ABSTRACT

The Degree to Which Mindfulness Practice Interventions Affect Perceptions of Job
Satisfaction in Middle School Teachers within Central Texas

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Educators today face challenges beyond the scope of College Preparation

Programs, with problems never before experienced. To study an opportunity for reducing

burnout and support teachers will be beneficial for our educational community and

student achievement.

KEYWORDS—mindfulness; teacher burnout, effective teaching; teacher professional
development; habits of mind; stress reduction; occupational health; classroom climate

The Degree to Which Mindfulness Practice Interventions Affect Perceptions of Job
Satisfaction in Middle School Teachers within Central Texas

by

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A Dissertation

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And finally, to my husband John Bruce, a man working in his Master of Psychology program when this journey began. He responded to every meltdown I had—and there was more than one—with love, kindness, nurturing, and support. He helped me keep going when I was not sure I could.

DEDICATION

To the most gracious Lord, my thanks for placing people in my path to assist my journey

To my sweet husband, without your steady patience and support of our family I would

not be where I am

To my children, for forgiving me when Momma had to do homework instead of play

To all the teachers in my life who give me inspiration yet today

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Nationwide, teachers report that they are dissatisfied with their jobs. While many factors contribute to job satisfaction, a significant cause of dissatisfaction is teachers' stress, which contributes to them burning out and leaving the profession (Conway et al., 2002). Parents and policymakers across America expect school systems to recruit and retain highly qualified educators. However, there is a disconnect between the expectations and what is occurring in the field. Educators are leaving the profession, on average, within the first 5 years, which continues to be a detriment to students' educational experience. While many factors contribute to job satisfaction, a significant cause of dissatisfaction is teachers' stress, which causes them to burn out and leave the profession. Forty-six percent of teachers experience high stress daily during the school year, which was tied to the highest daily pressure rate among occupations in 2017. Stress significantly increased from teacher stress levels measured in 1985 (Ryan, 2017).

Teacher burnout from reduced job satisfaction is a real crisis in the educational field. Providing high-quality instruction is virtually impossible when teachers do not stay longer than 5 years. According to Feiman-Nemser (2001), "The first years of teaching are an intense and formative time in learning to teach, influencing not only whether people remain in teaching but what kind of teacher they become" (p. 1026). Teachers who do not have the intrinsic social-emotional rewards for enduring the overwhelming number of standards and expectations depart the profession (Kokka, 2016).

Teacher turnover rate, equating to resource waste, causes a variety of challenges. Teachers leaving the profession are shown to impact student achievement, create a greater extent of knowledge gaps, and cost local school districts valuable resources to recruit and train new employees (Ryan, 2017). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2014), 8% of public-school teachers left the profession between 2011–2012 and 2012–2013. The Texas teacher mobility rate was also high in the 2011-2012 school year, at approximately 19% of teachers leaving. Worse yet, by the close of the 2015-2016 school year, the teacher mobility rate had reached 22% (Sullivan et al., 2017). Financially, teacher turnover accounts for more than $2.2 billion a year nationally (Haynes, 2014).

Background of the Problem

Educators are professionals with some of the highest job stress (Collie et al., 2012). As a result, teachers experience burnout, decreased job satisfaction, depression, anxiety, and purpose loss. Teachers' job-related stress falls under two major categories: (a) stress related to students' behavior and discipline and (b) stress-related to workload (M. G. Borg & Riding, 1991; Boyle et al., 1995; Chaplain, 2008; Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009). While there are concentrated efforts to acknowledge and reduce student discipline issues through initiatives such as restorative discipline and increasing social-emotional learning for students, attention for teachers in reducing stress is just now becoming prevalent. Most school-based mindfulness and social-emotional learning interventions are designed for students. There are fewer efforts to decrease stress and burnout among teachers and increase their job satisfaction. Professional development created for teachers are varied in actualization and has been met with varying degrees of

success (Richardson & Rothstein, 2008). However, personalized professional development, which is systematically implemented as part of professional and ongoing training for teachers, is missing.

Stress-Related to Student Behavior and Discipline

Teachers' continual strenuous effort into disciplining students' day-after-day causes emotional exhaustion leading to teacher burnout. Stress is especially heightened when administrative support significantly does not occur (Rice, 2014; Thibodeaux, 2014; Tsouloupas et al., 2010). While there are no quick solutions to student discipline and national policies combine a lack of clarity with increased pressure to perform to standards, there is undoubtedly growing awareness for decreasing these as stressors for teachers (Ramos, 2018). Prather-Jones (2011) stalwartly identified inconsistent administrative support connected to student discipline as a negative factor in teacher retention. Further, Ramos, in her 2018 study, uncovered teachers' perceptions of behavior ". . . that, especially extreme and disruptive behaviors are very discouraging and at some point, become 'disheartening'" (p. 146), showing how concurrent modes indeed lead to burnout and low job satisfaction.

Student discipline is recorded at higher rates in generational poverty rates, which has elevated the numbers of teachers reporting job dissatisfaction. When provided a different prospect, many teachers choose to leave schools serving urban areas with high populations of generational poverty (Boyd et al., 2005; Hanushek et al., 2004; Scafidi et al., 2005). Other stress-related teacher factors include student discipline, poor student attitudes, and time-resource challenges with the inability to reach parental support or administration understanding (Abel & Sewell, 1999). Continual stress of pupil

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misbehavior combined with a heavy workload is a consistent predictor of teacher stress (M. G. Borg & Riding, 1991; Hart, 1994).

Stress-Related to Workload

Job dissatisfaction is attributed to many factors such as burnout, stress, intense workload, minimal autonomy, student discipline issues, and lack of administrative support (Axner, 2013; Collie, 2014; Collie et al., 2016; Donaldson, 2009; Garcia & Weiss, 2019; Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Oberle & Schonert-Reichl, 2016). Leaders on the campus have a direct effect on teachers' likelihood of leaving the profession. Specifically, as teachers feel overworked while lacking support and resources, they increasingly experience decreased job satisfaction, which leads to the use of fewer responsive classroom strategies and hosts negative, cynical attitudes and feelings about students and colleagues (Oberle & Schonert-Reichl, 2016, p. 31).

Teachers' heavy workloads negatively impact their job satisfaction (Johnson et al., 2005). Teachers report that planning and grading intrude on family and relaxation opportunities, diminishing rest and recovery time (Klaussen & Chiu, 2010; Liu & Ramsey, 2008). Furthermore, teachers job satisfaction decreases under large clerical loads, such as with the amount of clerical work-induced, such as documentation of behavior issues, providing proof of accommodations, and recording of data that does not influence a change of instruction in the classroom (Boyd et al., 2005; Carroll et al., 2000; Hanushek et al., 2004; Scafidi et al., 2005).

Workload Stress Related to Standardized Testing and Low Efficacy

Along with minimal autonomy in the classroom, educational standards continue to increase teacher pressure and lower job satisfaction to meet lawmakers' testing and achievement stipulations (Boyd et al., 2007; Goldhaber et al., 2007; Hanushek et al., 2005). When schools fail to meet accountability standards, they face consequences such as strict growth plans and government takeover. As a result, teachers experienced moderate to high levels of stress among teachers as they experienced threats to their livelihood (Carlin, 2010; McGuinn, 2019; Tucker, 2009). Anxiety taxed educators who were already overburdened by severe working conditions felt decreased job satisfaction. Teachers reported a decreased sense of efficacy, minimal autonomy, and depression contributing to burnout factors. These constant flows of negativity become unbearable for teachers to sustain longevity in the classroom (J. H. Davis, 2010; Kelly, 2006; Schoen & Fusarelli, 2008).

Statement of the Problem

Teachers are dissatisfied with their jobs, and as a result, are leaving the teaching profession at alarmingly high rates, which is causing a crisis in K-12 education (C. J. Ferguson & Johnson, 2010; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Naylor & Malcomson, 2001; Rosensteel, 2020; Watson, 2018). Nationwide, teachers report that they are dissatisfied with their jobs. While there is a substantial amount of research-based literature that has documented this phenomenon, far less research efforts have explained what interventions would greatly influence increasing job satisfaction to decrease this relatively higher turnover rate. To date, few studies have explored resilience and mindfulness in teachers from a quantitative perspective (Kidger et al., 2016).

Researchers have attempted to increase job satisfaction through various interventions (Dolton & van der Klaauw, 1999; Elmore, 2000; Grissom, 2011; Johnson et al., 2005). These interventions include stipends, teacher coaching, rating systems, professional learning communities, book studies, and extra planning. Stipends were not just for additional duties but were also an extra layer of money applied to a teacher who performed with high averages on high-stakes accountability tests (Walden & Sogutlu, 2001; McGuinn, 2019). Schools implemented teacher accountability systems (Clotfelter, 2004) to increase the effectiveness of teaching and job satisfaction through higher student achievement. Professional collaboration is an intervention positively associated with teacher job satisfaction and student achievement. Reducing teachers' time to collaborate thoughtfully is detrimental to both groups (Goddard et al., 2007; Ronfeldt et al., 2015). However, it is not associated with teachers' longevity within the school system (McCarthy et al., 2016).

Other interventions, such as college preparation programs, mentorships, and generalized professional development, have also been implemented to enhance educational resiliency through preservice and service development (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Latham & Vogt, 2007). The literature that supports the link between job satisfaction and interventions shows that interventions have met with varying levels of success (Brewer et al., 2014; Gilpin, 2012; Goldhaber & Cowan, 2014; Jones, 2013; Rozich, 2017).

One intervention that has not been adequately addressed in teacher job satisfaction literature is the role of mindfulness practice. Research indicates mindfulness practices with adults can help with stress reduction, emotion regulation, well-being, and

temperaments (Fredrickson et al., 2008; Grossman et al., 2004; Shapiro et al., 2007). The limited quantitative research about mindfulness centers mostly on professionals in the medical field, elderly patients, and counselors (Benson, 2001; Bishop, 2002; Hamilton et al., 2006; Hayes & Wilson, 2003). Mindfulness interventions within middle school educators are limited, and emerging research to apply this practice for educators could increase job satisfaction. Therefore, this research fills a gap in the teacher dissatisfaction research repository.

Purpose of the Study

The study was a quantitative, quasi experimental design (Shadish et al., 2002). This design included a pretest measure, followed by a treatment and posttest for a randomly selected group, with the control group only receiving the pretest and posttest (Creswell, 2014; Posten, 1984). The purpose of this study was to determine the degree to which mindfulness practice interventions affect perceptions of job satisfaction in middle school teachers within Central Texas. The study results could assist researchers and practitioners with teacher retention through enhanced job satisfaction levels by providing an alternative strategy.

Study Procedures

Study data were collected using the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) through Qualtrics, to measure middle school teachers' perception of satisfaction within the current education scope. Pre and post surveys were administered online to both sets of participants. Survey data achieved using the JSS provided preliminary insight into teachers' perceptions of job identity and was used to develop the focus group intervention

protocol. The JSS was initially developed for social service employees and has been found to predict employee turnover (de Carbonel, 2007; Spector, 1985; Tsounis & Sarafis, 2018).

The intervention variable of "mindfulness" is modeled after the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction program created in 1979 by Kabat-Zinn (1982). This program was developed to help counter stress, chronic pain, and other ailments. Mindfulness courses share similarities with different approaches that have been successfully used to reduce workplace stress, such as the bio-ecological systems theory (Gerard & Buehler, 2004; Oldfield, Hebron et al., 2016; Oldfield, Humphrey et al., 2016). Kabat-Zinn's (1994) definition of mindfulness, "paying attention in a particular way, on purpose, in the present moment and nonjudgmentally" (p. 4), is critical for educators to have the ability to work through the overarching demands of their job. This definition emphasizes attending to emotions, sights, and sounds but not judging or reacting to these experiences. Instead, mindfulness encourages individuals to acknowledge the presence of these external and internal stimuli. In contrast to behavior replacement concepts, mindfulness interventions compose a different result because it develops observing and noticing as a response instead of reacting to a direct experience at the moment (Baer, 2003; Segal et al., 2002).

The researcher used 101: Mindfulness Foundations from Mindful Schools (2020) as the intervention. This curriculum is research-based, designed to teach educators and youth service providers in supporting the entire classroom in well-being and mindful approaches. Particularly this intervention is appealing as it has been studied with at-risk student and teacher populations, with statistical significance of reducing teacher stress,

increase of teacher reports of connecting with students and job efficacy, as well as increased job satisfaction (Flook et al., 2013; Klingbeil & Renshaw, 2018; Roeser et al., 2012). The 4-week course is designed with optimal access for busy educators, with a 2 to 3-hour time commitment per week, recorded trainer instruction, access to optional live sessions, resources such as reading and activities, and an online cohort forum. Teachers had the opportunity to gain strategies to apply during high-intensity emotional events, disrupt implicit bias by inspiring compassion and connection with cultural responsiveness, and enhancing trauma-sensitive responses.

Research Questions

The research questions guiding this study are as follows:

RQ1: To what degree do mindfulness practices affect middle school teachers' perceptions of overall job satisfaction?

RQ1a. To what extent do mindfulness practices affect individual aspects of job satisfaction?

RQ2: To what degree do study participants engage in mindfulness practices?

Research Hypotheses

H_{01}: Mindfulness practices do not significantly affect middle school teachers' perceptions of overall job satisfaction.

$H_{01}a$: Mindfulness practices do not significantly impact individual aspects of job satisfaction.

H_{02}: Study participants do not engage in mindfulness practices.

Sample Size Estimates

Parameters of sample size appropriate to detect a statistically significant finding within the study's research questions was addressed in an *a priori* fashion using the statistical power analysis platform G*Power software, Version 3.1.9.2 (Heinrich Heine Universität Düsseldorf, 2014). A medium treatment effect, $d = .50$; $p = .05$; $1 - \beta = .80$, 26 to detect a statistically significant finding, and a sample size of 64 to detect a statistically significant finding, for the use of linear regression with an anticipated medium predictive effect, $f2 = .15$; $p = .05$; $1 - \beta = .80$ (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Fowler, 2013; Schafer & Graham, 2002).

Data Analysis

Foundational analyses were conducted with study data prior to the formal analytic process with the research questions (Creswell, 2014). Missing data, internal reliability, and descriptive analysis of the study's demographic identifying information was addressed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques (Babbie, 2010; Creswell, 2014; Fowler, 2013).

Missing data were addressed using frequency counts (n) and percentages (%). In the event the study's missing data exceeds 5%, the randomness of missing data was addressed using Little's MCAR statistical technique (Schafer & Graham, 2002). Imputation of missing data was not considered as the event that the level of missing data reaches or exceeds 10% did not occur.

Internal reliability of study participant response to items on the study's research instrument was evaluated using the Cronbach's alpha (*a)* statistical technique (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Although alpha levels of $a = .60$ are generally considered the

threshold of adequacy, an alpha level of at least $a = .70$ was sought in the study (George & Mallery, 2018). In light of the acclaim and standardization associated with the study's adopted research instrument—JSS, the alpha levels did meet the "very good" level of $a = .80$ (Field, 2018).

Demographic identifier data associated with study participants was evaluated using descriptive statistical techniques. Specifically, frequency counts (n) and percentages (%) were used for both illustrative and comparative purposes (Fowler, 2013). Initial evaluations of study participant responses to the survey items of the research instrument at both the pretest and posttest conditions of the study were addressed using the descriptive techniques of frequency counts (n), percentages (%), mean scores (M), and standard deviations (SD). The statistical significance of the descriptive statistical findings at both conditions of the study were assessed using the one sample t-test (Ross & Wilson, 2017). The magnitude of effect of study participant responses within survey items at the pretest and posttest conditions of the study was assessed using Cohen's d statistical technique (Borg et al., 2006; Creswell, 2014).

