

Assessing Mindfulness in School-Aged Children: Development and Validation of BAU Mindfulness Scale For Children (BAU-MS)

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There has been a growing interest in mindfulness practices that can be embodied in daily life to help break the cycle of unhappiness due to stress, anxiety, and constant demands of the modern world. Jon Kabat-Zinn, founder of MBSR program, defined mindfulness as concentrating on what is happening in the present with acceptance in a non-judgmental way. Thereafter, broad conceptual definitions have been provided. Given as a complex term, mindfulness includes multiple elements such as being present, fully awareness, acceptance, and uncritical observation.

Existing empirical studies have mostly focused on mindfulness and its positive effects. Through growing evidence of positive impact of mindfulness on psychological health, emotional wellbeing, learning, and physical health, assessment of mindfulness has become essential. Nevertheless, the literature has shown deficiency of psychometric measure of mindfulness for school-aged children between 8 and 11 years. There appears an important gap in the existing national and international literature focusing on assessing mindfulness in children.

So, the main purpose of this study is two-fold: (a) to develop a mindfulness scale for school aged children, (b) to examine the reliability and validity of the mindfulness scale. Accordingly, the current study has two steps called Study1 and Study2.

In Study1, 41-item pool of BAU Mindfulness Scale for Children (BAU-MS) was administered to 275 students (146 male, 129 female). Obtained data were initially subjected to exploratory factor analysis (EFA). Results of EFA yielded two factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.00 and accounting for 33- % of the total variance.

In Study2, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed on the revised 16-item BAU-MS with 188 subjects (97 male, 91 female). The results of the CFA yielded a good fit The fit indices suggested that two factor solution with 16-items could be considered as a good fit to the sample data. The reliability of the 16- item BAU-MS was found satisfactory ($\alpha = 0.80$). The validity evidence, correlation with the quality of life scale score, has also shown that BAU-MS has promising psychometric properties and recommended for use on Turkish children. Future research would no doubt expand the assessment of mindfulness to include clinical sample.