

The Effects of Mindfulness Meditation and Religious Commitment on Levels of Perceived Stress

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Abstract

Research Hypotheses:

- (1) A significant main effect for Mindfulness Meditation such that mean Perceived Stress in the Meditation Condition will be significantly lower than mean Perceived Stress in the No Meditation Condition
- (2) A significant main effect for Religious Commitment such that mean Perceived Stress for the Religious-Commitment Condition will be significantly lower than mean Perceived Stress for the No-Religious-Commitment condition
- (3) A significant Meditation X Religious Commitment interaction such for those who receive Meditation, mean Perceived Stress for the Religious Commitment condition will be significantly lower than mean Perceived Stress for the No Religious-Commitment condition, however, for those who do not receive Meditation, mean Perceived Stress for the Religious Commitment condition will be significantly higher than mean Perceived Stress for the No-Religious Commitment condition.

Introduction

- The current study investigated the effects of Mindfulness Meditation and Religious Commitment on Perceived Stress.
- Our research is significant because it studies both the effect of Mindfulness Meditation and Religious Commitment at the same time while other studies have not done so.
- The origins of Meditation are deeply rooted in religion as stated by Quinn (2018) yet many studies do not explore this link and its effects on Stress. Meditation as well as Religious Commitment are believed to be relevant to each other because Meditation can lower stress, evidenced by Bostock, Crosswell, Prather, & Steptoe (2019); Hall (1999); Haynes, Irvine, & Bridges (2013); Jensen, Vangkilde, Frokjaer., & Hasselbalch (2012); Oman, Shapiro, Thoresen, Plante, & Flinders (2008); and Shonin, Van Gordon, & Griffiths (2014).
- Other studies have also researched the effect of Religious Commitment on Perceived Stress, as tested by Dreyer, L & S (2012); King, & Schafer (1992); Koenig, Pearce, Nelson, & Erkanli (2016); and Van Cappellen, Toth-Gauthier, Saroglou, & Fredrickson (2016) .

Method

- Participants consisted of 41 undergraduate students enrolled at a Southern Californian community college. Participants were diverse in terms of Age and Ethnicity.
- Two online surveys were created, one using the RCI-10 and the other using the PSS. Windows desktop computers were used to display two different types of videos to the participants, in a computer lab. Each participant used headphones. They watched the videos which either consisted of meditative instructions or an African wildlife video for 30 minutes and were timed to start watching at the same time.
- They entered the computer lab and each was seated in front of a computer which displayed different videos. Instructions informed participants they would be viewing a 30-minute video and once everyone had finished watching the video, they were to fill out a survey.
- After they completed the survey, they were thanked for their participation and dismissed.

Results

- The current study investigated the effects of Religious Commitment (Religious, Non-Religious) and Mindfulness Meditation (Meditation, No Meditation) on Perceived Stress using a Between-Subject Design.
- The main effect with Religious Commitment was not significant such that mean perceived stress in the Religious Commitment was not significantly different from mean perceived stress in the Non-Religious Commitment
- The main effect for Meditation Condition was not significant such that mean perceived stress in the Meditation was not significantly different from mean perceived stress in the No Meditation.
- Religiosity X Meditation interaction was not significant

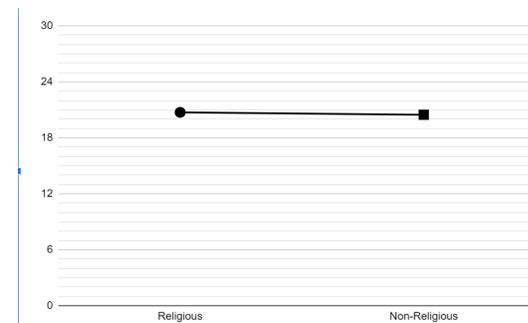


Figure 1: Mean Perceived Stress as a Function of Religious Commitment (Religious, Non-Religious).

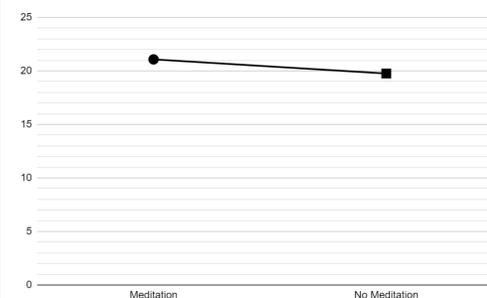


Figure 2. Mean Perceived Stress as a Function of Meditation (Meditation, No-Meditation).

Conclusions

- The main effect for Religious Commitment was not significant such that mean Perceived Stress in the Religious Condition was not significantly different than mean Perceived Stress in the Non-Religious Condition.
- This result is not consistent with the research hypothesis that mean Perceived Stress in the Non-Religious would be higher than mean perceived stress in the Non-Religious.
- The main effect for mean Perceived Stress in No-Meditation was not significantly different from mean Perceived Stress in Meditation. This result is not consistent with the research hypothesis that mean Perceived Stress in the Meditation would be significantly lower than mean Perceived Stress in the No-Meditation.
- Our experiment was conducted on both the Meditation and No Meditation Conditions, but however didn't account for the uneven population of Religious and Non-Religious individuals, which could have skewed data. One application for results, is that at least over a short period of time, Mindful Meditation does not appear to reduce perceived stress.

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