

## The effectiveness of Mindfulness-Based Well-being Training on Occupational Stress, Resilience and Academic Optimism in Female Teachers

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### ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted to determine the effectiveness of mindfulness-based well-being training on occupational stress, resilience, and academic optimism among female teachers in Zahedan. This study employed a quasi-experimental design with a pretest-posttest control group. The statistical population comprised all female elementary school teachers in Zahedan during the 2024-2025 academic year, from which 40 participants were selected using multistage random sampling and randomly assigned to experimental (n=20) and control (n=20) groups. The experimental group received mindfulness training over eight two-hour sessions. The research instruments included the Occupational Stress Inventory (Osipow, 1998), the Academic Optimism Questionnaire (Beard et al., 2010), and the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (2003). Data were analyzed using Multivariate Analysis of Covariance (MANCOVA). The results demonstrated that mindfulness-based well-being training had a significant effect on reducing occupational stress ( $F=36.37$ ,  $p=0.001$ ,  $\eta^2=0.51$ ) and increasing academic optimism ( $F=24.17$ ,  $p=0.001$ ,  $\eta^2=0.41$ ) and resilience ( $F=6.84$ ,  $p=0.013$ ,  $\eta^2=0.16$ ) among teachers. The effect sizes indicated a strong impact of the intervention on improving the studied variables. Therefore, it can be concluded that mindfulness-based well-being training can be utilized as an effective intervention to promote mental health and reduce occupational pressures among teachers.

### Introduction

Teaching is one of the most valuable yet challenging professions. Teachers play a vital role in shaping the minds of the younger generation; however, this substantial responsibility is frequently accompanied by elevated levels of occupational stress ([Dhungana et al., 2025](#)). Occupational stress is a process whereby workplace stressors arising from unmet demands, resource scarcity, and insufficient competencies result in psychological, behavioral, or physiological strain. This negative cognitive and somatic response emanates from an imbalance between job demands and the degree of control an individual possesses over meeting these demands ([Gunasekra & Perera, 2023](#)). Teachers encounter a broad spectrum of stressors, including adverse working conditions, excessive workload, student behavior and attitudes, lack of career advancement opportunities, and poor collegial relationships ([Mathew, 2023](#)). These factors can lead to psychological and physical health problems, reduced productivity, increased absenteeism, diminished



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morale, and significant decreases in life satisfaction. Chronic stress is capable of disrupting daily functioning and emotional equilibrium while creating a vulnerability for the development of other mental health disorders such as anxiety and depression ([Agyapong et al., 2022](#)). Occupational stress specifically culminates in negative outcomes including emotional exhaustion, loss of motivation, and decreased job satisfaction (Yilmaz et al., 2024). Findings from [Dilekçi et al. \(2025\)](#) demonstrated that occupational stress serves as a significant predictor of teacher attrition.

In this context, psychological resilience, conceptualized as an individual's capacity to successfully navigate environmental pressures, can play an instrumental role in mitigating stress ([Aghelvand, 2025](#)). Teacher resilience is a multidimensional construct encompassing individual and environmental factors that enables teachers to maintain their motivation, mental health, and efficacy under stressful conditions ([Collie & Mansfield, 2022](#)). Research indicates that resilience is critical for job satisfaction, professional retention, and instructional quality, demonstrating direct associations with positive classroom interactions and student academic achievement ([Trang & Thang, 2023](#)). [Pakdaman's \(2022\)](#) study revealed that greater resilience and coping capacity render individuals less susceptible to psychological and emotional disturbances.

Conversely, optimism, as a psychological resource, plays a pivotal role in enhancing teachers' mental health. Optimism refers to maintaining a positive outlook regarding future outcomes despite adverse circumstances and reinforces more adaptive coping strategies ([Carver & Scheier, 2014; Zhang & Luo, 2023](#)). Within the educational context, academic optimism denotes teachers' beliefs in their own and their students' capabilities to achieve academic success, encompassing emphasis on educational objectives, beliefs in the efficacy of engagement, and mutual trust between teacher and learner. This construct proves effective across all educational levels and assumes particular significance in elementary education ([song, 2022](#)).

