

Effectiveness of Mandala Art Therapy in Managing Rumination and Improving Mental Health among Women

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Mandala art has transcended its traditional boundaries and is now popular in various forms of art and designs, which further extends its importance in bringing an individual to calm and relaxed state. Investigating the influence of mandala art therapy on women's rumination and mental health was the primary goal of this study. Eighty-five women residing in Erode District underwent the process of completing the Informed Consent Form and Confidentiality Statement, as well as providing information through the Personal Profile Sheet, Brief State Rumination Inventory developed by Marchetti, Mor, Chiorri, & Koster and the Mental Health Screening Questionnaire constructed by Sharma & Devkota. Screening for the intervention was directed, and 52 out of the 85 participants were selected. Mandala art therapy, consisting of ten sessions, was provided to the 52 participants as a therapeutic intervention. After the intervention, the participants were re-assessed using the same set of questionnaires. The results of the study indicates the inverse relationship between rumination and mental health in women. Mandala art therapy was effective in reducing rumination and enhancing mental health in women.

Keywords: Rumination, mental health, art therapy

Mental health issues in India have a high prevalence, which affects individuals, families and society, which further leads to reduced quality of life and impaired functioning in social and economic costs. The process of rumination entails individuals persistently dwelling on their distressing thoughts, leading to adverse effects on mental health. Preservative cognition known as rumination revolves around harmful content from past and present experiences inducing emotional distress (Sansone, 2012). Rumination magnifies the negative mood and worsens negative thought processes that can increase vulnerability to depression. It represents a maladaptive cognitive strategy indicating that the individual is experiencing low mood. It is defined as a negative form of repetitive focus on the causes, meanings and consequences of negative mood and depressive symptoms. Rumination is one of the clinical features that can result in disorders like Post-traumatic

stress disorder, Depression, Obsessive compulsive disorder and General anxiety disorder. Rumination was found to be a predictor of depression (Schut & Boelen, 2017).

An individual who is more prone to ruminate can engage in other activities with their peers or engage in online to deviate from rumination (Kircaburun, 2019). Rumination focuses on one's attention to a negative emotional state, the meaning of those negative experiences and thinking about how an individual can change their situation in regard to the adverse events. Rumination is one of the coping mechanisms used by people to be in a negative mood through a passive focus on one's negative emotions (Deyo et al., 2009). Mental Health is being increased with art activities and has a positive effect on society, according to health professionals, patients and families

(Mollaoglu et al, 2022). Papazova and Karamanova (2019) studied rumination and mental health in emerging adulthood. They selected 202 subjects of age ranging from 17 years to 30 years to participate in this study. The tools used are Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood (IDEA), Rumination-Reflection Questionnaire, Rosenberg Global Self-esteem Scale, Short Depression Scale for Center for Epidemiological Studies and Revised Checklist for Assessment of Psychological Symptoms. The results revealed that rumination has significant effects on the mental health of the individual. Zawadzki (2015) found that there is an association between rumination and psychological health. The survey was conducted to assess emotion regulation strategies, health risk indicators, health outcomes and perceived chronic stress. The result findings indicated that rumination had a deleterious relationship with psychological health.

Mandala is the word describing the Sanskrit meaning of Circle or Centre. This circle represents the wholeness, unity, completion and eternity. The universal symbol of the circle indicates spiritual growth. Mandala helps the individual to focus inward and is considered as a sacred action. Carl Jung (1953) used mandala creation in therapeutic practices to symbolize the individuation of self and promote psychological healing. Mandala is believed to be a reflection of an individual's inner self. This is used for insight, healing and self-expression. Color is an integral part of the mandala because it helps people in expressing their innermost thoughts, feelings, intuitions and physical sensations. In color therapy, the mandala represents a symbol of healing. Coloring the symmetrical form of mandalas with repetitive patterns and complexity helps an individual to have a similar state of meditation. The meditative

state helps them to discover themselves even from their past experiences (Curry & Kasser, 2006). Mandala helps an individual by providing them with the needed stability to overcome their confusion in thoughts and concentrate on both conscious and unconscious selves (Ireland & Brekke, 1980). The brooding and reflection type of rumination scores predicted the depressive symptoms. Women are considered to be more ruminative (Alici & Hasanli, 2023). Mandala is an individual's active ingredient (Babouchkina & Robbins, 2015).

