






The Effectiveness of Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy on Social Anxiety and Emotional Regulation in Adolescents of Divorced Families

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The present study aimed to determine the effectiveness of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy on social anxiety and emotional regulation among adolescents from divorced families.

Methods and Materials: The present research employed a quasi-experimental design with a pretest–posttest format and a control group. The statistical population consisted of adolescents from divorced families who referred to psychological counseling centers in Tehran in 2026. Using convenience sampling, 30 participants were selected and randomly assigned into an experimental group ($n = 15$) and a control group ($n = 15$). Data collection instruments included the Social Anxiety Scale for Adolescents and the Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire. The experimental group received eight 2-hour sessions of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy, whereas the control group did not receive any intervention. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) through SPSS software.

Findings: The findings revealed that mindfulness-based cognitive therapy had a significant effect on reducing social anxiety among adolescents from divorced families ($F = 46.68, p < 0.001, \eta^2 = 0.61$). In addition, the intervention significantly improved emotional regulation in the experimental group compared with the control group ($F = 28.32, p < 0.001, \eta^2 = 0.67$). The results indicated that after controlling for pretest scores, the differences between the experimental and control groups in posttest scores were statistically significant, demonstrating the effectiveness of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy on both dependent variables.

Conclusion: The findings of the present study suggest that mindfulness-based cognitive therapy is an effective psychological intervention for reducing social anxiety and improving emotional regulation among adolescents from divorced families. By enhancing self-awareness, emotional acceptance, and adaptive coping strategies, mindfulness-based cognitive therapy may contribute to better psychological adjustment and emotional functioning in vulnerable adolescents.

Keywords: *Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy, Social Anxiety, Emotional Regulation, Adolescents of Divorced Families.*



1. Introduction

Adolescence is recognized as one of the most sensitive and transformative stages of human development, characterized by profound biological, cognitive, emotional, and social changes that significantly influence psychological adjustment and future mental health outcomes. Researchers have emphasized that adolescence represents a developmental transition during which individuals experience increased vulnerability to emotional disturbances and psychosocial stressors (Sawyer et al., 2018; World Health, 2020). During this developmental period, adolescents are required to establish emotional independence, develop social competence, and regulate increasingly complex emotional experiences. Failure to successfully adapt to these developmental demands may contribute to the emergence of emotional and behavioral disorders, including anxiety disorders, depression, and difficulties in emotional regulation (Hadi & Gharaibeh, 2023; Jangezahi et al., 2021). Among the different forms of anxiety disorders observed during adolescence, social anxiety has attracted considerable attention due to its prevalence, persistence, and debilitating impact on interpersonal functioning and psychological well-being.

Social anxiety refers to a persistent fear of social situations in which individuals may be exposed to evaluation, criticism, or rejection by others. Adolescents with elevated levels of social anxiety often experience avoidance of social interactions, heightened self-consciousness, impaired peer relationships, academic difficulties, and reduced self-esteem (Asnaani et al., 2020; Taheri, 2025). Social anxiety during adolescence is associated with impaired social development and can negatively affect educational achievement, emotional adjustment, and quality of life. Previous studies have demonstrated that socially anxious adolescents tend to exhibit maladaptive cognitive patterns, including excessive self-monitoring, fear of negative evaluation, and dysfunctional emotional responses (Zhong et al., 2024). In addition, prolonged social anxiety has been linked to psychological distress, isolation, and increased vulnerability to depressive symptoms and emotional dysregulation (Dendle et al., 2018; Regina et al., 2023).

One of the major psychological constructs associated with adolescent mental health is emotional regulation. Emotional regulation refers to the processes through which individuals monitor, evaluate, and modify their emotional experiences and emotional expressions in order to achieve

adaptive functioning and psychological balance (Hadi & Gharaibeh, 2023). Effective emotional regulation enables adolescents to cope with stressful experiences, maintain interpersonal relationships, and adapt to changing social environments. In contrast, emotional dysregulation is associated with impulsive behaviors, interpersonal conflicts, anxiety disorders, depression, and psychological maladjustment (Jangezahi et al., 2021; Salehi, 2022). Adolescents who experience difficulties in emotional regulation often struggle to manage negative emotions such as anger, fear, shame, and sadness, leading to impaired psychosocial functioning and increased psychological vulnerability.

