

Mindfulness-based Classroom Intervention: Boon or bane to ESL Teachers in Malaysia?

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Abstract

Teachers as well as pupils may experience stress during the process of teaching and learning a second language in a classroom setting. Mindfulness-Based Interventions are an effective way to manage stress issues in language classrooms. This study aimed to explore the perception of selected English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers on implementing MBIs during their online lessons regarding their understanding of and challenges in its execution. The perceptions of Malaysian English language teachers of this intervention have not been adequately evaluated, despite being one of the most important stakeholders in academia. Seventeen English language instructors from two secondary schools in Perak were interviewed using a semi-structured format. The subjects were chosen using a convenient sampling method. The goal was to determine what the teachers thought about the intervention in general. In addition, their readiness and acceptance of the method are also investigated. The interview was also conducted to elicit their thoughts on the potential inhibitors and facilitators to the introduction of MBIs in their lessons. The findings indicate that the idea of mindfulness is still new to the teachers since they do not understand it collectively. The challenges associated with executing the plan are also emphasized, along with recommendations for mitigating them. Despite possible obstacles, the teachers exhibit a generally positive attitude and a strong desire to implement Mindfulness-based Interventions in their classrooms.

Keywords: ESL teachers, Mindfulness-based classroom, intervention, perception, students

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Introduction

The concept of mindfulness involves intentionally directing one's focus towards a specific objective in the present moment, while maintaining a non-evaluative and observant mindset (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). This concept is expanding in popularity in the fields of educational psychology and teacher education (Altan, Lane, & Dottin, 2019). Teacher mindfulness is a complementing component in education. There are three primary methods for incorporating Mindfulness-based Intervention (MBI) program in schools: directly through student training programs; implicitly through teachers who have a personal mindfulness practice and so interact and teach with mindfulness qualities (e.g., open, non-judgmental attentive consciousness and acceptance); or both (Khng, 2018). The presence of teachers in the classroom is reinforced by the implementation of these deliberate behaviors. The presence of such aid would be beneficial to the professional development of academicians, as it would facilitate the academic and personal growth of their students (Sharp & Jennings, 2016).

The teaching profession has long been linked to high levels of anxiety which affects both academicians and students. Malaysian academicians were found to have symptoms of misery or depression (43.0 percent), anxiety (68.0 percent), and stress (32.3 percent) (Othman & Sivasubramaniam, 2019). To improve teacher well-being, schools may introduce MBI to teachers. Stress and burnout are prevalent concerns in the field of education, and educational institutions can offer support by empowering educators with strategies to cope with job-related stressors, such as mindfulness practices. MBIs are being implemented in educational institutions to address the concerns surrounding stress among academic staff (Schussler et al., 2018). This conclusion is consistent with the findings of a union poll conducted among academic staff in the United Kingdom (NASUWT, 2016) which found that 83 percent of academicians in the UK experienced workplace-related stress, with 60 percent reporting mental health issues. All these mental depression symptoms in academic staff may affect their interactions with students since they will be unable to focus during class (Shapiro, Rechtschaffen, & de Sousa, 2016).

To benefit students' learning, "faculty members need to incorporate mindfulness into each second of the class, not like something extra" (Xue, 2023, p. 5). It has been demonstrated that teachers' mindful approaches to pedagogical thinking, student sensitivity, and instructional innovation have a positive impact on students' mental health and general well-being. Students also suffer from these appalling mental and psychological illnesses (Ghatol, 2017). School pupils are also affected by stress and depression (Ishak, Ahmad, & Omar, 2020). Students' emotional well-being must be competent for them to thrive intellectually (White & Kern, 2018). As a result, there is an increasing need for schools and teachers to develop strategies to promote students' holistic well-being. Implementing the MBIs method is one way to go about it. MBIs have been shown to reduce levels of perceived stress (Halladay et al., 2019). The objectives of this study are to assess English Language teachers' comprehension of MBI in their language classes and to examine their perceptions of the implementation of the MBI program as well as the possible difficulties and facilitators of MBIs in their language classrooms. The following research questions were asked:

what is the English Language teachers' comprehension of Mindfulness-based intervention in their language classes and how do the teacher view the implementation of the MBI program as well as the possible difficulties and facilitators of MBIs in their language classrooms. Over the last decade, mindfulness education has risen to prominence in several nations worldwide. Unfortunately, there is a lack of research on this in Malaysian schools. To fill this gap, this study aims mainly to explore the perception of selected English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers on implementing MBIs during their online lessons regarding their understanding of and challenges in its execution. The results of this study would be significant for the various stakeholders in the education sector, including the relevant ministry, regional education offices, as well as school administrators and teachers, to consider integrating mindfulness-based classroom approaches as a way to facilitate teaching and learning.

Literature Review

Mindfulness can raise the consciousness of students, teachers, policymakers, material designers, and other field researchers (Song & He, 2021). Language teachers often face challenges, stress, and trauma and they can learn mindfulness techniques to improve themselves as teachers (Derakhshan, 2021). Few schools now provide structured Mindfulness-Based Programs (MBPs) to students within the curriculum, where school personnel have both completed an MBP and been further educated to teach mindfulness to their pupils (Wilde et al. 2019), however this number looks to be growing. Kim et al. (2019) conducted a study in Korean pre-schools to evaluate the feasibility and acceptability of a programme called OpenMind (OM-K). OM is a mindfulness-based SEL program for pre-schoolers that was just established. The educators who participated in the study displayed notable enthusiasm regarding the advantages of the OM-K program. The teachers noted that after being introduced to the mindfulness aspects, the program helped to produce a general sense of serenity among the kids, without placing anybody at risk. According to the participants, the mindfulness-centered program yielded favorable outcomes, leading them to advocate for it among their peers.

The benefits of mindfulness-based interventions in schools are extensive because they are advantageous to the entire school population, including teachers and students. Teachers' stress levels were reduced, and their management and self-esteem improved, in addition to addressing student stress. Teachers who actively participate in a mindfulness program to improve their personal well-being, according to Paulsen (2018), may experience increased teaching quality which will benefit their students. Mindfulness-based practices are also helpful for teachers to design and build new pedagogical techniques to create effective learning for their students (Zeilhofer, 2023).

Matsuba, Schonert-Reichl, McElroy, and Katahoire (2020) undertook a longitudinal feasibility study to assess the effectiveness of a Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) mindfulness-based school program (MindUp) for children in Northern Uganda following the war. The results suggest that the implementation of the mindfulness-based programs in schools throughout Uganda

and beyond would be beneficial. The children who engaged in the programs exhibited decreased levels of aggression and hostility, as well as improved academic performance.

Mindfulness practices may help new secondary teachers manage stress and enhance classroom teaching as part of their professional development (Roeser et al., 2022). Academician mindfulness was associated with lower levels of job stress, occupational disengagement, and depressive and anxiety disorders. Academicians were also observed to be more emotionally supportive in their interactions with students in their most stressful classrooms. The statement suggests that in order to improve occupational health and well-being, elevate the standard of teacher-student interactions within the classroom, and enhance student engagement and learning, it is imperative to implement intervention measures that focus on cultivating teacher mindfulness through training.

MBIs are found to have been of great help to educators in the United Kingdom in improving their personal mindfulness practice. Norton and Griffith (2020) stated that the teachers in their study were more attentive to others, had more compassion for themselves and their pupils, improved their emotional control, and were more resilient to stress due to the exercise. Several advantages to having a personal mindfulness practice for school personnel and giving MBIs at school might boost feelings of personal success have been identified. School leadership is one of the critical factors in the effective implementation of MBIs (Hudson, Lawton, & Hugh-Jones, 2020). They discovered the elements that contributed to the early success of a mindfulness whole school approach (M-WSA) to wellness program in Cumbria, the United Kingdom. M-WSA. They addressed the aspects of a mental health intervention's implementation in a school environment using the Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research (CFIR). Their findings showed that the CFIR was helpful in assessing the implementation of mental health programs in UK schools, with school administrators and policymakers as crucial components.