Research Questions 1, 1a, and 2 were addressed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The primary descriptive statistical techniques were frequency counts (n), mean scores (M), and standard deviations (SD) for the pretest, posttest, and difference score between pretest and posttest. The statistical significance of difference scores from the pretest to posttest conditions were assessed using the t-test of dependent means (Field, 2018). The normality of pretest/posttest difference data were assessed using skewness and kurtosis values. Skewness and kurtoses values less than -2.0/+2.0 are considered inconsequential to the assumption of normality (George & Mallery, 2018).

The magnitude of the intervention effect was evaluated using Cohen's (1992) *d* statistical technique. Qualitative interpretations of *d* values reflected Sawilowsky's (2009) conventions of effect size interpretation. Study data were analyzed using SPSS, Version 27.

Theoretical Framework

This study is framed by Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory, which explains human behavior leading to happiness (Herzberg & Hamlin, 1961). Factors of motivation typically lead to happiness or job satisfaction, while hygiene factors do not increase happiness. However, if hygiene factors are absent or poor, this results in low job satisfaction and demotivation. Motivation factors include achievement, recognition, promotion, personal growth, and job interest. Hygiene factors include quality of supervision, rate of pay, job security, work structure, and relations with others (see Figure 1). It is crucial to assess which factors are essential within the study group's scope and motivator factors essential to intrinsic satisfaction (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; Deci, 1971; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Herzberg & Hamlin, 1961).

Motivation-hygiene theory acknowledges the many influences that increase or sustain job satisfaction and motivate employees by claiming that "pay contributes little to job satisfaction. All employees need to grow psychologically, and interpersonal relations are more likely to lead to dissatisfaction than satisfaction" (Sachau, 2007, p. 378). Teachers finding motivation in experiencing recognition from a job well done and deep satisfaction with reaching and positively affecting students supported Herzberg's dual-factor theory in the educational setting (Sergiovanni, 1967).
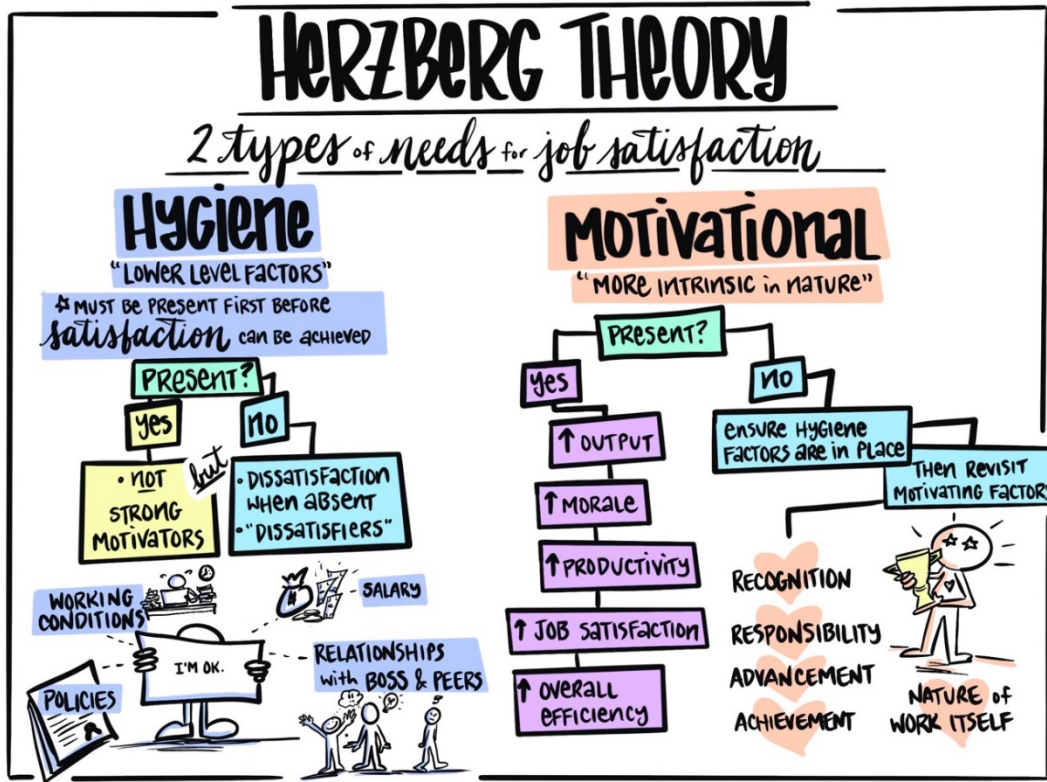
Figure 1. Herzberg theory.

Note. From *Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory: Two-Factor*, by S. Kurt, 2021, p. 1 (https://educationlibrary.org/herzbergs-motivation-hygiene-theory-two-factor/). Copyright 2021 by Education Library. Graphic from W. Pillars, personal communication, September 19, 2021.

Using this theory, an investigation of the potential connection of mindfulness intervention to job satisfaction within Central Texas middle school educators was conducted in the Spring semester of 2021 (Aspinwall & Staudinger, 2003; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). This theoretical framework has already been used successfully in other domains for exploring the influence of a range of factors on the process of adaptation of mindfulness (Kahneman, 1999; Kasser & Ahuvia, 2002; Myers & Diener, 1996; Demerouti et al., 2001). In summary, these theories state that specific workplace factors exist that cause job satisfaction, and independently another set that causes

dissatisfaction. Further to note, while satisfaction may rise in one area, it does not necessarily decrease job dissatisfaction in the other.

While pairing the JSS with the Herzberg motivation-hygiene theory (Herzberg & Hamlin, 1961), the researcher can pinpoint places of deficiency and growth. Table 1 displays the 36 questions with nine facet subscales, each subscale having four questions. When totaling the scores, investigating the range from 36 to 216, will produce three categories of job satisfaction. A total score of 36–108 = *feelings of dissatisfaction*, 108–144 = *an ambivalent feeling*, and 144–216 = *satisfaction of the job*.

Table 1

Instructions for Scoring the Job Satisfaction Survey

Subscale	Item numbers
Pay	1, 10, 19, 28
Promotion	2, 11, 20, 33
Supervision	3, 12, 21, 30
Fringe benefits	4, 13, 22, 29
Contingent rewards	5, 14, 23, 32
Operating conditions	6, 15, 24, 31
Coworkers	7, 16, 25, 34
Nature of work	8, 17, 27, 35
Communication	9, 18, 26, 36
Total satisfaction	1-36

Note. From *Instructions for Scoring the Job Satisfaction Survey, JSS*, by P. E. Spector, 1999 (http://shell.cas.usf.edu/~pspector/scales/jssscore.html), p. 1. Copyright 1999 by Paul E. Spector. Reprinted with permission.

This theory addressed the many facets that are involved in the complex educational system. In this quantitative experimental study using the motivation-hygiene method (Herzberg & Hamlin, 1961), the researcher explored whether mindfulness practice interventions impacted overall and specific perceptions of job satisfaction in middle school teachers within Central Texas.

Significance of the Study

Equitable education systems yield higher, achieving students. Students produce additional academic achievements when in a classroom led by a seasoned and well-rounded educator (Hanushek et al., 2016; Johnson et al., 2012; Ronfeldt et al., 2013). Positive cultures within the school walls could further alleviate teachers' dangerous burnout and exodus. Job satisfaction can influence overall organizational functioning, the employees' emotional well-being, their treatment, and their cooperative behavior (Spector, 1997). Pursuing targeted support for educators to increase job satisfaction and reduce the risk of experiencing burnout could reduce resource waste, develop students with high achievement, and benefit the community with successful future endeavors (Boyd et al., 2008; S. K. Chambers, 2010; Sheppard, 2016). This study targeted such possible support.

The results of this study's main benefit are the advancement of knowledge for future and present educators, persons involved in college preparation programs, and human resource staff development personnel. Education leaders can use this information to retain quality educators positively. There was not a statistical correlation between mindfulness and job satisfaction in this study. However, using job satisfaction survey data as a baseline to begin to improve educational systems could be used as a replication

of this study across all education system levels. The quantitative methods for investigating the effect of a mindfulness intervention on job satisfaction, specifically for middle school teachers, will add to the literature on potential interventions while working in a pandemic. In previous studies, large-scale interventions were noted to reduce burnout and increase job satisfaction (Iancu et al., 2018; Maricuțoiu et al., 2016; Naghieh et al., 2015). A targeted, embedded mindfulness intervention with consistent feedback and implementations could identify additional educator support.

Ethical Considerations

Universities have developed guidelines for conducting ethical research (Polonsky, 1998) to include considering general social research ethics (Homan, 1991) while covering a range of data collection approaches such as participant observation (Bulmer, 1982) and surveys/experiments (Sieber, 1982). Six broad ethical areas need to be considered within research (Polonski, 2004). The researcher planned appropriate responses for voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, the potential for harm, communicating the results, and the ability to withdraw from the study. Further, human intervention is defined to encompass a broad range of activities such as interviews, focus groups, experiments, oral histories, or surveys (Polonski, 2004). This specific intervention essentially involved the researcher having access to information that is not accessible to the public, leading to confidentiality procedures. Confidentiality means that the researcher knows who the participants are and will work to ensure their identity will not be revealed in any way with the resulting findings and reports (Creswell, 2014).

Definitions of Key Terms

In the effect of a mindfulness intervention on job satisfaction, specifically for middle school teachers, and education in general, many terms often have several meanings. For the purposes of this study and to provide clarification, terms and definitions are provided.

Attrition–This term is defined through the Texas Education Agency as teachers who were not employed as teachers or were not employed in the same district, for the following academic year. The academic year is September 1 through August 31 (T. G. Smith, 2021).

Burnout–According to Maslach et al. (2001), "prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job, and is defined by the three dimensions of exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy" (p. 397).

Hygiene Factors–These are identified in the two-factor theory of work motivation proposed by United States clinical psychologist Herzberg (1923-2000). Certain aspects of the working situation can produce discontent if they are meager or deficient; these factors in isolation will not affect behavior (Magny, 2012; VandenBos, 2007).

Job Satisfaction–This term is an employee's attitude within their career, often expressed as a response of liking or disliking the work (Magny, 2012; VandenBos, 2007).

Motivational Factor–This is a physiological or psychological factor that stimulates, maintains, and directs behavior (Magny, 2012; VandenBos, 2007).

Assumptions

The assumptions present in this study were:

1. The participating school district would grant permission to conduct the study in their three middle schools.

2. The participants in this study would represent the total population of teachers from the three respective middle schools under study in Central Texas.

3. The survey participants would answer truthfully and accurately.

4. The participants understood that their answers would remain completely anonymous.

Limitations

Several limitations could have been present in this study:

1. The results of the study could be influenced by more external factors than just the intervention.

2. Bias may be present in both the survey and in the interpretation of the data.

3. Middle school teachers in a specific Central Texas School District might be unwilling to participate.

Summary

Increasing mindfulness in middle school teachers of Central Texas could improve students' quality of educational experiences. Creating an opportunity for teachers to intensify longevity through affecting job satisfaction was the overall goal of this investigation. Adding to the literature base of quantitative data would provide further resources of positive impacts on K-12 education.

Many researchers, policymakers, and administrators have focused on teacher attrition and retention. Causes of attrition have been extensively studied, as have various attempts to mediate this attrition, solve the problem of a teacher shortage, and find a resolution for retention. Also, research exists on the various aspects of job satisfaction and its effects on job performance. However, little quantitative analysis exists on whether there is a definite link between a prescriptive mindfulness intervention plan to affect job satisfaction for middle school teachers in Central Texas.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

Education is a critical institution designed to enrich society's future population. The teachers, leaders of the classrooms, are the heartbeat of the process. Without effective teachers impacting students' growth, students will lose future opportunities to engage in successful endeavors (Gershenson, 2015). Teachers have many roles within the school day; first and foremost is delivering the curriculum. Effective teachers monitor student learning through the use of a variety of informal and formal assessments and provide meaningful feedback to students (Cotton, 2000; Good & Brophy, 1997; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Peart & Campbell, 1999), thus having a significant impact on student achievement (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Marzano, 2006). Effective teachers also check for student emotion, physical well-being, design engaging lessons, speak to students' strengths and weaknesses, adapt, and stay culturally responsive and diverse among other tasks (Collie et al., 2016). Teachers need time to build these competent skills, and when they become stressed to the point of burnout, their effectiveness diminishes as they leave the profession. Barnes et al. (2007) recommended schools invest in programs that increase teacher retention by tracking why teachers leave the field and then address those issues. This study was critical to find a positive, impactful intervention to alleviate the exodus of educators.

Stress in service-based professions is not a new idea. However, it is a detriment to future workings in America. Bertoch et al. (1989) noted over 30 years ago that teacher

stress is "recognized as serious by virtually everyone who has studied the problem" (p. 117), being pervasive then it is still an accurate evolution now. Teachers are leaving classrooms, which attributes to resource waste, lower student growth rates, and decline of stable educational settings (Collie et al., 2012; García Torres, 2019; Ingersoll, 2001). Teacher burnout creates an urgent need to consider this phenomenon within the culpable school leadership (Ingersoll, 2001).

There is a lack of understanding as to how some teachers can fare better with stress and remain in the classroom as opposed to those who leave (Ramos, 2018). What appears missing in the teacher stress and burnout literature is the application of visual experiences of stress and coping mechanisms that will conclude a thorough understanding of the factors that lead to teacher burnout (McCarthy & Lambert, 2006). Previous studies have not examined each of the specific areas of stressors as teachers may not present all factors or disclose specific negativity sources affecting their classroom performance. School leadership must understand prescriptive pieces of support to alleviate this stress leading to burnout.

Educators are a part of the human services field, typically viewed as professionals who work closely with other humans to educate them. Studying the history of attrition, specific to education were reviewed and compiled to guide how it manifests itself and what the impacts are within current conditions. The following is a literature review of interventions to alleviate these negating factors of educational success. The gap of knowledge to intervene with mindfulness exercises will be addressed in later chapters of the research.

The Teacher Attrition Problem

Teacher attrition is conceptually defined as a component of teacher turnover, meaning changing a teacher's status from year to year (Boe et al., 1993). Teachers could have exited the profession altogether. However, it also includes a change of school, district, or job category (Boe et al., 1993; Boe et al., 1995). This section of the literature review investigates the history of education to the prevalence of today's burnout and attrition issues.

While the teacher attrition problem has been present in the United States since the 1960s, the problem expanded greatly in the 1980 and 1990s (Macdonald, 1999). Hammer and Rohr (1992) and Bobbitt et al. (1994) reported about 5.5% of public-school teachers had prematurely left the profession in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Before the 1990s, the United States did not have a significant teacher attrition issue (Bobbitt et al., 1994; Macdonald 1999). Education in the United States began in the home, with parents typically teaching children how to read and write from the Bible, with simple math skills. Colonists eventually began to create rules such as the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1647 that every town with 50 families should have an elementary school, and towns with 100 families should have a Latin school (Carleton, 2009; Stillwaggon, 2012). As early as the Constitution's authoring, individual states were expected to provide education to its citizens. Of course, it took a more extended period to open the schoolhouse gates to all persons, male or female, and embrace various races to include the teaching staff (Webb, 2005). While education is not perceived as a fundamental right, the 14th Amendment ensured any child must be offered a place in the established public-school system (Russo et al., 1994).

Current educators face different challenges leading to burnout as compared to early American educators. In the early era, teachers had limited supplies and relied on the community's support and slim rules. Most schoolmasters were men through the 1830s and taught classrooms with varied age groups; the older students were taught the lesson and expected to pass the lesson to the younger students. Unlike today, there was no prescribed curriculum standard, and the school was based much on the factory model of bells to determine passing periods, specific hours, and creating a population ready to engage in the industry workforce. Teachers shifted from male to a more female population, who could only stay in their position while unwed. These gender shifts could explain why there is little evidence of teacher burnout through the late 1800s, as they would leave the profession fulfilled as having made a difference in others' lives (Jacobson, 2016).

