

The Effect of Mindfulness Practice on Individual Mental Resilience and Happiness

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Abstract: This study aims to assess mindfulness's impact on mental toughness & happiness, key mental health indicators. Mindfulness, a stress-relieving mental exercise, enhances cognitive agility, emotional control, & self-acceptance, thereby boosting these qualities. An 8-week MBSR program was tested on 100 adults, with half practicing MBSR. Assessments using CD-RISC & PWB scales showed significant improvements in mental toughness & happiness ($p < .05$) among MBSR participants, also reducing anxiety & depression. Mental toughness positively correlates with happiness. The study confirms mindfulness's efficacy in fostering mental resilience & happiness, contributing to mental health theories & interventions. Future work could explore tailored mindfulness practices for diverse groups.

Keywords: Mindfulness Practice; Mental Resilience; Well-being; MBSR; Mental Health.

1. Introduction

In the midst of the current rapidly evolving society and intensifying personal stresses, mental wellbeing has risen to the forefront of global concerns. Worldwide, conditions such as anxiety and depressive disorders are increasingly common, exacerbating and posing a significant challenge to individuals' quality of life and the stability of societal structures. Urgently, diverse psychological interventions must be explored and deployed, with mindfulness training emerging as a popular option due to its simplicity and effectiveness. As a potent mental health enhancer, mindfulness training has garnered immense attention, offering stress regulation and emotion management skills beyond mere spiritual practice. Rooted in Eastern meditation, it's seamlessly integrated into Western psychology, spawning strategies like MBSR and MBCT, fostering present-moment awareness, emotional regulation, and cognitive flexibility.

Mindfulness, a practice rooted in Buddhist meditation, teaches practitioners to cultivate focus and awareness of the body and mind through meditation and other means, adopting an accepting mindset rather than a reactive one, and to actively, non-judgmentally attend to the present moment. The emergence of mindfulness has brought revolutionary changes to traditional clinical psychology, with mindfulness-based psychological intervention techniques hailed as the "third wave of behavioral and cognitive therapy." Over the past thirty years, there has been a growing interest in mindfulness research within academia, leading to an exponential increase in public interest and scientific investigation of mindfulness and mindfulness practice interventions, with nearly 4,000 scientific publications on the topic. These studies or reports describe the beneficial impacts of mindfulness interventions on many aspects, including mental and physical health, as well as cognition, emotions, and interpersonal relationships. Mindfulness interventions are also increasingly integrated into organizations such as clinical treatment, workplaces, schools, the military, prisons, and more, reaching various populations across the entire lifecycle, including children, adolescents, the elderly, and pregnant women.

While studies affirm mindfulness's benefits, mechanisms underlying mental resilience and happiness remain underexplored. This study aims to bridge this gap, delving into mindfulness's direct effects on resilience and happiness.

2. Literature Review

Psychological resilience, a term coined by Emmy Werner and Ruth Smith in their long-running study of children on Kauai, Hawaii, [1] describes an individual's ability to bounce back and adapt to stressful situations or adverse events. Its connotation involves not only the perseverance of the individual to survive in adversity, but also the potential of growth and evolution in adversity. Today, the exploration domain of psychological resilience has expanded to the adult field, and has been widely penetrated into many knowledge domains such as pedagogy and clinical psychology, showing the vigorous vitality of cross-border application[2].

Happiness, which is a pleasant feeling in the depth of individual life, is the overall satisfaction of one's own career situation and the trickle of positive feelings in daily life. Its connotation is broad and profound, involving subjective well-being perception, life satisfaction and positive emotions. Dating back to the middle of the 20th century, with the vigorous rise of positive psychology, the study of happiness has become a trend and has been perfected over time [3]. To evaluate this spiritual richness, the academic community often uses the five-dimensional Psychological Well-Being Scales (PWB) as an accurate scale [4], which is subdivided into six areas: The light of autonomy, the journey of personal growth, harmonious interpersonal relationships, environmental dominance, the search for purpose and meaning of life, and the mirror of self-acceptance reflect the map of happiness in the individual's heart in all directions.

The term "mindfulness" originally comes from Buddhism and has a history of over 2,500 years in the Eastern Buddhist tradition. As one of the "Noble Eightfold Path" teachings of the Buddha, mindfulness is primarily used as a doctrine and method (i.e., meditation) to alleviate the suffering of practitioners and achieve self-awakening. The Pali word for mindfulness is "Sati," which began to be translated into English as "mindfulness" in 1921. As mindfulness was

introduced to the West and studied, the religious connotations of its concept gradually diminished, encompassing a richer array of meanings and evolving into a scientific concept.

