



RESEARCH ARTICLE

ASSESSING MINDFULNESS TOWARDS ENRICHING QUALITY OF LIFE

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ABSTRACT

*Our era is often said to be a time of rapid technological change, but the social changes occurring in this country and elsewhere are equally dramatic. Modern life style has a number of advantages which on the other hand different modern life style patterns have negative effects on health physically, psychologically, and socially. As today's society grapples with the stressors of modern living there are lot of efforts being done to enable people to maintain a healthy and wholesome lifestyle. Mindfulness is the new age mantras that show a path to more meaningful and healthier living.*

*Mindfulness is a state of active, open attention on the present. When you're mindful, you observe your thoughts and feelings from a distance, without judging them good or bad. Instead of letting your life pass you by, mindfulness means living in the moment and awakening to experience.*

*The present study is an attempt to assess the mindfulness quotient among the B.Ed student teachers. The aspects covered under the Mindfulness Quotient were observing, describing, awareness, being non-judgmental, non-reacting. The student teachers were administered a questionnaire and feedback for the same was taken. The study revealed that student teachers had a higher observing and describing mindfulness quotient than being non-reacting and non-judgmental.*

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INTRODUCTION

Mindfulness is a state of active, open attention on the present. When we are mindful, we observe our thoughts and feelings from a distance, without judging them good or bad. It's a busy world. We fold the laundry while keeping one eye on the kids and another on the television. We plan our day while listening to the radio and commuting to work, and then plan our weekend. But in the rush to accomplish necessary tasks, we may find our-self losing our connection with the present moment—missing out on what we are doing and how we are feeling. Mindfulness is the practice of purposely focusing our attention on the present moment—and accepting it without judgment. Mindfulness is now being examined scientifically and has been found to be a key element in happiness.

Ancient roots, modern applications: The cultivation of mindfulness has roots in Buddhism, but most religions include some type of prayer or meditation technique that helps shift our thoughts away from our usual preoccupations toward an appreciation of the moment and a larger perspective on life.

*Mindfulness improves well being*

Increasing your capacity for mindfulness supports many attitudes that contribute to a satisfied life. Being mindful makes it easier to savour the pleasures in life as they occur, helps you to become fully engaged in activities, and creates a greater capacity to deal with adverse events.

It has been noticed that people who practice mindfulness find that they are less likely to get caught up in worries about the future or regrets over the past, are less preoccupied with concerns about success and self-esteem, and are better able to form deep connections with others.

*Mindfulness improves physical health*

If greater well-being isn't enough of an incentive, scientists have discovered the benefits of mindfulness techniques help improve physical health in a number of ways. Mindfulness can:

- ✓ help relieve stress
- ✓ treat heart disease
- ✓ lower blood pressure
- ✓ reduce chronic pain
- ✓ improve sleep
- ✓ alleviate gastrointestinal difficulties

### Mindfulness improves mental health

In recent years, psychotherapists have turned to mindfulness meditation as an important element in the treatment of a number of problems, including:

- ✓ depression
- ✓ substance abuse
- ✓ eating disorders
- ✓ couples' conflicts
- ✓ anxiety disorders
- ✓ obsessive-compulsive disorder

This paper attempts to achieve the objective:

1. To assess the mindfulness quotient among the B.Ed student teachers.

### Research Methodology

To assess the mindfulness quotient among the B.Ed student teachers, a survey was conducted on 85 student teachers.

The student teachers were asked to rank the different aspects of the mindfulness quotient as per their preference. Each aspect of the mindfulness quotient is given a range from 1 to 5 of which 1 being the least preferred and 5 being the most preferred. The student teachers used the mindfulness quotient in the survey.

The aspects of mindfulness quotient used in this survey were: (i) Observing (ii) Describing (iii) Non-reacting (iv) Awareness (v) Non-judgemental.

The data collected was analysed using statistical technique. The mean value for each of the mindfulness quotient were analysed. To determine the relative ranking of the mindfulness quotient, the score of the student teachers are transformed to RII values using equation (Tam *et,al*,2000):

$$RII = \frac{w}{AN}$$

where w is the weightage given to each aspect of the mindfulness quotient by the student teachers ranging from 1 to 5, A is the highest weight (i.e. 5 for this study), N is the total number of samples, and RII is the relative important index,

$$0 < RII < 1.$$

### Aspects of Mindfulness Quotient included

**Observing:** Observing is sensing or experiencing without describing or labeling the experience. It is noticing or attending to something. The benefit of this practice is that the mind becomes quiet. Eventually, you will be able to observe things without a running commentary of a talkative mind. Preoccupation, rumination, distraction, and daydreaming are all examples of a talkative mind.

**Describing:** Describing is using words to represent what you observe. Observing is just noticing and attending; there are no words. Describing is a reaction to observing; it is labeling what is observed. Describing is "just the facts." Judging is labeling something in an evaluative way. The ability to apply names to behavioural and environmental events is essential for both communication and self-control. Learning to describe requires that you learn not to take your emotions and thoughts literally – that is, as a literal reflection of environmental events. Feeling

afraid does not necessarily mean that a situation is threatening to your life or welfare.

