

## EFFECT OF MEDITATION ON PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Received: 11 January, 2023   Revised: 16 February, 2024   Accepted: 22 February, 2024   Published: 28 February, 2024

### ABSTRACT

This study investigates the intricate relationship between meditation practices and psychological well-being, aiming to provide nuanced insights that inform mental health interventions, well-being programs, and mindfulness-based practices. Grounded in diverse theoretical frameworks, including contemplative theories, mindfulness perspectives, and psychological well-being models, the research explores the potential of various meditation techniques to enhance overall mental health. Meditation was kept as independent variable and psychological well-being was dependent variable. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative measures such as the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS), and Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scales (RPWBS). Additionally, qualitative data is gathered through interviews to capture the richness of participants' experiences with meditation. Using a randomized experimental design with 20 participants, the study took place over 1 month. They participated in Meditation, journaling and reactive log once daily. We observed significant results and improvement in their psychological wellbeing. The study's findings can inspire the development of innovative clinical interventions, where therapists incorporate specific meditation techniques tailored to individual mental health needs, fostering a more holistic approach to treatment. Educational institutions may benefit by integrating meditation into curricula and the research's insights can inform global mental health promotion strategies, encouraging the integration of culturally adapted meditation practices into public health initiatives, ultimately fostering psychological well-being on a larger scale. One of the main limitations of current study is response biasness and its generalizability. Data was collected from a single source i.e. questionnaires. In this research endeavor, an examination was conducted on students enrolled at single University.

**Keywords:** Psychological, Well-Being, University, Students

### INTRODUCTION

The word meditation comes from the Latin word "meditatum," which means "to consider." The practice of meditation has deep, observable roots, dating back millennia and originating in a variety of global societies. Even though it is difficult to pinpoint the clear beginning stages, reflection has been a fundamental piece of significant and philosophical practices in various old human progressions (Mead, 2019). In ancient India, where it was a fundamental component of Hindu and Vedic practices, reflection traces its earliest preserved foundations. The most settled made texts that notice reflection are the Vedas, out-dated organizations dating from around 1500 BC. These texts depict different thought practices highlighted achieving significant enlightenment

and self-affirmation. Additionally, meditation has a lengthy tradition in ancient Chinese culture. Taoist perspective particularly associated with the academic Laozi 6th century BCE, highlighted examination to achieve congruity with nature and creating inward balance. Buddhism is, without a doubt, one of the most compelling meditation practices. In the fifth century BCE, Gautama Buddha established Buddhism, which placed a strong emphasis on contemplation as a central practice for achieving edification and freedom from stagnation. The Buddha himself is said to have achieved enlightenment by thinking under the Bodhi tree. Different Buddhist practices, similar to Theravada, Mahayana, and Amicability, have encouraged their own uncommon examination

strategies, including care, obsession, besides, information consideration. Ancient Greece also had meditation practices, which were influenced by Indian and Egyptian practices. Scholars like Pythagoras and Plato advocated for self-education and shrewdness through rigorous training. The Greek period saw the rise of philosophical schools like Emotionlessness and Luxury, which included contemplation as a means of achieving harmony and uprightness. These schools were influenced by Greek, Egyptian, and Persian culture. Medieval meditation exercises were protected and developed within strict religious traditions like Christianity, Islam, and Sufism. Meister Eckhart and Blessed Teresa of Avila, two Christian spiritualists, worked to deepen one's connection to God. There was a resurgence of interest in contemplation and otherworldly research during the Renaissance. During the twentieth century, when researchers and deep seekers from various foundations investigated Eastern approaches to reasoning and practice, reflection gained significant attention in the West. In today's world, reflection is often praised for its positive effects on mental health, stress reduction, and self-improvement. Reflection has grown north of centuries and changed in accordance with different social orders and conviction systems. The primary reason for contemplation remains the same, despite variations in its specific practices and methods: to cultivate inner peace, mindfulness, and a deeper understanding of oneself and the world (Giovanni, 2017).

