

Mindfulness and Burnout in Matriculation and State Board School Teachers



Psychology

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ABSTRACT

An attempt was made to understand the relationship between mindfulness and burnout in teachers of Matriculation and State Board schools involving 150 teachers (58 female and 17 male from Matriculation)(51 female and 24 male in State Board). Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale and Burnout Inventory were used as psychological tools. The results showed that there was no statistically significant difference between mindfulness and burnout in Matriculation and State Board school teachers; there is a negative correlation between mindfulness and burnout in Matriculation and State Board school teachers. The findings of the present study would be helpful for other researchers in policy discussions and in the efforts to evolve modules to improve teachers' quality of work life and performance.

Introduction

Mindfulness is explained as paying attention to the present moment with a purpose, and without judgment (Kabat-Zinn, 1994). Mindfulness has been derived from centuries-old meditative traditions and taught in a secular way and it has been linked to heightened activation in brain regions responsible for regulating attention and positive affective states including empathy and other prosocial emotions (Davidson et al., 2003; Lutz, Greischar, Rawlings, Ricard, & Davidson, 2004; Lutz, Slagter, Dunne, & Davidson, 2008). Mindfulness is a natural to all individuals. Also, some are naturally more mindful than others - but everyone can develop their capacities further.

Although there are several disciplines and practices that can cultivate mindfulness, the majority of theoretical writing and empirical research on the subject has focused on mindfulness developed by mindfulness meditation. Meditation refers to: A family of self-regulation practices that focus on training attention and awareness in order to bring mental processes under greater voluntary control and thereby foster general mental well being and development and/or specific capacities such as calm, clarity and concentration (Walsh and Shapiro, 2006). With the advancement of neurological technology, mindfulness researchers are examining distinct components of mindfulness meditation such as focused attention, open monitoring (nonjudgmental moment-to-moment observation of one's experience), and loving-kindness compassion practice and their specific physiological outcomes (Lutz, Slagter, Dunne and Davidson, 2008; Lutz et al., 2009).

Use of Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction in workplace has shown that 8 weeks of training for employees of a biomedical company resulted in significantly increased relative left-sided anterior activation of the brain, a pattern that is associated with positive affect and well-being (Tomarken, Davidson, Wheeler, & Kinney, 1992; Urry et al., 2004). The intervention group also showed more robust immune response to an influenza vaccine and significantly decreased self-reports of anxiety (Davidson et al., 2003). In the qualitative literature, Napoli (2004) conducted a study with three teachers who reported improved ability to manage conflict and anxiety and improved productivity in the classroom subsequent to mindfulness training. The results of a pilot study done by Flook et al. (2013) suggested that a mindfulness intervention adapted for educators boosts aspects of teachers' mindfulness and self-compassion, reduces psychological symptoms and burnout, increases effective teaching behaviour, and reduces attentional bias.

Burnout is a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among members of the helping professions (Leiter and Maslach, 1988). One of the most prominent definitions describes burnout

as a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with people in some capacity (Maslach, Jackson and Leiter, 1996).

Teaching profession is one which is under the largest occupational pressure and prone to job burnout. Teacher burnout is an ongoing problem in school systems throughout the world. According to Truch (1980), 90 percent of all teachers had experienced some level of burnout. Similar studies by Dworkin (1987) and Schlenker (1987) showed that more than 25 per cent of teachers were experiencing severe levels of burnout in their jobs. The Teacher burnout can lead to serious consequences in the individual, the school, and students. According to Purkey (1970), teachers need to feel successful and good about themselves and their abilities before they can empower their students to feel the same. Thus the negative symptoms of job burnout among teachers are harmful to both students and teachers themselves. The effect of this factors make teacher facing unprecedented challenges of a career crisis and survival.

