Research Guru
Online Journal of Multidisciplinary Subjects (ISSN : 2349-266X)
Volume-18, Issue-4, March-2025
www.researchguru.net

A Comparative Study of Mindfulness between Meditators and Non-meditators

Aakanksha
Research Scholar Department of Psychology, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, 221005, Uttar Pradesh, India

Virendra Byadwal
Assistant Professor Department of Psychology, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, 221005, Uttar Pradesh, India

Abstract

These days, mindfulness and meditation are becoming popular as potential treatments for a number of illnesses. Apart from any therapeutic benefits, it has been widely advised that meditation can lower stress levels and enhance relationships and performance at work and at home. The role of Vipassana meditation on mindfulness has yet to be explored. Accordingly, the purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of Vipassana meditation on the facets of mindfulness. Subjects were selected using a random sampling method, resulting in a total of 100 non-meditators (40 male and 60 female) and 100 meditators (40 male and 60 female) who completed validated measures of mindfulness. Results demonstrated that participants of meditator group as compared to non-meditator group manifested significantly higher mindfulness in terms of Describing, Nonreactivity to inner experiences, Acting with awareness and Non-Judging of inner experiences facets of mindfulness. Findings provide new insight into the effect of Vipassana meditation on the facets of mindfulness.

Keywords: Mindfulness, Vipassana meditation, Meditators, Non-meditators, Describing, Nonreactivity to inner experiences, Acting with awareness, Non-Judging of inner experiences

Introduction

According to Kabat-Zinn (1990, 2005), mindfulness is the ability to be cognizant of one's experiences (such as thoughts, perceptions, affective states, and bodily sensations) in the present moment without passing judgment or reacting. The concept of mindfulness can be viewed as a state that is practiced during meditation or mindfulness training (e.g., Lau et al., 2006) or as a psychological trait associated with the propensity to be mindful in daily life (e.g., Baer, Smith, Hopkins, Krietemeyer, & Toney, 2006). Mindfulness has its roots in contemplative Buddhist practices and philosophy (Kalupahana, 1987). It appears that trait mindfulness is stable over time without intervention (e.g., Baer et al., 2006), and that practicing mindfulness both formally and informally results in a more aware disposition. One method of meditation that can help you calmly and clearly identify your thoughts and sensations is vipassana meditation. A deep sense of harmony and wellbeing can result from practicing Vipassana meditation, which also teaches you how to view your inner world objectively. Observe, describe, act with awareness, be non-judgmental, and be non-reactive are the five different aspects of this mindfulness disposition (Baer et al. 2006).

The observe facet involves paying attention to both internal and external events, such as feelings, thoughts, images, sounds, and odours, that are unlikely to be recognized by others. The describe facet is the process of assigning words that characterize emotions, beliefs, views, and expectations to interior experiences. The act with awareness feature describes focusing on activities in the present moment without interruption. Thinking and experiencing without judgment is referred to as the non-

judge of inner experiences component. Last but not least, the non-reactivity of inner experiences feature describes the propensity to "step back" from ideas and feelings rather than being enmeshed in or overwhelmed by them.

Mindfulness has been widely linked to improved mental health and overall well-being. Specifically, it has been shown to help reduce anxiety, depression, and stress while enhancing stress management abilities (Kabat-Zinn, 1990; Zimmaro et al., 2016). These positive effects are observed whether mindfulness is understood as a *state*, referring to skills developed through meditation-based training, or as a *trait*, describing an individual's general tendency to be mindful in daily life (e.g., Bao, Xue, & Kong, 2015; Chiesa & Serretti, 2009; Harrington, Loffredo, & Perz, 2014; Hofmann, Sawyer, Witt, & Oh, 2010; Weinstein et al., 2009). Hölzel, Lazar, Gard, Schuman-Olivier, Vago, and Ott (2011) suggested that mindfulness reduces stress by improving self-regulation of attention, thoughts, and emotions, increasing body awareness, and fostering a shift in perspective toward both internal experiences and the external world.

Dispositional mindfulness describes a person's capacity to remain in control when confronted with troubling thoughts, feelings, or experiences. Therefore, it makes sense that mindfulness has been linked to a variety of adaptive outcomes, such as flow dispositions (like high concentration), increased use of psychological skills (like self-talk and attentional control) (Kee & Wang, 2008), enhanced psychological well-being, and decreased physiological (like Zimmaro et al., 2016) and self-report (like Vidrine et al., 2015; Weinstein et al., 2009) indicators of psychological stress.

Objectives

To investigate the effect of mindfulness on meditation by using the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire and to compare mindfulness levels between meditators and non-meditators.

Hypotheses

In the light of the findings of previous studies, theoretical background and keeping the objectives of this study in mind, following directional hypotheses have been framed:

1. Participants with mindfulness practice will score higher on Describing facets of mindfulness.
2. Participants with mindfulness practice will score higher on Nonreactivity to inner experiences facets of mindfulness.
3. Participants with mindfulness practice will score higher on Acting with Awareness facets of mindfulness.
4. Participants with mindfulness practice will score higher on Non judging of inner experiences facets of mindfulness.
5. Participants with mindfulness practice will score higher on overall mindfulness also.

