

Driving Anger and Mindfulness among young Adults

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Abstract

Anger in all the ways is harmful socially, physically and psychologically. As the life style is changing and everybody is so occupied therefore the level tolerance has reduced. Especially in young adults patience has reduced and they are less worried about the consequence also. Anger has become a prominent cause of accidents these days and also turns in to driving anger. Mindfulness can be taken as a solution to help in reducing the level of anger. This paper is specially focusing on whether there is and relation between mindfulness and driving anger among young adults. The sample of this study includes 50 boys and 50 girls of age between 18- 25 years. The data is generated through Deffenbacher Driving Anger Scale (Deffenbacher, Oetting & Lynch, 1994) and Mindful Attention Awareness Scale Brown, K.W. & Ryan, R.M. (2003). It was found that mindfulness effects driving anger in young adults. There is also an impact of mindfulness on driving anger based on gender.

Keywords: Driving Anger, Mindfulness, Young Adults, Gender

Introduction

Driving Anger

"Driving Anger" is the anger experienced behind the steering wheel of a vehicle. According to Counseling psychologist Jerry Deffenbacher (1994), PhD, reasonable people who are typically seen to be calm can sometimes turn into warriors behind the wheel. Such individuals yell obscenities, wildly gesture, honk and swerve in and out of traffic, and may even endanger their own lives and others when provoked.

A psychology professor from the Colorado State University, Daffenbacher (1994) focused his research on the personality, risk-taking characteristics, and aggressiveness of high-anger drivers. Deffenbacher (1994), used questionnaires, driving diaries, imagery exercises, and computer driving simulations to assess the driving tendencies of high-anger drivers.

Over the last few decades, aggressive driving has become a topic of major concern. The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety found that between 1990 and 1996 road rage was the reason for 218 deaths and 12,610 injuries. The study analyzed and compiled 10,037 police reports and newspaper stories about traffic accidents that led to violence. There was also an increase in road rage of 7 percent each year, within that six-year period.

Researchers have also suggested that road rage is most likely to be perpetrated by young males. Various psychological factors such as displaced anger and high life

stress, and also crowded roads and bad road conditions are some environmental factors that are linked to road rage. It has also been found that people who experience road rage are more prone to misuse alcohol and drugs.

The thoughts, behaviors, and physiological activation that are associated with regular anger are the same that are involved in anger during driving. Therefore we can correctly say that, driving anger is no different from regular anger. The concept of driving anger draws our concern because people do get angry very frequently while driving. Many people have no anger problems otherwise in their lives, but they face real difficulty controlling their anger while driving.

Aggression is a reaction in response to a stressful situation or when confronted by a frustrating one. This not only results in verbal abuse, but in certain circumstances the individual might also resort to physical violence. In the United States, in the late 1980's, drivers faced increased levels of frustration due to the increasing congestion on the roads, this lead to fighting and shooting on a regular basis. Popular media came to term this as "road rage."

Anger can be triggered by various factors, and while driving the number of factors that can provoke anger drastically multiplies. Driving is becoming the perfect situation for aggravating anger. The most common form of road rage is aggressive tailgating (62 percent), followed by headlight flashing (59 percent), obscene gestures (48 percent), deliberately obstructing other vehicles (21 percent) and verbal abuse (16 percent). Small but a

significant 1 percent of drivers claim to have been physically assaulted by other motorists.

Anger is more likely when people are already stressed or under any kind of pressure. While driving people get a little more tensed than common because of the risk of injury coupled with driving. People are out with a particular goal in mind, when they perceive that someone is blocking their goals they become defensive. And finally, the meeting of the goal depends on the whim of the other drivers on the road or various other prospects. The anonymity among drivers leads to their behavior being interpreted in an overly negative way by the others. Thus causing misunderstanding between drivers.

