

## KAP Study of Seven Factors of Enlightenment

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**Abstract**

*This paper “KAP Study of Seven Factors of Enlightenment” is a research paper which consists of Buddhist dhamma - Bojjhaṅgas, concepts of Buddhist Philosophy, benefits of chanting these factors to relieve illness and the ways of practicing meditation by focusing these factors in mind. It includes a field study to detect the knowledge, attitude and practice of students of Buddhist Nikaya Studies and meditators of Ledi Buddhist meditation center. This paper also describes how to prepare the mind for meditation in practicing four types of satipaṭṭhānam technique. However, this paper will help people to gain some knowledge on seven factors that will guide yogi to attain enlightenment.*

**Keywords:** *Enlightenment, seven factors, Four Noble Truth, meditation, Nibbāna.*

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## Introduction

The Seven Factors of Enlightenment - *Bojjhaṅga* dhamma expounded by the Buddha, includes in the dhamma topic of 37 Aids to Enlightenment (or) 37 Factors of Enlightenment.

The term *Bojjhaṅga* is composed of *bodhi* + *aṅga*. *Bodhi* denotes enlightenment, which means insight, concerned with the realization of the Four Noble Truths. *Aṅga* means factors or limbs, thus *Bodhi* + *aṅga* (*Bojjhaṅga*) is actually the Factors of Enlightenment, or the Factors of insight.

In one occasion a monk asked the Buddha. “*Bojjhaṅgas! bojjhaṅgas!* they are called. Venerable sir, in what respect are they called *Bojjhaṅgas!*” Lord Buddha replied: “They conduce to Enlightenment, monk, that is why they are so called. Just as, monks, in a peaked house, all rafters whatsoever go together to the peak, slope to the peak, join in the peak, and of them all the peak is reckoned chief, even so, monks, the monk who cultivates and makes much of the Seven Factors of wisdom, slopes to *Nibbāna*, inclines to *Nibbāna*, tends to *Nibbāna*.” (Thera, The Seven Factors of Enlightenment-Satta Bojjhanga 1)

Practicing and fulfilling the four foundations of mindfulness is the most appropriate cause for this Enlightenment Factors. A devoted yogi can really understand and see his development in meditation through the practice although he has learned a theoretical knowledge of the subject in dhamma before practice.

These 7 Factors can be explained as:

**Mindfulness** (*sati*) - Awareness of what is happening in our body at the present moment. The last six factors - usually arise from doing mindfulness practice.

**Investigation** (*dhamma-vicaya*) - The ability to investigate (supported by knowledge) and understand the phenomena of mind and body.

**Energy** (*virīya*) - The strength and effort to cultivate wholesome states.

**Rapture** (*pīti*) - A state of joy or happiness (delight) occurs in meditation practice.

**Tranquility** (*passaddhi*) - Calming and stilling of physical and mental state.

**Concentration** (*samadhi*) - The mind is focused and concentrated at one point.

**Equanimity** (*upekkha*) - A state of balanced and non-reactivity of mind. Yogi closely looks on with equanimity at the mind thus concentrated. (Fronsdal)

## Literature Review

Over 2500 years ago *Bojjhaṅga* dhamma was expounded by the Buddha to make monks and yogis to develop wisdom helping them to attain *Nibbāna*. When venerable *Mahākassapa Thera*, who was living in the *Pippali* Cave, had a disease and was sick seriously, Buddha preached *Bojjhaṅga* dhamma besides him. Venerable *Mahākassapa Thera* was very glad on hearing of the *Bojjhaṅga* dhamma and recovered from his illness at the end of the recitation.

When the *Mahāmoggalāna thera* was afflicted with a disease and had severe illness, Buddha went to his residence and recited the *Bojjhaṅga sutta*. Then again, the *Mahāmoggalāna thera* recovered from his disease and became fit and healthy.

When the Buddha Himself had a disease and suffered pain and sickness, the venerable *Mahācunda thera* recited the *Bojjhaṅga sutta*. Soon, the Buddha also recovered from his illness at the end of reciting of the *sutta*. According to these evidences, most of the Buddhist people usually use to recite the *Bojjhaṅga* dhamma so as to recover from pain, disease and sickness. (Punnyakami)

There are similarities between *Bojjhaṅga* and *Eight Maggaṅga* such as:

1. *Dhamma-vicaya* = *sammā-diṭṭhi* (right view)
2. *Sati* = *sammā-sati* (right mindfulness)
3. *Viriya* = *sammā-vāyama* (right effort)
4. *Samadhi* = *sammā-samādhi* (right concentration)

One exception is that, one factor of *Eight Maggaṅga*, not included in *Bojjhaṅga* is:

5. *Sammā-saṅkappa* (right thought) (Nandamālābhivamsa)

### **Mindfulness (*sati*)**

The first Factor of *Bojjhaṅga* is mindfulness which consists of four types, namely mindfulness consisting in contemplation of the body (*kāyānupassanā*), feeling (*vedanānupassanā*), mind (*cittānupassanā*), and mental objects (*dhammānupassanā*).

