

Mindfulness for Partners

HKTGC

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

This study aims at investigating whether practicing mindfulness meditation improves adult attachment styles (Fraley, 2002) and need satisfaction (La Guardia et al, 2000) within intimate romantic relationship. This study was divided into time 1 (T1) at baseline and time 2 (T2) at the time after daily practice mindfulness meditation for at least 10 minutes for a month. The difference between the scores of mindfulness, adult attachment styles, and need satisfaction between T1 and T2 are compared to consider whether there are significant differences. If the results are positive, the proposition of this research warrant further investigation of their inter-relationship, vice versa.

This research report shall describe the research aim and objectives, literature review, hypotheses, methodology, results, and the implication of this study.

1.1. Reasons for this study, research problems, aim and objectives

Motivated by the knowledge that attachment styles and need satisfaction are particularly important to romantic partner relationship. It is my interest to investigate whether attachment styles and need satisfaction can be improved, for example, from insecure attachment style to secure attachment style. From review of literature, mindfulness and mindfulness meditation may be a method to improve attachment styles. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the relationship among the state of mindfulness, the three attachment styles, and need satisfaction from T1 (before mindfulness practice) to T2 (after one month of mindfulness practice).

The detailed aim of this study is to investigate how before and after mindfulness meditation improves the state of mindfulness, relate to the three attachment styles and

attachment, and anxiety attachment of another opposite sex's partner from T1 to T2.

This study was conducted through a questionnaire survey of 70 couples and apply quantitative data analysis technique, namely, paired sample t-test, and correlation coefficient analysis to test the hypotheses as listed in the below Section. The next section 1.2 shall be the literature review and the discussion of research hypotheses.

1.2. Literature Review and hypotheses

1.2.1. Mindfulness and mindfulness meditation

In the current decade, mindfulness is a hot issue in research field, and the entire society (Caldwell & Shaver, 2013). Mindfulness meditation is a popular and useful technique in stress reduction and better well-being (Kang et al, 2013). According to Kabat-Zinn (2013), mindfulness is a condition of awareness of the present, with an attitude of non-reactivity, non-judgement, and openness. In other words, mindfulness is known commonly as the situation of being alert and paying attention to present moment intentionally (Pepping, Davis & O'Donovan, 2015). The characteristic of mindfulness is being aware to what you feel, think in the absence of inhibition and overpowering (Brown & Ryan, 2003).

Mindfulness meditation is generally referred as sitting silent either on a chair or with one's legs crossed. Then, a person shall continue breathing and pay attention to their breath only without caring or judging any outside interference and inside thoughts (Dorjee, 2018). To achieve the full benefits, one should do it every day, spend at least 10 minutes on it, and gradually increases the time of mindfulness meditation to up to 30 minutes a day.

There are many studies on how mindfulness and mindfulness meditation improve one's well-being. In short, a state of being mindful cuts off automatic thoughts, and helps people to gain awareness of the present moment, and more importantly, being attentive and accept the present moment (Dorjee, 2018). Automatic thoughts are referred as thoughts that comes instantly, forms into a person's habit and not conscious to the person. Automatic thought is one of the major agents in affecting an individual's actions and emotional state (American Psychological Association, 2020). Examples of automatics thoughts include personalizing, catastrophizing, should or must statements, overgeneralization, all or nothing thinking (Gaus, 2018).

Kang et al (2013) described a de-automatization of mindfulness to desirable individual and social outcomes. Mindfulness works by first offering awareness, attention, focus on present moment, and acceptance to the current situation. With these elements, mindfulness works by de-automatizing things such as ruminating thoughts about the past, stereotyping, priming by giving you awareness, attention and openness, cognitive flexibility to the present moment. These helps to enhance cognitive control, facilitate meta-cognitive insight, prevent thought distortion, and discontinues automatic thought such as priming effects (i.e. an unconscious response to an exposure of stimulus) and stereotyping (Kang et al, 2013).

The benefits of being mindful includes better decision-making, more awareness and attention at the present, less automatic, unconscious behavior such as rumination and stereotyping, less stress, lesser risk of major depression disorder, less high-risk or dangerous behavior. In long run, it may lead to trait changes in personality such as neuroticism (i.e. a personality trait associated with negative feelings such as anxiety, fear, anger, frustration, jealousy) (Dorjee, 2018).

