The Mediating Role of Resilience in the Relationship Between Mindfulness and Creative Teaching Self-efficacy among Special Needs Teachers in Inclusive Classrooms

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Abstract

This study aims to explore The mediating role of Resilience in the relationship between mindfulness and creative teaching self-efficacy among special needs teachers in inclusive classrooms. A correlational design was employed. The relationships between the research variables were analyzed in the form of examining the paths of a structural equation model. The study population included teachers of Special Education and Integration. 200 teachers were selected using the convenience sampling method. The results of structural equation modeling showed that mindfulness directly and positively predicts creative self-efficacy in teachers in inclusive classrooms. The results of structural equation modeling also showed that mindfulness directly and positively predicted resilience in teachers in inclusive classrooms. Another finding showed that resilience directly and positively predicted creative self-efficacy in special needs teachers in inclusive classrooms.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is regarded as a fruitful and at the same time difficult matter in which teachers, as the starting point of any educational and upbringing transformation, play the greatest and most important role (Siegel et al., 2025). This issue is especially relevant in the education of exceptional children because exceptional teachers have more difficult tasks and consequently more vulnerability due to the specific educational situation in which they operate (Levinson et al., 2024). The first step towards achieving a successful teaching staff is to understand the factors that affect the quality of teachers' activities; because teachers in exceptional schools, due to the type of special educational environment, are more susceptible to job burnout compared to other teachers (Benigno et al., 2024). According to Martinez et al. (2024), a teacher's beliefs about the nature of knowledge and knowing play an important role in his or her behaviors and subsequently the beliefs and learning of students. In the field of education, this concept was considered by researchers with an emphasis on teachers' self-efficacy. Teacher self-efficacy is defined as teachers' beliefs about their abilities and capabilities in the context of teaching (Emiru & Gedifew, 2024).

Individuals' beliefs enable them to successfully perform creative behavior in a specific context and create a context of creative self-efficacy in them (Yang & Du, 2024); therefore, creative self-efficacy is used to describe an individual's belief in their ability to produce creative results and outcomes (Alhadihaq et al., 2024). By referring to the theory of creative self-efficacy and modern and new cognition, creativity was conceptualized as a behavior that produces useful and new ideas, products, and performance (Shaw et al., 2021). In addition to defining creative self-efficacy as a construct that increases individuals' ability and produces creative ideas, this construct can be viewed as a physiological process that affects the level of self-confidence of the individual (Dampérat et al.,2016).

Therefore, people who have creative self-efficacy are motivated and persistent towards their goals with confidence, and they face problems creatively and try to eliminate them (Abulela,2024). People who have high creative self-efficacy will have higher expectations of themselves for creative behavior compared to those who have low creative self-efficacy (Alhadihaq et al., 2024). Therefore, examining the factors and contexts It seems necessary to influence the creative self-efficacy of teachers. In this regard, the results of the study by Wang et al. (2024) showed that there is a relationship between the level of self-efficacy beliefs and resilience of teachers, and teachers with high self-efficacy beliefs also have high resilience; therefore, according to previous studies, one of the important characteristics that every person in their job, especially the job of a special education teacher, should have in the education process is resilience. Resilience can be considered the ability to cope with problems (Üstündağ & Akar, 2022) in a way that helps the individual deal with and adapt to difficult and stressful life situations and protects individuals from pathological disorders and life difficulties (Fathalla,2018).

 It is obvious that being resilient in relation to students' challenges and job performance plays an important role in the career decision-making of teachers of special education students. This resilience, in turn, gives them the ability to continue working (Elkady, 2019). Mohammed and Mostafa (2015) consider resilience to be the application of specific strategies that working people experience in adverse conditions. A resilient teacher has a positive attitude and realistic expectations of themselves and others during difficult times, focuses on learning and self-improvement, is committed to students, and has self-confidence and self-belief because they believe that life is more meaningful than giving up in the face of problems (Dinç & İlgar, 2022).