**Non-reacting:** Non-reacting is entering wholly into an activity, becoming one with the activity. It is throwing yourself into something completely without being reactive to the situation. It is spontaneous behaviour to a certain extent, although you can also do it mindfully.

**Awareness:** Mindfulness involves paying attention "on purpose". Mindfulness involves a conscious direction of our awareness. This purposefulness is a very important part of mindfulness. Having the purpose of staying with our experience, whether that's the breath, or a particular emotion, or something as simple as eating, means that we are actively shaping the mind.

**Non-judgemental:** Mindfulness is an emotionally non-judgemental. We don't judge that this experience is good and that one is bad. Or if we do make those judgements we simply notice them and let go of them. We don't get upset because we're experiencing something we don't want to be experiencing or because we're not experiencing what we would rather be experiencing. We simply accept whatever arises. We observe it mindfully. We notice it arising, passing through us, and ceasing to exist.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The mean value and RII values and ranking of all student support methods are shown below.

**Table 1**The Mean and RII values of Mindfulness Quotient.

Mindfulness Quotient	Mean Value	RII	Ranking
Observing	520	1.62	I
Describing	442	1.38	II
Non-reacting	306	0.95	V
Non-judgemental	433	1.35	IV
Awareness	439	1.37	III

The Mean value and RII values of Mindfulness Quotient through the five aspects – Observing, Describing, Non-reacting, Awareness, Non-judgemental are indicated in the above table. The RII values are used to rank the Mindfulness Quotient through the five aspects – Observing, Describing, Non-reacting, Awareness, Non-judgemental. **Observing** was ranked First and **Non-reacting** was ranked Fifth. **Describing** was ranked Second, **Awareness** was ranked Third and **Non-judgemental** was ranked Fourth.

### Recommendations

According to the findings of this paper, **Observing** is the most effective mindfulness quotient from the student teachers' point of view. Thus to practice mindfulness quotient few strategies are listed:

### Mindfulness Techniques

There is more than one way to practice mindfulness, but the goal of any mindfulness technique is to achieve a state of alert, focused relaxation by deliberately paying attention to thoughts and sensations without judgment. This allows the mind to refocus on the present moment.

**Basic mindfulness meditation** – Sit quietly and focus on your natural breathing or on a word or "mantra" that you repeat

silently. Allow thoughts to come and go without judgment and return to your focus on breath or mantra.

**Body sensations** – Notice subtle body sensations such as an itch or tingling without judgment and let them pass. Notice each part of your body in succession from head to toe.

**Sensory** – Notice sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches. Name them “sight,” “sound,” “smell,” “taste,” or “touch” without judgment and let them go.

**Emotions** – Allow emotions to be present without judgment. Practice a steady and relaxed naming of emotions: “joy,” “anger,” “frustration.” Accept the presence of the emotions without judgment and let them go.

**Urge surfing** – Cope with cravings (for addictive substances or behaviours) and allow them to pass. Notice how your body feels as the craving enters. Replace the wish for the craving to go away with the certain knowledge that it will subside.

## CONCLUSION

A survey of assessing the mindfulness quotient among the student teachers’ through the various aspects – observing, describing, non-reacting, awareness, non-judgemental were conducted. The relative important index (RII) and the overall mean values of all groups under each category was estimated. From the results it has been found out that the. **Observing** was the most effective quotient from the student teachers’ point of view towards mindfulness quotient and the least preferred was Non-reacting. Recommendation are provided to make efforts to keenly observe our surrounding and describe it judiciously. This purposefulness is a very important part of mindfulness. Having the purpose of staying with our experience, whether that’s the breath, or a particular emotion, or something as simple as eating, means that we are actively shaping the mind.

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Reni Francis was born in Mumbai, India on 17th May,1978. The author Ph.D in Education – Mumbai University (2012), Successfully cleared the SET Examination (2010), Masters in Education (M.Ed) Full time course – Mumbai University (2007-2008), Bachelors in Education (B. Ed) Full time course – Mumbai University (2006-07), Bachelors in Commerce (B. Com) - Mumbai University (2000), Certificate from Wide World, Harvard Graduate School of Education, U.S.A. on completion of an online course on “Multiple Intelligences” and “Coach Development” with study groups from all over the world. (Scored points – 41 out of 45)

She is currently the Assistant Professor at Pillai College of Education and Research, Mumbai and was previously working with Jabriya Indian School, Kuwait. She has a varied experience of more than 15 years in facilitating learning with school students, teachers and teacher educators in India and Kuwait. She has authored two Teacher handbooks known as "Blooming with Multiple Intelligences" (Mumbai, Maharashtra, NAS Publishers, 2013) and "Constructing Creative Minds"(Mumbai, Maharashtra, NAS Publishers, 2014), “Redesigning Learning Horizons through Multiple Intelligence Approach”, Lambert Publications, UK, and a series of 8 Teacher resources in English for Chetana Publications. She has presented papers at National and International conferences and seminars. She has received a Minor Research Grant from the University of Mumbai. She is the Editor of an International Journal of Education and is on the Editorial Board of two Research journals.

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