Deffenbacher (1994) compared aggressiveness, risk-taking and personality traits of high-anger drivers with those of low-anger drivers—those who focused their attention on safe driving, rethinking anger-provoking situations in less negative ways and using calming or distracting behaviors, such as turning on the radio to find out what is instigating road rage. His studies reveal that high-anger drivers engage in hostile and aggressive thinking and behavior, have more accidents, and experience more trait anger, anxiety and impulsiveness.

Two primary personality types that are highly prone to becoming aggressive behind the wheel are: antisocial, hostile personality; and a competitive one. A significant relationship has been noticed between the factors linked with disruptive driving and those associated with illegal manners. The antisocial group of drivers is prone to hostile aggression in and out of their vehicles. The rates of accidents and violations increases among the drivers with unsociable behavior and are many times more likely than the general driving population to have criminal histories. People with Competitive drive do not like being passed, they enjoy the thrill of speeding, and be deficient in the internal controls to override their competitiveness on the road.

Driving anger is triggered by various factors. These factors can be environmental conditions, such as, the car or road's physical environment, lack of negative reinforcement for aggressive driving, and influences off the social environment. Situational factors, such as, time constrictions, and distractions caused by mobile phones and similar devices also play a role. Furthermore, cultural factors also play a role in contributing to road rage. These are culture values, individuality over common good, fast-paced lifestyles, and competition that promotes aggressive driving. These factors don't work alone; rather a combination of all the factors operates simultaneously.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the term given to "the intentional, accepting and non-judgmental focus of an individual's consideration on the emotions, thoughts and feelings occurring in the present moment." Mindfulness can be trained by meditational practices derived from Buddhist

anapanasati. The term "mindfulness" is derived from the Pali-term sati, "mindfulness", which is an essential element of Buddhist practice.

Mindfulness has been popularized by Jon Kabat-Zinn with his Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program in the West. The definitions of mindfulness are typically selectively interpreted on the basis of who is studying it and how it has been applied. Mindfulness has been viewed as a trait or a dispositional characteristic, a mental state of being in the present moment, and/or as a set of skills and techniques that can be learnt, practiced and mastered.

Review of Literature

Toktam Kazemeini *et. al.* . conducted a research in 2013 which aiming to check the effect of Cognitive –Behavior group therapy (CBGT) and Mindfulness based Cognitive Behavior Group Therapy (MBCGT) in reducing aggression and anger during driving. The sample was 20 male taxi drivers who were participated voluntarily and selected through accessible sampling. Randomly two experimental groups were formed of the participants. While the first group received MBCGT, the second group received CBGT. Results showed that MBCGT has played a significant role in reducing driving anger, significant increase in adaptive/constructive expression of driving anger and aggressive expression of driving anger as compared to the CBGT group.

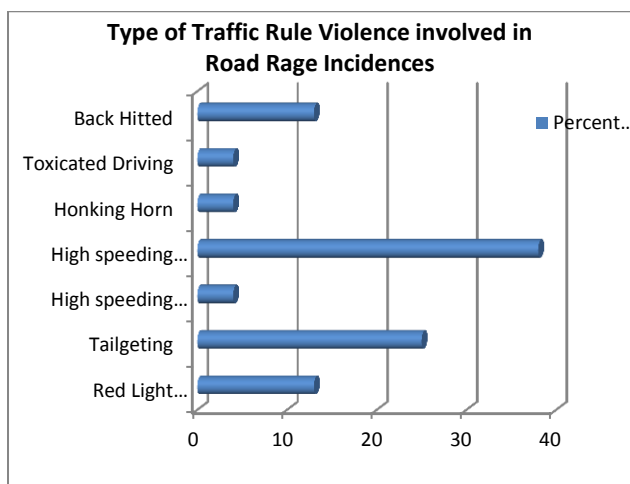
In a study done by Steven Wright *et. al.* (2009), in relation to the theory and treatment of problematic anger, aimed to determine whether a valid relationship exists for the use of mindfulness as a solution to treat anger. It was concluded that mindfulness-based interventions is the appropriate solution for an emotion like anger, and the potential mechanisms for its proposed effects in alleviating the cognitive, affective and behavioral manifestations of anger.

