrienders	03 7627 2929
新加坡：	新加坡撒玛利亚人协会	1800 221 4444
台湾：	台湾自杀防治中心热线	0800 788 995

参与者同意书：
继续进行调查问卷，我确认我已阅读所提供的参与者信息和同意书，理解其内容，并自愿同意参与由新加坡詹姆斯库克大学进行的题为“佛教宗教性量表验证”的研究。我明白我的参与完全是自愿的，我有权在任何时候退出研究，无需提供理由，也不会面临任何负面后果。 请选择适当的选项，以表示您是否同意参与本研究。您的回答将被记录，并作为您的数字签名处理。

知情同意：

我同意	1	
我不同意	2	终结

SCREENING QUESTIONS

S1 您现在的年龄是多少？ (请输入数字)

_____ [如小于 18，终结]

S2 以下哪种说法最恰当地描述了您与佛教的关系？

我是已正式皈依的佛教徒	1	
我认为自己是一名佛教徒，但尚未正式皈依	2	
我并不认为自己是佛教徒，但我赞同佛法的一些教导	3	终结
我不是佛教徒，也不信奉任何与佛教有关的东西	4	终结

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

D1 以下哪个佛教传统对您影响最大？

上座部 / 南传	1	
大乘	2	
密宗 / 金刚乘	3	
非派别	4	
世俗 （非宗教佛法）	5	
不清楚 / 不愿透露	6	

D2 请注明您目前的居住地：

中国（大陆）	1	配额 n=100
香港/澳门	2	配额 n=100
台湾	3	配额 n=100
马来西亚	4	配额 n=100
新加坡	5	配额 n=100

D3 请注明您的性别

男性	1	
女性	2	
非二元/第三性别	3	
不愿透露	4	

MAIN QUESTIONNAIRE

DICTATOR GAME

Q1 假设你获得了您所在地的货币价值 1000 元。你可以把这笔钱捐给一个慈善机构。请选择您要捐给该慈善组织的金额。您可以选择 0 到 1,000 元之间的任何金额，以 1 元为增量。您将向该慈善机构捐赠多少钱？(请输入整数）

_____

PROSOCIALNESS SCALE FOR ADULTS (PSA)

PSA 填写问卷时请您注意：仔细阅读量表的每一条，在每一个问题后选择和您的真实想法最贴近的答案。答案没有对错之分，不必花太长的时间去思考。

1. 从不/几乎从不	2. 偶尔	3. 有时	4. 经常	5. 几乎总是/总是

我乐于在活动中帮助我的朋友或同事。	1	
我愿意和我的朋友分享我的东西。	2	
我尝试着去帮助他人。	3	
我可以在志愿活动中帮助那些有需要的人。	4	
我对需要帮助的人很热心。	5	
我会立即帮助有需要人。	6	
我会尽我所能去帮助他人避免其陷入麻烦。	7	
别人的感受我能深切地感同身受。	8	
我愿意我的知识和能力让别人受益。	9	
我尝试去安慰那些伤心的人。	10	
我容易借出钱或其他东西。	11	
我可以轻易地设身处地为那些不适的人着想。	12	
我尝试亲近和照顾那些有需要的人。	13	
我会不假思索地与朋友分享任何我身边遇到的好机会。	14	
我会花时间陪伴感到孤独的朋友。	15	
即使对方没有直接与我表达，我也能立即感知到我朋友们的不适。	16	

22-ITEM BUDDHIST RELIGIOSITY SCALE (BRS-22)

Q2-1 请用 1-7 表示您对以下陈述的同意程度，其中 1 表示 "非常不同意"，7 表示 "非常同意"。您可以选择 1 和 7 之间的任何数字：

1. 非常不同意	2. 不同意	3. 有点不同意	4. 既不同意也不反对	5. 有点同意	6. 同意	7. 非常同意

我在与他人互动时始终体现慈悲。	E1	
我心态开放、包容多样性，接纳他人的原貌。	E2	
我经常内省，培养自我觉察和对自己的思惟和感受的洞悉力。	E3	
我已经在思想和行为中显著减少了贪嗔痴。	E4	
我相信万物皆能变善和成长。	E5	
我积极地以慈悲待己，认识到自我关怀的重要性。	E6	

