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Wonderfeelz Initiation of Meditation Scale (WIMS): First Phenomenological Tool for Meditation Learning – Identifying New 'Effect' Too.

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ABSTRACT:

There are many scales available to study the mindfulness in general and meditation experience to so-me extent. But no scale is available to study the Meditation Learning from session 1 of learning. Such an assessment would help capture the kind of experience, thoughts, and obstacles experienced by each client in the attempt of learning meditation. This would help to easily regulate the meditation learning from the beginning itself. Apart from this, such a scale would also help to understand how effectively each client is learning the meditation thereby judging the quality and depth of the meditation learning unique to each individual. This would also help for certification in meditation which has been a difficult one so far.

Wonderfeelz Initiation of Meditation Scale (WIMS) has been emerging using the experience sampling technique which is most helpful in clinical field. The new WIMS tool is presented and is to be validated more extensively in future. This also opened anew avenue of meditation learning effectiveness prediction for researchers.

A new Psychological Effect' is identified – similarly appearing things in general appear dissimilar by the influence of meditative experience, even for shortly. This new Psychological Effect of Meditative Experience need to be studied elaborately by psychologists in future. This New psychological Effect identified discourages Nomothetic approach in meditation research

Keywords: Meditation Initiation Assessment, WIMS, Experience Sampling, Idiographic Method, Meditation Learning Effectiveness Prediction, Micro Experience Sampling, New Psychological Effect

Introduction

Awareness and consequential effects are subjects of interest recently. Inclination to initiate movements or seek rest were influenced by the individual's perceptions of physical energy, fatigue and tiredness (Stults-Kolehmainen Matthew A et.al 2021). One can be aware of such experiences from moment to moment and also for an extended period such as for whole of past week. Such awareness plays a well-recognized role in interpersonal setting also (Pratscher, Steven & Wood, Phillip & King, Laura & Bettencourt, B, 2019). It should be kept in mind that such self-awareness is not only in the domain of meditation but a general function of mind. For example, applied in speech language therapy (Corinne McCabe, Andrea Sica, Niamh Doody & Donal G. Fortune. 2023) means, though the purposes or end uses differ, the process remains same almost similar. The attempt to assess such consciousness and mood can be traced back to "mental status Exam" developed by Adolf Meyer in 1918.

1.1. Meditation Scales

There are various scales to measure the experiences or consciousness during meditation. Each scale is different from the other in some respect but all revolve around the common axis of meditation experience. Meditation experience is measured but only as a resultant and not the mind that attempts to fetch such experience. In other words, once the meditation is being attempted or after the meditation is attempted how the individual had the consciousness or change in it. But when he attempts to do the meditation as a novice, to check the hurdles he or she undergoes to enter into meditation experience effectively are not measured.
These hurdles also occur only in the form of thoughts, feelings or conscious experiences. This area is totally neglected so far, which the current researcher has taken up as a pioneering attempt.

There is a need to probe into such aspects deeper to take the field of Meditation Psychology to next level. Pratscher, Steven & Wood, Phillip & King, Laura & Bettencourt, B, (2019), for example, attempted to measure mindfulness as it occurs within the interpersonal Context.

Current author takes this opportunity to propose that meditation psychology be made a distinct applied branch. In such case the subject matter of the field be 'sustained attention on same stimulus until a significant alteration occurs in conscious experience'. The branch could be operationally defined as the 'branch of psychology that deals with measurement and intervention using sustained attention on same stimulus, resulting alteration in conscious experience, and psycho-socio-biological impacts of such experience'.

A cognitive appraisal of Perceived State of Arousal based on the theory of the affective aggression was developed by Anderson C A., Deuser W E., and DeN eve K M (1995). Philadelphia Mindfulness Scale (Herbart J D., Forman E M., Farrow V 2008) is a two-dimensional measure of mindfulness that assesses present-moment "awareness" and "acceptance". But this scale is not restricted to assess meditation effect, rather their mindfulness in general (For example, "When talking with other people, I am aware of their facial and body expressions"). This scale doesn't deal with learning sessions of meditation.

The Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory (Buchheld, Grossman, and Walach 2001) is a 30-item test that evaluates openness to unpleasant experiences and non-judgmental present-moment observation. It's vital to remember that the first edition was created in collaboration with attendees of mindfulness meditation retreats and was intended only for seasoned meditators. Thus, those who have never meditated before could find it difficult to understand the meaning of some objects. A revised version was created (Walach et al. 2006) to be used with populations that did not meditate, and it included 14 of the original components.

Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS; Brown and Ryan 2003) focuses on attention to and awareness of present-moment experiences in daily life. Items reflect traits with mindfulness such as being preoccupied, operating automatically, and failing to pay attention to the present moment. However, the extent to which this can be used for initial meditation learning effectiveness is a question.

The Kentucky Inventory of Mindfulness Skills (Baer, R. A., Smith, G. T., & Allen, K. B. 2004) is another general mindfulness measurement, not specific to meditation sessions, that measures four mindfulness skills – Observing, Describing, Acting with Awareness, and Accepting Without Judgment. Feldman et al's (2007) Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale-Revised (CAMS-R) assesses individual differences in mindfulness. The 12 unidimensional Items do not specifically focus on meditation practice or training, but appropriate for use with a variety of non-meditating groups. The items measure present-focused attention, awareness, and nonjudgmental acceptance of thoughts and feelings.

Primarily focusing on assessing the ability to perform mindfulness meditation was entirely different as it focused on the behaviours during meditation session rather than generalized one. This objective took again a slight variation and addressed self-efficacy for the practice of mindfulness meditation, rather than assessing if one is adapting to expectations of a meditation learner – what obstacles he undergoes (rather than reporting self-efficacy) while learning meditation, so that a learner can be regulated right from the initial session. This is required because it is difficult to change once, a wrong self – image about learning and practicing meditation is formed over a period of time. A group of non-psychologists attempted the psychological scale building and created Self-Efficacy for Mindfulness Meditation Practice (SEMMP) Scale (Birdee GS., Wallston KA., Ayala SG., Ip EH., and Sohl SJ 2020). This scale in its final form included 9 items. Their final item selection too depicts some confusion as they dropped, for example, one item ("I am able to be mindful of my breath") because all of the other items on the attention factor were more cognitively focused. For any qualified psychologist this logic would not be encouraging. The item strengths are also just acceptable.

Buchheld, N., Grossman, P., and Walach, H (2001) developed Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory (FMI). This 30-items questionnaire taps on four dimensions of Present Moment Disidentifying Attention, Non -Judgmental Non – Evaluative Attitude Towards Self and Others, Openenss To Negative Mind States and Process – Oriented Insightful Understanding. This scale again similar to many scales, is a generalized one and not specific to capturing the obstacles / experience during the learning of the meditation session alone.

Thus, either the scales are generalize or if it is specific to meditation session alone then it is confined to Self – efficacy with very avaerage soundness psychometrically.

Meditative State Scale (MSS) developed by López,E., Jódar,R., and Halty, L. et al (2022) by their strenuous efforts with 12 – items scale covering the factors of "transcendence," "difficulties," and a third factor of "mental quietening". This scale addresses both difficulties and results of meditative practice / learning, especially during the session. But the difficulties are more general such as "Wanted To Move or Scratch", "Wanted The Exercise To End", "Was Difficult To Maintain Posture" and "Felt The Exercise Boring". While this is wonderful, one can easily realize that the 'obstacles' while learning meditation would not end with just these four.

A very wide Meditation practice of participants ranged from 2 months to 80 years, used to find the fit of Effects of Meditation scale (Skipper, T., O'Donovan, A., Conlon, E., & Clough, B. 2015), for five factors Cognitive effects, Mystical experiences, Relaxation, Physical discomfort and Emotional effects. These experiences are related to 'during' meditation but not essentially learning ones. Though the obstacles are covered more than in the Meditative State Scale (MSS), still our experience convince for capturing more obstacles that are wide and strongly influenced by individual differences – both inter and intra.

