

Unveiling the Mechanisms of Dispositional Mindfulness and Mental Health: A Study of Secondary School Teachers in Palu, Indonesia

Dhevy Puswiartika^{1*}, Bau Ratu¹, Dini Rakhmawati², Azam Arifyadi¹, Munifah¹

Universitas Tadulako, Indonesia¹

Universitas PGRI Semarang, Indonesia²

dhevy_p@untad.ac.id*

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ABSTRACT: Teachers in Palu, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, face complex professional pressures, including post-disaster recovery and a rapid transition to digital administration. This study aims to uncover the mechanisms linking mindfulness and mental health among secondary school teachers in Palu by exploring the mediating role of acceptance and the moderating role of age. A mixed-method approach with a sequential explanatory design was employed. The quantitative phase involved 66 junior and senior high school teachers selected through purposive sampling. The participants completed two instruments: the Dispositional Mindfulness at Work Scale and the Mental Health Inventory. Data were analyzed using linear regression and the PROCESS Macro for mediation and moderation testing, followed by thematic analysis in the qualitative phase to deepen the findings from the in-depth interviews with selected participants. The results indicated that correlation and simple regression analyses confirmed that dispositional mindfulness was a significant predictor of mental health, explaining 21% of its variance ($B = 0.390, p < .001$). Further analysis revealed a full mediation effect of the acceptance component, indicating that dispositional mindfulness requires an accepting attitude to effectively enhance teacher mental health. Additionally, age was a significant moderator ($B = -0.048, p = .003$), with the protective impact of dispositional mindfulness being notably greater for early-career teachers. Qualitatively, these mechanisms were found to be harmoniously integrated with the local wisdom of *Nosarara Nosabatutu*. Dispositional mindfulness emerged as the primary psychological resource supporting teacher resilience in a post-disaster, high-digital-demand environment. These findings provide an empirical basis for prioritizing mindfulness-based psychoeducation and interventions in guidance and counseling services.

INTRODUCTION

Teachers play an important role in upholding the right to education and are central to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which aims to ensure inclusive, equitable, and quality education by 2030. At the secondary school level, the teaching profession is crucial in shaping future generations; however, it remains one of the occupations most vulnerable to psychological

distress. Beyond pedagogical competence, teachers are increasingly pressured to maintain mental stability while navigating heavy administrative burdens, dynamic curriculum changes, and diverse student behaviors.

Global data indicate that the teacher attrition rate nearly doubled from 4.6% in 2015 to 9% in 2022, largely driven by excessive workloads and unsupportive environments (McBrearty, 2024). In line with these trends, approximately 42% of teachers consistently experience anxiety and are burdened by work demands outside of school hours, leading to chronic emotional exhaustion (Mansfield et al., 2016). These findings show that non-adaptive emotional management harms both teacher well-being and classroom instructional quality. Furthermore, studies show that high stress levels among 76% of educators strain teacher-student relationships and hinder student motivation and academic achievement (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

In the Indonesian context, pressure on teacher professionalism is escalating significantly due to the massive digitalization of education. A recent survey by the Indonesian Teachers Association revealed an alarming "technostress" phenomenon, with approximately 75% of teachers reporting mental distress related to the administrative demands of the e-Performance system (Mashabi & Prastiwi, 2025). This digital workload exacerbates the risk of emotional exhaustion, particularly in regions still undergoing post-disaster recovery, such as Palu City. Despite teachers being at the forefront of building students' psychosocial resilience, their own mental health is frequently neglected in education recovery policies (Wahyono & Husamah, 2020).

The mental health landscape in Palu City is uniquely complex due to cumulative post-disaster trauma. Recent data indicates that mental health literacy among prospective educators in the region remains low, at 43.43% (Rasido et al., 2026). Furthermore, while the prevalence of emotional disorders in Central Sulawesi remains high, a critical treatment gap of 90% persists due to limited access to mental health services. Preliminary interviews conducted by the authors with secondary school teachers in Palu corroborate these systemic issues, revealing significant struggles in balancing professional and personal lives. Teachers reported chronic fatigue, difficulty regulating emotions, diminished concentration, and insomnia, all of which are hallmark symptoms of burnout.

Mental health issues among teachers can lead to profound disturbances in social relationships, self-confidence, and motivation. Conversely, teachers with optimal mental health are better equipped to engage in effective social interaction and maintain a positive outlook despite daily professional challenges (Puswiartika, 2022). Given these conditions, there is an urgent need to investigate internal mechanisms that may act as protective factors, such as dispositional mindfulness, especially as a protective mechanism for fostering resilience in a demanding post-disaster educational environment.