Q2-2 请用 1-7 表示您对以下陈述的同意程度，其中 1 表示 "非常不同意"，7 表示 "非常同意"。您可以选择 1 和 7 之间的任何数字：

1. 非常不同意	2. 不同意	3. 有点不同意	4. 既不同意也不反对	5. 有点同意	6. 同意	7. 非常同意

我致力于学习和思考佛陀的教诲，以加深对解脱/彻悟之路的理解。	LTP1	
我真心渴望放下那些给我的生活带来痛苦和阻碍的执念和欲望。	LTP2	
作为我修行的一部分，我愿意无私奉献，为他人的福祉做出贡献。	LTP3	
我对佛、法、僧深怀感恩之情，意识到它们在引导我走向解脱/彻悟的道路上的作用。	LTP4	
我愿意在我的修行旅程中不断地学习和成长，寻求具格的导师和灵性指导。	LTP5	
我致力于将佛教教导融入我生活的方方面面，包括工作、人际关系和日常活动。	LTP6	

Q2-3 请用 1-7 表示您对以下陈述的同意程度，其中 1 表示 "非常不同意"，7 表示 "非常同意"。您可以选择 1 和 7 之间的任何数字：

1. 非常不同意	2. 不同意	3. 有点不同意	4. 既不同意也不反对	5. 有点同意	6. 同意	7. 非常同意

我始终使用诚实语、和善语、以及自利利他的言辞。	LTP7	
只要我们的身行是善行，那么我是否有一些恶念则并不重要。	LTP8	
我发现很难克制自己不妄语、恶口、两舌和绮语。	LTP9	
我对存在的本质、苦、苦的生成、苦的止息以及灭苦之道有了更深入的了解。	LTP10	
我积极调适心念，使之符合悲悯、无害和出离的动机。	LTP11	
我正在积极并持续努力来摆脱不善的状态，培养善的本质。	LTP12	
我始终通过修习禅定来达到专注及平和的心。	LTP13	
我正在努力培养当下的觉知，并以非批判的方式觉察我的体验。	LTP14	
我致力于通过道德以及善的方式谋生。	LTP15	
我正在努力不犯如杀、盗、淫等恶行。	LTP16	

NON-ATTACHMENT SCALE (NAS-7)

Q3 为了帮助我们了解您的总体生活态度以及您对自己、他人和整个生活的看法，请告诉我们以下陈述在多大程度上反映了您目前的生活经历。请在每项陈述所提供的量表上选择 1 到 6 的数字，以表示您同意该陈述的程度。请根据真正反映您经历的内容而不是您认为您应该经历的内容作答。

1. 非常不同意	2. 比较不同意	3. 稍微不同意	4. 稍微同意	5. 比较同意	6. 非常同意

对于过去发生的不满和遗憾，我可以释怀。	1	
我能够享受，并把握当下喜悦的感受。	2	
我把生活中的问题当作是需要积极处理的事，而不是让我沮丧难过的事。	3	
我欣赏并喜欢我的家人和朋友，但并不觉得我必须抓住他们不放。	4	
我能为别人的成就感到喜悦，而不会觉得羡慕。	5	
我不固执于不停的追求理想或完美的人生。	6	
当愉快的经验结束时，我可以好好地继续过日子。	7	

CENTRALITY OF BUDDHIST RELIGIOSITY SCALE (CBRS)

