

The Effectiveness of Mindfulness Training on Psychological Well-being and Academic Engagement for Students with Low Academic Achievement

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Extended Abstract

Aim

Academic achievement in law is one of the most difficult problems with educational, social, and cultural dimensions. Consequently, it can result in repeated failure among students, despite their qualifications to attain success. Academic success will be accelerated by school-based psychological interventions aimed at improving the mental health of students. Mindfulness as an evidence-based training enables individuals to experience greater flexibility via meditation methods. This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of mindfulness training on psychological well-being and academic engagement among Tehran, Iran, high school female pupils with low academic achievement.

Methodology

It was a quasi-experimental study with pre- and post-tests, a control group, and a follow-up design. This research recruited female students in the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades (mean age: 15.76 years; average GPA: 14.17) from a single school in the 14th district of Tehran. Students with a GPA below 15 were assessed and randomly assigned to one of two groups: experimental (n=15) or control (n=15). The experimental and control groups were statistically equivalent for homogeneity. Regarding parents' education, family income status (income less than expenses, income equal to expenses, and income greater than expenses), and residence status (homeowner and renter), a survey was administered. The experimental group received mindfulness training, while the control group did not. The purpose and methodology of the investigation were communicated to all participants. Before proceeding, we obtained confirmed consents. Each student agreed to participate in the investigation. Each 60-minute meditation class was offered once per week for eight weeks. Notably, the first five sessions were conducted in-person, but due to the spread of the Corona virus, the school was closed and the remaining three sessions were held virtually using Zoom. Prior to the start of courses, pre-tests were administered; post-tests were completed on the last day of courses; and follow-up was conducted for two months after the conclusion of training. Both groups were given questionnaires measuring their psychological health and academic engagement. The mindfulness training involved increasing students' awareness of the present moment with openness, acceptance, and without judgment (e.g., breathing mindfulness, body sensation mindfulness, and listening mindfulness). The study variables and general characteristics were described using frequencies and percentages. Analysis of variance with repeated measures was used to evaluate the differences in pre-test, post-test, and follow-up changes in variables between the experimental and control groups. SPSS-24 was utilized for all data collection.

Findings

The multivariate normality assumption was examined using the Shapiro-Wilk test ($p \geq 0.05$ for both groups), and the homogeneity of the covariance matrices for each group was examined using the box's M test. The analysis of the data revealed an increase in psychological well-being and academic engagement from pre-test levels. There is interaction (group*time) between psychological well-being and academic engagement, as well as a statistically significant difference between groups. Using a Bonferroni post hoc test, this difference was also significant in the post-test and follow-up. Mindfulness training was found to be effective in improving psychological well-being and academic engagement.

Conclusion

It appears that mindfulness interventions have the potential to make students more focused, to help them regulate their emotions and become more flexible, and to improve their conscious control over their thoughts, feelings, and actions. Therefore, educational institutions must implement mindfulness training in order to promote students' mental health and academic engagement.

Keywords: Academic Achievement, Academic Engagement, Mindfulness Training, Psychological Well-being, Students.