

Mindfulness Perception of Undergraduate Tourism Students

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ABSTRACT Mindfulness is considered a stress-coping tool that improves individuals' focus. This study focuses on how students perceive and use mindfulness to cope with stress. The mixed-methods study included tourism students. The students met once a week and practiced meditation for eight weeks. Both the experimental and control groups completed a survey before, during and after the meditation study. Data was also collected from compositions that the students wrote about their meditation experiences. The study's quantitative and qualitative findings show that, in general, the students found the meditation practices beneficial. Through these practices, the students began to feel more mindful, compassionate, and psychologically well. The results suggest that meditation may facilitate emotional exploration and enhance the overall well-being of university students. Mindfulness was evaluated as a coping mechanism for university students in the tourism field to manage negative emotions related to stress and anxiety about the future.

INTRODUCTION

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), mental health is defined as, "a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stress of life, realise their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community. It has intrinsic and instrumental value and is integral to our well-being". Mental health can cause difficulties in all areas of life, including school and work life. Mental health problems appear to cause significant economic consequences. Productivity losses directly increase employee costs (WHO 2023). Today, the management approach of businesses has changed from encouraging employees to produce more to being more involved in work and enjoying work. As the importance of improving employees' mental health in organisational behaviour increases, interest in positive psychology has also increased in recent years. Therefore, it is possible to say that academic studies are gaining momentum in this direction (Luthans 2002).

University students play an important role in the development and success of the country's economy. University years are a period in which an individual sets goals for his future. However, the same period can also bring about a stressful turn of life for the individual. Global statistics show that university students experience mental health problems. For example, two out of every five students in America struggle with anxiety and depression. The number of stu-

dents struggling with mental problems and obesity is also increasing in the UK (Yulia et al. 2022). Similar statistics are reported for students studying in Türkiye. For example, a study found that anxiety, mood and psychotic symptoms gradually increased in the first, second and third grades of undergraduate students (Koç et al. 2013). Another study found that approximately 40 percent of students had depression (Ulas et al. 2015). Unfortunately, to the researchers' knowledge, only a few studies have considered the tourism students' mindfulness situation. This is problematic, since the future anxiety and stress could influence students' inner conditions and the insight of students can be altered. Additionally, understanding and improving the mindful perspective of students would have practical implications for tourism managers to guide their employees to experience less stress and anxiety.

The human mind possesses the distinct capacity to introspect and contemplate prior experiences. Furthermore, it has the capacity to conceptualise future events, whether they are anticipated or planned. However, this faculty of retrocognition and prospection is not invariably salutary. Frequently, apprehension regarding the unforeseen future can cause anxiety, and ruminative contemplation of the past can result in depression, in its most extreme manifestation (Agarwal and Mishra 2016). The mind is an important tool for the survival of the individual and to be able to do an individual's daily tasks

easily. However, allowing the mind to do all the operations on autopilot can turn into an uncomfortable situation for the individual. Such a situation creates stress in the individual. Perceived stress is expressed as the reaction of the individual after a stressful situation (Cohen et al. 1983). Studies conducted in different countries at different times show that students generally drop out of school due to personal, environmental and school-related stress factors. Lorenzo-Quiles et al. (2023) highlight psychological and social factors such as stress, anxiety, and lack of motivation among the reasons that lead thousands of students worldwide to drop out of school. A similar situation can also be seen in tourism students. Their anxiety about working in the field and/or pursuing an academic career may also affect their daily course performance. An effective career requires empathy and compassion (Bond et al. 2013) but fulfilling the demands of tourists in the tourism sector and creating satisfied tourists increases stress in students and can reduce their ability to communicate with tourists. Staying in the moment, however, is an important situation that the mind does not want, but keeps the individual peaceful. Mindfulness has recently emerged as one of the prominent concepts in experiencing the practices of staying in the moment. From this point of view, Kabat-Zinn (2003: 145), who first defined mindfulness, explains the concept as, “the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment and non-judgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment”. It is claimed that mindfulness not only provides the development of positive emotions such as awareness, staying in the moment and focusing, but also has an effect on the transformation of emotions that can be described as negative such as stress, anxiety, anger and depression.

