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Exploring the Role of Mindfulness in Managing Stress among Young Adults

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ABSTRACT

Young adults face many emotional, cognitive and behavioral issues. It is a critical period of growth. Mental health during this period is one of the most important determinants of mental health in adulthood. Mindfulness is a practice that can help people to manage stress, emotions, and mental health challenges, and live in the moment. Several studies have reported positive effects of mindfulness-based stress reduction intervention on psychological well-being. In 2020, 17.2% of population aged 18–25 experienced a major depressive episode in the past year. The present study was planned with the major objective. To find out the impact of stress on mindfulness and the difference between gender. For this study a total of 100 young adults aged 18-25 years old were selected. Delhi NCR were targeted as a population. The variables are distributed into two different genders 50 male and 60 female. The mindfulness research was conducted on School and college going adults. These results suggest that MBSR may be a useful adjunct treatment for young adults in mental health facilities. It was found by the above study that mindfulness practices positively reducing stress and enhancing psychological well-being among young adults.

Keywords: Mindfulness, Adulthood, Mental health, Cognitive, Psychological well-being

INTRODUCTION

Teenagers are subjected to intense stress in various domains, including academic problems or problems related to social relationships, body image and the onset of sexual intercourse, among others, which may lead to psychological disorders. World Health Organisation (WHO, 2001) reported that between 10% and 20% of adolescents suffer from mental health problems. Adolescence brings with it new changes in the psychological system, including thinking and planning for the future, evaluating alternatives, introspection, reasoning, abstract thinking, new levels of autonomy and assertiveness, and generally new cognitive and sexual abilities. In addition, adolescence lies in the context of unfavorable social conditions, including family and peer pressures, social and cultural norms, and complex demands of society and social groups, leading to prolonged adolescence and delayed adult tasks. During this period, several psychological and psychiatric problems may occur. In addition, factors such as violence, poverty, stigma and deprivation affect the psychological well-being of adolescents. Consequences of failing to address the mental health and psychological well-being of adolescents extend into adulthood and impair physical and mental health. Therefore, one of the important influential variables of adolescence is psychological well-being. According to the definition of the World Health Organization (2004), mental health or psychological well-being in terms of positive psychology is more than the absence of mental illness and is a state in which a person realizes his abilities, copes with life stresses and helps his community. Mindfulness-based interventions aimed at reduction of psychological symptoms of distress and enhancement of quality of life are increasingly applied and popular in various kinds of settings in both mental health care and somatic health care. These interventions are aiming at the cultivation of an open-minded and non-

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judgmental awareness of whatever is happening at each successive moment of perception. The objects of perception, which is direct and pre-reflexive, include the whole range of possible phenomena, from internal psychological states and processes (thoughts, feelings, images, etc.), proprioceptive information from the body, to external stimuli entering the senses. Phenomena are approached in an open, nonjudgmental and accepting way. Anxiety and depression as the most commonly mental disorders might induce many aspects of health problems such as affective, cognitive, neurovegetive symptoms and hypertension. Therefore, it is critical to understand the potential protective factors which might reduce adolescent's distress.

Mindfulness was defined as an experience that can bring attention to the present moment with non-judgmental attitude. It is also suggested that levels of dispositional mindfulness vary among individuals. Specifically, high levels of mindfulness are positively associated with a variety of aspects concerning well-being, such as positive emotions, life satisfaction and overall health; whereas low levels of mindfulness are associated with depression, anxiety, and stress.

Objectives of the study:

1. To examine the impact of stress on mindfulness levels among young adults.
   Analysis: Correlation Analysis (e.g., Pearson or Spearman correlation)
   To determine the strength and direction of the relationship between stress and mindfulness levels.
2. To assess the influence of stress on the overall well-being of young adults.
   Correlation Analysis: To measure the relationship between stress and well-being.
3. To analyze gender differences (male and female) in stress levels, mindfulness, and well-being.
   Independent Samples t-Test
   To compare the mean stress, mindfulness, or well-being scores between males and females.

Hypothesis:

- **(H1)**: Stress has a significant negative impact on mindfulness levels among young adults.
- **(H0)**: There is no significant impact of stress on mindfulness levels among young adults.
- **(H2)**: Stress has a significant negative impact on the overall well-being of young adults.
- **(H0)**: There is no significant impact of stress on the overall well-being of young adults.
- **(H3)**: There are significant differences between males and females in stress levels, mindfulness, and well-being.
- **(H0)**: There are no significant differences between males and females in stress levels, mindfulness, and well-being.

Rationale of the study:

Now-a-days young adults face significant stress due to academic pressures, career uncertainties, financial challenges, and social expectations. Mindfulness has been extensively researched and shown to reduce stress, improve emotional regulation, and enhance overall well-being. Mindfulness practices can help young adults stay focused, resilient, and adaptive in challenging environments.

