

Research paper

The Relationship between Mindfulness and Positive Thinking: Mediating Roles of Emotional Cognitive Regulation and Self-Compassion

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to evaluate the fit of the model of the relationship between mindfulness and positive thinking through the mediation of emotional regulation and self-compassion in students. The study population included all students studying in Qazvin universities, from which 200 students were selected using the available sampling method. Participants in the study responded to four scales including: Baer et al Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire, Ingram and Wisnicki Automatic Thoughts Questionnaire- Positive, Garnefski et al Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire, and Neff Self-Compassion Questionnaire. Data were analyzed using structural equation modeling. The results of fitness indices indicated the fit of the proposed model. The path coefficients of the proposed model showed that there was a positive and significant relationship between mindfulness and cognitive emotion regulation, between mindfulness and positive thinking, between mindfulness and self-compassion.

Keywords :Cognitive emotion regulation, mindfulness, positive thinking, self-compassion.

Introduction

Positive thinking is a cognitive process that helps people have hopeful images of the future. The effects of positive thinking include positive feelings, emotions, behavioral characteristics, and problem-solving skills (Anderson & Bekhet, 2019). Positive thinking, while influencing various mental and psychological processes, may be influenced by and associated with many mental processes. One of the psychological processes that may be associated with positive thinking is mindfulness. Mindfulness is a strategy for releasing negative thoughts and replacing positive thoughts (Van der Gucht, et al., 2017). Mindfulness facilitates emotion regulation processes through the process of attention regulation and cognitive awareness of internal and external experiences (Karing & Beelmann, 2019). Today, researchers are increasingly interested in understanding emotional disorders in the field of mindfulness and emotion regulation. Cognitive emotion regulation is the ability to manage emotional states and reactions when a person has to deal with negative events (Malik & Perveen, 2021). Emotion regulation leads to changes in the type, intensity, duration and expression of emotions (Yazdanbakhsh, et al., 2020) Therefore, mindfulness and positive thinking skills seem to be related to this function.

Given that self-compassion is how one relates to oneself in times of distress, emotion regulation may be a potential mechanism through which compassion acts (Finlay, 2017). Given the above, the question arises whether the relationship between mindfulness and positive thinking with the mediating role of emotional regulation and compassion has a good fit?

Method

The present study was a correlational modeling of structural equations. The statistical population included students of Qazvin universities in the academic year 2019-2020, from which 200 people were selected as the research sample by convenience sampling method. Research data analysis was performed using structural equation modeling using AMOS software version 24. The research tools were:

Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire: Baer, et al (2006) developed the 39 items that has a form of a five-point Likert. The Swedish version validation by Lilja, et al., (2011) showed the same factor structure and the internal consistency by Cronbach's alpha method were between 0.70 and 0.90.

Automatic Thoughts Questionnaire- Positive: The 30-item questionnaire developed by Ingram & Wisnicki (1998) has the form of a five-point Likert response. They obtained Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.94 and the validity correlation of -0.33 between this questionnaire and Beck Depression Inventory.

Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire: A 36-item questionnaire introduced in 2002 by Garnefski, et al., (2002). The reliability of this test using Cronbach's alpha coefficient was reported to be 0.91, 0.87 and 0.93, respectively, and its validity was valid according to factor analysis.

Self-Compassion Questionnaire: This questionnaire was introduced by Neff (2003) and has 26 items and six subscales. Neff (2003) reported the correlation coefficients for the whole questionnaire as 0.92.

Results

The sample of this study was 200 people and the participants were studying in three levels of study: bachelor (101), master (99) and doctorate (23). 141 of the sample group were female and 59 were male students. In order to path analyze of the research model, its hypotheses including normality and non-multicollinearity of variables were examined and after the assumptions were established, the research hypotheses were tested. The study of the research model showed that in general, the fit indices of the research model have a favorable fit and the hypotheses of the researchers were confirmed. In Figure 1, the research model is reported in the form of standard coefficients.

