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Empowering identities: The impact of mindfulness meditation on the self-concept of married women

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of mindfulness meditation on the self-concept of 30 married women from the Amroha district of Uttar Pradesh. Using the Self-concept Scale made by Rastogi the self-concept was determined. The participants rated various dimensions of self-concept before and after a one-week mindfulness meditation training program. Results indicate significant improvements in Health and Sex Appropriateness, Abilities, Self-confidence, Self-acceptance, Worthiness, Present, Past and Future, and Beliefs and Convictions dimensions following the intervention. These findings suggest that mindfulness meditation holds promise as an effective intervention for enhancing self-concept and overall well-being in married women. Further research may explore long-term effects and generalizability to diverse populations.

Keywords: Mindfulness meditation, self-concept, married women

Introduction

Mindfulness meditation is a practice that involves intentionally focusing one's attention on the present moment, without judgment. It stems from the Buddhist tradition but has been adapted and secularized for widespread use in modern contexts. During mindfulness meditation, individuals typically engage in various techniques, such as focusing on the sensations of the breath, observing bodily sensations, or cultivating awareness of thoughts and emotions as they arise.

The core principle of mindfulness meditation is to cultivate a state of mindful awareness, where individuals become more attuned to their internal experiences and the world around them. This practice encourages acceptance of thoughts and feelings without getting caught up in them, allowing for a sense of inner calm and clarity.

Over time, regular practice of mindfulness meditation is believed to promote numerous benefits for mental, emotional, and physical well-being. These benefits may include reduced stress and anxiety, improved focus and concentration, enhanced emotional regulation, and greater self-awareness. Mindfulness meditation has been extensively studied and is commonly used as a therapeutic technique in various settings, including clinical psychology, education, and workplace wellness programs.

In recent years, mindfulness meditation has emerged as a powerful tool for enhancing mental and emotional well-being, and its benefits extend to married women in profound ways. As they navigate the complexities of marriage, career, family, and personal growth, mindfulness meditation offers married women a pathway to self-discovery, resilience, and profound transformation.

At its core, mindfulness meditation is about cultivating present-moment awareness and non-judgmental acceptance of one's thoughts, emotions, and bodily sensations. For married women, this practice can be particularly transformative, as it provides a sanctuary amidst the hustle and bustle of daily life, allowing them to reconnect with themselves on a deeper level.

One of the key benefits of mindfulness meditation for married women is increased self-awareness. Through regular practice, women learn to tune into their inner experiences, gaining insights into their thoughts, feelings, and behavioral patterns. This heightened self-awareness fosters a greater understanding of oneself, leading to a more authentic and empowered sense of self. It offers married women a refuge from the pressures and expectations of married life.

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In a society that often glorifies busyness and productivity, mindfulness meditation provides a space for married women to slow down, breathe, and simply be. This practice of self-care and self-nurturing is essential for maintaining balance and well-being in the face of life's challenges. It equips married women with invaluable tools for managing stress and cultivating resilience. Marriage, like any relationship, has its ups and downs, and mindfulness meditation offers a buffer against the inevitable stresses and strains that arise. By learning to observe their thoughts and emotions with equanimity, married women can respond to challenges with greater clarity and composure, rather than reacting impulsively out of fear or frustration.

In addition, mindfulness meditation promotes emotional intelligence and communication skills, which are essential for maintaining healthy and fulfilling relationships. Through mindfulness practice, married women learn to listen deeply, empathize with their partners' perspectives, and communicate with clarity and compassion. These skills not only enhance the quality of their marriages but also foster a deeper sense of connection and intimacy.

Mindfulness meditation fosters self-compassion and self-acceptance, which are crucial components of a healthy self-concept. Married women often face societal pressures to be perfect wives, mothers, and professionals, which can lead to feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt. Mindfulness meditation offers a counterbalance to these negative self-perceptions, encouraging married women to embrace their imperfections with kindness and compassion. It facilitates personal growth and transformation, empowering married women to live authentically and aligned with their values. As they cultivate mindfulness in their daily lives, married women become more attuned to what truly matters to them, making choices that honor their deepest aspirations and desires.

Overall it can be said that mindfulness meditation holds immense promise for married women seeking to enhance their well-being and self-concept. By cultivating present-moment awareness, self-compassion, resilience, and authenticity, mindfulness meditation empowers married women to navigate the complexities of marriage with grace and wisdom. As they deepen their mindfulness practice, married women can unlock the full potential of their inner strength and wisdom, leading to greater fulfillment and happiness in all aspects of their lives.