It is suggested that, mindfulness meditation can promote a person's mindfulness.

1.2.3. Mindfulness influences on opposite sex's attachment styles

Romantic relationship is a very intimate relationship. As mentioned in the above section, mindfulness may influence one's attachment style. It works by (1) improving one's propensity to secure attachment, and (2) reducing one's propensity to insecure attachment. Besides, mindfulness may influence one's need satisfaction. It works by improving one's need satisfaction. This promotes psychological well-being. The influence of good psychological well-being may not only influence an individual, but also influences a person who is close to the individual (Nisenbaum & Lopez, 2015).

Since romantic relationship is a relationship that is very close to each other, one person through practicing mindfulness meditation improve his/her psychological well-being and his/her behavior. The influence may spread from that individual to another individual who is close to him/her. Therefore, it can be hypothesized that men's mindfulness is positively related to women's secure attachment, but negative related to both insecure attachment (i.e. anxiety and avoidant attachment) from T1 to T2. Besides, women's mindfulness is positively related to men's secure attachment, but negative related to both insecure attachment (i.e. anxiety and avoidant attachment) from T1 to T2 (Nisenbaum & Lopez, 2015). Therefore, the hypotheses are:

H4a: Being more mindful for men is positively related to increase in score of women's secure attachment from T1 to T2,

H4b: Being more mindful for men is positively related to reduction in score of women's anxiety attachment from T1 to T2,

H4c: Being more mindful for men is positively related to reduction in score of women's avoidant attachment from T1 to T2.

the system of the Education University of Hong Kong. The hyperlinks of the questionnaire are hosted in Facebook for invitation from the researcher's friends and acquaintances and friends of friends. According to a pilot test with 10 participants, the whole questionnaire takes around 10 minutes to complete.

The participants need to fill in the same questionnaire for two times within a month. The first time is the baseline study which the participant fills in the questionnaire within doing continuous mindfulness meditation. In the questionnaire, the participants are asked to do continuous mindfulness meditation for a month for at least 10 minutes a day after filling in the baseline questionnaire.

Presumably after a month of practicing mindfulness meditation, the original couple participants are invited to fill in the questionnaire again to fill in the same questionnaire. The questionnaire survey was conducted in May to June 2020.

After collecting the data, some data analysis techniques are applied. The first one is mean and standard deviation analysis which measures the average score of each questionnaire components and the average dispersion of responses in each component in both T1 (i.e. baseline) and T2 (i.e. after a month of filling in the questionnaire at baseline). For simplicity, there are only five components to be measured. They are the whole FFMQ, the secure, anxiety and avoidant attachment styles in SAAM, and the whole BNSQ questionnaire.

Then, the mean score between T1 and T2 are tested for whether they have statistically significant differences through paired sample t-test. At last, to measure the relationship among mindfulness, attachment styles and basic psychological needs as prescribed in the five hypotheses, correlation coefficient analysis is applied. All analyses are conducted in IBM SPSS 26.0.

CHAPTER 4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter shall offer a discussion of the results, the limitations of this study and recommendations for future studies, and the ending remarks for this study.

4.1. Discussion of the results

All five study hypotheses are rejected. It is mainly due to (1) the absence of significant mean differences for mindfulness meditation to the state of mindfulness, attachment styles, and basic psychological need satisfaction from T1 to T2, and (2) the absence of relationship between any significant or reasonable relationship among males and females' mindfulness to attachment styles and basic psychological needs satisfaction.

When compared with the literature review in Chapter 1, the result of this study is a great contradiction to the existing literature. For example, various literature cited in Section 1.2.1 shows that mindfulness meditation is associated with increase in state of mindfulness of people. However, the study results did not suggest that. Besides, various literature cited in Section 1.2.2 suggested adult attachment styles and basic psychological needs matter in romantic relationship. More importantly, Section 1.2.2 cited literature that mindfulness may lead to improvement in attachment styles from insecure to secure, and basic psychological need satisfaction. However, the study results did not suggest that. Furthermore, Section 1.2.3 suggested that mindfulness in male or female may improve attachment styles of their opposite sex's partner. This is also not suggested in this study.

As to be discussed below, the reason for such results may lie on the limitations of this study.

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