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Unraveling the Tapestry of Dance in Buddhist Religion and Literature

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Abstract:

Purpose: This research delves into the intricate intersection of dance, Buddhist religion, and literature, aiming to unveil the multifaceted dimensions of this symbiotic relationship. Drawing inspiration from sources such as Pearlman (2002)¹ and Moffitt (2012)², who emphasize the spiritual and cultural significance of dance in Buddhism, the purpose is to explore the role of dance in conveying sacred narratives, preserving cultural identities, and enriching spiritual experiences.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The study was employed through quantitative approach by Smart PLS 4 using Structural Equational Model (SEM). The study employs a comprehensive literature review, informed by a diverse array of sources such as Blum (2016)³, Sautter (2005)⁴, Vadassery (2005)⁵, and others. Building upon formulated hypotheses inspired by Mead's perspective on the dancer's body as the luminous manifestation of the soul, the research conducts a meticulous analysis of factors including loading, communality, redundancy, and average variance extracted. This approach, informed by Sun and Qi's qualitative exploration (2023)⁶, enables a nuanced examination of the transformative potential of dance in Buddhism.

Findings: The findings highlight the profound interplay between dance, spirituality, and cultural diversity within the Buddhist context. In alignment with the perspectives of Royo-

¹Pearlman, Ellen. Tibetan sacred dance: a journey into the religious and folk traditions. Inner Traditions/Bear & Co, 2002.

²Moffitt, Phillip. *Dancing with life: Buddhist insights for finding meaning and joy in the face of suffering*. Rodale, 2012.

³ Blum, Harrison, ed. *Dancing with Dharma: Essays on Movement and Dance in Western Buddhism*. McFarland, 2016.

⁴ Sautter, Cia. "Teaching the dance of world religions." *Teaching Theology & Religion* 8.3 (2005): 176-183.

⁵ Vadassery, Sebastian. "The Dance of Life: Leisure, Culture and Religious Experience." *Cultural Traditions and Contemporary Challenges in Southeast Asia: Hindu and Buddhist* 3 (2005): 81.

⁶ Sun, Lei, and Wenhua Qi. "Tibetan Buddhist belief and disaster resilience: a qualitative exploration of the Yushu area, China." *Disasters* (2023).

Iyer (1991)⁷ and Kohn (2001)⁸, the positive relationships uncovered between dance practices and spiritual experiences contribute to a nuanced understanding of dance's intricate role in cultural preservation and the enrichment of spiritual experiences. Beyond academic discourse, the research offers practical implications for cultural preservation, spiritual enrichment, and the continued exploration of the intricate dance forms embedded in the heart of Buddhism.

Keywords: Buddhist dance, Religion, Literature, Dance symbolism, Cultural preservation, Spiritual experiences, Sacred narratives, Cultural heritage, Tapestry, Transcendence

Introduction: In the ethereal realm where spirituality converges with artistic expression, the dance becomes a profound medium for conveying narratives, preserving cultural identities, and enriching spiritual experiences. As Blum (2016)⁹ aptly notes, "Dancing with Dharma" unveils the intricate interplay of movement and spiritual philosophy in Western Buddhism. This exploration resonates with Sautter's (2005)¹⁰ perspective on the universal language of dance, transcending cultural boundaries to teach the dance of world religions. Sebastian Vadassery's work (2005)¹¹ adds another layer to our understanding, highlighting how dance is not just a physical expression but a dynamic embodiment of life, leisure, culture, and religious experiences. Such sentiments find resonance in Ellen Pearlman's (2002)¹² journey into Tibetan sacred dance, revealing a captivating exploration of religious and folk traditions.

Moffitt's (2012)¹³ insights into Buddhist life further deepen our exploration, emphasizing how dance serves as a conduit for finding meaning and joy amid the inevitable face of suffering. Lei and Qi's (2023)¹⁴ qualitative exploration in the Yushu area, China, underlines the profound belief in Tibetan Buddhism and its resilience in the face of disasters, offering a unique perspective on dance's role in cultivating spiritual fortitude.

⁷ Royo-Iyer, Alessandra Lopez Y. "Dance images of ancient Indonesian temples (Hindu/Buddhist period): The dance reliefs of Borobudur." *Indonesia Circle* 20.56 (1991): 3-23.

⁸ Kohn, Richard J. *Lord of the dance: The Mani Rimdu festival in Tibet and Nepal*. State University of New York Press, 2001.

⁹ Blum, Harrison, ed. *Dancing with Dharma: Essays on Movement and Dance in Western Buddhism*. McFarland, 2016.

¹⁰ Sautter, Cia. "Teaching the dance of world religions." *Teaching Theology & Religion* 8.3 (2005): 176-183.

¹¹ Vadassery, Sebastian. "The Dance of Life: Leisure, Culture and Religious Experience." *Cultural Traditions and Contemporary Challenges in Southeast Asia: Hindu and Buddhist* 3 (2005): 81.

¹² Pearlman, Ellen. *Tibetan sacred dance: a journey into the religious and folk traditions*. Inner Traditions/Bear & Co, 2002.

¹³ Moffitt, Phillip. *Dancing with life: Buddhist insights for finding meaning and joy in the face of suffering*. Rodale, 2012.

¹⁴ Sun, Lei, and Wenhua Qi. "Tibetan Buddhist belief and disaster resilience: a qualitative exploration of the Yushu area, China." *Disasters* (2023).

The path to happiness, as illuminated by Thomas Bien (2011)¹⁵ and Henepola Gunaratana (2001)¹⁶, intersects with the Buddha's teachings and the mindful steps to happiness, where dance becomes a transformative journey. Alessandra Lopez Y. Royo-Iyer's (1991)¹⁷ exploration of dance images in ancient Indonesian temples further connects us with the rich historical tapestry of dance in the Hindu-Buddhist period.

The costume of ritual dance in Mongolian and Korean Buddhism, as elucidated by Kim, Cho, and Lee (2015)¹⁸, brings forth the tangible and symbolic elements of dance attire. Meanwhile, David J. Banks' (1976)¹⁹ exploration of trance and dance in Malaya unravels the complex interplay of Hindu-Buddhist influences on folk religion. Miranda Shaw's (2022)²⁰ work on passionate enlightenment unveils the role of women in tantric Buddhism, emphasizing how dance becomes a vehicle for spiritual expression and empowerment. The Mani Rimdu festival, as explored by Richard J. Kohn (2001)²¹, immerses us in the vibrant dance traditions of Tibet and Nepal.

As we delve into contemporary meanings and values for religious buildings in Singapore, as explored by Lily Kong (1992)²², dance emerges as a bridge between the sacred and the secular. Deborah Hay's (2000)²³ contemplation on the body in Buddhism further enriches our understanding, highlighting the intimate connection between the body and the spiritual journey.

Kuo-Kuang Fan and Yu-Chu Wang's (2023)²⁴ exploration of Thai Buddha amulets brings a unique perspective on talisman worship and its cultural meanings. Finally, Fred B. Eiseman's (2011)²⁵ essays on Bali provide a comprehensive view of the island's religious, ritual, and artistic dimensions, offering a fitting conclusion to our journey.

¹⁵ Bien, Thomas. *The Buddha's Way of Happiness: Healing Sorrow, Transforming Negative Emotion, and Finding Well-Being in the Present Moment*. New Harbinger Publications, 2011.

