

FEATURES OF STUDENTS' MINDFUL SELF-REGULATION AS A BASIS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE MBSR PROGRAM

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Abstract. The article examines the characteristics of conscious self-regulation among students based on V. I. Morosanova's "Self-Regulation Profile - 98" (SRP-98) methodology. The study involved 515 students from the first to fourth year of study. The main indicators of self-regulation - planning, modeling, programming, evaluation of results, and flexibility-were analyzed using corresponding scales. The findings showed that most students had a moderate level of self-regulation development. According to the total sample, 58.9% of students demonstrated a moderate level, 28.0% showed a high level, and 13.1% exhibited a low level of self-regulation. The best-developed components were planning and evaluation of results. In contrast, programming and flexibility emerged as the weakest components of students' self-regulation.

The article discusses the potential of a mindfulness-based stress reduction program (MBSR) as a tool for developing the identified characteristics of self-regulation. MBSR practices may contribute to individuals' ability to observe their present-moment experience, regulate emotional reactions, flexibly modify behavioral patterns, and enhance self-reflection. However, the presented findings characterize the self-regulation profile of students prior to MBSR implementation rather than describing the direct effect of the program itself.

Keywords: MBSR, mindfulness, conscious self-regulation, self-regulation style, SRP-98, students, stress

Introduction

In contemporary higher education systems, students are required to possess not only professional knowledge and practical skills, but also the capacity to independently organize their own learning activities, set goals, manage time effectively, make informed decisions, and adapt to changing circumstances. The increase in academic load, the growing volume of information, examination-related stress, and concerns regarding professional prospects significantly impact students' psychological well-being.

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In this context, self-regulation constitutes an essential psychological resource for individuals' educational and professional activities. Self-regulation ensures the determination of one's personal goals, appraisal of situational circumstances, formulation of action plans, monitoring of outcomes, and modification of behavioral patterns when necessary.

The significance of mindfulness-based psychological programs in developing students' self-regulation continues to increase. One such program is Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), a mindfulness-based approach to stress reduction.

The primary objective of the program is to teach individuals to observe their present-moment internal and external experience non-judgmentally and with conscious awareness. The MBSR program comprises breath awareness, observation of bodily sensations, body scan meditation, meditative exercises, and mindful engagement in daily activities.

Although MBSR was originally developed for stress reduction purposes, its content is closely linked to self-regulation processes. Mindfulness enables individuals to observe their automatic reactions, perceive the gap between emotional response and behavioral action, and make conscious decisions aligned with situational demands.

The purpose of this study is to identify characteristics of students' self-regulation using the SRP -98 methodology and, based on the obtained findings, to analyze the MBSR program as a tool for developing self-regulation.

Literature Review

The issue of self-regulation is considered one of the principal theoretical directions in both domestic and international psychology for understanding goal-directed activity of personality. In Kazakh psychology, K. Zharyqbaev emphasized the development of individuals' conscious engagement and volitional qualities (Zharyqbaev, 1993), while S.M. Zhakypov substantiated the significance of subjectivity, reflexivity, and collaborative learning processes in educational activity (Zhakypov, 2004).

In international psychology, Albert Bandura associated self-regulation with mechanisms of self-monitoring, self-evaluation, and self-influence. Barry J. Zimmerman conceptualized self-regulated learning through the processes of goal-setting, planning of learning activities, and reflection phases. Roy F. Baumeister, in turn, conceptualized self-regulation as the capacity for conscious control of behavioral and emotional responses (Bandura, 1986; Baumeister et al., 2007; Dawson et al., 2020; Zimmerman, 2002).

Khoury et al. conducted a meta-analysis of 29 studies involving 2,668 healthy adults to evaluate the effectiveness of the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program. The results demonstrated a moderate positive effect of MBSR in reducing stress, anxiety, depression, and psychological distress, as well as in improving quality of life. These effects were maintained at an average follow-up of 19 weeks. Furthermore, changes in mindfulness and self-compassion levels were found to be correlated with improvements in psychological outcomes (Khoury et al., 2015).

P.R. Goldin and J.J. Gross examined the impact of the MBSR program on patients with social anxiety disorder (SAD). The results indicated that mindfulness training led to a reduction in anxiety and depression symptoms and an increase in self-esteem. Neuroimaging findings confirmed that MBSR facilitates more effective emotion regulation: when facing negative self-beliefs, participants showed decreased amygdala activity and increased activation in brain regions associated with attentional deployment (Goldin, 2010; Gross, 2015).

