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Mindful Communication and Students' Self-Concept in the Context of Buddhist Teachings

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the relationship between mindful communication and students' self-concept in the context of Buddhist teachings at Jinarakkhita Buddhist College of Lampung. A quantitative approach was employed using a survey method and a cross-sectional design. Data were collected through questionnaires measuring mindful communication and students' self-concept and analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics. The data analysis involved statistical assumption tests and simple linear regression to examine the relationship between the variables. The findings indicate that mindful communication has a positive and statistically significant relationship with students' self-concept. This suggests that greater mindful communication is associated with a more positive perception of oneself. From a Buddhist perspective, these findings can be discussed in relation to mindfulness (sati), loving-kindness (mettā), and Right Speech (sammā vācā), which emphasize awareness, ethical communication, and respect for others. This study contributes to the integration of communication psychology and Buddhist philosophical perspectives while distinguishing psychological constructs from religious doctrines. However, the cross-sectional design does not establish a causal relationship, and further research is needed to explore the underlying mechanisms and the broader applicability of the findings.

Introduction

In the era of globalization, characterized by technological advancements, social changes, and increasingly complex human interactions, self-development and an understanding of self-concept have become important aspects of student life (Crone et al., 2022). Students are expected not only to achieve academic success but also to develop communication skills, manage their emotions, build healthy social relationships, and understand their own potential and limitations (Martinsone et al., 2025). The process of self-concept formation occurs through personal experiences, self-evaluation, and interactions with the social environment. In the context of higher education, interpersonal communication serves as a means through which students receive feedback, understand others' perspectives, and develop perceptions of themselves (Dewi et al., 2025). Therefore, mindful communication is relevant to investigate as a potential factor associated with the development of students' self-concept.

Communication is fundamentally a process of exchanging information, ideas, feelings, sand meaning between individuals. However, effective communication is determined not only by

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a person's ability to convey messages but also by their awareness of their thoughts, emotions, intentions, and the impact of their words on others (Sabuhari et al., 2020). In this study, mindful communication is defined as a communication process characterized by full attention to the present moment, the ability to listen attentively, awareness of emotional reactions, and careful consideration before responding. (Sardana & Verma, 2025). Through mindful communication, individuals are expected to reduce impulsive reactions, understand others' perspectives, and express their opinions more thoughtfully. Such communication experiences can provide students with opportunities for self-reflection, enabling them to recognize their personal characteristics, accept constructive feedback, and develop a more realistic understanding of themselves

From a Buddhist perspective, communication is viewed not only as a social activity but also as part of ethical practice and mental development. The Buddha's teachings emphasize the importance of mindfulness, wisdom, loving-kindness (*mettā*), and Right Speech (*sammā vācā*) in everyday life. These principles provide a conceptual foundation for understanding communication that goes beyond message delivery by also considering truthfulness, benefit, appropriate timing, and the well-being of those involved (Senarath, 2023). Thus, the study of mindful communication in the context of Buddhist teachings can bridge the psychological dimensions of communication with its ethical and spiritual dimensions, particularly in understanding how students interact with others while developing perceptions of themselves.

The fundamental teaching on wholesome speech can be found in the *Vācā Sutta (Aṅguttara Nikāya 5.198).* In this discourse, the Buddha explains five qualities of good speech: speech that is spoken at the appropriate time, truthful, gentle, beneficial, and motivated by loving-kindness. In which the Buddha identifies five qualities of well-spoken speech: speech that is timely, truthful, gentle, beneficial, and expressed with a mind of goodwill. The sutta states: "It is spoken at the right time. It is spoken in truth. It is spoken affectionately. It is spoken beneficially. It is spoken with a mind of good-will" (Thanissaro, 1997). In student life, these principles can be applied when expressing opinions, providing criticism, engaging in discussions, resolving conflicts, and accepting differences in viewpoints. When practiced consistently, these principles may promote more constructive social interactions and provide meaningful experiences that support the process of self-reflection.