Mandala art could improve the psychological well-being of the individual by enhancing self-expression, self-concentration and self-healing ability. One of its aims is to focus on transferring feelings and perceptions through drawing and coloring. This helps the individual to express internal feelings, which are hard to express in front of others (Zang, Liu & Huang, 2024). Liu, Chen, Liu, Lin and Chiou (2020) found that the effectiveness of mandala art therapy in both cooperative and individual settings on subjective well-being. This study indicated the significant enhancement of the mental health of the participants. They also revealed that cooperative mandala drawing showed higher effectiveness than individual mandala drawing. Mandala drawing has been discovered to aid in bringing forth reality while impeding negative experiences (Wong, 2011). Thomsen et.al. (2004) identified the associations of rumination, immunity and healthcare utilization in a young and older adult. The results indicated that rumination is associated with health-related measures in the old age. The study concluded that negative thoughts are detrimental to health. The review studies highlight the need for further exploration into the effects of mandala art therapy on both the negative aspect of rumination and the positive aspect of mental health in individuals.

Objectives

- To examine the relationship between rumination and mental health among working and non-working women.
- To find out the effectiveness of mandala art therapy towards rumination and mental health among working and non-working women.
- To investigate the rumination and mental health differences between working and non-working women.

Hypotheses

- There will be a significant relationship between rumination and mental health among working and non-working women.
- There will be a significant difference between before and after phases of rumination among working and non-working women through mandala art therapy.
- There will be a significant difference between before and after phases of mental health among working and non-working women through mandala art therapy.
- There will be a significant difference in rumination and mental health between working and non-working women.

Method

The first phase consists of selecting the population. Initially, 85 women from the working and non-working categories of Erode district were selected as samples using the Stratified random sampling method. Informed Consent Form and Confidentiality Statement, as well as providing information through the Personal Profile Sheet, Brief State Rumination Inventory (Marchetti, Mor, Chiorri, & Koster, 2018), and the Mental

Health Screening Questionnaire (Sharma & Devkota, 2019) were administered to collect data. In the second phase, 52 women were selected after the screening. Mandala art therapy was given to the selected participants as a therapeutic intervention that consisted of ten sessions. The sessions incorporated various techniques by providing mandala art sheets including mandala coloring, tracing and freehand drawing and a combination of three. In the third phase, after the intervention, the participants were reassessed with the same set of questionnaires. The data collected was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences and the results were discussed.

Mandala Art therapy

Mandala art therapy will be given in a structured form, and it encourages the participants to express, reflect and heal through the creation of the mandalas. The sessions are carried out by ensuring the environment and space which is free from distractions and the requirements of the participants for mandalas. The concept of mandalas and its significance in different cultures and psychological practices have been explained. Furthermore, the benefits of creating mandalas like relaxation, self-awareness, emotional expressions have been discussed. Initially, participants are expected to set a personal intention to achieve through the process. The researcher instructed the participants with breathing exercises before starting a session to make them relax and center themselves. The sessions were carried out with the techniques like coloring the pre-drawn mandalas, tracing the mandala patterns, creating a mandala and finally combining creating and coloring the mandala.

Results

Table 1. Demographic data of the samples

Variables	Category	N	(%)
Type	Working	28	54
	Non-working	24	46
Locality	Rural	5	10
	Urban	47	90
Socioeconomic status	High	4	7
	Middle	43	83
	Low	5	10

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic data of the samples of the study. The sample from working category is about 54% and from non-working category 46%. 10% of samples are from rural backgrounds and 90% are from urban backgrounds. Nearly 83% of the samples belongs to middle socioeconomic status, 7% from high socioeconomic status and 10% from low socioeconomic status.

Table 3. Mean, Standard Deviation, t-value, Cohen's D value of Rumination among working and non-working women

Variable		Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean Difference	tvalue	Cohen's D
Rumination	Before Intervention	471.63	74.25			
	After Intervention	434.81	73.85	36.83	13.09**	0.50

**@ 0.01 level

Table 3 indicates the mean, standard deviation, t-value and Cohen's D value of rumination among working and non-working women. It clearly shows that the level of rumination decreases with mandala art therapy. It also helps people to handle their thoughts and get relieve from their negative

Table 2. Correlation between Rumination and Mental Health among working and non-working women