Dispositional mindfulness is defined as a disposition to pay attention to and be fully aware of internal and external conditions in the present moment, accepting every thought, feeling, or sensation that arises without elaboration or judgment (Bishop et al., 2004). Mindfulness as a dispositional trait has been negatively associated with stress over time, suggesting that it can play an important role in stress mitigation in isolated and confined environments, including long-duration space missions (Pagnini et al., 2024). The mindfulness framework demonstrates how mindfulness affects attention and impacts cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and physiological functions. The cognitive, emotional, and behavioral domains are functionally integrated, influencing workplace outcomes associated with mindfulness, such as performance, relationships, and well-being (Good et al., 2016).

In previous research, college students generally demonstrated a high level of dispositional mindfulness during the COVID-19 pandemic. They were able to regulate attention when completing tasks and responsibilities, focus on the task at hand, and be fully present in everyday experiences. They were also aware of and understood their emotional conditions and needs. Furthermore, they demonstrated positive and constructive responses to various situations (Puswiartika, Ratu, Misnah,

Iskandar, et al., 2021). Other research has demonstrated a positive relationship between dispositional mindfulness and psychological well-being among final-semester college students in the Guidance and Counseling study program. These college students, as prospective guidance and counseling teachers, demonstrated a high level of dispositional mindfulness, indicating better psychological well-being (Nasru et al., 2025).

The integration of mindfulness into the learning process provides teachers with the opportunity to interpret their current experiences with students as part of a long-term relationship that includes understanding children's needs, developing self-regulation skills, and making wise, child-oriented decisions (Maharani, 2015). Teachers who have a strong dispositional mindfulness, develop through regular mindfulness practices in their daily lives, including during learning activities. These teachers were able to think more clearly, demonstrate a calm and patient attitude, and establish warm interactions with students during the learning process (Puswiartika et al., 2018). Mindfulness helps individuals reduce negative feelings such as anxiety by reducing reactivity and regulating affect. Mindfulness can also help individuals develop social and emotional intelligence, enabling them to manage themselves and provide productive responses to various situations, especially those marked by uncertainty and drastic changes in daily life (Glomb et al., 2011).

Local wisdom values can serve as a basis for regulating intrapersonal and interpersonal relations between teachers and the academic community, and for fostering tolerance, responsibility, and harmony in multicultural school's settings (Kertih, 2014). This dispositional mindfulness mechanism does not stand alone but is integrated with the local wisdom values of *Nosarara Nosabatutu*, owned by the Kaili Tribe in Palu City (Ratu et al., 2023). *Nosarara Nosabatutu* has become a guiding value embodied in the socio-cultural life of the people of Central Sulawesi (Ratu et al., 2019). Philosophically, *Nosarara Nosabatutu* among the Kaili people represents brotherhood and unity, serving as a reference for their work ethic through a set of shared values and symbols (Misnah, 2018). The *Nosarara Nosabatutu* culture of peace encompasses the values of humanity, empathy, mutual assistance, concern for others, and environmental stewardship. The values of the *Nosarara Nosabatutu* culture of peace need to be effectively internalized by teachers to strengthen their dispositional mindfulness.

Although several studies have reported a positive relationship between mindfulness and mental health, the literature remains sparse regarding the specific internal mechanisms underlying this relationship. Most studies still treat mindfulness as a single construct, without examining whether the individual components of dispositional mindfulness are sufficient to maintain teachers' mental health. Furthermore, there is an urgent need to understand how demographic factors, such as age, moderate this relationship among teachers in Palu City with varying lengths of service. Identifying these mediating and moderating pathways is crucial for developing more precise and targeted psychoeducational models in the future.

Study Aim and Hypotheses

The primary goal of this study is to examine the psychological mechanisms that support teachers' mental health in Central Sulawesi. Specifically, the study aims are as follow: 1) To analyze the influence of dispositional mindfulness on the mental health of junior and senior high school teachers in Palu City; 2) To investigate the mediating role of the acceptance component in the relationship between the mindfulness component of awareness and teachers' mental health; and 3) To determine the extent to which age moderates the relationship between dispositional mindfulness and teachers' mental health among secondary school educators.

Based on the theoretical framework and the study aim, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Dispositional mindfulness has a significant positive effect on teachers' mental health of teachers in Palu.

- H2: Acceptance significantly mediates the relationship between dispositional mindfulness and teachers’ mental health.
- H3: Age significantly moderates the relationship between dispositional mindfulness and teachers’ mental health, such that the effect is stronger for younger teachers.

METHODS

Design

This study employed a mixed-methods approach with a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design that combines the exploration and understanding of the individuals or groups being studied (Creswell, 2017). The first phase involved a quantitative approach using a cross-sectional survey to test the hypothetical relationships between variables. This was followed by a qualitative phase involving in-depth interviews with selected participants to gain a deeper understanding of the mechanisms identified in the statistical analysis. Details of the mixed-methods approach in this study are presented in Figure 1 below.

