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INTERPERSONAL MINDFULNESS AS A CONSTRUCT OF SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING OF PUBLIC SECONDARY TEACHERS IN PANABO CITY DIVISION

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ABSTRACT

The study explored the relationship between interpersonal mindfulness of school heads and subjective well-being of teachers in public secondary schools of Panabo City Division. Also, it investigated the association of the involved variables and the domains of interpersonal mindfulness of school heads that significantly influence subjective well-being of teachers. With the use of probability sampling, 176 public secondary teachers were selected as the respondents. Utilizing the descriptive-correlational survey method, the data collated were analyzed through the use of Mean, Product-Moment correlation and Regression Analysis. Results revealed that there was a very high interpersonal mindfulness of school heads and a high subjective well-being of teachers among the respondents. Furthermore, there was a significant relationship between the two variables. Moreover, all domains of interpersonal mindfulness of school heads were found to have significantly influence the subjective well-being of teachers. Based on the findings, it was further suggested that higher officials in the Department of Education may identify means on how to strengthen the interpersonal mindfulness of school heads which would boost subjective well-being of teachers. More so, future researchers may further explore the involved variables considering other factors and research methods.

KEYWORDS: *Interpersonal Mindfulness; Subjective Well-Being; Descriptive Correlational; Panabo City Division, Philippines*

INTRODUCTION

Subjective well-being among teachers encompasses their personal feelings of happiness, stress levels, and life satisfaction, which significantly impact their professional performance and interactions with students. It is believed that interpersonal mindfulness, which involves being fully present and attentive in interactions with others, can enhance teachers' subjective well-being by fostering more positive and supportive relationships with students and colleagues. Unfortunately, teachers are greatly affected by work-related stress and insufficient support from colleagues and superiors that can undermine teachers' ability to remain present and engaged in their interactions, further contributing to decreased subjective well-being. Additionally, inadequate recognition and limited opportunities for professional growth can diminish their sense of fulfillment and overall job satisfaction, further impacting their emotional and mental health.

There was a growing body of literature that recognized the importance of sustaining teachers' subjective well-being, considering their interpersonal mindfulness. However, despite the extent of the issue on the subjective well-being of teachers, there was a scarcity of local studies intended to describe the variables. The situation in the Davao Region regarding the subjective well-being of teachers, as revealed by Casmayor (2019), did not generally present the real situation in the Panabo City Division. Hence, the researcher aimed to investigate the status of interpersonal mindfulness and teachers' subjective well-being. Additionally, the study intended to explore the relationship between the two variables.

REVIEW OF SIGNIFICANT LITERATURE

The related literature and studies of this study provided inputs about the interpersonal mindfulness on subjective well-being of teachers. Also, it presented varied studies showcasing the association of the involved variables in this study. The independent variable is interpersonal mindfulness of teachers. It has four indicators namely: attention to and awareness of the other person, being caught in the mind, body-anchored presence, and mindful responding (Khoury, Vergara & Spinelli, 2022). Meanwhile, the dependent variable is teachers` subjective well-being. It has three indicators namely: workload well-being, organizational well-being, and student interaction well-being (Wong et al., 2022).

In a Rand Corporation (2021) survey, 23% of teachers surveyed stated that they were likely to leave the profession by the end of the school year. Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, approximately 16% of teachers reported considering leaving their job (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). One in four teachers reported experiencing symptoms of depression, and 78% reported experiencing frequent job-related stress (Rand, 2021). The most cited causes of job-related stress were challenges engaging students, managing deviations to the school's instructional models, teaching remotely, making or sustaining communication with the families of the students, and supporting students' social and emotional learning (University of Southern California Dornsife Center for Economic and Social Research, 2021).

In the Philippines, the study of Mingoa (2017) as cited by Largo and Chavez (2023) revealed that teachers experience several signs of symptoms of poor well-being. Out of 100 teachers in her study, 71 percent experienced fatigue, 41 percent complain on percent aching neck and shoulder muscles, 39 percent have lower back pain, 34 percent have sleep disturbances and insomnia, and 22 percent suffered migraine headaches and menstrual distress or irregularities (22%). She stated that complaints on aching neck and shoulders and lower back pain are associated with the nature of the work. In the Philippine educational system, the workload of the teachers is a pressing issue. On top of the main job as facilitator of learning, the teacher also has different tasks to fulfill as part of the workload (David et al., 2019). Teachers who have heavy workloads have a hard time pursuing their professional development and are prone to exhaustion and high levels of stress which may lead to burnout and sickness, thereby negatively affecting their performance (Gonzales et al., 2022). These stressors apparently lead to poor subjective well-being.

