

Effect Of Mindfulness Based Intervention On Mindfulness Level Of Students

Ms. Shikha Gupta, ICSSR Doctoral Fellow, Department of Education, Panjab University, Chandigarh

Dr. Kuldeep Kaur, Associate Professor, Department of Education, Panjab University, Chandigarh

INTRODUCTION

"Observe the wonders as they occur around you. Don't claim them. Feel the artistry moving through, and be silent."

~ Rumi

Mindfulness is the most beautiful practice. The best thing about being mindful is that it can be practiced anytime and anywhere. Many of us struggle to remain calm during the day or to fall asleep at night. Our mind makes us feel good at one moment and terrible the other. From where does negativity and anguish engulf us and how do we go about being serene and peaceful? The answer is to practice Mindfulness. Today, Mindfulness is a buzz word- a state of being fully aware of the present moment, without any judgments and worries. It is a popular topic in Positive Psychology. Mindfulness is a state of being attentive to and aware of what is taking place in the present (Brown & Ryan, 2003). According to Kabat-Zinn (2003), mindfulness is an inherent human capacity and every person is mindful to one or another degree. When we practice mindfulness, our thoughts tune into what we are sensing in the present moment rather than rehashing the past or imagining the future (Greater Good Science Center, 2014).

We all know that the primary purpose of education should be to create happy, confident and fulfilled human being, who will play a meaningful role in society. Across the world, educationists are realizing the need for happiness and well-being lessons for children. Self-aware, sensitive and emotionally mature children are far more successful because of their advanced ability to engage in meaningful relationships. According to Mahatma Gandhi, "By education, I mean an all-round drawing of the best in child and man in body, mind and spirit". According to Dalai Lama, mindfulness practice can make students self-aware and content which in turn will create a better society. It can help in creating deep and sustainable happiness. By now, it is understood that each individual can be in a mindful state which may be a temporary state in which an individual is aware of his thoughts and feelings and is able to stay present when commotion arises, however people who show trait of mindfulness have

more permanent ability to enter a mindful perspective, in which there is recognition of thoughts and feelings, acceptance without judgment, and focus on the present moment. Schools are using Mindfulness based interventions (MBIs) to reduce student stress and anxiety and improve socio-emotional competencies, student behaviour and academic achievement (Maynard, et. al., 2017). These interventions have a positive and a direct relation with self-compassion and valued-living (Brown & Pakenham, 2012). The instructors who plan to teach mindfulness to the students must have a deep connection with this practice. The research suggests that, before teachers feel comfortable enough to effectively teach mindfulness in the classroom, they need to embody and practice mindfulness in their own lives (Albrecht, Albrecht, & Cohen, 2012). Qualitative interviews highlight that mindfulness can influence teacher engagement and improve their performance as it helps in reducing their stress levels, and improve self-esteem. With such practice some teachers found they were able to gain a holistic view of the curriculum and thus, impart key concepts to children – rather than feeling overwhelmed by the large number of learning outcomes they were expected to teach. According to Aydan (2015), there is a need of experimental studies that aims to boost teachers' self-compassion by developing programs aiming to reduce their anxiety levels. A brief daily program of mindfulness and yoga practice is a feasible strategy to impact educators' social-emotional competence and wellbeing (Harris et. al, 2014). In the study conducted by Griggs & Tidwell (2015), they found that the preparation of their course and their teaching have benefited from mindfulness practice. Through mindfulness meditation, they seek and found the means to achieve a kind of harmony, peace, and acceptance of the complexities found within formidable challenges to their own pre-conceived notions about any number of potentially difficult issues. Mindfulness is one aspect of social-emotional competence that predicts effective classroom performance (Abenavoli, et. al., 2014).

