

Tarot's Influence on Mindfulness, Well-Being, and Perceived Control

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ABSTRACT

Tarot cards, with their adaptability and capacity to stimulate insight, imagination, and intuition within the realm of spiritual exploration, provide a unique avenue for self-discovery and emotional processing. Over the course of four weeks, our research aimed to investigate the enduring effects of tarot card interpretations on participants' psychological well-being and their perceived sense of control. Participants maintained journals to record their tarot card encounters and reflections, shedding light on the relationship between tarot interpretations and personal growth. The interpretation of tarot cards coupled with the practice of mindfulness journaling appears to support positive changes in well-being and one's perception of control, emphasizing their potential as therapeutic tools. Furthermore, the participants' journals yielded comprehensive insights into various aspects of tarot card readings, including interpretation techniques, the evolving competence of participants, diverse interpretations of tarot, and their influence on psychological well-being.

Keywords: Tarot, Control, Depression, Anxiety, Mindfulness

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over time, it underwent a significant transformation and emerged as a divination tool associated with occult practices during the 18th century (Sosteric, 2014). Throughout its evolution, the themes and symbols within tarot cards have endured and grown more intricate, reflecting the depth of its symbolism (Sullivan et al., 2018).

Tarot has managed to maintain a dual purpose in contemporary times, continuing to serve as both an entertainment tool and a means of fortune-telling. Its enduring appeal can be attributed to its unique ability to convey stories and narratives. Tarot is often likened to the metaphorical journey of an individual through life, often referred to as the "Fool's journey" (Semetsky, 2009). This concept represents the transformative experiences and life lessons depicted by the various cards in a tarot deck.

Moreover, the "Fool's journey" depicted in the major arcana cards resonates

INTRODUCTION

Tarot's origins trace back to 15th-century Italy, where it initially served as a recreational tool for gambling and entertainment, without any occult connections. In its early days, tarot was used to engage and stimulate the minds of the general population (Farly, 2009). However,

with Jungian archetypes (Sullivan et al., 2018). Jung believed that individuals share common experiences at a deep level, reflected in the "collective unconscious." This collective unconscious manifests through symbols and imagery (Jung, 1959). Within the framework of Jungian psychology, tarot can be seen as a passage to the unconscious due to its rich and symbolic nature (Semetsky, 2014). By utilizing tarot as a tool, one can explore the unconscious mind and gain insights into their self-awareness and position in the world which is recognized as "amplification," by Jung (Semetsky, 2010). This unique perspective makes tarot a valuable tool for introspection and personal growth (Shuya, 2019). While the effect of prolonged use of tarot cards is yet to be understood, reading tarot cards has been shown to influence development of insight, imagination, and intuition through spiritual development (Semetsky, 2009).

A complete tarot deck comprises 78 cards, divided into 22 major arcana cards and 56 minor arcana cards. The major arcana cards represent significant life themes and experiences that an individual may encounter, while the minor arcana cards depict the more mundane situations that contribute to the overall life journey. The major arcana cards start with The Fool, denoted as 0, symbolizing the beginning of the journey, and end with The World at 22, signifying the culmination of one's experiences and self-discovery. The minor arcana cards are further organized into four suits: Wands, Cups, Swords, and Pentacles. Each suit encompasses 10 numbered cards (Ace to Ten) and four court cards (Page, Knight, Queen, and King), which add depth and complexity to the interpretations. Tarot cards are widely used in layouts and spreads, where they are arranged in specific patterns tailored to address questions or situations. These tarot spreads serve as gateways to the unconscious, employing symbols and meanings to draw valuable insights (Semetsky, 2010). Tarot is enveloped in a myriad of superstitions, offering an interesting avenue for independent study. It is worth noting that the practice of reading tarot cards possesses a remarkable

degree of flexibility, with much of its interpretive methodology deriving from personalized experience (Semetsky, 2005).