Variables		Rumin-ation	Mental Health
Rumination	Pearson Correlation Sig (2- tailed)	1	-0.37**
Mental Health	Pearson Correlation Sig (2- tailed)	-0.37**	1

** - Correlation is significant at 0.01 level

Table 2 shows a negative correlation between rumination and mental health which is statistically significant at 0.01 level. This indicates that people with high levels of rumination will have low mental health. It was found that rumination can lead to sleep disturbances, negatively impact physical health, disrupt thinking patterns and diminish individuals' mental health.

emotions. Reflecting on the participants creations helped them to heal and provide them a mental break from rumination by engaging themselves in promoting individuals to stay in present. The therapy stimulates cognitive shifts by helping them to come out of their rigid negative emotions and feel safe to express their thoughts.

Table 4. Mean, Standard Deviation, t-value, Cohen's D value of Mental Health among working and non-working women

Variable		Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean Difference	tvalue	Cohen's D
Mental Health	Before Intervention	4.35	1.33			
	After Intervention	2.98	1.16	1.37	12.42**	1.10

**@ 0.01 level

Table 4 indicates the mean, standard deviation, t-value, and Cohen's D value of mental health among working and non-working women. It shows that the level of mental health increases with the intervention of mandala art therapy with significant changes. Mandalas induce individuals to be in a meditative state, helping them to relax, which helps them to calm their body and mind. Creating a mandala with significant shapes and colors helps individuals process their emotions and thoughts and understand their feelings and behaviors.

Table 5. Level of Significance among Psychological Variables based on working status

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	t value
Rumination Working	505.36	77.48	4.03 **
Non-working	432.29	46.67	
Mental Health Working	4.07	1.30	1.64 N.S.
Non-working	4.67	1.31	

**@ 0.01 level; N. S. – Not Significant

Table 5 describes the significance level of rumination and mental health based on their working status. The t-value 4.03 indicates that there is a significant difference in the level of rumination based on their working status. Women who are working showed a high level of rumination compared to the women who are non-working. Working women may experience higher stress levels related to job responsibilities, deadlines, and career advancement. It is also found that there is no significant difference in the level of mental health based on the working status of the women. Working women may experience higher stress levels related to job responsibilities, deadlines, and career advancement, leading to more frequent and intense rumination about work-related issues. Mental health issues are prevalent in both groups and can be influenced by

individual circumstances and personal resilience.

Discussion

The study aims to understand the effectiveness of mandala art therapy on rumination and mental health among working and non-working women. Rumination is found to be present in every individual on different ratios and has more effect on their emotions, thinking patterns and difficulty in finding solutions to their problems. Coloring mandalas led to a notable reduction in anxiety levels and was found to be an effective intervention for those dealing with rumination and associated negative mood states (Curry & Kasser, 2005). A study (Henderson, Rosen & Mascaró, 2007) discovered that participating in mandala art creation was linked to enhanced psychological well-being and decreased stress symptoms. Mandala art therapy helped trauma survivors by alleviating anxiety and facilitating the integration of traumatic experiences (Holt & Kaiser, 2009). Cox and Cohen (2000) discovered that mandala art therapy significantly reduced symptoms of stress and anxiety while improving the mental health of the participants. Carlson and Wilson (2009) discussed the historical context of mandalas in therapy and found that mandalas help in enhancing mindfulness and supporting emotional expressions. Mandala has a constructive effect on the well-being and spirituality of the people. It is evident that the mandala creates a constructive way of handling thoughts and emotions, produces a relaxed state of mind by normal sleeping, and promotes the overall health of the people.

Limitations

The study was conducted in a single geographical area and included only female participants. A total of 52 participants were involved, though a more significant number

could have been included. The study lacks control groups or follow-up sessions.

Suggestions for further research

The study policy can be formulated by bringing back art and education as an important scheme. Periodical training programs can be planned to conduct art therapies or related activities. The therapeutic effect on gender differences can be studied.

Conclusion

Based on the findings from the appropriate statistics, it is inferred that rumination is negatively correlated with mental health among women. In addition, mandala art therapy has also proven effective in reducing rumination for working and non-working women. Mandala art therapy enhanced the mental health outcomes by engaging them in expressive art therapeutic techniques. It was also found that there existed a difference in rumination between working and non-working women. Furthermore, mandala coloring and creations help improve the cognitive processes and awareness of their coping styles.

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