It is interesting that Delhi Government has also initiated the formal training for mindfulness in government schools of Delhi. The new “happiness curriculum” aims to impart emotional intelligence through meditation, storytelling and activities in which the focus is on students' emotional and mental needs. These skills are intended to reduce stress and anxiety and manage depression. In this program, children have been grouped into three categories: kindergarten to grade two, grades three to five, and grades six to eight. It is important that students are taught effective strategies for stress reduction, not only because childhood stress is a precursor for adulthood stress, but also because stressful life events have been shown to

be related to reduced academic performance (Napoli, Krech and Holley, 2005). In forming the curriculum for the National Institute for Literacy, Marilyn Gillespie stated the underlying principle that, "Effective learning requires not only the acquisition but also active application of knowledge, skills, and processes." The results of the mindfulness intervention on children are feasible and promising (Burke, 2009; Harnett and Dawe, 2012). Improved wellbeing and sleep, increased self-care and awareness, relaxation, less reactivity, and a sense of connection with nature are some of the benefits on children (Wall, 2005). A study by Wong (1994) suggested that mediated mindfulness is effective in promoting the transfer of learned strategies in students with learning disabilities. Singh, Wahler, Adkins and Myers (2003) developed a mindfulness-based self-control strategy for an individual with mental retardation and mental illness whose aggression had precluded successful community placement. The data showed that he increased self-control over his aggressive behaviors. The study suggested that Mindfulness based intervention offers a viable alternative to traditional interventions, currently being used to treat behavioral challenges in children and adults with mild mental retardation.

Singh et. al. (2011) evaluated in his study the effectiveness of a mindfulness-based procedure. This procedure required the aggressive adolescents to rapidly shift the focus of their attention from the aggression-triggering event to a neutral place on their body, the soles of their feet. Incidents of aggression across these adolescents ranged from a mean of 14-20 per week during baseline, 4-6 per week during mindfulness training, including zero rates during the last four weeks of intervention. Aggression occurred at a rate of about one per year during a 3-year follow-up. Results suggested that adolescents with autism can learn and effectively use a mindfulness-based procedure to self-manage their physical aggression over several years.

Haydicky, Wiener, Badali, Milligan and Ducharme (2012) evaluated the impact of a 20-week mindfulness training program on executive function, internalizing and externalizing behavior, and social skills in a clinical sample of adolescent boys with learning disabilities (LD). Mindfulness Martial Arts (MMA) is a manualized group treatment program incorporating elements of mindfulness meditation, cognitive-behavioural therapy, and mixed martial arts. Sixty-five boys (ages 12-18) with LD were assigned to the MMA or waitlist control group (WL). Adolescents and their parents completed standardized questionnaire before and after training. Analysis of adolescents with distinct clinical profiles showed promising effects. Compared to the WL group, MMA participants with co-occurring ADHD improved on parent rated externalizing behavior, oppositional defiant problems, and conduct problems. Boys with

elevated hyperactive/impulsive symptoms improved on parent-rated social problems and monitoring skills. Boys with elevated anxiety reported decreased anxiety. MMA shows promise as an alternative treatment option for youth with LD and co-occurring difficulties. Spek, Van Ham and Nyklicek (2012) concluded in their research that Mindfulness-based therapy (MBT) is effective in reducing anxiety, depression and rumination in adults with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). Furthermore, positive affect increased in the intervention group but not in the control group.

In the light of the literature reviewed above, it is observed that mindfulness-based intervention improves the wellbeing and sleep, increases the self-care and awareness of children. It makes children with mild retardation less reactive and they learn to practice self-control. It helps adolescents with autism deal in their emotional awareness, decreases anxiety among adolescent boys with learning disabilities (LD) and helps in reducing anxiety, depression and rumination in adults with autism spectrum disorders(ASD).

There are different tools to measure the mindfulness level of students. Most of the tools measure dimensions of mindfulness like attention, awareness, non-reactivity to inner experiences, observation, describing, non-judgment, accepting, present focus, novelty seeking, engagement, novelty producing, flexibility, and curiosity.

A lot of work has been done to understand the students' shortcomings and the remedial measures have been designed which emphasize on individualized trainings but individualized training is not a feasible practice in institutions at all times and so an intervention which can cater maximum number of students is required. Hence the mindfulness-based teaching-learning methods are justified. The researcher studied the effect of mindfulness-based intervention on the mindfulness level of students choosing it as a focal point of research because of its relevance as an emerging technique of intervention to improve not only mindfulness level of students but also as a technique to overcome/deal with day to day challenges that students encounter. Mindfulness Questionnaire for school students (MQSS) by Kashyap & Kaur was used to measure the mindfulness level of students.