According to Huang (2022), educators' mindfulness and compassion reduce students' negative emotions, boost their positive feelings, and create a harmonious teacher-student relationship. Vetter (2020) supported the benefits of teachers' adoption of mindful qualities as the participating teachers in her research admitted to being more flexible with their students in the classroom which directly created a positive classroom environment for more conducive teaching and learning processes. Second-language learning lessons can be unnerving as teachers are expected to create a meaningful and fun class environment for the students (Nguyen, Le, Nguyen, Hoang, & Hoang, 2020). In the realm of English Language learning, Charoensukmongkol (2019) found that mindfulness is also helpful for EFL students in Thailand to reduce their anxiety during oral presentations in English. The study revealed that students with lower levels of anxiety achieved higher grades on their presentations compared to those who reported higher levels of anxiety.

In the context of higher education, excessive stress and anxiety are huge concerns on today's college campuses (Friesen, 2022). Because awareness was seen as the most beneficial result by students, mindfulness-based treatments for college students, like those for the general

population, should primarily focus on awareness. Several types of meditation might be used to bring consciousness during MBIs, including awareness of breath meditations, thinking meditations, walking meditations, shower meditations, and/or eating meditations (Bamber & Schneider, 2020).

Developing more mindfulness programs for teachers in the school is an essential step of professional development that benefits both teachers and students (Vetter, 2020). Among such programs are Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE), Stress Management and Relaxation Techniques (SMART), Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), etc. Nevertheless, MBI deployment in schools is not without its difficulties. The challenges of implementing MBIs in schools are numerous. Wigelsworth and Quinn (2020) identified some obstacles regarding instructors' perceptions of the approach. Religious problems, a lack of time, a lack of space, and a lack of grasp of the concept were all mentioned by the professors in their study. Nonetheless, the ten teachers who took part in the study agreed that MBIs helped reduce stress among their pupils as well as their own. In addition, MBIs were able to improve the academic achievement of their pupils. Despite the obstacles, the teachers were eager to implement MBIs in their classrooms.

MBIs possess the capacity to be implemented within educational institutions due to their ability to cultivate favorable attributes and skills such as attentiveness, cognitive awareness, emotional management, and adaptability in stressful scholarly attention towards MBIs in educational settings worldwide, there exists a dearth of research initiatives pertaining to its implementation within Malaysian schools. This study was thus conducted to address this vacuum in the literature particularly regarding ESL teachers' perceptions of MBIs as actors in their implementation in Malaysian schools.

Method

This study was underpinned by a pragmatic epistemology approach (Morgan, 2014). As very little is known about the implementation of MBIs in Malaysian schools, the study focused on determining the language teachers' perceptions concerning the existing literature. The data collection procedures included organizing regular meetings among the authors of this paper to discuss pertinent issues, adapting an interview frame from the literature, active and attentive listening to the interviewees during the interview, and adopting a suitable analytical method called Thematic Analysis.

Participants

The seventeen English Language teachers who participated in this study were chosen based on the convenience sampling method. Six teachers taught in the mainstream secondary four and five in two daily schools in the sub-urban area of Perak, a state in the northern region of Malaysia. Six others taught in the mainstream secondary six while the remaining five taught in lower secondary three and two in the same schools. All of them were females with more than five years

of teaching experience. The data were collected during school sessions in October 2022. The potential candidates were contacted through a written correspondence addressed to the school administrators. Subsequently, the letter was disseminated among all English Language instructors to identify individuals who expressed interest in the opportunity.

