EMOTIONAL LITERACY, SELF-COMPASSION, MINDSET, AND WORKPLACE BUOYANCY IN TEACHERS: A MODERATED MEDIATION MODEL

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ABSTRACT

With the increasing research on academia, there has been a lot of focus shifted on investigating the variables associated with the main pillar of academia "the teachers" (Howard-Jones 2014). The present research investigates the relationship among emotional literacy, self-compassion, mindset, and workplace buoyancy in teachers. A total of 168 teachers (mean age=33.11; SD=8.25; Men=25%; Women=75%) from schools, colleges, and universities of both public and private sectors completed an electronic survey during the pandemic using a purposive sampling technique. The demographic questionnaire was devised by the researchers to gather demographic information. Emotional Intelligence Scale, Self-Compassion Scale, Growth Mindset Inventory and Workplace Resilience Scale were used to assess target variables. Mediation moderation analysis revealed that growth mindset moderated the relationship between mindfulness and workplace buoyancy indicating that connectedness with thoughts and feelings was associated with high resilience in teachers at workplace but the presence of an additional trait of growth mindset enhanced that resilience. Further, mindfulness significantly mediated the relationship between the ability to manage one's emotions and workplace buoyancy which suggests that being connected to feelings and thoughts helped teachers in their emotional management resulting in high capability of dealing with stressors at workplace. This study will be helpful in the field of academia in highlighting the importance of teachers' capabilities in terms of emotional literacy and mindset which affects their performance at workplace. It is suggested to introduce resilience programs for teachers that use mindfulness techniques and focus on promoting the growth mindset to improve resilience in teachers.

Keywords: *emotional literacy, mindset, self-compassion, workplace buoyancy, teachers.*

INTRODUCTION

With the increasing research on academia, there has been a lot of focus shifted on investigating the variables about the main pillar of academia "the teachers". The professional skills or pedagogical method that teachers follow has a great influence on the work environment and relationship with their students. The pedagogical method is influenced and modified by the individual differences in personality, intelligence, and personal capacities like emotional handling, self-

compassion, and mindset of a teacher. These traits help teachers in facing and challenging the hustles of professional life as well as in influencing their students (Howard-Jones, 2014).

There is lengthy literature that sheds light on the importance of emotional intelligence, recognizing emotion, and utilization of emotion in relation to self-awareness. More the self-awareness in a person, more will be the kindness and mindfulness towards himself and others. All these variables are discussed as components of emotional literacy and self-compassion (Neff et al., 2007). Mindset is another important construct that can be described as growth and adaptation in relation to self-compassion and handling of emotions. Researches indicate that these positive components of self-care also include another strong positive trait or characteristic that is called resilience, also known as coping and buoyancy. A person inclined towards learning and who holds growth mindset will display virtues like kindness, empathy, forgiveness and mindfulness that eventually boost up his self-compassion (Frydenberg, 2017; Lee & Jang, 2018; Pagnini et al., 2019).

Teaching is a challenging profession along with the ability to give high levels of contentment. However, researchers show that teaching can also be very hectic and stressful. Teachers reported several sources of long-lasting stress including pressure of workload, students' issues, parents' queries and pressure of administrator's assigned tasks and hustles. In addition, signs of burnout like emotional exhaustion, powerlessness and pessimism have also been reported frequently by teachers. Developmental model recommends that productive coping possesses the ability to convert previously tense interactions into prospects for development, adding to greater quality commitment in teaching, increasing satisfaction and welfare. This model discusses the roles of mindfulness practices and meditations to aid teachers in creating personal assets that would assist them to cope more productively, and thereby delivering a pathway towards day to day resilience. Firstly, a developmental model manifests types of coping that can enhance teacher's engagement of learning. Mindfulness-based programs can be used to enhance mindfulness after understanding its efficacy in generating resources of coping (Skinner & Beers, 2016). Researches have also indicated that one's success at workplace stems from the image one

holds about himself. Literature suggests that growth mindset can be learned and achieved by working on it through learning a program to enhance the workplace resilience. It is indicated that learned capacities enhance growth mindset which is important for leadership and performance at workplace. The prediction of workplace performance from fixed or growth mindset of teachers is established in the literature (Dennis, 2016; Zeng et al., 2019).

