

MINDFULNESS AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AS MEDIATING FACTORS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SECURITY AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates the mindfulness and emotional intelligence as mediating factors of psychological security among university students in Nigeria. The study was guided with three research questions and hypotheses. The study adopted a descriptive research design of correlation type. A total of 306 University students were selected using purposive sampling technique. Three instruments were administered on mindfulness and emotional intelligence and psychological security, which were validated by two experts. The reliability of the instruments is SMQ, EIQ and SPSQ has 0.72, 0.78 and 0.69 respectively. Multiple Regression Analysis and Pearson Product Moment Statistic were used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings showed that the level of the mindfulness, emotional intelligence and psychological security were high among University students. All independent variables jointly accounted for 63.6% variance in predicting psychological security among University students in Katsina state. Also, mindfulness ($\beta = .771$; $p < 0.05$) and emotional intelligence ($\beta = .169$; $p < 0.05$) had relative contributions to psychological security. Also, the findings showed that mindfulness ($r = .781$; $p < 0.05$) and emotional intelligence ($r = .781$; $p < 0.05$) had significant relationship to psychological security among University students in Katsina state. The study recommended that there is need to improve students' awareness (mindfulness) and emotional stability that can help with communication channels and strategic alignment in psychological security.

Keywords: Mindfulness, Emotional Intelligence, Psychological Security, University Students.

Introduction

The world currently is full of turmoil and unrest which makes the learner feel helpless, depressed and anxious and always fearful of the future. There is need to promote awareness, cognitive functions, happiness and interpersonal relationship among individual for better societal development. Mindfulness includes both awareness and attention, it is individual's awareness of the information coming from the environment and paying attention to the situation that needs to be interpreted (Seki, Çimen & Dilmaç, 2023). The integration of mindfulness-based intervention (MBI) in Universities system has grown exponentially, which aim to improve learner's overall development by enhancing their emotional regulation, cognitive skills, and resilience (Carsley, Khoury & Heath, 2018). This intervention enhanced psychological security awareness (Wang, Wang & Qiu, 2024), improve emotional regulation, awareness, cognitive functioning and overall academic success (Zou & Chen, 2021). In addition, mindfulness is viewed as traits that include the self-regulation of attention, an attitude or orientation to experience that reflects acceptance, openness and curiosity that is closely aligned and connected with compassion (Roeser, Galla, & Baelen, 2022). Therefore, awareness plays an important role in behaviour and attitude modification that ultimately lead to understanding of emotions in individual self and others.

Emotional intelligence is conceptualized as the ability to perceive, use, understand and manage emotions of self and others (Mayer, Salovey & Cruso, 2008). Emotional intelligence model had five key elements that play a major role in student's psychological security these are as follows: (1) Self-awareness is a skill that we build through repetitive reflection and curiosity about our inner experience (2) Self-regulation which is managing one's internal states of security, impulses and resources that guide us to reach our security goals and well being (3) Self-motivation is self feelings and directing yourself towards security goals, despite self-doubt and impulsiveness. (4) Empathy is understand of how other people are feeling and secured (5) Social skills involves observing environments and people as well as having the ability to genuinely consider and accept security tones and emotions of others in a different circumstance (Faltas, 2021).

Emotional Intelligence of individual's is more likely to experience higher happiness and regulate their emotion. This could be because of their ability to manage and control negative emotions and emotional related issues. However, individual with low on emotional intelligence may find it difficult to manage emotional issues in their environment, and thus respond to challenging life problems with fear, anger, frustration, depression, and anxiety (Afolabi & Balogun, 2017). Hence, they may not experience better psychological well-being, subjective happiness and regulate emotion (Extremera & Fernández-Berrocal, 2005). Researchers have identified emotional intelligence as an important psychological factor that promotes positive life and regulate emotional outcomes. For example, studies Afolabi and Balogun (2017) have shown that individual with high emotional intelligence reduced the experiences of depression, hopelessness and suicide ideation, promotes better physical and psychological security, well-being and life adaptation.

The psychological security is concept of human need that emerges from the hierarchy of needs theory, where Maslow (1943) argued that when security need (categorized as lower-order need) was not met, individual may develop feeling of harm or threat, feel anxious and tense, become less satisfied with life, and may not strongly desire higher level needs (Afolabi & Balogun, 2017). Psychological security are distinct related constructs; that centered on how individuals assess and evaluate the safety or threats in their environment, while the latter emphasizes the subjective emotional state stemming from this environmental perception (Shu

Bin, & Yanjie 2023). It is a state when individuals' needs are satisfied and feelings of fear or danger are absent. Such a state enables individuals to encounter challenges flawlessly. When an individual is feeling of confidence and comfort as well as his ability to appreciate and fulfill himself, having sense of inner peace and reassurance apart from fear, threat and anxiety. Psychological security is a prerequisite for individual life, as it provides a person with a sense of security, balance and emotional stability. Individuals who feel psychologically secured usually perceive that the world is emotionally secured or free from emotional harm or behaviour (Taormina & Sun, 2015). They usually have high confidence and trust in themselves and others, feel less anxious, and tend to be more social and actively involve themselves in relationship with other people (Afolabi & Balogun, 2017). An individual with a high level of psychological security can respect himself, consider his abilities as real as they are, and have high self-confidence.