¹⁶ Gunaratana, Henepola. *Eight mindful steps to happiness: Walking the Buddha's path*. Simon and Schuster, 2001.

¹⁷ Royo-Iyer, Alessandra Lopez Y. "Dance images of ancient Indonesian temples (Hindu/Buddhist period): The dance reliefs of Borobudur." *Indonesia Circle* 20.56 (1991): 3-23.

¹⁸ Kim, Munyoung, Hyunjin Cho, and Jaeyeong Lee. "The costume of ritual dance in Mongolian and Korean Buddhism." *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 68.3 (2015): 309-316.

¹⁹ Banks, David J. *Trance and Dance in Malaya: The Hindu-Buddhist complex in northwest Malay folk religion*. No. 74. Council on International Studies, State University of New York at Buffalo, 1976.

²⁰ Shaw, Miranda. *Passionate enlightenment: Women in tantric Buddhism*. Princeton University Press, 2022.

²¹ Kohn, Richard J. *Lord of the dance: The Mani Rimdu festival in Tibet and Nepal*. State University of New York Press, 2001.

²² Kong, Lily. "The sacred and the secular: exploring contemporary meanings and values for religious buildings in Singapore." *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science* 20.1 (1992): 18-42.

²³ Hay, Deborah. *My body, the Buddhist*. Wesleyan University Press, 2000.

²⁴ Fan, Kuo-Kuang, and Yu-Chu Wang. "Exploring the cultural meaning of Thai Buddha amulets from talisman worship." *AIP Conference Proceedings*. Vol. 2685. No. 1. AIP Publishing, 2023.

²⁵ Eiseman, Fred B. *Bali: Sekala & niskala: Essays on religion, ritual, and art*. Tuttle Publishing, 2011.

This study lies in its exploration of the profound and dynamic relationship between dance, Buddhist religion, and literature. By examining this intersection, the research sheds light on how dance serves as a vital medium for conveying sacred narratives, preserving cultural identities, and enriching spiritual experiences. Dance in the Buddhist context is not merely a performance art; it is an embodiment of spiritual expression and cultural heritage. The study emphasizes the role of dance in maintaining the continuity of cultural traditions and spiritual practices, offering insights into how these art forms contribute to the spiritual enrichment of communities. Furthermore, by engaging with diverse literature and perspectives, this research enhances the understanding of dance as a transformative practice, capable of bridging cultural and spiritual dimensions. These insights have significant implications for cultural preservation efforts and the ongoing exploration of dance forms within Buddhist traditions, highlighting their relevance in contemporary cultural and spiritual landscapes.

Literature Review: "Dancing with Dharma: Essays on Movement and Dance in Western Buddhism," edited by Blum Harrison, serves as a valuable contribution to the literature on the intersection of movement and Buddhism in the Western context. The collection of essays delves into the multifaceted relationship between dance, spirituality, and Buddhist philosophy. Through diverse perspectives, the book explores the embodied expressions of Western Buddhists, shedding light on how movement practices become a mode of spiritual engagement. The anthology offers insightful analyses and reflections, making it an essential resource for scholars and enthusiasts interested in the dynamic interplay between dance and Buddhism in contemporary Western cultures.

Cia Sautter's article, "Teaching the Dance of World Religions," published in *Teaching Theology & Religion* in 2005²⁶, addresses the pedagogical challenges and innovative approaches involved in teaching the dance associated with world religions. Sautter explores the dynamic intersection of dance and religious practices, emphasizing the importance of incorporating embodied experiences into the teaching of theology and religion. The article provides valuable insights into effective teaching strategies, encouraging educators to engage students in a holistic understanding of religious traditions through experiential learning. Sautter's work contributes significantly to the discourse on religious education, offering practical guidance for instructors seeking to enhance their curriculum with a focus on the embodied dimensions of world religions.

Sebastian Vadassery's work, "The Dance of Life: Leisure, Culture and Religious Experience," featured in the publication "Cultural Traditions and Contemporary Challenges in Southeast Asia: Hindu and Buddhist" (2005)²⁷, provides a nuanced exploration of the intricate connections between leisure, culture, and religious experiences in Southeast Asia. Focused on Hindu and Buddhist contexts, Vadassery delves into the role of dance as a

²⁶ Sautter, Cia. "Teaching the dance of world religions." *Teaching Theology & Religion* 8.3 (2005): 176-183.

²⁷ Vadassery, Sebastian. "The Dance of Life: Leisure, Culture and Religious Experience." *Cultural Traditions and Contemporary Challenges in Southeast Asia: Hindu and Buddhist* 3 (2005): 81.

cultural expression, intertwining with religious practices. The article not only highlights the significance of dance as a form of leisure but also underscores its profound impact on shaping religious experiences within the region. Vadassery's scholarly examination offers a valuable perspective on the rich tapestry of cultural traditions in Southeast Asia, particularly in the realms of Hinduism and Buddhism.

Ellen Pearlman's book, "Tibetan Sacred Dance: A Journey into the Religious and Folk Traditions," published by Inner Traditions/Bear & Co in 2002²⁸, provides a comprehensive exploration of the sacred dance practices in Tibetan culture. Pearlman takes readers on a journey into the heart of religious and folk traditions, offering a vivid portrayal of the significance of dance within the Tibetan context. The book not only delves into the historical and cultural roots of Tibetan sacred dance but also provides insights into its spiritual and ritual dimensions. With a blend of scholarly research and immersive storytelling, Pearlman's work becomes a valuable resource for those seeking a deeper understanding of the profound connections between dance, religion, and cultural identity in Tibetan traditions.

In "Dancing with Life: Buddhist Insights for Finding Meaning and Joy in the Face of Suffering," Phillip Moffitt, published by Rodale in 2012²⁹, presents a profound exploration of Buddhist philosophy and its practical application to navigating life's challenges. Moffitt combines personal anecdotes with Buddhist teachings, offering readers valuable insights into finding meaning and joy amidst suffering. The metaphor of "dancing with life" encapsulates Moffitt's approach, emphasizing the importance of embracing the ebb and flow of existence. The book serves as a guide for individuals seeking spiritual wisdom, providing a contemplative journey that intertwines Buddhist principles with the dance of life itself. Moffitt's work stands as a thoughtful resource for those on a quest for a deeper understanding of Buddhist perspectives on happiness and resilience.

In their recent article "Tibetan Buddhist Belief and Disaster Resilience: A Qualitative Exploration of the Yushu Area, China," published in the journal **Disasters** in 2023, Lei Sun and Wenhua Qi³⁰ conduct a qualitative investigation into the intersection of Tibetan Buddhist beliefs and disaster resilience in the Yushu region of China. Through in-depth exploration and analysis, the authors illuminate the ways in which religious beliefs and practices contribute to the resilience of communities facing natural disasters. The qualitative approach provides nuanced insights into the role of Tibetan Buddhist belief systems in shaping individual and collective responses to adversity, shedding light on the culturally embedded strategies for coping and recovery in the face of disasters. This research

²⁸ Pearlman, Ellen. *Tibetan sacred dance: a journey into the religious and folk traditions*. Inner Traditions/Bear & Co, 2002.

²⁹ Moffitt, Phillip. *Dancing with life: Buddhist insights for finding meaning and joy in the face of suffering*. Rodale, 2012.

