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Research Paper

A Study on The Relationship Between Mindfulness Awareness and Psychological Well Being among Young Adults

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims to find out the relationship between Mindfulness Awareness and Psychological Well-being among Young Adults. Participants are 200 young adults. The tools used for the study are Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale (Brown. K.W &; Ryan. R, 2003) and Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale (Ryff,1989). Data is collected and statistically analyzed using appropriate statistical methods. Results are discussed from the findings of the study.

Keywords: *Mindfulness Awareness, Psychological Well-being, Young Adults, New Normal*

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have caused an enormous change to our everyday lives. Adjusting to change was challenging with a wide range of experiences and emotions impacting in various ways. The process of new normal could be a smooth journey for some while challenging for many. Some individuals may find themselves in survival mode, trying to cope up with the new practices of distance learning, work from home, social distancing, financial difficulties, loss of loved one or job while others quickly adopt a coping mindset and attempt to settle into their new routines. Being mindful of one self and the situation enhances mental well-being. The way one chooses to act during these challenging times influence one's stance towards life such as the ability to be aware of one's moment-to-moment experiences, adapt, utilize adaptive coping skills, have a non-judgmental approach, and look after one's well-being (Neha Dubey, 2020). Corona virus stress is found to be a mediator in the relationship between coronavirus suffering and mindfulness (Arslan, 2021). It indicated that experiences of coronavirus are an important risk factor for poor well-being and higher death obsession. Another research indicated that high fear of Covid – 19 is found to be associated with lower mindfulness, lower hope and higher hopelessness (Saricali et al., 2020). It is highly essential to not only

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protect and boost our physical well-being but also our mental well-being for a holistic optimal living. Mindfulness is one practice that can help a person to promote their well-being during this new normal. Mindfulness can be defined as a process of paying attention, awareness, and an open-minded acceptance of the present moment (Ciro Conversano, 2020; Shear and Jevning, 1999). Mindfulness is found to enhance well-being and also helps to deal with stressful situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic as a coping strategy (Conversano et al., 2020). Mindfulness can help an individual not to be carried away with strong emotions while aiding to stay calm and see clearly of things one can control). It is found that well-being and happiness is contributed by experiences which are suitable and open (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Brown et al., 2007). Mindful people are said to be focused on intrusive thoughts rather responding adaptively to negative stimuli leading to being more relaxed, happier and healthier (Hick & Bien, 2008; Karahan & Bakalim, 2021). It also increases our ability to regulates emotions, decrease stress, anxiety and depression. It is found that the student population has greatly benefitted from a mindfulness course in terms of improved well-being, decreased stress, and increased resilience (Roulston, 2018). Mindfulness as a practice has been discovered as a technique to improve general health and well-being – i.e., as a preventative technique (e.g., Baer, Lykins, & Peters, 2012; Brown & Ryan, 2003; Jazaieri & Shapiro, 2010; Lykins & Baer, 2009; Orzech, Shapiro, Brown, & McKay, 2009; Shapiro & Jazaieri, 2015). Many researchers found that the relationship between mindfulness practice and improved psychological wellbeing in a variety of domains, such as attention, positive and negative affect, life satisfaction, and so forth, for both clinical and non-clinical population (e.g., Baer, 2003; Chiesa & Serretti, 2009; Grossman, Niemann, Schmidt, & Walach, 2004; Hofmann et al., 2010; Keng, Smoski, & Robins, 2011).The Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS; Brown and Ryan, 2003) is a psychological instrument which assess the presence or absence of attention to and awareness of what is occurring in the present moment (Ciro Conversano, 2020). Acceptance and psychological flexibility has been known to have a positive effect on psychological well-being (Hayes and Strosahl, 2004). Dispositional mindfulness and well-being is found to have a positive relationship while a negative relationship exists between stressors and well-being (Irie T and Yokomitsu K, 2019). An individual's perception towards life, affect, attitude towards life circumstances coupled with environmental factors contributes towards an enhanced sense of wellbeing (Danielle Burns, 2020). This exponential aspect of mindfulness awareness and enhanced well-being has prompted curiosity and speculation about the relationship between mindfulness and well-being in this new normal.

