© Journal of the Indian Academy of Applied Psychology
September 2024, Special Issue, 213-220

The Association of Dispositional Mindfulness and Self Esteem: Meditators and non-Meditators among Young Adults

Pranaw Chhetri, and Jyotika Sharma,
Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology, Sikkim

The aim of the current study was to find the association between Dispositional Mindfulness and Self-esteem in a sample of meditators and non-meditators of Sikkim. The sample consisted of a total of 70 young adult population who belonged to the age group of 18 to 40 years of age. The mean age is 27.73 years (minimum = 20, maximum = 37) with SD of 5.16. In the gender category 42.8% (N = 30) were females and 57.2% (N = 40) were males. In terms of meditators/non meditators category 50% (N = 35) were meditators and 50% (N = 35) were non-meditators. Pearson correlation found a significant positive correlation between Dispositional Mindfulness and Self-esteem, r = .65, p < .001. In the subscales of Dispositional mindfulness, Describing (r = .69, p < .001), Acting with Awareness (r = .53, p < .001) and Non-judging of inner experiences (r = .27, p < .001) have revealed a significant positive relationship with Self-esteem. Regression analysis reported significant values with R^2 value of .424 signifying 42.4% of the variance in the outcome variable i.e. Self-esteem with F (1, 68) = 49.96, p<0.001. Further, stepwise regression analysis also reported significant two step model. Step 1 revealed R^2value of .47 reporting Describing Subscale which explained 47% of the variance in Self-esteem with F (1, 68) = 59.42, p < .001. Step 2 of the model revealed the R^2value of .57 reporting Describing and Acting with Awareness which explained 57% of the variance in Self-esteem with F (2. 67) = 44.83, p < .001. Lastly, independent samples t-test have revealed that the meditators have reported higher levels of Dispositional Mindfulness with $t(68) = 5.95$, $p < .001$ and Self-esteem with $t(68) = 3.24$, $p < .0l$ as compared to non-meditators.

Keywords*:* Young-adult, Dispositional Mindfulness, Self-esteem, Meditators, Non-meditators

Adulthood is a stage of human development that occurs after the stage of adolescence. It incorporates major life changes like separation from parents, finding a career, getting married, having children, loosing loved ones etc. Psychological characteristics of adults are inclusive of formulating answers to questions about oneself as a person and also as a member of society. It incorporates of developing the ability to make choices about personal values and also about one's place in the world. It makes one gain experience through participation in different types of situations, make contacts with other people, and also to their own internal experiences that affect the formation of identity and self-esteem. Adults are over whelmed by challenges to improve one's personal and professional qualifications (Klimczuk, 2016). Amongst all these changes the need for maintaining a positive mental health is of dire need for individuals. Studies done on community adults have shown that the psychological trait of 'dispositional mindfulness' plays a major role in keeping a healthy state of mind. Studies have shown that mindfulness has been associated with higher self-esteem (Brown & Ryan, 2003).

The theory of Mindfulness states that mindfulness can be both a capacity of

individuals as well as a trainable ability (Kabat-Zinn, 1994). In this paper we shall try to study mindfulness as capacity by associating it with self-esteem. Mindfulness is an individual's tendency that encompasses 'self-regulation of attention' which refers to non-elaborative awareness of sensations, thoughts, or feelings from moment to moment (Bishop et al., 2004). Studies have shown that individuals who have practiced regular mindfulness training and meditation practices have higher levels of dispositional mindfulness (Baer et al., 2006).

Dispositional Mindfulness and Self-esteem

Mindfulness usually takes effect through re-perceiving i.e. a shift in perspective that enables individuals to contemplate their daily experiences without becoming completely immersed in them (Shapiro et al., 2006). Individuals who are high in dispositional mindfulness report to be less consumed by the thoughts and emotions that characterize low self-esteem thus allowing them to be less consumed by harsh, critical, and judgmental thoughts that relate to the self (Baer et al., 2006).

Thompson et al. (2008) on examining the relationship between mindfulness, self-esteem and unconditional self-acceptance found that there was a bivariate positive correlation between the three. Denny et al. (2009) has reported from his study that mindfulness has a strong positive correlation with locus of control, restraint, self-esteem and denial of distress. Mindfulness was negatively correlated to distress. Randall et al. (2015) has reported the association between dispositional mindfulness and self-esteem. Increase in self-esteem was noticed when exposed to Mindfulness based Interventions.

