Mindfulness practices in secondary schools: Exploring teachers’ attitudes, and the barriers and facilitators to achieving teacher buy-in to a whole-school approach

Willow Jefferies
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Mindfulness Practices in Secondary Schools: Exploring Teachers’ Attitudes, and the Barriers and Facilitators to Achieving Teacher Buy-In to a Whole-School Approach

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This thesis is presented for the degree of Masters of Education by Research

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Abstract

Mindfulness practices are increasingly being introduced into schools as a whole-school approach, with teachers often responsible for implementing the exercises with their students. The aim of this research project was to explore the attitudes secondary teachers hold towards mindfulness practices and determine the barriers to and facilitators of teachers buying-in to a mindfulness initiative. A qualitative research methodology was utilised with twelve semi-structured interviews conducted across three Perth metropolitan secondary schools. Interview questions were devised using both attitudinal constructs and the Revised Theoretical Domains Framework (TDF-R). In order to separately explore both teachers’ attitudes towards mindfulness practices and the barriers to and facilitators of their buy-in to an initiative, the interview data were analysed twice. In the first instance, deductive analysis was used within the suite of questions relating to each attitudinal construct. Following this, a hybrid approach was used to determine which TDF-R domains acted as either barriers to or facilitators of achieving participant buy-in to a mindfulness initiative.

Findings indicated that this sample of secondary teachers held ambivalent attitudes towards the implementation of mindfulness practices as a whole-school approach. This included participants’ having a positive attitude towards mindfulness practices in schools, while holding reservations regarding whether teachers should be the ones to implement the practices. The TDF-R domains Situational Knowledge and Beliefs about Consequences were deemed to be facilitators of participant buy-in. The following domains were considered barriers to participant buy-in: Beliefs about Capabilities, Professional Role and Identity, Organisational Culture and Resources. The implications of the research include ensuring schools’ expectations of educators are clearly defined, providing staff with adequate training, and ensuring the leadership have authentic and consistent intentions.
Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

i. incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;

ii. contain any material previously published or written by another person where due reference is made in the text of this thesis; or

iii. contain any defamatory material.

Willow Jefferies

Date: 27th August 2021
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Chapter 1 Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Mindfulness practices are increasingly being implemented into schools with the aim of supporting student wellbeing, and teachers are often responsible for implementing the exercises with their students. As attitudes often drive professional practice (Forgas et al., 2010), the attitude of teachers who are responsible for implementing mindfulness practices may affect the success of a wellbeing initiative. Therefore, the primary purpose of this thesis was to explore secondary teachers’ attitudes towards implementing mindfulness practices in school. In addition to this, the study investigated the barriers to and facilitators of implementing mindfulness practices in secondary schools.

Adolescent Mental Health

Mindfulness initiatives have the potential to improve mental health and wellbeing outcomes for adolescents (Conboy et al., 2013; Felver et al., 2015; Saoji et al., 2017). Mental illness has become a global issue, with the World Health Organisation (2021) reporting up to 20% of the world’s children and adolescents as having a mental disorder or problem, and suicide as the second leading cause of death in fifteen to twenty-nine-year-olds. These statistics are consistent with Australian mental health statistics reporting that 20% of adults have at least one mental illness (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008), one in every seven young people have a mental illness (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2020) and 26% of adolescents aged 16 – 24 years suffer from a mental health disorder (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008). The most common mental health issues reported among young people are anxiety, major depression and substance abuse (Black Dog Institute, 2020). Young people are also reporting concerns around anxiety, peer rejection and substance abuse (Mission Australia, 2020). These results are especially important to note for educational
communities, as students experiencing a mental illness have been shown to have decreased academic motivation and lower academic achievement (Noble et al., 2008).

For the last decade, an Australian-wide survey conducted by Mission Australia (2020) has reported that young people believe two of the top three issues of personal concern to be coping with stress, and school or study-related issues. This is consistent with a worldwide study that reported 55% of students have test anxiety and 37% of students felt tense while studying (The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2017). Students experiencing academic-related stressors also report decreased intrinsic motivation, self-compassion and resilience (Cunha & Paiva, 2012).

What are Schools Doing?

The need to develop student wellbeing is acknowledged by all levels of educational policy. The Mparntwe Education Declaration states that students should develop a “sense of self-worth, self-awareness and personal identity that enables them to manage their emotional, mental, cultural, spiritual and physical wellbeing” (Education Council, 2019, p. 6). The Australian Curriculum has expanded on these points by outlining personal and social capabilities which promote education around self-management, self-awareness, social management and social awareness (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2020a). In accordance with these documents, the latest annual Western Australian Department of Education focus stated that “create[ing] learning environments that promote resilience, optimism, confidence and self-efficacy” is necessary to help students achieve a successful future (Department of Education, 2021a, p. 3).

The Australian Government is also funding wellbeing programs to assist schools in supporting students. In 2018, the Australian Government launched a program called Be You, run by Beyondblue in partnership with Headspace. This program is designed to give mental health support to schools by providing them with guidance, programs and materials (Beyond
Blue, 2021). In addition to this, the Federal Government committed to a payment of $98.6 million towards supporting student mental health (Hunt, 2008).

While governments around the world are investing in programs and interventions designed to decrease adolescent mental illness (Australian Government, 2017; Kristjánsson, 2012), there is no mandatory curriculum directing schools and teachers in the support of student wellbeing (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2020b). As stated above, the Australian Curriculum reflects the need for social and emotional learning through the inclusion of *Personal and Social Capability* as one of the seven general capabilities to be embedded within schools (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2020b; Australian Government, 2017). The seven general capabilities consist of *Literacy, Numeracy, Information and Technology (ICT), Critical and Creative Thinking, Personal and Social, Ethical Understanding and Intercultural Understanding* (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2020b). While these capabilities have been written as seven equal components, only Literacy, Numeracy and ICT have a prescribed curriculum and assessment process. Teachers receive limited direction in how the remaining four general capabilities are to be delivered, with guidance on how to teach and assess them only provided for teachers who seek the information (Australian Government, 2017; Scoular, 2018).

The implementation of mindfulness initiatives is one strategy schools are using to support student wellbeing. Many school-based mindfulness programs are incorporated within wider wellbeing programs and developed by private companies. Examples of these popular programs within Australia include, but are not limited to, Positive Education (Seligman et al., 2009), Smiling Minds (Smiling Minds, 2018), The Resilience Project (The Resilience Project, 2011), and Mindfulness Meditation Australia (Mindful Meditation Australia, 2017). Programs such as these often pride themselves on being grounded in scientific research.
and have the potential to benefit schools who are unsure of how to incorporate mindfulness practices as a whole-school approach. Usually, the programs provide curriculum links, lesson plans, guidelines for how to implement the programs and limited professional development for teachers (Mindful Meditation Australia, 2017; MindMatters, 2018; The Resilience Project, 2011). These resources are intended to make the implementation of such programs straightforward for schools.

Research has demonstrated the efficacy of mindfulness practices as a means of addressing Social and Emotional Learning outcomes, as outlined in government policies, such as social-awareness, self-awareness, and self-regulation (Conboy et al., 2013; Khalsa et al., 2012; Mazza Davies, 2015; Piotrowski, 2017). Despite this, schools are forced to independently determine the most appropriate means of addressing the general capabilities. While there are a number of barriers to any new school initiative, a possible barrier to the success of a mindfulness initiative in schools is the attitude teachers hold towards it and achieving staff buy-in.

**Significance and Rationale for the Current Study**

Teaching staff are often responsible for the implementation of Social and Emotional Learning curricula, which include mindfulness practices and initiatives. This is important as the use of mindfulness practices within schools is relatively new (Simpson, 2017) and can be controversial when considering their history as a religious worldview and their use in clinical practice (Forbes, 2016; Monteiro et al., 2015; Nehring & Frawley, 2020b). Within education, the practice of mindfulness is increasingly involved in the wider wellbeing programs teachers are required to deliver (Simpson, 2017). Teachers’ attitudes become relevant to the success of these programs as attitudes are formed over long periods and often drive professional practice (Pajares, 1992). Teachers’ attitudes can have a significant effect on the success of implementing such initiatives, often due to the affective and cognitive components that make
up one’s attitude (Bodur et al., 2000; Borg, 2001; Pajares, 1992; Pickens, 2005). Similarly, school-based initiative are more successful when teacher buy-in is high (Baker et al., 2018).

Ample research has been conducted to assess the effectiveness, efficacy and ethics of implementing mindfulness practices within secondary schools (Crawford et al., 2020; Geelong Grammar School, 2014; Simpson, 2017); however, only six studies have addressed the perception of the staff responsible for implementing the programs (Jean-Baptiste, 2014; Mazza Davies, 2015; Norton & Griffith, 2020; Piotrowski, 2017; Reindl et al., 2020; Wigelsworth & Quinn, 2020). Of these studies none had a majority of secondary teachers as their participants and, therefore, cannot adequately represent the perspectives of secondary teachers. This issue is critical as primary and secondary schools are structured differently, and will present different challenges in the implementation of initiatives. In addition to this, only one of the studies reached theoretical saturation by including a sample of twelve or more participants (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). This indicates that there is a gap within the research regarding secondary teachers’ attitudes towards implementing mindfulness practices within schools. This study addresses these gaps by only including secondary teachers’ within the data collection.

The present study aims to help improve student mental health by supporting schools to implement more effective mindfulness initiatives, by creating an awareness of teachers’ attitudes and the potential barriers to and facilitators of teacher buy-in.
Chapter 2 Literature Review

Chapter Overview

This chapter will review the literature relevant to the current study, including a definition of mindfulness; a summary of the origins of mindfulness practices and how they have come to be regularly utilised within Western culture; an outline of the research conducted regarding the potential benefits of mindfulness practices, as well as some concerns regarding the morals of introducing these mindfulness practices into schools; a definition of attitudes and exploration of their constructs; and, finally, a discussion of the previous research regarding teachers’ attitudes towards mindfulness practices in schools.

What is Mindfulness? Definitions and Development.

For the purpose of this research project, mindfulness will be defined using a commonly accepted definition as “the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgementally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment” (Kabat-Zinn, 2003, p. 145). While variations of this definition are common, the central tenets of mindfulness remain “awareness” and “attention” (Kabat-Zinn, 2003).

A range of both formal and informal activities are now accepted as mindfulness practices. Informal practices include activities such as mindful listening, mindful colouring, and mindful walking. These informal practices are often incorporated into primary school mindfulness programs (Mindful Meditation Australia, 2017). Mindful meditation is a more formal mindfulness practice and is commonly used in programs designed as therapeutic interventions, such as Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (Simpson, 2017). Mindful yoga is another example of a formal practice that includes a combination of relaxation, breathing techniques and postures (Khalsa & Butzer, 2016). Mindfulness programs implemented with
adolescents in schools are often modelled after a Hatha-style yoga, including a combination of “asana” which means physical postures and “pranayama” which means mindful breathing (Yogaziet, 2020). The current study will only refer to mindfulness practices that are considered more formal, such as mindful meditation and mindful yoga (Simpson, 2017).

With these definitions in mind, it is important to recognise that the term mindfulness can be defined in varied and yet conceptually correct ways. While two definitions of mindfulness may be referring to a common term, possibly using common language, it does not necessarily mean the two definitions are describing the same concept. Therefore, when trying to define such a nebulous concept, it is essential to take into account the origins of the term and how its journey into acceptance within Western cultures may have transformed its meaning.

**Traditional Mindfulness: Philosophical Origins and the Evolution of Mindfulness**

The philosophical origins of mindfulness can be traced back to the 5th century Before the Common Era (BCE) when the Pali people practised “Sati”, which means “remembering” (Ergas, 2019b). This idea was later elaborated on by the Buddha in texts such as “Satipattana Sali” (Ergas, 2019b), in which the Buddha promoted the philosophy that it is not our reality but the way in which we respond to our reality, that causes us distress (Sellman & Buttarazzi, 2020). In this context, the practice of mindfulness contributes to an ethical worldview (Sellman & Buttarazzi, 2020).

While mindfulness practices are an essential aspect of Buddhism, Buddhists believe the practice of mindfulness is only one component of their journey towards liberating their own suffering (Ergas, 2019b; Monteiro et al., 2015). Suffering, from a Buddhist’s point of view, should be experienced without allowing one’s self to become lost within it (Gehart & Paré, 2008). In order to reach this level of non-judgemental acceptance, those practising Buddhism need to find a balance between the eight limbs of the Eightfold Path (Monteiro et
The eight limbs act as behavioural descriptions and consist of: View, Intention, Speech, Action, Livelihood, Effort, Mindfulness and Concentration; therefore, practising mindfulness is considered just one aspect of the Buddhist Eightfold Path. Adding to the complexity of the Buddhist Eightfold Path is the consideration that each behaviour can be conducted in a “right” or “wrong” manner. If a behaviour is “right”, then it will lead one closer to the end of suffering (Monteiro et al., 2015).

Although there are multiple schools of Buddhism, each with its own insights and teachings, a central component of all is the incorporation of mindfulness practice (Matthews, 1993; Monteiro et al., 2015). Mindfulness within Buddhism is a widely practised tradition within Eastern cultures, and Kabat-Zinn (2003) lists the following Buddhist streams that include mindfulness meditative practices:

Theravada tradition of the countries of Southeast Asia (Thailand, Burma, Cambodia, and Vietnam); the Magayana (Zen) schools of Vietnam, China, Japan and Korea; and the Vajrayana tradition of Tibetan Buddhism found in Tibet itself, Mongolia, Nepal, Bhutan, Ladakh, and now large parts of India in the Tibetan community in exile. (P146).

Although mindfulness was considered to be just one aspect of Buddhism, it was prioritised within the practice during the colonial invasion of the East (Ditrich, 2016). In an attempt to transform Buddhism into a religion considered equal to Christianity, Ditrich (2016) states the following transformations of Buddhist practices were made:

- Diminishing the traditionally central role of the Sangha and the increased involvement of and leadership from the laity, thus reflecting the anti-clericism of Protestantism; positioning the early Canonical texts as the source of “true” or “original” Buddhism, while largely disregarding the living Buddhist traditions of the time; situating meditation at the very centre of Buddhism, perceiving it to be
individualised practise and experience, reflecting a protestant aim for an individual to relate directly to and experience God without priestly intermediaries (P203).

This repositioning of mindfulness may have been one of the crucial steps in its journey to popularity in Western cultures (Ditrich, 2016).

**Modern Mindfulness**

The second version of mindfulness referred to in this literature review has a much shorter history and is widely recognised within Western culture. After achieving success with mindfulness practices in 1979, Jon Kabat-Zinn (an North American academic) modified the mindfulness concepts and introduced them to his patients in the form of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) (Ergas, 2019b; Sellman & Buttarazzi, 2020). Kabat-Zinn recognised the limitations of introducing a concept steeped in religious tradition if it was to be ‘consumed by the masses’ and so intentionally severed MBSR from the connotations of its origins (Ergas, 2019b; Simpson, 2017). Academics consider this version of mindfulness to have been “commodified” and is referred to in a multitude of ways, including “McMindfulness”, “Medicalised mindfulness” (Farias et al., 2020; Sellman & Buttarazzi, 2020) and “Contemporary mindfulness” (Monteiro et al., 2015).

Critics of modern mindfulness refer to it as a practice that has been popularised by diluting its origins and secularising mindfulness techniques (Simpson, 2017). Forbes (2016) critiques that these mindful practices hold the superficial goal of reducing symptoms rather than contributing to a journey to end suffering. Ditrich (2016, p. 205) explains how the clinical versions of mindfulness practices have simplified the aim of meditation, stating, “the traditional pursuit of freedom from rebirth in various undesirable realms and the ultimate liberation from rebirth is replaced by the aim of liberating an individual from a negative, conflicting mental state”. This diluted version of mindfulness has become a common and increasingly recognised self-help tool within Western cultures (Min & Lynn, 2020).
Defining the Differences between Traditional and Modern Mindfulness

Traditional and modern mindfulness practices have the common goal of alleviating
pain or suffering, using similar language and developing from the same origins; however,
they are considered by academics to be separate practices (Crawford et al., 2020; Simpson,
2017). While the following differences are not exhaustive, this literature review presents how
the ethical considerations, language, and focus of traditional and modern mindfulness
practices may vary.

The integration of traditional mindfulness practices with its broader spectrum is in
stark contrast to the central and often singular focus of those who advocate for the practice of
modern mindfulness. Consequently, modern mindfulness practices are described as being
secular and in danger of being practised without the ethical or moral guidance that underpins
traditional mindfulness practices (Crawford et al., 2020; Monteiro et al., 2015). For example,
Simpson (2017) reasons that a trained assassin could easily be a practitioner of modern
mindfulness, considering the awareness and attention needed to focus for such extended
periods; however, a sniper could not be a practitioner of traditional mindfulness because the
act of being a sniper disregards other Buddhist domains.

Some researchers also raise ethical concerns that the more artificial employment of
modern mindfulness practices are the result of society wishing to promote socially acceptable
behaviour (Crawford et al., 2020; Sellman & Buttarazzi, 2020). The moral and ethical
implications of modern mindfulness practices in relation to the current study will be explored
further in this review.

It can also be noted that while modern mindfulness practices may use similar
language to that used by traditional practices, the true meaning behind this language may not
remain the same. When discussing traditional mindfulness practices, Ergas (2019b) lists three
core facets of mindfulness: attention on a single focus; intentionally completing the practice;
and the attitude that underpins the exercise, including not berating yourself when you
inevitably lose focus. By doing this, Ergas (2019b) draws on the Buddhist philosophy that it
is the way in which we respond to our reality, rather than the reality itself, which causes
suffering (Sellman & Buttarazzi, 2020). He postulates that without all three facets, it cannot
be considered mindfulness (Ergas, 2019b).

Modern mindfulness practices have been defined by psychologists using similar
concepts. As stated earlier, Kabat-Zinn (2003, p. 145) uses the definition, “the awareness that
emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgementally
to the unfolding of experience moment by moment” and the American Psychology
Association (2021) defines mindfulness as “a moment-to-moment awareness of one’s
experience without judgement”. Sellman and Buttarazzi (2020) caution that modern
mindfulness teachings use the term “non-judgemental” and promote “presence”, which may
have become misleading. They highlight the difference between practising self-compassion
in the form of not rebuking oneself for losing focus or negative self-talk and avoiding
evaluation altogether. Sellman and Buttarazzi state: “discernment as a form of judgement or
evaluation, built upon awareness, lies at the heart of the mindfulness practice” (Sellman &
Buttarazzi, 2020, p. 69), explaining that in order for mindfulness to be a practise of
transformation it may require the destruction of one’s sense of self.

Another criticism of the practice of modern mindfulness is that it teaches the
practitioner to focus on the self alone; this can be troublesome as it has the potential to lead to
self-absorption (Forbes, 2016) and often requires the practitioner to take responsibility for
external stressors out of their control (Sellman & Buttarazzi, 2020). In addition to this, Forbes
(2016) elaborates that the different ‘modes of mindfulness’ can be separated into personal
and collective, subjective and objective quadrants (see Figure 1). Forbes (2016, p. 1259)
expresses concern that some modes of mindfulness have “quadrant bias and are lacking
integral balance”, going on to describe how more traditional mindfulness practices take into account all four quadrants of the intersection of interior versus exterior focus and individual versus collective focus.

**Figure 1**

*Integral Framework Established by Forbes*

When discussing the intention of promoting mindfulness practices in schools, Forbes (2016) states:

Rather than serve as a practice for students to explore, enrich and develop the landscape of one’s interiority and to critically interrogate conditioned mistakes thoughts and cravings, mindfulness is used for individualist behaviour skill building
and normative social role improvements, for students to be better students and teachers to be better teachers (p. 1264)

Based on the differences outlined above, the current thesis will refer to these versions of mindfulness as separate identities when possible. This will not always be possible due to the popularity of modern mindfulness within Western culture. When mindfulness practices without a prefix of ‘modern’ or ‘traditional’ are discussed, the study has not discerned between the two versions.

**Potential Benefits of Modern Mindfulness Practices**

The following section will summarise the literature which supports the notion that mindfulness training may improve mental health and academic success in adolescents. In order to provide further context to these conclusions, evidence suggesting mindfulness practices may positively affect the brain will be explored first. Following this, research that advocates for the mental health and academic benefits of mindfulness practices being introduced into secondary schools will be discussed.

**Mindfulness Training and Neuroplasticity**

Studies have found that mindfulness training results in structural and functional changes in the brain (Desai et al., 2015; Hölzel et al., 2010; Hölzel et al., 2011; Lazar et al., 2005). These changes are referred to as neuroplasticity, which is the brain's ability to create new neural pathways (Davidson & Lutz, 2008; Luders et al., 2012). As a result of mindfulness, structural and functional changes have been found to occur in the amygdala, hippocampus, and prefrontal cortex (PFC) (Desai et al., 2015; Hölzel et al., 2010; Lazar et al., 2005; Pascoe & Bauer, 2015). In addition to these specific regions, studies have found practising mindfulness contributes to the deactivation of the Default Mode Network which is commonly active when one is experiencing negative emotions (Banks et al., 2007; Hölzel et al., 2011; Marchand, 2014; Taren et al., 2014; Travis & Shear, 2010).
Neurological studies have found that mindfulness training directly correlates with the functioning, size and connectivity of the amygdala, hippocampus and PFC (Banks et al., 2007). Research indicates a correlation between the size and density of each region of the brain and its influence on an individual’s stress levels, emotional regulation and ability to concentrate (Hölzel et al., 2010; Hölzel et al., 2011; Lazar et al., 2005; Taren et al., 2014). In one study, Hölzel et al. (2010) concluded that perceived stress was highly correlated with the density and volume of the amygdala in twenty-six already highly stressed individuals recruited to participate in a longitudinal magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) study. Their study required the participants to complete an eight-week MBSR program in which they attended weekly meetings and completed at-home meditative practices. At the end of the eight-week intervention, Hölzel et al. (2010) found that the MBSR program decreased perceived stress and was positively correlated with a reduction in the density of the amygdala.

Furthermore, mindfulness training has the potential to cause neurological changes which help with emotional and stress regulation. Studies using neuroimaging technology have found that the practice of mindfulness strengthens the connection between the amygdala and the frontal regions in the brain, which increases an individual’s ability to regulate their emotions, negative affect, and perceived stress (Hölzel et al., 2010; Hölzel et al., 2011).

These findings supported those of Banks et al. (2007) when they examined the functional connection between the amygdala and the frontal regions of 14 adult participants while they were attempting to use mindfulness practices in order to regulate their negative affect. Banks et al. (2007) found that amygdala-frontal coupling was evident during emotional regulation and that the strength of the connection between a person’s PFC and amygdala has a negative correlation with their negative affect, indicating the stronger a person’s connection, the less negativity they experience.
Research has also found that mindfulness practices can have a positive effect on the Default Mode Network (Brewer & Garrison, 2014; Marchand, 2014). When an individual’s brain is not specifically concentrating, they are in a state of ‘automatic thinking’ which is controlled by a network of brain regions referred to as the Default Mode Network (Marchand, 2014; Mckenzie & Hassed, 2012). This network, which includes the amygdala, is particularly active during mind-wandering, rumination, worry, and stress. Marchand (2014) and Brewer and Garrison (2014) concluded that mindfulness practices had the potential to improve sustained attention by deregulating the Default Mode Network. The deactivation of the Default Mode Network has been found to increase controlled thinking (Travis & Shear, 2010), with activity levels in the Default Mode Network positively correlating with experience with meditation (Pascoe & Bauer, 2015). These findings have led to the conclusion that the more experience an individual has with mindfulness, the more successful they will be in decreasing their perceived stress and mind-wandering.

**Mindfulness Training and Adolescent Mental Health**

The following section of the literature review will examine the impact mindfulness practices have on adolescents’ abilities to regulate their emotions and stress, as well as wellbeing markers such as self-compassion, anxiety, and depression. Given that the World Health Organisation defines adolescents as people between the ages of 10 and 19 years (World Health Organisation, 2012) and the United Nations defines youth as being between 15 and 24 years of age, studies which have been conducted in an education setting with participants between the ages of 13 and 21 are deemed relevant to this exploration.

**Emotional-Regulation.** Engaging in mindfulness practices has been found to increase self-regulation, which includes the ability to regulate one’s emotions (Conboy et al., 2013; Khalsa et al., 2012). Emotion regulating factors include self-control, reactivity, and anger control. Sustained attention provides young people with the ability to identify their emotions
but it is self-regulation that determines how they react to these emotions (Mckenzie & Hassed, 2012). In two studies assessing the impact of mindfulness on self-regulation, Conboy et al. (2013) and Khalsa et al. (2012) conducted randomised control trials that compared the effects of a yoga program with an active control group who were assigned to participate in Physical Education (PE) classes. Conboy et al. (2013) had students complete either 12 weeks of PE as normal or 12 weeks of yoga. At the end of the study, 26 participants in the yoga program reported an improvement in their ability to regulate their emotions. Khalsa et al. (2012) found similar results to Conboy et al. (2013) when they implemented an 11-week yoga program in which seven Year 11 and 12 classes were randomly assigned to an intervention or control group. Participants of the intervention group practised at least 30-minutes of yoga, 2-3 days per week. In comparison to the control group, the yoga group showed an improvement in anger control by the end of the 11-week program. Several other studies have reported similar findings of increased self-control (Galla, 2017), improvements in non-reactivity (Galla, 2016), reductions in emotional arousal (Frank et al., 2014) and decreases in anger (Felver et al., 2015) after participating in mindfulness practices.

**Compassion, Self-Esteem, and Resilience.** Conceptually, mindfulness is closely linked to resilience, compassion and self-esteem, as mindfulness places such a high importance on the acceptance of the self, others and situations out of one’s control (Fredrickson, 2001). To understand the relationship between mindfulness, self-compassion and emotional wellbeing, Bluth et al. (2015) implemented a mindfulness curriculum with 28 adolescents between the ages of 10 and 18 years old. The intervention involved participants meeting for an hour and a half once a week for six weeks. The participants completed a mindfulness measure, a self-compassion scale, and an emotional wellbeing (perceived stress and life satisfaction) scale both before and after the six-week intervention. At the end of the study, Bluth et al. (2015) found that participants experienced higher levels of self-
compassion, resilience, and lower levels of perceived stress, in comparison to their pre-intervention results.

The covariance between resilience and self-compassion in adolescents was reinforced further by Bluth and Eisenlohr-Moul (2017) when they implemented a mindful self-compassion program. The intervention included 47 adolescents aged between 11 and 17 years, and found that self-compassion can act as a protective factor and promote resilience (Raes, 2010). MacBeth and Gumley (2012) also found that mindfulness practices had a positive impact on adolescents’ self-compassion using a meta-analysis of 20 research articles relevant to compassion and mental health symptoms. From their meta-analysis, they also determined that compassion could be a factor that explains and helps to cultivate resilience (MacBeth & Gumley, 2012). Mindfulness was found to have positive effects on adolescents’ resilience by Khalsa et al. (2012) who implemented an 11-week yoga program with seven Year 11 and Year 12 classes. The results showed a significant improvement in the resilience of the intervention group when compared to the control group.

Several studies have found that adolescent self-esteem may be improved after a period of mindfulness training. Biegel et al. (2009) conducted an eight-week MBSR course with adolescents seeking psychiatric care. Seventy-four out-patient participants aged between 14 and 18 years were assigned to either an intervention group or a wait-listed control group. At the end of the eight-week trial, Biegel et al. (2009) found that mindful meditation had a positive effect on adolescents’ self-esteem. Similarly, Dundas et al. (2016) implemented an eight-week MBSR course with 46 participants who suffered from evaluation anxiety with the aim of determining whether the course would decrease anxiety and increase confidence. They tested students’ anxiety, self-esteem, academic self-esteem, and self-efficacy seven times, including a baseline test before the intervention began as well as three days before their first exam. Baseline test results indicated that the MBSR group had significantly lower self-
esteem than the control group. When they were tested three days before the exam, the MBSR group showed an increase in self-esteem and self-efficacy. These changes bought the self-esteem levels of the participants who had previously suffered from evaluation anxiety up to the same level as the control group, who had shown no change.

In summary, mindfulness practices have been demonstrated to improve and foster protective factors in adolescents, such as compassion, self-esteem, and resilience.

**Affect and Rumination.** Mindfulness practices may increase positive affect, and decrease negative affect and rumination. Affect can be defined as experiencing a mood, feeling, or emotion and are often arranged into negative or positive experiences (Forgas et al., 2010; Malhotra, 2005). Positive and negative affect have an inverse relationship (MacBeth & Gumley, 2012; Raes, 2010), which may explain mindfulness training being found to simultaneously decrease symptoms of negative affect while increasing positive affect (Felver et al., 2015; Galla, 2016, 2017; Sibinga et al., 2013).

Academic affect refers to the specific experiences, feelings or emotions a person has towards their studies or school environment; it can differ from those experienced outside of school (Rüppel et al., 2015). An adolescent’s experience of negative affect can be a result of perceived failure (Salamon et al., 2011) and has the potential to become repetitive. When this occurs, adolescents can experience an increase in rumination and brooding and a decrease in self-compassion and resilience, resulting in the potential for their academic motivation to decline (Arsenio & Loria, 2014). The danger of this, according to Cunha and Paiva (2012), is that students’ grades do not appear to have an effect on their test anxiety. Therefore, if an adolescent experiences negative academic affect, they have the potential to stay confined to these emotions despite their hard work or results. Negative affect, including negative self-talk, can be perceived as a threat by the brain. When the brain responds to a threat, whether the event is real or perceived, it pulls energy away from non-life-threatening functions, such
as cognitive functions (Mckenzie & Hassed, 2012), and potentially further increases academic difficulties.

In two studies, Galla (2016) and Galla (2017) specifically reported on the outcome of negative affect, including rumination, in adolescents who participated in a period of mindfulness training. In (2016), and then again in (2017), Galla had participants complete week-long retreats which included a range of mindful activities with a strong emphasis on mindful meditation. At the end of the week-long intensive retreats, both studies reported a decrease in negative affect and rumination. In addition to participants’ improvement in negative affect, Galla (2016) reported an overall increase in positive affect. These findings are consistent with previous studies focussed on mindful training that reported decreases in rumination (Sibinga et al., 2013) and reductions in negative affect (Felver et al., 2015).

**Stress.** Multiple studies have demonstrated that mindfulness training can be beneficial to adolescents who show the physiological and psychological symptoms of stress (Anyan & Hjemdal, 2016; Biegel et al., 2009; Bluth & Eisenlohr-Moul, 2017; Bluth et al., 2015; Fishbein et al., 2016; Galla, 2016; Sharma, 2014; Sibinga et al., 2013). Stress has been described as “the physiological and psychological response, including behaviours, as a result of encountering stressors, interpreting them and making judgements about controlling or influencing the outcomes of these events” (Sharma, 2014, p. 59). Whether the stressor is a life-threatening situation or a reaction to an upcoming examination, the automatic mechanisms in the brain elicit a stress response, including the secretion of cortisol and adrenaline (Desai et al., 2015). The physiological outcomes can include raised heart rate or blood pressure, sweating and cortisol secretion; psychological responses can manifest as anxiety, depression, low self-esteem or self-compassion and negative thought-patterns (Mckenzie & Hassed, 2012).
In one study demonstrating the benefits of the practice of mindfulness on perceived stress, Biegel et al. (2009) reported a decrease in the stress levels of adolescent psychiatric patients who took part in a randomised control trial of mindfulness. Self-reported measures of participant stress were collected before, and three months after an eight-week MBSR program. At the baseline, the intervention group and the wait-list group showed no significant difference in their stress levels but after the intervention, the MBSR group displayed significantly lower levels of self-reported stress than the control group.

It is important to note the association between increased stress and decreased wellbeing (Mckenzie & Hassed, 2012). While researching the relationship between several outcomes, Anyan and Hjemdal (2016) found a high correlation between each participant’s anxiety, depression and their stress levels in a survey of 533 participants with an average age of 15.25 years. This result may be explained by the research conducted by Pascoe and Bauer (2015), which was designed to investigate the effects of yoga on stress-related biological markers. They found that chronic stress was not only associated with depression and anxiety, but it could also contribute to the onset of anxiety (Pascoe & Bauer, 2015).