Results of the study conducted by Asher and colleagues (2017) indicate that social anxiety disorder is more prevalent among women, who also tend to exhibit relatively more pronounced clinical manifestations of the condition.

The work of J.J. Gross emphasizes that different emotion regulation strategies can lead to diverse psychological outcomes, highlighting the importance of providing a more profound and precise description of the underlying mechanisms of this process (Gross, 2015).

A systematic review by Gu and colleagues explored the mediating mechanisms that facilitate the therapeutic efficacy of MBSR (Gu, J. et al., 2015). The results suggest that clinical improvements are mediated by enhanced levels of mindfulness, self-compassion, and metacognition, as well as a decrease in rumination and psychological distress.

Watkins describes rumination-focused cognitive behavioural therapy as a specialized approach to the treatment of depressive disorders. This intervention aims to shift individuals' thinking patterns away from abstract,

repetitive thought processes toward the experiential understanding of specific situations. Such an approach is consistent with the principles of mindfulness and may contribute to the development of more effective emotion-regulation skills (Watkins, 2016).

Mambetalina et al. emphasize that mindfulness-based interventions lead to a substantial decrease in psychological distress, anxiety, and depression. Additionally, these practices facilitate the strengthening of mental health and foster greater emotional stability (Mambetalina et al., 2025).

P. Malinowski argues that mindfulness practices may enhance voluntary attentional control, reduce automatic emotional reactivity, and promote more adaptive emotion regulation. These processes may underlie the beneficial effects of mindfulness-based interventions on psychological well-being (P. Malinowski, 2018).

Dawson et al. conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis of 51 randomized controlled trials examining mindfulness-based interventions among university students. Compared with passive control conditions, these interventions produced small-to-moderate benefits in reducing psychological distress, anxiety, depressive symptoms, and rumination, while improving well-being and mindfulness. Improvements in distress and mindfulness persisted beyond three months (Dawson et al., 2020). However, the authors noted a generally high risk of bias across the included trials and found no convincing benefits for several outcomes, including sleep, blood pressure, life satisfaction, and resilience.

V.I. Morosanova's theoretical framework, the individual style of self-regulation is characterized through several interrelated processes: planning, modeling, programming, evaluation of results, and flexibility (Morosanova, 1998).

Planning is associated with the determination of individuals' goals, future tasks, and pathways for their achievement. Individuals with high levels of planning capacity clearly define the objectives of their actions and preliminarily conceptualize the necessary steps required for goal attainment.

Modeling refers to the consideration of significant internal and external requirements of the conditions in which activity is performed. This indicator is related to an individual's capacity for adequate understanding of the situation, anticipation of changing factors, and evaluation of conditions that facilitate goal achievement.

Programming describes the capacity to construct a system of concrete actions directed toward goal achievement. This component extends beyond merely establishing goals and encompasses the development of specific, systematic, and sequential programming for goal attainment.

Evaluation of results refers to an individual's comparison of the outcomes of their actions with initial goals, identification of errors, and the introduction of corrections when necessary. This process is closely linked to reflection and self-monitoring.

Flexibility denotes the capacity to restructure the self-regulatory system in response to changing environmental conditions.

According to J. Kabat-Zinn, mindfulness serves as a fundamental mechanism for stress reduction, emotional regulation, and personal growth. A key distinctive feature of the program is that it does not teach the suppression of negative emotions, but rather cultivates the capacity to observe and accept them.

Multiple connections exist between mindfulness and self-regulation. First, mindfulness facilitates timely observation of one's internal states. Second, it reduces automatic behavioral responses and expands the capacity for deliberate choice-making. Third, mindfulness strengthens emotional stability and the ability to restructure behavior in accordance with situational demands.

For students, the MBSR program is undoubtedly significant in terms of managing academic stress, enhancing attentional focus, improving time management, reducing pre-examination anxiety, and developing decision-making capacity in challenging situations. However, to substantiate MBSR's effect on self-regulation, experimental research comparing pre-intervention indicators with post-intervention outcomes is necessary.

Methods

Design of research

To achieve the objectives of the study, the following research methods and instruments were employed:

- methods of theoretical and practical research analysis;

– methods of empirical data collection:

V. I. Morosanova's "Self-Regulation Profile Questionnaire";

– methods of qualitative analysis and interpretation of the research findings;

– methods and procedures of statistical analysis. Quantitative and qualitative interpretation of the data was performed using SPSS Statistics 23.0.

The reliability and validity of the questionnaire results were ensured by the use of a standardized instrument appropriate to the research objectives, a sufficient number of participants, and the appropriate application of statistical methods for data processing.