A promising method for capturing phenomenological experiences is Experience Sampling. Experience Sampling is a method that collects subjective experiences of an individual, widely employed in the medical field to assess the effectiveness of treatments for both physical and mental health, as well as to characterize people's well-being and symptom course (Corrigan-Curay, Sacks, & Woodcock, 2018; Myin-Germeys et al., 2018; Food and Drug Administration), 2022; De Calheiros Velozo J et al 2024).

The main method used to measure mind wandering is experience sampling during sustained attention activities, when participants are asked to self-report if they were mind wandering or not in the moments before the probe (Polychroni, N., Konishi, M., Steinecker, I., and Terhune, D. B. 2024).

Reactive effects Experience Sampling Method give additional benefits over quantitative and qualitative methods. Experience Sampling Method measurements showed a decline in emotional awareness with time, despite participant reports of gains in emotional awareness during interviews. In both the quantitative and qualitative studies, behavioral changes were uncommon. The Experience Sampling Method data showed a decline in positive affect with time, and interviews revealed a variety of shifts in affect, emotion regulation, and cognition. The impact of sample procedure and individual factors on changes over time were not consistently observed. The findings imply that over time, Experience Sampling Method may cause modifications in affect, emotional awareness, completion times, and within-person variability (Eisele, G., Vachon, H., and Lafit, G et, al 2023). Idiographic methods largely use Experience sampling.

The personalized approach to psychopathology aims to create formal idiographic statistical models to capture each of these unique processes, conceptualizing mental illness as a complex system of contextualized dynamic processes that are nontrivially unique to each individual. The personalized approach is based on long-standing influences from clinical psychology, but in recent years, with the advent of statistical techniques and intensive longitudinal data capture, there has been an explosion of research that makes it easier to model the dynamic processes of each individual's pathology. Personalized psychopathology has the potential to provide new insights, address challenging diagnostic problems, and enhance the effectiveness and timeliness of interventions (Wright, A G.C., and Woods, William C 2020)

Psychological research frequently aims to find universal principles that apply to all people, which is at odds with studying what makes each person unique. Many studies in psychology and psychotherapy are able to create a basic component of Cronbach and Meehl's foundational nomological networks of validity by combining data from self-report questionnaire responses with statistical and psychometric methods due to general statistical regularities across individuals' subjective self-report. Idiographic data has been neglected as a result of these approaches' exclusive applicability to situations in which the majority of participants provide the same answers on measures that produce nomothetic data (Evans, C., Carlyle, J., and Paz, C 2023):

The patient's sickness narrative is lost in the process since these measures were created under a nomothetic paradigm, which aims to improve our understanding of people's self-perceived health state by converting complex personal sentiments and experiences into a straightforward numerical score (Meadows, K.A 2022)

Clinical data analysis is dominated by the nomothetic method, or the investigation of interindividual variation, despite the fact that its presumption of homogeneity across individuals and time periods is frequently broken. The study of intraindividual variation, or the idiographic approach, has been criticized for being complex due to its person-specific methodology and outcomes, although it is best suited for analysis of heterogeneous clinical data (Beltz AM., Wright AG., Sprague BN., and Molenaar PC 2016).

Objectives:

- To Collect the Experiences, Thoughts and Obstacles experienced of clients in learning meditation
- To Collect the Experiences, Thoughts and Obstacles of clients in learning meditation in a client-centric manner to reflect phenomenology accurately
- To Collect the Experiences, Thoughts and Obstacles of clients in learning meditation that can help understand learning effectiveness.
- To Collect the Experiences, Thoughts and Obstacles- of clients in learning meditation that help to regulate meditation coaching from the first session itself
- To Collect the Experiences, Thoughts and Obstacles of clients in learning meditation to enhance control over the meditation learning of the client by the coach
- To Collect the Experiences, Thoughts and Obstacles experienced of clients in learning meditation, for an emerging Wonderfeelz Initiation of Meditation Scale (WIMS)

Method:

Participants:

Three meditation learners aged between 40 yrs to 47 yrs, including one male and two females were the participants.
Two females were already experienced in a different meditation method and were practicing earlier. They have not been practicing any meditation at least for the past two years.