Q4-1 请跟据个人对于「佛」或「菩萨」的观感来回应以下题目。

1. 完全不重要	2. 不太重要	3. 适当	4. 颇为重要	5. 非常重要

您在多大程度上相信佛、菩萨？	1	
您有多大程度相信轮回转世之说？	2	
您有多大程度相信能从娑婆解脱？	3	

Q4-2 请跟据个人对于「佛」或「菩萨」的观感来回应以下题目。

1. 从不	2. 甚少	3. 一年几次	4. 每月一至三次	5. 每周一次	6. 每周多于一次

您多久参修行一次？	1	
您认为佛教修行有多重要？	2	
对您而言，佛教僧团有多重要？	3	

Q4-3 请跟据个人对于「佛」或「菩萨」的观感来回应以下题目。

1. 从不	2. 甚少	3. 一年几次	4. 每个月一至三次	5. 每周一次	6. 每周多于一次	7. 每天一次	8. 每天多次

您多久祈愿，唱诵或者打坐冥想一次？	1	
对您而言，诵念，祈愿与/或打坐冥想有多重要？	2	
在每日里，你有多经常向佛陀祈愿或练习打坐冥想？	3	

Q4-4 请跟据个人对于「佛」或「菩萨」的观感来回应以下题目。

1. 从不	2. 甚少	3. 偶尔	4. 时常	5. 经常

您多久思考一次与佛教相关的事情？	1	
您多久经历一次感觉佛菩萨出现在生活中？	2	
您多久学习佛教相关内容一次？	3	
您多久经历一次你与佛菩萨感应道交？	4	
您多久通过媒体（例如电台、电视、书籍杂志、网络、与/或光碟）接收一次有关佛教内容的信息？	5	
您多久一次感应到有佛、菩萨围绕？	6	

DUREL

DUREL-1 您多久去一次教堂，清真寺，寺庙，或其他宗教会议？

从来没有	1	
每年一次或更少	2	
一年几次	3	
一个月几次	4	
每周一次	5	
超过一周一次	6	

DUREL-2 您多久参与一次宗教活动，如祈祷、打坐、宗教经文学习？

从来没有或很少	1	
一年几次	2	
一个月几次	3	
每周几次	4	
每天一次	5	
每天超过一次	6	

DUREL 3-5 以下三句话多真实地描述了您？

1. 绝对不真实	2. 有点不真实	3. 既不真实也不假	4. 有点真实	5. 绝对真实

在我的生活中，我感受到神的存在。	1	
我的整个生活态度源于我的宗教信仰。	2	
我试图努力将我的宗教贯彻到生活中的一切。	3	

DEGREES OF BELIEF IN GOD SCALE (DBIGS)

Q5 请说明您是否同意以下说法：

0. 不同意	1. 同意

我相信佛/菩萨是万能的。	1	
我相信佛/菩萨赋予生命意义。	2	
我相信佛/菩萨保护着我。	3	
我相信佛陀/菩萨使正义得到伸张。	4	
我们凡夫需要佛/菩萨将我们从罪业中救赎。	5	
我相信佛/菩萨是我们摆脱烦恼和危险的拯救者。	6	

RELIGIOUS MEANING SCALE (RMS)

Q6 请在下表中选出您同意或不同意以下声明的程度。

1. 非常不同意	2. 不同意	3. 中立	4. 同意	5. 非常同意

我的人生目标源于我对佛/菩萨的理解。	1	
当我逐渐疏离佛/菩萨时，我就更难感受到人生的目的和意义。	2	
我的人生使命是由我对佛/菩萨的信仰所指引/缔造的。	3	
我的人生目标反映了我认为佛/菩萨对我的期许。	4	
佛/菩萨在我选择人生道路的过程中发挥着作用。	5	

SATISFACTION WITH LIFE SCALE (SWLS)

Q7 请细阅下列五项，并根据在旁 1 至 7 的指标，选上适当的数字，表达你对各项的统一程度。请以开明和城市的态度作答。

1. 非常不同意	2. 不同意	3. 少许不同意	4. 中立	5. 少许同意	6. 同意	7. 非常同意

我的生活大致符合我的理想。	1	
我的生活状况非常圆满。	2	
我满意自己的生活。	3	
直至现在为止，我都能够得到我在生活上希望拥有的重要东西。	4	
如果我能重新活过，差不多没有东西我想改变。	5	

GAD-7

Q8 根据**过去两周**的状况，请您回答是否存在下列描述的状况及频率。

0. 完全不会	1. 好几天	2. 超过一周	3. 几乎每天

感觉紧张，焦虑或急切。	1	
不能够停止或控制担忧。	2	
对各种各样的事情担忧过多。	3	
很难放松下来。	4	
有与不安而无法静坐。	5	
变得容易烦恼或急躁。	6	
感到似乎将有可怕的事情发生而害怕。	7	