Research Instruments

The tool with which the data were collected was a semi-structured interview. It was adapted from Wigelsworth and Quinn (2020). The interview items were arranged according to three significant themes namely understanding of mindfulness, teachers' perceptions of MBIs in language classrooms, and teachers' perceptions of MBI obstacles and facilitators. Braun and Clarke have categorized theme analysis into six distinct stages (2006). We completed the first stage of the analysis which entailed familiarizing ourselves with the data. The analysis was done by reading and revisiting each of the interview transcripts, as well as making notes on first thoughts on the data and probable codes. The second phase involved creating initial codes throughout the whole body of data by choosing and collecting data extracts that seemed to speak to a particular feature or fascinating element and then labeling them. Third, by looking for broader patterns of meaning throughout the data set, we began organizing the initial codes for each interview into more prominent themes. After sketching a larger thematic framework for meaning and patterns, the fourth stage entailed reviewing these ideas again and polishing them: we set out theme tables for each major subject. The process entailed the aggregation of comparable themes and subthemes, while also eliminating initial codes and themes that did not align with the overarching framework. Fifth, the themes were chosen by fine-tuning each feature such that each one could tell a story while still fitting within the overall data narrative. To illustrate the themes using data extracts and to explain how each data extract captured a different aspect of the subject, the themes were added at the end of the report. Several proposed tests were utilized throughout the research to investigate and enhance the plausibility and coherence of the principal author's viewpoint (Levitt et al., 2018). These included keeping a reflective notebook, re-reading the transcripts after the first drafting of data themes, and conducting a "member check" with all subjects, with four saying the themes matched their own experiences. The data was additionally triangulated with the aid of the third author, who evaluated the various steps of analysis for theme identification and emergent themes by reviewing one original transcript.

Research Procedures

Data Collection Protocol

Semi-structured interviews were used following Wolf's (1978) conclusion that research on the social validity of treatments should include the social relevance of the intervention goals, the social appropriateness of techniques, and the acceptability of the intervention. Interviews in this study were conducted over the telephone and digitally recorded. This method of data collection was chosen due to the movement restriction order caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Each participant underwent a brief member check after the interview to increase trustworthiness. The

process of verification was undertaken in order to ensure that the responses provided by the teachers were accurately interpreted.

Data Analysis

The confidentiality of the interviewees was guaranteed as all the recordings were made anonymous and carefully transcribed before being analyzed. In the first phase, the data was deductively analyzed using the Thematic Analysis. The interview items and coding were explicitly designed to address the following structures:

- teachers' understanding of mindfulness,
- their perceptions about mindfulness in schools, and
- their perceived barriers and facilitators to their implementation

In the second phase, an inductive method of data analysis was performed to highlight issues and pertinent points of interest which had not been unearthed in the extant literature. The codes were later organized according to themes through an exhaustive search for possible repetitions and consistencies. The codes and themes were then examined, and a list of the most pertinent ones to the study questions was created. The semantic encoding procedure was used to record the participants' distinct and shared views regarding the use of MBIs in their language classrooms.

Results

Below are the interviewees' responses, which were grouped into three categories based on Wigelsworth and Quinn's (2020).

Theme One – ESL Teachers' Understanding of Mindfulness

All the teachers in this study emphasized the use of mindfulness as a form of emotional support. Consensually, they realized that being mindful meant being conscious of one's thoughts and emotions in the present moment as well as in the past and future. They also agreed that being non-judgmental was crucial to achieving the state of mindfulness. All associated mindfulness with their ability to control their emotions as seen from one of the responses – 'one must be aware of the need to have control over one's emotions.' However, three respondents made a connection between mindfulness and being open to accepting one's emotional condition (s). Unfortunately, a few of the respondents were still unclear about the concept of mindfulness. Several respondents acknowledged that they had not previously utilized Mind-Body Interventions (MBIs) throughout their teaching years of service, despite being aware of its existence. These individuals expressed reservations regarding the integration of MBIs into their instructional practices. Nevertheless, most felt that MBIs would be helpful for them to deal with their own stress at work. It can be generally deduced here that the definition and concept of MBIs were still elusive among language teachers.

Theme Two – ESL Teachers’ Perceptions of MBIs in Language Classrooms

The general benefits of MBIs were acknowledged by all seventeen language teachers in this study. They unanimously agreed that MBIs would benefit both teachers and students particularly in a second language classroom where frustrations were often experienced by both parties if implemented with proper planning and execution. The respondents also believed that MBIs could help reduce teachers’ stress levels and increase a positive and encouraging teaching experience. MBIs would also be advantageous to the students by assisting them in managing their stress and anxiety, especially in connection to learning a second language. In addition, with reduced stress levels, the students would then enjoy improved academic attainment. More than half of the participating teachers described MBIs as a possible way to help them handle difficult emotions. All of them agreed that the ability to handle stress would make them more resilient and dynamic. Fifteen out of the seventeen respondents also believed that reduced stress and depression would create a healthy sense of calmness and joy or happiness at the workplace. Some of the recorded responses are shown below:

Teacher 4 - I truly believe that when you are in tune with yourself, you will be satisfied, calm, happy, and contented with what life has to offer. MBIs in class would make me more relaxed.

