



Research Paper

Mindfulness – a Study with respect to MBA Students of Gujarat

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Abstract

Mindfulness gives greater attention to and awareness to present moment experience. In the past two decades there has been a very huge increase in the mindfulness interventions. This research paper focus on mindfulness in the academic industry. It has been a proven fact through various literature review that mindfulness has been very important in improving the efficiency at the corporate workplace. The research paper tries to see the same with regards to academics especially for the MBA students. This research paper is trying to explain the correlation between the student's mindfulness on their academic performance. The researcher has implemented confirmatory factor analysis using maximum likelihood method and tries to mention the correlation between mindfulness and academic performance for Master of Business Administration (MBA) students. It has been observed that mindfulness is an important factor to improve the academic performance for MBA students.

Key words – Mindfulness, students, correlation

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I. INTRODUCTION

Jon Kabat-Zinn, creator of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center, defines mindfulness as “awareness that arises through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally.”

Mindfulness. Many people think of mindfulness as just another word for meditation, when in fact mindfulness in our context is much more. Mindfulness, for us, is work in service of deep noticing—we practice quieting our minds and wait to see whether something important might creep into our peripheral vision to inform the work we are doing. That could be an image, a memory, even the sense of a possibility. In reality what we are doing is slowing down now to go fast more productively and reflects another type of dynamic tension. This sounds easy but, in real time, is actually quite difficult to practice, and it's one of the first areas where participants often face great, internal discomfort. Manipulating velocity is a powerful tool for reflection and for accessing intuition. (Alan M. Barstow and Sharon Benjamin 2019)

Mindfulness is also defined as “the capacity to experience each object of the mind with friendliness or neutrality” and situates mindfulness's status within the larger history of Buddhist cultural adaptation. (Sarah Shaw)

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

In the corporate world mindfulness helps in creating a positive work environment and reduces employee stress. Many multi-national companies like Bank of America, General Mills, JP Morgan Chase & Co, Intel Corp, Google are using mindfulness to create a more harmonious and positive work environment. Even the large sports teams like NBA and NFL are taking the help of mindfulness experts to help their elite players to deal with the pressure of performance. In the same article it's been mentioned that there is ample of research and personal testimony that proves how mindfulness can benefit employees and teams in various diverse industries like finance, insurance, education, government and IT in creating happier and healthier employees and a more positive culture. (Pandit Dasa 2017).

In the management education the students are suppose to perform various stressful activities like presentations, assignments etc. Mindfulness can help individuals to manage workplace stress, perform task more effectively, enhance self awareness, improve workplace relationship and make perception more accurate. (John Morris 2012) The study has confirmed that mindfulness can develop collaboration, focus and empathy. (Dr. Megan Reitz). Mindfulness will support your development as a person and help one to navigate its career. (Jessica Powers 2019)

“Mindful people can better cope with difficult thoughts and emotions without becoming over-whelmed or emotionally shutting down” (Lisa R Schmidt 2018). Neuroscientists Richard Davidson at the Center for Investigating Healthy Minds in Madison, Wisconsin, have shown that mindfulness changes the way the brain functions—which improves cognitive flexibility (the ability to understand multiple points of view), creativity and innovation, well-being, emotional regulation, and empathy (Lynn Rossy 2013)

There are lots of people who have applied mindfulness techniques to cognitive behavioural therapy to reduce depression, boost working memory, reduce emotional reactivity, (Carol Brzozowski 2018) and a whole range of physiological problems (Robert Jeffery 2015). Mindfulness is negatively related to role conflict (Sean Valentine, Lynn Godkin, Philip E Varca 2009) Mindfulness allows all the employees to focus on the task, recharge quickly and master peak levels of stress (Neal Goodman 2020).

From the above-mentioned literature review its clear that mindfulness is very helpful for the corporate employees. Thus, this research paper focuses on weather mindful students are having good academic performance with respect to MBA study. Thus, we come up with the following hypothesis

H1 – There is a positive correlation between mindfulness and academic performance of the MBA students