In Davao Region, Casamayor (2019) stated in a report that the past suicide incidents of teachers allegedly due to depression in the city and in other places could be connected to too much workload and pressure from the piled-up requirements. Teachers continue to experience stress and a lack of family-work balance issues even though we recover from the pandemic and return to normal. Teachers may be experiencing increased burnout as a result, which could result in high turnover rates in the near future (Kotowski et al., 2022).

Moreover, this study also aimed to provide valuable insights to policymakers, helping them develop policies, programs, interventions, projects, and activities focused on enhancing both the interpersonal mindfulness and subjective well-being of teachers. The researcher also planned to present the study's findings to a wider audience at the division, region, national, and international forums. The researcher also planned to publish the paper in a Scopus-indexed journal.

Interpersonal Mindfulness of Teachers

Teaching is a challenging profession that unfolds in a growing students' diversity and complex competitive world, involving high social demands and pressure in education. Prevalence of stress, burnout, depression, and anxiety, or low self-esteem, among teachers is high which can, in turn, affect students (Moyano et al., 2023). In the educational field, different reviews indicate the potential of mindfulness as a mechanism for alleviating some mental and physical disorders, such as anxiety, depression, stress, clinical pain, etc. (Montero-Marin et al., 2021). However, to date most research on mindfulness has focused on students, and has often neglected teachers.

Mindfulness is defined as the ability to pay attention to the present moment intentionally and without judging experience. Interpersonal mindfulness is an approach to mindfulness that focuses on cultivating awareness, presence, and compassion in our interactions with others. While traditional mindfulness practices often emphasize individual meditation and self-awareness, interpersonal mindfulness extends these principles to the realm of relationships and social dynamics. It involves being fully present, nonjudgmental, and empathetic in our interactions with other people (Dunne, 2020). In the teaching profession, mindfulness practices are beneficial in managing job-related stress and burnout (Tarrasch et al., 2020). While mindfulness interventions reduced stress, strain, anxiety, depression, burnout, distress, and anger, it increased well-being and satisfaction among pre-service and in-service teachers.

In the fast-paced and often stressful environment of schools, teachers play a crucial role in shaping the learning experiences of their students (Darling-Hammond, 2018). Interpersonal mindfulness, a practice rooted in mindfulness principles, has gained recognition as a valuable tool for educators to enhance their wellbeing, foster positive relationships, and create a conducive learning atmosphere. This approach goes beyond individual mindfulness practices and focuses on the interpersonal dynamics within the school community. Various forms of mindfulness-based compassion training help us to care more about the needs, happiness, and health of other people. However, direct applications of interpersonal mindfulness activate these influences into direct action on behalf of others.

Mindfulness is also defined as "paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment and non-judgmentally". Internal and interpersonal mindfulness are two types of mindfulness. Internal mindfulness includes the individual's attention to inner life, the present moment, awareness, accepting without judgment and not acting reactively. Interpersonal mindfulness, on the other hand, refers to a person's ability to sustain moment-to-moment awareness when engaging with others, to be aware of his/her own thoughts, feelings, body sensations, and internal experiences during the interaction process, as well as paying attention to external experiences (Pratscher et al., 2019).

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As a result of the increase in research on the concept of mindfulness, studies have revealed its importance in certain relationships, such as parenthood, marriage, friendship, and teaching. Interpersonal mindfulness contributes to the development of the individual's relationships in business as well as family life. Since the more mindfulness people have, the more they communicate effectively. Effective communication is crucial for the learning environment, and close relationships with people increase subjective well-being (Deniz et al., 2020).

Interpersonal mindfulness buffers against the effects of high stress. Ma et al. (2021) also found that teachers' mindfulness in teaching was negatively correlated with burnout. Mindfulness interventions improve the well-being of in-service teachers by lowering negative outcomes, such as perceived stress, burnout, and anxiety. Interpersonal mindfulness is associated with the positive and functional relationships of the individual.

Mindfulness in the communication process ensures meaningful and satisfying interaction. Interpersonal mindfulness has important qualities that contribute to relationships. These qualities include being open to people's thoughts, trying to understand them as they are, being able to understand the feelings of others, putting yourself in the place of the other person, being empathetic, showing compassion to other people, enjoying the happiness and joy of other people, being calm, moderate and wise. Mindfulness increases social interaction and establishes close relationships, but interpersonal mindfulness increases it much more significantly. In line with the literature, the contribution of interpersonal mindfulness to effective communication is understandable (Tekel & Erus, 2023).

