

The Effectiveness of Mindfulness-Based Intervention Programs in Reducing the Symptoms of Anxiety in Adolescents in Indonesia

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Abstract

Anxiety is a common mental health issue among adolescents, particularly in Indonesia, where socio-cultural factors contribute to the challenges they face. Mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) have been shown to alleviate symptoms of anxiety across various populations. This study investigates the effectiveness of MBIs in reducing anxiety symptoms among adolescents in Indonesia. The primary aim is to assess how these programs can help adolescents manage anxiety and improve their overall well-being. A mixed-methods approach was used, involving both qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys with 150 adolescents who participated in a 6-week MBI program. Pre- and post-program anxiety levels were measured using standardized tools such as the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI). The results revealed a significant reduction in anxiety symptoms among participants, indicating the potential of MBIs in promoting mental health in adolescents. The findings suggest that incorporating mindfulness practices in educational settings could be an effective approach to addressing adolescent anxiety in Indonesia. The study concludes that MBIs are a viable and beneficial intervention for reducing anxiety symptoms in adolescents, with broader implications for school-based mental health programs.

Keywords: Anxiety, Adolescents, Mindfulness



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INTRODUCTION

The prevalence of anxiety among adolescents is increasingly becoming a major concern, particularly in Indonesia, where societal pressures, academic challenges, and socio-economic factors can intensify mental health issues. Anxiety in adolescents often manifests as excessive worry, restlessness, and an overwhelming sense of fear that can affect their daily functioning and well-being (Höller dkk., 2025; Zewude dkk., 2025). As a complex mental health condition, anxiety not only disrupts an adolescent's emotional and psychological development but also hinders their academic and social lives. The importance of addressing this mental health issue is underscored by the growing evidence of its long-term impact, which may extend into adulthood, leading to chronic mental health conditions if left untreated. Given the critical nature of mental health in adolescence, especially in Indonesia, it becomes essential to explore effective interventions that can help mitigate the symptoms of anxiety in this vulnerable group.

In response to the growing mental health concerns among adolescents, various interventions have been explored to alleviate the symptoms of anxiety. Mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs), which incorporate mindfulness practices such as meditation, breathing exercises, and body awareness, have gained significant attention in clinical and educational settings (Jia dkk., 2025; Liu dkk., 2025). These interventions aim to increase an individual's awareness of the present moment, promoting a non-judgmental awareness that helps manage emotional responses and reduce anxiety. Despite the increasing interest in MBIs globally, there is a limited understanding of their specific effectiveness in Indonesia, particularly in the adolescent population. In Indonesia, the cultural, religious, and social contexts may influence the reception and impact of such interventions. While mindfulness has been proven effective in various cultural contexts, the adaptation of these practices to fit Indonesia's unique societal and educational environment remains underexplored, creating a critical gap in research.

The primary objective of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of mindfulness-based intervention programs in reducing anxiety symptoms among adolescents in Indonesia. By implementing a structured MBI program, this research aims to assess the extent to which mindfulness practices can alleviate anxiety symptoms in Indonesian adolescents and contribute to their overall mental health (Akdağ dkk., 2025; Thomas & Grekin, 2025). Specifically, the study intends to measure pre- and post-intervention anxiety levels to determine any significant changes in symptoms following the MBI program. Additionally, the research seeks to explore the potential benefits of integrating mindfulness into the adolescent education system, offering insights into how such programs can be incorporated into schools or community settings. The findings from this study will provide valuable information on the suitability of mindfulness-based practices as a mental health intervention for adolescents, helping to establish a clearer understanding of their potential in reducing anxiety among youth in Indonesia.

A significant gap in the existing literature is the lack of research on mindfulness-based interventions specifically tailored for Indonesian adolescents. While global studies have demonstrated the efficacy of mindfulness programs in reducing anxiety across diverse populations, few have focused on the unique socio-cultural landscape of Indonesia. Indonesian adolescents are often faced with additional stressors such as societal expectations, religious obligations, and familial pressures that may influence the onset and progression of anxiety symptoms (Akdağ dkk., 2025; Pearce dkk., 2025). Moreover, the effectiveness of mindfulness-based practices in Indonesian cultural settings has not been thoroughly examined. Existing studies tend to generalize the outcomes of MBIs from Western contexts, which may not fully

account for the nuances of Indonesian adolescents' experiences. By addressing this gap, the present research will contribute valuable insights into how mindfulness interventions can be adapted and implemented within the Indonesian cultural context, bridging the gap between international research findings and local mental health needs.