Another study by Atefeh Milani *et.al* (2013) investigated the effectiveness of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy training (MBCT) in reducing aggression in a juvenile correction and rehabilitation center of Zahedan province during years 1991 to 1992. The results showed that aggression can be reduced with the help of mindfulness-based cognitive training. Moreover, the results indicated that physical aggression and hostility can also be treated with this method. However, with the use of verbal aggression subscale no significant reduction was observed.

Significance/ Need for the Study

- Drivers who are high on anger have a significantly higher risk of experiencing anger triggered by a variety of individual and environmental factors on Indian roads and are more susceptible to engage in aggressive driving behavior.

- To find out the effect of mindfulness on driving anger. Because road rages are increasing very rapidly. Though there are many reasons for it, one of the most prominent is aggression.
- Gives us a better understanding about driving anger and the thoughts and emotions underlying it.
- It will help determine mindfulness as an effective way to reduce driving anger.
- In the last three years in the capital of India, sudden provocation prompted people to kill or physically assault each other. In 2005-2006 it topped the list of murder motives. In 2007 it was the second highest cause in murder list.



(1994), Oetting & Lynch, 1994, is a self-report questionnaire to assess anger felt while driving. A 14-item short form (alpha reliability = .80) was developed from scores more highly correlated ($r = .95$) with scores on the long form.

- Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS). The scale was constructed by Kirk Warren Brown, Ph.D. & Richard M. Ryan, Ph.D. The MAAS is a 15-item scale designed to assess a core characteristic of dispositional mindfulness, namely, open or receptive awareness of and attention to what is taking place in the present.

Statistical Tool

Linear Regression using SPSS

Result and Analysis

Table 1.1: Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
DA	42.12	10.11078	100
Mdf	61.91	12.84491	100

(DA = Driving Anger, Mdf = Mindfulness)

Table 1.2: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Change Statistics	
				F Change	Sig. F Change
1	.231 ^a	0.053	0.044	5.532	0.021

a. Predictors: (Constant), Mdf

Table 1.3: Coefficients

Model		1	
		(Constant)	Mdf
Unstandardized Coefficients	B	53.384	-0.182
	Std. Error	4.89	0.077
Standardized Coefficients	Beta		-0.231
t		10.916	-2.352
Sig.		0	0.021

a. Dependent Variable: DA

Objective

- To study the effect of mindfulness on driving anger among young adults.
- To study the impact of mindfulness on driving anger according to gender.

Hypotheses

- There shall be significant effect of mindfulness on driving anger among young adults.
- There shall be a difference of mindfulness on driving anger on the basis of gender.

Method

Sample

The sample comprised of 100 young adults (50 male and 50 female) of the age group 19- 24 years. Purposive random sampling technique was used for selecting the subjects.

Research Design

Non-Experimental design is used for the study.

Description of the Tool

- Deffenbacher (1994) Driving Anger Scale DAS - Short form. The scale was constructed by Deffenbacher

Table 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 depicts the results for mindfulness as a predictor of driving anger. In table 1.2, R Square

value is .053, which means that the total variation in it is 5.3%. It is significant, and hence, we can conclude that mindfulness is a predictor of driving anger in young adults.

Table 2.1: Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
DA1	39.96	8.94646	50
mdf1	61.18	14.00392	50

(DA1 = Driving Anger in males, Mdf1 = Mindfulness in males)

Table 2.2: Model Summary

Model		1
R		.200 ^a
R Square		0.04
Adjusted R Square		0.02
Change Statistics	F Change	1.996
	Sig. F Change	0.164

a. Predictors: (Constant), Mdf1

Table 2.3: Coefficients

Model		1	
		(Constant)	mdf1
Unstandardized Coefficients	B	47.77	-0.128
	Std. Error	5.668	0.09
Standardized Coefficients	Beta		-0.2
t		8.428	-1.413
Sig.		0	0.164

a. Dependent Variable: DA1

Table 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 depicts the results for mindfulness as a predictor of driving anger in females. In table 3.2, R Square value is .095, which means that the total variation in it is 9.5%. It is significant, and hence, we can conclude that mindfulness is a predictor of driving anger in females.

