



The Effectiveness of Mindfulness Training in Reducing Emotional Self-Regulation Difficulties and Improving Quality of Life for Mothers of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Riyadh

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Abstract

This research set out to compare the two groups' average scores on two measures of program efficacy: the Emotional Self-Regulation Difficulties Scale and the Quality-of-Life Scale. It also looked at how mindfulness training helped moms whose children had autism spectrum disorder (ASD) better manage their emotions and live better overall. Using a quasi-experimental design, the researcher studied 16 moms whose children had autism spectrum disorder. The researcher's own mindfulness-based training program, the Five Factors Mindfulness Questionnaire, the Brief Emotional Regulation Difficulties Scale, and the Quality-of-Life Scale (Brief Version) were among the tools used. A statistically significant difference was found between the control and experimental groups' mean rankings, with the post-test assessment being favored. The experimental group showed no statistically significant changes between the post-test and follow-up assessments on the mindfulness questionnaire, emotional self-regulation scale, and quality of life scale two months after the program concluded.

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Introduction

Since its incorporation into many facets of life, including emotional intelligence, self-control, and mental and physical wellness, interest in mindfulness has skyrocketed over the last 20 years. Researchers and therapists have taken an interest in it, and it has become a major topic in psychology. Carers of people with special needs or chronic diseases are among those who endure chronic stress as a result of their work, and research shows that practicing mindfulness may help them cope with this stress and improve their mental health (Goodman & Schorling, 2012). Numerous clinical patients with conditions such as cancer, chronic pain, anxiety, and depression have benefited from mindfulness therapy's proven efficacy in medical settings (Herman et al., 2013).

Research has shown that practicing mindfulness may help with emotional control and overall well-being (Abu Zaid, 2017). Mothers' ability to regulate their emotions is critical to their mental health since it allows them to deal with stressful events that come from interacting with others and the world around them (Khasawneh, 2020).

The scientific and practical communities have begun to pay more attention to the idea of quality of life, which is a reflection of the amount of material and social services offered to people. Researchers have shown that parents' happiness levels affect their children's happiness levels, and that as parents' happiness levels rise, they are better able to care for their children with special needs (Al-Ashol, 2005). However, as a result of the continuous care obligations that come with having a kid with autism spectrum condition, parents often endure a diminished quality of life, increased stress, and psychological challenges.

Researchers have shown that parents, and especially moms of autistic children, may benefit from mindfulness training in a number of ways, including less stress, better emotional control, and improved family relations.

Study Hypotheses

After mindfulness training, the experimental and control groups had statistically significant changes in post-test Emotional Self-Regulation Difficulties Scale and Quality of Life Scale mean rankings.

Two months after the program concludes, the experimental group's mean rankings on the mindfulness questionnaire, Emotional Self-Regulation Difficulties Scale, and Quality of Life Scale are not significantly

Variables	Groups	Mean Ranks	Sum of Ranks	U	W	Z	Significance Level
Emotional Self-Regulation Difficulties	Experimental Group	5.50	44.00	8.00	44.00	2.528	0.01
	Control Group	11.50	92.00				
Quality of Life	Experimental Group	11.44	91.50	8.50	44.50	2.479	0.01
	Control Group	5.56	44.50				

different.

Methodology

The researcher tested a mindfulness-based training program on moms of children with autism to improve emotional self-regulation and quality of life using a quasi-experimental design with two groups (experimental and control).

Study population: Riyadh mothers of autistic children.

Study sample: A purposive sample of 16 moms was split into 8 experimental and 8 control groups.

Tools: The study used the following:

The 39-item Bear et al. (2006) Five Factors Mindfulness Questionnaire, translated by Abdul Kareem (2019), measures observation, description, acting with awareness, non-judgment, and non-reactivity.

The Brief Emotional Regulation Difficulties Scale by Bjureberg et al. (2016), translated by Abadi and others (2019), has 15 questions on non-acceptance, objectives, impulsivity, tactics, and clarity.

The WHO QOL-BREF Quality of Life Scale (Brief Version), translated by Ahmed (2008), measures overall quality of life, general health, physical health, psychological health, social interactions, and the environment with 25 questions.

A 20-session mindfulness-based training program designed by the researcher.

Fourth: Study Results:

The findings of the first hypothesis: "There are statistically significant differences between the mean rank scores of the experimental and control groups in the post-measurement of emotional self-regulation difficulties and quality of life after applying the training program".

To test this hypothesis, we compared the experimental and control groups' post-measurement mean scores on emotional self-regulation issues and quality of life using the Mann-Whitney test for independent groups. We looked for significant changes in both directions. See the table below for the test results:

Table (4-1) shows the Mann-Whitney values and significance of changes in the mean rankings of emotional self-regulation problems and quality of life between the experimental and control groups after program implementation.