Methodology

Sample

Two hundred respondents (100 with mindfulness training and 100 normal populations) from period of meditation i.e. at least six month, ecological

background (rural / urban), Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal were sampled by following multi-stage sample procedure for the conduct of the current study. The first stage consisted of listing of the institutions imparting the vipassana meditation in above mentioned states. Finally the data were collected from the Dhamma Paliputta, Patna, Bihar, Dhamma Bodhi, BodhGaya, Bihar, and Dhamma Cakka, Sarnath, Uttar Pradesh. At this stage a number of extraneous variables of age, time family structure (nuclear / joint), family income of the respondents, medium of instructions and the like were recorded with the objective to equate / match the samples for the conduct of the study. At last 100 meditators (40 male 60 female) and 100 non-meditators (40 male 60 female) were randomly sampled for conduct of the final study.

Instrument

2.1 Five Facets Mindfulness Questionnaire

The Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) is one of the most widely used tools for assessing mindfulness (Baer et al., 2006). Numerous studies have demonstrated that this tool exhibits minimal differential item functioning when applied to demographically matched groups of meditators and non-meditators (Baer et al., 2010).

Observing- This facet measures an individual's ability to stay present with perceptions, sensations, thoughts, or feelings, even when they are unpleasant or painful, without resorting to distraction.

Describing- This parameter evaluates the ability to articulate or label one's beliefs, opinions, emotions, and expectations in words.

Acting with Awareness- This facet assesses an individual's capacity to remain present in their actions without distraction, as well as their ability to bring mindful awareness into daily activities.

Non-judging of Inner Experience- This parameter reflects the extent to which an individual refrains from judging their own experiences throughout the day. It captures the tendency to remain non-judgmental in various situations.

Non-reactivity to Inner Experiences- This refers to the ability to observe and acknowledge emotions without reacting to them or becoming emotionally deregulated.

Procedures

Subjects were selected using a random sampling method, resulting in a total of 100 non-meditators (40 male and 60 female) and 100 meditators (40 male and 60 female). Both groups were assessed using the FFMQ tool. The participants were demographically similar, with non-meditators and meditators selected from states of Utter Pradesh and Bihar, India. Participants were aged between 21 to 55 years and included both males and females. The non-meditators had a minimum educational qualification of graduation, while the meditators had at least two years of meditation experience. The meditator group was exclusively comprised of Vipassana Meditation practitioners.

Result

Psychometric analysis included the (a) to examines group difference among meditators (N = 100) and non-meditators (N = 100) on the Describing, Nonreactivity to inner experiences, Acting with Awareness and Non-judging of inner experiences facets of mindfulness. For this the obtained data were subjected to one-way ANOVA to elucidate between groups effects.

Table 1: *One-way ANOVA table comparing (Describing, Nonreactivity to inner experiences, Acting with Awareness, Non-judging of inner experiences) facets of mindfulness score among meditators and non-meditators*

Facets of mindfulness	Meditator (n=100)		Non-meditator (n=100)		F (1,198)
	Mean	*SDs*	*Mean*	*SDs*	
Describing	33.89	4.456	27.01	5.465	95.19**
Nonreactivity to inner experiences	19.66	2.861	15.34	3.307	97.61**
Acting with Awareness	33.59	4.048	27.24	5.290	90.88**
Non judging of inner experiences	21.80	4.129	20.38	4.308	5.66**
FFMQ-H Total	108.94	10.730	89.97	11.951	139.50**
** p < 0.01					

The Mean and S.D values of Describing, Nonreactivity to inner experiences, Acting with Awareness, Non-judging of inner experiences facets of mindfulness and on FFMQ-H total for meditator and non-meditator groups are given in Table 1. The obtained data were subjected to one-way ANOVA to elucidate between groups effects on the facets of mindfulness and the results of one way ANOVA are shown in Table 1. One way ANOVA manifested significant between groups effects for Describing, Nonreactivity to inner experiences, Acting with awareness and Non-Judging of inner experiences facets of mindfulness. These results demonstrated that participants of meditator group as compared to non-meditator group manifested significantly higher mindfulness in terms of Describing, Nonreactivity to inner experiences, Acting with awareness and Non-Judging of inner experiences facets of mindfulness.

There was a significant mean difference on Describing *(f= 95.192, p<.001),* Nonreactivity to inner experiences *(f=* 97.607, *p<.001),* Acting with Awareness *(t=* 90.882, *p<.001),* Non-judging of inner experiences facets of mindfulness *(f=* 5.662, *p<.001),* and on total FFMQ-T *(f= 139.500, p<.001)* among meditators and non-meditators.

Earlier research has established a connection between practicing mindfulness meditation and heightened levels of mindfulness, evident in both long-time practitioners (Brown & Ryan, 2003) and individuals with no prior meditation experience following brief training periods (Carmody & Baer, 2008). The research findings facilitate our study that meditators and non meditators differ significantly on the facets of mindfulness. Meditators

score high on the facets of mindfulness which indicates that meditation (Vipassana) plays vital role in elaborating the dimensions of mindfulness i.e. Describing, Nonreactivity to inner experiences, Acting with Awareness, Non-judging of inner experiences.