Mindfulness makes the development of competencies involving emotional intelligence and security (Seki et al., 2023). The study of Othman (2019) revealed that there is a positive relationship between the emotional intelligence and awareness of security risks for students of the University, there is a positive relationship of statistical significance between emotional intelligence and awareness of the dangers of terrorism and moral corruption. The studies of Abdelfattah Alalawi, Al Mashaikhya, & Al-Saleh (2023); Le & Nguyen (2021) have confirmed the impact of security on individual psychologies like; worry depression, anxiety, and stress. Therefore, the studies of Dahleez et al. (2021); Mascia et al.(2020); Morales-Rodríguez et al. (2020) on emotional intelligence aroused as a critical factor that enhances and supports students' psychological well-being and security in school. The finding of Babore et al. (2020); Kee, (2020) Afolabi and Balogun, (2017) implies that there is significant and positive relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological security. The study Abdelfattah et al. (2023) revealed that high emotional intelligence students were significantly associated with higher psychological security.

Statement of the Problem

Numerous educational problems such as low interest in learning, educational decline and increasing dropout are attributed to the lack of psychological security. Psychological security plays a very important role in the students' safety, learning process, influencing various aspects of psychological development. The individual's feeling of dissatisfaction in their own environment, and realization that they have no role to fulfill which in turn create hatred poor sense of belonging among individual students. The dissatisfying of individual's physical, social and emotional needs while society is responsible for providing security as a basic need for individuals to a well meaningful life. The individual's belief and concluded that hope, faith and ideology have being oppressed within the society due poor and inadequate security for individuals. It is against this background that the study intends to investigate the impacts of mindfulness and emotional intelligence on psychological security of University students in Katsina State, Nigeria

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was investigates the relationship among mindfulness, emotional intelligence and psychological security among University students in Katsina State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study is to:

1. determine the levels of mindfulness, emotional intelligence and psychological security among University students in Katsina State, Nigeria.
2. investigate the combine relationship among mindfulness, emotional intelligence and psychological security among University students in Katsina State, Nigeria.
3. find out the relationship between mindfulness and psychological security among University students in Katsina State, Nigeria.
4. examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological security among University students in Katsina State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following are Research Questions for this study:

1. What is the level of mindfulness among University students in Katsina State, Nigeria?
2. What is the level of emotional intelligence among University students in Katsina State, Nigeria?
3. What is the level of psychological security among University students in Katsina State, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following are research hypotheses guided this study:

HO₁: There is no significant combine relationship among mindfulness, emotional intelligence and psychological security among University students in Katsina State, Nigeria.

HO₂: There is no significant relationship between mindfulness and psychological security among University students in Katsina State, Nigeria.

HO₃: There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological security among University students in Katsina State, Nigeria.

Methodology

The research design employed in this study is descriptive research design of correlation type. The population of this study consists of all the University students in Katsina State. There are four universities in Katsina State, Nigeria, namely, Federal University Dutsin-ma, Katsina State, Federal University of Transport, Daura, Katsina state, Umar Musa Yar'dua University Katsina state and Al-Qalam University Katsina state. They are federal, state and private universities respectively. The target population was 300 level students from Faculty of Education in the selected Universities. The decision to choose 300 level students was due to the fact that they are more aware about the issues of psychological security in environment and as they are nearing point of graduation from University.

The purposive sampling technique was used to select the Universities based on ownership of government and private own institutions. Three Universities were purposively selected for the study; they are Federal University Dutsin-ma, Katsina State Umar Musa Yar'dua University, Katsina State, and Al-Qalam University Katsina state. The proportional sampling technique was used to select the three hundred and six (306) respondents from the selected Universities. Thus 201 respondents were selected from Federal University Dutsin-ma, Katsina State, 73 Umar Musa Yar'dua University, Katsina State, and 28 from Al-Qalam University Katsina state.