Rasmussen et al. (2011) in his study of adult undergraduate students found that the dispositional mindfulness significantly predicted high levels of self-esteem and low levels of social anxiety. Pepping et al. (2013) did a study on adult undergraduate students which reported that individuals high on four facets of mindfulness (non-reactivity, awareness, labeling, and non-judging of experience) were higher in self-esteem. Dutt et al. (2019) has also reported that are significant positive correlation between mindfulness and self-esteem. Mindfulness was found to have direct beneficial effects on self-esteem. It was also reported in the study that experimental mindfulness induction could successfully enhance both state-mindfulness and self-esteem.

Mohammed Hasan et al. (2021) in a cross-cultural study of college students of China, Indonesia and Yemen reported that dispositional mindfulness is positively associated with self-esteem and subjective well-being. Awad et al. (2022) reported in his study that higher self-esteem is significantly associated with more mindfulness. Chandna et al. (2022) reported in his study that there is a moderate significant relationship between all dimensions of mindfulness and self-esteem. The dimensions of mindfulness were also found to be a significant predictor for self-esteem -with 51% model fitness.

Hypothesis

The current study hypothesizes that there will be a positive association between Dispositional Mindfulness and Self-esteem in young adults of Sikkim. Dispositional Mindfulness can significantly predict Self-esteem in Young Adults of Sikkim. Moreover, levels of mindfulness will be significantly higher in meditators than non-meditators.

Method

Research Design

A quantitative research design was used in order to explore the various objectives of the study. The association between Dispositional Mindfulness and Self-esteem

was assessed using correlation design. Further, between-group design was used to compare the levels of variables in between group of meditators and non-meditators.

Participants

The sample of participants consists of 70 young adults with age ranging from 20 to 40 years. Out of the sample there are 30 males and 20 females. In terms of meditation practice 35 are meditators and 35 are non-meditators. The sample has been collected from Sikkim through means of Google forms. Purposive Convenience Sampling method has been used to collect the data.

Measures

The Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire or FFMQ-15 (Baer et al., 2008): It is a 15 question self-report scale that measures mindfulness with regards to thoughts, experiences, and actions in daily life. The items are to be answered in a 5 point likert scale with 1 being 'never or very rarely true' to 5 being 'very often or always true'. The five facets scales of the FFMQ demonstrated adequate to good internal consistency, with alpha coefficients ranging from .75 to .91. There are 5 subscales inclusive of this questionnaire: Observation, Description, Acting with Awareness, Non-judgemental and Non-reactivity.

Rosenberg Self –Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) : It is a 10 item scale that measures global self-worth by measuring positive and negative feelings about the self. The scale is uni-dimensional where all items are responded using the 4 – point likert scale format that ranges from strongly agree, agree, disagree to strongly disagree. The test-retest reliability correlations range from.82 to .88. The Cronbach's alpha ranges from .77 to .88 (internal consistency).

Procedure

Data was collected using Google forms. The survey was divided into various sections inclusive of 1) Study Description 2) Informed Consent 3) Demographic datasheet with choices asking for age, gender, meditation practice etc 4) Standardized tools of Mindfulness and Self-esteem. Use of purposive convenience sampling was done in order to collect the data. Data was collected from equal number of meditators and non-meditators which belonged to young adult category which includes ages between 20 to 40 years.

Results

Data has been analyzed for 70 participants wherein mean age was found to be 27.73 years (minimum = 20, maximum = 37) with SD of 5.16. In the gender category 42.8% (N = 30) were females and 57.2% (N = 40) were males. In terms of meditators/non meditators category 50% (N = 35) were meditators and 50% (N = 35) were non-meditators. In the test for normality, the skewness was reported to be 0.33 with standard error of 0.287. The kurtosis was reported to be 0.608 with standard error of 0.566. For Self-esteem, the skewness was reported to be 0.285 with standard error of 0.287. The kurtosis was reported to be -0.164 with standard error of 0.566. Finally, Age was put for test of normality and it was found to be normally distributed by Shapiro-Wilk test reporting significant values, W (70) = 0.930 with p=0.001 level.

Table 1 represents the correlation matrix and descriptive statistics for the study variables. A significant positive correlation has been revealed between Dispositional Mindfulness and Self-esteem, $r = .65$, $p < .001$. In the subscales of Dispositional mindfulness, Describing ($r = .69$, $p < .001$), Acting with Awareness ($r = .53$, $p < .001$) and Non-judging of inner experiences ($r = .27$, $p < .001$) have revealed a significant positive relationship with Self-esteem. As for the subscales; Observing and Non-reactivity to inner experiences have reported insignificant values.

Table 2 shows the impact of Dispositional Mindfulness on Self-esteem in young Sikkimese adults. The R^2 value of .424 revealed that 42.4% of the variance in the outcome variable i.e. Self-esteem with F (1, 68) = 49.96, p<0.001. The findings revealed that Dispositional Mindfulness positively predicted Self-esteem (â = .65, p < .001).

Table 3 shows the impact of the subscales of Dispositional Mindfulness on Self-esteem in young adults of Sikkim. In Step 1, the R^2 value of .47 revealed that Describing Subscale explained 47% of the variance in Self-esteem with F (1, 68) = 59.42, p < .001. The findings revealed that Describing subscale significantly predicts Self-esteem (â = .68, p < .001). In Step 2, the R^2 value of .57 revealed that Describing and Acting with Awareness predicted 57% of the variance in Self-esteem with F (2. 67) = 44.83, p < .001. The findings revealed that Describing (â = .57, p < .001) and Acting with Awareness (â = .34, p < .001) positively predicted Self-esteem. The ÄR^2 value of .11 revealed 11% chance in the variance of model 1 ad model 2 with F (1, 67) = 16.60, p < .001. In Step 1, the excluded variables were Observing, Acting with Awareness, Non-judging of inner experiences and Non reactivity to inner experiences. In Step 2, the excluded variables were Observing, Non-judging of inner experiences and Non reactivity to inner experiences.

Table 4 revealed significant mean differences on Dispositional Mindfulness with *t*(68) = 5.95, *p*< .001. Findings show that Meditators exhibited higher scores on Dispositional Mindfulness (*M* = 132.31, *SD* = 12.23) compared to Non-meditators (*M* =115.51, *SD* = 11.37). The value of Cohen's *d* was 1.42 (> 0.8) which indicate a large effect size.

Table 4 also revealed significant mean differences on Self-esteem with *t*(68) = 3.24, *p*< .01. Findings show that Meditators exhibited higher scores on Self-esteem (*M* = 20.66, *SD* = 4.55) compared to Non-meditators (*M* =17.43, *SD* = 3.75). The value of Cohen's *d* was 0.77 (> 0.5 and <o.8) which indicate a medium effect size.

Discussion

The purpose of this study has been covered up in two phases. Firstly, the study was designed to find the relationship between Dispositional Mindfulness between and Self-esteem in a sample of young adult meditators and non-meditators from Sikkim. Secondly, the study also explored whether there were significant differences between levels of Dispositional Mindfulness and Self-esteem between meditators and non-meditators.On exploring the relationship between Dispositional Mindfulness and Self-esteem it was found that there lies a significant positive correlation between the two. Past studies have reported that Dispositional Mindfulness have been associated with higher levels of Self-esteem. They both exert a bivarate relationship thus having a significant positive association with each other (Thompson et al., 2008; Denny et al., 2009).

Among the various subscales of Dispositional Mindfulness, it was found that Describing, Acting with Awareness and Non-judging of inner experiences have a significant positive correlation with Self-esteem. Studies have supported that Describing, Acting with Awareness and Non-judging have been significantly correlated in the previous studies (Pepping et al., 2013; Chandna et al., 2022). Studies have reported people with people with higher dispositional mindfulness have lesser problems with having lower self-esteem as they are less consumed by harsh, critical, and judgmental thoughts (Baer et al., 2006). No significant association was derived with subscales of Observing and Non-reactivity to inner experiences.

