

Developing Empathy Skills among Early Childhood Teachers by Fostering Mindfulness in the Educational Setting

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Abstract: *The study sought to determine how promoting mental alertness in the educational environment contributes to the development of emotional empathy abilities among early childhood instructors. The descriptive analytical method was utilized to fulfil the study's aims. Frank, Jennings, and Greenberg developed the mental alertness in teaching scale, which served as the study tool. (Frank, Jennings, & Greenberg, 2016), which has three dimensions (calmness, kindness, and clarity of thought), and the Empathy Compassion Scale established by Caruso and Mayer (Caruso & Mayer, 1998), which has six dimensions (suffering, positive involvement, responsiveness). Crying, emotional attentiveness, concern for others, and emotional contagion. The validity and reliability of the research tools were established. The study sample included (300) male and female early childhood teachers recruited using the available method from Nazareth District's elementary schools and children classes. The findings revealed a strong positive relationship between mental alertness in teaching and the development of emotional empathy skills among early childhood teachers, as well as a positive and statistically significant contribution of mental alertness in the educational environment to teachers' emotional empathy. The findings of the multivariate triple analysis of variance revealed that the gender variable had a statistically significant effect on emotional empathy in favor of women. The findings also revealed that there was no statistically significant effect of educational degree, experience, or school level on empathy and mental attentiveness in the classroom. The study recommended that those in charge of the educational learning process focus their efforts on developing specialized training programmes aimed at improving mental alertness among early childhood teachers, and that educational institutions implement supportive policies and programmes to improve mental alertness among early childhood educators. It is suggested that practical training programmes incorporate opportunities. The study suggested conducting research studies to assess the efficacy of programmes to improve teachers' mindfulness in developing empathic empathy skills in the field of early childhood education.*

Keywords: Educational Environment, Mindfulness, Empathetic Empathy, School Teachers, Early Childhood Education

1. Introduction

The success of society in achieving its goals depends greatly on the competence and dedication of teachers. The more a teacher has distinguished teaching skills and his ability to build positive relationships with students, the more he contributes to developing their creative and mental powers, and thus contributes to building a bright future for society. Children are a gift from God is a blessing, and we must care for them appropriately, as they represent the continuity of life and future generations and what we plant in them when they are young we reap later. We instill in them ideals and ideas while also enriching their surroundings with knowledge and concepts that will help them learn, move and develop emotionally and socially, and this undoubtedly helps. Humans are able to refine their personalities and shape their psychological and behavioral characteristics.

Developing emotional empathy skills among teachers in the field of early childhood can play a prominent role in enhancing the quality of education in this vital period in children's lives (Shuaib and Ali, 2020). Emotional empathy is considered one of the basic factors that greatly influence the interaction between the teacher and the child and the building of positive relationships that contribute to the comprehensive development of the child (Al - Ruwaili, Al - Nashmi, 2019). In this context, Khashaba and Fatima (2018) stated that promoting mindfulness in the educational environment can be an effective way to improve teachers' empathy skills. Enhancing mental alertness can contribute to

improving awareness of oneself and others and enhancing the ability to think consciously and analyze situations better (Al - Dakhil Allah, Dakhil, 2007). Jennings & Greenberg (2009) consider that learning from direct example of applying emotional and social skills is the most effective in building children's emotional abilities. Accordingly, it appears that developing emotional empathy skills among teachers in the field of early childhood can be essential in Improving the quality of education and promoting comprehensive child development. It is therefore important that more research and applied experiments are conducted to explore the effectiveness of this approach and determine the most effective methods for applying it in different educational settings. Ahmetoglu and Acar (2016) stated that the teacher has a major role towards students, as he transfers knowledge and skills to them, and contributes to forming a new class of conscious and responsible citizens. Therefore, the teacher is considered an essential partner in the process of building and developing society (Toran, 2017). Empathy skills are among the most important skills that teachers must possess in the field of early childhood, as the child at this stage of his life is more vulnerable to external influences, and needs someone who understands his feelings and responds to them appropriately (Ayles, 2018).

2. Study Problem

Most of what the educational process aims to do is prepare a generation capable of learning and keeping pace with the latest developments of the times in a positive and dynamic

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way, in order to use them effectively in their lives. The greatest role falls on the teacher, so the problem of this study lies in the importance of qualifying and preparing the teacher because of his great importance in the educational and pedagogical system. He is the basic foundation for bringing about change and development and is the key to success and achieving quality educational outcomes. This requires that the teacher have a degree of skills. Which enables him to deal with the changing educational reality, be open to everything new, and be prepared to accept change, which means the necessity of possessing the emotional empathy skills of teachers in the field of early childhood by enhancing mental alertness in the educational environment in order to contribute to performing the work as expected. In light of the teacher's multiple roles, his ability to adapt to changes depends on the skills and capabilities of emotional empathy he possesses and develops, which in turn will achieve effectiveness and enhance vigilance in the learning environment and be reflected in his performance in general.