问卷结束

Buddhist Religiosity Scale Wave 2 (Traditional Chinese)

參與者資訊和知情同意書

研究題目： 佛教宗教性量表驗證
研究員： Barry Tse
聯絡方式： 電話 ，電子郵件：barry.tse@my.jcu.edu.au

主導師： Jonathan Ramsay 副教授
聯絡方式： 電話 ，電子郵件：jonathan.ramsay@jcu.edu.au
歡迎您參與由新加坡詹姆斯庫克大學進行的研究，旨在開發佛教宗教性量表。 此量表將測量那些遵循佛教、秉持佛教教義或將佛教原則融入生活方式的個體的宗教性水準。 在決定是否參與之前，瞭解研究的目的、程式以及可能的風險和益處非常重要。 請仔細閱讀以下資訊，並在做出決定前提出任何問題。

研究目的：
本研究的目的是驗證一種佛教宗教性量表，該量表用於評估那些認同佛教、遵循佛教教義或認為佛教原則對他們的生活方式至關重要的個體的宗教性水準。

參與者資格：
您受邀參與本研究，是因為您自認為是佛教徒，遵循佛教教義，或將佛教原則視為您生活方式的重要組成部分。

自願參與：
參與本研究完全是自願的。 您的參與並非必需，您的決定不會影響您與詹姆斯庫克大學或任何附屬機構的關係。 您可以隨時退出研究，無需提供理由，也不會面臨任何負面後果。

研究流程：
如果您選擇參與，您將完成一個調查問卷，旨在評估您的佛教宗教性水準。 本問卷大概需要 20 分鐘來完成。 您的回答將以電子方式收集，並安全存儲在受密碼保護的計算機和大學數據存儲庫中。 只有授權的研究人員能夠訪問這些數據。 所收集的數據皆為匿名，調查問卷中不會包含索取任何個人身份資訊。

風險和利益：
參與本研究幾乎不涉及任何風險。 您提供的資訊是機密的，不會與您的身份關聯。 雖然對您來說沒有即時的好處，但您的參與將有助於開發一種有價值的工具，用於評估佛教宗教性。

保密性與數據用途：
您的回答將是匿名。 個人身份資訊不會與您的調查問卷回答一起存儲。 數據將安全存儲最少五年，期間可能與其他研究人員分享數據或被被設作公開數據，目的為促進更多的相關學術研究。

出版與結果：
本研究的結果可能會在學術期刊上發表或用於進一步的研究。 您的身份將在任何從本研究中產生的出版物或報告中保持匿名。 如若您對研究結果由興趣，請通過電郵聯繫主試以索取研究結果摘要。

退出：
您可以隨時在問卷回答過程中退出宣告，無需提供理由。 未完成的訪談將從總體分析中排除。但一旦問卷被提交，因為本次問卷的匿名性質，我們將無法刪除問卷。

資金：
詹姆斯庫克大學為本次研究提供資金。

倫理審核：
本此研究獲得詹姆斯庫克大學人類研究倫理委員會的批准，倫理批准號為：H9272

聯繫方式：
如果您對研究有疑問，您可以聯繫主要研究員 Barry Tse，或下方列出的任何導師。 另外，如果您對研究的道德行為有疑慮，您可以聯繫詹姆斯庫克大學的人類倫理官員。

主試： Barry Tse
主導師： Jonathan Ramsay 副教授
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顧問導師： Denise Dillon 副教授

倫理聯繫： 人類倫理官員，研究辦公室 詹姆斯庫克大學，昆士蘭州 Townsville，郵編 4811 電話：（07） 4781 5011 電子郵件：ethics@jcu.edu.au

支持熱線： 在極低機率的情況下，如果您在完成調查時遇到任何困擾，您可以聯繫以下熱線尋求說明：

中國：	Lifeline 熱線	400 821 1215
香港：	明愛 24 小時危機熱線	18288
馬來西亞：	Befriender	03 7627 2929
新加坡：	新加坡撒瑪利亞人協會	1800 221 4444
臺灣：	台灣自殺防治中心熱線	0800 788 995