When we are mindful, we become clearly aware of the objects arising at each sense door, thus the yogi should have a mind that is bent towards developing mindfulness with full strength. He should also avoid those who are not mindful. (Punnadhammo)

### **Factors Exerting the Mind**

#### **Investigation of States (*dhamma-vicaya*)**

For developing this Factor, one should reflect on profound dhamma on elements and faculties. He should have a mind bent towards the investigation of dhamma, should avoid those who are not knowledgeable of dhamma and should study dhamma knowledge as well as meditation practice.

#### **Energy (*virīya*)**

To strengthen this Factor, one should reflect on the Buddha and his disciples who aroused energy and should have a mind bent towards the development of effort.

#### **Rapture (*pīti*)**

For developing this Factor, one should do recollection of the Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha and generous acts one has performed.

### **Factors Subduing the Mind**

#### **Tranquility (*passaddhi*)**

The fifth Factor of Enlightenment – tranquility is two-fold in nature; *kāya passaddhi* which is calm of body and *citta passaddhi* which is the calm of the mind. One can develop the Factor of tranquility by recollection of the Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha and by reviewing the greatness of *Jhāna paṭibhāga nimitta* and *Udayabbaya ṅāṇa* in *Vipassanā samādhi*. (Nandamālābhivamsa)

#### **Concentration (*samadhi*)**

The sixth Factor of Enlightenment is concentration or *samadhi* which is the tranquillized mind that develops in meditation practice. One can develop *samādhi* by focusing and upholding the mind on the meditation object, by reviewing the *Jhāna* and liberation and also by having the mind bent towards concentration with effort.

### Equanimity (*upekkha*)

For development of this seventh Factor, one should maintain neutrality (balanced mindset) on living beings, neutrality towards formations/ inanimate things and should also review the fifth *Jhāna samādhi*. (Mahasi)

In general, while practicing *Bojjhaṅga* Dhamma, the meditator yogi should take care of these steps:

When the mind is contracted, Tranquility (*Passaddi*), Concentration (*Samādhi*) and Equanimity (*Upekkhā*) should not be practiced because the mind can become even more lazy and sleepy by practicing these factors.

When the mind is contracted, it is appropriate to practice analysis of dhamma (*Dhamma Vicaya*), effort (*Viriya*) and happiness (*Pīti*) so that yogi can overcome laziness and sleepiness.

If the mind is not concentrated, analysis of dhamma (*Dhamma Vicaya*), effort (*Viriya*) and happiness (*Pīti*) should not be practiced. If we practice, our mind can become even more scattered because we are adding more fuel to the fire.

When the mind is scattered, it is appropriate to practice Tranquility (*Passaddi*), Concentration (*Samādhi*) and Equanimity (*Upekkhā*). Then the mind will become calm and concentrated, like pouring water to put out a flame.

Mindfulness *Bojjhaṅga* Dhamma is needed at all times. (Huruluwewe)

### Statement of the Problem

*Bojjhaṅga* dhamma, expounded by the Buddha, includes in the 37 Factors of Enlightenment.

Nowadays, Buddhist monks and lay people usually practice to recite the *Bojjhaṅga* dhamma as a prevention or treating their diseases and sickness although they don't really understand the meaning of this dhamma, its benefits and its Seven Factors of Enlightenment. So, also, monks and yogis from Buddhist meditation centers usually have poor knowledge on this dhamma and its factors.

Actually, this dhamma is not only useful for treating pain and sickness, but it helps to develop dhamma knowledge which guides yogi to attain Enlightenment. Students from Buddhist literature training schools/ centers usually understand *Bojjhaṅga sutta* and Factors of Enlightenment, but some persons in these centers fail to do daily practicing of *vipassana* technique and loses their chances to incline to *Nibbāna*.

From the about problems of people of Buddhist meditation centers and Buddhist literature training centers, it is advisable to conduct a study concern with the Seven Factors of Enlightenment. Field study has to be done by personal and online interview method to detect the knowledge, attitude and practice of students of literature training center and yogis of Ledi meditation center.