Research questions:

- 1) Does mindfulness contribute to developing emotional empathy skills among teachers in the field of early childhood in the educational environment in a statistically significant way?
- 2) Are there statistically significant differences between the averages of emotional empathy and mental alertness among teachers in the field of early childhood in the educational environment, due to the variables (gender, educational qualification, and years of experience) ?

Significance of the Study

The research is of great importance for several reasons, including the lack of Arab research that addresses the topic of developing emotional empathy skills among teachers in the field of early childhood. In addition to the need to educate teachers about the importance of mental alertness and its role in developing emotional empathy skills and defining the role of mental alertness in developing emotional empathy skills among teachers in the field of early childhood, the importance of research also comes in providing practical suggestions for developing emotional empathy skills among teachers by enhancing mental alertness in Education environment. This study seeks to explore ways in which emotional empathy skills can be developed among teachers in the field of early childhood, by enhancing mental alertness in the educational environment, and to propose strategies for developing teachers' emotional empathy skills by enhancing mental alertness in the educational environment.

Definition of Terms:

Early childhood: The early childhood stage is usually known as the period that extends from birth until the age of eight or nine. It is a vital period in a child's life where many physical, mental and social developments occur. Paying attention to this period is considered one of the most important factors that affect the child's development later in his life. Berk, (2015). The researcher defines it procedurally as: childhood in the country, which is a very important period in a person's life where many basic skills and abilities are developed. This stage includes two main periods: early childhood (up to the

age of 6 years) and late childhood (from 6 years to the age of 12 years).

Teachers in the field of early childhood: They are people who work directly with children in kindergartens, kindergartens, and the first grades of primary school to provide them with appropriate care and education. This category includes male and female teachers who provide support and guidance to children to ensure that they receive appropriate care and education, and develop themselves to better understand the needs of children. and developments of young children and to develop policies and programs that effectively support their development (Parke, & Gauvain, 2009).

Empathy: "The ability to monitor the feelings and emotions of others, differentiate between them, and use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (Caruso & Mayer, 1998). The researcher defines it procedurally as the ability of teachers in the field of early childhood to share their feelings with students, and it is measured by the total score of the responses of the study sample members on the emotional empathy scale with its six dimensions (suffering, positive participation, crying response, emotional attention, feeling for others, and emotional contagion) that was used. In this study.

Mindfulness: "The practice of being aware of the current situation, moment by moment, without making evaluative judgments about it" (Frank, et al., 2016). The researcher defines it procedurally as the ability of teachers in the field of early childhood to pay attention to what is happening at the present moment instead of thinking about the past or worrying about the future, and it is measured by the total score of the study sample members' responses on the mental alertness scale prepared by Frank et al. (Frank, et al., 2016). which was used for this purpose.

3. Literature Review

Early childhood plays a crucial role in developing an individual's personality and forming a solid foundation for his learning and subsequent development, and it is known that teachers in the field of early childhood play a vital role in encouraging children's growth and developing their social and emotional abilities (Al - Darabkeh, Muhammad, Al - Rashidi, Abdul Majeed, Al - Otaibi, and Nouf 2023). Children are born with a blank piece of paper for their mothers and fathers to engrave, and after that they learn a set of words that form a language through which they communicate with the outside world (Thomas, & Otis 2010). The youngsters then notice the presence of individuals around them, each with their own set of differences, and what they have learned about the concepts, values, morals, customs, natures, and techniques by which they interact with others (Al - Mutlaq and Abdel - Aziz, 2023). The importance of strong education that begins in childhood. Raising children is a huge and very sensitive task, especially in this era, with so many changes, rapid events, the opening of the world, and changing concepts (Al - Dhabani, Amer, 2021). However, the modern educational system faces several challenges in developing teachers' empathy skills, and this can negatively impact the learning experience and development of children at the early stage. Therefore, promoting mindfulness among teachers may have

a significant impact on developing their empathy skills. Thus improving the quality of education and interaction with children (Al - Dhabani, Amer, 2021).

Enhancing empathy and self - awareness skills among early childhood teachers: The role of the educational environment and daily routines:

As stated by Jennings and Greenberg (2009), early childhood teachers play a pivotal role in shaping the social and emotional development of young children. By showing empathy, teachers can create a caring and inclusive atmosphere where children feel valued and understood. Empathic childhood teachers are better equipped to respond to the diverse needs of their students, handle conflicts effectively, and develop a sense of belonging within the classroom community (Hen, 2010). To develop emotional empathy skills among teachers in the field of early childhood, the skills necessary to understand and express feelings, make decisions, and form relationships must be developed. Some skills are related to teachers' relationships with those around them and other skills depend on regulating their emotions, and these skills develop with teachers in their work, including relationship skills. With others (Bullough, 2019). The teacher's ability to instill these skills comes into play in kindergarten, where children play with their friends and convey their feelings and thoughts through words and sentences, in addition to their ability to understand the feelings of their friends, and children learn and strengthen their personal relationships when they participate in kindergarten and its various activities (Al - Darabkeh, Muhammad, Al - Rashidi, Abdul Majeed, Al - Otaibi and Nouf 2023).

