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EFFECTS OF FOUR FOUNDATIONS OF MINDFULNESS-BASED INTERVENTION (FFMBI) ON MINDFULNESS LEVELS OF INTERNATIONAL PRACTITIONERS AND MENTAL WELL-BEING OF HUNGARIAN PRACTITIONERS

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Abstract

This cross-context synthesis combines results from two intensive Four Foundations of Mindfulness–based interventions (FFMBI) delivered in distinct higher-education settings: (1) residential retreats for international university students in Thailand (15-day, $n=55$; 30-day, $n=15$) and (2) a seven-day residential retreat for Hungarian adult learners in Mánfa, Hungary ($n=25$). In Thailand, participants completed the FFMQ-39 and DASS-21 before and after retreat. The 15-day cohort showed a small but significant gain in dispositional mindfulness (FFMQ-Total $\Delta=+4.20$; $d=0.28$; $p=.043$); the 30-day cohort showed a larger, medium-sized increase ($\Delta=+10.20$; $d=0.46$; $p=.094$, underpowered). Reductions in distress were modest, with trend-level decreases in stress for 15-day attendees. Critically, mindfulness gains correlated with reductions in stress, anxiety, and depression. Feasibility and acceptability were high (environment ratings $M=3.91/5$; 90% would re-attend), and descriptive patterns

suggested a dose–response favouring longer retreats. In Hungary, a pre–post analysis employed STAI (State/Trait), FFMQ-15, Self-Compassion Scale (SCS), DASS-42, and WHO-5. Large and clinically meaningful improvements were observed in state anxiety (STAI-S $\Delta=-10.44$; $d=-0.94$; $p<.001$), with medium-to-large gains in trait anxiety (STAI-T $d=-0.65$; $p=.004$), depression ($d=-0.77$; $p<.001$), stress ($d=-0.64$; $p=.004$), and well-being (WHO-5 +10.56 percentage points; $d=0.67$; $p=.003$). Self-compassion improved (SCS total $d=0.50$; $p=.029$), particularly Over-identification ($d=0.51$; $p=.017$). FFMQ-15 facet changes were mixed. Across 7-, 15-, and 30-day formats, FFMBI appears feasible and acceptable for both international and Hungarian cohorts, yielding consistent pre–post reductions in psychological distress and improvements in either mindfulness (longer formats) and self-compassion/well-being (shorter format). Combined evidence hints at a dose–response for trait mindfulness with longer intensives, while even a seven-day retreat delivers substantial relief in anxiety, depression, and stress. Limitations include single-group pre–post designs, self-report measures, attrition (international cohort), and unequal cell sizes. Nonetheless, converging quantitative and qualitative indicators support FFMBI as a scalable option for student mental-health support in culturally distinct settings, and they motivate controlled trials comparing retreat lengths and tracking maintenance of gains.

Keywords:

Satipaṭṭhāna, Mindfulness, Residential Retreat, University Students, Mental Well-Being