

Mindfulness among University Students

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Abstract. The present study aimed to measure the level of mindfulness among a sample of university students and to examine the differences in their mindfulness scores according to the gender variable (male/female). The study sample consisted of 150 male and female students, who were selected using the accidental sampling method. The descriptive approach was adopted. The study also relied on the Mindfulness Scale developed by Ahlam Abdullah (2013). After processing the study data using SPSS 21, the results revealed the following:

- The level of mindfulness among university students is high.
- There are no statistically significant differences in the level of mindfulness among university students attributable to the gender variable (male/female).

1. INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT:

Research on the variable of mindfulness is of great importance, as it is one of the variables that fall within the field of positive psychology. Positive psychology is a branch of psychology and represents a relatively recent orientation concerned with investigating the positive aspects of the individual, including behaviors, virtues, and sources of strength, with the aim of achieving positive mental health. This concept extends beyond psychological normality and the absence of illness to include what proponents of this orientation refer to as both psychological and social well-being. Accordingly, positive psychology is concerned with the scientific study of human strengths and virtues and with efforts to develop them in order to promote psychological well-being and quality of life for the individual, the group, and society in general.

The university institution, as an important social structure, bears an active and vital role in shaping and developing societies. It represents the apex of the formative and educational hierarchy through the preparation of university students at the cognitive, educational, social, professional, and psychological levels. Accordingly, the latter dimension—the psychological aspect of the university student—is of particular importance, especially the positive dimension of the student's personality, which has a substantial influence on behavior in general and academic performance in particular. This positive dimension includes multiple variables, such as happiness, hope, optimism, psychological reassurance, quality of life, gratitude, positive thinking, and mindfulness.

Mindfulness, in particular, is considered one of the core concepts in positive psychology, as it represents an important indicator of positive mental health. This is supported by the studies of (Burgoon, Berger and Waldron, 2000; Feltman, Robinson and Ode, 2009), which indicated that mindfulness training programs contribute to reducing psychological stress among learners, seek to improve their lifestyle, and help them confront and understand different learning situations in a logical manner.

Moreover, Howell & Buro (2011:1008) argue that mindfulness provides students with rich experiences that contribute to influencing the self-regulation of behavior. It includes students' attention to their goals and their focus on them, the development of their ability to align themselves with these goals, and the improvement of academic regulation, which is linked to the need to acknowledge the importance of modifying goals and controlling behavior in ways that contribute to achievement and goal attainment. In the same context, Al-Dabaa and Talab (2013) indicate that mindfulness contributes to enabling the individual to acquire the ability to face different challenges and situations instead of avoiding them, and to accept their condition despite the presence of emotional stress, which helps protect the self from negative emotions.

The study by Al-Sayed (2018), which examined the relationship between mindfulness and life satisfaction among a sample of male and female adolescents, indicated a positive relationship between the two variables, as well as the contribution of mindfulness to predicting life satisfaction among the study sample. In addition, many other studies have shown that mindfulness is associated with other positive variables. For instance, Balbal's study (2019), which addressed mindfulness and its relationship with academic resilience and perceived life stress among university students, concluded that there were statistically significant differences between students with low and high levels of mindfulness in academic resilience, in favor of those with high mindfulness. It also found a positive correlational relationship between mindfulness and academic resilience, whereas a negative correlational relationship was found between mindfulness and perceived life stress.

In addition to experimental studies on this variable, findings have demonstrated the effectiveness of training programs based on mindfulness skills in improving many negative behaviors among the targeted study samples. One example is the study by Al-Adaini (2019), which investigated the effectiveness of a cognitive-behavioral program based on mindfulness in improving emotion regulation among a sample of university students. The results revealed statistically significant differences between the mean scores of students in the experimental group and those in the control group in emotion regulation, in favor of the experimental group.

The results also showed no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group students in emotion regulation between the post-test and the follow-up measurement conducted one month after the first application. Similarly, the study by Aliwa, Abdelrahman, and Omran (2025) demonstrated the effectiveness of a training program based on

mindfulness in reducing psychological burnout among special education teachers.

As Haskar (2010) also indicated, mindfulness can be used to develop metacognitive thinking, which represents higher-order control processes that include self-awareness of knowledge and its self-regulation through planning, monitoring, control, and self-evaluation of thinking. Based on the foregoing, the importance of investigating the positive dimensions of the human personality in general becomes evident, particularly in relation to achieving mental health, openness toward goal attainment, and access to a good life. This importance becomes even greater when the group under consideration is university students, who represent human capital and the central pillar of sustainable development in all areas of life.

Accordingly, the present study was conducted to identify the level of mindfulness among a sample of university students. The problem statement of the study was formulated through the following questions:

- What is the level of mindfulness among university students?
- Are there statistically significant differences in mindfulness among university students attributable to gender (males/females)?

2. STUDY HYPOTHESES

- The level of mindfulness among university students is moderate.
- There are statistically significant differences in mindfulness among university students according to the gender variable (male/female).