Review of Literature

Saraff *et al.* (2020) ^[3] investigated the impact of mindfulness interventions on students within a group setting. Their study aimed to demonstrate how a mindfulness-based approach could positively affect the self-concept, self-esteem, and growth mindset of first-year college students. The participants were divided into three groups: a control group, treatment group 1, and treatment group 2. Results revealed a significant improvement in self-concept, self-esteem, and growth mindset among students in treatment group 2 compared to the control group. Furthermore, the study explored the effectiveness of campus-based training in facilitating these improvements.

Chandna S, Sharma P, Moosath H. (2022) ^[1] study aimed to assess the relationship between mindfulness, self-esteem, and self-efficacy among Indian adults, comparing differences across genders and age groups. Using Pearson correlation and multiple linear regression, it found moderate

positive correlations between mindfulness dimensions and self-esteem, as well as self-efficacy. Females scored higher in acting with awareness and observing, while middle-aged adults scored higher in non-judging of inner experiences. The research highlights the potential positive impact of mindfulness on self-esteem and self-efficacy in the Indian context.

Crescentini and Capurso (2015) ^[2] in their review article assess the current understanding of how mindfulness meditation influences practitioners' personality profiles and self-concepts. Initially, they examined studies that explore the relationship between mindfulness and personality using established self-report inventories such as the Five-Factor model of personality traits and the Temperament and Character Inventory. Additionally, considering the inherent limitations of explicit personality measures, the findings demonstrating the effects of MM on both implicit and explicit self-representations. Despite the nascent stage of research on MM and personality, emerging evidence suggests that this meditative practice may significantly mold individuals' personality and self-concept towards healthier profiles.

Yekta *et al.*, (2022) ^[4] in their quasi-experimental study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) in enhancing marital satisfaction among married women in Tehran. Sixty women with moderate marital satisfaction participated in pre-test, post-test, and control group assessments. The experimental group underwent 8 sessions of MBSR, while the control group remained on a waiting list. Various psychological measures were administered before and after the intervention, including assessments of mindfulness, psychological distress, emotion regulation, empathy, marital intimacy, and positive affect. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed for data analysis. The initial model revealed significant indirect effects of mindfulness on marital satisfaction through psychological distress, emotion regulation, and empathy. After refining the model, significant improvements in marital satisfaction were observed via reduced psychological distress and enhanced emotion regulation and empathy. These findings underscore the efficacy of MBSR interventions in improving marital satisfaction among women by addressing psychological distress and promoting emotional regulation and empathy. Considering the importance of mindfulness meditation in improving self-concept this research paper is written with following objective.

Objective

To study the effect of Mindfulness meditation on self-concept of married women.

Sample

The sample consist of 30 married women of Amroha district of Uttar Pradesh selected through convenient sampling.

Tool description

Self-concept Scale constructed and standardized by Dr. (Miss) Mukta Rani Rastogi was used. The dimensions of Self-concept includes total of 51 items distributed in dimensions namely, Health & Sex Appropriateness (6 items), Abilities (8 items), Self-confidence (5 items), Self-acceptance (4 items), Worthiness (7 items), Present, Past and Future (5 items), Beliefs and Convictions (3 items),

Feeling of Shame & Guilt (5 items), Sociability (4 items) and Emotional (4 items). The respondents have to give responses on five point continuum Likert type scale. The score 5 is given to Strongly Agree, score 4 to Agree, 3 to undecided, score 2 to disagree and score 1 to strongly disagree is given for positive items and vice versa for negative items. The high score shows better self-concept. Reliability of the scale by split-half method following Spearman-Brown Prophecy formula was found to be 0.87. The test possess face and content validity.

Procedure of Data Collection

The married were contacted at ladies club and the purpose of the research is communicated to them after their agreement in participation in 1 week training programme for improving self-concept through mindfulness meditation. They were given the Self-concept Scale before and after the one weeks of intervention. The proper rapport was established before the training and data collection.

Training Procedure

The training program is designed to span over one week, lasting 30 minutes to 1 hour each. Additionally, participants are encouraged to dedicate 10-20 minutes per day to personal meditation practice outside of the structured sessions. The sessions includes the following key points considered for Mindfulness Meditation.

Day 1: Introduction to Mindfulness

- **Session:** Began with a 10-minute guided mindfulness meditation focusing on the breath.
- **Activity:** Introduced the concept of mindfulness and its benefits for improving self-concept. Discussed the importance of being present in the moment and observing thoughts without judgment.

