

## Dhamma Online for Developing Quality of Life in Psychological Well-Being through Multicultural Practitioners in London, United Kingdom: A Case Study of Buddhamahametta Foundation\*



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### Abstract

This research aimed to 1) study the current status of Quality of Life in Psychological Well-being of multicultural practitioners in London, UK; 2) use Dhamma Online for developing Quality of Life in Psychological Well-being; and 3) evaluate Quality of Life in Psychological Well-being after participating in the Dhamma Online program. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative pre- and post-test questionnaires with qualitative interviews and focus group discussions. The sample consisted of 30 multicultural Dhamma practitioners residing in London. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics, while qualitative data underwent thematic analysis.

The research found that: 1) Practitioners faced significant challenges impacting their mental well-being, including work-life imbalance, relationship difficulties, financial stress, and health concerns. 2) The Dhamma Online program, incorporating seven key components, effectively enhanced quality of life, with statistically significant improvements across all measured dimensions ( $p < 0.001$ ) and large effect sizes (Cliff's delta 0.84-0.93). Qualitative findings corroborated these results, revealing profound transformations in mental clarity, emotional regulation, and sense of purpose. 3) The program's success was attributed to its accessibility, cultural relevance, supportive virtual community, and quality instruction. Integration of the Buddha's teachings, expert guidance, engaging media content, and practical compassion-based exercises created a holistic learning experience that resonated with multicultural practitioners.

In conclusion, Dhamma Online demonstrates effectiveness in enhancing psychological well-being and quality of life among diverse practitioners. The program's success highlights the potential of online spiritual platforms to provide accessible, engaging, and transformative experiences promoting holistic well-being in contemporary multicultural contexts.

**Keywords:** Dhamma Online; Psychological Well-Being; Quality of Life; Multicultural Practitioners

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\*Received June 15, 2025; Revised September 27, 2025; Accepted October 6, 2025

## Introduction

In an increasingly diverse and interconnected world, the potential for online Dhamma practice to support psychological well-being among multicultural populations is significant. London, as one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse cities globally, provides a relevant context for examining the impact of online Buddhist teachings on practitioners' quality of life.

Despite the growing popularity of online Dhamma resources, limited research has investigated their effectiveness for diverse urban practitioners. Most studies have focused on general effects of religiosity on well-being, without considering the role of online engagement or multicultural experiences. Moreover, the few studies on online Buddhist teachings have emphasized doctrinal content rather than lived impacts on well-being.

This research aimed to address these gaps by exploring how Dhamma Online influences quality of life in psychological well-being among multicultural practitioners in London. Drawing upon the theoretical foundations of Mindfulness, Self-Determination Theory, Cultural Dimensions Theory, and the Technology Acceptance Model, the study examined practitioners' current challenges, the development and implementation of a comprehensive online program, and its impact on multiple dimensions of well-being. The research offers valuable insights for designing culturally responsive online spiritual interventions to meet the needs of diverse contemporary seekers.

## Objectives of the Research

This study aimed to:

- (1) To study the current status in terms of Quality of Life in Psychological Well-being of Multicultural Practitioners in London, UK.
- (2) To use Dhamma Online for developing the Quality of Life in Psychological Well-being of Multicultural Practitioners in London, UK.
- (3) To evaluate the Quality of Life in Psychological Well-being of Multicultural Practitioners in London, UK.

## Research Methodology

This mixed-methods study was conducted in three phases. Phase 1 Qualitative Research Design to address the first objective, in-depth interviews were conducted with 30 multicultural Dhamma practitioners residing in London, UK. Phase 2 Qualitative and Action Research Design to address the second objective, a focus group discussion was conducted with the same 30 practitioners to guide the development of the Dhamma Online program. Phase 3 Quantitative and Qualitative Research Design to address the third objective, a pre-test and post-test design was employed to evaluate changes in psychological well-being. The 10-item Thai Mental Health and Well-being Scale was administered to all participants before and after the program.

### **The 1<sup>st</sup> Step: Documentary Study**

A comprehensive literature review was conducted to establish the theoretical foundations and identify gaps in existing research on online Dhamma practice, mindfulness, quality of life, and multicultural considerations. Key sources included Buddhist scriptures (Tripitaka), academic journals, books, and dissertations covering relevant topics such as Buddhist teachings, digital religion, and well-being interventions. This provided the theoretical grounding for program development.