Furthermore, communication principles in Buddhist teachings are closely related to *Sammā Vācā* (Right Speech), one of the factors of the Noble Eightfold Path. In the *Vibhaṅga Sutta* (*Saṃyutta Nikāya 45.8*), Right Speech is explained as abstaining from false speech, divisive speech, harsh speech, and idle chatter (Bodhi, 2000). The same discourse also identifies Right Mindfulness (*sammā sati*) as one of the factors of the Noble Eightfold Path. These two principles highlight the importance of awareness and ethics in Buddhist practice. In the context of communication, awareness of one's thoughts and emotions can help individuals recognize the impulse to speak hastily, while Right Speech encourages them to consider whether their words are truthful, harmless, and appropriate to the situation. Although the Vibhaṅga Sutta does not directly address self-concept in the sense of modern psychology, its teachings provide an ethical foundation for examining communication as part of behavioral development and personal growth.

The relationship between communication and self-concept can be understood through the process by which individuals interpret their social experiences. Self-concept refers to an individual's perceptions and evaluations of themselves, including their perceived abilities,

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characteristics, values, and position within the social environment (Simbolon & Simbolon, 2023). Self-concept is not entirely fixed but can develop through experiences and interactions throughout life. In higher education, students gain diverse experiences through relationships with peers, lecturers, student organizations, and the wider community. Supportive communication can provide opportunities for students to recognize their strengths and limitations, whereas demeaning or conflict-ridden communication may influence how they perceive themselves. Therefore, mindful communication is worth investigating because it may be associated with how students receive feedback, understand others' responses, and reflect on their interpersonal experiences.

Nevertheless, the relationship between self-concept and communication cannot be assumed to follow the same pattern in every context. Fadhila & Hudaniah (2025) examined the relationship between self-concept and interpersonal competence among students Clarity (2024) in a study involving adolescents who were not formally enrolled in school, reported no relationship between self-concept and interpersonal communication skills. These differing findings highlight the importance of considering population characteristics and the constructs used in each study. Interpersonal communication skills are not entirely equivalent to mindful communication. While communication skills emphasize an individual's ability to interact effectively, mindful communication focuses on awareness, attention, and intention throughout the communication process. Therefore, research on mindful communication may offer a more specific perspective for understanding the relationship between communication awareness and students' self-concept.

This study is particularly relevant in the context of Buddhist higher education, especially at Jinarakkhita Buddhist College of Lampung, where the research was conducted. As a Buddhist higher education institution, the campus provides a suitable context for examining student communication in relation to the Buddhist values of mindfulness, loving-kindness, and ethics. Interactions in learning activities, academic discussions, student organizations, and everyday campus life offer opportunities for students to practice listening, expressing opinions, and responding to differences. However, the presence of Buddhist values in an educational environment does not necessarily mean that every student consistently applies them. Therefore, empirical research is needed to examine the relationship between students' mindful communication and self-concept within Buddhist higher education, without presuming that a Buddhist educational background directly leads to a more positive self-concept.

Based on this discussion, the study entitled Mindful Communication and Students' Self-Concept in the Context of Buddhist Teachings aims to analyze the relationship between mindful communication and students' self-concept within the context of Buddhist teachings at STIAB Jinarakkhita Lampung. This study is expected to contribute to communication psychology by expanding the discussion of mindful communication and self-concept while incorporating a Buddhist perspective through the principles of Right Speech, mindfulness, and loving-kindness. Practically, the findings are expected to inform the development of student programs that promote mindful, ethical, and empathetic communication while supporting self-reflection and personal growth. Thus, this study views communication not merely as a social skill but also as a mindful practice relevant to students' personal development.

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Mindful Communication

Mindful communication refers to a communication process that involves conscious attention to thoughts, emotions, words, and responses during interpersonal interactions. This approach emphasizes the ability to listen attentively, recognize emotional reactions, and respond without rushing to judgment. Contemporary mindfulness research identifies awareness of present-moment experiences as one of the key elements of this practice (Chems et al., 2025).

From a Buddhist perspective, mindful communication can be examined through the concepts of *sati* (mindfulness) and *sammā vācā* (Right Speech). In the *Vibhaṅga Sutta* (*Saṃyutta Nikāya 45.8*), Right Speech involves abstaining from false speech, divisive speech, harsh speech, and idle chatter. Meanwhile, the *Vācā Sutta* (*Aṅguttara Nikāya 5.198*) describes five qualities of good speech: speaking at the appropriate time, speaking truthfully, speaking gently, speaking beneficially, and speaking with goodwill. These teachings provide an ethical foundation for understanding communication as a process that requires awareness, intention, and responsibility toward others.