Mental health is a serious concern in the Philippines. Philippine Department of Health statistics has estimated that 154 million Filipinos suffer from depression, and 877,000 die by suicide each year. Focusing on prevention of mental health concerns may be a way to address the mental health crisis in a resource-strapped and overburdened health system. Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) is one program that demonstrates efficacy in preventing depression relapse and managing stress. However, Filipinos do not readily participate in mental health programs and have unfavorable attitudes toward mental health seeking. As a result, Filipinos report low rates of utilization of mental health services despite the high rates of distress (Mesa & Lopez, 2023).

Many ways in which mindfulness affected teachers' well-being were significant. In the study conducted by Violago and Martin (2024) in one of the private elementary schools in Manila, it was disclosed that participants had a better understanding of their motivations, which helped them feel more connected to their teaching goals. Practices of mindfulness helped people adopt the attitude of embracing intrinsic rewards, which improved their motivation overall. The mindfulness integration within the school environment also contributed to a positive shift in the teacher community, fostering a culture of empathy, support, and collaboration.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study determined the relationship between the interpersonal mindfulness and subjective well-being of teachers in Panabo City Division. More specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1.What is the level of interpersonal mindfulness of teachers in terms of:
- 1.1 Attention to and awareness of the other person;
- 1.2 Being caught in the mind;
- 1.3 Body-anchored presence; and
- 1.4 Mindful responding?

2. What is the level of subjective well-being of public secondary teachers in terms of:
- 2.1 Workload well-being;
- 2.2 Organizational well-being; and
- 2.3 Student interaction well-being?

3. Is there a significant relationship between interpersonal mindfulness and subjective well-being of teachers?

4. Which domains of leadership interpersonal mindfulness significantly influence the and subjective well-being of teachers?

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents an overview of the methodology for the study, covering the research design, research respondents, research instrument, ethical considerations, data collection process, and data analysis methods to be employed in the investigation.

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research approach, specifically using the descriptive correlational method. Quantitative research emphasized the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data in numerical form, highlighting the value of numerical data in understanding social phenomena and drawing meaningful conclusions. Furthermore, this approach involved a structured and objective process for data collection and analysis, which was critical for producing valid and reliable results (Creswell, 2016, as cited in Alek, n.d.).

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The descriptive correlational research design aims to describe variables and assess the degree of relationships between them (Aprecia et al., 2022). As explained by Bhat (2024), this method involves gathering data to explore variables of interest and understand how they are connected. The primary objective is to provide a comprehensive overview of the variables and their relationships without altering them or implying a cause-and-effect relationship. This study was categorized as quantitative because it used numerical data for analysis and interpretation. It took a descriptive approach to evaluate teachers' interpersonal mindfulness and subjective well-being. Additionally, it was identified as correlational as it examined the relationship between teachers' interpersonal mindfulness and their subjective well-being within the public secondary schools of Panabo City Division.

Research Respondents

This study targeted 176 public secondary school teachers in the Panabo North District of Panabo City Division. Using the Slovin Formula and considering a margin of error of .05, the total population of 315 teachers with at least 5 years of teaching experience was reduced to 176. This was aligned with the contention of Hair et al. (2018), who claimed that a sample size of at least 50 or 100 was sufficient for studies employing regression analysis. Thus, the identified 176 respondents were sufficient to address the intention of the study.

The researcher employed a probability sampling method known as cluster sampling to choose the sample. In cluster sampling, the population was divided into various groups (clusters), and then some of these clusters were randomly selected using either simple random or systematic random sampling techniques for data collection and analysis (Fleetwood, 2024). In the context of this study, the researcher chose samples that represented all the secondary schools of Panabo City Division. The study's inclusion and exclusion criteria specified that participants had to be secondary teachers with a minimum of five years of teaching experience. This requirement was based on the premise that five years in the public school system allowed teachers to accurately assess their interpersonal mindfulness and subjective well-being. Additionally, participants had the option to withdraw from the study at any time if they felt uncomfortable or uneasy about completing the survey. Their decision to withdraw was respected, highlighting the study's commitment to prioritizing the respondents' welfare and well-being throughout the research process.

Research Instruments

To gather data, this study utilized a tailored survey questionnaire created specifically for the research. The questionnaire was structured into two distinct sections to comprehensively investigate the research objectives: the first section concentrated on assessing the interpersonal mindfulness of teachers, while the second section was dedicated to evaluating the subjective well-being of teachers.

Data Analysis

For more comprehensive interpretation and analysis of the data, the following statistical tools were utilized.

Mean

This was used to measure the level of interpersonal mindfulness and subjective well-being of teachers.