Materials:

For the current study no existing scale was used but Experience Sampling technique was adopted.

Procedure:

For the current study, author used the Wonderfeelz Neuropsy Meditation (Ramesh Kumar G S 2022) and that has been elaborated in his further papers. Unlike other meditations, Wonderfeelz Neurospy Meditation is trained using a coaching method. This is a method that can be taught only by qualified Psychologists. Current author would give instruction to close the eyes and sit for a duration of approximately 1 minute. After asking to open, the current author would ask "What did you do?" and "What happened?". These are the only open-ended probing questions asked after every instance of 1 minute or so. For every successive instance of meditation (each instance would have a variable duration of many seconds to couple of minutes), current author would gradually instruct to introduce the meditation procedure.

After each instance, as the two open ended questions are asked and answers elicited, those responses are qualitatively analysed psychologically to understand the experiences and difficulties or obstacles experienced by the client. These psychologically analyzed information are given as feedback along with further instructions towards regulating the meditation learning.

For the current study, the experiences, thoughts, obstacles experienced by the client each instance was noted. The learning session would last for about 30 minutes every day and many 'instances' within it. The sessions lasted for about 20 days for each client. The experiences, thoughts, obstacles reported by each client after each 'instance' within the daily sessions were noted and got clarified. The clients attended the sessions once all the 20 sessions were over for a client, so that experiences sampled from one client could be used as base and probed to categorize / differentiate the experiences reported by each client.

The experience samples thus collected are tabulated (Table 1) and used as the statements for emerging questionnaire of Wonderfeelz Initiation of Meditation Scale (WIMS).

These statements were not developed by researchers and then matched with the subjective experience of the clients. Rather, these statements are produced by the phenomenology of the clients only and therefore more reflecting phenomenological reality. For each report from the client, the current author clarified whether it was a thought or experience or obstacle. For example, distraction would be probed and scored as whether (i) 'experienced' or not (ii) subsequent 'thought' and whether it was a potential 'obstacle' for meditation. Each instance may produce a distraction in any of the variation of these three categories.

Results:

Table 1. The way Experience, Thoughts, Obstacles Reported by clients are processed

S. No	Statement recorded after each instance	Experience	Thought	Obstacle	Indicated R1. R2,…If Repeated
1. 2. …. …. 46.					

Current study has resulted in identifying as many as 46 statements of Experiences, Thoughts and Obstacles, which are prone to variations in every instance and then gradually reduction of thoughts and obstacles occurred over sessions, while the experiences of more positive prevailed though

lesser. In Wonderfeelz Neuropsy Meditation, Observing, noting, viewing, analyzing, seeing, checking, verifying tendencies within mind are not encouraged. These feedback from the clients were accordingly interpreted and feedback given to clients for regulating meditation learning.

Some items look like overlapping, but when cross-checked with the clients they differentiated and thus, the apparent similarity is not real when the true phenomenology of the client is called for. For example, they differentiated items numbers 2 and 12 from each other (all the three clients but at different instances and sequence). Though they could not put in words clearly, they were well convinced that both ere giving different effects to them. But when these statements were shown to three professionals and asked for their judgement, they opined that these looked almost similar. After a few days, when asked to the same clients, they opined, "yes, looks like same'

Thus, this study is also highlighting here 'A new Psychological Effect' – similarly appearing things in general appear dissimilar by the influence of meditative experience, even for shortly. This new Psychological Effect of Meditative Experience need to be studied elaborately by psychologists in future. This New psychological Effect identified discourages Nomothetic approach in meditation research.

Current author defines this 'New Psychological Effect' as 'an alteration in perception of a stimulus due to meditative experience such that the perception in other non-meditative experience is different but related that difference is apparently negligible but significantly meaningful to the phenomenology of the client subjectively, even if unable to describe in words".