Ever since the concept launched to pragmatic writing more than a decade ago, the study on self-compassion has expanded to phenomenal extent. One of the many coherent conclusions tells that self-compassion is found to be linked with psychological welfare (Zessin et al., 2015). A meta-analytic review investigated the relationship of self-compassion with psychopathology including depression, anxiety and stress. The meta-analysis concluded significant negative relationship of self-compassion with depression, anxiety and stress demonstrating that being kind, compassionate and mindful towards oneself in associated with low levels of depression, anxiety and stress (MacBeth & Gumley, 2012). Furthermore, self-compassion is strongly positively correlated with psychological assets and powers such as optimism, happiness, and life satisfaction along with its positive association with motivation, health beliefs and behaviors, positive body image, and buoyancy. Self-compassion also aids in coping with personal or occupational stressors and positively correlates with workplace buoyancy (Sbarra et al., 2012), which is a personal resource that enables the individual to effectively manage the experiences of hardships and challenge occurring at workplace (Collie, 2021).

Teachers are considered as a most important pillar in the growth of society as they play a vital role in the nurturance of a nation. Literature indicates that if teachers are more aware of their potential and qualities, they can cope and handle their life challenges in a better way. It is essential that teachers, as professionals, acknowledge and manage their emotions, and problems and have relationships with their students that make them capable of meeting their emotional needs effectively (Abiodullah, Dur-e-Sameen & Aslam, 2020; Split, Koomen & Thijs, 2011; Turner & Thielking, 2019). The ability to handle emotions effectively leads to a healthy mindset or growth mindset. The mindset of an individual reflects his

other aspects of personality especially when we talk about teachers. A teacher has a responsibility to influence or provide the opportunities for growth to his students. They should be compassionate towards themselves as well as towards their students. An individual, especially one with great responsibility to teach others, if surrounded by problems, cannot deliver the best to his students, therefore, being connected with one's emotions and dealing with them effectively is critical for achieving maximum productivity. Further, the academic institutes have evolved immensely during the past years and they continue to do so. With this evolution, there is a great increase in competition and the demands that are posed on teachers by the institutes. These demands can be overwhelming for teachers who already struggle with problems in their personal or professional life. In the face of such increased pressure and demands, only those teachers perform effectively who have enough personal resources to deal with their emotions appropriately. This is where the importance to investigate emotional literacy emerges. In such circumstances, it is important to investigate the relationship among variables such as emotional literacy, self-compassion, growth mindset, and workplace buoyancy so as to understand the contribution of personal resources that increase performance by enhancing workplace buoyancy. Emotional literacy has been studied in students regarding their achievement but there is a minimum work investigating emotional literacy in teachers in relation to self-compassion, mindset and work-place buoyancy. In Pakistan, the concept of emotional literacy has not been studied yet while there is minimum literature available on other variables under investigation. The present research aims to fill that gap in the previous literature which will help understand the contributing factors towards workplace buoyancy in teachers that can further be used to provide necessary psychological help to teachers for their optimal performance. The present research hypothesizes that self-compassion will have a mediating role between emotional literacy and workplace buoyancy, whereas, growth mindset will have a moderating role between self-compassion and workplace buoyancy (see Figure 1).