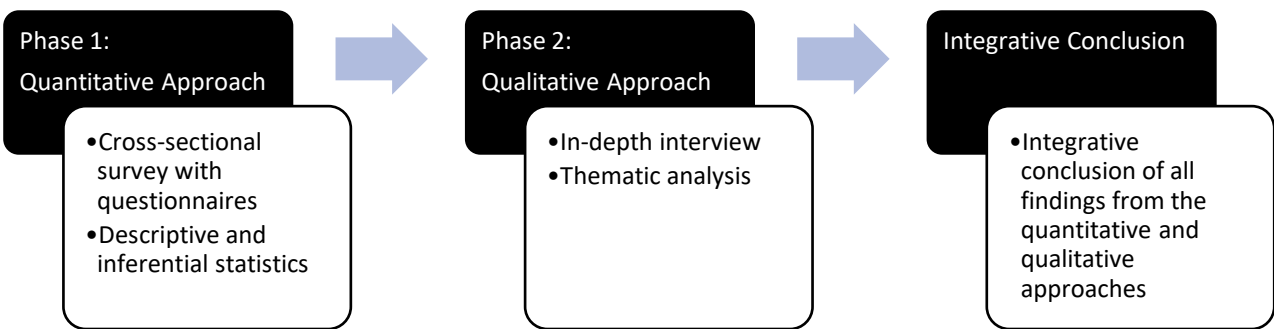


Figure 1. Mixed-methods Approach

Participants

The population in this study consisted of teachers working in secondary schools (junior and senior high) in Palu City, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia. The participant criteria for this study were teachers who were actively teaching in the 2024/2025 academic year, regardless of gender, with at least 3 months of tenure, and at least 21 years of age. The sampling technique used in this study was purposive sampling, which uses specific criteria to determine the sample size (Sugiyono, 2013) and ensures representation across various age groups and professional backgrounds, allowing for a more robust moderation analysis. The sample size for this study comprised 66 teachers who responded to the questionnaire and 20 teachers who participated in the focus group discussions (FGDs). Details of the participants of this study are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The Participant Criteria

Characteristic	Inclusion Criteria
Work Location	Teachers working in Palu City, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia
Level of School	Secondary School (Junior and Senior High School)
Status of Teacher	Actively teaching in the 2024/2025 Academic Year
Tenure	Have taught for at least 3 months.
Age	Minimum age: 21 years

Instruments

To ensure data accuracy and psychological depth, this study employed instruments that had been previously validated and adapted for the Indonesian educational context. Dispositional mindfulness was assessed using the Dispositional Mindfulness at Work Scale, modified by the authors based on the conceptual framework of Bishop et al. (2004). The instrument consists of items measuring four core components: attention, present focus, awareness, and acceptance. In prior research involving teachers in Central Sulawesi, this scale demonstrated strong internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.842. The validity of the items was confirmed by item-total correlation coefficients (r) ranging from 0.255 to 0.643, indicating that the instrument effectively captures dispositional mindfulness among educators. The results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) showed that all indicators forming the latent variable had factor loadings (λ) ≥ 0.5 . The 24 indicators that form the Dispositional Mindfulness at Work Scale are deemed valid. The dispositional mindfulness variable's CR value is $0.94 > 0.7$, and the VE is $0.58 > 0.5$, indicating that the latent variable was reliable, where all manifest variables can provide consistent measurements of the dimensions of the latent dispositional mindfulness variable.

The participants' mental health was measured using the Mental Health Inventory (MHI), originally developed by Veit & Ware (1983). This study utilized the Indonesian version adapted by Aziz (2019). The MHI assesses two primary dimensions: psychological distress (including anxiety and depression) and psychological well-being (including life satisfaction and emotional stability). In prior research involving teachers in Central Sulawesi, this scale demonstrated strong internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.905. The validity of the items was confirmed by item-total correlation coefficients (r) ranging from 0.357 to 0.745, indicating that the instrument effectively captures educators' mental health. The 12 indicators forming the Mental Health Inventory are declared valid. The mental health variable's CR value is $0.97 > 0.7$, and the VE is $0.88 > 0.5$, indicating that the latent variable was reliable, where all manifest variables can provide consistent measurements of the dimensions of the latent mental health variable.

Data Analysis

The data analysis techniques used in this study combined quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative data analysis technique used descriptive statistics to describe dispositional mindfulness and mental health levels among teachers. Data were analyzed using correlation and linear regression analysis through SPSS and Hayes' PROCESS Macro for mediation-moderation testing. The qualitative data obtained from focus group discussions were analyzed using thematic analysis to deepen the findings regarding the integration of the local wisdom of Nosarara Nosabatutu.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Overall, the respondents' demographic characteristics reflect the diversity of educators facing professional challenges in post-disaster areas. The data distribution shows a predominance of female teachers (66.7%) and young teachers under the age of 35 (42.4%), who are theoretically the most adaptable yet vulnerable to the pressures of digital adaptation. Details of the respondents' characteristics are presented in Table 2.