There are numerous studies supporting the finding that mindfulness practices may reduce both physiological and psychological responses to academic stressors (Chan et al., 2013; Sharma, 2014). Academic stress occurs when students’ stress levels rise to significant proportions, often during highly stressful periods of the semester (Bedewy & Gabriel, 2015). Academic stress often manifests as anxiety and can be referred to as academic anxiety, performance anxiety or examination anxiety. A student who has academic stress can experience reduced cognitive abilities as well as reduced wellbeing (Mckenzie & Hassed, 2012; Preoteasa et al., 2016). While it most commonly presents itself during examination periods, this is not the only time a student can suffer from these symptoms (Bedewy & Gabriel, 2015).
Five studies within the bounds of this literature review have specifically researched the effect of mindfulness practices in relation to the stress levels of adolescents around an examination or performance period (Dundas et al., 2016; Gopal et al., 2011; Hagins & Rundle, 2016; Kauts & Sharma, 2009; Khalsa et al., 2013). The most intriguing results on academic stress and mindfulness were found by Kauts and Sharma (2009) who conducted a large-scale study designed to determine whether yoga could increase adolescents’ academic performance in relation to their stress. Three-hundred-and-one students were split into either ‘high stress’ or ‘low stress’ groups and then each group was halved and assigned to be either a ‘treatment group’ or a ‘control group’. Participants assigned to a treatment group completed seven weeks of daily meditation in the mornings for one hour. Academic performance was measured by participants’ Mathematics, Science and Social Studies grades. The results of the study showed that while high stress had a negative effect on academic scores, those who were part of the yoga course performed better academically than their non-yoga counterparts. The important factor to note here is that both interventions groups, whether students were considered to have ‘high levels of stress’ or ‘low levels of stress’, outperformed their equivalent control group (Kauts & Sharma, 2009). This indicates that mindfulness practices have the potential to improve perceived stress, which may also have a positive effect on students’ academic results.

**Anxiety and Depression.** Many studies have reported that a period of mindfulness training can reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression in adolescents (Biegel et al., 2009; Bluth & Eisenlohr-Moul, 2017; Bluth et al., 2017; Felver et al., 2015; Frank et al., 2014; Sibinga et al., 2013). Sibinga et al. (2013) reported positive results in adolescents after holding weekly 50-minute sessions of mindful meditation with 22 urban male participants. After the 12-week MBSR course, results indicated that participants’ anxiety levels had decreased. These results are consistent with the results of Frank et al. (2014), who
implemented a full semester of mindful yoga with 49 adolescents who were considered ‘at risk’. After three to four 30-minute sessions per week for a full semester, the adolescents reported lower levels of anxiety and depression in comparison to baseline measures.

Similar conclusions have been drawn from short interventions on mindfulness, anxiety, and depression. In one study, Felver et al. (2015) conducted only a single session of mindful yoga with 47 fifteen-year-olds. They compared the change in anxiety and depression measures of the mindful yoga group to those of the group who completed a PE lesson as usual. As hypothesised by Felver et al. (2015), participants who were assigned to the yoga group had a greater decrease in depression than those who participated in the PE class. Combined, these results indicate that mindfulness training has the potential to reduce anxiety and depressive symptoms experienced by adolescents.

**Mindfulness Training and Academic Achievement**

Mindfulness training has been found to enhance a range of cognitive functions that have a direct impact on an adolescent’s academic success in high school (Bansal et al., 2013; Chiesa et al., 2011; Gard et al., 2014). This cognitive functions include; concentration (Bansal et al., 2013; Gard et al., 2014), improve focus (Donovan et al., 2016) and increase sustained attention during cognitively demanding tasks (Baijal et al., 2011; Fishbein et al., 2016; Saoji et al., 2017). From their review of 15 studies, Chiesa et al. (2011) reported that the implementation of a mindfulness program has the potential to increase working memory capacity and memory retention. These results were measured in a range of cognitive tests including asking participants to recall information after reading it, correctly memorising combinations of digits and retrieving specific memories when given a cue. Along with the direct impact that memory retention has on academic success, Mizuno et al. (2011) also found that a decrease in working memory had a strong correlation with decreased intrinsic motivation when they implemented a study across 133 high-school students between the ages
of 13 and 15. While this correlation was not found among elementary-school-aged children who took part in the same study (Mizuno et al., 2011), these findings suggest that working memory may have an indirect influence on study, which helps adolescents to succeed academically.

The adolescent studies mentioned within this section have drawn their conclusions from self-assessment questionnaires, anecdotal evidence, and minimally invasive testing such as blood samples. Furthermore, the findings of improved concentration, self-regulation, and mental illness markers as a result of mindfulness interventions support the conclusions drawn from the neurological studies conducted with adult participants (Banks et al., 2007; Hölzel et al., 2010; Hölzel et al., 2011). These neurological studies show clear evidence of neuroplasticity occurring in response to a period of mindfulness training (Luders et al., 2012).

**Potential Concerns of Modern Mindfulness Practices**

There have been some potential concerns raised regarding the implementation of mindfulness practices in schools. These concerns relate to the motivation behind its implementation, the methods of implementation and the efficacy of allowing untrained individuals to deliver the practices. Each of these concerns will be explored further below.

**The Education System**

Some researchers question whether mindfulness practices can be implemented into the current education system. Ergas (2019a) states that since the industrial revolution, the purpose of education has been to ensure conformity within society, so that the workforce that can sustain the economy. To elaborate on this, Sellman and Buttarazzi (2020, p. 66) discuss the possibility that financial elites and high performers within society regard education as key to “[educating] a workforce to the degree that it participates efficiently in such the system but does not question it”. Due to this underlying purpose of conformity, researchers cast doubt on the validity of implementing mindfulness practices into schools.
Concerns are being raised as to whether the motivation for implementing mindfulness practices within the education system has strayed from the intention of addressing student mental health to a practice that promotes even higher standards and increased conformity of students and teachers alike (Ergas, 2019b; Sellman & Buttarazzi, 2020). Furthermore, critics argue that modern mindfulness practices are being implemented into education institutions in order to improve the character traits schools both praise and demand, such as concentration and engagement, rather than student wellbeing (Crawford et al., 2020; Sellman & Buttarazzi, 2020). Institutions are further criticised for suggesting that problems exist within individuals without acknowledging that societal issues may have created the issues in the first place (Sellman & Buttarazzi, 2020). Consequently, researchers remain sceptical of the intentions and morals behind programs which include mindfulness practices.

**Method of Implementation**

There are some distinct differences between the potential methods of implementing mindfulness practices into schools. Ergas (2019b) presents the idea that mindfulness can either be implemented *in* education or *as* education. When implementing mindfulness *in* education, the practice is socialisation-oriented and used as a discrete tool. This tool promotes components of a prosocial classroom, such as improved behaviour, concentration and emotional regulation (Ergas, 2019b). This method of implementing mindfulness is employed by most school-based mindfulness programs, which have rooted their lessons in the scientific findings of intervention-style studies (Simpson, 2017). The major issue with this method is that these educational programs are following the scientific research of psychological interventions, and therefore use medical terminology such as “interventions” and “dosage” (Ergas, 2014). This is particularly concerning if schools are disregarding the need for informed consent (Burrows, 2016) and implementing mindfulness practices without the consideration of individual students. In comparison to this, mindfulness *as* education is
argued for due to its embedded approach towards the practice (Ergas, 2019b; Sellman & Buttarazzi, 2020); this includes all interactions being educational through pedagogy, such as mindful relationships and mindful discipline.

**Potential for Adverse Effects**

The literature is also clear that the implementation of mindfulness practices has the potential to cause adverse effects (Crawford et al., 2020; Farias et al., 2020; Sellman & Buttarazzi, 2020). Farias et al. (2020) supported this statement when they reported that 65% of the studies analysed in their systematic review had resulted in at least one mindfulness adverse effect (MAE). These MAEs ranged from increased stress to death, and were found to occur in both individuals with and without pre-established mental health disorders (Farias et al., 2020). Other articles also acknowledge the possibility of students experiencing some form of emotional distress as a result of mindfulness practices (Crawford et al., 2020; Sellman & Buttarazzi, 2020). Conversely, Van Gordon et al. (2017) have previously disputed the efficacy in studies reporting alarming statistics such as these on the basis that there has been insufficient research to support their claims.

In relation to the potential for students to experience adverse effects after a period of mindfulness training, Burrows (2016) conducted a small study with thirteen college students with the aim of exploring their experiences when participating in a mindful communication course. While the participants of Burrows (2016) study reported positive outcomes, she also concludes by discussing how educational institutions are likely unaware of their students’ emotional backgrounds. Burrows (2016) notes that in order to create a safe environment for students, such institutions implementing mindfulness practices need to consider whether they have adequate support in place and whether staff are sufficiently trained. Van Gordon et al. (2017) agrees with these conclusions by postulating that adverse effects are commonly
experienced as a result of instructors having a lack of understanding and poor teaching of techniques, rather than issues with the mindfulness practices themselves.

In summary, there are ample studies which have reported positive outcomes in students after a period of mindfulness training, as well as a growing body of research which questions the efficacy of implementing these practices into schools. Conversely, there is limited research regarding the attitudes of those teachers who are responsible for implementing these practices, or how these attitudes influence the potential for positive or negative student outcomes.

The Significance of Attitudes

If mindfulness is implemented in schools teacher attitudes need to be considered. Attitudes are critical because they have the potential to determine the level of teacher buy-in to a school initiative (Forgas et al., 2010; Pickens, 2005). Attitudes are difficult to define, understand and measure due to their extremely personal and sometimes irrational formations and influences (Pickens, 2005). Initial definitions and thoughts regarding the formation of attitudes have changed significantly since the early 1900s (Schwarz & Bohner, 2007).

Pickens (2005, p. 44) defines attitudes as “a mindset or a tendency to act in a particular way due to both an individual’s experience and temperament”. Malhotra (2005, p. 478) defines an attitude as “a summary evaluation of an object” and Ajzen and Fishbein (1977, p. 889) define attitudes as one’s “evaluation of the entity in question”, an entity being another person, object, behaviour or policy.

Originally, attitudes were thought to be extremely complex with their formation being influenced by many aspects, including cognition, affect, motivation and behaviour. Researchers then began to simplify the concept of an attitude to simply measuring one’s likes and dislikes in the 1950s before, once again, more recently agreeing they were indeed a complex concept (Schwarz & Bohner, 2007). Pickens (2005) posits that attitudes are
influenced by the social world and are usually formed by learning or education, modelling others such as parents, or direct experiences with people or situations. Thus, attitudes are commonly formed through association and are usually subconscious to the holder. The more involved the holder is in the formation of an attitude, the stronger and more unwavering the attitude will be; therefore, if an attitude is merely formed through association, it would be considered weaker and more malleable (Malhotra, 2005).

Attitudes are generally comprised of three constructs: an affective construct (emotions or feelings), a cognitive construct (beliefs) and a behavioural construct (connotations or actions) (Forgas et al., 2010; Pickens, 2005). Of these three constructs, affect and belief are internal, leaving only the aspect of behaviour observable by others. This effect means that simply observing one’s behaviour is insufficient when making an assumption about their attitude (Pickens, 2005). Attitudes are particularly important to this study because of the influence they have on decisions, behaviour and selective memory; they are formed over a long period of time and can only be changed by first addressing their underlying beliefs (Pickens, 2005). The following sections will explore each construct of an attitude in more detail.

The Affective Construct

Affect plays an important role in how one organises their world of social experiences and is an important measure of attitude. One can experience affect towards themselves, towards others, towards events or towards a behaviour (Forgas et al., 2010). Borg (2001) discusses how affect has a direct influence on attitudes. It is generally considered to be divided into two categories: negative affect and positive affect. Forgas et al. (2010, p. 143) state that “experiencing temporary positive or negative affect feeds into the way attitudes about the social world are formed”. He goes on to explain that affect has a strong influence
on one’s attitude; for example, experiencing feelings of positive affect towards oneself often leads to an improved attitude towards oneself (Forgas et al., 2010).

Measuring one’s affect is difficult as it is an unstable construct and may constantly change; for example, one may experience “emotional contagion”, where they merely catch an emotion being experienced by another (Malhotra, 2005), or one may acquire an affective response towards something without even knowing it (Forgas et al., 2010). While the first example of “emotional contagion” can bias one’s attitude, it is thought to be less stable due to the way it was formed (Malhotra, 2005). Despite this instability, if one’s experience of affect begins to accumulate, it may strengthen as it forms an association pattern.

Affect can also be a difficult construct of attitude as one may confuse their affect with their attitude. If directly asked to form an attitude, people often simply draw on how they feel about the concept, rather than also considering their conscious and unconscious beliefs and their behavioural response to the given concept (Schwarz & Bohner, 2007). Once this has occurred, it is difficult to change what one believes their attitude to be. This is due to the neutral or sometimes influential nature of the affective component when presented with alternatives or persuasive messaging (Forgas et al., 2010). Therefore, measuring teachers’ affect towards mindfulness practices being implemented in schools will be imperative to exploring their overall attitudes.

The Cognitive Construct (Beliefs)

Although everyone holds their own beliefs on a range of topics, it is likely that individuals are unaware of the true meaning or power of their beliefs. Borg (2001, p. 186) defines a belief as “a proposition which may be consciously or unconsciously held, is evaluative in that it is accepted as true by the individual and is therefore imbued with emotive commitment”. An important distinction to make is the difference between a belief and knowledge. While knowledge is objective, factual and must be externally verifiable, a belief
is subjective and only needs to be accepted by the individual who holds that belief (Borg, 2001; Pajares, 1992; Woolfolk Hoy et al., 2012). Many articles do not distinguish between the two constructs; however, due to the sometimes illogical and unexplainable nature of beliefs in comparison to knowledge, this study will differentiate the research conducted on the formation and changing of beliefs and knowledge.

**The Significance of Beliefs.** Beliefs are significant because they help people to determine where they belong and how they make sense of the world (Borg, 2001; Pajares, 1992; Woolfolk Hoy et al., 2012). Beliefs also play a central role in determining an individual’s emotive reaction to a particular situation, as well as the decisions a person makes (Pickens, 2005). Research has demonstrated beliefs are shaped by personal connections, schooling and formal knowledge (Woolfolk Hoy et al., 2012) and they become more ingrained the earlier they are developed (de Vries et al., 2013). The subjective value one places on the attributes of an object, combined with the strength association of the belief helps to determine how stable the belief is. For example, the more easily accessible the belief, the more stable it is likely to be (Malhotra, 2005). One’s beliefs act as a metaphorical screen that influences how one perceives and interprets new information, as well as whether one accepts the information at all (de Vries et al., 2013; Pajares, 1992; Woolfolk Hoy et al., 2012). Existing beliefs shape how new beliefs are formed and people may unconsciously alter information they are given in order to fit old beliefs (de Vries et al., 2013). In the case of mindfulness, beliefs may be formed through personal religious beliefs, previous experiences, or social connections.

**Changing Beliefs.** It is difficult to modify beliefs and adapt to new practices (Murphy & Mason, 2012; Speer, 2008), which means beliefs are generally left unchanged unless the individual determines new information to be relevant (Woolfolk Hoy et al., 2012). To understand how to change an individual’s beliefs, it is important to first understand how the
belief system operates, determine the internal criterion needed and then understand the environment required so the individual’s beliefs may be altered (de Vries et al., 2013).

The belief system refers to how beliefs are interrelated and how central they are (Pajares, 1992). The most central beliefs are those that touch one’s identity and the beliefs one shares with others (Pajares, 1992). The more central the belief, the more difficult that belief will be to alter (Woolfolk Hoy et al., 2012). It is the connection between an individual’s beliefs that determines their behaviour and values (Pajares, 1992). If a new change directly conflicts with a central belief, the change will not occur (Murphy & Mason, 2012). As an example, beliefs about the teacher’s role and the efficacy of mindfulness may be influenced by personal educational experiences.

A change in beliefs can either a small or large. For example; a small alteration in one’s beliefs may occur when an individual simply assimilates new information within existing beliefs; however, a large change may be required when the individual accommodates new information by replacing or reorganising their existing beliefs (Pajares, 1992). In order to create a large and true change in one’s beliefs, people generally have to be dissatisfied with their old beliefs and exposed to a powerful alternative (Pajares, 1992; Woolfolk Hoy et al., 2012). Even in this case, if the new belief is not consistent with the remaining beliefs within one’s belief system, they are more likely to reject the alternative than change their enduring central and interlocking beliefs (Woolfolk Hoy et al., 2012).

It is important to create the right environment when attempting to change a person’s beliefs. Change is more successful when small but meaningful practices are implemented (de Vries et al., 2013). Those attempting to bring about such change need to recognise that individuals understand new information through their own belief lenses (Speer, 2008). In addition to this, Woolfolk Hoy et al. (2012) recommend ensuring that the developmental environment is non-threatening and stimulates both affective and cognitive appraisals. They
go on to remind those wishing to alter the beliefs of others that a belief change may bring about a change in how a person understands who they are as an individual. For this reason, professional development that aims to change the beliefs of teachers should include a component that allows teachers to explore and become familiar with their identities and beliefs (Woolfolk Hoy et al., 2012).

This deeply engrained, sometimes unconscious, formation of beliefs is significant to implementing mindfulness practices in schools because teachers’ beliefs have been linked to the decisions they make and drive their practices (de Vries et al., 2013). This means that a teacher’s beliefs play a central role in how they engage in professional development and whether or not they learn from and apply it (Speer, 2008). Therefore, teachers who attend professional development in mindfulness practices may not respond positively if the development does not address individuals current beliefs.

**The Behavioural Construct**

In order to measure the behavioural construct of an attitude, their observable actions as well as their intentions and what they are willing to do must be taken into consideration (Forgas et al., 2010). Like attitudes, the attitude-behavioural relationship has been studied for a long time. Originally, behaviour and attitudes were considered to have a close relationship but were usually measured as unrelated constructs (Schwarz & Bohner, 2007). Researchers began to report that one’s attitude construct and behavioural construct often did not correlate (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977; Forgas et al., 2010; Prislin, 1987). It was later discovered that one’s behaviour is driven by their intentions or willingness to perform this behaviour (Forgas et al., 2010). The expectancy-value model shown in Figure 2 expands on this idea by postulating that one’s intention or motivation to perform a behaviour can be calculated by measuring the value they place on an object (or their expectation that their wanted outcome will be
achieved), plus the strength of the association (how much they value the outcome) (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2008).

**Figure 2**

*Expectancy-Value Model for Measuring the Behavioural Construct of Attitudes*

\[ A_B \propto \sum b_i e_i \]

Where

\[ A_B = \text{Attitude Towards Behaviour} \]

\[ b_i = \text{Strength of Belief} \]

\[ e_i = \text{Evaluation of Outcome} \]

(Ajzen & Fishbein, 2008)

It is also important to note that one’s attitude towards a behaviour and towards an object should be considered separate entities (Forgas et al., 2010). Using this study as an example, this means that a participant’s attitude towards mindfulness practices in schools (the object) could be vastly different to their attitude towards personally implementing mindfulness practices in schools (the behaviour).

**Attitudes Towards Mindfulness Practices in Secondary Schools**

There is a significant gap within the research surrounding attitudes towards wellbeing programs and mindfulness practices being implemented in secondary education. Keyword searches in the university library databases using the keywords “mindfulness”, “teachers” and “attitudes” or “perceptions” generated only six direct results, all of which were based on perceptions rather than attitudes. The previous studies conducted on teachers’ perceptions towards mindfulness programs have all been qualitative studies implemented with a majority of participants teaching in a primary school setting and, with the exception of one, all consisting of ten or fewer participants (Jean-Baptiste, 2014; Mazza Davies, 2015; Norton & Griffith, 2020; Piotrowski, 2017; Reindl et al., 2020; Wigelsworth & Quinn, 2020). Mazza
Davies (2015) conducted an exploratory study with nine primary school teachers in New Zealand in order to determine teachers’ perceptions of wellbeing in relation to mindfulness. In addition to this, both Piotrowski (2017) and Jean-Baptiste (2014) conducted interviews with four and eight participants, respectively, on their experiences implementing a mindfulness program within a primary school setting and the teachers’ perceived benefits of the specific programs. Both studies concluded that the Mindfulness-Based Programs (MBP) were useful as a teaching tool in helping to prepare students for learning. Participants of both studies also perceived the MBPs as making them more effective teachers, as well as increasing self-awareness and self-regulation within the participating students (Mazza Davies, 2015; Piotrowski, 2017). However, these studies were more focused on assessing the MBPs themselves rather than the attitudes teachers held regarding their efficacy or implementation.

More recently, Reindl et al. (2020) conducted a total of nine focus groups with the aim of exploring both elementary teachers’ and students’ perceptions of mindfulness. Altogether, 23 teachers participated in the study. As with previous research (Mazza Davies, 2015; Piotrowski, 2017), the study mainly reported teachers’ perceived benefits of mindfulness, which included an increase in cognitive function, self-esteem, confidence and emotional regulation. Reindl et al. (2020) also described reports of how time, personal beliefs and lack of communication acted as barriers to implementing mindfulness practices in schools, as well as stating that all of their participants requested additional training. In research investigating the experiences of teachers who had implemented mindfulness practices with their students, Norton and Griffith (2020) interviewed a total of eight teachers in their qualitative study. All participants were trained in the UK-based Dot B program and had delivered at least two sessions to students prior to recruitment to the study. The findings were reported within four main themes: relationships in school, delivery, work-life, and
implementation. Norton and Griffith (2020) reported teachers feeling an increase in openness and understanding towards their students and, therefore, an improvement in their relationships with students after delivering the program. Participants also explained that while the majority of students enjoyed the activities, they did experience a number of challenging behaviours and some disengagement in students. Norton and Griffith (2020) also found that participants collectively experienced an improvement in their work-life balance, with all perceiving themselves to be more effective teachers. When discussing the implementation of the Dot B program, participants found that, despite all their positive experiences, they still needed more support from management and mindfulness practices did not fit the current education system (Norton & Griffith, 2020).

Perhaps the most notable recent article that falls within the scope of the current research project is that of Wigelsworth and Quinn (2020). These researchers conducted interviews with six primary school teachers and four secondary school teachers with the aim of determining teachers’ understanding of mindfulness, their perceptions of mindfulness, as well as the perceived barriers to implementing mindfulness practices within schools. The findings indicated that teachers had a lack of understanding regarding Mindfulness-Based Interventions (MBI), which appeared to be one of the major barriers to their implementation. Other barriers which were reported were a lack of time, lack of space, religious beliefs and student engagement and behaviour (Wigelsworth & Quinn, 2020). Despite these barriers, Wigelsworth and Quinn (2020) found that participants perceived a need for MBI for both students and teachers.

In order to determine whether any previous research had been conducted specifically on attitudes towards the implementation of mindfulness programs, the search parameters were widened to include attitudes or perceptions towards mindfulness in fields of research outside of education. A limited number of articles were found, and these were mainly within
the medical field (Byron et al., 2015; Christopher et al., 2011; Duggan & Julliard, 2018; Hunter et al., 2018). In one study, Byron et al. (2015) conducted interviews with participants following an MBSR course with the aim of determining facilitators and barriers to the implementation of mindfulness practices with adolescent patients. The study listed five facilitators: staff buy-in, providing adequate time, staff knowledge, allowing staff voluntary participation, and the use of local champions. The only barrier was staff receiving adequate time (Byron et al., 2015). The remaining three results were considered irrelevant due to the focus on perceptions of personal use (Christopher et al., 2011; Duggan & Julliard, 2018; Hunter et al., 2018). Therefore, while some previous studies have explored barriers and facilitators to implementing mindfulness practices, no previous studies have addressed teachers’ attitudes like the current study.

**Theoretical Domains Framework**

One of the aims of this study was to identify the potential barriers to and facilitators of teacher buy-in to a whole-school mindfulness initiative. In order to achieve this, the researcher utilised the revised Theoretical Domains Framework (TDF-R). The TDF-R is an integrative theoretical framework originally developed by Michie et al. (2005). The original framework consisted of twelve domains, containing a total of 128 theoretical constructs (Michie et al., 2005). In an attempt to validate the TDF, the framework has since been revised with an additional two domains. The revised Theoretical Domains Framework (TDF-R) is comprised of 14 domains: *Knowledge, Skills, Social/Professional Role and Identity, Beliefs about Capabilities, Optimism, Beliefs about Consequences, Reinforcement, Intentions, Goals, Memory Attention and Decision Processes, Environmental Contexts and Resources, Social Influences, Emotions* and *Behavioural Regulation* (Cane et al., 2012). Table 1 provides a more thorough overview of the 14 TDF-R domains and their definitions.
Table 1

The Refined Theoretical Domains Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain (definition)</th>
<th>Constructs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Knowledge (An awareness of the existence of something) | Knowledge (including knowledge of condition/scientific rationale) 
Procedural knowledge 
Knowledge of task environment |
| 2. Skills (An ability or proficiency acquired through practice) | Skills 
Skills development 
Competence 
Ability 
Interpersonal skills 
Practice 
Skill assessment |
| 3. Social/Professional Role and Identity (A coherent set of behaviours and displayed personal qualities of an individual in a social or work setting) | Professional identity 
Professional role 
Social identity 
Identity 
Professional boundaries 
Professional confidence 
Group identity 
Leadership 
Organisational commitment |
| 4. Beliefs about Capabilities (Acceptance of the truth, reality, or validity about an ability, talent, or facility that a person can put to constructive use) | Self-confidence 
Perceived competence 
Self-efficacy 
Perceived behavioural control 
Beliefs Self-esteem 
Empowerment 
Professional confidence |
| 5. Optimism (The confidence that things will happen for the best or that desired goals will be attained) | Optimism 
Pessimism 
Unrealistic optimism 
Identity |
| 6. Beliefs about Consequences (Acceptance of the truth, reality, or validity about outcomes of a behaviour in a given situation) | Beliefs 
Outcome expectancies 
Characteristics of outcome expectancies 
Anticipated regret 
Consequences |
| 7. Reinforcement (Increasing the probability of a response by arranging a dependent relationship, or contingency, between the response and a given stimulus) | Rewards (proximal / distal, valued / not valued, probable / improbable) 
Incentives 
Punishment 
Consequences 
Reinforcement 
Contingencies 
Sanctions |
| 8. Intentions (A conscious decision to perform a behaviour or a resolve to act in a certain way) | Stability of intentions 
Stages of change model 
Transtheoretical model and stages of change |
| 9. Goals (Mental representations of outcomes or end states that an individual wants to achieve) | Goals (distal / proximal) 
Goal priority Goal / target setting 
Goals (autonomous / controlled) 
Action planning 
Implementation intention |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain (definition)</th>
<th>Constructs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10. Memory, Attention and Decision Processes (The ability to retain information,</td>
<td>Memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>focus selectively on aspects of the environment and choose between two or</td>
<td>Attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more alternatives)</td>
<td>Attention control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cognitive overload / tiredness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Environmental Context and Resources (Any circumstance of a person's situation</td>
<td>Environmental stressors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or environment that discourages or encourages the development of skills and</td>
<td>Resources / material resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abilities, independence, social competence, and adaptive behaviour)</td>
<td>Organisational culture /climate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Salient events / critical incidents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Person x environment interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Barriers and facilitators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Social influences (Those interpersonal processes that can cause individuals</td>
<td>Social pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to change their thoughts, feelings, or behaviours)</td>
<td>Social norms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group conformity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social comparisons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group norms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intergroup conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alienation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Modelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Emotion (A complex reaction pattern, involving experiential, behavioural,</td>
<td>Fear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and physiological elements, by which the individual attempts to deal with a</td>
<td>Anxiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>personally significant matter or event)</td>
<td>Affect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Depression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive / negative affect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Burn-out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>observed or measured actions)</td>
<td>Breaking habit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Action planning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Cane et al., 2012)

The TDF-R was designed to support the implementation of new interventions, particularly those which may require a level of behavioural change (Cane et al., 2012). More specifically, the TDF-R is a theoretical framework that can be used to identify barriers and facilitators to the implementation of new interventions (Michie et al., 2005). The TDF-R can also be used to support data analysis by utilising either an inductive or deductive approach (Cane et al., 2012).

Summary of the Literature Review

With the emphasis now being placed on adolescent wellbeing and academic success by international organisations and government bodies (Australian Government, 2017;
Department of Education, 2018b; Kristjánsson, 2012; World Health Organisation, 2003), schools are beginning to adopt wellbeing programs designed to target mental health and wellbeing within adolescents, many of which incorporate mindful strategies.

Neurological studies indicate that mindfulness has the potential to increase adolescents’ awareness (Marchand, 2014) and decrease their negative affect and reaction to stressors by strengthening their amygdala-frontal connection (Banks et al., 2007). Studies conducted within high schools have reported that mindfulness can reduce the symptoms of mental health disorders by increasing protective factors, such as resilience and compassion (Bluth et al., 2015), as well as decreasing symptomologies, such as stress (Kauts & Sharma, 2009), anxiety and depression (Sibinga et al., 2013). Improvements in adolescent cognitive functions, such as memory and concentration (Baijal et al., 2011; Bansal et al., 2013), have also been found to occur at the end of a period of mindfulness training. Therefore, adolescents may experience increased academic success from mindfulness training through the combined benefits of improved mental health and cognitive functions.

As programs are more successful when teachers feel ownership towards their implementation (Harris & Jones, 2010), the attitudes teachers hold towards mindfulness may impact the success of mindfulness programs within a school. Due to a lack of research within education, especially secondary schools, field research is required in order to help bridge the gap in research into teachers’ attitudes towards mindfulness, previous studies not reporting on this outcome.
Chapter 3 Methods

Chapter Overview

This chapter will outline the research design, including details of the philosophical approach, qualitative methodology, participant recruitment and selection, as well as data collection and analysis. In addition to this, the methods chapter will outline the steps taken to ensure qualitative rigour and all ethical considerations.

Research Aim

The primary aim of the current study was to explore teachers’ attitudes towards mindfulness practices being implemented within secondary schools. This included identifying any positive or negative factors that may influence these attitudes. In addition to this, the research aimed to investigate any potential barriers to or facilitators of achieving teacher buy-in to a whole-school mindfulness initiative.

Research Questions

1. What attitude do secondary school teachers hold towards mindfulness practices being implemented within high schools?

2. Are there any factors that positively or negatively influence teachers’ attitudes towards the implementation of mindfulness practices in schools?

3. Which of the domains within the revised Theoretical Domains Framework could be considered barriers or facilitators when implementing mindfulness practices in secondary schools?

4. Are there any underlying factors that affect participants’ willingness to buy-in to a mindfulness initiative?
Philosophical Approach

Philosophical assumptions are “beliefs and values about the nature of reality, including how one is able to gain knowledge about that reality” (Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016, p. 196), also referred to as philosophies, worldviews or paradigms (Creswell, 2008; Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016). Research projects are directed by these philosophies; in the case of constructivism, the combination of theory, perspectives and practices work together to shape and inform one another (Broido & Manning, 2002).

This research project has been conducted with a social constructivist approach. As a research theory, social constructivism has been said to include aspects of both postpositivist and interpretivist paradigms (Levers, 2013) by recognising that knowledge is subjective and, therefore, one’s knowledge cannot be defined as reality (Cobern, 1993). Social constructivism is founded on the belief that one’s external world, including experiences, history and societal influences, shapes reality (Creswell, 2008; Talja et al., 2005). A social constructivist recognises that reality, knowledge and learning are all constructed by human activity through their interactions within society and their environment (Kim, 2001). While constructionism and constructivism share many of the same assumptions as social constructivism, they differ in some of their beliefs about the origin of knowledge (Lewis-Beck et al., 2004).

Constructivism takes the position that experiences and observations shape one’s knowledge while constructionism assumes that knowledge is a product of ongoing conversations (Talja et al., 2005). Conversely, researchers who adopt this paradigm believe that individuals actively seek an understanding of the world around them and, therefore, due to differences in an individual’s experiences and societal norms, there can be numerous complex realities (Broido & Manning, 2002; Creswell, 2008). Social constructivists also recognise the importance of external variables within the research process, such as the values
of the researcher and respondent and the research site, as well as acknowledging that the relationships between the researcher and participants are interdependent and interactive (Broido & Manning, 2002; Levers, 2013).