Mindfulness is operationalised in two approaches in the literature. One of these is the Buddhist approach, where mindfulness is operationalised with daily and deep meditations. The other (Western ideology) emerged as a result of combining Buddhist approaches such as breathing, sitting, eating and walking meditation, body scan and yoga with Western psychology. It is possible to say that the Western ideology was developed by Kabat-Zinn (1991) and has a mindfulness program called Mindfulness-Based

Stress Reduction (MBSR). The historical roots of mindfulness within the Buddhist tradition have presented significant challenges in terms of its adaptation to contemporary contexts and its practical applications. In light of the philosophical and socio-political critiques of modern mindfulness, scholars have advocated for a more critical and engaged application of mindfulness in contemporary settings, including education (Lee et al. 2024).

It is seen that mindfulness studies are frequently applied in the field of psychology. There are various studies that focus on increasing the academic success of university students while reducing their negative psychological symptoms (Ramasubramanian 2017; Bamber and Schneider 2022). There are a limited number of studies on reducing students' stress and anxiety levels. Some of these studies focus on increasing students' emotional support for coping by implementing one of the 8 or 15-week mindfulness programs. It has been observed that mindfulness programs are applied to students studying in fields such as nursing (Beddoe and Murphy 2003), psychology (Louchakova 2006), social services (Birnbaum 2008), and medicine (Bond et al. 2013). There are also studies that include mindfulness applications involving students studying in different departments of the university (Hjeltnets et al. 2015; Crowley and Munk 2017). Within educational environments, students are most likely to encounter mindfulness through directed activities that introduce them to specific meditation techniques. These practices can manifest in diverse forms, ranging from brief periods of focused breathing at the commencement of a learning session to comprehensive programs encompassing contemplative practices such as body and sensory awareness, walking meditation, and mindful yoga (Hemming and Arat 2025). Studies conducted in general indicate that mindfulness applications can be effective in managing students' negative emotions such as stress and anxiety. However, a “one size fits all” approach in health and education is not appropriate. Therefore, it would be inaccurate to assume that a standardised mindfulness practice would work for all college students, as suggested by Bamber and Schneider (2022). From this point of view, it is predicted that investigating the concept of mindfulness in uni-

versity students in different cultural and educational fields will increase the richness of the concept. More research is needed to understand whether mindfulness exercises work for all university students or not (Crowley and Munk 2017). Moreover, understanding the mindfulness perceptions of university students may help to respond to special needs of students in their academic life.

Objective of the Study

Despite the significant focus on enhancing the understanding of mindfulness among university students in recent years, there has been a paucity of research quantifying the effects on tourism students, who are the future tourism employees. The utilisation of mindfulness meditation in the context of tourism education is a relatively uncommon practice. Consequently, this study merits documentation on its own merits. A critical examination of the mindfulness benefits, particularly in relation to the emotional needs of tourism students, is warranted. The experiential approach of mindfulness meditation has the potential to address the needs of students by orienting them towards the present moment, fostering emotional awareness, and facilitating a reconnection with their bodies. According to Birnbaum (2008), through mindfulness meditation, students can observe their transformed selves in a non-judgmental environment. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap in literature by analysing this effect. The question of this research is, "Can mindfulness be applied to obtain a positive experience for tourism students trying to fulfil different life responsibilities such as work, and school?" The purpose of this study is to use a mixed methodology to examine how practicing meditation in 8 weeks long affects the well-being and future anxiety of tourism students. In this way, it will be practical for tourism students to regulate themselves through mindfulness in case they are faced with a negative situation.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

A mixed method was adopted in this study. In the mixed method, a convergent parallel design was selected as the design and both quan-

titative and qualitative data were collected concurrently in the study. Similarly, the quantitative and qualitative data obtained were merged concurrently in the analysis and interpretation processes (Creswell and Clark 2011). During the research process, quantitative and qualitative data were collected from the same sample group and the studies carried out in this selection were compiled as study 1 and study 2. The study sample was determined using purposive sampling. Campbell et al. (2020) express the purpose of purposive sampling as a better match of the sample with the aims and objectives of the research, thus increasing the rigour of the study and the reliability of the data and results. The research was conducted in the fall semester of 2024, subsequent to the procurement of the requisite permissions from Mugla Sıtkı Kocman University, Faculty of Tourism, Türkiye. Given that students nearing graduation might experience higher levels of stress and career anxiety, 48 volunteer senior students were selected as participants.

Study 1: Quantitative Process

The quantitative phase of the study used scales previously tested for validity and reliability by researchers. Data were collected from students using a survey created using these scales. During this process, students were divided into two groups, that is, a control group and an experimental group. Students in the experimental group received a mindfulness program once a week for 8 weeks. Students were asked to complete questionnaires before, during, and after the eight-week mindfulness program. A control group, which did not receive the mindfulness program, was also asked to complete questionnaires during the same periods.

The question that the quantitative design study aims to answer can be stated as, "Are students who participate in the mindfulness program better at managing career anxiety and stress? If so, is there a statistically significant difference in career anxiety and stress management between students who participate and those who do not participate in the mindfulness program?"

Based on this, the concepts identified in line with the research questions included mindful-

ness, perceived stress, and career anxiety. The scales for these concepts in the survey forms were based on the work of previous researchers.

The researchers used Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) measurement to examine the mindfulness statement of participants. The MAAS scale addresses the individual's awareness of the presence or absence of what is happening in the present (Brown and Ryan 2003). The MAAS consists of 15 items with one dimension. The perceived stress scale (PSS), with ten items, was designed by Cohen (1994) to understand the extent to which an individual evaluates situations in their life as stressful. The aim of this scale is to determine to what extent the individual evaluates their life as unpredictable and uncontrollable, and whether they find their life overloaded. The career anxiety scale was taken from the study of Tsai et al. (2017). This scale attempts to measure the individual's perceptions on issues such as understanding the workplace, lack of self-confidence and psychological conflict. This scale includes four sub-dimensions, called personal ability (8 items), irrational beliefs about employment (8 items), employment environment (5 items) and professional education training (4 items). The personal ability dimension evaluates the basic skills that potential employees should have (computer usage, foreign language, leadership skills, etc.). The irrational beliefs about employment dimensions expresses the difficulties that university graduates may encounter when they enter the labour market. The employment environment dimension represents the work environment or information about employment. The professional education training dimension corresponds to the vocational training provided to university students. All measurement tools were scaled with a 5-point Likert scale. The measurement was operationalised both groups as the three times, before, during and after the 8-week mindfulness practice embedded in the mindfulness program.

Study 2: Qualitative Process

The qualitative design of the study was conducted to explore how students interpreted their experiences of the mindfulness program's effects on their anxiety. To this end, the experimental group was presented with descriptive literature during the weekly mindfulness programs. Sessions included reading about mindfulness and

engaging in experiential activities such as mindfulness meditation. Jon Kabat-Zinn's (2011) book, "Mindfulness for Beginners", served as the inspirational text. The researcher read several pages from the book at the beginning of each session. The pages covered topics such as the importance of breathing, letting go, a non-judgmental attitude, trust, being present, reconnecting with the moment, transforming pain, the importance of meditation, and the term beginner's mind. Following the reading, a guided meditation was conducted for at least 10 minutes. Group members were asked to focus on their breathing and observe mental, emotional, and physical content as they emerged. All sessions took place in a classroom. In addition to the sessions, participants were asked to keep a journal after at least one meditation practice each week throughout the eight-week program. To this end, each student was provided with a journal in which they could record their experiences and feelings. This mindfulness program aimed to help students strengthen their self-regulation by improving their awareness, focus, compassion, and acceptance in the moment. A qualitative assessment of the students' writing was conducted. After the essays were read, a list of emerging themes was kept. MaxQda software was used to analyse the data. The statistical findings and themes were then discussed.

The protection of human subjects in this study was ensured by the university ethics commission. Participants were informed of the general purpose of the study and the duration of the mindfulness program. They were also informed about the security of individual data, which was not shared with anyone else. The researcher also clarified that the participation was completely voluntary and that participation would have no effect on their course grades. The 8-week mindfulness program was co-developed by the researchers. One of the researchers is a licensed mindfulness trainer. The mindfulness program included 8 weeks of in-class structured meditation as a mindfulness practice, discussions, and individual practice outside of the class.

RESULTS

Twenty-four students enrolled in an eight-week mindfulness program. All enrolled students completed surveys before, during, and after the program. The control group also consisted of 24

students. All students in the control group were also asked to complete the surveys at the same time.

The participants' who attend the 8-week mindfulness program mean mindfulness score increased from 2.92 to 3.56 during the course (-0.64). Mean perceived stress has decreased from 3.62 to 3.21 (-0.41). The career anxiety scale consists of four subscales. When each dimension is considered one by one, decrease is observed in all sub-dimensions. The highest decrease in career anxiety sub-dimensions was observed in the employment environment (-0.94). When the control group was examined, the mean mindfulness score decreased from 3.45 to 3.17 during the course (-0.28). It is possible to say that the perceived stress level remains almost the same, from 3.29 to 3.28 (-0.01). Differences are observed in the sub-dimensions of the career anxiety scale. It is observed that the averages of the control group about the concepts do not change noticeably. This finding shows the pos-

itive effect of mindfulness practices on the mindfulness group. Table 1 shows mean scores of all dimensions.

Although the MAAS scale is focused on the presence or absence of the awareness of what is occurring right now, the researchers also wanted to test what participants' experience was after meditation practices. 24 enrolled tourism students wrote a journal that includes reflective essays during the 8-week course. It provided a description of each theme with illustrative quotations from participants. In this study, the thematic synthesis approach was used to analyse the journals written by the participants (Barnett-Page and Thomas 2009). First, all texts based on participants' writing were transcribed verbatim. The researchers reviewed the transcripts for validity and each researcher generated categories and subcategories in line with the aim of the study. In this process, the researchers clustered similar codes into a category and separated dissimilar codes to form different categories in terms

Table 1: Means on self-report measures

Scale	Control group (n=24)			Mindfulness group (n=24)		
	Pre-test	Follow-up	Post-test	Pre-test	Follow-up	Post-test
Mindfulness	3.45	3.42	3.17	2.92	3.48	3.56
Perceived stress	3.29	3.22	3.28	3.62	3.43	3.21
Personal ability	2.60	2.62	2.50	3.29	3.26	3.19
Irrational beliefs about employment	2.45	2.43	2.62	2.98	2.71	2.51
Employment environment	3.91	3.82	3.83	3.98	3.76	3.04
Professional education training	2.47	2.59	2.48	3.05	2.80	2.41

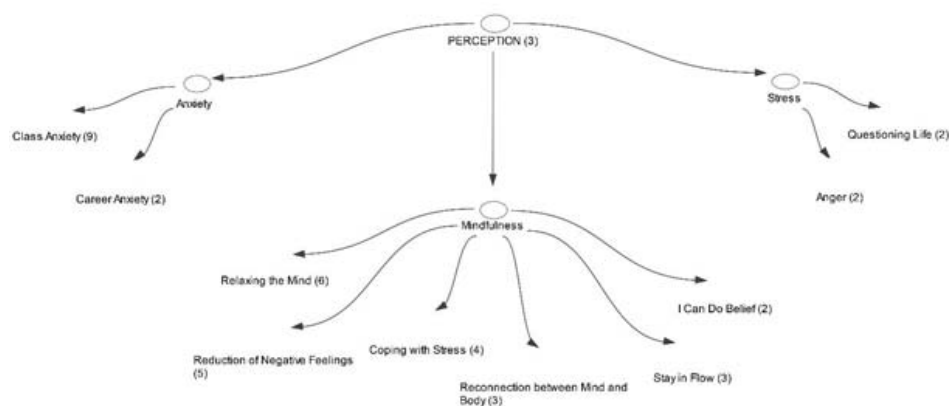


Fig. 1. Emerging themes and related codes

of meaning units. Then, these categories were evaluated in terms of meaning and interpretation. Subsequently, a diagram was created to illustrate the theme, categories and codes found in the data. At the end of the analysis, three main categories emerged as anxiety, mindfulness and stress. Figure 1 shows these categories.

Anxiety

According to the data obtained from the diaries, it was determined that mindfulness participants experienced anxiety in two ways, that is, class anxiety and career anxiety. Within the scope of class anxiety, the participants' anxiety about their daily lessons and exams is revealed in the diaries. There are presentations and similar tasks that they will do in class, topics they cannot understand in class, whether they will be able to finish school on time and general pre-exam anxiety. In the context of career anxiety, it is seen that tourism students are worried about what kind of career they will have after finishing school.

"I have to give a presentation at school this week. I'm a little nervous about it. I've never given a presentation in my life. I've never even spoken in front of a crowd. My presentation was ready weeks ago. But even when I was going over it, I didn't know what I was saying because I was so excited."

"I have a lot of anxiety about my future. The most important of these is that living and working abroad is becoming more and more difficult for us."