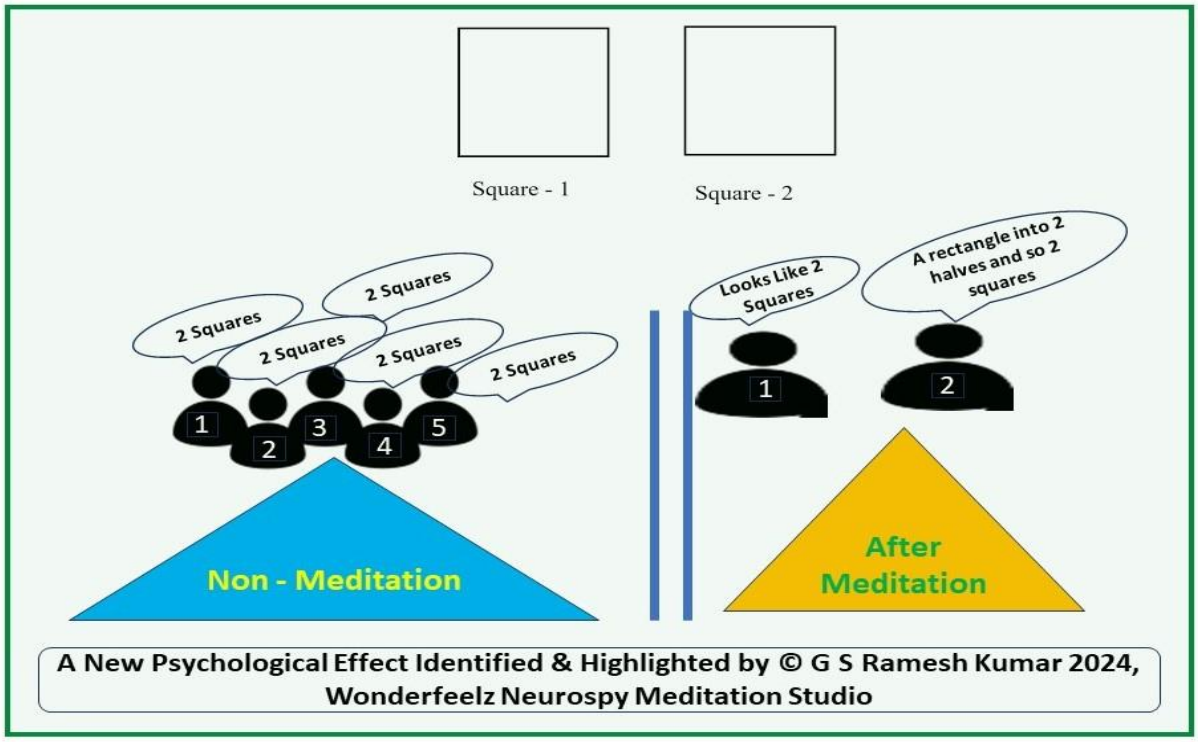

Figure 1 Depicting the New Psychological 'Effect' identified & Highlighted by Current Author

These statements help to understand the unique meditation learning process of each client and coach them accordingly. The statements are representing the reality of phenomenology. The emerging Wonderfeelz Initiation of meditation Scale is unique and first of its kind to predict the learning effectiveness / obstacles by the client in meditation learning.

This has not followed the usual researcher-centric methodology in which the judges who are not actually experiencing the phenomenology neither aware of the phenomenology of the clients are deciding inclusion of the items. In the current client-centric methodology the real phenomenology of the clients decides inclusion of the items. In the researcher-centric methodology, sometime mere three judges are used (Mateus, C., Jabba, D., Erazo, A.M. et al 2024).

The current paper has thus attempted to reach certain objectives and that have been attained in a Client-Centric manner. The emerging Wonderfeelz Initiation of Meditation Scale, is the first scale measuring the psyche of a meditation learner from the very first beginning or "initiation' of meditation and throughout learning sessions.

