



The Predictive Power of Self-Compassion, Mindfulness and Stress on Quality of Life in College Students.

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When trying to increase the quality of life of undergraduates, self compassion should be uniquely targeted in addition to increasing mindfulness and reducing stress.

Introduction

- Undergraduates are known to have higher levels of stress than the general population, and such stress is negatively associated with quality of life [1]. Because of this, identifying targets for intervention which reduce stress and increase quality of life in undergraduates remains an important area of study.
- According to a recent meta-analysis [2] mindfulness-based interventions have a large effect on stress reduction and increases in quality of life.
- Self-compassion as also been identified as a strong predictor of quality of life among help-seeking adults [3] and may be an additional area of interest when aiming to increase quality of life in undergraduates.
- The present study sought to determine whether self-compassion uniquely predicted quality of life in undergraduates, after accounting for mindfulness and stress.

Methods

- Participants (N=555) were undergraduates at the University at Albany, SUNY ($M_{age} = 19.24$, $SD_{age} = 2.48$; 66% female; 42% White, 24.7% Black or African American, 18.4% Hispanic or Latino, 14.4% Asian, 0.4% American Indian or Alaska Native, 0.2% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander) who completed an online survey examining the prevalence of meditation and its impact on everyday life along with a battery of validated psychological measures, including:
 - **The Quality of Life Inventory** (Frisch., 1994).
 - **The Self-Compassion Scale** (Neff, 2003).
 - **The Freiberg Mindfulness Inventory** (Walach et al., 2006).
 - **Perceived Stress as Problematic** measured by a single 5-point item ranging from “not at all problematic” to “extremely problematic.”
- Data were analyzed via hierarchical multiple linear regression using RStudio version 1.3.959 {stats} package.

Results

Table 1. Linear Regression Model Predicting Quality of Life Scores

Variable	R ²	B	SE	β	t
Step 1	.187	-19.3*	8.59		-2.257
Stress		-5.34***	1.12	-.187	-4.740
FMI		0.81***	0.08	.359	9.117
Step 2	.229	-36.2***	8.89		-4.067
Stress		-3.24**	1.16	-.113	-2.792
FMI		0.49***	0.10	.222	4.839
SCS		11.5**	2.03	.268	5.546

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

Discussion

- Consistent with previous research [i.e., 3], self-compassion was found to account for a unique proportion of variance in quality of life beyond mindfulness and stress.
- These results suggest that when aiming to increase quality of life in undergraduates, self-compassion should be uniquely targeted for intervention along with increasing mindfulness and reducing stress.
- Exploration into the unique contributions of self-compassion such as self-kindness and common humanity and their connection with ACT processes could be an interesting area for future work in this area.
- A comparison examining the outcome differences between interventions that target anxiety and stress (e.g. MBSR) and self-compassion (e.g. Mindful Self-Compassion) could be an additional direction of future study.

References

[1] Bamber, M. D., & Kraenzle Schneider, J. (2016). Mindfulness-based meditation to decrease stress and anxiety in college students: A narrative synthesis of the research. *Educational Research Review*, 18, 1–32. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2015.12.004>

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[3] Van Dam, N. T., Sheppard, S. C., Forsyth, J. P., & Earleywine, M. (2011). Self-compassion is a better predictor than mindfulness of symptom severity and quality of life in mixed anxiety and depression. *Journal of Anxiety Disorders*, 25(1), 123–130. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.janxdis.2010.08.011>