



Gender and Peace of Mind: Exploring Correlational Dynamics

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Abstract

Peace of mind is an emotional and psychological condition in which the mind is filled with joy, tranquillity, and, most importantly, contentment. It is the most valuable commodity on the planet. To be at peace with yourself, one must embrace all their flaws, frailties, and insecurities. It also includes rising above petty animosities and prejudices, and attempting to be content with what one has. The goal of the current study is to investigate the factors that influence peace of mind, such as anxiety, stress, and mindfulness among males and females. The study was conducted on a sample of 43 males and 43 females aged 18- 30 years. The results showed that there is no significant mean difference between males and females in Peace of Mind on all these dependent variables Anxiety, Stress and Mindfulness. Whereas, correlation matrix shows a significant relationship between stress and mindfulness at $p < .05$ level and significant correlation matrix between stress and anxiety at $p < .01$ level. This study provides an insight that

the key to achieving peace of mind is to divert the attention of mind away from negative and irrational thoughts and replace them with positive and rational thoughts.

Keywords: *Peace of Mind, Stress, Anxiety, Mindfulness*

Introduction

“We can never make peace with the outer world, until we had made peace with ourselves.”

– Dalai Lama

Peace of Mind

Peace of Mind can be defined as “an internal state of peacefulness and harmony” (Lee et al., 2013). Peace of mind is referred to as a mental state of calmness or tranquillity. It may also include freedom from worry and anxiety. This attribute is critical in today's environment of stress, worry, and hurried living to protect your physical, emotional, and mental health. Peace of mind is a way of being that goes beyond thoughts and emotions. It's when you an individual is to their core, totally calm and tranquil.

Stress

Stress can also be defined as an imbalance between our perceived capability to satisfy demands (from inside or beyond). The American Psychological Association defines psychological stress “as an emotional response to an external trigger. Stress can be short-term or long-term, depending on whether the cause is temporary or ongoing.” Stress triggers the release of certain hormones, such as noradrenaline and cortisol. These hormones cause physiological changes in the body, which can negatively impact mental and physical health. Lazarus and Folkman (1986) conceptualized stress as a process whereby an individual

perceives and responds to events that he appraises as overwhelming or threatening to his well-being

Anxiety

Anxiety is described as feelings of worry, hesitation, nervousness and fear that go along with the commencement of the sensitive nervous system that arouses bodily changes like blood pressure, fast heart beating, perspiration, cramps etc. Zeidner and Matthews (2011) explained that anxiety orients the individual toward anticipating dangers, motivates the person to act in order to avoid events that might cause bodily harm or psychological distress, and prepares the body and mind for taking some sort of action.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is a 2500-year-old concept that comes from ancient eastern and Buddhist philosophy. ‘Jon Kabat-Zinn’ was the first to introduce the notion of mindfulness (Kabat-Zinn, 2009). It is an ability to be “fully present, conscious of where we are and what we are doing, and not unduly reactive or overwhelmed by what is going on around us is understood as mindfulness.” While, mindfulness is something we all have, it is made more accessible to us when we practise it on a regular basis. It is the awareness that arises from paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment and non-judgmentally. Mindfulness incorporates two components, firstly, self-regulation of attention in order to keep it focused on the present experience, secondly adopting an attitude of curiosity, openness, and acceptance toward one's experiences in the present moment (Shapiro et al., 2017). Additionally, mindfulness aids in promoting compassion, peace, and nonviolence.

Review of Literature

Liu et al. (2015) conducted a randomised controlled trial study to explore if mindfulness training can successfully promote inner calm in those who have never had a mental illness. A total of 57 people were randomly assigned to either mindfulness training (N = 29) or a wait-list control (N = 28). The method of experience sampling was applied. The results asserts the first evidence that mindfulness training increases participants' inner serenity.

Xu et al. (2015) carried out a study in a traditional Chinese cultural setting. The effects of self-acceptance on the link between mindfulness and peace of mind were investigated in this study. The Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire, Peace of Mind Scale, and Self-acceptance Questionnaire were completed by 212 people. Findings revealed that mindfulness was significantly positively connected with peace of mind, and that this positive relationship was mediated by self-acceptance.

Weigelt et al. (2019) carried out an occupational stress study which highlighted unfinished work activities as a key job-related stressor. Weekly observations from 58 employees at the beginning and conclusion of the work week were collected using diary technique over a period of 12 weeks, giving 377 matched observations. These findings suggests that proactive work activity can help people relax mentally over the weekend by restoring competence needs fulfilment within the face of incomplete chores.

Sleight et al. (2021) studied a heterogeneous, community-based group of recently diagnosed cancer survivors, the extent to which spiritual well-being moderates the relationship between anxiety and physical well-being (n = 5506). The results found that meaning of life and peace were negatively linked with anxiety, ($r = -0.56$, $p < .001$), and positively associated with physical well-being ($r = 0.43$, $p < .001$).

Maharana et al. (2023) carried out a study on stress, anxiety, and depression on 220 post-graduate students of Odisha to check its effect on academic performance. FFMQ-15 and DASS-21 were used as tools. The study was assessed to see how well mindfulness treated students stress, anxiety, and depression symptoms. The results showed that mindfulness reduced stress, anxiety, and depression of postgraduate students and participants reported bigger gains in mindfulness as well as greater decrease in stress, anxiety, and depression.

Sun et al. (2024) employed a positive psychological perspective and aimed to investigate relationship between pregnancy stress and mental health of the pregnant women and found using structural equation modelling, that mindfulness and peace of mind acted as partial mediators in the relationship between pregnancy stress and mental health.

More recently, Chachignon et al. (2024) conducted a study on Mindfulness which is both a psychological and social phenomenon, researchers explored the reasons to incorporate mindfulness-based practices and mindfulness integration into a scientific and neoliberal landscape in institutions and corporations as it is considered as the universal panacea to address mental health, social and environmental problems.

