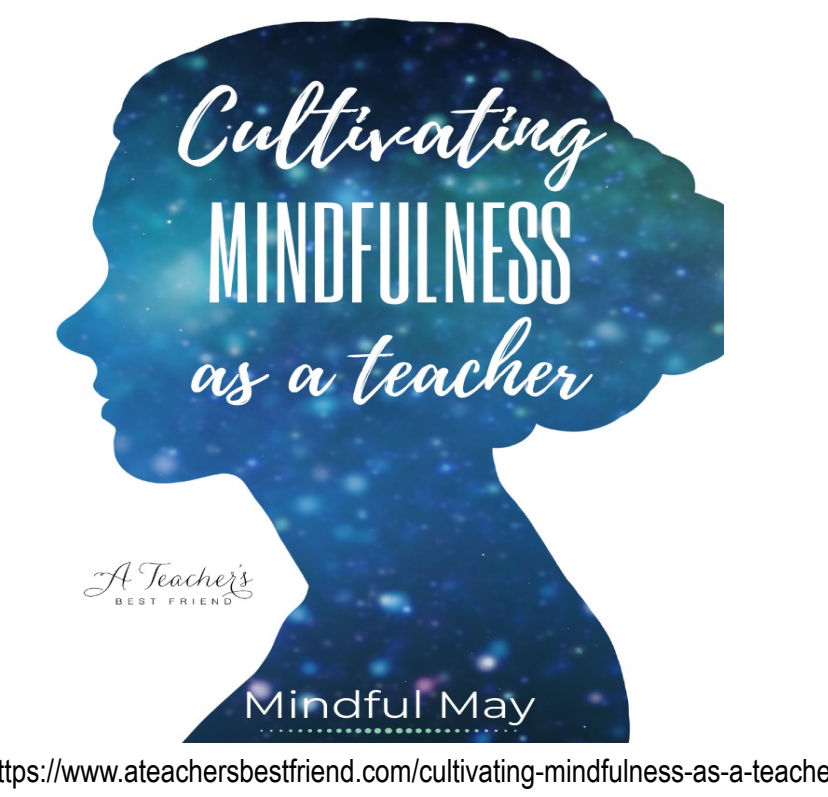


Dania Javaid, Holly Hatton, & Carrie Clark

Introduction

The study is part of an evaluation of an 8-week intervention called ‘Cultivating Healthy, Intentional, Mindful Educators’ (CHIME).

The intervention was aimed to teach socio-emotional learning (SEL) in the context of mindful, self-compassionate practices.



Background

Self-compassion, which includes self-kindness, mindfulness, and recognition of one's common humanity, has been shown to have benefits for promoting overall wellbeing among early childhood teachers in the short and long term (O’Hara-Gregan, 2023)

Both mindfulness and self-compassion engage in a dynamic iterative process which may culminate in improved well-being. (Bluth & Blanton, 2013)

Heart rate variability (HRV) refers to the variation in the time intervals between successive heartbeats. Optimal HRV levels are linked to health, self-regulation, and adaptability. Resting vagally-mediated HRV is associated with enhanced executive functions such as attention and emotional processing (McCarty & Shaffer, 2015).

While HRV had been linked to self-compassion (Di Bello et al., 2020), *it wasn't clear whether ECEs' self-compassion and wellbeing links to their HRV in real-world classroom contexts.*

Aims

The study's main goal was to determine how practices based on mindfulness and self-compassion are related with early childhood educators' wellbeing and heart rate variability.

Method

Sample:

The sample consisted of 155 early childhood educators aged 19-70 from throughout Nebraska (Mean= 38.25, SD= 12.51) and with varying years of experience (M = 10.62, SD = 6.78).