### Objectives

1. To study the Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) of students of literature training center and yogis of Ledi meditation center.
2. To analyze the results/outcome of KAP study and to identify the association between dependent and independent variables such as:
  - i) KAP grading score and literature training
  - ii) KAP grading score and meditation practice

## Methodology

This study utilized a structured methodology which provided reliable results and valuable findings.

### Sample Design and Framework

Ledi Meditation Center from Sanchaung Township, Yangon was selected to conduct a field study due to its location accessibility with regular yogis' attendance every month. Total yogis about 20 in number were selected as a sample size for this study.

Equal number of 20 students were also selected randomly from Mingalar-Byuhar Literature Training Center at Shwe Dagon Pagoda basement compound. Personal interview - KAP study was planned to conduct with a total number of 40 respondents.

### Preparation procedures for the study

Question bank was formatted under four headings; Demographics of respondent - 12 items, knowledge questions - 9 items, attitude questions - 7 items and practice questions - 8 items, total - 36 items of questions.

Two interviewers (data collectors) were hired and gave one day training in social science methods. As a pilot study, they were sent for data collection to the two survey sites, three days before the KAP study. Three respondents from each site were interviewed as a pilot study and get data from six persons.

The results were reviewed, ethical issues were considered and questionnaire set was modified to obtain quick and correct response in data collection. Although questions were printed in English language, the data collectors had to ask them in Myanmar local language for the convenience of the respondents.

### Data management

The recorded data was reviewed and checked for errors. Suspected data records were corrected and edited after asking the respondents on video call. After data cleaning process was finished, two data groups (data sets) with 20 cases each were selected for data entry. Then, data coding and data entry procedure were done using Fast Statistics data software.

### Delimitation

This study was done to know the status of knowledge, attitude and practice of lay people – male and female yogis/students. Monks and nuns were excluded from this study because they didn't join to practice in this Ledi meditation center and also didn't come to study in Dhamma literature training class.

The sample size was determined for only 20 respondents in each study site due to its small-scale meditation center and also small-scale literature training class. Time frame of getting one month study period was said to be- another reason for delimitation of this study with only 40 participants. There is **no other KAP Study of Seven Factors of Enlightenment** research works found in Google search.

### Analysis and Discussion

Results of forty respondents were collected from KAP Study. Data entry, data coding and analysis were done by data analyzer using Fast Statistics data software and Epi Info 7.2 Statistics data software. The following findings and results were shown by tables and graphs.

### Demographic results

Total cases	Age(yr)	Sex	Marital status	Education
Group 1 (meditators)	40 - 86	Male - 12 Female - 8	Single - 1 Married - 19	PhD - 1, master - 4 Graduate - 15
Group 2 (literature students)	43 - 79	Male -7 Female - 13	Single - 6 Married - 14	PhD - 1, master - 11 Graduate - 8

**Table 1. Age, sex, marital status, education status**

Total cases	Family no	Race	Occupation
Group 1 (meditators)	2 - 7	Myanmar -18 Chinese - 2	Officer - 6 Officer (retired) - 8, Private - 6
Group 2 (literature students)	2 - 7	Myanmar-18 Chinese - 2	Officer(retired) - 6 Staff(retired) - 1 Private – 12, dependent - 1

**Table 2. Family no., race, occupation**

Total cases	House location	Meditation practice	Literature training
Group 1 (meditators)	Urban	Yes - 20	Yes - 3 No - 17
Group 2 (literature students)	Urban	Yes - 18 No - 2	Yes - 20

**Table 3. House location, meditation practice, literature training**

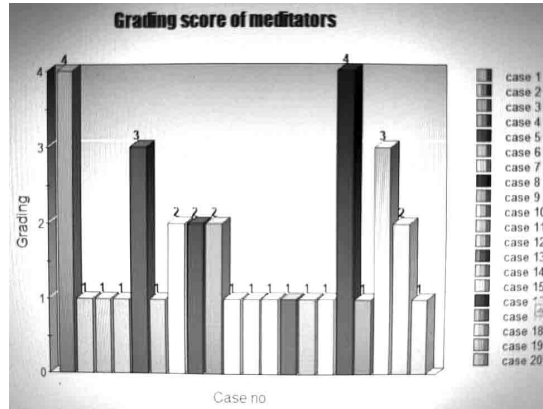
### KAP score grading results

Total cases	KAP score grading	Grading-pass / fail %
Group 1 (meditators)	Grade A, B, C, D = 8 Grade F ( <i>fail</i> ) = 12	Pass 40% Fail 60%
Group 2 (literature students)	Grade A, B, C, D = 17 Grade F ( <i>fail</i> ) = 3	Pass 85% Fail 15%