Figure 1
Showing Hypothesized Model.
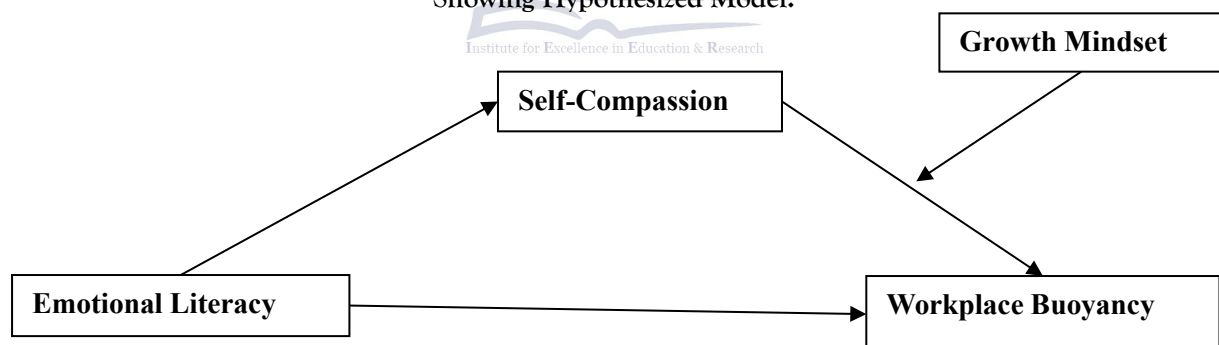
Method
Study design
Correlational research design was used and a total sample of 168 teachers (mean age=33.11 years; men=25%; women=75%) was selected using purposive sampling technique. Sample size was computed by using G-Power Analysis with medium effect size p=.30 and alpha level of 95 which gave a sample size of 115.

Participants and procedures
The sample size was later increased to reduce the chances of error. The data was collected from teachers of schools, colleges, and universities of both public and private sectors with at least 1 year of regular teaching experience. Any teacher with any diagnosed psychological or physical disability was not included. The study was conducted using the electronic survey using Google Form as the data was collected during the pandemic. The consent was also taken online and participants were explained the purpose of data collection.

Measures
Demographic Questionnaire
A demographic questionnaire was designed by the authors in which sample characteristics were inquired such as age, gender, education, work experience, monthly income etc.

Emotional Literacy

Participant's emotional literacy was assessed using the Emotional Intelligence Scale developed by Schutte (2009). The scale was translated in Urdu language by the researchers for use in the present research. This scale assesses the capability of handling emotions with four components: emotions' perception (10 items), utilization of emotions (6 items), managing own emotions (9 items) and managing other's emotions (8 items). This scale is constructed on the version presented in 1990 by Salovey and Mayer. The scale comprises of total 33-items using 5 point Likert scale with response options ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree. The sample items for emotions' perception subscale include: "I am aware of my emotions as I experience them", "I am aware of the non-verbal messages I send to others". The sample items for utilization of emotions subscale include: "I expect that I will do well on most things I try", "I expect good things to happen". The sample items for managing own emotions subscale include: "Other people find it easy to confide in me", "I like to share my emotions with others". The sample items for managing others' emotions scale includes: "When my mood changes, I see new possibilities", "When I am in a positive mood, solving problems is easy for me". The Cronbach alpha coefficient in the previous literature for emotions' perception, utilization of emotions, managing own emotions and managing others' emotions are 0.68, 0.70, 0.67 and 0.75, respectively (Al-Qadri et al., 2022). The cronbach alpha values of the four factors established in the present research are 0.74, 0.72, 0.67, 0.60 and, respectively.

Growth Mindset

The variable of growth mindset was assessed using Growth Mindset Scale developed by Dweck (2006) based on incremental theories of intelligence and measures growth mindset and fixed mindset. The scale was translated in Urdu language by the researchers for use in the present research. It has 8 items with higher score depicting growth mindset, whereas, lower score depicting fixed mindset. It is a 5 point Likert scale with response options ranging from 1=strongly agree to 5=strongly disagree. The sample items include: "You can learn new things, but you can't really change how intelligent you are", "You can always substantially change how intelligent you are". The Cronbach alpha coefficient of growth mindset scale in the previous literature is 0.90 (Winfrey, 2020). For the present research, the scale has Cronbach alpha reliability value of 0.71.

