

Mindfulness: A Strategy to Improve Students' Self-Regulation Capacity

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Abstract

This study examined how mindfulness intervention improves students' self-regulation capacity. A descriptive research design was used in this study. The respondents were 63 Third Year Bachelor of Science in Agriculture students at the Iloilo State College of Fisheries – Dingle Campus. The data gathered were analyzed using mean and t-test for paired samples. Results of the study showed an increase in the level of self-regulation from low to moderate after six weeks of intervention. Furthermore, findings of this study revealed that concerning the seven successive processes involved in the development of self-regulation, mostly there is an increase in the average of the processes involved such as receiving, triggering, searching, formulating, implementing, and assessing but a decrease in evaluating process. In light of these findings, the researcher, therefore, recommended integrating intervention programs into classrooms and to devise assessment mechanisms on the effects of these variables in the development of self-regulation. Students should be exposed to mindfulness activities to improve their self-regulation capacity.

Keywords: Capacity, Intervention, Mindfulness, Self-regulation, Paying Attention

Introduction

There are many strategies to improve self-regulation, one of which is through mindfulness activities. Vago and Silbersweig (2012) defined mindfulness as a systematic mental training that develops meta-awareness (self-awareness), an ability to effectively modulate one's behavior (self-regulation), and a positive relationship between self and others that transcends self-focused needs and increases pro-social characteristics (self-transcendence). This self-awareness, self-regulation, and transcendence framework (S-ART) demonstrates a technique for understanding the circumstances that give rise to (and eliminate) distortions or biases. Students often discover they can pay attention better and increase the quality of their performance when they learn to be more "present" and less worried.

They often become more focused, more able to approach situations from a fresh perspective, use existing knowledge more effectively, and pay attention. Self-regulation research is important because of the impacts it has on behavioral and academic outcomes. Self-regulation approaches can be used to actively engage passive students in the learning process. Students need to view learning as an activity that they proactively undertake for themselves, rather than viewing learning as a covert event that occurs to them as a result of instruction. Allowing students to take a more active role in their education puts students in the driver's seat as they actively participate in the learning process. There are many studies that show that many college students lack self-regulation as

evidenced by their poor academic performance due to low to average exam results, failure to submit or late submission of school requirements/projects, and absenteeism.

It was observed by many educators that students were having difficulty focusing on a task and controlling their emotions and behavior. They could spend their vacant time loitering in the school lobby and sitting in the cafeteria and remain to be passive when inside the classroom during class discussions. Many of them were finding it difficult to learn because of this, which also made it challenging for the teacher to facilitate the teaching and learning process as well as to expect from them better grades since most of them in this group were scholars. With this, I can say that many of these students were having difficulty self-regulating. Hence above all are the reasons why the study of self-regulation is important and why this study was conducted.

Research Questions

This study aimed to determine the effectiveness of Mindfulness activities as a strategy to improve the self-regulation capacity of the third-year Bachelor of Science in Agriculture students for the First Semester of the Academic Year 2018-2019. Specifically, this study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the self-regulation capacity of students before the intervention?
2. What is the self-regulation capacity of students after the intervention?
3. Is there a significant difference in the self-regulation

capacity of students before and after the intervention?

Methodology

Research Design

This study used a descriptive research framework to accommodate the objectives of the study.

Participants

The participants of this study were third-year Bachelor of Science in Agriculture students enrolled at Iloilo State College of Fisheries – Dingle Campus last Second Semester of

Data Gathering Instrument

The instrument used in this study was the Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ) by Brown, Miller & Lawendowskie, 1999). This is composed of 63 items that should be answered in a 5-point Likert scale with the following scale points. The respondents were instructed to choose from among the options given on how they thought about the items generally using the following; 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Uncertain or Unsure, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

Permission to conduct the study was sought from the Office of the Academics and Campus Administrator of this institution. The instrument was administered personally by the researcher. After the administration of the instrument, questionnaires were checked by the researcher, and scores were analyzed and interpreted using the range provided in the instrument. Analysis was processed via the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Software. This study determined how effective the intervention on Mindfulness is in improving the students' self-regulation capacity. This study made use of the descriptive research design.

Brief Description of the Intervention

A sixth-week action plan for the intervention was implemented with the following activities. Orientation was conducted regarding the study as well as its objective followed by a lecture on self-regulation in the first session (first week). In the second session (second week), a lecture about mindfulness as well as

a sample of mindfulness activities was conducted for the students to get familiar with. A series of mindfulness activities were administered from the third session to the sixth session (third week to the sixth week). Participants were grouped into four from the start of session one. Every session participants shared their experiences and insights during the mindfulness activities within their group and representatives from every group will share the overall insights of the group to which they belong the whole class.

Data Analysis Procedure

Data obtained was analyzed using mean and t-test for paired samples. Computing the mean difference in students' level of self-regulation from the pre-test and post-test results determine whether the intervention was successful or not in improving students' self-regulation capacity.

Results and Discussion

The level of students' self-regulation capacity before is shown in Table 1. The results indicate that the student's overall self-regulation was low ($M=201.87$, $SD=28.40$) before the intervention.