### **The 2<sup>nd</sup> Step: Field Study**

The research employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection. Field research was conducted remotely, with each of the 30 Multicultural Practitioners in London, UK, over a period of 12 months, focusing on multicultural Dhamma practitioners engaged with the Buddhamahametta Foundation's online program.

### **The 3<sup>rd</sup> Step: Key Informants**

Purposive sampling was used to recruit 30 multicultural Dhamma practitioners residing in London. Participants were selected to ensure diversity in cultural background, age, and length of Dhamma practice. Key informants included both lay practitioners and ordained monastics from various Buddhist traditions.

Additionally, nine experts; including meditation masters, mindfulness experts, and long-term expatriates who have extensive experience living abroad, were selected for a focus group to validate the model.

### **The 4<sup>th</sup> Step: Research Instruments and Methods**

#### **1) In-Depth Interviews**

Semi-structured interview guides were developed, covering topics such as current well-being status, challenges faced, engagement with Dhamma teachings, and perspectives on online practice. Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed using thematic analysis. The process involved familiarization with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing and defining themes, and producing the report. Strategies such as member checking and peer debriefing were employed to ensure trustworthiness of the findings.

#### **2) Focus Group Discussion**

A focus group was conducted with the nine experts to guide the development of the Dhamma Online program. The discussion explored essential components of Dhamma practice, opportunities and challenges in adapting teachings for online delivery, strategies for engaging diverse participants, and recommendations for program design.

#### **3) Study and follow up on the results**

The 4-week Dhamma Online program was implemented with the 30 participants. The program incorporated seven key components: Ask for Forgiveness, Mindful Bowing, Dhamma Talk Sessions, Dhamma Media, Practitioner Narrative Accounts, Chanting, and Spreading Loving-

kindness. Each component was carefully designed to be culturally responsive and accessible. Daily online sessions lasting approximately 1.5 hours were conducted, with flexibility to accommodate diverse schedules and needs. Throughout the program, data was collected through participant observations, reflective journals, and feedback forms. Researchers observed participants' engagement, noting patterns, challenges, and adaptations. Participants maintained reflective journals documenting their experiences, insights, and application of teachings. Feedback forms gathered input on program content, delivery, and suggested improvements. Data was analyzed thematically to understand the implementation process and inform program refinement.

#### **The 5<sup>th</sup> Step: Data Collection**

Data collection involves in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, participant observations, reflective journals, feedback forms, and pre- and post-test questionnaires. Interviews and focus groups were audio-recorded and transcribed. Observations, journals, and forms were documented systematically. The 10-item Thai Mental Health and Well-being Scale was administered before and after the program to assess changes in psychological well-being.

#### **The 6<sup>th</sup> Step: Data Analysis**

Qualitative data from interviews, focus groups, observations, journals, and forms underwent thematic analysis to identify patterns, challenges, and insights. Quantitative data from the well-being scale was analyzed using descriptive statistics, paired t-tests or Wilcoxon signed-rank tests (depending on data normality), and effect size calculations (Cliff's delta). Quantitative and qualitative findings were integrated using a convergent mixed-methods approach to provide a comprehensive understanding of the program's effectiveness.

#### **The 7<sup>th</sup> Step: Summary and Presentation of Results**

The synthesized findings were articulated in a narrative format, accentuating principal themes, insights, and implications for prospective research and practical applications. The results were systematically structured in accordance with the research objectives, elucidating the contemporary state of practitioners' psychological well-being, the formulation and execution of the Dhamma Online program, as well as the assessment of its effects on psychological health. The findings were contextualized within the framework of existing scholarly literature, underscoring the contributions of the study and its potential applicability in diverse multicultural environments.

### **Research Results**

From the 1<sup>st</sup> objective is to study the current status of Quality of Life in Psychological Well-being. From the research result, it was found that multicultural practitioners in London encountered a multifaceted array of challenges that substantially affected their mental well-being. The thematic analysis of the interview data unveiled that difficulties related to work-life balance constituted a primary source of stress, with participants grappling to manage

demanding workloads, navigate business uncertainties, and contend with the incessant pressure to reconcile professional and personal obligations. Numerous participants, particularly those operating small businesses or employed in service sectors characterized by irregular schedules, articulated feelings of being overwhelmed by the competing demands on their time and energy.