Education evolved in many other areas as well over the past 200 years. Tyack (1974), an educational historian, noted the businessmen's administrative processes of the early 1900s who attempted to reform education uniformly and efficiently placed teachers at the bottom of the level. Teachers were forced into mass-producing a population of educationally standards-driven students not meeting their unique needs (Mulford, 2003). From the 1930s to the early 1960s, education seemed to gain a peaceful rhythm, and educators tended to stay in the field through retirement (Tyack, 1974). It is unclear if this was due to education being one of the few acceptable occupations for women outside of the home or if they simply could manage the stress to stay in the field long term.

A Nation at Risk, a report released in 1983 proposed the American education system was failing society's children and was taught by under-qualified educators, who

had low standards for the progression of learning (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Children in the United States, when compared academically to the world's population, were low. This realization demanded educational reform from politicians to correct this gap. A defunct educational system concept resulted in accountability measures, standardized testing, an in-depth curriculum, and even more government directives. Eventually, conversations pertaining to *A Nation at Risk* included only politicians and businessmen, disregarding the professional in practice, and in the 2000s the introduction of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (2002). To educators' further stress, this brought more demands of high-stakes testing, rigorous standards, and extrapolating documentation (Abel & Sewell, 1999; Lacireno-Paquet et al., 2016; Sullivan et al., 2017). Within the era of the late 1990s, Darling-Hammond said, "We need to move now to a professional approach, which holds people accountable for doing what is good for kids, teaching, and learning" (PBS, n.d., para. 35). The public scrutinized the education system, while the education system was breaking unprecedented grounds, not only were privileged kids to be educated, but equity and excellence for all students should have been in the forefront of teachers' agendas.

While these political drivers were created to generalize a higher success rate of students' achievements, the number of educators willing to stay through the changes decreased (Sullivan et al., 2017). National data on teacher retention paints a similar picture. The first survey data were gathered in 1988, and its baseline showed a leaver rate of almost 6%. The National Center on Education Statistics reported for the 2012-2013 school year, approximately 8% of teachers left their school to become faculty at another school, and 8% left the profession altogether (Podgursky et al., 2016). While the leaving

rate increased 2%, it held relatively steady at the national level. Conflicting data showed a much higher rate from reports in 2014. Teachers within the first 5 years of beginning their careers are leaving at numbers of more than 41% (Ingersoll et al., 2014). Seidel (2014) reported a larger number of 15%, almost half a million teachers, leave the profession every year. Furthermore, 20% of teachers in high-poverty schools leave each year, a rate 50% higher than for more affluent schools in America.

<center>*Prevalence of Teacher Attrition*</center>

National Trends in Teacher Attrition

Nationally, the incidence of teacher attrition is at an all-time high. This is due to teachers leaving the profession without replacements ready to work Barnes et al., 2007; Luekens et al., 2005; Milner & Woolfolk Hoy, 2003; T. M. Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). As many as 25% of educators in the United States leave the profession within the first 3 years, and at 5 years, attrition increases to almost 40% (Barnes et al., 2007; Luekens et al., 2005; Milner & Woolfolk Hoy, 2003; T. M. Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Recent national analyses suggest potential problems with teacher recruitment and retention. According to data from ACT (2014), fewer high school graduates are interested in pursuing education majors, and fewer college students are pursuing teaching careers.

State Trends in Teacher Attrition

Compared to the current national numbers, teacher attrition and mobility rates in Texas are even higher. Specifically looking at Texas data of teacher mobility rates, during the 2011-2012 school year, approximately 19% of teachers left, and by the 2015-2016 school year, the teacher mobility rate had reached 22% (Sullivan et al., 2017).

Sullivan et al. (2017) noted further, ". . . teachers leaving Texas public schools accounted for the largest share of the teacher mobility rate over the period, teachers moving between districts accounted for most of the increase in mobility rates" (p. 1). Compared with the national average the National Center for Education Statistics reports, Texas has well over 10% higher attrition rates (Sullivan et al., 2017).

Texas has continued to expand the number of teaching positions annually, with an approximate average increase of 3,957 jobs (T. G. Smith, 2021). In school year 2020-2021, Texas employed the largest aggregate of educators totaling 375,222 regular classroom teachers, which equated to an upsurge of approximately 27,700 jobs since 2014 (Bell, 2018; T. G. Smith, 2021). Regarding attrition through the 2017 school year, the Texas Education Agency reported an average amount of 33,000 teachers leaving the work field each year (Sullivan et al., 2017). According to the Texas Education Agency (T. G. Smith, 2021) 2019-2020 data, of the first-year teachers who were standard certified, 3,686 or 17.02% statewide left their original post. Post first year standard certified teachers' numbers were reported at a devastating 43,002 or 13.70% of statewide attrition. Educators working in districts with high poverty, low-performing schools tend to leave more often from burnout (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Hoglund et al., 2015), which puts a more significant gap in already stressed education systems. Teacher burnout is a continuing epidemic. The unsustainability and demands that continue to increase for teachers are making it a challenging profession to proceed.

Texas teachers have been observed in various studies to uncover needs and develop solutions to keep educators in the classrooms. A study of music educators reported a significant number of feedbacks that cited a lack of administrative support and

student discipline problems as the primary reasons to leave education (Killian & Baker, 2006). Previous literature supported these two factors as major causations of educators exiting the profession (Baker, 2005; Chapman, 1984; Chapman & Green, 1986; DeLorenzo, 1992; Ingersoll, 2001; Krueger, 2000; Madsen & Hancock, 2002; Madsen & Madsen, 1998).

Causes of Teacher Attrition

An extensive body of literature exists to investigate why teachers leave the profession targeting a link between the conditions of teaching and teachers' continuation with their work in education. This will be deeply investigated later in this literature review. Research suggests several factors influence teacher attrition, some are under the sphere of influence of school administration, and some are not. Researchers confirm that beginning teachers in all K-12 education levels, both in the United States and abroad, consistently name classroom discipline as their greatest challenge (Madsen & Madsen, 1998; Veenman, 1984). However, the top-three number of factors can be manipulated, such as job satisfaction, workload, and stress (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Ferguson & Johnson, 2010; Ingersoll, 2001; Vail, 2005). Teachers with the absence of high-quality interventions, meaning they do not have proper support and assistance, are twice as likely to leave the classroom (Levine, 2006).

Impacts of Teacher Attrition

Teacher attrition impacts not only financial costs for schools, districts, and teachers (Coggshall & Sexton, 2008; Costrell & Podgursky, 2010; Feng & Sass, 2018; Watlington et al., 2010) but also lowers student achievement (Ronfeldt et al., 2013).

According to Marshall et al. (2013), students are more successful in districts with higher teacher retention rates. The U.S. Department of Education anticipates more than 2,000,000 new teachers will enter the teaching profession within the next decade, and 666,000 will leave within their first 3 years (Snyder & Dillow, 2010). School districts are working in developing a meaningful intervention to support teachers from leaving the profession before retirement. The outcome is crucial to students' growth and the stability of school districts.

Financial Impacts

It is difficult to place a value on a human asset, as there is no real way to quantify a human to money. However, it seems that researchers have developed a way to calculate time and money spent on training a person for a specific task (Barnes et al., 2007; Ramos, 2018; Watlington et al., 2010). According to Haynes (2014), teacher attrition expenditures range from $1 to $2 billion annually. This includes training from school districts to keep within the mandates from state and federal guidelines. Local estimates of teacher training and onboarding costs can exceed $12,000 per teacher per year. This does not account for highly technical or specialized classes.

Further, a financial drain for local public schools are the leaving of educators and students to charter schools (Rivera & Lopez, 2019; TASB, 2020). While charter schools continue to capture students for various reasons, they are structurally only able to receive state funding from average daily attendance. Charter schools receive zero funding from the local tax base. These students are recruited to participate in the privately managed state charter system. They often offer a sales pitch of providing a college preparatory education that can close achievement gaps, especially for low-income minority families.

However, the data from Texas Education Agency does not always support that picture (Rivera & Lopez, 2019; TASB, 2020). Charter school leadership often picks the best students to stay and either ask the underperformers to leave or deny admittance at all based on discipline.

Public schools are expected to meet each child's needs and provide free and appropriate education, regardless of special needs. Charter schools tend to sell the parents a story of the grass being greener on the other side; attending public schools can offer more resources for unique needs students (Rivera & Lopez, 2019; TASB, 2020). These tactics indeed skew the data of how well charters are genuinely performing, such as test scores and graduation rates. So, while charter schools continue to keep an average of about 7% of students, they continue to cipher 20% of state revenue that could have been funded to K-12 public schools.

Effects on Student Achievement

Several studies have demonstrated the negative impacts of teacher attrition on student achievement (Goldhaber et al., 2017; Martin et al., 2012; Schaffer et al., 2014). High rates of teachers leaving create gaps for students' opportunities to learn with highly effective, well rounded, and culturally responsive educators. Furthermore, students in urban settings are most in need of positive student-teacher relationships; categorically, these urban settings are typically where high-stress interactions lead to burnout (McGrath & Van Bergen, 2015; Nichols et al., 2006; Talbert-Johnson, 2004). It is further documented that minority and low-income students in schools with high concentrations of students in poverty or racial minorities are considerably less likely to be taught by teachers with strong credentials or high estimated effectiveness and these teachers are

more likely to leave after 1 year (Clotfelter et al., 2011; Feng & Sass, 2018; Goldhaber, 2015). Barnes et al. (2007) focused on the adverse effects on at-risk schools due to teacher turnover. With teachers leaving at high rates, fewer teachers with less developed skills create opportunity gaps in students' ability to learn from a well-rounded educator.

The problem is the inequality of resources (Betoret, 2006; Demerouti et al., 2001; Hoglund et al, 2015; McCarthy & Lambert, 2006). A significant, though not perfect, correlation between dollars spent per pupil and student education outcomes as measured by such factors as dropout rates, high school graduation rates, scores on standardized tests. The correlation is incredibly robust in elementary schools when students are in their formative years. The variation of disparities in per-pupil expenditures is staggering, and with the fallout of the recent pandemic, it is unclear how and when these inequities will be addressed.

The variety of school districts across the country include rural, suburban, and urban, all face challenges of retaining teachers and working through the current financial systems and inequity of resources (Betoret, 2006; Demerouti et al., 2001; Hoglund et al, 2015; McCarthy & Lambert, 2006). They must find a balance between monetary and non-monetary incentives to compete for teachers. Rural districts have continued to struggle with lower pay, geographic and social remoteness, and strenuous working conditions that make recruiting and retaining teachers challenging (Abel & Sewell, 1999; Donaldson, 2009; Talbert-Johnson, 2004). Suburban and urban districts face challenges such as competing for resources, high student discipline, high numbers of inexperienced educators with low support from campus administration. With the challenge of keeping teachers in the same schools, student achievement becomes a predicament (Weiss, 2020).

Causes of Teacher Attrition

Teachers have many mandated roles and responsibilities to follow, not just an in-depth knowledge of developing engaging work for students. There are many expectations for teachers to master that do not include classroom instruction, such as data collection, meetings for students' behavior, 504s, special education, school committees, building positive relationships with parents, and many more. Two types of stress that have consistently been mentioned in the literature are stress related to students' behavior and discipline, followed by stress related to workload (Borg & Riding, 1991; Boyle et al., 1995; Chaplain, 2008; Klassen & Chiu, 2010). While both highlighted issues have intrinsic and extrinsic impacts, this researcher endeavored to uncover a solution to increase job satisfaction and reduce the causes of teacher attrition from burnout.

Job Satisfaction

The type of professional school climate administration produces will influence teachers' job performance and satisfaction (Drago-Severson, 2012; Grissom, 2011; Kraft et al., 2015). Literature shows that school characteristics influence teachers' attrition decisions (Clotfelter et al., 2011; Imazeki, 2005; Murnane & Olsen, 1990; Scafidi et al., 2007). Such characteristics include building administration with student discipline, follow-through of universal expectations, holistic team approach when navigating difficult parent meetings, and keeping consistency with student learning targets. When school administration displays inconsistency on these complementary vital pieces of support, teacher stress increases, and satisfaction diminishes (Grissom, 2011).

Further, administrators are expected to observe and appraise teachers each year. Federal guidelines direct states to enhance evaluation systems to ensure a higher student

population (Riordan et al., 2015). Texas began to use the Texas Teacher Evaluation &

Support System (2021) in the 2014-2015 school year, which included 16 dimensions

across four domains: each piece with a rating choice—improvement needed, developing,

proficient, accomplished, or distinguished. Tied to the overall rating of a teacher's

performance, regardless of class growth and connections, is some type of standardized

testing. Texas uses the STAAR, State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness as

their measure, beginning in the third grade, following high school (Texas Education

Agency, 2020).

       Research shows a positive correlation of higher teacher satisfaction with the

administration when the evaluation rating did not include test scores and obtained

excellent marks (Sullivan et al., 2017). Besides, "teachers with more positive perceptions

of their principal's leadership were more likely to be satisfied with the evaluation

process" (Lacireno-Paquet et al., 2016, p. 5). Teachers that could report trusting the

administration to support them were less affected by the evaluation system. With an

ineffective administration or a driving culture of fear the teachers were less likely to find

value in the evaluation process. The stress of new results from the evaluation process is

tedious to teachers' mental well-being.

       Job satisfaction is also influenced by current laws and the continued direction

from the Supreme Court. Policymakers and the public demanded to improve the

instructional core of what teachers were presenting as evidenced by *San Antonio*

Independent School District et al., Appellants, v. Demetrio P. Rodriguez et al. 1973

(Legal Information Institute, n.d.). The initial determination was proposed to foster

innovation in the classroom. However, historically, larger-scale education innovations

have been crafted and promoted with teachers as recipients rather than authors of prospective innovations (Fagan, 1994). These disruptions were typically integrated as laws and rulings were released, independent of the year within the school cycle. This caused dysregulation of already operating entities, further adding stress to the teachers' overbearing workload (Farber, 1991; Howard & Johnson, 2004).

Workload

Reduced teacher pupil rapport. The workload of teachers grows each year, and the COVID-19 pandemic certainly has increased educators' expectations. As the researcher writes this investigation of teacher burnout, teachers' workload increases on varying levels while the pandemic continues. There will be a new wave of information and influences as these events are revealed.

According to Riggs (2013), the initial years of teaching are made more difficult as many first-year teachers assume the same roles as their veteran peers, and overwhelmingly these factors have contributed to higher attrition rates. Teachers in high poverty, low-performing schools tend to leave more often from burnout (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Hoglund et al., 2015), which puts a more significant gap for an already stressed education systems. While educators were expected to be "Highly Qualified" with extensive certifications, training, and degrees, this does not replace experience, and while the term no longer applies federally, states determine how to specify expectations of teacher qualified requirements. Developing distinguished teachers is a process of experiences; the preparation programs leave a gap in how teachers build relationships with students and parents. To navigate the accommodations of varying needs, being

knowledgeable and fluid in standards-based environments, and building appropriate relationships with stakeholders takes in action practice. With teachers leaving at high rates, the effects are fewer teachers with less developed skills creating academic setbacks in students to learn from a well-rounded educator (Goldhaber et al., 2017; Martin et al., 2012; Schaffer et al., 2014).

Student discipline. "Among all teachers, stress from student behaviors was the only stress factor linked to talking to their doctor about stress" (Ferguson et al., 2017, p. 71). Teachers managing student behaviors was the most pressing issue and the highest subject of discussion with professionals outside the school setting (Ferguson et al., 2017). Negative experiences with student discipline have required a diversion of a considerable amount of school resources from pieces of training to creations of alternative schooling placements and it still accounts for the largest percentage of workplace stress (Cornell & Mayer, 2010; Golden, 1993; MacNaughton & Johns, 1991; Terrell, 1976; J. L. Williams et al., 2013). Teachers consistently redirecting disruptive student behaviors have overall reduced students' abilities to receive quality instructional time (Dinkes et al., 2007) and have generated adverse outcomes for teachers' emotional and occupational well-being leading to burnout (Aldrup et al., 2018).

