
| RESEARCH ARTICLE**Mindfulness and Attachment Anxiety in Nepali Working Adults: The Mediating Role of Emotional Clarity****Bishnu Bahadur Ale***Dongbang Culture University, South Korea***Corresponding Author:** Bishnu Bahadur Ale, **E-mail:** chinuale@gmail.com

| ABSTRACT

Attachment anxiety is also becoming one of the vulnerability factors of distress in the workplace, especially in a collectivistic and high-stress society like Nepal. Mindfulness has been suggested as a protective resource, but there is no clear information concerning the mechanisms. This research study investigated whether emotional clarity, the capacity to recognize and comprehend their feelings, mediates the relationship between trait mindfulness and attachment anxiety in Nepali working adults. The survey was a cross-sectional survey involving 312 full-time employees (52.6 percent female; Mage = 32.4 years, SD = 6.8) in healthcare, education, banking, and IT companies in Kathmandu Valley from January to March 2025. The participants were given the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire-Short Form (FFMQ-SF), Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised Anxiety subscale (ECR-R Anxiety), and Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale-Clarity subscale (DERS-Clarity, reverse-scored). Holding age, gender, and work sector constant, structural equation modeling found that mindfulness had a negative relationship with attachment anxiety ($\beta = -.38, p < .001$) and a positive relationship with emotional clarity ($\beta = .51, p < .001$). Emotional clarity, on the other hand, forecasted less attachment anxiety ($\beta = -.44, p < .001$). Emotional clarity had an important indirect effect ($\beta = -.22, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.29, -.16]$), which explains 58 percent of the overall effect, which is partially mediated. Results are consistent with recent data that mindfulness lowers attachment insecurity by improving conscious awareness of automatic relational responses (Yang & Oka, 2022) and that emotional clarity deficits increase dysregulation related to attachment (Ramos-Henderson et al., 2024). Within the Nepali context, where 46.9% of healthcare workers indicated clinically significant anxiety during COVID-19 (Adhikari et al., 2021), the development of emotional clarity might be a consonant route. The implications of the mindfulness work programs are explained.

| KEYWORDS

Mindfulness, attachment anxiety, emotional clarity, emotion regulation, Nepal, working adults, mediation

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1. Introduction

The fast urbanization and increased workload in Nepal after the pandemic have imposed new stresses on working adults that were never before experienced. In 2021, national surveys revealed that 46.9% of Nepali healthcare workers were anxious and 41.3% were depressed, and perceived stigma was associated with more distress (Adhikari et al., 2021). Though these numbers may be indicative of acute crisis conditions, they highlight a more widespread susceptibility: relational insecurity at work. Attachment theory, which was initially developed to describe infant-carer relationships, has been applied to adult relationships at the workplace. Burnout, interpersonal conflict, and emotion dysregulation are predicted by attachment anxiety, which is hypervigilance to rejection, fear of abandonment, and

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excessive need for reassurance (Ramos-Henderson et al., 2024). Attachment anxiety can be especially relevant in collectivistic cultures such as Nepal, where family and subordination in the workplace are the primary sources of identity. Mindfulness, described as a non-judgmental current awareness, has become a potential intervention. A BMC Psychology study (2022) showed that trait mindfulness was a resilience predictor, with reduced attachment anxiety and avoidance (Yang & Oka, 2022). Likewise, a systematic map published in 2025 discovered that mindfulness-based interventions are of greatest help to people with more attachment anxiety (Gazder et al., 2025). However, mindfulness does not work in solitude. Recent process models have made a point of highlighting that mindfulness increases mental health by augmenting emotion control abilities, especially clarity of emotions (Park & Naragon-Gainey, 2020). One of the dimensions of the Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale is emotional clarity, or the ability to distinguish and comprehend oneself in relation to one's emotions. Poor clarity is associated with elevated levels of internalizing symptoms, whereas high clarity makes it easier to cope with the problem and minimizes depression (Cho & Choi, 2024). Significantly, attachment anxiety demonstrates certain gaps in recognition and acceptance of emotions among individuals (Ramos-Henderson et al., 2024). In spite of such convergent evidence, there are three gaps. To begin with, the majority of the studies are Western; Asian studies on mindfulness have been based on clinical samples, but not on working adults (Thapaliya et al., 2018, for a review). Second, the route between mindfulness and attachment anxiety through emotional clarity has not been tested in Nepal. Third, Nepal workplace interventions tend to introduce Western mindfulness guidelines without respecting the local relational ecologies. This paper fills these gaps by testing a mediation model among Nepali working adults.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Mindfulness and attachment anxiety