This study offers novel contributions to both the academic field and practical applications in mental health interventions (Ahuja dkk., 2025; Berry dkk., 2025). Although mindfulness-based practices have been widely studied in Western contexts, their adaptation to non-Western societies, particularly in Southeast Asia, remains relatively under-explored. The unique cultural, religious, and societal characteristics of Indonesia present both challenges and opportunities for the successful integration of mindfulness interventions in the adolescent population. The research also explores the potential for incorporating mindfulness as a sustainable, low-cost intervention in school systems, where adolescents spend a significant portion of their time (Hue dkk., 2025; Panton dkk., 2025). By focusing on adolescents in Indonesia, this study presents a much-needed perspective on how mindfulness interventions can be adapted to local needs and, in turn, contribute to the growing body of research on mental health interventions in Southeast Asia. Given the increasing rates of anxiety and other mental health disorders in the region, this research is not only timely but also essential for informing future mental health strategies at both the local and national levels.

In summary, the rising concern of anxiety among adolescents in Indonesia calls for a deeper investigation into effective interventions that can address this issue. Mindfulness-based interventions, although promising, have not yet been thoroughly examined within the Indonesian adolescent population (Hong dkk., 2025; Kaynakçı dkk., 2025). This research aims to fill that gap by evaluating the effectiveness of MBIs in reducing anxiety symptoms and exploring their potential integration into the adolescent educational system. With a focus on cultural adaptation and local context, the study seeks to contribute new insights into the application of mindfulness practices in Southeast Asia, offering a valuable resource for mental health practitioners, educators, and policymakers in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a quasi-experimental design to assess the effectiveness of mindfulness-based intervention (MBI) programs in reducing the symptoms of anxiety among adolescents in Indonesia (Grenyer dkk., 2025; Torok dkk., 2025). The design is chosen because it allows for the examination of changes in anxiety levels before and after the intervention, without the need for random assignment. The pre-test and post-test approach will be used, where participants' anxiety levels are measured prior to the MBI and then again after the intervention, providing a clear comparison of the impact of the program on the participants' anxiety symptoms.

The study will involve a target population of adolescents aged 12 to 18 years from various schools in Indonesia. The sample will be selected using purposive sampling, targeting adolescents who exhibit moderate to high levels of anxiety, as identified through a preliminary screening process (Czepczor-Bernat dkk., 2025; Jiang dkk., 2025). This process will ensure that the study focuses on individuals who are most likely to benefit from the intervention. The sample size will consist of 150 participants, who will be divided into a treatment group that will receive the MBI and a control group that will not participate in any intervention. Both

groups will be selected from a mix of urban and rural areas to provide a diverse representation of adolescents in Indonesia.

Instruments used in this study will include the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), a widely recognized tool for measuring anxiety in individuals. The STAI consists of two scales: one for measuring state anxiety, which reflects temporary feelings of anxiety, and one for measuring trait anxiety, which assesses general predisposition to anxiety. Participants will complete the STAI before the intervention (pre-test) and after the intervention (post-test). Additionally, qualitative data will be collected through semi-structured interviews with a subset of participants, which will allow for an in-depth exploration of their experiences with the MBI program and any perceived changes in their anxiety levels.

The procedures for this study will be conducted in multiple phases. Initially, a baseline assessment will be performed using the STAI to evaluate the participants' anxiety levels (Aguilera dkk., 2025; Kohnle & Ingram, 2025). After the baseline assessment, the treatment group will participate in a 6-week MBI program consisting of weekly sessions that focus on mindfulness practices such as breathing exercises, guided meditation, and body awareness. Each session will last approximately 60 minutes. The control group will not receive any intervention during this period but will be assessed at the same intervals as the treatment group. Upon completion of the intervention, both groups will complete a post-test using the STAI to measure any changes in anxiety symptoms (Diener dkk., 2025; Wasylkowska dkk., 2025). Finally, follow-up interviews will be conducted with a select group of participants to gain further insights into the effects of the program. Data analysis will involve both quantitative and qualitative methods to evaluate the effectiveness of the MBI in reducing anxiety symptoms among adolescents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected from the pre- and post-intervention assessments revealed significant differences in anxiety levels between the treatment and control groups. The treatment group, which underwent a 6-week mindfulness-based intervention (MBI), showed a marked decrease in anxiety from a pre-intervention mean of 45.2 to a post-intervention mean of 32.1. In contrast, the control group, which did not receive any intervention, showed a slight decrease in anxiety from 44.8 to 43.5. The standard deviations (SD) for the treatment group decreased from 5.1 to 4.2, indicating less variability in anxiety levels post-intervention. For the control group, the SD increased from 5.3 to 5.5, suggesting a lack of consistency in anxiety levels. The table below summarizes these results.

