

Effects of Mindfulness on Mental Health and Psychological Well-Being: A Systematic Review

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Abstract: *Finding purpose in life and incorporating mindfulness into our daily lives are important aspects of leading a fulfilling and healthy life. Practicing mindfulness provides a valuable tool for alleviating the symptoms of mental health disorders, improving emotional regulation, and supporting overall psychological well-being. The nature of the study is exploratory, which is purely based on secondary data, which have been collected from various sources: such as books, journals, websites and other online database. Sample size is 15 articles, from the period of last seven years (2017-2024). After reviewing the literature it is find out that mindfulness and psychological wellbeing are interlinked to each other and have a positive impact on psychological as well as mental health. This way, we can utilize the transformative potential of mindfulness to cultivate a healthier, more resilient, and flourishing society.*

Keywords: Mindfulness, Mental Health, Psychological Well-Being.

1. Introduction

The intersection of Mindfulness and Mental Health has become a focus for scientific circles and the wider community over the last decades. In modern psychology and medicine, mindfulness, derived from Buddhist contemplative practices, has evolved from spiritual traditions to secular applications. The practices of mindfulness, which are characterized by conscious and unjudgemental awareness of the present experience, include different methods like meditation or deep breathing and body scanning. A growing body of research highlighting the profound impact of mindfulness on mental health and psychological well being aims to be explored in this introduction. Mindfulness is defined as being aware of your own state of mind and surroundings, and observing your emotions, thoughts, and experiences without judgment, American Psychological Association, n.d. Mindfulness can be practiced by deliberately focusing on moment-to-moment experiences (de Vibe et al., 2018). Studies have shown that mindfulness can improve well being (Charoensukmongkol, 2013; de Vibe et al., 2018; Niemiec et al., 2012). Mindfulness has been associated with increased coping skills, sleep quality, self-efficacy, and study engagement (Caldwell et al., 2010; Charoensukmongkol, 2013; Cohen et al., 2021; de Vibe et al., 2018; Kakoschke et al., 2021; Shearer et al., 2016). Mindfulness has been shown to improve compassion for oneself and others, while also improving a state of mind that is optimistic (Foroughi et al., 2020; Rodríguez-Carvajal et al., 2016).

Understanding Mindfulness

It is essential to understand the essence of Mindfulness before we begin to examine its effects. Jon Kabat-Zinn, a pioneer in the field, defines mindfulness as "paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally." The focus of this definition is on the deliberate nature of Mindfulness, and it emphasizes the cultivation of awareness in isolation from evaluation or critical thoughts. Individuals can learn to anchor themselves in the present moment through meditation, deepening a deep

connection with their thoughts, emotions and bodily experiences.

A deeper understanding of its effects on psychological health and well being was facilitated by the integration of mindfulness in experimental studies. The efficacy of Mindfulness Based Interventions Based on Meditation for Alleviating Psychological Stress and Improving Overall Well Being Using Various Methodologies has been demonstrated in a range of studies, including Randomized Controlled RCT Studies RCT Study with Longitudinal Investigation. For instance, a meta-analysis conducted by Hofmann et al. (2010) demonstrated moderate to large effect sizes for the beneficial effects of mindfulness-based therapies on anxiety, depression, and stress.

Impact on Mental Health

Studies have indicated that, mindfulness can also improve mental health by reducing levels of anxiety and depression (Beddoe & Murphy, 2004; Carmody & Baer, 2008; Cohen et al., 2021; Krusche et al., 2013; Shearer et al., 2016; Singh & Gorey, 2018; Takahashi et al., 2019; van der Zwan et al., 2015). Mindfulness-based interventions have emerged as promising adjunctive therapies for a myriad of mental health conditions. Mindfulness interventions have demonstrated efficacy in reducing symptom severity of anxiety disorders and depression to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and substance abuse, and enhancing psychological resilience. Notably, mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT), developed by Segal, Williams, and Teasdale (2002), has shown remarkable effectiveness in preventing depressive relapse among individuals with a history of recurrent depression.

Enhancing Psychological Well-being

Psychological well being was firstly developed as a way of describing positive functioning over the course of one's life,. In order to describe mental health and well being, a model developed by Ryff and Keyes in 1995 is now expanded. To describe various dimensions of an individual, such as autonomy, positive relationships with others, ability to cope with social pressures, the best use of available opportunities,

acceptance and personal growth are called 'psychiatric well being'. There have been previous studies demonstrating a beneficial relationship between mental well being and healthy living. Klainin-Yobas (2016) suggests that having higher psychological well-being prevents health problems and increases life expectancy. Specifically, their results showed the elder participants who were identified as having higher psychological well-being were lower on cardiovascular risks, cortisol level, inflammatory responses, and high on their quality of sleep.