Results and Discussion

The study involved a total of 515 students. The sample comprised first-year students ($n = 162$), second-year students ($n = 107$), third-year students ($n = 111$), and fourth-year students ($n = 135$). Students' self-regulatory characteristics were assessed using the primary scales of the Self-Regulation Profile-98 (SRP-98) methodology.

Table 1

Students' Self-Regulation Indicators Across the General Sample

Scale	Low Level, n (%)	Moderate Level, n (%)	High Level, n (%)
Planning	70 (13,6%)	239 (46,4%)	206 (40,0%)
Modeling	113 (21,9%)	297 (57,7%)	105 (20,4%)
Programming	136 (26,4%)	325 (63,1%)	54 (10,5%)
Results Evaluation	34 (6,5%)	340 (66,1%)	141 (27,4%)
Flexibility	118 (22,9%)	313 (60,8%)	84 (16,3%)
Overall Level	68 (13,1%)	303 (58,9%)	144 (28,0%)

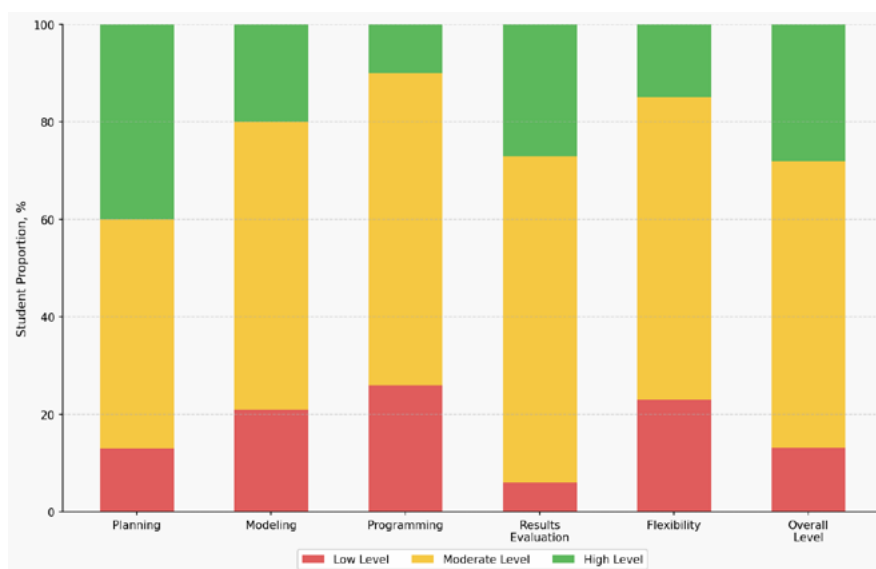


Figure 1. Students' Self-Regulation Indicators Across the General Sample

According to the total sample results, on the Planning scale, low levels were identified in 13.6% of students, moderate levels in 46.4%, and high levels in 40.0%. This indicates that the majority of students are able to identify educational goals and organize their actions in advance.

On the Modeling scale, low levels were found in 21.9%, moderate levels in 57.7%, and high levels in 20.4%. Consequently, the ability to consider significant situational factors is developed at a moderate level in most students.

The study indicates that twenty percent of participants lack the necessary capacity to conduct a holistic assessment of the various factors affecting the process.

The findings indicate that programming proficiency remains one of the weakest areas, with 26.4% of the student population performing at a low level. Conversely, high-level attainment was limited to 10.5%, while a substantial proportion (63.1%) remained at an intermediate threshold.

Despite the fact that most respondents are capable of goal-setting, they exhibit an inability to formulate a comprehensive execution algorithm; this is especially evident in their failure to provide plan precision, chronological consistency, and susceptibility to transformation.

According to the self-assessment criteria, 6.5% of respondents performed at a low level, 66.1% at a moderate level, and 27.4% at a high level. These data suggest that students have developed a sufficient capacity to analyze the outcomes of their activities. However, since a significant proportion of participants is concentrated at the moderate level, the systematic further improvement of reflection skills remains highly relevant.

The predominance of low (22.9%) and intermediate (60.8%) scores in the assessment of student flexibility suggests that individuals face specific challenges regarding environmental adaptation and the situational reconfiguration of previous experiences. Conversely, a high level of proficiency was observed in a mere 16.3% of the cohort.

The overall characterization of self-regulation within the sample indicates that the majority of respondents demonstrated a moderate level of self-regulation (58.9%), while the remaining participants were classified as having high (28.0%) or low (13.1%) levels. A comparison across academic years revealed differences in the distribution of self-regulation levels and variations in the developmental patterns of this psychological characteristic.

