

Mindfulness and Subjective Well-Being among Undergraduate Students in Balasore District of Odisha: A Correlational Study

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Abstract

Sustaining the mental health and well-being of students is the utmost priority in the 21st Century, while Mindfulness has been proven to be a crucial factor to enhance the mental health of individuals with psychological disorders. Still, there is a lack of Indian-specific studies that examined the association between mindfulness and the subjective well-being of students. The present study examined the relationship between mindfulness and the subjective well-being of the undergraduate students of the Balasore district of Odisha. 180 samples were selected randomly from the different degree colleges of Balasore district. A self-developed tool was used to assess the students' subjective well-being, and the Five-Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire was used to examine students' mindfulness. The study revealed that the undergraduate students of Balasore district exhibited an average level of mindfulness and subjective well-being, representing a moderate state of present moment awareness and life satisfaction among undergraduate students. It was also found that gender does not affect these psychological constructs, as no significant difference was found in mindfulness and subjective well-being among undergraduate students in terms of their gender. The study further revealed that there is a moderate to high level of positive correlation between mindfulness and subjective well-being, with a coefficient of correlation value of +0.63, indicating that a higher level of mindfulness is associated with a higher level of well-being among undergraduate students. The study suggests that integrating mindfulness into the curriculum may help in developing students' well-being and ensure better mental health.

Keywords: Mindfulness, Subjective Well-being, Undergraduate Students, Mental Health.

Introduction

The world is enduring an expeditious change in the education system, especially after the pandemic of 2020. The brisk change in the education system calls on students to increase their potential through continuous efforts to achieve 21st-century skills. The youth of the 21st century require being mentally fit and having well-adjustment skills to cope with adverse situations. Further, mindfulness enhances and sustains the well-being of the students. In the field of education, a student must have good mental health for their academic success (Salami, 2010). Additionally, (Subhrajyoti & Acharya, 2025) highlighted that the mental health and well-being of students are essential to create a healthy and sustainable teaching and

learning environment. Moreover, WHO reports indicated that one among the 7 students of the age group 10-19 globally experiences a mental disorder (WHO, 2024). The WHO data indicated that 4.4% from the age group of 10-14 and 5.5% of the age range 15-19 are suffering from anxiety, while 1.4% of the 10-14 age group and 3.5% of the 15-19 age group are experiencing depression symptoms. Besides, 2.9% from the 10-14 age and 2.2% from 15-19 age are struggling with behavioural disorders globally (WHO, 2024).

In the past few decades, “Mindfulness” has gained popularity in the field of education due to its positive effects observed on the psychology of the practitioners. Mindfulness is practised by Buddhist followers, an ancient Indian spiritual tradition that is believed to have existed over 2550 years ago. The term “Mindfulness” is considered a psychological characteristic or a state of awareness. The most accepted definition of mindfulness is stated as “Awareness that arises through paying attention in a particular way; on purpose, in the present moment and nonjudgmentally” (Keng et al., 2011). Although mindfulness has a connection with spiritual beliefs, the Western concept of mindfulness was first synthesised by (Kabat-Zinn, 1990) stating mindfulness as “paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally”. Many other researchers like Baer, (2003) defines mindfulness as “the nonjudgmental observation of the ongoing stream of internal and external stimuli as they arise”. It is also defined as “self-directed practice for relaxing the body and calming the mind through focusing on present-moment awareness” (Bazarko et al., 2013).

Cognitive theories highlighted that mindfulness improves attention control and minimises avoidance of experience (Bishop et al., 2004). People with a greater level of mindfulness find it easier to break away from automatic negative evaluations and refocus their attention on their present sensory experiences. This change in attention improves their ability to cope with stressors and achieve emotional stability. Scientific studies have shown that mindfulness is positively associated with well-being and satisfaction in life and happiness, whereas anxiety and depression are inversely related (Baer et al., 2006; Brown & Ryan, 2003). Thus, mindfulness can be viewed as an important psychological resource that protects individuals from emotional disturbances and ensures a positive perception of life events. Mindfulness also helps to develop effective emotional regulation strategies. People practising mindfulness do not repress their emotions; rather, they accept them with a non-judgmental attitude. This approach allows individuals to reduce the intensity of their emotions and engage in emotional regulation through cognitive restructuring, thus helping them achieve a healthy emotional state. As subjective well-being is influenced by the ratio between positive and negative experiences, enhanced emotional regulation plays a critical role in achieving high levels of SWB (Tikader & Mandal, 2025).