Subsequently, on investigating the predictive capability of dispositional mindfulness towards self-esteem, regression analysis provided evidence of a strong capability of the same. Overall, dispositional mindfulness was found to predict 42.6% of the variance in Self-esteem. In order to check the same for various subscales step-wise regression analysis was used which revealed a two-step model. The first step of the model contained describing to be as the significant predictor providing a model reporting 47% variance. Further, second step of the model was inclusive of describing and acting with awareness which provided a 57 percent variance. Past studies have reported that dispositional mindfulness has a strong tendency to predict higher self-esteem in adult population (Rasmussen et al., 2011). Studies have also reported similar studies using hierarchical and step-wise regression analysis with significant models reporting predictive capacities (Hinterman et al., 2012; Chandna et al., 2022). Further, the current study reported that meditators as compared to non-meditators have had higher levels of dispositional mindfulness and self-esteem. Previous studies have reported that regular mindfulness training and meditation practices have higher levels of dispositional mindfulness (Baer et al., 2006). Successful mindfulness induction trainings like meditations can enhance both mindfulness and self-esteem (Dutt et al., 2019). Mindfulness theories have reported that mindfulness is a trait that can be cultivated with training (Kabat-Zinn, 1994).

Conclusion

Positive psychology is a relatively new field where a finding about certain possibilities that may enhance mental health in individuals is greatly valued. Studies like the present one may provide an encouragement to the young adults to engage in practices that may motivate people to engage in positive practices like meditation. Since the study includes an equal number of meditators and non-meditators, the differences can be highlighted more clearly. Sikkim has been frequently seen to have cases relating to adult depression and suicide, so studies like this can encourage various policy makers and both governmental bodies and non-governmental bodies to promote meditation workshops across the state so that it can be beneficial to the young adult population. Young adults are the population who face troubles like unemployment and life transitions like marriage, having a child, losing a parent etc. Keeping in mind the current societal situation, studies promoting positive psychological practices can be highly beneficial.

Mindfulness is a relatively new topic for the Sikkimese landscape. Although studies had been done to check mindfulness in various populations, similar studies have seldom been validated in the Sikkimese population. Moreover, taking equal sample of meditators and non-meditators significant differences between levels of Dispositional Mindfulness and Self-esteem were found to hold true in the Sikkimese population as well. Sikkim also holds a large number of drug abuse cases where rehabilitation programs like mindfulness training, meditations etc can boost the self-esteem of these effected individuals and motivate them towards leaning into healthy mental health habits, Since the study has shown that Mindfulness and Self-esteem are closely related via correlation and regression studies, this information may help promotions of mindfulness techniques to uplift the self-esteem of people who are in depression and anxiety related issues. Mindfulness has been reported to increase the individual's tolerance towards negative self-evaluation and various life's unfortunate circumstance and failures.

Table1. Descriptive and Correlation statistics of Study Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Dispositional Mindfulness	1						
2. Observing	.399**	1					
3. Describing	.764**	.239**	1				
4. Acting with Awareness	.657**	-.061	.318**	1			
5. Non-judging of inner experiences	.381**	-.485**	.188	.428**	1		
6. Non-reactivity to inner experiences	.596**	.588*	.372**	.058	-.176	1	
7. Self-esteem	.651**	.087	.683**	.526**	.270**	.207	1
Mean	123.91	25.71	26.27	27.04	23.73	20.91	19.04
SD	14.457	4.93	5.43	5.49	5.34	4.48	4.45

*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01

Table 2. Regression Coefficients of Dispositional Mindfulness over Self-esteem.

Variable	*B*	*β*	*SE*
Constant	-5.765		3.53
Dispositional Mindfulness	.20***	.651	.03
R^2	.424		

Note: N = 70; *** p<0.001

Table 3. Stepwise Regression using 5 subscales of Dispositional Mindfulness to predict Self-esteem

	Meditators		Non-Meditators		*t*		Cohen's
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	(68)	*p*	*d*
Dispositional Mindfulness	132.31	12.23	115.51	11.37	5.95	.000***	1.42
Self Esteem	20.66	4.55	17.43	3.75	3.24	.002**	0.77

Table 4. Mean Comparison of Meditators and Non-meditators on Dispositional Mindfulness and Self-esteem

Variable	*B*	95% CI		SE *B*	*β*	R^2	ΔR^2
		LL	UL				
Step 1						.47	.47***
Constant	4.34*	.45	8.22	1.94			
Describing	.560***	.415	.705	.07	.683***		
Step 2						.57	.11***
Constant	-.83	-5.16	3.49	2.17			
Describing	.470***	.33	.61	.07	.574***		
Acting with Awareness	.278***	.14	.41	.07	.343***		

Note: CI = Confidence Interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit. *p < .05; ***p < .001

References

Awad, E., Hallit, S., & Obeid, S. (2022). Does self-esteem mediate the association between perfectionism and mindfulness among Lebanese university students?. *BMC psychology*, *10*(1), 256. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-022-00964-9

