



Mindfulness Dynamics: Influencing Well-Being and Emotional Regulation among Adults

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Abstract

Mindfulness is the basic human ability to be fully present, and cognizant of one's surroundings and actions while maintaining a non-reactive stance. It has gained prominence in contemporary positive psychology which helps individuals to lead a better and more meaningful life. The present study aims to investigate the effectiveness of mindfulness on well-being and emotion regulation. Well-being is a sense of health and vitality that arises from thoughts, emotions, actions, and experiences. When we have well-being in our arsenal, we feel happy, healthy, socially connected, and purposeful most of the time. Emotional regulation is the ability to exert control over one's own emotions. It helps to understand how people regulate and manage their emotions. It gives an insight into an individual's emotional experience, or how they feel within. The other aspect of emotional regulation is emotional expression, or how people show emotions while talking to others. A sample of 41 people was taken from the ages 20-40 years. Standardized tools were used to measure the variables - mindfulness, well-being, and emotional regulation. The findings of this study offer valuable insights into the nuanced relationships between mindfulness, well-being, and emotion regulation. Moreover, the results found a significant positive correlation between well-being

and mindfulness, suggesting that individuals engaging in mindfulness practices experienced heightened overall well-being. This finding underscores the potential of mindfulness interventions to foster positive mental states within the specified age group. However, no significant relation was found between emotional regulation and mindfulness and well-being. Research sheds light on the intricate interplay between mindfulness, and well-being. However, its specific impact on emotional regulation remains an area for further exploration and understanding.

Keywords: *Mindfulness, emotional regulation, well-being, cognitive reappraisal, expressive suppression*

Introduction

“Do not dwell in the past, do not dream of the future, and concentrate the mind on the present moment.”

~Gautama Buddha

One of the most important teachings of Buddha is to be there in the present. It is the ultimate source of power that an individual can practice regulating emotions and increase their well-being. Mindfulness simply means being in the present without worrying about the past or future. Kabat-Zinn (1994) defined mindfulness as “the awareness that arises from paying attention on purpose, in the present moment and non-judgmentally.”

Mindfulness originated from ancient Eastern and Buddhist philosophy and dates back around 2500 years. Jon Kabat-Zinn introduced it to the Western world. The benefits of which have now spread all around the world and are practiced in every corner. It helps one become more aware of the environment and gives more control over one’s emotions and behavior. It

can be practiced in different ways; one can start the journey of mindfulness through meditation. It is a mental training that helps to learn to slow down thoughts and help relax the body and mind. It does not end here; an individual can incorporate mindfulness into all daily life activities.

Mindfulness has been used to bring awareness towards skillfully using the process to respond to emotional distress and maladaptive behavior (Bishop et al., 2004). In recent years Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) and Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) have been introduced to help individuals attain the state of mindfulness, thus reducing psychological distress. Mindfulness training also leads to a significant decrease in reports of distraction and rumination than a relaxation treatment (Roemer et al., 2015). Another research by Shapiro et al. (2005) focuses on clinical studies to understand the efficacy of mindfulness-based interventions. It shows that these interventions are helpful in managing psychological as well as physical symptoms.

Emotional Regulation

In a typical day, individuals experience a wide range of emotions, which can be either positive or negative. The critical distinction lies in how these emotions are regulated. Effective emotional regulation involves managing one's emotional responses, rather than being controlled by them. This capacity for regulation highlights the significance of emotional regulation in determining emotional well-being. Emotional regulation is the ability to respond to the ongoing demands of experience with the range of emotions in a socially acceptable manner. Emotional regulation is significant and plays an important role in our social interactions and if emotions are not regulated there could be outcomes that are undesirable or negative. For example, if anger is not regulated, it could lead to aggressive actions. Regulating emotions can also play an important role in the prevention of negative

cognitive effects that may occur because of suppressing behaviors that are driven by emotions. Emotional regulation can be defined as “the cognitive and behavioral efforts people make to modify their emotions” (Fiest & Rosenberg, 2015). A study by Botha (2015), found that mindfulness-based interventions may foster adaptive emotional regulation among emerging adults. The findings of Good et al. (2012), supports the view that the relationship between emotional regulation and mindfulness may be bi-directional.

Emotional regulation in adults can be measured in two aspects: Cognitive reappraisal which is changing the way one thinks about potentially emotion-eliciting events and expressive suppression which involves changing the way one behaviorally responds to emotion-eliciting events (Cutuli, 2014). Butler et al. (2003) examined expressive suppression to be a factor involved in disrupted communication and increased stress levels. It is asserted that individuals keep their emotions from showing during social interactions. The results showed suppression alone disrupted communication, reducing the rapport and inhibiting relationship formation. It also showed a negative impact on the regulators’ emotional experience and increased blood pressure. Studies also indicate that using reappraisal is associated with better interpersonal functioning, whereas using suppression is associated with worse interpersonal functioning (Gross & John, 2003).

