

Mindfulness: A Mediator of Interpersonal Style in Predicting Academic Adjustment

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Abstract

The transition to university not only requires academic learning, but there are a range of social skills that are also required for adaption to tertiary level education. The current research identified interpersonal style and mindfulness as frameworks and theoretical perspectives to address first year university students' adjustment to their new milieu. Study one examined the relationship between students' attachment styles, mindfulness and academic adjustment using self-report measures with students who identified as being in their first year of university. The methodology used to examine these relationships was a demographic-matched design, with groups of self-identified meditators and non-meditators. The results indicated that in a meditative sample of first year university students who scored higher in insecure attachment style, their results negatively predicted academic adjustment, and this relationship was partially mediated by higher scores in mindfulness. Interestingly, in a non-meditative sample of first year students who scored higher in anxious attachment style, their results negatively predicted academic adjustment, and this was partially mediated by higher scores in mindfulness. However, this was not the case for students who endorsed higher levels of avoidant attachment style.

As mindfulness has its origins in eastern philosophy and meditation, the aim of study two was to examine two dimensions of the meditation experience and its effect on mindfulness. The frequency of the meditating experience was found to have an effect on self-reported levels of mindfulness. Research implications and limitations are discussed with future research suggestions which may provide the impetus for further work in the area of student adjustment to first year of university.

Keywords: interpersonal style, attachment, mindfulness, academic adjustment, meditation

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