



Meaningful Correlation among Well-Being, Mindfulness, Socioemotional Competencies (SEC), and Social Media Engagement (SME)

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Abstract

The authors have been involved in the Japanese Society of Psychosomatic Medicine (JSPM), and their recent activities include multifaceted approaches such as mindfulness, subjective happiness, well-being, socioemotional competencies (SEC), social media engagement (SME), education, and culture. Findings from several studies indicate that the four elements—mindfulness/meditation, happiness/well-being, SEC, and SME—are interrelated through one-way or mutual influences. As SME increases, happiness tends to decrease, suggesting that frequent SME has an inhibitory effect on happiness. Cultural orientation emerged as a moderator influencing the relationship between SEC and happiness. The link between culture and happiness varies depending on cultural alignment and the context-dependence of self-esteem.

Keywords

Psychosomatic Medicine, Subjective Happiness, Cultural Orientation, Socioemotional Competencies, Social Media Engagement

Abbreviations

SEC: Socioemotional Competencies; SME: Social Media Engagement

Commentary

In recent years, various psychological stresses have become a problem in developed countries such as the United States and Japan, and the importance of psychosomatic medicine has increased. The authors have been engaged in clinical activities and research for years. In 2023, we were in charge of hosting the academic conference of the Japanese Society of

Psychosomatic Medicine (JSPM), and have continued research activities [1]. Recent topics in psychosomatic medicine have focused on multifaceted approaches. These include cultural orientation, involvement with education, mindfulness, happiness, socioemotional competencies (SEC), and social media engagement (SME). In this article, we would like to touch on the latest findings and trends.

Mindfulness has been a well-known professional term, and its information has attracted attention until now. Regarding its effect and definition, mindfulness is based on the concept of "non-evaluative awareness of the present" and an "accepting attitude." It has been redefined from the perspectives of both Buddhism and Western psychology [2]. Furthermore, like SEC, it has been reported to have a high correlation with happiness ($p < 0.001$), and contributes to mental resilience through emotional regulation and stress relief. In another recent report, an interview study with 20 experienced mindfulness practitioners introduced their daily mindfulness practices with technology use [3]. Participants presented the benefits and challenges of long-term commitment to continued practice. They took advantage of various methods, including social accountability, brief mindfulness exercises, and some guidance from teachers for developing mindfulness practice.

The treatment of mindfulness can be applied not only to middle-aged and elderly people, but also to the younger generation. An intervention of the Mindfulness-based Social-Emotional Growth (MSEG) program for 12 weeks was applied to 70 elementary school students [4]. As a result, lower-grade students (grades 1–3) showed substantially reduced anxiety and depression, while upper-grade students (grades 4–6) demonstrated enhanced resilience compared to the control group. For some decades, mindfulness meditation (MM) has been evaluated as a cognitive strategy for emotional regulation in mental health problems. A systematic review and meta-analysis ($n=52$) found that behavioral impulsivity in humans was significantly reduced [5]. Furthermore, MM modulated blood cortisol, salivary immunoglobulin A, galvanic skin response, P300 components, and event-related potential amplitudes.

From an anti-aging point of view, subjective happiness (SH) or well-being has been in focus for its relationships with other factors. SEC is a group of abilities that includes skills such as self-awareness, self-management, understanding of others, interpersonal relationships, and decision-making. A survey conducted at the end of 2024 confirmed that SEC was significantly positively correlated with SH ($p < 0.001$) [6]. This

suggests that basic abilities such as self- and other-awareness, emotional regulation, and interpersonal skills may be the foundation of happiness. Furthermore, a correlation was found between SH and SME. Interestingly, the higher the SME, the lower the happiness, indicating a negative correlation. It was suggested that a particularly high frequency of SME may have an inhibitory effect on happiness. However, the strength of this effect varied by culture, and differences in cultural background emerged as an important factor.