3. STUDY OBJECTIVES

The present research aims to achieve the following:

- To determine the level of mindfulness among university students.
- To identify differences in the level of mindfulness among university students according to the gender variable (male/female).

4. STUDY SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of the present study stems from the following:

- The nature of the sample and the developmental stage to which it belongs, as the university stage represents an important transitional bridge that provides opportunities for developing the mental, psychological, and social skills of university students. These skills contribute to shaping their personality, preparing them appropriately, and qualifying them to become thoughtful, creative, and achievement-oriented individuals.
- Mindfulness, as a positive concept, helps promote mental health by enabling students to regulate their emotions and strengthen psychological hardiness, which contributes to improving learning skills, academic performance, and quality of life in general.
- This study represents a call for those responsible for counseling and mental health to give greater attention to designing programs based on positive behaviors in various environments, particularly the university environment.

5. OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF THE STUDY CONCEPTS

Mindfulness: A psychological concept that refers to a state of awareness of the individual's subjective experiences and a focus on present situations without issuing evaluative judgments. This contributes to promoting mental health by confronting stressful situations and controlling negative emotions. Operationally, it is represented by the score obtained by the university student on the Mindfulness Scale developed by Abdullah Ahlam (2013).

Study Limits:

Subject limits: The present study was limited to the variable of mindfulness.

Spatial limits: The present study was conducted at Hassiba Benbouali University, Ouled Fares University Campus.

Temporal limits: The study instrument was administered during the academic year (2024–2025).

Human limits: The present study was conducted on a sample consisting of 150 male and female students.

Study Procedures

First: The Exploratory Study:

The exploratory study aimed to calculate the psychometric properties of the instrument and to gain experience in its administration.

Sample of the Exploratory Study:

The study instruments were administered to an exploratory sample consisting of 30 male and female university students, including 19 female students and 11 male students.

Psychometric Properties of the Mindfulness Scale

1. Validity of the Scale:

Extreme-Groups Validity

After quantifying the responses and arranging the obtained scores in descending order, a comparison was made between the two extreme groups. A proportion of 27% was selected to represent individuals with high scores, and another proportion of 27% was selected to represent individuals with low scores. The results were as shown in the following table:

Table 1. Extreme-groups validity between high-score and low-score groups on the Mindfulness Scale using the T-test.

Mindfulness Scale	Sample size		Degree of freedom	Calculated "t" value	Probability value	Statistical significance
	15	15	9	13.18	0.000	Significant
	Upper group	Lower group				
	Mean	Mean				
	Standard deviation	Standard deviation				
	136,20	111.30				
	8,37	5.71				

It is clear from Table 1 that the calculated “t” value was 13.18, and that the probability value was 0.000 for the Mindfulness Scale, which is lower than the significance level of 0.01. This indicates that the scale has the ability to discriminate between those who obtained high scores and those who obtained low scores on the Mindfulness Scale. This confirms the validity of the scale and indicates that it measures what it was designed to measure.

Reliability of the Scale

Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient

The results were presented in the following table:

Table 2. Results of the reliability coefficient of the Mindfulness Scale using Cronbach's Alpha and Guttman methods.

Mindfulness Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	Guttman
Total score	0.79	0.71

Table 2 shows that the reliability coefficient of the Mindfulness Scale, calculated through the internal consistency method using Cronbach's Alpha equation, reached 0.79. The reliability coefficient calculated through the split-half method using Guttman's coefficient reached 0.71. These values are considered high, indicating that the study instrument demonstrates a strong degree of reliability. Accordingly, the results obtained through this instrument can be considered dependable and methodologically trustworthy.

Second: The Main Study

1. Study Methodology: The descriptive method was adopted because it is the most appropriate approach for the nature and objectives of the present study, which seeks to identify the level of mindfulness among a sample of university students and examine differences in mindfulness according to gender.

2. Study Population and Sample: The original population of the present study consisted of students enrolled at the University of Chlef during the academic year 2024–2025, at the Ouled Fares University Campus in Chlef, Algeria, from both scientific and humanities specializations.

The study sample was selected using the accidental sampling method from the Faculties of Arts and Computer Science. It consisted of 150 male and female students, including 114 female students and 36 male students.

3. Study Instruments

3.1. Study Instruments

Description of the Scale: The Mindfulness Scale developed by Ahlam Abdullah (2013) was used. It consists of 35 items distributed across four dimensions as follows:

The first dimension: mindful discrimination, consisting of 12 items.

The second dimension: openness to novelty, consisting of 12 items.

The third dimension: orientation toward the present, consisting of 6 items.

The fourth dimension: awareness of multiple perspectives, consisting of 5 items.

The Mindfulness Scale included five response alternatives: “Always applies to me,” “Often applies to me,” “Sometimes applies to me,” “Rarely applies to me,” and “Never applies to me.” Scores for positive items are assigned as follows: a score of 5 is given for the response “Always applies to me,” a score of 4 is given for the following alternative, and so forth. Naturally, scoring is reversed for negative items.