Large classes. Urban teachers often face large class sizes, with limited resources and space, low student attendance, a disproportionate number of 504 and special education accommodations to meet, with the extra stress of passing high-stakes tests (Barmby, 2006; Eslinger, 2014; Haberman & Rickards, 1990). Large class sizes influence teacher satisfaction and workload. The average class size in 2011–2012, within public school settings, was 21.2 pupils for elementary schools, and secondary schools averaged

26.8 pupils (Hussar & Bailey. 2019; Snyder et al., 2019). While COVID-19 has temporarily decreased in-class participation, teachers' workloads have doubled while teaching dually in person and virtually (Bintliff et al., 2020; P. Ellis, 2020).

Additional duties. Educators are expected to do more than just deliver curriculum to students. Consequently, this pressure has been cited as a possible catalyst for teacher burnout, which increases teacher stress and lowers morale (Fernet et al., 2012; Kamenetz, 2015; Tapp, 2020). Teachers are expected to manage and document educational needs, foster social and emotional learning, council on academic classes, and encourage physical well-being (McCarthy et al., 2010). The workload of managing all the time-consuming pieces leads to less time in planning with peers, taking care of their family, and causing diminished job satisfaction (Bernard, 2016; Ferguson et al., 2017; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017).

Lack of curricular freedom/testing issues. Additionally, teacher burnout is a lack of curricular freedom because of standardized testing. No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (2002) and Every Student Succeeds Act (2015) focused heavily on content and systems, measured by standardized testing rather than designing relationships and connection. The literature consistently shows teachers believe student test scores do not accurately measure instructional practice (Coggshall et al., 2010; Darling-Hammond, 2015). Removing the very human nature of guiding students to discover learning and replacing it with a testing performance created an environment of high stress and diminished investment of the teacher job satisfaction (Collie et al., 2012).

The ever-present accentuation on high-stakes testing is unarguably a stress factor to teachers (McCarthy & Lambert, 2006). McCarthy noted, ". . . standardized testing to address teacher accountability can be debated in terms of policy effectiveness, there is little doubt that it has caused elevated levels of stress for teachers and administrators" (McCarthy et al., 2012, p. xx). Teachers have been forced to turn away from their craft autonomy and instead focused on embedding testing skills. This led to a fear of losing their livelihood, and job satisfaction diminished, which cultivated further burnout.

Classroom appraisals were initially devised to assist teachers in honing their craft (Danielson, 2007). It is now an accountability tool that is useful when the administration embraces the right spirit for which it was designed. Teachers report they design a captivating lesson for administrators to see, and the actual day-to-day functioning of the class is not always observed. Indeed, the focus is high on student growth, which is measured in the state standardized testing. In reality, it is not what the teachers are being appraised for. Fear of low ratings, leading to growth plans, further adds to the teacher's stress (Betoret, 2009; Collie et al., 2012).

Stress leading to burnout. The literature review created an observable correlation of the complexity of all the pieces within the school unit that affects teachers' stress such as administrative support, curriculum choice, high-stakes testing, inadequate facilities, and additional duties (Ladd, 2011). School-level data should consider student enrollment; student-teacher ratio; the proportions of students identified as English learners, economically disadvantaged, and gifted and talented; special education programs; student academic achievement based on state testing, and student ethnicity (Sullivan et al., 2017). These factors influence how administrators operate on a day-to-day basis, which in turn

affects teachers. When the administration is laissez-faire or antagonistic, the culture and climate will deteriorate, further adding stress (Coggshall et al., 2010; Fernet et al., 2012; Kamenetz, 2015).

Stress within the classroom and career of education can outweigh the fulfillment of helping students learn, leading to diminished energy, cynicism, detachment, and feelings of ineffectiveness (Herman et al., 2020). The very idea of stress on the job began in the research of the late 1930s by Hans Selye (Rochette & Vergely, 2017). His onset indication of the nature of stress created vocabulary we are intimately embraced with today. Indeed, he determined ". . . use the word "stressor" as the factor/agent that triggers the "stress" response. He clearly wanted to emphasize that the stressor may be physical (e.g., cold and heat), chemical (e.g., formalin and ether), or psychologic" (Rochette & Vergely, 2017, p. 181). Stress was proven to affect the immune system, among other biological results. Further, stress has been shown to diminish the overall quality of relationships between teachers and students, which reduces the effectiveness of a primary education. Prolonged stress is linked to burnout (Abel & Sewell, 1999; Blase, 1986; Farber, 1982).

Maslach began to research this phenomenon in the mid-1970s in human service workers (Maslach et al., 2001). Combined with other psychological researchers, the term burnout began to intermingle with more than just chronic drug users. Wagner (2019) studied the attrition rate and correspondence to leadership. Wagner did note "the concept of professional burnout is defined as a condition of bodily and mental exhaustion creating a negative sense of self-worth (Gold, 1984; Jackson & Maslach, 1982)" (p. 22). While the acknowledgment of burnout is found in literature, the lack of addressing the cause or

circumventing the outcome is limited (Dierking & Fox, 2013; Herman & Reinke, 2014;

Sadler-Gerhardt & Stevenson, 2012).

The global conceptualization of job burnout as a psychological syndrome

responds to prevalent and persistent interpersonal stressors in and involving the

workplace. McCarthy noted: "The three key dimensions of this response are an

overwhelming exhaustion, feelings of cynicism and detachment from the job, and a sense

of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment" (as cited in Maslach et al., 2001, p. 399).

These overwhelming emotions and thought processes take over a person's sense of ability

to interact positively, unable to dismiss the feeling of incompetence and a lack of

achievement, and diminishes productivity at work (Maslach et al., 2001).

Repercussions of burnout include teacher perceptions of demands and resources

in the school environment, which coincides perfectly with Lazarus and Folkman's (1984)

transactional model of stress. This model hypothesized that when life demands are

encountered, a subjective transaction occurs in which the person weighs the perceived

demands of the event against perceived capabilities for coping. Perceptions that life

demands outweigh available resources for coping lead to the stress response, which

includes negative emotions and, in the long term, burnout symptoms and health problems

(Hemmeter, 2013). In the context of teaching, Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) theory

would suggest that when an educator perceives their classroom demands as outweighing

the available resources for coping with them, stress is the likely outcome.

Poor Facilities

Supportive studies show school working conditions appear to have some of the

most robust and most significant effects on teachers' perceptions of job satisfaction and

resilience (Boyd et al., 2011; Johnson et al., 2012; Ladd, 2011). There is also research supporting that inadequate facilities and lack of teaching materials are associated with continuing the attrition issue (X. Wei et al., 2015). They are working in dilapidated facilities, unsafe buildings in need of repair compound stressful responses in educators (Lippman, 2013).

Interventions (Attempts to Reduce Teacher Attrition)

Despite such challenges, school officials can play a vital role in promoting teacher well-being, particularly in the area of reducing teacher stress and promoting healthy countermeasures to biologically alleviate negative effects (Betoret, 2006; Boyle et al., 1995; Jepson & Forrest, 2006; Kyriacou, 2001). The effects of prolonged occupational stress on teachers' health and the well-being and educational development associated with student achievement have prompted numerous studies (Brown et al., 2007; Pretsch et al., 2012; Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2015). Some of these interventions are so new there is no literature or research yet, others have not had the results policymakers expected. With this study, the researcher offers insight as an intervention including viable coping strategies for combating teacher burnout that will increase job satisfaction at the three selected middle school sites.

Preparation Programs

The consideration for colleges to prepare teachers as highly qualified has created intensive preparation programs to retain excellent teachers in the educational system (Sutcher et al., 2016). College preparation programs have increased standards for graduating to include such things as student teaching, clinical, and mentoring. The

increase of time in the preparation programs and more negative public perceptions of teaching have led to a decrease in university teacher preparation programs nationwide (Sutcher et al., 2016). To advance teacher attrition, enrollment numbers in Texas educator preparation programs dropped from 67,361 in the 2009-2010 school year to 45,385 in 2013-2014, a 33% drop (Sullivan et al., 2017). Therefore, schools are limited due to fewer highly qualified teachers in their applicant pools.

College preparation programs show trends of success in specific elements. Goldhaber et al. (2017) found in an investigation of a prep program that teachers are more likely to stay in the field of education, be more effective, and overall have a higher job satisfaction outcome when they are hired within a similar demographic makeup of student teaching to first hire. It is unclear if these more effective teaching outcomes will curb teacher burnout in the first 5 years.

The need for qualified teachers to fill vacancies is an issue facing all education areas (Donitsa-Schmidt & Zuzovsky, 2014; Flynt & Morton, 2009; Garcia & Weiss, 2019; U.S. Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education, 2016). Alternative certification pathways, such as Teach for America or iTeach, de-professionalize teaching while traditional preparation programs experience increased requirements have created further conflict in educational systems. Alternative certification pathways deviate by candidate selection and acceptance, intensity and rigor, and length (U.S. Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education, 2016). Bransford et al. (2007) stated some alternative teacher certification models offer only slim overviews of fundamentals needed for productive teaching and could only require a few weeks' worth of professional preparation. Considering a traditional 3-credit hour

college class typically comprises 75 or more total instructional hours, it is a probable

correlation why alternative pathways to teacher certification are viewed as academic

shortcuts in comparison to their robust traditional pathways (Bowling & Ball, 2018;

Walsh & Jacobs, 2007; Watts, 1986). This lack of training and preparation could add

teachers in the category for leaving the profession within the first 5 years (Goldhaber et

al., 2017; Sutcher et al., 2016).

Mentors

Another preventative measure placed by school agencies is a mentoring program

to pair a more seasoned educator with a novice educator (Feiman-Nemser, 2012).

Mentoring, typically a one-on-one learning relationship, can address questions and solve

problems as situations arise and have mixed results within the current literature. These

results depend on various factors, for example, is the relationship between the pair

genuine, whether they have adequate time and resources to assist, and their real follow-

through. "Inducting new teachers into . . . integrated professional environments not only

reduce the problem of teacher isolation but also fosters learning with and from colleagues

and promotes a sense of collective responsibility" (Feiman-Nemser, 2012, p. 15).

Mentoring programs are as superior as the facilitators guiding the novice teacher

(Daniels, 2021). At worst, haphazard mentoring programs consist of randomly assigned

pairs of veteran teachers and novices, typically the teacher willing to take on one more

duty. The results of such endeavors can be disastrous to the incoming teacher (Daniels,

2021). Programs that develop confidence for beginning teachers are only as effective as

the people willing to work the extra steps; most expert teachers are already overburdened

with extra duties and choose not to participate. Establishing the professional and social

foundation with the new educator population is imperative for success (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Kidger et al. (2016) found similar conclusions and stated it was unclear why teachers felt unable to discuss their feelings of stress with colleagues but revealed: "a culture among teachers of coping alone and unwillingness to approach senior managers for support due to concerns about appearing weak or incompetent" (pp. 79-80). Mentors can be a strength; they work when honesty can be shared when they are on the same campus, teaching the same content, and not hindering the meetings' consistency. While all teachers are required for compliance-based professional development, targeted mentor programs and specific and individualized professional development are still lacking (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Olebe, 2005; H.-S. Wei et al., 2010).

Generalized Professional Development

Most states require educators to attain a certain number of continuing education hours to keep their certifications current (Collie et al., 2015). School districts in Texas typically offer professional development throughout the year and summer with support from the regional service centers, in-house training, and released training from the Texas Education Agency. This generalized professional development is not seen as positively impacting teachers' job satisfaction or reduced workload stress (Collie et al., 2015).

Stipends

Stipends, extra duty pay, or loan forgiveness are monetary benefits to teachers to compensate for teaching's emotional demands (Donaldson, 2009; Gilpin, 2012; Goldhaber et al., 2007; Grissom & Loeb, 2017). The Teacher Recruitment and Retention

Act of 2003 was initiated and enacted to help retain educators in high-needs schools (GovTrack, 2021). This act would provide funds for increasing dollar amount loan forgiveness in high needs areas, specifically math, science, and special education teachers. Title I schools had access to this also, but not as high of a dollar amount. While it is designed for teachers to stay 5 years in education to earn the compensation, there is little research leading to this specific intervention keeping educators in the profession long term (Donaldson, 2009; Gilpin, 2012; Goldhaber et al., 2007; Grissom & Loeb, 2017).

Signing Bonus

Another enticement of monetary value is signing bonuses to bring in and keep teachers within school districts (Satty, 2016). Texas has provided a new House Bill 3 to funnel money to the education system and boost accountability standards. While not all is clear at the time of writing, some school districts have offered the teachers the 2020-2021 school year a signing bonus of $2,500 (Isenberg, 2020). Other districts chose to spend that money on the front end rather than provide a higher salary long term. This is to entice teachers to stay or to move, depending on which space they hear the message (Moore, 2019; See et al., 2020). It causes competition among neighboring districts, and long term could cause more movers and leavers in education.

<center>*Stress Reducing Activities*</center>

The effects that deteriorate teachers' health and mental well-being are of notice to school leaders (Baer & Krietemeyer, 2006; Baer et al., 2004; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Kabat-Zinn, 2014). Current research indicates the outcomes of the teachers'

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educational value and their occupational health is at risk if proper interventions are not put into place. Iancu et al. (2018) noted there was minimal research on the effectiveness of interventions presented to teachers. Professional interventions include mental health services, wellness programs, decreasing workload, and mindfulness routines (Maricuțoiu et al., 2016).

Herman and Reinke (2014) suggested the solution could be as simple as an attitude adjustment in their stress management guidebook. Singer (2012) concurred that attitude might play a key role in how people deal with stressful situations and modifying one's reactions may reduce the stress that leads to burnout. Singer also suggested coping skills and strategies can be developed to eliminate the negative responses that fuel burnout. According to Dierking and Fox (2013), the idea of building coping skills is very empowering because teachers feel more in control of their emotions and better able to handle stress in their workplace. Coping responses affect the impact of stress on psychological well-being and physiological responses (Steptoe et al., 1998). How people cope also affects situational appraisal and the implication of challenges, thus altering stress perception (Park & Folkman, 1997; Terry & Hynes, 1998; Terry et al., 1995). Seidman and Zager (1991) noted several positive coping approaches used by teachers and found that competitive or low-level physical exercise, meditation and relaxation, and hobby and vacation activities all correlated with lower rates of burnout.

Waltz (2016) explained stressors cannot be removed from the teaching environment, which is why teachers should learn strategies and techniques to manage stress triggers and maintain teaching along with personal effectiveness. Seidman and Zager (1991) noted several positive coping approaches teachers use, such as competitive

to low-level physical exercise, meditation or relaxation, and hobby activities. They found these strategies all correlated with lower rates of burnout. Mindfulness-based approaches are recognized as effective ways to establish and maintain health and well-being (Baer, 2003; Brown & Ryan, 2003; K. Williams et al., 2001).

Mindfulness

Kabat-Zinn (1994) describes mindfulness as a practiced intentional moment of paying close attention to what is occurring, without producing judgment. Many studies in recent times have studied the brain and bodies reaction to the use of these centuries' old traditions of meditation and have discovered positive affective states (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Roeser & Eccles, 2015; Roeser et al., 2013; Schussler et al., 2015). A pilot study of the effects on stress and teacher well-being in 2013 shared patterns positively associated with increased effect and well-being after an 8-week training on mindfulness with increased brain activity (Flook et al., 2013).