Previous studies have continuously reported that mindfulness practice, such as the Mindfulness-based stress reduction program, can result in a significant decrease in anxiety and stress levels and improve the well-being of the students (Karakurt & Durmaz, 2025). (Atanes et al., 2015) reported that higher mindfulness is related to higher subjective well-being and is negatively associated with perceived stress, indicating mindfulness is associated with both the cognitive and affective domains of subjective well-being. Resilience mediated the relationship between mindfulness and subjective well-being during the COVID-19 period, reflecting that mindfulness protects mental health during stressful times (Bharti et al., 2023). Mindfulness among the students in the late adolescent period is strongly associated with greater subjective well-being and self-esteem (Sheng et al., 2022). A meta-analysis revealed that mindfulness is associated with greater emotional well-being and results in higher positive affect (Quaglia et al., 2016). Experimental studies like (Carmody & Baer, 2008) reported that

mindfulness practice can result in reduced perceived stress and higher gain of subjective well-being. (Feldman et al., 2010) also found that acting with awareness and non-judgement, the components of mindfulness are positively associated with positive affect and life satisfaction. This indicates that mindfulness enhances subjective well-being. Higher mindfulness predicts higher positive reappraisal and reduced negative affect, providing evidence that mindfulness is linked to well-being positively through adaptive cognitive appraisal (Garland et al., 2015).

Despite several studies indicating a positive relationship between mindfulness and subjective well-being, most of the studies were conducted in Western countries. Fewer studies were conducted in the Indian context, especially focusing on undergraduate students. With the emphasis on holistic education and the well-being of students in NEP 2020, there is a need for more Indian context-specific studies on students to sustain the well-being of students. The present study focused on examining the association between mindfulness and subjective well-being, which will not only contribute to the growing body of literature but also provide a practical insight into higher education institutions.

Objectives

1. To examine the level of mindfulness among undergraduate college students.
2. To compare the mindfulness of undergraduate students in relation to their gender
3. To examine the level of subjective well-being among undergraduate college students.
4. To compare the subjective well-being of undergraduate students in relation to gender
5. To examine the relationship between mindfulness and subjective well-being among undergraduate college students.

Hypothesis

1. There is no significant difference in the mindfulness of male and female undergraduate students
2. There is no significant difference in the subjective well-being of male and female undergraduate students
3. There is no significant relationship between mindfulness and the subjective well-being of undergraduate students.

Methodology

The primary objective of the study was to examine the nature and degree of relationship between mindfulness and subjective well-being of the students, for which the study adopted a non-experimental quantitative approach, under which a correlational research design was found suitable for the study. Undergraduate students of the different affiliated colleges of Balasore district are taken as the sample for the present study. A total of 180 samples were collected using simple random sampling. Among the 180 samples, 90 were male students, and 90 were female students.

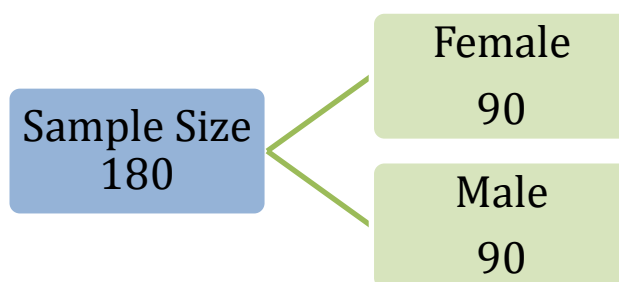


Figure 1: Sampling Frame

Instrument

Subjective Well-being Scale: A self-developed subjective well-being scale (SWS) for undergraduate students was used to assess the subjective well-being of the students. The scale consists of 25 items, including 5 reverse scoring items and a 5-point Likert scale was used for scoring. Thus, the minimum score possible is 25, and the maximum score is 125 for SWS.

Five-Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire: To assess the students' mindfulness, the five-facet mindfulness questionnaire (FFMQ) was developed and standardised by (Baer et al., 2006) was used. Among the 39 items in the tool, 19 were reverse-scoring items. The tested reliability of the scale was between 0.87 and 0.92, which makes it suitable for different contexts.