Our focus narrows, digging into a brief explanation of the intricacies of tarot reading mechanics and interpreting tarot cards. Experienced tarot readers often offer initial guidance by emphasizing the importance of creating a comfortable reading environment (Jodorowsky & Costa, 2009). The customary act of shuffling the deck, reminiscent of shuffling playing cards, serves as a familiar starting point for experienced readers. Subsequently, cards are thoughtfully chosen and arranged within specific spreads. The inherently personal nature of tarot card reading contributes to diversity in interpretations. Much like honing any skill, proficiency in reading tarot cards necessitates practice (Ericsson & Harwell, 2019). The more an individual engages with tarot, familiarizing themselves with the card meanings and the intricate connections between them, the easier the act of reading tarot cards becomes. This journey is similar to mastering any craft; it happens gradually, revealing deeper layers of insight and understanding over time.

Tarot in Clinical Settings

The use of spiritual modalities for healing is an area of research that is gradually expanding, with researchers utilizing various forms of spirituality to measure and enhance empathy (Parra & Giudici, 2020). However, it is important to acknowledge that psychological healing through spiritual methods is currently underrepresented in the existing literature. Among these spiritual modalities, tarot cards have garnered attention for their flexibility in offering insights and guidance. Despite their potential benefits, tarot cards are viewed with ethical concerns in clinical settings as they are used to explore uncertainty and alleviate anxiety (Lavin, 2021), yet they can also serve as tools for individuals to discover and develop their spirituality, creating a space for processing deep emotional and negative experiences on their journey of self-discovery (Semetsky, 2011). In therapeutic practice, tarot cards

have been employed as tools for self-reflection, enabling individuals to navigate aspects of their lives that are beyond their control or understanding (Semetsky, 2005). Within the clinical setting, tarot cards provide a means for clients and therapists to explore issues through projective techniques. The nature of tarot card readings is related to 'sandplay' therapy techniques and other non-verbal means of therapy, wherein images and symbolism are used to access and express feelings without relying solely on language (Semetsky, 2006).

Understanding the potential benefits and ethical considerations associated with employing spiritual modalities in the healing process will enable researchers to integrate practices into therapeutic approaches, potentially fostering overall well-being and personal growth. As the research expands, there will likely be greater opportunities to better understand the potential of spirituality in promoting mental and emotional well-being. While further research seeks to connect tarot imagery and major life themes within a clinical scope, the present study sought to understand the relationship between how individuals interpret the tarot reading and the effects reading tarot cards can have on mindfulness journaling, psychological wellbeing, and locus of control.

Mindfulness and Mindful Journaling

Mindfulness, characterized as the transformative state of wholeheartedly acknowledging and accepting the present moment without judgment, is a profound psychological practice (Kabat-Zinn, 1994). This becomes especially evident through the practical application of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) techniques, which offer effective stress management strategies (Snippe & Nyklíček, 2015). The framework of MBSR encompasses a range of practices, including meditation, yoga, controlled breathing exercises, and the practice of journaling. Mindfulness journaling within the context of MBSR emerges as a potential tool that nurtures self-compassion, leading to enhanced psychological well-being (Beck & Verticchio, 2018). By putting pen to paper,

individuals can engage in self-exploration where their thoughts and emotions are given voice. The act of journaling becomes a private space where individuals can process their thoughts, uncover hidden layers of emotions, and gradually cultivate a more compassionate relationship with themselves (Beck & Verticchio, 2018).

Semetsky's (2011) work underscores tarot cards' potential to not only develop insight but also serve as a pathway for exploring intense emotions. Considering this, it is plausible to envision tarot as a tool within the mindfulness toolkit. By offering a pathway to self-discovery and emotional exploration, tarot reading aligns well with the principle of mindfulness, which facilitates greater awareness and nonjudgmental acceptance to the present moment. This alignment suggests that tarot reading might offer a potential avenue for practicing mindfulness.

Sense of Control

When assessing one's sense of control, the predominant paradigm used has been the locus of control (LOC) model, originating from Rotter's (1966) seminal social learning research explores the connection between an individual's behavior and their consequences (Caliendo & Hennecke, 2022). It examines the degree to which people believe their lives are shaped by internal or external factors (Timmins & Martin, 2019). An internal locus of control signifies that individuals see themselves as significant influencers of life events, while those with an external locus of control attribute much of their life outcomes to external forces (Caliendo & Hennecke, 2022). By understanding into the interplay between LOC and tarot card readings, the authors sought to shed light on the subtle connections between psychological beliefs and spiritual practices. Understanding how individuals' perceptions of control may influence their engagement with divinatory practices can contribute valuable insights to the fields of psychology and spirituality.