Objectives

1. To determine how people perceive the new normal.
2. To investigate the strategies people adopt to cope with the situation.
3. To examine the relationship between mindfulness awareness and psychological well-being in young adults.
4. To find out the significant difference in mindfulness awareness based on demographic factors
5. To find out the significant difference in psychological well- being based on demographic factor.

Research Design

The Research design was Ex post facto research.

Statistical Analysis

Statistics used are Pearson correlation coefficient was used to investigate the relationships between variables and independent samples *t*-test was used to examine gender differences in the two variables.

Sample Design

The sample consisted of 200 young adults between the age group of 18-35 years of age. Snowball sampling technique was used to select the sample.

Tools Used for The Study

- **Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale – Brown K W & Ryan R, 2003:** The 15-item self-report Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale measured mindfulness awareness towards the self during day-to-day activities. Likert scale items (1=Almost Always, to 6=Almost Never) assessed to which extent the participants pay attention and stay mindfully aware during their day-to-day activities. The Mindfulness attention awareness scale maintained excellent internal consistency (Cronbach's α=.92). The scale is also found to have a good convergent and discriminant validity.
- **Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale – Carol D. Ryff, 1995:** This scale was developed with 42-items and later was shortened into 18-items, researchers have used both the versions to measure the psychological well-being of oneself. The Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale measures six aspects of wellbeing and happiness: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. Likert scale items (1=Strongly Agree to 7=Strongly Disagree). Positive items reflect the ability of psychological well-being and negative items indicates in the opposite direction of what the scale is measuring. The test-retest reliability coefficient of RPWBS was 0.82. The subscales of Self-acceptance, Positive Relation with Others, Autonomy, Environmental Mastery, Purpose in Life, and Personal Growth were found to be 0.71, 0.77, 0.78, 0.77, 0.70, and 0.78 respectively, which were statistically significant ($p<0.001$)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Pearson's Product Moment correlation between mindfulness awareness and psychological well-being in young adults.

Variable	Correlation Coefficient
Mindfulness awareness	0.55**
Psychological well-being	

**p < .01

From the above table, it is observed that the correlation coefficient between mindfulness awareness and psychological well-being in young adults, r (198) = 0.55, which is significant at 0.01 level. The positive relationship indicates that increase in mindfulness awareness, psychological well-being increases in young adults. The finding seems to indicate that individuals who are likely to focus on being content with the present situation with mindful awareness may have increase coping ability during stressful conditions which might in itself generate a greater sense of well-being. This result is supported by the research conducted by Moskowitz, Duncan, Branstrom (2011) indicated that mindfulness is strongly related to well-being and perceived health.

Table 2: Mean, standard deviation, 't' value (CR) and level of significance on mindfulness awareness between 18 - 22 years & 23-35 years.

Variables	Age	N	Mean	SD	SED	'*t*' value
Mindfulness awareness	18-22 years	105	56.85	14.43	2.16	2.11*
	23-35 years	95	61.43	16.06		

*p < .05

From the above table, it is observed that the critical value for t = 2.11, p < 0.05, which is significant at 0.05 level. This indicates that there exists a significant difference in Mindfulness awareness between 18 - 22 years & 23-35 years. Comparing the mean values, individuals between 23-35 years are slightly greater in mindfulness awareness when compared to 18-22 years which signifies that emotional and social maturity or experiences over life may cause them to be more focussed on the present and accept the new normal better than individuals between 18-22 who may find transition into new normal challenging. This is in support to the study done by Zivnuska et. al (2016) indicated that employee who is high in mindful awareness will notice when they are distracted, and this awareness will motivate to refocus, to remain "engaged" in the present moment, enabling them to return to the task. This is also in support to the study done by Alispahic, Hasanbegovic-Anic (2017) older participants scored higher in mindfulness than younger participants.

Table 3: Mean, standard deviation, 't' value (CR) and level of significance on psychological well-being between 18 - 22 years & 23-35 years.

Variable	Age	N	Mean	SD	SED	't' value
Psychological well-being	18-22 years	105	84.58	13.34	1.91	3.03**
	23-35years	95	90.38	13.34		

**p < .01

From the above table, it is observed that the critical value for t = 3.03, p < 0.01, which is significant at 0.01 level. This indicates that there exists a significant difference in psychological well-being between 18 - 22 years & 23-35 years. Comparing the mean values, individuals between 23-35 years are slightly greater in psychological well-being when compared to 18-22 years which signifies that individual between 23-35 years have better independence, work-life balance leading to enhanced well-being when compared to 18-22 years of age. This is in contradictory to the study done by Aryan, Richa & Kathuria, Deepika. (2017) indicated that there is no difference in psychological well-being between individuals lower or greater than 25 years of age.