A social constructivist approach is appropriate to the current study because while education is situated in the ‘real world’, the context behind human nature usually provides the foundation for the findings of educational research (Phillips, 2005). Educational research exists within the classroom, which is an “objective” reality, as well as being constructed by how we see the classroom, a “subjective” reality (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Levers (2013) suggests that the realist ontology of social constructivism accepts there is a real world, although individuals only access small pieces of it. Therefore, any data generated by an individual is a product of these pieces and should not be substantiated as a full illustration of reality. The philosophical assumptions of social constructivism also apply to the current research project because individual teacher’s attitudes are extremely subjective and will be an indicator of both their conscious and subconscious beliefs and experiences (de Vries et al., 2013). As research has indicated that the construct of beliefs arises as a product of personal connections, formal knowledge and schooling, it is reminiscent of the assumption that societal context plays a central role within a social constructivists research theory (Woolfolk Hoy et al., 2012).

**Qualitative Research Methods**

This research project will utilise a qualitative research approach. Plano Clark and Ivankova (2016, p. 4) define qualitative research as “a research approach that focuses on exploring individuals’ understanding of, and experiences with, a phenomenon by collecting and analysing narrative or text data expressed in words and images”. The intent of qualitative research is to understand the meaning and complexities of a phenomenon (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007), which Brinkmann and Kvale (2018) point out is fundamental in understanding
the complexities of people, their lives and experiences. The current research project was conducted through a social constructivist lens which recognises that an individual’s reality is subjective, working towards the explicit goal of exploring secondary teachers’ attitudes towards mindfulness. Percy et al. (2015) state that it is difficult to adequately understand experiences, attitudes or subjective opinions when measured via statistical analyses; thus, through a qualitative research approach, the researcher is able to develop a deeper understanding of these individuals’ attitudes.

Qualitative data was collected via semi-structured interviews comprising twenty-three questions (see Appendix A). Interview questions were devised using two separate frameworks. The first was based on the theory that attitudes are comprised of an affective construct, a cognitive construct, and a behavioural construct (Forgas et al., 2010; Pickens, 2005). This attitudinal framework was utilised in order to explore teachers’ attitudes towards mindfulness practices in schools. The second framework was the Revised Theoretical Domains Framework (TDF-R). The interview questions were written to cover all of the 14 domains of the TDF-R and then also used within the data analysis process. The use of an evidence-based behavioural change framework that has been designed to determine barriers and facilitators allowed the researcher of the current study to explore the potential barriers to and facilitators of teacher buy-in to a whole-school mindfulness initiative.

Participants

The target population for this study included secondary school teachers employed as teachers by Western Australian Department of Education metropolitan schools at the time of data collection. Purposeful sampling was used, with ten schools that either currently implemented mindfulness practices or had the intention to implement mindfulness practices being initially invited to participate (Creswell et al., 2007). Purposeful sampling is the process of refining the sample to a specific inclusion criteria (Flick, 2007). This was suitable
within the current study as the researcher aimed to interview participants who had some insight into the purpose behind, as well as how, mindfulness practices may be implemented in schools. Principals from three schools agreed for their teaching staff to be directly invited to participate in a short interview.

A total of twelve participants were interviewed from the three participating schools. Of these twelve participants, there were two males and ten females. Ensuring the inclusion of a minimum of twelve participants was purposeful due to it being the theoretical number of participants required to achieve saturation within the data (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018; Flick, 2007). The participants worked in a range of subject-specific departments, including Mathematics ($n = 3$), Science ($n = 2$), Humanities and Social Sciences ($n = 4$), Arts ($n = 1$) and English ($n = 2$). Participants were not equally distributed between the schools. Fiona, Adam, and Molly were employed at School X and had experience in implementing mindfulness practices within their classroom. School X was implementing a wellbeing program inspired by the Geelong Grammar Positive Education framework which promotes the importance of positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, accomplishment, and health (PERMAH). This program was being implemented with students in Years 7 – 10. Of the three participants interviewed from School X, none had been included in a team of teachers sent to Geelong Grammar for direct training. Disappointingly, none of the teachers who had been to Geelong Grammar volunteered to participate in an interview. Six of the participants, including Janet, Sarah, Phoebe, Danielle, Joan, and Bonnie, were employed at School Y. All six of these participants had received training on how to implement the PERMAH framework in their own lives. School Y had outlined a 3–5-year plan to allow teachers to become comfortable with the PERMAH strategies before implementing them with students. Finally, Alex, Casey and Jenny were employed at School Z. Of these three participants, only Alex had received any professional training in mindfulness. Participants
from School Z discussed future plans to implement mindfulness practices within the school and Jenny had experienced implementing mindfulness practices voluntarily.

Participants’ experience with the concept of mindfulness varied. Table 2 outlines the diversity of participants’ experience with mindfulness. The table shows that two-thirds of participants had voluntarily implemented mindfulness practices within their personal lives, five of the twelve participants had experienced implementing mindfulness practices within their classrooms, and seven of the twelve participants reported receiving some professional development in mindfulness. It is worth noting that none of the participants reported receiving any training in the delivery of mindfulness practices to students.

Table 2
Profile of Participant’s Experience of Mindfulness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Subject Areas</th>
<th>Experience with Mindfulness practices in personal life</th>
<th>Experience of Mindfulness practices in the classroom</th>
<th>Mindfulness PD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fiona</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>HASS</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Maths</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molly</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Maths</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janet</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>HASS</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phoebe</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danielle</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joan</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>Z</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>HASS</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casey</td>
<td>Z</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Maths</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny</td>
<td>Z</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>HASS</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonnie</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The inclusion of participants from a range of subject-specific departments, with a range of experiences and from different schools, allowed the researcher to further explore teachers’ attitudes as well as potential barriers to and facilitators of successfully implementing a mindfulness initiative within schools.

Procedure

Once ethics approval from Edith Cowan University Human Research Ethics Committee (2019-00330-JEFFERIES) and the Western Australian Department of Education (see Appendix B) had been obtained, the researcher contacted a total of ten schools that already, or intended to, implement mindfulness practices with students. After permission was granted to conduct research within the school site by the Principals of three of the schools, a whole-school email was sent inviting teachers within the school to participate in the study. As participants presented themselves as willing to participate in the short interview, a convenient time and venue were arranged. All twelve interviews took place on the school site within a four-week period. Appendix C provides a more detailed overview of the timeline.

Prior to the interview, participants were emailed an information letter and consent form (see Appendix D and Appendix E) pertaining to their role in the study and how the data would be used. If required, participants were also provided with a hard copy of the letter to sign before beginning the interview. All participants were explicitly asked, and granted, permission for the researcher to voice-record the interviews. They were also reminded that all data would be treated confidentially and that they may withdraw consent at any time.

Interviews lasted between 20 and 40 minutes. The voice recordings were then transcribed verbatim by the researcher and all identifying information removed. The data collection and analysis stages of this study were undertaken alongside each other, rather than through a linear process, in order to ensure that content saturation had been achieved after the twelve interviews were completed (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006).
Analysis

Two separate frameworks were utilised for the data analysis in this research project. In order to explore teachers’ attitudes towards the implementation of mindfulness practices in schools, deductive analysis was used. This involved the researcher identifying themes within each suite of questions relating to the attitudinal constructs of affect, cognition, and behaviour. Once the attitudinal constructs were explored individually, the researcher was able to further investigate how these constructs influenced participants’ attitudes.

The second framework utilised was the TDF-R, with the intention of identifying the barriers to and facilitators of teacher buy-in to a whole-school mindfulness initiative. A hybrid approach, utilising the strengths of both inductive and deductive thematic data analysis, was used with this framework. The data analysis consisted of a six-step process, summarised in Table 3. Although the interview questions (see Appendix F) were written with consideration of the TDF-R framework, the researcher acknowledged that themes that emerge from the data may have little to no relation to the question originally asked (Braun & Clarke, 2006). For this reason, analysis began using an inductive approach. Therefore, the first step in data analysis was for the researcher to familiarise herself with the content of each interview by reading and exploring the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Inductive/ deductive analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step One</td>
<td>Researcher familiarises themselves with the data</td>
<td>Inductive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step Two</td>
<td>Open coding used at a descriptive level</td>
<td>Inductive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step Three</td>
<td>Theme formation and refining</td>
<td>Inductive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step Four</td>
<td>Review themes</td>
<td>Inductive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step Five</td>
<td>Determine level of alignment between inductive themes and TDF-R domains</td>
<td>Deductive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step Six</td>
<td>Present findings in thesis</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Following this, the researcher began using open-coding and text was divided into small units and assigned descriptive labels. The data were then grouped into themes which were identified from the initial coding. As the data collection and analysis were paralleled, themes were continually refined. The fourth step, suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006), was to review the themes once all the data had been collected and analysed. This involved checking the extracts within each theme to ensure they fitted and the theme had enough supporting evidence, along with providing confirmation that the theoretical theme map represented the entirety of the data (Kiger & Varpio, 2020).

Once the themes had been finalised, the researcher used a deductive approach to determine whether the findings aligned with the domains of the TDF-R (Atkins et al., 2017). Figure 3 shows how the refined themes produced during the inductive analysis of the data aligned with the TDF-R domains. The recommendations of Braun and Clarke (2006) identify the fifth step of thematic data analysis as defining and naming the themes. As the themes identified within the first four steps of the analysis aligned with the TDF-R framework, the definition and names of the themes were taken directly from the TDF-R (Cane et al., 2012). Themes were matched with five of the 14 TDF-R categories, including Knowledge, Beliefs about Capabilities, Professional Role and Identity, Beliefs about Consequences and Organisational Contexts and Resources (Cane et al., 2012). Two of the TDF categories, Knowledge and Environmental Contexts and Resources were divided into relevant subcategories. Knowledge was split into three new domains: Situational Knowledge, Conceptual Knowledge and Knowledge Development. The Environmental Contexts and Resources category was divided into Organisational Culture and Resources.
As the TDF-R is considered a framework of behavioural change and motivation (Atkins et al., 2017), by aligning the theme which emerged during the inductive data analysis process with the TDF-R domains, the researcher was able to develop an understanding of the barriers and facilitators that may affect teacher buy-in. In addition to this, any emerging factors that may influence teacher buy-in became identifiable. The final stage within the data analyses was to report the findings in the context of the current thesis (Kiger & Varpio, 2020).

**Qualitative Rigour**

Rigour within a qualitative study demonstrates the integrity of the research (Hadi & José Closs, 2016), measured by the trustworthiness of a study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007;
While reliability and validity, which are accepted as the benchmarks of a quality quantitative research project, have standardised criteria to meet (Creswell, 2008), qualitative research is more open to variation. Hadi and José Closs (2016) posit there are three separate opinions on what constitutes quality qualitative research. The first and least popular is that which attempts to adopt positivist terminologies by relating the elements of trustworthiness to those of reliability and validity. In contrast to this, the realist view explains that the concepts of reliability and validity are inapplicable to qualitative research due to the differences in theoretical and philosophical paradigms. The third opinion is that of the interpretivist, who believes there is too much variation within the methodologies of qualitative research for a single criterion to be valid (Hadi & José Closs, 2016). Aguinaldo (2004) accepts these differences when he discusses the fact that positivism bases the quality of the research on the objectivity of the researchers, while social constructivism acknowledges that all findings are situated and partial. It is argued that the social world is only an interpretation of the individual and thus requires this interpretation (Aguinaldo, 2004). Therefore, in a quality social constructivist approach, subjectivity should not merely be acknowledged but fully embraced (Morrow, 2005).

By outlining the measures taken to ensure trustworthiness, researchers can enhance the degree of confidence the reader has in the chosen method, raw data and interpretations made during the analyses (Connelly, 2016). In contrast to the structured approach to rigour that quantitative research demands, trustworthiness is defined by “criteria that guide researchers in producing findings that can be accepted as persuasive” (Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016, p. 163). In order to ensure the trustworthiness of the current study, the researcher will examine the following four related trustworthiness concepts: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Shenton, 2004). When established within a
study, these four elements of trustworthiness are said to provide the reader with adequate information to evaluate the quality of the qualitative research (Connelly, 2016; 2010).

Hadi and José Closs (2016) outline a set of seven strategies to ensure trustworthiness, and explain how a single strategy can help to strengthen multiple trustworthiness concepts. For this reason, in addition to outlining how each concept of trustworthiness has been addressed below, Table 4 provides an overview of how each employed strategy contributes to multiple concepts.

**Table 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Concept of trustworthiness addressed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Triangulation</td>
<td>Credibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Confirmability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent Variation</td>
<td>Credibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audit Trail</td>
<td>Transferability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dependability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflexivity</td>
<td>Credibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Confirmability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Credibility*

Credibility can be thought of as the ‘truth’ in the findings of a study (Connelly, 2016) and refers to the researcher ensuring that the findings accurately convey the participants’ experiences (Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016). This idea extends to ensuring there is an “agreement between participants and the researcher” (2010, p. 1). Within the current study, credibility was addressed in several ways. The researcher worked in close contact with her supervisors to create strong investigator triangulation. All interview transcripts, data analyses and memos were shared to ensure agreement with the conclusions being drawn from the data. In addition, a summary of the findings was sent to all participants for respondent validation (Hadi & José Closs, 2016). There were several other steps taken to enhance credibility within
this study, including: ensuring each participant had adequate time to respond to interview questions; clarifying ambiguous answers; and checking the accuracy of the account by asking the participant to review their transcripts prior to analysis (Creswell, 2008; Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016; Shenton, 2004).

**Transferability**

Transferability is concerned with whether the findings are applicable in other contexts and with other people (2010). While this concept is often related to the quantitative measure of generalisability, qualitative researchers recognise that the story told by an individual is not everybody’s story (Connelly, 2016). Therefore, by providing information on the phenomenon in adequate detail, the researcher is allowing the consumer of this information to determine how applicable the findings are within other contexts (Amankwaa, 2016). Within the context of the current study, this has been achieved by ensuring a detailed audit trail was kept during data collection and analysis (see Appendix G). An audit trail provides an in-depth description of the sources and techniques of data collection and analyses, interpretations made and conclusions drawn (Hadi & José Closs, 2016).

**Dependability**

The third aspect of trustworthiness is dependability, which focuses on assessing whether the findings from a study would be consistent if the research was to be repeated (2010). As Connelly (2016) states, conditions in some qualitative studies are subject to change, making consistency more difficult in certain contexts. A solution to this is for the researcher to provide an audit trail that demonstrates the accuracy of the data and interpretations, as well as demonstrating how the findings are situated within the data (Amankwaa, 2016). It is argued that due to the strong connection between credibility and dependability, satisfying one helps to satisfy the other (Shenton, 2004).
Confirmability

Finally, confirmability assesses the extent to which the researcher’s personal biases or perspectives affect the conclusions drawn from the data (2010). Confirmability typically refers to the objectivity of the researcher. As the current study has been conducted within the guidelines of a social constructivist approach, the researcher has acknowledged the understanding that the subjectivity of the researcher may have an impact on the conclusions drawn from the data (Morrow, 2005). In order to minimise this, the researcher made every effort to ensure judgements were formed from the participants’ ideas and experiences by employing investigator triangulation throughout each stage of the investigative process. In addition to this, the researcher presented an audit trail which outlines the exact process the researcher undertook when making decisions (Shenton, 2004). Finally, all field notes and memos included an aspect of reflexivity. Reflexivity is a strategy in which an account of self-reflection and self-appraisal is included to ensure subjectivity as a researcher is documented, which can contribute to the quality of the research (Primeau, 2003).

Ethical Considerations

Ethics approval from both the Edith Cowan University Human Research Ethics Committee and the Western Australian Department of Education was granted prior to contacting any schools or participants. In accordance with the ethical guidelines outlined by both institutions, each participating school was provided with a Site manager information letter (see Appendix H) and Site manager consent form (see Appendix I) and each participant was provided with an individual participant information letter and consent form. Prior to commencing each interview, the researcher ensured the participant understood the information provided within the information letter before signing the consent form (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018; Davies & Hughes, 2014; Flick, 2007). Participants were also reminded that they could withdraw their consent at any time. During the interview, the
researcher was prepared to abandon the interview in the event a participant became upset at any stage. Additionally, if a participant had become unsettled by a particular question or set of questions, they would have been reminded that they have the right not to answer any question (Oppenheim, 2001). They were also referred to appropriate mental health services if required.

Davies and Hughes (2014) define confidentiality as “not sharing information beyond the agreed limits”. To maintain confidentiality and anonymity during the study, identifiable information was immediately removed from all documentation, including field notes and transcripts, and stored in a separate location (Flick, 2007). Only the researcher and their supervisors had access to raw data and all data were kept under lock and key in the researcher’s office.
Chapter 4 Results

Chapter Overview

The primary aim of this research project was to determine teachers’ attitudes towards mindfulness practices being implemented in secondary schools. In order to achieve this aim, the following research questions were investigated:

1. What attitude do secondary school teachers hold towards mindfulness practices being implemented within secondary schools?
2. Are there any factors that positively or negatively influence teachers’ attitudes towards the implementation of mindfulness practices in secondary schools?
3. Which of the domains within the Theoretical Domains Framework could be considered barriers or facilitators when implementing mindfulness practices in secondary schools?
4. Are there any underlying factors that affect participants’ willingness to buy-in to a mindfulness initiative?

In order to explore these research questions, the findings of this study have been organised into two sections. The aim of the first section is to explore the attitudes the participants hold towards implementing mindfulness practices in secondary schools. In order to achieve this, the researcher discusses how the findings relate to the affective, cognitive, and behavioural constructs of participants’ attitudes towards mindfulness being implemented in schools. After discussing the individual constructs of their attitudes, the researcher provides a summary of participants’ attitudes towards implementing mindfulness practices in schools.

The aim of the second section is to determine which of the TDF-R domains act as barriers to or facilitators of participants buying-in to a mindfulness initiative. This is achieved by summarising the findings within each of the relevant TDF-R domains individually and
determining whether these domains can be considered barriers or facilitators. The researcher then explores whether there were any underlying factors within the TDF-R that influenced the willingness of participants to buy-in to a mindfulness initiative.

**Section One: Participants’ Attitudes Towards Mindfulness Practices in Schools**

The primary aim of the current study was to determine teachers’ attitudes towards mindfulness practices being implemented within secondary schools. In order to achieve this aim, interview questions relating to each of the attitudinal constructs were analysed so that a collective measure of each construct could be explored. Once these constructs were explored individually, the researcher was able to discuss participants’ overall attitudes towards implementing mindfulness practices in schools. The results for the Affective, Cognitive, and Behavioural Construct are presented below.

**The Affective Construct**

Participant responses demonstrated how the affective construct of an attitude can be difficult to measure, as respondents often experienced more than one emotion towards mindfulness practices. They were directly asked three questions designed to measure their affect towards mindfulness. These questions referred to a range of emotions along the spectrum, including general feelings, concern, and hope. Overall, participants’ affect towards mindfulness practices being implemented in schools included: optimism, hope, concern, scepticism, and distrust.

Eleven of the twelve participants expressed emotions of positivity when directly asked “how do you feel about mindfulness being implemented in schools?” Of these eleven participants, Fiona, Phoebe, Alex, and Jenny expressed only positive emotions, such as optimism and hope. For example, Phoebe stated: “I'm super on board with it – like 100%”. She later went on to expand on this by saying:

*I'd hope that it would limit their stress or at least be able to manage – manage is
probably a better word – manage their stress. That they could learn some strategies to know when to acknowledge when they're starting to feel – because that was one thing I liked about mindfulness – I was at that panic level – I kind of started to actually listen to my body, notice the signs of stress before it kind of snapped.

Janet and Casey both expressed positive emotions towards implementing mindfulness practices with students; however, they also conveyed concerns over where mindfulness practices would fit within a secondary school curriculum and whether they would have enough time to personally implement the practices with their students. Similarly, both Molly and Joan’s positive feelings were accompanied by feelings of distrust towards the intentions of their school leader. In the case of Joan, the distrust she felt around the current school culture resulted in her holding somewhat negative affect towards a wellbeing program being implemented with students at all, she stated:

*I think there's a lot of things that could come out of it if it's done well. I think it's really important. I mean, I know – I'm feeling very negative about it and I think it's only because it is so damn important that if we don't do it properly and if it's done just because of a nice little stamp on the front of the brochure, that would be a real shame.*

The only participant who expressed mainly negative emotions when directly asked how they felt about mindfulness practices being implemented within schools was Adam. He was concerned over the safety of teachers being responsible for the implementation, saying: “*[Mindfulness] is a wonderful concept but it could be fraught with issues...a little bit of knowledge is a dangerous thing for some people to be trying to express, do and implement*”.

Participants only communicated feelings of hope when directly asked “what do you hope will be achieved by implementing mindfulness practice in schools?” Molly, Danielle, Alex, and Jenny all expressed hopeful feelings that mindfulness practices would improve
students’ ability to cope with daily stressors and this would eventually spread through to other aspects of their lives. When explaining these hopes, Jenny stated:

I would hope that the overall would be that students develop better, better coping strategies which would then impact their ability to think through problems and give them a calmer way to attack issues, or a calmer way to deal with issues and their ability to cope with whatever – like the school work, social issues, home life.

Other participants also expressed the hope that mindfulness practices would improve students’ independence, resulting in calmer and happier students.

The positive emotions participants expressed towards mindfulness practices in schools were intensified when participants were asked the follow-up question of “how important do you think it is to continue down the path of implementing mindfulness?” Fiona, Adam, Molly, Joan, Sarah, Phoebe, Danielle, Janet, and Alex all stated that they thought it was very important to continue implementing mindfulness in schools. Despite his often negative affect towards mindfulness in school, Adam succinctly expressed many of their thoughts when he stated that he believed it was important and then followed by saying: “I think it's incredibly important to get people to have a little bit less anxiety, have a little bit less concerned and as corny as it sounds, be a little bit content”. Danielle’s response when questioned on the importance of mindfulness in schools also intensified her feelings of hope, she said: “I think it's super important. I think it's too dangerous not to try it – if that makes sense. Like I feel like the way we're heading – like there's no way we couldn't do something like this”.

When directly asked whether they felt any concern regarding mindfulness practices being implemented in schools, participants listed some concerns. Several minor concerns listed were confidence, parental and student responses and limited time but these concerns were all mainly dismissed by the participants. An example of this was when Alex raised the
concern of parental response and said, “it might be that their parents are just not on board — they think it's worthless”; however, she then stated, “but then again nothing's going to be perfect. So some things just don't work for kids but at like least you'd be getting some people maybe practising and getting on board with it”.

The main concern that appeared to influence participants’ affect, and therefore their attitude towards mindfulness practices, was the possibility of teachers not having sufficient knowledge and experience in the delivery of mindfulness practices. Adam, Molly, Janet, Sarah, Danielle, Joan, and Bonnie directly listed student harm as a result of inadequate training as a concern when asked this question. Participants expressed worry that implementing mindfulness practices in schools could result in adverse effects for students, which will be discussed in detail in the Beliefs about Capabilities section.

In summary, participants’ affect towards mindfulness practices being implemented in schools was generally positive. When directly asked how they felt about mindfulness practices in schools, almost all of the participants first expressed positive emotions, such as optimism, before conveying negative emotions, such as distrust. Participants’ responses to the question assessing their hope were stronger and more concise than their response to the question regarding their concerns; however, participants did hold strong concerns regarding their ability to safely deliver mindfulness practices to students who may be at risk of experiencing adverse effects. These concerns appeared to have a significant influence on participants’ affect and therefore attitude towards personally implementing mindfulness practices in schools. Overall, it may be more accurate to state that participants expressed positive affect towards mindfulness practices being implemented in schools; however, they experienced more negative affect towards teachers being responsible for the implementation.
**The Cognitive Construct (Beliefs)**

Participants were asked direct questions regarding their cognitive beliefs about the efficacy of introducing mindfulness practices in schools, whether teachers should be responsible for implementing mindfulness practices, and about their capabilities. The findings and corresponding literature in regard to each of these questions will be explored individually below.

All participants’ attitudes were positively affected by their beliefs regarding the positive consequences that mindfulness practices could have if introduced into schools. As will be reported in the *Beliefs about Consequences* section, participants described the expected outcomes to be improved wellbeing and academic output, with a follow-through into improved societal markers. When discussing her beliefs regarding the consequences of introducing mindfulness to students, Alex stated: “Better engaged students, happier students, more resilient students”. Janet believed these consequences would expand to the whole school, explaining: “Well within the school I imagine that [mindfulness practices] will have an impact on the day-to-day conversations...between students and students, students and staff, staff members and other staff members, their peers and also between Admin and teachers”. Other participants, such as Janet, Phoebe and Alex, believed the consequences of implementing mindfulness practices within schools could be a driver for change within society. For example, Janet said:

*Well within the school I imagine that it will have an impact on the day-to-day conversations between students and students, students and staff, staff members and other staff members, their peers and also between Admin and teachers. So that the whole [school] community has a slightly different look and feel in their interactions because they're coming from a place that's looking for the positives rather than dwelling on the bad things that are happening. And then the same thing in the*
community – because that would affect their interactions at home, their interactions with other people and so on.

Therefore, participants’ attitudes towards mindfulness practices in schools were positively affected by their beliefs regarding the potential consequences.

Conversely, participants’ overall attitudes were negatively influenced by their beliefs about their role as a classroom teacher, and their capabilities. All participants at one point stated they believed mindfulness practices are most suited to being implemented within a pastoral-care period or within health classes. This was universal amongst participants, including Fiona, Phoebe and Jenny who were already implementing mindfulness practices voluntarily with at least one of their classes. The main driver behind this belief was the reluctance participants exhibited to personally stray outside of the professional boundaries their curriculum dictated. In addition to this, over half of the participants described a belief that they were not sufficiently trained to implement mindfulness practices in case students experienced adverse reactions to the activities.

Overall, participants believed that mindfulness practices could be used as an effective strategy to improve wellbeing outcomes for students; however, beliefs around their role as classroom teachers and their capabilities may not permit them to accept mindfulness practices to be within their everyday role. Therefore, in a similar conclusion to that of the affective construct, this study found all participants believed mindfulness practices should be introduced into schools; however, there was some hesitancy as to whether teachers should be the ones to deliver them.

**The Behavioural Construct**

Behaviour as a construct of an attitude should be measured by participants’ actions, their conation (willingness), and their intentions (Forgas et al., 2010). For the purpose of this study, actions will be considered as whether participants were currently implementing
mindfulness practices with their students. Conations and intentions will be considered as what participants indicated they were willing to implement, including whether they planned to implement mindfulness practices. Participants indicated several factors that may have a direct influence on their behaviour and these will also be explored below.

Actions. Only three of the twelve participants were consistent in the behaviour of implementing mindfulness practices with their students. When directly asked, “Is [this program] something you do consistently?” only Fiona, Phoebe and Jenny stated they were consistently implementing mindfulness practices with their students. These participants were voluntarily implementing mindfulness practices outside of a school-led initiative.

Factors such as knowledge, experience and confidence appeared to influence the behaviour of participants directly implementing mindfulness practices with their students. Participants Fiona and Phoebe held the most knowledge around mindfulness practices, whereas Jenny had employed the assistance of a knowledgeable school psychologist. Fiona spoke about the necessity of introducing mindfulness practices to students with scientific backing and demonstrated adequate knowledge of this during the interview. Phoebe did not place such an emphasis on scientific support but did speak about the Buddhist practitioners she frequently listened to. Finally, Jenny spoke of how well her students responded to the expert knowledge of the school psychologist during the first few sessions and she perceived that the success of mindfulness practices within her class could be attributed to how she and the psychologist had introduced it.

In contrast to this behaviour, Adam, and Molly, who had been instructed to implement mindfulness practices as part of their Positive Education Program, had chosen not to. Knowledge also appeared to be significant here. When asked why, Adam suggested he did not feel his content knowledge was adequate, stating: “I would like more succinct instructions... I think that that's [implementing mindfulness without training] a dangerous
thing for any school and any classroom because some people are going to think they know more than they know”. Molly explained she had ceased implementing the whole-school approach because she had not received adequate training or resources to support her. In regard to the inadequate resources, Molly said:

_They provided the resources that they wanted to do as part of the Year 8 Positive Education Program, but it felt like a really rush job. It wasn’t age appropriate. It was quite immature. A lot of the content was set for kids in primary school so Year 8s were very switched off and trying to then get them engage and even if you didn’t you’d start going ah no this is garbage._

These examples indicate that participants’ confidence in their knowledge and resources may influence their attitude by affecting their behaviour.

Another factor that affected some participants’ behaviour when implementing mindfulness practices in schools was student behaviour. Fiona, Adam, Molly and Jenny had all experienced behaviour issues when attempting to implement mindfulness activities; however, this only affected Adam and Molly’s behaviour. The main difference between their experiences was that Fiona, Phoebe and Jenny had chosen to implement the mindfulness activities, while Adam and Molly had not. Adam and Molly were required to because mindfulness practices were part of the Positive Education Program that School X was implementing during the timetabled pastoral-care period. This resulted in Adam taking a step back from the implementation – instead, having one of his students run the sessions – and Molly stopping altogether. She stated:

_They didn’t see any value in positive education. Quite a lot of the students said they’d honestly prefer to just do Maths rather than Positive Ed, which I was really surprised about because they were bottom Year 8s, so I was like – “Ok”_
Consequently, it appears that student behaviour had have a negative influence participants’ behaviour when they were not voluntarily implementing mindfulness practices.

Participants’ personal behaviours when implementing mindfulness practices may only contribute to a measure of participants’ attitudes towards mindfulness practices in general, however they may still be relevant to this discussion. Four of the participants who reported enjoying using mindfulness practices in their personal lives also stated they found it difficult to make time for the practice and were usually inconsistent. Casey provided an example of this inconsistency when he described how often he practised mindfulness: “I used to do it every morning ... like a lot of good things for me – I tend to do them in short, and then stop”. Casey went on to explain the differences he experienced on the days he practised mindfulness:

*I have more energy, I’m more alert and just have a more positive attitude towards the day. Like I’m ready to go, start you know straight away, I’m like alright let’s get to work and let’s get going. Whereas other days? [I am] kind of sluggish and don’t always really want to get to work in a hurry.*

The inconsistency participants experienced in their own lives aligned with their predictions of an inconsistent approach to mindfulness practices if they were to be introduced within schools. This extends beyond participants’ concerns about leadership being inconsistent, with three-quarters of participants predicting that their colleagues would also be inconsistent in these behaviours. For example, when asked if, as a classroom teacher, she could be consistent in implementing mindfulness practices, Alex stated: “*I think most teachers in this school would definitely give it a go and start it. It’s just continuing the momentum, I think, will become an issue*”. Consequently, participants’ predictions that a mindfulness initiative would be inconsistent appeared to negatively influence their overall attitudes towards mindfulness practices being implemented as a whole-school approach.
Willingness. Participants’ confidence in their knowledge and skill to implement mindfulness practices negatively affected their convention (willingness) to implement the practices. Janet, Sarah, Casey, Bonnie, and Joan indicated that their willingness was affected by their concern over their knowledge and training in mindfulness and how to implement the practices. In addition to this, the following example is just one quotation that demonstrates how Bonnie was a strong proponent of schools needing to adequately upskill their staff in order to encourage their behaviour to remain consistent:

I suppose, you want to get teachers from being unconsciously unskilled to consciously skilled in the use of this initiative and to set in place structures, strategies within their classrooms and within their programs to ensure that they are accounting for the needs of the students.

In some circumstances, participants’ indicated that they were willing to implement mindfulness practices, however they had no current intention to. Joan, Sarah, Danielle, Alex, and Casey indicated they were willing to implement mindfulness practices but had no intention to until certain conditions were met. For Joan, this condition was the implementation of a whole-school approach. Joan stated she had no reservations in implementing mindfulness practices and that she believed they could be beneficial for students; however, she had no current intention to implement mindfulness practices with her students. When explaining why she had no intention to start implementing the strategies she had learned during a professional learning session, Joan stated: “we haven’t actually been asked to do that”. This indicated that although Joan was willing to implement mindfulness practices if required, she had no intention to do so until a whole-school approach was established.