Most of the literature reviewed suggests a need for further investigation into factors linked to psychological well being. These results indicate that, irrespective of how it is implemented and applied, Mindfulness can be a major contributor towards psychological well being. In addition to improving symptoms of mental illness, mindfulness practices have a profound impact on enhancing psychological well being and building resilience when faced with adversity. According to the research, Mindful meditation is capable of creating favorable emotions including gratitude, compassion and rumination while mitigating tendencies for equanimity and negative effects. In addition, mindfulness-based interventions have been linked to improvements in brain function, such as attention control, working memory and flexibility of thinking.

Finally, an increasing number of studies demonstrate the transformative potential for mindfulness to promote mental health and psychological well being. As empirical evidence continues to accumulate, integrating mindfulness-based interventions into clinical practice holds promise for augmenting existing therapeutic approaches and addressing the burgeoning global burden of mental illness. However, in order to understand the underlying mechanisms of Mindfulness and to optimize its use in diverse populations and contexts, further research is needed.

Objective of the study

This study reviewed the previous researches which explored the Effects of Mindfulness on Mental Health and Psychological Well-Being.

2. Literature Review

Sóley María Kristínardóttir (2022) examined the relationship between mindfulness and mental health and whether positive affect, age, and gender promote the effect of mindfulness on mental health. The relationship between positive affect and mental health was additionally examined. 60 Participants assessed their mental health and their level of mindfulness and positive affect. A significant negative relationship was found between mindfulness and anxiety, depression, and stress. Positive affect had a significant negative relationship with depression and stress. Linear and multiple regression analyses revealed that high levels of mindfulness significantly contribute to improved mental health, and that positive affect and gender promote the effect of mindfulness on mental health. Age promoted the effect of mindfulness on anxiety.

Afrashteh and Hasani (2022) analyzed the relationship between mindfulness and psychological well-being of

adolescents considering the mediating role of self-compassion, emotional dysregulation and cognitive flexibility. This cross-sectional research population was adolescents (elementary, first and second high school) in Zanjan, Iran in 2021, whose approximate number was 14,000. Results indicated that mindfulness is directly and positively related to psychological well-being, it is also indirectly through self-compassion and Cognitive flexibility has a positive and significant relationship with psychological well-being and also mindfulness has an indirect, negative and significant relationship with psychological well-being through emotional dysregulation.

Terzioğlu, Z.A. (2022) examined the effectiveness of a mindfulness-based physical exercise program on 60 university students' psychological well-being and life satisfaction. The results suggested significant differences between the psychological well-being and life satisfaction posttest scores of the experimental and control groups in favor of the experimental group. In the sub-dimensions of psychological well-being, significant differences were found between the experimental and control groups in post-test scores of environmental mastery, personal growth, and purpose in life. There was no significant difference between the psychological well-being, positive relationships with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and self-acceptance.

Minh Anh Quang TRAN et. al. (2024) investigate how mindfulness could reduce the anxiety, depression, and stress of university students and how self-compassion and psychological well-being could mediate the links between mindfulness and these mental health disorders. The results indicated that self-compassion and psychological well-being serially mediated the relationships between mindfulness (as a predictor) and anxiety, stress, and depression (as outcome variables). The findings demonstrated the key role of mindfulness in increasing students' self-compassion and psychological well-being as well as reducing anxiety, depression, and stress.

Roulston, A., et.al. (2017) studied the impact of a six-week Mindfulness course, modelled on the manualised treatment program developed by Kabat-Zinn, on the mental well-being, stress and resilience of undergraduate social work students in Northern Ireland. Statistical tests were used to compare mean scores from the scales, and qualitative data were manually analysed using thematic content analysis. Findings indicated significant changes in the scores for well-being, stress and resilience for the intervention group, but not for the control group. Mindfulness may not appeal to all students so should not be a mandatory component of training, but may be offered as one of the wider approaches to self-care for undergraduate social work degree students.

Freligh (2020) studied the concept of mindfulness has been shown to positively impact psychological well-being, and one application of mindfulness-based interventions has been the development and implementation of courses specifically for college students. Results revealed significant increases in mindfulness and in one domain of psychological well-being (environmental mastery) following the course but did not reveal significant improvements in other well-being domains

nor significant changes in adaptive coping. Therefore, the planned mediation analysis was not conducted. A post-hoc hierarchical regression analysis revealed significant relationships between mindfulness and adaptive coping in the hypothesized directions while controlling for participants' scores before the course. This may indicate that participants who developed significantly in their capacity for mindfulness practice may indeed have demonstrated the impact upon adaptive coping hypothesized in this study.