Family structure and family functioning play critical roles in shaping adolescents' emotional and psychological development. Divorce is considered one of the most stressful family events affecting adolescents and has been associated with a wide range of psychological and emotional difficulties. Adolescents from divorced families frequently experience emotional insecurity, family conflict, loneliness, fear of abandonment, and social maladjustment (Safiyari Roshi et al., 2019). The disruption of parental relationships and changes in family dynamics may increase adolescents' susceptibility to anxiety, emotional instability, and difficulties in interpersonal interactions. Previous investigations have indicated that adolescents from divorced families report higher levels of stress, anxiety, depression, and behavioral problems compared to adolescents from intact families (Sattari Sefidan et al., 2018; Tourani et al., 2020). Moreover, unresolved emotional conflicts within divorced families may interfere with adolescents' ability to develop adaptive coping strategies and effective emotional regulation skills.

Social anxiety appears to be particularly prevalent among adolescents from divorced families because family instability and reduced emotional support may intensify fears of rejection and negative social evaluation. Adolescents exposed to chronic parental conflict or emotional neglect may internalize feelings of insecurity and social inadequacy, thereby increasing vulnerability to social anxiety symptoms (Sattari Sefidan et al., 2018). Emotional dysregulation may further exacerbate these difficulties by limiting adolescents' ability to cope effectively with interpersonal stressors and emotionally challenging situations. Consequently, identifying effective psychological interventions for improving emotional regulation and reducing social anxiety in this population is considered a major clinical and social priority.



In recent decades, mindfulness-based interventions have received increasing attention as effective approaches for improving emotional functioning and reducing psychological symptoms. Mindfulness is generally defined as purposeful and nonjudgmental awareness of present-moment experiences, including thoughts, emotions, bodily sensations, and environmental stimuli (Mirzazadeh et al., 2022; Segal et al., 2013). Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy integrates principles of cognitive therapy with mindfulness practices in order to help individuals develop greater awareness of maladaptive cognitive and emotional processes. This therapeutic approach encourages individuals to observe thoughts and emotions without avoidance or overidentification, thereby reducing automatic emotional reactivity and promoting adaptive self-regulation (Segal et al., 2013).

Theoretical perspectives suggest that mindfulness-based cognitive therapy may reduce anxiety symptoms through several mechanisms, including increased self-awareness, reduced rumination, improved attentional control, and enhanced emotional acceptance (Mirzazadeh et al., 2022; Wild et al., 2025). Individuals who develop mindfulness skills are believed to become more capable of recognizing emotional experiences without reacting impulsively or engaging in maladaptive avoidance behaviors. As a result, mindfulness training may facilitate more adaptive emotional regulation and improve psychological resilience. Research findings have consistently demonstrated positive associations between mindfulness, emotional regulation, and psychological well-being across various clinical and nonclinical populations (Easdale-Cheelee et al., 2026; Wild et al., 2025).

Empirical evidence supports the effectiveness of mindfulness-based interventions for reducing anxiety and improving emotional functioning among adolescents and young adults. Zhong et al. reported that mindfulness and self-regulation were negatively associated with social evaluation anxiety and impulsive behavior among athletes, suggesting that mindfulness contributes to improved emotional control and reduced anxiety-related responses (Zhong et al., 2024). Similarly, Taheri demonstrated that mindfulness-based cognitive therapy significantly reduced social anxiety and loneliness among adolescents, highlighting the relevance of mindfulness interventions for adolescent psychosocial adjustment (Taheri, 2025). Other studies have also shown that mindfulness interventions improve psychological capital, emotional regulation, and

adaptive coping skills among students and adolescents (Sharifian Motlaq & Mohammadi, 2025).