Table 3.1: Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
DA2	44.28	10.81579	50
Mdf2	62.64	11.66848	50

(DA2 = Driving Anger in females, Mdf2 = Mindfulness in females)

Table 3.2: Model Summary

Model		1
R		.308 ^a
R Square		0.095
Adjusted R Square		0.076
Change Statistics	F Change	5.021
	Sig. F Change	0.03

a. Predictors: (Constant), Mdf2

Table 3.3: Coefficients

Model		1	
		(Constant)	Mdf2
Unstandardized Coefficients	B	62.147	-0.285
	Std. Error	8.108	0.127
Standardized Coefficients	Beta		-0.308
t		7.665	-2.241
Sig.		0	0.03

a. Dependent Variable: DA2

Table 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 depicts the results for mindfulness as a predictor of driving anger in females. In table 3.2, R Square value is .095, which means that the total variation in it is 9.5%. It is significant, and hence, we can conclude that mindfulness is a predictor of driving anger in females.

Discussion and Interpretation

The current study sought to research, mindfulness as a predictor of driving anger. This problem comprises of one independent variable and one dependent variable. The independent variable of study is mindfulness and the dependent variable of the study is driving anger. The examiner used the Driving Anger Scale DAS - Short form (Deffenbacher et. al.,1994), and the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) (Brown, K. et. al., 2003)

There are two important objectives of present research first objective of present research is to study the effect of mindfulness on driving anger among young adults, and the second objective of this research is to study the impact of mindfulness on driving anger according to gender. For research purposes the whole data was divided into three groups of male, female and overall.

Results can be summarized as follows; to examine first objective linear regression analysis was used using SPSS on all three groups. It was found that mindfulness has a significant impact on driving anger and was therefore a predictor of driving anger. Heppner et. al. (2008) found that mindfulness, or enhanced attention and awareness in the present moment may be linked to lower levels of ego-involvement and, as a result, may have implications for lowering hostility and aggressive behavior. According to personality type of antisocial group of drivers, ego plays a central role in triggering aggressive behavior. Seemingly trivial events, such as perceived insults to drivers' self-image or safety most often provoke driving anger.

Similar results were also seen in a study by Malte Friese et. al. (2012) in which mindfulness meditation counteracts the deleterious effect that the exertion of self-control has on subsequent self-control performance. Due to reduced self-control the personality type of aggressive drivers is high on competitiveness; therefore, they dislike being passed, enjoy the thrill of speeding, and

lack the internal controls to override their competitiveness on the road.

The impact of mindfulness on driving anger was also evident in the male and female samples. However results showed that female sample is high on mindfulness as compared to their male counterparts. And therefore, driving anger is found to be lesser in the female sample as compared to the male sample. According to a research by Shao *et. al.* (2009), mindfulness interacted with gender to predict performance. Specifically, the positive association between mindfulness and performance was stronger for women than for men.

In a research by Melissa Dittmann (2003) it was found that women tend not to be as aggressive as men in expressing anger and tend to talk about their anger more, she says. "They are more proactive and use more problem-solving approaches in discussing a problem with a person they are angry with."

Conclusion

As we know that present research aimed to study the effect of mindfulness on driving anger and also to study the impact of mindfulness on driving anger on the basis of gender, the results obtained were found to be consistent with previous researches in this area. The present study incorporated the linear regression analysis using SPSS, and the data was collected using the Deffenbacher (1994) Driving Anger Scale DAS - Short form and the Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS).

The results thus obtained from the study of different groups are concluded as under:

- The results affirmed that there is significant effect of mindfulness on driving anger and that mindfulness is a predictor of driving anger.
- The results revealed that there is significant impact of mindfulness on driving anger based on gender. Females are found to be high in mindfulness as compared to males, and thus they are low on driving anger whereas males are high on driving anger.

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