In contrast to this example, Fiona had been consistently implementing her own mindfulness practices; however, when asked if she implemented School X’s whole-school
approach consistently, Fiona reported: “Look. No. Not the program…. So I just continue on and do my own thing”. Therefore, the alternative actions and beliefs of Fiona and Joan indicate that a whole-school approach may not determine all teachers’ behaviours regarding the implementation of mindfulness practices. Despite these thoughts, it is relevant to reiterate that although Adam, Molly and Fiona were not actively executing the whole-school approach School X had implemented, they did state that they believed a whole-school approach was necessary for a mindfulness initiative to be effective. Consequently, while participants’ willingness and intentions to implement mindfulness practices may be closely linked, it may be necessary to measure them individually.

**Intentions.** Bonnie, Molly, Danielle, Alex, and Joan all explicitly indicated their intent would be affected by an outside factor. Joan directly stated that her intention to implement mindfulness practices in the future would be compromised if leadership did not provide adequate time for training first; she said: “I wouldn't do it. I'd tick-box it. I wouldn't refuse but what I would basically want is – right - you tell me what you want me to do and I'll do it. And it would be tick-boxing”. Danielle and Alex also stated that they intended to implement mindfulness if instructed to; however, they would be reluctant to fully commit to the initiative as they were discouraged by the behaviour of leadership and did not trust the school to maintain consistency. Bonnie and Molly revealed their behaviour was also discouraged by time limitations within the curriculum, although Bonnie added to this by stating that it would be easier to prioritise if it was written into her faculty business plan.

In summary, five of the twelve participants exhibited behaviours that were directly observable. Three of these participants were voluntarily implementing mindfulness practices in their classrooms, and two were directly disregarding the school’s wellbeing program, which included mindfulness practices, due to a lack of confidence in the quality of the resources and their content knowledge. Of the seven participants who were not implementing
mindfulness practices, six indicated they were willing and intended to implement them if they were introduced as a whole-school approach. These participants went on to describe several factors which limited their positive conations and intentions, such as beliefs, a lack of confidence due to limited knowledge and training, a distrust towards school leadership and inadequate resources. Therefore, the following factors may have a negative influence on participants’ attitudes: participants’ confidence due to a perception of inadequate training and knowledge; the lack of or inadequate whole-school approach; the perception of insufficient resources provided to support staff.

**Summary of Participants’ Attitudes Towards Mindfulness Practices in Schools.**

In order to provide an overall measure of participants’ attitudes towards mindfulness practices being implemented in schools, collective measures of their affective, cognitive, and behavioural constructs must be considered. Current literature demonstrates this is not a straightforward process of averaging the results of each construct, as both the affective and cognitive components have been known to override the other constructs for particular individuals (Forgas et al., 2010; Speer, 2008). Table 5 provides an overview of the affective, cognitive, and behavioural constructs of participants’ attitudes towards mindfulness practices being introduced in schools, as well as any factors that may have had an influence on these constructs.
Table 5

Summary of Participants’ Attitude Constructs and the Factors that may have had a Positive or Negative Influence on Each Construct

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitudes Construct</th>
<th>Positive Influence</th>
<th>Negative Influence</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affective Construct</td>
<td>Hope and optimism towards mindfulness practice improving student mental health.</td>
<td>Strong concern regarding the level of knowledge and training.</td>
<td>Participants exhibited positive emotions such as hope and optimism. The main negative emotion experienced by some participants was concern.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Construct (Beliefs)</td>
<td>Belief in mindfulness practices in schools resulting in positive consequences.</td>
<td>Belief that mindfulness practices were outside of the role of a secondary classroom teacher.</td>
<td>Participants had conflicting beliefs which draws the conclusion that they believed mindfulness practices should be in schools, however that teachers should not be delivering the practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioural Construct</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>Three out of twelve participants implemented mindfulness practices consistently. Willingness and intent to implement mindfulness practices not clear.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Generally, participants held a positive attitude towards mindfulness practices being implemented within schools; however, their attitude towards whether teachers should be the ones to implement the practices were more complicated. Their emotions were divided between the hope and optimism that they could affect real change in the mental health of students and their concern over whether their inadequate training could cause distress among students during a mindfulness exercise. Similarly, the cognitive construct of their attitude towards mindfulness practices in schools was strongly influenced by participants’ opposing beliefs. These beliefs were regarding the positive consequences of implementing mindfulness practices in schools and their beliefs around the role and capabilities of a secondary school teacher. Finally, only three of the participants were consistently implementing mindfulness
practices, with the remaining nine participants placing conditions on both their willingness and their intention to implement mindfulness practices in the future. Overall, these contradictions suggest that attitudes towards mindfulness practices in schools are currently negative.

**Section Two: TDF-R Domains as Barriers or Facilitators to Participant Buy-in**

Once the codes were generated through inductive analysis and the themes aligned with the TDF-R domains, five of the fourteen revised domains were considered to be relevant as barriers to or facilitators of participants buying-in to a whole-school approach for mindfulness within schools. Three of the relevant TDF-R domains were *Beliefs about Capabilities, Beliefs about Consequences,* and *Professional Role and Identity.* The fourth and fifth relevant categories were *Knowledge* and *Environmental Contexts and Resources*; however, during analysis, the researcher found it necessary to separate these domains. Table 6 illustrates how the categories used in the current study relate to the revised TDF-R domains. *Knowledge* was divided into *Situational Knowledge, Conceptual Knowledge* and *Knowledge Development,* while *Environmental Contexts and Resources* was organised into the subcategories *Organisational Culture* and *Resources.* These two domains were separated into subheadings due to the volume of data generated within them and the distinct relevance the data held within each subheading.
Table 6

Summary of How the TDF-R domains Relate to the Open Coded Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TDF-R domain</th>
<th>Coded Category</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Situational Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conceptual Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs about Capabilities</td>
<td>Beliefs about Capabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Role and Identity</td>
<td>Professional Role and Identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs about Consequences</td>
<td>Beliefs about Consequences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Contexts and Resources</td>
<td>Organisational Culture Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While only five of the fourteen revised TDF-R domains have been explicitly represented within the data analysis, other domains have been incorporated within these five domains. As Atkins et al. (2017) explained, the domains are interrelated and researchers are often required to make informed decisions regarding which domain is most relevant to their study. An example of this is the data incorporated within the category Beliefs about Capabilities. Participants’ beliefs about their skills were included within this category, although a lot of the data also aligned with the TDF-R domain of Skills. The choice to incorporate the data in Beliefs about Capabilities rather than Skills arose due to the subtle definitional differences Cane et al. (2012, p. 13) used when defining each domain; Skills being defined as “an ability or proficiency acquired through practice”, in comparison to Beliefs about Capabilities being defined as “acceptance of the truth, reality, or validity about an ability, talent, or facility that a person can put to constructive use”. As the current study is guided by social constructivism – in which knowledge and reality are constructed by the
individual – how participants perceived their abilities, rather than the abilities they exhibited, was determined to be more relevant (Broido & Manning, 2002).

**Situational Knowledge**

Situational knowledge was considered to be a facilitator of participants buying-in to the implementation of mindfulness in schools. Situational knowledge, similar to knowledge of task environment, refers to the knowledge one holds about a situation as it typically appears. In the current study, this included participants’ knowledge about student mental health. All participants agreed that the mental health of students was having a detrimental effect on both their education and overall wellbeing. Participants listed concerns such as low resilience and high stress, anxiety, and depression rates among teens. Over half of the participants also reported a lack of self-awareness or self-regulation as a common issue for secondary students. This was measured by participants in a range of informal ways, including observing students having panic attacks, crying, presenting to student services, and receiving official diagnoses of mental health conditions.

There was disagreement amongst participants as to whether negative mental health in teens was increasing or whether it was simply becoming more recognised. Fiona, Adam, and Molly indicated they believed that mental health was “deteriorating”; however, Adam, Molly, Sarah, Phoebe, Danielle, Casey, and Bonnie also held the view that mental health issues had not necessarily increased amongst teens – they were just more recognised and widely accepted. For example, Danielle stated “I'm not sure if it's just something that's coming to the forefront or if it's always been there and it's just because it's easier to talk about” and suggested that mental health issues were becoming more accepted and acknowledged both within schools and the wider community. Molly also offered the opinion that the increase in awareness around mental health issues may have been leaving students confused as to how to use wellbeing literacy correctly. She suggested that students too often
used the information to self-diagnose depression or anxiety, rather than acknowledging that emotions such as sadness are normal and healthy emotions.

Five participants also expressed a variety of beliefs around the possible causes of increased mental health issues amongst teens. Fiona, Janet, Phoebe, and Danielle named home life issues or “permissive parenting” as the cause, while Molly stated that she believed the increase in exposure to technology was limiting students’ ability to “switch off”. When discussing her beliefs around technology, Molly included the television shows students were exposed to, their increased screen time and prolonged bullying or social issues through social media use. Molly also discussed how she believed the issues she faced as a teenager were similar to the issues teens face today except, that with the increase in technology, the issues have grown out of proportion. She said: “[The issues students deal with are] all the same … but I guess there's no way for [teenagers] to shut that down with all of the technology that they have now, as opposed to when we were at school.”

Therefore, the anecdotal evidence of participants’ situational knowledge appeared to positively influence their buy-in to the implementation of mindfulness practices in schools. This effect is a result of participants’ knowledge of the current state of student mental health and their motivation to intervene.

Conceptual Knowledge

Participants identified conceptual knowledge as essential to implementing mindfulness practices in the classroom, meaning it had the potential to be either a barrier or facilitator. The TDF-R framework defines knowledge as “an awareness of the existence of something” (Cane et al., 2012). When using this definition in a literal sense, it appears that the participants did have a knowledge of mindfulness. This was evident from eleven of the twelve participants using commonly accepted mindfulness-related keywords, “aware” and
“presence” (Mckenzie & Hassed, 2012), when asked to describe what mindfulness means to them.

The participants did not appear to have any conceptual knowledge that there was a difference between traditional mindfulness – the Buddhist practice – and modern mindfulness practices commonly practised in Western societies. This was determined by the participants’ lack of acknowledgement of the difference between the two versions of mindfulness, as well as the examples participants provided when discussing their experiences with mindfulness practices. For example, Danielle and Jenny spoke of different software applications (apps) they had found useful, while Molly and Danielle spoke of using mindfulness practices as an intervention for diagnosed mental health issues. These references suggest more of a modern mindfulness approach, in which mindfulness practices are utilised discretely.

Furthermore, mindfulness practices were described by participants as a “tool” to be used as a discrete and informal practice or strategy. Referring to mindfulness practices as a tool is another example of modern mindfulness practices because it segregates mindfulness from one’s everyday lifestyle or mindset rather than integrating it into their way of life. Molly expanded on how she had used mindfulness practices as a personal tool:

*I think it’s a tool, if things are getting a bit much, or you know, in any situation you’re in where you need to reset and you need to be present – it’s really important to just have a method or something that you can use to get yourself back on track and carry on.*

In addition to this, Fiona discussed how she explains mindfulness activities to unreceptive students: “*Some of them think that it’s some weird religious thing. Some Eastern religion. And I’ve had to say to them, this has nothing to do with meditating, or Hare Krishna, or yoga, or anything like that*. ” This explanation used by Fiona indicates she is referring to a modern mindfulness approach, as she considers the practice of mindfulness to
be disconnected from any religious or cultural connection. Conversely, Phoebe mentioned that she listened to podcasts by Buddhist practitioners; however, she did not discuss any of the insights or refer to anything that revealed a deeper knowledge or appreciation of the origins of mindfulness practices.

Participants’ exact conceptual knowledge of modern mindfulness practices, their boundaries and the science behind them also appeared to be limited. All participants from School Y demonstrated a sound knowledge of PERMAH and often referred to it when speaking of mindfulness practices. While the PERMAH model incorporates mindfulness practices as a strategy within it, mindfulness practices are not a central component of the framework and therefore the terms cannot be used interchangeably. Bonnie provided an example of participants from School Y incorrectly using the PERMAH language interchangeably with the term mindfulness. When asked what mindfulness meant to her, she stated:

Mindfulness to me is a sense of presence, a sense of appreciation for what I have. It is spending more time acknowledging the positives around me rather than the negatives. It is ... looking at the accomplishments and I would have to say health.

Whether Bonnie was aware of it or not, her definition of mindfulness embodied the PERMAH framework almost perfectly. The PERMAH acronym stands for Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Accomplishments and Health (Geelong Grammar School, 2014). All participants from School Y consistently referred to the language of PERMAH throughout the interviews while speaking of mindfulness practices. Although this demonstrates they did not have a sound understanding of the concept of mindfulness, it does suggest they were receptive and motivated to learn new wellbeing strategies.

Of those interviewed, only Fiona expressed any knowledge of the science which underpins mindfulness practices. She stated: “mindfulness creates different neural pathways
in the brain that enable us to think from the front part of the brain rather than the amygdala and get all hot and bothered”. She was also able to use more informal “bush track” analogies (Siegel, 2010) regarding creating new habits through the myelination of different neural pathways within the brain.

The lack of scientific knowledge in most participants is noteworthy because Fiona, Adam, Molly, Janet, Phoebe, Joan, and Jenny all indicated that they believed having adequate scientific knowledge to explain the “why” behind mindfulness practices was critical to successful implementation within schools. This extended to teachers being able to scientifically explain why students should participate in mindfulness activities and how it would be beneficial; or, as Molly stated, “I think the kids having some sort of understanding of why they're doing it and why it's helpful and the science behind it”.

The contrasting experiences of Molly and Jenny highlight the need for a distinction to be drawn around how much scientific knowledge teachers require if the resources have adequate scientific backing. Molly spoke about her experience when implementing mindfulness practices, without any training, as part of a generic wellbeing package developed by the school for all students. She explained that she did not feel confident in her knowledge and ended up being discouraged as a result. She said: “We tried it last year with the Year 8s and a lot of them just thought it was a big joke and they didn’t see the benefit because they didn’t understand why they were doing it”. Molly had also explained that she did not believe the resources had been designed by someone with adequate knowledge of mindfulness science. As a result, Molly said that the students were disengaged and eventually she stopped delivering the content altogether.

This contrasted with Jenny’s experience. Jenny had a positive experience of voluntarily implementing mindfulness activities with her Year 7 class. She explained that she had been motivated to implement mindfulness practices when she was unable to curb their
behaviour using traditional behaviour management techniques. She utilised the school psychologist’s knowledge and support to introduce the activity to the students and help explain why mindfulness practices may be helpful. She shared the following insight into why she believed mindfulness practices had been so successful with her class: “It was building the purpose for why we were doing that with them beforehand”.

After taking the time to build the context of why mindfulness practices would be beneficial to her students, Jenny reported her students to be receptive and felt it had been a positive and beneficial experience. She attributed the success of introducing mindfulness practices to having the school psychologist explain to the class the scientific evidence behind mindfulness practices and the ease of using the Smiling Minds resources. Similarly, Fiona explained that she always introduces mindfulness practices to her students using a scientific-based Smiling Minds video. According to her, students are generally more receptive to the practice of mindfulness after watching the video.

To summarise the three experiences described by participants above, Molly, Jenny and Fiona, acknowledged themselves to have a limited understanding of mindfulness practices; however, Jenny and Fiona were not deterred by this due to their use of scientifically backed resources. These findings may indicate teachers do not necessarily require adequate conceptual knowledge to build a context for mindfulness practices if, instead, they have scientifically supported resources. However, the importance participants placed on having a deeper understanding of mindfulness practices, including why and how they were beneficial, does reinforce the belief that participants required more training before they would buy-in to a mindfulness initiative. This notion will be discussed further in the sections below.

Overall, while participants held a general conceptual knowledge of the practice of mindfulness and how it could be useful, only Fiona, Janet and Phoebe expressed any
indication of a more traditional version of mindfulness. This included a knowledge of how mindfulness practices could be activated in one’s mindset and lived daily, rather than simply being utilised as a strategy. The remaining nine participants had limited conceptual knowledge and explained the benefits of mindfulness practices being used only as a discrete tool or strategy to implement when necessary. Those participants who demonstrated a sound conceptual knowledge of mindfulness practices were voluntarily implementing them with their students. Other participants listed a lack of knowledge as the reason they were not, or did not feel confident in, implementing mindfulness practices with their students. In conclusion, conceptual knowledge acted as a facilitator to the buy-in of those participants who obtained it and a barrier to those participants who did not.

**Knowledge Development**

Any knowledge development that occurred for participants, whether from personal experience or professional learning, acted as a facilitator to them buying-in to a mindfulness initiative. The knowledge of participants appeared to be developed in two ways; firstly via the participants personally seeking out mindfulness practices to assist with a perceived need or secondly, through professional development provided by the participants’ schools. Half of the participants were or had been motivated to seek out and use mindfulness practices in their personal lives. This motivation to develop a personal knowledge of mindfulness stemmed from a variety of personal issues, including insomnia, depression, anxiety, physical distress, and general wellbeing coping strategies. Danielle, who described herself as having underlying mental health issues, perceived mindfulness practices as necessary for her to continue as an educational professional, declaring: “Yes, I try to use it [mindfulness] a lot because I suffer from depression and I'm medicated as well, so like, I can't manage the stress of being a classroom teacher”. Those participants who had developed their knowledge
through positive personal experiences were more willing to buy-in to a mindfulness initiative than those who had not.

There was a contrast between how the professional knowledge and professional experience of participants were established. School X required Fiona, Adam, and Molly to implement mindfulness practices with their students due to the whole-school Positive Education Program. Adam and Molly said they had received no training within this space and Fiona perceived the training she had received to be insincere, or “tongue in cheek”. So, in essence, Fiona, Adam and Molly did not necessarily receive professional development as much as ‘on the job’ professional experience.

In contrast to this, School Y had implemented mindfulness practices with Janet, Sarah, Phoebe, Danielle, Joan, and Bonnie through the professional development in the PERMAH framework. They were taught personal strategies, including mindful moments and mindfulness strategies, to implement within their own lives. School Y had outlined a 3–5 year development period. Only after the development period would teachers be required to implement the PERMAH strategies with students, which would include mindfulness practices. Therefore, while School Y had provided their teachers with some personal training, these participants had not received professional development in how to implement mindfulness practices with their students.

Finally, when asked if she had received any mindfulness training, Alex from School Z explained that she had received a short introduction to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, Emotional Learning (CASEL) framework. It is important to note here that Casey and Jenny from School Z had not been included in the CASEL training because the school had only included their student services team. While mindfulness practices and the CASEL framework complement each other, being trained in the CASEL framework does not ensure training in the delivery of mindfulness practices. This means, that although teachers are
trained in general wellbeing strategies, it is not guaranteed that they will have developed a sound knowledge of mindfulness practices.

As none of the participants reported receiving professional development in the delivery of mindfulness practices, the researcher is unable to comment on whether this would have influenced participants’ buy-in. What can be summarised is that knowledge developed through personal or professional experience appeared to have a positive influence on both participants’ confidence in their ability to implement mindfulness practices, as well as how effective they perceived the practice would be for students.

**Beliefs about Capabilities**

The Beliefs about Capabilities domain was considered to be a barrier, as the majority of participants did not perceive themselves to have the relevant skills to deliver mindfulness practices to their students. Within this domain, there is a significant amount of cross-over with the TDF-R domain Knowledge as participants believed their skills to implement mindfulness practices came from their knowledge and training.

When asked if they felt as though they had the skills to deliver mindfulness practices within their classrooms, participants gave a wide range of responses. Two of the participants who had consistently implemented mindfulness practices within their classes had no concerns. Fiona said: “You don’t really have to be able to deliver it. Smiling Minds does it for you”. Jenny held similar sentiments when she said:

*Yes. I actually think that there's enough information there and enough other resources to help us put that into part of our program. As I said, ...it doesn't have to be a big thing – it can be those little chunks of time to just put in as part of your routine in your classroom, you know, OK come in – you're all sitting in your desk – we're listening to, you know, this for 5 minutes and that's going to help us move forward and then we're moving on with our next task.*
Sarah, Danielle, Alex, and Casey expressed similar, yet more hesitant beliefs about their skills in implementing mindfulness practices. For example, Sarah stated, “I think I have enough general knowledge” when asked if she felt adequately skilled to implement mindfulness practices. However, she also stated, “I would have to go and do my homework” before she would be confident in her skills in implementing mindfulness practices with students. Sarah was not alone in this, as shown by Molly and Casey describing the study and preparation they felt would be necessary. Molly stated “I definitely feel like I'd need to go and do some work on it myself or research on it”. This indicates that half of the participants who responded positively to implementing mindfulness practices also felt a degree of discomfort. All participants stated they would feel more confident in their capabilities around exactly how and when to implement mindfulness practices with their students if they received further resources or training.

Above the need to feel skilled, participants’ predominant concerns were around teachers’ capabilities to deliver mindfulness content without causing any students further mental distress, doubting whether they were sufficiently trained to support students if they did become aggrieved. For example, Adam explained he was concerned about his own capabilities as well as his colleagues’ ability to recognise the limitations of their own capabilities:

I don’t want to have what people call “awakenings” and all of a sudden you’ve triggered something you haven’t got the ability to [deal with] and don’t recognise that you’ve done it wrong. The idea is great but I’m a little worried that, again, people think they’re smarter than they are, a lot of people think that they do things better than they do.

This was a common concern as Adam, Molly, Janet, Sarah, Danielle, Joan, and Bonnie believed that mindfulness practices fall into a specialised area of psychology. Janet
agreed with Adam’s earlier sentiment when she said she was concerned mindfulness practices may “open Pandora’s box”. Consequently, all participants except Fiona and Jenny expressed a desire for further training in the delivery of mindfulness practices. As a result of participants’ lack of knowledge and training, the results indicate participants’ beliefs about their capabilities were a barrier to implementing mindfulness in schools.

**Professional Role and Identity**

Participants all aligned their duties as a classroom teacher with their subject-specific curriculum, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL standards) and other educational guidelines. When asked how they define their role as a classroom teacher, all participants initially stated that delivery of their content-specific subject area was a priority. For example, Casey said: “So education's the number one, so my job is to teach them Maths”. All participants also went on to discuss that, after prioritising the curriculum, their role included a wide range of other duties. Alex said: “it's to deliver curriculum – that's number one, but it is also Pastoral Care”. When describing these additional duties, participants indicated that their personal priorities may conflict with their perceived duties as a curriculum teacher. This was apparent when Janet explained, “In general I think my role is to try and make sure that every student in my class achieves as best they can in terms of their academics – you know I'm a Science teacher”, but she added:

> I don’t really care if they understand lots about science – as long as they come out of school and they’re you know – well they’re still here with us and able to be a little bit resilient and take on the world. So I think it’s [mindfulness practices in schools] really important, I just don’t know how we’ll do it.

Janet’s contradictory statements regarding her priorities as a teacher were common in the twelve interviews. All participants indicated that increasing wellbeing outcomes for
students was important to them; however, they still felt the need to prioritise their traditional role as a content specialist.

Participants often described the pressures of curriculum content delivery from time restraints, increasing expectations of teachers, leadership, and the students’ parents. Adam made this clear when he described how his role as a classroom teacher meant external pressures forced him to prioritise curriculum delivery. He said: “I go ‘well it’s only Maths’ and to smile and be happy is far better but it’s not necessarily as easy to translate into your classroom because there is still the push to teach Maths”. For Molly, the pressure was a perception that a teacher’s role is constantly expanding. She stated: “But it’s the nature of teaching, there’s an ever-growing expectation of what teachers are supposed to do and how they’re supposed to fill their time in a lesson”. External pressures as to what should be included and achieved within a lesson was a factor which affected the buy-in of all participants.

Participants indicated they would be more accepting of mindfulness initiatives if they were part of their role and included in the official curriculum outlined by the School Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCSA). The desire for mindfulness practices to be included within SCSA documentation was driven by a belief that they should be compulsory or, as Fiona stated: “I think it should be mandatory. It should be part of the SCSA curriculum as far as I’m concerned”. In the case of Fiona, this statement was motivated by a strong belief that mindfulness was a “life skill”, and her belief that it should be standardised across all classes. Other participants, such as Phoebe, Danielle, and Bonnie, advocated for mindfulness to be part of the curriculum so that they would feel more comfortable implementing the practices as part of their role.

Although Phoebe and Danielle were strong proponents of mindfulness in schools, they were concerned the practices were outside of the traditional role of a classroom teacher.
Their experiences provided examples of how difficult it can be for some teachers to include a practice from outside their curriculum. Phoebe indicated this when she described why she, on some occasions, felt uncomfortable when she voluntarily implemented mindfulness practices in her classroom: “From some avenues, it’s not the traditional role of the teacher. So I think, that’s the thing, am I actually performing my duties?” Similarly, Danielle described her discomfort in introducing 10-minutes of silent-reading – an activity which could be directly linked to English – at the beginning of her classes, because she believed she would be neglecting her responsibility to spend the time during class delivering the outlined curriculum. She explained that once she perceived it aligned with the curriculum, and therefore her role as an English teacher, she became more comfortable with it. She stated:

... we ended up having to read a novel, Jasper Jones, and I was like these kids just aren't going to read it because it's huge. And these kids aren't going to read it at home so I might as well give them 10 minutes at the start of the lesson and because that was actually part of my program, I felt more comfortable with it. But mindfulness isn't part of our program. So I feel like they almost need to kind of like link it to something in the curriculum.

Both Phoebe and Danielle’s perception of their role as educators being linked to the outlined curriculum created a feeling of hesitancy towards incorporating mindfulness practices within their lessons.

Without participants directly acknowledging them, professional guidelines and educational policies had an equally strong influence on the duties they perceived to be within the role of a classroom teacher. Participants collectively cited three of the seven AITSL standards. For example, creating a safe classroom environment (Standard 4), was described as a necessary part of their role by all participants. Fiona explained:
I’m here to teach, but at the same time, I have to provide an environment where they can feel safe, where they can learn. So they have to feel safe. They have to be able to express themselves without fear of ridicule for their peers, or people making fun of them. Everyone is on the same level.

Furthermore, participants listed managing student behaviour (Standard 4.3) as another expected duty of a classroom teacher. Similarly, participants also described knowing your students through building relationships (Standard 1) to be part of their role. This included having an individual understanding of each student’s capabilities within the subject area and, as Sarah reported, “Just to ensure they get the best chance to achieve an outcome that supports them. So not necessarily achieving an ‘A’ but improving on where they were at the start of the year”. Participants described ‘knowing their students’ to extend to a knowledge of their students’ social and emotional wellbeing; or, as Molly explained, “I think a really critical part of teaching now is being able to speak into a student’s emotional welfare and mental state”.

In addition to the AITSL standards, participants described duties that aligned with the goals of the Mparntwe Declaration as part of their role. All participants portrayed an underlying sense that facilitating lifelong learning (Goal 2) was a large part of their role as a classroom teacher. Similarly, participants described facilitating the transformation of students into valuable members of society to be part of their role (part of Goal 1). Strategies participants felt necessary in facilitating this transformation included: training students in appropriate manners and respectful behaviour; problem-solving; dealing with authority figures; and accountability and responsibility.

Considering that participants listed duties outside of their curriculum to include the expectations outlined by other policies, this suggests they perceive them to be part of their role in order to meet the standards, rather than purely to support the wellbeing of their
students. Jenny indicated that mindfulness may be acceptable within a teacher’s role under these circumstances if it was utilised as a behaviour management technique rather than a wellbeing tool. As discussed under the Conceptual Knowledge heading, Jenny had only implemented mindfulness practices with her Year 7 class because the behaviour of students was affecting her ability to perform her perceived responsibilities as a teacher. Although she saw value in mindfulness practices with her Australia Tertiary Admittance Rank (ATAR) students, she was less motivated to implement it as a wellbeing strategy with this class, as she explained: “But there are times where they've been quite stressed with exams and assessment. We did talk about whether we would do one of those [mindfulness] strategies in class and they were quite open to that as well”.

Jenny’s implementation of mindfulness practices with her Year 7 students took priority because their behaviour was “off the charts”. This again suggests that teachers may be more willing to buy-in to a mindfulness initiative if it was implemented as a strategy to enhance student productivity, concentration, and academic achievement, rather than a wellbeing strategy.

In summary, participants aligned duties within their role with responsibilities outlined within official documents, such as their subject-specific curriculum and the AITSL standards. Participants expressed concerns that prioritising duties outside of this documentation, such as mindfulness practices, would be abandoning their role as a classroom teacher. Therefore, the absence of mindfulness practice from all official standards and documentation acts as a barrier to securing participant buy-in to a whole-school mindfulness initiative.

Beliefs about Consequences

The TDF-R domain Beliefs about Consequences was a facilitator to participants’ buy-in to a mindfulness initiative. This conclusion arose a result of the participants primarily expecting positive consequences from mindfulness practices being introduced within schools. When directly asked, Danielle stated: “I feel like there can only be positive consequences”,
and Joan said “It can only be positive”. Specifically, predicted positive outcomes included: positive teacher-student interactions, positive student mental health and wellbeing, improved student academic results, and improved behavioural data.

Although participants saw losing time as a concern, Fiona, Danielle, Casey, and Jenny held the belief that implementing mindfulness practices could increase productivity during class. Jenny described this as being true for her Year 7 students once she had started implementing mindfulness practices at the beginning of Monday’s period 5 class. She said: “Because then what I got out of them afterwards was a good 40-minutes’ worth of work as opposed to a [typical] Session 5 on a Monday which you’d be lucky to get 25-minutes’ worth of work normally”.

The possible negative consequences of mindfulness in schools raised by participants were all related to the reaction of students and parents. Sarah was concerned that students would use mindfulness practices as yet another work avoidance tactic; she said: “part of me questions, when you get some of those kids that go – oh I can't do work I just need to do some mindfulness activities – when really they just don't want to do work”. When describing a concern that parents may complain about schools straying from their curriculum time, Phoebe stated: “I think traditionalists will be like: ‘you're not focusing on the curriculum’. Especially with like [Online Literacy and Numeracy Assessment] OLNA and [National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy] NAPLAN being that big of a thing”. Danielle also predicted some difficulties with parents concerned over schools straying from their curriculum focus; however, after noting the issue, she immediately dismissed the consequences, stating: “If there is any backlash from parents or the wider community, I feel like that shows more a deeper problem I guess, of the fact that mental health still isn’t considered a top priority”.
In summary, participants believed that the introduction of mindfulness practices into schools would have positive consequences on the students, school, and wider community. The possible negative consequences of student and parent reactions identified by some participants did not appear to negatively affect their buy-in to a mindfulness initiative. Therefore, participants’ beliefs regarding the consequences of implementing mindfulness practices in schools acted as a facilitator of buy-in to a whole-school mindfulness initiative.

**Organisational Culture**

All participants described the organisational culture of their school to be a barrier to their buy-in to a whole-school mindfulness initiative. Participants perceived the culture of their school to be one of academic priorities. This perception caused them to question their leadership’s motivations, whether mindfulness would remain a consistent initiative, and how students and colleagues would respond to the implementation of mindfulness practices. Each of these factors will be explored in detail below.

Participants were unwilling to buy-in to a mindfulness initiative when they perceived the leadership’s motivations to be inauthentic. Five of the participants directly questioned whether the school would use a “tokenistic” or “tick-box” approach to a mindfulness initiative just to advertise its implementation. This was explained by Joan when she said:

*The very first words that I hear come into my brain is tick-box. That it’s going to be done without any depth, it’ll be done badly and it’ll just be – ‘look what we’ve done’ and it’ll be another logo they can stick on the website.*

Molly also described inauthenticity in her leadership’s messaging when she stated that although School X’s business plan listed student wellbeing as the number one priority, the speech made by the Principal at the Year 12 graduation indicated otherwise:

*Even when the Year 12s were at their Graduation Ceremony at the school, there was big talk about being successful and you know, going and doing your best and getting*
This result but there was no discussion whatsoever about the other aspects of life and what success looks like you know, in your relationships and how you treat people.

This perception of inauthentic messaging became a barrier to participants buying-in to a mindfulness initiative. The main driver behind this barrier was the participants’ beliefs that, despite the official school messaging, student academic outcomes would always be prioritised over student wellbeing.

The previous experiences of inconsistent and short-term initiatives described by participants acted as a further barrier to participants buying-in to a mindfulness initiative. Participants from all schools spoke of additional initiatives that had at one time been ‘prioritised’ and then discarded by their school. Fiona described her reluctance to believe in the authenticity of School X’s implementation of their Positive Education Program when she said:

Next flavour of the month, once the next person who is on the promotion [track] comes up and now we’re going to be doing literacy, or no, we’re going to be doing STEM. There is a very cynical view by the run of the mill teacher who is not on the promotional track that we’re just kind of used as fodder for those people who are looking to get their level 3 [promotion].