Self-compassion

This variable was assessed using the Self Compassion Scale developed by Neff (2003). The scale was translated by the researchers in Urdu language for use in the present research. It assesses total six components of self-compassion; Self-Kindness (5 items), Self-Judgment (5 items), Common Humanity (4 items), Isolation (4 items), Mindfulness (4 items) and Over-Identification (4 items). The scale has total 26 items and is administered on a 5 point Likert scale with response options ranging from 1=almost never to 5=almost always. The sample items for self-kindness subscale include: "I try to be loving towards myself when I am feeling emotional pain", "I am kind to myself when I'm experiencing suffering". The sample items for self-judgment subscale include: "I am disapproving and judgmental about my own flaws and inadequacies", "When times are really difficult, I tend to be tough on myself". The sample items for common humanity subscale include: "When things are going badly for me, I see the difficulties as part of life that everyone goes through", "I try to see my failings as part of the human condition". The sample items for isolation subscale include: "When I'm feeling down, I tend to feel like most other people are probably happier than I am", "When I fail at something that's important to me, I tend to feel alone in my failure". The sample items for mindfulness subscale include: "When something upsets me I try to keep my emotions in balance", "When I fail at something important to me I try to keep things in perspective". The sample items for over-identification subscale include: "When I am feeling down I tend to obsess and fixate on everything that's wrong", "When something upsets me I get carried away with my feelings". The Cronbach alpha coefficient reported in the previous literature for self-kindness, self-judgment, common humanity, isolation, mindfulness and over-identification subscales was 0.78, 0.77, 0.80, 0.79, 0.75 and 0.81, respectively (Neff, 2003). The Cronbach alpha reliability values of self-kindness, self-judgment, common humanity, isolation, mindfulness and over-identification subscales are 0.74, 0.63, 0.65, 0.78, 0.47 and 0.55, respectively.

Workplace Buoyancy

This variable was assessed using Workplace Resilience Scale developed by Winwood et al. (2013) and was translated by the researchers in Urdu language for use in the present research. The scale consisted of 20 items and was scored on a 7 point Likert scale with response options ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree. The total score of the scale was used in the present research. The sample items include: "I have important core values that I hold fast to in my work life", "I am careful about eating well and healthy". The previous literature stated the Cronbach alpha coefficient of the scale to be 0.84 (Winwood et al., 2013). The Cronbach apha reliability value for the scale in the present research is 0.84.

Statistical Analyses

SPSS21.0 was used to analyze the collected data. Descriptive analysis was employed to analyze demographic variables (see Table 1). Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to determine correlation (see Table 2). Moderation Mediation analysis was done using Hayes PROCESS after the assumptions were fulfilled to assess the moderation and mediation (see Table 3). Emotional literacy was taken as predictor of workplace buoyancy with self-compassion as mediator between the two, whereas, growth mindset was taken as a moderator between self-compassion and workplace buoyancy.

Results

Table 1

Showing Sample Characteristics (N=168)

Variables	ƒ (%)	M (SD)
Age (Years)		33.11(8.25)
Gender		
Men	42(25%)	
Women	126(75%)	
Education		
Intermediate	4(2.4%)	
Graduation (14 years)	17(10.1%)	
Masters (16 years)	74(44%)	
MPhil/MS (18 years)	61(36.3%)	
PhD	1(7.1%)	
Marital Status		
Married	82(48.8%)	
Unmarried	82(48.8%)	
Family System		
Nuclear	83(49.5%)	
Joint	85(50.5%)	
Work Experience (Years)		5.98(5.75)
Monthly Income (PKR)		45355(32689.56)
Work Hours		6.66(1.46)
Institute		
School	95(56.5%)	
College	37(22%)	
University	36(21.4%)	
Sector		
Private	91(54.2%)	
Public	77(45.8%)	
Study with Job		
Yes	68(40.5%)	
No	100(59.5%)	
Extra Duties at Workplace		

Yes	137(81.5%)
No	31(18.5%)
Extent to which Extra Duties Affected Performance	
Not at all	5(2.97%)
A little bit	5(2.97%)
To some extent	36(21.4%)
A lot	100(59.2%)
Completely	22(13.0%)