Trait mindfulness has moderate negative relationships with both attachment anxiety ($r^+ = -.34$) and avoidance (Stevenson et al., 2017). Recent studies demonstrate this trend: Yang and Oka (2022) observed mindfulness to be correlated with anxiety ($r = -.36$) and avoidance ($r = -.23$) in a Japanese-Chinese sample, and both dimensions mediate the mindfulness-resilience connection. The information-processing theory suggests that mindful decentering enhances awareness of the automatic relational schemas, and thus the internal working models can be revised.

2.2 Mechanism of emotional clarity

Park and Naragon-Gainey (2020) showed that emotional clarity has curvilinear relationships with internalizing symptoms, and overall, greater clarity mediates stress. Problem-focused coping predicted lower depression and life satisfaction in older Korean adults, in which emotional clarity predicted these variables (Cho & Choi, 2024). Neurophysiological studies indicate that attachment anxiety exacerbates emotion regulation problems in the event of high late positive potential amplitude during reappraisal, and unclear emotional cues burden cognitive control (Ramos-Henderson et al., 2024).

2.3 Nepali context

On top of pandemic data, Nepali workers have chronic stressors: job insecurity, family separation due to migration, and stigma. Mindfulness has cultural appeal in Buddhist Vipassana practices, but secular work-based programs are still in their early stages. The peak level of interest in mindfulness in the workplace was observed in Nepali journals in 2019, which necessitates culturally adjusted research (Thapa et al., 2024).

The hypotheses of this study are as follows: H1: Mindfulness negatively predicts attachment anxiety; H2: Mindfulness positively predicts emotional clarity; H3: Emotional clarity negatively predicts attachment anxiety; H4: Emotional clarity mediates the mindfulness–attachment anxiety relationship.

3. Methodology Design

A cross-sectional correlational design with mediation analysis was employed, following STROBE guidelines. Participants Using purposive stratified sampling, 312 full-time employees were recruited from four sectors in Kathmandu Valley (healthcare $n = 98$, education $n = 82$, banking $n = 71$, IT $n = 61$). Inclusion: age 22–55 years, ≥ 1

year of tenure, Nepali literacy. Exclusion: current psychiatric treatment. Mean age 32.4 years (SD = 6.8); 52.6% female; 68% married; average tenure 5.2 years.

3.1 Measures

1. Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire-Short Form (FFMQ-SF; 24 items, $\alpha = .87$). Validated in South Asian samples.
2. Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised Anxiety subscale (ECR-R Anxiety; 18 items, $\alpha = .89$). Measures fear of rejection and abandonment.
3. Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale–Clarity (DERS-Clarity; 5 items, reverse-scored, $\alpha = .81$). Higher scores indicate greater clarity.
4. Control variables: age, gender, sector.

3.2 Procedure

Ethical approval was obtained from Tribhuvan University IRB (Ref: TU-Psy-2024/112). Data were collected via paper-and-pencil and secure online forms in Nepali (back-translated). Participants provided informed consent. No compensation was offered.

3.3 Data Analysis

Analyses were conducted in SPSS 28 and AMOS 26. Preliminary analyses examined normality and multicollinearity. Pearson correlations tested bivariate associations. Mediation was tested with structural equation modeling using maximum likelihood estimation and 5,000 bias-corrected bootstrap samples.

4. Results

Preliminary analyses showed acceptable reliability and no severe multicollinearity ($VIF < 1.8$).