Klussman et.al. (2020) studied to better understand the effect of mindfulness on well-being by examining self-connection as a potential mediator. In Study 1, they recruited 101 people from Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk) and asked them about their connection to themselves, mindfulness and flourishing. In Study 2, they surveyed an additional 104 people from MTurk, again measuring mindfulness and self-connection. However, this time they operationalized well-being as satisfaction with life. Results revealed that mindfulness predicted self-connection and well-being in both studies. Self-connection also predicted well-being and partially mediated the relationship between mindfulness and well-being. These results suggest that mindfulness bolsters self-connection, which in turn increases people's well-being.

Zohreh Shahsavari Goghari et.al. (2022) examined 30 university students randomly divided into two groups: Control (n = 15) and experimental (n = 15). The experimental group received eight 90-minute MBCT sessions biweekly. The research tools included the Subjective Well-being Scale (SWS) and the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS-21). Results indicated that Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy significantly improved the posttest scores of subjective well-being subscales (emotional, psychological, and social well-being). Moreover, depression, anxiety, and stress decreased significantly in the experimental group. Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy effectively reduced psychological distress and improved subjective well-being in university students.

Juul et.al. (2021) a parallel randomized controlled trial (RCT) was conducted among self selected student teachers at a Danish undergraduate program. The effects were analyzed according to the intention-to-treat principle using mixed-effect linear regression models. Mediating effects of mindfulness skills on the mental health outcomes were explored using structural equation modeling. Results indicated that statistically significant effects of the intervention were found on perceived stress, symptoms of anxiety and depression, well-being, and on three of seven resting-state dimensions. No effects were found on resilience or mindfulness. Statistically significant mediated effects via resting-state dimensions were found.

Ma Y and Fang S (2019) investigated the relationship between adolescents' dispositional mindfulness and psychological symptoms of depression, anxiety and stress. Measures assessing mindfulness, emotion regulation, and psychological distress were administered to 1067 adolescents in mainland China. The results confirmed that adolescents' dispositional mindfulness was negatively associated with depression, anxiety, and stress. DERS, especially the sub-dimensions of Acceptance and Strategies,

significantly mediated the relationship between mindfulness and symptoms of depression, anxiety and stress. These findings provided insights for the potential underlying mechanism between adolescents' mindfulness and psychological distress, demonstrating that DERS might be more pervasive than ERQ. Further research was suggested to explore other mediating variables underlying mindfulness and psychological distress among adolescents and develop mindfulness-based programs to improve adolescents' mindfulness and emotion regulation ability.

Bhardwaj & Imran (2023) studied the impact of mindfulness on hope, resilience, and psychological wellbeing on 100 participants with the age ranging from 18-25 years. The results indicated that there is small, positive relationship between Mindfulness and Hope and negative relationship between Mindfulness and Resilience. There is moderate, positive relationship between Mindfulness and Psychological well-being. Findings revealed that only psychological well-being is influenced by mindfulness.

Nataraj & Reddy (2021) studied the relationship of mental health assets such as psychological well-being, and mindfulness to COVID-19 event related stress among teachers. Results indicate that there is moderate negative correlation between psychological well-being and impact of event, and between mindfulness and impact of event. Psychological well-being and mindfulness is positively correlated. This indicates that presence of positive mental health components can imply lower stress response during the pandemic.

Tang Y-Y (2019) study based on a series of randomized controlled trial (RCT) studies of one form of mindfulness training in adolescents and adults, the integrative body-mind training (IBMT). They used IBMT as an exemplar to provide research evidence of the positive effects of mindfulness training on psychological well-being. They focused on one of the mechanisms by which IBMT enhances psychological well-being—the interaction between mind (mindfulness) and body (bodiffulness)—which involves both the central nervous system (CNS) and the autonomic nervous system (ANS). They also highlight the role of brain self-control networks, including the anterior cingulate cortex/prefrontal cortex (ACC/PFC), in improving psychological well-being. Findings suggested that mindfulness training may be a promising program that promotes the synergistic engagement of mind and body to achieve the goals of enhancing psychological well-being.