Teacher 12 – When you are happy, you are more focused on your work and thus be more productive. MBIs is a great tool to create that feeling in me, especially when I am in class, handling difficult students.

Positive Teaching Experience

The respondents agreed that MBIs had a high possibility of allowing teachers create a positive and tranquil classroom ambiance for students. With everyone in the classroom being mindful of their existence and purpose for the assembly, the lesson would run more smoothly with fewer hiccoughs or disruptions regarding attentiveness and focus. Almost all respondents said that cultivating a personal mindfulness practice helped them cope with the fast-paced nature of their jobs.

Reduced Students’ Stress and Anxiety Levels

Teachers also believed MBIs could be used by students in their everyday lives to help them deal with stress and anxiety related to language learning. In addition, the students would also develop greater resilience to any changes taking place in the learning. To students who are usually overly worried about examinations, MBIs could be the possible answer to calming them down, according to the teachers in this study. In a study by Schwind et al. (2017), the participating teachers in their study reported students feeling more relaxed and less anxious after participating in their study. According to the teachers, the brief mindful breathing exercise at the beginning of

class helped students feel more focused and balanced before working with the course material. Most students thought the lovingkindness meditation was a great approach to end the lesson. The positive impact of MBIs on students is also reverberated by the responses from the teachers in this study. Two responses from two teachers are shown below.

Teacher 2 - Students in Malaysia need this mindfulness technique to help alleviate their stress due to exam pressure. They need to be assisted in channeling the anxiety elsewhere. MBIs can surely help them to tackle the pressure. Once they are capable of coping, their lives will be less stressful.

Teacher 11 – MBIs would be great for students to help them overcome stress related to their academics. I believe this is a good way for us teachers to help our students by exposing them a simple method to relieve stress particularly during the challenging language lesson in schools.

Theme Three - Teachers' Perceptions of MBI Obstacles and Facilitators

Presented below are the obstacles to the implementation of MBIs in Malaysian English Language classrooms, as perceived by the respondents in this study after which the solutions to the challenges are discussed.

Time Constraint

Every one of the respondents claimed that heavy workload was the biggest hurdle to their implementing personal interventions such as MBIs. Their failure to include MBIs in their lessons indicated that it was also a barrier to the implementation of MBIs for their students as the teachers did not have the luxury of time to prepare and execute the intervention. The teachers also mentioned onerous administrative tasks and demands for completing the curriculum and syllabus as obstacles to implementation. In addition to this, the teachers were also concerned about the amount of time taken away from their lessons should MBI be implemented. This is because completion of the syllabus was commonly a priority particularly for classes taking major examinations.

Conflicts of Faith

Thirteen out of the seventeen respondents felt somewhat unsure about the religious aspect of Mindfulness. Thirteen of the teachers were Muslims while the other four were Hindus. A conflict with religion was more prevalent among the Muslims after being told that Mindfulness originated in Buddhism. Five participants expressed doubts regarding parental consent as most of the students were also Muslims. However, they relented after being given some explanations concerning the universalities of mindfulness. The Muslim teachers were also assured that meditation was a long-time Islamic practice through daily dhikr or mantra which is essentially a repeated expression of gratitude to God. The elaborate explanation managed to enhance their understanding of mindfulness.

Lack of Understanding

Another obstacle to the possible use of MBIs in Malaysian language classrooms was the teachers' and students' lack of comprehension of the concept. Some of the teachers mentioned the possible skepticism among society regarding MBIs being associated with mental illness. The stigma of being labeled as incapable of coping with life's stressors was also cited by several teachers as a factor that inhibited the use of MBIs. They feared the stigma of someone being labeled insane or of an unsound mind. What this entails is the need for the relevant authorities to raise awareness of MBIs in education.

