

**MINDFULNESS MEDITATION, ANXIETY AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-
BEING
AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS**



Dr. Kamala H

Associate Professor of Psychology,
Smt.V.H.D. Central Institute of Home Science, Bangalore

ABSTRACT:

College days are golden days in the life of a student. It is a period of sensitive development of youth and is influenced by both positive factors such as self confidence, identity, decision making, problem solving, self esteem etc. Development of anxiety, helplessness, conflict that demands different coping strategies to overcome the problems also occurs in this age. Mindfulness meditation is one of the positive ways of handling the unpleasant feelings of personality. An attempt is made in the present study to assess the role of mindfulness meditation as a means of reducing anxiety level and enhancing psychological well-being among college students.

In the present study 60 college girl students pursuing degree between the age of 18 and 21 years participated. A single group design with pre and post mindfulness meditation practice was followed to measure its effect on anxiety and psychological well-being. Applying appropriate statistical steps data collected was analyzed to test the hypothesis. Results showed a positive effect of meditation on anxiety and psychological well-being.

KEY WORDS: Mindfulness Meditation, Anxiety and Psychological well-being

Introduction

In the words of Robert Kennedy, “The world demands the qualities of youth: not a time of life but a state of mind, a temper of the will, quality of imagination, a predominance of courage over timidity, of the appetite for adventure over the life of ease”.

Definition of age depends of culture and time. To understand adolescents, it becomes important to pay attention to one's culture. Social construction plays a major role in this period. Societal members such as neighbors, peer groups and friends, gender, other relations shape the behaviour of an individual. These guide the development of psychological characteristics as self identity, self concept, self reliance and so on. This age also includes the development of identity crisis, anxiety, depression, conflict and confusion, lack of self confidence etc.

Meditation

Centuries ago meditation had its inception in Eastern part of the world thousands of years ago. It is considered as one of the relaxation techniques that include concentration based on selective attention on a sound, object or word. When practiced, it will result in relaxed muscle tone. Transcendental meditation is a contribution from India, the list also includes Chakra yoga, Mudra yoga etc. "Mantra" - a sound such as "OM" is the source of transcendental meditation that is repeated. Other mental tool that has been used in meditation includes *mandala*, *nadaa* and *pranayama*. Studies have shown that meditation can reduce stress, anxiety and tension by inducing the relaxation response.

Mindfulness Meditation:

Mindfulness is a representation of smriti which means to remember in sanskrit. Hann (1998) defines mindfulness as, "remembering to come back to the present moment". Mindfulness meditation increases self-awareness, concentration, emotion regulation skills. Studies suggests that mindfulness meditation benefits memory, attention and other multiple mental functions. Fox et al. (2014) found out from their meta analysis differences in memory, meta-awareness, emotional regulation, exteroceptive and interoceptive body awareness.

Anxiety:

Anxiety has been defined as a "state of arousal" caused by threat to the well-being (Spielberger 1960). "State" means a condition involving the entire organism. "Arousal" means a condition of tension, unrest or uneasiness or readiness to act and respond. "Threat" means anticipation of pain or danger or serious interference with goal seeking activities.

Anxiety manifests itself in three ways:

1. through a conscious state of discomfort and apprehension.
2. through visceral disturbances especially of digestive and circulatory systems.
3. through motor symptoms which includes restlessness, trembling, irritability and so on.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Sandhyarani Hawbam and Ishita Aggarwal conducted a study using pre and post test design, with an aim to assess the effect of mindfulness meditation on cognitive abilities such as working memory, shifting attention and executive functioning in 35 (control group =18 and experimental group=17) adolescents. 30 minutes intervention was given for 10 days consecutively to the experimental group that included mindfulness meditation along with relaxation exercises. Results showed that the short-term practice of mindfulness meditation can be used to enhance cognitive functions in adolescents.

Kim Rod (2015) conducted a study to observe the effects of mindfulness-based meditation on anxiety and depression in chronic pain patients using Hamilton Depression Rating Scale (HDRS), Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS) and Quality of Life Scale (QoLS). They practiced mindfulness meditation every three days a week for an hour. Patients' Global Impression of Change (PGIC) was used to evaluate pain. Results showed that after practicing meditation for a period of one year, noticeable improvement was seen in pain, anxiety, depression and global impression of change. This study proved the importance of mindfulness meditation in treating psychological problems.

Research by Istvan Schreiner and James Philip Malcolm (2008) investigated the effect of mindfulness meditation on the emotional states of depression, anxiety, and stress among 50 participants. Study also explored whether mindfulness training resulted in different severity of anxiety, depression and stress. Study included pre and post mindfulness meditation program for a period of 10 weeks. Tools included Depression Anxiety and Stress Scale, 21-item version (DASS-21). Results indicated that, emotional difficulties of participants showed a remarkable improvement after meditation.

Aim:

To assess the role of mindfulness meditation in reducing anxiety and enhancing psychological well-being among college students.

