

INFLUENCES OF MEDITATION ON THE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE
OF PARTICIPANTS AT BUDDHA HAKSA TEMPLE

by

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ABSTRACT
INFLUENCES OF MEDITATION ON THE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE
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This phenomenological study explores the influence of meditation on the emotional intelligence of participants at Buddha Haksa Temple in Waukesha, Wisconsin. Using Daniel Goleman's (2017) model of emotional intelligence as a theoretical framework, the research examines how meditation affects self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, and social skills. The study also incorporates Buddhist teachings, particularly Samatha (concentration) and Vipassana (insight) meditation, to provide a holistic understanding of emotional transformation through mindfulness.

Through semi-structured interviews with meditation practitioners, the study investigates four research questions: (1) How does meditation influence emotional intelligence? The study found that meditation enhances self-awareness by fostering emotional recognition and introspection, improves self-regulation by reducing impulsivity, strengthens empathy by deepening social awareness, and enhances social skills through mindful communication. (2) What life experiences or beliefs led participants to begin meditation? Findings reveal that participants were drawn to meditation due to emotional struggles, personal crises, and a quest for spiritual growth. (3) What expectations did participants have regarding meditation? Many sought emotional stability, self-mastery, and, for some, the ultimate goal of Nirvana. (4) Have there been noticeable behavioral shifts since participants began meditating? Results indicate meaningful behavioral transformations, including increased patience, emotional resilience, conflict management skills, and a greater sense of compassion toward others.

Findings suggest that meditation fosters emotional intelligence by enhancing self-awareness and control over emotional responses. Participants reported improved stress management, mindfulness in interactions, and greater emotional balance in daily life. The findings align with Goleman's model and Buddhist teachings, emphasizing meditation's role in cultivating self-awareness and emotional regulation. This research highlights meditation as a valuable tool for emotional development, with implications for education, leadership, and mental health. While acknowledging limitations in sample size and cultural specificity, the study provides a foundation for future research on the long-term effects of meditation on emotional intelligence across diverse populations and contexts.