Understanding the concept of LOC is pivotal, as it serves as a robust predictor of behavior (Timmins & Martin, 2019). While

LOC has connections to spiritual and religious beliefs, further exploration is needed to better understand their relationship. In this context, the researchers aimed to investigate the association between LOC and weekly tarot card readings. It is essential to note that experiencing high levels of external LOC due to religiosity or spirituality does not necessarily imply a passive surrender of control to external factors (Timmins & Martin, 2019). As the exploration of LOC continues, it may unlock a deeper understanding of how individuals navigate life's complexities and find meaning in their experiences.

Well-being

Well-being encapsulates the combination of experiencing positive mental states and achieving optimal functionality, all while recognizing that wellbeing does not hinge solely on a perpetual state of positivity (Huppert, 2009). Within the realm of psychological well-being, there exists a dynamic spectrum encompassing both negative and positive emotions. The well-being literature has undergone a transformative shift, moving away from focusing on the negative aspects often examined within clinical contexts. Its compelling influence extends its reach to physical health, mental equilibrium, and even the maturation of social interactions (Huppert, 2009). This underscores the multidimensional character of wellbeing and its pivotal role in sculpting a life experience that is genuinely comprehensive and deeply enriching.

Engaging with tarot cards present a possibility of being a tool to increase psychological well-being. The potential of tarot cards resides in their ability to serve as navigational aids for individuals traversing challenging life scenarios that might otherwise prove daunting to overcome (Semetsky, 2011). The symbolism and narrative within tarot cards could potentially help individuals reframe their experiences, seek insights, and uncover new perspectives. By engaging with these cards, individuals might find themselves better equipped to navigate emotional landscapes and confront

situations they might have otherwise struggled to address. As tarot cards emerge as potential aid on the journey toward improved psychological well-being, their blend of imagery and intuitive exploration offer an intriguing lens through which to view life's complexities (Semetsky, 2006). While their effectiveness is yet to be comprehensively studied, the alignment between the introspective process of engaging with tarot cards and the aspiration of promoting wellbeing is an avenue for exploration and discovery.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To the best of the author's knowledge, this study marks the first attempt to gather data on the impacts of tarot card readings. The research questions posed in this study were intentionally broad, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of various themes. First and foremost, the researchers aimed to understand whether engaging in weekly tarot readings influenced participants' overall psychological well-being. Secondly, the researchers sought to understand the diverse styles of interpretation adopted by participants when reading tarot cards. An additional point of interest for the research team was the educational aspect, regarding how participants interpreted their tarot cards effectively. In many respects, this study offers a preliminary glimpse into the influence of tarot card readings on the individuals who engage in them.

METHODS

Participants

The present study recruited participants ($n = 14$) from the local community in northern New Mexico. The participants ($m_{age} = 31.64$; $SD = 15.39$) were mostly women (78.6%), heterosexual (57.1%), Hispanic (79.1%), and from a Christian/Catholic religious practice (57.1%). When asked about their past experiences with tarot, a majority of the participants reported that they had received a tarot reading in the past (71.4%), only a few had read tarot themselves (28.6%), and there was an overall openness to tarot being a helpful tool for their

spiritual and psychological well-being (71.4%).

Procedure

After the researchers received IRB approval from New Mexico Highlands University, participants were recruited to engage with a four-week, longitudinal study to assess the role of learning how to read tarot and conducting weekly readings on psychological well-being. During the first week of the research, participants came to the laboratory to complete a demographic questionnaire, meet with a professional tarot reader for a reading and lesson, and received half of a free deck of tarot cards (the Major Arcana). The participants were instructed to complete a spread with their cards at the beginning of each week and use a digital survey (hosted by Qualtrics) as a tarot journal to share details about the spread and complete a brief assessment of their well-being.

Each participant received an information packet during the first week. The packet included a basic guide to interpreting tarot cards, as well as the weekly spread participants would use during their time in the study. The authors created the tarot spread for the participants (Figure 1) to maintain consistency across participants' weekly readings. Further, participants were instructed to only use the Major Arcana in their readings. They were not limited to reading their tarot more than once a week; however, only the specified weekly spread was collected for the present research.