4. Statistical Methods Used in the Study

The following statistical methods were used through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, SPSS 21:

- Arithmetic mean
- Standard deviation
- T-test

5.1. Presentation, Analysis, and Discussion of the First Hypothesis

The first hypothesis stated that the level of mindfulness among university students is moderate.

To verify this hypothesis, the arithmetic mean and the theoretical mean were calculated, and the results were as follows:

Table 3. The Level of Mindfulness among University Students.

Statistical methods / Scale	Sample	Arithmetic mean	Theoretical mean	Standard deviation	Degree of freedom	T value	Probability value	Statistical significance
Mindfulness	150	123.58	105	11.57	149	19.65	0.00	Significant

The table above shows that the arithmetic mean of the study sample on the mindfulness variable was estimated at 123.58, with a standard deviation of 11.57. To determine the significance of the difference between this mean and the hypothetical mean, estimated at 105, a one-sample t-test was calculated. The obtained value reached 19.65 at 149 degrees of freedom, with a probability value of 0.000 at the 0.01 significance level. This indicates statistically significant differences between the two means, in favor of the study group, as its mean score was higher. Therefore, the members of the study sample demonstrate a high level of mindfulness.

This result may be attributed to the spread of cognitive awareness within the university environment, resulting from the rapid technological development witnessed worldwide in recent times. This development has contributed to the search for novelty and openness to innovative ideas. The high level of mindfulness among the study sample also indicates its association with the intellectual and emotional maturity of university students, considering that mindfulness develops with age, as demonstrated by the studies of Bao et al. (2015) and Branstrom et al. (2011).

Through repeated experiences, students acquire a greater capacity to become aware of their thoughts and feelings regarding the events they encounter. This also increases their self-understanding and self-acceptance, strengthens their emotional

regulation and control over their feelings, enhances their conscious insight into events, and supports their ability to focus clearly on goals. These processes contribute to different forms of adjustment, as one of the determinants of mindfulness, as indicated by Langer's theory.

Furthermore, the rational thinking that characterizes students at this age stage may represent one of the subjective factors explaining their high level of mindfulness. In addition, various factors of socialization play an important role in developing mindfulness, since it is an acquired element that can be developed and trained. This has been demonstrated by numerous studies in this context, such as the study of Parke et al. (2014), the study of Al-Adaini (2019), and the study of Aliwa et al. (2025).

These results are consistent with the findings of Ahlam Abdullah's study (2013) and Ismail's study (2017), which revealed a high level of mindfulness among their study samples.

5.2. Presentation, Analysis, and Discussion of the Result of the Second Hypothesis

The second hypothesis states that: "There are statistically significant differences in mindfulness among university students attributable to the gender variable (male/female)."

To verify this hypothesis, the t-test for two independent samples was applied to calculate the significance of the differences between males and females. The results were as follows:

Table 4. Differences in Mindfulness among University Students According to the Gender Variable.

Statistical methods / Variables	Sample	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Degree of freedom	Calculated "t" value	Probability value	Significance level
Males	36	121.97	12.61	148	-0.95	0.34	Not significant
Females	114	124.08	11.24				

Table 4 shows that the arithmetic mean for males was estimated at 121.97, while it was estimated at 124.08 for females. The standard deviation was estimated at 12.61 among males and 11.24 among females, with 148 degrees of freedom. The calculated t-test value for two independent samples was -0.95, and the probability value (sig), which was 0.34, was greater than the significance level of 0.01.

Based on these values, there are no statistically significant differences in mindfulness among university students attributable to the gender variable (male/female). Accordingly, the alternative hypothesis is rejected, and the null hypothesis is accepted, which states that there are no statistically significant differences in mindfulness among university students attributable to the gender variable (male/female).

The absence of statistically significant differences between the two genders in the level of mindfulness may be attributed to the equality of opportunities available to both genders in terms of social and academic dimensions within the unified university context. In other words, both males and females experience the same university learning situations. The possibilities and resources provided by the university institution are the same for females and males alike, which places both genders at a similar level of focus and attention toward the current events they experience, and at a similar degree of self-regulation, insight, understanding, and flexibility in dealing with various lived situations and circumstances.

This result is consistent with the findings of the studies conducted by Al-Sayed Huda (2018), Al-Shahawi (2020), Al-Khatatneh (2019), and Al-Maamouri (2018).

6. RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS:

In light of the findings reached by the present study, the following recommendations and suggestions are proposed:

- Giving greater attention to developing and strengthening the positive aspects of university students through the activation of training programs aimed at promoting their mental health.
- Drawing the attention of university teachers to the importance of providing a positive learning environment that encourages university students to acquire positive behavioral skills capable of enhancing their cognitive, psychological, and social competence.
- As a continuation of the present study, a set of proposed research directions can be presented:
- Conducting similar studies on mindfulness in relation to technological and digital development.
- Conducting intensive experimental studies aimed at developing mindfulness and other positive behaviors across different educational stages.
- Conducting studies and research on mindfulness among children and adolescents at various educational levels.
- Conducting follow-up studies to identify the development of mindfulness.

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