

Ethical Self-Concept's Mediating Role Between Mindfulness and Overclaiming

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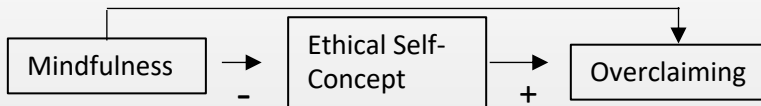
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Introduction

- People may act unethically in order to maintain their positive self-concept (Garing, 2013) but individuals with greater dispositional mindfulness may be less likely to cheat even when given the chance as they will be less likely to attribute lower performance to negative aspects of themselves.
- Mindfulness is positively associated with trustworthiness and self-discipline (Crescentini, C., & Capurso, V., 2015).
- Though people can act unethically (cheating) when there is a reward, they may not if they have a greater ethical self-concept and mindfulness.
- Ethical reminders can reduce overclaiming (Grym & Liljander, 2016).
- Present study examined if ethical self-concept mediated the relationship between dispositional mindfulness and overclaiming.

Hypotheses

- *Hypothesis:* There will be a negative association between dispositional mindfulness and overclaiming, and this effect would be mediated by ethical self-concept.



Measures

Dispositional Mindfulness: Baer et al.'s (2006) Mindfulness Measure

- Acting with Awareness (alpha = .92), Non-judging of inner experience (alpha = .92), Non-reacting to inner experience (alpha = .85), Observing (alpha = .83) – only 4 facets were measured

Ethical Self-Concept: Stevens' (1957) magnitude estimation procedure

- Used Ethics-Me ratings on a 0-300 sliding scale
- Higher values indicated ethics are less central to one's self-concept

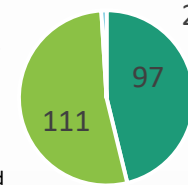
Performance: Experimental Manipulation

- Participants solved matrices within a time limit
- Participants in experimental condition self-reported the number of matrices they "solved" – their answers were unverified unlike for those in the control condition hence the chance to overclaim.
- Number of overclaiming behaviors, operationalized by completing more matrices than possible.

Participants

- 112 of 210 Military Cadets from Singapore examined
- Participants in the "opportunity-to-cheat" condition only
 - Mean age: 34.53 years
 - Age range: 18-74 years

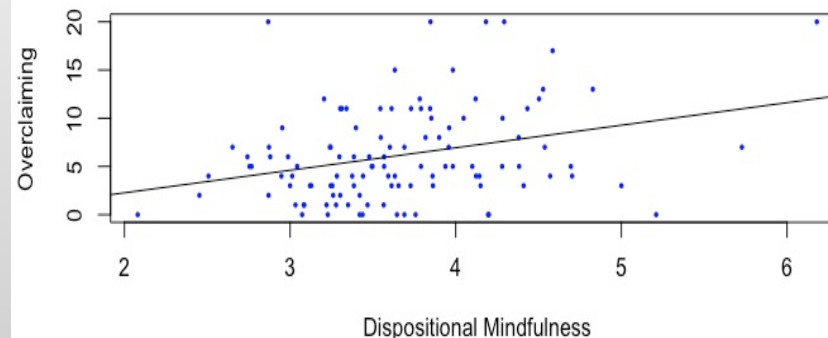
- Male
- Female
- Unidentified



Results

- Baron & Kenny's (1986) Mediation Procedure was used to test Hypothesis.
- A significant total effect of dispositional mindfulness on overclaiming was found, $\beta = 0.31, p < 0.01$. For every 1 SD increase in mindfulness, overclaiming increased by 4.92 SD.
- The effect of ethical self-concept on test performance was not significant, $\beta = 0.00, p > .05$, but the effect of dispositional mindfulness was significant, $\beta = 0.29, p < 0.01$. Ethical self-concept did not mediate the effect of mindfulness on over-claiming, but mindfulness impacted over-claiming.
- A simple regression of ethical self-concept on dispositional mindfulness, revealed a significant effect of dispositional mindfulness, $\beta = 0.32, p < 0.01$.
- Direct effect of mindfulness on overclaiming plotted below. Regression equation: $Y = -2.412 + 2.338(X)$

OVERCLAIMING PLOTTED AGAINST DISPOSITIONAL MINDFULNESS



Discussion

- Contrary to the literature, my results indicate potentially negative consequences of dispositional mindfulness.
- Specifically, the theorized mediation model was not supported as the link between ethical self-concept (mediator) and overclaiming (outcome) was insignificant.
- A direct link between mindfulness and overclaiming was found, however the direction of this relationship was the opposite of the hypothesized model.
 - Greater dispositional mindfulness was associated with greater overclaiming.
- Greater mindfulness may motivate unethical behavior as it can allow people to see how that behavior could enhance their self-concept. Gino's 2015 study could support this.

Possible Explanations & Future Research

- Possible explanations of null results could be a lack of statistical power, lower social desirability bias of higher mindfulness individuals,
- Future research could focus on examining if mindfulness is associated with ethical self-concept and other forms of unethical behavior aside from cheating.

References

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