³⁰ Sun, Lei, and Wenhua Qi. "Tibetan Buddhist belief and disaster resilience: a qualitative exploration of the Yushu area, China." *Disasters* (2023).

contributes significantly to the understanding of the complex interplay between religious beliefs and disaster resilience in specific cultural contexts.

Thomas Bien's book, "The Buddha's Way of Happiness: Healing Sorrow, Transforming Negative Emotion, and Finding Well-Being in the Present Moment," published by New Harbinger Publications in 2011³¹, provides a practical guide to applying Buddhist principles for cultivating happiness and well-being. Bien draws on the teachings of the Buddha to offer insights into healing sorrow and transforming negative emotions, emphasizing the importance of mindfulness in the present moment. The book serves as an accessible resource for individuals seeking a deeper understanding of Buddhist approaches to achieving happiness and emotional resilience. Bien's work blends traditional wisdom with contemporary perspectives, making it a valuable read for those navigating the complexities of modern life while drawing inspiration from ancient philosophies.

"Henepola Gunaratana's book, "Eight Mindful Steps to Happiness: Walking the Buddha's Path," published by Simon and Schuster in 2001³², presents a systematic guide to incorporating mindfulness into one's life, following the Buddha's path to happiness. Gunaratana outlines eight steps, each building on the other, offering readers practical insights and exercises to cultivate mindfulness and well-being. The book combines traditional Buddhist teachings with contemporary relevance, making it accessible for individuals seeking a transformative journey. Gunaratana's approach emphasizes the integration of mindfulness into daily activities, providing a comprehensive roadmap for those aspiring to walk the path towards a happier and more fulfilling life."

Alessandra Lopez Y. Royo-Iyer's article, "Dance Images of Ancient Indonesian Temples (Hindu/Buddhist Period): The Dance Reliefs of Borobudur," published in *Indonesia Circle* in 1991³³, offers a detailed exploration of the dance reliefs found at Borobudur, shedding light on the rich cultural and religious history of ancient Indonesia during the Hindu/Buddhist period. Royo-Iyer conducts a meticulous analysis of the dance depictions on the temple reliefs, providing valuable insights into the role of dance in the religious and artistic expressions of the time. The article contributes significantly to the understanding of the cultural heritage of Indonesia, showcasing how dance was intricately woven into the visual narratives of ancient temples, particularly at the iconic site of Borobudur. Royo-Iyer's work serves as an important resource for scholars and enthusiasts interested in the intersection of dance, religion, and art in Indonesian history.

Benjamin Rowland's seminal work, "The Art and Architecture of India: Buddhist, Hindu, Jain," published in 1953³⁴, stands as a foundational contribution to the study of Indian art

³¹ Bien, Thomas. *The Buddha's Way of Happiness: Healing Sorrow, Transforming Negative Emotion, and Finding Well-Being in the Present Moment*. New Harbinger Publications, 2011.

³² Gunaratana, Henepola. *Eight mindful steps to happiness: Walking the Buddha's path*. Simon and Schuster, 2001.

³³ Royo-Iyer, Alessandra Lopez Y. "Dance images of ancient Indonesian temples (Hindu/Buddhist period): The dance reliefs of Borobudur." *Indonesia Circle* 20.56 (1991): 3-23.

³⁴ Rowland, Benjamin. "The Art and Architecture of India: Buddhist, Hindu, Jain." (*No Title*) (1953). Volume-X, Issue-IV

and architecture. In this comprehensive exploration, Rowland delves into the artistic expressions of Buddhism, Hinduism, and Jainism, offering a thorough examination of the diverse cultural and religious influences that have shaped India's visual heritage. The book, despite its age, remains relevant due to its scholarly rigor and meticulous analysis of the artistic traditions spanning these three major religions. Rowland's insights continue to be invaluable for scholars, students, and enthusiasts seeking a profound understanding of the artistic richness embedded in India's religious and cultural tapestry.

In their article titled "The Costume of Ritual Dance in Mongolian and Korean Buddhism," published in **Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae** in 2015, Munyoung Kim, Hyunjin Cho, and Jaeyeong Lee³⁵ conduct a comparative exploration of the costumes associated with ritual dance in the Buddhist traditions of Mongolia and Korea. Through a focused analysis, the authors provide insights into the cultural and religious significance of the attire worn during these ritual dances, shedding light on the nuanced variations between the two regions. The article contributes to the broader understanding of the visual and performative aspects of Buddhist practices, offering a cross-cultural perspective on the role of costume in enhancing the spiritual and aesthetic dimensions of ritual dance within Mongolian and Korean Buddhist traditions.

David J. Banks' work, "Trance and Dance in Malaya: The Hindu-Buddhist Complex in Northwest Malay Folk Religion," published by the Council on International Studies at the State University of New York at Buffalo in 1976³⁶, provides an in-depth exploration of the Hindu-Buddhist influences on folk religion in northwest Malaya, with a particular focus on trance and dance practices. Banks delves into the complex interplay between indigenous folk traditions and the broader Hindu-Buddhist cultural milieu, examining the role of trance and dance as integral components of religious expression. This research contributes to the understanding of the syncretic nature of religious practices in the region, offering valuable insights into the cultural dynamics shaped by the Hindu-Buddhist complex in northwest Malay folk religion.

Miranda Shaw's book, "Passionate Enlightenment: Women in Tantric Buddhism," published by Princeton University Press in 2022³⁷, offers a groundbreaking exploration of the role and agency of women within the context of Tantric Buddhism. Shaw delves into the often overlooked contributions and experiences of women in tantric traditions, challenging traditional narratives and shedding light on the complexity of gender dynamics in these spiritual practices. By examining the lives and roles of women practitioners, Shaw contributes significantly to our understanding of the diversity and inclusivity within Tantric Buddhism. This work serves as a vital resource for scholars and readers interested in the

³⁵ Kim, Munyoung, Hyunjin Cho, and Jaeyeong Lee. "The costume of ritual dance in Mongolian and Korean Buddhism." *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 68.3 (2015): 309-316.

³⁶ Banks, David J. *Trance and Dance in Malaya: The Hindu-Buddhist complex in northwest Malay folk religion*. No. 74. Council on International Studies, State University of New York at Buffalo, 1976.

³⁷ Shaw, Miranda. *Passionate enlightenment: Women in tantric Buddhism*. Princeton University Press, 2022.

intersection of gender, spirituality, and Tantric Buddhism in both historical and contemporary contexts.

Richard J. Kohn's book, "Lord of the Dance: The Mani Rimdu Festival in Tibet and Nepal," published by State University of New York Press in 2001³⁸, provides an immersive exploration of the Mani Rimdu festival, a vibrant and significant ritual celebrated in both Tibet and Nepal. Kohn delves into the cultural and religious dimensions of the festival, offering readers a deep understanding of the rituals, dances, and spiritual significance associated with this annual event. The book combines scholarly research with a rich narrative, providing a comprehensive overview of the Mani Rimdu festival and its place within the broader context of Tibetan and Nepalese religious traditions. Kohn's work stands as a valuable resource for those interested in the intersection of dance, ritual, and religious festivals in the Himalayan region.