Research Questions

The research questions for the present study are stated as below:

1. What is the level of mindfulness of students?
2. Can mindfulness-based intervention improve level of mindfulness of students?

Statement of the Problem

The problem of the present study is stated as follows:

EFFECT OF MINDFULNESS BASED INTERVENTION ON MINDFULNESS LEVEL OF STUDENTS

Objectives of the study

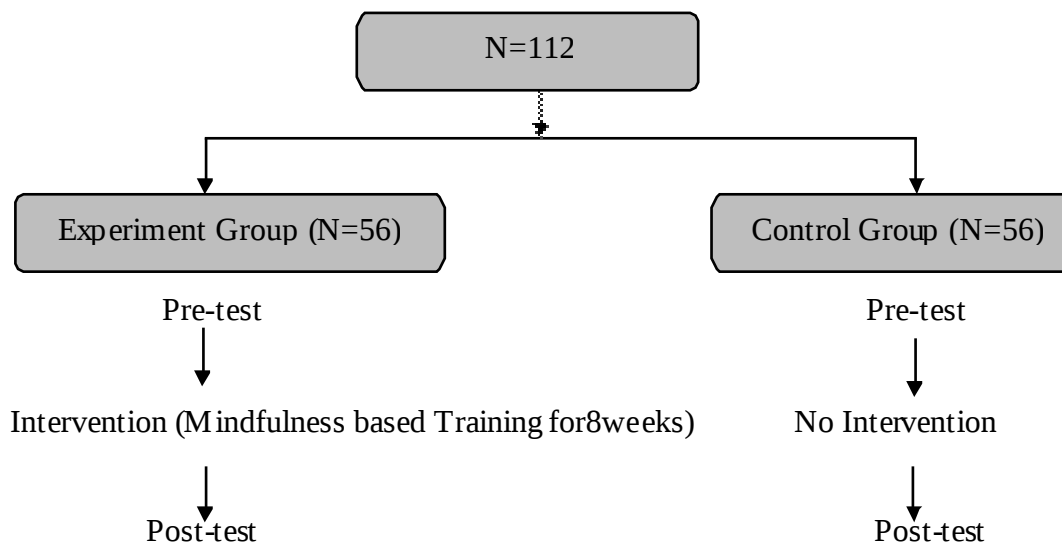
1. To study the level of mindfulness of the students.
2. To study the effect of Mindfulness based intervention on the Mindfulness level of students.

Research Methodology

Design of the Study

The study was experimental in nature wherein pre-test post-test control group design was used (Figure1).

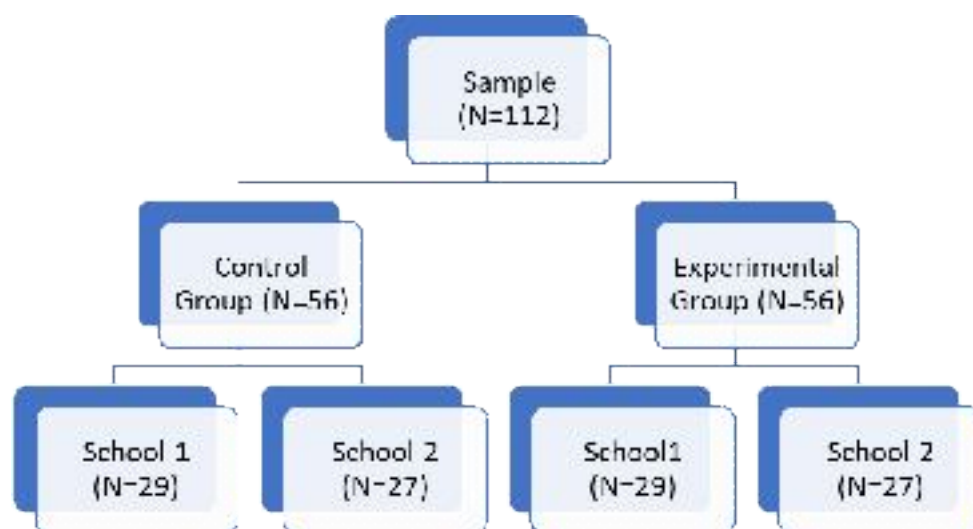
Figure 1: Diagrammatic representation of the design of the study



Sampling and Sample Size

The two schools were selected randomly from the list approved by the District Education Office (D.E.O.), UT, Chandigarh. The sample comprised of students studying in 6th grade. The final sample consisted of 112 students, which were randomly assigned to experimental group (EG, N=56) and control group (CG, N=56).