Review of Literature:

Mindfulness is the basic human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we're doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what's going on around us. MBSR was originally designed for patients with chronic medical conditions to help reduce stress and improve their quality of life via focused attention, meditation, cognitive restructuring and adaptive learning techniques (Kabat-Zinn, 2013). Mindfulness, or intentionally paying attention to current experiences with an open and non-judging attitude, is described as both a skill and as a way of being (Bishop *et al.,* 2004). Psychological scientists have found that mindfulness influences two different stress pathways in the brain, changing brain structures and activity in regions associated with attention and emotion regulation. Scientists are also beginning to understand which elements of mindfulness are responsible for its beneficial effects. In a review of meditation studies, psychology researchers found strong evidence that people who received MBCT were less likely to react with negative thoughts or unhelpful emotional reactions in times of stress. They also found moderate evidence that people who participated in MBCT or MBSR were better able to focus on the present and less likely to worry and to think about a negative thought or experience over and over. Intervention research provides support for the hypothesis that increasing mindfulness can lead to health and performance benefits. Controlled studies show participants in mindfulness-based interventions

(MBIs) consistently report lower perceived stress following training (Colgan *et al.*, 2019). Mental health, executive functioning and social behaviors are known to be detrimentally affected by high stress (Cohen *et al.*, 2019), are also shown to consistently improve following mindfulness training (Gallant, 2016; Donald *et al.,* 2019). Further, beneficial training effects for resilience (Joyce *et al.*, 2018), cognitive functioning (Chiesa *et al.*, 2011) and work engagement (Dane and Brummel, 2014; Vonderlin *et al.*, 2020), indicate mindfulness may be a protective personal resource that can ameliorate the detrimental effects of stress and enhance health and performance. Studies have taken a variety of approaches, including cross-sectional and correlational, in design. Researchers have examined associations between mindfulness and various indicators of well-being in laboratory-based, experimental research examining the effects of brief mindfulness inductions (state mindfulness). In addition, other research has focused on mindfulness-based interventions and their effects on well-being (Grossman *et al.,* 2004; Hofmann *et al*., 2010). The researchers concluded that mindfulness-based therapy may be useful in altering affective and cognitive processes that underlie multiple clinical issues. Incorporating mindfulness practices in university/college curricula. Some scholars and practitioners have designed and conducted ongoing mindfulness training in the classroom across curricula to support an attentive, present centered, and non-reactive mental mode (Fung *et al*., 2019, Ramasubramanian, 2017; Warren and Deckert, 2019) or in specific curricula such as music (Bartos *et al.*, 2022) and chemistry (Vitha, 2022), as well as focused on the role of the Instructor (Schwind *et al.*, 2017). Mindfulness training is effective in reducing indicators of burnout, depression, anxiety, and stress and improving indicators of well-being, vigor, empathy, and stress-resilience among physicians, other health care professionals, and medical students.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a quantitative approach to investigate the role of mindfulness in managing stress among young adults. Survey were utilized as the primary method of data collection with structured questionnaires.

Variables:

Stress, Mindfulness, well-being, Male and Female, Age

Scales:

1. *Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)*: Measures perceived stress levels.
2. *Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS)*: Measures the level of mindfulness.
3. *WHO-5 Well-Being Index*: Assesses subjective well-being.

Data collection:

Data collection process was conducted by google form at galgotia university, targeting undergraduate and postgraduate students. A structured questionnaire was developed as the primary tool for data collection, leveraging Google forms to facilitate online distribution and accessibility**.**

Survey Distribution:

The questionnaire link was distributed via WhatsApp to students in various departments, including Arts, Social Sciences, Commerce, and Natural Sciences. A random sampling approach was used, encouraging participants to share the link with their peers to maximize reach.

Population:

For this study young adults of Delhi NCR were targeted as a population.

Sample:

100 young adults studying in school, colleges, in different courses were selected for the study (50 Males and 50 Females)

Data Analysis:

Once all responses were collected, the data was organized and analyses using Microsoft Excel.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the study, highlight key results regarding the impact of stress and well being on mindfulness among young adults.

Respondent's background:

A total of students participated in this study. The majority of the respondents were female students as shown Fig. 1.

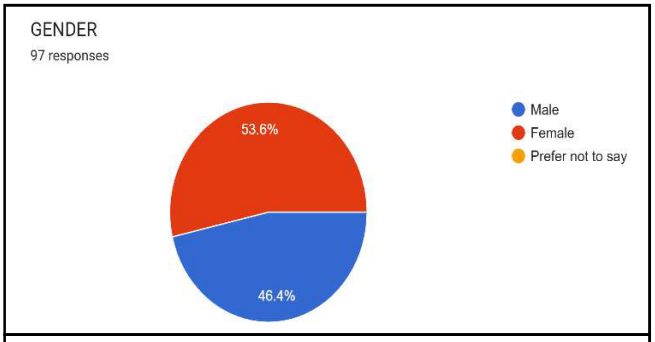
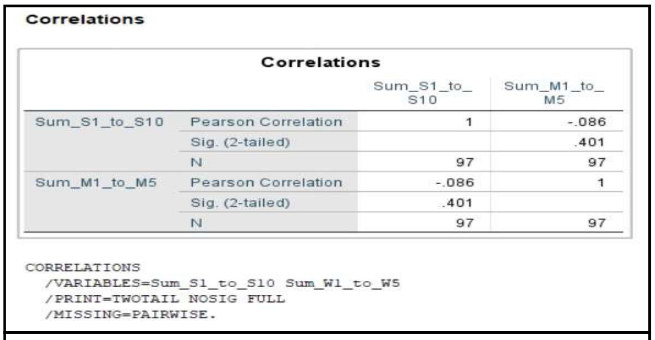