Relationship issues also emerged as a significant challenge, with participants citing marital conflicts, growing emotional distance from partners, and the profound pain of breakups as major sources of distress. These relational difficulties were often intertwined with work-related stressors, creating a vicious cycle of tension and strain. Financial stress was another prominent theme, especially for those facing job instability or business struggles. Participants described the constant worry and anxiety associated with making ends meet, paying bills, and maintaining financial obligations.

Additionally, health concerns, both physical and mental, added to the burden of daily challenges. Participants with chronic pain or health conditions reported that their physical limitations often exacerbated their emotional distress, while those with mental health issues described a complex interplay between their symptoms and external stressors. The constant navigation of these multiple challenges left many participants feeling emotionally drained and yearning for a greater sense of stability and resilience.

Participants delineated their mental well-being as a fluctuating condition, with intervals of happiness and contentment interspersed with episodes of stress, sadness, and emotional turmoil. This inconsistency emerged as a source of frustration for many, who conveyed a profound yearning for more enduring inner peace and equanimity. In spite of the considerable challenges they confronted, participants also identified significant sources of strength and support, including close relationships with family and friends, personal spiritual practices, and the profound guidance and perspectives afforded by Dhamma teachings. These resources provided a degree of solace and inspiration amidst the adversities of daily existence.

From the 2<sup>nd</sup> objective is to use Dhamma Online for developing Quality of Life. From the research result, it was found that the design and implementation of the Dhamma Online program were directly informed by the insights gleaned from the focus group discussion and action research. Participants' input was instrumental in shaping the program's structure, content, and delivery to effectively address the diverse needs and challenges of multicultural practitioners.

The comprehensive 4-week program that emerged from this collaborative process incorporated seven carefully crafted components, each targeting a specific aspect of psychological well-being. The "Ask for Forgiveness" component provided a structured space for participants to process past regrets, seek forgiveness, and cultivate self-compassion, addressing the emotional burdens many carried. "Mindful Bowing" offered a physical practice

to develop embodied presence, emotional regulation, and humility, fostering a deeper sense of grounding and self-awareness.

"Dhamma Talk Sessions" delivered teachings on key Buddhist principles and their practical application to daily challenges, providing participants with a roadmap for developing wisdom and resilience in the face of adversity. "Dhamma Media" incorporated engaging multimedia content to support learning and reflection, catering to diverse learning styles and ensuring the accessibility of the teachings.

"Practitioner Narrative Accounts" shared inspiring stories of transformation, offering encouragement and normalizing the struggles inherent in the spiritual path. "Chanting" sessions promoted concentration, emotional upliftment, and a sense of connection to the broader spiritual tradition, while "Spreading Loving-kindness" exercises nurtured compassion for self and others, fostering positive relationships and prosocial behaviour.

These multifaceted components were seamlessly integrated into daily online sessions, with a flexible structure designed to accommodate the diverse schedules and needs of participants. The program's content and delivery were carefully tailored to be culturally responsive, drawing upon teachings and practices from various Buddhist traditions while consistently emphasizing their universal applicability and relevance to contemporary challenges.

Throughout the program, participant feedback and observations were actively solicited and incorporated, allowing for ongoing refinements and optimizations to enhance engagement and impact. This iterative, participant-centred approach ensured that the Dhamma Online program remained dynamic and responsive to the evolving needs of multicultural practitioners.

From the 3<sup>rd</sup> objective is to evaluate Quality of Life after participating in the program. From the research result, it was found that the Dhamma Online program had a profound and statistically significant impact on participants' psychological well-being, as evidenced by both quantitative and qualitative measures. The analysis of pre- and post-test scores from the well-being questionnaire revealed substantial improvements across all assessed dimensions.

Participants reported marked increases in feelings of relaxation ( $Z = -4.782$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , Cliff's delta = 0.92), indicating a greater capacity for stress management and inner calm. They also noted enhanced problem-solving abilities ( $Z = -4.793$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , Cliff's delta = 0.88), suggesting improved cognitive flexibility and resilience in the face of challenges. Greater clarity of mind ( $Z = -4.782$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , Cliff's delta = 0.93) was another prominent benefit, with participants describing heightened mental acuity and focus.

Stronger social connections ( $Z = -4.741$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , Cliff's delta = 0.86) were also reported, reflecting the program's success in fostering a sense of community and belonging among participants, even in the virtual format. Finally, participants experienced improved

emotional regulation ( $Z = -4.826$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , Cliff's delta = 0.93), indicating a greater capacity to manage and process difficult emotions in a healthy manner.