Figure 2: School-wise Distribution of the Sample



Procedure

The present study was conducted in following phases. These are:

Phase I	Preparation and validation of experimental intervention (Mindfulness modules).
Phase II	Identification of sample and assigning them to experimental group (EG) and control group(CG).
Phase III	Administration of pre-tests (MQSS) on both experimental group and control group.
Phase IV	Mindfulness training to experimental group.
Phase V	Administration of post-test (MQSS) on both experimental group and control group.
Phase VI	Analysis and interpretation of data (scores on tool).
Phase VII	Report writing.

Tool used

Mindfulness Questionnaire for School Students (MQSS) by Kashyap and Kaur (2017) was used. The four dimensions of mindfulness covered under this questionnaire are (i) Acting with Awareness, (ii) Non-judgmental acceptance of the experience, (iii) Observing and (iv)

Describing.

Intervention

The experimental group was given intervention in the form of Mindfulness training for eight weeks (45 working days approximately spread over 60 days.). Each day, one period of 30 minutes was devoted to Mindfulness. The investigator prepared the modules that laid emphasis on Mindful Breathing, Mindful Eating, Mindful Listening, Mindful Observation, Mindful Communication, Mindful Walking and Benefits of Mindfulness etc. For intervention, the constraints related to time-table were resolved by taking the sessions in the zero period and free/adjusted period. At times, the school implemented their own programs in the period allotted to the researcher. In this case, the researcher quickly reaches out to the time table in-charge who helped her in getting the adjustment period. Sometimes, the mid-day meal periods were taken to conduct sessions. This helped the researcher in inculcating the very important component of mindfulness intervention i.e. mindful eating. There were instances when the researcher could not implement the lesson planned for the day. One such instance was, when the researcher wanted to implement body scan with students, but there was noise coming from the loud speakers outside and researcher quickly changed her plan and conducted a session on mindful listening. Other constraint the researcher faced was the room allocated was used for some other purpose by the school authorities. In that case, the researcher took the students to the garden area. Here, the investigator told students to practice mindful walking. Mindful observation was implemented more successfully here.

“I love those who can smile in trouble...” — **Leonardo da Vinci**

Statistical Technique

For this study, Descriptive and Inferential statistical techniques were used to study the data and draw meaningful inferences.

Findings of the study

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive Analysis for Assessment of Mindfulness of Students in Control Group (CG) and Experiment Group (EG) at the Pre-test Stage.

Results:

Table 1: Mean, Median, Mode, Standard Deviation, Skewness, and Kurtosis Values of Mindfulness Scores of Students in CG at the Pre-test Stage (N=56)

Mindfulness and its dimensions	Awareness	Acceptance	Observing	Describing	Mindfulness(total)
Mean	11.3750	9.6071	8.8750	6.0357	35.8929
Median	12.0000	10.0000	9.0000	6.0000	35.5000
Mode	12.00	10.00	10.00	6.00	40.00
Std. Deviation	3.63599	2.63320	1.99146	2.20713	7.81067
Variance	13.220	6.934	3.966	4.871	61.006
Skewness	-.201	-.590	-.251	.227	.131
Std. Error of Skewness	.319	.319	.319	.319	.319
Kurtosis	-.698	.186	-.445	.465	.439
Std. Error of Kurtosis	.628	.628	.628	.628	.628
Range	14.00	11.00	8.00	12.00	38.00
Minimum	4.00	3.00	4.00	0.00	16.00
Maximum	18.00	14.00	12.00	12.00	54.00
Skewness / Std. Error of Skewness	-0.62953	-1.849	-0.78651	0.710762	0.409914
Kurtosis / Std. Error of Kurtosis	-1.11129	0.295604	-0.70886	0.740934	0.698634

Table 2: Mean, Median, Mode, Standard Deviation, Skewness, and Kurtosis Values of Mindfulness Scores of Students in EG at Pre-test Stage (N=56)