Well-Being

The well-being index indicates how a person is doing in their life. The concept of well-being is multifaceted, it encompasses various dimensions of life whether it is physical, social, or emotional dimensions that contribute to an individual’s overall quality of life and functioning. It is more than just the absence of illness or stress; it also means that an individual is experiencing satisfaction, happiness, and purpose in life with the ability to manage challenges effectively.

“Well-being is a positive state experienced by individuals and societies” as defined by WHO. WHO-5 has given a short questionnaire to measure the subjective well-being of individuals. Diener (1984) proposed a three-part model of Subjective well-being that examines how people perceive their experiences: frequent experiences of positive emotions, infrequent experiences of negative emotions, and cognitive evaluations such as life satisfaction. The study of subjective well-being (happiness or life satisfaction) has expanded significantly. It includes defining the predictors for measuring well-being such as temperament, income, and social relationships, and the positive impacts of high well-being on health, relationships, and work (Diener et al., 2018).

According to Sonnentag (2015), well-being refers to a person’s hedonic experience of feeling good and to the eudaimonic experience of fulfillment and purpose. Mindfulness also plays an essential role in enhancing an individual’s well-being, Nyklíček (2010) established a positive association between mindfulness and psychological well-being in correlational and intervention studies comparing the effects of mindfulness-based psychological interventions. Cash and Whittingham (2010) also reported a higher degree of acting with awareness and non-judgment aspects of mindfulness to be predictive of psychological well-being outcomes. Stevenson et al. (2018) in their study found a relationship between both the act with awareness and non-judgment facets of mindfulness and adaptive emotional regulation (increased cognitive reappraisal and decreased expressive suppression to influence psychological well-being). Studies implementing mindfulness interventions demonstrated an overall improvement in well-being (Xu et al., 2022).

Methodology

Purpose

The purpose of the study is to investigate the correlations between mindfulness, emotional regulation, and well-being among adults aged 20-40. Specifically, the study aims to:

- a) To examine the relationship between mindfulness and well-being in adults.
- b) To examine the relationship between mindfulness and emotional regulation in adults.

Hypothesis

- H1: There will be a positive correlation between mindfulness and well-being among adults.
- H2: There will be a positive correlation between mindfulness and emotional regulation among adults.

Sample

A sample of 41 people were taken from the ages 20-40 years of age from Delhi NCR. The participants were informed about the purpose of the research, informed consent was taken, and questionnaires were filled out through Google Forms.

Measures

Standardized scales were used for the study: The Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS), Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ), Well-Being (WHO-5)

- ***The Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS)***

The trait MAAS is a 15-item scale which helps to assess various characteristics of mindfulness. The scale was developed by Brown and Ryan (2003).

- ***Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ)***

It is a 10-item scale designed to measure respondents' tendency to regulate their emotions in two ways: cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression. It is a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The scale was developed by Gross and John (2003).

- ***Well Being (WHO-5)***

The WHO-5 is a short questionnaire consisting of 5 simple and non-invasive questions, which tap into the subjective well-being of the respondents (Topp et al., 2015).

Procedure

The objective of this research is to examine the interplay of mindfulness, emotional regulation, and well-being among adults aged 20-40 in Delhi NCR. The study utilizes various standard measures to assess these variables. Participants were informed about the purpose of the research and questionnaires were filled out through Google Forms. Consent was taken from all the participants and standardized tools were administered.

Analysis of Data

Scoring for all the given tests was done. The raw scores were tabulated and subjected to various statistical analyses.

Results

Table 1

N, Mean and Standard Deviation

Descriptives			
	Mindfulness	Wellbeing	Emotional Regulation
N	41	41	41
Mean	65.0	14.6	45.9
Standard Deviation	12.2	5.33	10.7

Table 1: In the provided descriptive statistics table, each variable is represented by its respective sample size (N), mean score, and standard deviation. For mindfulness, the sample size is 41 with a mean score of 65.0 and a standard deviation of 12.2. Well-being also has a sample size of 41, with a mean score of 14.6 and a standard deviation of 5.33. Emotional regulation has a sample size of 41 with a mean score of 45.9 and a standard deviation of 10.7. These statistics provide insights into the central tendency and variability within the data for each variable.