Academic optimism constitutes a key component of teacher well-being that influences not only their effectiveness and retention but also directly impacts student well-being and achievement ([Song, 2022](#)). Research demonstrates that optimistic teachers exhibit greater resistance to burnout while experiencing superior physical and mental health, which subsequently influences instructional quality and classroom interactions positively ([Bagdziuniene et al., 2023](#)). [Moradi et al.'s \(2015\)](#) findings corroborate this, revealing a significant positive relationship between teachers' academic optimism and students' academic achievement.

One effective strategy for enhancing teacher resilience and optimism is mindfulness-based training. According to Baer et al.'s (2008) conceptualization, mindfulness comprises five core facets: observing, describing and articulating experiences, acting with awareness, non-judging of inner experiences, and non-reactivity to internal thoughts and feelings. These competencies can assist teachers in developing greater awareness of their cognitions and emotions, preventing immersion in them or automatic reactive responses, thereby achieving reduced psychological distress ([Rombouts et al., 2025](#)).

Mindfulness training contributes to teachers' professional health, personal well-being, and positive affective experiences through strengthening self-regulatory and coping resources as well as prosocial orientations ([de Carvalho et al., 2021](#)). Mindfulness can serve a valuable function in augmenting teachers' capacity to manage instructional stress and provide emotional support, as it enables them to regulate and manage their emotions, control teaching stress, and prevent occupational burnout ([Agha Askari et al., 2022](#)). Renkf's (2017) research findings demonstrated that mindfulness-based training leads to enhanced resilience. Similarly, Keye and Pidgeon (2014) identified a significant positive relationship between mindfulness and resilience ([as cited in Basak et al., 2024](#)). [Khavari's \(2025\)](#) study also revealed that in-service training based on mindfulness-based stress reduction approaches can effectively reduce stress levels and prevent occupational burnout among teachers.

The escalating prevalence of occupational stress among teachers has emerged as a serious concern for educational systems. In this regard, Rezaei, citing Bazmani and Bazmani (2024), demonstrated that 25%

of Iranian teachers experience relatively severe stress, indicating the extensive dimensions of this issue domestically. Despite existing research on mindfulness and psychological variables, a considerable gap remains in examining the simultaneous effectiveness of mindfulness-based well-being training on occupational stress, resilience, and academic optimism among teachers, particularly within the population of female teachers in Iran. Female teachers, due to their multiple societal roles including familial responsibilities, child-rearing, and socio-cultural expectations, face heightened psychological pressures that can adversely affect their occupational performance and mental health. Therefore, the present study aims to investigate the effectiveness of mindfulness-based well-being training on occupational stress, resilience, and academic optimism among female teachers, thereby filling the existing research gap while providing evidence-based practical solutions for addressing the prevalence of occupational stress and promoting teachers' mental health. The findings of this research can be utilized by counselors, educational psychologists, educational administrators, policymakers in the Ministry of Education, and designers of in-service training programs, serving as a foundation for developing effective psychological interventions to improve teachers' professional and personal quality of life.

Accordingly, the principal research question is: Does mindfulness-based well-being training significantly affect occupational stress, resilience, and academic optimism among female teachers?

## **Method**

### **Sample and Sampling Method**

The statistical population comprised all female elementary school teachers in Zahedan during the 2024-2025 academic year, from which 40 participants were selected using multistage random sampling and randomly assigned to experimental (n=20) and control (n=20) groups.