Pearson r

This was utilized to determine the relationships between interpersonal mindfulness and subjective well-being of teachers.

Regression Analysis

This determined the significant influence of interpersonal mindfulness on subjective well-being of teachers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the results of the study. These are the findings of the problems raised in the previous chapter. They are presented both in the textual and tabular forms.

Level of Interpersonal Mindfulness of Teachers in terms of Attention to and Awareness of the Other Person

Table 1 reflects the level of interpersonal mindfulness of school heads in terms of attention to and awareness of the other person. It shows that the overall mean is 4.31, in a very high level. This means that the level of interpersonal mindfulness of school heads in terms of attention to and awareness of the other person is always evident.

It can be gleaned from the data that all 5 statements a very high result. When arranged chronologically according to mean scores, the items are as follows: noticing changes in the tone of voice of the other person (4.35), noticing changes in body language of the other person (4.33), and paying attention to the other person’s facial expression (4.30). These items prove that the interpersonal mindfulness of school heads in terms of attention to and awareness of the other person is always evident.

The findings indicate that the level of interpersonal mindfulness of school heads, specifically in terms of attention to and awareness of the other person, is very high.

This implies that school heads consistently demonstrate strong sensitivity and attentiveness in their interactions, particularly by being fully present and perceptive of others' verbal and non-verbal cues. The consistently very high ratings across all five indicators suggest that school heads are highly mindful in their communication, which fosters mutual respect, understanding, and effective leadership within the school community.

A closer examination of the data reveals that the most evident practices include noticing changes in the tone of voice, noticing changes in body language, and paying attention to the other person's facial expression. These top-rated items highlight the school heads' ability to read subtle social cues, enabling them to respond appropriately and empathetically during interpersonal interactions. Such mindfulness enhances trust, promotes positive relationships, and contributes to a supportive school environment. These findings underscore the importance of emotional intelligence and attentiveness in educational leadership, which are key factors in maintaining effective communication and a healthy school climate.

The very high status of attention to and awareness of the other person confirmed the observation of Huber and Seidel (2018) citing that a teacher's selective visual focus of attention is known to be a prerequisite for the teacher's noticing of relevant classroom events and thereby, interpreting the classroom events based on their professional knowledge of teaching and learning. It can be very challenging for teachers to focus immediate visual attention on all students who require individual academic support. Therefore, teachers must identify students who need more individual support to develop their basic academic skills. This phenomenon is often connected to the term "evocative effect," which refers to an adult's response arising from children's characteristics, such as behavior or academic performance.

Additionally, Goldberg et al. (2021) claimed that teachers' visual focus of attention can vary based on students' academic skills and actual behaviors in the classroom. For example, teachers gazed more on students who needed adaptive pedagogical action and gazed longer when providing guidance to students who struggled, showed less interest, and did not concentrate during academic activities. Teachers also focused more visual attention on individual students while providing feedback on their answers during classroom interactions. Additionally, teachers seemed to focus more visual attention on students who showed disruptive behavior and interactive behavior, such as asking the teacher questions or explaining their answers to the teacher. Manbiar and Dube (2022) mentioned that the quality of social interactions depends on effective regulation of one's emotions, and the latter requires skillfully responding to one's own and others' emotions. Therefore, strategies that balance attentiveness to inner and outer affective events may be especially helpful. Moreover, Michael S. A. Graziano (2019) proposed that the brain constructs our own attention – which not only help control our own attention but also allow us to attribute awareness to others and predict their behavior.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Presented in this chapter are the findings based on the results of data gathered, the conclusions drawn from the findings and the recommendations for consideration.

The main focus of the study was to determine the significance of the relationship between interpersonal mindfulness of school heads and subjective well-being of teachers in public secondary schools. The study was conducted in the selected public schools of Panabo City Division. There were on hundred seventy-six (176) teachers who participated in this study. Descriptive correlational method of research was used in this study utilizing adapted research instruments. The said instruments were validated by the panel of experts and subjected to pilot testing before it was made ready for administration. Mean, Pearson Product Correlation of Coefficient, and Regression Analysis were the statistical tools used in analyzing the data. The hypotheses raised in this study were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

The level of interpersonal mindfulness of school heads is very high.The findings suggest that the interpersonal mindfulness of school heads is at a very high level, indicating that they consistently exhibit awareness and attention to others in their interactions. This high level of mindfulness likely contributes to a positive and supportive environment for teachers, fostering better relationships and emotional well-being. The consistent demonstration of mindfulness traits by school heads underscores their crucial role in promoting a healthy school climate and enhancing teacher satisfaction.

