

2016 Research Week Proposal Instructions and Template Posters and Presentations

Title - An Exploratory Study of Mindfulness, Educator Wellbeing, and Classroom Management

Program of Study – Psychology

Presentation Type – Choose one of the following: Print Poster

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Category – Choose one of the following: Experimental Applied

Abstract: Background. Mindfulness training has been associated with reduced stress, anxiety, depression and a variety of other wellbeing outcomes. Roeser and colleagues (2012) proposed a model of mindfulness applied to the field of education. Specifically, they proposed that mindfulness would be associated with teachers' occupational health, wellbeing, and engagement. These teacher-level outcomes would in turn predict better classroom-level outcomes and ultimately student-level outcomes. Using this model, the current study explored links between trait-based mindfulness, teacher wellbeing (e.g., stress, burnout, self-compassion, life satisfaction), and classroom management. Specifically, the research aimed to test a mediation model linking mindfulness and classroom management by way of educator wellbeing (e.g., stress, burnout, and self-efficacy). **Method.** A total of 20 participants were recruited from a graduate education course to complete an online, anonymous survey. Participants completed measures of dispositional mindfulness, perceived stress, burnout, teacher self-efficacy, and classroom management (behavioral and instructional). Due to missing data, analyses included data from 11-13 participants, depending on the measures included. **Results.** Due to small sample size and low power, the full mediation model could not be tested. Bivariate correlations between key variables of interest indicated that high mindfulness was associated with low burnout. In addition, high teacher self-efficacy was associated with low burnout. **Implications.** Preliminary findings from this study suggest a possible link between mindfulness and burnout; however, all data should be interpreted cautiously in light of the small sample size. Future

researchers can use this study as a starting point for testing Roeser and colleagues' model in larger samples of educators.

Christian worldview integration: In 250-500 words, describe how your Christian worldview has informed your research design and communication of your results. How is your research impactful within the culture at large?

As a university with an evangelical foundation, Liberty University values the integration of a Christian worldview within the process of education. The current study evaluates the link between the mindfulness of educators and their classroom management skills by way of their overall wellbeing. In this way, the current study promotes caring for God's children (the teachers, and ultimately the students) while seeking to be good stewards of the educational resources he has given. With regard to the study's impact within the culture, the quality of human experience as it relates to education can be promoted through research into which traits and behaviors aid educators in teaching with the most responsible and beneficial classroom management skills. The study focuses on both behavioral and instructional classroom management, speaking to the importance of educators not only teaching facts and information, but also guiding and mentoring the lives of students. The research from the current study provides preliminary insight into a specific trait (mindfulness) that may promote educators in fulfilling their calling with greater understanding and efficacy. Findings regarding educator wellbeing may also help inform whether mindfulness can improve the lives of the educators themselves. Research regarding all the aforementioned salient constructs further encourages the body of Christ and holds implications for a major institution within our culture, the education system.

Despite the lack of robustness in the results of the present study (due to a small sample size), the team has chosen to present the results as a matter of ethical principle. Because the team collected data from educators who expected the results to be used to further the body of educational and psychological knowledge, fully presenting the study's findings follows the morally appropriate approach to the situation. In line with a Christian worldview, the findings are presented truthfully, with both a humble acknowledgment of flaws and an explanation of strengths. The transparent discussion of strengths and limitations allows the team to present knowledge in a way that benefits educators and students alike, while also bringing glory to God through utilizing the resources and research opportunities provided throughout the course of this research study.