### **Tools Used**

#### **Osipow Occupational Stress Questionnaire**

The Osipow Occupational Stress Questionnaire was developed in 1998 by Osipow and Spokane to assess individual stress (Osipow & Spokane, 1998). This questionnaire consists of 10-item subscales including role overload, role insufficiency, role ambiguity, role boundary, responsibility, and physical environment. Scoring is based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5. The score range indicates: 50 to 99 as low stress, 100 to 149 as low to moderate stress, 150 to 199 as moderate to severe stress, and 200 to 250 as severe stress. Sakketou et al. reported the reliability of this questionnaire using Cronbach's alpha method as 0.86 ([Sakketou et al., 2014](#)). In the study by Azad Marzabadi and Gholami Fesharaki (2011) [AzadMarzabadi](#) the reliability and validity of this questionnaire using Cronbach's alpha method and split-half method were obtained as 0.78 and 0.65, respectively. The reliability of this questionnaire in the present study was estimated using Cronbach's alpha method as 0.78.

#### **Teacher Academic Optimism Questionnaire**

To assess teacher academic optimism, the standard questionnaire by Beard et al. (2010) was used. This questionnaire, which is known as the Teacher Academic Optimism Assessment Tool, consists of three components: teacher academic emphasis, teacher sense of efficacy, and teacher trust in students and parents, which is designed based on a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 (very low to very high). This instrument contains 11 items designed in three main sections. The first section describes teacher academic emphasis, the second section addresses teacher sense of efficacy, and the third section deals with faculty trust in parents and students. The reliability of this questionnaire based on Cronbach's alpha was reported as 0.89 in the study by [Abbasian and Heidarzadeh \(2014\)](#) and 0.98 in the study by [Moradi et al. \(2015\)](#). The reliability of this questionnaire in the present study was estimated using Cronbach's alpha method as 0.78.

#### **Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale**

The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale was developed in 2003, and the developers believe it is a good instrument to distinguish resilient individuals from non-resilient ones in clinical and non-clinical groups. This instrument consists of 25 items with a five-point Likert scale ranging from completely false (0) to

completely true (4), where the minimum score is zero and the maximum score is 100. Validity has been established through factor analysis, convergent and divergent validity methods, and reliability has been confirmed by the test developers using test-retest and Cronbach's alpha methods in various normal and at-risk groups. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of this questionnaire has been reported as 0.86 (Connor & Davidson, 2003). In the study by Samani et al. (2007), a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.87 was obtained, indicating appropriate reliability of the questionnaire. The validity of the questionnaire was also confirmed in this research. The reliability of this questionnaire in the present study was estimated as 0.86.

### Procedure

The current study utilized a Quasi-Experimental research design with a Pretest-Posttest Control Group structure. The statistical population included all female primary school teachers in Zahedan city during the 2024–2025 academic year. The sample was selected using a Multi-Stage Random Sampling procedure, adhering to Inclusion Criteria (being a female teacher, employed in primary schools in Zahedan). The final sample consisted of 40 participants who were randomly assigned into two groups: the Experimental Group (n=20) and the Control Group (n=20). Exclusion Criteria were established to maintain internal validity, including (more than two absences from the training sessions, and simultaneous participation in other psychological interventions). Following the Pretest administered to both groups, the Experimental Group received Mindfulness-Based Well-being Training over 8 two-hour sessions, implemented weekly for 8 weeks. The training protocol was adapted from the Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) and Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) models developed by Kabat-Zinn and colleagues (Zarei & Arshadhosseini, 2019). Immediately after the intervention concluded, the Posttest was administered to both groups. Finally, the research data were analyzed using Multivariate Analysis of Covariance (MANCOVA).