Mindfulness and its Dimensions	Awareness	Acceptance	Observing	Describing	Mindfulness(total)
Mean	11.9643	8.9107	8.0000	6.1607	35.0357
Median	12.0000	9.5000	8.0000	6.0000	35.0000
Mode	12.00	10.00	8.00 ^a	6.00	34.00
Std. Deviation	3.30269	2.48835	2.17423	2.70203	6.22302
Variance	10.908	6.192	4.727	7.301	38.726
Skewness	-.504	-.636	-.308	-.309	-.520
Std. Error of Skewness	.319	.319	.319	.319	.319
Kurtosis	.537	-.184	-.365	.137	.464
Std. Error of Kurtosis	.628	.628	.628	.628	.628
Range	16.00	10.00	9.00	12.00	30.00
Minimum	2.00	3.00	3.00	0.00	17.00
Maximum	18.00	13.00	12.00	12.00	47.00
Skewness / Std. Error of Skewness	-1.5812	-1.99385	-0.96613	-0.96729	-1.63009
Kurtosis / Std. Error of Kurtosis	0.855389	-0.29293	-0.58115	0.218731	0.738962

Discussion:

Table 1 and Table 2 give descriptive statistical values for Mindfulness scores (Total) and its dimensions. The mean score on Mindfulness (Total) are 35.8929 and 35.0357 for CG and EG respectively at the pre-test stage. The value of skewness for CG is -.131 and that for EG is -.520. The value of kurtosis for CG is -.439 and that for EG is -.464.

A z-test was applied for normality test using skewness and kurtosis. The z- score for skewness and kurtosis for CG are 0.41 and 0.70 and EG are -1.63 and 0.74 respectively. Since these values lie within the acceptable limits i.e. ± 1.96 , thus, the distribution of measure can be considered as normal for both CG and EG.

Inferential Statistics

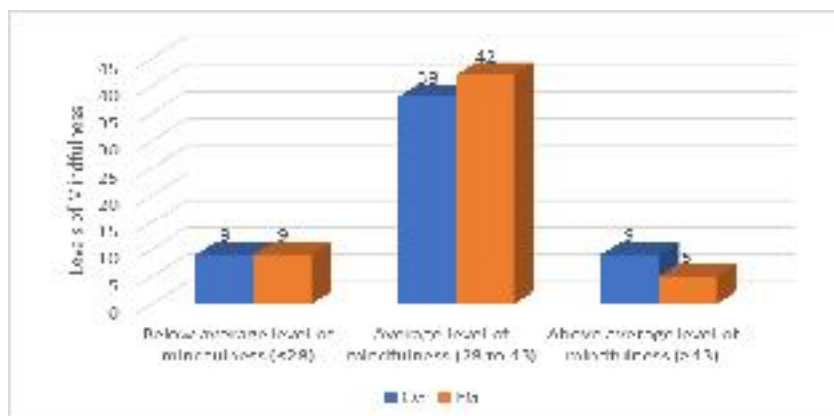
Objective 1: To study the level of mindfulness of the students.

For this, we will classify the students based on the levels of their Mindfulness.

Table 3: Levels of Mindfulness of Elementary School Students at Pre-test Stage

Levels of Mindfulness	No. of students		
	CG	EG	Total
Below average level of mindfulness (≤ 28)	9 (16.07%)	9 (16.07%)	18 (16.1%)
Average level of mindfulness (28 to 43)	38 (67.86%)	42 (75 %)	80 (71.43%)
Above average level of mindfulness (≥ 43)	9 (16.07%)	5 (8.93 %)	14 (12.5%)
Total Number of students	56	56	112 (100%)

Figure 3: Levels of Mindfulness of elementary school students at Pre-test Stage



After analyzing data descriptively, researcher made an attempt to group the sample into different levels based on their performance on Mindfulness Questionnaire for School Students (MQSS) and found that the maximum number of students lies in the average level (28 to 43) of mindfulness as presented in Table 3 and Figure3.

Objective 2: To study the differences in pre-test and post-test mean scores on Mindfulness of students in Control Group.

In order to study this objective, three hypotheses were formulated which are discussed at under:

Hypothesis 1: There exists no significant difference in the pre-test and post-test Mindfulness mean scores of students in Control Group.