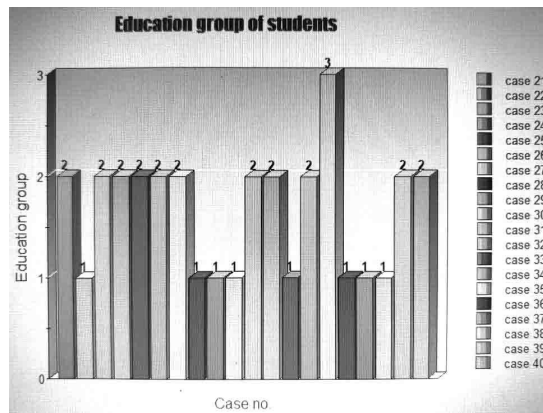
**Table 4. KAP score grading**

Traditional Grading System was used to calculate KAP score grading such as:

Total marks 90 - 100	= Grade A	= code 5
Total marks 80 - 89	= Grade B	= code 4
Total marks 70 - 79	= Grade C	= code 3
Total marks 60 - 69	= Grade D	= code 2
Total marks 0 - 59	= Grade F	= code 1 (Failed)



**Figure 1.** Grading score of meditators



**Figure 2.** Grading score of students

Literature training students of group 2, had better scoring (85 % of respondents had pass marks) than meditators of group 1 (40 % of respondents had pass marks).

**Age group** was defined by using the following classification such as:

Old age adult 80 - 89 = code 5,

Old age adult 70 - 79 = code 4,

Old age adult 60 - 69 = code 3,

Middle age adult 50 - 59 = code 2,

Middle age adult 40 - 49 = code 1

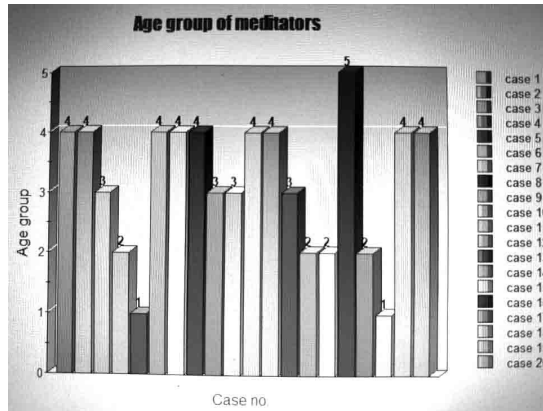


Figure 3A. Age group of meditators

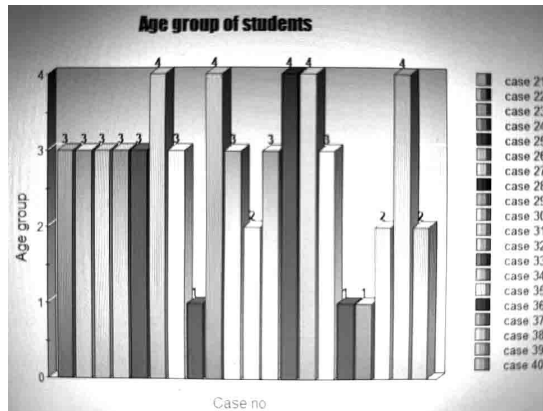


Figure 3B. Age group of students

Middle age and old age adults were seen in both meditators and literature training students.