Promoting Empathy and Mindfulness: A Vital Imperative for Early Childhood Educators:

Emotional empathy is one of the psychological and social variables that plays an important role in an individual's social and professional life, as it enables him to be aware of the thoughts and feelings of others (Shehadeh, 2018). The teacher - who is the one who has the most contact with the students, and who plays the most prominent role in achieving the goals of the educational process - needs to use his attention in a positive and effective way, in order to understand the students and interact with them emotionally, as the students need an atmosphere in which they feel sympathy and emotional participation. And to the teacher's understanding of their concerns and hopes (Australian Childhood Foundation 2013). Khamis, Abdel Azim, Mohamed, and Hassan (2023) stated that promoting mindfulness among teachers can play a crucial role in developing their empathy skills and improving the quality of early childhood education. It is important for educational institutions and relevant authorities to adopt these findings and direct efforts and resources towards developing training programs aimed at enhancing mental alertness among teachers with the aim of enhancing their empathy skills and thus promoting the comprehensive development of children in the early stage (Bernay 2014).

Empathy in early childhood education:

Early childhood teachers play a pivotal role in shaping the social and emotional development of young children. By showing empathy, teachers can create a nurturing, inclusive atmosphere where children feel valued and understood. Empathetic teachers are better equipped to respond to the

diverse needs of their students, handle conflicts effectively, and develop a sense of By belonging within the classroom community Greason, & (Cashwell, 2009). Meyers, Rowell, Wells, and Smith (2019) stated that empathy is a critical skill for teachers, especially those who work with young children in early childhood education. It involves the ability to understand and share the feelings of others, which is essential for creating supportive learning environments and promoting positive relationships (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 1999). In recent years, there has been increasing interest in incorporating mindfulness practices into educational settings as a way to enhance various social and emotional skills, including empathy (Mapel, 2012).

Empathy among early childhood educators includes being affected by the other's emotional state, sharing it, evaluating the reasons for the other's condition, identifying with the other, and adopting his or her point of view. Cognitive empathy refers to understanding the mental states of others, such as thoughts and feelings, and taking their perspectives (Centeno, & Fernandez K. (2020). Affective empathy includes cognitive and emotional processes that reinforce each other (Al - Mutlaq & Abdel - Aziz, 2023). Researchers have defined empathy in different ways. Some have focused on cognitive aspects, while others have focused on emotional aspects (Hen, 2010). Some researchers define empathy as an increased response to the emotional experience of others, while others view it as a set of interconnected constructs related to responding to others (Bernay 2014). Empathic empathy is essential for an individual's social development, as it affects his behavior toward others and the quality of his social relationships (Bullough, 2019). It is necessary to stimulate positive social behavior, including adherence to social rules and engaging in altruistic behavior. Empathic empathy always facilitates the development of social competence and enhances The quality of meaningful relationships (Al - Darabkeh, Muhammad, Al - Rashidi, Abdel - Majeed, Al - Otaibi, and Nouf 2023).

Mindfulness in early childhood teaching:

Research on developing empathy skills in early childhood educators through promoting brain - related mindfulness in the educational setting provides significant advances in our understanding of mindfulness, sparking the interest of researchers and scholars in this field. Mental alertness among teachers in the field of early childhood is considered a set of competencies and abilities that can be learned and developed, as it plays an important role in expanding the individual's horizons and increasing his opportunities, and gives him flexibility and the ability to interact with his environment (Bullough, 2019). The term "mindfulness" is interpreted differently in the literature, with some considering it an exercise of the mind that affects cognitive and emotional processes, and leads to improved brain structure and function (Hen, 2010).

In the field of teaching, mindfulness is defined by early childhood educators as the practice of being aware of current reality without over - judgment, a process of intentionally recognizing experiences without rushing to judge them, which helps enhance awareness and focus on the current experience (Centeno, & Fernandez, 2020). Mindfulness allows individuals to become aware of their experience as it

occurs, while maintaining an attitude of curiosity and kindness, leading to increased awareness, wisdom, and empathy (Al - Darabkeh, Mohamed, Al - Rashidi, Abdel - Majeed, Al - Otaibi, and Nouf 2023).

The role of mindfulness in enhancing empathy:

Mindfulness involves paying attention to the present moment with openness, curiosity, and acceptance. By practicing mindfulness, teachers can enhance their ability to regulate their emotions, manage stress, and develop empathy for others. Mindfulness techniques, such as deep breathing, meditation, and mindful listening, can help teachers develop greater self - awareness and attune to their students' experiences (Al - Mutlaq and Abdel - Aziz, 2023). This heightened awareness enables teachers to respond to difficult situations with empathy and understanding, thus modeling empathic behavior for their students (Bernay, 2014). Early childhood is a sensitive period in a person's life, during which basic social and emotional skills are formed. Teachers play an important role at this stage, as they can greatly influence the development of their children's empathy skills. (Barr, 2011) Mindfulness is a practice that helps focus on the present moment without judgment. Mindfulness enables teachers to be more aware of their thoughts, feelings, and behavior, which helps them deal with difficult situations better (Mahrous, 2022). Mindfulness promotes empathy in teachers by increasing self - awareness. Mindfulness helps teachers be more aware of their thoughts and feelings, which helps them better understand their children's feelings Australian Childhood Foundation (2013). Mindfulness improves communication skills. Mindfulness helps teachers improve communication skills with their children, which helps them express their feelings better (Al - Darabkeh, Muhammad, Al - Rashidi, Abdul Majeed, Al - Otaibi, and Nouf 2023).