The consistently substantial effect sizes correlated with these enhancements (Cliff's delta ranging from 0.84 to 0.93) accentuate the magnitude and practical significance of the program's impact on participants' well-being. These quantitative findings were further validated and enriched by the qualitative data obtained through comprehensive interviews.

Participants provided poignant accounts of the notable transformations they experienced in their mental states, characterized by increased lightness, clarity, and emotional stability. They recounted numerous instances of the novel coping strategies they had cultivated, such as mindful breathing and self-compassion practices, which empowered them to navigate stressful situations with enhanced ease and poise.

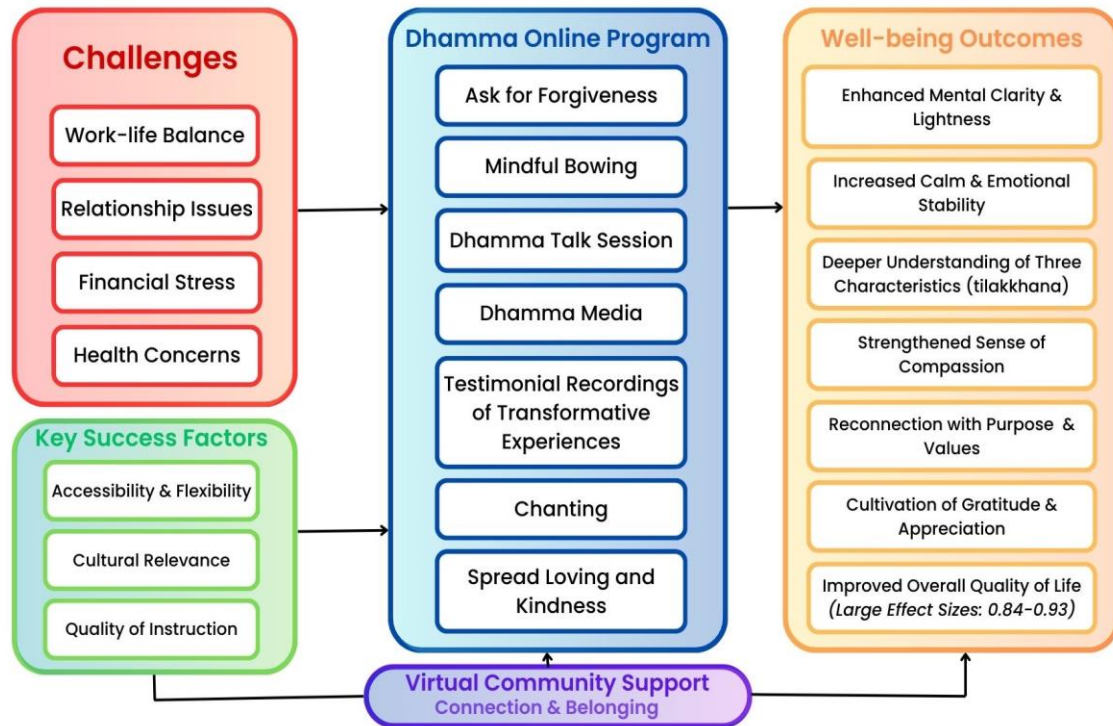
The teachings on impermanence and non-attachment were frequently cited as transformative, offering participants a compelling framework for relinquishing unproductive thought patterns and fostering acceptance in the face of life's fluctuations. Participants also underscored the essential role of the virtual Dhamma community in delivering support, inspiration, and a profound sense of belonging, noting that the collective journey of learning and practice nurtured deep connections and solidarity, even in the absence of physical proximity.

Notably, participants emphasized the practical applicability of the teachings to their everyday lives, sharing numerous illustrations of how they integrated Dhamma principles into their professional, relational, and decision-making processes. This integration led to greater alignment between their values and actions, a heightened sense of purpose, and an overall improvement in their quality of life.

The accessibility and flexibility inherent in the online format were uniformly commended, with participants articulating how the program's architecture facilitated their ability to uphold a consistent practice amidst the exigencies of their hectic urban lifestyles. This adaptability proved to be essential in safeguarding the program's efficacy and sustainability, as it permitted participants to engage with the teachings and practices in a manner that was both practicable and significant, considering their distinctive circumstances.

In conclusion, the research findings furnish compelling evidence regarding the efficacy of the Dhamma Online program in augmenting various dimensions of psychological well-being among diverse practitioners in London. The integration of quantitative and qualitative insights provides a comprehensive, nuanced comprehension of the program's effects, underscoring the transformative potential of online Dhamma practice in cultivating resilience, inner tranquility, and flourishing within contemporary multicultural environments.