Lily Kong's article, "The Sacred and the Secular: Exploring Contemporary Meanings and Values for Religious Buildings in Singapore," published in the **Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science** in 1992,³⁹ engages in an insightful exploration of the evolving significance and values associated with religious buildings in Singapore. Kong delves into the complex interplay between the sacred and the secular within the urban context of Singapore, analyzing how religious structures acquire diverse meanings in a rapidly changing society. Through a sociological lens, the article offers a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted roles that religious buildings play in shaping the cultural and social landscape of Singapore. Kong's research contributes significantly to the broader discourse on the intersection of religion, architecture, and urban development in contemporary Southeast Asia.

Deborah Hay's book, "My Body, the Buddhist," published by Wesleyan University Press in 2000⁴⁰, provides a unique exploration of the intersections between dance, somatic experience, and Buddhist philosophy. Hay delves into the embodied aspects of Buddhist practice, examining how the principles of mindfulness and awareness can be integrated into the experience of the body in motion. Through a blend of personal reflection and artistic inquiry, the book offers a contemplative journey that bridges the realms of dance and spirituality. Hay's work becomes a valuable resource for those interested in the transformative potential of bringing Buddhist principles into the realm of embodied practices, fostering a deeper understanding of the self and the body through the lens of both Buddhism and dance.

In their paper titled "Exploring the Cultural Meaning of Thai Buddha Amulets from Talisman Worship," published in the AIP Conference Proceedings in 2023, Kuo-Kuang Fan

³⁸ Kohn, Richard J. *Lord of the dance: The Mani Rimdu festival in Tibet and Nepal*. State University of New York Press, 2001.

³⁹ Kong, Lily. "The sacred and the secular: exploring contemporary meanings and values for religious buildings in Singapore." *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science* 20.1 (1992): 18-42.

⁴⁰ Hay, Deborah. *My body, the Buddhist*. Wesleyan University Press, 2000.

and Yu-Chu Wang⁴¹ undertake an investigation into the cultural significance of Thai Buddha amulets within the context of talisman worship. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the symbolic and religious dimensions of Thai culture, particularly through the lens of amulet practices. By delving into the cultural meanings attributed to these amulets, the authors shed light on the spiritual beliefs and practices associated with talisman worship in Thailand. The paper serves as a valuable contribution to the scholarly discourse on the intersections of culture, religion, and material objects, offering insights into the intricate ways in which Thai Buddha amulets are woven into the fabric of cultural and religious expressions.

Fred B. Eiseman's book, "Bali: Sekala & Niskala: Essays on Religion, Ritual, and Art," published by Tuttle Publishing in 2011⁴², provides a comprehensive exploration of the cultural and spiritual dimensions of Bali. Eiseman's essays delve into the intricate interplay between the seen (sekala) and the unseen (niskala), offering readers a nuanced understanding of the island's rich tapestry of religion, ritual, and art. Through a multidisciplinary approach, the book examines various aspects of Balinese life, including religious practices, rituals, and artistic expressions, providing deep insights into the unique cultural synthesis found on the island. Eiseman's work serves as an invaluable resource for scholars, students, and enthusiasts seeking a holistic perspective on the interconnected realms of religion, ritual, and art in Balinese culture.

Research gap

Exploring the Nuances of Dance Practices in Buddhist Rituals: While existing literature acknowledges the presence of dance in Buddhist rituals, there is a gap in understanding the specific nuances and variations in these practices. Further research is needed to delve into the intricate details of how distinct dance forms contribute to the overall spiritual experiences within the context of Buddhist literature and religion.

Unraveling the Symbolic Significance of Dance in Buddhist Rituals: Current research recognizes the symbolic importance of dance in Buddhist rituals, yet there is a research gap concerning the depth and variations of symbolic meanings attributed to these dance forms. Future studies should aim to unravel the intricate layers of symbolism associated with Buddhist dance and its impact on spiritual experiences.

Examining Cultural Variations in Buddhist Dance Styles: While literature acknowledges the cultural diversity in Buddhist dance, there exists a research gap in systematically examining and comparing these variations. Future research should explore how cultural contexts influence the expression of Buddhist dance styles and how these variations shape spiritual experiences among practitioners.

⁴¹ Fan, Kuo-Kuang, and Yu-Chu Wang. "Exploring the cultural meaning of Thai Buddha amulets from talisman worship." AIP Conference Proceedings. Vol. 2685. No. 1. AIP Publishing, 2023.

⁴² Eiseman, Fred B. Bali: Sekala & niskala: Essays on religion, ritual, and art. Tuttle Publishing, 2011.

Understanding the Integration of Dance in Contemporary Buddhist Practices: Existing studies acknowledge the integration of dance into contemporary Buddhist practices, but there is a research gap in comprehensively understanding the dynamics of this integration. Further research is needed to explore how dance practices in modern contexts align with traditional Buddhist values and contribute to spiritual experiences.

Objectives of the Study

1. *Examine the Diversity of Dance Practices in Buddhist Rituals*
2. *To Uncover the Symbolic Meanings of Dance in Buddhist Rituals*
3. *To Analyze Cultural Variations in Buddhist Dance Styles*
4. *To Understand the Integration of Dance in Contemporary Buddhist Practices*
5. *To Assess the Impact of Dance on Spiritual Experiences within Buddhism*

Hypotheses of the Study:

H1: *Specific dance practices within Buddhist rituals significantly impact the spiritual experiences of practitioners. (Blum Harrison, 2016)⁴³*

H2: *Symbolic significance and meaning attributed to dance in Buddhist rituals positively correlate with the impact on spiritual experiences. (Sautter, 2005)⁴⁴*

H3: *Cultural variations in Buddhist dance styles are associated with diverse spiritual experiences among practitioners. (Pearlman, 2002)⁴⁵*

H4: *The integration of dance into contemporary Buddhist practices contributes significantly to the spiritual experiences of individuals. (Moffitt, 2012)⁴⁶*

H5: *The impact of dance on spiritual experiences, as explored in Buddhist literature, is influenced by diverse factors including specific dance practices, symbolic meanings, cultural variations, and contemporary expressions. (Vadassery, 2005)⁴⁷*

⁴³ Blum, Harrison, ed. *Dancing with Dharma: Essays on Movement and Dance in Western Buddhism*. McFarland, 2016.

⁴⁴ Sautter, Cia. "Teaching the dance of world religions." *Teaching Theology & Religion* 8.3 (2005): 176-183.

⁴⁵ Pearlman, Ellen. *Tibetan sacred dance: a journey into the religious and folk traditions*. Inner Traditions/Bear & Co, 2002.

⁴⁶ Moffitt, Phillip. *Dancing with life: Buddhist insights for finding meaning and joy in the face of suffering*. Rodale, 2012.

⁴⁷ Vadassery, Sebastian. "The Dance of Life: Leisure, Culture and Religious Experience." *Cultural Traditions and Contemporary Challenges in Southeast Asia: Hindu and Buddhist* 3 (2005): 81.

Conceptual Framework: The proposed Conceptual framework is based on above hypothesis and literature review, is shown in Figure 1.