Table 2

Correlation between Mindfulness, Well Being and Emotional Regulation

	Mindfulness		Wellbeing		Emotional Regulation
Mindfulness	—				
Wellbeing	0.325	*	—		
Emotional Regulation	0.008		-0.044		—
Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$					

Table 2: It represents the correlation matrix between the variables. Well-being exhibits a significant positive relationship with mindfulness ($r = 0.325$, $p < 0.05$). Whereas there is no significant relationship between emotional regulation and mindfulness ($r = 0.008$) as well as between emotional regulation and well-being ($r = -0.004$). This table provides valuable insights into the interrelationships among these variables in a research or analytical context, aiding in understanding their associations and implications.

Discussion of Results

The aim of the present study was to investigate the correlation of mindfulness, emotional regulation, and well-being among adults. Based on Pearson's product-moment correlation statistical analysis, the results found that there was a significant positive correlation between well-being and mindfulness ($r = 0.325$, $p < 0.05$). Suggesting that individuals engaging in mindfulness practices experienced heightened overall well-being. This finding underscores the potential of mindfulness interventions to foster positive mental states within the specified age group. However, no significant relation was found between emotional regulation and mindfulness.

Several factors may account for this lack of significant correlation. Firstly, the sample size could be a critical factor contributing to the non-significant findings that might have limited the statistical power of the study.

Another factor that might have influenced the results is the nature of the sample itself. The study focused on adults, a demographic characterized by many other responsibilities and stressors. Adults often juggle multiple roles that can lead to high levels of stress and divided attention, potentially impacting both emotional regulation and mindfulness practices. However, previous research by Botha (2015) contributed to the understanding of mindfulness as a construct that may foster adaptive emotional regulation. Although the findings were

stated to be preliminary, suggesting that a specific focus on only three facets of mindfulness (acting with awareness, non-judging, and non-reactivity) in mindfulness-based interventions, may foster adaptive emotional regulation.

Conclusion

The growing stressors in life are making people feel like they have very little time on their hands as they are mostly thinking about the past or future and tend to forget to live in the present. Research sheds light on the intricate interplay between mindfulness, and well-being, however, its specific impact on emotional regulation remains an area for further exploration and understanding. Adulthood represents a pivotal transitional period in the lifespan of an individual, characterized by a significant shift of focus towards independence and the pursuit of long-term life goals such as establishing careers, building a family, and achieving financial stability. As individuals are preoccupied with these hassles in life, they often forget to take care of their emotional needs.

To add to this challenge, the advancement of technology has been an essential aspect of life that impacts the cognitive and attentional capacities of individuals. Constant use of these devices has led to a pervasive culture of multitasking resulting in divided attention, where the cognitive resources required to focus on a single activity are dispersed across several concurrent tasks. As a result, individuals may experience diminished ability to concentrate fully on any one task leading to disrupting the mindfulness presence of individuals as mindfulness involves fully engaging with the current task and being attuned to one's thoughts, emotions, and surroundings without distraction. The tendency to multitask can undermine mindful engagement, making individuals less aware of their actions and emotions.

Recommendations

Further intervention studies can explore the long-term effects of mindfulness-based interventions on well-being and emotional regulation giving us a better understanding of the interplay between these variables. Chiodelli et al. (2018) examined the effects of a brief mindfulness program for emotional regulation and levels of mindfulness on senior students in Brazil. The results showed an increase in emotional regulation as well as in levels of mindfulness in students at Brazilian universities. Further research was suggested using an experimental design and follow-up.

Incorporating mixed-methods approaches can offer rich insights into the mechanisms underlying these effects. These methods allow for a holistic exploration of the phenomena under study. Quantitative measures, such as standardized assessments can provide us with the statistical data to see the changes in well-being and emotional regulation, helping us understand the extent of change across a large population, and offering generalizable insights into the effectiveness of mindfulness interventions.

On the other hand, qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews or observations, can help understand the subjective experience and personal narratives of individuals as to how these practices have helped them influence their emotional processing, presence, and many other aspects of daily life.

By examining both quantitative measures and qualitative experiences, researchers can gain a comprehensive understanding of how mindfulness practices impact emotional regulation and overall well-being, leading to more effective interventions and strategies for promoting mental health and resilience.

Exploring the long-term effects of mindfulness-based interventions will also help us understand how these practices influence individuals over time, helping individuals to get positive outcomes from the practice. As these interventions might improve individuals'

emotional regulation (Iani et al., 2018). Correlational, experimental, and treatment studies converge to suggest that the practice of mindfulness associated with healthy emotional regulation may play a causal role in these effects, although more experimental research is needed to determine this (Roemer et al., 2015).

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