## The New Body of Knowledge



**Figure 1:** Conceptual Model: Dhamma Online for Enhancing Psychological Well-being in Multicultural Practitioners

The conceptual model illustrates how specific challenges faced by practitioners are addressed through the comprehensive Dhamma Online Program. This program integrates seven essential components: Ask for Forgiveness, Mindful Bowing, Dhamma Talk Session, Dhamma Media, Testimonial Recordings, Chanting, and Spreading Loving-kindness, complemented by the foundational Understanding of the Three Characteristics. The program's effectiveness is enhanced by key success factors including accessibility, cultural relevance, and quality instruction, while being supported by the sense of connection fostered through virtual community. Together, these elements produce significant well-being outcomes, demonstrated by enhanced mental clarity, increased calm, deeper understanding of the Dhamma, strengthened compassion, reconnection with purpose, cultivation of gratitude, and improved overall quality of life with large effect sizes. This model illustrates the transformative potential of online Dhamma practice when designed with cultural sensitivity and delivered through an integrated approach addressing multiple dimensions of well-being.

## Discussion of Research Results

From the research result of the 1<sup>st</sup> objective, it was found that the complex array of challenges faced by multicultural practitioners in London, including work-life imbalance, relationship difficulties, financial stress, and health concerns, aligns with existing research on

the multifaceted influences on mental health outcomes in diverse populations. This is consistent with the concept, theory, and research work of Williams and Sternthal (2010) and Kagawa-Singer et al. (2010), who highlighted the complex interplay of cultural, social, and economic factors in shaping health disparities and well-being (put in-text citation). The present findings extend this understanding by providing a nuanced illustration of how these pressures specifically affect Dhamma practitioners in the unique context of London, as they navigate the challenges of maintaining spiritual practice amidst the demands and stressors of urban living.

From the research result of the 2<sup>nd</sup> objective, it was found that the comprehensive, multi-component structure of the Dhamma Online program, integrating diverse practices such as forgiveness, mindful movement, wisdom teachings, multimedia content, narrative sharing, chanting, and compassion cultivation, reflects the contemporary understanding of effective mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs). This is consistent with the concept, theory, and research work of Creswell (2017) and Schumer et al. (2018), who demonstrated that MBIs incorporating various complementary practices tend to yield more robust and sustained benefits compared to single-component interventions (put in-text citation). The present study extends this principle to the context of online Dhamma practice, illustrating how a carefully curated combination of teachings and experiential exercises can be effectively delivered in a virtual format to support practitioners' holistic psychological well-being.

From the research result of the 3<sup>rd</sup> objective, it was found that the Dhamma Online program yielded statistically significant improvements across all dimensions of psychological well-being, with effect sizes (Cliff's delta ranging from 0.84 to 0.93) that exceed those typically reported in mindfulness intervention studies. This is consistent with the concept, theory, and research work of Goldberg et al. (2018) and Khoury et al. (2013), whose meta-analyses have generally found moderate effects for MBIs on psychological outcomes (put in-text citation). The exceptionally large effects observed in the present study suggest that the program's comprehensive, culturally responsive approach, which integrates ancient wisdom teachings with contemporary delivery methods, may offer particularly potent benefits for multicultural practitioners. The findings demonstrate how core Dhamma principles, such as the insights on impermanence and non-attachment, can be skilfully translated into accessible online formats to provide powerful support for diverse practitioners navigating the inevitable challenges and vicissitudes of life in a complex, globalized world.

## Conclusion

This research provides compelling evidence for the effectiveness of a thoughtfully designed and culturally responsive online Dhamma program in promoting significant enhancements in the psychological well-being and quality of life among a diverse group of multicultural practitioners in London, UK. By skilfully integrating multiple dimensions of

spiritual practice, including reflective exercises, mindful movement, wisdom teachings, multimedia content, narrative sharing, chanting, and compassion cultivation, and delivering these teachings in an accessible, engaging, and culturally sensitive manner, the program successfully addressed many of the key challenges faced by urban practitioners navigating the complexities of modern life.

The study powerfully demonstrates the immense potential of online platforms to make the transformative wisdom of the Dhamma more widely available, deeply engaging, and directly relevant to the needs and aspirations of contemporary multicultural audiences. The profound insights gained from this research offer invaluable guidance for the design and implementation of future online spiritual initiatives, highlighting the importance of cultural adaptability, technological accessibility, and holistic approaches to practice in effectively meeting the evolving needs of practitioners in an increasingly interconnected and globalized world.