Many studies seek to connect how mindfulness can increase the workforce's productivity and sustainability, specifically in education. Hülsheger et al. (2013) found that mindfulness was positively associated with job satisfaction, and further, they found this relationship also increased satisfaction in outside areas of the participants' lives (Crain et al., 2016). Mindfulness could be a significant component of keeping teachers within the profession and making positive differences within classrooms across the educational system (Jennings et al., 2019; Roeser et al., 2012; Schussler et al., 2018).

Mindfulness-Based Programs for Teachers

Mindfulness training programs typically teach mindfulness skills and coping strategies through structured practices such as body scans, breath meditation, and loving-kindness meditation. These practices teach how attention is focused intentionally and nonjudgmentally on present-moment somatic, mental, and social experiences in the form of bodily sensations, feelings, mental images, and thoughts (Kabat-Zinn, 2013; Lutz et al. 2007; Vago & Silbersweig, 2012). Although mindfulness programs may be advantageous, they can be difficult to access due to cost and program length (Carmody & Baer, 2009; Roeser et al., 2012).

Due to the significant commitment of time and money, researchers and mindfulness experts have begun to examine the benefits of briefer, 8 weeks or less, as more accessible interventions (Taylor et al., 2016). Some interventions are designed with fewer synchronous hours but add asynchronous intervention time. Others reduce the number of weeks of commitment but require longer days. Others seek to increase exposure by making the interventions easier to access, such as self-paced videos or audio recordings (Carmody & Baer, 2009; Jennings et al., 2013). Meiklejohn et al. (2012) identified 10 particular school-based programs, and he noted popular programs such as Mindful Schools are gaining attention from education leaders.

This section reviews four samples of mindfulness-based training programs for teachers: Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE); Mindfulness, Courage, and Reflection for Educators; Stress Management and Relaxation Techniques (SMART) in Education, and Mindful Schools. These programs share an underpinning thought that mindfulness-trained teachers embrace mindful behaviors and attitudes

through their presence and interaction with students in the classroom (Baer, 2003;

Jennings et al., 2012; Grossman et al., 2004; Shapiro & Carlson, 2009).

Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education™ (CARE) was developed to

actively address teacher burnout by equipping school personnel with tools and strategies

to manage stress and emotional responses (Jennings, Snowberg et al., 2011). The CARE

program consists of training in emotional skills regulation, mindfulness/stress

management practices, and caring and listening practices. Two incredibly unique

components—emotion skills instruction and caring and listening practices—are

particularly relevant to school personnel. During the training, content is delivered through

lectures, small group discussions, dyadic interactions, and experiential activities

(Jennings et al., 2013). The CARE program has been presented in several formats: two-

day training sessions, four 1-day sessions, and a 5-day intensive retreat. During the time

between sessions, CARE facilitators provide e-mails and individualized coaching

sessions over the phone to support the integration of skills into practice (Meiklejohn et

al., 2012).

Mindfulness, Courage, and Reflection for Educators, a blend of the Courage to

Teach Program and Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction activities, is offered online

through the University of Massachusetts Medical Center (UMass Memorial Health,

2021). Time spent in mindfulness practice, whether at home or in a group, has been

associated with more significant reductions in mood disturbance and symptoms of stress

(Brown et al. 2007; Speca et al. 2000). The 8-week course is synchronous and

asynchronous, requiring a 2-hour orientation before enrollment. Weekly classes total 31

hours of direct instruction, with the daily home practice of 45 to 60 minutes per day.

There is 1 full-day class that is required to complete the course (UMass Memorial Health, 2021).

The SMART program, which stands for Stress Management and Relaxation Techniques in Education, was created in 2007 by the Impact Foundation (Roeser et al., 2013). Based on the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program of the Center for Mindfulness in Worcester, SMART is targeted towards K-12 teachers and addresses topics such as mindfulness, emotional understanding and regulation, compassion for self and others, concentration, and attention. Participants attend eight 2-hour weekly sessions and a 4-hour silent retreat. While lasting over 9 weeks, the program includes presentations, discussion, and experiential activities involving movement, emotional awareness, and meditation. A randomized waitlist study showed positive outcomes, with teachers who have completed the program reporting decreased stress, anxiety, depression, and burnout (Roeser et al., 2013).

Mindful Schools, developed in 2007, is designed to offer online mindfulness classes with a scaffolding curriculum (Mindfulness Foundations, 2020). Laurie Grossman, Megan Cowan, and Richard Shankman established the Community Partnership for Mindfulness in Education, which was later renamed Mindful Schools (Semple et al., 2016). In the 2011–2012 school year, Mindful Schools researchers partnered with the University of California, Davis, to conduct a randomized-controlled study on mindfulness (A. Smith et al., 2012). Each school was located in a relatively high-crime district with mostly minority, low-income students and 91% qualified for free or reduced-fee school lunches (Semple et al., 2016; A. Smith et al., 2012). Evaluation results indicated teachers were satisfied with the program, found it beneficial, and

planned to continue mindfulness practices (A. Smith et al., 2012). Teachers reported that teachers and students improved their awareness, healthily dealt with stress, and regained focus when distracted. Besides, the teachers reported the program helped to improve student behavior and self-control. Finally, most teachers noticed at least a few of their students using mindfulness strategies on their own (A. Smith et al., 2012).

Mindfulness 101 is a 4-week course to provide educators with necessary information about mindfulness while supporting personal meditation practice (Brach, 2019; Semple et al., 2016). Goals include developing a daily sitting practice, working skillfully with thoughts and emotions, and cultivating positive mind states. Closeout surveys were sent to track the impact graduates of the program have, how the courses have affected them, and how improvements could be made for future classes (Brach, 2019; Semple et al., 2016). Mindful Schools also conducted pre and post surveys each time a course is taught to test for significant improvements on validated measures (D. S. Black & Fernando, 2014; Brach, 2019).

Programs that train teachers and students in skills that promote prosocial behavior to create a non-disruptive classroom could alleviate teacher burden and benefit student learning (Darling-Hammond, 2001; Montgomery & Rupp, 2005; Pas et al. 2010). Mindful Schools have been utilized with successful study rates in high-poverty, urban schools making it an excellent intervention for this study (Brach, 2019; Semple et al., 2016; A. Smith et al., 2012). To date, Mindful Schools (Hanger, 2020) has not been studied with teachers using the Job Satisfaction Survey as a measurement of effect, meaning this would add valuable data to the mindfulness repository.

Conclusion

More research is needed to understand and address further what causes teachers to burnout and leave education—teachers who have longevity in the field with the dedication to educate youth positively impact student achievement. Shifting mindsets to allow teachers to have satisfaction in the workplace and administration reducing workloads could be helpful. However, the provision of enhancing teachers' skillset to use mindfulness responses adeptly may indeed be the critical turning point of flattening the curve of educational disparity.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

In this study, the researcher examined the effect of a mindfulness intervention on job satisfaction. The background of the problem and extensive searching of the current literature was researched within Chapter Two, the literature review. The methods used for the current study are introduced in Chapter Three.

The study's focus was to identify the effect that a mindfulness intervention would exert upon job satisfaction perceptions in middle school teachers. Chapter Three contains a description of the methods and procedures that addressed the study topic. The research design, research questions, a sample of participants, research instrumentation, and data analysis are presented and discussed within the chapter.

The study was a quantitative, quasi experimental, pretest, and posttest study (Fraenkel et al., 2019). The study's focus was the possible degree to which mindfulness practice interventions impact perceptions of job satisfaction in middle school teachers within Central Texas. The intervention, Mindful Schools' (2020) 101: Mindfulness Foundations, offered the opportunity for enhanced job satisfaction levels and support as an alternative strategy that is not widely discussed in the professional or research literature. As noted in Chapter One, there is a gap within the current literature of quantitative studies regarding mindfulness interventions and job satisfaction. The study was significant, considering the lack of research within the professional literature on mindfulness and job satisfaction of quantitative studies regarding mindfulness

interventions and job satisfaction while teaching in a pandemic. Moreover, most studies featured in the professional literature on the study's topic are qualitative and mixed with nature and design.

Research Design

The study was an experimental design in which participants, after self-selection, were assigned to treatment (experimental) and control groups. This allowed the researcher to calculate an effect as the difference between the outcomes from participants who received treatment and a reasonable counterfactual, an absence of treatment (Shadish et al., 2002). The researcher provided a pretest survey to all 160 middle school teachers, with a request for voluntary participants in the opportunity to participate within the mindfulness intervention. This response data allowed for at least 30 teachers to be randomly selected for the mindfulness intervention, 26 teachers said yes to the intervention. The control group of 16 did not participate in the mindfulness intervention and were placed on a wait list, they still received the post test.

Intervention

The intervention was 101: Mindfulness Foundations from Mindful Schools (2020), developed with neuroscience research. This program included explicit instruction on emotions and stress, offered times to practice how to use mindfulness to regulate emotions and stress more effectively, and integrate mindfulness in the natural habits of life (Bishop et al., 2004; R. Chambers et al., 2009). Mindfulness Foundations (2020) is comprised of a 4-week online, self-paced seminar. Typically, the intervention is held over 4 weeks with in-between coaching sessions provided to participants virtually to support mindfulness skills. Mindfulness Foundations utilized four primary instructional

components: concepts and practices, mindfulness of the body, mindfulness of emotions, and mindfulness of thoughts and practice in daily life. Program components are linked to specific strategies for improving classroom management, teacher-student relationships, and instructional strategies (Jennings, Foltz et al., 2011; Jennings, Snowberg et al., 2011; Sharp & Jennings, 2016). Mindfulness Foundations made a sound research-based mindfulness intervention for this study. At the time of this research, Mindful Schools programs (Brach, 2019), specifically, Mindfulness Foundations, have never been measured with the JSS, which makes a compelling study for educational advancement.

Site of Data Collection

The site selected for the study was a 6A school district located in Central Texas. Data from the National Center for Education Statistics accounted for the 2019-2020 school year, a span of 17 schools serving Pre-K through 12th grade. This district served a total of 8,752 students, with a total of 608.80 classroom teachers. The middle schools, consisting of Grades 6–8, reported 1,939 students and 118 teachers. All three campuses supported high percentages of students with low-socioeconomic needs based on free and reduced lunch applications and 73% of the middle school students in the highest at-risk range.

Current 2020-2021 data reports 1,882 students with 56.96% designated at-risk and 74.28% designated low-socioeconomic (free and reduced lunch), within the three middle schools. The current teacher data shows a total of 160 teachers on the middle school campuses for 2020-2021 school year. Teachers within 0-5 years of service make up 53% of the teaching staff and 46% were alternatively certified.

Participants

Middle school teachers from all three campuses were invited to participate in the study. Teachers were defined as holding a valid Texas teaching certification within their teaching assignment and were considered full-time employees. Substitutes, aides, and administration were not included for study participation. Essential demographic identifiers included study participant gender, years of professional experience, type of certification, and mindfulness activity status (Likert scale 1-10) outside the study's intervention variable parameters.

Participants were asked for self-selection of participation in the mindfulness intervention. Due to the small sample size, the study group and control group were placed based on self-selection. Participating teachers that completed the initial survey but did not self-select for the intervention were invited to complete the post survey as the control group.

Sample Size Estimates

Parameters of sample size appropriate to detect a statistically significant finding within the study's three research questions were addressed in *a priori* fashion using G*Power software, Version 3.1.9.2 (Heinrich Heine Universität Düsseldorf, 2014). A medium treatment effect ($d = .50$; $p = .05$; $1 - \beta = .80$) for the pretest/posttest research design used in the study required a sample size of 27 to detect a statistically significant finding, and a sample size of 64 was required to detect a statistically significant finding for the use of linear regression with an anticipated medium predictive effect, $f2 = .15$; $p = .05$; $1 - \beta = .80$ (Cohen, 1992).

Response Rate

A response rate of at least 75% was desired at the outset of the study. The potential sample pool for study purposes was approximately 160 teachers. The desired response rate for the study far exceeds the customary level of 33% generally achieved in internal surveying, and 29% generally achieved in electronic surveying methods (Lindemann, 2021). The actual response rate of pre and post survey totaled 42 for both groups.

Research Instrumentation

Study data were collected using the JSS to measure middle school teachers' perception of satisfaction within the current education scope of professional responsibility (see Appendix A). Pre and post surveys were administered online to participants through Qualtrics. Survey data achieved using the JSS provided preliminary insight into teacher perceptions of job identity and was used to develop the focus group intervention protocol. This survey tool has been used in many studies and is deemed as a valid tool. Permission to use the survey is in Appendix B. Validity is defined as the extent to which a concept is accurately measured and secondly, important in a quantitative study is reliability, or the accuracy of an instrument. Specifically, the research instrument consistently has the same results when used in the same situation on repeated occasions (Heale, 2015).

The JSS was initially developed for social service employees and has been found to predict employee turnover (de Carbonel, 2007; Spector, 1985; Tsounis & Sarafis, 2018; van Saane et al., 2003), making it an exceptional study component for teacher job satisfaction and predicting burnout. The JSS contains 36 items related to intrinsic and

extrinsic satisfaction factors. Participants will respond to each item using a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = *disagree very much* to 6 = *agree very much*. The items corresponding to overall job satisfaction, and each subscale are summed to create composite scores (Spector, 1985).

Research Questions

The research questions guiding this study are as follows:

RQ1: To what degree do mindfulness practices affect middle school teachers' perceptions of overall job satisfaction?

RQ1a. To what extent do mindfulness practices affect individual aspects of job satisfaction?

RQ2: To what degree do study participants engage in mindfulness practices?

Research Hypotheses

H_{01}: Mindfulness practices do not significantly affect middle school teachers' perceptions of overall job satisfaction.

$H_{01}a$: Mindfulness practices do not significantly impact individual aspects of job satisfaction.

H_{02}: Study participants do not engage in mindfulness practices.

Data Analysis Procedures

Foundational analyses of an introductory nature are conducted with study data before the formal analytic process with the research questions (Creswell, 2014). Missing data, internal reliability, and descriptive analysis of the study's demographic identifying information was addressed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques.

Missing data was addressed using frequency counts (n) and percentages (%). Should the study's missing data have exceeded 5%, the randomness of missing data would have been addressed using Little's MCAR statistical technique (Schafer & Graham, 2002). Imputation of missing data would have been considered in the event the level of missing data reached or exceeded 10%.

Internal reliability of the study participant response to items on the study's research instrument was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha (*a*) statistical technique (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Although alpha levels of *a* = .60 are generally considered the threshold of adequacy, an alpha level of at least *a* = .70 was sought in the study (George & Mallery, 2018). Considering the acclaim and standardization associated with the study's adopted research instrument—JSS, the alpha levels did meet the "very good" level of *a* = .80 (Field, 2018).

Demographic identifier data associated with study participants were evaluated using descriptive statistical techniques. Specifically, frequency counts (*n*) and percentages (%) were used for illustrative and comparative purposes. Initial evaluations of study participant responses to the survey items of the research instrument at both the pre-test and post-test conditions of the study were addressed using the descriptive techniques of frequency counts (*n*), percentages (%), mean scores (*M*), and standard deviations (SD; Ross & Wilson, 2017).

The statistical significance of the findings within the study were assessed using a repeated measures ANOVA (Cohen, 1992). The magnitude of effect size of study participant responses within survey items at the pre-test and post-test conditions of the study were assessed using Cohen's (2013) *d* statistical technique.

Research Questions 1 and 1a were addressed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The primary descriptive statistical techniques used were frequency counts (*n*), mean scores (*M*), and standard deviations (*SD*) for the pre-test, post-test, and difference score between pre-test and post-test. The statistical significance of difference scores from the pre-test to post-test conditions were assessed using the repeated measures ANOVA (Cohen, 1992). The normality of pre-test/post-test difference data was assessed using skew and kurtosis values. Skewness and kurtoses values less than -2.0/+2.0 are considered inconsequential to the assumption of normality (George & Mallery, 2018).