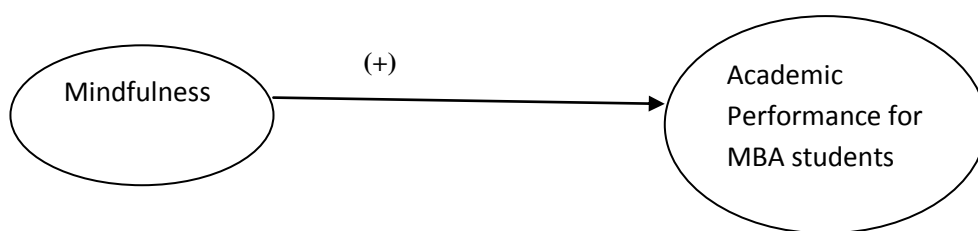


Fig 1 Hypothesized Relationship

Purpose of the research

The researcher is a faculty at an MBA college in Gujarat and noticed that there are few students whose academic performance in MBA is good and there are few students whose academic performance is poor. The researcher wants to improve the academic performance of poor students. Thus, through this study, researcher wanted to identify the relationship between mindful students and their academic performance. If the relation is positive, then further the researcher wants to conduct some training program on mindfulness for the poor academic students so that there may be a chance for them to be academic performer. Thus this research will be forming a base for conducting the training program on mindfulness for the MBA students.

III. METHOD

The researcher had prepared a Google document and was circulate in various MBA colleges of Gujarat. The Google document was a Mindful Attention Awareness Scale. It was basically a six-point Likert scale as under

Table 1 Mindful Attention Awareness Scale

Sr. No	Statement	Almost always	Very frequently	Somewhat frequently	Somewhat infrequently	Very infrequently	Almost never
1	I could be experiencing some emotion and not be conscious of it until some-time later	1	2	3	4	5	6
2	I break or spill things because of carelessness, not paying attention or thinking of something else	1	2	3	4	5	6
3	I find it difficult to stay focused on what's happening in the present	1	2	3	4	5	6
4	I tend to walk quickly to get where I'm going without paying attention to what I experience along the way	1	2	3	4	5	6
5	I tend not to notice feelings of physical tension	1	2	3	4	5	6

	or discomfort until they really grab my attention						
6	I forget a person's name almost as soon as I've been told it for the first time	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	It seems I am "running on automatic" without much awareness of what I'm doing	1	2	3	4	5	6
8	I rush through activities without being really attentive to them	1	2	3	4	5	6
9	I get so focused on the goal I want to achieve that I lose touch with what I am doing right now to get there	1	2	3	4	5	6
10	I do jobs or tasks automatically, without being aware of what I'm doing	1	2	3	4	5	6
11	I find myself listening to someone with one ear, doing something else at the same time	1	2	3	4	5	6
12	I drive places on "automatic Pilot" and then wonder why I went there	1	2	3	4	5	6
13	I find myself preoccupied with the future or the past	1	2	3	4	5	6
14	I find myself doing things without paying attention	1	2	3	4	5	6
15	I snack without being aware that I'm eating	1	2	3	4	5	6

The Google document was send twice in the month of July 2020, within a span of two weeks. In the first mail the researcher received the 228 responses from the students and in the second reminder the responses received from the students was only 98. Thus the total responses is 326. The final responses taken for the researcher were 294 as 32 responses consisted missing data.

The responses which was received was quantified using the package of SPSS version 20 and 'R' package was used

Output and Results.

The below mentioned table shows mean, standard deviation and Item-Total Correlations for the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale

Table 2 Means, Standard Deviation and Item-Total Correlations for the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale

Sr. No	Scale Item	M	SD	I-T
1	I could be experiencing some emotion and not be conscious of it until some- time later	3.71	1.24	0.47
2	I break or spill things because of carelessness, not paying attention or thinking of something else	4.21	1.47	0.65
3	I find it difficult to stay focused on what's happening in the present	3.86	1.40	0.72
4	I tend to walk quickly to get where I'm going without paying attention to what I experience along the way	3.50	1.55	0.53
5	I tend not to notice feelings of physical tension or discomfort until they really grab my attention	3.71	1.47	0.62
6	I forget a person's name almost as soon as I've been told it for the first time	4.50	1.59	0.45
7	It seems I am "running on automatic" without much awareness of what I'm doing	4.38	1.38	0.68
8	I rush through activities without being really attentive to them	4.00	1.25	0.71
9	I get so focused on the goal I want to achieve that I lose touch with what I am doing right now to get there	3.57	1.48	0.58
10	I do jobs or tasks automatically, without being aware of what I'm doing	4.43	1.31	0.63
11	I find myself listening to someone with one ear, doing something else at the same time	4.00	1.53	0.51
12	I drive places on "automatic Pilot" and then wonder why I went there	4.21	1.53	0.58
13	I find myself preoccupied with the future or the past	3.57	1.51	0.56
14	I find myself doing things without paying attention	4.29	1.49	0.64
15	I snack without being aware that I'm eating	4.21	1.59	0.53

In the above table the mean is more than 3.5 in all the items and the standard deviation is more than 1. In all the items the Item-Total Correlations is more than 0.4. Thus, it proves the reliability of the data.