The results of the previous table indicate the following:

- **The post-test application of the software shows significant variations in emotional self-regulation problems between experimental and control groups at the 0.01 level. Since the experimental group has a lower mean rank, the differences favour them.**
- participants in the comparison group. The negative wording of the emotional regulation problems scale's statements explains why a higher mean value suggests more challenges with emotional self-regulation. Thus, the training had a role in alleviating the experimental group's emotional self-regulation issues, proving that the mindfulness program was successful in this regard.
- **There are statistically significant differences at the 0.01 level** in the mean ranks of compared the two groups' quality of life after using the software for testing purposes, with the experimental group coming out on top. The results show that the mindfulness program did its job of making people's lives better.

Given that the control group was not exposed to the program's experiences, activities, and procedures, they exhibited no improvement in performance. In contrast, the experimental group, who attended the program sessions, profited from them.

Consistent with other studies, this one found that mindfulness sessions helped participants with emotional self-regulation issues and overall quality of life. For example, Zarchi et al. (2019) shown that educating women to practice non-judgment and refrain from fighting ideas via mindfulness training improved their emotional regulation and quality of life. Because of this, women were better able to cope with stressful events, negative emotions, and tough situations overall. Mindfulness promotes better mental health and less anxiety by training one to pay attention and accept one's emotional sensations without judgement.

Consistent with previous research, the present study found that participants in a mindfulness program were better able to control their emotions and thoughts by training themselves to pay more attention to, name, describe, and accept their feelings and thoughts without judgement or suppression (Al-Mahrouq, 2022). The experimental group shows much better control over their emotions as a result. Additionally, it aligns with **Ibrahim (2021)**, who found that mindfulness enhances the effectiveness of emotional self-regulation through re-evaluation, creating positive effects on emotions and memory. Conscious mindfulness practice helps individuals recognize negative thoughts and feelings and makes them more inclined to accept emotional responses as they are without judgment.

The results of this research are in line with those of Al-Adaini (2019), who discovered that the experimental group's ability to regulate their emotions increased after the introduction of a mindfulness program. Mindfulness training promotes attention, concentration, and awareness; it aids in the management of emotions, tension, and anxiety; and it improves one's capacity for self-regulation.

It also lends credence to the conclusions drawn by Ahmed (2019) and Balturschat et al. (2021), who found that mindfulness was inversely related to emotional regulation issues. When comparing people with different levels of mindfulness, those who practise it often report lower scores on measures of emotional management challenges. People who practise mindfulness are better able to control their emotions, according to research by Tasneem and Panwar.(2022)

Mindfulness, according to the study, enables one to consciously control their emotions by bringing their attention to the here and now, free from judgement. The results showed that the experimental group members were happier overall, less anxious about the future or the past, and better able to handle stressful circumstances by accepting and regulating their emotions. Mindfulness also aids in the formation of healthy relationships and promotes the growth of empathy.

Consistent with previous research, our study confirms that mindfulness programs significantly enhance the quality of life of persons who participate in them (Wang et al., 2021; Ryan & Ahmed, 2016; Hwanr et al., 2015). The results make sense when seen through the lens of mindfulness, a practice that emphasises accepting one's emotions and sensations as they are in the here and now and so improving one's quality of life.

Previous studies have shown that there is a positive association between the ability to practise mindfulness and one's quality of life; the data that we have presented here support these findings. A number of additional research, such as Al-Saqieh and Al-Muqrin (2022), Al-Tayyar (2022), Al-Asafrah (2021), and Abdel-Majid (2021), have shown that there is a positive association between mindfulness and quality of life.

This finding is ascribed by the researcher to the beneficial effects of mindfulness on improving people's quality of life. This is because it changes people's perspectives on difficult life events, turning negative views into positive ones through the practice of different mental exercises that engage the brain, improve concentration, lessen anxiety, delay judgement, and embrace the here and now.

The second hypothesis's findings, which indicate: "There are no statistically significant differences between

Variables	Groups	Mean Ranks		Sum of Ranks		U	Significance Level
		Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive		
Mindfulness	Post-Test	3.38	5.63	13.50	22.50	0.635	Not Significant
	Follow-Up						
Emotional Self-Regulation Difficulties	Post-Test	4.33	3.75	13.00	15.00	0.171	Not Significant
	Follow-Up						
Quality of Life	Post-Test	2.75	5.08	5.50	30.50	1.76	Not Significant
	Follow-Up						

the mean rank scores of the experimental group in the post-test and follow-up measurements on the Mindfulness Questionnaire, the Self-Regulation Difficulties Scale, and the Quality of Life Scale, two months after the cessation of the training program".