參與者同意書：
繼續進行調查問卷，我確認我已閱讀所提供的參與者資訊和同意書，理解其內容，並自願同意參與由新加坡詹姆斯庫克大學進行的題為"佛教宗教性量表驗證"的研究。 我明白我的參與完全是自願的，我有權在任何時候退出研究，無需提供理由，也不會面臨任何負面後果。 請選擇適當的選項，以表示您是否同意參與本研究。 您的回答將被記錄，並作為您的數位簽名處理。

知情同意：

我同意	1	
我不同意	2	終結

篩選問題

S1 您現在的年齡是多少？ （請輸入數位）

_____ [如小於 18，終結]

S2 以下哪種說法最恰當地描述了您與佛教的關係？

我是已正式皈依的佛教徒	1	
我認為自己是一名佛教徒，但尚未正式皈依	2	
我並不認為自己是佛教徒，但我贊同佛法的一些教導	3	終結
我不是佛教徒，也不信奉任何與佛教有關的東西	4	終結

人口統計資訊

D1 以下哪個佛教傳統對您影響最大？

上座部 / 南傳	1	
大乘	2	
密宗 / 金剛乘	3	
非派別	4	
世俗 （非宗教佛法）	5	
不清楚 / 不願透露	6	

D2 請註明您目前的居住地：

中國（大陸）	1	配額 n=100
香港/澳門	2	配額 n=100
臺灣	3	配額 n=100
馬來西亞	4	配額 n=100
新加坡	5	配額 n=100

D3 請註明您的性別

男性	1	
女性	2	
非二元/第三性別	3	
不願透露	4	

主問卷

獨裁者遊戲

Q1 假設你獲得了您所在地的貨幣價值 1000 元。 你可以把這筆錢捐給一個慈善機構。 請選擇您要捐給該慈善組織的金額。 您可以選擇 0 到 1,000 元之間的任何金額，以 1 元為增量。 您將向該慈善機構捐贈多少錢？ （請輸入整數）

_____

成人親社會性量表 （PSA）

PSA 填寫問卷時請您注意：仔細閱讀量表的每一條，在每一個問題後選擇和您的真實想法最貼近的答案。 答案沒有對錯之分，不必花太長的時間去思考。

1. 從不/幾乎從不	2. 偶爾	3. 有時	4. 經常	5. 幾乎總是/總是

我樂於在活動中說明我的朋友或同事。	1	
我願意和我的朋友分享我的東西。	2	
我嘗試著去說明他人。	3	
我可以在志願活動中說明那些有需要的人。	4	
我對需要說明的人很熱心。	5	
我會立即說明有需要人。	6	
我會盡我所能去說明他人避免其陷入麻煩。	7	
別人的感受我能深切地感同身受。	8	
我願意我的知識和能力讓別人受益。	9	
我嘗試去安慰那些傷心的人。	10	
我容易借出錢或其他東西。	11	
我可以輕易地設身處地為那些不適的人著想。	12	
我嘗試親近和照顧那些有需要的人。	13	
我會不假思索地與朋友分享任何我身邊遇到的好機會。	14	
我會花時間陪伴感到孤獨的朋友。	15	
即使對方沒有直接與我表達，我也能立即感知到我朋友們的不適。	16	

22 項 佛教宗教信仰量表 （BRS-22）

Q2-1 請用 1-7 表示您對以下陳述的同意程度，其中 1 表示 “非常不同意”，7 表示 “非常同意”。您可以選擇 1 與 7 之間的任何數位：

1. 非常不同意	2. 不同意	3. 有點不同意	4. 既不同意也不反對	5. 有點同意	6. 同意	7. 非常同意

我在與他人互動時始終體現慈悲。	E1	
我心態開放、包容多樣性，接納他人的原貌。	E2	
我經常內省，培養自我覺察和對自己的思惟和感受的洞悉力。	E3	
我已經在思想和行為中顯著減少了貪嗔癡。	E4	
我相信萬物皆能變善和成長。	E5	
我積極地以慈悲待己，認識到自我關懷的重要性。	E6	