The researcher performed a Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the single factor model on the data collected from students, using maximum-likelihood estimation in the R program. The fit indices of the model indicated that the correspondence between factors mindfulness and the performance was satisfactory, $\chi^2(92, N = 294) = 252.115$ (goodness-of-fit index [GFI] = 0.90, comparative fit index [CFI] = 0.91, index to fit [IFI] = 0.91, root-mean-square error of approximation [RMSEA] = 0.055)

All 15 items in the scale are significantly related to the latent factor. The internal consistency (alpha) was 0.9071

After the fit indices the sem plot was plotted in R. The model was as under

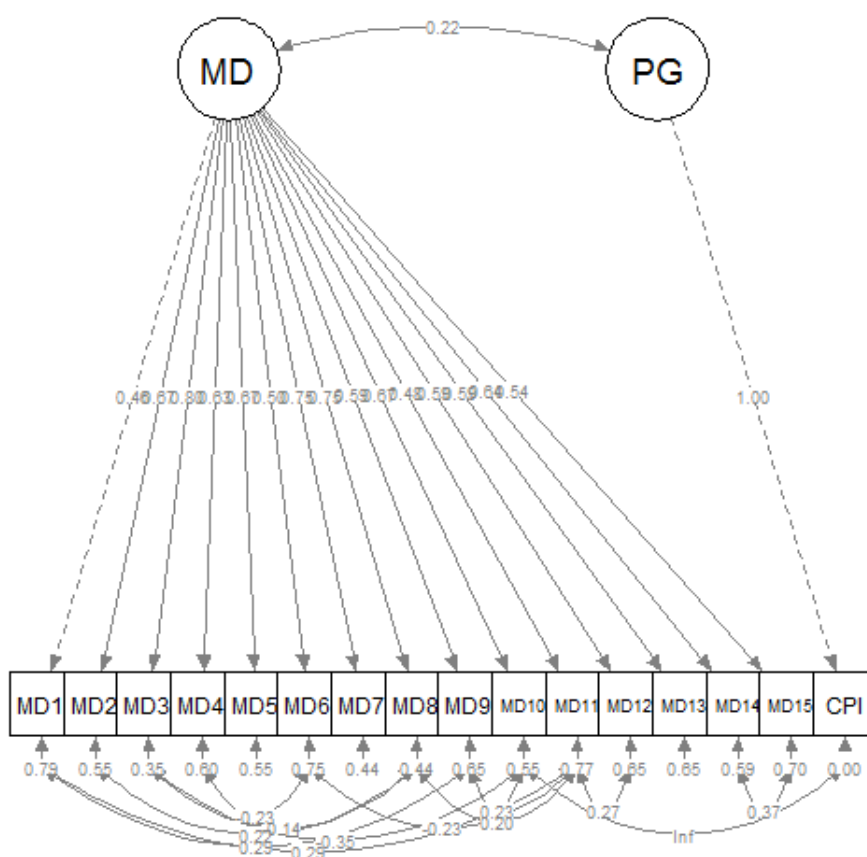


Fig 1 SEM model based on Mindfulness of students with respect to their performance

IV. DISCUSSION

Primary goal of this study was to see the relationship between the mindfulness of MBA students to their performances. Thus, if the students are mindful, their performance will be high. From the research the hypothesis has been accepted i.e. the performance of MBA students is associated with mindfulness. There is a positive correlation between mindfulness of MBA students and its academic performance. Thus, in MBA if the student wants to score good marks or want to have good academic performance, then being mindfulness helps that student.

Limitations and Future Directions

The basic limitations of the research paper are that it is only focused on only one state of India and on one stream only. The focus of the research paper is in Gujarat and on MBA students only.

For the future directions, the scope of the research can be improved to other states and beyond MBA to other disciplines.

Implications

The research paper will be helpful for MBA students and even to the teachers who are teaching in MBA. For the students it will give an opportunity to understand how the performance can be improved with the help of mindfulness. Teachers will understand how mindfulness has an impact on the performance of the students. Thus, this research paper will be helpful for both the community of students and educators in understanding the relationship between mindfulness and performance. This research paper will have a positive effect on MBA students mind set and they will try to be mindful which will further help them in improving their performance in the examination.

V. CONCLUSION

The research paper has positively identified the correlation between mindfulness and the MBA student's academic performance. Thus, if the students want to achieve a higher academic performance, then he/she can focus on achieving mindfulness. Mindfulness is powerful tool through which habitual multitasking can be done, thus helping the student to be more effective as a professional. It is also a useful way to improve the quality of daily lives. Thus, mindfulness intervention is useful to students also.

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