Benefits of enhancing empathy among childhood teachers:

Empathy helps build strong relationships between teachers and children, which improves learning experiences. Empathy contributes to creating a positive and supportive learning environment, which encourages learning. Empathy helps improve children's learning skills, such as problem solving and critical thinking, as teachers can practice meditation on a regular basis to improve their self - awareness and concentration skills (Mahrous, 2022). Teachers can use deep breathing techniques to deal with difficult situations. Teachers can practice body awareness techniques to increase their awareness of their feelings (Al - Mutlaq and Abdel Aziz, 2023). Al - Dhabani and Amer (2021) stated that there are many ways to promote mindfulness in the educational environment, and to integrate mindfulness practices into the daily routine of early childhood education settings, teachers can incorporate short mindfulness exercises into morning meetings or transition times, which encourages students to stop and reflect on their thoughts and feelings. Providing opportunities for nature walks, sensory experiences, and mindful movement activities can also promote relaxation and emotional regulation among teachers and students. Additionally, creating a supportive professional development culture that prioritizes self - care and mindfulness training can enable teachers to Develop empathy skills and enhance their overall well - being.

Theories that address mental alertness in teaching:

Mindfulness in teaching is one of the forms of mindfulness at the individual level, as teachers' mental awareness contributes to enhancing their understanding of themselves and their students, and thus positively affects the quality of education and the classroom environment (Greason, & Cashwell, 2009). Some theories have addressed mindful behavior in individuals, such as Allen - Langer's theory and Oldham's theory, which focus on different factors that affect the level of mental alertness of individuals (Al - Mutlaq and Abdel - Aziz, 2023). Allen - Langer's theory (1989a) began with the idea of mindful behavior as a warning behavior, through which individuals can interact with their environment more consciously and analytically. Factors in this theory include rethinking, analyzing automatic behavior, accepting new ideas, emphasizing process rather than outcome, and using doubt as a means of stimulating rational analysis. As for Oldham's theory (Oldham, 1995), it focuses on the personal characteristics that distinguish individuals with mental alertness, such as independence, caution, self - defense, sensitivity to criticism, self - awareness, and sincerity.

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4. Study Methodology

The current study used the descriptive analytical approach to identify the relative contribution to developing emotional empathy skills among teachers in the field of early childhood through enhancing mental alertness in the educational environment, in order to achieve the objectives of this study. The study population consisted of all male and female teachers working in the field of early childhood in schools, numbering (1, 014) male and female teachers from primary schools and childhood classes in Nazareth District, according to statistical records for the academic year 2023 - 2024. The study sample consisted of (300) male and female teachers working in the field of early childhood and primary schools in Nazareth District, who were selected in the available manner. Table (1) shows the distribution of the study sample members according to the variables of gender, academic qualification, and years of experience.

Table 1: Distribution of the study sample according to the variables of gender, experience, and educational qualification

Variable	Variable Levels/Categories	No	Percentage
Gender	male	100	33%
	Female	200	67%
Qualification	Bachelor's	219	73%
	Master's degree or more	81	27%
Years of Experience	Less than 10 years	97	32%
	From 10 to Less than 20 years	135	45%
	20 Years and over	68	23%
Total		300	%100

Table (1) shows the distribution of study sample members according to the variables of gender, experience, and educational qualification. Two tools were used for the study. The first tool was the Multi - Dimensional Emotional Empathy Scale, which was developed by Caruso and Mayer (1998), and includes thirty items classified according to a five - point Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, neutral). When the scale is corrected, grades (5, 4, 6, 2, 1) are given, respectively. As for the second tool, the mental alertness scale for teachers prepared by Frank, Jennings, and Greenberg was used (Frank, Jennings, & Greenberg, 2016).

5. Results

First: Results related to the answer to the first question: **“Does mindfulness contribute to developing the emotional empathy skills of teachers in the field of early childhood in the educational environment in a statistically significant way?”** To identify the results of mental alertness predicting the development of emotional empathy skills among teachers in the field of early childhood in the educational environment, the correlation coefficient (Pearson) was calculated for the relationship between the development of emotional empathy skills and mental alertness in teaching among teachers in the field of early childhood in the educational environment, and Table (2)) explains that.

