

# Mindfulness and Depression on Academic Performance among Adolescents

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**Abstract:** *The present study throws light to find out the impact of mindfulness and depression on academic performance among adolescents. 100 male and female adolescents in the age group of 15 to 17 were selected through multistage cluster random sampling. They completed the Kentucky Inventory of Mindfulness Skills devised by Ruth A. Baer, Gregory T. Smith & Kristin B. Allen in 2004, Beck's Depression Inventory devised by Beck, Steer & Garbin in 1988 and Personnel information schedule devised by author. Aggregate percentage of marks obtained by adolescents in their previous exam was used as academic performance. The obtained data were analyzed using required statistical tools. The obtained results revealed that there is a positive correlation found between mindfulness and academic performance, negative correlation between depression and academic performance and mindfulness. It was also found that female adolescents are more depressed than male adolescents and elder students were found to be more depressed than younger adolescents.*

**Key Words:** *academic performance, adolescents, mindfulness, depression.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

In the present day's competitive scenario there is a stringent need for the students to prove their academic competence. In order to prove their academic competence they need to score higher in academic exams. Academic performance plays major role in the student's education context because, only through the academic performance they can prove themselves that they are competent and well enough in academic subjects. More often academic performance scores are used as criteria for deciding their higher education. Therefore in order to get in the desired higher studies there is need to score high marks in the academic subjects. Failure in academic performance may result in stress, depression, self- mutilation and sometimes suicide too. Therefore academic performance has to be taken into account seriously. There are various factors which influences the academic performance in different ways. Mindfulness and depression are two important factors among them.

### 1.1. MINDFULNESS:

Mindfulness is the basic human capacity and it occurs at different levels. It helps to cultivates the awareness of the present experience makes to accept the world with its original nature and cultivates non judgmental perspective of oneself and others. In the words of Kabat-Zinn, (1994) "Mindfulness is paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non judgmentally" (p. 4).

Mindfulness at higher level increases the clarity of one's awareness and creates an ability to access one's abilities and knowledge, both intellectually and emotionally. Mindfulness improves the academic performance (Nidich et al., 2011; Colbert, 2013). It also enhances the capacity of working memory and maintains the attention (Chambers, Lo, and Allen, 2008) which are highly essential for effective learning. It also decreases the anxiety and stress (Shapiro et al., 2007) which are common among students during examinations. It is found that children who have participated in a mindfulness based stress reduction intervention showed improvements in attention, self-regulation which are the essential qualities for higher academic performance. Therefore mindfulness training can be given to students in order to improve their academic performance.

### 1.2. DEPRESSION:

Depression seems to be the common mental health problem which occurs at all ages including adolescence stage. Unidentified or untreated, depression can create a pervasive and long-term impairment on personal, social and academic performance of the adolescents. When the school personnel are able to identify and handle the adolescents with depression, it will be an effective support for them to come out of depression.

Depression is sometimes mistaken as lack of motivation. Even depression might be displayed with the symptoms like severe withdrawal, suicide attempts, emotional swings; sometimes milder cases may not receive attention and not noticed by others.

Depressive students often explain and interpret their failure in a pessimistic way. When a student suffers with depression it affects their mood and it reduces their academic performance (Lindsey, Fabiano, & Stark, 2009). In the words of McCarthy, Downes & Sherman (2008) depression is one of the causes for suicide among students. Female students are more prone to stress than male students (Kuehner, 2016). The depression level may range from mild to severe and its level of impairment, treatment differs accordingly. When the student is depressed they may be spending

less time in their educational activities and they are seem to be underachievers with low grade points. They may not be in the position to classify the negative affect and positive affect. A survey conducted by American College Health Association with college students reveals that 30 percent of students are found to be depressed and their regular functions got impaired.

When a person is under depression then their emotional reactions, thinking processes and day to day activities and behaviours may get disrupted. There are many factors that contribute to depression such as loneliness, lack of social support from family, peers, neighbors, financial strain, stress due to studies etc. Depression involve the feelings of being weak, sad, helpless, frustrated, disappointed, despairing and hopeless .The symptoms of depression like difficulty in concentration, lack of interest, motivation reduces and affects their educational performance.

## 2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE:

Sharma & Pandey (2017) did a study to investigate about depression, anxiety and stress in relation to academic performance among the school students. 120 higher secondary school going students were selected through random sampling and they completed the ADS Scale devised by Bhatnagar et al., 2010. The obtained results revealed that depression and anxiety significantly influences the academic performance.

Sheikhzadeh & Khatami (2017) examined the relationship between the critical thinking, mindfulness and academic achievement among intermediate Iranian learners. 220 participants from the age group of 20 to 25 of both male and female majoring in English translation were selected and administered a standardized Oxford Placement Test (OPT), California critical thinking questionnaire, mindfulness awareness scale and reading comprehension test. The results indicated a significant negative correlation between the students' critical thinking and reading comprehension. There was a significant positive correlation found between the students' mindfulness and reading comprehension and no significant relationship between the students' mindfulness and critical thinking.

## 3. METHOD AND MATERIALS:

### 3.1. OBJECTIVES

- To find out the relationship between mindfulness, depression and academic performance among adolescents.
- To examine whether there is any significant difference on depression among adolescents on the basis of their gender.
- To find out whether there is any significant difference exists on depression among adolescents on the basis of age.

### 3.2. HYPOTHESES

- There is a significant relationship between mindfulness, depression and academic performance of adolescents.
- Adolescents differ in depression on the basis of gender.
- Adolescents differ in the depression on the basis of age.

