

The effect of Mindfulness on Negative Automatic Thoughts

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Abstract: Mindfulness is a Bhuddists practice or preaching that helps a person to adapt

New positive thoughts ,focus on one's body.

This study was conducted to find the effect of mindfulness intervention on negative automatic thoughts. For this study total 9 subjects were taken as sample and all were females studying in Lovely Professional University. For this study, dependent paired sample t- test was applied. To measure negative automatic thoughts NAT Questionnaire developed by Holland and Kendall was used. In the beginning NAT questionnaire was administered on participants to get the NAT scores. Afterwards participants were given 10 days of mindfulness exercises. There were total 3 different exercises (mindful breathing, mindful hearing and mindful observation) which were given to them for 10 days for 20 minutes daily. After 10 days of practice of mindfulness exercises, the negative automatic thought were checked again through NAT questionnaire. After applying the dependent paired sample t-test the results came out significant. It showed significant difference in the pre and post test scores.

Key Words: mindfulness, Buddhist meditation, past regrets and future worries.

1. INTRODUCTION:

" A Quality of consciousness manifest in, but not isomorphic with, the activities through which it is enhanced Mindfulness can also be viewed as a means to develop wisdom. "

Mindfulness based therapy is one tool that can help us learn to recognize and understand our thoughts and feeling patterns, with the goal of creating new, more effective patterns.

2. MINDFULNESS:

Mindfulness is a state of active, open attention on the present. When one is mindful, they carefully observe what one feels, think without any judgment. It is the awareness about things we are doing, what we are and awareness about our surroundings. Instead of letting our life pass by us, mindfulness means living in the moment and awakening to our current experience, rather than dwelling on the past or anticipating the future. It is basically observing the present moment and be fully in it.

Mindfulness is rooted from Buddhist meditation. Mindfulness therapy can be combined with cognitive therapies and with stress reduction therapies to get more positive and long lasting results. So many studies have documented the benefits of mindfulness technique in dealing with both physical and psychological issues.

In today's scenario many people are living in their past or are running for their future plans or life. People do not have time to sit, observe and actually feel the present moment, to understand the present thoughts, to feel the emotions related to the present. This fast running life makes people unaware about the moment. It is easy to run then to stop and understand the present scenario. But until and unless we are not getting the meaning of the present, we will not be able to bloom out of the doom.

Through mindfulness we can empty our mind and make it more positive and productive. There are certain exercises which helps in enhancing the mindfulness.

3. MINDFULNESS EXERCISES:

There are total 8-10 Exercises in mindfulness. Which can help a person to relax. Those are- mindful breathing, mindful observing, mindful awareness, mindful listening, mindful immersion , mindful appreciation.

4. NEGATIVE AUTOMATIC THOUGHTS:

Thoughts are keep coming and going. Some are positive and some are negative. Some are induced and some are automatic. Positive thoughts are very beneficial for the healthy development of an individual. It contributes happiness and well-being. On the other hands, negative thoughts, mainly automatic are the most devastating thoughts and are more powerful and less likely to be controllable easily. Negative automatic thoughts are the ones which makes

people more prone to depression or other mental illness. These thoughts generally come from helplessness, low self-esteem, stress and over thinking. These thoughts can also be a reflection of a negative situation or action. It is said that negative thoughts increase during painful situations and psychological stress and are related to that situation only (Gil. Et.al, 1990). Detached mindfulness and thought evaluation are compared with each other. And was found out that negative automatic thoughts comes from different heavy and stressful situations. Beck was the first one to invent the concept of Negative automatic thoughts. Negative thoughts are basically the negative interpretations about the events, about self and about the future and surroundings. And it impacts our feeling as well as mood negatively.

This paper had tried to make an awareness about how the with the technique of mindfulness we can curb the negative thoughts and focus more on the present positively.

5. REVIEW OF LITERATURE :

Mindfulness and negative automatic thoughts

Ben shahar.et.al (2010), conducted a study of MBCT on depressive patients and some on partial remission, they were randomized to 8-week long control trial. The immediate effect on depressive symptoms were shown in the study. The pre-post study of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy showed the reduction of depressive symptoms in depressive patients.

Karen Caldwell & Et. All. (2010), conducted a study to see that effect of mindfulness training on stress, mood sleep quality. This Research was conducted on 166 college students in 2005-2006. Mindfulness Exercises were given for 15 weeks. And afterwards its effects were seen. The results were pretty impressive as mindfulness, total mindfulness scores have increased. The study showed positive effect on their health, students started having proper sleep, their tiredness, negative thought arousal were less as compared to previous. Increased mindfulness helped in good mood and relaxation.

Katie Witkiewitz, Sarah Brown (2012), conducted a study on depressive patients and alcohol craving people. There study was on relationship between depression, craving and relapse in depressive behavior. The results showed that Mindfulness-based relapse prevention influence Cognitive and behavioural responses to depressive symptoms. The direct effects of treatment on substance use outcomes were evident from the 2 month treatment program. This study focused on the positive effect of mindfulness on relapse in depression.

Laura R. Silberstein, Dennis Tirch, and Robert L. Leahy (2012), conducted a study on 107 adult cognitive behavioural outpatient participants. In this study the major focus was on the relationship between mindfulness, emotional schemas and psychological flexibility. There were total fourteen levels of mindfulness on which the patients were experimented with the help of mindful attention and awareness scale (MAAS). In this study researchers found out that the patients who lack psychological flexibility and had low mindfulness were more rigid in their personality and lack emotion stability.

