

Abstract

Considering the prevalence of psychological distress but underutilization of psychological services in university, it is crucial to understand the psychological help-seeking process. Mental health literacy and self-stigma of psychological help-seeking were found to relate to psychological help-seeking. While mindfulness and self-compassion were well established to account for individuals' psychological well-being, they may also influence help-seeking process. This study tested the indirect effects of mindfulness on psychological help-seeking attitudes and intentions, as mediated by self-compassion, self-criticism, self-stigma of help-seeking and mental distress. To understand the predictive power of independent variables, data on mindfulness, self-compassion, self-criticism and mental health literacy was collected in in October 2015, and the remaining dependent variables were measured in January 2016. The sample included 255 students. Structural equation modeling confirmed an acceptable fit of the model (CFI = .94, RMSEA = .06). Self-stigma of help-seeking played a strong role by mediating the relationships of all variables associated with help-seeking attitudes. Self-criticism-but not self-compassion exerted negative and positive indirect effects on help-seeking attitudes and intentions respectively. Hence, mindfulness only exerted its indirect influence via self-criticism, which in turn influenced help-seeking intentions but not attitudes negatively. Mental health literacy and self-stigma of help-seeking imposed positive and negative indirect effects on help-seeking intentions respectively. Finally, the non-significant moderation effect of help-seeking attitudes on the relationship between mental distress and help-seeking intentions suggested that help-seeking attitudes and mental distress exerted independent effects on help-seeking intentions. Implications in promoting psychological help-seeking by working on mental distress and help-seeking attitudes are discussed.