Some movements have been observed concerning SME. To reduce social media use and decrease screen time, digital well-being interventions have been mainly proposed. Consequently, they tend to neglect the potential benefits of the platforms [7]. Currently, a novel digital well-being intervention has been presented to align users' behaviors with their intentions. The buffering effect of SME and mindfulness as moderators has been reported. One study found no moderating effect of mindfulness or SME on the relationship between SEC and happiness [6]. However, it was confirmed that cultural orientation (individualism/collectivism) became a "moderator" that influenced the association from SEC to happiness ($p < 0.05$).

Subjective happiness (SH) or well-being shows great dynamism in relation to a person's cultural orientation in each country. From a cultural perspective, it has been shown that "individualism" and "indulgence" have a positive effect on the loyalty of Recovery Colleges, while "uncertainty avoidance" has a negative effect [8]. In addition, Ed Diener et al. confirmed that the link between culture and subjective happiness varies depending on cultural match and the context-dependence of self-esteem [9].

From the points mentioned above, several tendencies have been summarized. SEC includes a wide range of skills such as self-regulation and empathy with others [10]. As SEC increases, the sense of well-being also increases. Mindfulness enhances well-being and resilience through emotion regulation, but high social media involvement is often counterproductive to well-being. Furthermore, mindfulness and SME themselves

do not mediate the relationship between SEC and well-being. It has been noted academically that cultural orientation has a significant moderating effect on this relationship.

For example, it has been suggested that the link between SEC and well-being tends to be stronger in individualistic cultures. On the other hand, the relationship may be somewhat weaker in collectivist cultures. Cultural indicators include several factors, such as self-indulgence, individualism, and uncertainty avoidance. It has also been revealed that cultural indicators may affect the effectiveness of community support programs such as Recovery Colleges. Therefore, cultural compatibility would be important for evaluation and judgment.

In the light of psychosomatic medicine, we can consider the relationships among education, culture, and happiness. Some interventions may foster SEC and mindfulness that contribute to improving well-being, taking into account cultural background [11]. Therefore, novel medical intervention designs will require a comprehensive approach that incorporates cultural sensitivity and addresses the actual situation of social media use.

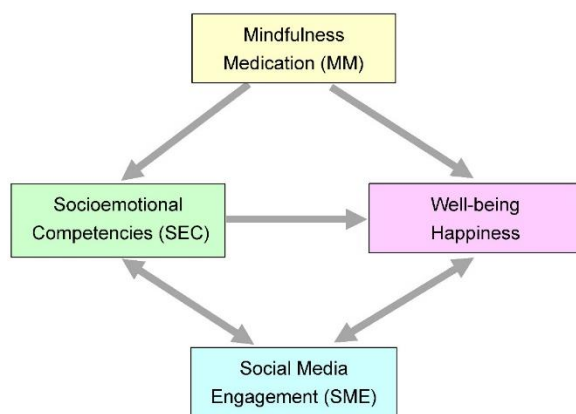


Fig-1: Correlations among mindfulness, well-being, SEC and SME

The general relationships among these factors are shown in (Fig-1), and the following perspectives would be helpful concerning these interrelationships. i) Mindfulness contributes to the development of social-emotional abilities such as self-awareness, emotion regulation, and empathy. ii) High SEC improves the quality of interpersonal relationships and enhances stress coping abilities, contributing to happiness and

overall well-being. iii) A mindful attitude improves happiness by positively accepting the present moment. iv) High well-being is associated with moderate social media usage, while excessive SNS use increases anxiety and loneliness. v) High SEC may enable better self-disclosure and interpersonal interactions on SNS, but low SEC increases conflict due to SNS addiction and misunderstandings.

In summary, this article examined the mutual relationships among mindfulness/meditation, happiness, well-being, SEC, SME, education, and culture. In fact, cultural orientation may mediate these relationships and is key to intervention design. Mind-body approaches need to integrate culture, technology, and educational background. This information will hopefully become a useful reference for future psychosomatic research.

Conflict of Interest

The authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript. The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

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