Table 2: Pearson correlation coefficient for the relationship between developing empathic skills and mindfulness in teaching among teachers in the field of early childhood in the educational environment

Domain	1	2	3
Empathic empathy	1		
Mindfulness in teaching	.251**	.342**	1

**Statistically significant at the level (0.01≥P).

It is noted from Table (2) that emotional empathy has a positive, statistically significant relationship with mental alertness in teaching (r = 0.226; P < 0.01). This means that the level of emotional empathy increases with the increase in the level of mental alertness in teaching. To reveal the relative contribution (predictive ability) of mindfulness in teaching by developing emotional empathy skills among teachers in the field of early childhood in the educational environment, a stepwise regression analysis was used. Before performing multiple regression analysis, multicollinearity was checked, where multicollinearity (or collinearity) occurs when there are high correlations between a set of predictor variables. In other words, multicollinearity occurs when two or more Predictor (independent) variables contain much of the same

information, and Variance of the Inflation Factor (VIF) and Tolerance Index (TI) are two methods used to check the degree of multicollinearity (Pallant, 2010). As can be seen from Table (11), the VIF values are less than 10, and the Tolerance (TI) values are greater than 0.10, and this indicates that the multicollinearity assumption is not violated.

Accordingly, a stepwise multiple regression analysis was performed, extracting the multiple linear regression coefficients (R) and their squares (R²) and the amount of change values in those coefficients, and Table (3) shows the results of that:

Table 3: Coefficients of multiple linear regression analysis using the Stepwise method for the predictive ability of mental alertness in teaching by developing emotional empathy skills among teachers in the field of early childhood in the educational environment

Sample	R Correlation coefficient	R ² The coefficient of determination	Adjusted R Square	Standard error of estimate	Change statistics				
					R ² (ΔR ²)	Change in F calculated	Degree of freedom of expansion	Degree of freedom of position	Statistical significance
1	0.534	0.285	0.283	0.284	0.013	10.187	1	555	0.001

It is noted from Table (3) that the model for the predictors (mental alertness in teaching) was 28.5% (R² =.285), while the variable “mental alertness in teaching” alone explained 1.3% of the total explained variance in emotional empathy in the sample. study, and it is also clear that all values of change in the explained variance were statistically significant at the

significance level (0.01≥P). A one - way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was calculated for the linear regression analysis coefficients of mental alertness in teaching with empathic empathy among the teaching sample, and Table (4) shows this:

Table 4: Results of the predictive ability of mindfulness in teaching by developing empathic empathy skills among teachers in the field of early childhood in the educational setting

Sample	variable	Unstandardized transactions		Standard coefficients	Statistician (t)	Statistical significance	Tolerance	VIF
		B	Standard error	Beta				
First	Gradient constant	2.054	0.152		13.52	0		
	Mindfulness in teaching	0.089	0.028	0.121	3.192	0.001	0.897	1.114

It is noted from Table (4) that mindfulness in teaching has a positive predictive ability to develop emotional empathy skills among teachers in the field of early childhood in the educational environment (β = 0.121; t = 3.192; p < 0.01), and contributes 1.3% of the variance in emotional empathy. (ΔR²=0.013; P<0.01). Therefore, mindfulness has a strong

predictive effect on emotional empathy. To identify the results of the prediction of the areas of teaching self - efficacy and mental alertness with the areas of emotional empathy combined, the correlation coefficient (Pearson) was calculated for the relationship between emotional empathy and mental alertness in teaching among the study sample, and Table (5) shows this.

Table 5: Coefficients of multiple linear regression analysis using the Stepwise method for the predictive ability of mental alertness in teaching by developing emotional empathy skills among teachers in the field of early childhood in the educational environment

Sample	R Correlation coefficient	R ² The coefficient of determination	Adjusted R Square	Standard error of estimate	Change statistics				
					R ² (ΔR ²)	Change in F calculated	Degree of freedom of expansion	Degree of freedom of position	Statistical significance
1	0.596	0.355	0.353	0.27	0.038	32.345	1	555	0
2	0.604	0.365	0.361	0.268	0.01	8.45	1	554	0.004

It is noted from Table (5) that in the first model of the predictors, all values of the change in the explained variance were statistically significant at the significance level (0.01≥P). A one - way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was calculated for the linear regression analysis coefficients for

the predictive ability of the predictive ability areas of mental alertness in teaching by developing emotional empathy skills among teachers in the field of early childhood in the educational environment of the study sample, and Table (6) shows this.

Table 6: One - way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for the regression analysis coefficients for the predictive ability of mindfulness in teaching by developing empathic empathy skills among teachers in the field of early childhood in the educational setting

Sample	Source of variance	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean squares	(F)	Significance level
1	Gradient constant	22.239	2	11.12	152.688	0
	The rest	40.418	555	0.073		
	Total	62.657	557			
2	Gradient constant	22.846	3	7.615	105.975	0
	The rest	39.811	554	0.072		
	Total	62.657	557			

It is noted from Table (6) that there is a statistically significant effect of the first predictor model (the teacher’s effectiveness in engaging students in the teaching - learning process) on internal empathy ($F(1, 556) = 258.461; p < 0.01$). There is a statistically significant effect for the second predictor model (the teacher’s effectiveness in engaging students in the teaching - learning process, kindness) on emotional empathy ($F(1, 555) = 152.688; p < 0.01$), and there is a statistically significant effect for the third predictor model (the teacher’s effectiveness in Involving students in the teaching - learning process, kindness, calmness) in emotional empathy ($F(1, 555) = 105.975; p < 0.01$).