Baer, R. A., Smith, G. T., Hopkins, J., Krietemeyer, J., & Toney, L. (2006). Using self-report assessment methods to explore facets of mindfulness. *Assessment*, *13*(1), 27–45. https://doi.org/10.1177/1073191105283504

Baer, R. A., Smith, G. T., Lykins, E., Button, D., Krietemeyer, J., Sauer, S., Walsh, E., Duggan, D., & Williams, J. M. (2008). Construct validity of the five facet mindfulness questionnaire in meditating and nonmeditating samples. *Assessment*, *15*(3), 329–342. https://doi.org/10.1177/1073191107313003

Bishop, S. R., Lau, M., Shapiro, S., Carlson, L., Anderson, N. D., Carmody, J., Segal, Z. V., Abbey, S., Speca, M., Velting, D., & Devins, G. (2004). Mindfulness: A proposed operational definition. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice, 11*(3), 230–241. https://doi.org/10.1093/clipsy.bph077

Brown, K. W., & Ryan, R. M. (2003). The benefits of being present: Mindfulness and its role in psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 84*(4), 822–848. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.84.4.822

Chandna, S., Sharma, P., & Moosath, H. (2022). The Mindful Self: Exploring Mindfulness in Relation with Self-esteem and Self-efficacy in Indian Population. *Psychological studies*, *67*(2), 261–272. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12646-021-00636-5

Denny, K. G., & Steiner, H. (2009). External and internal factors influencing happiness in elite collegiate athletes. *Child psychiatry and human development*, *40*(1), 55–72. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10578-008-0111-z

Dutt, Rekha., S.V.R., Kampali., &Kumar, Naga Pavan. (2019). Association between Mindfulness and Self-esteem among the medical students of NRI Institute of Medical Sciences, Sangivalasa. *IOSR Journals*. https://doi.org/10.9790/0853-1812050105

Hinterman, Corina & Burns, Lawrence & Hopwood, Danielle & Rogers, William. (2012). Mindfulness: Seeking a More Perfect Approach to Coping with Life's Challenges. *Mindfulness*. 3. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-012-0091-8

Kabat-Zinn, J. (1994). *Wherever you go, there you are: Mindfulness meditation in everyday life.* New York: Hyperion

Klimczuk, A. (2016). Adulthood. In H. L. Miller (Ed.), *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Theory in Psychology* (pp. 15-18). SAGE Publications https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781483346274

Mohammed Hasan Ali Al-Abyadh, Aamer Aldbyani, Atta Ullah. (2021). Dispositional Mindfulness, Self-esteem, Subjective Well-being, and Mental Health: Cross-culture study. *Pakistan Journal of Educational Research*, *4*(4). https://doi.org/10.52337/pjer.v4i4.334

Pepping, C. A., O'Donovan, A., & Davis, P. J. (2013). The positive effects of mindfulness on self-esteem. *The Journal of Positive Psychology, 8*(5), 376–386. https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2013.807353

Randal, C., Pratt, D. & Bucci, S. (2015). Mindfulness and Self-esteem: A Systematic Review. *Mindfulness* **6**, 1366–1378. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-015-0407-6

Rasmussen, M. K., & Pidgeon, A. M. (2011). The direct and indirect benefits of dispositional mindfulness on self-esteem and social anxiety. *Anxiety, stress, and coping*, *24*(2), 227–233. https://doi.org/10.1080/10615806.2010.515681

Rosenberg, M. (1965). *Society and the adolescent self-image*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Shapiro, S. L., Carlson, L. E., Astin, J. A., & Freedman, B. (2006). Mechanisms of mindfulness. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 62, 373–386.

Thompson, B. L., & Waltz, J. A. (2008). Mindfulness, self-esteem, and unconditional self-acceptance. *Journal of Rational-Emotive & Cognitive-Behavior Therapy, 26*(2), 119–126. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10942-007-0059-0

Pranaw Chhetri, Assistant Professor, Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology, Majhitar, Sikkim, India. 737136 (pranawd6@gmail.com/pranaw.c@smit.smu.edu.in)

Jyotika Sharma, PhD., Head of Department Clinical Psychology, Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology, Majhitar, Sikkim, India. 737136. (jyotika.sharma@smu.edu.in)