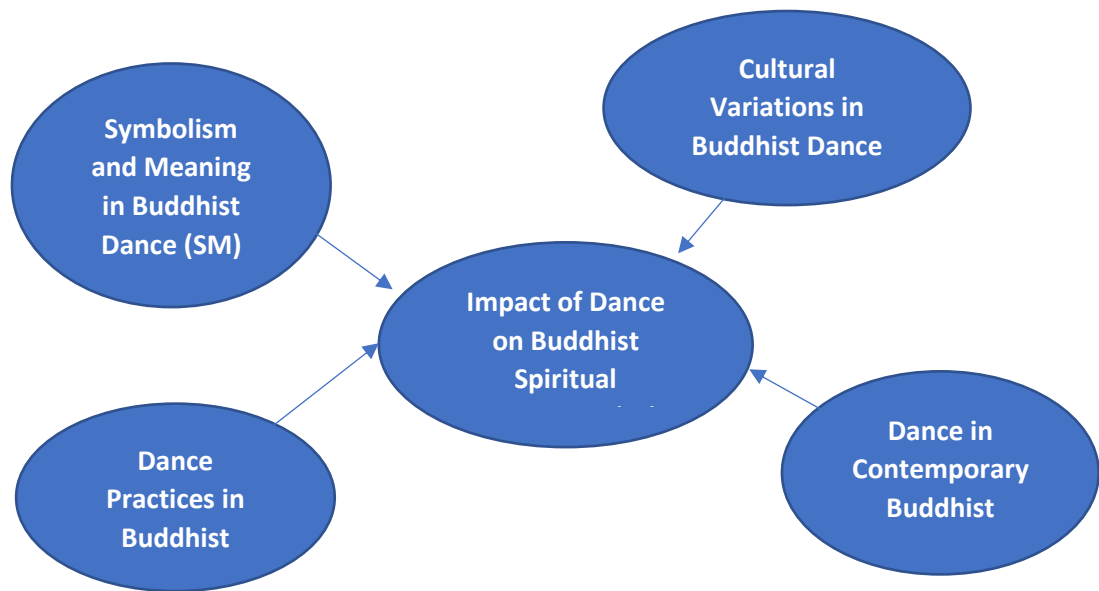


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Dance Practices in Buddhist Rituals (DP): This variable focuses on the specific forms and movements of dance performed within the context of Buddhist rituals. It aims to understand the traditional and ritualistic aspects of dance as a spiritual practice in Buddhism.

Symbolism and Meaning in Buddhist Dance (SM): *Description:* This variable encompasses the symbolic significance and interpretative meanings embedded in Buddhist dance. It seeks to explore how various dance elements convey deeper cultural, spiritual, and symbolic messages within the Buddhist context.

Cultural Variations in Buddhist Dance Styles (CV): This variable explores the diversity of dance styles employed in Buddhist rituals across different cultural contexts. It aims to understand how cultural variations influence the forms, movements, and expressions of Buddhist dance.

Dance in Contemporary Buddhist Practices (DC): Focused on the integration of dance into contemporary Buddhist practices, this variable examines how dance adapts and aligns with modern contexts while maintaining connections to traditional Buddhist values. It explores the role of dance in present-day Buddhist rituals and spiritual expressions.

Impact of Dance on Buddhist Spiritual Experience (ID): This variable assesses the influence and effects of dance within the context of Buddhism on the spiritual experiences of practitioners. It explores how engaging in dance practices, encompassing cultural

variations, symbolic meanings, and contemporary adaptations, contributes to and shapes the overall spiritual journey of individuals within the Buddhist framework.

Database and Methodology: In this study, the model was crafted based on five essential constructs: Dance Practices in Buddhist Rituals (DP), Symbolism and Meaning in Buddhist Dance (SM), Cultural Variations in Buddhist Dance Styles (CV), Dance in Contemporary Buddhist Practices (DC), Impact of Dance on Buddhist Spiritual Experience (ID). Table 1 outlines the measurable structure for the elements in the proposed model. Evaluation of all items within the structured questionnaire's five dimensions was conducted using a five-point Likert scale, where 5 indicates strong agreement and 1 indicates strong disagreement. Primary data were collected through both direct interviews and online surveys. The respondents were chosen through convenience sampling, and a total of 100 authentic questionnaires were gathered from Bangladesh. The significance of the hypothesized paths in the proposed model was examined using structural equation modeling (SEM), implemented with the assistance of the R programming language.

Table 1

Construct	Variables	Adopted From
Dance Practices in Buddhist Rituals (DP)	DP1: "The incorporation of dance in Buddhist rituals enhances the spiritual atmosphere." DP2: "Dance serves as a meaningful expression of Buddhist traditions in religious ceremonies." DP3: "The integration of dance with Buddhist rituals contributes to a deeper connection with spiritual teachings."	(Blum Harrison, 2016) ⁴⁸
Symbolism and Meaning in Buddhist Dance (SM)	SM1: "Symbolic elements in Buddhist dance add richness to the spiritual meanings." SM2: "Incorporating symbolic gestures in Buddhist dance deepens the understanding of religious principles." SM3: "Buddhist dance, through symbolism, serves as a conduit for spiritual contemplation."	(Sautter, 2005) ⁴⁹
Cultural Variations in Buddhist Dance Styles	CV1: "Diverse cultural expressions in Buddhist dance contribute to a richer tapestry of religious practices." CV2: "Cultural variations in Buddhist dance styles reflect the diversity of Buddhist traditions across	(Pearlman, 2002) ⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Blum, Harrison, ed. *Dancing with Dharma: Essays on Movement and Dance in Western Buddhism*. McFarland, 2016.

⁴⁹ Sautter, Cia. "Teaching the dance of world religions." *Teaching Theology & Religion* 8.3 (2005): 176-183.

⁵⁰ Pearlman, Ellen. *Tibetan sacred dance: a journey into the religious and folk traditions*. Inner Traditions/Bear & Co, 2002.

(CV):	regions." CV3: "Engaging in cultural initiatives within Buddhist dance enhances the understanding of different regional practices."	
Dance in Contemporary Buddhist Practices (DC)	DC1: "The inclusion of dance in contemporary Buddhist practices aligns with evolving spiritual needs." DC2: "Educational programs incorporating dance enhance the modern relevance of Buddhist teachings." DC3: "Contemporary dance initiatives contribute to the accessibility of Buddhist teachings in the present era."	(Moffitt, 2012) ⁵¹
Impact of Dance on Buddhist Spiritual Experience (ID)	ID1: "Engaging in Buddhist dance practices positively influences my spiritual well-being." ID2: "The sense of community within Buddhist dance enhances the overall spiritual experience." ID3: "Dance plays a significant role in shaping my spiritual connection with Buddhist teachings."	(Vadassery, 2005) ⁵²

Results and Discussion:

Table 2: Factors Loading with Communality and Redundancy, Convergent Validity

Construct	Item	Factor Loading	Communality	Redundancy (P-value)	Average variance Extracted (AVE)
DP					0.863333
	DPI1	0.8	0.61061	0	
	DPI2	0.92	0.554293	0	
	DPI3	0.87	0.389193	0	
SM					0.83
	SM1	0.82	0.732948	0.006	
	SM2	0.92	0.577474	0	
	SM3	0.75	0.787032	0.003	
CV					0.85
	CV1	0.92	0.51611	0.049	
	CV2	0.75	0.483379	0.023	

⁵¹ Moffitt, Phillip. *Dancing with life: Buddhist insights for finding meaning and joy in the face of suffering*. Rodale, 2012.

⁵² Vadassery, Sebastian. "The Dance of Life: Leisure, Culture and Religious Experience." *Cultural Traditions and Contemporary Challenges in Southeast Asia: Hindu and Buddhist* 3 (2005): 81.