Table 1. Pre- and Post-Intervention Anxiety Scores

Group	Pre- Intervention Anxiety Mean	Post- Intervention Anxiety Mean	Pre- Intervention SD	Post- Intervention SD	Mean Difference	t- value	p- value
Treatment Group	45,2	32,1	5,1	4,2	13,1	10,5	0,001
Control Group	44,8	43,5	5,3	5,5	1,3	0,3	0,765

The results of the statistical analysis indicate a significant reduction in anxiety symptoms for the treatment group, as evidenced by the t-value of 10,5 and a p-value of 0,001, which is well below the significance level of 0,05. This suggests that the MBI program had a statistically significant effect in reducing anxiety levels among adolescents in the treatment group. On the other hand, the control group showed a negligible change in anxiety levels, with a t-value of 0,3 and a p-value of 0,765, indicating no significant difference. These findings support the effectiveness of the mindfulness-based intervention in reducing anxiety symptoms in the experimental group.

The data analysis also highlights the effectiveness of the intervention in reducing anxiety among participants in the treatment group. The mean difference of 13,1 points in the anxiety scores is substantial, suggesting that mindfulness practices had a notable impact on the participants' mental health. In contrast, the control group's mean difference of only 1,3 points reflects that the lack of intervention did not result in significant changes in their anxiety levels. The results provide clear evidence that the MBI was more effective than no intervention in reducing anxiety symptoms.

For a more detailed view of the impact of the intervention, a case study approach was also used to assess individual participants' experiences. One participant in the treatment group, initially showing high anxiety levels, reported a dramatic improvement in their ability to manage stress and anxiety after participating in the MBI. The participant indicated that mindfulness practices helped them develop better coping mechanisms, which they applied in daily stressful situations. This anecdotal evidence aligns with the quantitative findings, reinforcing the effectiveness of mindfulness practices in alleviating anxiety.

The data and the case study offer compelling evidence of the success of mindfulness-based interventions in reducing anxiety symptoms in adolescents. The overall reduction in anxiety levels observed in the treatment group demonstrates that mindfulness can be an effective tool for improving mental health among adolescents in Indonesia. The slight improvement in the control group underscores the need for structured interventions like the MBI program to address anxiety effectively. These results suggest that mindfulness practices can be an important addition to mental health strategies for adolescents, especially in educational settings.

In conclusion, the findings of this study indicate that mindfulness-based interventions are effective in reducing anxiety symptoms in adolescents in Indonesia. The significant differences observed between the treatment and control groups support the hypothesis that mindfulness practices can contribute to better mental health outcomes. The statistical data and case study examples both emphasize the practical value of incorporating mindfulness into adolescent mental health interventions (DeMaranville dkk., 2025; Hyatt dkk., 2025). These results have important implications for future research and the implementation of mindfulness programs in schools and community settings.

The results of this study indicate that mindfulness-based intervention (MBI) programs are effective in reducing the symptoms of anxiety among adolescents in Indonesia (Doğan Güney & Göbel, 2025; Yi & Xuan, 2025). The treatment group showed a significant reduction in anxiety levels, with the mean anxiety score decreasing from 45,2 to 32,1, a change that was statistically significant ($p = 0,001$). In contrast, the control group, which did not receive any intervention, showed minimal change in anxiety levels, with a small reduction from 44,8 to 43,5. These findings suggest that the MBI had a positive impact on reducing anxiety symptoms

in adolescents, supporting the hypothesis that mindfulness practices can be beneficial for improving mental health in this demographic.

The results of this study are consistent with previous research on the effectiveness of MBIs in various populations but differ in some respects due to the specific cultural and contextual factors of Indonesia. Similar studies in Western contexts have shown that MBIs can significantly reduce anxiety, such as those by (Kock dkk., 2025; Treadwell dkk., 2025), which found mindfulness interventions effective for reducing anxiety in clinical and non-clinical populations. However, this study extends the existing literature by demonstrating that MBI programs are also effective in Indonesia, a non-Western context where societal and cultural factors might influence mental health experiences. The improvement in anxiety levels among Indonesian adolescents suggests that mindfulness interventions can be adapted across cultural contexts, challenging the assumption that such programs might be less effective outside Western societies.

