

Understanding the effects of mindfulness meditation
combined with aromatherapy, to enhance the
wellbeing of MCAST beauty therapy students:
A narrative study

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Introduction

- Unfortunately, the rise in students experiencing stress and anxiety symptoms is a global concern (OECD, 2017).
- To counteract these issues, several studies are focusing their attention towards integrating mindful meditation and aromatherapy in schools.
- **Objective:** This study aims to understand whether the practices of mindfulness and aromatherapy can help students reduce their levels of stress and achieve wellbeing.

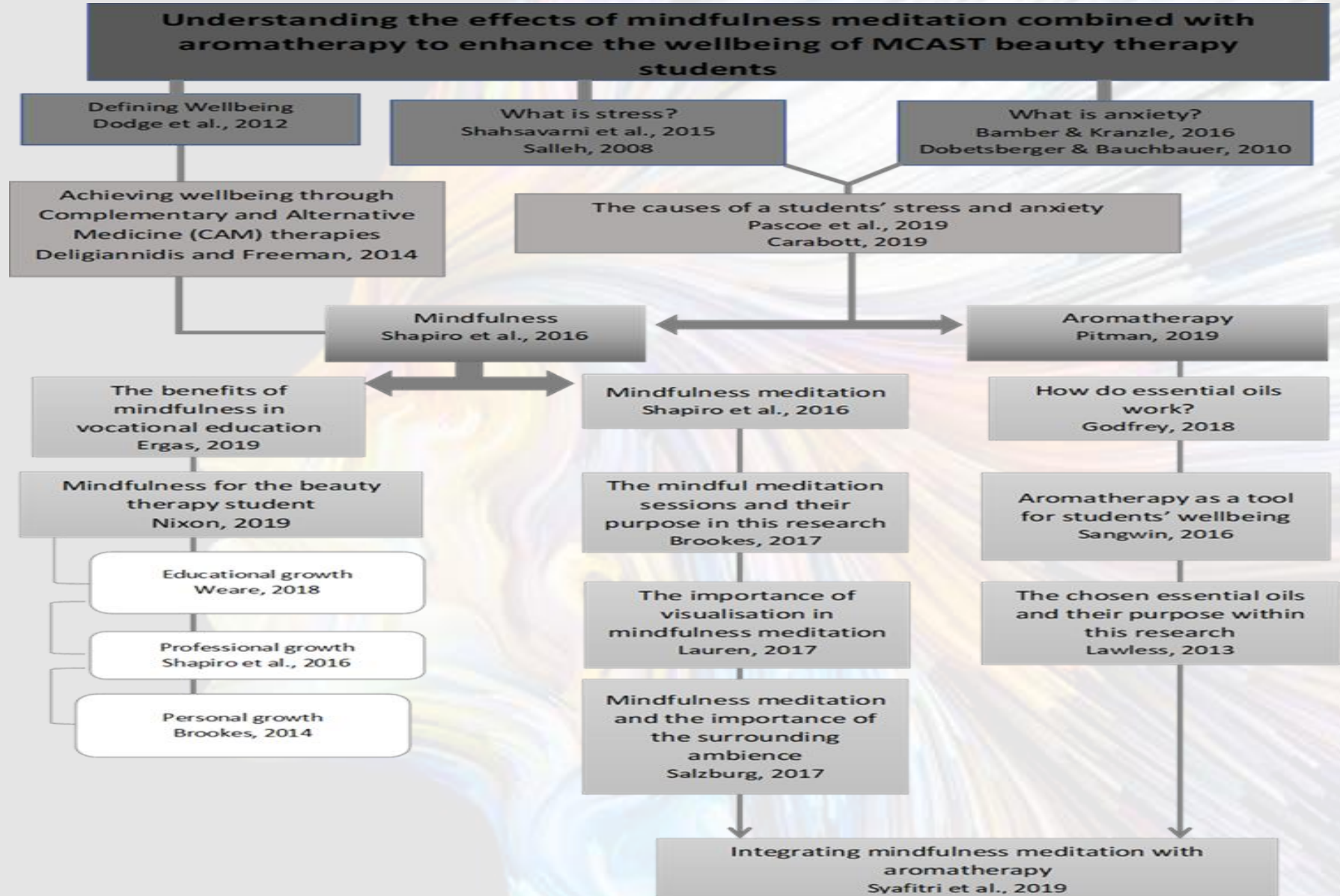
- **Research question:**

What effects can mindfulness meditation combined with aromatherapy have on the wellbeing and professional development of MCAST beauty therapy students?

