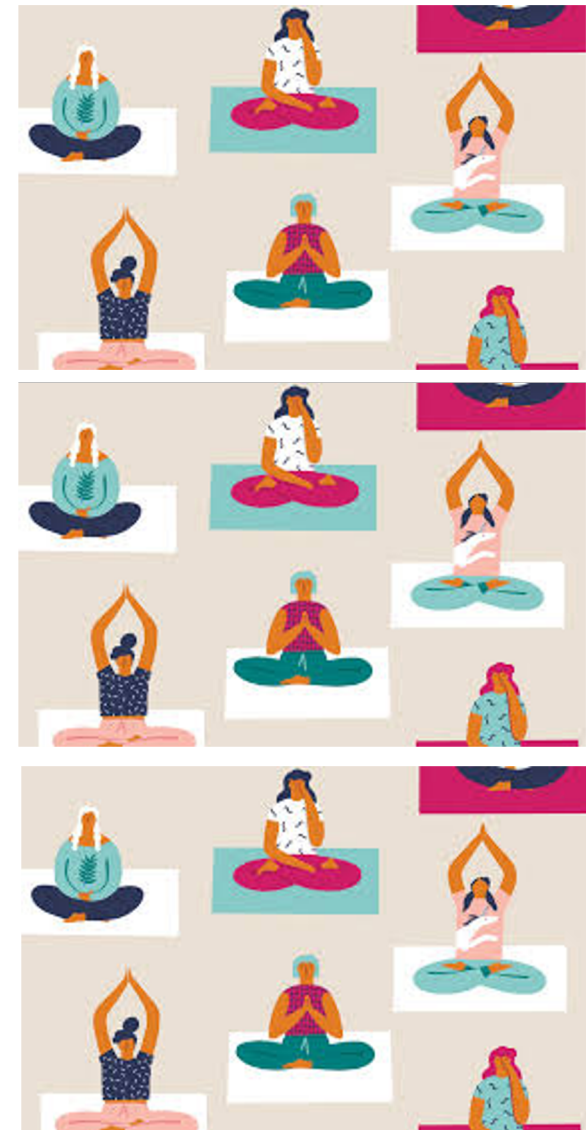




A Mindful Approach to Improving Work Performance Among College Students

Saray Valenzuela Jaime
California State University,
Dominguez Hills



Mental health issues are on the rise on college campuses.

22% of college students were diagnosed with anxiety over the past year, and the rate for depression rose from 10% to **17%** in the same span. ⁵



- Many students are forced to work in paid employment to help pay for tuition and living expenses.
 - 85% of students work in paid employment while also being enrolled in undergraduate and postgraduate programs. ⁶
 - Students must juggle multiple roles which can increase the amount of pressure and stress they are under.
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Purpose of the study

- Examine if mindfulness can help working college students manage symptoms of stress and negative psychological emotions while also improving work-related productivity.
- Specifically, we examined whether higher levels of mindfulness use are associated with lower levels of negative affect, which in turn would be associated with higher levels of work-related productivity.



What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness has its roots in Eastern spiritual, especially Buddhist traditions and has been defined as a state of being in which individuals bring their **attention to the experiences** occurring in the **present moment**, in a nonjudgmental and accepting way.²

PATH A - Benefits of Mindfulness

- 4 weeks produced changes in stress response.²
 - A simple, cost-effective tool for college students that does not require a lot of time to practice.²
 - Helps prevent burnout for employees working in emotionally exhausting jobs.⁴
 - Employees report better psychological mood and physical well-being.⁴
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Path B - Work-related Outcomes