**Table 1- Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy Protocol Based on Kabat-Zinn et al (1992) Model.**

| Session        | Session Description  |
|----------------|--|
| <b>First</b>   | Welcome and explanation of goals – Training on greater awareness of emotions, thoughts and bodily sensations moment by moment and experiencing being in the moment (explaining the importance of being present in the here and now and opening up the concept of mindfulness for members using several techniques and learning to perform daily activities and paying attention to them) |
| <b>Second</b>  | Training attention to emotions and thoughts and expanding and accepting unpleasant and aggressive thoughts and feelings (discovering the wandering mind and practicing attention to the body, bodily sensations, physical feelings and attention to breathing)   |
| <b>Third</b>   | Training response skills to unpleasant and aggressive thoughts or feelings (calming the wandering mind through practice, breathing and body scan, sitting meditation and performing exercises that bring attention to the present moment)  |
| <b>Fourth</b>  | Training to prevent creating and consolidating aggressive thoughts (learning to remain in the present moment without avoiding people and observing the turbulence of thoughts)   |
| <b>Fifth</b>   | Changing old thought habits (recognizing daily thought patterns, being unmotivated in tasks, considering activities fruitless, full awareness of thoughts and feelings and accepting them without judgment and direct interference)  |
| <b>Sixth</b>   | Training to avoid aggression in difficult life situations, having big dreams, constantly comparing one's current situation with the desired situation (changing mood and thoughts by perceiving thoughts as just thoughts and not reality)   |
| <b>Seventh</b> | Training to become aware of warning signs of stress and aggression   |
| <b>Eighth</b>  | Training awareness of subtle mood changes (planning and using presence techniques for life and generalizing it to the entire flow of life)   |

### Results

Data analysis in the present study was conducted in two sections: descriptive and inferential. In the descriptive statistics section, the descriptive statistics of the research variables, including mean and

standard deviation, were described, and then, for inferential analysis of the research data, multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) was used.

The mean scores and standard deviations of the pretest and posttest for job stress, academic optimism, and teacher resilience are as follows (Table 2).

**Table 2- Descriptive Statistics Results for Pretest and Posttest by Group.**

| Group               | Variables         | Pretest |                    | Posttest |                    |
|---------------------|-------------------|---------|--------------------|----------|--------------------|
|                     |                   | Mean    | Standard Deviation | Mean     | Standard Deviation |
| <b>Control</b>      | Job Stress        | 162.00  | 22.74              | 163.45   | 23.43              |
|                     | Academic Optimism | 35.20   | 5.92               | 35.15    | 6.81               |
|                     | Resilience        | 60.80   | 10.87              | 61.55    | 12.79              |
| <b>Experimental</b> | Job Stress        | 154.80  | 19.70              | 139.80   | 19.41              |
|                     | Academic Optimism | 31.90   | 5.00               | 37.15    | 6.17               |
|                     | Resilience        | 59.60   | 12.86              | 66.10    | 13.57              |

To investigate the effect of Mindfulness-Based Well-being Training on teachers' optimism, resilience, and job stress, Multivariate Analysis of Covariance (MANCOVA) was employed. Prior to performing this test, the examination of several statistical assumptions is mandatory. One of the assumptions of the Multivariate Analysis of Covariance test is the homogeneity of the covariance matrices. Box's Test was used to check the fulfillment of this assumption. The results pertaining to the execution of this test are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3- Results of Homogeneity of Covariance Matrices Test.**

| Box's M     | F           | df1      | df2             | Significance Level |
|-------------|-------------|----------|-----------------|--------------------|
| <b>3.11</b> | <b>0.47</b> | <b>6</b> | <b>10462.19</b> | <b>0.83</b>        |

As observed in Table 3, the Box's test value (3.11) is not significant at the 95% confidence level ( $p > 0.05$ ). Therefore, the homogeneity of covariance matrices is confirmed.

**Table 4- Results of Levene's Test for Homogeneity of Variances.**

| Variable                 | F    | df1 | df2 | Significance Level |
|--------------------------|------|-----|-----|--------------------|
| <b>Job Stress</b>        | 0.50 | 1   | 38  | 0.48               |
| <b>Academic Optimism</b> | 2.76 | 1   | 38  | 0.11               |
| <b>Resilience</b>        | 3.52 | 1   | 38  | 0.07               |

As shown in Table 4, the results of Levene's Test are not significant for any of the variables at the 95% confidence level ( $p > 0.05$ ). Therefore, the assumption of homogeneity of variances for the variables is confirmed.