The effectiveness of mindfulness-based approaches in improving emotional regulation has also been supported by meta-analytic and systematic review findings. Easdale-Cheelee et al. concluded that mindfulness-based interventions significantly improve emotional regulation and reduce emotional dysregulation among individuals with mental health conditions (Easdale-Cheelee et al., 2026). These findings indicate that mindfulness practices may strengthen individuals' ability to manage emotional experiences in a flexible and adaptive manner. Furthermore, mindfulness-based cognitive therapy has demonstrated effectiveness in reducing depression, stress, anger, and emotional distress across diverse populations (Dolatabadi & Sarabian, 2016; Rafsanjani Akbari Abadi et al., 2022). Such evidence highlights the potential value of mindfulness-based approaches for adolescents experiencing emotional difficulties associated with family disruption and divorce.

Cognitive and emotional self-regulation processes are closely interconnected with anxiety-related disorders. Asnaani et al. found that emotion regulation and anxiety sensitivity significantly predicted successful cognitive behavioral therapy outcomes for anxiety disorders, emphasizing the importance of emotional regulation mechanisms in anxiety treatment (Asnaani et al., 2020). Similarly, studies examining metacognitive and cognitive-behavioral interventions have shown improvements in emotional self-regulation and reductions in anxiety symptoms among adolescents and students (Mirza Hosseini & Kabiri Qomi, 2019; Rafezi et al., 2021). Interventions focused on self-awareness and emotional understanding have also been associated with enhanced positive emotion regulation and psychological adjustment (Salehi, 2022). These findings suggest that interventions enhancing awareness, emotional acceptance, and adaptive cognitive processing may be particularly beneficial for adolescents struggling with social anxiety and emotional dysregulation.

Although previous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of mindfulness-based interventions in reducing anxiety and improving emotional regulation, relatively limited research has specifically examined adolescents from divorced families as a vulnerable population. Adolescents exposed to divorce-related stressors may require specialized interventions addressing both emotional dysregulation and interpersonal anxiety. Given the developmental sensitivity of adolescence and the psychological consequences associated with family instability, there is a clear need for

evidence-based interventions that can strengthen emotional resilience and improve social functioning in this group. Furthermore, considering the increasing global emphasis on adolescent mental health assessment and intervention, identifying effective psychological approaches for vulnerable adolescents remains an important research priority (Regina et al., 2023; World Health, 2020).

Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy may be especially appropriate for adolescents from divorced families because it promotes emotional acceptance, reduces maladaptive cognitive patterns, and enhances self-regulatory capacities. Through mindfulness practices, adolescents may learn to recognize distressing emotions and anxious thoughts without judgment, thereby reducing emotional reactivity and social avoidance behaviors. Additionally, mindfulness interventions may improve interpersonal awareness and self-compassion, which are critical factors for psychological adaptation during adolescence (Sharifian Motlaq & Mohammadi, 2025; Wild et al., 2025). Therefore, investigating the effectiveness of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy for reducing social anxiety and improving emotional regulation among adolescents from divorced families may contribute valuable evidence to the field of adolescent psychology and clinical intervention.

Accordingly, the present study aimed to determine the effectiveness of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy on social anxiety and emotional regulation among adolescents from divorced families.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

The present study employed a quasi-experimental research design with a pretest–posttest format and a control group. The statistical population consisted of adolescents from divorced families who referred to psychological counseling and mental health centers in the city of Tehran in 2026. Participants were selected through convenience sampling based on their willingness to participate and the inclusion criteria of being an adolescent from a divorced family, having no severe psychiatric disorder requiring immediate clinical intervention, and being within the defined adolescent age range. A total of 30 participants were selected and randomly assigned into two equal groups, including an experimental group ($n = 15$) and a control group ($n = 15$). Prior to the intervention, both groups completed the pretest measures. The experimental group subsequently received mindfulness-based cognitive therapy, whereas the control

group received no psychological intervention during the study period. After completion of the intervention sessions, both groups completed the posttest assessments. Ethical considerations, including informed consent, confidentiality of participants' information, and the voluntary nature of participation, were fully observed throughout the research process.

2.2. Measures

The Social Anxiety Scale for Adolescents developed by La Greca (1998) was used to assess social anxiety symptoms among participants. This instrument consists of 16 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “Completely like me” to “Completely unlike me.” The total score ranges from 16 to 80, with higher scores indicating greater levels of social anxiety. Previous psychometric evaluations conducted in Iran confirmed the factorial validity of the instrument through factor analysis, supporting a three-factor structure. Convergent and divergent validity were established using correlations with the Children's Depression Questionnaire and the Manifest Anxiety Scale for Children. The reliability of the questionnaire was examined through the test–retest method, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.88 for the total scale. Furthermore, Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the subscales ranged from 0.74 to 0.84, indicating satisfactory internal consistency.