Note. f= frequency, M=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of research participants. The age of participants ranged from 25 to 55 years (mean=33.11, SD=8.25). The acquired education of 4(2.4%) participants was Intermediate, 17(10.1%) participants were educated up to Graduation (14 years), 74(44%) held Masters (16 years) degree, 61(36.3%) held MPhil/MS (18 years) degree and only 1(7.1%) held PhD degree. 82(48.8%) participants were married and 82(48.8%) were unmarried. The mean teaching experience of participants was 5.98 years (SD=5.75) with an average income of 45355 PKR (SD=32689.56). The participants recruited from schools were 95(56.5%), 37(22%) participants were included from colleges and 36(21.4%) were selected from the universities. 91(54.2%) participants were from private institutes, whereas, 77(45.8%) participants from public institutes.

Table 2

Showing Correlation Matrix for Emotional Literacy, Self- Compassion, Growth Mindset and Workplace Buoyancy (N=168)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	M	SD
1. Perception of Emotion	-	.48***	.47***	.41***	.04	.23**	.04	.06	-.02	.26***	.00	.30***	31.93	4.59
2. Managing Own Emotion		-	.65***	.44***	-.00	.55***	-.06	.34***	-.05	.51***	-.03	.70***	40.21	4.17
3. Managing Others' Emotion			-	.45***	-.06	.30***	.08	.17*	.06	.37***	.12	.50***	33.17	3.81
4. Utilization of Emotion				-	.00	.24**	.20**	.28***	.27***	.41***	.35***	.41***	25.68	3.40
5. Growth Mindset					-	.09	.04	.04	.05	.04	.06	.11	15.27	5.73
6. Self-Kindness						-	-.14*	.44***	.02	.52***	.06	.51***	3.73	.72
7. Self-Judgement							-	.11	.71***	.02	.61***	-.11	3.35	.77
8. Common Humanity								-	.14*	.48***	.13*	.47***	3.83	.78
9. Isolation									-	.03	.74***	-.12	3.09	1.00
10. Mindfulness										-	.13*	.60***	3.90	.62
11. Over-Identification											-	-.05	3.46	.82
12. Workplace Buoyancy													91.01	13.92

Note: M=Mean; SD= standard deviation, * p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Table 2 shows the correlation among study variables. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient revealed that perception of emotions had significant positive relationship with self-kindness (r = 0.23, p < 0.01), mindfulness (r = 0.26, p < 0.001) and workplace buoyancy (r = 0.30, p < 0.001). Managing own emotions also had significant positive relationship with self-kindness (r = 0.55, p < 0.001), common humanity (r = 0.34, p < 0.001), mindfulness (r = 0.51, p < 0.001) and workplace buoyancy (r = 0.70, p < 0.001). Further, managing others' emotions had significant positive relationship with self-kindness (r = 0.30, p < 0.001), common humanity (r = 0.17, p < 0.05), mindfulness (r = 0.37, p < 0.001) and workplace buoyancy (r = 0.50, p < 0.001). Utilization of emotion showed significant positive relationship with all subscales of self-compassion including self-kindness (r = 0.24, p < 0.01), self-judgment (r = 0.20, p < 0.01), common humanity (r = 0.28, p < 0.001), isolation (r = 0.27, p < 0.001), mindfulness (r = 0.41, p < 0.001) and over-identification (r = 0.35, p < 0.001) along with workplace buoyancy (r = 0.41, p < 0.001) indicating that higher scores and command over utilization of emotions is related to high self-compassion and workplace buoyancy. Self-kindness (r = 0.51, p < 0.001), common humanity (r = 0.47, p < 0.001) and mindfulness (r = 0.60, p < 0.001) also showed significant positive relationship with workplace buoyancy indicating high resilience in those teachers who possess the traits of self-kindness, common humanity and mindfulness.