Day 2: Cultivating Self-Awareness

- **Session:** Practiced a 15-minute body scan meditation, paying attention to sensations in different parts of the body.
- **Activity:** Reflected on the experience of the body scan meditation and discussed how increased self-awareness could lead to a more accurate self-perception.

Day 3: Self-Compassion Practice

- **Session:** Engaged in a 15-minute loving-kindness meditation, directing well-wishes towards oneself and others.

- **Activity:** Explored the concept of self-compassion and its role in reducing self-criticism. Discussed ways to cultivate self-compassion in daily life.

Day 4: Emotional Regulation

- **Session:** Practiced a 20-minute mindful breathing meditation, focusing on the sensations of the breath as an anchor for present-moment awareness.
- **Activity:** Reflected on the relationship between mindfulness and emotional regulation. Discussed strategies for managing emotions effectively in challenging situations.

Day 5: Stress Reduction

- **Session:** Participated in a 20-minute body scan meditation, using relaxation techniques to release tension and stress from the body.
- **Activity:** Discussed the impact of stress on self-concept and explored how mindfulness could help alleviate stress. Brainstormed stress-reducing activities to incorporate into daily life.

Day 6: Improving Interpersonal Skills

- **Session:** Practiced a 15-minute mindful listening meditation, focusing on being fully present and attentive during conversations.
- **Activity:** Reflected on the importance of effective communication in relationships. Discussed how mindfulness could enhance listening skills and promote empathetic understanding.

Day 7: Integration and Reflection

- **Session:** Concluded with a 20-minute open awareness meditation, allowing thoughts and emotions to arise without attachment.
- **Activity:** Reflected on the week-long mindfulness journey and its impact on self-concept. Discussed strategies for integrating mindfulness practices into daily life moving forward.

Throughout the program, participants were encouraged to keep a journal to track their experiences, insights, and any changes in their self-concept. They were also encouraged to practice mindfulness techniques for at least 10-20 minutes each day outside of the program to maintain and further develop their mindfulness skills.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Comparing pre and post test scores of mindfulness meditation on dimensions of self-concept for married women

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Mean Difference	t'	p value
Health and Sex Appropriateness	Pre	18.500	30	2.224	0.406	3.333	17.202	0.000
	Post	21.833	30	2.102	0.384			
Abilities	Pre	26.200	30	1.846	0.337	2.400	14.697	0.000
	Post	28.600	30	1.499	0.274			
Self-confidence	Pre	15.300	30	2.246	0.410	3.333	38.079	0.000
	Post	18.633	30	2.282	0.417			
Self-acceptance	Pre	13.867	30	2.255	0.412	1.333	9.103	0.000
	Post	15.200	30	1.990	0.363			
Worthiness	Pre	22.900	30	2.468	0.451	3.167	8.451	0.000
	Post	26.067	30	3.667	0.669			
Present Past and Future	Pre	15.033	30	2.236	0.408	3.600	39.573	0.000
	Post	18.633	30	2.312	0.422			
Belief and Convictions	Pre	10.100	30	1.709	0.312	2.767	13.006	0.000
	Post	12.867	30	1.224	0.224			

Feeling of Shame and Guilt	Pre	15.067	30	2.243	0.409	3.800	27.346	0.000
	Post	18.867	30	2.063	0.377			
Sociability	Pre	12.967	30	1.691	0.309	1.333	15.232	0.000
	Post	14.300	30	1.765	0.322			
Emotional	Pre	13.067	30	1.701	0.310	2.400	26.382	0.000
	Post	15.467	30	1.717	0.313			
Total Self-concept	Pre	163.000	30	8.069	1.473	27.467	43.842	0.000
	Post	190.467	30	7.951	1.452			

The above table indicates that the mean scores for Pre-testing for Health and Sex Appropriateness dimension of Self-concept is found to be 18.500 and for post testing it was 21.833. The mean difference is 3.333 and the 't' value is found to be 17.202 which is significant at 0.01 level ($p=0.000$; $p < 0.01$). It infers that there is significant difference in mean scores during pre-testing and post testing for Health and Sex Appropriateness dimension of Self-concept. Furthermore, the mean score suggest that the mean scores for Health and Sex Appropriateness dimension of Self-concept are significantly higher at the time of post testing in comparison to pre-testing. It can be inferred that Mindfulness Meditation improves Health and Sex Appropriateness dimension of Self-concept of married women.