**Table 5- Results of Multivariate Analysis of Covariance (MANCOVA).**

| Effect       | Test               | Value | F     | Hypothesis df | Error df | Significance Level | Partial Eta Squared |
|--------------|--------------------|-------|-------|---------------|----------|--------------------|---------------------|
|              | Pillai's Trace     | 0.68  | 23.95 | 3             | 33       | 0.001              | 0.68                |
| <b>Group</b> |                    |       |       |               |          |                    |                     |
|              | Wilks' Lambda      | 0.31  | 23.95 | 3             | 33       | 0.001              | 0.68                |
|              | Hotelling's Trace  | 2.17  | 23.95 | 3             | 33       | 0.001              | 0.68                |
|              | Roy's Largest Root | 2.17  | 23.95 | 3             | 33       | 0.001              | 0.68                |

Based on the multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) table, all four tests including Pillai's Trace, Wilks' Lambda, Hotelling's Trace, and Roy's Largest Root have been confirmed at the significance level of 0.001 ( $p < 0.01$ ), indicating that there is a significant difference between the groups. The partial eta squared value (0.68) also indicates a large effect size of the independent variable on the dependent variables, demonstrating the significant impact strength of the intervention or factor under investigation.

**Table 6- ANCOVA Results for Job Stress, Academic Optimism, and Resilience Scores.**

| Variable                 | Stage     | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F     | Sig.  | Effect Size |
|--------------------------|-----------|----------------|----|-------------|-------|-------|-------------|
| <b>Job Stress</b>        | Post-test | 2010.81        | 1  | 2010.81     | 36.37 | 0.001 | 0.51        |
|                          | Error     | 1934.70        | 35 | 55.27       |       |       |             |
|                          | Total     | 942789.00      | 40 |             |       |       |             |
| <b>Academic Optimism</b> | Post-test | 230.41         | 1  | 230.41      | 24.17 | 0.001 | 0.41        |
|                          | Error     | 333.61         | 35 | 9.53        |       |       |             |
|                          | Total     | 53916.00       | 40 |             |       |       |             |
| <b>Resilience</b>        | Post-test | 232.14         | 1  | 232.14      | 6.84  | 0.013 | 0.16        |
|                          | Error     | 1187.63        | 35 | 33.93       |       |       |             |
|                          | Total     | 169757.00      | 40 |             |       |       |             |

The results of Table 6 showed that after controlling for the effect of the pretest, significant differences were observed between the groups in all three dependent variables. Specifically, significant differences were observed in job stress ( $F=36.37$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $\eta^2=0.51$ ), academic optimism ( $F=24.17$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $\eta^2=0.41$ ), and resilience ( $F=6.84$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ,  $\eta^2=0.16$ ). The effect sizes indicate that the intervention

explained 51%, 41%, and 16% of the variance in the dependent variables, respectively, reflecting the strong and practical effectiveness of the intervention in improving the studied variables.

### Conclusion & Discussion

The aim of the present study was to determine the effectiveness of mindfulness-based well-being training on job stress, resilience, and academic optimism among female teachers in Zahedan. The results showed that mindfulness skills training led to a reduction in job stress and an increase in resilience and academic optimism among teachers. The findings of this study are consistent with the results of [Ossai \(2024\)](#) and [Janabadi et al. \(2016\)](#), which demonstrated that mindfulness-based programs reduce the level of perceived stress and improve stress management among teachers. Job stress in teachers refers to the pressure and tension arising from their occupation that they experience. This stress leads to a decline in the quality of professional performance characterized by weaknesses in interacting with students, reluctance to implement innovative teaching methods, increased absenteeism, and leaving the teaching profession ([Beegum & Binu, 2022](#)). Understanding the factors that create job stress in teachers and their consequences on their mental health is of particular importance for designing intervention programs and establishing effective support networks. Mindfulness practices play an important role in reducing occupational pressures and promoting teachers' mental health ([Sambyal et al., 2025](#)). The concept of mindfulness, which is rooted in the Buddhist tradition, includes non-judgmental acceptance and present-moment awareness. According to the transactional model of stress, stress occurs when individuals perceive environmental demands as exceeding their coping resources, a process mediated through two mechanisms: cognitive appraisal and coping. Given the high pressures and chronic stressors teachers face in the classroom, mindfulness skills can help teachers to reappraise events and strengthen their coping mechanisms through developing self-compassion and present-moment orientation. Consequently, when an individual's coping resources increase, threat perception decreases and stress-related distress diminishes ([Fedewa et al., 2022](#)). Therefore, mindfulness, as an evidence-based intervention, can play an effective role in improving job stress management and promoting teachers' mental health.

