

Abstract

The present study has two aims. The first aim is to investigate the mechanisms of mindfulness based on the self-regulatory executive function model of emotional disorder (S-REF; Wells & Matthew, 1996) and the Intention-Attention-Attitude (IAA; Shapiro, 2006). A new model with elements of mindfulness awareness metacognitive awareness, self-actualization, cognitive coping strategies, and psychological distress has been proposed. 311 participants have been recruited from a 5-day mindfulness retreat to test the proposed mechanisms of mindfulness, and it was supported that the above factors flow through a direct path with the use of the Structural Equation Model.

Another aim of the study is to examine the effectiveness of mindfulness in reducing psychological distress such as depression, anxiety and stress based on the mechanisms proposed above. The participants are required to fill in the questionnaire before and after the retreat. One-month follow-up was also built into the research design to track longer-term change. Different aspects that mindfulness might bring change such as metacognitions, self-actualization, and cognitive coping strategies have been examined based on the proposed model. There were significant changes in aspects of the mindfulness awareness, metacognitive plans, self-actualization, the use of more adaptive coping strategies, and psychological distress. It was also found that

the benefits of mindfulness might require continuous practice.

The present study aims to provide further theoretical underpinning on the mechanisms of mindfulness, and to establish empirical support for the effectiveness of mindfulness-based intervention in promoting psychological well-being so as to encourage mindful living in the general public.