



Short Communication

The effects of mindfulness and self-consciousness on persistence

Daniel R. Evans*, Ruth A. Baer, Suzanne C. Segerstrom

Department of Psychology, University of Kentucky, 111 Kastle Hall, Lexington, Kentucky 40506-0044, United States

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 21 October 2008

Received in revised form 18 March 2009

Accepted 30 March 2009

Available online 5 May 2009

Keywords:

Mindfulness

Self-regulation

ABSTRACT

Although theory and research suggest that self-awareness is necessary to regulate one's behaviors, it is unclear what effect mindfulness, a form of present-centered, non-judgmental, and non-reactive awareness, would have on behavioral self-regulation. The present study found that trait mindfulness, particularly its nonjudging and non-reacting facets, predicted increased persistence on a difficult lab task ($N = 142$). Although self-critical facets of self-consciousness were negatively related to mindfulness, self-consciousness did not predict persistence as expected. Mindfulness, particularly nonjudging and non-reactive aspects, may improve self-regulation.

© 2009 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

If behavioral persistence can occur only when people are self-aware, what are the effects of mindfulness, a distinct kind of self-awareness, on persistence? Self-awareness has been defined as attention focused on some aspect of the self (Fenigstein, Scheier, & Buss, 1975). According to self-regulation theory (Carver & Scheier, 1998), self-awareness promotes awareness of a discrepancy between one's current state and a standard, which in turn promotes behavior to minimize the discrepancy. Individuals seek to control their behaviors to the extent that they are aware of their standing in relation to a goal, that is, the extent that they are self-aware.

1.1. Self-awareness and self-regulation

As employed in the self-regulation literature, self-consciousness is the trait version of state self-awareness and encompasses three factors: private and public self-consciousness and social anxiety (Fenigstein et al., 1975). Private self-consciousness is awareness of one's thoughts, feelings, and private motivations, while public self-consciousness is awareness of oneself as a social object. The private self-consciousness factor is itself composed of two facets (Burnkrant & Page, 1984; Cramer, 2000): *Self-reflectiveness* represents rumination about oneself, whereas *internal state awareness* reflects awareness of one's emotional states. Self-reflectiveness positively correlates with rumination, depression, and anxiety whereas internal state awareness negatively correlates with these variables (Anderson, Bohon, & Berrigan, 1996), suggesting that self-reflectiveness may be a maladaptive form of self-awareness, while internal state awareness may be neutral or adaptive. Although past research has examined the role that self-consciousness plays in

triggering self-conscious emotions such as guilt and shame, and their relation to goal pursuit (Tracy & Robins, 2004), it appears that no studies have examined the effects on persistence of specific facets of private self-consciousness.

1.2. Mindfulness and self-awareness

Mindfulness is a form of attentional self-regulation that involves a different quality of attention brought to bear on the self, emphasizing a non-judgmental, non-discursive awareness of one's perceptions, sensations, thoughts, and emotions. Mindfulness and self-awareness are different constructs that should affect behavior differently. In the self-regulation literature, self-awareness reflects a critical or evaluative state that automatically leads to comparison of the self against standards (Silvia & Duval, 2001) and efforts to change behavior. In contrast, mindful awareness does not necessarily lead to identification of discrepancies or attempts to reduce them. Rather, mindful awareness involves acceptance of whatever is observed, even discrepancies. Furthermore, mindfulness allows for deliberate actions that may not be consistent with automatic discrepancy reducing behaviors.

Studies that have examined the relationship between mindfulness and self-consciousness have found negative correlations between mindfulness and public self-consciousness ($r = -.15$ to $r = -.23$) but no relationship with private self-consciousness, although relationships between mindfulness and the two facets of private self-consciousness were significant and in opposite directions ($r_{\text{self reflection}} = -.13$; $r_{\text{internal state awareness}} = .23$; Beitel, Ferrer, & Cecero, 2005; Brown & Ryan, 2003).

1.3. The present study

Relationships among mindfulness, self-consciousness, and persistence have not been investigated simultaneously. The present

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +1 859 940 2091; fax: +1 859 323 1979.
E-mail address: daniel.evans@uky.edu (D.R. Evans).

study tested three hypotheses about these relationships using five facets of mindfulness (Baer, Smith, Hopkins, Krietemeyer, & Toney, 2006) that include *observing* (noticing or attending to internal and external stimuli); *describing* (labeling observed experiences); *acting with awareness* (attending to one's present-moment activities); *nonjudging of inner experience* (taking a nonevaluative stance toward thoughts and feelings), and *nonreactivity to inner experience* (the tendency to allow feelings and thoughts to come and go).