This can also be used for assessing meditation effect and quality after learning and during practicing. But importantly, this is a psychometric tool and need to be administered and interpreted only by a Qualified psychologist who ahs done minimum of 5 years core psychological course (Ug & PG). Others can't use it judiciously.

Table 2. Table 1 Showing the Statements of Experience, Thoughts and Obstacles reported during Meditation Learning

Item No.	Statements / Questions representing Experiences, Thoughts, and Obstacles
1.	Thought regarding Will this meditation help me and in which way
2.	Thought regarding How to achieve the results quickly?
3.	My mind doesn't stick easily and I have a slight worry about it
4.	Thought regarding What if this effort just stops with calmness and no benefit for my business or income directly/ further
5.	Tendency to get easily distracted if there's any slight sound or event
6.	Trying wilfully to keep my mind in my control
7.	Trying wilfully to keep my calmness in control (to safeguard against reduction in calmness obtained)
8.	Thought regarding Searching for a way to master it quickly
9.	I feel if this is worth the money I pay for it
10.	I wonder if others cannot give the results I would get from this meditation
11.	I have weak belief in what my core mind can do for me
12.	I want to shorten the duration so that I will start getting benefits quickly
13.	I want to shorten the duration so that I will start doing other works / regular business quickly
14.	My expectations about the benefits were more before starting and now I feel I cannot expect much.
15.	I followed the instructions but also had a resistance to not follow
16.	I have a doubt about how much will this help to solve my problems/ overcome situations,
17.	I feel that by undergoing this process, I distance myself from reality
18.	Without any effort my attention easily stays inward without getting distracted by external stimuli or unwanted thoughts
19.	A tendency to check if I was doing correct
20.	I impose onto myself regarding how I do, speak, think, work, be viewed by others etc
21.	Tendency to check if the resulting feeling would help in my day-to-day life
22.	I have a complacency that my present level is more than sufficient
23.	I get the feeling of 'I am inferior' - 'Others Better Than Me'
24.	I feel that I have attachment with my place, home or way of living
25.	There is a push - pull in my mind
26.	There is a tendency to get keyed up to get effect / benefit quickly or without missing
27.	I think if I am relaxed it is indicating being careless or casual without committed
28.	I feel my mind is humble and just remains
29.	If I get distracted once, my mind goes beyond my control for more time on many things
30.	I get some sudden solutions but get faded before analyzing the utility of those solutions
31.	My seeking of inner core of mind didn't happen
32.	My seeking of inner core of mind was very smooth
33.	I felt (not aware) my inner core mind has potential that I am yet to understand. I tried to push my inner core mind to get my wishes
34.	fulfilled
35.	I feel a sense of greed while meditating
36.	I could feel the self-motivation I have
37.	I could feel if I should continue every day at any cost, the self-motivation I have is not sufficient
38.	I have the feeling of boring
39.	I imagined meditative / spiritual feeling like absorbing into universe, God's presence etc
40.	I felt that my core mind would decide what I should attend to among the things around me
41.	I felt not my mind on its own, but 'I' should decide what should I attend to among things around me
42.	I was eager to know how would my mind be after transformation
43.	I have a self-doubt that if this is right method or solution for me
44.	When I got a new experience during meditating, I tried to extend its duration.
45.	I have a thought of revenging / defeating others or prove myself to teach them a lesson
46.	I am concerned when getting right focus is delayed (during meditation.

4. Future Directions:

The current paper has opened a new path for future research in meditation effectiveness prediction itself.
The current research to be replicated with a greater number of individual clients (probably up to 7 clients) for next level validation using the current Micro Level Experience sampling method. This scale will also have a provision for any entirely different experience, thought or obstacle by clients in future.
The current scale to be correlated with similar meditation experience scales in the future projects, thereby extending the subscale identification and strengthening.
Similarly, this scale to be used in more researches to find how these items are helping in predicting the learning speed and depth of meditation by clients.
WIMS will also open the anew avenue of assessing learners and evaluating them for certifications professionally

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