In the field of brain science, meditation/contemplation is defined as a set of mental preparation exercises designed to familiarize the practitioner with types of mental cycles (Dienstmann, 2017). Examination is portrayed as a mind and body practice focused in on joint efforts between the frontal cortex, cerebrum, body, and direct, containing four key parts, a quiet region with little interferences, a pleasant position, a point of convergence of thought, and an open disposition. It is common practice to use reflection for its various medical benefits, specifically the alleviation of mental states like dejection (Saini et al., 2021).

### **Aspects of psychological well-being on mental health:**

Mental prosperity, including different parts of psychological well-being and emotional experience, has for quite some time been a focal worry in the area of brain research. It alludes to a singular's general fulfilment with life, positive feelings, and a feeling of working successfully in day-to-day existence. Understanding the elements that add to mental prosperity is vital for advancing psychological well-being and improving nature of life. As of late, there has been developing revenue in examining the impacts of contemplation on mental prosperity. Research proposes that reflection rehearses, established in antiquated customs, can have significant impacts on emotional wellness results. Contemplation includes preparing one's consideration what's more, attention to accomplish a condition of uplifted present-second mindfulness and non-judgmental acknowledgment of contemplations and sentiments. Through ordinary practice, people may develop more prominent mindfulness, profound guideline, and a more inspirational perspective on life. Therefore, reflection has been estimated to impact mental prosperity decidedly.

### **Studies and research:**

A few researches have investigated the relationship among contemplation and mental prosperity, featuring its likely advantages. For instance, a concentrate by (Keng et al., 2018) found that people who took part in care contemplation displayed more elevated levels of mental prosperity contrasted with the individuals who didn't rehearse contemplation. Essentially, a meta-investigation by (Galante et al., 2018) inspected the impacts of reflection-based mediations and detailed critical enhancements in mental prosperity results, counting expanded positive effect and decreased negative effect.

Be that as it may, in spite of the current exploration, there is as yet a requirement for additional examination into the particular impacts of reflection on mental prosperity. Many investigations to date have zeroed in on expansive proportions of prosperity, like life fulfilment or positive effect, while dismissing other significant aspects, like versatility, self-

empathy, or reason throughout everyday life. Furthermore, the hidden components through which contemplation impacts mental prosperity require further investigation. Understanding the nuanced connections between various types of contemplation, practice length, and explicit features of mental prosperity can give significant bits of knowledge to the two analysts and specialists.

#### **Theoretical framework:**

Meditation emerges as a multifaceted contemplative practice, drawing upon a rich theoretical foundation that posits its potential transformative effects on psychological well-being. From the positive psychology perspective, meditation aligns with the pursuit of positive affect and life satisfaction. Positive psychology theories posit that engaging in activities that promote positive mental states, such as meditation, contributes to an individual's overall psychological well-being. By fostering positive emotions and a sense of life satisfaction, meditation becomes an avenue for enhancing mental health.

## **METHOD**

#### **Objectives:**

1. To examine the effect of meditation interventions in promoting mindfulness and psychological wellbeing.
2. Meditation has a positive correlation with the psychological well-being.
3. Meditation has a significant effect on the psychological well-being.

#### **Operational definition:**

##### **Meditation:**

For the purpose of this study, meditation is operationally defined as a practice involving focused attention, mental stillness, and self-regulation of attention and awareness.

##### **Psychological well-being:**

Psychological well-being is operationally defined as an individual's overall satisfaction with their life and the cognitive evaluation of their life circumstances.

#### **Research Design:**

For this experimental study, the chosen research design involves a quantitative approach to assess the effect of psychological well-being among university students. The study was conducted in a carefully selected university setting, with a target participant group comprising 20 participants.

#### **Sampling Technique**

The participants were selected from different areas. The research was carried out through Probability sampling Technique.

#### **Inclusion criteria:**

1. Participants were universities students.
2. Age range of participants was 18 to 25 years.
3. Individuals having interest in meditation were elected.

#### **Exclusion criteria:**

1. Individuals with significant medical conditions that may hinder their ability to engage in meditation or affect their psychological well-being were excluded.