Teacher Upskilling and Training

The participating teachers strongly believed that educators need to undergo comprehensive training and development programs for their mindfulness practice before executing MBIs in the classrooms. Several were given proper training. A few of them admitted that they would seriously consider using MBIs in their classroom if the benefits outweighed the setbacks. They also felt that the knowledge and skills to be attained in training would help them build their confidence in the intervention process. According to Jennings (2015), to ensure a positive environment for teaching and learning, teachers and other pertinent school or faculty staff should receive the appropriate education and training on mindfulness. Parents, stakeholders, policymakers, and educators have all expressed the need for the educational agenda to be expanded to include social and emotional learning for both teachers and students.

A Whole-school Community Approach to MBIs Execution

The respondents were insistent that a comprehensive directive from the federal, state, and school administrations needed to be communicated to the entire school population. The whole school community must be engaged to ensure that MBIs would be implemented with proper planning and solid execution basis. No one party is to be singled out in the MBIs implementation. Seven of the seventeen respondents felt that the holistic approach to the MBIs was crucial to mitigate stigmas surrounding the concept itself.

Dissemination of Information to Stakeholders

The final point to facilitate MBIs is the awareness of all the stakeholders in the learning process of students. All teachers, students, and parents should be adequately informed of MBIs and their benefits. Most of the teachers in this study also admitted that they did not know that even teachers could benefit from MBIs. Proper dissemination of relevant information regarding MBIs to parents would particularly help ease any form of misunderstanding with regard to the religious connotations of MBIs. Furthermore, accurate distribution of information would ensure parental support for the implementation of MBIs at home. This is apparent from the recorded response of one of the respondents shown below.

Parents who are concerned with the well-being of their children would welcome this idea of MBIs in school. This is even more so in a second language learning environment which can be frustrating at times to the students. What teachers and school administrators need to do is to consciously approach the parents with the proper explanation given to them concerning the manifold benefits of MBIs for their children.

The findings indicated that some respondents were unfamiliar with MBI and had never used it despite acknowledging that the approach helped ease job-related stress. Furthermore, the participants acknowledged that MBI yielded a favorable professional encounter that also had advantageous effects on their students. Notwithstanding, several impediments to the efficacious execution of MBI were also discerned, encompassing temporal constraints, religious discord, educators' inadequate comprehension, and insufficient MBI instructions. Numerous facilitators to the potential execution of MBI were also presented in the findings such as a whole-school community approach and adequate information sharing with all the stakeholders.

Discussion

This study attempted to explore the perception of selected English Language teachers regarding Mindfulness-based interventions in their language classrooms. They were mainstream secondary teachers in two daily schools in the sub-urban area of Perak. The teachers had not received any prior exposure or training in the implementation of Mindfulness-based Interventions (MBIs) prior to the commencement of the study. The participants' perspectives on the implementation of MBIs were captured through semi-structured interviews which explored their comprehension, perception, and the various factors that influence the feasibility of MBIs. This discussion will be guided by the three research questions as follows:

RQ1 What do ESL teachers understand about the concept of Mindfulness-based intervention in their classrooms?

Mindfulness is indeed an intricate concept as reflected in the teachers' responses concerning their understanding of what mindfulness necessitated. The teachers defined the concept as an emotional support and a self-help device for managing stress in their language classrooms. However, several respondents admitted that they never heard of MBIs before being approached for the current study. This implies that there is a lack of consensus for an exact operational definition of MBIs among the teachers which may affect the execution of the intervention in schools. A vague understanding of the definitional operation may engender differing expectations of the outcomes. Another issue of concern in the teachers' understanding of MBIs is the 'introspective awareness' (Hyland, 2016) which forms the fundamental aspect of a mindful practice. This missing perspective from the teachers may have stemmed from their treatment of methods as mere commodities. A lack of proper understanding among the teachers will make them reluctant to implement MBIs in language classrooms. The onus is thus on the school administrators to inform their academic staff about the purpose and the multiple benefits of

MBIs.