Teachers play a central role in creating a classroom climate that fosters student learning and social-emotional well-being. However, teaching can be stressful and managing classroom dynamics taxing. As a profession, teaching is plagued by significant turnover, often attributed to burnout, with documented rates of teacher turnover rising in public schools over the past decade (Aud et al., 2011; Ingersoll, 2001). For teachers who stay, stress can impact their ability to be responsive and effective in the classroom. Multiple sources of stress have been cited including time demands, workload, student disruptive behavior, and organizational factors (Blase, 1986; Boyle, Borg, Falzon, & Baglioni, 1995). Teachers also face increasing pressure and scrutiny with accountability to standardized tests. While these issues are complex and have a long history, to effectively address and support teachers in the current climate will require teacher involvement (Farber, 1991). The personal, societal, and financial costs associated with burnout are too high to ignore. Teachers' perceptions of stress and their ability to cope with demands are implicated in burnout (McCormick & Barnett, 2011).

The present study attempted to understand mindfulness and burnout in Matriculation and State Board school teachers and also to understand the correlation between their mindfulness and burnout. This comparison was done between two different conditions of state board and matriculation board because the working conditions are entirely different that can contribute to mindfulness and burnout.

Method

Sample

From two Matriculation and two State Board schools, in and

around Coimbatore, 58 female and 17 male teachers (Matriculation) and 51 female and 24 male teachers (State Board), between the age group of 23-55 years were randomly selected for the study. Survey method was used for this research.

Tools

- The Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale (Brown K.W. and Ryan R.M., 2003). This scale consists of 15 statements with 6 point rating scale.
- The Burnout Inventory (Dianna Podmoroff, 2006). This scale consists of 15 questions with 4 point rating scale.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Significant Difference in Mindfulness in Matriculation and State Board School Teachers

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower		Upper
Mindfulness	Equal variances assumed	3.449	.065	349	148	.727	90667	2.59461	-4.22059	6.01393
	Equal variances not assumed			349	146.991	.727	90667	2.59461	-4.22068	6.01432

From the Table 1, it can be noted that the Sig value is .065 which is greater than .05. A value greater than .05 means that the variability in two conditions is about the same; that the scores in one condition do not vary too much than the scores in second condition. Put scientifically, it means that the variability in the two conditions is not significantly different. This means that there is no statistically significant difference in mindfulness in Matriculation and State Board school teachers.

Table 2: Significant Difference in Burnout in Matriculation and State Board School Teachers

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower		Upper
Burnout	Equal variances assumed	4.776	.030	-.404	148	.687	-.54667	1.35310	-3.22055	2.12722
	Equal variances not assumed			-.404	145.446	.687	-.54667	1.35310	-3.22094	2.12761

Table 2 shows that there is no statistically significant difference in burnout in Matriculation and State Board school teachers. The Sig (2-Tailed) value is .687 which is greater than .05. So we can conclude that there is no statistically significant difference in the levels of burnout in Matriculation and State Board school teachers.

Table 3: Correlation between Mindfulness and burnout in Matriculation School Teachers

Burnout	Pearson Correlation	Burnout	Mindfulness
	Sig. (2-tailed)	1	-.459**
	N	75	75
Mindfulness	Pearson Correlation	-.459**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	75	75

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 3 shows that there is a significant correlation at 0.01 level between mindfulness and burnout in Matriculation School teachers of the present study. The correlation is of negative nature, which means that when burnout is more, mindfulness is less and vice versa.

Table 4: Correlation between Mindfulness and Burnout in State Board Teachers

Burnout	Pearson Correlation	Burnout	Mindfulness
	Sig. (2-tailed)	1	-.719**
	N	75	75
Mindfulness	Pearson Correlation	-.719**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	75	75

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 also shows a significant correlation at 0.01 level between mindfulness and burnout in State Board teachers of the present study. Similar to that of the Matriculation School teachers, the correlation is of negative nature, which means that when burnout is more, mindfulness is less and vice versa.

Recommendations

School Counsellors could train teachers and students for mindfulness. Teachers could be given awareness about burnout and ways to deal with it.

Suggestions for Further Research

Future studies could be done on a larger and geographically diverse national sample of teachers to replicate findings. In addition, investigating a combined approach to teacher and student may offer valuable insights towards evolving modules to enhance mindfulness and prevent burnout, thereby promoting a healthy classroom environment.

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