Second: Results related to the answer to the second question: “Are there statistically significant differences between the averages of emotional empathy and mental alertness among teachers in the field of early childhood in the educational environment, due to the variables (gender, educational qualification, and years of experience) ?”

To answer this question, the arithmetic means and standard deviations were calculated for the study sample’s estimates of the level of emotional empathy and mental alertness in teaching among teachers in the field of early childhood in the teaching environment from the teachers’ point of view, according to the variables of gender, academic qualification, and years of experience. As shown in Table (7).

Table 7: Arithmetic means and standard deviations for the level of emotional empathy and mental alertness in teaching according to demographic variables

Dependent variable	Demographic variable		Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation
Empathic empathy	Gender	male	4.2	0.38
		Female	4.31	0.32
	Qualification	Bachelor's	4.28	0.33
		Master's degree or more	4.29	0.34
	Years of Experience	Less than 10 years	4.31	0.34
		From 10 to Less than 20 years	4.29	0.35
Years and over 20		4.28	0.33	
Mindfulness in teaching	Gender	male	3.65	0.46
		Female	3.64	0.46
	Qualification	Bachelor's	3.65	0.42
		Master's degree or more	3.64	0.46
	Years of Experience	Less than 10 years	3.64	0.48
		From 10 to Less than 20 years	3.69	0.5
Years and over 20		3.61	0.42	

It is noted from Table (7) that there are apparent differences between the averages of the study sample’s estimates of the level of emotional empathy and mental alertness in teaching among the study sample, according to the variables of gender, educational qualification, and years of experience. To determine the statistical significance of the differences between the arithmetic means of the study sample’s estimates of the level of emotional empathy and mental alertness in

teaching among school teachers combined (linear combination) in the study sample, according to the variables of gender, educational qualification, and years of experience, a multivariate analysis of variance (without interaction) was used., and using the Wilks - Lambda test. Before conducting a four - way MANOVA, the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was used, and Table (8) shows this.

Table 8: Results of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity

3	2	1	The independent variable
		1	1. Empathic empathy
1	.320**	.276**	2. Mindfulness in teaching
Bartlett's test value = 246.678, degrees of freedom (3), and statistically significant at the level (P < 0.01)			

It is noted from Table (8) that the chi - square value is statistically significant ($\text{Chi - square} = 246.678; df = 3; P < 0.01$); Therefore, there is no interference between the three variables, and the possibility of conducting a multivariate

three - way analysis of variance. Accordingly, a three - way multivariate analysis of variance (without interaction) (Four - way MANOVA) was conducted using the Wilks - Lambda test, as shown in Table (9).

Table 9: Results of the Wilks Lambda test for the effect of demographic variables on the study sample’s estimates of the level of mental alertness in teaching by developing emotional empathy skills among teachers in the field of early childhood in the educational environment

Independent variable	value ¹	F	Degree of freedom	Degree of freedom error	Statistical significance	ETA square
Gender	0.98	3.761	3	548	0.011	0.02
Qualification	0.995	0.927	3	548	0.427	0.005
Years of Experience	0.991	0.808	6	1096	0.563	0.004

The results of Table (9) showed a statistically significant effect of the gender variable on the study sample’s estimates of the level of emotional empathy and mental alertness in

teaching combined. The Eta square value indicates that the gender variable explains (2%) of the variance in the study sample’s estimates of the level of emotional empathy and

mental alertness in teaching combined. Empathic empathy and mindfulness in combined teaching. In contrast, there is no statistically significant effect of the variables of educational qualification, experience, and school level on emotional empathy and mental alertness in teaching combined. To determine the statistical significance of the apparent

differences between the averages of the study sample's estimates of the level of emotional empathy and mental alertness in teaching among school teachers (single), according to the variables of gender, educational qualification, and years of experience, a three - way analysis of variance was used, and Table (10) shows this.

Table 10: Results of a three - way analysis of variance to compare the arithmetic means of the level of emotional empathy and mental alertness in teaching separately, according to demographic variables.

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Mean squares	F	Statistical significance	ETA square
Gender	Empathic empathy	0.569	1	0.569	5.11	0.024	0.009
	Mindfulness in teaching	0.067	1	0.067	0.325	0.569	0.001
Qualification	Empathic empathy	0.051	1	0.051	0	0.995	0
	Mindfulness in teaching	0.001	1	0.001	0.003	0.957	0
Years of Experience	Empathic empathy	0.078	2	0.039	0.349	0.706	0.001
	Mindfulness in teaching	0.784	2	0.392	1.897	0.151	0.007
Error	Empathic empathy	61.246	550	0.111			
	Mindfulness in teaching	113.669	550	0.207			
Total	Empathic empathy	10314.249	558				
	Mindfulness in teaching	7529.702	558				

It is noted from Table (10) that there is a statistically significant effect of the gender variable on the study sample's estimates of emotional empathy, in favor of females, and there is no statistically significant effect of the gender variable on the study sample's estimates of mental alertness in teaching. It was also found that there was no statistically significant effect of academic qualification variables on the study sample's estimates of the level of predictive ability of mental alertness in teaching by developing emotional empathy skills among teachers in the field of early childhood in the educational environment (single) among school teachers.