Results:

Table 4: Paired Samples t-test for Pre-test and Post-test Mean Scores on Mindfulness of Students in Control Group (N= 56)

Group	Mean	SD	SE _M	Df	Difference in mean (Post-Pre)	t-value (p-value)
Pre-test	35.89	7.81	1.04	55	1.48	6.9523 P=0.0001
Post-test	37.38	7.66	1.02			

As presented in Table 4, the difference in pre-test and post-test mean scores on Mindfulness of students in Control Group was found to be 1.48. As compared to the critical (table) value, the obtained t-value i.e., $t = 6.96523$, $p = 0.0001$, was significant. Hence, the null hypothesis stating “There exists no significant difference in the pre-test and post-test mean scores on Mindfulness of students in Control Group.” is rejected. It was observed that students in CG were already familiar with MQSS, hence they performed better in the test. Also, the CG group was involved in sports activities. Hence, the result.

Hypothesis 2: There exists no significant difference in the pre-test and post-test mean scores on Mindfulness of students in Experiment Group.

Results:

Table 5: Paired Samples t-test for Pre-test and Post-test Mindfulness Mean Scores of Students in Experiment Group (N= 56)

Group	Mean Gain Scores	SD	SE _M	Df	Difference in mean (Post-Pre)	t-value (p-value)
Pre-test	35.03	6.22	0.83	55	7.88	12.96
Post-test	42.91	6.60	0.88			P= 0.0001

As presented in Table 5, the difference in the pre-test and post test mean scores on Mindfulness of students in the Experiment Group was found to be 7.88. As compared to the critical (table) value, the obtained t-value i.e., $t = 12.96$, $p < 0.01$, was found to be significant. Hence the null hypothesis stating “There exists no significant difference in the pre-test and post-test mean scores on Mindfulness of students in Experiment Group” stands rejected. Hence, it can be interpreted that the Mindfulness level of these students has improved after the intervention. Studies conducted by Napoliet al. (2005); Dellbridge and Lubbe (2009); Huppert and Johnson (2010); Sempleet al. (2010); Oberleet al. (2012); Van de Weijer-Bergsma et al. (2012); Schonert-Reichlet al. (2015); and Spinhovenet al. (2017) are supporting the above result.

Hypothesis 3: There exists no significant effect of Mindfulness intervention on the level of Mindfulness of students.

Results:

Table 6: Independent Samples t-test for Mean Gain Scores on Mindfulness of Students in Control and Experiment Group (N=56)

Group	Mean Gain Scores	SD	SE _M	Df	Difference in mean (EG-CG)	t-value (p-value)
CG	1.48	1.60	0.21	110	6.39	$t = 10.102$
EG	7.88	4.55	0.61			$P = 0.0001$

As shown in Table 6 above, the mean gain scores on Mindfulness of students in the Control Group and Experiment Group were found to be 1.48 and 7.88 respectively. As compared to the critical (table) value, the obtained t-value, i.e., $t = 10.102$, $p < 0.01$, was found to be significant. Hence the null hypothesis stating “There exists no significant effect of

Mindfulness intervention on the level of Mindfulness of students” stands rejected. In other words, mindful level of the students in EG improved significantly after intervention as compared to students in CG. Studies conducted by Napoli *et al.* (2005); Huppert and Johnson (2010); Hennelly (2011); and Spinhoven *et al.* (2017) are supporting the above result.

Implications of the study

The present study evaluates the effect of Mindfulness Intervention on mindfulness level among students. The students on which Mindfulness Intervention was administered were of age group 10-12 years. This was a small-scale intervention which yielded much significant results, having valuable implications for students and trainers both in academic and corporate settings.

The effect of Mindfulness Intervention was found to be significant for enhancing mindfulness level among students which strengthened the idea to use such interventions/programs in schools to make students more aware and attentive not only about themselves and their surroundings but also to work more efficiently on the task at hand.

Conclusion:

There exist significant mean gain score differences on the level of mindfulness of students exposed to Mindfulness Intervention i.e. Experiment Group and Control Group. This result indicates that Mindfulness Intervention is an effective technique to improve the level of mindfulness of students.

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