Alex expressed a similar sentiment when describing how School Z had only implemented one of a three-part professional development series for the CASEL social and emotional wellbeing program before changing their priorities. These types of examples enhanced the general feeling of distrust and apprehension towards the school culture and caused participants uncertainty when considering their own buy-in to the implementation of mindfulness practices.

Poor student behaviour also became a barrier for some participants when combined with their previous experiences of initiatives lacking longevity. As described above,
participants believed a mindfulness initiative may be abandoned quickly and therefore the
students would not have enough time to adjust to the new practices. These predictions of
student behaviour aligned with Phoebe’s experience of voluntarily implementing mindfulness
within her classes outside of a consistent whole-school approach. She told of one difficult
experience: “Yes, I’ve had a couple of angry Year 9 boys who were just like – ‘oh f- off, I’m
not doing that, don’t tell me to breathe’”. Despite this, concerns around behavioural issues
were largely dismissed by those participants who raised them under the assumption the
behavioural issues would discontinue after a period of adjustment. When directly asked
whether he believed behaviour would remain an issue if mindfulness practices were
implemented consistently, Casey said: “Not really, I think it would get better”. Therefore,
participants perceived the success of mindfulness practices to require consistent and sustained
implementation to be beneficial. This perception added to the participants’ hesitancy of buy-
in as a result of their experience of inconsistent non-academic initiatives within the current
school culture.

Participants also believed that some of their colleagues would choose not to
participate in a whole-school mindfulness initiative and would not be held accountable by the
leadership. The predicted actions of their colleagues acted as a further limitation to
participant buy-in as, once again, they believed consistency across all year levels and all
classes was key to students adjusting to mindfulness practices in schools. Therefore, the
potential lack of accountability appeared to reduce confidence in participants’ buy-in.

In summary, the participants’ perceptions of the organisational culture of their school
came a barrier to achieving buy-in. All participants feared their commitment and efforts
would be in vain if the culture of the school continued to prioritise academic outcomes. These
fears were based on participants’ past experiences and extended to a distrust in their
leadership’s motivations for implementing a mindfulness initiative and a belief that a whole-school initiative would be inconsistent and lack longevity.

**Resources**

Within the TDF-R domain of Resources, the main barriers to achieving participant buy-in was time and training. Participants explained that they perceived time to be a limitation. This was further enhanced by their perception of an overcrowded curriculum and a perceived school culture that prioritises academic achievement over student wellbeing. This was true of Alex when she spoke about the difficulties of incorporating mindfulness practices with upper-school classes. She stated: “The other pressure that comes with our Year 11 and Year 12s again is ATAR students finding time”. Jenny also shared this belief when discussing why a whole-school approach would be difficult to achieve. She said, “and time-wise and there is always such a push in schools to just – academics, academics, academics”. The perceived barrier of time required to deliver curriculum content is also linked to the discussion above concerning a culture prioritising academic results.

Participants described other required resources to be additional training, planning time and observations of mindfulness practices being successfully implemented in lessons. They perceived these resources as necessary due to their strong desire to feel skilled, which they believed would make any implementation of mindfulness practices more valuable. In addition to this, participants also believed they should have developed a personal understanding of mindfulness, as well as how to implement it within a classroom. When asked what this professional development would look like, Casey stated: “So I think probably a practitioner to come out and actually take us through it, let us experience it ourselves”. Sarah explained:

*Giving staff the [personal] skills, before [any of the] kid’s stuff, and kind of implementing those into [the staff’s personal] routines. Then [staff] will find it a lot better to manage their own lives which then I think flows into the classroom as well.*
Adam envisioned more observational training. He described a session in which a group could demonstrate how to successfully implement mindfulness practices within a classroom. Adam responded:

But even having a small group that specifically – not teachers – but a group that specifically acted out a scenario or something so that you could see how, what, where, if, when – so that you knew what and what not to say – and if it was all a little bit more prescribed would be nice.

On a physical level, participants did not perceive the need for extensive resourcing. All participants except Adam preferred the idea of a flexible embedded approach where the school provided them with video and audio resources to support them.

In summary, participants described their inadequate classroom time as well as training in mindfulness implementation as barriers to buying-in to a whole-school initiative. They placed higher value on professional development and school support than physical resources and booklets. The perception of participants was that with additional training, the issues of time and resources would lessen.

**Summary of TDF-R Domains as a Barrier or Facilitator to Participant Buy-in**

Out of the eight TDF-R domains determined to be relevant to assessing barriers to and facilitators of participant buy-in to a mindfulness initiative within secondary schools, four domains were considered to act as barriers, three as facilitators and one domain became a barrier or facilitator depending on the individual participant. Table 7 provides an overview of which domains were considered to be barriers or facilitators.
Table 7

Summary of TDF-R Domains as a Barrier to or Facilitator of Achieving Participant Buy-in to a Mindfulness Initiative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TDF-R Domain</th>
<th>Barrier or Facilitator</th>
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<td>Situational Knowledge</td>
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<td>Conceptual Knowledge</td>
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<td>Knowledge Development</td>
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<td>Beliefs about Capabilities</td>
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<td>Professional Role and Identity</td>
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<td>Beliefs about Consequences</td>
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<td>Organisational Culture</td>
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The TDF-R domains which were considered to be facilitators of participant buy-in to a mindfulness initiative were: *Situational Knowledge, Beliefs about Consequences, and Knowledge Development*. The TDF-R domain of *Situational Knowledge* outlined participants’ knowledge of student mental health concerns which appeared to have a positive influence on their buy-in. Furthermore, the positive consequences that participants believed mindfulness practices would have on student mental health and productivity also had a beneficial effect on their willingness to buy-in. Finally, the knowledge of mindfulness they had established through personal development and experience further appeared to have a positive influence on their perceived consequences of implementing mindfulness practices.

The TDF-R domain of *Conceptual Knowledge* was identified as a facilitator to achieving participant buy-in but only for those participants who had obtained it. Participants
who demonstrated a sound knowledge of mindfulness practices or mindfulness science appeared to have more confidence in implementing mindfulness practices with their students. In Section one: participants’ attitudes towards mindfulness practices, the influential effect that participants’ confidence had on their willingness to implement mindfulness practices in schools was discussed. As such, those participants who did not have a sound knowledge of mindfulness appeared to lack confidence in the implementation of mindfulness practices and, therefore, their lack of conceptual knowledge was considered a barrier.

The TDF-R domains considered to be barriers to achieving participant buy-in were: Beliefs about Capabilities, Professional Role and Identity, Organisational Culture, and Resources. It appears there were two major underlying factors which contributed to these four domains becoming barriers. The first factor was that participants had not received any professional training in the implementation of mindfulness practices with students. This absence of training resulted in participants having concerns that they did not have the knowledge or skills to safely implement mindfulness practices with students without the potential of causing further harm to students’ mental health. As such, the main resource participants listed to encourage them to implement mindfulness practices was further professional training. The second factor affecting participants’ buy-in was a perception of an educational community that only prioritised academic achievement. This was relevant to the Organisational Culture domain; however, it was also a driving influence of participants questioning whether mindfulness practices were indeed part of their role as a classroom teacher.

Summary of Findings

An exploration of participants’ attitudes found that they were outwardly positive; however, further evaluation revealed that all participants were discouraged from personally implementing mindfulness practices within a whole-school approach. The main factors which
had a positive influence on participants’ attitudes were participants’ strong beliefs, combined with feeling of hope and optimism that mindfulness had the potential to address student mental health issues and become a driver for wider change within the community. Conflicting factors were participants’ concern over causing harm to students due to teachers being inadequately skilled to implement mindfulness practices and their beliefs regarding their role as a classroom teacher.

The impact that underlying factors had on participants’ behavioural construct of their attitudes differed by individual. For example, two of the participants were unwilling to implement mindfulness practices due to the whole-school approach currently employed in the school. In contrast to this, six other participants indicated they were unwilling to implement mindfulness practices outside of a whole-school mindfulness approach. Similarly, each participant’s confidence appeared to have both a positive and negative influence on the behavioural construct of their attitudes. Those participants who showed confidence in implementing mindfulness practices were voluntarily doing so, while those who did not have confidence were less willing to implement the practices.

Five out of the original fourteen TDF-R domains were found to be relevant to participants’ attitudes towards mindfulness practices being implemented in secondary schools. Due to the large volume of data in certain domains, these five domains were expanded to the following eight categories: Situational Knowledge, Conceptual Knowledge, Knowledge Development, Beliefs about Capabilities, Professional Role and Identity, Beliefs about Consequences, Organisational Culture and Resources.

The main facilitators of achieving participant buy-in included the perceived potential that mindfulness intervention could act as a driver for change in student mental health, as well as within the context of wider societal issues. In opposition to these factors, participants were uncertain whether the school culture would allow for an authentic implementation of
mindfulness, whether personally implementing such practices was within their role as a classroom teacher, and whether they were capable of implementing such practices adequately and safely; therefore, these concerns were determined to be barriers to participants buying-in to a mindfulness initiative.
Chapter 5 Discussion

Chapter Overview

The aim of this thesis was to explore teachers’ attitudes towards implementing mindfulness practice in secondary schools. In addition to this, the researcher investigated the potential barriers to and facilitators of implementing a whole-school mindfulness initiative. This chapter will discuss the research findings in relation to the relevant literature. The discussion will follow the same format as the results chapter, with the first section discussing and comparing the research that is relevant to the teachers’ attitudinal constructs. Following this, the second section will discuss the potential barriers to and facilitators of achieving teacher buy-in to a whole-school mindfulness initiative, which were identified using the TDF-R.

Section One: Teachers’ Attitudes Towards Mindfulness Practices in Schools

Section one of the results chapter explored participants’ attitudes towards the implementation of mindfulness practices in schools and discussed the possible influencing factors on these attitudes. The results chapter outlined how each of the attitudinal constructs of affect, beliefs, and behaviour (Forgas et al., 2010; Pickens, 2005) influenced participants’ attitudes. After discussing the individual attitudinal constructs, the findings of this study could not simply identify participants’ attitudes as negative or positive; this was due to the mixed, and sometimes conflicting, emotions and beliefs participants exhibited towards mindfulness practices. When attempting to situate these findings within the literature, it became evident that the interplay between one’s affective and cognitive response could not be disregarded. The idea of a reciprocal relationship between the emotions expressed by participants and the beliefs they held towards mindfulness practices in schools is firmly grounded within the research (Pryor & Pryor, 2005; Saunders, 2013). Therefore, in addition
to discussing the individual attitudinal constructs, this section will discuss and compare the affective-cognitive association.

**Affective Construct**

Participants expressed both positive and negative affect towards mindfulness practices being implemented in schools. This included feelings of both hope and optimism that mindfulness practices would support student mental health, as well as feelings of concern in regard to their knowledge and training in mindfulness. According to Malhotra (2005), affect is often a subconscious and unstable viable, meaning that experiencing a range of emotions towards an object or experience is not uncommon. Other research suggests that experiencing a range of emotions can be a result of generalising emotions, whereby emotions are quick to be passed on to an object or event (Frijda & Mesquita, 2000). This may be relevant to the current study if participants had generalised their feelings towards mindfulness practices in schools to include those emotions elicited by associated events, such as being personally required to implement mindfulness practices without feeling knowledgeable or skilled. This would mean that, rather than participants experiencing multiple emotions regarding one event, they may have been experiencing multiple emotions concerning multiple events.

Other evidence from the literature may help to explain the assertion that the emotions participants experienced were in response to multiple associated objects or events. In one study, Clore and Gasper (2000) hypothesised that if multiple situations are categorised together, an individual may be unable to accurately allocate the affect experienced towards a single event. Consequently, participants’ positive and negative affect may need to be attributed to separate events the participants associate with the mindfulness practices being implemented in schools.

**Positive Affect.** Participants conveyed the positive emotions of hope and optimism when discussing mindfulness practices in schools. There is limited prior research that
specifically reports teachers’ positive emotions towards mindfulness practices being implemented in schools. Studies that have discussed the positive emotions experienced towards mindfulness in schools include Reindl et al. (2020), who assessed students’ emotions regarding the implementation of mindfulness practices in schools, but only addressed teachers’ cognitive appraisals of mindfulness practices. Wigelsworth and Quinn (2020) reported teachers to have an optimistic and positive attitude towards mindfulness-based interventions; however, they did not elaborate on the extent to which participants’ emotional responses influenced the conclusion of this attitude. Therefore, there is limited prior school-based research to compare with the positive emotions the participants of the current study exhibited.

With limited prior school-based research on the positive emotions experienced by teachers towards mindfulness practices in school, it is critical to draw on wider emotional research. According to the research, the emotions participants experienced were likely subjective (Berridge, 2018). Subjective emotions are said to occur when one considers a situation to be either conductive or obstructive to a goal (Frijda, 1988). These subjective emotions are usually either influenced by past feelings, hypothetical feelings or present-moment feelings (Berridge, 2018). As no participants had experience in mindfulness practices supporting students’ mental health, this suggests their positive emotions were likely hypothetical. As hypothetical emotions are often less influential on attitudes, these emotions may not have had a strong influence on participants’ overall attitudes towards mindfulness practices in schools.

**Negative Affect.** The negative affect experienced by participants appeared to be in response to the factors they perceived would inhibit the effectiveness of a mindfulness initiative. Examples of this included: participants’ feelings of distrust due to their experience of leadership being inconsistent in whole-school initiatives; and participants’ concern that
teachers are insufficiently trained to safely deliver mindfulness practices. Teachers experiencing negative emotions in regard to delivering mindfulness practices to students is also noted in other studies. One study that reported negative emotions experienced by teachers came from Norton and Griffith (2020), who discussed their participants’ concern over schools rushing into the implementation of mindfulness practices without proper consideration of teacher training. Similarly, Wigelsworth and Quinn (2020) reported that their participants felt apprehensive about being untrained in the delivery of mindfulness practices. According to the participants of the current study, their concern regarding insufficient training was caused by a belief that, without training, mindfulness practices would not have the desired influence on student mental health, or could even be detrimental to it. Therefore, the perception that mindfulness practices will be introduced into schools but may not be effective in supporting student mental health, may arouse negative affect in teachers.

The other negative emotion experienced by participants was distrust, which was aroused by participants’ past experiences of inconsistent whole-school initiatives. Participants’ distrust is a good example of how affect may accumulate and create an association pattern (Forgas et al., 2010). According to Forgas et al. (2010), such emotions may have accumulated enough for participants to create a pattern of negative affect towards all whole-school initiatives. This theory of affective accumulation may also be relevant to other negative emotions participants exhibited, such as concern that mindfulness may not fit within their curriculum. Participants described several scenarios in which initiatives were introduced, only to be abandoned when a new initiative was introduced or when it became too time-consuming to run alongside the regular curriculum. Consequently, the accumulation of negative affect may continue to challenge teachers’ attitudes towards all new whole-school initiatives, despite the reality of the initiative’s efficacy.
Cognitive Construct

The participants’ cognitive construct of their attitude revealed mixed beliefs towards mindfulness practices, with several of these beliefs being in direct conflict with one another. Participants’ beliefs regarding the potential benefits of mindfulness in schools had a positive influence, while their beliefs about their capabilities, the training they had received and their role as a classroom teacher all had negative influences.

Potential Benefits of Mindfulness Practices. Participants believed that mindfulness practices in schools had the potential to support student wellbeing, improve student academic results and create positive change within society. These results were consistent with the findings of other studies that reported how teachers believed mindfulness practices could reduce anxiety and stress (Wigelsworth & Quinn, 2020), improve resilience and self-esteem (Reindl et al., 2020; Wigelsworth & Quinn, 2020), and offer students a strategy to use throughout their lives (Norton & Griffith, 2020; Reindl et al., 2020; Wigelsworth & Quinn, 2020). These studies discussed teachers’ beliefs regarding the potential benefits of mindfulness practices in schools after their participants delivered a mindfulness program within schools for a period (Norton & Griffith, 2020; Reindl et al., 2020; Wigelsworth & Quinn, 2020). Consequently, as previous research has only included participants who had experience in implementing mindfulness practices in schools, the current study may offer a unique perspective into inexperienced teachers’ beliefs.

According to research, beliefs can be acquired in one of three ways: direct observation; acceptance of information; or inferring new beliefs from a prior belief (Pryor & Pryor, 2005). While participants of the current study did not directly discuss how their beliefs were developed, their experiences may be useful when ascertaining the source of their beliefs. The majority of participants had not experienced mindfulness practices being implemented successfully in schools, which suggests they did not develop their belief
through direct observation. Furthermore, a majority of participants discussed having either
attended professional development for personal mindfulness practices, personally researching
mindfulness through podcasts or internet searchers or implementing a mindfulness
intervention to support a personal mental illness issue. These experiences strongly suggest
that participants’ beliefs regarding the potential benefits of mindfulness practices in schools
may have been developed through either; the acceptance of information, or by inferring their
beliefs about mindfulness practices in schools from their existing beliefs about personal
mindfulness practices. Consequently, participants’ beliefs regarding the potential benefits of
mindfulness practices in schools may change as new information is presented, or if
participants have a negative or positive experience when implementing mindfulness
practices. This idea highlights the importance of the information teachers are exposed to, as
well as the importance of teachers having a positive experience with mindfulness practices, in
helping to cultivate a positive attitude towards mindfulness practices in schools.

Training. At certain points during the interview, participants raised the belief that
mindfulness practices delivered by teachers without sufficient training may be harmful to
students. This belief had a negative influence on participants’ attitudes towards personally
implementing mindfulness practices in schools, as it conflicted with their main goal to
support student mental health. There is research that suggests that the implementation of
modern mindfulness practices into schools could be harmful to student mental health
(Crawford et al., 2020; Sellman & Buttarazzi, 2020; Simpson, 2017). This research posits that
schools are not a safe environment to universally implement practices designed as clinical
interventional therapies (Simpson, 2017), especially when educators lack the relevant training
(Van Gordon et al., 2017). Therefore, providing teachers with training may contribute to
teachers holding a positive attitude towards mindfulness practices in schools as they would be
shown how to alleviate these concerns; however, in order to ensure participants do not
perceive the practices as harmful, further explanations of what would be considered as ‘adequate’ training may be required.

**Profession Role.** Participants’ beliefs regarding their role as a classroom teacher also had a negative influence on their attitudes. While participants believed schools should implement mindfulness practices to support student mental health, this did not necessarily extend to the belief that teachers should be responsible for its implementation. According to research, the majority of teachers do believe that schools should be supporting student mental health; however, they also believe a teacher’s role within interventions does not extend to the delivery of social and emotional learning (Reinke et al., 2011). Furthermore, Reinke et al. (2011) reported teachers explicitly stated they believed social and emotional learning was the responsibility of the school psychologist. Therefore, teachers may only have a positive attitude towards interventions which they perceive to align with their role in curriculum content delivery. This suggests that while teachers may support the introduction of mindfulness practices in schools, they may also resist personally implementing any initiative that conflicts with their perceived role as a curriculum specialist.

**The Affective-Cognitive Association**

Participants’ affective response, as well as their cognitive appraisal of mindfulness practices, were highly correlated and appeared to have a strong influence on their attitudes towards mindfulness practices being implemented in schools. This included participants exhibiting both correlated positive emotions and beliefs, as well as correlated negative emotions and beliefs towards mindfulness practices. According to previous research, cognitive and affective valence towards an object are often highly correlated (Lavine et al., 1998), which may be a result of the way emotions and cognitive processes are processed in the brain (Schneider et al., 2015). According to Schneider et al. (2015), examples of how similar areas within the brain are active during affective and cognitive processes include: the
amygdala, which is central to experiencing emotions and also has an impact on cognitive processes, such as attention allocation; and neural circuits required for cognition, which are also intrinsically involved when one experiences emotions. Consequently, it is common for one’s affective and cognitive responses to be correlated.

To add to the complexity of the affective-cognitive association, research suggests that either the emotional or cognitive component within an attitude can be dominant over the other (Lavine et al., 1998). Furthermore, one component is often directly derived from the other, in which case it is important to explain how these attitudinal constructs are integrated (Lavine et al., 1998). Therefore, the remainder of this section will explore how participants’ affect and beliefs may have influenced each other, as well as what effect this influence may have had on participants’ attitudes towards mindfulness practices in schools.

Cognitive Influence on Affect. The negative affect exhibited by participants appeared to be a direct result of participants’ beliefs regarding factors that may inhibit the effectiveness of mindfulness practices in schools. Examples of this included: participants experiencing distrust of their leadership team due to a belief they would be inconsistent and inauthentic in their rationale; concern, which may have stemmed from the belief that mindfulness practices could not fit into a secondary school curriculum; and further concern, which may have formed due to the belief that teachers did not have enough training or knowledge to implement mindfulness practices effectively. According to research, it is not uncommon for a belief to form the core of an emotion (Frijda & Mesquita, 2000), especially when the belief is elicited by an event the individual appraises to be real (Frijda, 1988). Furthermore, highly evaluative beliefs can result in strong feelings (Clore & Gasper, 2000), particularly when the belief has accumulated over a long period (Frijda & Mesquita, 2000). This research suggests that participants’ negative beliefs towards the implementation of mindfulness practices may strengthen or contribute to their negative affect. Therefore,
participants’ cognitive and affective attitudinal constructs may have been working in unison to have a negative influence on their attitudes towards mindfulness practices in schools.

**Affective Influence on Cognitive Appraisals.** When specifically asked what they believed the consequences of implementing mindfulness practices into school would be, participants responded with only positive beliefs. The inclusion of only positive beliefs when directly asked this question is noteworthy, as at other points during their interview participants raised the conflicting belief that mindfulness practices had the potential to cause harm if not implemented correctly. Research regarding the influence of emotions on one’s beliefs may offer an explanation for the participants developing two directly conflicting beliefs. According to Clore and Gasper (2000), the hope and optimism experienced by participants in response to mindfulness practices potentially supporting student mental health may have contributed to them only responding positively when asked what they believed the consequences of implementing mindfulness practices would be. The “information principle” suggests that emotions provide a feedback loop to the cognitive appraisal of a situation in relation to one’s goals (Clore & Gasper, 2000). They further explain this connection by stating that if one is experiencing a strong emotion towards an object, their attention is often narrowed towards information relevant to achieving the said goal (Clore & Gasper, 2000). If the information principal is accurate, participants’ attention may have been narrowed to information supporting their belief that mindfulness practices would improve student mental health. Therefore, when directly asked about their beliefs regarding the consequences of implementing mindfulness practices, participants’ cognitive appraisal of mindfulness practices in schools may have allowed them to momentarily disregard the potential for mindfulness practices to be harmful.

**Dominant Construct.** While participants’ cognitive appraisals and affective responses appeared to correlate, it is difficult to determine which attitudinal construct exerted
dominance over the other. The examples above regarding how participants’ affect may have influenced their beliefs, or conversely how their beliefs may have influenced their affect, suggest that neither of the attitudinal constructs was dominant. This being said, when including other variables, such as the limited conceptual knowledge displayed by participants, research suggests that participants’ affective responses may have been more influential on their attitude towards implementing mindfulness practices in schools (Lavine et al., 1998). According to Lavine et al. (1998), if one exhibits weak conceptual knowledge, one’s attitudes are more likely a result of emotional response to an object, rather than a more rational cognitive assessment. As participants had weak conceptual knowledge of mindfulness practices, the findings of Lavine et al. (1998) indicate that their affective attitudinal construct may have been more influential on their attitudes. The implications of this research are important to participants’ attitudes, as they imply that improving participants’ conceptual knowledge may alter their cognitive appraisal of mindfulness practices, as well as increase the level of influence their cognitive construct has on their overall attitude. Therefore, teachers who have low conceptual knowledge of mindfulness practices may also have a more negative attitude towards mindfulness practices in schools.

**Positive and Negative Attitudes.** Participants’ correlated affective and cognitive attitudinal constructs suggest they held both positive and negative attitudes towards mindfulness practices being implemented in schools. Individuals experiencing multiple attitudes towards a given object is increasingly recognised within the literature, which suggests that conflicting attitudes are comprised of equally strong positive and negative associations with the object (de Liver & Wigboldus, 2007). This research supports the conclusion that participants’ emotions and beliefs towards events merely associated with mindfulness practices in schools, such as their knowledge and training in the delivery of these practices, may have had a direct influence on their attitudes towards mindfulness practices.
Participants experiencing both negative and positive attitudes towards mindfulness practices in schools suggests that their attitudes were ambivalent (Conner & Sparks, 2002; de Liver & Wigboldus, 2007; Lavine et al., 1998; Schneider et al., 2015). Ambivalence can be described as conflicting or opposing evaluations regarding an object (Schneider et al., 2015). According to research, ambivalent attitudes are a common result when one experiences mixed emotions or conflicting cognitive appraisals (Conner & Sparks, 2002). Furthermore, research indicates that ambivalent attitudes are often unstable, meaning the attitude would be easily influenced, and less likely to be exhibited within one’s behaviour (Conner & Sparks, 2002). If this research is correct, participants experiencing ambivalent attitudes towards mindfulness practices in schools would imply that the instability of their attitude means it is more malleable and open to variation. Consequently, addressing the associated events that are causing participants’ negative affective-cognitive appraisals of mindfulness practices may result in a positive variance of participants’ attitudes.

The Behavioural Construct

Participants’ behaviours indicated that they held a negative attitude to personally implementing mindfulness practices in schools. Behaviours were measured via actions, conations, and the intention to implement mindfulness practices (Forgas et al., 2010). There are alternative views on what factors may influence the aspects of one’s behaviour; therefore, behavioural models relating to participants’ actions, conations and intentions are discussed within this section.

Personal Reason. All three participants who were implementing mindfulness practices were doing so voluntarily. Each of these participants had a reason for implementing mindfulness practices with their students, two of these stemming from a belief that mindfulness was an essential skill and the third reason being to calm a difficult class. According to Schwarz and Bohner (2007), the reason an individual engages in an activity can
change their behaviour and attitude towards it; for example, if a teacher perceives a reason for the implementation of mindfulness practices, they will be more likely to carry out this behaviour. Alternatively, if teachers are merely implementing mindfulness practices because it is part of a school initiative, without a personal reason for the implementation, their behaviour towards the initiative may not be consistent (Schwarz & Bohner, 2007). This research implies that a successful initiative may require teachers to have a personal reason if they are going to be consistent in their implementation. Furthermore, merely achieving teacher compliance in the implementation of mindfulness practices, rather than teachers developing a strong personal reason for it, may not result in a consistent mindfulness initiative.

**Whole-school Approach.** All three participants who worked within a school implementing a whole-school approach were actively disregarding or altering the mindfulness initiative. Their main reason for disregarding or altering the initiative was that they did not value the specific resources, which they felt needed adaptation to suit their students. According to research, teachers often disregard whole-school implementation of initiatives (Greenberg et al., 2005), or, when they do implement them, they are likely to adapt or modify the program (Dusenbury et al., 2005). This adaptation may become an issue to the integrity of a mindfulness initiative (Crane et al., 2012). The integrity of a program is based on two points: firstly, the competency of the implementer to carry out the lessons as they were intended; and secondly, the extent to which teachers adhere to the objectives and resources provided (Crane et al., 2012). Therefore, even if participants were implementing the whole-school initiative, their adaptation of the resources suggests they were not adhering to the program as it was designed.

According to research, teachers are more likely to adhere to a mindfulness initiative, and less likely to resist the initiative, if they feel their individual needs and interests are being
met (Greenberg et al., 2005). Achieving teacher adherence requires them to perceive the channels of communication as open, as well as an acknowledge their personal beliefs and expectations of the initiative (Greenberg et al., 2005). Research also states that schools achieving teacher adherence is important, as studies suggest that lower teacher adherence to an initiative can result in poorer outcomes (Dane & Schneider, 1998). This research is relevant as the participants from the current study did not believe their opinions were valued and questioned whether the initiative was achieving the desired outcomes. Consequently, achieving teacher compliance in the delivery of mindfulness practices may not be enough to ensure the integrity and success of a mindfulness program if a teacher’s adherence to the program is low. Furthermore, if the integrity of the program is compromised, this may result in further negative attitudes experienced by teachers if they perceive that the program is not achieving the expected outcomes.

**Cognitive Influence on Behaviour.** While all participants stated they were willing to implement mindfulness practices, only three of the twelve participants were actively implementing them with their students. This suggests an underlying element impeding their motivation to follow through with this action. According to research, underlying elements impeding participants’ motivation may be directly related to their cognitive responses to mindfulness practices being implemented in schools. The research of Ajzen and Fishbein (2008) regarding the expectancy-value model suggests that one’s cognitive assessment of the likelihood of achieving a goal, or the extent to which they value the outcome of achieving the goal, may impede their motivation to perform a given behaviour. Within the current study, it has been identified that the participants’ goal for implementing mindfulness practices was to support student wellbeing. Therefore, according to the model of Ajzen and Fishbein (1977), either participants may not have believed mindfulness practices were likely to achieve their
goal of supporting student wellbeing or they may not have valued the achievement of this goal enough to motivate their behaviour.

Participants offered some examples of beliefs that may limit their belief that mindfulness practices would be successful in supporting student wellbeing within their school, including; a lack of confidence in teacher knowledge and training, a distrust of the school leadership’s motivation to support student wellbeing, and a belief that a mindfulness initiative would be discarded before it became effective. The implications of these findings suggest that participants’ negative beliefs may have caused them to have low expectations of the effectiveness of a mindfulness initiative within the context of their school, which may have impeded their motivation to perform the required behaviour.

** Intentions.** Some participants had no intention to implement mindfulness practices unless specifically told to do so. Research states that intentions to perform a task are based on the combination of two factors: one’s attitude towards the behaviour and subjective norms (Pryor & Pryor, 2005). Within this theory, subjective norms are based on whether those who are perceived to be important would approve of the task (Pryor & Pryor, 2005). In the case of a school, the participants’ subjective norms would likely comprise the views of the school leadership team, colleagues, students, and the students’ parents. This intention model suggests that participants’ intentions may have been limited by both their negative attitudes towards personally implementing mindfulness practices and the prediction that mindfulness practices would receive resistance from their colleagues, students, and some students’ parents. By instructing participants to implement mindfulness practices, only a small aspect of this intention model would be changed. Consequently, directly being instructed to implement mindfulness practices by leadership may not be enough to overcome the factors that have negatively influenced their attitude towards mindfulness practices in schools and how they perceive their subjective norms.
**Personal Behaviours.** Participants described their personal behaviour towards mindfulness practices as inconsistent, despite reporting improvements in their mental health, relationships, concentration, and energy. Inconsistent personal behaviours are not uncommon when attempting to change habits, with research suggesting one must work through five stages of change and maintain such change for six months before the behaviour becomes a habit (Raihan & Cogburn, 2020). Furthermore, the path through these five stages of behaviour change is not always linear, with relapses being common (Raihan & Cogburn, 2020). According to some theories, participants’ inconsistent behaviours may have contributed to their positive experiences with mindfulness practices. Some researchers posit that inconsistent mindfulness habits may actually be more beneficial than the implementation of monotonic mindfulness practices (Britton, 2019). This research suggests that the benefits of mindfulness practices are not linear, but follow an inverted U-shape, in which exercises which are beneficial may become negative to an individual who practices mindfulness too often (Britton, 2019). Therefore, it may be a common occurrence for individuals to have a positive experience when they incorporate mindfulness practices within their lives, even when their behaviour is inconsistent.

The personal experience of participants discussed above mirror their predictions that mindfulness practices would be beneficial to students but would also be employed within schools inconsistently. According to research, the outcomes participants predict may have a direct relationship with their personal experiences of mindfulness practices being inconsistent but beneficial (Clore & Gasper, 2000). The direct relationship between participants’ experiences and their predictions occurs through participants acquiring an experiential knowledge (knowledge developed through firsthand experience) which has a strong influence on one’s beliefs (Clore & Gasper, 2000). Other research also supports the notion of this relationship by suggesting that experience alone can be a predictor of belief change within
teachers (Fives et al., 2015). This relationship may have been evident in other research that stated how teachers who had a positive personal experience with mindfulness initiatives became the strongest advocates for their implementation in schools (Hudson et al., 2020). Therefore, teachers’ personal experiences with mindfulness practices may have a direct influence on their beliefs regarding how successful mindfulness practices will be in schools. Consequently, personal experiences may need to be addressed in order to change their attitudes towards mindfulness initiatives.

