



Male Prisoners- A Study on Attention, Present Focus, Awareness, Acceptance, Mindfulness & Anxiety among the adults

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ABSTRACT

Attention, present focus, awareness, and acceptance are the four pillars of mindfulness. Anxiety is the fear & worry found on a large scale in humans and is increasing widely nowadays. If left ignored can lead to anxiety-related disorders. Its level is comparatively high in inmates compared to the general public. This research aims to study the relationship between attention, present focus, awareness, acceptance, mindfulness, and anxiety. The purpose of this study was to assess the need to introduce mindfulness techniques or therapies inside the prison premises. The study assessed 100 Indian male inmates of the Delhi prison. Standardised tests were used. The findings say anxiety is significantly negatively correlated with attention, present focus, awareness, acceptance, and mindfulness. Also, mindfulness is significantly positively correlated with attention, present focus, awareness & acceptance. Thus, the study concluded that there is a need to introduce mindfulness techniques inside the prison premises like mindfulness attention, mindfulness awareness, yoga, meditation, etc. that can help with catering relief to psychological issues. One can lower their level of anxiety by being mindful. One should realise the value of their life, live it to the fullest, and get the most out of it. So, embrace it as nobody has ever before.

Key Terms: Attention, Present Focus, Awareness, Acceptance, Mindfulness & Anxiety.

Introduction

“Education is not education if the heart is not also educated.”- Aristotle

Anxiety can be defined as a persistent, fear or worry about a particular or everyday situation or event. Numerous anxiety-related disorders are triggered when this worrying intensifies, becomes excessive, and is uncontrollable. The most typical signs of anxiety are agitation, difficulty breathing, pain in the body, loss of sleep, gastrointestinal issues, muscle tension, etc. Mindfulness is one of the popular positive psychology strategies used today to lessen stress, anxiety, despair, pain, etc. It is the ability to be aware, alert, and attentive to the present moment, their senses, and their bodily movement. For instance, during the rainy season, try to focus on the scent of the land and mud mixed with rain water, & while breathing, concentrate on the process of inhaling and exhaling and determining which nostril is active - the right one or the left one, it can be taught at no cost. When inmates eat, they should try to feel the texture through the taste, and when they drink water, they should focus on the path it takes into the stomach, among other things. The population of UT's Convicts, illiterate and literate inmates, orphans and non-orphans, the population of first-time offenders and repeaters, people of different offenses like murder, attempt to murder, theft, sexual offenders, gamblers, gangsters, etc. all are under one roof. In such an environment many psychological issues like stress, anxiety, selective mutism, etc. can arise. At least fulfilment of physiological and societal needs, inmates start cursing their existence. It becomes necessary and important to be mindful enough not only inside the prison premises but outside the prison too, during the court procedures, furlough, bail, etc. After coming into the records, the person feels helpless and hopeless. They get frustrated, start losing patience, become depressed and many times are suicidal.

In the review article by Auty et al., (2017) the effect of mindfulness meditation and yoga enhance the psychological well-being of the inmates. According to a study by Samuelson et al., (2007) done on 1350 drug-addicted inmates who completed the course of MBSR in 6 Massachusetts prisons, the improvement of women was found to be greater than men. According to Tacon et al., (2003) study done on 9 women aged (48-78), post-intervention supported the beneficiary effect of MBSR (Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction) on heart patients.

Mindfulness

According to Salzberg (2015), “Mindfulness is more than just being aware that you are experiencing a certain sensation, hearing something, or seeing something. It's about doing it in a certain way, without being critical or out of balance. The practice of paying attention in a way that allows for insight is called mindfulness.” “The capacity to observe oneself without judging is mindfulness” (Kabat - Zinn, 1990).

According to An et al., (2019) study done on 83 male inmates in 6-week mindful training found an effective change in anxiety, depression, and aggression in long-term inmates compared to short-term inmates. According to Xu et al., (2016) after a 6-week mindfulness training done on 40 long

terms, Chinese male inmates resulted in a positive change in them in terms of reducing the level of anxiety, tension- anxiety, dejection, etc. According to Greeson (2008), 52 exemplars of empirical and theoretical work were reviewed, and the result indicated that the cultivation of mindful techniques can reduce the level of stress, and can enhance psychological well-being.