Table 4: Mean, standard deviation, 't' value (CR) and level of significance on mindfulness awareness between male and female young adults.

Variables	Gender	N	Mean	SD	SED	'*t*' value
Mindfulness awareness	Male	81	57.96	16.10	2.22	0.80^{NS}
	Female	119	59.74	14.86		

NS – Not Significant

From the above table, it is observed that the critical value for t = 0.80, which is not significant indicating there exists no significant difference in mindfulness awareness between male and female young adults. However, the mean scores indicate that women are slightly greater in mindfulness awareness when compared to men though the result is not

statistically significant. This is in contradictory to the study done by Alispahic, Hasanbegovic Anic (2017) indicated gender differences in the mindfulness awareness where women were high in mindfulness awareness than men in most of the components of mindfulness. However, in this research there is no significant gender differences with regard to mindfulness awareness.

Table 5: Mean, standard deviation, 't' value (CR) and level of significance on psychological well-being in male and female young adults.

Variables	Gender	N	Mean	SD	SED	'*t*' value
Psychological well-being	Male	81	87.20	15.00	1.98	0.10^{NS}
	Female	119	87.42	12.81		

NS – Not Significant

From the above table, it is observed that the critical value for t = 0.10, which is not significant indicating there exists no significant difference in psychological well-being between male and female young adults. This is in support to the study done by Hasan, Mohammad (2019) indicated no gender differences in the psychological well-being.

Table 6: Mean, standard deviation, 't' value (CR) and level of significance on mindfulness awareness based on employment status.

Variables	Employment status	N	Mean	SD	SED	't' value
Mindfulness awareness	Employed	88	60.11	15.70	2.20	0.88^{NS}
	Unemployed	112	59.74	15.10		

NS – Not Significant

From the above table, it is observed that the critical value for t = 0.88, which is not significant indicating there exists no significant difference in mindfulness awareness between employed and unemployed individuals. However, the mean scores indicate that employed individuals are slightly greater in mindfulness awareness when compared to unemployed individuals though the result is not statistically significant. This is in support to the study done by Fryer (2000) indicated people with-out jobs are on average more anxious, pessimistic and depressed than their employed counterparts. This signifies that their mindful awareness is lower than the employed individuals.

Table 7: Mean, standard deviation, 't' value (CR) and level of significance on psychological well-being based on employment status.

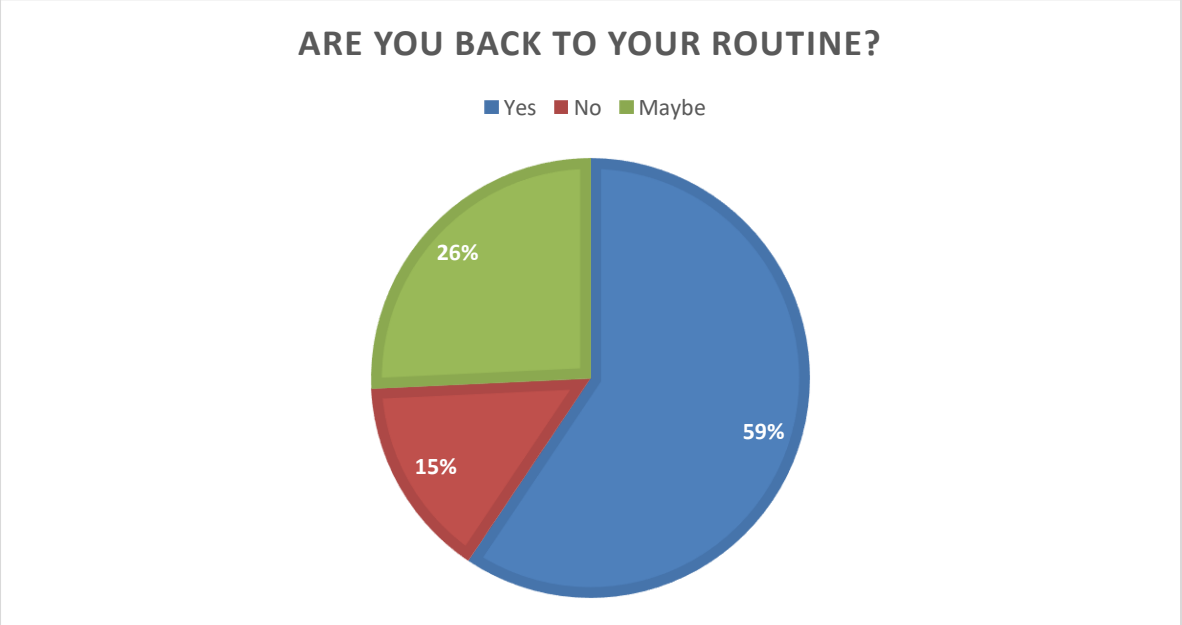
Variables	Employment status	N	Mean	SD	SED	'*t*' value
Psychological well-being	Employed	88	89.85	14.46	1.94	2.31*
	Unemployed	112	85.36	12.81		