Table 3

Moderation Mediation Analysis Showing Direct Effect, Indirect Effect and Total Effect of Predictor, Moderator and Mediators

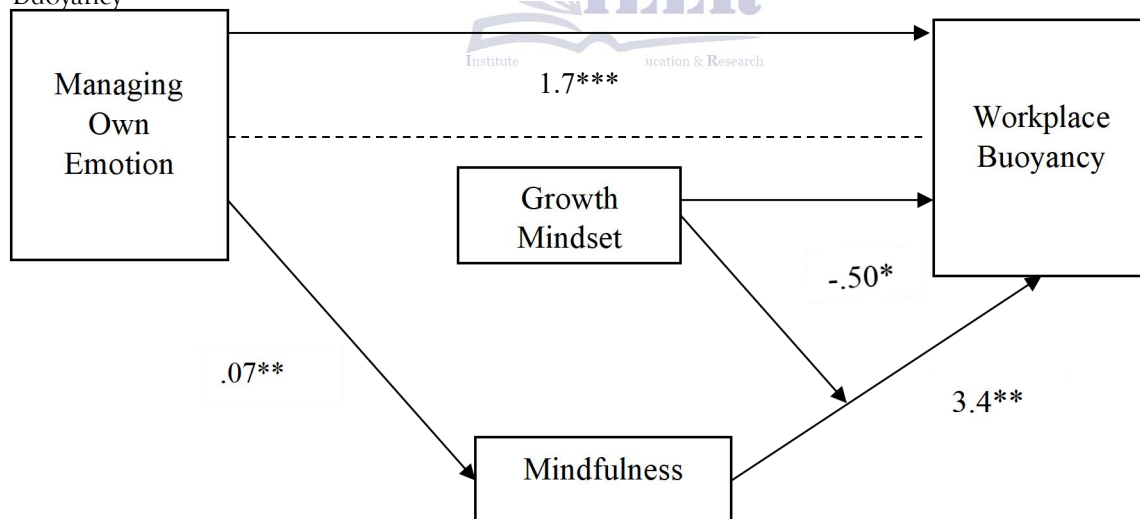|	M1		M2		(Y) Workplace Buoyancy	
Antecedents	β	SE	β	SE	B	SE
Constant	.82	.40	1.2	.55	-37.7	14.4
Managing Own Emotion	a1.06***	.01	a2 .07***	.00	c', 1.7**	.18
Common Humanity/M1	-	-	-	-	b1, 1.92	.55
Mindfulness/M2	-	-	-	-	b2, 3.4**	.00
Growth Mindset/W					1.61*	.82
Int1(M1*W)					.15	.18
Int2(M2*W)					-.50*	.22

Note. β = standardized coefficient of beta, SE= standard error, c'= direct effect, , p<.05, **p<.01.*

Table 3 shows the moderated mediation analysis after all the assumptions were fulfilled for the analysis. The results illustrated that subscale of emotional literacy; managing own emotions had a significant direct effect on workplace buoyancy (β=1.7, p<.001). It also indirectly predicted workplace buoyancy (β =3.4, p<.001) and the indirect path was mediated by subscale of self-compassion; mindfulness (β 3.4, p<.001). Interaction of the variables growth mindset and mindfulness significantly predicted workplace buoyancy (β =-.50, p<.05) demonstrating the role of growth mindset as a significant positive moderator affecting the relationship between mindfulness and workplace buoyancy (β =1.6, p<.05).

Figure 2

Showing Statistical Model for Emotional Literacy, Self- Compassion, Growth Mindset and Workplace Buoyancy

Discussion

The study aimed to assess the relationship among subscales of emotional literacy, mindset, self-compassion and workplace buoyancy in school, college and university teachers. The ratio of women was quite higher than men and majority of those worked in private schools. It has been observed that women usually opt teaching profession in Pakistan as it is considered to be noble and suitable profession for them. The eligibility to enter in this profession is Graduation or Masters in most cases which is why majority of the sample held Masters degree (Siddiqui & Soomro, 2019; Shaukat, 2016; Naqvi et al., 2016). In the present research, online mode of data collection was used so the data was received from across the country but maximum data was from Punjab.