As the rapid advancement of digital technologies continues to reshape the landscape of religious and spiritual engagement, this pioneering research underscores the vital importance of skillfully harnessing these powerful tools to support the psychological thriving and overall well-being of individuals and communities alike. By clearly demonstrating the life-changing impact of culturally adapted online Dhamma teachings in fostering resilience, inner peace, and flourishing among diverse practitioners, this study opens up exciting new avenues for further exploration of how the timeless wisdom of ancient spiritual traditions can be creatively translated and applied to enhance the quality of life in the context of our modern, multicultural societies.

In embracing the transformative potential of this emerging synthesis of ancient wisdom and cutting-edge technology, we stand poised to forge innovative pathways to holistic well-being and awakening, transcending the limitations of geographical distance and cultural differences to touch the hearts and minds of countless seekers across the globe. As we continue to navigate the uncharted territories of our rapidly evolving world, let us draw inspiration and guidance from the profound insights and promising possibilities illuminated by this groundbreaking research, working together to create a future in which the liberating teachings of the Dhamma can be made ever more accessible, relevant, and transformative for all those who seek to alleviate suffering, cultivate wisdom and compassion, and realize the highest potential of the human spirit.

## Suggestions

From the results of the research, the researcher has the following suggestions:

### 1. The suggestions from the research

From the research result of the 1<sup>st</sup> objective, it was found that multicultural practitioners in London face significant challenges in their psychological well-being, including

work-life imbalance, relationship difficulties, financial stress, and health concerns. Therefore, the related institute should apply as follows: Dhamma centers and teachers should consider developing culturally adapted online programs that specifically address these challenges and support the mental well-being of multicultural practitioners. These programs should incorporate teachings and practices that promote work-life balance, healthy relationships, financial stability, and overall health.

From the research result of the 2<sup>nd</sup> objective, it was found that the Dhamma Online program, which incorporated seven key components (Ask for Forgiveness, Mindful Bowing, Dhamma Talk Sessions, Dhamma Media, Practitioner Narrative Accounts, Chanting, and Spreading Loving-kindness), effectively enhanced practitioners' quality of life and psychological well-being. Therefore, the related institute should apply as follows: Online Dhamma platforms should prioritize accessibility, interactivity, and community-building features to optimize engagement and impact. This can be achieved by offering flexible scheduling options, incorporating interactive elements such as live Q&A sessions and discussion forums, and fostering a supportive virtual community through group practice sessions and peer mentorship programs.

From the research result of the 3<sup>rd</sup> objective, it was found that participants experienced significant improvements in multiple dimensions of psychological well-being, including increased relaxation, enhanced problem-solving abilities, greater clarity of mind, stronger social connections, and improved emotional regulation. Therefore, the related institute should apply as follows: Practitioners should be encouraged to integrate online teachings into their daily lives through structured reflective practices and peer support networks. This can involve providing guided meditation recordings, journaling prompts, and practical exercises that help practitioners apply Dhamma principles to real-life situations, as well as facilitating online study groups and accountability partnerships to maintain motivation and consistency in practice.

## **2. The Suggestions for Future Research**

The future research should involve the following issues:

2.1 Longitudinal studies investigating the long-term sustainability of benefits derived from online Dhamma practice. Future research should assess participants' psychological well-being and quality of life at multiple time points (e.g., 6 months, 1 year, and 2 years post-intervention) to determine whether the improvements observed in the current study are maintained over time and to identify factors that support or hinder long-term engagement and growth.

2.2 Comparative research examining the relative effectiveness of different online delivery formats and instructional approaches for teaching Dhamma. Studies could compare outcomes between synchronous (live) and asynchronous (recorded) sessions, varying degrees of interactivity and multimedia content, and different pedagogical styles (e.g., didactic vs. experiential) to identify best practices for online Dhamma education.

2.3 Qualitative explorations of how specific cultural factors influence practitioners' engagement with and outcomes from online Dhamma programs. In-depth interviews and focus groups could be conducted with practitioners from diverse cultural backgrounds to gain a nuanced understanding of how their unique cultural experiences, values, and beliefs shape their approach to online Dhamma practice and their perceived benefits and challenges. This research could inform the development of more culturally responsive and inclusive online Dhamma offerings.

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