Fig 1: Race of ECE Teachers

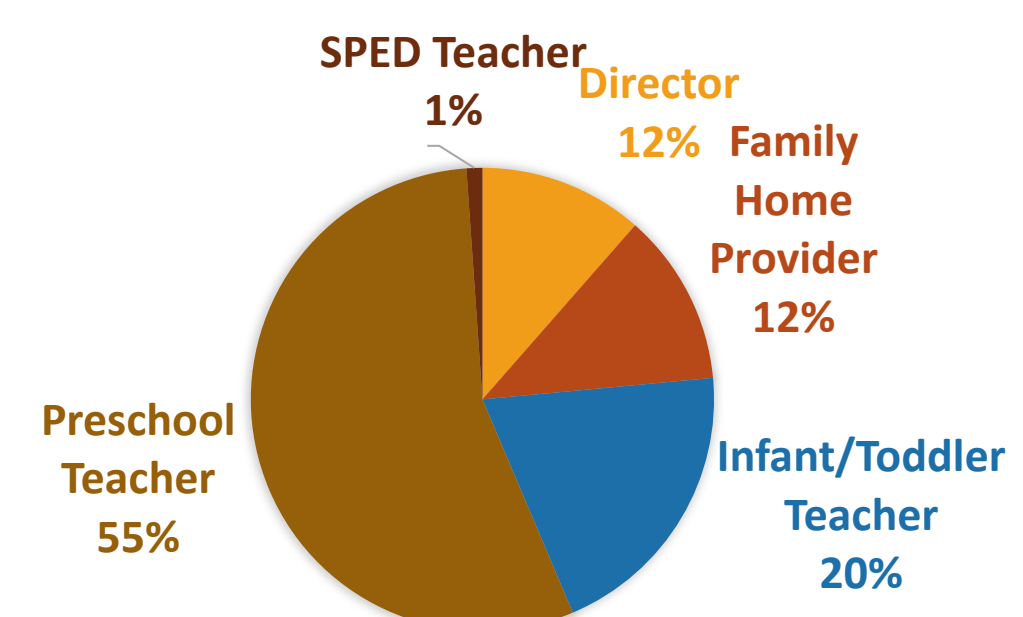
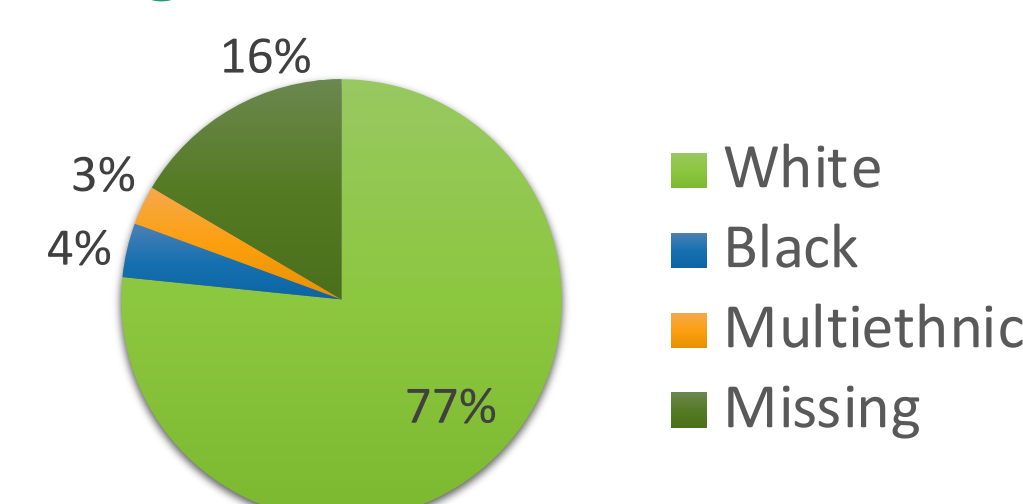


Fig 2: Category of ECE Teacher

Table 1: Measures used in the Study

Measures	Developed by	subdomains	Items
Self-Compassion Scale-Short form	Raes et al., (2011)	6	12
Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale-Revised	Feldman et al., (2007)	Nil	12
Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being scale	Tennant et al., (2007)	Nil	14
ECE teachers wore an ACTi heart (CamTech Inc.) device for 3 days in the classroom.			

Results

Table 2: Pearson product moment correlation among main study variables (N = 155)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1 Heart Rate Variability	-	-.19	-.07	.06	.17	-.10	.19	-.03	.28**	-.15
2 Wellbeing		-	.31**	.40**	.43**	.26*	.35**	.38**	.11	.31**
3 Mindfulness			-	.67**	.67**	.51**	.57**	.33**	.44**	.59**
4 Self-compassion				-	.87**	.79**	.74**	.72**	.64**	.85**
5 Self-Kindness					-	.61**	.70**	.43**	.64**	.62**
6 Self Judgement						-	.34**	.62**	.30*	.71**
7 Common Humanity							-	.35**	.54**	.56**
8 Isolation								-	.22	.64**
9 Mindfulness									-	.35**
10 Over Identification										-

*p < .01**, p < .05**



(Vivian Shih)