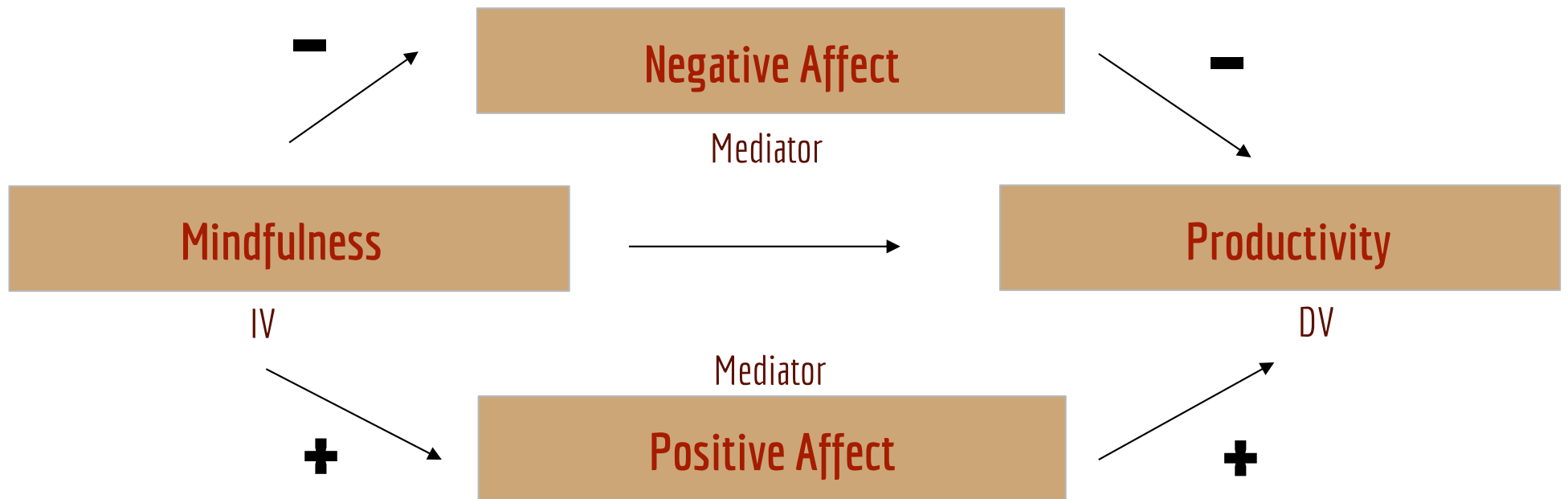
- Job performance is higher when employees are physically and emotionally capable of working.³
 - Productivity loss is greater in individuals who suffer with stress.³
 - Higher levels of health risks are strongly associated with greater loss in work productivity.³
 - 41 minutes of absence and 2 hours and 29 minutes of job impairment lead to loss of work performance.³
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Research Questions

Do students who practice mindfulness experience health benefits (reduction in stress, anxiety, depression) compared to individuals who do not practice mindfulness?

- a. How do these health benefits affect their work lives? (i.e. productivity)
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H1: Higher levels of mindfulness use would be associated with lower levels of Negative Affect and lower levels of Negative Affect would be associated with higher levels of productivity.



H2: Higher levels of mindfulness use would be associated with higher levels of Positive Affect and higher levels of Positive Affect would be associated with higher levels of productivity.

METHODOLOGY

Participants	N = 113
SEX	Male = 31 Female = 148
RACE	Predominantly Hispanic, 69.1%
AGE	M = 20.45, SD = 3.83
ANALYTIC APPROACH	PARALLEL MEDIATION ANALYSIS
RECRUITMENT	SOCIAL MEDIA, PSY 101 COURSES
PROCEDURE	SURVEYMONKEY

Measures

- PANAS - Positive and Negative Affect Schedule

Indicate the extent you have felt this way over the past week:

Distressed - Negative Affect

Interested - Positive Affect

- EWPS - Endicott Work Productivity Scale

During the past week, how frequently did you:

Find yourself daydreaming, worrying, or staring into space when you should be working?