Objective:

1. To study the role of mindfulness meditation in reducing anxiety of college students.
2. To study the role of mindfulness meditation in enhancing psychological well-being of college students.

Hypothesis:

1. There will be no significant difference (pre and post) in anxiety among college students.
2. There will be no significant difference (pre and post) in psychological well-being among college students.
3. There will be a significant relationship between anxiety and psychological well-being among college students.

Variables:

Independent variable: Mindfulness Meditation

Dependent Variable: 1. Anxiety
2. Psychological well-being

Design: Single group design with pre and post practice was adopted.

Sample: Random purposive sample of 60 students between the ages of 18 to 21 years were involved in the present study from a women's college in Bengaluru.

Tools:

1. IPAT - Anxiety scale developed by Samuel E. Krug with Ivan H. Scheier and Raymond B. Cattell, This scale includes 40 items with a reliability of 0.82 and validity of 0.84. Higher the score on the scale, greater the anxiety as per the norms.

2. Psychological well-being Scale developed by Bhogle and Prakash(1995). This is a 28 item questionnaire to assess Psychological wellbeing and gives a quick measure of Psychological wellbeing for research purpose. The scale has Alpha coefficient of 0.84, split half coefficient of 0.91 and test retest coefficient of 0.72. The maximum possible score on PWB questionnaire is 28. As per norms, higher the score on the scale, greater the well-being.

Procedure:

After establishing rapport with the subject IPAT - Anxiety scale and Psychological well-being Scale was administered to the students. Though there is no time limit, the subjects were expected to work fast and give honest, frank and spontaneous response to each item. Once the data sheet was received they were scored and interpreted according to the scoring keys and norms. The scales were administered under pre and post meditation condition.

Students underwent meditation practice of one hour each for a period of thirty days. Students were also asked to practice meditation at home every day.

Statistical Analysis:

Quantitative measure such as mean, standard deviation and 't' test was applied & analyzed to find out the significance of difference between the pre and post sessions of mindfulness meditation. Correlation was applied to find out the relationship between anxiety and psychological well-being.

Ho₁. There will be no significant difference (pre and post) in anxiety among college students.

Table 1 indicating the scores on anxiety of 60 college students based on pre and post mindfulness meditation practice

Anxiety	Mean Difference	t	df	p
	20.72	54.97	119	0.00**

*** significant at 0.01 level*

The above table 1 shows the score which is significant at 0.01 (0.00**) level. This indicates the importance of meditation in one's life. As the earlier studies have shown a positive effect of mindfulness meditation in decreasing mental stress, tension and other psychological disturbances the present study is a small step that helps in understanding the positive role of mindfulness meditation in reducing anxiety among youth. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that there will be no significant difference in anxiety is retained.

Ho₂. There will be no significant difference (pre and post) in psychological well-being among college students.

Table 2 indicating the scores on psychological well-being of 60 college students based on pre and post mindfulness meditation practice

PWB	Mean Difference	t	df	p
	61.33	117.02	119	0.00**

*** significant at 0.01 level*

Mindfulness Meditation does help in maintaining a balanced psychological status. Table 2 shows a significant difference (0.00**) at 0.01 level in psychological well-being of students

under pre and post mindfulness meditation practice. Hence, the hypothesis “There will be no significant difference in psychological well-being among college students” is retained.

H₃. There will be a significant relationship between anxiety and psychological well-being among college students.

Table 3 indicating the relationship between anxiety and Psychological well-being among college students

Scales	PWB
Anxiety	-.331**

*** significant at 0.01 level*

Table 3 indicates the correlation between anxiety and psychological well-being (-.331**) among the college students. This indicates the negative relationship between the two. Because of which it can be said that better the psychological well-being of an individual lower will be anxiety. This is undoubtedly because of mindfulness meditation. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that “there will be a significant relationship between anxiety and psychological well-being among college students” is retained.

Limitations

1. Present study includes a small sample.
2. It is a single group method conducted on only girl students.
3. It is conducted only on urban sample.

Suggestions

1. Study should be conducted on a large sample.
2. Rural population should be included.
3. Demographic factors are to be considered.

Reference:

1. Istvan Schreiner and James Philip Malcolm (2008). The Benefits of Mindfulness Meditation: Changes in Emotional States of Depression, Anxiety, and Stress. Volume 25 , Issue 3 , 01 September 2008 , pp. 156 - 168. DOI:10.1375/bech.25.3.156. Copyright © Cambridge University Press 2008
2. Kim Rod (2015). Observing The Effects Of Mindfulness-Based Meditation On Anxiety And Depression In Chronic Pain Patients. *Psychiatria Danubina*, 2015; Vol. 27, Suppl. 1, pp 209–211 © Medicinska naklada - Zagreb, Croatia .
3. Wikipedia the free encyclopedia: A non-profit site for Educational Purposes