Qeios

Peer Review

Review of: "Rethinking Practice in Mindfulness-Based Interventions: A Developmental Theoretical Model Integrating Formal Practice, Informal Practice, Practice Quality, and Dispositional Mindfulness"

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Dear Author,

Thank you for this timely and conceptually valuable article. I found the paper clear, well-structured, and highly relevant to the field of mindfulness-based interventions. Its main contribution—moving beyond a static and linear dose–response model of mindfulness practice—is both important and much needed.

I particularly appreciated the way the article reframes practice as a developmental and multidimensional process. The distinction between formal practice, informal practice, practice quality, and dispositional mindfulness is compelling and helps make sense of the mixed findings in the literature. I also found the emphasis on informal practice especially valuable. In my view, the capacity to transfer mindfulness into everyday life is likely one of the most clinically meaningful aspects of practice. This distinction also aligns with frameworks suggesting that formal practice primarily supports the acquisition of core skills, whereas informal practice plays a central role in the transfer and generalization of these skills into real-life contexts, which may be critical for the long-term maintenance of benefits.

The section “Practice Quality as the Missing Mechanism” is another strong part of the article. The argument that practice time alone is a crude proxy for the actual psychological processes occurring during practice is convincing and well-supported. This point has important implications for both research and pedagogy.

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I would like to suggest several ways in which the model could be further strengthened.

1. Differentiate more explicitly between types of meditative practices

In the section “A Developmental Model of Practice in MBIs,” practice is mainly discussed through the dimensions of formal/informal practice, quantity, and quality. However, the model could be enriched by more explicitly differentiating between families of meditative practices.

As suggested in theoretical models (e.g., Dahl et al., 2015) and supported by emerging empirical findings (e.g., Stinus & Berjot, 2026), attentional, constructive, and deconstructive practices are likely to rely on partially distinct mechanisms. For instance, focused-attention practices may primarily support attentional stability, meta-awareness, and cognitive decentering, whereas deconstructive practices may more directly target self-related processes, such as identification with self-narratives, self-rigidity, and the perceived solidity of the self.

Integrating this distinction would allow the model to become more precise by clarifying not only when practice matters, but also which types of practice may be most relevant for specific mechanisms and at different phases of training.

2. Integrate self-related mechanisms as a central dimension

The article discusses dispositional mindfulness as a developmental marker, particularly in the section “Dispositional Mindfulness as a Developmental Marker.” While this is an important contribution, the model would benefit from more explicitly integrating self-related mechanisms as a central dimension rather than a secondary extension.

Many of the processes targeted by mindfulness-based interventions, such as rumination, emotional reactivity, psychological rigidity, threat appraisal, and attachment to beliefs, are closely tied to how the self is constructed and maintained. Recent work on deconstructive meditation and psychotherapy highlights mechanisms such as self-inquiry, cognitive defusion, self-flexibility, and transformations in self-perception as key drivers of change (Lamas-Morales et al., 2025).

From this perspective, dispositional mindfulness may not only reflect the increasing availability of mindful skills in everyday life, but also a shift in the relationship to self-related experience. Constructs such as disidentification, self-flexibility, reduced identity threat, or selflessness could therefore provide a valuable bridge between practice and clinical outcomes.

3. Consider insight-based and non-linear forms of change

One particularly promising way to deepen the article's critique of the dose–response model would be to further examine the nature of change itself.

The article convincingly argues that the relationship between practice and outcome is not strictly linear. However, the proposed developmental model still seems to rely primarily on a gradual, cumulative view of skill acquisition. While this view is well suited to attentional training, it may be insufficient to account for mechanisms involved in deconstructive or insight-oriented practices.

In contemplative science and related traditions, some forms of meditative change are described as insight-based. In this view, improvements in well-being may arise not only from the progressive strengthening of attentional or regulatory capacities, but also from qualitative shifts in how experience and the self are perceived. These shifts may occur in a discontinuous manner, resembling threshold effects or phase transitions rather than incremental gains proportional to practice time.

This perspective could strongly complement the central argument of the paper. It suggests that inconsistencies in dose–response findings may stem not only from variations in practice quantity, quality, or format, but also from the coexistence of different modes of change: gradual skill acquisition versus insight-based transformation. This perspective may be particularly important for interpreting null or inconsistent dose–response findings, which could reflect the episodic and transformative nature of insight rather than the absence of an effect.

This addition would be especially relevant for understanding deconstructive practices, where processes such as self-inquiry and insight into impermanence, interdependence, or non-self may induce transformations in self-perception that are not easily captured by linear models.

Taken together, these points suggest that differences between meditation practices lie not only in how much one practices, but also in what is being transformed and how change unfolds.

Overall evaluation

Overall, this is a strong and promising theoretical contribution. The article offers an insightful developmental reframing of mindfulness practice and provides a coherent explanation for heterogeneity in the dose–response literature.

I strongly support the publication of this work. The suggestions above are intended to further strengthen an already valuable and timely contribution, particularly by refining the differentiation between types of practices, integrating self-related mechanisms more centrally, and considering the role of non-linear,

insight-based change. These additions would, in my view, make the model more comprehensive and even more useful for guiding future empirical research.

References

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Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.