Resilience is important in education for three reasons: first, it affects the teacher's expectations of students, because the teacher himself is a model for showing resilient behavior. Second, teaching is a difficult and complex profession and requires that the teacher deal correctly and logically with the ambiguities, difficulties, and difficulties encountered in the classroom, and this requires a

resilient behavior style (Üstündağ & Akar, 2022). On the one hand, the teacher must manage his stress and on the other hand, he must perform his professional duties correctly in order to maintain his motivation and commitment to the teaching profession over time. Third, resilience is defined as the ability to solve problems, quickly retrieve possible solutions, and act boldly in the face of various problems in an efficient manner, and is precisely related to a sense of commitment to work, self-management, and motivation in teaching for the comprehensive achievement of students (Üstündağ & Akar, 2022). This shows the importance of paying attention to professional resilience in teachers, especially teachers in special schools. However, the findings of Almohammadi (2025) indicated that high mindfulness can promote resilience among teachers. Mindfulness is a technique that, combined with meditation and specific mental orientations towards an experience, encourages awareness of the present moment in a non-judgmental way by minimizing involvement in thoughts and feelings (Aydın & Ünlü Kaynakçı, 2022).
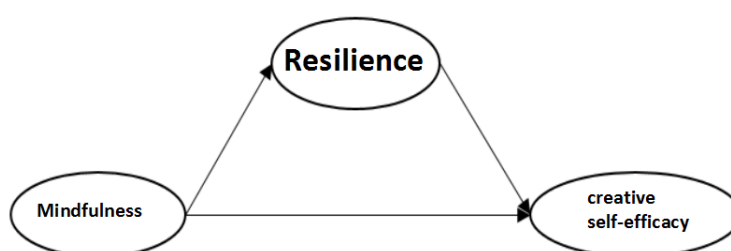
Different definitions of mindfulness reflect three basic characteristics: a) Attention and awareness focused on the present moment b) Intention or purposefulness that adds a motivational component to a person's attention and behavior c) Attitude that indicates how a person pays attention, or the state that a person is in when paying attention, such as interest, curiosity, non-judgment, acceptance, and responsiveness (Şakiroğlu et al., 2017). The most important part of mindfulness practices is being aware, that is, committing to the presence of mind (Ghomi et al., 2015). Also, several studies have been conducted on research variables, including the research of Fan and Cui (2024, who showed in a study that there is a positive and significant relationship between mindfulness and self-efficacy. The results also showed that mindfulness and self-efficacy have a negative and significant relationship with the level of stress.

AIMS AND RESEARCH GAP

Teachers face numerous challenges, including low salaries and wages, heavy workload, long working hours, student misconduct, student decline, and lack of support from the principal, all of which lead to feelings of inadequacy, reduced self-esteem and self-efficacy, job dissatisfaction, and burnout. Given these challenges, teachers must have the ability to make the right decisions in the face of adversity and hardship. The findings of the study by Wu and Qin (2025) indicated that high mindfulness can promote resilience among teachers. However, despite extensive research on resilience, mindfulness, and creative self-efficacy, the researcher did not find a comprehensive study that examined the prediction of creative self-efficacy based on mindfulness with regard to the mediating role of psychological resilience; therefore, he attempted to investigate this issue.

Therefore, the present study aims to answer the question of whether the mediating role of psychological resilience is related to mindfulness and creative self-efficacy of teachers in special schools. According to the aforementioned research background, the conceptual model of this study is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. *Conceptual research model*

METHOD

A correlational design was employed. The relationships between the research variables were analyzed in the form of examining the paths of a structural equation model.

