



An Investigation Into How Mindfulness Affects Emotional Intelligence In Teenagers

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Adolescent emotional intelligence is an important component of mental wellbeing of a person. Being an important component, mindfulness can play a major role in emotional intelligence in teenagers.

Objective: The purpose of the study is to investigate the effect of mindfulness therapy on emotional intelligence levels in teenagers.

Methodology: Teenagers studying in senior secondary schools participated in this pre-posttest study. Written consents were obtained, and 90 study participants who met the inclusion and exclusion criteria were chosen from stratified data. Three groups were formed, including 20 teenagers in each group. While 10 teenagers were excluded and 20 were kept on the waiting list, a total of 15 teenagers dropped the therapy. Thus, a total of 45 teenagers have completed mindfulness therapy. The Mangal's emotional intelligence scale was utilised to collect data on emotional intelligence. A total of 12 mindfulness sessions were employed for each group to manage emotional intelligence. A t-test was applied for statistical analysis.

Findings: The initial emotional intelligence level of teenagers was 120.66, which was in the average category. After 12 mindfulness sessions, the subject's emotional intelligence degree was improved by 44.72% and emotional intelligence level entered in the high level category.

Conclusion: This investigation is a diagnostic study, which is aimed at managing the level of emotional intelligence in teenagers. The study discovered that teenagers' emotional intelligence was improved significantly following mindfulness.

Keywords: teenagers, gender, emotional intelligence, mindfulness.

Abbreviations: EI: Emotional intelligence

MEIS: Mangal's emotional intelligence scale.

1.0 Introduction

Emotional intelligence is an essential trait and skill for students. Emotional intelligence (EI) is a concept involving awareness of one's emotions, the ability to modulate them appropriately to the situation, and interaction with others empathetically. There is a positive correlation between mindfulness/meditation and EI, which in turn is positively correlated with mental health, job performance, and leadership skills. There are many models of EI, but according to psychologist Daniel Goleman, there are five main elements: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. The ability to regulate our emotions is essential to our happiness. Good understanding and skillful modulation of our emotions help us with stress management, which requires cognitive and behavioural flexibility and a reasonable window of distress

tolerance. When our emotions are in the driver's seat, we tend to make unwise decisions and cause unnecessary suffering for ourselves and others. Understanding how to make emotions our co-pilot, rather than the captain, is a hallmark of emotional intelligence. Mindfulness is a form of meditation that involves directing our attention towards a heightened awareness of our current sensations and emotions, without making any evaluations or criticisms. According to the American Psychological Association, "Mindfulness is awareness of one's internal states and surroundings. Mindfulness can help people avoid destructive or automatic habits and responses by learning to observe their thoughts, emotions, and other present-moment experiences without judging or reacting to them." By cultivating this awareness, individuals can develop a greater understanding of their mental and emotional landscapes, leading to more intentional and conscious choices in their daily lives.

2.0 Review of Literature:

Emotional intelligence is a trendy issue in the field of applied psychology. The twenty-first century saw a meteoric rise in its popularity. According to **Coleman and Andrew (2008)**, emotional intelligence is "the capacity to recognize one's own and other people's feelings, to differentiate between and accurately identify different emotions, and to use emotional knowledge to drive both cognition and behavior." Children's academic pressures, family difficulties, and the need to fit in with peers all occur at a time when they are still forming a sense of who they are and how to handle their emotions. Because their sense of identity and emotional maturity are still forming, this can be difficult for kids. Teens who suffer from emotional deficits are more likely to develop depression and anxiety as adults.

Fernández-Berrocal et al. (2006) examined the relationship between emotional intelligence, anxiety, and depression among teenagers. Two hundred and fifty high school students were administered the Trait Meta-Mood Scale (TMMS), a self-reported measure of emotional intelligence, along with measures of thought suppression, self-esteem, anxiety, and depression. The study revealed two main findings. First, self-reported ability to regulate mood (Emotional Repair) was positively related to self-esteem. Second, self-reported emotional intelligence was negatively related to levels of depression and anxiety. Specifically, the ability to discriminate clearly among feelings (Emotional Clarity) and the ability to self-regulate emotional states were associated with better psychological adjustment, independent of the effects of self-esteem and thought suppression. The results support the hypothesis that emotional abilities are an important and unique contributor to psychological adjustment.

Adolescent mental health may benefit from a focus on emotional development because it may lead to the creation of more effective coping mechanisms (**Downey et al., 2010**). According to **Mayer and Salovey (2003)**, there are individual variations in how people receive emotionally charged information and how they relate emotional processing to more broad cognitive processes. In their view, emotional maturity reflects flexibility in character. They presented the EI model as an intelligence-based framework that seeks to define emotional intelligence in terms of conventional scholastic benchmarks.