Wang, Q. (2023) investigated the impact of mindful learning on subjective well-being (SWB) and psychological well-being (PWB) in postgraduate students, using survey questionnaires and a randomized experimental design. In Study 1, correlation and regression analyses based on 236 postgraduate students revealed significant positive associations among mindful learning, SWB, and PWB. In Study 2, 54 students were randomly assigned to three groups: the experimental (which received Mindful Learning Coaching), active-, and blank control groups. The results showed that coaching significantly improved students' mindful learning. The participants' SWB and PWB significantly decreased in both the active and blank control

groups, whilst their SWB and PWB tended to increase in the experimental group. In conclusion, mindful learning, SWB, and PWB are significantly correlated, while the enhancement of mindful learning may be a protective factor in students' well-being.

Crego et.al. (2020) investigate the relationship between mindfulness and meaning in life and to analyze how these variables are connected with life satisfaction, happiness, mental health and affect scores, regarded as outcome variables, after controlling for the effects of socio-demographic variables and religious attitudes ($N=1628$). A structural equation model revealed that compared to mindfulness, meaningfulness was more strongly associated with positive well-being (i.e., life satisfaction, happiness and positive affect). Mindfulness, however, had a stronger relationship with negative well-being (i.e., negative affect and mental health issues). Moreover, meaningfulness was found to mediate the relationship between mindfulness and both positive and negative well-being. These findings provide new insights for psychological interventions promoting well-being and enhancing mental health through mindfulness- and meaningfulness-based approaches.

3. Method

The nature of the study is exploratory, which is purely based on secondary data, which have been collected from various sources: such as books, journals, websites and other online database. Sample size is 15 articles, from the period of last seven years (2017-2024). The variables are Mindfulness, Mental Health and Psychological wellbeing.

4. Discussion

Finding purpose in life and incorporating mindfulness into our daily lives are important aspects of leading a fulfilling and healthy life. After reviewing the literature it is find out that mindfulness and psychological wellbeing are interlinked to each other and have a positive impact on psychological as well as mental health. Examination the effects of mindfulness on mental health and psychological well-being reveals significant benefits, supporting the findings of numerous studies in the fields of psychology and mental health. Mindfulness, a practice involving focused attention and present-moment awareness, has been shown to have profound effects in reducing symptoms of various mental disorders, improving overall psychological well-being, and promoting a more balanced and resilient state of mind.

After reviewing the findings of studies there is the consistent evidence of the effectiveness of mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) in reducing symptoms of anxiety, depression, and stress. Participants who engaged in mindfulness practices such as Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) and Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) showed greater reductions in symptoms of anxiety and depression compared to control groups. These interventions promote non-judgmental awareness of thoughts and feelings, helping patients break out of negative thinking patterns and reduce rumination, a common feature of anxiety and depression.

Furthermore, studies highlight the role of mindfulness in improving emotion regulation. By increasing awareness of one's own emotional responses and cultivating an attitude of acceptance, mindfulness exercises enable people to respond to emotional stimuli in a more adaptive way. This improvement in emotion regulation is important for reducing the adverse effects of stress and preventing the escalation of negative emotions. Moreover, mindfulness practice has been associated with increased activation in brain regions involved in emotion regulation, further supporting its positive effects on mental health.

The positive effects of mindfulness go beyond symptom reduction to encompass broader aspects of psychological well-being. People who regularly practice mindfulness report greater life satisfaction, increased self-compassion, and improved interpersonal relationships. Mindfulness promotes a deeper connection with the present moment, allowing individuals to enjoy positive experiences and cultivate gratitude. Increased awareness of the present moment leads to a more fulfilling and meaningful life.

Another key finding of the study is the potential of mindfulness to improve cognitive function. Mindfulness practice has been associated with improvements in attention, working memory, and executive function. These cognitive benefits are especially true in today's fast-paced, distracting environments, where the ability to maintain focus and cognitive flexibility is critical to personal and professional success.

Research also highlights the importance of integrating mindfulness into diverse environments, including clinical, educational, and professional settings. In clinical settings, mindfulness-based therapies serve as an effective adjunct to traditional treatments for mental health disorders. In educational settings, integrating mindfulness into the curriculum can promote students' emotional and cognitive development. In the workplace, mindfulness programs can reduce stress, increase job satisfaction, and improve overall productivity.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion we can say that mindfulness has significant and wide-ranging effects on mental health and psychological well-being. Practicing mindfulness provides a valuable tool for alleviating the symptoms of mental health disorders, improving emotional regulation, and supporting overall psychological well-being. As the body of evidence continues to expand, it is crucial for mental health professionals, educators, and policymakers to acknowledge the potential of mindfulness and integrate it into various interventions and programs. This way, we can utilize the transformative potential of mindfulness to cultivate a healthier, more resilient, and flourishing society.

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