Figure 1

Tarot spread used by the participants in study

Tarot Spread		
Card 1: What is in my control this week?	Card 2: What is out of my control this week?	Card 3: Advice for the week.

After the participants read their own tarot and completed the online journal for four weeks they were invited back to the laboratory. After completing a final questionnaire, participants met with the tarot

reader for a final reading, they received the Minor Arcana cards to complete their decks, and were taught how to use the Celtic Cross spread. Lastly, the participants met with the PI of the study for a debriefing and to have any of their questions about the research answered.

Measures

Tarot Reading

Participants were asked to share information regarding their weekly reading. Each journal included a space to include the three cards they drew for the week. Additionally, participants were asked to disclose their interpretation of the reading ("Please take a moment to reflect on the cards and share your thoughts, feelings, and impressions. What does it mean to you?") and a reflection on their reading from last week ("Please think about the tarot cards that you drew last week. How well did they relate to the week that you had? Did some of the predictions come true? Was the reading useful for you?").

Treatment of Qualitative Data

For the open-ended questions related to each of the weekly tarot readings, the authors of the present study followed a systematic, inductive approach to analyzing the data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). First, an initial set of codes were created to assess the major themes within the weekly journals. Second, memos were drafted by the coders to document the insights gained through the coding process. Lastly, a debrief session was held to build consensus about the findings of the qualitative data to enhance the trustworthiness of the results (Jones et al., 2014; Knafl & Breitmayer, 1989).

RESULTS

Over the course of the four weeks, participants engaged in journaling to share the cards they drew, as well as their reflections on their current readings and the past week's reading. These journals provided insight into several factors related to tarot card readings. First, they allowed the researchers to understand how different cards, particularly

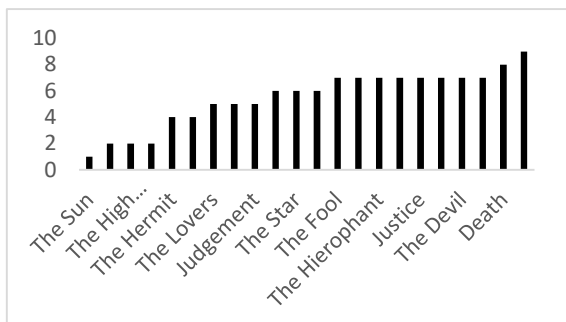
cards with more negative meanings (e.g., The Devil, Death, The Tower) were interpreted by the participants. Second, they allowed the researchers to observe the learning process of tarot as the participants become more comfortable working with the cards. Third, the participants were able to share how they conceptualized reading tarot cards (e.g., as affirmations, predictions, frameworks for decision making). Lastly, the journals provided deeper insights into the participants' psychological well-being.

Card Interpretations

Over the four weeks of the study, every Major Arcana card was drawn by at least one participant (Figure 3), which provided ample opportunity for participants to engage with both traditionally positive (e.g., Strength, The Sun, The Star) and negative cards. Notably, Strength and Death were the most common cards drawn across all participants. It was observed in the interpretations given by the participants that they had to spend time thinking about both the meaning of the card they drew, as well as what the card meant in relation to the position in the tarot spread to come to a satisfying interpretation. The strained process of interpretation was observed in both dealing with positive and negative cards.

Figure 2

Frequency of tarot cards drawn across participants over the four-week study period



Regarding the positive cards, participants were more fluid in their interpretations when they appear in the “What is in my control?” position in the weekly spread. For example, one participant shared of

the Strength card: *“In terms of things I can control, courage as a quality of the card strength really resonates for me. I see this as permission to act rather than be paralyzed by doubt, even when the full picture isn't clear yet. I screen grabbed a meme earlier today that said ‘are you not ready to start, or not ready to fail?’ Cheesy, yes, but sort of in the same spirit of the card strength.”* However, when a positive card appeared in the “What is out of my control?” position, participants had to work a bit harder at finding a meaningful interpretation. For example, one participant who had drawn The Lovers stated: *“Something that's out of my control this week is the lovers card. I think with this card I'm gonna have to deal with certain situations within my close circle and I'm gonna have a lot of decisions to make.”* Even though a specific card may traditionally have a positive interpretation, the participants were challenged to be flexible in their meanings to apply both the light and dark sides of the card appropriately.