RQ2: What are ESL teachers' perceptions regarding MBIs in their classrooms?

Despite the teachers' limited and convergent understanding of MBIs which engendered their apprehension in the implementation, they displayed optimism about the possible success of MBIs in their language classrooms. Such a response could have been triggered by the urgent need to address the stress- and anxiety-related issues that afflicted members of the education fraternity (OCED, 2020). Teachers must make a meaningful and fun classroom for second language learners which can be unsettling to the former (Nguyen, Le, Nguyen, Hoang, & Hoang, 2020). School is where students are given numerous opportunities to develop their self-regulatory practices and personal attributes. This makes schools an ideal platform to introduce them to various strategies for their mental and psychological well-being (Virtanen, Vasalampi, Torppa, Lerkkanen, & Nurmi, 2019). School authorities have the responsibility to promote both teachers' and students' social and emotional well-being by ensuring that a conducive setting is provided to all (Hwang et al., 2017). Schools can assist teachers in MBIs by organizing mindfulness-based training programs like MBSR or programs designed particularly for teachers like Mindfulness-Based Wellness Education (MBWE), Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE), and Stress Management and Relaxation Techniques (SMART) in Education (Khng, 2018). Almost all respondents said that cultivating a personal mindfulness practice helped them cope with the fast-paced nature of their jobs. This corroborates the findings by Norton and Griffith (2020) who confirmed the benefits of MBIs for teachers.

RQ3: What potential barriers and facilitators do language teachers perceive in implementing MBIs in their classrooms?

The respondents in this study cited several barriers that could impede the successful implementation of MBIs in their language classrooms. The most prominent barrier to MBIs was lack of time. The allocation of time is necessary for the scheduling of MBIs within pre-existing, busy timetables, as well as for the completion of syllabus and curriculum requirements. The teachers were under pressure to incorporate additional components into their already busy schedules. The teachers also mentioned the need for them to be adequately trained with skills and knowledge as implementers of MBIs. Comprehensive training and upskilling were thus necessary to ensure that the teachers are competent in delivering MBIs in their lessons (Humphrey et al., 2016). The results of the study suggest that inadequate understanding of Mindfulness-based Interventions among teachers posed a barrier to the prospective effectiveness of the intervention. Along the same breadth was the concern of MBIs being grounded in Buddhism which posed the predominantly Muslim teachers with religious conflicts. Any doubts about MBIs causing religious conflicts among the stakeholders may jeopardize their acceptance of the intervention. All of this requires a structured and organized execution of MBI through appropriate distribution of pertinent information about the intervention programme in a real-world setting. Participants in this research generally had mixed feelings about the implementation of mindfulness training in educational

settings. These opinions were linked to their desire to promote student wellness since they deemed that mindfulness exercises were indeed helpful despite feeling inadequately prepared to execute the technique (Jefferies, 2021).

Conclusion

The study examined the perception of selected ESL teachers in two schools on implementing MBIs during their online lessons regarding their understanding of and challenges in its execution. A lack of understanding and awareness of the intervention among the MBI implementers may threaten the success of the program. To prevent failure to the execution of any MBI program, proper and detailed groundwork is necessary before its implementation (Duggan & Julliard, 2018). All parties involved, including school officials, teachers, students, and parents, should be fully informed. All problems that pose a threat to them should also be resolved, with special attention paid to the MBI's universal nature, purposeful process, and benefits. Aligned accountability between the relevant authorities i.e. district education departments, schools and teachers would lead to an enhanced performance of any program implemented in school (Soleimani, 2020). It is also recommended that teachers be trained and given ample time to prepare for effective implementation. Mindfulness is a promising mechanism as a school-based intervention that helps promote a favorable school environment for both teachers and students. Schools should be aligned and accountable to ensure the success of MBI programs. Qualitative findings from the study should be triangulated with expert informants and third-person cognitive behavioral measures to investigate improvements in staff pro-social dispositions. Further research with schools that are effectively integrating mindfulness may be conducted to evaluate what provision was made available to staff or explore other organizational supports.

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