Q2-2 請用 1-7 表示您對以下陳述的同意程度，其中 1 表示 “非常不同意”，7 表示 “非常同意”。您可以選擇 1 與 7 之間的任何數位：

1. 非常不同意	2. 不同意	3. 有點不同意	4. 既不同意也不反對	5. 有點同意	6. 同意	7. 非常同意

我致力於學習和思考佛陀的教誨，以加深對解脫/徹悟之路的理解。	LTP1	
我真心渴望放下那些給我的生活帶來痛苦和阻礙的執念和慾望。	LTP2	
作為我修行的一部分，我願意無私奉獻，為他人的福祉做出貢獻。	LTP3	
我對佛、法、僧深懷感恩之情，意識到它們在引導我走向解脫/徹悟的道路上的作用。	LTP4	
我願意在我的修行旅程中不斷地學習和成長，尋求具格的導師和靈性指導。	LTP5	
我致力於將佛教教導融入我生活的方方面面，包括工作、人際關係和日常活動。	LTP6	

Q2-3 請用 1-7 表示您對以下陳述的同意程度，其中 1 表示 “非常不同意”，7 表示 “非常同意”。您可以選擇 1 與 7 之間的任何數位：

1. 非常不同意	2. 不同意	3. 有點不同意	4. 既不同意也不反對	5. 有點同意	6. 同意	7. 非常同意

我始終使用誠實語、和善語、以及自利利他的言辭。	LTP7	
只要我們的身行是善行，那麼我是否有一些惡念則並不重要。	LTP8	
我發現很難克制自己不妄語、惡口、兩舌和綺語。	LTP9	
我對存在的本質、苦、苦的生成、苦的止息以及滅苦之道有了更深入的瞭解。	LTP10	
我積極調適心念，使之符合悲憫、無害和出離的動機。	LTP11	
我正在積極並持續努力來擺脫不善的狀態，培養善的本質。	LTP12	
我始終通過修習禪定來達到專注及平和的心。	LTP13	
我正在努力培養當下的覺知，並以非批判的方式覺察我的體驗。	LTP14	
我致力於通過道德以及善的方式謀生。	LTP15	
我正在努力不犯如殺、盜、淫等惡行。	LTP16	

不執著量表 （NAS-7）

Q3 為了說明我們瞭解您的總體生活態度以及您對自己、他人和整個生活的看法，請告訴我們以下陳述在多大程度上反映了您目前的生活經歷。 請在每項陳述所提供的量表上選擇 1 到 6 的數位，以表示您同意該陳述的程度。 請根據真正反映您經歷的內容而不是您認為您應該經歷的內容作答。

1. 非常不同意	2. 比較不同意	3. 稍微不同意	4. 稍微同意	5. 比較同意	6. 非常同意

對於過去發生的不滿和遺憾，我可以釋懷。	1	
我能夠享受，並把握當下喜悅的感受。	2	
我把生活中的問題當作是需要積極處理的事，而不是讓我沮喪難過的事。	3	
我欣賞並喜歡我的家人和朋友，但並不覺得我必須抓住他們不放。	4	
我能為別人的成就感到喜悅，而不會覺得羨慕。	5	
我不固執於不停的追求理想或完美的人生。	6	
當愉快的經驗結束時，我可以好好地繼續過日子。	7	

佛教宗教信仰中心性量表 （CBRS）

Q4-1 請跟據個人對於「佛」或「菩薩」的觀感來回應以下題目。

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
完全不重要	不太重要	適當	頗為重要	非常重要

您在多大程度上相信佛、菩薩?	1	
您有多大程度相信輪迴轉世之說?	2	
您有多大程度相信能從娑婆解脫?	3	

Q4-2 請跟據個人對於「佛」或「菩薩」的觀感來回應以下題目。

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
從不	甚少	一年幾次	每月一至三次	每週一次	每周多於一次

