

Abstract

Objectives

The present study aimed to experimentally investigate the effects of two Buddhist-derived concepts, mindfulness and interconnectedness, on prosociality. In addition, the generalizability of the prosocial effects (namely, interpersonal helping intention, antidiscrimination and civic engagement) of mindfulness and interconnectedness on two underprivileged groups with and without virtual contact (i.e., ethnic minorities and people with physical disabilities) was compared.

Method

A total of 197 participants were randomly assigned to one of the three conditions (e.g., mindfulness, interconnectedness and control) to watch and do written reflections on video clips about an ethnic minority member sharing his/her difficulties in Hong Kong. Participants completed several state measures of mindfulness, interconnectedness, related virtues, and prosocial intention before and after the induction.

Results

Both mindfulness and interconnectedness induction conditions resulted in significantly greater levels of improvement in interpersonal helping behaviours towards ethnic minorities, antidiscrimination concerning people with physical disabilities, and civic engagement attitude concerning both underprivileged groups than the control condition. The interconnectedness condition induced more antidiscrimination and civic engagement, and these effects could be better generalised to people with physical disabilities than in the mindfulness and control conditions. Even though compassion mediated the effects in all models in the current study, interconnectedness could additionally predict antidiscrimination and civic engagement attitudes concerning people with physical disabilities.

Conclusion