Table 2

Overall Self-Regulation Level by Academic Year

Academic Year	Number of Students	Low Level, n (%)	Moderate Level, n (%)	High Level, n (%)
1	162	20 (11,8%)	83 (51,6%)	59 (36,6%)
2	107	12 (10,6%)	64 (60,6%)	31 (28,8%)
3	111	22 (19,8%)	65 (58,6%)	24 (21,6%)
4	135	15 (11,1%)	90 (66,7%)	30 (22,2%)

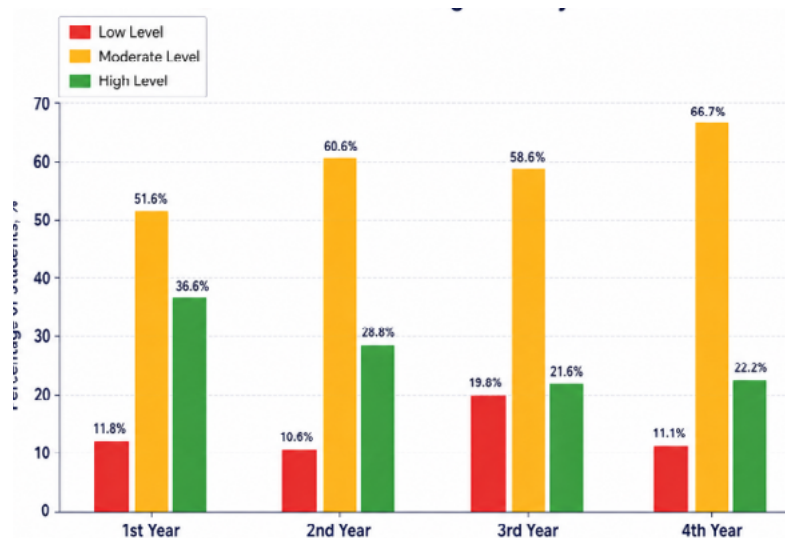


Figure 2. Overall Self-Regulation Level by Academic Year

According to research data, 51.6% of first-year students exhibit a moderate level of self-regulation, 36.6% demonstrate a high level, and 11.8% show a low level of development in this area. It was established that the relatively well-developed aspects of this group are associated with the indicators of planning and the evaluation of performance outcomes.

Specifically, a high level of planning was identified in 42.0% of the students. Conversely, the development levels of flexibility, programming, and modeling skills were found to be insufficient.

Table 3

Self-Regulation Indicators of First-Year Students

Scale	Low Level, n (%)	Moderate Level, n (%)	High Level, n (%)
Planning	14 (8,6%)	80 (49,4%)	68 (42,0%)
Modeling	37 (22,8%)	90 (55,6%)	35 (21,6%)
Programming	31 (19,1%)	106 (65,4%)	25 (15,4%)
Results Evaluation	14 (8,7%)	97 (59,6%)	51 (31,7%)
Flexibility	36 (22,2%)	108 (66,7%)	18 (11,1%)
Overall Level	20 (11,8%)	83 (51,6%)	59 (36,6%)