Further, participants who drew traditionally negative cards had to contend with managing existentialism in their readings to maintain an overall positive interpretation. For example, of Death, one participant shared: *“I got some news this week about a loved one's medical condition that feels scary. They are not handling it the way I would hoped. Since death suggests “mortality” (I'm going to take the invitation to NOT associate it with literal death!) I would say that I *do* have control over my own reactions to this news, even though I clearly do not have control over the loved one's actions or the outcome.”* In this instance, the participant chose to compartmentalize their experience of death via their loved one's medical problems, rather than use their reading to explore what the death of their loved one could mean to them. Further, when faced with The Devil appearing in the spread, one participant compartmentalized the card by actively choosing to view the card not as something out of their control, but as losing control if they indulge in the card: *“To my understanding, The Devil is an illusive character who appears when any type of*

unhealthy habit can cloud my judgement, making it seem like I have lost control. I believe the card to be an allegory for overindulging in self-destructive behaviors or becoming compulsive resulting in self-destructive habits. Although it's in the category for what I can not control, I am choosing to believe that I lose control IF I allow the illusion to deceive me. I will be mindful of this during the week." Both of these instances demonstrate an active interpretation process of distancing and compartmentalizing negative cards to enable a positive interpretation. While this is reasonable, as people have a need to maintain an optimistic attitude about themselves and their lives, this could represent a bias in reading tarot whereby readers will actively reinterpret cards as optimistically as possible.

Learning Tarot is a Process

In the present research, participants were asked to complete the journals every week for four weeks, which provided the researchers with insights into how the participants learned how to read the cards. It was observed that early in the study, participants had a difficult time making meaning of the cards, but as the study progressed, they become more comfortable with the process and began to find meaning in their weekly spreads (Table 2). For Participant A, they experienced an increase in the richness and applicability of their readings to their life, which resulted in them actually taking the reading and turning it into actionable goals each week. Participant B started out very skeptical about tarot card, but by the end of the four weeks they started to see the utility of the readings. Lastly, Participant C had a much steeper learning curve to climb over the course of the study, but toward the end they were able to use tarot as a means to reflect on their decision making. These findings indicate that participants were motivated to maintain contact with the tarot through the course of the study.

Table 1

Within participant quotes regarding the accuracy and helpfulness of their own interpretations

	Participant A	Participant B	Participant C
Week 1	I felt as if they related to how my week went.	I think they are a cool party trick but do not think the readings are real	I was still really unsure of how to apply the tarot reading to my life...I cannot tell if the reading was accurate.
Week 2	I think I related a lot to the cards that I pulled last week... I was able to be creative and enjoy my current life like the last card had suggested I do.	The readings were accurate but I did not find them useful.	I am thinking this particular reading didn't impact me as much since I can't remember anything about it.
Week 3	I followed the advice which was telling me to "use your logical thinking and everything will work out" and I feel as if it did!	They matched the events I was going through that week. It was useful for me that week.	I am getting a clearer understanding of how to apply the reading to my life.
Week 4	I think that last weeks reading was fairly accurate...I think the prediction of setting boundaries came to life.	They related to my week pretty well. The readings were useful for that week.	I thought a lot about the cards that I drew throughout the week...The card drawings were useful because they

			encouraged me to think more about the decisions I was making and why.
<p><i>Note.</i> The excerpts from participants were in response to the open-ended question: “Please think about the tarot cards that you drew last week. How well did they relate to the week that you had? Did some of the predictions come true? Was the reading useful for you?”.</p>			

Different Approaches to Using Tarot

In addition to the differences in card interpretation and the overall process of learning the tarot, participants also demonstrated differences in how they conceptualized the meaning of tarot interpretations. Three main themes of understanding the functionality of tarot were observed in the data. First, some participants used tarot as a way gain affirmation for their life choices, as was the case for one participant who shared their interpretation of the Strength card: *“I am taking it to mean that I should embrace my feminine power and see my softness and gentleness as a strength that can influence others in a positive way. I am loving the meaning of this card since I have really being leaning into my femininity lately. My take away for Strength in this category is that it is like an affirmation to embrace my feminine strength”*. For this participant, the cards represented a way to reaffirm the direction in life they had already chosen.