Student Self-Concept

Self-concept refers to an individual's perceptions and beliefs about their personal characteristics, abilities, and identity. Shavelson et al. (1976) explain that self-concept is multidimensional, encompassing various aspects of life, including academic, social, emotional, and physical domains. Among university students, self-concept can develop through educational experiences, social interactions, and evaluations of their abilities and roles within their environment (García-martínez et al., 2022).

In this study, students' self-concept is understood as how students perceive and understand themselves in both academic and social contexts. Self-concept may be associated with communication experiences, as interpersonal interactions provide opportunities for students to receive feedback, understand others' perspectives, and engage in self-reflection. However, this relationship needs to be examined empirically and should not be directly assumed to represent a causal relationship.

The Relationship Between Mindful Communication and Students' Self-Concept

Theoretically, mindful communication may be associated with students' self-concept through emotional awareness, attention to interpersonal experiences, and self-reflection. From a Buddhist perspective, the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta (Dīgha Nikāya 22)* provides a foundation for understanding mindfulness through awareness of bodily and mental experiences (Lambert et al., 2021). Furthermore, the *Kakacūpama Sutta* (*Majjhima Nikāya 21*) emphasizes maintaining a mind free from hatred and cultivating loving-kindness when responding to others, including in difficult interpersonal situations. These teachings provide an ethical and contemplative framework for examining mindful communication. However, the Buddhist concept of *anattā*, discussed in the *Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta* (*Saṃyutta Nikāya 22.59*), should be distinguished from psychological self-concept because they serve different conceptual purposes (Bodhi, 2000).

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Method

This study employed a quantitative approach using a survey method and a cross-sectional design. This approach was selected to examine the relationship between mindful communication as the independent variable and students' self-concept as the dependent variable, based on numerical data obtained from respondents. According to Creswell, J. W., & Creswell (2018), quantitative research is used to examine relationships between variables through measurement and statistical analysis of numerical data. The study was conducted at STIAB Jinarakkhita Lampung in Bandar Lampung, Indonesia, involving 33 students as respondents. Data were collected using questionnaires designed to measure mindful communication and students' self-concept.

The collected data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 22. Before hypothesis testing, statistical assumption tests were conducted, including residual normality, linearity between variables, and homoscedasticity. Subsequently, simple linear regression was used to analyze the statistical relationship between mindful communication and students' self-concept. The significance of the regression coefficient was examined using the t-test, while the coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to determine the proportion of variation in self-concept explained by mindful communication in the model. Hypothesis testing was conducted at a significance level of 0.05. Given the cross-sectional design, the results were interpreted as statistical associations between variables and were not considered direct evidence of a causal relationship.

Result and Discussion

Result

Normality Test

The normality test aims to test whether, in regression, the variables have a normal distribution or not. Normality testing in this study used IBM SPSS 22 software using the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, with a significance level of 0.05 or 5%. A significance level of 0.05 or 5% means that the researcher took a risk in making the decision to reject the correct hypothesis 5% of the time and was correct in making the decision at least 95%; the smaller the error rate, the better the research.

The output results in the One Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov column can be seen. It was concluded that the population data obtained from distributing instruments in the form of a normal distribution questionnaire, or Ha, was accepted because the significance value of self-concept was 0.200 and the self-concept of students was 0.172. See the following table for more information:

Table 1. Normality Test

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test			
		X	y
N		33	33
Normal Parameters [a, b]	Mean	103.8788	89,0000
	Std. Deviation	24.18129	28.16469
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.107	,130
	Positive	.107	,130
	Negative	-.069	-.080

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Statistical Tests	.107	,130
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,200 cds	.172 c

a. Test distribution is Normal.
b. Calculated from data.
c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.
d. This is a lower bound of the true significance.
Source: Results of data processing using IBM SPSS 22

Test Homogeneity

The homogeneity of variances test can be used. To determine if the variance of the population is the same or not, as part of the sample test analysis, independent use of the Campare Means One-Way ANOVA homogeneity test was carried out. Analysis (ANOVA) of variance from the population based on assumptions on the same basis the variance of the second group of data is declared the same if the threshold testing is greater than 0.05 or 5%. Output mark variance test homogeneity show findings test homogeneity. Significant draft self and quality communication 0.193 because mark significant > 0.05 then can be said that both data _ said normal homogeneity. For more, he explained it in the following test of homogeneity of variances table:

Table 2. Homogeneity Test

Test of Homogeneity of Variances			
X			
Levene Statistics	df1	df2	Sig.
1,731	1	64	,193

Source: Results of data processing using IBM SPSS 22

Table 2 shows that the Levene statistic is 1.731 with degrees of freedom of 1 and 64 and a significance value of 0.193. Since this value is greater than 0.05, the variances of the data are homogeneous. In other words, the data come from populations with the same variance, so no group of data is more dispersed than the other and the data are suitable for simple linear regression analysis.

Analysis Regression Linear Simple

Simple linear regression analysis is used to determine the connection or relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. In this research this analysis is simple linear regression because there is only one independent variable.

Table 3. Output equation regression

Coefficients a						
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	Q	Sig.
1	(Constant)	39,930	7,869		5,075	,000
	Y	,719	,084	,837	8,513	,000

a. Dependent Variable:

Source: Results of data processing using IBM SPSS 22

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Hypothesis Testing

The decision on the hypothesis that has been submitted is based on the results of the test analysis. Basically, hypothesis testing uses the same methods as carrying out analysis tests, linear regression, and testing the regression coefficients.

In this study, the hypothesis was tested using three indicators, namely the t test for the significance of the regression coefficient, the F test for the feasibility of the regression model, and the coefficient of determination for the magnitude of the contribution of the independent variable. The null hypothesis (H_0) states that mindful communication has no significant effect on students' self-concept, while the alternative hypothesis (Ha) states that there is a significant effect. The decision criterion used is that Ho is rejected and Ha is accepted if the significance value is smaller than 0.05. The results of each test are presented in Table 4 and Table 5 below.

Table 4. Analysis Output ANOVA

ANOVA [a]						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	13105.150	1	13105.150	72,464	,000 [b]
	Residual	5606.365	31	180,850		
	Total	18711.515	32			

a. Dependent Variable: y
b. Predictors: (Constant), x
Source: Results of data processing using IBM SPSS 22

Table 4. presents the F test of the regression model. The regression sum of squares is 13,105.150 out of a total sum of squares of 18,711.515, and the resulting F value is 72.464 with degrees of freedom of 1 and 31 and a significance value of 0.000. Because the significance value is smaller than 0.05, the regression model is significant and can be used to explain the effect of mindful communication on the self-concept of STIAB Jinarakkhita Lampung students. This result supports the decision to reject the null hypothesis (H_0) and accept the alternative hypothesis (Ha).

Table 5. Coefficient values determination R Square (Model Summary)

Model Summary [b]				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.837 [a]	,700	,691	13.44807

a. Predictors: (Constant), Y
b. Dependent Variable:
Source: Results of data processing using IBM SPSS 22

The model summary in Table 5 shows a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.837, a coefficient of determination (R Square) of 0.700, an adjusted R Square of 0.691, and a standard error of the estimate of 13.448. The R Square value of 0.700 means that mindful communication explains 70% of the variation in students' self-concept, while the remaining 30% is explained by other factors that were not examined in this study. The adjusted R Square, which is only

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slightly lower than R Square, indicates that the model remains stable after taking the number of respondents into account.

Taken together, the results of the classical assumption tests and the regression analysis consistently show that the research data meet the requirements of the analysis and that mindful communication has a significant and strong effect on students' self-concept. The significance values of the t-test (0.000) and the F test (0.000) are both smaller than 0.05, and the positive coefficient indicates that the direction of the relationship is positive. Therefore, Ho is rejected and Ha is accepted, meaning that the higher the level of mindful communication, the higher the students' self-concept.