The literature indicates that higher ability of individuals to manage their as well as other

people's emotions is associated with increased practice of personal resources such as self-kindness, common humanity and mindfulness. Those who use these resources are better able to cope and fight the adversities of their workplace (Mayor et al., 2008; Howard & Johnson, 2004; Carmeli, 2003). The findings of the present research also demonstrated the same findings indicating significant positive relationship of level of emotional literacy with self-compassion and workplace buoyancy

The ability to manage one's emotions is a skill which is, if used properly, can result in an individual being kind, mindful, humane and resilient. On the other hand, the individuals who do not have the ability to manage their emotions may turn out the other way around. It is suggested by previous literature that teaching requires being self-compassionate and emotionally literate as it helps in improving coping strategies and increasing workplace resilience. There have been programs designed to educate teachers about strategies to enhance emotional literacy and be more kind and cheerful in classroom to deal with daily work related obstacles (Carmeli, 2003; Naqvi et al., 2016; Asrar-ul-Haq et al., 2017). In the present research, the management and utilization of one's emotions significantly positively predicted self-compassion and workplace buoyancy in teachers which is consistent with the previous literature.

A heap of literature indicated that a teacher having growth mindset will be highly cheerful and resilient at workplace and the previous researches have already established growth mindset as a positive predictor of wellbeing, coping, resilience and grit (Burnette et al., 2020; Zeng et al., 2019). The present research has also confirmed growth mindset as a significant positive predictor of workplace buoyancy.

The present research found that subscales of self-compassion; common humanity and mindfulness were significant positive predictors of workplace buoyancy. This indicates that those teachers who were able to recognize their experiences as a part of common human experience and had the ability to observe their thoughts and feelings reported to have increased ability to deal with the adversities at workplace. The findings of the present research are consistent with the previous literature which also suggested similar relationships among variables (Moe & Katz, 2020).

Mediation moderation analysis showed that growth mindset moderated the relationship between mindfulness and workplace buoyancy in the present research indicating that even though teachers who were connected to their thoughts and feelings reported high resilience at workplace but those who possessed an additional trait of growth mindset displayed even higher resilience at workplace. Further, mindfulness was a significant mediator in the relationship between the ability to managing one's emotions and workplace buoyancy which suggests that teachers who were connected to their feelings and thoughts were better able to manage their emotions which eventually resulted in high capability of dealing with stressors at workplace. These findings are also consistent with the previous literature where positive relationships of emotional literacy, self-compassion and growth mindset are separately established with workplace buoyancy (Burnette et al., 2020; Zeng et al., 2019; O'Keefe, 2013). There is evidence that by managing one's emotions, resilience at workplace can be built and there are factors that contribute to that including mindfulness (Zessin et al., 2015). The findings of the study are helpful in the arena of academia including positive, clinical and organizational psychology in such a way that they help us understand importance of personal capacities like emotional literacy, self-compassion and mindset in contributing towards teachers' resilience at workplace. Teachers' well-being must be given consideration and intervention programs must be introduced at academic institutes to teach teachers the necessary skills that can help them resolve and deal with any external chaos that might be affecting their performance. These interventions will not only help increase teachers' productivity but will also benefit the institutes in the long run.

The first limitation of the present research is that data was collected online due to pandemic as all institutes were closed. Due to online classes, there must have been factors affecting the study variables. Also, the authors do not have any way to establish response rate as we may not know how many respondents received the form and did not fill it. Secondly, the data was not representative of all the provinces of Pakistan but it was mainly from Punjab. Future researches can include data from all over the country with increased sample size to increase generalizability of findings. In addition to this, future researches can be

conducted using qualitative method for in-depth exploration of external and internal factors that contribute towards workplace buoyancy.

Conclusion

The present research concludes that managing one's emotions, utilization of emotion, mindfulness, common humanity and growth mindset are the specific virtues and capacities that can be helpful in fighting with the challenges of workplace by enhancing resilience, particularly in teachers. The present research bridges between positive and clinical psychology specifically in academia. The constructs of this study are embedded in positive psychology while having theoretical basis of clinical psychology. The awareness and learning of these concepts and virtues is beneficial for teachers and reflects the significance of workplace buoyancy in remaining sane and healthy.

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