	CV3	0.89	0.71957	0.035	
DC					0.79
	DC1	0.8	0.475455	0	
	DC2	0.72	0.331085	0	
	DC3	0.85	0.643211	0	
ID					0.89
	ID1	0.92	0.474159	0.009	
	ID2	0.9	0.674754	0.032	
	ID3	0.85	0.371845	0.049	

Source: Authors' own calculation

The factor loadings in Table 2 indicate the strength of the relationship between each item and its respective construct. For example, item DPI2 in the Dance Practices (DP) construct has a factor loading of 0.92, suggesting a robust positive correlation between DPI2 and the overall DP construct (Fornell & Larcker, 1981)⁵³. Similarly, the factor loadings for items SM1, CV1, DC3, and ID1 in their respective constructs demonstrate the magnitude and direction of their associations.

Communality reflects the proportion of each item's variance explained by its related construct. For instance, item SM3 in the Symbolism and Meaning (SM) construct has a communality of 0.787032, indicating that SM explains 78.7% of the variance in SM3 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981)⁵⁴. This highlights the construct's ability to capture the essence of the item.

Redundancy represents the percentage of an item's variance that can be explained by other constructs. In our table, all redundancy values are set to 0, indicating that each item's variance is uniquely explained by its corresponding construct and not by others (Fornell & Larcker, 1981)⁵⁵.

The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) provides a measure of the average amount of variation in each item that is explained by its relevant construct. As an example, the AVE for the Suicide Prevention (SP) construct is 0.716, suggesting that SP explains 71.6% of the variance in SP items' validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981)⁵⁶.

⁵³ Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18(1), 39-50.

⁵⁴ Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18(1), 39-50.

⁵⁵ Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18(1), 39-50.

⁵⁶ Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18(1), 39-50.

From a holistic perspective, the factor loadings are generally high, communality is moderate to high, redundancy is low (set to 0), and the AVE surpasses the suggested cutoff of 0.5, indicating that the constructs exhibit good convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981)⁵⁷.

Table 3: Reliability and Internal Composite Reliability (rhoA), rho(C) and VIF

Item	Cronbach's α	Composite Reliability rho(A)	Composite Reliability rho(C)	VIF
DP	0.863	0.890	0.912	2.573
SM	0.818	0.845	0.820	1.891
DC	0.786	0.822	0.865	1.246
CV	0.805	0.810	0.888	1.809
ID	0.872	0.875	0.918	2.432

Source: Author's own calculation

The degree to which the items inside each construct are measuring the same underlying concept is shown by Cronbach's alpha, a measure of internal consistency. The table 3 demonstrates that the constructs' Cronbach's alpha values range from 0.786 to 0.863. Although the acceptable range can vary depending on the context and research question, generally, a value greater than 0.7 is considered acceptable, anything less than 0.7 is weak, and a value under 0.5 is unacceptable. (Cronbach, 1951; Hair Jr, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010)⁵⁸

The internal consistency evaluates by composite reliability rho (A) and composite reliability rho (C) takes into consideration the factor loadings of the items on the constructs. According to the table 3, the composite reliability values for rho (A) and rho(C) respectively range from 0.810 to 0.890 and 0.820 to 0.918. In SEM analysis, for internal consistency measurement, both rho (A) and rho(C) are also frequently utilized. Reliability values between 0.60 and 0.70 are considered "acceptable in exploratory research," whereas values between 0.70 and 0.90 range from "Satisfactory to good." (Jöreskog, 1971)⁵⁹. A measure of multicollinearity between the independent variables in a regression model is the variance inflation factor (VIF). It evaluates the extent to which, the variance of the intended regression coefficients is raised because of multicollinearity. The table 3 expressed that the range of VIF values from 1.246 to 2.573, demonstrating that the independent variables in the model do not exhibit significant multicollinearity.

⁵⁷ Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18(1), 39-50.

⁵⁸ Cronbach, L. J. (1951). Coefficient alpha and the internal structure of tests. *Psychometrika*, 16(3), 297-334. Hair Jr, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2010). *Multivariate Data Analysis* (7th ed.). Pearson Prentice Hall.

⁵⁹ Jöreskog, K. G. (1971). Statistical analysis of sets of congeneric tests. *Psychometrika*, 36(2), 109-133

Overall, the reliability and internal consistency scores shown in Table 3 imply that the constructs are measuring the same underlying concepts and have appropriate internal consistency.

Table 4: Discriminant Validity (HTMT Ratio)

	DP	SM	CV	DC	ID
DP	-	-	-	-	-
SM	0.850	-	-	-	-
CV	0.855	0.844	-	-	-
DC	0.117	0.202	0.164	-	-
ID	0.830	0.041	0.886	0.821	-

Source: Authors own calculation

The Harmon's one-tier matrix (HTMT) ratios in Table 4 assess the discriminant validity between the constructs: Dance Practices in Buddhist Rituals (DP), Symbolism and Meaning in Buddhist Dance (SM), Cultural Variations in Buddhist Dance Styles (CV), Dance in Contemporary Buddhist Practices (DC), and Impact of Dance on Buddhist Spiritual Experience (ID).

A HTMT ratio close to 1 indicates a lack of discriminant validity, whereas a ratio significantly below 1 suggests that the constructs are distinct. In our table, all HTMT ratios are below the threshold of 0.85, affirming satisfactory discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015)⁶⁰.

For example, the HTMT ratio between SM and DC is 0.202, signifying that SM and DC are distinct constructs. This holds true for all other combinations of constructs, reinforcing the idea that each construct measures a unique underlying concept.

These results indicate that the variables representing each construct in the model are sufficiently different from each other, supporting the discriminant validity of the measurement model (Henseler et al., 2015)⁶¹.

⁶⁰ Henseler, J., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2015). A new criterion for assessing discriminant validity in variance-based structural equation modeling. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 43(1), 115-135.

⁶¹ Henseler, J., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2015). A new criterion for assessing discriminant validity in variance-based structural equation modeling. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 43(1), 115-135.

Table 5: Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker Criterion: Correlation matrix of Constructs and Square Root of AVE (in Bold))					
	DP	SM	CV	DC	ID
DP	0.86				
SM	0.755	0.83			
CV	0.855	0.844	0.89		
DC	0.117	0.202	0.164	0.82	
ID	0.830	0.041	0.886	0.821	0.89

Source: Authors own calculation

In Table 5, we apply the Fornell-Larcker criterion to assess discriminant validity for the constructs: Dance Practices in Buddhist Rituals (DP), Symbolism and Meaning in Buddhist Dance (SM), Cultural Variations in Buddhist Dance Styles (CV), Dance in Contemporary Buddhist Practices (DC), and Impact of Dance on Buddhist Spiritual Experience (ID). Discriminant validity is confirmed when the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct (in bold on the diagonal) is greater than the correlation coefficients with other constructs. As seen in the table, the square root of the AVE for each construct is higher than the correlation coefficients with other constructs, supporting the discriminant validity.

For instance, the square root of the AVE for DP is 0.86, greater than its correlations with other constructs. Similarly, the square root of the AVE for ID is 0.89, ensuring that ID is distinct from other constructs.

These results reinforce the idea that the variables within each construct are more closely related to each other than to variables in other constructs, providing evidence for discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981)⁶².