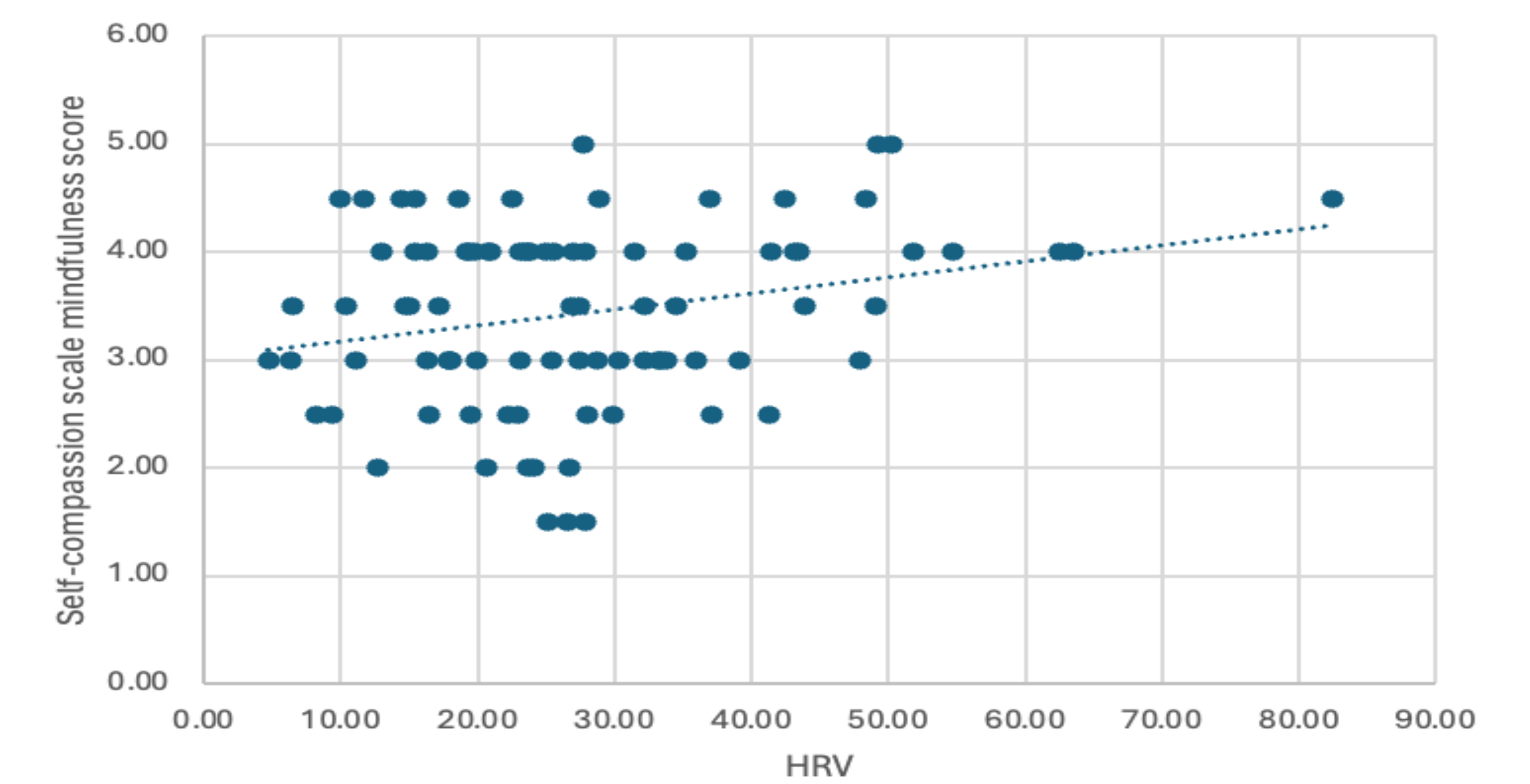
Discussion

The findings suggest a link between mindfulness based self-compassion and heart rate variability, which may mean that those with higher self-compassionate mindfulness are less stressed in the classroom.

The strong positive correlation discovered between educators' overall well-being and self-compassion (excluding the mindfulness aspect) emphasizes the significance of nurturing self-compassion as a protective element against burnout and stress in the teaching profession.

The significant correlations observed between emotional and cognitive mindfulness and self-compassion and its different aspects suggest the potential advantages of integrating mindfulness techniques into teacher training and professional development programs.

Fig 3: Scatterplot of HRV in relation to self-compassion: mindfulness score



Implication

By identifying key correlations and highlighting potential areas for intervention, this research lays the groundwork for future studies aimed at supporting Early childhood educators' mental health and fostering a positive work environment in educational settings.

Future Directions

- The significant positive association between HRV and mindfulness-related self-compassion suggests that physiological factors may contribute to educators' psychological well-being.
- The lack of significant correlations between HRV, self-compassion, and its subdomains, as well as general well-being or affective and cognitive mindfulness, highlights the need for a nuanced examination of different facets of self-compassion.
- The robust positive correlation between educators' overall well-being and self-compassion, excluding self-compassion-related mindfulness, underscores the importance of fostering self-compassion as a protective factor against burnout and stress among teachers.
- The significant correlations between affective and cognitive mindfulness and self-compassion and its subdomains suggest the potential benefits of incorporating mindfulness practices into educator training and professional development programs.
- The lack of a significant correlation between isolation and self-compassion-related mindfulness raises questions about the role of social support and connectedness in educators' well-being.

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