

Mindfulness and Sustainable Tourism – An Integrative Review

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Abstract

Background: The purpose of this review paper is to present a holistic conceptualization by synthesising mindfulness and sustainable tourism literature. To this end, we conducted an extensive review of the mindfulness and sustainable tourism literature.

Objectives: The findings revealed that mindfulness is gaining popularity in the research domain of tourism, especially consumer behaviour. While some recent studies have begun to explore the role of mindfulness in ecological sustainability, there is still a need to integrate all the conceptual frameworks and empirical evidence to understand the research gap, which needs to be analysed further.

Methods: This paper also focuses on how mindfulness practise can be employed in the workplace. In this regard, we also explored various theories of behavioural science to understand the possible effect of mindfulness on the attitude, behaviour, and habits of an individual.

Statistical Analysis: We argue that this is one of the few review papers that integrates various theories and empirical findings to understand the work that has been done in their relationship. The paper also looks at the attitude-behaviour gap and how mindfulness could help bridge it.

Findings: It also shows that there is a lack of academic research in the domain of social and economic sustainability.

Applications and Improvements: The paper ends with implications and suggestions for future research.

Keywords: Mindfulness, Sustainable, Tourism, Sustainable tourism.

1. Introduction

There is a clear sign of a rising lack of attention to the rise in technological advancement. It somehow demands that society be more mindful in terms of its day-to-day activities. There is also rising concern regarding the deterioration of the climate, and social scientists are trying their level best to come up with an approach that could help them change the mindset and hence the behaviour of individuals towards sustainability. It also demands understanding various behavioural models to analyse the issue at its core. The growing issue of the attitude-behaviour gap, the lack of sustainable habits and lifestyles, as well as policy implementation

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through reward and punishment, opens up new dimensions to be further studied and empirically tested.

"Mindfulness" is a way of being that involves paying attention to one's internal and external environments without dismissing or suppressing uncomfortable or undesirable sensations or ideas. Mindfulness not only lessens suffering (Kiken & Shook, 2011), but it also enhances compassion and altruism (Winning & Boag, 2015) and decreases prejudice and dissatisfaction (Flook, Goldberg, Pinger, & Davidson, 2015; Ruedy & Schweitzer, 2010). The practise of mindfulness is gaining popularity in the hospitality industry, with more and more hotels and airlines offering mindfulness courses to their employees and guests (Barber & Deale, 2014; Frauman & Norman, 2004; Moscardo, 1996). Sustainable decision-making and actions may be aided by practising mindfulness.

When clinical psychologists began studying its potential benefits, they coined the term "mindfulness" (Kabat-Zinn, 1982; Kabat-Zinn et al., 1985). There has been an exponential increase in the number of articles published on the topic of mindfulness research since the first paper appeared in 1982 (Black, 2014). The Pali word "sati," originally meaning "remembrance," was the inspiration for the English word "mindfulness," which first appeared in print in the early 1900s (Davids 1881 in Gethin, 2011).

There are at least four justifications for substituting the term mindfulness for meditation.

1. It's a generic term that stands for the generalizability of the methods it encompasses.
2. It is the "heart" of Buddhism (Nyanaponika, 1962; Nanamoli and Bodhi in Kabat-Zinn, 2003) and does not come with the theological "baggage" that sometimes makes Buddhism difficult to understand and digest for Westerners.
3. In Western religious traditions, meditation may entail serious thought or reflection on a subject. Mindfulness is a technique for achieving mental stillness.
4. Meditation encompasses a wide variety of practises, including TM (Transcendental Meditation).

However, they differ significantly from mindfulness-based approaches in important ways.

The majority of studies (Amel, Manning, & Scott, 2009; Barber & Deale, 2014; Ericson, Kjnstad, & Barstad, 2014) have been conducted in non-tourist settings and have relied on survey research. Overall, these results suggest that a heightened awareness of the social and cultural consequences of one's actions is associated with higher trait levels of mindfulness (Chambers, Gullone, & Allen, 2009; Shapiro, Carlson, Astin, & Freedman, 2006). Problems with determining causation and effect are inherent to survey methodology. Therefore, in this study, we employed experimental approaches to examine the feasibility of incorporating mindfulness into ecotourism.