*p < .05

From the above table, it is observed that the critical value for t = 2.31, $p < 0.05$, which is significant at 0.05 level. This indicates that there exists a significant difference in psychological well-being between employed and unemployed individuals. Comparing the mean values, individuals who are employed are slightly greater in psychological well-being when compared to individuals who are unemployed which signifies that employed individuals may be engaged and occupied in their work-life routine and financially secure when compared to unemployed individuals. This is in support to the study done by McKee-

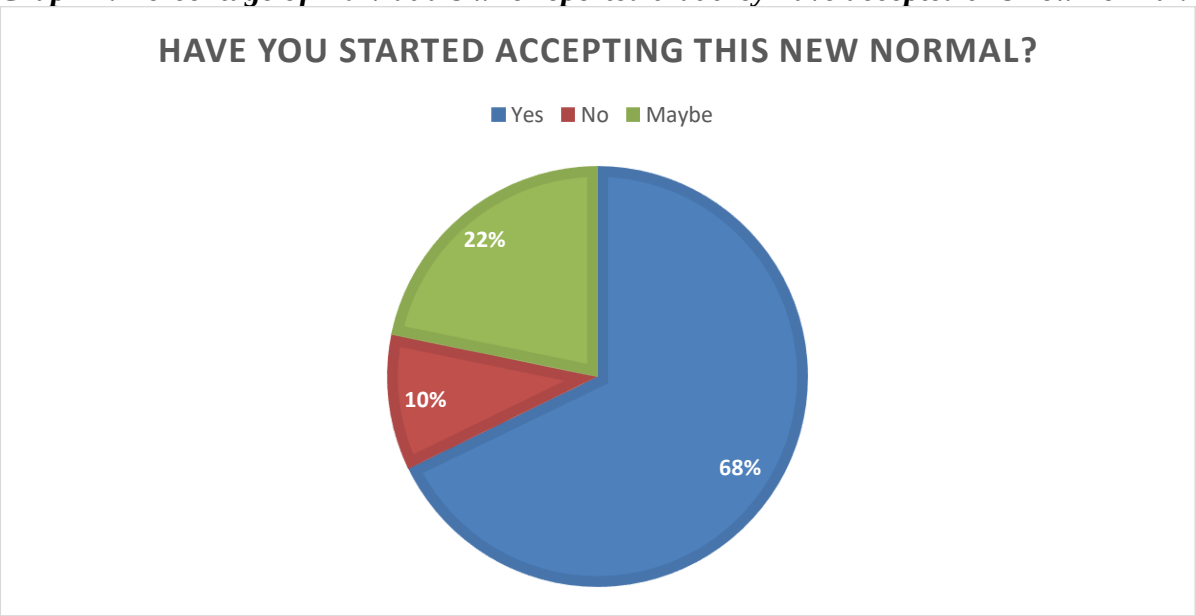
Ryan, Song, Wanberg, and Kinicki (2005) indicated that unemployed persons had lower mental and physical well-being than did their working counterparts.

Graph 1: Percentage of people who reported that they are back to their routine.