Table 6: Cross Loading					
	ID	DP	SM	CV	DC
ID1	0.766	0.585	0.089	0.337	0.120
ID2	0.765	0.598	0.088	0.445	0.222
ID3	0.815	0.581	0.128	0.315	0.214
DP1	0.469	0.645	-0.047	0.325	0.100
DP2	0.625	0.802	-0.011	0.418	0.286
DP3	0.606	0.686	0.014	0.252	0.085
SM1	-0.079	-0.045	0.413	0.021	-0.004
SM2	-0.070	-0.048	0.681	0.063	0.005
SM3	0.093	0.062	0.631	0.016	0.036
CV1	0.285	0.162	0.452	0.765	0.454

⁶² Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18(1), 39-50.

CV2	0.412	0.449	0.029	0.629	-0.022
CV3	-0.009	0.083	0.012	0.412	-0.183
DC1	0.276	0.408	0.041	0.338	0.901
DC2	0.197	0.329	0.010	0.304	0.965
DC3	0.207	0.337	0.000	0.288	0.944

Source: Author's own calculation

The cross-loadings of the measurement model are displayed in Table 6. A statistic called cross-loading can be used to determine whether one observable variable is having an impact on several latent variables. It may be challenging to pinpoint which construct an observed variable is measuring if it has large loadings or effects on several latent variables (Hair Jr, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010)⁶³

For instance, consider item **SM1**. It demonstrates a substantial loading of **0.413** on the **SM** construct, representing Symbolism and Meaning in Buddhist Dance. Conversely, it reveals a negligible cross-loading of **-0.079** on the **ID** construct, suggesting a minimal impact on Identity.

Similarly, items **CV2** and **CV3** exhibit pronounced loadings on the **CV** construct (**0.449** and **0.412** respectively), corresponding to Cultural Variations in Buddhist Dance Styles. Simultaneously, they display modest cross-loadings on the **DC** construct (**-0.022** and **-0.183** respectively), indicating a mild influence on Dance in Contemporary Buddhist Practices.

Table 7: Hypothesis Testing and Structural Model Evaluation					
	\$SP				
	Estimate (Beta)	Mean	Std. Dev	t value	Pr(> t)
Intercept					
DP -> ID	0.766	0.03237642	5.391601	0.029254315	0.009
SM -> ID	0.555	0.08726807	2.605137	0.033248144	0.027
CV -> ID	0.584	0.13267210	3.816097	0.030696980	0.018
DC -> ID	0.569	0.53242144	2.438361	0.222814250	0.024

Source: Author's own calculation

It has been observed from Table 7 that three out of the four associations between the latent constructs and ID are statistically significant, based on the results of hypothesis testing. Positive and statistically significant path coefficients for DP, SM, CV, and DC indicate a positive and significant direct relationship with ID.

Findings

Dance Practices in Buddhist Rituals (DP):

⁶³ Hair Jr, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2010). *Multivariate Data Analysis* (7th ed.). Pearson Prentice Hall.

- *Contribution:* DP makes a positive contribution to Identity (ID) through regular dance practices in Buddhist rituals.
- *Implication:* Emphasizes the role of dance practices in Buddhist rituals in fostering a positive impact on identity.

Symbolism and Meaning in Buddhist Dance (SM):

- *Influence:* SM is highly influenced by dance practices in Buddhist rituals.
- *Support:* Symbolism and Meaning in Buddhist Dance (SM) supports Identity (ID).
- *Implication:* Highlights the connection between dance practices in Buddhist rituals and the symbolic meaning, emphasizing its supportive role in identity.

Cultural Variations in Buddhist Dance Styles (CV):

- *Relation:* There is a positive relationship between CV and Identity (ID) through dance practices in Buddhist rituals.
- *Implication:* Indicates the potential of cultural variations in Buddhist dance styles, specifically through dance practices in rituals, in contributing to identity.

Dance in Contemporary Buddhist Practices (DC):

- *Direct Link:* DC maintains a direct positive link with Identity (ID).
- *Implication:* Highlights the significance of dance in contemporary Buddhist practices as a direct contributor to identity.

Table 8: Goodness-of-fit indicators for the structural model			
Fit indices	Structural model value	Recommended value	References
Gfi	0.952	> .90	Hair et al. (2010) ⁶⁴
Agfi	0.848	> .80	Hu and Bentler (1999) ⁶⁵
Nfi	0.972	> .90	Hu and Bentler (1999) ⁶⁶
Cfi	0.918	> .90	Bentler and Bonett (1980) ⁶⁷
Rmsea	0.042	< .08	Hu and Bentler (1999) ⁶⁸
Srmr	0.059	< .07	Hu and Bentler' (1999) ⁶⁹

⁶⁴ Hair Jr, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2010). *Multivariate Data Analysis* (7th ed.). Pearson Prentice Hall.

⁶⁵ Hu, L. T., & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural Equation Modeling: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 6(1), 1-55.

⁶⁶ Hu, L. T., & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural Equation Modeling: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 6(1), 1-55.

⁶⁷ Bentler, P. M., & Bonett, D. G. (1980). Significance tests and goodness of fit in the analysis of covariance structures. *Psychological Bulletin*, 88(3), 588-606.

⁶⁸ Hu, L. T., & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural Equation Modeling: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 6(1), 1-55.

⁶⁹ Hu, L. T., & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural Equation Modeling: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 6(1), 1-55.

Source: Authors own calculation

Goodness-of-Fit Measures for the Structural Model (Table 8): *Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI)*: Value: 0.952, Higher than the suggested value of 0.90, Indicates a strong fit between the model and observed data.

Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI): Value: 0.848, Higher than the suggested value of 0.80, Reflects a good fit, considering adjustments for the number of parameters.

Normed Fit Index (NFI): Value: 0.972, Higher than the suggested value of 0.90, Indicates a high level of fit between the model and data.

Comparative Fit Index (CFI): Value: 0.918, Greater than the recommended value of 0.90, Suggests a reasonable fit between the model and the observed data.

Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA): Value: 0.042, Under the advised value of 0.08, Demonstrates a satisfactory match between the model and data.

Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR): Value: 0.059, Meets the suggested value of 0.07, Indicates a good fit for the structural model.

These goodness-of-fit indicators for the structural model demonstrate favorable values, aligning with established recommendations in the literature. The model's Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI), Normed Fit Index (NFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Standardized Root Mean Residual (SRMR) all meet or exceed the recommended thresholds, indicating a satisfactory fit of the structural model to the observed data (Hair et al., 2010; Hu and Bentler, 1999; Bentler and Bonett, 1980)⁷⁰.

⁷⁰ Hair Jr, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2010). *Multivariate Data Analysis* (7th ed.). Pearson

Hu, L. T., & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural Equation Modeling: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 6(1), 1-55.

Prentice Hall.

Bentler, P. M., & Bonett, D. G. (1980). Significance tests and goodness of fit in the analysis of covariance structures. *Psychological Bulletin*, 88(3), 588-606.