We used the setting of Uluru to test the hypothesis that being more mindful would increase awareness of environmental and cultural issues, thereby decreasing participants' intentions to climb the sandstone, an activity that has negative effects on the natural formation and culture of the local Indigenous Anangu people (Norman, 2017). Studies on the effects of mindfulness on students, educators, and parents have been conducted (Weijer-Bergsma, Formsma, Bruin, & Bögels, 2012), as have studies on the effects of mindfulness on workers (Reb, Narayanan, & Ho, 2013) and policymakers (Fiol & O'Connor, 2003).

As a precondition for any inventive process, mindfulness has been shown to have a beneficial influence on creativity (Colzato, Ozturk, & Hommel, 2012). By increasing awareness and decreasing the occurrence of habitual reactions and "auto-pilot" actions, mindfulness can lessen one's exposure to advertising, rising consumption, and material gain (Jacob, Jovic, & Brinkerhoff, 2008; Amel, Manning, & Scott, 2009), all of which are positively correlated with sustainable behaviour. (Brown & Kasser, 2005).

The British government, persuaded by the growing body of research, established an all-party parliamentary group in 2014 to investigate the potential applications of mindfulness in fields as diverse as medicine, education, and law enforcement. It's quickly becoming the norm in the business sector. Monsanto, Intel, Google, Adobe Systems, Goldman Sachs Group, Deutsche Bank, Apple, Procter & Gamble, and many more are just some of the businesses that have started using mindfulness.

2. Background Study

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is "a strategy for enhancing one's awareness and skillfully reacting to mental processes that lead to emotional suffering and maladaptive behaviour," to put it in layman's words (Bishop et al., 2006). Therefore, mindfulness may be seen as a treatment, a technology, or a lifestyle choice, and it can be found in a wide range of settings, including classrooms, universities, military bases, legislative chambers, and the like (Kabat-Zinn, 2014). It gained widespread acceptance as a panacea for contemporary society's woes (Kristensen, 2018). Mindfulness' potential impact on the tourism industry's sustainability agenda and its employees performance has been highlighted (Chen et al., 2017; Kirwin et al., 2019; Loureiro et al., 2019), as have its positive impacts on visitor welfare and transformational effects on experiences (Jang et al., 2020). The benefits of meta-awareness within tourist encounters are slowly being recognised by the tourism industry, and commercial applications are emerging to capitalise on this trend (McGoarty et al., 2020). The benefits of implementing mindfulness training in the tourism industry would extend well beyond the individual and social levels. There has been a growing chorus of voices arguing that a more mindful approach to life may help solve the world's social, economic, and environmental challenges (Gotojones, 2013; Wamsler et al., 2018). However, the mindfulness movement's revolutionary potential throughout the whole tourism sector is currently understeered (Stankov et al., 2020). Moscardo (1996) defined a mindful traveller as someone who is self-aware and curious. A considerate traveller will, for instance, make an effort to learn about the local culture and, as a result, will treat the local environment with greater respect (e.g., reducing litter or paying attention to environmental heritage signage).

Hotels provide travellers with a special chance to implement meaningful green habits while on the road. Towel reuse (Budovska et al., 2020; Reese et al., 2014), food waste reduction (Dolnicar et al., 2020; Juvan et al., 2018), and resource reduction (Warren et al., 2017) are just a few examples of the many ways that people may adopt more eco-friendly practises. 'Green' features, which signify a hotel as an environmentally friendly option when making a reservation, might be easier to spot with the use of such incentives. Hotels may now proudly display marks attesting to their commitment to environmental sustainability thanks to the creation of environmental certifications such as Ecolabel certificates and ISO 14001 (Font, 2002). Studies on the effects of mindfulness on travellers and their interactions with foreign cultures have found mostly favourable outcomes for both groups. In particular, the readiness to interpret experiences (Moscardo, 2014), the ability to withdraw from digital gadgets, and the practise of mindfulness have all been linked to visitors' actions and reactions in host settings (Barber & Deale, 2014; Chan, 2019). Mindfulness, for instance, has been shown to affect people's perspectives on environmental sustainability, as reported by Chan (2019). The authors observed that visitors who listened to a mindfulness meditation were more conscious of the environmental ramifications of their actions; hence, they were less likely to choose a group trip to Uluru (which might have negative effects on the physical environment). There is

a consensus among studies that travellers who put environmental factors first are better able to appreciate and protect the places they visit (Barber & Deale, 2014).