Section Two: TDF-R Domains as Barriers or Facilitators to Participant Buy-in

The findings of this study determined five of the fourteen TDF-R domains to be barriers to or facilitators of implementing mindfulness practices in schools. Due to the amount of data generated within two of the domains, the researcher separated these domains into their relevant subcategories. As a result, a total of eight categories were reported as either a barrier or facilitator regarding the achievement of participant buy-in to a mindfulness initiative. These eight categories were: Situational Knowledge, Conceptual Knowledge, Knowledge Development, Beliefs about Capabilities, Professional Role and Identity, Beliefs about Consequences, Organisational Culture and Resources. Section two of this discussion will follow the same format as section two of the results chapter, with the relevant literature within each of the eight categories being discussed and compared.

Situational Knowledge

Participants’ knowledge of student mental health had a positive influence on their buy-in to a mindfulness initiative. Participants explained that their knowledge of student mental health had developed through observations of student behaviour, as well as students confiding their mental health concerns to them. Teacher observations of student mental health issues were discussed by Dusenbury et al. (2005), who reported that 75% of teachers who participated in their study also reported having observed at least one student who was
experiencing mental health issues in the past year. As knowledge developed through personal observation can be considered experiential and has a strong influence on one’s emotions and beliefs (Clore & Gasper, 2000), participants’ knowledge of student mental health may have a stronger influence on their buy-in than knowledge developed in other ways.

Participants did not have conclusive knowledge of what was causing student mental health issues. When directly asked what the cause could be, participants were unsure but discussed how the effects of permissive parenting and increased technology use may contribute to student mental illness. Despite participants lacking a definitive answer to the cause of student mental illness, researchers have found evidence there is a correlation between mental illness and the categories cited by participants. This includes studies finding an association between permissive parenting and increased levels of stress (Barton & Hirsch, 2016), poor mental health (Barton & Hirsch, 2016) and increased levels of anxiety (Sahithya & Raman, 2021). Furthermore, research has also linked student mental illness to increased technology and social media use (Twenge, 2013). Therefore, although participants’ knowledge regarding the cause of student mental health was purely anecdotal, it may have been accurate. Moreover, participants’ anecdotal knowledge did not appear to negatively influence their buy-in to a mindfulness initiative; however, participants’ desire to support student mental health may mean stronger situational knowledge could increase their confidence and therefore their buy-in.

Participants also discussed the number of students presenting as anxious or stressed as a result of academic-related pressure. This was mainly in reference to senior school students; however, participants also stated it was evident in all year groups. According to youth, their top two stressors are: dealing with stress and school- or study-related issues (Mission Australia, 2020). These results imply that it may be the education system itself which is contributing to student mental illness. This conclusion is also evident within research that
suggests self-reflective mindfulness practices should not be introduced into schools when schooling itself may be contributing to student mental illness (Forbes, 2016). Therefore, within a system that is unchangeable to the individual teacher, there is a debate as to whether it is ethical for teachers to support student mental health by using mindfulness strategies to cope with the stress of their environment (Sellman & Buttaruzzi, 2020). While participants did not expand their discussion to the depth of this debate, they did suggest that they were unsure how to incorporate mindfulness practices to support student wellbeing under the current culture of education. These conclusions imply that the efficacy of mindfulness practices being introduced into schools may be reduced or entirely diminished due to the current system, and that true change may not occur until the education system acknowledges and addresses how it may be contributing to student mental illness.

**Conceptual Knowledge**

Participants’ conceptual knowledge became a barrier for those participants who did not perceive their knowledge of mindfulness to be adequate. This was due to the influence knowledge had on their confidence in their own skills and capabilities, including: their ability to explain the scientific rationale of mindfulness practices to students and their ability to effectively deliver the practices. According to Greenberg et al. (2005), implementers of mindfulness practices should be both knowledgeable and confident in their skills to implement practices. They explain that implementer knowledge should include a theoretical basis for the initiative, as well as practical knowledge of implementation (Greenberg et al., 2005). These recommendations align with the knowledge participants identified they were lacking and implies that providing educators with adequate knowledge-based professional development may have a two-fold positive influence on their buy-in. Firstly, participants may consider themselves sufficiently knowledgeable; and secondly, participants’ confidence in their skills and capabilities may improve.
Traditional vs. Modern Mindfulness Knowledge. Participants exhibited some conceptual knowledge of modern mindfulness practices; however, collectively they did not demonstrate good knowledge of traditional mindfulness practices. This was evident by only one participant acknowledging the link between mindfulness and Buddhism, while another expressly dismissed any relationship between mindfulness practices and Eastern religions and the remaining participants did not acknowledge the origins of mindfulness practices at all. According to research, it is not surprising that participants’ conceptual knowledge was limited to that of modern mindfulness practices (Ditrich, 2016; Min & Lynn, 2020). While modern mindfulness practices are said to be based on the Buddhist practice, much of the foundational meaning was altered when the philosophy became amalgamated with European science (Ditrich, 2016). Therefore, much of the information widely accepted within Western society is limited to that of modern mindfulness (Min & Lynn, 2020).

Teachers should also develop knowledge of both modern and traditional mindfulness practices due to the large disparities between the two versions. Traditional mindfulness practices are described as contemplative practices that recognise that mindfulness is just one element of a larger worldview (Ditrich, 2016). Within these traditional versions of mindfulness, suffering is not claimed to be eliminated by focusing on the self alone, but forms part of a personal journey of self-discovery (Ditrich, 2016). In comparison to this, researchers have described modern mindfulness practices to be those which have been willingly severed from their traditional origins (Sellman & Buttarazzi, 2020). It is asserted that modern mindfulness practices have been developed into a secular practice used within therapeutic clinical settings, which focus mainly on one’s self and use terms such as ‘dosage’ and ‘intervention’ when describing their application (Ergas, 2019b). The formal terms of ‘dosage’ and ‘interventions’ may be relevant within the scientific models of clinical
mindfulness therapies; however, researchers question the efficacy of universally implementing such practices in schools.

School-based mindfulness programs generally follow a modern mindfulness approach. This is noteworthy, as knowledge of traditional mindfulness may have offered participants more perspective into how mindfulness practices could become an embedded approach within schools. This approach would allow a teacher’s everyday practices to model a version of mindfulness that also account for the importance of other behavioural descriptions, such as intentions and actions (Ergas, 2019b; Monteiro et al., 2015).

Furthermore, a knowledge of traditional mindfulness would help participants to recognise that mindfulness does have the potential to be practised in the ‘wrong’ way (Monteiro et al., 2015). Therefore, limiting one’s knowledge to that of secular modern mindfulness practices may restrict implementation to a more discrete nature, in which "mindfulness exercises" are delivered to students alongside their regular curriculum (Ergas, 2019b). These differences in the implementation of mindfulness practices may offer a solution to several perceived barriers raised by participants, including the belief that mindfulness practices could not fit alongside the regular curriculum. Similarly, mindfulness practices implemented as a traditional, teacher-centred approach, may resolve participants’ concern that all mindfulness practices align only with the role of a psychologist. Participants’ conceptual knowledge of mindfulness practices being limited to that of modern mindfulness may have restricted participants from developing a full knowledge of how mindfulness practices could be implemented as a holistic, embedded approach and, consequently, may have hindered them from completely buying-in to an initiative.

Participants’ limited conceptual knowledge implied they considered all mindfulness practices to be the same. According to Van Dam et al. (2018), mindfulness has become an umbrella term for a large range of practices and, therefore, one cannot make assumptions
about another individual’s intended meaning when using the term. They suggest that the single term of mindfulness should not be used to denote all the practices being used within clinical settings, military training, commercial boardrooms and education institutions (Van Dam et al., 2018). The assertion that the term mindfulness needs to be differentiated aligns with participants’ concerns that implementing mindfulness practices may be outside of a classroom teacher’s capabilities. With a strong conceptual knowledge of how mindfulness practices can be differentiated from those applied within clinical settings, participants may have been more confident in their ability to learn and implement particular mindfulness practices within classrooms. This implies that participants’ limited knowledge of mindfulness may not have allowed them to personally determine whether specific practices are appropriate to be delivered in school settings and by teachers, which may have led them to question the implementation of all mindfulness practices into schools.

Participants referred to modern mindfulness programs which included both mental health interventions, such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, as well as educational programs that include mindfulness, such as Positive Education and CASEL. Researchers raise concerns around school programs such as these due to their foundation in clinical mental health interventions (Simpson, 2017). The use of modern mindfulness as a clinical mental health intervention has been referred to by some as ‘medicalised mindfulness’ (Farias et al., 2020). The term medicalised mindfulness describes those secular versions of mindfulness that have been severed from their origins and are now implemented as a clinical intervention with the objective of treating mental illnesses (Farias et al., 2020). The use of medicalised mindfulness practices may negate the importance of mindfulness practices being part of an integrated mindset and instead focus on the ‘dosage’ required to achieve a particular outcome (Ergas, 2014). While educational mindfulness programs may not be considered ‘medicalised’, they often follow a modern mindfulness approach and are developed using the scientific research
supporting therapeutic mindfulness interventions (Simpson, 2017). Consequently, researchers posit that implementing any program designed after a mental health intervention may be inappropriate to be introduced into education on a universal scale (Crawford et al., 2020; Sellman & Buttarazzi, 2020).

While participants did not directly cite any knowledge or concerns regarding mindfulness in schools being associated with ‘medicalised mindfulness’, some participants did question the integrity of the programs. There is evidence within the literature that suggests the mindfulness programs available to schools lack integrity (Crane et al., 2017; Emerson et al., 2020; Greenberg et al., 2005). This lack of integrity was reported due to the conclusion that most school mindfulness programs only acknowledge modern mindfulness practices by: firstly, not adequately presenting the theoretical context for mindfulness practices; and secondly, only a small minority of programs acknowledge the foundations of mindfulness practices as contemplative theory (Emerson et al., 2020). Furthermore, Emerson et al. (2020) reported that mindfulness programs rarely incorporate the recommended inclusion of all three formal practices (sitting, body scan, and movement), an inquiry process and at-home practise (Crane et al., 2017). While participants did not appear to have conceptual knowledge of traditional versions of mindfulness practices, they were still able to identify their mindfulness programs as lacking an integral basis. This suggests that even without a sound conceptual knowledge of mindfulness practices, teachers’ buy-in may be negatively affected by modern mindfulness practices which lack foundational integrity.

Modern Mindfulness Practices. While participants seemed to have good conceptual knowledge of modern mindfulness practices, this knowledge was still superficial and lacked defining boundaries. Examples of this were participants’ mindfulness vocabulary being limited to popular mindfulness terminology, such as ‘awareness’, as well as using the term mindfulness interchangeably with other wellbeing concepts, such as Positive Education.
According to some researchers, a superficial knowledge of mindfulness practices may be a result of its sudden increase in popularity in ‘Western style’ modern mindfulness practices (Nehring & Frawley, 2020b). This popularisation of modern mindfulness in Western society has prompted researchers to label it as a ‘fad’ and question the efficacy of its sharp spike in interest in recent years (Nehring & Frawley, 2020a). The increased interest in modern mindfulness practices has resulted in more information being presented by the media and a booming commercial industry (Min & Lynn, 2020; Nehring & Frawley, 2020a). Some researchers raise concerns that media and commercial industries often over-exaggerate the potential benefits of mindfulness practices (Van Dam et al., 2018); therefore, as with an influx of information regarding any topic, it is difficult to ascertain the depth and accuracy of information being absorbed by individuals (Nehring & Frawley, 2020b). Consequently, the researcher cannot exclude the possibility that participants’ superficial knowledge of modern mindfulness practices is a result of media and commercial advertising. Furthermore, research regarding the popularisation and commercialisation of modern mindfulness practices within Western society may explain participants’ knowledge being limited to that of modern mindfulness practices. This implies that in order to achieve a standard of mindfulness knowledge across education, theoretical professional training in mindfulness practices, including information on both modern and traditional mindfulness, may be required (Emerson et al., 2020; Greenberg et al., 2005).

Conversely, the lack of defining boundaries used by participants may have been a direct result of the professional development on personal wellbeing they had received. Half of the participants had received professional development in a Positive Education program which included mindfulness practices. These participants often defined mindfulness interchangeably with terms that are concurrent with the Positive Education training they had received (Geelong Grammar School, 2014). This suggests that receiving training in wider
wellbeing programs will not necessarily result in adequate knowledge acquisition of mindfulness practices (Emerson et al., 2020). Therefore, mindfulness-specific professional training, rather than mindfulness training within a wider wellbeing program, may be essential to provide participants with the conceptual knowledge required to achieve buy-in to a school-based mindfulness initiative.

**Mindfulness Practices in Schools.** As with participants’ general conceptual knowledge of mindfulness practices, their conceptual knowledge of how mindfulness practices would be implemented in schools was also limited. Participants often contradicted themselves, firstly advocating for an embedded, whole-school approach, then stating that mindfulness practices should be situated within pastoral care or health curricula. Researchers and program designers offer different models of how mindfulness practices can be implemented in schools. One option is to purchase a pre-packaged wellbeing program (Mindful Meditation Australia, 2017; The Resilience Project, 2011); although, as already discussed, pre-packaged mindfulness programs often lack integrity (Emerson et al., 2020). Further problems with implementing pre-packaged wellbeing programs are that they do not differentiate according to student context or account for teachers’ beliefs, knowledge or experience (Lawlor, 2014). Despite these concerns, the pre-packaged mindfulness programs do offer an example of how modern mindfulness practices are being utilised within schools, although this approach may not be preferable. Pre-packaged modern mindfulness programs are also often employed more discretely than as embedded approaches, and as a result have been referred to as ‘mindfulness in education’ (Ergas, 2019b).

An alternative method of implementing mindfulness in schools is as a more traditional embedded approach in which the practices are utilised as a philosophy. According to Ergas (2019b), in order to authentically embed mindfulness practices into education, the mantra of ‘mindfulness as education’ needs to be adopted. To achieve this, all aspects of a teacher’s
role become opportunities to embed mindful lessons, including behaviour management and social engagement (Sellman & Buttarazzi, 2020). This more traditional approach also takes the focus of mindfulness practices away from purely self-reflective breathing techniques and would require teachers and students to be mindful in their day-to-day lives.

The traditional embedded approach to mindfulness appeared to be what participants were advocating for when they discussed how mindfulness practices in schools had the potential to improve wellbeing and change interactions within schools. Despite this, with the limited professional training provided by schools, participants did not appear to have any philosophical knowledge of mindfulness and thus, when this occurs, the implementation of mindfulness may be limited to ‘in education’. Therefore, while participants contradicted themselves regarding their beliefs around how mindfulness practices in schools should be implemented, this could have been due to their limited conceptual knowledge of mindfulness. This result further suggests that participants may be more likely to buy-in to a mindfulness initiative if they had sufficient conceptual knowledge of how mindfulness practices could be implemented in schools, including a more traditional embedded approach to mindfulness practices.

**Knowledge Development**

Those participants who developed both propositional and experiential personal knowledge of mindfulness appeared more likely to buy-in to a mindfulness initiative than those who developed only propositional or only experiential knowledge. As discussed previously, experiential knowledge is when one develops their knowledge through personal experience while propositional knowledge is when one develops their knowledge indirectly, for example from information presented at a professional development session (Clore & Gasper, 2000). Half of the current participants had developed propositional knowledge through professional development in the personal implementation of mindfulness practices.
Of these participants, those who also activated the propositional knowledge they had gained to develop personal mindfulness practices (experiential knowledge), appeared to be more likely to buy-in than those who did not activate this knowledge. Of the participants who had not received professional development (propositional knowledge) but had implemented mindfulness practices in their personal lives (experiential knowledge), only half appeared to feel positively about implementing mindfulness practices in schools. Therefore, using the knowledge gained through professional development and then actively implementing personal mindfulness practices may be a facilitator of achieving participant buy-in.

Developing only an experiential knowledge of implementing mindfulness practices, without any propositional knowledge, did not consistently act as a facilitator to participants’ buy-in to a mindfulness initiative. Of the five participants who had implemented mindfulness practices with students, the experience only had a positive effect on three of them, with two being negatively influenced by it. According to research, implementing mindfulness practices without having received professional development and feeling skilled in the delivery is likely to cause teachers to lose confidence, which may result in a negative association (Greenberg et al., 2005). Furthermore, research suggests that the delivery of mindfulness practices is strongest when teachers have received both professional development and have experience in delivering the practices (Geelong Grammar School, 2014; Greenberg et al., 2005). As with participants’ personal experience, this implies that participants developing both propositional knowledge through professional development and experiential knowledge through implementation may be necessary to achieve participant buy-in to mindfulness initiatives.

**Beliefs about Capabilities**

Participants’ beliefs about their capabilities were largely influenced by the perception of their knowledge of mindfulness practices. One of the main concerns listed by participants was that students may have “awakenings” which could “open Pandora’s box” and that
teachers may not have adequate knowledge or the skills to provide support. Recent research has shown that implementing mindfulness practices in schools without adequate knowledge of them, and how to support a student in their journey, can be considered dangerous due to the experiences a student may encounter during the activity (Ergas, 2014; Farias et al., 2020; Sellman & Buttarazzi, 2020). Specifically, Sellman and Buttarazzi (2020) describe how, when practising any mindfulness practices, students may encounter a release of repressed and traumatic material. In the right contexts, this release is thought to be beneficial; however, mindfulness practices implemented universally and by untrained teachers within school classrooms may not be an appropriate setting for students to experience such a release. Consequently, participants’ beliefs that they are inadequately trained appear to be accurate and imply that it may be unethical and harmful if unskilled staff members are implementing mindfulness practices with students.

Participants also cited a belief that mindfulness practices were beyond their capabilities because they belong within the boundaries of psychology. As discussed under the Conceptual Knowledge heading, most of the modern mindfulness programs and resources used within education have been developed using the scientific model of mindfulness originally designed to be used as a clinical therapeutic treatment (Simpson, 2017). Therefore, if the mindfulness practices implemented in schools mirror those used by psychologists in clinical practice, they will likely result in similar outcomes. Research demonstrates that these outcomes often include participants experiencing adverse effects (Farias et al., 2020). Therefore, it appears that a clear distinction between the role of mindfulness as a psychological clinical intervention and the potential role of mindfulness within schools needs to be made (Van Dam et al., 2018). This may include implementing mindfulness practices in schools as a more traditional integrated approach to a teacher’s role, in which they become a foundational aspect of interactions within schools. Within this approach, the emphasis may be
focussed more on the actions of the teacher, rather than on students experiencing a
‘therapeutic’ change. For example, rather than implementing a ten-minute mindfulness
exercise with a class, a teacher may focus on ensuring all of their interactions with their class
are mindful, including their instruction and behaviour management. This suggests that, while
certain aspects of mindfulness practices may be better situated to the role of a psychologist,
with the right knowledge, there are more integrated versions of mindfulness practices that
may be appropriate to use within schools.

Some participants stated they thought they would be capable of implementing
mindfulness practices, but not competent. This included being competent in deciding which
practices were appropriate to implement and how to differentiate these practices across a
whole class of students. Competence can be defined as how fit one is to practise (Crane et al.,
2012), and as such instructor competence is especially relevant when mindfulness practices
are implemented as a universal approach (Lawlor 2014). This is because, when mindfulness
is implemented universally, students have no choice in being exposed to the practices and
may have little or no prior experience (Lawlor, 2014). Furthermore, in the event that
mindfulness practices are implemented universally, teachers may not know the personal
backgrounds of all their students (Burrows, 2016). The combination of teachers’
incompetence in the delivery of mindfulness practices and having little understanding of their
students’ backgrounds indicates that teachers cannot be expected to know how an exercise
may trigger an individual student.

Forbes (2016) explains that modern mindfulness practices, which are commonly
employed universally within schools, may trigger some students by guiding them to focus
solely on their individual interior rather than maintaining a balance between both interior and
exterior, as well as the individual and collective. This type of self-reflection may imply to
students that they are responsible for external stressors that are outside of their control
(Forbes, 2016; Sellman & Buttarazzi, 2020). Therefore, a universal modern mindfulness initiative may be triggering to a student who is currently living in an abusive household as the practices may convey that the student should reflect on and passively accept their situation (Crawford et al., 2020). This could be occurring without the teacher knowing it and without the teacher being competent enough to support the student should they require it. Therefore, when universally implementing a modern mindfulness initiative, teachers may not be capable of providing the support students require.

In summary, participants’ reservations to implement mindfulness practices without adequate training aligned with researchers’ concerns regarding whether it is ethical to implement mindfulness practices universally and without consideration of individual students’ needs. Overall, participants’ recognition of their limited knowledge appeared to have a strong negative influence on their beliefs about whether they were capable of safely and effectively implementing mindfulness practices. Therefore, participants appeared to be hesitant to buy-in to a mindfulness initiative while their knowledge, and capabilities, in mindfulness practices were limited.

**Professional Role and Identity**

Participants did not perceive mindfulness practices to be within the boundaries of a classroom teacher’s professional role and identity. As a result, participants’ perceptions of their professional role and identity were considered a barrier to achieving their buy-in to a mindfulness initiative. According to the literature, the development of a teacher’s perception of their role and identity is influenced by their beliefs, values, education, and wider societal norms (Trede et al., 2012). This suggests that a teacher may integrate the expectations of society, as well as their experience within the education system, into their belief systems to form the basis for their professional identity and role (Saunders, 2013). This research was evident within the current study with participants’ beliefs regarding their role and identity as
a classroom teacher being influenced by curriculum and policy documentation, such as the AITSL standards. Furthermore, participants’ perceptions of societal norms regarding a classroom teacher’s role also influenced their professional identity. Each of these ideas will be expanded on and discussed in detail below.

**Curriculum Documents.** Participants describe the delivery of subject-specific curriculum content to be their primary role as secondary school teachers. Although some participants had other duties within the school, curriculum delivery remained a central aspect of their perceived role. The Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (2021) clearly outlines the curriculum content they expect to be delivered and the assessment expectations of each secondary school department. These outlines and expectations are then transferred into the daily operational planning of schools. Participants spoke of using their departmental operational plans as a direct guide as to what content should be delivered in each lesson. Furthermore, one participant said they would be more willing to implement mindfulness practices if the practices were included within their departmental operational planning. Therefore, the rigidity of curriculum delivery and assessment requirements, combined with the absence of mindfulness practices from operational planning, may result in participants’ uncertainty as to whether straying from their planned curriculum is appropriate within their role. This implies that participants may be more likely to incorporate mindfulness practices into their daily lessons if their departmental operational planning directly outlined how they should be used in conjunction with their curriculum obligations.

**Professional Standards and Policy Documents.** Participants aligned their roles and responsibilities with the AITSL professional standards. During the interviews, participants indirectly referred to four of the seven standards. Teachers are constantly held accountable to the teaching professional standards. Examples of this accountability include their performance management being directly linked to the AITSL standards (Department of
Education, 2016) and how teachers aspiring to further their career and achieve either Lead Teacher or Level 3 Classroom Teacher have to prove their merits against these professional standards (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011). With the accountability of these standards being embedded into both performance management and promotional documentation, participants may not have consciously recognised that they were quoting standards such as ‘know your students’ and ‘create a safe learning environment’ to be aspects of their role. This suggested that having the AITSL standards ingrained within performance management documentation may have ensured participants’ perceived themselves to be accountable for upholding them.

While mindfulness practices may not be relevant within the AITSL standards, it may be worth questioning whether participants would be more likely to consider mindfulness practices within their role if accountability was placed on teachers to deliver the practices. There is research that supports this claim, including Eisenhart et al. (1988) who suggest it is only when school policies demand accountability from their staff that teachers are unable to refuse an initiative. Therefore, until system-wide documents prioritise wellbeing, schools will remain responsible for achieving teacher adherence to student wellbeing programs. Consequently, if schools do not address how their internal policies will ensure their teachers are held accountable to a mindfulness initiative, teachers may continue to prioritise those duties they are held accountable to.

Participants also cited aspects of the Mparntwe Declaration as part of their role; however, it was interesting to note their inconsistencies in relation to this document. The Mparntwe Declaration states that schools should “ensure that education promotes and contributes to a socially cohesive society” (Education Council, 2019, p. 5) and that “all young Australians become confident and creative individuals, successful lifelong learners” (Education Council, 2019, p. 6). Both of these statements are associated with responsibilities
the participants outlined to be part of their role as a classroom teacher; however, they did not specifically indicate an awareness that these responsibilities aligned with the declaration. This suggests that participants may not necessarily have been acknowledging the declaration, although aspects of the declaration may be ingrained in their perception of their role as a classroom teacher. One aspect of this declaration that participants did not recognise within their role, was the need to actively promote wellbeing markers such as emotional regulation, self-awareness and personal identity (Education Council, 2019). These inconsistencies could be a result of the wider education system prioritising the academic related educational policies to be part of a teacher’s role more than others. Therefore, it would be interesting to explore why certain aspects of the declaration were ingrained within participants’ perception of their role as a teacher but not all aspects of it.

**General Capabilities.** Participants strongly advocated for the inclusion of mindfulness practices within written policy documentation; however, only one participant mentioned the General Capabilities. The General Capabilities are comprised of seven overarching educational outcomes which the Australian Curriculum mandates to be embedded within all year groups and learning areas (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2020b). While mindfulness practices are not specifically included within the General Capabilities, they do require schools to develop qualities that are often associated with mindfulness training. Specifically, personal and social capability is comprised of four key components: self-management, self-awareness, social management, and social awareness (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2020b). These four key components are also the most common consequences that participants envisioned would come from implementing mindfulness practices within schools.

The consequences participants believed would result from mindfulness practices in schools are interesting to note, as participants did not include aspects of personal and social
capability within their role. This could be because the capabilities that align with academic achievements, such as numeracy, literacy and information and communications technology (ICT) are more privileged within schools than other capabilities. That schools and teachers privileging these capabilities is likely due to their relationship with standardised tests, such as the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR), National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) and Online Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (OLNA). These assessments are government mandates, with high levels of accountability being placed on schools and teachers to ensure their students achieve pleasing results.

In comparison to these academically driven capabilities, there is little guidance or accountability placed on schools to address personal and social capabilities. The personal and social capabilities were briefly addressed within the 2021 Code of Conduct and Standards document produced by the Western Australian Department of Education (Department of Education, 2021b). Standard 4 of the Code of Conduct and Standards document states, “we maintain the safety and wellbeing of ourselves, our students, our colleagues and our stakeholders” (Department of Education, 2021b, p. 11). Beyond this vague statement, the document only provides a link to a brief overview of social and emotional learning programs and suggests that schools should consult with their school psychologist to provide advice (Department of Education, 2021c). This provides evidence that, while social and personal capability is outlined within the Australian Curriculum, there is limited promotion of this capability to schools and teachers. Therefore, it is worth discussing the purpose of introducing seven General Capabilities into the Australian Curriculum, while only holding schools accountable for addressing three of them. Furthermore, it raises the question as to whether the introduction of the General Capabilities had the intent of shifting educational priorities, or whether they were only introduced as what participants of the current study would refer to as a ‘tick-box’ solution. This suggests that while all participants were likely
aware of the General Capabilities, they may not have included them within their role, as their school policies and operational planning may have only privileged the capabilities that schools are accountable for delivering.

Identity. Participants primarily drew their identity from the duties they perceived to be part of their role as a classroom teacher. This included explicitly defining themselves as subject-specific teachers. According to Beijaard et al. (2004), it is common for teachers’ professional identities to be influenced by their role as a subject-specific teacher. Beyond a teacher’s role simply influencing their identity, research suggests that a teacher’s professional identity is a perception of their role (Beijaard et al., 2004) or whether they perceive themselves as adequate in performing their expected role (Trede et al., 2012). Teachers’ identities being related to their perception of how well they can perform their role provides an important link between a teacher’s identity and their self-efficacy as a classroom teacher (Watt & Richardson, 2015). Therefore, if participants aligned their professional role with both curriculum-delivery and the professional standards, this research implies that participants may have also aligned their identity with their ability to deliver curriculum content and meet the professional standards. Furthermore, the inclusion of a practice they are not confident in within their role, such as mindfulness practices, may challenge their self-efficacy as a classroom teacher. This suggests that participants may further privilege these academic documents they are already confident delivering as a matter of professional pride.

There was also evidence that participants’ professional identities were formed through their relationships and their perception of societal norms. This included their relationships with their students, as well as what they perceived wider society to expect of them as teachers. Research suggests that a teacher’s professional identity develops over their career and is influenced by a complex interaction of their beliefs, personal values and social expectations (Fitzgerald, 2020; Saunders, 2013). Moreover, their identities can be bound by
institutional relationships, meaning a change in their practice may directly challenge a teacher’s identity and how they relate to their colleagues and students (Saunders, 2013). These influences were evident within participants’ concerns that society may not consider mindfulness practices to be within a teacher’s role and that the introduction of the practices may negatively affect the relationships they have developed with their students. Thus, changing their practice from what their students and society expect, may act as a barrier to achieving participant buy-in.

**Beliefs about Consequences**

Participants’ optimistic beliefs regarding the consequences of implementing mindfulness practices was a facilitator to achieving their buy-in. They believed that mindfulness practices could result in an increase in student self-awareness, self-regulation, and academic achievement. There is evidence within the literature that suggests these positive beliefs regarding the consequences of mindfulness are common among teachers. One study reported that participants perceived the potential consequences of mindfulness practices to be: reduced stress and anxiety within students, as well as improved focus within the classroom (Wigelsworth & Quinn, 2020). Similarly, Reindl et al. (2020) reported that teachers believed mindfulness practices had the potential to increase students’ self-esteem, confidence and emotional regulation, as well as improving cognitive functioning. This suggests that mindfulness practices are widely believed to be beneficial within the teaching community and therefore may act as a facilitator to achieving buy-in from teachers.

There was a divide in the depths of positive consequences participants believed mindfulness practices could have. Some participants appeared to believe that the introduction of mindfulness practices in schools had the potential to create change throughout society, while other participants simply believed they could reduce mental health symptomatology and improve student behaviour. This divide is highly relevant to the discussion under the
Conceptual Knowledge heading which outlined the discrepancies between modern and traditional versions of mindfulness practices. This included the distinction of modern mindfulness practices which are commonly implemented within schools, reflecting those secular practices that have been developed from clinical interventions (Simpson, 2017). Critics of modern mindfulness practices discuss concerns that modern mindfulness practices will only improve student and teacher performance in a superficial way (Crawford et al., 2020; Ergas, 2014; Forbes, 2016, 2017; Sellman & Buttarazzi, 2020). In one study, Sellman and Buttarazzi (2020) disputed the extent to which modern mindfulness practices in schools can alter the current state of student wellbeing and argued that secular modern mindfulness practices only have the capacity to elicit superficial change. Ergas (2014, p. 66) agreed, pointing out that modern mindfulness may simply be “moderating stress levels of students with just the right dosage to keep them on track”. To this point, sceptics of modern mindfulness also state that implementing mindfulness practices in education is purely aimed at increasing conformity and socially pleasing character traits, rather than addressing student wellbeing (Crawford et al., 2020; Forbes, 2017; Sellman & Buttarazzi, 2020; Simpson, 2017). Therefore, it is worth exploring whether the positive results found within students after a modern mindfulness intervention are superficial and lack depth.

Issues with the validity of modern mindfulness research may cause disappointment within those participants who hold the strongest beliefs regarding the positive consequences of implementing mindfulness practices in schools. One possible issue is that the majority of school-based mindfulness studies are conducted like mindfulness interventional studies, in which data is collected before and after a short period of mindfulness implementation. According to Van Dam et al. (2018), the depth of the findings of interventional mindfulness studies should be questioned. They raise concerns over the construct validity and the generalisability of these intervention studies. These concerns largely revolve around the wide
discrepancies found within different levels of mindfulness required within each intervention (Van Dam et al., 2018). More specific research regarding school-based mindfulness programs have determined that the studies often under-report necessary details that would allow the reader to determine whether the program holds intervention integrity and ensures teacher training and competence (Emerson et al., 2020). The combination of studies being conducted as short-term interventions and lacking necessary details, limits the generalisability of their findings. Without further research, studies cannot confidently ascertain whether long-term, whole-school mindfulness initiatives will result in positive consequences. Consequently, if the reality of a longer-term school-based mindfulness initiative does not result in the positive consequences participants optimistically believed in, this may cause disillusionment and negatively influence their continued buy-in to the initiative.