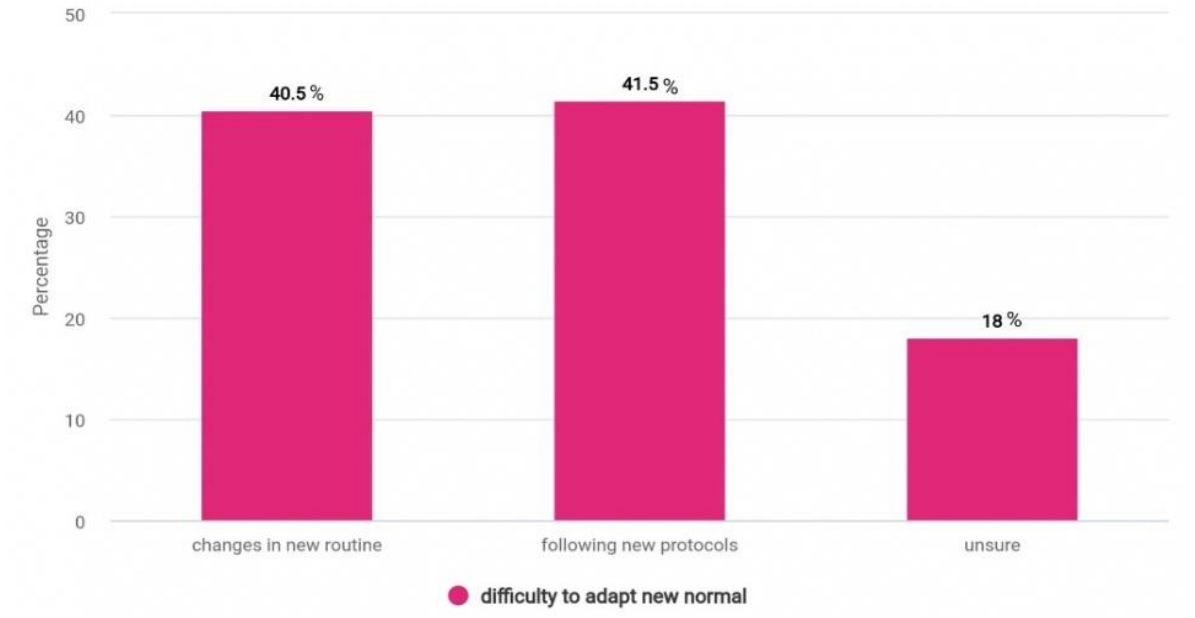
59% of participants have said that they are back to their routine, 26% of the participants are unsure of their transition to routine, 15% are still not to the routine. More than 50% of participants are back to routine which indicates their acceptance and awareness to changes in the environment and greater psychological well-being.

Graph 2: Percentage of individuals who reported that they have accepted this new normal.



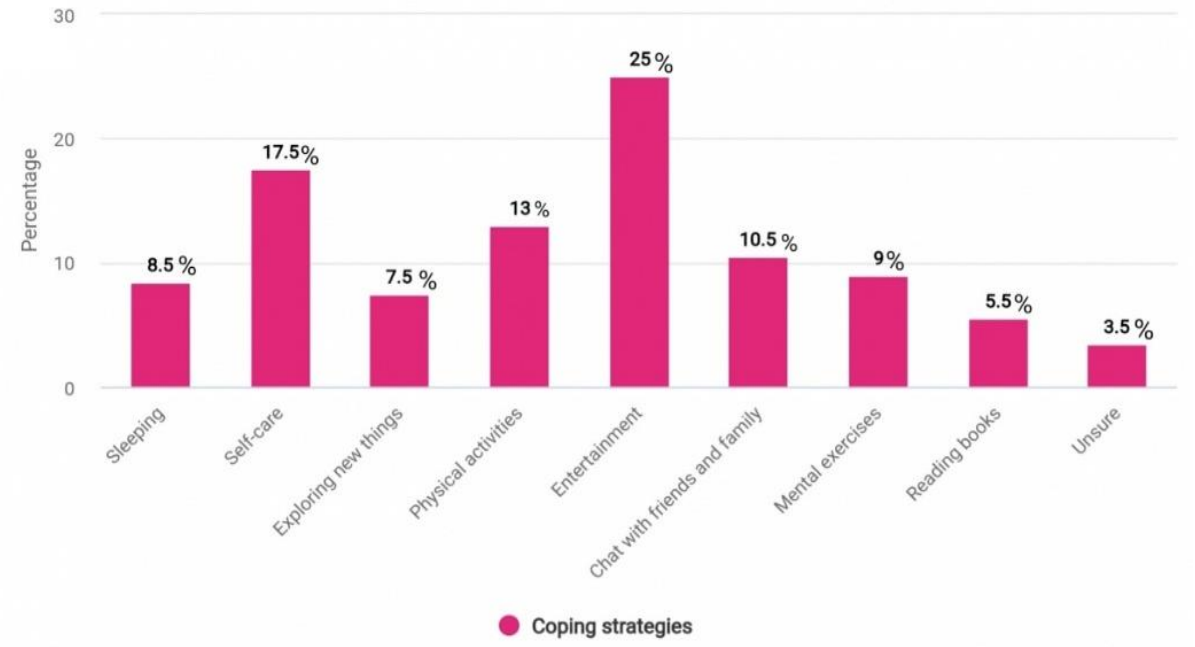
68% of participants have accepted this new normal, 22% of participants are unsure of their acceptance of new normal while 10% have not accepted this new normal. More than 50% of participants have accepted this new normal indicating greater psychological well-being such as displaying autonomy & environmental mastery over this new normal