PARTICIPANTS

The study population included teachers of Special Education and Integration. 200 teachers were selected using the convenience sampling method. The questionnaires were administered virtually. In the present study, 140 female teachers (70%) and 60 male teachers (30%) participated. The average age of the participating teachers was 29.6, and they ranged in age from 21 to 33 years. They were from schools for inclusion. They were at least one year experience. The inclusion criteria for the study were: 1- Individual consent to participate 2- All teachers were exceptional school teachers. The exclusion criteria for the study were: 1- Individual non-cooperation 2- Physical illness that prevented participation.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

Participants are informed about the purpose of the study, and they provided their written consent

DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

Connor and Davidson Resilience Questionnaire (RISC-CD): The original scale was developed by Connor and Davidson (2003) who viewed resilience as a measurable ability to cope with stress. The scale consists of 25 items, which are self-rated on a five-point scale (0-4): never (0), rarely (1), sometimes (2), often (3), and almost always (4). The assessment is based on how the subjects felt in the past month, with a total score of 0-100, with higher scores representing higher resilience. When Connor and Davidson (2003) developed the scale, the research subjects included community samples, primary care outpatients, private psychiatric outpatients, generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) research subjects, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) clinical trial subjects. The internal consistency Cronbach's α of the scale was .89, and the test-retest reliability was .87. The data from the general population sample were analyzed and confirmed to have a five-factor structure. Factor 1: "Personal competence, high standards and resilience"; Factor 2: "Trust in personal instincts, tolerance Factor 3: "positive acceptance of change and safe interpersonal relationships"; Factor 4: "control"; and Factor 5: "spiritual influence". The reliability of this tool in this study was 0.86, which indicates that the reliability is desirable.

Langer Mindfulness Questionnaire: The Mindfulness Questionnaire was designed and developed by Langer (2004) to measure mindfulness in teachers. This questionnaire has 14 questions and four subscales: 1) *Awareness* of the environment (14, 12, 9, 4), 2) novelty seeking (14, 12, 9, 4), 3) Flexibility (1, 2, 3), and 4) novelty creation (10, 11, 12). The reliability of this tool in this study was 0.79, which indicates that the reliability is desirable.

Creative Self-Efficacy Questionnaire (Karwowski et al., 2018): This 11-item scale was developed and used by Karwowski et al. (2018). This scale is single-factor and has five items. The items of this scale are scored based on a five-point Likert scale from one (I completely disagree) to five (I completely agree). Karwowski et al.(2018) used the test-retest method with an eight-month interval to examine the validity and reported a coefficient of 0.48. The validity of this scale was examined by calculating the correlation of the score of each item with the total score of the scale. In the present study, by calculating Cronbach's alpha, a coefficient of 0.82 was obtained, which indicates the desirable validity of this scale. Confirmatory factor analysis was used to examine validity. Factor analysis was performed using the principal components analysis method on the scale items. The KMO index was 0.82 and the Bartlett chi-square test of sphericity was significant. The total variables were able to explain 58.80 percent of the total variance of the structure.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis was performed using the correlation method based on the structural equation modeling approach using AMOS version 24 software. The desired data were collected through the following three questionnaires.

RESULTS

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS ANALYSIS

The results of Pearson's correlation (Table 1) showed that there are significant relationships between the research variables; therefore, the research model can be examined. It should be noted that the proposed model of the present study was examined in two parts: a) Measurement model: to determine whether the measurement model developed for the constructs has the minimum defined scientific criteria or not. The results of the measurement model showed that in the resilience questionnaire, all factors have a factor loading of more than 0.3. It should be noted that the measurement model had a good fit. b) Structural model.

Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics of Each Variable and Correlation Matrix*

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3
1. Mindfulness	44.30	1.44	-		
2. Resilience	60.33	1.65	0.53**	-	
3. Creative self-efficacy	32.17	1.82	0.58**	0.60**	-

Note: n = 200. p < .01.

Based on the standardized coefficients (beta) in table 2, it is observed that the paths of the structural model of the present study are significant. The beta values of these correlations along with their significance level can be seen in table 2. To determine the significance of the indirect paths, the output of the bootstrap command in the AMOS software is reported in table 3.