Fig. 1 : Shows the gender distribution



Correlations

		Sum_S1_to_S10	Sum_M1_to_M5
Sum_S1_to_S10	Pearson Correlation	1	-.086
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.401
	N	97	97
Sum_M1_to_M5	Pearson Correlation	-.086	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.401	
	N	97	97

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CORRELATIONS
  /VARIABLES=Sum_S1_to_S10 Sum_W1_to_W5
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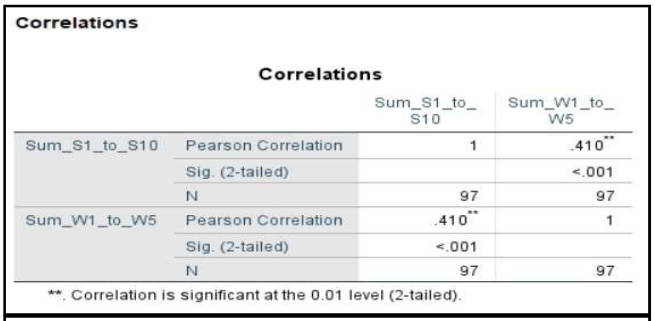
Fig. 2 : Result of Pearson correlation analysis between stress and mindfulness

Weak Correlation:

The Pearson correlation coefficient of -.086 indicates very weak negative relationship between stress and mindfulness. As we see one variable increase, the other shows tendency to decrease.



Correlations

		Sum_S1_to_S10	Sum_W1_to_W5
Sum_S1_to_S10	Pearson Correlation	1	.410**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	97	97
Sum_W1_to_W5	Pearson Correlation	.410**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	97	97

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Fig. 3 : Result of Pearson correlation analysis between stress and well being

No statistical Significance:

The two variables' association is not statistically significant, according to the p-value of 0.401.

Correlation Coefficient:

The Pearson correlation coefficient between stress and well being is .410. The two variables have a moderately positive association, according to this. When one variable's value rises, the other one usually does too.

Statistical Significance:

At less than .001, the significance value (sig.(2-tailed)) is significantly lower than the conventional cut off of 0.05. This indicates that there is a statistically significant link and that the relationship could not have happened by accident.

T-Test

Group Statistics

	GENDER	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Sum_S1_to_S10	Male	45	29.96	8.775	1.308
	Female	52	32.79	5.370	.745

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances: F	Sig.	t-test for Equality of Means: t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference: Lower	Upper
Sum_S1_to_S10	Equal variances assumed	5.082	.026	-1.946	95	.055	-2.833	1.456	-5.723	.058
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.882	70.732	.064	-2.833	1.505	-5.834	.169

Independent Samples Effect Sizes

		Standardizer[a]	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval: Lower	Upper
Sum_S1_to_S10	Cohen's d	7.151	-.396	-.798	.008
	Hedges' correction	7.209	-.393	-.792	.008
	Glass's delta	5.370	-.528	-.937	-.113

a. The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.
Cohen's d uses the pooled standard deviation.
Hedges' correction uses the pooled standard deviation, plus a correction factor.
Glass's delta uses the sample standard deviation of the control group.

Fig. 4 : Result of independent samples t-test

Group statistics:

Females have a higher mean score (32.79) than Males (29.96). Males also show greater variability compared to Females.

Independent sample Test:

The t-test's p-value, which is 0.064, is somewhat higher than the 0.05 alpha threshold. This shows that, at the 5% level, there is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the males and females. We are unable to rule out the null hypothesis. The scores of males and females do not differ much

Independent Samples Effect Sizes:

The difference between groups is small (Cohen's d 0.396). Glass's delta (-0.528), which uses the control group's standard deviation, indicates a slightly moderate effect size.

Table 1 : Pearson Correlation between Stress and Mindfulness

Variable Pair	Correlation (r)	Significance (p-value)
Stress and Mindfulness	0.086	0.401

There is a very weak negative correlation, according to correlation (r = -0.086). This indicates that stress tends

to go down, albeit very slightly, as mindfulness increases. Significance (p = 0.401). The p-value provides insight into the validity and potential merits of the hypothesis. The threshold, or level of 5% significance, is typically set at p = 0.05. In this instance, the means are not statistically significant because 0.401 > 0.05. Based on the available data, there is no statistically significant relationship between stress and mindfulness. Using the sample data, the previously shown negative correlation was insufficiently strong to confirm the existence of a relationship**.**

Limitations:

Focusing one's concentration on the experience of the current moment is known as mindful attention. In the fields of psychology and self-help, the concept of mindfulness has become very popular. This is understandable given that practicing mindfulness can help with a variety of personal issues as well as general wellbeing.

Conclusion:

The study finds a strong correlation between wellbeing and mindfulness. Although women often score higher than men, the effect sizes are still small and the difference is not statistically significant at the 5% level.

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