The above table indicates that the mean scores for Pre-testing for Abilities dimension of Self-concept is found to be 26.200 and for post testing it was 28.600. The mean difference is 2.400 and the 't' value is found to be 14.697 which is significant at 0.01 level ($p=0.000$; $p < 0.01$). It infers that there is significant difference in mean scores during pre-testing and post testing for Abilities dimension of Self-concept. Furthermore, the mean score suggest that the mean scores for Abilities dimension of Self-concept are significantly higher at the time of post testing in comparison to pre-testing. It can be inferred that Mindfulness Meditation improves Abilities dimension of Self-concept of married women.

The above table indicates that the mean scores for Pre-testing for Self-confidence dimension of Self-concept is found to be 15.300 and for post testing it was 18.633. The mean difference is 3.333 and the 't' value is found to be 38.079 which is significant at 0.01 level ($p=0.000$; $p < 0.01$). It infers that there is significant difference in mean scores during pre-testing and post testing for Self-confidence dimension of Self-concept. Furthermore, the mean score suggest that the mean scores for Self-confidence dimension of Self-concept are significantly higher at the time of post testing in comparison to pre-testing. It can be inferred that Mindfulness Meditation improves Self-confidence dimension of Self-concept of married women.

The above table indicates that the mean scores for Pre-testing for Self-acceptance dimension of Self-concept is found to be 13.867 and for post testing it was 15.200. The mean difference is 1.333 and the 't' value is found to be 9.103 which is significant at 0.01 level ($p=0.000$; $p < 0.01$). It infers that there is significant difference in mean scores during pre-testing and post testing for Self-acceptance dimension of Self-concept. Furthermore, the mean score suggest that the mean scores for Self-acceptance dimension of Self-concept are significantly higher at the time of post testing in comparison to pre-testing. It can be inferred that Mindfulness Meditation improves Self-acceptance dimension of Self-concept of retired persons.

The above table indicates that the mean scores for Pre-testing for Worthiness dimension of Self-concept is found to

be 22.900 and for post testing it was 26.067. The mean difference is 3.167 and the 't' value is found to be 8.451 which is significant at 0.01 level ($p=0.000$; $p < 0.01$). It infers that there is significant difference in mean scores during pre-testing and post testing for Worthiness dimension of Self-concept. Furthermore, the mean score suggest that the mean scores for Worthiness dimension of Self-concept are significantly higher at the time of post testing in comparison to pre-testing. It can be inferred that Mindfulness Meditation improves Worthiness dimension of Self-concept of married women.

The above table indicates that the mean scores for Pre-testing for Present, Past & Future dimension of Self-concept is found to be 15.033 and for post testing it was 18.633. The mean difference is 3.600 and the 't' value is found to be 39.573 which is significant at 0.01 level ($p=0.000$; $p < 0.01$). It infers that there is significant difference in mean scores during pre-testing and post testing for Present, Past & Future dimension of Self-concept. Furthermore, the mean score suggest that the mean scores for Present, Past & Future dimension of Self-concept are significantly higher at the time of post testing in comparison to pre-testing. It can be inferred that Mindfulness Meditation improves Present, Past & Future dimension of Self-concept of married women.

The above table indicates that the mean scores for Pre-testing for Beliefs and Convictions dimension of Self-concept is found to be 10.100 and for post testing it was 12.867. The mean difference is 2.767 and the 't' value is found to be 13.006 which is significant at 0.01 level ($p=0.000$; $p < 0.01$). It infers that there is significant difference in mean scores during pre-testing and post testing for Beliefs and Convictions dimension of Self-concept. Furthermore, the mean score suggest that the mean scores for Beliefs and Convictions dimension of Self-concept are significantly higher at the time of post testing in comparison to pre-testing. It can be inferred that Mindfulness Meditation improves Beliefs and Convictions dimension of Self-concept of married women.

The above table indicates that the mean scores for Pre-testing for Feeling of Shame and Guilt dimension of Self-concept is found to be 15.067 and for post testing it was 18.867. The mean difference is 3.800 and the 't' value is found to be 27.346 which is significant at 0.01 level ($p=0.000$; $p < 0.01$). It infers that there is significant difference in mean scores during pre-testing and post testing for Feeling of Shame and Guilt dimension of Self-concept. Furthermore, the mean score suggest that the mean scores for Feeling of Shame and Guilt dimension of Self-concept are significantly higher at the time of post testing in comparison to pre-testing. It can be inferred that Mindfulness Meditation improves Feeling of Shame and Guilt dimension of Self-concept of married women.