Three research instruments titled "Students' Mindfulness Questionnaire" (SMQ), "Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire" (EIQ) and "Students Psychological Security

Questionnaire” (SPSQ) were used to obtain relevant data from the respondents. The Students’ Mindfulness Questionnaire (SMQ), was adapted from Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire, (FFMQ) developed by Baer et al., (2006). The FFMQ is a 39-item questionnaire that measures five facets of mindfulness: Observing (8-items), Describing (8-items), Acting with awareness (8-items), Non-judging (8-items) and Non-reacting (7-items). The items are rate on a modified four-point Likert scale ranging from “never or very rarely true” to “very often or always true”. The Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (EIQ) was adopted from Indigenous Emotional Intelligence Scales (IEMS) developed by Afolabi (2017). The IEMS is forty 40-items questionnaire that measures on five dimensions: Interpersonal Skill (6-items), Stress Tolerance (5-items), Optimism (6-items), Assertiveness (9-items), Problem Solving (7-items) and Flexibility (7-items). The items are rate on a modified four-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”. Students Psychological Security Questionnaire (SPSQ) was adapted from Psychological Security Scale developed by Mustafa and Al-Shrefen (2013) which was used for this present study. It has 28 items distributed under three dimensions: the feeling of safety (11 items), the feeling of belongingness (10 items), and the feeling of acceptability and love (6 items). Each item is rated on a modified 4-point Likert scale ranging from 4 “always true of me” to 1 “never true of me.” Items with negative wording were reverse coded.

The instruments were validated using face and content validity by two experts from Department of Educational Psychology and Counselling, Federal University Dutsin-Ma Katsina state. The split-half reliability procedure was used to determine the reliability of the instrument, the Pearson product-moment correlation statistic was used to determine the co-efficient of the instruments and this yielded 0.72, 0.78 and 0.69 respectively. The instruments were administered to respondents at various lecture halls for easy recovery and to avoid missing of instruments. In analyzing the data, descriptive statistics, Multiple Regression Analysis and Pearson product-moment statistic were used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Table 1: Level of Mindfulness, Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Security among University Students in Katsina State, Nigeria

Variables	Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Mindfulness	High	252	82.4
	Low	54	17.6
	Total	306	100
Emotional Intelligence	High	271	88.5
	Low	35	11.5
	Total	306	100
Psychological Security	High	285	93.1
	Low	21	6.9
	Total	306	100

The table 1 revealed the level of mindfulness among the universities students, out of the 306 respondents, 252 (82.4%) experienced high level of mindfulness, while 54 (17.6%) experienced low level of mindfulness. The findings on the level of emotional intelligence among the universities students, out of the 306 respondents, 271 (88.5%) experienced high level of emotional intelligence, while 35 (11.5%) experienced low level of emotional intelligence. The

findings on the level of psychological security among the universities students, out of the 306 respondents, 285 (93.1%) experienced high level of psychological security, while 21 (6.9%) experienced low level of psychological security.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant combine relationship among mindfulness, emotional intelligence and psychological security among University students in Katsina State, Nigeria.

Table 2: Regression Analysis of Combined relationship among mindfulness, emotional intelligence and psychological security among University students

R=.799 ^a						
R Square =.639						
Adjusted R Square = .636						
Std. Error of the Estimate = 6.16277						
Analysis of Variance						
Model	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F-value	Sig	Remark
Regression	20352.685	2	10176.343	267.942	.000 ^b Sig	
Residual	11507.841	303	37.980			
Total	31860.526	305				

a. Dependent Variable: Psychological Security

b. Predictors: (Constant) Mindfulness and Emotional Intelligence

The result on Table 2 revealed that the two independent variables made a joint predictive impact of 56.6% on students' psychological security. The composite effect of the independent variables as jointly contributive to psychological security are revealed as thus, $R = .799$, $R^2 = .639$, Adjusted $R^2 = .636$ and Standard Error of estimate 6.16277. The result of the multiple regression analysis produced an F-value (2,303), 267.942 which was significant at $p < 0.05$ alpha level. This implies that 69.9% of the psychological security among the respondents was accounted for the joint efforts of the independent variables when taking together, while the remaining may be due to other factors and residuals. This implies that there is significant combine relationship among mindfulness, emotional intelligence and psychological security among University students in Katsina State, Nigeria.

Table 3: Test of significant of Regression coefficient Variance

Model	Un-standardized coefficients			Standardized coefficients	
	B	Standard Error	Beta	t-value	Sign.
(Constant)	-19.504	4.647		-4.197	.000
Mindfulness	.643	.029	.771	22.293	.000
Emotional Intelligence	.136	.028	.169	4.880	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Psychological Security, ($P < 0.05$)

Table 3 revealed that the relative contributions of mindfulness and emotional intelligence to psychological security of University students in Katsina State, Nigeria. The relative contributions of mindfulness ($\beta = .771$; $t = 22.293$, $p < 0.05$) and emotional intelligence ($\beta = .169$; $t = 4.880$, $p < 0.05$) to psychological security were significant. In terms of rank, mindfulness was the most potent factor followed by emotional intelligence.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between mindfulness and psychological security among University students in Katsina State, Nigeria.