Discussion

The Relationship Between Mindful Communication and Students' Self-Concept

The results of the analysis indicate that mindful communication has a positive and statistically significant relationship with the self-concept of students at STIAB Jinarakkhita Lampung. The positive regression coefficient indicates that higher mindful communication scores are associated with higher self-concept scores. These findings support the alternative hypothesis that a significant relationship exists between mindful communication and students' self-concept. Nevertheless, because this study employed a cross-sectional design, the findings should be interpreted as a statistical association and do not directly establish that mindful communication causes an improvement in self-concept.

Theoretically, this relationship can be understood through the characteristics of mindful communication, which emphasizes attention to present-moment experiences, awareness of emotional responses, and the ability to listen attentively (Sardana & Verma, 2025). The relevance of mindfulness to communication and the development of interpersonal relationships has also been discussed in previous research. In the context of university students, awareness during interactions may provide opportunities to understand others' messages, evaluate personal responses, and receive feedback more openly (Iraj et al., 2020). hese experiences may be associated with the process through which students recognize their abilities, characteristics, and social roles. Thus, mindful communication is conceptually relevant for investigation as one of the factors associated with self-concept formation. However, this study did not directly examine whether emotional awareness, feedback acceptance, or self-reflection constitutes the mechanism underlying this relationship.

These findings can also be explained through the perspective of Shavelson et al. (1976) ho conceptualized self-concept as a multidimensional construct encompassing individuals' perceptions of themselves across various aspects of life. Students' self-concept can be formed and developed through academic experiences, social interactions, and evaluations of their abilities and personal characteristics. Through communication, students receive responses from their environment that can serve as a basis for self-evaluation. When communication takes place with sufficient attention and consideration, students may have opportunities to understand others' perspectives without immediately interpreting every difference as a negative judgment of themselves. Nevertheless, the relationship may also operate in the opposite direction, as students with a positive self-concept may feel more confident communicating openly and mindfully. This possibility of a reciprocal relationship further reinforces the need to avoid interpreting the research findings as evidence of a causal relationship.

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Mindful Communication from the Perspective of Buddhist Teachings

The findings of this study can be further discussed through the principles of communication in Buddhist teachings, particularly sammā vācā, or Right Speech. In the Vācā Sutta (Aṅguttara Nikāya 5.198), the Buddha describes five qualities of good speech: it should be spoken at the appropriate time, be truthful, gentle, beneficial, and motivated by loving-kindness (Thanissaro, 1997). This principle indicates that the quality of communication is determined not only by the ability to convey messages but also by awareness of timing, the truthfulness of content, the manner of delivery, the benefits of the message, and the intention underlying it. In the context of university students' lives, this principle is relevant to academic discussions, group work, the delivery of criticism, and the resolution of disagreements. Communication that takes these qualities into consideration may foster mutually respectful interactions, thereby creating a more conducive social environment for self-reflection and self-understanding.

Furthermore, the *Vibhaṅga Sutta* (*Saṃyutta Nikāya 45.8*) explains Right Speech as abstaining from false speech, divisive speech, harsh speech, and idle chatter (Bodhi, 2000). In the same sutta, Right Mindfulness (*sammā sati*) is also described as one of the factors of the Noble Eightfold Path. These two teachings provide a framework for understanding the relationship between awareness and ethics in communication. Awareness of thoughts and emotions enables individuals to recognize their tendency to respond impulsively, while the principle of Right Speech provides guidance for considering the impact of their words on others. In the context of this study, these two principles serve as a philosophical foundation for understanding mindful communication as a communication practice involving both awareness and ethical responsibility. However, because this study employed a psychological questionnaire, its statistical findings cannot be considered a direct test of the validity of Buddhist teachings or the extent to which students have attained spiritual development.

The Buddhist perspective also broadens the understanding of communication as part of personal development. Communication practices grounded in mindfulness and loving-kindness may encourage individuals to observe their thoughts, understand their emotions, and consider the needs of others before speaking. Conceptually, this process may be associated with students' ability to engage in self-reflection and accept different perspectives. Senarath (2023), this perspective discusses mindful communication within a Buddhist approach to human and social development. It provides a foundation for understanding that mindful communication aims not only to improve the effectiveness of interactions but also to consider the quality of relationships and collective well-being. Nevertheless, the relationship between these Buddhist principles and self-concept in this study should be understood as a conceptual connection rather than evidence that the application of particular principles directly leads to a more positive self-concept.