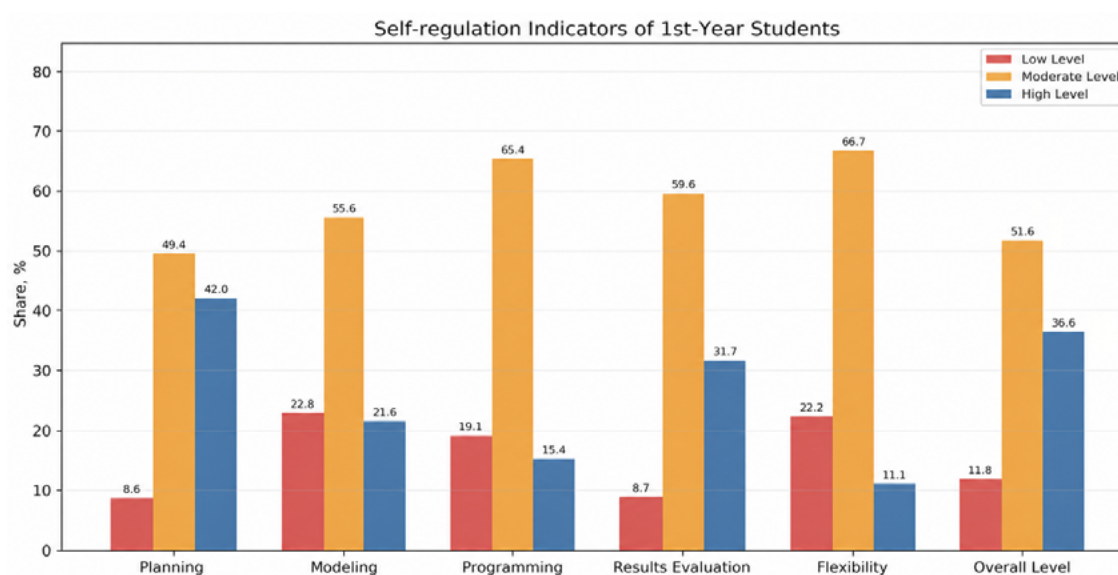


Figure 3. Self-Regulation Indicators of First-Year Students

Statistical data indicate that only 10.6% of second-year subjects exhibit a low level of self-regulation. However, the low indicators for flexibility and programming (29.0% and 35.5%, respectively) suggest that learners encounter difficulties when adapting to new environments and planning their activities.

Table 4

Self-Regulation Indicators of Second-Year Students

Scale	Low Level, n (%)	Moderate Level, n (%)	High Level, n (%)
Planning	14 (13,1%)	49 (45,8%)	44 (41,1%)
Modeling	22 (20,6%)	65 (60,7%)	20 (18,7%)

Programming	38 (35,5%)	55 (51,4%)	14 (13,1%)
Results Evaluation	19 (18,3%)	63 (57,7%)	25 (24,0%)
Flexibility	31 (29,0%)	71 (66,4%)	5 (4,7%)
Overall Level	12 (10,6%)	64 (60,6%)	31 (28,8%)

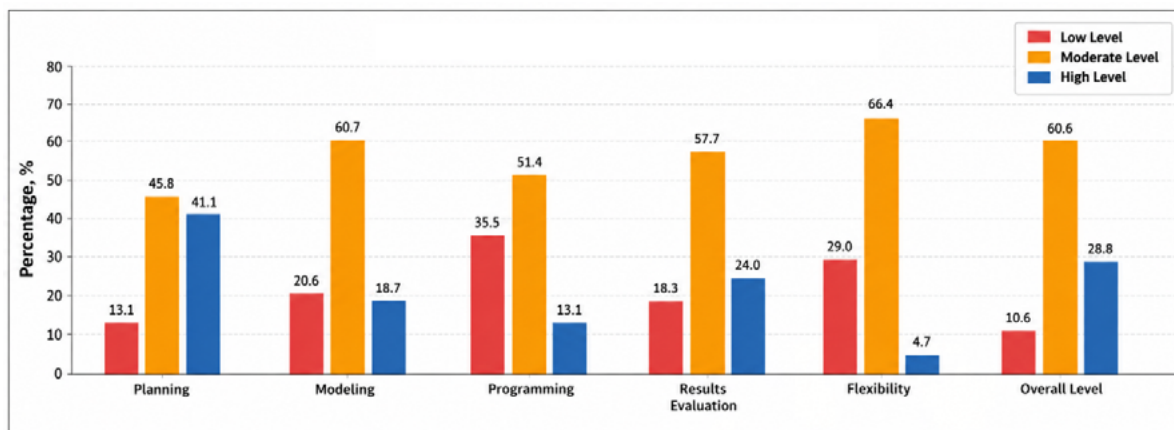


Figure 4. Self-Regulation Indicators of Second-Year Students

The study findings reveal that third-year students' general self-regulation predominantly falls within the moderate (58.6%) and high (21.6%) ranges, with low levels accounting for 19.8% of the sample. A distinguishing feature of this cohort is the complete absence of low scores in the results evaluation metric, where 73.9% of respondents performed at a moderate level and 26.1% at a high level. Furthermore, a comparative analysis with the preceding two academic years indicates a marked progression in students' capacity for regulatory flexibility; however, the action programming scale remained a vulnerable area.

Table 5

Self-Regulation Indicators of Third-Year Students

Scale	Low Level, n (%)	Moderate Level, n (%)	High Level, n (%)
Planning	17 (15,3%)	55 (49,5%)	39 (35,1%)
Modeling	19 (17,1%)	72 (64,9%)	20 (18,0%)
Programming	32 (28,8%)	64 (57,7%)	15 (13,5%)
Results Evaluation	0 (0,0%)	82 (73,9%)	29 (26,1%)
Flexibility	16 (14,4%)	54 (48,6%)	41 (36,9%)
Overall Level	22 (19,8%)	65 (58,6%)	24 (21,6%)