Attention

Ross (1951), has defined attention as “the process of getting an object or thought clearly before the mind.” “Attention allows our cognitive processes to consider selected aspects of our environment, i.e., to limit information” (Palmer, 1999).

Bishop (2009), found that highly anxious individuals had reduced prefrontal cortex activity. Dalgleish & Watts (1990), attention was found to be strongly correlated with anxiety.

Present focus

“Focus is the ability to concentrate on things that help you and to avoid distractions that can interfere with your work effort” Taylor (2013). According to N & Sam (2013), the focus is defined as “the term describing concentrating and concentrating on a single stimulus.”

According to Li et al., (2022) study done on 30 college, students found a positive effect of mindfulness-based treatment in diffuse anxiety disorder. A study by Cao et al., (2022) found that recognition memory is modulated by social anxiety.

Awareness

According to Crocker (2018) awareness is defined as “the knowledge and understanding of how operations actually work. As changes occur, you'll be aware and know exactly how those changes will affect your production and your team.” Gafoor (2012) defined awareness as “it is a state or inability to perceive, feel or being aware of events, objects or sensory patterns.”

A study by Crowley et al., (2022) found the meditation mindfulness awareness course increased happiness and decreased anxiety. McDonald et al., (2022) found that dispositional mindfulness awareness is negatively correlated with parental depression and anxiety after examining 149 mothers.

Acceptance

“You admit that you are not perfect as a fallible person. You will always be great, but sometimes you will make mistakes. You always accept yourself unconditionally, without judgment” (Greiger, 2013). “Acceptance means taking a mindful, non-judgmental stance and actively embracing the experience of thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations” (Hayes et al., 2004).

Johannsen et al., (2022) found that acceptance and mindfulness-based therapies are effective in healing anxiety and depression. Yang et al., (2022) found mindfulness acceptance-based training is effective for mental health and treating anxiety and depression during pregnancy after assessing 149 pregnant women.

Anxiety

According to Barlow (2002), “Anxiety is an uncontrollable, diffuse, unpleasant and persistent negative emotional state characterized by a fearful anticipation of unpredictable and inevitable future danger, accompanied by stressful physiological symptoms and a persistent state of hypervigilance.” Moss (2014), defined anxiety as “A person’s general response to a threat or danger.”

Mindfulness-based Interventions (MBIs) showed positive benefits for 44 male Portuguese prisoners in psychological and physical health (Carmo et al., 2022). According to Dadi et al., (2016) a cross-sectional study was done in North West Amhara, Ethiopia on 700 prisoners. GAD-7 was used to know the level of anxiety according to different prison environments. According to Lester et al., (2003) different domains were ascertained on 300 men by directly asking about their qualifications, drug, alcohol, diet, worries, etc. out of which only 41 inmates were within the normal range of HAD (Hospital Anxiety and Depression).

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine the correlation between attention, present focus, awareness, acceptance, mindfulness, and anxiety of the Indian male prisoners.

Hypotheses

There will be a significant negative correlation between anxiety with attention, present focus, awareness, acceptance and mindfulness.

There will be a significant positive correlation between attention, present focus, awareness, acceptance and mindfulness.

Method

Sample

The sample consisted of 100 male adults. The sample was collected from the Delhi prison.

Measures

1. **Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale-Revised** (Feldman et al 2007) is a 10-item scale used to measure the self-report of attention, present focus, awareness, acceptance, and mindfulness with options ranging from 1- Rarely/Not at All to 4- Almost Always.
2. **Generalized Anxiety Disorder -7** (Spitzer et al 2006) is a 7-item scale used to measure the level of anxiety with options ranging from 0- Not at All to 3-Nearly Every Day.

Procedure

The offline method was used to collect the data. The inmates were informed about the purpose of the research and the questionnaires were filled with their proper consent. To get honest responses from the participants, the confidentiality of the data was ensured to them. Formal cerebral tests were administered to the participants.