Data Collection Procedure

The researchers visited the degree colleges and explained the purpose of the study and the procedure to provide the data in the tools. Before data collection formal permission was taken from the heads of the institutions. Students' agreement was also considered before data collection.

Data Analysis Technique

Descriptive statistics like mean, median, standard deviation and percentage were used in the study to assess the level of mindfulness and subjective well-being among the students. A t-test was used to compare the means of male and female students, and Pearson's product-moment correlation was used to identify the relationship between mindfulness and subjective well-being.

Ethical Considerations

The data collected was kept confidential and was used only of the present study.

Findings

To examine the level of mindfulness among undergraduate students

To examine the level of mindfulness among the students, mean, SD and percentile scores were used in the study. The results were given in the table below

Range	No of Students	Percentage	Level
110 or below	29	16.1	Low
110-150	151	83.9	Average
Above 150	0	0	High

Table 1: Level of mindfulness among undergraduate students

Table 1 represents the level of mindfulness among the undergraduate students. the majority of the students that is 83.9% (N=151) are in the average category represents that most of the undergraduate students have average level of mindfulness. A lower portion of the students that is 16.1% (N=29) are in low category indicating a very few students have low level of mindfulness. No student is in high category indicates an alarming condition as no undergraduate students were found to have high level of mindfulness.

To compare the mindfulness of undergraduate students in relation to their gender

Table 2: Comparison of Mindfulness in terms of gender

Group	Male	Female
Sample Size	90	90
Mean	119	121
SD	9.62	9.31
SEM	1.01	0.98
df	178	
t-value	1.85	
p-value	0.066	

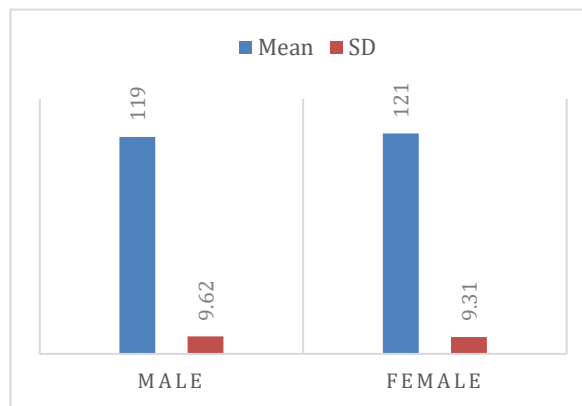


Figure 2: Comparison of Mindfulness in terms of gender

From Table 2, it is evident that the mean and standard deviation of the mindfulness score of undergraduate male students are 119 and 9.62, respectively, while for the female undergraduate students, they are 121 and 9.31, respectively. Although the values represent a higher mindfulness in female undergraduate students, the t-value of 1.85 at 178 degrees of freedom and 0.05 significance level indicates a statistically nonsignificant difference in mindfulness of male and female undergraduate students. The same was also confirmed through the p-value of 0.06, which is higher than 0.05, indicating a statistically non-significant result. Hence, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis, concluding there is no significant difference in mindfulness of male and female students.

To examine the level of subjective well-being among undergraduate students

In the present study, the level of subjective well-being among the undergraduate students was analysed using a simple percentage. The result was given in the table

Table 3: Level of SWB among Undergraduate students

Range	No of Students	Percentage	Level
70 or below	32	17.77	Low
70-90	135	75	Average
Above 90	13	7.22	High

Table 3 represents the level of subjective well-being of undergraduate students. From the table, it is evident that the majority of the students, 75% (N=135), have an average level of subjective well-being, while 17.77% (N=32) of the students have a low level of subjective well-being. Although the number is not very high still a matter of concern. Additionally, only a few per cent, that is 7.22% (N=13) of the students have a high level of subjective well-being, indicating a need for quality intervention to enhance students' subjective well-being.