**Organisational Culture**

Participants’ perceptions of the organisational culture within their school acted as a barrier to achieving their buy-in to a mindfulness initiative. They perceived the culture of their schools to be academically driven which, in turn, caused considerable doubts as to whether a mindfulness initiative would be implemented effectively and consistently. Cultural change, leadership behaviour, staff behaviour, student buy-in, and approaches are discussed below.

**Cultural Change.** The prediction that mindfulness initiatives would be inconsistent and short-lived within a school culture of academic prioritisation became a barrier to securing participant buy-in. This was evident through participants’ hesitancy to commit their time and energy to developing new strategies and routines when they believed that the school culture would need to change in order for a mindfulness initiative to be successful. Other research reported similar findings in regard to the education system. In one study, Crawford et al. (2020) reported that both teachers and students expressed the belief that mindfulness
practices implemented within the current education system may superficially support student wellbeing; however, this support would remain superficial until there was a larger change in the system’s academic prioritisation. Similarly, Norton and Griffith (2020) identified that while teachers saw mindfulness practices in schools as positive, they believed the discrepancy between the culture of the education systems and the aims of mindfulness practices was an obstacle to a mindfulness initiative being maintained within schools. Consistent with these findings were the discussions of both Sellman and Buttarazzi (2020) and Ergas (2019b) who proposed that authentic mindfulness practices could not be assimilated into the current education system due to the structured and rigid academic culture of schools. Consequently, participants may have been underestimating the scale of cultural change required when they merely suggested the culture of their individual would need to change.

Furthermore, participants may not have been accounting for how their individual school culture is influenced by the larger culture of the education system. If individual school cultures are influenced by wider educational policies, pressures, and norms (Kaplan & Owings, 2013), changing the culture of a school would involve more than simply changing internal structures. This also suggests, that without changing the education system on a large scale, the educational policies, pressures, and norms that have influenced the culture of education may continue to dictate decisions made by school leadership. Consequently, changing the culture of an individual school would have to be achieved within the boundaries of the wider education system and this may not be enough for participants to feel confident enough to buy-in to the mindfulness initiative.

Leadership Behaviours. In order to change the school culture, participants believed their school leadership would first need to change their behaviour. This belief stemmed from a feeling of distrust towards their leadership’s intentions in implementing mindfulness
practices in schools. Furthermore, participants believed a positive change in the behaviour of leadership would result in a more positive response to mindfulness practices within the school community. There is evidence within the literature that suggests the behaviour of school leadership is associated with the overall school culture and, therefore, the behaviour of those within the school community. One study suggests that the culture of an organisation is positively correlated with the behaviour of its leadership (Tsai, 2011), indicating that school leadership prioritising academic achievement may influence the expectations and behaviour of staff and students (Kaplan & Owings, 2013).

Similarly, research has demonstrated that the level of priority school leadership assigns to a mindfulness initiative is relevant to the initiative’s continued implementation and longevity. For example, Hudson et al. (2020) discussed how just the perception that a school’s leadership would prioritise a mindfulness initiative was enough to correlate to increased implementation activity in staff. Furthermore, they also reported that the leadership’s prioritisation of a mindfulness initiative was also directly related to the longevity of the program within the school (Hudson et al., 2020). This research suggests that if the behaviour of school leadership modelled the prioritisation of mindfulness practices, the behaviours of staff, students and other stakeholders may also model this prioritisation. Although changing leadership behaviour may appear to offer a simple solution to shifting the academically driven culture of these schools, it is still necessary to consider the previous discussion regarding the extent to which school leadership can change their behaviour and priorities within the expectations of the wider educational system. This suggests that when the leadership works within the wider educational boundaries to address how those within the school community perceive their behaviour towards mindfulness practices, this may positively influence participants’ buy-in to an initiative.
**Staff Buy-in.** Within an academically driven school culture, participants did not believe that all staff would buy-in to a mindfulness initiative without being held accountable. This was important to participants’ buy-in, as they perceived ensuring all staff were accountable to a mindfulness initiative as important in achieving a long-term, consistent approach. According to research, teachers may refuse or be inconsistent in delivering a program if they are not held accountable for delivering and achieving the outcomes of the initiative (Eisenhart et al., 1988); however, ensuring long-term and consistent teacher accountability using this approach may require continued leadership oversight. Other research poses a more holistic approach to achieving staff buy-in to a mindfulness initiative. As teachers who have better social and emotional markers themselves tend to be more effective and confident in implementing mindfulness practices, some research suggests that achieving teacher buy-in requires a more teacher-centred focus (Lawlor, 2014). A holistic teacher-focused approach to securing staff buy-in would involve staff being trained in mindfulness practices over a period of time, with their prior beliefs and expectations of mindfulness practices being addressed (Lawlor, 2014). This approach may also help to situate mindfulness practice within the culture of the school, as staff are more likely be consistent in an approach they believe in. Therefore, if participants’ concerns are based around achieving consistency and longevity through a change in school culture, this approach may offer a more authentic opportunity to create lasting change within the school at the ground-level. A possible issue with the more holistic approach to achieving teacher buy-in is that it would likely require a longer period of adjustment than leadership simply enforcing a mindfulness initiative by demanding staff accountability. Therefore, while a holistic, teacher-focused approach may better situate mindfulness practices within the school culture and help to ensure teacher buy-in, the time required to achieve such an approach may require the school leadership to initially articulate how staff will be held accountable to a mindfulness initiative.
**Student Behaviour.** Participants believed that a culture of academic prioritisation would result in difficult student behaviour. Concerns regarding difficult student behaviour were mainly described as students being negative and disengaged during the practices. Poor student behaviour has also been identified as a barrier to implementing mindfulness practices in schools in other research. One study specifically reported student engagement and behaviour as a barrier, with teachers stating that student reluctance to participate in mindfulness practices may be due to embarrassment and lead to poor behaviour (Wigelsworth & Quinn, 2020). Another study directly reported students’ perceptions of a mindfulness intervention, stating that students were disengaged because they would have preferred to be using their time on other activities (Norton & Griffith, 2020). The findings of these studies aligned with the reports of the current participants who have had a negative experience implementing mindfulness practices as part of a whole-school approach. They recounted discontinuing with the program because students were disengaged or voiced the opinion that they would prefer to be continuing with their regular classroom curriculum. Therefore, participants believed that a combination of consistency across all classes and a cultural shift within the school that prioritises a mindfulness initiative may help to change poor student behaviour by situating the practices within the normal routine of students. Consequently, as demonstrated by participants of the current study, the main barrier may be ensuring that all staff persevere in a consistent approach to mindfulness practices for long enough to see a shift in engagement and poor student behaviours.

**Whole-School Approach.** Participants believed a whole-school approach may help to situate mindfulness within the culture of the school and ensure its continued prioritisation. This belief influenced participant buy-in to a mindfulness initiative, as participants perceived a whole-school approach would ensure effectiveness and consistency throughout the school. According to research, a whole-school approach to mindfulness may address many of the
concerns participants listed in regard to their school culture. Within their study, Jamtsho (2015) stated that a whole-school approach to any wellbeing initiative should be embedded within the school’s policies, structures, curricula and practice. Therefore, if schools were to implement a mindfulness initiative as a whole-school approach, changes to school policies, structures and practices may involve ensuring staff are accountable for implementing the delivery.

Other concerns raised by participants were addressed in the findings of Wigelsworth and Quinn (2020), who reported their participants predicted that a consistent and universal whole-school approach would positively affect the implementation of a mindfulness initiative by ensuring support from leadership and creating normalcy for students. As previously discussed, these findings align with the concerns raised by the participants of the current study, who reported the prospect of poor student behaviour to be a potential barrier to their buy-in. Therefore, research suggests that a whole-school approach has the potential to address the issues participants identified as possible barriers to achieving consistency and longevity in a mindfulness initiative. Despite this potential, the research is also clear in stating that the implementation of a whole-school mindfulness initiative requires integrity (Emerson et al., 2020). The current study found that a failure to address all aspects of integrity negatively influenced participants’ buy-in to a whole-school mindfulness initiative. This suggests that the positive influence a whole-school mindfulness initiative may have on participants’ buy-in could be conditional and requires schools to ensure the initiative has addressed all issues of integrity.

Although all participants believed there was a need for a whole-school approach for a mindfulness initiative to be successful within an academically driven culture, their behaviour indicated otherwise. To briefly recap participants’ behaviour: three participants worked in a school with a whole-school approach to mindfulness but were actively disregarding the
approach; and three participants were successfully implementing mindfulness practices outside of a whole-school approach. This is noteworthy, as research suggests a whole-school approach is not necessary to achieve success. For example, Ergas (2019a) discusses how contemplative mindfulness practices are successfully being introduced as a curriculum pedagogy through both a top-down and bottom-up approach. Other research studies agree that it is not the whole-school approach that affects the success of a mindfulness initiative but rather the consistency with which mindfulness practices are delivered (Norton & Griffith, 2020). The behaviour of those participants who were successfully and voluntarily implementing mindfulness practices reflect these findings, with all three participants describing consistency within their implementation practices. This implies that a bottom-up approach may eliminate some perceived barriers, such as the perception that leadership would need to hold all staff accountable.

Resources

All participants perceived the need for two additional resources to adequately implement mindfulness practices in their classrooms: time and training. While the need for these resources is well established within the literature (Geelong Grammar School, 2014; Sellman & Buttarazzi, 2020), one resource that may limit the availability of time and training is the funding received by government schools. Time and training are discussed in the following section.

Time. A perception that teachers would not be provided with adequate time was a barrier to achieving participants’ buy-in to a mindfulness initiative. The need for time included additional time for departmental and personal planning, as well as additional face-time with students. There is evidence within the literature that suggests time could be a barrier to implementing mindfulness practices in schools for several reasons, including: time constraints within the curriculum; the time required to train teachers; and the time required to
plan for the interventions (Wigelsworth & Quinn, 2020). Similarly, Piedrahita (2017) found that time is essential in changing teachers’ professional practice and recommended that all professional changes should be allowed to occur over at least a three year period.

Conversely, the mindfulness approach suggested by Ergas (2019b) would require time for a change in teachers’ practices; however, he disputes the need for additional face time with students. He postulates that mindfulness should be implemented ‘as education’, whereby the duties of a classroom teacher would continue as normal but they would be employed as mindful practices (Ergas, 2019b). Consequently, any mindfulness initiative will require time for change; however, there are approaches that would not involve a daily time allocation and could run in conjunction with teachers’ day-to-day classroom practices.

**Training.** Participants believed a large amount of time would be required to adequately train staff in the implementation of mindfulness practices. This belief was concurrent with participants’ desire to feel confident in their personal practices, as well as confident in the implementation of mindfulness practices. Research suggests that it is important for a mindfulness initiative to allocate time to developing teachers’ personal mindfulness practices, as well as time to train teachers in the implementation of mindfulness practices (Geelong Grammar School, 2014; Sellman & Buttarazzi, 2020). For example, Sellman and Buttarazzi (2020) state that without embodying mindfulness practices, the theory of mindfulness cannot be adequately learned or imparted. This approach is recognised within the Positive Education program of Geelong Grammar. According to Geelong Grammar School (2014), a wellbeing approach must allocate time for developing participants’ knowledge of four key stages: learn it, live it, teach it and embed it. Therefore, this research suggests that training teachers to implement mindfulness practices may require a substantial time commitment.
Funding. Participants questioned whether their schools would follow through on the necessary time and training required to make implementation valuable. This discussion is closely linked to that of inconsistent non-academic initiatives raised under the Organisational Culture heading and may have exaggerated participants’ scepticism towards leadership. As a government school, it may be difficult for the school’s leadership to sustain the long-term training required for a valuable mindfulness initiative due to funding restraints. According to the Department of Education (2018a), a total of three-hundred Western Australian public schools received an additional 0.1FTE of Level 3 Classroom Teachers to be spent on wellbeing, equating to approximately $11,428.70 (Department of Education, n.d.). An online course run by Mindful Schools (2021) costs $495 per enrolment and provides a simplified example of how much it would cost to train a full school of teachers. Consequently, the time and training required for valuable mindfulness implementation may simply remain a barrier to government schools being consistent with their intentions due to funding limitations.

Participants believed that Geelong Grammar School provided an example of how a whole-school wellbeing approach, which included mindfulness practices, could be effective and sustained. On this point, it is worth noting the continued commitment of Geelong Grammar School to ensuring the ongoing effectiveness of their program. All new staff are required to undertake four days of professional development prior to beginning work at the school. In addition to this, all staff are expected to receive a minimum of one additional day of professional development for each year they are employed at the school (Bott et al., 2017). Therefore, although participants perceived Geelong Grammar School as an example of a wellbeing initiative that has been effective and sustainable, the school’s time and training commitments providing further evidence that existing funding in government schools may be insufficient to effectively sustain a schoolwide mindfulness program.
Concluding Discussion

The current study found that the factors influencing participants’ attitudes towards mindfulness practices in schools and achieving their buy-in to a mindfulness initiative were interrelated. Although participants’ attitude and buy-in were explored separately, there was a significant overlap between the positive and negative influencing factors for both attitude and buy-in. Within this concluding discussion, a summary of participants’ attitudes and the barriers to and facilitators of their buy-in is provided.

Section One: Teachers’ Attitudes Towards Mindfulness Practices in Schools

Affective Response. Participants’ affective response towards implementing mindfulness practices in schools was consistent with the limited previous research available. When situating participants’ experiences of both positive and negative affect alongside relevant literature, it appeared that participants’ experience of positive affect may have been a result of their perception that mindfulness practices may be conducive to supporting mental health. Similarly, the negative affect participants experienced may have been in relation to those events they perceived as obstructive to a mindfulness initiative supporting student mental health, such as ineffective implementation. The experience of negative affect towards mindfulness practices in schools being ineffectively implemented was consistent with the findings of other studies and appeared to be more influential on participants’ attitudes than the positive affect they experienced. Consequently, although participants experienced both positive and negative affect towards mindfulness practices in schools, overall, their negative affect had more influence on their attitudes.

Cognitive Construct. Participants had both positive and negative beliefs regarding the implementation of mindfulness practices in schools. These beliefs were also related to the participants’ goal of supporting student wellbeing, as they believed that mindfulness practices had the potential to support student wellbeing; however, they also believed that teachers may
not be adequately trained to implement the practices and that mindfulness practices may be better situated within the role of a school psychologist. Consequently, while participants had both positive and negative beliefs regarding the implementation of mindfulness practices in schools, these beliefs often directly conflicted each other.

While participants’ beliefs were consistent with teachers’ beliefs reported in other studies, neither previous research nor the participants of the current study specified how much training they believed would be necessary for teachers to be considered adequately trained. Therefore, with most mindfulness initiatives relying on teachers to implement the practices, participants’ negative beliefs may contribute to their maintaining an overall negative attitude.

**Behavioural Construct.** The behaviour of the majority of participants indicated they held a negative attitude towards mindfulness practices. Consistent with the literature, it appeared that several factors were having a direct influence on participants’ behaviour in regard to implementing mindfulness practices in schools. Factors that positively influenced participants’ behaviour were the development of a personal reason to implement mindfulness practices, and personally experiencing the positive effects mindfulness practices can have. Conversely, factors that had a negative influence were the belief that mindfulness practices may not be successful in supporting student mental health, and the perception that mindfulness practices were not accepted within their social norms. Consequently, the interrelated nature of attitudinal constructs suggests that participants’ inactivity regarding mindfulness practices in schools may be evidence of their negative attitude being influenced by their affective and cognitive constructs.

**Overall Attitude.** When exploring participants’ overall attitudes towards mindfulness practices in schools, it appeared they held a positive attitude towards the practices being implemented in schools while also holding a negative attitude towards personally
implementing the practices. When these findings were situated alongside the relevant literature, the highly interrelated nature of the affective, cognitive and behavioural attitudinal constructs suggest that participants’ attitudes towards implementing mindfulness practices in schools were ambivalent (Conner & Sparks, 2002). Despite this ambivalence, it appears the factors which had a negative influence on participants’ attitudes were more influential, shown as the majority of participants were not implementing mindfulness practices.

Section Two: TDF-R Domains as Barriers or Facilitators to Participant Buy-in

Knowledge and Beliefs about Capabilities. Participants’ perceptions of their inadequate conceptual knowledge and beliefs regarding their capabilities to implement mindfulness practices were intrinsically linked. These two factors may have been the most limiting factor of achieving participants’ buy-in to a school-based initiative, as they believed that implementing mindfulness practices without adequate knowledge and training could be detrimental to student mental health. These beliefs aligned with those reported in other studies (Sellman & Buttarazzi, 2020), as well as literature suggesting implementing mindfulness practices in schools without instructor knowledge and training may be unethical and potentially harmful to student wellbeing (Lawlor, 2014).

Participants’ inadequate knowledge led to the belief that all mindfulness practices are the same. This belief became a barrier to participants buying-in to a mindfulness initiative as they may have assumed that teachers would be required to implement practices they perceived to belong within the role of a trained psychologist. Therefore, participants’ concerns regarding teachers’ capabilities to safely implement mindfulness practices may have been exaggerated by their lack of knowledge regarding how mindfulness practices could be differentiated. Consequently, both participants’ conceptual knowledge and their beliefs regarding their capabilities to deliver mindfulness practices were barriers to achieving their buy-in to an initiative.
**Professional Role.** Participants’ perception that mindfulness practices were outside the boundaries of their professional role was a barrier to achieving their buy-in to a mindfulness initiative. Consistent with teacher behavioural research (Eisenhart et al., 1988), participants perceived their role to reflect those curriculum and policy documents that schools and teachers are held directly accountable to, including their subject-specific curricula and the AITSL standards. Furthermore, while the Australian Curriculum acknowledges the need for schools to address the affective states of students, wellbeing policies appear to stand alongside curriculum documents, with limited promotion or guidance provided to teachers (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2020b; Education Council, 2019). This suggests that implementing a mindfulness initiative without ensuring accountability or providing guidance to teachers will likely continue to result in their perception that these practices are outside of the boundaries of their role.

**Beliefs about Consequences.** Consistent with other studies, participants held optimistic beliefs regarding the consequences of implementing mindfulness practices within schools (Reindl et al., 2020; Wigelsworth & Quinn, 2020). These beliefs were conducive to participants’ goals of supporting student wellbeing and therefore were considered to be a facilitator of achieving participant buy-in to a mindfulness initiative. Despite their overall positive beliefs, a lack of clarity was identified in whether participants believed mindfulness practices had the potential to end negative mental health states experienced by students, or whether mindfulness practices would merely alleviate these mental health issues enough for students to continue to cope. Consequently, participants’ buy-in to a mindfulness initiative may be conditional on the initiative producing noticeable and lasting changes to student mental health. Therefore, participants’ buy-in may be negatively influenced if the reality of implementing mindfulness practices does not result in the optimistic consequences participants’ believe they will.
**Organisational Culture.** Participants’ perceptions that mindfulness practices would not be consistent and effective within the current culture of education was consistent with findings from previous studies (Crawford & Jenkins, 2018; Norton & Griffith, 2020). They perceived this culture to be academically driven and that the behaviours of stakeholders within the schools reflected this. Furthermore, participants believed the actions of stakeholders within the school community, such as leadership, colleagues and students, would be the cause of a mindfulness initiative being inconsistent and ineffective; this implies that achieving buy-in from participants requires them to perceive a change in the culture of their individual schools, which may result in participants not buying-in to a mindfulness initiative at all, as individual school cultures appear to be highly influenced by the wider culture of education. Consequently, individual schools may find it difficult to prioritise and consistently implement a mindfulness initiative within the academically driven culture of the wider education system.

**Resources.** The main two resources that influenced participants’ buy-in to a mindfulness initiative were time and training. The time and training participants required were consistent with the reports of other studies (Piedrahita, 2017; Wigelsworth & Quinn, 2020); however, dedicating this level of time and training to a mindfulness initiative may be an unachievable short-term goal for government schools. This suggests that participants’ buy-in to a mindfulness initiative may be further influenced by the longevity of the initiative, as government schools may be required to provide the time and training participants desired over a number of years.

In summary, although there were factors that had a positive influence on participants’ attitudes and buy-in, they were outnumbered by the negatively influencing factors. When discussing the findings of the current study against the relevant literature, it may be concluded that singularly addressing any one of these factors will be unlikely to achieve the
positive attitude and buy-in required for a long-term mindfulness initiative to be successful. This appeared evident throughout the study and highlights the complexities of successfully introducing mindfulness practices into schools.
Chapter 6 Conclusion

Chapter Overview:

This chapter will summarise the research project, including: a summary of the findings, implications of the findings on theory, policy and practice, consideration of research limitations, recommended directions for future research and a final concluding statement.

Summary of the Thesis

The primary aim of the current research project was to explore secondary teachers’ attitudes towards mindfulness practices being implemented in schools. This included investigating any common themes that may have a positive or negative influence on their attitudes. In addition to this, the research aimed to identify any potential barriers to or facilitators of achieving teacher buy-in to a whole-school mindfulness initiative.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a total of twelve secondary teachers from three Western Australian Department of Education schools. Two theoretical frameworks underpinned the interview questions. The first theory was that attitudes are constructed by three components: an affective construct, a cognitive construct, and a behavioural construct (Forgas et al., 2010; Pickens, 2005). The second framework was the revised Theoretical Domains Framework (TDF-R), used to identify barriers to and facilitators of participant buy-in to a mindfulness initiative (Cane et al., 2012).

Data analysis was conducted through two separate processes. The first process aimed to identify participants’ attitudes. In order to achieve this, the researcher used deductive analysis within the question suites that specifically ascertained participants’ attitudinal constructs. The second process utilised a hybrid of both inductive and deductive analyses with the aim of identifying the potential barriers and facilitators to achieving participant buy-in. This involved first using an inductive thematic approach, in which themes were
continually revised as new data were presented. Once data collection was finalised and themes had been established, a deductive approach was used by comparing the themes with the TDF-R domains. As a result of this process, the following five TDF-R domains were deemed to be relevant: Knowledge, Beliefs about Capabilities, Professional Role and Identity, Beliefs about Consequences and Environment Contexts and Resources. Due to the inductive analysis, as well as the volume of data generated in each domain, the domain of Knowledge was reported under the following categories: Situational Knowledge, Conceptual Knowledge and Knowledge Development. Similarly, Environment Contexts and Resources was reported under the categories: Organisational Contexts and Resources.

Findings indicated that participants held an overall positive attitude towards the implementation of mindfulness practices in schools but were less certain as to whether teachers should be required to implement the practices. Their positive attitude was influenced by their hope and optimistic belief that mindfulness practices could be a driver for change in student mental health. Conversely, their feelings of concern regarding their ability to safely implement mindfulness practices, whether the school culture would allow student wellbeing to remain an ongoing focus and whether mindfulness practices were part of their role as a classroom teacher acted as negative influences on their attitudes.

The analysis of the TDF-R categories concluded that the following domains could be considered facilitators: Situational Knowledge, Knowledge Development and Beliefs about Consequences. The following four TDF-R domains were identified as barriers: Professional Role and Identity, Beliefs about Capabilities, Organisational Culture and Resources. These barriers were underpinned by two major factors, including their limited training in the implementation of mindfulness practices in schools and a concern that their school culture prioritised academic results over wellbeing and had a history of short-term initiatives.
Limitations

It was the intention of the researcher to collect data from an equal number of participants who had, and had not, implemented mindfulness practices as a whole-school approach. While the researcher contacted a total of ten schools, many of the schools were unwilling to allow their staff to participate in the interviews due to the increased pressure schools were experiencing in regard to the COVID-19 pandemic at that time. Once the researcher had determined that only three schools were willing to participate, of which only one had implemented a whole-school mindfulness initiative, an amendment to the ethics application was submitted to both Edith Cowan University Human Research Ethics Committee and the Western Australian Department of Education. The amendment requested that the researcher be cleared to contact a further ten public schools. Due to the time delay in the Department of Education accepting this request, the researcher pursued data collection with participants from the original three schools. As only three teachers from the school that had implemented a whole-school mindfulness approach agreed to an interview, the researcher was unable to collect data from an equal number of participants who had, and had not, implemented mindfulness practices as part of a whole-school initiative. This limited the researcher’s ability to compare and contrast the effects that personal experience may have had on teachers’ attitudes and buy-in to a mindfulness approach.

Another possible limitation of this study is the participants’ desires to answer questions in a socially acceptable manner. For example, participants may have felt pressured to favour the implementation of mindfulness practices in schools due to their current popularity within Western culture. While some research offers contradictory results on the impact of mindfulness (Foster, 2016), many of the articles published in the media present the positive impacts mindfulness practices can have on a range of industries, including schools (Booth, 2017; Hinchliffe, 2018; Urban, 2018). For this reason, participants may have felt
obligated to answer the interview questions in a manner that reflects a different attitude to their own. This is a limitation because exploring participants’ attitudes and buy-in relies on an accurate overview of their affective and cognitive appraisals of mindfulness practices. Therefore, if participants answered in accordance with what they perceived appropriate, this may have altered the validity of any conclusions regarding their attitudes and buy-in. In order to minimise this effect, the interview questions were written as a suite of questions, with more than one question addressing their attitudinal constructs.

**Implications**

The findings of this study have implications that may contribute to the theory, policy, and practice of implementing mindfulness practices in schools. These findings may contribute to theory by providing foundational research into teachers’ attitudes, as well as furthering the body of research regarding potential barriers to and facilitators of implementing mindfulness practices in schools. Implications for policy and practice include shifting the management of wellbeing policies to align with that of academic policies and ensuring any implementation of mindfulness practices adequately addresses teacher knowledge and training. The following sections will expand on the implications for theory, policy, and practice.

**Theory**

This study provides foundational research regarding teachers’ attitudes towards the implementation of mindfulness wellbeing programs within schools. This research can be considered foundational as – to the knowledge of the researcher – there is currently no other research that has measured teachers’ attitudes towards any school-based wellbeing programs using the theoretical framework of affective, cognitive, and behavioural constructs. The current study explored the factors which influenced participants’ individual attitudinal constructs, as well as how these constructs influenced each other. By doing so, the researcher
was able to develop an overview of teachers’ overall attitudes, as well as the factors which may contribute to teachers developing a positive or negative attitude towards mindfulness practices.

Schools having knowledge of teachers’ attitudes is important to the implementation of whole-school initiatives as they may influence how an individual responds to the initiative. Furthermore, teachers who have positive attitudes are more likely to support an initiative; therefore, by providing foundational research into teachers’ attitudes, the current study may help schools to determine the attitudes of their staff, as well as help schools to identify specific factors they may be required to change. Consequently, by determining teachers’ attitudes towards mindfulness initiatives or general wellbeing initiatives, schools may be more successful in the implementation of these initiatives.

The current study can also contribute to a growing body of research regarding the barriers to and facilitators of implementing mindfulness practices in schools. This research identifies specific factors which may be barriers to achieving teacher buy-in to a mindfulness initiative. Within a whole-school initiative, teacher buy-in may be an essential element to achieving success and longevity with the initiative. Therefore, by contributing to the research exploring the factors that may become barriers to achieving teacher buy-in, the findings of this study may help schools to achieve success and consistency in a mindfulness initiative.

**Policy**

The findings of the current study demonstrated that there are large discrepancies between how academic-related and wellbeing-related policies are adhered to and promoted within schools. Some of these discrepancies appear to be a result of the accountability placed on schools and teachers to ensure policy objectives are met. Schools and teachers are held accountable to academic-related policies through standardised testing, curriculum moderation, reporting and review processes. Furthermore, schools are publicly ranked by
their Year 12 ATAR rankings, with those schools achieving the highest academic results being indiscriminately championed. Comparatively, there is no accountability placed on schools to demonstrate how they are contributing to student wellbeing or social and emotional education. Moreover, schools are not promoting teachers’ adherence to wellbeing policies within daily operational planning.

In order to ensure wellbeing policies are being implemented and promoted within schools, the education system needs to manage wellbeing policies like they do academic policies. This would require an ongoing system-wide assessment of student mental health, with individual schools being monitored. As with academically underachieving schools, this assessment process would allow schools underperforming in wellbeing to be identified and held accountable, thus improving student wellbeing through education system processes.

With this level of accountability being placed on individual schools, the education system may be required to provide adequate training and resources to ensure schools are able to meet the expectations of these policies. This would involve ensuring implementers are competent in the delivery of mindfulness practices, as well as knowledgeable and skilled in determining which mindfulness practices are required. Furthermore, teachers would need similar training to ensure they are sufficiently knowledgeable and skilled in mindfulness practices to differentiate the practices and ensure the practices being implemented are appropriate to their students. This may mean that universities may be required to train undergraduate education students in both personal and professional implementation of mindfulness practices.

On an individual school level, leadership needs to ensure that all teachers understand their role in wellbeing initiatives. In order to align wellbeing activities, such as mindfulness practices, within a teacher’s role, the relevant wellbeing policies may need to be promoted in daily operational planning and measures of success. This would require schools to clearly
articulate how they will be measuring and supporting student wellbeing within their business plans. In the case that mindfulness practices are implemented as a means of supporting student mental health, departmental operational planning should also reflect this. By having mindfulness practices written in departmental operational plans, teachers will be more likely to identify it as part of their role and prioritise it within the classrooms. The inclusion of mindfulness practices in the school business plan and departmental planning may also increase teacher buy-in by positioning student wellbeing as an accepted part of a teacher’s role to the wider school community.

**Practice**

The findings of the current study suggest that the events associated with implementing mindfulness practices in schools have a large influence on teachers’ attitudes and buy-in to mindfulness initiatives. By addressing the associated events which may have a negative influence on teachers’ attitudes and buy-in, mindfulness practices may be more likely to be successful and consistently implemented. The associated events that were identified to have a negative influence on implementing mindfulness practices in schools included teacher knowledge and training, as well as the purpose and method of implementation. These are discussed below.

**Knowledge.** Participants’ knowledge and confidence in mindfulness practices had a large influence on their willingness to buy-in to a school-based initiative; therefore, addressing teacher knowledge may be essential when implementing mindfulness practices in schools. When addressing teacher knowledge, those in charge of the implementation may need to first determine the prior knowledge teachers have regarding mindfulness practices. Without ascertaining teachers’ prior mindfulness knowledge, schools will be unable to ensure that their knowledge has been developed through credible sources and to an appropriate standard. Consequently, without ensuring teachers have acquired accurate and sufficient
knowledge regarding mindfulness practices, schools will be unable to address potential barriers that may emerge from inadequate knowledge of mindfulness practices.

An adequate mindfulness knowledge includes teachers developing both theoretical and practical knowledge of traditional and modern mindfulness practices. A theoretical knowledge consists of an understanding that their philosophical origins are part of a larger worldview, as well as how they have been altered for use within therapeutic clinical practices. Moreover, teachers need to develop a theoretical knowledge and understanding of the different roles mindfulness practices assume within each of these variations and the implications of each role when implementing these practices. Specific detail should also be provided so teachers have clear theoretical knowledge regarding how to differentiate between the numerous variations of activities and exercises included within the common term, ‘mindfulness practices’.

Practical knowledge of mindfulness practices requires teachers to develop an understanding of how to implement them with students. This includes teachers being sufficiently knowledgeable to determine when and which practices are appropriate. This practical knowledge should also ensure teachers understand how the practices they are implementing differ from those implemented by psychologists within clinical practice.

The findings of the current study provide an example of how insufficient knowledge and training in mindfulness practices appear to have a negative influence on both teachers’ attitudes and buy-in to school-based mindfulness practices. Therefore, if schools fail to adequately address teacher knowledge prior to expecting teachers to implement mindfulness practices in their classrooms, teachers may be inconsistent or disregard a mindfulness initiative.