Table 2. *Standard And Unstandardized Coefficients Of Direct Paths İn The Structural Model Of The Research*

Path			Non-standard coefficients (B)	Standard coefficients (β)	Standard Error (S.E.)	Critical Ratio (C.R.)	p
Mindfulness	→	Resilience	0.50	0.61	0.07	6.22	.000
Resilience	→	Creative self-efficacy	1.22	0.55	0.15	5.77	.000
Mindfulness	→	Creative self-efficacy	0.51	0.43	0.1	4.88	.000

As the results of the bootstrap test show (Table 3), resilience has established a mediating role between mindfulness and creative self-efficacy. As shown in table 4, the structural model of the research has an acceptable fit.

Table 3. *Results Of The Bootstrap Test For The İndirect Path Coefficients Of The Structural Model*

Predictor variable	Mediator	independent variable	Indirect effect	Lower limit	Upper limit	p
Mindfulness	Resilience	Creative self-efficacy	0.40	0.25	0.56	.002

As can be seen in table 4, the structural model of the research has an acceptable fit.

Table 4. *Fit İndices Of The Research Structural Model*

Measurement model	Index
3.7	χ^2/df (Standardized Chi-Square Index)
0.92	CFI (Comparative Fit Index)
0.93	TLI (Tucker Lewis Index)
0.04	RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approach)
0.93	GFI (Goodness-of-Fit Index)
0.94	AGFI (Adjusted Goodness of Fit)

DISCUSSION

The aim of the present study was to explain, within the framework of a model, the role of mindfulness on creative self-efficacy of special needs teachers in inclusive classrooms through the mediation of psychological resilience. The results of structural equation modeling showed that mindfulness directly and positively predicts creative self-efficacy in teachers in inclusive classrooms. This finding is consistent with the results of the research of Wang (2024), Fan and Cui(2024), Yen et al.(2024),and Almohammadi(2025). In explaining this finding, it can be said that mindfulness means paying attention in a specific and purposeful way in the present. Mindful people perceive internal and external realities freely and without distortion and have a great ability to deal with a wide range of thoughts, emotions, and experiences, both pleasant and unpleasant. Mindfulness is the ability to self-regulate attention and direct it towards the task. Numerous studies, including Zhou et al.(2020), have shown that having mindfulness skills reduces symptoms of vulnerable mood, anxiety, worry, stress, and tension.

In other words, mindfulness is a specific way of cultivating attention to develop awareness. On the other hand, it should be noted that self-efficacy reflects a sense of control over life, mind, beliefs, and attitudes. At the same time, mindfulness also leads to the correction, control, and processing of negative thoughts. Mindfulness also includes being able to identify problematic aspects of a thought and establish a relationship with these thoughts with a different approach. In fact, mindfulness makes a person deal with mental content in different ways, which is a characteristic that indicates creative self-efficacy in the person (Fan and Cui, 2024). Mindfulness strengthens three important skills(Ding, 2024). First, mindfulness activates "omnipresent thinking" in humans, meaning that it opens the doors of the human mind to new ideas. Second, mindfulness exercises strengthen "attention" in humans, which means that it becomes easier for the person to understand and identify practical and creative ideas than before. Third, mindfulness exercises strengthen people's courage and flexibility in facing obstacles and possible failures(Ding, 2024). This is of great importance because obstacles and failures have a direct relationship with the innovation process in humans; therefore, it can be concluded that mindfulness affects creative self-efficacy. The cognitive-behavioral perspective also believes that mindfulness can lead to sustained exposure to feelings, thoughts, and emotions, desensitizing conditioned responses, and reducing avoidance behaviors. As a result, this awareness of thoughts and feelings provides the individual with the ability to deal with different situations, and as a result, the individual will feel more effective.