### 3.3 PARTICIPANTS

Adolescents studying in the private and government schools in the age group between 15 and 17 participated in the study. They were selected through multistage cluster random sampling.

### 3.4 INSTRUMENTS

- Kentucky Inventory of Mindfulness Skills devised by Ruth A. Baer, Gregory T. Smith & Kristin B. Allen (2004). It is a 39 item self report inventory used to assess the mindfulness skills. It is used to measure four mindfulness domains like observe, describe, acting with awareness and accepting (or allowing) without judgment.
- Beck's Depression Inventory devised by Beck, Steer & Garbin in 1988. This is a 21 item inventory used to measure affective, cognitive and vegetative symptoms of depression.
- Personnel information Schedule devised by researcher.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

**Table 1**

*Correlation coefficient between Academic performance, mindfulness and depression among adolescents*

Variables	Academic Performance	Mindfulness	Depression
Academic Performance	-	.74**	-.22**
Mindfulness	.74**	-	-.01**
Depression	-.22	-0.10**	-

\*\* Correlation is significant at 0.01 level

Table 1 shows the correlation coefficient between academic performance, mindfulness and depression among adolescents. From the table it is found that academic performance is positively correlated with mindfulness ( $r = .742$ ) and negatively correlated with depression ( $r = -.223$ ). It is also found that mindfulness is negatively correlated with depression ( $r = .010$ ). Thus it can be interpreted that mindfulness has a positive relationship with academic performance and negative relationship with depression, depression has a negative relationship with academic performance. This result is in line with Bhasin, Sharma & Saini (2009).

**Table 2**

*Mean and Standard deviation of depression of adolescents on the basis of gender*

Gender	Number	Mean	Std. Deviation	t value
Male	50	2.78	1.60	3.22
Female	50	3.92	1.91	

Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation of depression of adolescents on the basis of gender. From the table it is found that the obtained mean value and standard deviation value for male is 2.78 and 1.60 and for female is 3.92 and 1.91. The obtained t value 3.22 is significant at 0.01 level. From the mean value it is found that female scored higher and therefore it is inferred that female are higher in depression. Therefore the formulated hypothesis that, adolescents differ in the depression on the basis of gender is accepted. The result is in line with Jha et al., (2017) Kumar, Jain & Hegde (2012); Bhasin, Sharma & Saini (2009). The difference may be due to their difference in biology, socio factors etc. Solomon & Herman says that testosterone in male may provides protective benefits against depression which is lower level in females.

**Table 3**

*Mean, Standard deviation of depression of adolescents on the basis of age*

Age	Number	Mean	Std. Deviation	F value
17	24	4.29	1.82	5.09
16	39	3.28	1.97	
15	37	2.81	1.50	
Total	100	3.35	1.85	

Table 3 shows the mean and standard deviation of depression of adolescents on the basis of age. From the table it is found that the obtained mean value and standard deviation value for the age 17 is 4.29, 1.82, for the age 16 is 3.28, 1.97 and for age 15 is 2.81, 1.50. The obtained F value 5.09 is significant at 0.01 level. From the mean value it is found that the adolescents in the age group of 17 scored higher and therefore it can be interpreted that they are having more depression than adolescents in the age group of 15 and 16. Thus the formulated hypothesis adolescents differ in the depression on the basis of age is accepted. The result is in line with Naushad et al., (2014), Jha et al (2017), Bhasin, Sharma & Saini (2009). Elder students may have more study related activities, social responsibilities, commitments, than the younger students. Since the exposure to psychological stress is high in elder adolescents it may pave way for them to be more depressed.

## 5. FINDINGS:

- There is a positive correlation between mindfulness and academic performance, negative correlation between depression and mindfulness, academic performance.
- Female adolescents are higher in depression than male adolescents.
- The adolescents in the age 17 are higher depression than adolescents in the age of 15 and 16.

## 6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS:

The present study focused to find the impact of mindfulness and depression on academic performance among adolescents. 100 male and female adolescents in the age group of 15 to 17 completed the Kentucky Inventory of Mindfulness Skills devised by Ruth A. Baer, Gregory T. Smith & Kristin B. Allen (2004), Beck's Depression Inventory devised by Beck, Steer & Garbin in 1988 and Personnel information schedule devised by author. Aggregate percentage of marks obtained by adolescents in their previous exam was used as academic performance. They were selected through multi stage cluster random sampling. The obtained data were analyzed using required statistical tools.

The obtained results revealed that there is a positive correlation found between mindfulness and academic performance. This implies that mindfulness positively influences the academic performance. Hence measures can be taken to train the students in mindfulness so that it may help the students to score higher in academics. It is also found that depression is negatively correlated with academic performance. Hence measures has to be taken in order to identify the depression symptoms at early stages itself, so that the adverse effect due to depression may be avoided

and it also makes the adolescents to get higher academic performance. In regard to gender female are found to have more depression than male adolescents. This may due to their biological changes, socio-cultural factors etc. Hence while diagnosing or dealing with depression female adolescents has to be given extra concern since they are seems to be more prone to depression. With regard to age, adolescents in the age of 17 were depressed more than the adolescents in the age of 15 and 16. This implies that elder students are having more stress. The stress may be due to their learning activities, family pressures and commitments etc. Hence elder adolescents have to give more care while dealing with depression. Thus when mindfulness is improved and depression is reduced it paves a chance for the adolescents to perform well in academics and score higher academic performance.

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