In order to test this hypothesis, we utilised the non-parametric Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test for paired samples. The purpose of this test was to determine whether or not there was a significant change in the mean rank scores of the experimental group for emotional self-regulation difficulties, quality of life, and mindfulness between the post-test and follow-up assessments that were administered during the program. The results are included in the table that can be seen below.

The Z-value for the Wilcoxon test shows that there are significant differences between the post-test and follow-up applications for the experimental sample (n=8) on measures of mindfulness, emotional self-regulation issues, and quality of life (Table 4-2).

The results of the above table indicate:

- Both the post-test and the follow-up assessments, which were taken two months following the conclusion of the training program, did not reveal any statistically significant variations in the overall mindfulness scores of the experimental group.

Both the post-test and the follow-up assessments, which were taken two months following the conclusion of the training program, did not reveal any statistically significant variations in the total self-regulation problems scores for the experimental group..

- There are no statistically significant differences in the overall quality of life scores between the post-test and follow-up measurements for the experimental group, two months after the completion of the training program.
- These findings demonstrate that the program that was implemented with the experimental group was successful, and that the skills and techniques that were acquired through this program continue to have a positive impact on emotional self-regulation difficulties and on the quality of life of mothers who have children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. Through the tasks that they were instructed on, the experimental group was able to learn the concepts and abilities of mindfulness and apply them to a variety of different circumstances that they encountered in their lives.
- The results of this research are consistent with those of Potharst et al. (2022), who demonstrated that the mindfulness training was successful and that it continued to have a beneficial impact on follow-up measures even after the program had been completed. The findings of Momeni et al. (2020), which demonstrate that the efficacy of mindfulness in enhancing quality of life continued two months after the program finished, demonstrating increases in the participants' quality of life and psychological well-being, are also supported by these findings.
- These results are in line with the findings of Al-Mahrouq (2022), who found that there were no statistically significant variations in the mean ranks of the experimental group in the post-test and follow-up measurements on the emotional regulation scale. These results are compatible with the findings discussed above. In this way, the experimental group was able to effectively learn the concepts and abilities of mindfulness and then apply them to a variety of different life circumstances. This conclusion is also consistent with the findings of Al-Adini (2019), which indicated the efficacy of the mindfulness program in terms of emotional regulation in both post-test and follow-up assessments one month after the program had concluded. The researcher believes that the program's sustained efficacy may be attributed to the significant role that its sessions and procedures had in teaching the experimental group, as well as the fact that the group continued to apply exercises long after the program had concluded.
- The results of the research are also in keeping with the findings of Benn et al. (2012), who found that the mindfulness program had a favourable influence on the experimental group that lasted for two months after the program had concluded. The participants saw substantial decreases in stress and anxiety, as well as improvements in mindfulness, self-compassion, and personal development. Additionally, they became more aware of themselves, their bodily sensations, and their surroundings.
- This finding is attributed by the researcher to the experimental group's capacity to practise mindfulness and concentrate their attention on the here and now without passing judgement, which ultimately leads to an improvement in emotional regulation. The ability to recognise and accept their present sentiments and sensations enables individuals to cease reacting to events in an automatic manner, which ultimately results in an improvement in their perspective on a variety of life circumstances.
- Through the practice of bringing continuous attention to one's emotional experiences, the researcher thinks that mindfulness may play a beneficial role in lessening challenges associated with challenging self-regulation. This enables people to acquire the ability to differentiate between negative and good ideas, as well as the ability to learn to accept and handle challenging circumstances. The effectiveness of the program can also be attributed to the positive relationship that exists between the researcher and the experimental group from the very beginning of the sessions. This relationship is characterized by friendliness, respect, and confidentiality. Additionally, the members of the experimental group are motivated and determined to implement the exercises and accomplish the program's objectives. The researcher notes that the good influence on the experimental group was due in part to the substance of the program, which featured a variety of different approaches and exercises during the course of the program. There is also the availability of work sheets and audio clips for exercises, which contain instructions for mindfulness practices and may be referred to at any time. This is another factor that contributes to the program's sustained efficacy.
 - It is possible to draw the conclusion that the effectiveness of the program can be attributed to the training it provides on mindfulness skills, the enhancement of quality of life, and the reduction of difficulties in dealing with emotional self-regulation. This conclusion can be reached on the basis of the information that

has been presented above. The improvements that were shown in the experimental group that took part in the program are evidence that this is indeed the case.

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