Meanwhile, the level of subjective well-being of teachers is high. The high level of subjective well-being among teachers indicates that they generally experience positive emotions and a sense of fulfillment in their professional lives. This suggests that teachers feel supported and valued in their roles, which may contribute to their overall job satisfaction and performance. The strong subjective well-being of teachers is essential for maintaining a motivated and engaged workforce, leading to better educational outcomes.

It was found out that there is a significant relationship between interpersonal mindfulness of school heads and subjective well-being of teachers. The significant relationship between the interpersonal mindfulness of school heads and the subjective well-being of teachers highlights the impact that school leadership can have on teachers' emotional and psychological health. School heads who demonstrate higher levels of mindfulness, such as being attentive and responsive to teachers' needs, foster a more supportive and positive work environment. This connection underscores the importance

of mindful leadership in promoting teachers' well-being, which in turn can enhance their job satisfaction and overall performance.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were offered: The level of interpersonal mindfulness of school heads means that it is always evident. Notably, attention to and awareness of the other person and being caught up in mind are always evident while body anchored presence and mindful responding are oftentimes evident.

Meanwhile, the level of subjective well-being of teachers is high. Specifically, student interaction well-being is always evident. On the other hand, workload well-being and organizational well-being are oftentimes evident.

Based on the findings, interpersonal mindfulness of school heads and subjective well-being are related. All domains of interpersonal mindfulness of school heads are linked and significantly influence the subjective well-being of teachers. This leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

The significant and positive correlation between the interpersonal mindfulness and subjective well-being of teachers supports the principles established in Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by Deci and Ryan (1985). In the context of this study, teachers who practice interpersonal mindfulness are more self-aware and can regulate their emotional responses, allowing them to feel more in control of their interactions and decisions, which enhances their sense of autonomy. Mindfulness helps teachers manage stress, improve classroom management, and navigate interpersonal relationships, making them feel more competent in their roles. SDT posits that teachers will experience greater subjective well-being, aligning mindfulness practices with improved emotional resilience, job satisfaction, and mental health. Thus, SDT serves as an ideal theoretical lens to understand how interpersonal mindfulness contributes to teachers' subjective well-being.

Recommendations

The following suggestions were offered based on the conclusions of the study:
Based on the findings, DepEd officials are encouraged to strengthen programs that promote interpersonal mindfulness among school heads, recognizing its significant influence on the subjective well-being of teachers. Initiatives such as training and workshops on mindful communication, empathetic leadership, and stress-resilient practices may be institutionalized to enhance school heads' capacity for attention to others and mindful responding. Furthermore, to improve teachers' well-being in terms of workload and organizational climate, policies may prioritize balanced workload distribution, supportive supervision, and the provision of mental health resources. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms may also be implemented to ensure that mindfulness-based leadership practices translate into improved teacher morale and school culture across all levels of the educational system.

Moreover, school heads further develop and consistently apply all aspects of interpersonal mindfulness to sustain and enhance the subjective well-being of teachers. Specifically, while attention to and awareness of others is already strong, greater emphasis may be placed on improving body-anchored presence and mindful responding through professional development programs, reflective practices, and mindfulness-based leadership coaching. By doing so, school heads may more effectively support teachers in managing their workload and fostering a positive organizational environment. Additionally, cultivating a more mindful leadership approach will not only promote healthier school relationships but also positively impact teacher morale and performance, ultimately contributing to a more nurturing and effective educational setting.

Furthermore, teachers are encouraged to actively engage in open and mindful communication with their school heads, recognizing that the interpersonal mindfulness of leaders plays a vital role in shaping their own well-being. They may take initiative in expressing professional needs and concerns, especially in areas affecting workload and organizational environment, to support more responsive and collaborative school leadership. Furthermore, teachers may benefit from participating in well-being programs, mindfulness practices, and peer support initiatives that enhance their resilience and strengthen their ability to maintain high levels of student interaction and job satisfaction. By fostering a culture of mutual awareness and understanding, teachers may contribute to a more supportive and mentally healthy school environment.

Lastly, future researchers are encouraged to explore the impact of interpersonal mindfulness of school heads on other dimensions of teacher outcomes such as job satisfaction, motivation, and organizational commitment to broaden the understanding of leadership influence. It is recommended to conduct longitudinal studies or employ mixed-method approaches to capture deeper insights and causal relationships over time. Researchers may also consider expanding the scope to different school settings or educational levels, and include variables such as teacher resilience, emotional intelligence, and cultural context to enrich the findings and enhance the applicability of results across diverse educational environments.

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