The results of the present study showed that mindfulness training increases teachers' resilience, a finding consistent with the results of [Singh \(2024\)](#) and [Seyedi et al. \(2025\)](#). This finding is also aligned with the World Health Organization's emphasis on the application of mindfulness-based interventions in occupational settings to promote mental health and implement preventive measures (World Health Organization, 2022a). In explaining this finding, it can be stated that mindfulness, by strengthening cognitive capacities such as attention regulation and working memory, enables teachers to provide more deliberate responses in the face of stressful classroom situations rather than automatic and emotional reactions. Furthermore, increased body awareness and emotion regulation ([Whitfield et al., 2022](#)) reduce emotional reactivity and negative appraisals of self and educational situations, which through regular practice and the application of self-regulatory approaches ([Roeser et al., 2012](#)), enhances teachers' resilience and effectiveness in the long term.

The findings of this study also showed that mindfulness skills training had a significant effect on increasing teachers' academic optimism. This result is consistent with the research evidence of [Khavari \(2025\)](#) and [Kazemi et al. \(2020\)](#). Mindfulness enhances teachers' academic optimism through several main pathways. First, these interventions provide teachers with effective tools by facilitating the transition from pessimistic to optimistic thinking patterns and creating a problem-focused emotional approach to combat job burnout, helping them cope more effectively with the cognitive, social, and emotional challenges inherent in the teaching profession ([Kazemi et al., 2020](#)). Second, teachers who possess educational optimism demonstrate greater flexibility and conserve their physical and mental energy, which is later utilized in more effective management of processes related to motivating and teaching students. Such teachers enjoy better mood, greater perseverance, higher achievement, and more favorable physical health, and they focus on the positive aspects of students, classrooms, and their schools, creating a reinforcing cycle of optimism and well-being ([Ahmad et al., 2023](#)). Third, mindfulness training, by increasing moment-to-moment awareness and reducing negative rumination, provides an appropriate cognitive-emotional foundation for forming and strengthening optimistic attitudes, enabling teachers to

respond with awareness and conscious choice rather than automatic reactions to stressful situations and maintain more positive expectations for the future.

The findings of the present study demonstrated that mindfulness-based well-being training can serve as a comprehensive, evidence-based intervention that simultaneously has a positive impact on reducing job stress and increasing resilience and academic optimism among teachers. The innovative aspect of this research lies in the simultaneous examination of three key variables of teachers' psychological and professional health within a single intervention framework, demonstrating that mindfulness can be employed as an integrated approach to promoting teachers' occupational well-being in the educational system. From a practical perspective, these findings suggest that educational policymakers and school administrators can not only promote teachers' mental health but also improve the quality of education and students' learning environment by incorporating mindfulness training programs into teachers' professional development programs.

Among the limitations of this study are the restriction of the sample to female teachers in Zahedan and the lack of long-term follow-up of the intervention's effectiveness. It is recommended that future research be conducted with larger and more diverse samples in terms of gender and other geographical regions, and that the long-term effects of mindfulness training on teachers' mental health variables and job performance be examined over time. Additionally, examining the role of mediating and moderating variables in the relationship between mindfulness and outcome variables could provide a deeper understanding of the mechanisms through which these interventions operate.

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It is hoped that the findings of this research will constitute a small step towards enhancing the Occupational Well-being and increasing the Resilience of the hard-working community of teachers in our beloved country

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