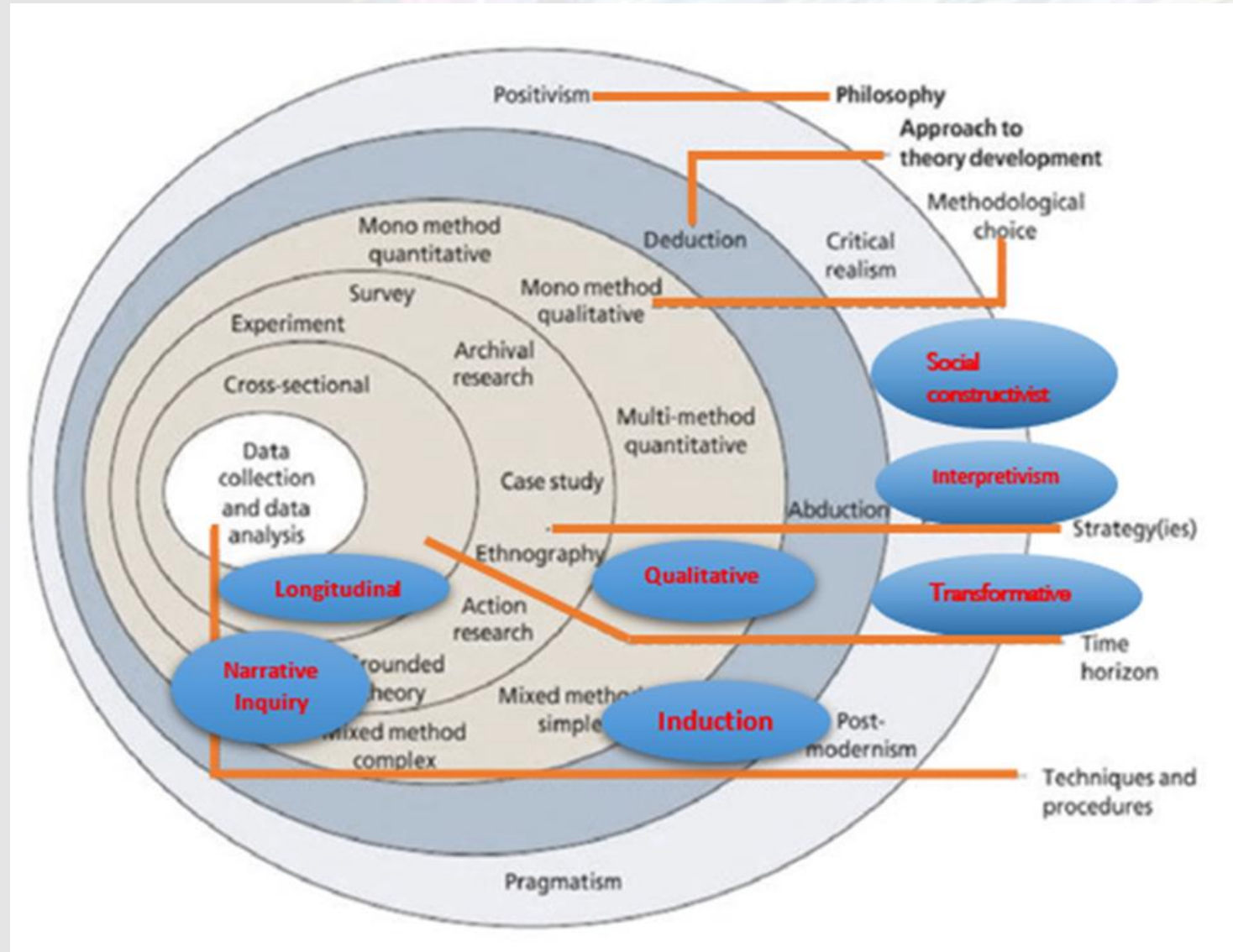
Justifications

- **Personal Justification:** As educators the researchers encounter students suffering from stress and anxiety which in turn detracts from the academic, personal, and professional wellbeing on their work placements.
- **Practical Justification:** The study intends to bring forward practical and feasible suggestions on how to integrate mindfulness and aromatherapy within the Institute of Community Services (ICS).
- **Social Justifications:** This study aims to give a valuable social contribution as the suggestions provided for ICS can be adapted to various state and private schools.

Literature Map



Research Onion



Research onion illustrating the chosen approach (adopted from Saunders et al. 2007)

Methodology

- **Method:** The researchers use a qualitative narrative inquiry approach to draw meaning and understanding emerging from the participants' experiences.
- **Why narrative inquiry:** With narrative inquiry the researcher views the study from the participant's perspective, thus aiding the researchers in understanding, noting, and observing the individual's actions, emotions, and behaviour.
- **Researcher's role:** Narrative researchers must be willing to become part of the phenomenon.
- **Sample population:** Using convenience and purposive sampling, three MCAST beauty therapy students were chosen to participate in this study.
- **Research instruments:** These include, observation, participants' journals, audio recordings, individual in-depth interviews, and focus groups.

Ethical Considerations

- Participation was voluntary with the right to withdraw with no further obligation.
- The participants had the opportunity to make changes to the interim text
- Participants endorsed the final text.
- A consultation was conducted to ensure that the participants were not contraindicated to any essential oils used

Process of Analysis

Step 1:	Transcripts were created and inputted in the MAXQDA software to later assist the analysis.
Step 2:	The participants' mindful journals were read and re-read, and anything that needed further clarification was noted.
Step 3:	The audio recordings of each session were listened to several times. Transcripts, journals and field notes were read and re-read, in turn, elucidating the participants' narrative.
Step 4:	Participants were asked to verify and endorse the content.
Step 5:	The analysis process was a reflexive exercise that explored emotions and feelings as well as social conditions.
Step 6:	In this study both the analysis of narrative and narrative analysis (Polkinghorne, 1995) were developed. As is typically seen in such presentations, whole segments from the individual transcripts were elicited to explicate various themes.
Step 7:	A thematic narrative analysis approach was chosen to examine emergent themes and identify common patterns found across the narratives.
Step 8:	Transcripts and narratives were re-read in search for resonances, divergences and liminalities to emerge. MAXQDA software was used to facilitate the process.
Step 9:	Themes and sub-themes were merged, leaving a total of nine common themes.
Step 10:	Following the analysis, the outcome was discussed by producing reliable arguments that are supported by literature and the participants' experiences.

Main Themes

Theme 1	Achieving self-awareness	Theme 5	Achieving a deeper meditative state
Theme 2	Achieving wellbeing	Theme 6	Enhancing our personalities through mindful meditation
Theme 3	The effects of aromatherapy when combined with mindful meditation	Theme 7	Enhancing our profession through mindfulness training
Theme 4	The importance of ambience	Theme 8	Mindfulness as part of MCAST curriculum
		Theme 9	Dealing with Scepticism

Emerging Models



Self-awareness holds the key to our wellbeing



Creating a blissful ambience



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Thank you