Analysis of Data

The responses of the participants were analysed using the Pearson correlation coefficient & Table 1 is the representation of the mean and standard deviation, and Table 2 represents the correlation between attention, present focus, awareness, acceptance, mindfulness, and anxiety.

Results

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation

	Attention	Present Focus	Awareness	Acceptance	Mindfulness	Anxiety
N	100	100	100	100	100	100
Mean	7.68	2.52	7.72	7.94	25.9	9.10
Standard deviation	2.10	0.979	2.39	2.51	6.33	4.97

Table 2: Correlation between Attention, Present Focus, Awareness, Acceptance, Mindfulness, & Anxiety

	Attention	Present Focus	Awareness	Acceptance	Mindfulness	Anxiety
Attention	—					
Present Focus	0.328 ***	—				
Awareness	0.450 ***	0.426 ***	—			
Acceptance	0.463 ***	0.494 ***	0.632 ***	—		
Mindfulness	0.735 ***	0.620 ***	0.843 ***	0.865 ***	—	
Anxiety	-0.336 ***	-0.372 ***	-0.274 **	-0.310 **	-0.395 ***	—

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Discussion of Results

The result found that there is a significant negative correlation between attention & anxiety ($r = -0.336^{***}$, $p < .001$), between present focus & anxiety ($r = -0.372^{***}$, $p < .001$), between awareness & anxiety ($r = -0.274^{**}$, $p < .01$), between acceptance and anxiety ($r = -0.310^{**}$, $p < .01$), & between mindfulness & anxiety ($r = -0.395^{***}$, $p < .001$). Also, a significant positive correlation was found between attention & mindfulness ($r = 0.735^{***}$, $p < .001$), between present focus & mindfulness ($r = 0.620^{***}$, $p < .001$), between awareness & mindfulness ($r = 0.843^{***}$, $p < .001$) and between acceptance & mindfulness ($r = 0.865^{***}$, $p < .001$). Therefore, the hypotheses are accepted.

Earlier studies aligning with the results found, Mohsenabadi et al., (2019) mindfulness and anxiety were significantly negatively correlated. Tan & Martin (2016) study done on 106 adolescents, mindfulness was negatively correlated with anxiety and depression. According to Malakoutikhah et al., (2021) mindfulness was found to be negatively correlated with anger and anxiety.

Conclusion

The result found that there is a significant negative correlation between attention & anxiety ($r = -0.336^{***}$, $p < .001$), between present focus & anxiety ($r = -0.372^{***}$, $p < .001$), between awareness & anxiety ($r = -0.274^{**}$, $p < .01$), between acceptance and anxiety ($r = -0.310^{**}$, $p < .01$), & between mindfulness & anxiety ($r = -0.395^{***}$, $p < .001$). Also, a significant positive correlation was found between attention & mindfulness ($r = 0.735^{***}$, $p < .001$), between present focus & mindfulness ($r = 0.620^{***}$, $p < .001$), between awareness & mindfulness ($r = 0.843^{***}$, $p < .001$) and between acceptance & mindfulness ($r = 0.865^{***}$, $p < .001$).

This research aims to study the relationship between attention, present focus, awareness, acceptance, mindfulness, and anxiety among Indian male inmates. A total of 100 male adults were taken randomly. It was proved that there is a significant negative correlation between anxiety with attention, present focus, awareness, acceptance, and mindfulness. Also, it was proved that there is a significant positive correlation between attention, present focus, awareness, acceptance & mindfulness. By this, we can conclude that there is a need to introduce mindfulness techniques like mindfulness meditation, yoga, mindfulness awareness, etc. on the prison premises. Techniques learned on the prison premises itself, can help the inmate after release also, aiding in adjusting back to society. Life is precious and one should know its worth. Live your life as a blessing. One should not judge any person based on imprisonment after all they are also "Humans". Sometimes people became the prey of time, accidents, and unfortunate incidents bringing them into the records by mistake. Nobody teaches how to become a criminal but still, people commit crimes & there can be many reasons. We should think about those reasons that forced the person to commit a crime. That is why mental health is very important. Knowing your mental health can save you from many misfortunes.

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