Samson W. Yeung (2013), conducted a study to find the underlying mechanism of how mindfulness works in promoting mental health through negative thought on hundred and eleven undergraduate students of the city university of Hong Kong. The study revealed negative correlates of automatic thoughts with mindfulness effecting mental health. The study aimed to explore the underlying mechanism of how mindfulness works in promoting mental health by taking negative cognition into account. The study shows that mindfulness helps in decreasing negative automatic thoughts and had good effect on mental health.

Nicole De Zoysa, Florian A. Ruths, James Walsh and Jane Huttson (2014), this study was basically a follow-up to the mindfulness based cognitive therapy. As the researchers wanted to know that whether psychological benefits and positive thoughts are still there after 3 months of mindfulness practices. Out of 23 professionals 18 agreed for this study. And as the result showed that there was a significant improvement in levels of mindfulness, the professionals were taking life quite positively even after 3 months of mindfulness practice, given to them.

Jason B. Luoma et. All. (2014), conducted a study on the relationship between suicidal behaviour and mindfulness therapy. The researchers want to find mindfulness effect on suicidal tendency. This study was conducted on patients who have already tried suicides before. The results showed that after participants were given mindfulness therapy, their positive thoughts increased significantly.

Marloes J. Hujibers et. All. (2015), conducted a study to know the effect of mindfulness based cognitive therapy on recurrent depression. The researchers divided adults into 2 parallel groups who have 3 or more episodes of depression. The study was conducted within the time span of 6 months. The results showed that participants after the mindfulness based cognitive therapy did not have one single episode of depression in 3 months.

6. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

- To study the effect of mindfulness on negative automatic thoughts.

HYPOTHESIS

- There will be no effect of mindfulness on negative automatic thoughts.

7. METHODOLOGY:

Scope of the Study

Mindfulness is an ancient therapy which is very much needed in today's world, where people are more dwell either in their past or in their future, but not in their present world. Through this technique one will be able to learn to live in the present which makes the person more productively happy. Once the person is in present, it takes him/her more distant from the past regrets and future worries. And at the end person will make more productive decisions and develop sound mind and body.

Research Design

This study was quasi-experimental in nature. The main focus of the study was to see the "effect of mindfulness on negative automatic thoughts."

Sample

Purposive and convenient sampling methods were applied to get the sample. The sample was taken from Lovely Professional University. Total 9 subjects were taken and all were female students.

Tools used

Three Mindfulness based exercises were used in this study. These were - mindful listening, mindful observing, and mindful breathing.

(1) **Mindful breathing** - subject were made comfortable and instructed to relax for 30 seconds. Then instruction was given to focus on their natural breathing process. The they were told to hold their breadth for 5-10 second s as long as they felt comfortable and later breadth out. It was continued for 15 times for ----- days. Instructi ons were provided to be calm, smile and feel the present breathing process.

(2) Mindfulness seeing

Firstly subjects were made relaxed for 30 seconds. Prefer was given to stand by the window and focus outside. They had to just focus on any article. One can focus on any branch or bird or tree or plant. One had to focus on its structure and its components. Focus should be on a one particular thing. They were told to look at the object with interest and fascination. And relaxed while watching the particular object.

(3) Mindful Hearing

In this exercise, subjects were instructed to feel or hear one's own heartbeat, pulse rate and even if possible their blood following also. One had to sit for 1-2 minutes and concentrate on one own self. One had to concentrate and feel their hands, legs and other body parts. Concentrate on breathing was go side by side. Then later concentration was shifted to other parts of the body.

• Automatic Thoughts Questionnaire developed by Hollon and kendall (1980). This questionnaire contains 30 items to measure the level of negative automatic thoughts. Hollinger and Kendall (1980) reported high internal reliability, strong The coefficients of correlation ranged from .45 to .70.

Statistical analysis

Pared sample t test was applied to get the pre and post test scores.

8. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

Table 1. Shows the score of negative automatic thoughts before and after the mindfulness intervention.

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair	total negative automatic thoughts pre phase	48.78	9	9.203	3.068
1	total negative automatic thoughts post	35.5556	9	3.16667	1.05556

Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences				t	df	sig (2-tailed)	
	Mean	Std Deviation	Std error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower				Upper
pair 1 total negative automatic thoughts pre phase- total negative automatic thoughts post	13.22222	9.06612	3.02204	6.25339	20.19106	4.375	8	.002

The above table shows that there is a significant difference in the scores of pre and post test. Hence here we reject our hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in pre and post negative automatic thoughts test scores after mindfulness intervention. Mindfulness technique helps people to be in the present and once the person is in the present, it automatically focuses less on past failures and on future worries, but more on the present moment. This technique is very useful in minimizing stress, negative thoughts, depressive symptoms. Our mind and body is in sync when one do mindfulness therapy. Mindfulness based exercises are one of the easiest and effective therapies in today's psychology field.

9. CONCLUSION:

It has been found that mindfulness technique is useful and effective in dealing with negative automatic thoughts. Through Mindfulness we can inculcate to be in the moment state in the person. Once the person is in present, it automatically takes him/her away from the past and future tensions. Mindfulness-based therapy is very popular therapy. It effects several other prospects of human body. Mindfulness is an ancient therapy which can be useful in day to day life. Mindfulness is a Buddhists practice or preaching that helps a person to adapt new positive thoughts, focus on one's body. Increased mindfulness helps in minimizing wrong or negative automatic thoughts and stress very effectively.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The sample size limits the experiment in few ways. There were only 9 participants for a given period of time and all were females.
- It will be more beneficial to take more sessions of mindfulness for long lasting impact.
- Other mindfulness exercises can be included for more benefit.

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