Emotional intelligence is segmented into four sub-domains (**Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2004**): emotional perception, emotional absorption, emotional comprehension, and emotional regulation. The phrase "four-branch model" stems from the fact that each component can be split into two sub-parts. The four-branch model of emotional intelligence, on the other hand, focuses on the four sub-skills that make up the whole of emotional quotient.

Hunter explains how one can obtain benefits from practicing the mindfulness meditation to gain greater control of their thoughts (**Hunter L., 2016**). This translates to a mental state of tranquility and calm, which provides them with perspective; these, in turn, are key elements for improving the care of patients and interprofessional communication. There is evidence of the impact and effectiveness of students for professionals, resulting in the reduction of stress and the promotion of self-compassion and self-care (**Botha E., Gwin T., Purpora C., 2015**). The reduction of emotional exhaustion and the incidence of burnout, the improvement of well-being and mental health, and decreased anxiety and depression, with the same results being obtained in students by **Guillaumie L., Boiral O., Champagne J., 2017**. Despite the above, the relationship between practice and training in EI skills and mindfulness has been studied little among students. Regular mindfulness practices may help one better recognise and comprehend one's own emotions. It is associated with attention to feelings, greater clarity of feelings, and reduced distraction (**Feldman, G., et al. 2007**). Mindfulness training teaches practitioners to pay attentive attention to their feelings and thoughts without judgement or intervention. Being alert encourages people to pay greater attention to how others are feeling, allowing them to better decode emotional cues and recognise and comprehend others' sentiments. In this way, mindfulness helps distinguish between action and reaction. It helps people use their emotions more effectively by helping them identify which emotions are suited for specific tasks. Being aware of one's own feelings and those of others, one can learn to control and apply emotions mindfully, which is what emotional intelligence needs. Mindfulness meditation is an effective way of training emotional intelligence. Mindfulness is a form of meditation based on the ability to bring one's attention to what they are currently experiencing in the present moment, accepting it without judgement and identifying the sensations, emotions, and thoughts (**Vásquez-Dextre E.R., 2016**). This meditation is used as a therapeutic psychological treatment with positive results, reducing levels of anxiety,

depression, and stress, and alleviating physical symptoms such as pain as well as vulnerability due to psychiatric illnesses (Zhou B., et al., 2020; Xie C. et al., 2020).

This paper aims to identify the recent evidence on the relationship between mindfulness and emotional intelligence among teenagers.

3.0 Rationale: The reason behind choosing this topic of research was less research done on the relation between emotional intelligence and mindfulness. Being mindful can be helpful with not just anxiety but also being emotionally competent and psychologically motivated. Mindfulness meditation has proved to be effective in increasing the well-being of those who practice it, leading to emotional health. Most research that takes place regarding teenagers includes topics like anxiety or depression, either done individually or taking a more holistic view but very less work is observed based on mindfulness. This paper aims to identify evidence about the relationship between mindfulness and emotional intelligence among students.

4.0 Research methodology

4.1 Objective of the study: To study the effect of mindfulness therapy on the degree of emotional intelligence in teenagers.

4.2 Hypothesis:

Ha 01: There will be a significant improvement in the degree of emotional intelligence in teenagers through mindfulness therapy.

Ha 02: There will be a significant improvement in the degree of emotional intelligence in male teenagers through mindfulness therapy.

Ha 03: There will be a significant improvement in the degree of emotional intelligence in female teenagers through mindfulness therapy.

4.3 Sampling: The random method selected 90 teenagers, including 45 male and 45 female teenagers of 16 to 18 years of age who were studying in classes 11 and 12 in Dehradun. A total of 10 teenagers were excluded due to medical and preexisting psychological treatment, and a total of 12 male and 8 female teenagers were allocated to the waiting list. A total of three groups were formed, including 10 male and 10 female teenagers. A total of 15 teenagers dropped therapy midway. Thus, a total of 45 teenagers completed the therapy, which includes 21 male and 24 female teenagers.

4.4 Plan of Mindfulness Therapy: For the management of emotional intelligence, a total of 12 sessions of mindfulness therapy were provided to each subgroup. After each session of mindfulness therapy, a 3-days break was observed. For this break, specific tasks were given, which included journaling and noting their own emotions and reactions as per current situations.