It is also important to distinguish the psychological concept of self-concept from the Buddhist doctrine of anattā, or non-self. In this study, self-concept refers to an individual's perceptions and beliefs about their personal characteristics, abilities, and identity, as discussed within the psychological framework by (Shavelson et al., 1976). Meanwhile, *anattā* is a Buddhist teaching concerning the absence of a permanent and independent self. These two concepts have different contexts and purposes and therefore cannot be directly equated. In this article, Buddhist teachings serve as an ethical and philosophical framework for understanding mindful communication, while self-concept continues to be measured and analyzed as a psychological construct.

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The Contribution of Mindful Communication to Students' Self-Concept

The coefficient of determination analysis indicates that the regression model explains a substantial proportion of the variation in students' self-concept scores within the research sample, while the remaining variation cannot be explained by the model. The unexplained variation may be associated with other factors, such as family experiences, social support, academic experiences, personality characteristics, and environmental conditions. These factors represent potential explanations that require further investigation and cannot be identified as established causes in this study. Furthermore, the magnitude of the coefficient of determination does not, by itself, indicate that mindful communication is the only important factor in self-concept formation. The interpretation of the findings should also take into account the sample size, the quality of the research instruments, and the appropriateness of the regression assumptions.

These findings have practical implications for student development in Buddhist higher education institutions. Mindful communication is associated with the practices of mindfulness (*sati*), loving-kindness (*mettā*), and Right Speech (*sammā vācā*). These principles encourage students to listen attentively, express their opinions respectfully, and avoid speech that is false, harsh, or divisive. According to the Vācā Sutta (Aṅguttara Nikāya 5.198), well-spoken speech should be truthful, timely, gentle, beneficial, and motivated by goodwill (Thanissaro, 1997). The application of these principles may support students' character development and the quality of their interpersonal relationships, while their relationship with self-concept requires further investigation through future research.

Although the findings were statistically significant, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. The relatively small sample, consisting of students from a single institution, means that generalizing the findings to the broader student population should be done with caution. The cross-sectional design also prevents the researchers from establishing the temporal sequence between mindful communication and self-concept. Furthermore, measuring both variables through questionnaires may have introduced biases related to subjective perceptions and respondents' response tendencies. Future research could involve larger and more diverse samples, employ instruments with established validity and reliability, and consider longitudinal designs to examine changes in both variables over time. Further studies could also investigate the roles of self-reflection, social support, or mindfulness practices as additional variables to develop a deeper understanding of the relationship between mindful communication and self-concept.

Overall, the findings provide statistical evidence of a positive relationship between mindful communication and the self-concept of students at STIAB Jinarakkhita Lampung within the sample examined. From a Buddhist perspective, these findings can be discussed in relation to the principles of Right Speech, mindfulness, and loving-kindness as ethical foundations for interpersonal interactions. The main contribution of this study lies in its effort to integrate research on communication psychology with Buddhist perspectives without equating psychological constructs with religious doctrines. Thus, mindful communication may be considered a relevant aspect of student development, although the strength, mechanisms, and direction of its relationship with self-concept require further investigation.

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Conclusion

This study concludes that mindful communication has a positive and statistically significant relationship with the self-concept of students at Jinarakkhita Buddhist College of Lampung. The findings indicate that higher levels of mindful communication are associated with higher self-concept scores, highlighting its relevance to students' personal and social development. From a Buddhist perspective, this relationship can be discussed in relation to mindfulness *(sati),* loving-kindness *(mettā),* and Right Speech *(sammā vācā),* which emphasize awareness, ethical communication, and respect for others. This study contributes to the integration of communication psychology and Buddhist philosophical perspectives while maintaining a distinction between psychological constructs and Buddhist teachings. However, given the cross-sectional design and limited sample from a single institution, the findings should be interpreted as a statistical association rather than evidence of causation. Further research involving larger and more diverse samples and longitudinal designs is needed to clarify the nature and direction of the relationship between mindful communication and students' self-concept.

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