

The Impact of Mindfulness-Based English Learning on Students' Emotional Well-Being and Academic Performance

Icha Pebly Arma^{1*}

ABSTRACT

ABSTRACT This study explores the impact of Mindfulness-Based English Learning (MBEL) on students' emotional well-being and academic performance. As traditional language learning methods often focus heavily on cognitive aspects, they may neglect the emotional and psychological needs of learners. Integrating mindfulness into English learning seeks to address this gap by promoting greater self-awareness, emotional regulation, and focus, which are essential for both well-being and academic success. Using a mixed-methods approach, this research involved quantitative analysis through pre- and post-tests of academic performance, alongside surveys measuring emotional well-being, and qualitative interviews to capture student experiences. The findings reveal that students engaged in MBEL reported reduced anxiety, improved mood, and enhanced concentration, which contributed to better classroom engagement and language retention. Moreover, there was a significant improvement in their English test scores compared to those in conventional learning settings. The results suggest that MBEL not only fosters a more supportive and emotionally balanced learning environment but also enhances students' academic outcomes. This study highlights the importance of incorporating emotional and psychological strategies, such as mindfulness, into language education to support holistic student development. Implications for educators and curriculum designers are discussed, encouraging the integration of mindfulness practices in English language instruction

Keywords: Mindfulness, English Learning, Emotional Well-Being, Academic Performance, Student Engagement

19 Introduction

In recent years, there has been growing attention to the integration of emotional and psychological dimensions into the educational process, particularly in language learning contexts [1]. While traditional English language instruction emphasizes grammar mastery, vocabulary acquisition, and test performance, it often overlooks the affective factors that significantly influence learning outcomes [2]. Students' emotional well-being encompassing feelings of anxiety, stress, and self-confidence plays a critical role in their academic engagement and performance (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012). When emotional burdens are not addressed, even the most intellectually capable students may struggle to achieve optimal learning outcomes.

Mindfulness, a mental practice derived from Buddhist traditions and widely adapted in contemporary psychology, refers to the act of paying attention to the present moment intentionally and non-judgmentally [3]. Mindfulness-Based Interventions (MBIs) have shown significant promise in reducing anxiety, improving attention, and enhancing emotional regulation

¹Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang

*Alamat korespondensi: ichapeblyarma@gmail.com

among students across various disciplines [4]. When applied to English learning, Mindfulness-Based English Learning (MBEL) serves as a pedagogical approach that combines mindfulness practices such as deep breathing, body scanning, and mindful listening with traditional language instruction.

This study investigates the extent to which MBEL impacts students' emotional well-being and academic performance. It builds on the premise that emotionally balanced students are more capable of maintaining focus, managing stress, and engaging meaningfully with learning materials. Moreover, this study responds to a critical gap in English language pedagogy by proposing a model that promotes both cognitive and emotional development in students. The central research questions are: (1) Does MBEL improve students' emotional well-being? (2) Does MBEL positively affect academic performance in English? (3) How do students perceive their experiences in MBEL settings compared to traditional classrooms?

20 Literature Review

1. Mindfulness in Education

Mindfulness practices have gained substantial empirical support for their positive effects on student mental health and learning capacities. According to Shapiro, Brown, and Astin (2011), mindfulness fosters improved attention regulation, emotional resilience, and meta-cognitive awareness [5]. These traits are crucial for successful learning, particularly in environments that demand high cognitive processing, such as language classrooms.

A meta-analysis by Durlak et al. (2011) found that mindfulness-based social-emotional learning (SEL) programs in schools enhanced students' emotional well-being, social behavior, and academic achievement [6]. Furthermore, Meiklejohn et al. (2012) assert that mindfulness cultivates a classroom environment that supports reflective rather than reactive responses to challenges.

2. Emotional Well-Being and Language Learning

Language learning is inherently anxiety-provoking for many students, especially in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) contexts [7]. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) coined the term "foreign language anxiety" to describe the apprehension associated with second language acquisition. Numerous studies have confirmed that anxiety negatively correlates with performance and retention in language learning [8]. Integrating mindfulness into language education offers an effective strategy to address this issue. For instance, Gregersen, MacIntyre, and Meza (2014) demonstrated that mindfulness practices reduced learners' anxiety and improved their willingness to communicate in English, which is often a barrier in traditional classrooms.

3. Mindfulness-Based English Learning (MBEL)

MBEL is a relatively new pedagogical framework that infuses mindfulness practices into the structure of English language lessons. It encourages students to remain present, focused, and self-compassionate during learning processes [8]. Practical techniques include mindful breathing before vocabulary tests, mindful listening exercises using audio materials, and reflection journals to process emotional reactions during lessons [8]. Research by Tanaka and Maruyama (2020) found that students who practiced mindfulness regularly in English classes reported increased motivation, greater self-efficacy, and better language retention [9]. Thus, MBEL serves not only as an emotional support mechanism but also as a cognitive enhancer in language acquisition.