6. Discuss The Results

The current study aimed to investigate the relative contribution to developing emotional empathy skills among teachers in the field of early childhood through enhancing mental alertness in the educational environment.

First: Discussing the results related to the first question: "Does mindfulness contribute to developing the emotional empathy skills of teachers in the field of early childhood in the educational environment in a statistically significant way?"

Pearson correlation coefficients indicated that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between mindfulness in teaching and the development of emotional empathy skills among teachers in the field of early childhood in the educational environment. In other words, the level of teachers' estimates of the level of emotional empathy increases with the increase in the level of their estimates of mental alertness in teaching in the field of early childhood. In the education environment. The researcher believes that the positive relationship between mental alertness in teaching and the development of emotional empathy skills among teachers in the field of early childhood is due to several reasons, as there is a strong positive relationship between mental alertness in teaching and the development of emotional empathy skills among teachers in the field of early childhood.

This relationship can be explained by several factors, including:

- Deep understanding of feelings: Mindfulness allows teachers to better understand their feelings, thoughts, and behavior. This enables them to understand their children's feelings more accurately, which increases their ability to empathize with them.
- Self - awareness: Mindfulness helps teachers be more aware of themselves, including their prejudices and biases. This enables them to deal with their feelings better, making them less likely to affect their interactions with their children.
- Self - regulation: Mindfulness helps teachers better regulate their feelings, thoughts, and behavior. This enables them to deal with difficult situations more effectively, making them less likely to display unwanted behaviour.
- Awareness of others: Mindfulness helps teachers be more aware of the feelings, thoughts, and behavior of others. This enables them to empathize with their children better, which improves their relationships with them.
- Full presence: Mindfulness helps teachers be fully present in their interactions with their children. This enables them to better address their children's needs, improving learning experiences.
- Communication skills: Mindfulness helps teachers improve communication skills with their children. This enables them to express their feelings better, which helps their children understand and express their feelings.
- Creating a safe environment: Mindfulness helps teachers create a safe and supportive environment for their children. This enables them to express their feelings without fear, which helps them learn better. The results also showed that mental alertness in teaching is linked to a positive, statistically significant relationship with emotional empathy. In other words, the level of teachers' ratings of empathic empathy increases with the level of their ratings of mindfulness in teaching. This can be explained by the role that practicing mindfulness in teaching plays in reducing the teacher's stress level, which leads the teacher to be more empathetic toward others (Passalacqua & Segrin, 2012). Studies and research on

empathic empathy and its relationship to mental alertness also show that humans are born with a biological predisposition to be empathetic, and the environment works to enhance this relationship, and that empathic empathy in education opens the possibility of moving towards a society of understanding (Albiol, 2014), and preliminary evidence indicates that mindfulness Mindfulness may enhance empathic empathy, and self-esteem of mindfulness is associated with self-esteem of empathy (Dekeyser et al., 2008; Greason & Cashwell, 2009). Some studies have pointed to the reasons behind the role of mindfulness in enhancing compassion, including: first, by focusing on the dynamics of self-awareness; Being aware of one's feelings leads to a better understanding of how they occur and what happens while they occur, and individuals are able to perceive another person's experience and what they must feel. Second, by being non-reactive and non-judgmental, which are components of mindfulness, an individual can distance themselves from their own difficult feelings and care about the suffering of others (Block-Lerner et al., 2007).

There are many studies that support the positive relationship between mindfulness and compassion (Centeno & Fernandez, 2020; De la Fuente, et al., 2019; Gür & Yilmaz, 2020; Jones et al., 2019; MacDonald & Price, 2017; Silver et al., 2018;), which indicated a statistically significant relationship between mindfulness and empathic empathy. In contrast, Ridderinkhof et al. (2017) studied the effect of a short mindfulness practice on compassionate empathy in adults, and their results showed that mindfulness did not have a statistically significant effect on affective empathy. The results of multiple regression analysis indicated that mental alertness in teaching has a statistically significant predictive ability for emotional empathy. These results are attributed to the fact that a teacher who has high levels of mental alertness in teaching is more capable of building relationships based on emotional empathy with oneself and others.

The results of multiple regression analysis indicated that the calmness domain has a statistically significant positive predictive ability for affective empathy, and the kindness domain has a statistically significant positive predictive ability for affective empathy. Accordingly, kindness and calmness contribute positively to affective empathy, and these results can be attributed to a teacher who possesses high levels of kindness. Calm, more able to build relationships based on compassionate empathy with oneself and others. Research has found a relationship between mindfulness practice and positive outcomes, including increased emotional intelligence, insight, wisdom, self-awareness, compassion, and attention to and clarification of feelings (Brown & Ryan, 2003). Several studies suggest that mindfulness training increases various aspects of empathy (Baer et al., 2008), and Jennings & Greenberg (2009) found that mindfulness can be a valuable resource for teachers to be more aware of the emotional climate in their classrooms. Scholarship. Thomas & Otis (2010) also suggested that practicing mindfulness can help teachers develop calmer responses to the daily stresses that teaching brings.