Chart 1: Indicates responses of participants of what they find difficult to adapt in this new normal.



From the participants in this study, 40.5% of participants have reported changes in new routine is what they find difficult to adapt in this new normal, 41.5% of participants have reported following new protocols is what they find difficult to adapt in this new normal while 18% are unsure of they find difficult to adapt in this new normal.

Chart 2: Indicates few coping strategies of participants to manage stress in the new normal.



From the study, it is found that 8.5% of participants have reported sleeping as a coping strategy to manage stress in the new normal , 17.5% have reported self-care as a coping

strategy to manage stress in the new normal, 7.5% have reported exploring new things as a coping strategy to manage stress in the new normal, 13% have reported physical activities such as workout, walking, running, exercise, swimming and cycling as a coping strategy to manage stress in the new normal, 25% have reported entertainment such as playing games, watching movies, Netflix , music , playing games and playing with pets as a coping strategy to manage stress in the new normal, 10.5% have reported chat with friends and family as a coping strategy to manage stress in the new normal, 9% have reported mental exercise such as yoga and meditation as a coping strategy to manage stress in the new normal, 5.5% have reported reading books as a coping strategy to manage stress in the new normal, while 3.5% are unsure of coping strategies to manage stress in the new normal.

CONCLUSION

1. There is a significant positive relationship between mindfulness awareness and psychological well-being in young adults.
2. There is a significant difference in mindfulness awareness based on age.
3. There is a significant difference in psychological well-being based on age.
4. There is no significant difference in mindfulness awareness based on gender
5. There is no significant difference in psychological well-being based on gender.
6. There is no significant difference in mindfulness awareness based on employment status
7. There is a significant difference in psychological well-being based on employment status.
8. The analysis from the study pertaining to number of people who feel they are back to the new normal and accept it also indicates that there are individuals who still find it challenging to accept the new normal.
9. The study reveals that following new protocols, changes in routines and uncertainty are the major reasons on how their psychological well-being is significantly affected.
10. Sleeping, self-care activities, physical activities, spending time with friends and family, reading books are some coping strategies individuals try to adopt in this new normal.

Implications

The new normal period can be challenging with lots of unforseen changes such as online learning, financial and social constraints. It is found that practicing mindfulness awareness may enhance well- being in young adults. Thus, intervention to teach mindfulness may help these young adults to cope with difficult situations and improve overall psychological well-being. Psycho-education on how to monitor one's negative thoughts and emotions and also to be aware and accept the circumstances may bring about a better clarity to handle the situation. Thus, it is also the role of a psychologist to bring awareness and provide training programs for young adults and other age groups on mindfulness awareness which can help the individuals handle interpersonal, work-life situations and social problems more effectively and to possess a hopeful outlook about life. Thus, mindfulness awareness benefits the individual personally as well socially.

Limitations

1. The research was done with only 200 young adults.

Suggestions For Further Research

1. A larger sample could have been used.

2. Other psychological variables related to mindfulness awareness and well-being can be investigated.
3. The study can be done with other age groups such as middle and old age adults.

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Conflict of Interest
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