The magnitude of the intervention effect size was evaluated using Cohen's (1992) *d* statistical technique. Qualitative interpretations of *d* values reflected Sawilowsky's (2009) conventions of effect size interpretation.

Research Question 2 is predictive, utilizing a binary, categorical grouping independent variable. Mindfulness practice for study purposes was evaluated on a 10-point Likert scale (0 = *Not at all likely*; 10 = *Extremely likely*), with a value of 5 = Neutral on the scale. The researcher looked for the range of participation within the experimental group. The Cohen's (1992) *d* statistical technique was used to evaluate the magnitude of study participant effect of response to perception of engagement in mindfulness practices. Study data were analyzed using SPSS, Version 27.

Ethical Considerations

Notwithstanding typical cultural considerations, the Belmont Report of 1978 (Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1979) generated a framework of causing no harm to individuals who participate within a research frame. University-based

researchers must seek Institutional Review Board approval when their projects meet the research's human subjects' regulations' definition. The researcher committed to adhering to the three basic ethical principles respect for persons, beneficence, and justice throughout the study (Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1979).

The researcher collected data used for this study. To protect all participating teachers' confidentiality and privacy, no individual identifying information was available in the data analysis. Instead, all demographic data that provides information on participating teachers and control group were presented in aggregate at the district level so there was minimal risk of teachers' identities being uncovered. The researcher went to additional efforts to ensure the datasets compiled were not accessible to anyone outside the research team.

Data were downloaded onto the researcher's private computer that is password-protected and only utilized by the researcher during the data preparation phase. Although school names were available on web-based dashboards that houses some data, the researcher replaced all names in the dataset that she created with ID numbers rather than using names. Although readers will see the type of district, the number of participating teachers, and the demographic characteristics (aggregate) of these teachers, the schools' or teachers' actual identities were not revealed.

After the study, all study data will be retained for 7 years, standard procedure with quantitative data. The data will continue to be stored on the researcher's password-protected, personal computer and will only be available to the researcher. Presentations of the data, in print or oral format, will only describe data in aggregate,7 across all participating schools, and school identities will not be shared with audiences.

Limitations

Limitations within the study are variables outside of the researcher's scope of control. Limitations the researcher considered are as follows:

1. Teachers will answer questions honestly and without fear of reprisal.

2. It was assumed that teachers will take time to deeply consider their responses to the survey questions and not only check boxes.

3. Effects of COVID-19 within the overall scope of education and the harsh response to instructional change.

4. External applications of seeking further interventions to increase job satisfaction.

Summary

School teachers are leaving the profession at alarming rates and turnover trends are larger in high-poverty schools than in low-poverty public schools (Shen, 1997; Winter & Cowen, 2013). Moreover, teacher attrition within low-performing schools tends to be greater (Boyd et al., 2008; Hanushek et al., 2004) as well as schools with higher percentages of minority students (Mueller & O'Connor, 2007; Scafidi et al., 2007). While many factors contribute to job satisfaction, a significant cause of dissatisfaction is teachers' stress, which aids them to burnout and leave the profession (Fisher, 2011; Scott, 2019; Sutcher, 2016). Teachers' job-related stress falls under two major categories: stress related to students' behavior and discipline and stress-related to workload (Borg & Riding, 1991; Boyle et al., 1995; Chaplain, 2008; Skaalvik, & Skaalvik, 2009; Klassen & Chiu, 2010).

In this chapter, the researcher described the quantitative study with the Job Satisfaction Survey from Spector (1994), pre-intervention, and post-intervention. The robust mindfulness intervention was 101: Mindfulness Foundations" from Mindful Schools (2020), a 4-week program with participants utilizing skills while in the classroom of an urban-like district in Central Texas. The results were shared to enhance the literature base as well as enrich future classrooms.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

The study was conducted to identify the effect that a mindfulness intervention might exert upon the perceptions of job satisfaction in middle school teachers. This chapter includes a description of the data analysis of the two research questions to address the study's topic and research problem. Three middle school campus teachers in a Central Texas school district were invited to participate in the study. A pre-test, mindfulness intervention, and post-test were administered in the spring semester of 2021.

The researcher emailed 160 surveys to middle school teachers in Central Texas with a response rate of 42 completed surveys and 26 willing participants for the Mindful Schools interventions. The researcher used Qualtrics to send emails to collect the survey results of the Job Satisfaction Survey. Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were used to analyze the study's research questions. The analysis of data and reporting of study findings were conducted using SPSS, Version 27. Chapter Four contains the formal reporting of findings achieved in the study.

Research Questions

The research questions guiding this study are as follows:

RQ1:   To what degree do mindfulness practices affect middle school teachers'
       perceptions of overall job satisfaction?

RQ1a. To what extent do mindfulness practices affect individual aspects of job satisfaction?

RQ2: To what degree do study participants engage in mindfulness practices?

Preliminary Findings

Foundational, preliminary analyses were conducted in advance of the formal analysis of the study's research questions. The preliminary analyses conducted focused on the study's extent of missing data/survey completion rate, internal reliability, and descriptive statistical analyses of the study's demography and initial findings in the response sets. Descriptive statistical analyses were primarily used at the preliminary phase of data analysis.

Missing Data/Survey Completion Rate

The study's extent of missing data and subsequent survey completion rate were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques. The study's essential data arrays at the pre-test and post-test phases were 100% intact, reflecting no missing data. As a result, no consideration was afforded to Little's MCAR analysis (Schafer & Graham, 2002) or possible data imputation procedures.

Internal Reliability

The internal reliability of study participants' responses across all survey items represented on the research instrument at the pre-test and post-test phases of the study was conducted using the Cronbach's alpha (*a*) statistical technique for both the control and experimental groups (Field, 2018). As a result, the internal reliability level achieved

was considered excellent for both groups using the conventions of interpretation of alpha proposed by George and Mallery (2018).

Table 2 contains a summary of finding for the evaluation of internal reliability across the pre-test and post-test phases for the study's control group.

Table 2

Internal Reliability for Job Satisfaction: Control Group

Construct	No. of Items	α	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Job Satisfaction	72	0.96	0.94	0.98

Note. The lower and upper bounds of Cronbach's α were calculated using a 95% confidence interval.

Table 3 contains a summary of finding for the evaluation of internal reliability across the pre-test and post-test phases for the study's experimental group.

Table 3

Internal Reliability for Job Satisfaction: Experimental Group

Construct	No. of Items	α	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Job Satisfaction	72	0.96	0.94	0.98

Note. The lower and upper bounds of Cronbach's α were calculated using a 95% confidence interval.

Demographics of Respondents

Descriptive Statistics: Demography

Descriptive statistical techniques were used to evaluate the studies primary demographic identifier variable. Frequencies (*n*) and percentages (%) were the specific descriptive statistical techniques used to evaluate the study's demography.

Tables 4–7 contain inclusive data of finding for the descriptive statistical analysis of the study's primary demographic identifier variable of Group.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics: Demography

Demographics	Male	%	Female	%	Total
Group					
Control	6	37.5	10	62.5	16
Experimental	5	19.23	21	80.77	26

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics: Type of Teaching Certification

Type of Teaching Certification	Traditional Certification	%	Alternative Certification	%	Total
Group					
Control	9	56.25	7	43.75	16
Experimental	9	34.62	17	65.38	26

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics: Length of Time Teaching–Control Group

Length of time teaching Control group	*n*	%
0-5 years	7	33.60
6-10 years	2	32.70
11-15 years	3	18.70
16-20 years	1	1.90
21+	3	2.80
Total	16	100.00

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics: Length of Time Teaching–Experimental Group

Length of time teaching Experimental group	*n*	%
0-5 years	15	57.69
6-10 years	7	26.93
11-15 years	2	7.69
16-20 years	0	0.0
21+	2	7.69
Total	26	100.00

Descriptive Statistics: Initial Findings

Descriptive statistical techniques were used to evaluate the study's primary demographic identifier variable. Frequencies (*n*), measures of typicality (mean scores), variability (standard deviations), and data normality (skew; kurtosis) were the specific

descriptive statistical techniques used to evaluate the study's initial findings in the pre-test and post-test phases of the study.

     Table 8 contains a summary of finding for the descriptive statistical analysis of the study's responses in the pre-test phase of the study for the elements of job satisfaction for the control group.

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics: Control Group Pre-Test (Satisfaction Elements)

Variable	*M*	*SD*	*N*	SE_M	Min	Max	Skewness	Kurtosis
Pay	3.42	0.41	16	0.10	2.75	4.25	0.33	-0.58
Promotion	3.69	0.52	16	0.13	3.00	4.75	0.53	-0.67
Supervision	3.58	0.34	16	0.08	2.75	4.25	-0.26	1.09
Fringe Benefits	3.62	0.53	16	0.13	2.50	4.50	-0.43	-0.53
Contingent Reward	3.19	0.61	16	0.15	2.25	4.25	-0.07	-0.66
Operating Conditions	3.97	0.88	16	0.22	2.25	5.25	-0.54	-0.58
Co-Workers	4.00	0.46	16	0.11	3.50	4.75	0.34	-1.22
Nature of Work	4.41	0.54	16	0.13	3.50	5.00	-0.81	-0.86
Communication	2.98	0.63	16	0.16	2.00	4.00	0.18	-1.07

     Table 9 contains a summary of finding for the descriptive statistical analysis of the study's responses in the pre-test phase of the study for the elements of job satisfaction for the Experimental Group.

Table 9

Descriptive Statistics: Experimental Group Pre-Test (Satisfaction Elements)

Variable	M	SD	N	SE_M	Min	Max	Skewness	Kurtosis
Pay	3.38	0.44	26	0.09	2.00	4.50	-0.44	2.93
Promotion	3.51	0.61	26	0.12	2.50	4.50	0.09	-1.13
Supervision	3.63	0.38	26	0.07	3.00	4.75	0.75	1.21
Fringe Benefits	3.72	0.55	26	0.11	2.25	4.75	-0.10	0.67
Contingent Reward	3.38	0.70	26	0.14	2.25	5.25	0.50	0.20
Operating Conditions	3.88	0.90	26	0.18	2.00	5.75	0.19	-0.04
Co-Workers	4.02	0.59	26	0.12	3.00	5.00	0.11	-1.14
Nature of Work	4.56	0.36	26	0.07	3.75	5.50	-0.25	1.34
Communication	2.97	0.69	26	0.14	2.00	4.50	0.80	0.06

Table 10 contains a summary of finding for the descriptive statistical analysis of the study's responses in the post-test phase of the study for the elements of job satisfaction for the control group

Table 11 contains a summary of finding for the descriptive statistical analysis of the study's responses in the post-test phase of the study for the elements of job satisfaction for the Experimental Group.

Table 10

Descriptive Statistics: Control Group Post-Test (Satisfaction Elements)

Variable	*M*	*SD*	*N*	*SE$_M$*	Min	Max	Skewness	Kurtosis
Pay	3.55	0.49	16	0.12	2.50	4.75	0.38	1.12
Promotion	3.61	0.46	16	0.11	2.50	4.50	-0.34	0.92
Supervision	3.58	0.28	16	0.07	3.25	4.25	1.60	1.68
Fringe Benefits	3.62	0.56	16	0.14	2.25	4.50	-0.47	0.63
Contingent Reward	3.41	0.66	16	0.17	2.25	4.50	-0.35	-0.62
Operating Conditions	3.42	1.00	16	0.25	1.25	4.75	-0.86	0.03
Co-Workers	4.00	0.46	16	0.11	3.50	4.75	0.34	-1.22
Nature of Work	4.27	0.61	16	0.15	2.75	4.75	-1.31	0.64
Communication	2.91	0.40	16	0.10	2.25	3.50	-0.39	-0.60

Table 11

Descriptive Statistics: Experimental Group Post-Test (Satisfaction Elements)

Variable	*M*	*SD*	*N*	*SE$_M$*	Min	Max	Skewness	Kurtosis
Pay	3.49	0.46	26	0.09	2.75	4.50	0.25	-0.38
Promotion	3.53	0.57	26	0.11	2.25	4.75	-0.21	0.53
Supervision	3.80	0.48	26	0.09	3.00	5.00	1.14	0.99
Fringe Benefits	3.60	0.52	26	0.10	2.50	4.75	-0.12	0.14
Contingent Reward	3.41	0.74	26	0.15	2.00	4.75	0.05	-0.67
Operating Conditions	3.82	0.81	26	0.16	1.75	5.00	-0.44	-0.15
Co-Workers	4.02	0.59	26	0.12	3.00	5.00	0.11	-1.14
Nature of Work	4.38	0.61	26	0.12	3.00	5.00	-0.91	-0.10
Communication	3.12	0.75	26	0.15	1.50	4.25	-0.15	-0.82

Findings by Research Question

The study's research questions were addressed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The probability level of $p \leq .05$ represented the threshold value for findings to be considered statistically significant. Qualitative interpretations of effect sizes achieved in the study were derived using the conventions of effect size espoused by Cohen (1988) and Sawilowsky (2009). The findings achieved in the study's research questions are reported as follows.

Research Question 1

To what degree do mindfulness practices affect middle school teachers' perceptions of overall job satisfaction?

Experimental group finding. The statistical significance of mean score difference in the pre-test/post-test phases of the study for the study's experimental group was assessed using the *t*-test of dependent means. The assumption of normality for the difference score in the pre-test and post-test phases of the study was first assessed through the interpretation of the data array's skew and kurtosis values. As a result, the skew value of -0.94 and kurtosis value of 0.49 in the difference score were well within the parameters of -/+2.0 (skew) and -/+7.0 (kurtosis) for data array normality proposed by George and Mallery (2018). The assumption of data normality was therefore satisfied.

The pre-test and post-test scores were not significantly different ($t_{(26)} = 0.44$; $p = .66$). Table 12 contains a summary of finding for the pre-test/post-test comparison for the experimental group featured in Research Question 1.

Table 12

Summary of Finding: Pre-Test Mean and Post-Test Mean (Experimental Group)

Pre-Mean		Post-Mean				
M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*	*d*
3.67	0.23	3.69	0.25	0.44	.66	0.09

Note. $N = 26$. Degrees of Freedom for the *t*-statistic = 25. *d* represents Cohen's *d*.

Control group finding. The statistical significance of mean score difference in the pre-test/post-test phases of the study for the control group was assessed using the *t*-test of dependent means. The assumption of normality for the difference score in the pre-test and post-test phases of the study was first assessed through the interpretation of the data array's skew and kurtosis values. As a result, the skew value of -0.58 and kurtosis value of 0.18 in the difference score were well within the parameters of -/+2.0 (skew) and -/+7.0 (kurtosis) for data array normality proposed by George and Mallery (2018). The assumption of data normality was therefore satisfied. The pre-test and post-test scores were not significantly different, $t_{(15)} = 0.88$; $p = .39$, for the control group. Table 13 contains a summary of finding for the pre-test/post-test comparison for the control group featured in Research Question 1.

A follow-up analysis was conducted featuring a comparison of pre-test/post-test difference score achieved for the study's control group and experimental group. The assumption of homogeneity of variances was assessed using the Levene's test. The Levene test value was non-statistically significant (Levene $F = 0.001$; $p = .98$). As a

result of the non-statistically significant finding for the Levene's test, the assumption of homogeneity of variances was satisfied for the use of the *t*-test of independent means.

Table 13

Summary of Finding: Pre-Test Mean and Post-Test Mean (Control Group)

Pre-Mean		Post-Mean				
M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*T*	*p*	*d*
3.65	0.27	3.60	0.26	0.88	.39	0.22

Note. N = 16. Degrees of freedom for the *t*-statistic = 15. *d* represents Cohen's *d*.