Table 4: r – value between Mindfulness and Psychological security

Variable	N	Mean	S.D	df	r-value	p-value	Decision
Mindfulness	306	112.19	12.265	304	.781*	.000	Sign.
Psychological security	306	69.76	10.22				

* Significant < 0.05

Table 4 shows that correlation analysis of mindfulness and psychological security of University students in Katsina State. The degree of freedom is 304 and r-value of .781 is greater than the p-value of .000 at 0.05 level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that, there is significant relationship between mindfulness and psychological security among University students in Katsina State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological security among University students in Katsina State, Nigeria.

Table 5: r – value between Emotional intelligence and Psychological security

Variable	N	Mean	S.D	df	r-value	p-value	Decision
Emotional Intelligence	306	126.53	11.35	304	.215*	.000	Sign.
Psychological security	306	69.76	10.22				

* Significant < 0.05

Table 5 shows that correlation analysis of emotional intelligence and psychological security of University students in Katsina State. The degree of freedom is 304 and r-value of .215 is greater than the p-value of .000 at 0.05 level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that, there is significant relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological security among University students in Katsina State, Nigeria.

Discussion

Based on the findings, the study revealed that, the level of mindfulness, emotional intelligence and psychological security is high 82.4%, 88.5% and 93.1% respectively among the universities students in Katsina State. The finding of this study is in agreed with finding of Seki, et al (2023) who revealed that, the student have higher mindfulness. In addition, Abdelfattah, et al (2023) revealed that there is high emotional intelligence among students were significantly associated with higher psychological security. This means that students' belief about their capabilities in organizing and conducting activities to make awareness on psychological security and manage their emotion whenever there is any information on security challenges.

Based on the findings, all the independent variables (mindfulness and emotional intelligence) are significantly and positively correlated with the psychological security among University students in Katsina State. The finding of this study is in support with finding of Othman, (2019) who revealed that there is a positive relationship between the emotional intelligence and awareness (mindfulness) of security risks for students of the University. In addition, Seki, et al (2023) who revealed that, mindfulness makes the development of competencies that involving emotional intelligence and psychological security. Also, findings revealed that there was a significant joint contribution of mindfulness and emotional intelligence to the prediction of psychological security among University students in Katsina State, Nigeria. Both mindfulness and emotional intelligence had joint contribution to psychological security.

From hypothesis two, there is significant relationship between mindfulness and psychological security among University students in Katsina State, Nigeria. The finding of this

study is in line with finding of Othman, (2019) who revealed that there is a positive relationship of statistical significance between awareness (mindfulness) of the dangers of terrorism and moral corruption. Also, it is clear indication that mindfulness involves awareness and attention, individual's awareness of the information on psychological security coming from the environment and paying attention to the situation on psychological security that needs to be interpreted.

From hypothesis three, there is significant relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological security among University students in Katsina State, Nigeria. The finding of this study corroborate with finding of Abdelfattah, et al. (2023) revealed that there is significant and positive relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological security. In addition, the finding of this study is in support with findings of Dahleez et al. (2021) Extremera et al. (2020); Mascia et al. (2020); Morales-Rodríguez et al. (2020) who revealed that there is significant relationship between emotional intelligence and students' psychological well-being and security in school. In contrary, the findings of Babore et al. (2020); Kee, (2020) Afolabi & Balogun, (2017) shows an indirect effect of psychological security between emotional intelligence. The future of education at all level could benefit from more research on psychological security and increase focus on developing security awareness, attention and emotion in students.

Conclusion

The study concluded that mindfulness and emotional intelligence is mediating factors of psychological security among university students in Nigeria. The result indicates that the level of mindfulness, emotional intelligence and psychological security among university students is high. The findings of this study showed that, there is significant relationship between mindfulness and psychological security among University students in Katsina State, Nigeria. The results indicated that, there is significant relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological security among University students in Katsina State, Nigeria.

Recommendations

In line with the findings, the following are hereby recommended:

1. There is need to improve students' awareness (mindfulness) and emotional stability that can help with communication channels and strategic alignment in psychological security.
2. University authorities should endeavour to maintain the psychological security of the host community and students in their security plans, to ensure effective security development of the staff and students.
3. University authority through the security organization should organize regular training, workshops and seminars to enhance the students' security awareness and emotional competency.

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