The mindfulness program helped with both, in reducing their general anxiety and in managing their anxiety about their future careers (Brown and Ryan 2003; Hjelmets et al. 2015; Crowley and Munk 2017; Bamber and Schneider 2022). Individuals are able to 'reconnect' with their thoughts and bodily sensations throughout short meditations (Kerrigan et al. 2017; Beck et al. 2017). Mindfulness helps calm thoughts by ensuring the perception of the mind and emotions (Hanh 1987).

Stress

The students who participated in the mindfulness program were found to have thoughts

about questioning life and becoming aware of their anger as indicators of their stress. In general, the stress they experienced sometimes caused them to question life and to ask basic existential questions such as, "why am I living, who am I". At the same time, meditation practices had an effect where they became angry with themselves and became aware of this anger.

"I asked myself the question of what I live for. Am I living for myself or for this world?"

"I'm so angry, so hurt, so worthless. I wish I could stay in the moment. Observing my feelings and thoughts, like in meditation, and saying welcome and goodbye to them is not easy in daily life."

The damages in the individual's career, social life and/or family relationships have the potential to transform normal stress into a pathological state (Stahl 2013). According to researchers, the focus that comes with mindfulness is effective in regulating the distress that comes from academic anxiety (Schwind et al. 2017). For example, Kara (2021) found in his study on university students that mindfulness significantly predicted students' perceived stress. Considering studies examining the relationship between mindfulness and anxiety, attention is drawn to the effect of mindfulness on individuals' anxiety. In Ülev's (2014) study on university students, it was found that mindfulness is effective in reducing stress and anxiety.

Mindfulness

Positive effects of meditation practices in terms of mindfulness were observed in the participants. Various codes were determined in parallel with the stress and anxiety of the participants as follows.

- a. I can do belief: Participants developed a belief that they could change and do something through meditation practices after a lesson or a situation in their daily lives that they believed they could not do.

"My anxiety had increased because it was my last year of school. I was extremely anxious about whether I would pass the foreign language course. For years, I had driven myself even lower by telling myself that my German was terrible. My anxiety has decreased thanks to meditation. Now I think I can learn German somehow."

- b. Self-compassion: Students' thoughts about doing the assignments given in class perfectly sometimes increases their stress level. The meditations they practiced were effective in treating themselves more compassionately in this regard. In this way, they focused on their own values. *"I have to make a presentation at school this week. I am a little anxious about this. I have never made a presentation in my life. My presentation was ready weeks in advance. But even when I was rehearsing, I did not know what I was saying because I was so excited. Thanks to meditation, I found something to convince myself. After all, no one has done it perfectly. Also, giving a bad presentation does not make me a failure. I am valuable because I am who I am."*
 - c. Relaxing the mind: One of the most common results observed in participants as a result of meditation practices was relaxing the mind. Participants reported that they felt lighter, their minds and bodies relaxed, and that this relaxation even resembled the effect of a massage thanks to the meditation practices they applied. *"I started meditation at 9:30am. Initially, I was thinking about the stress the day would bring. I wonder how my day will go. I got into a calmer, more relaxed mindset after meditation. I realised that it was unnecessary to bother myself so much."* *"Meditation feels like going to a massage and relaxing my whole body and muscles."*
 - d. Stay in flow: Meditation made it easier for students to stay in the flow. Although the students felt anxiety in an anxious situation, they were able to get out of this situation and focus on the activity at that moment. *"This week I went rock climbing to overcome my biggest fear in life, my fear of heights. I was feeling stressed while preparing the track. So I started breathing the way I do in meditation. When I looked down for a moment during the climb, I felt dizzy. But I was able to complete the climb. The biggest lesson I learned from this experience was that when I go with the flow and just do it, all my fears are left behind."*
 - e. Reconnection between mind and body: Meditation practices helped participants become aware of their bodies as a whole. The healing aspect of breathing, which is automatic in daily life, has been discovered. *"I never realised before that breathing was so healing."* Others, even those who enjoyed being alone with themselves, became aware of their physical integrity through meditation. Participants began to listen to their body as a whole realising the unity of mind and body. *"I'm a person who likes to be alone with myself. But, I was only focusing on my mind during this process. I have never listened to myself physically as a whole. I felt like my body was trying to tell me something."*
 - f. Coping with stress: Meditation practices help participants cope with the difficulties they encounter in their daily lives. These difficulties may be related to any course at school, difficulties they experience with their friends and/or a new situation they try in their daily lives. *"Today I was ostracised by a group of friends. When I asked why, they didn't tell me anything clear. This situation was a bit difficult for me. At first, I tried to solve the problem, but I failed. So I continued my life by focusing on my breathing and remaining unresponsive."*
 - g. Reduction of negative feelings: In general, meditation practices helped participants reduce their negative thoughts. This helped them discover their potential and transform negative situations into positive ones. *"Thanks to meditation, I now focus on the present, I don't think negatively, and I don't feel lazy at all."*
- Mindfulness practices can be conceptualised as a tool that facilitates present-moment awareness, or, in other words, enables individuals to focus on the present. A multitude of studies have demonstrated that individuals' levels of mindfulness exhibit an upward trend over time. As indicated in the extant literature, the correlation between the mind and body is recognised as a component of the concept of mindfulness.