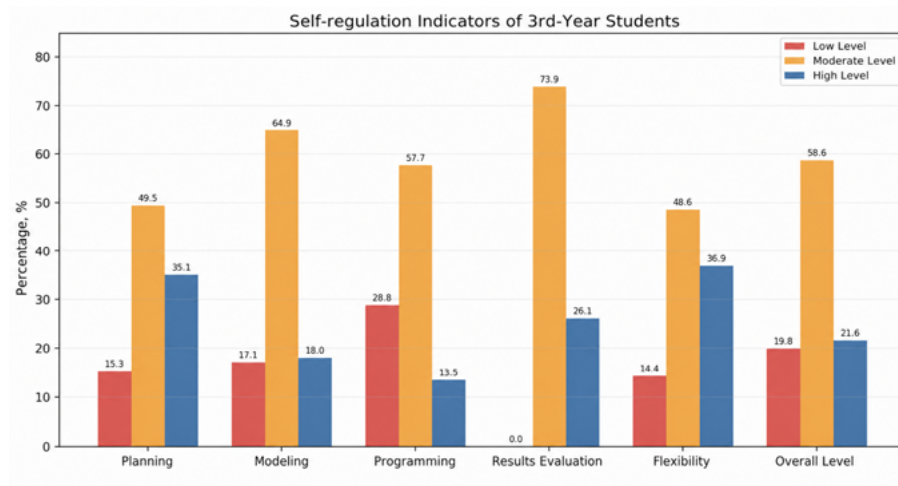


Figure 5. Self-Regulation Indicators of Third-Year Students

The fourth-year cohort exhibited the following pattern of overall self-regulation: high proficiency (22.2%), moderate proficiency (66.7%), and low proficiency (11.1%). Similar to previous cohorts, planning and results evaluation dimensions demonstrated comparative strength within this academic year. Notably, however, the programming scale presented a particularly concerning finding: not a single student achieved high-level performance. Instead, 74.1% demonstrated moderate levels and 25.9% exhibited low levels.

In terms of flexibility, 25.9% of the participants exhibited low scores, whereas 14.8% demonstrated high scores.

Table 6

Self-Regulation Indicators of Fourth-Year Students

Scale	Low Level, n (%)	Moderate Level, n (%)	High Level, n (%)
Planning	25 (18,5%)	55 (40,7%)	55 (40,7%)
Modeling	35 (25,9%)	70 (51,9%)	30 (22,2%)
Programming	35 (25,9%)	100 (74,1%)	0 (0,0%)
Results Evaluation	0 (0,0%)	100 (74,1%)	35 (25,9%)
Flexibility	35 (25,9%)	80 (59,3%)	20 (14,8%)
Overall Level	15 (11,1%)	90 (66,7%)	30 (22,2%)