- Mindfulness Item

Do you practice mindfulness? → Yes/No

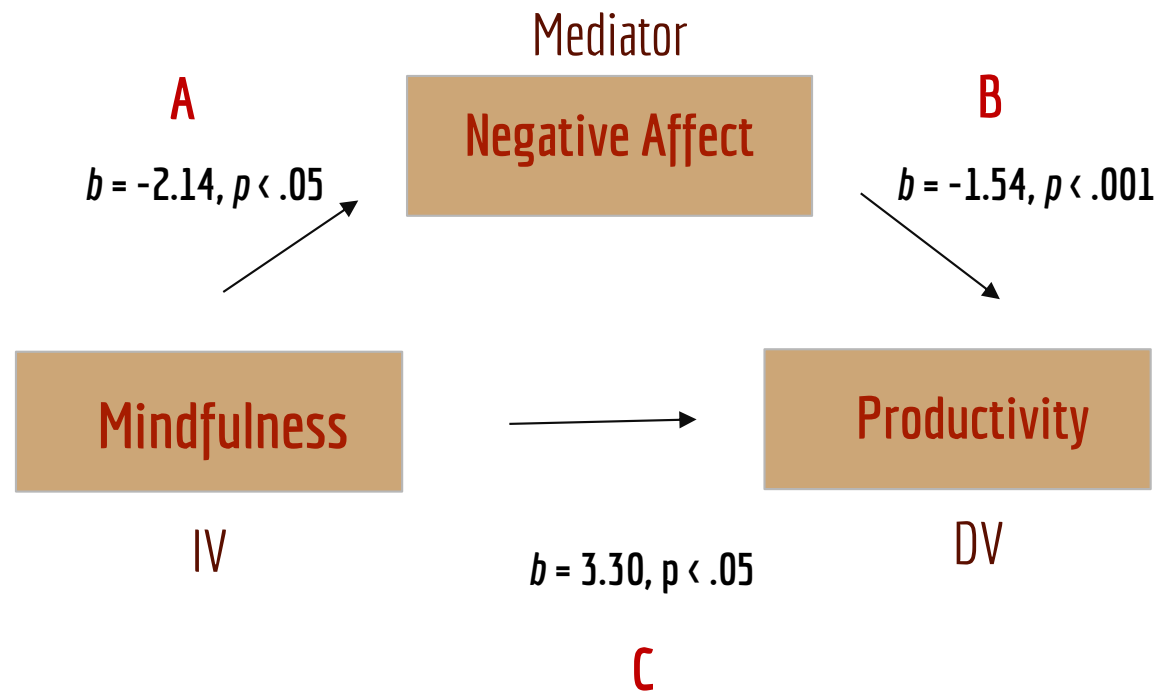
RESULTS - NEGATIVE AFFECT

PATH A : (SIGNIFICANT)

PATH B : (SIGNIFICANT)

PATH C : (NOT SIGNIFICANT)

INDIRECT EFFECT : (SIGNIFICANT)



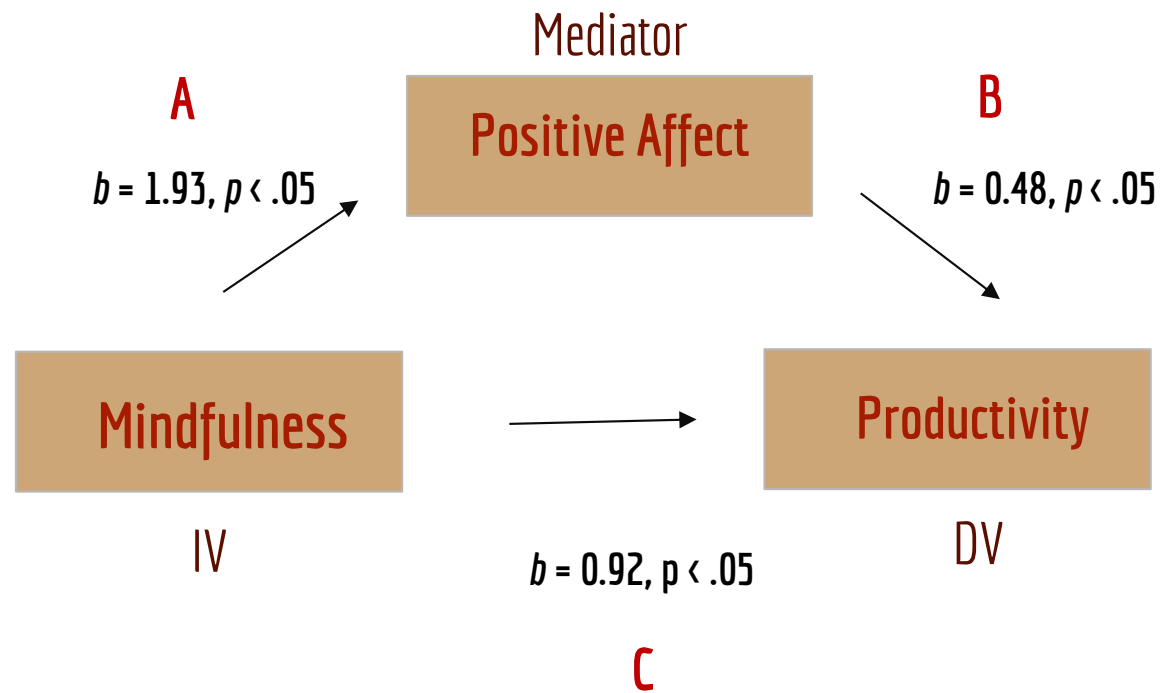
RESULTS - POSITIVE AFFECT

PATH A : (SIGNIFICANT)

PATH B : (SIGNIFICANT)

PATH C : (NOT SIGNIFICANT)

INDIRECT EFFECT : (SIGNIFICANT)



Discussion

- **Negative Affect:**

A statistically significant indirect effect was observed as hypothesized, higher mindfulness use was associated with lower negative affect, which was associated with higher productivity.

- **Positive Affect:**

A statistically significant indirect effect was observed as hypothesized, higher mindfulness use was associated with higher positive affect, which was associated with higher productivity.

- **Mindfulness-based practices may be associated with work productivity by modulating individual's level of affect.**

Implications

- This research offers a better understanding of the effects mindfulness may have in increasing worker productivity through changes in psychological affect, specifically among student workers.
- Teaching students simple, easy-to-learn mindfulness techniques can offer a cost-effective and convenient way for students to cope.
Deep breathing, mindful eating (raisin exercise), the body scan, mindful reminders (text alert)
- Yoga and dog therapy are other simple, cost-effective mechanisms that students can easily access while reaping many benefits.¹

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