**Sex group** was defined by using the following classification such as:

Male = code 1

Female = code 2

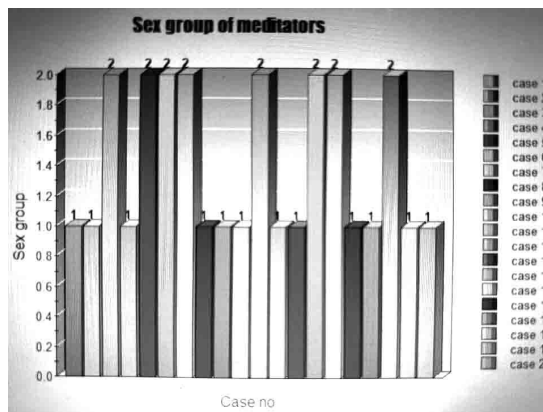


Figure 4. Sex group of meditators

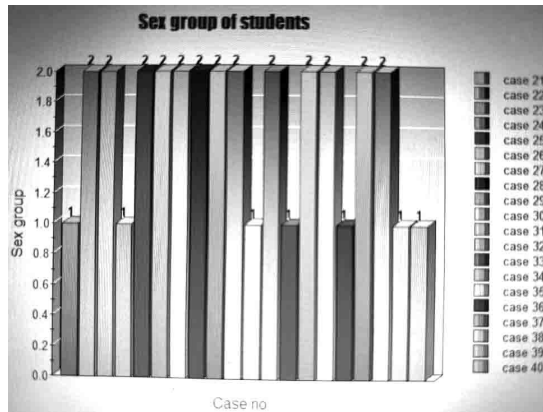


Figure 5. Sex group of students

Male yogi number was higher in meditator group but lower in literature training class group.

**Education group** was defined by using the following classification such as:

Ph.D. = code 3                      Master degree = code 2                      Graduate = code 1

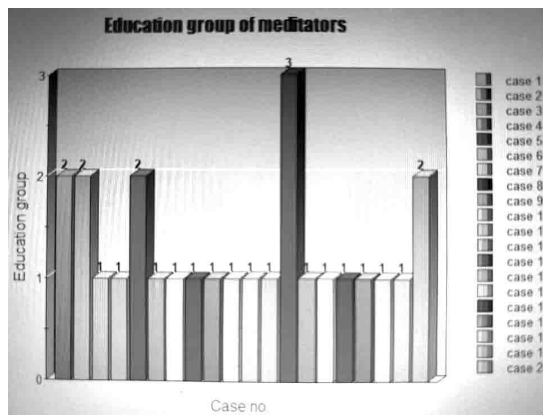


Figure 6. Education group of meditators

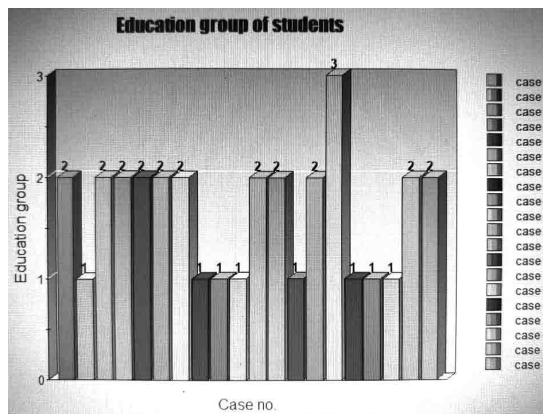


Figure 7. Education group of students

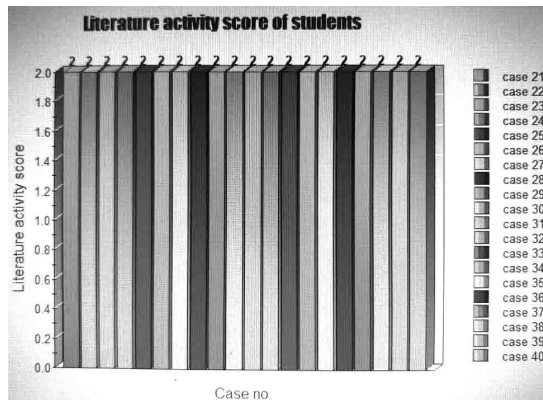
There were 1 yogi with Ph.D. degree, 4 with master degree and the rest were graduates in meditation group, but in literature training group, 1 student had Ph.D. degree, 11 students had master degree and the rest were graduates.

**Literature activity score** was defined by using the following classification:

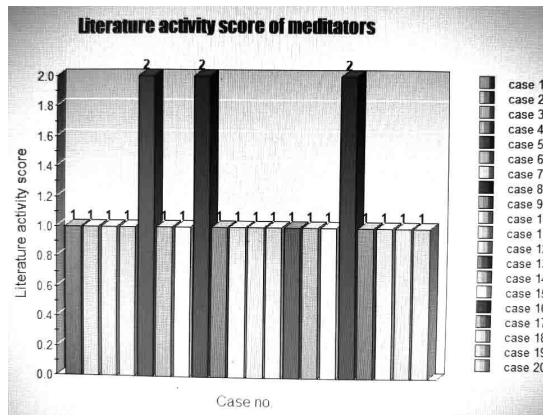
Literature activity (+) = code 2

Literature activity (-) = code 1

Out of 20 meditators, 3 yogis had attended literature training classes and 17 yogis had no literature training experiences before. In group 2, all 20 persons were students of literature training class.