Concurrently, a state of relaxation emerges as a consequence of the re-establishment of the connection between the mind and the body. Research indicates that students who experience a state of relaxation are better prepared for academic assessments (Hjeltnes et al. 2015), exhibit heightened awareness of their physical senses, and report a sense of calm, peace, and harmony in their bodies (Ramasubramanian 2017; Beck et al. 2017). Similar studies also show that mindfulness-based practices are generally beneficial for students (Hjeltnes et al. 2015; Crowley and Munk 2017; Bamber and Schneider 2022).

The importance of mindfulness in the tourism sector, a labour-intensive industry, has been increasingly evident in recent studies conducted on employees and tourists (Stankov and Fliminoau 2023; Wang and Uysal 2024; Ayazlar and Ayazlar 2024). Long working hours, individual customer service, and the fear of job loss due to the seasonal nature of tourism make it even more crucial to prioritise employee mental health. Therefore, this awareness, which students should acquire before entering the sector, is considered crucial for coping with potential stressors in the future.

DISCUSSION

At this point, mindfulness can be evaluated as a source that helps the individual to tolerate the stressful situations they experience. A mindful individual does not try to control the situations brought by life. On the contrary, they can come to the point of accepting the current situations rather than controlling them. In other words, mindfulness does not make the situations better, it makes the well-being of the individual better in the face of the situations. Morgan and Katz (2021) state that mindfulness practices for students support their personal development and encourage them to notice and embrace their negative emotions, ideas, and experiences rather than trying to escape them.

This study found that participants' overall awareness increased by +0.64 through meditation. Data obtained through journaling also supports this finding. Participants experienced more flow, established a stronger mind-body connection, felt more mentally and physically relaxed, and increased their belief in their ability to re-

spond to situations. According to the study's findings, participants greatly benefited from mindfulness practices in managing anxiety and stress in their daily lives, especially in their relationships and at school. The findings of this study, along with previous research, indicate that mindfulness practices positively impact students' stress (Galante et al. 2018), anxiety, depression (Luong et al. 2019; Singh and Bandyopadhyay 2021; Alvarado-Garcia et al. 2025), university adjustment, and resilience (Flett et al. 2019). However, based on the participants' daily records, it was concluded that they used mindfulness more to manage stress in daily life and at school.

Lin (2023) highlights the importance of mindfulness training and flow experience as an emotional experience in improving the well-being of university students. The results of this study indicated that participants exhibited a tendency to persist in a state of flow with greater frequency. This phenomenon can be attributed to the heightened emphasis placed on individual development. The practice of meditation has been shown to facilitate the maintenance of a state of flow in students. According to Kabat-Zinn's framework, one of the seven attitudes toward mindfulness is referred to as 'flow'. The practice of mindfulness-based interventions has been demonstrated to facilitate the release of intense emotions and promote the development of emotional intelligence through the utilisation of exercises designed to promote mindfulness. A fundamental tenet of mindfulness is the practice of present-moment awareness. The practice of mindfulness techniques involves the deliberate observation of one's emotions and thoughts. This approach enables individuals to circumvent the suppression of their emotions and thoughts, thereby preventing the development of dependency on these repressed elements. This phenomenon occurs because emotions and thoughts that are repressed or dependent eventually become the individual's reality. The findings indicate that mindfulness practices have contributed to students' emotional regulation, stress reduction, and the cultivation of a state of peace and calm. Meditation practices helped participants become aware of their bodies as a whole. The healing aspect of breathing, which is automatic in daily life, has been discovered.

Starting to be an observer of the mind brings relaxation.