Emotional regulation was measured using the Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire developed by Garnefski et al. (2001). This multidimensional self-report instrument was designed to identify cognitive coping strategies employed by individuals after experiencing negative or stressful events. The questionnaire contains 36 items and evaluates nine cognitive emotion regulation strategies, including self-blame, acceptance, rumination, positive refocusing, refocus on planning, positive reappraisal, putting into perspective, catastrophizing, and blaming others. Responses are rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (“almost never”) to 5 (“almost always”). Each subscale consists of four items, and the overall score is obtained through the summation of the subscale scores. Previous studies reported Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.67 to 0.89 for the subscales, indicating acceptable reliability. Test–retest correlations over a two- to four-week interval ranged from 0.57 to 0.76 at the 0.001 significance level. In addition, studies conducted in Iran reported Cronbach's alpha coefficients between 0.76 and 0.92 and demonstrated acceptable validity through correlations with

the Schutte Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire ($r = 0.47$, $p < 0.01$), supporting the strong psychometric properties of the instrument.

2.3. Intervention

The experimental group participated in eight weekly sessions of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy, with each session lasting approximately two hours. The intervention program was designed to enhance present-moment awareness, reduce maladaptive cognitive patterns, and improve emotional regulation skills among adolescents from divorced families. The sessions included mindfulness meditation exercises, breathing awareness practices, body scan techniques, cognitive restructuring exercises, identification of automatic negative thoughts, emotional awareness training, and acceptance-based coping strategies. Participants were also trained to recognize emotional triggers associated with social anxiety and to respond to stressful interpersonal situations in a more adaptive and nonjudgmental manner. Homework assignments and daily mindfulness practices were provided throughout the intervention period to strengthen the application of therapeutic skills in everyday situations. In contrast, the control group did not receive any structured psychological intervention during the study period.

2.4. Data Analysis

Data obtained from the pretest and posttest assessments were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical

methods. Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were calculated to summarize participants' scores on social anxiety and emotional regulation variables. Inferential analyses were conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy on the dependent variables. Prior to conducting the main analyses, assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variances were examined. Subsequently, covariance analysis was employed to compare posttest scores between the experimental and control groups while controlling for pretest differences. Statistical analyses were performed using SPSS software, and the significance level for all analyses was considered at $p < 0.05$.

3. Findings and Results

The demographic characteristics of the participants indicated that all respondents were adolescents from divorced families who had referred to psychological counseling centers in Tehran. The participants were randomly assigned into two equal groups, including an experimental group ($n = 15$) and a control group ($n = 15$). The age range of the participants was within adolescence, and there were no substantial differences between the two groups in terms of demographic characteristics at baseline. All participants completed the pretest and posttest assessments, and no attrition occurred during the intervention process.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables in the Experimental and Control Groups

| Variable | Group | N | Pretest Mean | Pretest SD | Posttest Mean | Posttest SD |
|----------------------|--------------|----|--------------|------------|---------------|-------------|
| Social Anxiety | Experimental | 15 | 55.86 | 7.56 | 42.78 | 5.19 |
| | Control | 15 | 54.47 | 7.57 | 53.35 | 7.57 |
| Emotional Regulation | Experimental | 15 | 30.85 | 4.47 | 39.41 | 5.47 |
| | Control | 15 | 28.35 | 4.24 | 29.36 | 4.68 |

As presented in Table 1, the mean scores of social anxiety in the experimental group decreased from the pretest stage to the posttest stage, whereas the control group demonstrated only a slight change in scores. Furthermore, the mean scores of emotional regulation in the experimental group increased notably following the intervention, while the control group showed minimal variation between the pretest and posttest stages. These descriptive findings provide preliminary evidence regarding the effectiveness of mindfulness-based

cognitive therapy on reducing social anxiety and improving emotional regulation among adolescents from divorced families.