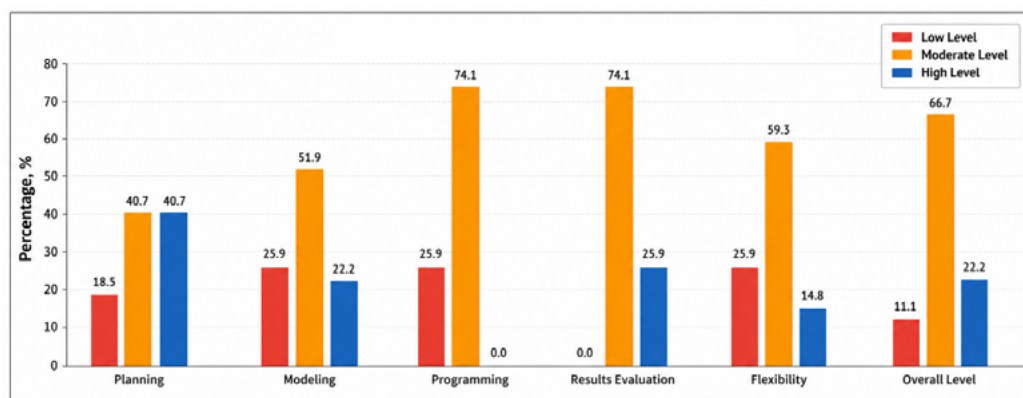


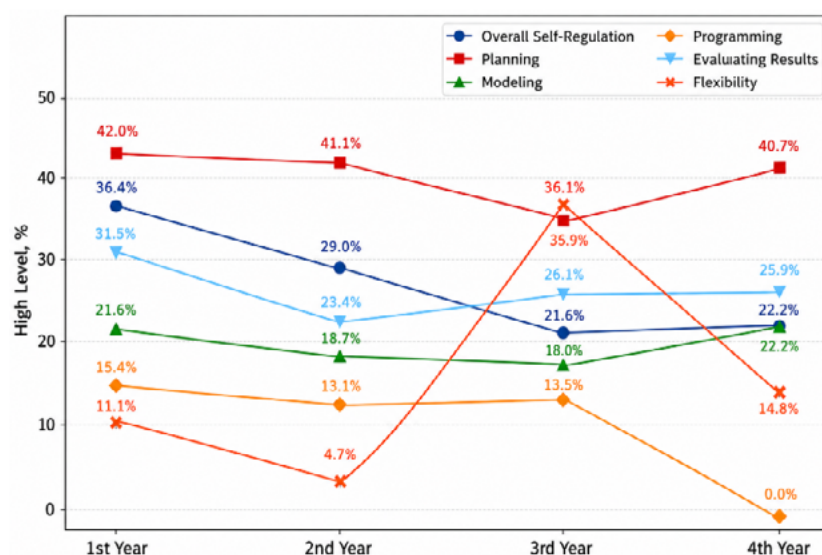
Figure 6. Self-Regulation Indicators of Fourth-Year Students

As indicated by the cross-sectional analysis, the highest proportion of students with advanced self-regulation skills is found in the first year (36.6%), followed by a downward trend to 28.8%, 21.6%, and 22.2% in successive years. Conversely, the moderate development level showed consistent growth, peaking at 66.7% in the senior year.

Table 7

Comparison of High-Level Self-Regulation Indicators Across Academic Years

Scale	1	2	3	4
Overall Level	36,4%	29,0%	21,6%	22,2%
Planning	42,0%	41,1%	35,1%	40,7%
Modeling	21,6%	18,7%	18,0%	22,2%
Programming	15,4%	13,1%	13,5%	0,0%
Results Evaluation	31,5%	23,4%	26,1%	25,9%
Flexibility	11,1%	4,7%	36,9%	14,8%

**Figure 7. Comparison of High-Level Self-Regulation Indicators Across Academic Years**

The findings indicate that the components of students' self-regulation do not develop uniformly and do not necessarily improve as students progress through their academic years. This suggests that academic experience and maturation do not automatically lead to the development of all regulatory skills.

The relatively high planning indicators may be explained by the influence of external structures within the university environment, such as class schedules, deadlines, syllabi, and assessment systems. Students acquire goal-setting and learning outcome evaluation skills through the demands of their daily academic routine. This finding is consistent with the key conclusions of research on self-regulated learning and academic self-regulation.

The relatively lower levels of action programming may indicate difficulties in translating goals into specific steps. Although students may understand what needs to be done, they may experience challenges in determining how and in what sequence tasks should be completed. This may be influenced by insufficient practical experience, multitasking, procrastination, and the cognitive load placed on executive functions.

Variation in flexibility indicators across academic years may be related to students' cumulative experience in adapting to new circumstances and the development of tolerance for ambiguity. While first- and second-year students tend to rely more heavily on prior behavioral patterns during their transition to the higher education envi-

ronment, third- and fourth-year students are better able to modify their strategies according to changing situations, drawing upon their accumulated experience.

These findings highlight the importance of targeting the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program toward the weaker components of self-regulation, particularly action programming and cognitive flexibility. Mindfulness practices can help stabilize attention, reduce emotional reactivity, and facilitate adaptation to changing conditions. Consequently, MBSR can be considered a comprehensive psychological intervention within the educational process to enhance students' self-regulatory systems.

Conclusion

This study enabled the identification of diagnostic characteristics of conscious self-regulation across undergraduate cohorts. The empirical evidence demonstrated that most participants exhibited a predominantly moderate level of self-regulatory development. Across the entire sample, planning and results evaluation skills were comparatively well-developed, whereas action programming and regulatory flexibility were identified as vulnerable components across all academic years. The persistently low scores in action programming even among senior students underscore the necessity for targeted interventions to support this skill throughout professional training.

The findings provide a theoretical rationale for considering Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) as a promising intervention aimed at addressing the identified vulnerabilities. From a theoretical standpoint, mindfulness training may facilitate attentional stabilization, attenuate automatic reactivity, and foster emotional equilibrium. However, the empirical results of this study merely delineate baseline self-regulatory profiles and do not directly substantiate the efficacy of MBSR. Consequently, its actual effectiveness warrants rigorous evaluation in subsequent experimental research through systematic pre- and post-intervention comparative analyses.