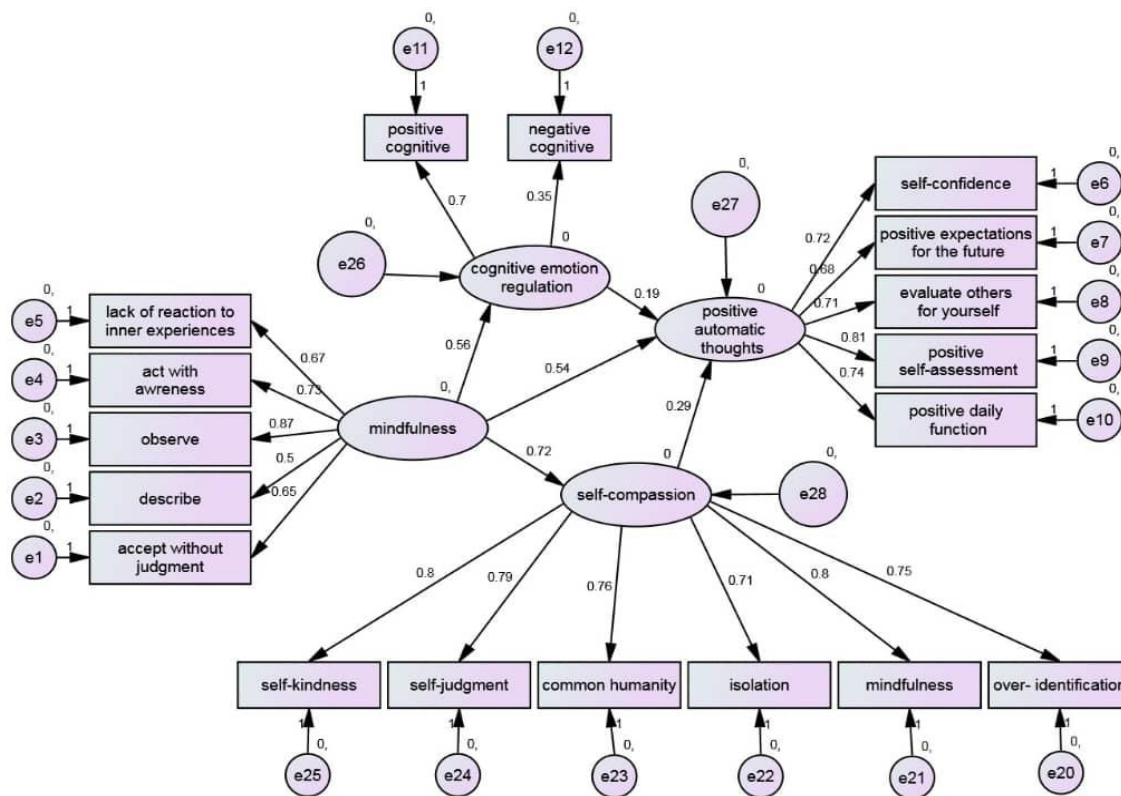


Figure 1. structural equation modeling

Discussion

The result obtained for the relationship between mindfulness and positive thinking mediated by cognitive regulation of emotion and self-compassion showed that there is an indirect positive and significant relationship between them. Explaining the obtained results, it can be said that mindfulness causes the spread of positive thoughts, reduces emotions in stressful situations and be kind to yourself. Positiveness can make people more mentally compatible with the environment and while improving mental health, it can increase people's life satisfaction (Chang et al., 2020). Also, having positive thoughts affect people's perception and ability to deal with a threatening experience (Anderson and Bakht, 2019). In summarizing the presented results, it can be said that positive thinking is influenced by mindfulness and cognitive regulation of emotion and self-compassion as two mediating factors in this influence play a positive role in the student population. Due to the fact that this study was conducted on students of Qazvin Universities, the generalization of the results to other groups should be done with caution.

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