#### **Instruments:**

Following instruments were used for the study:

1. Demographic sheet
2. Inform consent
3. Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS)
4. Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS)
5. Ryff's Psychological wellbeing scale (RPWBS)

#### **Procedure:**

After taking permission from concerned authorities, students from different institutes were approached; they were given a brief introduction about the research. Questionnaires were distributed, and informed consent was obtained before distribution of questionnaires among them. All the ethical procedures were kept in mind during the research. The study was approved by the local ethics commission of the Department of Applied Psychology, Riphah International University, Islamabad. Pre-test and

post-test were conducted. Pre-assessment was administered and then the participants were given with the sessions and activities of meditation. And after the sessions there was

another assessing test for the same participants which were referred as post-test. At the end results of both trails were compared.

## RESULTS

### Pre-testing assessment:

#### Descriptive Analysis

**Table 1**

*Demographic details of participants, frequencies and percentage (N=20)*

Variable	Category	Frequency	%
Age	18yrs-20yrs	6	30.0
	21yrs-23yrs	13	65.0
	24yrs-25yrs	1	5.0
Gender	Female	10	50.0
	Male	10	50.0
Socio-Economic Status	Upper class	1	5.0
	Middleclass	19	95.0

Table 1 reveals that, in pretesting assessment, majority of the participants were from age range 21 years old to 23 years old (n=13, 65.0%). While six of the participants were 18yrs-20yrs (n=6, 30.0%) and only one participant fall in 24yrs-25yrs of age range. Descriptive analysis showed that there were equal number of male (n=10, 50.0%) and female (n=10, 50.0%) participants were included in the research. As it was preferred to take participants from both upper and middle class but majority of the

participants who participated were belong to middle class (n=19, 95.0%). Only one participant was from upper class (n=1, 5.0%).

#### Psychometric Properties of Instruments for Pretesting

For psychometric properties, reliability analysis was done in order to determine Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient value which describes the internal consistency.

**Table 2**  
*Descriptive Statistics and Alpha Reliability Coefficient of Study Variable (N=20)*

Variable	Items	@	Mean	S.D	Skewness	Kurtosis
PWS	18	.80	82.95	10.92	.36	.42
Aut	3	.57	12.40	3.88	.47	.41
EnvMas	3	.75	19.00	2.84	.50	.50
PG	3	.60	16.25	3.04	.16	.51
PRWO	3	.75	12.70	5.02	.00	.81
PIL	3	.68	12.65	2.74	.70	.06
SA	3	.78	15.65	2.35	.04	.92
MAAS	15	.77	50.95	11.83	.64	.59
SWLS	5	.85	16.40	7.15	.36	1.15

Note: PWS=Psychological Well Being Scale, Aut= Autonomy Subscale, EnvMas= Environmental Mastry Subscale, PG= Personal Growth Subscale, PRWO= Positive Relations With Others Subscale, PIL= Purpose in life Subscale, SA= Self-acceptance Subscale, MAAS= Mindful Attention Awareness Scale, SWLS= Satisfaction With Life Scale.

Table 2 describes the psychometric properties of the scale. The Cronbach's alpha values for

SWLS (.80) MAAS (.77) and SWLS (.85) shows good internal consistency. The Skewness and kurtosis values also lies in the between +2 and -2.

Post-testing assessment  
 Psychometric Properties for Post-Testing Analysis

**Table 3**  
 Descriptive Statistics and Alpha Reliability Coefficient of Study Variable (N=20)

Variable	Items	@	Mean	S.D	Skewness	Kurtosis
PWS	18	.72	3.01	.01	.68	.11
Aut	3	.64	2.17	.03	.68	.26
EnvMas	3	.53	2.29	.02	.10	.24
PG	3	1.56	2.29	.02	.77	.29
PRWO	3	.79	2.29	.03	.20	1.30
PIL	3	.63	2.00	.04	.52	.92
SA	3	.63	2.29	.03	.10	1.38
MAAS	15	.74	2.90	.01	.49	.59
SWLS	5	.80	12.30	1.45	.33	.45

Note: PWS=Psychological Well Being Scale, Aut= Autonomy Subscale, EnvMas= Environmental Mastery Subscale, PG= Personal Growth Subscale, PRWO= Positive Relations with Others Subscale, PIL= Purpose in life Subscale, SA= Self-acceptance Subscale, MAAS= Mindful Attention Awareness Scale, SWLS= Satisfaction with Life Scale.