Concluding Remarks

The main findings of the study can be summarized in three conclusions:

1. Most students demonstrated a moderate level of self-regulation, with planning skills being relatively more developed than the other components.
2. Action programming and flexibility represent vulnerable components of the self-regulatory system and constitute the primary areas for targeted psychological development.
3. The MBSR program is a promising tool for enhancing these components; however, demonstrating its actual effectiveness requires further experimental research.

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Conflicts of interest

No potential conflicts of interest are declared by the authors.

Authors' contributions

Zh.K. Aubakirova – writing the text of the article and translating it into English.

M.D. Aurenova – writing the text, approving the final version of the article for publication.

Zh.K. Aubakirova, L.M. Gitikhmayeva, M.D. Aurenova – significant contribution to the concept or design of the work; collection, analysis and interpretation of the results of the work.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

During the preparation of this work, the author(s) used DeepL (Web / Pro version) for translating the final manuscript from Russian into English. Following the use of this tool, the author(s) reviewed and edited the translated content as necessary and take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

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Особенности осознанной саморегуляции студентов как основа для применения программы MBSR

Аннотация. В статье особенности осознанной саморегуляции студентов рассматриваются как основа для применения программы снижения стресса на основе осознанности (MBSR) и анализируются эмпирические результаты, полученные с помощью методики В. И. Моросановой «Стиль саморегуляции поведения – 98» (ССП-98). В исследовании приняли участие 515 студентов 1–4 курсов, показатели саморегуляции которых определялись по шкалам планирования, моделирования, программирования, оценки результатов и гибкости.

Результаты исследования показали, что у большинства студентов преобладает средний уровень саморегуляции (58,9 % – средний, 28,0 % – высокий, 13,1 % – низкий уровень). В структуре регуляторного профиля планирование и оценка результатов проявились как наиболее развитые компоненты, в то время как программирование действий и гибкость были определены как уязвимые звенья, требующие целевой психологической поддержки.

На основе полученных диагностических данных программа MBSR теоретически обосновывается как перспективный инструмент для развития выявленных уязвимых компонентов. Описывается, что практики mindfulness могут способствовать снижению автоматических реакций, стабилизации осознанности и повышению поведенческой гибкости. Вместе с тем, поскольку полученные результаты отражают лишь исходный уровень до внедрения программы, доказательство реальной эффективности методики MBSR требует проведения экспериментальных исследований в будущем.

Ключевые слова: MBSR, осознанность, осознанная саморегуляция, стиль саморегуляции, ССП-98, студенты, стресс.

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MBSR бағдарламасын қолданудың негізі ретінде студенттердің саналы өзін-өзі реттеу ерекшеліктері

Аңдатпа. Мақалада студенттердің саналы өзін-өзі реттеу ерекшеліктері зейін қоюға негізделген стрессті төмендету (MBSR) бағдарламасын қолданудың негізі ретінде қарастырылып, В. И. Моросанованың «Мінез-құлықты өзін-өзі реттеу стилі - 98» (ССП-98) әдістемесі бойынша алынған эмпирикалық нәтижелер талданады. Зерттеуге 1–4-курс студенттері 515 студент қатысып, олардың өзін-өзі реттеу көрсеткіштері жоспарлау, модельдеу, бағдарламалау, нәтижелерді бағалау және икемділік шкалалары бойынша анықталды.

Зерттеу нәтижелері студенттердің басым бөлігінде өзін-өзі реттеудің орташа деңгейі басым екенін көрсетті (58,9 % - орташа, 28,0 % - жоғары, 13,1 % - төмен деңгей). Реттеуші құрылымда жоспарлау мен нәтижелерді бағалау ең дамыған компоненттер ретінде көрінсе, іс-әрекетті бағдарламалау мен икемділік мақсатты психологиялық қолдауды қажет ететін осал тұстар ретінде анықталды.

Алынған диагностикалық деректер негізінде MBSR бағдарламасы анықталған осал компоненттерді дамытудың перспективалық құралы ретінде теориялық тұрғыдан негізделді. Mindfulness жаттығулары автоматты реакцияларды азайтуға, саналықты тұрақтандыруға және мінез-құлық икемділігін арттыруға ықпал етуі мүмкін екендігі сипатталады. Сонымен бірге алынған нәтижелер тек бағдарламаны енгізуге дейінгі бастапқы деңгейді көрсететіндіктен, MBSR әдістемесінің нақты тиімділігін дәлелдеу болашақта эксперименттік зерттеулер жүргізуді қажет етеді.

Түйін сөздер: MBSR, саналық, саналы өзін-өзі реттеу, өзін-өзі реттеу стилі, ӨРС-98, студенттер, стресс.

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