Hypothesis 1: Mindfulness and persistence. The literature on mindfulness suggests a positive relationship between mindfulness and adaptive functioning (Brown, Ryan, & Creswell, 2007). To the extent that persistence is adaptive, we hypothesized that mindfulness would predict persistence. With regard to mindfulness facets, in student samples, relationships between *observing* and adaptive characteristics are nonsignificant or negative. Therefore, we predicted that *observing* would be unrelated to persistence.

Hypothesis 2: Mindfulness and self-consciousness. Because private self-consciousness and its facets include attention to thoughts and feelings, we hypothesized that they would positively correlate with *observing*. We also hypothesized that *acting with awareness* would inversely relate to public self-consciousness and self-reflectiveness, replicating previous findings. Because the content of both public self-consciousness and self-reflectiveness includes critical self-examination, we hypothesized that they would inversely relate to *nonjudging*. We made no hypotheses regarding relationships between self-consciousness and *describing* and *nonreactivity*.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

Participants were 142 native English-speaking psychology students who participated for partial course credit. They were 71.8% female with an average age of 19.33 ($SD = 2.72$). The majority was Caucasian (83.8%) with another 1.4% identifying as Hispanic; 3.5%, Asian-American; 9.9%, African-American; and 1.4%, two or more races. Average American College Test (ACT) score was 24.20 ($SD = 4.22$), ranging from 16 to 33.

2.2. Procedure

Participants provided informed consent and completed questionnaires. They then attempted to solve 11 anagrams. They were instructed to work on each anagram without the aid of paper or pencil for as long as they liked, then call out the answer to the experimenter before moving on. Participants were asked to work as quickly and accurately as possible. The first anagram had no solution, and participants were asked to move on if they had not done so within 5 min. The following 10 anagrams were mild to moderate in difficulty and had time limits of 90 s each. By creating

an initial impression of difficulty but allowing for progress, this design is suited to detect persistence (Nes, Segerstrom, & Sephton, 2005).

2.3. Measures

Participants reported their age, gender, ethnicity, and ACT or Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) score. SAT scores were converted to ACT scores according to the formula provided by the publisher of the SAT (College Board, 1999).

Self-consciousness was measured with the Self-consciousness scale (SCS; Fenigstein et al., 1975), a 17-item questionnaire with a 5-point Likert-type response scale (1 = "strongly disagree"; 5 = "strongly agree"). In this sample, $\alpha = .74$ for the total score. For public self-consciousness, $\alpha = .77$; private self-consciousness, $\alpha = .69$; self-reflectiveness, $\alpha = .75$; internal state awareness, $\alpha = .52$.

Mindfulness was measured with the Five Factor Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ; Baer et al., 2006), a 39-item questionnaire employing a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = "never or rarely true"; 5 = "very often or always true"). In this sample, $\alpha = .68-.88$ for all facets. Sample items from the mindfulness and self-consciousness measures are provided in Table 1.

Persistence was measured by total time in seconds spent working on the anagrams.

3. Results

Participants spent between 110 and 952 s, or approximately 2–16 min ($M = 496$ s; $SD = 183$) working on the anagrams, solving an average of 3.56 ($SD = 2.14$) anagrams out of 10. Only one participant solved all of the anagrams. Those who were better able to solve the anagrams might have persisted due to their success rather than their tendencies to be mindful or self-conscious. Therefore, when calculating the relationships between these variables and persistence, we used partial correlations that controlled for the number of anagrams solved. Table 2 displays these partial correlations and zero-order correlations between all other variables. We did not control for ACT scores because greater ability would be exerted through total anagrams solved. Total mindfulness ($M = 3.36$; $SD = .36$), private self-consciousness ($M = 3.42$; $SD = .48$), and public self-consciousness ($M = 3.30$; $SD = .68$) scores suggested moderate levels of mindfulness and self-consciousness in this sample.

3.1. Mindfulness and persistence

We predicted that all facets of mindfulness except for *observing* would be positively related to persistence on the anagram task. Results (see Table 2) showed that two of the remaining four mindful-

Table 1
Example items for mindfulness and self-consciousness scales.

| Scale | Example item |
|---|---|
| <i>Five facet mindfulness questionnaire</i> | |
| Observing | I pay attention to how my emotions affect my thoughts and behaviors. |
| Describing | I'm good at finding words to describe my feelings. |
| Acting with awareness | I find myself doing things without paying attention. (R) |
| Nonjudging of inner experience | I think some of my emotions are bad or inappropriate and I shouldn't feel them. (R) |
| Nonreactivity to inner experience | I perceive my feelings and emotions without having to react to them. |
| <i>Self-consciousness scale</i> | |
| Internal state awareness | I'm generally attentive to my inner feelings. |
| Self-reflectiveness | I never scrutinize myself (R) |
| Public self-consciousness | I'm concerned about the way I present myself. |

Note: R = reverse-scored item (higher scores represent higher levels of mindfulness or self-consciousness).

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

ISIArticles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات