

29th World Summit on

POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY, MINDFULNESS AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

May 21-22, 2018 | New York, USA

The effect of mindfulness practice on people's perception of their own behavior patterns and interpersonal experiences — an initial exploration

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Statement of the Problem: One feedback that is frequently mentioned by our clients is that they become more efficient and comfortable while interacting with others after practicing mindfulness skills and thus enjoy their social life in different domains more. The purpose of this study is to gain more understand on how mindfulness practice helps improve people's interpersonal relationship.

Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: 34 participants who joined an eight week mindfulness course, which was held for the staff in our hospital, finished the Chinese versions of Interpersonal Behavior Survey (IBS), Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory III (MCMI-III), and General Self-efficacy Scale before and after the course. MCMI-III was a tool screening for emotional distress and maladjusted traits that might deserve further help and none of personality change was expected.

Findings: There was no significant change in self-efficacy. Besides general assertiveness, which improved almost significantly, none of any subscale of IBS showed significant change. However, many subscales of MCMI- III significantly improved, including decreases of many clinical syndromes, clinical personality patterns, and one of severe personality pathologies. Also, two subscales in MCMI-III thought to be correlated with well adjustment improved significantly. Since personality traits were not supposed to change over an eight week course and results showed no interpersonal behaviors and self-efficacy changes, a possibility is that although eight weeks of mindfulness practice didn't change their social behaviors nor self-efficacy, it did help improve their emotions and regard their behavior patterns, even self-esteem, more positively.

Conclusion & Significances: The results of this study may provide a new hypothesis that mindfulness practice might improve people's well-being not only through improving their emotions but also by helping them regard their own behaviors and interpersonal experiences in a less judgmental and even more positive way which may induce further changes of their interpersonal behaviors. Further researches on the hypothesis are needed.

Biography

Yi-Hsuan Pan is a Clinical Psychologist providing psychological assessment and psychotherapy in the hospital. In addition to Department of Psychiatry, she is also devoted to promote psychological care, especially concepts of positive psychology, in many different departments in the hospital and to improve wellbeing of the patients and the staff.

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