Alternatively, many participants used tarot as a means for generating predictions about their week. For example, one participant indicated that *“One prediction that I can see applied was it describing that I should reflect where I am at now and where I plan to go. I recently found out that my partner has the opportunity to go to another university to continue his education. Sadly, it is no where close to where we currently live and the university no longer has online courses.”* Another participant shared, *“The cards I drew last week were very useful to me. I drew cards that represented the week I had spot on, and my advice for the week was*

really helpful as well. Every single one of the predictions came true.” For both of these participants, they used the tarot to anticipate and plan future events in their lives, which lead them to be more mindful of situations as they emerged.

Lastly, participants used the tarot as a means of reflecting on their lives and how they approached situations. One participant indicated that they were going through major upheaval in their education, work, and personal life and the reading *“Change is happening and some things are coming to end in my life. The reading was helpful because I am able to be okay with things not being my way but I know they are going to work out somehow.”* Additionally, another participant who shared that they were in the process of working through issues in their personal life and their tarot reading helped them prepare for that psychological work: *“I see The Devil as granting permission to react with stronger emotions (if even still privately) than what I’ve allowed myself to show in the past month.”* For these participants, they used the tarot as less of an affirmation of the choices they had made, or as a tool for predicting future events in their week, but rather has a method of reflecting on their actions and refining their approaches to challenging situations. One participant exemplified this approach by sharing: *“I don’t see tarot as making predictions as much as giving me perspectives on the issues I have in my minds eye when I do a reading.”*

Psychological Well-Being

Regarding the primary research questions for the present study, participants demonstrated a wide range in their psychological well-being. During the study period, many participants were faced with relocation, illness, occupational pressures, and relationship foreclosures. We found that across all participants that learning and using tarot became a tool for reflecting on these issues and developing strategies to improve their overall well-being.

Regarding anxiety, participants shared that the tarot provided a sense of calm when contemplating their upcoming week and

reaffirming that they can take their time. For example, one participant shared that their reading helped them *“understand that it's okay if I need to hit pause and think about things before making a decision, and that it may bring me some peace and wisdom to do so. I think the empress card has a more personal message for me. I have drawn this card multiple times, and I think it is trying to tell me to have patience.”* Additionally, another participant shared a similar sentiment, *“I understood the next card (temperance) as being calm and patient in the face of financial struggles.”* In both cases, the tarot reminded them of the importance to take their time and to not become overwhelmed.

Additionally, participants journaled about how the tarot helped them realize that their feelings or perceptions were not unreasonable and that they had the tools necessary for dealing with their life circumstances. For example, one participant shared that they were experiencing a lot of uncertainty about their future but the tarot *“made me feel a little relieved knowing that my feelings weren't entirely made up.”* This sentiment was echoed across the data set as one overwhelmed participant shared that the cards reminded them that: *“Everything I need is inside me. [The] cards asks me to go inside myself and trust my gut.”* Thus, there was also a grounding aspect of tarot which participants found to be encouraging them to trust themselves and their ability to meet the challenges in their lives.

Finally, the concept of control and taking control of circumstances was present nearly across the dataset. Participants shared that their readings encouraged them to take control of their decisions and actions, as one participant shared: *“I am taking it as a reminder that doing the work to understand my fear, anxieties, and emotions is important for me to access my intuition. Although I cannot control life, I can control how I react to life.”* Taking responsibility for taking control over one's life as extended to one participant's physical well-being, *“I've been thinking a lot lately of my physical well-being, so I think my advice for this week is to finally get it under control and start taking care of*

myself. I've been having some health issues, so I need to take action and begin taking the steps needed to heal myself.” Lastly, some participants shared that the tarot helped them distinguish between what is and is not in their control. One participant journaled that they received disappointing news about their work schedule, but was able to recognize that their sense of control was an illusion: *“I didn't actually stew too long after seeing my new work schedule. It wasn't too difficult to see the hopeful possibilities and accept the outcome as an area for growth and learning. I am seeing now that one of the reasons I made that shift relatively easily is because I accepted that the new schedule was absolutely out of my control.”*

DISCUSSION

The present study explored the potential benefits of prolonged tarot card use on psychological well-being and one's sense of control. The findings collectively suggest that tarot could be a tool for enhancing psychological well-being. The practice of tarot appeared to facilitate the clarity of complex life situations, helping participants discern what aspects were within their personal control and what were not. Notably, the study observed a wide range of approaches in how participants engaged with tarot. Some participants utilized it as a reflective tool for self-discovery, while others sought affirmations or predictions about their upcoming week. Despite these varied approaches, the participants demonstrated growth in their ability to read and interpret tarot as the study progressed.