The above table indicates that the mean scores for Pre-testing for Sociability dimension of Self-concept is found to be 12.967 and for post testing it was 14.300. The mean difference is 1.333 and the 't' value is found to be 15.232

which is significant at 0.01 level ($p=0.000$; $p < 0.01$). It infers that there is significant difference in mean scores during pre-testing and post testing for Sociability dimension of Self-concept. Furthermore, the mean score suggest that the mean scores for Sociability dimension of Self-concept are significantly higher at the time of post testing in comparison to pre-testing. It can be inferred that Mindfulness Meditation improves Sociability dimension of Self-concept of married women.

The above table indicates that the mean scores for Pre-testing for Emotional Maturity dimension of Self-concept is found to be 13.067 and for post testing it was 15.467. The mean difference is 2.400 and the 't' value is found to be 26.382 which is significant at 0.01 level ($p=0.000$; $p < 0.01$). It infers that there is significant difference in mean scores during pre-testing and post testing for Emotional Maturity dimension of Self-concept. Furthermore, the mean score suggest that the mean scores for Emotional Maturity dimension of Self-concept are significantly higher at the time of post testing in comparison to pre-testing. It can be inferred that Mindfulness Meditation improves Emotional Maturity dimension of Self-concept of married women.

The above table indicates that the mean scores for Pre-testing for Total dimensions of Self-concept is found to be 163.000 and for post testing it was 190.467. The mean difference is 27.467 and the 't' value is found to be 43.842 which is significant at 0.01 level ($p=0.000$; $p < 0.01$). It infers that there is significant difference in mean scores during pre-testing and post testing for total dimensions of Self-concept. Furthermore, the mean score suggest that the mean scores for total dimensions of Self-concept are significantly higher at the time of post testing in comparison to pre-testing. It can be inferred that Mindfulness Meditation improves total dimensions of Self-concept of married women.

Mindfulness meditation holds promise in improving the self-concept of married women through various pathways. One potential reason lies in its ability to heighten self-awareness. By engaging in mindfulness practices, such as focused breathing or body scanning, married women may become more attuned to their thoughts, emotions, and bodily sensations. This increased self-awareness allows them to develop a clearer understanding of their strengths, weaknesses, and inner experiences, contributing to a more grounded and authentic self-concept.

Mindfulness meditation may contribute to a reduction in self-criticism among married women. Through practices centered on self-compassion and non-judgmental awareness, individuals can learn to treat themselves with kindness and understanding. As married women cultivate a gentler and more accepting attitude toward themselves, they may experience less harsh self-criticism, fostering a more positive and nurturing self-concept.

Another possible reason for the beneficial effects of mindfulness meditation on self-concept is its impact on emotional regulation. Married women often face a multitude of stressors within their relationships and daily lives. By practicing mindfulness, they can develop skills to recognize and manage their emotions more effectively. This enhanced emotional regulation enables them to navigate challenges with greater resilience and composure, fostering a sense of confidence and self-assurance that positively influences their self-concept.

Mindfulness meditation is associated with stress reduction, which may contribute to an improved self-concept among

married women. By engaging in mindfulness practices that promote relaxation and present-moment awareness, individuals can alleviate the physiological and psychological effects of stress. As married women experience greater calmness and inner peace, they may develop a more positive outlook on themselves and their capabilities, bolstering their self-concept.

Mindfulness meditation fosters the development of communication and relationship skills that are essential for healthy marital dynamics. Through practices that cultivate empathy, active listening, and non-reactivity, married women can deepen their connections with their partners and foster a sense of mutual understanding and support. This enhanced relational satisfaction may in turn positively impact their self-concept, as they feel valued and affirmed within their relationships.

Mindfulness meditation encourages the cultivation of positive traits such as patience, gratitude, and resilience. By regularly engaging in practices that nurture these qualities, married women may develop a greater sense of self-confidence and inner strength. This enhanced self-assurance can contribute to a more resilient self-concept, allowing them to navigate life's challenges with greater ease and grace.

Mindfulness meditation may improve the self-concept of married women through various mechanisms, including increased self-awareness, reduced self-criticism, enhanced emotional regulation, stress reduction, improved communication and relationship skills, cultivation of positive traits, and greater resilience. By incorporating mindfulness practices into their daily lives, married women can foster a more positive and authentic sense of self, enriching their overall well-being and marital satisfaction.

Conclusion

Mindfulness meditation positively impacts married women by increasing self-awareness, reducing self-criticism, enhancing emotional regulation, and managing stress. It improves interpersonal skills, cultivates positive traits, and decreases rumination. By promoting autonomy and authenticity, mindfulness contributes to an empowered self-concept. In a nutshell it can be said that it offers potential significant benefits for married women's well-being.

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