**Training.** Being provided with professional training was important to the participants of the current study. Ensuring teachers are receiving adequate training remains the
responsibility of schools and those in charge of implementation. These school leaders cannot assume that purchasing a pre-designed mindfulness package will result in sufficient teacher training, as many programs have been found to provide inadequate training to those staff involved in their implementation. This point is particularly relevant, as many schools are utilising these types of programs. This further highlights the importance of those in charge of the implementation of wellbeing initiatives being competent and knowledgeable themselves. With those in charge of implementation being adequately knowledgeable, they may not simply rely on a pre-packaged whole-school initiative to ensure teachers receive sufficient training; instead, implementers would be able to assess the collective competency and knowledge of teachers to make sure they receive sufficient training for them to feel confident and skilled.

The current study found that participants who had personal experience in the implementation of mindfulness practices had a more positive attitude and were more likely to buy-in to an initiative. Therefore, adequate professional development may be more effective when implemented as a two-stage process, which begins with teachers developing a personal experience. The first stage requires teachers to be trained and confident in the personal implementation of mindfulness practices. Only once educators have had sufficient time and training to be comfortable and confident in personal implementation should they receive professional development in how to implement the practices with students. As this method of professional development requires two stages, it is likely to occur over an extended period of time. This method of implementation becomes a long-term approach and will not be valuable if adequate time is not allowed for each stage of the implementation.

Participants believed they required training in order to support students if they had a negative experience during a mindfulness activity. Their concerns may be allayed if a certain type of mindfulness is implemented. Therefore, in order to assure teachers that they are
receiving adequate and relevant training, schools and implementers will need to be clear in the purpose and method of implementation of mindfulness practices within their school. This is because the mindfulness professional training provided to teachers would need to vary depending on the style of mindfulness being implemented. For example, the implementation of student-centred modern mindfulness practices may require all teachers to be trained in Mental Health First Aid in order to support students should they experience adverse effects during an activity. Alternatively, the implementation of a more teacher-centred mindfulness initiative would require teachers to receive professional training in how to apply mindfulness practices to their everyday responsibilities and interactions, such as behaviour management and relationship-building. Consequently, schools need to be clear about the style of mindfulness being implemented within the school in order to guarantee their teachers receive correct and thorough training.

Whether implementing a student-centred or teacher-centred approach, schools will be required to prioritise the mindfulness initiative by committing adequate funding for the necessary time and training to develop teachers’ knowledge and skills. Examples within the literature of private schools that are currently committing the necessary time and funding to achieve a consistent mindfulness initiative suggest that the overall cost of an effective initiative may be unachievable for individual government schools. For example, if public schools were to follow the model of Geelong Grammar School, they would be required to commit funding for four days of training for all new staff, as well as a single day of refresher training for all staff (Bott et al., 2017). This implies individual schools may require support from the wider educational system in order to provide all staff with adequate professional training.

**Purpose.** Participants of the current study were hesitant to buy-in to a mindfulness initiative as they believed their leadership would have a hidden agenda behind the
implementation. In order to achieve participant buy-in, the implementation of a mindfulness initiative requires the school to be clear and transparent in its purpose. Being transparent in the purpose of implementing mindfulness practices would require schools to clearly state how the practices would be introduced, how the effectiveness of the initiative will be measured, and the expectations of staff and students. Furthermore, schools should clearly outline these processes to staff and students, as well as the wider school community. Being clear and transparent in the purpose behind the implementation of mindfulness practices may be beneficial in three ways: firstly it may relieve concerns regarding hidden intentions behind the practices; secondly, it may help to situate mindfulness practices within the expected role of a teacher; and thirdly, it may hold schools accountable by ensuring the initiative is consistent.

Although there was an acknowledgement that mindfulness practices could improve student attention and academic outcomes, participants were more motivated to buy-in to a mindfulness initiative in order to support student mental health. Therefore, schools that clearly outline how mindfulness practices will be implemented in order to support student mental health are more likely to be positively received than if implemented for the purpose of improving student academic achievement. Consequently, schools that are transparent in how they plan to support student wellbeing through the implementation of mindfulness practices may achieve higher levels of teacher buy-in.

**Method of Implementation.** Participants placed a lot of importance on how mindfulness practices were implemented, mainly advocating for a whole-school approach. Whole-school mindfulness approaches often include the implementation of pre-designed mindfulness packages; however, these packages do not allow for the flexible, embedded approach participants perceived as valuable. Rather than allowing for flexibility, these packages often require teachers to implement a standardised lesson with their students, with
little regard given to their varied needs, backgrounds, or abilities. As an alternative to implementing standardised lessons, a whole-school mindfulness initiative could consist of the commitment to empower all teachers to adapt and implement practices relevant to their students. In this case, a whole-school mindfulness approach could consist of all staff developing a sound knowledge of both modern and traditional mindfulness practices, and receiving professional training in how to competently choose and implement appropriate mindfulness practices. The implementation of this type of mindfulness initiative may encourage teacher buy-in by encouraging them to utilise valuable mindfulness practices they are knowledgeable and confident in, rather than attempting to discretely implement pre-scripted mindfulness practices alongside their already overfull curriculum. Furthermore, empowering participants to be confident in the implementation of mindfulness practices may help to shift the culture of education within the school by allowing teachers ownership over their practices, rather than merely demanding accountability to another initiative. Consequently, a whole-school approach that consists of investing in the time and training necessary to empower all teachers to embed mindfulness practices within their everyday teaching practices may result in a more positive attitude and continued buy-in to a mindfulness initiative than a standardised program.

Participants raised concerns that implementing mindfulness practices would be difficult to fit within an already overfull curriculum. Furthermore, those participants who had experienced the implementation of a pre-designed wellbeing program, which included mindfulness practices, perceive the practices as needing to be implemented as a standalone lesson, outside of their daily curriculum instruction. Consequently, those schools who choose to implement a pre-designed wellbeing policy will need to acknowledge that teachers cannot simply fit another work-package into their already demanding programs. By asking teachers to find additional space within their curriculum time, the additional pressure will likely result
in teachers developing a negative attitude towards the program and possibly not adhering to the lessons. Therefore, in the event that schools decide a pre-designed program is the most effective way to support student wellbeing, timetabling needs to allow for adequate implementation time. Conversely, if teachers are required to implement mindfulness practices discretely, alongside their normal curriculum, schools need to allow flexibility within operational planning to ensure teachers are not simply expected to fit the practices in.

**Recommendation for Future Research**

The current study was designed and conducted as an exploration into the attitudes of secondary teachers regarding the implementation of mindfulness practices in schools. At the time of writing the current thesis, there are only six previous studies that have explored the perceptions of teachers regarding the implementation of mindfulness practices in schools. Furthermore, the current study is the only one to specifically investigate attitudes and the only study conducted specifically with secondary teachers. As this was an exploratory qualitative research project, its generalisability is limited. Despite this, the findings of the current study are consistent with those of the limited previous research. Based on the results, the following recommendations can be made.

**Involve the Whole Educational Community**

As stated previously, the target population of the current study included secondary teachers currently employed by a Department of Education school. While teachers would likely be responsible for the delivery of a school-based mindfulness intervention, it is recognised that the wider school community plays an important role in the success of wellbeing initiatives (Mindful Meditation Australia, 2017); therefore, exploring the attitudes of all stakeholders, including other school staff, students and parents, could be used to further enhance the success of new programs within schools.
**Research Design**

It is recommended that further quantitative data are collected to strengthen the research in this field. To the author’s knowledge, there are currently no quantitative data regarding the attitudes secondary teachers hold towards the implementation of mindfulness practices in schools. At the time of designing the current project, there was insufficient preliminary research on the current topic in order to design and pilot a questionnaire. Quantitative data would allow the data to be collected from a larger population sample, further increasing the generalisability of the findings. The current research project used an attitudinal framework to explore teachers’ attitudes towards mindfulness practices and refine the positive and negative influencing factors on each construct. This foundational research will allow future studies to use the findings from the current study, along with any other relevant recent research that emerges, to develop a survey which could be used to collect quantitative data.

In addition to this, assessing the attitudes of private and independent school stakeholders would also serve to increase the generalisability of any conclusions drawn. There are approximately 1100 schools in Western Australia, 800 of which are public and 300 of which are private (Department of Education, 2020; The Private Schools Guide, 2016). It is recommended that future research include private schools as well as public schools within their target population. By including both public and privately employed teachers, researchers would be able to determine whether this variable has an associated influence. Furthermore, this method would better represent teachers within the Perth metropolitan region and thus increase the generalisability of research findings.

**Final Conclusion**

The primary aim of the current study was to determine secondary teachers’ attitudes towards mindfulness practices being implemented in schools. With the collective measures of
teachers’ affective, cognitive, and behavioural constructs analysed, it was concluded that participants of the current study held ambivalent attitudes towards mindfulness practices being implemented in schools.

Participants’ knowledge, their beliefs regarding their capabilities and their perception of the culture of their school were identified as the main barriers to achieving buy-in to a mindfulness initiative. Participants saw that the school culture prioritised academic results above all else, which led to concerns that implementing mindfulness practices was not part of a teacher’s role and, therefore, doing so would be negligent to their duties. In the case that mindfulness practices were mandated as a school-wide initiative, each participant’s behaviour demonstrated that ensuring teachers have adequate knowledge and training in mindfulness practices is important to achieving teacher buy-in. A further limitation of achieving teacher buy-in was the shared belief that initiatives outside of the academic curriculum were always short-term and implemented in an inauthentic manner. This was the result of participants’ negative perception regarding the intentions of those in charge of implementing mindfulness practices. In order to change this perception, participants required their school’s leadership to demonstrate that their intentions for a mindfulness initiative were indeed to support student wellbeing and that the practices would be prioritised as a long-term initiative.

The implications of these findings suggest that in order to successfully implement a mindfulness initiative, the negative attitudes teachers may hold, as well as the barriers to achieving teacher buy-in, should first be addressed. In order to achieve this, expectations about the teacher’s role in the implementation needs to be clarified through policy and operational planning. In addition to this, providing teachers with the training to develop their knowledge and capabilities over a period of time is required; this may involve schools allowing enough time to develop detailed implementation plans in which all stakeholders are aware of the objectives of the initiative.
Overall, participants had a strong desire to see their students succeed in life, and acknowledged that this often included the need to support students’ wellbeing. Therefore, the participants were collectively receptive to implementing new practices; however, they placed several strict conditions on their buy-in. This may be the most desirable outcome, as it suggests that while teachers are willing to support student wellbeing, they will not do so carelessly. Therefore, by teachers placing stringent conditions on their buy-in to mindfulness initiatives, they may be essentially holding schools and the wider education system accountable for ensuring student wellbeing is a true priority, rather than one in name only.
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## Appendix A

### Interview questions - interview order

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sequence Reasoning</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>TDF Domain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction/ background questions</strong></td>
<td>1. Mental health is increasingly a very high priority within the education community and beyond. As a high school teacher, how do you perceive the mental health of young people to be today?</td>
<td>Optimism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. How would you define your role as a classroom teacher?</td>
<td>Social/Professional Role &amp; Identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mindfulness overview questions</strong></td>
<td>3. Can you describe what Mindfulness means to you?</td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. What experience do you have with Mindfulness in your personal life?</td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. What are the benefits of Mindfulness?</td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. How do you feel about Mindfulness being implemented within schools? [Follow-up] can you elaborate on that feeling?</td>
<td>Emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. How is Mindfulness currently being implemented within [insert school name] and what is your role in it?</td>
<td>Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal experience with Mindfulness in schools</strong></td>
<td>8. Do you believe practices like Mindfulness should be part of your role?</td>
<td>Social/Professional Role &amp; Identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. Have you been trained in Mindfulness? (either through school, online, personal courses)</td>
<td>Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10. Do you feel adequately skilled to implement Mindfulness? [If not] What would support you feeling skilled in implementation?</td>
<td>Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11. Is [details of program] something you do consistently or are there instances in which you do not do [details of program]</td>
<td>Memory, attention &amp; decision processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Domain</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Are there parts of the Mindfulness program that you find harder or</td>
<td>Memory, attention</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>easier to remember and implement?</td>
<td>&amp; decision processes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13. By implementing [program] have you been required to change your</td>
<td>Behaviour</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>normal routine as a classroom teacher?</td>
<td>regulation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14. [POSSIBLE FOLLOW UP] Do you feel as though there are any resources</td>
<td>Environmental context &amp; resources</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>that would make [details] easier for you? For example, extra time or</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Have you personally had any specific difficulties in implementing</td>
<td>Skills</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mindfulness?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>16. Do you have any concerns about you personally implementing</td>
<td>Belief about capabilities</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mindfulness in your classroom?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Opinion questions</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>17. What do you hope to achieve by implementing Mindfulness in the</td>
<td>Goals</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>classroom?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>18. How important do you think it is to continue with [program]</td>
<td>Intentions</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>19. Is there anything that would encourage or discourage your use of</td>
<td>Reinforcement</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mindfulness in the classroom?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>20. [POSSIBLE FOLLOW UP] What, or who, would you say has the largest</td>
<td>Social Influences</td>
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<tr>
<td>influence on this decision – [prompt] personal reasons, resources,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>school admin, students, other teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Are there any circumstances in which you believe the implementation</td>
<td>Optimism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of Mindfulness could have been more successful?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. [POSSIBLE FOLLOW UP] Do you think it will continue to be successful?</td>
<td>Optimism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. What do you foresee the consequences of implementing Mindfulness</td>
<td>Belief about consequences</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>with your students to be?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B

Western Australian Department of Education Approval Letter

Ms Willow Jefferies
13 Clamp Court
EIBRA LAKE WA 6163

Dear Ms Jefferies

Thank you for your application received 5 March 2020 to conduct research on Department of Education sites.

The focus and outcomes of your research project, *An exploration of teachers’ attitudes towards the implementation of mindfulness within schools*, are of interest to the Department. I give permission for you to approach principals to invite their participation in the project as outlined in your application.

Given the current restrictions due to COVID-19, this permission is subject to the following conditions:

1. Consistent with Department policy, participation in your research project will be the decision of the schools invited to participate and individual staff members.

2. A copy of this letter must be provided to principals when requesting their participation in the research.

3. Participation in the research must comply with all COVID-19 related restrictions which remain in place.

4. Researchers are to sign a confidential declaration and provide a Working with Children Check upon arrival at Department of Education schools.

5. Upon conclusion, the results of this study are forwarded to the Department at the email address below.

Responsibility for quality control of ethics and methodology of the proposed research resides with the institution supervising the research. The Department notes a copy of a letter confirming that you have received ethical approval of your research protocol from the Edith Cowan University Human Research Ethics Committee.

Any proposed changes to the research project will need to be submitted for Department approval prior to implementation.

Please contact Ms Bev Vickers, Principal Evaluation Officer, on (08) 9264 5512 or researchandpolicy@education.wa.edu.au if you have further enquiries.
Very best wishes for the successful completion of your project.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

ALAN DODSON
DIRECTOR
SYSTEM AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

3 June 2020
# Appendix C

## Project timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Milestones Overview</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proposal seminar</td>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>May</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confirmation of candidature</td>
<td>May</td>
<td>June</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECU Ethics approval granted</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>July</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>DoE Ethics approval granted</td>
<td>July</td>
<td>Aug</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Amendments &amp; final submission</td>
<td>Aug</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Data Collection &amp; Analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data collection</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thesis Writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Update literature review</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finalise research design</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Complete findings and discussion chapter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Write discussion chapter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finalise conclusion, introduction &amp; abstract</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Final edit of thesis</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The table above outlines the project timeline, with specific milestones and their corresponding months for 2019, 2020, and 2021.
Appendix D

Participant information letter

An exploration of teachers’ attitudes towards the implementation of Mindfulness within schools.

Dear Teacher,

My name is Willow Jefferies and I am a research student from Edith Cowan University. I am conducting a research project that aims to explore how high school teachers perceive Mindfulness and whether they believe it may be a helpful tool when introduced into high schools. The project is being conducted as part of the requirements of a Masters of Education. I am completing this project in consultation with my supervisor, Dr Mandie Shean.

As your school has implemented a program which includes elements of Mindfulness, I would like to invite you to take part in this project. Your school is one of ten public metropolitan secondary schools in Western Australia approached for this project.

What does participating in the research involve?
You are invited to participate in an interview. The intention of the interview is to gain an understanding of how Mindfulness is being implemented within your school, and what opinions teachers hold towards the program in terms of its successes and difficulties. In agreeing to participate in an interview, you will be asked approximately twenty-three questions, which I anticipate will take approximately forty minutes. With your permission I will audio record the interview for transcription purposes and take written notes. You will be provided a copy of the transcribed interview prior to any data analysis to ensure the accuracy of the transcription. Before commencing the interview, you will be required to sign a consent form. A copy of the form is provided below for your convenience.

Do I have to take part?
No. Participating in this research project is entirely voluntary. This decision should always be made completely freely. All decisions made will be respected by members of the research team without question.

What if I wanted to change my initial decision?
Once a decision is made to participate, you can change your mind at any time. If you change your mind, data collected from the interview will not be used in the project.
There will be no consequences relating to any decision you make regarding participation. The decision to withdraw will not affect your relationship with the university, the researcher, or your school.

**What will happen to the information I give, and is privacy and confidentiality assured?**

Information that identifies any school or individual will be removed from the data collected. The data is then stored securely under a password protected computer until the completion of my thesis and can only be accessed by myself and my supervisor, Dr. Mandie Shean. The deidentified data will be stored for a minimum period of 7 years, and may be used in published journal articles. After which it will be deleted (electronic) or shredded (transcripts). Findings will be reported as overall themes identified from aggregated information collected and will not identify an individual school or participants.

Participant privacy, and the confidentiality of information disclosed by participants, is assured at all times, except in circumstances where the research team is legally required to disclose that information.

It is intended that the findings of this study will be used within my final thesis. A summary of the research findings will also be made available upon completion of the project. You can access this by requesting a copy of the summary which will be provided to your school. The summary is expected it to be available in December 2020.

**Is this research approved?**

The research has been approved by the Edith Cowan University Human Research Ethics Committee, approval number 2019-00330-JEFFERIES, and has met the policy requirements of the Department of Education.

**Who do I contact if I wish to discuss the project further?**

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this study with a member of the research team, please contact me on the number provided below. If you wish to speak with an independent person or my supervisor about how the project is being conducted or was conducted, please contact:

Research Ethics Officer  
Edith Cowan University  
270 Joondalup Drive  
JOONDALUP WA 6027  
Phone: (08) 6304 2170  
Email: research.ethics@ecu.edu.au

Dr Mandie Shean  
Edith Cowan University  
270 Joondalup Drive  
JOONDALUP WA 6027  
Phone: (08) 6304 6888  
Email: m.shean@ecu.edu.au

**How do I become involved?**

If you have had all questions about the project answered to your satisfaction, and are willing to become involved, please complete the **Consent Form** on the next page. This information letter is for you to keep.
Ms Willow Jefferies  
Research Student  
Edith Cowan University  
Phone: [REDACTED]  
Email: willowj@our.ecu.edu.au
Appendix E

Participant consent form

LETTER OF CONSENT
Mindfulness as a Whole-School Approach: An Exploration of Teachers’ Attitudes Towards the Implementation of Mindfulness in Classrooms

- I have read and understood the information letter about the project, or have had it explained to me in language I understand.
- I have taken up the invitation to ask any questions I may have had, and am satisfied with the answers I received. I understand that any further questions I may have will be answered by the research team when they arise.
- I understand that participation in the project is entirely voluntarily.
- I am willing to become involved in the project by participating in an interview, as described in the information letter.
- I freely agree to participate in this research project and I understand I am free to withdraw that participation at any time without explanation or penalty.
- I understand that if I do change my mind, data can be withdrawn from the study up until [insert date].
- I give permission for my contribution to this research to be published in a final thesis, provided that I or the school are not identified in any way.
- I understand that I can request a summary of findings once the research has been completed.

Participant Name: __________________________________________
Participant Signature: ________________________________________
Date: ________________________________________________________
### Appendix F

**Interview questions - ordered by TDF-R domain**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TDF Domain</th>
<th>Interview Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Knowledge  | • Can you describe what Mindfulness means to you?  
              • What experience do you have with Mindfulness in your personal life?  
              • What are the benefits of Mindfulness? |
| Skills     | • How is Mindfulness currently being implemented within [insert school name]?  
              • Have you personally had any specific difficulties in implementing Mindfulness?  
              • Have you been trained in Mindfulness? (either through school, online, personal courses)  
              • Do you feel adequately skilled to implement Mindfulness?  
              • What would support you feeling skilled in implementation if not? |
| Social/Professional Role & Identity | • How would you define your role as a classroom teacher?  
                                            • Do you believe practices like Mindfulness should be part of your role? |
| Belief about capabilities | • Do you have any concerns about you personally implementing Mindfulness in your classroom? |
| Optimism | • How successful do you think the implementation of Mindfulness has been within [insert school name].  
            • Do you think it will continue/improve its success in the future?  
            • Mental health is increasingly a very high priority within the education community and beyond. As a high school teacher, how do you perceive the mental health of young people to be today? |
| Belief about consequences | • What do you foresee the consequences of implementing Mindfulness with your students to be? |
| Reinforcement | • Is there anything that would encourage or discourage your use of Mindfulness in the classroom? |
| Intentions | • How important do you think it is to continue with [program] |
| Goals | • What do you hope to achieve by implementing Mindfulness in the classroom? |
| Memory, attention & decision processes | • Is [details] something you do consistently or are their instances in which you do not do [details]  
                                           • Are there parts of the Mindfulness program that you find harder or easier to remember and implement? |
| Environmental context & resources | • Do you feel as though there are any resources that would make [details] easier for you? For example extra time or training |
| Social Influences | • What, or who, would you say has the largest influence on this decision – [prompt] personal reasons, resources, school admin, students, other teachers |
| Emotions | • How do you feel about Mindfulness being implemented within schools?  
            • [Follow-up] can you elaborate on that feeling? |
| Behaviour Regulation | • Have you had to change your anything you would normally do, such as your routine as a classroom teacher in order to incorporate [details] |
Memo Writing

Transcript [removed] 11th July 2020

It seemed to me that the participant was upset at the way Mindfulness was being implemented. She didn’t like that people were using it as a way to get promoted rather than the school/staff taking it seriously. She seemed to feel as though teachers were the victims of the system and being used to help those who are seeking career progression rather than what is best for the students.

She spoke a lot about what she was doing herself, outside of the program which had been designed. It almost sounded as though she wanted some recognition? Or that she was a saviour to students who may have other external forces working against them.

She spoke about teens as though they were helpless. Almost as though it was hopeless for them in this current society. She had a strong message that you need to take control of your own life, no matter what the circumstances. That was the message she was trying to deliver to them, both within her course curriculum and by guiding them with 5 minute relaxation meditations.

Transcript [removed] 25th July 2020

Participant [removed] does not come across as excepting of Mindfulness in schools as Participant [removed] was. He does not have the same content knowledge as the first
participant did, this is evident by his confusion as to what constitutes Mindfulness practices in comparison to ‘wellbeing’ practices in general.

While I am reading his transcript, I can sense a lack of confidence in implementing Mindfulness practices himself. He talks about wanting an exact script to follow, about how it could be harmful if the teacher does not have enough expert knowledge, and about his discomfort in the activities he has been required to do with his students.

I get the sense that he has had some trauma or mental health issues which are influencing his opinions. For example, he talks about hoping that students are happier than he was as a child and that he can “see them going down the same path as he did”.

He appears to have a genuine care for his students, referring to them as “his” kids, rather than students, and hoping that they are happy. This is somewhat contradicted by some of the terms he uses such as; “talk to the dopey cat”

Transcript [removed] & [removed] 26th July 2020

Both Participant [removed] and Participant [removed] have expressed the idea that there is a need for Mindfulness within, however, neither of them are not happy with the way Mindfulness is being implemented within their school. These come from two different place, with Participant [removed] being concerned about the motivation behind the implementation of Mindfulness and Participant [removed] being concerned about the ability of classroom teachers to implement it safely. Participant [removed] has demonstrated a sound understanding of Mindfulness practices, whereas Participant [removed] doesn’t appear to have a full understanding of what constitutes as a Mindful activity, whether formal or informal.
Is there a relationship between the concerns expressed by teachers and the amount of experience and understanding they have about Mindfulness.

Transcript [removed] 28th July 2020

Reading Participant [removed]’s interview again, I can sense a feeling of possible injustice that some people are just happy and others are not. This theme is present through most of the interview and suggests that he disregards strategies such as Mindfulness as being a tool to affect your own personal wellbeing. This is despite his hopes that introducing wellbeing programs into schools will make students happier than he was.


Rereading some of the responses from Participant [removed] has highlighted some possible contradictions. She appears to feel as though teens are overreactive in the present day – possibly even dismissive of their difficulties, however, she states that she has suffered some mental health issues such as anxiety and insomnia. She also mentions cognitive behavioural therapy and sites Mindfulness as a strategy she uses for her anxiety and sleep issues. This suggests that she has sort professional help for the difficulties. This said, she believes that mental health in teens is “deteriorating”.

I find it interesting that Participant [removed] was so receptive to the PERMAH PL after watching her Mum go down a path she did not want to follow. It would be interesting to know whether she had started Mindfulness strategies before the PL or whether the PL just solidified her experience. This is interesting because of what the research says about teachers changing their beliefs in relation to PL. They have to be willing and have some kind of personal motivation to accept the change. She lists a lot of wellbeing strategies, which shows an understanding of the theory behind an all-round approach to healthy lifestyles/wellbeing.
Participant 6 has experienced increased self-regulation from her personal Mindfulness experience and she has tried to implement Mindfulness with her students who demonstrated reactive behaviours.

Combining transcripts into table

Participant [removed] expresses concern over the method of implementation at her current school. She believes that it needs to be developed and implemented by those with special training, however, she then goes onto say that her last school had a very beneficial program that everyday classroom teachers facilitated in they were underload. She also says that she believes the program should be structured and include resources, but contradicts that down the line by implying that her previous school was less structured. This leads me to believe that she has a lot more respect from her previous school and the program/methods that they were using. The other interesting thing I noticed was that she has a negative connotation towards the students at her current school. Perhaps her opinion of her students is leading her to the conclusion that the students are the way they are due to the ineffective implementation of the posed program. Or more likely, the program is unsuccessful based on her perception of the students. Can a teacher successfully deliver a program to students who she perceives to be unresponsive? What is the effect of a teachers perceptions of their students on the success of a wellbeing program?

I also noticed that of the teachers who are currently being asked to implement Mindfulness activities with their students, all of their preconceived beliefs around Mindfulness limit their acceptance of the program they are supposed to be implementing. Participant 1 believes in
the importance of Mindfulness but does not think the method of implementation (booklet learning) is adequate, therefore she does her own thing. Participant 3 expresses concern over the development of the resources, especially in comparison to her previous school, and so chose not to deliver it with her student – although she states that she didn’t deliver it because of the students’ reactions to the program. Participant [removed] does not appear to believe in the benefits of Mindfulness, and leans more to believing that you cannot change your wellbeing. He completes the activities as a passive by-stander and asks the girls to run the activities for him. What message does that give the students who are already sceptical/resistant?

This is in comparison to Participant [removed] who is motivated to implement strategies with her students and has a very positive perception of her students, even implying that students at other schools are not as receptive. Participant [removed] also seeks personal guidance for her own wellbeing from lectures and courses and has implemented different strategies in her own life. She also perceives that these practices have had a positive influence on her own wellbeing. Is it the combination of these factors that influence the willingness of a teacher to implement strategies with their students?
Appendix H

Site manager information letter

Dear [Insert Title and Surname of Site Manager]

An exploration of teachers’ attitudes towards the implementation of Mindfulness within schools.

My name is Willow Jefferies and I am a research student from Edith Cowan University. I am conducting a research project that aims to determine how teachers perceive Mindfulness; their attitudes towards Mindfulness when implemented within high schools; and how these attitudes were formed. The study will also examine common factors that may affect the success of programs in schools in general, as well as Mindfulness programs. The project is being conducted as part of the requirements of a Masters of Education. I am completing this project in consultation with my supervisor, Dr Mandie Shean.

I would like to invite [insert school name] to take part in the project. This is because [insert school name] is currently implementing Mindful activities across the whole school and I believe the teachers could provide valuable insight into the perceptions teachers have towards the practice of Mindfulness in the classroom. [insert school name] is one of ten public metropolitan secondary schools in Western Australia being approached for this project.

What does participation in the research project involve?

I seek access to invite all teachers currently working at [insert school name] to participate in the study.

If granted permission, teachers will be invited to participate in an interview. The interview is estimated to take approximately forty minutes. The study aims to interview twelve teachers in total across all schools which agree to take part. I will audio record each interview as well as take written notes. Once the audio recording has been transcribed participants will be provided a copy of the transcription to ensure the accuracy of the data.

I will keep the [insert type of Department site, e.g. school, college]’s involvement in the administration of the research procedures to a minimum. However, it will be necessary for the [insert type of Department site, e.g. school, college] to allow me to conduct interviews with willing teachers.
To what extent is participation voluntary, and what are the implications of withdrawing that participation?

Participation in this research project is entirely voluntary. If an individual decides to participate and then later changes their mind, they are able to withdraw their participation at any time. If the participant withdraws consent all of their data will also be withdrawn from the study. There will be no consequences relating to any decision by an individual or the [insert type of Department site, e.g. school, college] regarding participation, other than those already described in this letter. Decisions made will not affect the relationship with the research team or Edith Cowan University.

What will happen to the information collected, and is privacy and confidentiality assured?

Information that identifies a school or any individual will be removed from the data collected, including all transcripts and recordings. The data will then be stored securely on a password protected computer until the completion of my thesis and can only be accessed by myself and my supervisor, Dr Mandie Shean. The deidentified data will be stored for a minimum period of 7 years, and may be used in published journal articles. After which it will be deleted (electronic) or shredded (transcripts). Findings will be reported as overall themes identified from aggregate information collected and will not identify any individual school or participant.

The identity of participants and the school will not be disclosed at any time, except in circumstances that require reporting under the Department of Education Child Protection policy, or where the research team is legally required to disclose that information. Participant privacy, and the confidentiality of information disclosed by participants, is assured at all other times. The data will be used only for this project, and will not be used in any extended or future research without first obtaining explicit written consent from participants.

Consistent with Department of Education policy, a summary of the research findings will be made available to the participating site(s) and the Department of Education. This will be available in December 2020.

Is this research approved?
The research has been approved by the Edith Cowan University Human Research Ethics Committee, approval number 2019-00330-JEFFERIES, and has met the policy requirements of the Department of Education as indicated in the attached letter.

Who do I contact if I wish to discuss the project further?

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this study with a member of the research team, please contact me on the number provided below. If you wish to speak with an independent person or my supervisor about how the project is being conducted or was conducted, please contact:

Research Ethics Officer
Edith Cowan University
270 Joondalup Drive
JOONDALUP WA 6027
Phone: [redacted]
Email: research.ethics@ecu.edu.au

Dr Mandie Shean
Edith Cowan University
270 Joondalup Drive
JOONDALUP WA 6027
Phone: [redacted]
Email: m.shean@ecu.edu.au

How do I indicate my willingness for the [insert type of Department site, e.g. school, college] to be involved?

If you have had all questions about the project answered to your satisfaction, and are willing for the [insert type of Department site, e.g. school, college] to participate, please complete the Consent Form on the following page.

This information letter is for you to keep.

Regards,

Ms Willow Jefferies
Research Student
Edith Cowan University
Phone: 0410 174 362
Email: willowj@our.ecu.edu.au
Appendix I

Site manager Consent Form

- I have read this document and understand the aims, procedures, and risks of this project, as described within it.
- For any questions I may have had, I have taken up the invitation to ask those questions, and I am satisfied with the answers I received.
- I am willing for this [insert name of Department site] to become involved in the research project, as described.
- I understand that participation in the project is entirely voluntarily.
- I understand that the [insert name of Department site] is free to withdraw its participation at any time, without affecting the relationship with the research team or Edith Cowan University.
- I understand that if I do change my mind, data can be withdrawn from the study up until [insert date].
- I understand that this research may be used in a thesis which will be used for a Masters of Education degree, provided that the participants or the school are not identified in any way.
- I understand that the [insert name of Department site] will be provided with a copy of the findings from this research upon its completion.

Name of Site Manager (printed): ________________________________
Signature: ________________________________
Date: ________________________________