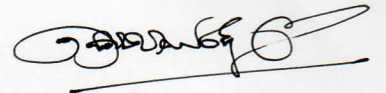


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# Counselling for Interpersonal Conflict: A Model Based on Buddhist Principles

I hereby certify that this doctoral dissertation, "Counselling for Interpersonal Conflict: A Psychological Model based on Buddhist Principles" is based on my own original research work and investigations under the supervision and guidance of Dr. Wasantha Thirapadasinha and Mr. Samanatha Dasanayake and this dissertation does not include any work that has been submitted previously to any institution of higher education or agency that has been previously written or published by any author, except where that is so referred to in the text, and listed in the bibliography.

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## Abstract

This research developed a psychological counselling model for interpersonal conflicts, based on the Dhamma points in the Sutta Pitaka. While the potential for using Buddhist principles in psychological interventions has drawn increasing attention, the scientific application that is most widely used and researched is in the mindfulness-based psychotherapies. However, Buddhist principles are not utilised holistically in current counselling approaches. Interpersonal conflict is widespread and is a cause of many psychological disorders. Further, it is an area where mindfulness-based research is scant. The present research aimed to fill this research gap by systematically incorporating the core teachings of Buddhism in a counselling model for interpersonal conflicts. The Buddhist analysis of the nature of interpersonal conflicts, their causality, and techniques for eliminating the causes were extracted and synthesized through a systematic analysis of the Sutta Pitaka. The model also drew from the experience of contemporary counselling approaches particularly mindfulness-based and cognitive behaviour therapies. An initial empirical testing of the model was carried out using a pre-post design. The participants in this study were 23 persons in interpersonal conflict situations. The results showed positive changes in levels of self-reported mindfulness, aggression, anxiety, and sense of psychological wellbeing. The participants also reported increased ability to cope with conflicts and lower level of perceived conflicts. Limitations to the study and suggestions for future research are presented.