Sustainable Tourism

Sustainability: In 1994, Elkington proposed the concept of sustainability as a triple-bottom-line approach. The economic, social, and cultural, as well as environmental aspects, are all included in the triple bottom line. Some researchers have even used five or more aspects in their investigations of sustainability. "Sustainable development is development that satisfies the demands of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to satisfy their own needs," as stated by the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987). The Brundtland Report (1987) defines sustainable tourism as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.'

Sixty or more percent of the global population has accepted the reality of the climate disaster at this point (Flynn et al., 2021). The lack of a paradigm shift towards more environmentally friendly lifestyles is notable (IPCC 2014; Brondizio et al. 2019). Our actions may not always reflect our good intentions, despite the fact that we are aware of environmental problems, know what is causing them, can effect change, and are dedicated to doing so (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002). One possible explanation is that we are too careless in our day-to-day activities. An abundance of data implies, however, that many of our daily decisions and actions are the product of algorithmic processing (Bargh & Chartrand, 1999). Some professionals argue that employees may significantly affect and even improve organisational sustainability through their behaviours (Zhang et al., 2020). Although there is no common definition of the phrase, most people mean the same thing when they talk about business sustainability: positive performance in economic, social, and environmental sectors without compromising future performance (Meuer et al., 2020). The suggested model is evaluated and verified with respect to the environmental aspect of sustainability as the primary focus. However, the most important takeaway for environmental studies is the correlation between materialism and ecotourism. The materialistic worldview was found to negatively correlate with ecotourism-related attitudes, interests, intentions, and propensities to pay (Lu et al., 2016).

Mindfulness at the Workplace

After implementing mindfulness programmes at work, some managers saw a dramatic improvement in their employees' output, while others saw only a small or no improvement (Ashoori, 2020). Companies like Google, General Mills, Aetna, Intel, and Goldman Sachs are among the rising number that have started introducing mindfulness training in the workplace and seen positive results, such as less stress and increased productivity and performance (Linkedin, 2015). A growing corpus of academic research has also established a good connection between mindfulness practises and results for employees in the workplace, including productivity, connections with coworkers, and overall happiness (Good et al., 2016; Glomb, Eby et al., 2019). There is a growing body of data linking workplace mindfulness programmes to improved results. Still, no studies have examined the organisational characteristics that may bolster or weaken this association from one company to the next. A review of the research (Ashoori, 2020)

In addition, it is commonly believed that males are less likely to seek help or participate in stress-relieving activities like meditation sessions outside of the office because of the stereotype that these actions are more associated with women. Rosenberg (2004) suggests

that increased self-awareness leads to less reliance on habitual patterns of behaviour and a greater capacity for both individual satisfaction and social connection (Rosenberg 2004). The first group to do so, Ericson et al. (2014), identified and arranged some of the theoretically important points supporting a possible relationship between mindfulness and sustainability in a comprehensive assessment of the research. They argue that Pro-environmental behaviour can be bolstered by the positive features of mindfulness, such as greater happiness, pro-social behaviour, and awareness of one's own fundamental values. Individuals can be liberated from unreflected automatism and habits if they get an understanding of where they came from and how they serve, as argued by Bahl et al. (2016). If taught from a more ethically aware perspective, according to Siqueira and Pitassi (2016), mindfulness has the potential to expand its effect into organisations by encouraging creative leadership and sustainability-oriented solutions. When unsustainable behaviours are founded on unmanaged emotional impulses, the power of habit serves as a major obstacle to a long-term modification of environmental behaviours (Kollmuss and Agyeman 2002; Klöckner and Verplanken 2019). Because it encourages people to take a step back and reflect on their actions before taking them, mindfulness has been linked to a decrease in impulsive and automatic behaviours (Baer et al. 2006).