4.5 Assessment and Statistical Analysis: Mangal Emotional Intelligence Scale (MEIS) was used to measure emotional intelligence (S. K. Mangal and Shubhra Mangal, 2012). A t-test was applied for the statistical assessment.

4.6 Variables

4.6.1 Independent variables: Mindfulness

4.6.2 Dependent variables: Emotional intelligence (EI).

4.6.3 Nominal Variables: Gender

5.0 Results and Discussion

5.1 Alternate Hypothesis Ha01: Among teenagers, there will be a significant improvement in emotional intelligence after mindfulness therapy.

After 12 sessions of mindfulness therapy, the initial EI score of teenagers increased from 120.66 to 173.8 (44.04% improvement), for which the t-value is 117.6857, which is found significant at the 95% level of significance. Hence, the first hypothesis is accepted, and it is concluded that there is a significant improvement in the level of EI in teenagers after mindfulness therapy (Table 1).

Table 1: EI Scores of Teenagers

EI Score	Teenagers (N = 45)					
	Mean	Progress	SD	t-Value	SED	Inference
Pretest	120.66	44.04%	2.7665	117.6857	0.452	Significant
Average Level						
Post test	173.8		1.2335			
High Level						

*Significant at 0.05

5.2 Alternate Hypothesis Ha02: Among male teenagers, there will be a significant improvement in emotional intelligence after mindfulness therapy.

Table 2: EI Scores of Male Teenagers

EI Score	Male Teenagers (N = 21)					
	Mean	Progress	SD	t- Value	SED	Inference
Pretest	118	43.22%	3.4783	63.2523	0.806	Significant
Below Average Level						
Post test	169		1.2465			
Above Average Level						

*Significant at 0.05

After 12 sessions of mindfulness therapy, the initial EI score of male teenagers increased from 118 to 169 (43.22% improvement), for which the t-value is 63.2523, which is found significant at the 95% level of significance. Hence, the second hypothesis is accepted, and it is concluded that there is a significant improvement in the level of EI in male teenagers after mindfulness therapy (Table 2).

5.3 Alternate Hypothesis Ha03: Among female teenagers, there will be a significant improvement in emotional intelligence after mindfulness therapy.

Table 3: EI Scores of Female Teenagers

EI Score	Female Teenagers (N = 24)					
	Mean	Progress	SD	t- Value	SED	Inference
Pretest	123	44.72%	2.7845	86.8626	0.633	Significant
Average Level						
Post test	178		1.3670			
High Level						

*Significant at 0.05

After 12 sessions of mindfulness therapy, the initial EI score of female teenagers increased from 123 to 178 (44.72% improvement), for which the t-value is 86.8626, which is significant at the 95% level of significance. Hence, the third hypothesis is accepted, and it is concluded that there is a significant improvement in the level EI in female teenagers after mindfulness therapy (Table 3).

6.0 Interpretation

6.1 Alternate hypothesis Ha01, which expected a significant improvement in EI in teenagers after mindfulness therapy, was accepted. A significant increase is observed in the EI scores of teenagers after 12 sessions of mindfulness therapy. **Rodrguez-Ledo (2018)**, in their research, found a similar impact of mindfulness therapy on the EI level of teenagers.

6.2 Alternate hypothesis Ha02, which expected a significant improvement in EI in male teenagers after mindfulness therapy, was accepted. A significant increase is observed in the EI scores of male teenagers after 12 sessions of mindfulness therapy. **Rodrguez-Ledo (2018)**, in their research, found a similar impact of mindfulness therapy on the EI level of teenagers.

6.3 Alternate hypothesis Ha03, which expected a significant improvement in EI in female teenagers after mindfulness therapy, was accepted. A significant increase is observed in the EI scores of female teenagers after 12 sessions of mindfulness therapy. **Tang DF et al. (2021)**, in their research, found a similar impact of mindfulness therapy on the EI level of teenagers.

7.0 Recommendation / Future Implications:

From the research conducted, a few recommendations were found to be proposed for future researchers who might be interested in taking up similar or related research topic in the future: - 1. School teenagers should be encouraged to take some time for themselves too, which will help them to introspect and regulate their emotions better. 2. School teenagers should be encouraged to maintain an emotional journal where they would keep a record of all the emotions they experience in a day and practice mindfulness techniques to reduce anxiety and for the betterment of psychological positive negative effect. 3. School teenagers should be encouraged to be happy and motivated to ask for help when needed, whether it be academically or emotionally.

8.0 Conclusion:

This study found that mindfulness therapy is highly useful in the management of emotional intelligence among teenagers.

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10.0 Conflict of Interest: The authors have declared that no competing interest exists.

11.0 References

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