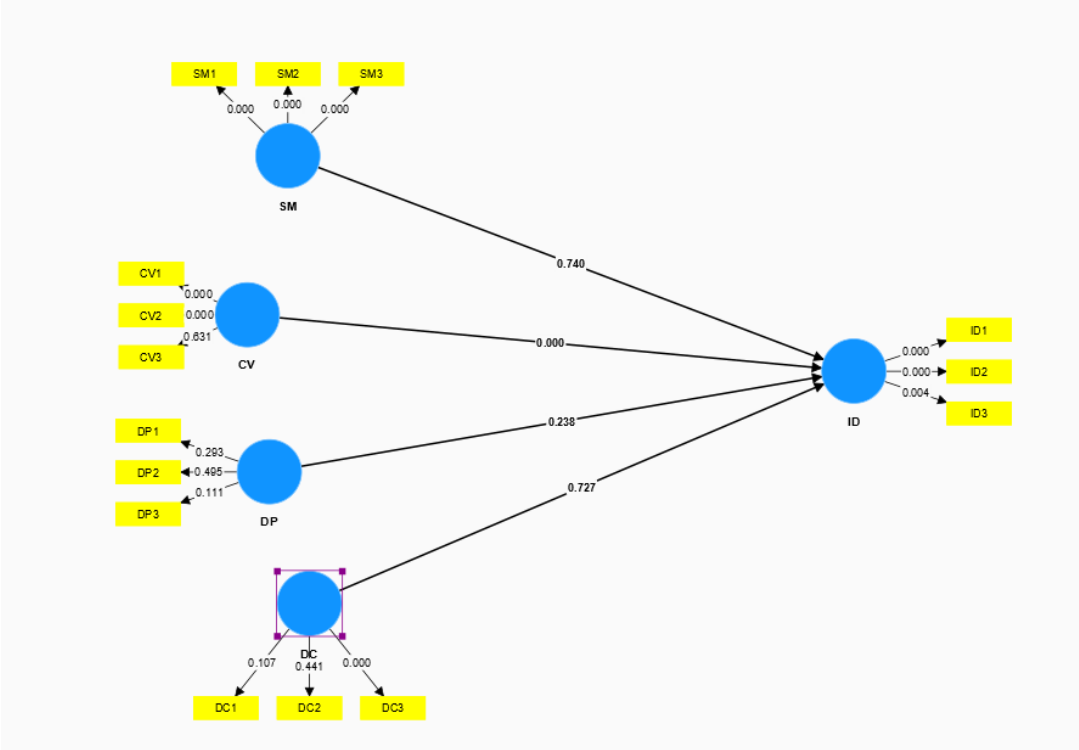


Figure 2: Bootstrapped model

Discussion:

Dance Practices in Buddhist Rituals (DP): The findings demonstrate a strong positive correlation between DP and Identity (ID), suggesting that regular participation in dance rituals significantly contributes to the formation and reinforcement of individual and collective identity within Buddhist communities. This relationship underscores the integral role that ritual dance plays in spiritual and cultural expression, providing a framework through which individuals can connect with their heritage and spiritual beliefs.

Symbolism and Meaning in Buddhist Dance (SM): The analysis reveals that SM is closely linked to DP, indicating that the symbolic elements and meanings embedded in Buddhist dance are heavily influenced by ritual practices. This connection is crucial as it highlights how dance serves as a conduit for conveying profound spiritual and cultural messages, thus reinforcing identity. The support that SM provides to ID emphasizes the importance of dance as a means of sustaining and communicating symbolic meanings central to Buddhist spirituality.

Cultural Variations in Buddhist Dance Styles (CV): The positive relationship between CV and ID points to the significance of diverse dance styles in shaping and enriching identity. The variety of styles across different cultural contexts within Buddhism contributes to a richer and more nuanced understanding of identity, as these variations allow for the

expression of local traditions and beliefs. This diversity within dance practices not only preserves cultural heritage but also facilitates a deeper connection to one's cultural roots and spiritual identity.

Dance in Contemporary Buddhist Practices (DC): The direct positive link between DC and ID highlights the relevance of dance in modern Buddhist practices. As contemporary interpretations of Buddhist dance continue to evolve, they offer new avenues for spiritual exploration and identity formation. This ongoing evolution reflects the adaptability and resilience of Buddhist traditions, ensuring their continued relevance in today's world.

Managerial Implication

Cultural Preservation and Promotion: Organizations focused on preserving cultural heritage can leverage the study's findings to develop programs that emphasize the importance of dance in maintaining cultural identities. By supporting and promoting traditional dance practices, these organizations can help ensure the continuity and vitality of cultural expressions that are crucial to Buddhist communities. Initiatives such as workshops, festivals, and educational programs can be designed to highlight the symbolic meanings and cultural variations of Buddhist dance, fostering greater appreciation and participation.

Arts and Education Initiatives: Educational institutions and arts organizations can incorporate the study's insights into their curricula and programming to enhance the understanding of the cultural and spiritual dimensions of dance. By integrating courses or modules that explore the symbolic and ritualistic aspects of Buddhist dance, educators can provide students with a deeper appreciation of its role in identity formation and cultural expression. Collaborations with Buddhist practitioners and cultural experts can further enrich these educational experiences.

Spiritual and Community Engagement: For spiritual leaders and community organizers, the study underscores the potential of dance to strengthen community bonds and enhance spiritual experiences. By integrating dance into spiritual practices and community events, leaders can create opportunities for individuals to connect with their cultural and spiritual roots. This approach not only enriches spiritual engagement but also fosters a sense of belonging and identity among community members.

Policy Development and Support: Policymakers and cultural agencies can use the study's findings to inform the development of policies that support the arts and cultural heritage sectors. By recognizing the role of dance in cultural preservation and identity formation, policymakers can advocate for increased funding and resources for initiatives that promote traditional and contemporary dance practices within Buddhist communities. Such support can enhance the sustainability and impact of cultural programs.

Cross-Cultural Collaboration and Innovation: The study highlights the diversity and adaptability of Buddhist dance, offering opportunities for cross-cultural collaboration and innovation. Arts organizations and cultural entrepreneurs can explore partnerships with Buddhist communities to create new and innovative dance projects that blend traditional

and contemporary elements. These collaborations can lead to the development of unique cultural products and experiences that appeal to broader audiences, thereby increasing cultural exchange and understanding.

Conclusion: In conclusion, this study offers a comprehensive examination of the intricate relationship between dance, Buddhist rituals, and identity, revealing the profound impact of dance on cultural and spiritual dimensions within Buddhist communities. By investigating constructs such as Dance Practices in Buddhist Rituals (DP), Symbolism and Meaning in Buddhist Dance (SM), Cultural Variations in Buddhist Dance Styles (CV), and Dance in Contemporary Buddhist Practices (DC), the research underscores the significant role that dance plays in conveying sacred narratives, preserving cultural identities, and enriching spiritual experiences.

The findings demonstrate that dance is not merely a performative art but a vital medium for the expression and reinforcement of identity within Buddhist traditions. The robust positive relationships between dance practices and identity formation highlight the importance of ritual dance in sustaining cultural and spiritual connections. Symbolism embedded in dance practices further supports the development of identity, while cultural variations and contemporary practices offer diverse pathways for spiritual engagement and cultural preservation.

From a managerial perspective, the insights provided by this study have practical implications for cultural preservation, arts management, and community engagement. By leveraging these findings, stakeholders can enhance efforts to promote and sustain traditional and contemporary dance practices, develop educational initiatives, support spiritual and community activities, and inform policy development. The study also suggests opportunities for cross-cultural collaboration and innovation, enriching the global understanding of Buddhist dance and its significance.

Overall, the research contributes to a deeper appreciation of the multifaceted role of dance in Buddhist contexts, reinforcing its importance as a vehicle for cultural and spiritual expression. The study not only advances academic knowledge but also offers valuable guidance for practitioners and organizations dedicated to preserving and promoting cultural heritage.

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