The results of structural equation modeling also showed that mindfulness directly and positively predicts resilience in teachers in inclusive classrooms. In explaining this finding, as Almanasef and Almaghaslah (2024) state, higher levels of mindfulness may help individuals overcome difficult situations and achieve higher levels of resilience. Mindful people are better able to respond to difficult situations without engaging in involuntary and maladaptive behaviors. They are open to new perceptions, tend to be more creative, and are better able to deal with difficult situations, painful thoughts, and feelings without weakness or discomfort. Some research has shown that mindfulness can reduce the use of avoidant coping styles in response to stress and increase resilience (Almanasef & Almaghaslah, 2024).

Another finding showed that resilience directly and positively predicts creative self-efficacy in special needs teachers in inclusive classrooms. In explaining this finding, it can be said that people who have higher resilience skills have the ability to successfully adapt to threatening situations and are better able to tolerate and overcome difficulties (Radhamani & Kalaivani, 2021). As a result, despite difficult and difficult conditions, they have confidence in their abilities to deal with problems and have the necessary flexibility to face various

situations. In fact, resilient people have the flexibility needed to face life's challenges and believe that they can overcome the problems that arise and that negative life events do not prevent them from achieving their goals. On the other hand, low resilience causes the person to lack the ability and capacity to deal with problems and avoid problems instead of coping effectively and constructively; therefore, it can be concluded that resilience and creative self-efficacy have a meaningful relationship with each other (Radhamani & Kalaivani, 2021).

It seems that the resilience of teachers in special needs in inclusive classrooms makes them more resistant to problems in the workplace, especially problems related to teaching exceptional children, and less stressed and distressed. As a result, it seems that such teachers, with high patience and tolerance, believe in their abilities to perform their duties and try to provide the best conditions for themselves and their students with their creativity when dealing with exceptional children.

The results of structural equation modeling showed that mindfulness, mediated by resilience, positively predicts creative self-efficacy in special needs teachers in inclusive classrooms. In other words, the more mindfulness teachers have, the higher their resilience will be, and the more resilience they have, the greater their creative self-efficacy will be.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, the results of structural equation modeling also showed that mindfulness directly and positively predicted resilience in teachers in inclusive classrooms. Another finding showed that resilience directly and positively predicted creative self-efficacy in special needs teachers in inclusive classrooms. People who are mindful are aware of their thoughts, behaviors, emotions, and motivations and try to manage and regulate them in the best possible way. Mindfulness makes a person more aware of themselves and their surroundings, and as a result, when faced with problems, due to their awareness of matters, they avoid taking any sudden, emotional, or incorrect actions and instead find a logical solution to them by comprehensively examining the problems; therefore, mindfulness increases the resilience of the individual. On the other hand, the direct effect of the components of stress coping skills in controlling unpleasant and crisis-causing life situations leads to the provision of effective solutions when accidents, problems, and traumatic psychological pressures occur, and will increase the individual's performance in social environments. Mastery and resilience of individuals not only make them stronger and more flexible in the face of problems, but also empower them to acquire skills such as controlling behavior and searching for new solutions. As a result, a resilient person believes that he can control the situation using his abilities and find appropriate and new solutions to problems and issues; therefore, it can be concluded that mindfulness affects creative self-efficacy through resilience.

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Since mindfulness is one of the variables that is effective in improving resilience and is a skill that has the ability to be taught, it is suggested that future research be conducted focused on experimental designs related to teaching this skill. It is also suggested that similar research be conducted among other teachers (public, non-profit, gifted schools) to provide a more appropriate perspective on the relationship between the research variables and their relationship with each other. Convenience sampling introduces an increased risk of bias into the research process. Future research could include longitudinal designs and mixed-method approaches for a deeper understanding of causal mechanisms. Considering the results of the research, it is recommended that policy makers and educators pay attention to improving the level of mindfulness and resilience of teachers of teachers in special needs in inclusive classrooms and plan to increase the mindfulness and resilience of teachers, especially teachers in special needs in inclusive classrooms.

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