To compare the subjective well-being of undergraduate students in relation to gender

Table 4: Comparison of SWB in terms of gender

Group	Male	Female
Sample Size	90	90
Mean	77.9	78.4
SD	8.59	7.54
SEM	0.90	0.79
df	178	
t-value	0.41	
p-value	0.415	

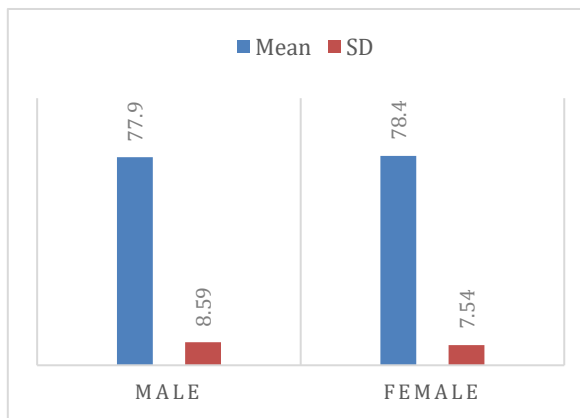


Figure 3: Comparison of SWB in terms of gender

The table 4 indicates that the mean score of subjective well-being for male and female students is 77.9 and 78.4 respectively and the standard deviation is 8.59 and 7.54 respectively. The t-value of 0.41 is much less than the t-critical value of 1.97 at 178 degrees of freedom and 0.05 significance level, which indicates a non-significant difference in subjective well-being of male and female undergraduate students. The p-value of 0.679 is also higher than the significance value of 0.05, which indicates that the difference observed in the mean score of male and female students is not significant. So, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis, concluding there is no significant difference in the subjective well-being of male and female students.

To examine the relationship between mindfulness and the subjective well-being of students

Table 5: Correlation matrix between Mindfulness and Subjective Well-being

Scale	Mindfulness	SWB
Mindfulness	1	
SWB	0.63	1

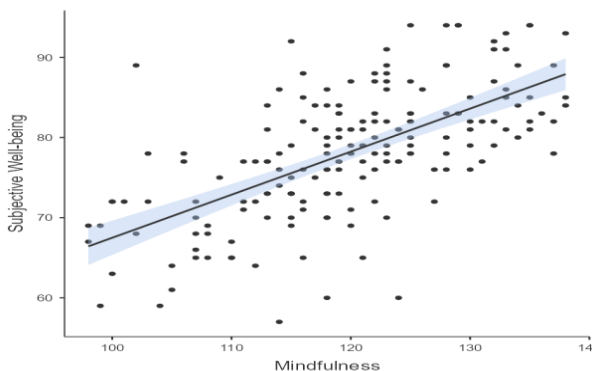


Figure 4: Correlation between mindfulness and SWB

Table 5 represents the correlation between mindfulness and subjective well-being. The product-moment correlation value of 0.63 represents a moderate to high level of positive correlation between mindfulness and the subjective well-being of undergraduate students. The graph in Figure 4 clearly shows the direction of the relationship between the two variables. The p-value <0.001 confirms a significant relationship between mindfulness and subjective well-being. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected and concluded that there is a significant positive relation between mindfulness and subjective well-being.

Discussion

The study revealed a significant positive correlation between mindfulness and subjective well-being among the undergraduate students of the Balasore district of Odisha. The finding indicates that students attentive to the present moment and practice non-judgmental awareness of their thoughts and emotions tend to have greater life satisfaction and overall psychological well-being. The result supports earlier studies (Atanes et al., 2015; Bharti et al., 2023; Brown & Ryan, 2003), which have demonstrated that mindfulness enhances emotional regulation and lowers perceived stress. Individuals with high mindfulness tend to regulate academic pressures, interpersonal relationships, and uncertainties about future careers, all of which are common concerns during the undergraduate years. The positive relation observed between mindfulness and subjective well-being indicates that mindfulness can be a crucial psychological factor to promote resilience and coping skills among students.

Additionally, it was observed that undergraduate students exhibit an average level of mindfulness, and SWB implies that they have moderate psychological capabilities, but there is still a need for promoting the psychological well-being of undergraduate students further. It also implies that the implementation of mindfulness training programs in college settings can be a useful way of improving students' overall well-being. Moreover, the lack of substantial differences between males and females regarding mindfulness and subjective well-being indicates that gender doesn't affect the psychological attributes of students.

Conclusion

The study shows the presence of a high positive association between mindfulness and subjective well-being among undergraduate students of Balasore District, Odisha, implying that a higher degree of mindfulness results in greater life satisfaction as well as experiencing positive emotions. The study also shows that the students have average levels of mindfulness and subjective well-being, which suggests that the students have some level of psychological strength, but at the same time, there is room for improvement. Lack of gender differences implies that mindfulness, as well as subjective well-being, acts in the same way irrespective of the student's gender.

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