3. Methodology

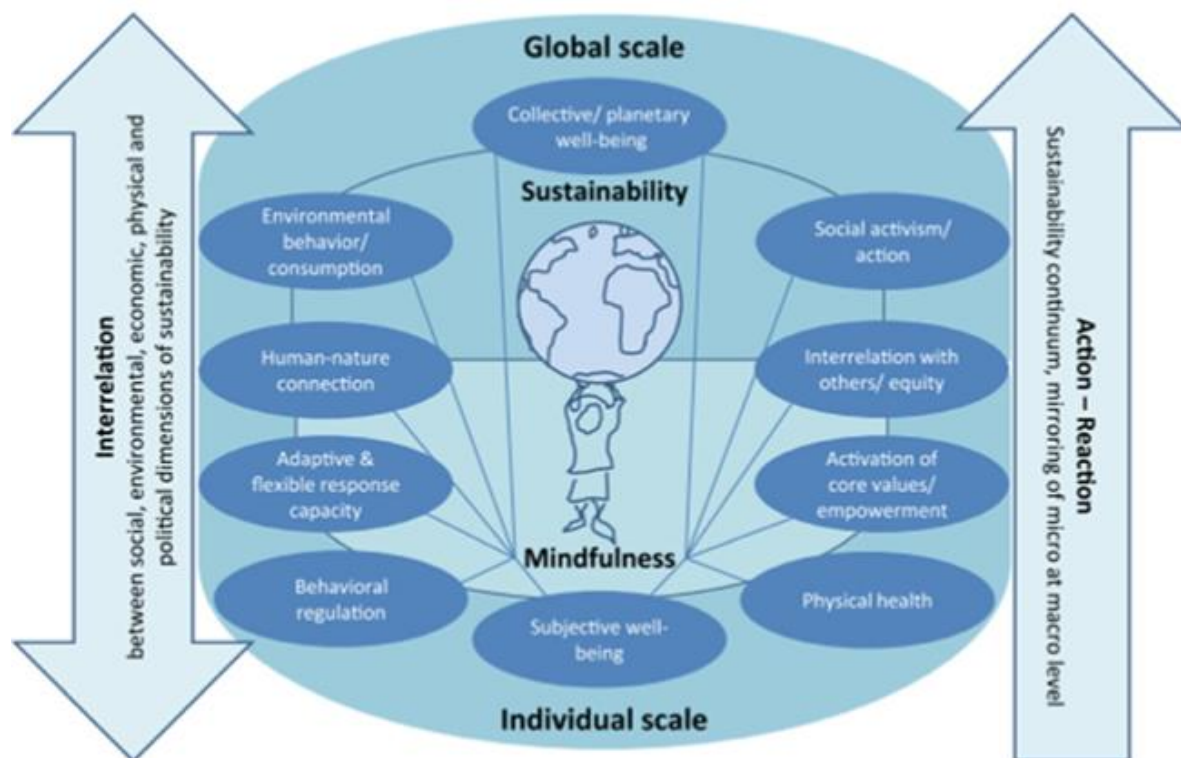


Figure 1. Framework for Contemplative Scientific Inquiry, Practice and Education in Sustainability (Wamsler et al. 2017)

Figure 1 shows that Mindfulness has interconnections both at the micro and macro levels. It shows various benefits associated with Individual mindfulness and how it is directly or indirectly related to sustainability.

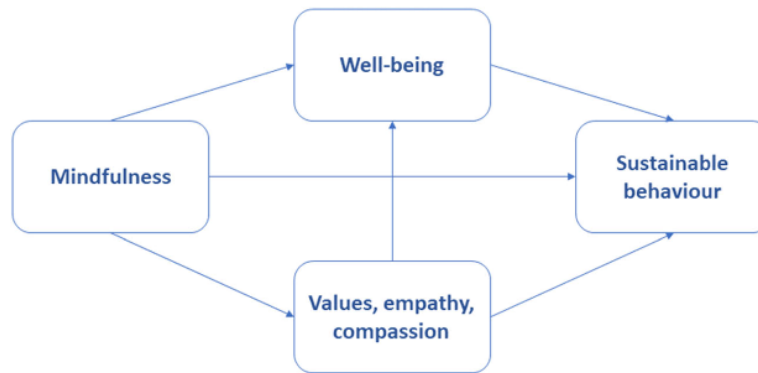


Figure 2. Hypothesised Relationships between Mindfulness, Values/ Empathy/ Compassion, Well-Being and Sustainable Behaviour (Ericson et al. 2014)

Figure 2 shows the interrelationship between mindfulness and sustainable behaviour through the mediating effects of well-being and values, empathy, and compassion. It shows how mindfulness affects individuals cognitive aspects, which in turn leads to a more sustainable approach.