您多久參修行一次?	1	
您認為佛教修行有多重要?	2	
對您而言，佛教僧團有多重要?	3	

Q4-3 請跟據個人對於「佛」或「菩薩」的觀感來回應以下題目。

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.
從不	甚少	一年幾次	每個月一至三次	每週一次	每周多於一次	每天一次	每天多次

您多久祈願，唱誦或者打坐冥想一次?	1	
對您而言，誦念，祈願與/或打坐冥想有多重要?	2	
在每日里，你有多經常向佛陀祈願或練習打坐冥想?	3	

Q4-4 請跟據個人對於「佛」或「菩薩」的觀感來回應以下題目。

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
從不	甚少	偶爾	時常	經常

您多久思考一次與佛教相關的事情？	1	
您多久經歷一次感覺佛菩薩出現在生活中？	2	
您多久學習佛教相關內容一次？	3	
您多久經歷一次你與佛菩薩感應道交？	4	
您多久通過媒體（例如電臺、電視、書籍雜誌、網路、與/或光碟）接收一次有關佛教內容的資訊？	5	
您多久一次感應到有佛、菩薩圍繞？	6	

DUREL

DUREL-1 您多久去一次教堂，清真寺，寺廟，或其他宗教聚會？

從來不去	1	
每年一次或更少	2	
一年數次	3	
一個月數次	4	
每週一次	5	
每週超過一次	6	

DUREL-2 您多久參與一次宗教活動，如祈禱、打坐、宗教經文學習？

從來沒有或極少	1	
一年數次	2	
一個月數次	3	
每週數次	4	
每天一次	5	
一天超過一次	6	

DUREL 3-5 以下這三句話對您的描述有多真實？

1. 絕對不真實	2. 有點不真實	3. 既不真實也不假	4. 有點真實	5. 絕對真實

在我的生活中，我感受到神的存在。	1	
我的整個生活態度源於我的宗教信仰。	2	
我試圖努力地將我的宗教帶到我生活中其它所有的面向。	3	

信仰上帝程度量表 （DBIGS）

Q5 請說明您是否同意以下說法：

0. 不同意	1. 同意

我相信佛/菩薩是萬能的。	1	
我相信佛/菩薩賦予生命意義。	2	
我相信佛/菩薩保護著我。	3	
我相信佛陀/菩薩使正義得到伸張。	4	
我們凡夫需要佛/菩薩將我們從罪業中救贖。	5	
我相信佛/菩薩是我們擺脫煩惱和危險的拯救者。	6	

宗教意義量表 （RMS）

Q6 請在下表中選出您同意或不同意以下聲明的程度。

1. 非常不同意	2. 不同意	3. 中立	4. 同意	5. 非常同意

我的人生目標源於我對佛/菩薩的理解。	1	
當我逐漸疏離佛/菩薩時，我就更難感受到人生的目的和意義。	2	
我的人生使命是由我對佛/菩薩的信仰所指引/締造的。	3	
我的人生目標反映了我認為佛/菩薩對我的期許。	4	
佛/菩薩在我選擇人生道路的過程中發揮著作用。	5	

生活滿意度量表 （SWLS）

Q7 請細閱下列五項，並根據在旁 1 至 7 的指標，選上適當的數字，表達你對各項的統一程度。 請以開明和城市的態度作答。

1. 非常不同意	2. 不同意	3. 少許不同意	4. 中立	5. 少許同意	6. 同意	7. 非常同意

我的生活大致符合我的理想。	1	
我的生活狀況非常圓滿。	2	
我滿意自己的生活。	3	
直至現在為止，我都能夠得到我在生活上希望擁有的重要東西。	4	
如果我能重新活過，差不多沒有東西我想改變。	5	

GAD-7

Q8 根據過去兩周的狀況，請您回答是否存在下列描述的狀況及頻率。

0. 完全不會	1. 好幾天	2. 超過一周	3. 幾乎每天

感覺緊張，焦慮或急切。	1	
不能夠停止或控制擔憂。	2	
對各種各樣的事情擔憂過多。	3	
很難放鬆下來。	4	
有與不安而無法靜坐	5	
變得容易煩惱或急躁。	6	
感到似乎將有可怕的事情發生而害怕。	7	

問卷結束