Before conducting the main inferential analyses, the assumptions underlying covariance analysis were examined. The normality of the distribution of research variables was assessed using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test. The obtained significance values for both social anxiety and emotional regulation at the pretest and posttest stages were greater than

0.05, indicating that the variables were normally distributed. In addition, the measurement scales of the variables were interval-based, and the assumptions of homogeneity of variances and homogeneity of regression slopes were

satisfied. Therefore, multivariate and univariate analyses of covariance were considered appropriate for analyzing the data and evaluating the effectiveness of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy on the dependent variables.

Table 2

Results of Univariate Analysis of Covariance for Social Anxiety and Emotional Regulation

| Variable | Source of Variation | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Eta Squared |
|----------------------|---------------------|----------------|----|-------------|-------|-------|-------------|
| Social Anxiety | Pretest | 1745.278 | 1 | 1745.278 | 37.47 | 0.001 | 0.53 |
| | Group | 1924.924 | 1 | 1924.924 | 46.68 | 0.001 | 0.61 |
| | Error | 952.735 | 27 | 35.286 | | | |
| Emotional Regulation | Pretest | 1521.912 | 1 | 1521.912 | 16.24 | 0.001 | 0.56 |
| | Group | 1278.311 | 1 | 1278.311 | 28.32 | 0.001 | 0.67 |
| | Error | 561.357 | 27 | 19.679 | | | |

The results presented in Table 2 indicate that after controlling for pretest scores, the effect of group membership on both social anxiety and emotional regulation was statistically significant. For social anxiety, the group effect was significant ($F = 46.68$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.61$), suggesting that mindfulness-based cognitive therapy significantly reduced social anxiety among adolescents from divorced families. Moreover, the effect size demonstrated that a substantial proportion of variance in posttest social anxiety scores was attributable to the intervention. Regarding emotional regulation, the group effect was also significant ($F = 28.32$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.67$), indicating that mindfulness-based cognitive therapy significantly improved emotional regulation in the experimental group compared with the control group. Overall, these findings support the effectiveness of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy in reducing social anxiety and enhancing emotional regulation among adolescents from divorced families.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The present study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy on social anxiety and emotional regulation among adolescents from divorced families. The findings demonstrated that mindfulness-based cognitive therapy significantly reduced social anxiety and improved emotional regulation in the experimental group compared with the control group. These findings indicate that mindfulness-based cognitive therapy can be considered an effective psychological intervention for improving emotional and social functioning among adolescents experiencing the psychological consequences of parental divorce.

One of the major findings of the present study was the significant reduction in social anxiety among adolescents who participated in mindfulness-based cognitive therapy sessions. This finding is consistent with previous studies emphasizing the effectiveness of mindfulness-based interventions in reducing anxiety symptoms and improving interpersonal functioning (Asnaani et al., 2020; Taheri, 2025; Tourani et al., 2020). Taheri reported that mindfulness-based cognitive therapy reduced social anxiety and loneliness among adolescents, suggesting that mindfulness skills help individuals become less emotionally reactive to perceived social threats and interpersonal evaluations (Taheri, 2025). Similarly, Asnaani et al. demonstrated that emotional regulation and anxiety sensitivity were important mechanisms underlying successful treatment outcomes in anxiety-related disorders (Asnaani et al., 2020). The findings of the current study further support the argument that mindfulness-based cognitive therapy may directly influence cognitive and emotional processes associated with social anxiety.

The reduction in social anxiety observed in the present study may be explained through the mechanisms underlying mindfulness practices. Adolescents with social anxiety often engage in excessive self-monitoring, anticipatory worry, and fear of negative evaluation in social situations. These maladaptive cognitive patterns intensify emotional distress and contribute to avoidance behaviors. Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy teaches individuals to observe their thoughts and emotions without judgment or overidentification, thereby weakening automatic cognitive reactions to social stressors (Segal et al., 2013). Through mindfulness exercises such as breathing awareness, body scanning, and present-moment attention, adolescents learn



to disengage from catastrophic interpretations and repetitive anxious thinking. Consequently, they become more capable of tolerating social discomfort and responding to interpersonal situations in a calmer and more adaptive manner.