Semetsky's work emphasized that tarot serves as a tool for introspection and personal growth (Semetsky, 2010). Our study supports this by demonstrating that engaging in tarot readings and reflection exercises can indeed contribute to enhanced psychological well-being. Specifically, the findings reveal a reduction in perceived anxiety and depression among participants, supporting the idea that tarot can help individuals navigate and reframe challenging life situations (Semetsky, 2011). The researchers suggest that tarot readings offer a potential avenue for

practicing mindfulness, as the act of engaging with tarot cards encourages greater awareness and nonjudgmental acceptance of the present moment (Kabat-Zinn, 1994).

The researcher's findings collectively underscore the potential value of tarot as a holistic means to improve psychological well-being. These insights lay the groundwork for further research into tarot's potential therapeutic applications. It is important to recognize the limitations of the current study, such as the sample size and potential confounding variables, which warrant consideration in future research endeavors. Overall, the study contributes to the emerging body of literature on tarot's psychological implications, encouraging further exploration of this practice and its impact on individuals' mental health and self-awareness.

Limitations and Future Directions

The research team encountered specific challenges during this study, primarily stemming from the notable divergence in response lengths observed within the participants' journals. Journal entries ranged widely, spanning from detailed and comprehensive narratives to more succinct statements. To counteract this variability, future research could begin refining the design of journal prompts, aiming to longer entries by the participants. By adopting such an approach, the goal would be to create a richer dataset, in turn enhancing the reliability of subsequent analyses and interpretations. Additionally, it could be helpful to conduct journaling activities in a physical, handwritten format, instead of relying solely on online entries. This recommendation is underpinned by the issues encountered where some participants occasionally overlooked their weekly journaling when utilizing an online platform. By having participants engage in the act of physical journaling, it is believed that potential memory-related challenges could be mitigated, resulting in increased participant compliance and, consequently, an improvement in the overall quality of the collected data.

The researchers further support the expansion of participant sample sizes, aiming for greater diversity, to attain a deeper understanding of how tarot cards impact mindfulness, psychological well-being, and LOC. The inclusion of a limited number of men within the study did not offer a comprehensive understanding of how tarot card usage might influence other demographics. Future research could strengthen the understanding of the effects that reading tarot cards might have with larger sample sizes.

It is also noteworthy that a significant portion of the participants identified themselves as having either interacted with tarot cards previously or having experience in reading them. This factor has prompted the research team to acknowledge that the study's findings might not offer a comprehensive depiction of how prior experiences with tarot might have influenced the data. This recognition highlights the need for further exploration in both experienced and novice populations to gain a more comprehensive understanding into the potential influences at play.

CONCLUSION

The present study has illuminated the influence of tarot readings on psychological well-being and sense of control. Our findings revealed that individuals who engaged in tarot reading and practiced mindfulness journaling reported lower levels of perceived anxiety and depression over the course of the four-week study. Additionally, there was a modest increase in their sense of control over their lives during this period. These results suggest that tarot cards might be a tool in promoting psychological well-being. Additionally, the research underscores the importance of spiritual practices on mental and emotional well-being as a way to enhance mindfulness practices, psychological health, and one's sense of control over their life.

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Generative AI Statement:

The authors would like to acknowledge the use of ChatGPT, a language model developed by OpenAI, in the preparation of this paper. ChatGPT was used to create the outline and grammatically edit the introduction and discussion sections. The present work does not contain text directly constructed from ChatGPT.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare a conflict of interest due to accepting the donation of tarot decks from The Arc Bookstore of Santa Fe, which may bias the authors' interpretation of the present study's results. However, the authors are neither affiliated with nor employed in any capacity by The Arc Bookstore of Santa Fe.

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