Table 1. Sample Characteristics (N = 312)

Variable	n / Mean	% / SD
Age	32.4	6.8
Female	164	52.6%
Healthcare sector	98	31.4%
Education sector	82	26.3%
Banking	71	22.8%
IT	61	19.5%
Married	212	67.9%

Table 2. Descriptives and Correlations

Variable	M	SD	1	2
1. Mindfulness	3.61	0.52	—	
2. Emotional Clarity	3.78	0.61	.51***	—
3. Attachment Anxiety	3.12	0.89	-.38***	-.44***

Note. ***p < .001. All scales 1-5 except attachment anxiety 1-7.

Table 3. Mediation Results

Path	β	SE	95% CI
Mindfulness → Clarity (a)	.51	.05	[.41, .61]
Clarity → Anxiety (b)	-.44	.06	[-.55, -.33]
Direct effect (c')	-.16	.06	[-.27, -.05]
Indirect effect (a×b)	-.22	.03	[-.29, -.16]
Total effect (c)	-.38	.05	[-.48, -.28]

The mediation model demonstrated good fit: $\chi^2(125) = 232.50, p < .001; \chi^2/df = 1.86; CFI = .97; TLI = .96; RMSEA = .042, 90\% CI [.033, .051]; SRMR = .032$. Emotional clarity accounted for 58% of the total effect, supporting partial mediation. Results remained significant after controlling for sector and gender.

4.1 Conceptual Mediation Model

Mindfulness → ($\beta = .51$) → Emotional Clarity → ($\beta = -.44$) → Attachment Anxiety; Direct path $\beta = -.16$. All $p < .001$.

5. Discussion

This study is the first to show emotional clarity as a mediator between mindfulness and attachment anxiety among Nepali working adults. In line with H1–H4, greater trait mindfulness forecasted greater emotional clarity, and this forecasted less attachment anxiety. The indirect effect was also significant and indicated that merely being mindful is not enough; rather, it is the capacity to label and comprehend emotions that converts mindfulness to relational security. It is consistent with the results of Yang and Oka (2022), which concluded that attachment insecurity mediates the mindfulness–resilience associations, but adds clarity as the mediating variable. It similarly overlaps with neurocognitive findings that attachment anxiety affects emotion recognition and enhances LPP responses when engaging in reappraisal (Ramos-Henderson et al., 2024). In the case of unclear emotions, hyperactivating strategies prevail and maintain anxiety. Clarity can be particularly protective in Nepal, where workplace hierarchies do not encourage the expression of emotions. High levels of anxiety were reported by workers who struggled with stigma (Adhikari et al., 2021); our data indicate that interventions focused on clarity may help mitigate the vulnerability. Contrary to the situation in Western samples, where mindfulness sometimes enhances distress through increasing awareness in the absence of skills, our results indicate a clear adaptive pathway in the presence of clarity. Practical implications: Vipassana traditions of emotion-labeling should be combined with secular

mindfulness in a workplace program. Short exercises (e.g., naming three feelings prior to meetings) can make things clearer. Attachment-related hypervigilance could be decreased by training managers to model non-judgmental emotional inquiry. Limitations are that the design is cross-sectional, which excludes causality, self-report bias, and a Kathmandu-centric sample, which reduces generalizability to rural workers. Further longitudinal and intervention studies are needed to determine whether clarity training can decrease attachment anxiety in the long term and to address cultural moderators, including collectivism and power distance.

6. Conclusion

Emotional clarity partially mediates the relationship between mindfulness and attachment anxiety among Nepali working adults, accounting for 58 percent of the total effect. The findings confirm that mindfulness reduces attachment anxiety by enhancing the ability to recognize and comprehend emotions, offering a culturally relevant pathway to improve relational security in Nepali workplaces.

6.1 Recommendations

1. Integrate emotional clarity exercises, such as emotion-labeling activities, into workplace mindfulness programs.
2. Develop culturally adapted interventions combining secular mindfulness with traditional Vipassana practices.
3. Train managers in non-judgmental emotional inquiry to model healthy emotional expression.
4. Conduct longitudinal and intervention studies to validate the long-term efficacy of emotional clarity training in reducing attachment anxiety.

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