Second: Discussing the results related to the second question: "Are there statistically significant differences

between the averages of emotional empathy and mental alertness among teachers in the field of early childhood in the educational environment, due to the variables (gender, educational qualification, and years of experience) ?"

The results of the analysis of variance showed that there was a statistically significant difference between the average ratings of the study sample members in emotional empathy, according to the gender variable, in favor of females. While there is no statistically significant difference between the average ratings of the study sample members regarding mental alertness in teaching. The results also showed that there were no statistically significant differences between the average ratings of the study sample members regarding emotional empathy and mental alertness in teaching, according to the variables of academic qualification and experience. The researcher believes that there are cultural and social differences. There are different societal expectations regarding the appropriate behavior and role for men and women. Men are stronger and more stable and women are more compassionate and caring. These cultural expectations may affect how male and female teachers express empathy and mental alertness. The researcher believes that there are biological differences between males and females that affect emotional and mental interaction. For example, there may be differences in hormonal activity or neural activation that can affect levels of empathy and mental alertness.

The researcher attributes these differences to the experience and training that males and females obtain in the field of education, and this may affect the levels of empathy and mental alertness. For example, female teachers may receive training more directed towards empathy and care in education in the field of childhood, while more emphasis may be placed on the technical or administrative aspects of teaching among some male teachers. In addition to personal factors that vary between individuals and affect levels of empathy and mental alertness, there may be differences in individuals' tendencies and personalities that may affect how they express empathy and respond to the emotional and cognitive needs of children in the educational setting.

The researcher attributes the difference between males and females, and the advantage of females in emotional empathy, to the nature of Eastern females, who may respond to some stimuli by crying, and they are also more sensitive and understanding of the feelings of others. Also, the job of a teacher requires emotional effort that extends throughout his professional life, as he is surrounded by different emotions, and is expected to feel, understand, and interact with the feelings of others appropriately (Gaines et al., 2019), and emotional empathy, especially cognitive empathy, is necessary for building relationships and understanding. Likewise, emotional empathy is one of the psychological and social variables that plays an important role in the social and professional life of the teacher, as it enables him to be aware of the students' thoughts and feelings. The teacher needs to use his attention in a positive and effective way, in order to understand the students and interact with them emotionally, as the students need To a climate in which they feel empathic empathy and emotional participation, and to the teacher's understanding of their hopes (Besser & Hill, 2010).

These results are consistent with Kim's study (2018), which indicated that 45.9% of the variance in affective empathy was attributable to gender. The results of the current study also do not agree with the study of Jolliffe & Farrington (2006), which indicated that females scored higher than males in emotional and cognitive empathy, and the study of Al - Dhabani (2021), which indicated that there was a statistically significant difference in favor of females in emotional empathy. However, these results are not consistent with Greeno et al. 's study (2018), which showed no relationship between gender and empathic empathy.

The results showed that there were no statistically significant differences between the arithmetic means of the study sample members' estimates of emotional empathy, according to the academic qualification variable. These results can be explained through the cognitive and emotional competencies of the teacher in the Arab environment. Success in teaching requires the combined influences of cognitive and emotional empathy; Affective empathy enables individuals to display more altruistic behaviors, while cognitive empathy allows individuals to rationally choose the best way to help others (Smith, 2006). The results showed that there were no statistically significant differences between the arithmetic means of the study sample members' estimates of emotional empathy, according to the experience variable. These results can be attributed to the characteristics of Arab or Eastern (religious) culture, which is based on tolerance and compassionate empathy with others. These results are consistent with the results of Greeno et al. 's study (Greeno et al., 2018), which indicated no relationship between years of work and empathic empathy. On the other hand, it does not agree with the results of the Mevarech and Maskit study (2015), which indicated that there were statistically significant differences between new and experienced teachers in the level of emotional empathy.

The results indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between the averages of the study sample members' estimates of mental alertness in teaching, according to the variables of gender, educational qualification, and experience. This result can be attributed to the requirements of the profession of a kindergarten teacher, which requires calmness, especially when dealing with the behavior of kindergarten children. Teachers are also subject to close education and courses that they benefit from in a balanced and synchronous manner, and they provide close, organized and agreed - upon services according to the training circulars that are organized by them. Department of Arab Education within the Green Line. This result can also be attributed to the fact that males and females are the same in comparison to the academic burdens and social burdens they are exposed to, which lead to anxiety about the future and psychological pressures that affect the level of mental alertness among males and females alike (Salahat and Al - Zaghoul, 2018). This result is consistent with the findings of the study of Salahat and Al - Zaghoul (2018) and the study of Shaheen and Rayan (2020), which showed that there is no statistically significant difference in overall mental alertness attributable to the gender variable. On the other hand, it is not consistent with the findings of the study of Boutros (2010). Which showed a statistically significant difference in favor of males in mental alertness. It also does not agree with the

results of the study by Al - Dhabani (2021), which indicated the presence of a statistically significant difference in favor of males in mental alertness. These results are consistent with the study of Al - Ruwaili (2019), which indicated that there are no differences between male and female student counselors in Turaif Governorate due to the variable of experience in mental alertness.

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