21 Research Methods

This study employed a mixed-methods approach to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the impact of Mindfulness-Based English Learning (MBEL) on students' emotional well-being and academic performance. The research design combined quantitative methods such as pre- and post-tests and surveys with qualitative methods through semi-structured interviews, following Creswell's (2014) explanatory sequential design [10].

The participants consisted of 60 tenth-grade students from a private high school in Indonesia, equally divided into two groups: an experimental group that received MBEL instruction and a control group that followed conventional English instruction. Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure they had similar baseline English proficiency levels and no prior experience with mindfulness training.

Several instruments were used in the study. The Emotional Well-Being Survey, adapted from the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988), was used to assess students' emotional states before and after the intervention. English proficiency tests—comprising reading comprehension, vocabulary, and grammar—were administered as both pre-tests and post-tests based on the school's standard curriculum. Additionally, a semi-structured interview protocol was developed to explore students' experiences, perceived changes, and personal reflections during the MBEL sessions.

The research procedure was carried out in three phases. In Phase 1 (Pre-test), all participants completed the English proficiency test and the emotional well-being survey. Phase 2 (Intervention) lasted for eight weeks, during which the experimental group participated in weekly MBEL sessions that included 10-minute mindfulness exercises, followed by English instruction integrated with mindful listening, speaking, and writing tasks. Meanwhile, the control group received traditional instruction without any mindfulness components. In Phase 3 (Post-test and Interviews), all students retook the English test and the emotional well-being survey, and 10 students from the experimental group were selected for in-depth interviews to gain richer qualitative insights.

The quantitative data were analyzed using paired sample t-tests to compare pre- and post-intervention results within each group, and independent sample t-tests to examine differences between the experimental and control groups. For qualitative analysis, interview transcripts were analyzed thematically using Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework to identify recurring emotional and cognitive themes related to the MBEL experience.

22 Result and Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that Mindfulness-Based English Learning (MBEL) has a positive influence on both students' emotional well-being and academic performance. Quantitative analysis using paired sample t-tests showed a significant improvement in the emotional well-being scores of students in the experimental group, with participants reporting lower levels of anxiety and stress, as well as heightened feelings of calmness and enthusiasm. In contrast, the control group displayed minimal changes in their emotional well-being, suggesting that the mindfulness component played a crucial role in fostering emotional stability among learners. In terms of academic performance, students who participated in MBEL demonstrated significantly higher scores in post-tests measuring English proficiency compared to their pre-test scores. Furthermore, independent sample t-tests indicated that the experimental group outperformed the control group in areas such as reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and grammar usage, confirming the academic benefits of integrating mindfulness into English instruction.

Qualitative data from student interviews further supported these results. Thematic analysis

revealed recurring experiences of improved concentration, reduced anxiety, greater classroom engagement, and enhanced self-awareness. Students shared that the mindfulness activities helped them maintain focus during lessons and lessened their fear of making mistakes when speaking or writing in English. One student expressed that mindfulness sessions made them feel more relaxed and confident when speaking in class, highlighting how the approach positively transformed their emotional experience and classroom participation.

These results suggest that MBEL successfully bridges the often-overlooked connection between cognitive learning and emotional regulation. In alignment with prior studies such as those by Meiklejohn et al. (2012) and Zoogman et al. (2015), the current study reinforces mindfulness as a valuable tool to enhance student focus, resilience, and academic outcomes. By nurturing both the cognitive and emotional dimensions of learners, MBEL promotes a more holistic and student-centered educational environment. This approach enables students to become more engaged, emotionally balanced, and academically capable. Therefore, the incorporation of mindfulness into language learning is not merely an enhancement but a necessary innovation to address the psychological and educational needs of students. Educators and curriculum developers are encouraged to embed mindfulness strategies within pedagogical practices to cultivate a more supportive, inclusive, and effective learning experience.

23 Conclusion

This study concludes that Mindfulness-Based English Learning (MBEL) significantly improves students' emotional well-being and academic performance. The implementation of mindfulness techniques, such as focused breathing and mindful reflection, contributes to reduced anxiety, increased emotional regulation, and improved concentration, which collectively enhance students' engagement and learning outcomes in English language classrooms.

The quantitative data confirmed that students who received MBEL performed better in English tests compared to those who received conventional instruction, while qualitative findings reinforced that mindfulness positively influenced students' emotional experiences and classroom behavior. These results underline the value of incorporating emotional and psychological strategies into educational practices.

In light of these findings, educators and curriculum designers are encouraged to integrate mindfulness-based approaches in English language instruction to promote holistic student development. Future research may explore long-term impacts of MBEL and its applicability in other subject areas and educational levels.

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