The mindfulness group preferred to use mindfulness practices for self-regulation rather than in their professional work lives. Similar studies (Galante et al. 2018; Heinrich and O'Connell 2024) have shown that mindfulness practices are effective in reducing students' stress. In other words, based on both previous studies and the findings of this study, it can be said that mindfulness-based interventions are an effective mechanism for university students to cope with stress and/or anxiety. Another observed finding was a decrease in participants' perceived stress levels (-0.41). Studies that frequently associate mindfulness with stress support the findings of this study.

When the means of the mindfulness group regarding career anxiety are examined, it is observed that there are decreases in all dimensions related to the concept at the beginning and end of the 8-week period. The greatest decrease in these dimensions was experienced in the employment environment (-0.94) dimension. This dimension is followed by professional education training (-0.64), irrational beliefs about employment (-0.47) and personal ability (-0.10). It is possible to say that the least decrease in anxiety is in the personal ability dimension. Based on the journaling findings obtained in this study, it is possible to say that the awareness of mindfulness participants regarding personal ability is not sufficient. As Wang et al. (2024) have demonstrated, students' mindfulness can play a pivotal role in mitigating the adverse impacts of academic stress on career anxiety. In this respect, the research findings contribute new perspectives to mindfulness and resilience studies in tourism education. The finding regarding the irrational beliefs about employment dimension shows that there is a decrease in anxiety in this regard. It was previously stated that the participants focused on the stress in their daily lives rather than career anxiety. Based on this, the fact that the school process has not yet ended can explain the reason for the decrease in this dimension. The findings obtained from the averages show that there was a remarkable decrease in anxiety towards professional education training. The decrease in stress towards school lessons through mindfulness may have

also reduced anxiety towards professional education in this dimension. The greatest decrease in career anxiety was found in the employment environment dimension. The decrease in stress towards finishing school also helped to reduce the employment anxiety of the participants.

CONCLUSION

The objective of this study was to ascertain whether mindfulness could be effectively implemented to engender a positive experience for tourism students who are navigating multiple life responsibilities, including professional and academic commitments. To this end, a mixed methodology was employed to examine the effects of meditation on the well-being and future anxiety of tourism students over an eight-week period. The findings of the study indicated that students majoring in tourism exhibited a positive correlation between the incorporation of mindfulness practices and the management of anxiety and stress in their daily lives, particularly in their interpersonal relationships and academic environments. The implementation of mindfulness practices has been demonstrated to result in a substantial reduction of stress, anxiety, and depression among the student population. A notable finding of the study indicated that students exhibited a propensity to persist in a state of flow with greater frequency. The present moment and its perceived importance to personal development were found to mitigate the negative impact of academic stress on career anxiety.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study reveal the importance of mindfulness practices for students working in the tourism sector, which requires intensive labour. In the future, it has a guiding feature in terms of designing and implementing appropriate mindfulness programs for tourism students. The findings obtained in the study can be used for appropriate programs aimed at increasing their mindfulness and thus reducing their stress and anxiety levels. The research findings showed that the awareness levels of tourism students increased after meditation practices. At the same time, a decrease was observed in

their stress and anxiety levels. The potential for improving mindfulness practices in reducing stress and anxiety of tourism students during their busy and off-peak seasons and during their school terms requires further research. At the same time, in addition to the meditation practice applied in this study, the applicability of other mindfulness techniques and their effects on tourism students stand out as another topic worth investigating. In this study, students' journaling during the school period and after the meditation practice were used. A similar study can be conducted during the students' working period and the effects of mindfulness practices during this period can be observed.

Mindfulness practices can be difficult to adapt to students' daily lives. This situation brings about a similar situation when tourism students are working during the high season and/or are busy during the course period. Based on this, it would be appropriate to consider the physical environment and duration in which students will not feel overwhelmed for mindfulness practices in such situations in future studies. Planning should be made according to the targeted mindfulness practice and the benefits that mindfulness practice will provide to students should be clearly stated. If these are ignored, the sustainable continuity of tourism students' mindfulness practices will be negatively affected.

LIMITATIONS

This study has several limitations. There were a limited number of university students and limited departments (only the tourism management department) in the study. Further, this paper relies solely on students' feedback and their perceptions about mindfulness exercises. The study also focuses on the perceived stress levels and career anxiety of tourism students. Since the perceived stress and career anxiety of students studying in different professions may differ, these differences need to be investigated. This study is based on tourism students' feedback and journaling data.

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