The findings of this study are also compatible with the results reported by Zhong et al., who found significant relationships between mindfulness, self-regulation, and social evaluation anxiety (Zhong et al., 2024). Their findings indicated that increased mindfulness was associated with lower levels of social evaluative fear and greater self-regulatory functioning. Adolescents from divorced families frequently experience insecurity, fear of rejection, and heightened sensitivity to interpersonal evaluation due to disrupted family relationships and emotional instability. Therefore, mindfulness-based interventions may provide these adolescents with opportunities to develop emotional awareness and psychological acceptance, reducing their sensitivity to social judgment and improving social confidence.

Another important finding of the present study was the significant improvement in emotional regulation among adolescents who received mindfulness-based cognitive therapy. This finding is in line with previous research demonstrating the positive effects of mindfulness interventions on emotional regulation abilities (Easdale-Cheelee et al., 2026; Sharifian Motlaq & Mohammadi, 2025; Wild et al., 2025). Easdale-Cheelee et al., in their systematic review and meta-analysis, concluded that mindfulness-based interventions significantly improved emotional regulation and reduced emotional dysregulation across individuals with mental health conditions (Easdale-Cheelee et al., 2026). Similarly, Sharifian Motlaq and Mohammadi found that mindfulness training enhanced emotional regulation among gifted students, suggesting that mindfulness skills contribute to adaptive emotional functioning (Sharifian Motlaq & Mohammadi, 2025). The consistency between these findings and the current results highlights the central role of mindfulness in facilitating emotional self-regulation processes.

Emotional regulation is considered one of the most important protective psychological factors during adolescence because it enables individuals to cope effectively with stress, frustration, and interpersonal conflict. Adolescents from divorced families are particularly vulnerable to emotional dysregulation because they may experience persistent emotional tension, reduced parental support, and uncertainty regarding family relationships

(Safiyari Roshi et al., 2019). These experiences may lead to increased emotional instability and difficulty managing negative emotional states. Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy appears to improve emotional regulation by increasing emotional awareness and reducing experiential avoidance. Through mindfulness training, adolescents learn to identify and accept emotional experiences instead of suppressing or reacting impulsively to them. This process enhances cognitive flexibility and promotes healthier coping strategies.

The findings of the present study are also consistent with studies examining the effects of cognitive and metacognitive interventions on emotional self-regulation. Rafezi et al. demonstrated that group metacognitive therapy improved emotional self-regulation and ego strength among anxious students (Rafezi et al., 2021). Likewise, Mirza Hosseini and Kabiri Qomi found that group cognitive therapy significantly improved cognitive emotion regulation and reduced anxiety among depressed girls (Mirza Hosseini & Kabiri Qomi, 2019). These findings support the idea that interventions targeting cognitive awareness and emotional processing can effectively enhance emotional adjustment. Since mindfulness-based cognitive therapy combines cognitive therapeutic principles with mindfulness practices, it may simultaneously influence maladaptive thought patterns and emotional regulation strategies, leading to improved psychological functioning.

The observed improvement in emotional regulation can also be interpreted in light of theoretical perspectives emphasizing the role of self-awareness in emotional functioning. Hadi and Gharaibeh suggested that self-awareness plays a critical role in predicting emotional regulation difficulties (Hadi & Gharaibeh, 2023). Mindfulness practices directly strengthen self-awareness by encouraging individuals to attend consciously to internal experiences, emotional states, and bodily sensations. Increased self-awareness may enable adolescents to recognize early signs of emotional distress and employ adaptive coping strategies before emotions escalate into maladaptive reactions. Consequently, mindfulness-based cognitive therapy may reduce impulsive responses, emotional avoidance, and cognitive rumination among adolescents from divorced families.

Another explanation for the effectiveness of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy may involve its influence on self-compassion and emotional acceptance. Wild et al. found that mindfulness and self-compassion significantly predicted quality of life and emotional functioning (Wild et al., 2025).



Adolescents from divorced families may experience self-blame, feelings of inadequacy, or emotional insecurity due to family disruption. Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy encourages nonjudgmental acceptance of internal experiences and promotes compassionate self-awareness. This therapeutic process may reduce self-criticism and emotional suppression while fostering greater psychological resilience and adaptive emotional responses.