Table 1. *Students Self-Regulation Capacity*

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Description</i>
Overall Self-Regulation Capacity	201.87	28.40	low

The level of students' self-regulation capacity after the intervention is shown in Table 2. The results indicate that the student's overall self-regulation was moderate/intermediate ($M=22.79$, $SD=25.12$) after the intervention.

Table 2. *Students Self-Regulation Capacity*

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Description</i>
Overall Self-Regulation Capacity	222.79	25.12	moderate

The difference in the self-regulation capacity of

students before and after the

intervention is shown in Table 3. The results indicate that the self-regulation capacity of students was improved after the conduct of the intervention which is mindfulness activities.

Table 3. *Students Self-Regulation Capacity*

Variable	N	t-computed	Significance
Overall Self-Regulation Capacity	63	4.451	.000

Table 4 shows the seven successive processes in the development of self-regulation, mostly there is an increase in the average of the processes involved such as receiving, triggering, searching, formulating, implementing, and assessing but a decrease in evaluating process.

An increase in receiving as the first process in self-regulation means an improvement in how a person obtains and understands information to change behavior. In the case of evaluation, intervention does not improve the student's consistency between expected and actual performance thus making them not fully aware of the negative consequences of the behavior. For the third process, there is also improvement in instigation to change behavior. The same as to improvement in searching for options to reduce discrepancies that have been detected in the processes mentioned above. The formulating process was also improved which means after the intervention students became more conscious and gave more importance in formulating a where one sets down a schedule, activities to be pursued, places and any other aspects to be considered in the attainment of goals. Implementing process was also improved, which means there was an improvement in the execution of all that was planned in the previous phase. Lastly in the assessing phase, there is an improvement in how students conducted the comprehensive assessment, addressing both the effectiveness of one's planning and attainment of goals.

Table 4. *Students' Self-Regulation Capacity (Subscales)*

Subscales	Pre-test	Post-test
Receiving	31	33
Evaluating	29	28
Triggering	28	29
Searching	33	35
Formulating	28	31
Implementing	30	31
Assessing	31	32

Conclusion

The results of this study are evidence that suggests that mindfulness - the practice of paying attention to the present moment without judgment - can help young people to improve their self-regulation capacity. Mindfulness is a state of mind difficult for some students to achieve. Practicing this in regular times can help the students appreciate mindfulness to help them to keep their focus more on the present moment.

Most of the participants believed that to begin mindfulness in their everyday lives is to slow down an ordinary activity and should pay attention to the small experiences that make it. Learning mindfulness involves bringing the mind back to some detail of the present moment and acknowledging it. Everyday activities can be carried out mindfully. Someone might sweep a floor, wash a dish, study for an exam, eat a raisin, or do any number of other ordinary activities, slowly and mindfully. Doing the same thing repeatedly for a while—possibly daily or many times a week—helps when learning mindfulness.

Self-regulation and mindfulness are important factors in contributing students to well-being. Self-regulation includes being aware of one's own emotional state and observing how one reacts to stimuli. Being conscious of your thoughts, feelings, and behavior is the foundation of self-regulation; without it, there is no ability to reflect or choose a different path. One effective strategy for enhancing overall well-being and self-regulation is to teach mindfulness. By encouraging active awareness of one's thoughts and feelings, mindfulness encourages making deliberate decisions about how to behave rather than just going along with what your feelings are telling you to do.

Students who are capable of self-regulating can develop good study habits and actively participate and listen during class discussions as well as can submit what is required in class as part of their requirements

since self-regulation also means the ability to engage in tasks and more specifically with the processes involved.

The "mindful" examination of inner mental states, such as emotion and cognition, is encouraged by mindfulness, which heightens awareness of the present moment experiences. It may be possible to have a wider variety of conscious experiences and better mental flexibility by bringing cognition and emotion into conscious awareness. It is hypothesized that this would enable the affective and cognitive systems to be tuned and adjusted into adaptive and functionally more complex mental states. Students who are more conscious may be able to create more complex mental states that work better than students who are less mindful or aware of their mental states.

Self-regulation is a learned skill that could be improved. The intervention conducted is an example of an intervention aimed at improving self-regulation through mindfulness activities. Activities like mindfulness should be integrated into the lessons that will help develop and improve self-regulation capacity. A series of classroom activities designed to help students practice paying attention, remembering instructions, and demonstrating self-control significantly improved self-regulation skills, especially for students with low self-regulation.

School administrators should formulate and support intervention programs/activities that would develop and improve the Self-Regulation Capacity of Students. Teachers should integrate intervention programs in their classrooms and devise assessment mechanisms on the effects of these variables in the development of self-regulation. Students should be exposed to mindfulness activities to improve their self-regulation capacity.

Parents and other stakeholders should be informed of the intervention activities undertaken for them to give proper support to such endeavors.

Guidance counselors should make available student orientation programs, homeroom guidance training, or lectures to enhance students' self-regulation capacity.

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