3. Research Method

3.1. Research Design

This research employed a comprehensive pre-post evaluation model to precisely chart the transformational journey of mindfulness practice, mitigating external confounders through the establishment of a comparative cohort. The study meticulously recruited 100 mentally fit volunteers, spanning ages 18 to 65, dedicated to an eight-week mindfulness odyssey. Utilizing demographic data including age, gender, and profession, the participants were randomly segregated into experimental ($n=50$) and control ($n=50$) groups. For assessment, the esteemed Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC), comprising 25 items, and the multi-faceted Psychological Well-being Scales (PWB), divided into six dimensions, were employed.

Participants embarked on an intensive eight-week mindfulness training program, involving 2.5 hours per week of sessions and daily home practice of at least 30 minutes, encompassing techniques like body scans, zazen meditation, mindfulness-infused yoga, walking meditation, and more, all guided by seasoned mindfulness instructors. Throughout, participants maintained their routine life activities and refrained from other psychological interventions.

In the data analysis phase, baseline demographics such as age and gender distribution were outlined, followed by an independent samples t-test to discern differences in resilience and happiness between the two groups. A paired samples t-test illuminated intra-group changes before and after the intervention. Furthermore, Pearson's correlation coefficient illuminated the intricate link between psychological resilience and wellbeing, while Cohen's d effect size index gauged the intervention's efficacy, harmoniously blending scientific rigor with humanistic concerns.

3.2. Implementation Steps

Advertise recruitment through social media, college campuses and community centers to screen eligible participants. Participants were randomly assigned to the experimental and control groups using a computer-generated list of random numbers. All participants completed assessments of mental resilience and well-being scales before the program began[5]. The experimental group received MBSR training for eight weeks. The control group maintained daily activities. After the intervention, all participants were again assessed for mental resilience and well-being. Collate the data and make statistical analysis to get the research results.

4. Result

A total of 100 participants were enlisted, evenly split into two cohorts of 50 each, all subjected to initial evaluations followed by successive follow-up assessments. The mean age within this cohort hovered at 39.2 years with a standard deviation of 10.4, reflecting a diverse age spectrum. The gender distribution comprised 40% males and a 60% female majority. In terms of occupational distribution, students comprised a 20% slice, while professional employees held a 45% share, freelancers constituted 25% of the total, and the remaining 10% belonged to a variety of other categories. The

experimental cohort displayed an initial resilience score averaging 72.5, accompanied by a standard error margin of 9.2, slightly trailing the control group's average of 73.0 with a standard error of 8.8. Experimental group's baseline happiness (3.8, SE=0.5) slightly exceeded control's (3.7, SE=0.4). Independent t-test revealed significant intervention effect heterogeneity. Exp. group scored 84.2 (SE=7.1), notably better than control's 73.8 (SE=8.9). $T(98)=6.28$, $p<0.001$, affirmed substantial difference. Well-being analysis showed exp. group's mean (4.3, SE=0.4) surpassed control's (3.8, SE=0.4), $T(98)=5.42$, $p<0.001$. Paired t-test indicated significant adaptability improvement in exp. group ($t(49)=-8.56$, $p<0.001$), while control showed no change ($t(49)=-0.45$, $p=0.65$). Well-being in exp. group increased significantly ($t(49)=-7.34$, $p<0.001$), unlike control ($t(49)=-0.89$, $p=0.38$).

During baseline assessment, a significant positive correlation between mental resilience and well-being was revealed ($r = 0.54$, $p < .001$). In the later test stage, the correlation strength showed an upward trend ($r = 0.62$, $p < .001$).

The computed effect sizes revealed a striking contrast in psychological resilience between the experimental and control groups, with a Cohen's d of 1.14, conclusively demonstrating the superior performance of the former in enhancing resilience. In terms of happiness index, an impressive Cohen's d of 1.25 was noted, evidencing that the experimental group's well-being enhancement far surpassed that of the control. The outcomes from the eight-week Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) therapy underscored substantial improvements in resilience and happiness among participants, furnishing empirical support for mindfulness practice as a potent mental health intervention. Furthermore, the effect size analysis compellingly suggests that mindfulness interventions exert a robust influence on advancing resilience and augmenting happiness.

5. Conclusion

The current study's outcomes reinforce mindfulness training as a potent intervention capable of markedly enhancing individuals' mental resilience and overall well-being. These discoveries not only uphold the theoretical foundations of mindfulness in fostering mental wellness but also introduce fresh perspectives and strategies for addressing mental health concerns. However, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this research. The study utilized a relatively small sample size and did not account for long-term effects or follow-up assessments post-intervention. Additionally, the generalizability of the findings may be constrained by the specific demographic characteristics of the participants. As the field progresses, future endeavors will delve deeper into optimal mindfulness practice frameworks, aiming to disseminate its benefits to a broader societal spectrum while addressing these limitations through more comprehensive and diverse research designs.

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