The findings of the present study additionally support previous evidence indicating that mindfulness-based interventions are effective across different adolescent psychological difficulties. Dolatabadi and Sarabian demonstrated that mindfulness training reduced perceived stress among anxious adolescent girls (Dolatabadi & Sarabian, 2016). Rafsanjani Akbari Abadi et al. also reported that mindfulness-based cognitive therapy improved anger control among adolescent girls (Rafsanjani Akbari Abadi et al., 2022). Similarly, Salehi found that self-awareness training contributed to positive emotional regulation among secondary school students (Salehi, 2022). These findings collectively indicate that mindfulness-based interventions may exert broad psychological benefits by enhancing emotional regulation capacities, reducing maladaptive emotional responses, and strengthening psychological adjustment.

The importance of these findings becomes more evident when considering the increasing global concern regarding adolescent mental health. International health organizations have repeatedly emphasized the need for preventive and therapeutic interventions aimed at improving adolescents' psychological well-being and emotional resilience (Regina et al., 2023; World Health, 2020). Adolescents represent a psychologically vulnerable population due to developmental changes and social pressures (Sawyer et al., 2018). For adolescents from divorced families, these developmental challenges are often compounded by family instability and emotional stressors. Therefore, implementing evidence-based psychological interventions such as mindfulness-based cognitive therapy may significantly contribute to reducing mental health risks and promoting adaptive psychosocial functioning.

Furthermore, the findings of this study may be interpreted within the framework of cognitive emotion regulation theories. Previous studies have emphasized the role of cognitive emotion regulation strategies in predicting behavioral and psychological outcomes among adolescents (Jangezahi et al., 2021; Mirzaei & Hasani, 2015). Maladaptive cognitive strategies such as rumination,

catastrophizing, and self-blame may intensify emotional distress and social anxiety symptoms. Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy helps individuals become aware of these maladaptive cognitive processes and respond to them more flexibly and nonjudgmentally. As a result, adolescents may gradually replace maladaptive emotional responses with more adaptive coping mechanisms and emotional regulation strategies.

Overall, the findings of the present study suggest that mindfulness-based cognitive therapy is an effective intervention for reducing social anxiety and improving emotional regulation among adolescents from divorced families. The therapeutic effects observed in this study can be attributed to enhanced self-awareness, reduced emotional reactivity, improved attentional control, increased emotional acceptance, and modification of maladaptive cognitive patterns. These findings contribute to the growing body of evidence supporting mindfulness-based interventions as valuable psychological approaches for vulnerable adolescent populations.

One of the limitations of the present study was the relatively small sample size and the restriction of participants to adolescents referring to counseling centers in a single city, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other populations and cultural contexts. Another limitation was the use of self-report questionnaires, which may have been influenced by response bias or social desirability effects. Additionally, the study lacked a long-term follow-up period, making it difficult to determine the durability of the intervention effects over time.

Future research is recommended to examine the long-term effectiveness of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy through follow-up assessments at different time intervals. Researchers may also compare mindfulness-based cognitive therapy with other psychological interventions such as cognitive behavioral therapy, acceptance and commitment therapy, or emotion-focused therapy in adolescents from divorced families. Conducting studies with larger and more diverse samples, including adolescents from different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds, may further strengthen the generalizability of findings. In addition, future investigations may explore mediating variables such as self-compassion, resilience, attachment style, and family functioning.

The findings of the present study have important practical implications for mental health professionals, school counselors, and family therapists working with adolescents from divorced families. Mindfulness-based cognitive

therapy may be incorporated into school counseling programs and psychological support services to improve emotional regulation and reduce anxiety symptoms among adolescents. Parents and educators may also benefit from training programs aimed at increasing awareness regarding the emotional needs of adolescents experiencing family disruption. Furthermore, integrating mindfulness practices into adolescent mental health interventions may contribute to improved psychological well-being, interpersonal functioning, and emotional resilience in vulnerable youth populations.

Authors' Contributions

All authors significantly contributed to this study.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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Ethical Considerations

In this study, to observe ethical considerations, participants were informed about the goals and importance of the research before the start of the study and participated in the research with informed consent.

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