Methodology

Research Objectives

- a)** To explore gender differences of peace of mind.
- b)** To study the relationship between anxiety, stress, mindfulness.

Hypothesis

H₁: There will be a significant relationship between anxiety, mindfulness and stress

H₂: There will be no gender differences between anxiety, mindfulness and stress.

Sample

In this study total 78 participants were selected, but 35 participants denied to fill up the questionnaires. Therefore, participants were randomly selected and the final sample consisted of 43 males and 43 females between the age range of 18 -30 years from Chandigarh. The inclusion criteria set for the study was that individuals from intact families with no medical ailments were chosen.

Tests and Tools

For present study and for collection of quantitative data, three scales were used:

- ***The Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS)*:** This is a 15-item scale (1-6 Likert) given by Brown and Ryan (2003) that assesses a basic feature of mindfulness, namely, a receptive state of mind in which attention, guided by a sensitive awareness of what is happening in the present, simply observes what is happening. To score the scale, a mean or average of the 15 items is calculated.
- ***Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (HAM-A)*:** The scale has 14 items given by Hamilton in 1959 each with its own set of symptoms, and it measures both psychic and somatic anxiety (mental agitation and psychological distress) (physical complaints related to anxiety). Each item is scored on a basic numeric scoring of 0 (not present) to 4 (severe).

- **Perceived Stress Scale:** It is a ten-point rating scale given by Cohen (1983). It is a measure of the degree to which situations in one's life are appraised as stressful. The items were chosen to illustrate how unpredictable, chaotic, and overwhelmed the lives of the respondents are. High scores were associated with high stress.

Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistics including Mean, Standard deviation and correlation coefficient was calculated, to find out the relation between all the variables and to explore the gender differences t-test was used.

Results

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Males (Mean)	Males (Sd)	Females (Mean)	Females (Sd)
Mindfulness	62.7	12.45	60.2	12.52
Anxiety	24.0	16.03	18.3	12.21
Stress	20.2	5.91	20.6	7.91

Table 2*Correlation between Stress, Mindfulness, Anxiety*

	Stress	Mindfulness	Anxiety
Stress	-	-0.227*	0.329**
Mindfulness	-0.227*	-	-0.072
Anxiety	0.329**	-0.072	-

Discussion of Results

The results indicated that mean scores of males is higher on mindfulness and anxiety (Mean=62.7, S.D=12.45 & Mean=60.2, S.D=12.52 respectively for males and females and anxiety (Mean=24.0 S.D=16.03 & Mean=18.3, S.D=12.21) respectively for males and females. For the variable stress, it is seen that females scored slightly higher in comparison to males (Mean=20.6, S.D=7.19 & Mean=20.2, S.D=5.91). Further, the results showed that there is a significant negative relationship between stress and mindfulness ($r=-0.227$) at $p<.05$ level i.e. lesser stress will lead to greater mindfulness and eventually it shall help pay way towards one's peace of mind, well-being and healthy living.

On the other hand, there is a significant positive relationship between stress and anxiety ($r=0.329$) at $p<.01$ level. Higher levels of stress makes an individual highly anxious in life in general. Lastly, negative relationship is found between anxiety and mindfulness ($r=-0.072$). However, finding revealed that there exists significant correlation among anxiety, stress and mindfulness.

To know the differences among males and females on these variables t-test is used. The result indicated no significant difference among males and females with regard to anxiety, stress and mindfulness in relation to peace of mind.

Though the second hypothesis stands accepted yet, the researcher can carry forward this work on a larger sample as especially in the discipline of psychology, mindfulness is increasingly being utilised to treat the mental health disorders. Psychologists and therapists (Siegel et al., 2002) have developed contemporary treatments, merging mindfulness and psychology. It can be concluded that this work is a pilot study to plan intervention and module including tenets like personal well-being, awareness, optimism, calmness, empathy to cultivate a feeling of oneness with the self.

Conclusion

Stress, anxiety, and mindfulness are directly related to mental peace. A calm mental state is significantly impeded by stress and worry. Whereas, anxiety frequently results from internal concerns and doubts, stress is caused by external expectations and pressures. Both have the potential to start a vicious cycle of unfavourable feelings and ideas that disturb mental peace. On the other hand, tension and worry can be lessened by practicing mental serenity, which improves general wellbeing.

An essential component of this process is mindfulness. It helps people become more conscious of their thoughts and feelings by focusing on the present moment with intention and without passing judgment. By engaging in mindfulness exercises like meditation and deep breathing, one can improve their emotional control and self-awareness, which will lessen the severity of their stress and anxiety. By encouraging a change in attention from concerns about

the past or the future to the present, these techniques help people feel more at ease and in control.

Individuals can improve their peace of mind by building a defence against stress and anxiety via the regular practice of mindfulness. This all-encompassing strategy enhances mental health while also promoting a more balanced and satisfying existence where one is better equipped to handle setbacks with poise and fortitude.

To improve peace of mind, it is beneficial to minimize the time spent reading newspapers or watching the news on TV, as these activities can often expose one to distressing content. Additionally, it is important to avoid negative conversations and people who exhibit negative attitudes. Steering clear of restless and stressful individuals can also help maintain personal calm. Learning to forgive and forget is crucial, as holding grudges can nurture ill feelings and hinder sleep. It is also essential to overcome feelings of jealousy, which often stem from low self-esteem and a sense of inferiority. Acceptance of things that cannot be changed can save a significant amount of time, energy, and worry. If a situation can be changed, taking action is appropriate; if not, acceptance is key. Lastly, focusing on the present moment rather than dwelling on the past, which cannot be changed, can significantly enhance peace of mind.

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