Table 3 describes the psychometric properties of the scale. The Cronbach's alpha values for MAAS (.74) PWS (.72) and SWLS (.80) shows acceptable internal consistency. The Skewness and kurtosis values also lies in the between +2 and -2.

**Difference between pre-test and post-test assessment:**

**TABLE 4:**

Scales	Pre-test		Post-test		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
RPWBS	2.50	.55	1.75	.89	17.694	.0034
MAAS	2.10	.88	2.00	.94	10.128	.004
SWLS	2.38	.76	2.01	.88	12.635	.004

Table 4 results revealed mean difference of PWS across PTPWS. On average post-test scores were higher than pre-test scores (95% CI= 14.99541, 16.30459). There was a significant average difference between pre-test and post-test scores ( $t=17.694$ ). Results also revealed mean difference of MAAS across PTMAAS. On average post-test scores were higher than pre-test scores (95% CI= 22.84693, 33.25307). There was a significant average difference between pre-test and post-test scores ( $t=10.128$ ). This table's results also revealed mean difference of SWLS across PTSWLS. On average post-test scores were higher than pre-test scores (95% CI= 12.38622, 14.05000). There was a significant average difference between pre-test and post-test scores ( $t=12.635$ ).

## **DISCUSSION**

The study investigated the impact of meditation on the psychological well-being of university students in two phases: pre-testing using scales and post-testing to establish relationships between variables after meditation. Psychometric properties were ensured through perpendicular research, and a team of four members conducted the study to reduce subjectivity. Findings revealed a significant positive correlation between meditation and psychological well-being, making meditation a positive predictor. Lack of meditation was linked to various negative outcomes, including mental illnesses and reduced life satisfaction. The text emphasizes the importance of a conducive environment and expert guidance in maximizing meditation benefits. In a related context, the text highlights the significance of emotional regulation for achieving positive outcomes without providing specific strategies, underscoring the role of managing emotions in overall well-being.

## **Conclusion**

The study on university students explored the impact of meditation on psychological well-being, revealing a significant positive relationship and positioning meditation as a predictor of higher life satisfaction. The absence of meditation was associated with a negative effect on well-being. The study stressed the importance of integrating meditation practices

for positive outcomes in maintaining health and overall well-being. Additionally, it highlighted meditation's role in managing emotions, behaviors, and attention in a socially acceptable manner, emphasizing the impact of the environment, meditation type, and expert guidance. Overall, the findings underscored the vital role of meditation in promoting the well-being of university students, with potential positive effects on mental and emotional states. The text also mentioned a hypothesis supported by previous research, citing a study by Chen & Khoury (2019) in the Netherlands affirming the positive effects of meditation on adolescents' well-being.

## **Limitations and suggestions**

The current study acknowledges limitations in response bias and generalizability due to data collection from a specific university and a small participant sample. Future studies are recommended to broaden data collection across multiple universities and participants, utilizing additional sources like semi-structured interviews and considering demographic factors. Further research should explore the cumulative effects of longterm meditation practice on psychological well-being, accounting for consistency, variations in intensity, and cultural contexts. To enhance understanding, future investigations could examine the combined effects of meditation with practices like physical exercise or cognitive behavioural interventions. The study's specific meditation techniques over a short period suggest a direction for future research to diversify methods and explore efficacy over longer durations, contributing valuable insights to the field of meditation research.

## **Practical implications**

The study focused on investigating the impact of meditation on psychological well-being and its role in managing negative emotions. It emphasized the importance of personality traits for societal stability and highlighted the evolving role of students in fostering a friendly public environment. The findings are proposed to have broad applications in clinical practices, public health, education, communities, workplaces, and individual well-being strategies. Integration of

the study's results into these settings can enhance mental health and contribute to individual and community flourishing.

Mental health professionals are encouraged to incorporate meditation practices into traditional therapeutic approaches, acknowledging the mind-body connection. Additionally, the study suggests that educational institutions can integrate meditation into curricula, fostering a supportive learning environment that prioritizes both academic success and the psychological well-being of students.

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