The *t*-test of independent means analysis was non-statistically significant, $t_{(40)} =$ 0.99, *p* = .33, indicating the mean of difference favoring the experimental group was not significantly different between the control and experimental groups. The magnitude of effect in the comparison favoring the difference score achieved by the experimental group was considered between small and medium (*d* =.31). A summary of finding for the follow-up comparative analysis of pre-test/post-test difference scores for the control and experimental groups is presented in Table 14.

Table 14

Pre-Test/Post-Test Difference Score Comparison: Control Group/Experimental Group

Variable	Control		Experimental				
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*	*d*
Difference	-0.05	0.23	0.02	0.21	0.99	.327	0.31

Note. N = 42. Degrees of Freedom for the *t*-statistic = 40. *d* represents Cohen's *d*.

Table 15 contains a summary of finding for the follow-up analysis comparing pre-test/post-test summed cut scores for the control group and experimental group in the study by total ranges.

Table 15

Comparison Summary Table: Pre-Test/Post-Test Summation Score by Job Satisfaction Survey for the 36-Item Total Where Possible Scores Range From 36 to 216

	Control		Experimental	
Ranges	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Dissatisfaction 36 to 108	0	0	2	2
Ambivalent 108 and 144	5	5	10	14
Satisfaction 144 to 216	11	11	14	10

Note. From *Job Satisfaction Survey*, by P. E. Spector, 1994 (https://paulspector.com/assessments/pauls-no-cost-assessments/job-satisfaction-survey-jss/). Copyright 1994 by Paul E. Spector. All rights reserved.

The Job Satisfaction Survey (Spector, 1994) summary of cut scores is developed from the scoring ranges of the questions. Items are written positively and negatively with scores for total job satisfaction. Each item is scored from 1 to 6 if the original response choices are used. High scores on the scale represent job satisfaction, so the scores on the negatively worded items must be reversed before summing with the positively worded scores. A score of six representing most substantial agreement with a negatively worded item is considered equivalent to a score of 1 = *most vigorous disagreement* on a positively worded item, allowing them to be combined meaningfully. Scores are based on

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the sum of all 36 items and can range from 36 to 216 (Spector, 2021). Table 16 shows the movement of four subjects in the experimental group moving backwards in the cut scores from satisfaction to ambivalent.

Research Question 1a

To what extent do mindfulness practices affect individual aspects of job satisfaction? The statistical significance of mean score difference in the pre-test/post-test phases of the study for individual elements of job satisfaction was assessed using the *t*-test of dependent means. Five of the nine elements reflected positive levels of impact in the wake of the study's intervention variable of mindfulness training. One element, "Co-workers," remained the same. In three of the elements, non-statistically significant decreases were noted from the pre-test to the post-test phases of the study. The element reflecting the greatest single degree of positive response effect from the pre-test to the post-test of the study in the wake of the intervention variable was the element of "Supervision" ($d = .32$). Overall teachers were satisfied with their supervisor's interactions with them.

Table 17 contains a summary of finding for the pre-test/post-test comparison by element of job satisfaction for the study experimental group. A follow-up analysis was conducted featuring a comparison of pre-test/post-test difference score achieved for the study's control group and experimental group by individual elements of satisfaction using the *t*-test of independent means and Cohen's *d* statistical techniques. Four of the nine comparisons favored the experimental group, with the greatest single effect in the difference of comparisons was reflected in the element of "Operating Conditions" ($d = .64$). Four comparisons favored the control group with effects of difference considered

small to trivial. One comparison, the element of "Co-workers," reflected no degree of difference in the comparison. The data shows in the scope of Herzberg's theory the experimental group is operating within the hygiene section. The control group's data shows a tendency towards the motivation section (see Figure 1).

Table 16

Outline of the Nine Elements of Job Satisfaction as Presented in Spector's JSS Survey

		Herzberg's	
Subscale	Item Nos.	Motivation	Hygiene
Pay	1, 10, 19, 28		Salary
Promotion	2, 11, 20, 33	Advancement	
Supervision	3, 12, 21, 30		Supervision
Fringe Benefits	4, 13, 22, 29		Policies
Contingent rewards	5, 14, 23, 32		Bonus
Operating conditions	6, 15, 24, 31		Policies and administration
Coworkers	7, 16, 25, 34		Relationships with coworkers
Nature of work	8, 17, 27, 35	Work Itself	
Communication	9, 18, 26, 36	Communication	
Total satisfaction	1-36		

Note. From *Job Satisfaction Survey*, by P. E. Spector, 1994 (https://paulspector.com/assessments/pauls-no-cost-assessments/job-satisfaction-survey-jss/).

Table 17

Summary: Pre-Test/Post Test Comparison by Elements of Satisfaction (Experimental Group)

Mindfulness Element	N	Mean Difference (Pre/Post)	SD	t	d
Pay	26	0.12	0.61	0.96	.19
Promotion	26	0.02	0.63	0.16	.03
Supervision	26	0.16	0.52	1.61	.32
Fringe Benefits	26	-0.13	0.61	-1.05	-.21
Contingent Reward	26	0.04	0.75	0.26	.05
Operating Conditions	26	-0.06	0.79	-0.37	-.07
Co-workers	26	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Nature of Work	26	-0.17	0.54	-1.64	-.32
Communication	26	0.14	0.84	0.87	.17

A follow-up analysis was conducted featuring a comparison of pre-test/post-test difference score achieved for the study's control group and experimental group by individual elements of satisfaction using the *t*-test of independent means and Cohen's *d* statistical techniques. Four of the nine comparisons favored the experimental group, with the greatest single effect in the difference of comparisons was reflected in the element of "Operating Conditions" (*d* = .64). Four comparisons favored the control group with effects of difference considered small to trivial. One comparison, the element of "Co-workers," reflected no degree of difference in the comparison. The data shows in the scope of Herzberg's theory, the experimental group is operating within the hygiene section. The control group's data shows a tendency towards the motivation section (see Figure 1).

Table 18 contains a summary of finding for the follow-up analysis comparing mean pre-test/post-test difference scores for the control group and experimental group in the study by individual element of job satisfaction:

Table 18

Comparison Summary Table: Pre-Test/Post-Test Difference Score by Group and Individual Elements of Job Satisfaction

Job Satisfaction	*N*	Mean Difference	Favoring	*d*
Pay	40	0.01	Control	.02
Promotion	40	0.10	Experimental	.15
Supervision	40	0.16	Experimental	.36
Fringe Benefits	40	0.13	Control	.21
Contingent Reward	40	0.04	Control	.27
Operating Conditions	40	0.49	Experimental	.64
Co-workers	40	0.00	Neither	0.00
Nature of Work	40	0.03	Control	.07
Communication	40	0.22	Experimental	.31

Research Question 2

To what degree will study participant engage in mindfulness-based practices? The one sample *t*-test was conducted to determine the statistical significance of the extent to which the experimental group engaged in mindfulness practices. This was after completion of the month-long Mindful Schools intervention, with 8 weeks to practice independently. The experimental group self-reported to a single question sent by the researcher. This was an additional question to support the investment of application the

participants utilized in real life situations. Mindfulness practice for study purposes was evaluated on a 10-point Likert Scale (0 = *Not at all likely*; 10 = *Extremely likely*), with a value of 5 = *Neutral* on the scale. The researcher looked for the range of participation within the experimental group. The Cohen's *d* statistical technique was used to evaluate the magnitude of study participant effect of response to perception of engagement in mindfulness practices.

The assumption of data normality was first evaluated in advance of using the one sample *t*-test. The skew and kurtosis values were of the dependent variable (engagement in mindfulness practices). The skew value of -0.20 and kurtosis value of -1.36 were well-within the parameters of -/+2.0 for skew and -/+7.0 for kurtosis proposed for data array normality by George and Mallery (2018). As a result, the assumption of normality was satisfied for the use of the one sample *t*-test. The mean score of 4.46 (*SD* = 3.24) for study participant perceptions of engagement in mindfulness practices was not statistically significant ($t_{(25)}$=-0.85; *p* = 41). Table 19 contains a summary of finding for study participant perceptions of engagement in mindfulness practices in Research Question 2.

Table 19

One Sample t-test Finding: Perceptions of Engagement in Mindfulness Practices

Variable	*M*	*SD*	μ	*t*	*p*	*d*
Mean	4.46	3.24	5	-0.85	.41	-.17

Note. Degrees of freedom for the *t*-statistic = 25. *d* represents Cohen's *d*.

Summary

This researcher found evidence that middle school teachers have individual aspects of high job satisfaction. In general, this group of Central Texas middle school teachers was satisfied with their careers, work, and co-workers; however, they were dissatisfied with their salary and communication. All independent variables showed a strong correlation between the nature of work, co-workers, and operating conditions with the strongest, negative correlation among communication, contingent rewards, and pay. The study results showed low fidelity to the use of mindfulness practices. Overall, job satisfaction did not change overtly regarding the overall cut scores in the Job Satisfaction Survey. Chapter Five is a summary of the study, implications of the study, recommendations for future study, limitations, and a final conclusion.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion and Conclusions

The study was conducted to identify the effect that a mindfulness intervention might exert upon the perceptions of job satisfaction in middle school teachers in Central Texas. Teacher attrition in Texas is problematic for the growing school population. Rates of teachers leaving the profession or moving to different schools cause a financial strain on districts to retrain new teachers and leave campuses scrambling for people to fill vacancies. This phenomenon correlates with student achievement as well as overall educational culture.

Two research questions were posed to address the study's topic and research problem. A pre-test of job satisfaction, followed by a control group of a mindfulness intervention, and the finishing post-test of job satisfaction were delivered electronically in the spring semester of 2021. Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were used to analyze the study's research questions. Overall, there was little movement in job satisfaction with a mindfulness intervention. The author holds that while the findings of this study were small overall, individual aspects were impacted positively through a mindfulness intervention supported by the research literature base. This study is the joining of mindfulness and theory using intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, relationships, and satisfaction to lean into curbing the teacher attrition epidemic (see Figure 2).
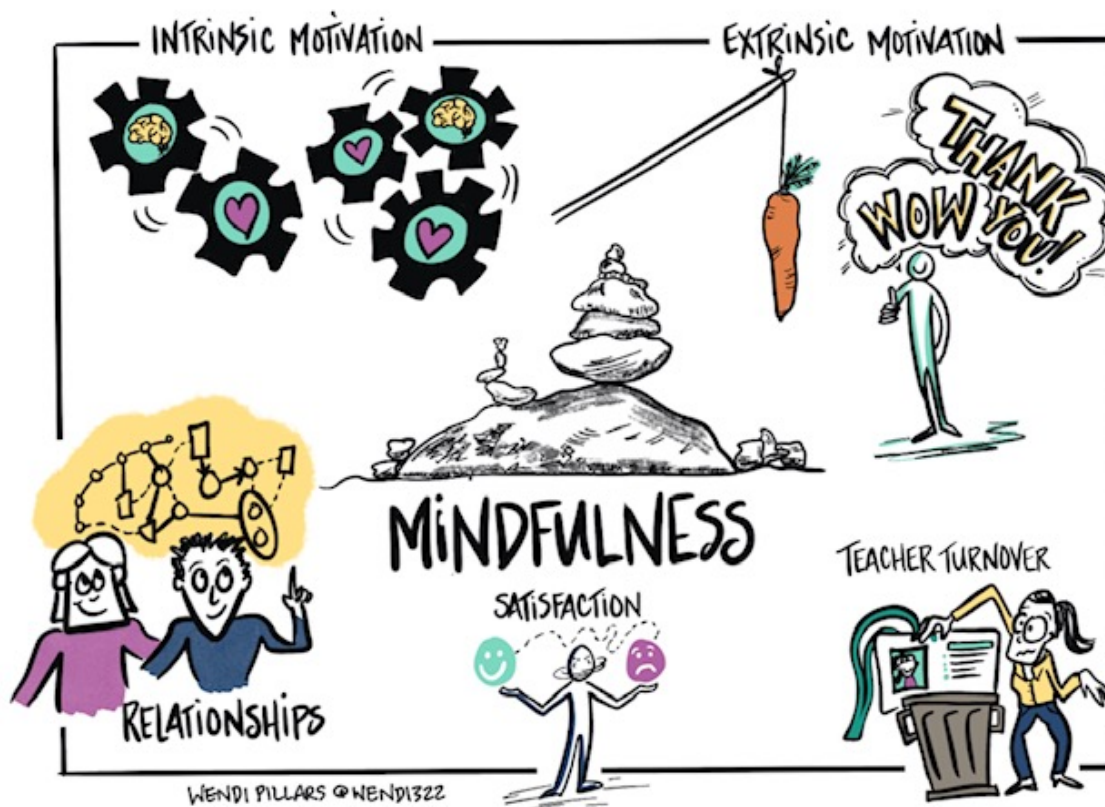
Figure 2. Mindfulness.

Note. Graphic from W. Pillars, personal communication, September 19, 2021.

This chapter contains the summary of this study, recommendations for future and additional study, implications for pedagogical practice, limitations of this study, and final conclusions.

Summary

Teacher attrition is a concern across America's school districts. Not only does it affect families, but attrition also affects children who attend school to grow their knowledge. There are politics and policies that governments, federal, state, and local, continue to attempt to alleviate this disparity, yet it has not come to fruition as of the

writing of this dissertation. Teachers wish to teach, and children wish to learn. While not a new idea or practice, mindfulness could very well assist all parties until a collective leadership brings about the new way of American education. The following conclusions were derived from the results of the study.

Research Question 1

To what degree do mindfulness practices affect middle school teachers' perceptions of overall job satisfaction? The overall data showed no statistically significant changes in overall job satisfaction. This could be due to multiple limitations. Findings of supporting studies suggest beneficial effects for increased job satisfaction (Hülsheger et al., 2013), and enhanced resilience in the workplace (Glomb et al., 2011). However, studies have shown that interventions do not positively impact teacher stress and increase job satisfaction when the quality of evidence was low for interventions due to authors not reporting all results, loss of participants for follow-up, or low fidelity of implementation of the intervention (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Meiklejohn et at., 2012; Naghieh et al., 2015; Sriwilai & Charoensukmongkol, 2016).

Did the intervention increase job satisfaction overall for Central Texas middle school teachers? The answer was no. This could have been due to the lack of follow up for implementation, or the inability to add the supports needed to make it successful in the classroom. In addition to the lack of time and people for implementation due to the layers of trauma experienced throughout spring semester (e.g., housing disaster and repair, displacement of living quarters, lack of food, diminished teaching time while still staying true to state and district timelines, students displaying extreme trauma responses and little time to support them mentally before moving to academics, and other prevalent

issues) added less appeal to the intervention study. Attempting to implement a new regimen while experiencing traumatic events, exacerbated by outside factors of a non-traditional teaching year, the teachers were less likely to develop positive mindfulness healthy habits. Teachers shared throughout the study how excited they were to learn more about mindfulness practices for their classroom, but they felt stressed they did not have time to implement or practice with fidelity. A teacher confided in me during a classroom check in, "I love this learning, but this was not the year to try and learn one more new thing." Another teacher noted, "I can't wait to try this next year with my students." While the feedback overall that 101: Mindfulness Foundations was an excellent class, the learning did not translate into personal change.

Furthermore, teachers were under pressure to reformat teaching assessing cycles, feedback loops, and implementation of learning growth targets from the previous school year pandemic response closure. These pressures created challenges related to job satisfaction. Teachers were operating in less than ideal conditions and did not have the bandwidth to embrace well-being through mindfulness.