**Figure 8.** Literature activity score of students



**Figure 9A.** Literature activity score of meditators

**Meditation practice score** was defined by using the following classification such as:

Meditation practice (+) = code 2

Meditation practice (-) = code 1

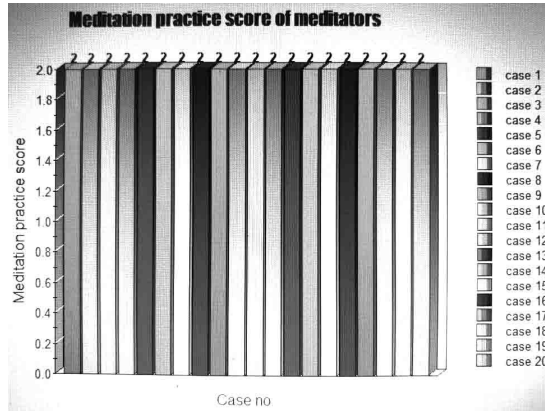


Figure 9B. Meditation practice score of meditators

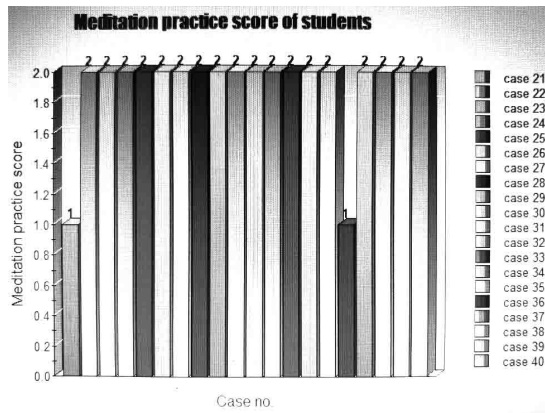


Figure 10. Meditation practice score of students

In group 1, all 20 respondents were meditators, but in group 2, 18 students had meditation experiences except 2 students (case 21 and 36) had no meditation experiences before.

**Chi Square Statistical Analysis**

KAP grading score (Pass / Fail) and Literature training (+) (-) were analyzed with X<sup>2</sup> test by using Epi Info (version 7.2) Statistical data software.

	Pass	Fail	
Literature training (+) 23	24	14	
Literature training (-) 17	1	1	
	25	15	= 40

X<sup>2</sup> = 13.81

P < 0.005 (0.0002)

Odds Ratio = 16

The above calculation showed high  $X^2$  value, small P value and high odds ratio, thus, there was significant **association** between KAP grading score and literature training. This indicates that respondent students with literature training may have high KAP grading score.

KAP grading score (Pass / Fail) and Meditation practice (+) (-) were analyzed with  $X^2$  test by using Epi Info (version 7.2) Statistical data software.

	Pass	Fail	
Meditation practice (+) 38	20	3	
Meditation practice (-) 2	5	12	
	25	15	= 40
	$X^2 = 0.1404$		
	$P > 0.1 (0.707)$		
	Odds Ratio = 1.7143		

Low  $X^2$  value, high P value and low odds ratio indicates that there is no significant association seen between KAP grading score and meditation practice.

### Conclusion

Over 2500 years ago, Lord Buddha had expounded *Bojjhaṅga sutta*, the Seven Factors of Enlightenment to develop dhamma knowledge that leads to *Nibbāna*. Before He passed away, He gave a short talk about his own practice which included these Seven Factors of Enlightenment that could create the mind condition by developing inner-strengths to remove attachments/defilements that leads to liberation. Based on one Factor of Enlightenment, we can develop the next Factor which is persistence in developing other remaining Factors.

Daily practicing of mindfulness meditation will have benefits of developing these Seven Factors of Enlightenment that facilitates to activate Noble Eightfold Path, the roadmap to our goal of *Nibbāna*. This research work which is seemed to be the first KAP study done in Myanmar on the *Bojjhaṅga* dhamma is an introductory base-line study. It highlights the knowledge level of meditators / dhamma literature students on the Seven Factors of Enlightenment and detects their attitude and practice on them. Although it is a short and a small-scale study, it can prove that there is a significant association between KAP grading score and literature training which indicates that students with dhamma literature training centers may have high level of knowledge, attitude and practice concern with the Seven Factors of Enlightenment.

As a short-time study, it does not include to investigate the knowledge level of public community as well as monks and nuns. If we have some opportunity to do further research, the future study should focus on the wide-spread investigation of the knowledge, attitude and practice level of Myanmar citizens including monks and nuns.

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