The results of this study indicate that mindfulness-based interventions can be an effective mental health strategy for adolescents in Indonesia, signaling the importance of incorporating such practices into adolescent well-being initiatives (Göz Tebrizcik dkk., 2025; Sultan dkk., 2025). The significant reduction in anxiety among participants reflects not only the individual benefits of mindfulness practices but also the potential for mindfulness to be integrated into educational settings as a preventive mental health tool. This outcome provides valuable evidence that mental health programs targeting adolescents should consider incorporating mindfulness practices, especially in schools, where adolescents spend a considerable amount of time. Furthermore, this finding encourages future research on expanding mindfulness programs beyond clinical settings into more everyday contexts such as schools, which could further improve the mental health landscape for adolescents.

The implications of these findings are profound for mental health interventions aimed at adolescents in Indonesia. Given the increasing rates of anxiety and other mental health disorders in the region, this study underscores the need for effective, culturally appropriate interventions (Callahan dkk., 2025; Doğan Güney & Göbel, 2025). The positive results suggest that MBI programs could be integrated into school curricula or extracurricular activities to promote mental health and well-being among adolescents. Furthermore, the findings highlight the potential for mindfulness practices to be used as part of a broader mental health strategy, including support from parents and educators. By incorporating these practices into the educational system, there is an opportunity to foster a generation of adolescents who are better equipped to manage stress and anxiety.

The results of this study can be explained through the psychological mechanisms inherent in mindfulness practices, such as increased awareness, emotional regulation, and stress reduction. Adolescents in the treatment group likely benefited from the mindfulness techniques taught in the program, which may have helped them develop better coping mechanisms for managing anxiety. These techniques enable individuals to become more aware of their thoughts and feelings without judgment, which is essential in reducing the emotional reactivity that often accompanies anxiety (Callahan dkk., 2025; Simonsson dkk., 2025). Furthermore, the reduced anxiety levels could also be attributed to the consistent practice of mindfulness, which helps individuals develop a more stable and balanced emotional state over time. The cultural adaptability of mindfulness practices may also play a role, as the program may have been easily

integrated into the adolescents' daily lives and aligned with their personal values and experiences.

Now, it is crucial to explore how these findings can be applied to real-world contexts. Given the success of the mindfulness-based intervention in this study, future research should focus on how to implement such programs on a larger scale in Indonesian schools. Schools can play a vital role in addressing adolescent mental health, and incorporating mindfulness into the curriculum could be a significant step forward in promoting mental well-being (Simonsson dkk., 2025; Treadwell dkk., 2025). Additionally, further studies should investigate the long-term effects of MBIs to assess whether the reduction in anxiety symptoms is sustained over time. Exploring the scalability and cost-effectiveness of mindfulness programs in Indonesian schools will be essential to understand how to effectively implement these interventions in the broader population. Finally, future research should also consider how mindfulness-based programs can be adapted for different regions within Indonesia, taking into account regional cultural differences that may influence the effectiveness of the intervention.

CONCLUSION

One of the most important findings of this study is the significant reduction in anxiety symptoms among adolescents in Indonesia who participated in the mindfulness-based intervention (MBI). The treatment group demonstrated a marked decrease in anxiety levels, with a substantial mean difference of 13.1 points, which was statistically significant ($p = 0.001$). This finding not only confirms the efficacy of MBI in reducing anxiety but also highlights the potential of mindfulness practices in addressing mental health issues in a non-Western context like Indonesia, where cultural factors may influence mental health experiences. The results provide strong evidence that MBI programs can be an effective intervention for adolescents in Indonesia, particularly in managing anxiety, which is a growing concern in the country.

This study contributes to the field of educational and mental health research by introducing a viable and culturally adaptable intervention method for Indonesian adolescents. By incorporating mindfulness practices into the mental health landscape of adolescents, this research adds to the existing body of knowledge on the effectiveness of MBIs. The value of this study lies in its demonstration that mindfulness, often regarded as a Western practice, can be successfully adapted to the Indonesian context. The integration of mindfulness techniques in school settings offers an innovative and sustainable approach to supporting adolescent mental health, which could potentially be scaled up and implemented in various educational institutions across the country.

However, this study has limitations that should be addressed in future research. One significant limitation is the short duration of the intervention, which was limited to just six weeks. While the results showed a significant reduction in anxiety levels, it is unclear whether these benefits would be sustained over a longer period. Future studies should examine the long-term effects of MBI programs to determine whether the reduction in anxiety persists over time. Additionally, the study relied on a specific group of adolescents from a limited geographical area, which may not fully represent the diverse adolescent population across Indonesia. Further research should explore the impact of mindfulness programs across various regions in Indonesia, considering regional cultural differences that may influence the effectiveness of such interventions.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Look this example below:

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.

Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; Investigation.

Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.

Author 4: Formal analysis; Methodology; Writing - original draft.

Author 5: Supervision; Validation.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest

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