Research Question 1a

To what extent do mindfulness practices affect individual aspects of job satisfaction? Mindfulness practices affected few individual aspects of job satisfaction. As evidenced in Chapter Four, participants reported slight improvement in individual aspects of job satisfaction with "nature of work" showing the greatest improvement. Although none of the increases were significant, other aspects included a positive outlook on supervisors, fringe benefits, operating conditions, and co-workers. These fall into the hygiene category of Herzberg's motivation theory (Herzberg & Hamlin, 1961) and must

first be addressed before moving into the motivation aspects of job satisfaction can come into fruition. These results do not speak to the intervention as much as it does to the culture of the schools. When hygiene factors are measured as high in job satisfaction, the system can move to the motivation factors to increase job satisfaction. The researcher questions if the intervention should have been brought to team members who can influence the motivation pieces such as campus and district level administrators. Of course, without the initial study there was no baseline data, so this data could inform future work.

As the highest reasons of burnout and diminished job satisfaction, based on literature discussed in Chapter Two, a mindfulness intervention was plausible to increase job satisfaction (Fredrickson et al., 2008; Grossman et al., 2004; Shapiro et al., 2007). Responding to students in moments of crisis or outbursts, relieving tension in a healthy manner, and repairing relationships to foster community in the classrooms have been discussed in Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports literature and programs for years (Sprick, 1981; Sprick et al., 2007; Sugai et al., 2000). Mindfulness develops skills in adults to teach the students how to interact with each other in healthy ways. However, the skills only work when there is time to implement the processes and for skill development as demonstrated in previous studies (Brewer et al., 2014; Gilpin, 2012; Goldhaber, 2015; Jones, 2013; Rozich, 2017). The results of this study did not demonstrate a significant increase in job satisfaction due to the overwhelming workload and lack of time to implement the true nature of the mindfulness process.

Research Question 2

To what degree do study participants engage in mindfulness practices? The intervention group participated in an online, 1-month-long intervention through Mindful Schools (Brach, 2019; Hanger, 2020). This intervention was particularly appealing as it has been studied with at-risk student and teacher populations with statistical significance of reducing teacher stress, increase of teacher reports of connecting with students and job efficacy, as well as increased job satisfaction (Flook et al., 2013; Klingbeil & Renshaw, 2018; Roeser et al., 2012). The 4-week course was designed with optimal access for busy educators, with a 2 to 3-hour time commitment per week, recorded trainer instruction, access to optional live sessions, resources such as reading and activities, and an online cohort forum. Teachers had the opportunity to gain strategies to apply during high-intensity emotional events, disrupt implicit bias by inspiring compassion and connection with cultural responsiveness, and enhancing trauma-sensitive responses.

The people participating in the intervention did not report high engagement or fidelity of mindfulness practices outside of the school setting. Teachers self-reported that this was just another layer of stress to accomplish rather than be a productive use of time. According to one teacher, "This was just not the year." Teachers were overwhelmed with concurrent teaching and all the clerical pieces required to teach both in person and online students simultaneously. The feedback loop was difficult to manage through a digital system, as so many communication pieces were lost such as responses, body language, and reduced engagement levels. Meaningful feedback works when the teacher can provide fluid target paths, first attempts, improvement cycles, and reflection pieces (see Figure 3; Eckert, 2021). The online platform was convenient for teachers to access, but

they reported that they were "zoomed out" when it came to professional development. Teachers were missing the personal interactions and practices that naturally occur in face-to-face spaces. Providing an opportunity to meet as a group face to face for follow-up and increased fidelity of using Mindfulness in the classrooms could prove a positive outcome as opposed from the current study.
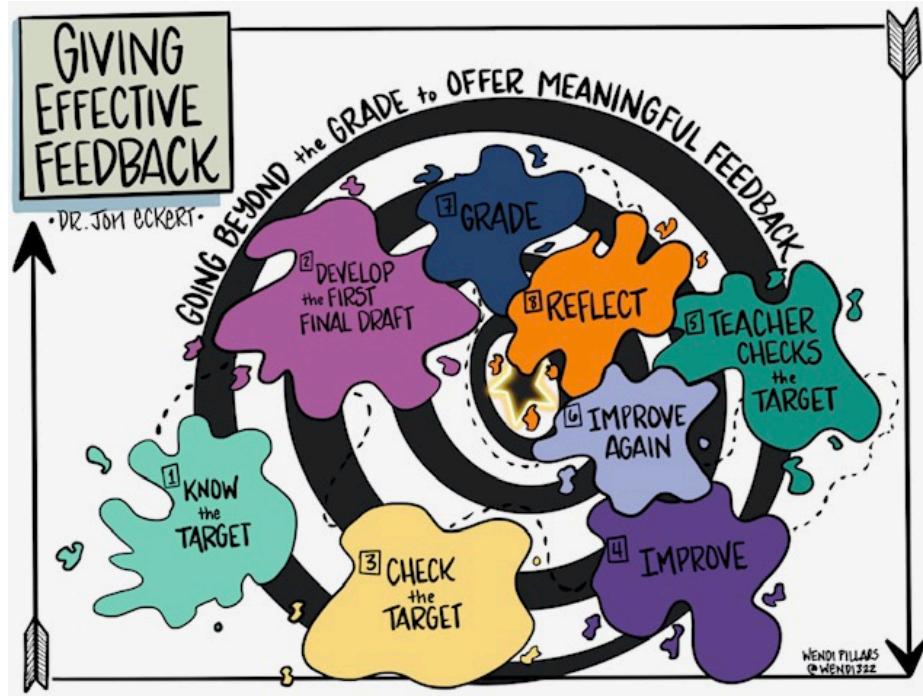
Figure 3. Effective feedback.

Note. Adapted from *8 Steps to Making Feedback More Effective* by J. Eckert, 2021, p. 1 (https://www.edutopia.org/article/8-steps-making-feedback-more-effective). Copyright 2021 by George Lucas Educational Foundation. Graphic from W. Pillars, personal communication, September 19, 2021.

Future Study Recommendations

While this study did not demonstrate growth in overall job satisfaction, it is remarkable to note that with all the challenges and limitations of the 2020-2021 school year, job satisfaction did not significantly decrease. Further research in the use of specific mindfulness areas within the scope of educational practices is still a pursuit the researcher

will continue. The researcher believes valuable strategies and data will be uncovered through these studies. Following are the studies under consideration.

1. Replication of this study with a mixed-methods component could be conducted to include various teachers at different grade levels.

2. A comparison of this study could be made to the national study of school mindfulness programs across the United States, further investigating face-to-face or virtual learning of mindfulness intervention produces higher job satisfaction.

3. A longitudinal case study could be made to follow onset teachers participating in using mindfulness within their classrooms. Qualitative data added to the longitudinal study could show how intended or unintended interventions and events influence job satisfaction.

4. Randomized controlled trials that include control and a comparison condition, alongside measures capturing within-group changes over time and between-groups differences employing pre-and post-intervention measurements could add to the literature base.

Implications

Equitable education systems yield higher achieving students. Students produce additional academic achievements when in a classroom led by a seasoned, well-rounded educator (Hanushek et al., 2016; Johnson et al., 2012; Ronfeldt et al., 2013). Should educational organizations continue to thrive it is necessary to instill positive cultures to further reduce teachers' burnout and exodus. Job satisfaction can influence overall organizational functioning, the employees' emotional well-being, treatment, and cooperative behavior (Spector, 1997). Pursuing targeted support for educators to increase

job satisfaction and reduce the risk of experiencing burnout will likely reduce resource waste, improve student learning, and benefit the community (Chambers, 2010; Sheppard, 2016; Boyd et al., 2008).

These quantitative methods for investigating the effect of a mindfulness intervention on job satisfaction, specifically for middle school teachers, will add to the literature on potential interventions. In previous studies, large-scale interventions were noted to reduce burnout and increase job satisfaction (Iancu et al., 2018; Maricuţoiu et al., 2016; Naghieh et al., 2015). The results in this study showed a positive increase in specific aspects of job satisfaction. A targeted, embedded mindfulness intervention is likely to intensify additional educator longevity and student achievement.

Limitations

Further limitations outside the researcher's control likely contributed to the fact that there was not a significant increase in job satisfaction or any of the measures in the study. The COVID-19 pandemic required these educators to teach concurrent remote students, as well as students face-to-face in the classroom. These "roomies" and "zoomies" caused a strain on teachers attempting to meet dual needs while maintaining high-quality education and staying within legal guidelines. As the remote "zoomies" re-entered the face-to-face classrooms, restructuring of management and relationships interrupted educational processes and job satisfaction.

The inability to manage attendance, engagement, and real time interventions in concurrent classrooms efficiently made it a challenge for educators across Texas. For example, students who were enrolled as remote learners had until 11:59 pm to log into the system and make forward progress. This resulted in the teachers having to revisit

attendance checks the following day to turn in. Campuses would follow up the next week for teachers to check and approve attendance. This took hours to complete and was in addition to the normal teacher workload.

Moreover, the lack of real-time interventions made it difficult for teachers to manage goals and progress. Students emailed questions, and it could take 24 hours for the teacher to respond. Not all students had access to video chats when they were scheduled either due to sharing devices or bandwidth at home. Many students in these classes were also assisting in caring for younger siblings which compounded the inability to focus on schoolwork when one would typically be in the traditional classroom. Teachers who typically set goals with student to help track progress expressed concern about who was completing the work in a timely fashion and struggled to maintain engagement. The quality of work with some students was also in question. Teachers could not determine if older siblings or parents coached them through the process more so than the teacher would in a live classroom. It invalidated test data and created more work for teachers when the students came back to class with larger knowledge gaps than expected.

There was also a 7 school-day freeze singularity that left many students and teachers without power and water. Many people were displaced from their homes for extraordinary lengths of time, and as the freeze thawed extensive water damage further precluded the return to normalcy. Schools had damage to repair as well as homeowners. Upon returning to school, teachers maintained a frantic pace to make up for the lost educational moments. Students returned to buildings expressing fear and frustration, along with other trauma responses that were hastily acknowledged to be able to move

forward with scope and sequence. Recovering from the trauma of the freeze was a unique factor unforeseen at the onset of the study.

Conclusion

This quantitative, pre-test/post-test quasi-experimental study investigating mindfulness interventions' effects on job satisfaction highlighted specific aspects of increasing retention of educators. While combating challenges never faced in a school year, some of the teachers who participated did become interested in the practice of mindfulness within their classrooms and look to embedding further practices into their routines. The group overall did not have the personal bandwidth to persevere in using the mindfulness interventions, and self-reported lack of fidelity. In turn, this translated into minimal improvement in job satisfaction.

Research shows that professional development is often ineffective in changing the practices of teachers when missing supportive components (Darling-Hammond et al. 2017). A framework of these widely shared features was harvested from 35 methodologically rigorous studies that triangulated a positive link between teacher professional development, teaching practices, and student outcomes. To have positive outcomes the intervention must be content focused, incorporating active learning with adult learning theory, job embedded collaboration, modeling of effective practice, coaching support, opportunities for feedback and reflection, and sustained duration. While the program of Mindful Schools' (2020) 101: Mindfulness Foundations had most of these components, the work back in the classroom did not translate to practice. The researcher should have followed up with focus groups and coaching support in practice. While the teachers enjoyed the concept of mindfulness practices, they felt unable to

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spend the time putting those practices to use, as it was not yet a content enhancer supported by the district.

Delving deeper into the intervention, there is merit in improving social emotional wellbeing, which theoretically translates into increased job satisfaction. At 1 month, the length of time as an introduction course is feasible; however, coming back together to revisit the practices as a group and being able to observe these practices being put into action in the classrooms could have made a more positive shift to mindfulness use. Further, the use of qualitative questioning and journaling would have likely rounded out the study and could have identified flaws in the implementation of mindfulness.

The result data were contrary to the mindfulness literature on practices reducing stress as compared to its correlation with job satisfaction. The low fidelity of implementation was due to concurrent traumatic events (e.g., the COVID-19 pandemic and a 7-school day freeze during the study) outside of the researcher's control. This study will add to the literature base of teacher burnout within educational organizations and possibly inspire future research on mindfulness' effects on job satisfaction.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Survey

	JOB SATISFACTION SURVEY Paul E. Spector Department of Psychology University of South Florida						
	PLEASE CIRCLE THE ONE NUMBER FOR EACH QUESTION THAT COMES CLOSEST TO REFLECTING YOUR OPINION ABOUT IT.	Disagree very mcuh	Disagree moderately	Disagree slightly	Agree slightly	Agree moderately	Agree very much
1	I feel I am being paid a fair amount for the work I do.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2	There is really too little chance for promotion on my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3	My supervisor is quite competent in doing his/her job.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4	I am not satisfied with the benefits I receive.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5	When I do a good job, I receive the recognition for it that I should receive.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6	Many of our rules and procedures make doing a good job difficult.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	I like the people I work with.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8	I sometimes feel my job is meaningless.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9	Communications seem good within this organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10	Raises are too few and far between.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11	Those who do well on the job stand a fair chance of being promoted.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12	My supervisor is unfair to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13	The benefits we receive are as good as most other organizations offer.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14	I do not feel that the work I do is appreciated.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15	My efforts to do a good job are seldom blocked by red tape.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16	I find I have to work harder at my job because of the incompetence of people I work with.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17	I like doing the things I do at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18	The goals of this organization are not clear to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6

	PLEASE CIRCLE THE ONE NUMBER FOR EACH QUESTION THAT COMES CLOSEST TO REFLECTING YOUR OPINION ABOUT IT.	Disagree very much	Disagree moderately	Disagree slightly	Agree slightly	Agree moderately	Agree very much
19	I feel unappreciated by the organization when I think about what they pay me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20	People get ahead as fast here as they do in other places.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21	My supervisor shows too little interest in the feelings of subordinates.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22	The benefit package we have is equitable.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23	There are few rewards for those who work here.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24	I have too much to do at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6
25	I enjoy my coworkers.	1	2	3	4	5	6
26	I often feel that I do not know what is going on with the organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6
27	I feel a sense of pride in doing my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6
28	I feel satisfied with my chances for salary increases.	1	2	3	4	5	6
29	There are benefits we do not have which we should have.	1	2	3	4	5	6
30	I like my supervisor.	1	2	3	4	5	6
31	I have too much paperwork.	1	2	3	4	5	6
32	I don't feel my efforts are rewarded the way they should be.	1	2	3	4	5	6
33	I am satisfied with my chances for promotion.	1	2	3	4	5	6
34	There is too much bickering and fighting at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6
35	My job is enjoyable.	1	2	3	4	5	6
36	Work assignments are not fully explained.	1	2	3	4	5	6

APPENDIX B

Permission To Use the Survey

Conditions for Using These Assessments

All of the assessments in the Paul's No Cost Assessments section of paulspector.com are copyrighted. They were developed by me and my colleagues.

You have my permission for free noncommercial research/teaching use of any of the assessments that are in the Paul's No Cost Assessments section. This includes student theses and dissertations, as well as other student research projects. Copies of the scale can be reproduced in a thesis or dissertation as long as the copyright notice is included, as shown in the downloadable copy of each scale.

For commercial uses there is a fee for using these scales. A commercial use means you are charging someone a fee to provide a service that includes use of one or more of these scales. Contact me at paul@paulspector.com to discuss fees for commercial use.

Translations

You are welcome to translate any of these scales into another language if you agree to send me a copy of the translation. Word (.doc or .docx) is best, but .pdf is also acceptable. Be sure to include the copyright statement on the translated version, as well as credit the person who did the translation and the year.

A condition for free use of these assessments is that you share results. The results I need include:

1. Means per subscale and total score
2. Sample size
3. Brief description of sample, e.g., 220 hospital nurses. I don't need to know the organization name if it is sensitive.
4. Name of country where collected, and if outside of the U.S., the language used. I am especially interested in nonAmerican samples.
5. Standard deviations per subscale and total score (optional)
6. Coefficient alpha per subscale and total score (optional)

Results can be shared by providing an e-copy of a published or unpublished research report (e.g., a conference paper, dissertation, journal article, thesis, etc.) where one or more of these assessments are used.

You can share the material with me via e-mail: paul@paulspector.com

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