Measurement Scales

Sustainability: In a review by (Cruz and Manata, 2020), the researchers analysed various scales that have been used for the assessment of individual sustainable behaviour.

A total of 24 scales have been mentioned in the article, with sub-groups of General Scales, Scales for children, and Scales for Student Groups.

General Scales as cited by (Cruz and Manata, 2020) have been mentioned here:

1. Socially Responsible Consumption Behaviour Scale (SRCB) – Antil and Bennett, 1979
2. Ecological Worldview Scale (EWS) – Blaikie, 1992
3. Ecological Concern Scale – Bohlen et al., 1993
4. Environmental Identity Scale – Clayton, 1993
5. New Environmental Paradigm Scale (NEP) – Dunlap and Van Liere, 1978
6. Dominant Social Paradigm Scale (DSP) – Dunlap and Van Liere, 1984
7. New Ecological Paradigm Scale (Revised NEP) – Dunlap et al., 2000
8. Environmental Attitude Scale – Kuhn and Jackson, 1989
9. Modified NEP/DSP Environmental Attitudes Scale – La Trobe and Acott, 2000
10. Attitude Towards the Environmental Quality Scale – Lounsbury and Tornatzky, 1977
11. Ecological Attitudes and Knowledge Scale (Revised) – Maloney et al., 1975
12. Environmental Attitudes Inventory - Short Form (EAI-S) – Milfont and Duckitt, 2010
13. Environmental Satisfaction Scale - Pelletier et al., 1996
14. Environmental Concerns – Schultz, 2001
15. Value Orientations Scale – Stern et al., 1993
16. Anthropocentric and Ecocentric Attitudes Scales – Thompson and Barton, 1994
17. Environmental Concern Scale – Weigel and Weigel, 1978
18. Green Issues – Zimmer et al., 1994

Mindfulness: Baer et al. (2006) analysed several major inventories, including the Kentucky Inventory of Mindfulness Skills (KIMS; Baer Smith & Allen, 2004), the Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale (CAMS; Feldman et al., 2004; as cited in Baer et al., 2006), the

Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory (FMI; Buchheld et al., 2001; as cited in Baer et al., 2006), the Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS; Brown & Ryan, 2003), and the Mindfulness Questionnaire (MQ; Chadwick et al., 2005; as cited in Baer et al., 2006).

Variables for study under the mindfulness construct

- Observing
- Describing
- Acting With Awareness
- Non-Judgement
- Reactivity (Cf. Baer Et Al. 2006).

Other Scales for the Measurement of Mindfulness

Five key aspects of mindfulness: Observing, Describing, Acting with awareness, Non-judgement, and Reactivity (cf. Baer et al. 2006).

MAAS: Mindful Attention and Awareness Scale (Brown and Ryan, 2003).

FFMQ: Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (Baer et al., 2006): all five facets: Non-reactivity, Acting with Awareness (AWA), Observing (OBS), Describing, and Non-judgment

4. Conclusion

According to the literature, there is a clear link between mindfulness and sustainability. As a result, a higher level of mindfulness exhibits a higher level of sustainable behaviour. Still, there is a need for more conceptual models and empirical validation for assumptions to be proven significant. There is a huge scope for studying the phenomenon of mindfulness and its various benefits, both at the organisational and individual levels. It can also bridge the gap between attitude and behaviour, which has been seen as a major issue according to 'The Theory of Cognitive Dissonance'. As more and more organisations understand its importance, it shows how it could also influence policy and decision-making. It has also been seen that there is a lack of research in the social and economic dimensions of sustainability, which provides an opportunity for researchers to explore these areas further and contribute towards a more sustainable society.

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