CONCLUSION

The statistical analysis of the test results comparing mindfulness between meditators and non-meditators leads to the following conclusions:

Meditators and non-meditators show a significant difference in overall mindfulness scores, as measured by the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire.

Meditators excel in describing experiences compared to the non-meditator. This enhanced ability to give detail of any situation and ability to narrate and express cultivated over time through consistent practice of Vipassana meditation. Therefore, it can be concluded that meditation improves to delineate situation by picture or words.

Meditators are observed to remain non-reactive in various daily life situations. This makes meditation a valuable practice for individuals seeking greater resilience and composure in challenging circumstances. In today's world, where minor issues often escalate into significant conflicts, non-reactivity is a crucial quality. These conflicts frequently lead to prolonged stress, which can negatively impact overall health. Regular and disciplined meditation practice helps calm the mind, enhance resilience, and equip individuals to face challenges with greater ease and reduced stress.

Future research could focus on larger sample groups, including participants from diverse regions across the country, to standardize the proposed findings. Additionally, the authors recommend exploring the therapeutic benefits of practicing meditation and examining how the five facets contribute to the overall well-being of meditators.

In conclusion, meditators and non-meditators show significant overall differences. Meditators excel in describing, non-reactivity to inner experiences, acting with awareness, and non-judging of inner experiences, which are valuable traits. Additionally, meditators are more perceptive and reflective in evaluating their inner experiences.

References

Baer RA, Samuel DB, Lykins EL (2010) Differential item functioning on the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire is minimal in demographically matched meditators and nonmeditators. Assessment 18(1):3–10

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,* 27–45. doi:10.1177/1073191105283504

Bao, X., Xue, S., & Kong, F. (2015). Dispositional mindfulness and perceived stress: The role of emotional intelligence. *Personality and Individual Differences, 78,* 48-52. doi:10.1016/j.paid.2015.01.007

Chiesa, A., & Serreti, A. (2009). Mindfulness-based stress reduction for stress management in healthy

people: a review and meta-analysis. *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, *15*, 593-600. doi:10.1089/acm.2008.0495

Harrington, R., Loffredo, D. A., & Perz, C. A. (2014). Dispositional mindfulness as a positive predictor of psychological well-being and the role of the private self-consciousness insight factor. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *71*, 15–18. doi:10.1016/j.paid.2014.06.050

Hofmann, S. G., Sawyer, A. T., Witt, A. A., & Oh, D. (2010). The effect of mindfulness-based therapy on anxiety and depression: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *78*, 169–183. doi:10.1037/a0018555

Hôlzel, B. K., Lazar, S.W., Gard, T., Schuman-Olivier, Z., Vago, D. R., & Ott, U. (2011). How does mindfulness meditation work? Proposing mechanisms of action from a conceptual and neural perspective. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, *6*, 537–559. doi:10.1177/1745691611419671

Kabat-Zinn, J. (1990). *Full catastrophe living: Using the wisdom of your mind to face stress, pain and illness*. New York: Dell.

Kabat-Zinn, J. (2005). *Coming to Our Senses: Healing Ourselves and the World through Mindfulness*. New York, NY: Hyperion.

Kalupahana, D. J. *(*1987*). The principles of Buddhist psychology.* Albany*: State University of New York Press.*

Kee, Y. H., & Wang, C. K. (2008). Relationships between mindfulness, flow dispositions and mental skills adoption: A cluster analytic approach. *Psychology for Sport and Exercise*, *9*, 393-411. doi:10.1016/j.psychsport.2007.07.001

Lau, M. A., Bishop, S. R., Segal, Z. V., Buis, T., Anderson, N. D., Carlson, L., … Carmody, J. (2006). The Toronto Mindfulness Scale: Development and validation. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, *62*, 1445–1467. doi: 10.1002/jclp.20326

Vidrine, I. J., Businelle, M. S., Reitzel, L. R., Cao, Y., Cinciripini, P. M., Marcus, M. T., … Wetter, D. W. (2015). Coping mediates the association of mindfulness with psychological stress, affect, and depression among smokers preparing to quit. *Mindfulness, 6*, 433-443. doi: 10.1007/s12671-014-0276-4

Weinstein, N., Brown, K. W., & Ryan, R. M. (2009). A multi-method examination of the effects of mindfulness on stress attribution, coping, and emotional well-being. *Journal of Research in Personality*, *43*, 374-385. doi:10.1016/j.jrp.2008.12.008

Weinstein, N., Brown, K. W., & Ryan, R. M. (2009). A multi-method examination of the effects of mindfulness on stress attribution, coping, and emotional well-being. *Journal of Research in Personality*, *43*, 374-385. doi:10.1016/j.jrp.2008.12.008

Zimmaro, L.A., Salmon, P., Naidu, H., Rowe, J., Phillips, K., Rebholz, W.N., … Sephton, S. E. (2016). Association of dispositional mindfulness with stress, cortisol, and well-being among university undergraduate students. *Mindfulness, 7*, 874-885. doi:10.1007/s12671-0160526-8