The profile of the respondents' dispositional mindfulness is summarized in Table 3, revealing an overall strong level ($M = 3.458$; $SD = 0.263$). Notably, while the Attention component emerged as the most prominent component with a "Very Strong" rating ($M = 4.315$; $SD = 0.506$), the Acceptance component recorded the lowest mean score ($M = 2.890$; $SD = 0.381$), falling into the "Moderate" category. This contrast suggests that although the teachers in Palu maintain a high

Table 2. Respondent Demography Profile

Demography	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	22	33.3 %
	Female	44	66.7 %
Age	< 35	28	42.4 %
	35-50	24	36.4 %
	> 50	14	21.2 %
Education Level	Undergraduate	61	92.43 %
	Postgraduate	5	7.57 %
Length of Service (in years)	< 5	30	45.45 %
	6-15	19	28.79 %
	> 15	17	25.76 %
Teaching Level	Junior High School	30	45.5 %
	Senior High School	36	54.5 %
Employment Status	Permanent Teacher	40	60.6 %
	Temporary Teacher	26	39.4 %

degree of situational focus and cognitive alertness, their capacity for non-judgmental receptivity toward internal and external stressors, particularly those stemming from rapid digital transformation, remains a significant area for further psychological development.

The mental health profile of the respondents, as detailed in Table 4, demonstrates a favorable emotional balance characterized by a high level of Positive Affect ($M = 4.620$; $SD = 0.42$) and a low level of Negative Affect ($M = 1.850$; $SD = 0.65$). Despite this positive skew in emotional states, the Overall Mental Health score is positioned within the Moderate category ($M = 4.540$; $SD = 0.57$). This finding indicates that while the teachers in Palu are successful in cultivating positive emotions and suppressing negative ones, their overall psychological well-being remains in a transitional phase toward stabilization. This moderate standing likely reflects a resilient yet adaptive psychological response as they continue to balance long-term post-disaster recovery with the immediate pressures of modernizing educational standards.

Before conducting the regression test, a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between the variables and their dimensions. The analysis showed that all variables had significant positive relationships, as shown in Table 5.

Table 3. Profile of Dispositional Mindfulness in Respondents

Component	Mean	SD	Category
Attention	4.315	0.506	Very Strong
Present-focus	3.110	0.554	Moderate
Awareness	3.835	0.382	Strong
Acceptance	2.890	0.381	Moderate
Overall Dispositional Mindfulness	3.458	0.263	Strong

Table 4. Profile of Mental Health in Respondents

Aspect	Mean	SD	Category
Positive Affect	4.620	0.42	High
Negative Affect	1.850	0.65	Low
Overall Mental Health	4.540	0.57	Moderate

Table 5. Correlation Matrix Between Variables

Variable/Dimension	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Dispositional Mindfulness (X)								
Attention	1							
Present-focus	0.720**	1						
Awareness	0.650**	0.680**	1					
Acceptance	0.580**	0.610**	0.669**	1				
Overall Dispositional Mindfulness								
Mental Health (Y)	0.910*	0.915*	0.914*	0.913*	1			
Positive Affect	0.410**	0.380**	0.440**	0.490**	0.454**	1		
Negative Affect	-0.320**	-0.350**	-0.380**	-0.420**	-0.415**	-0.280*	1	
Overall Mental Health	0.385*	0.412*	0.390*	0.454*	0.458*	0.880*	-0.720*	1

Note. ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$ (2-tailed).

The results of the simple regression analysis indicate that overall dispositional mindfulness has a significant positive effect on teacher mental health ($B = 0.390$; $p < .001$), accounting for 21% of the variance ($R^2 = .210$). These initial findings provide a basis for further testing of the most influential components of dispositional mindfulness and their internal mechanisms through mediating variables. Next, a multiple regression analysis assessed the extent to which dispositional mindfulness predicted teachers' mental health. The results of the multiple regression analysis are shown in Table 6 below.

Table 6. Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis

Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
(Constant)	2.854	0.412		6.927	.000
1. Attention	0.124	0.095	0.152	1.305	.198
2. Present-focus	0.158	0.102	0.184	1.549	.126
3. Awareness	0.215	0.098	0.245	2.194	.032*
4. Acceptance	0.454	0.112	0.482	4.054	<.001**
Statistics	$R^2 = .285$	$F = 6.075$	$p = .000$		

Note. $p < .001$. * $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$.

The multiple regression analysis in Table 5 shows that the overall model significantly predicts mental health, $F = 6.075$, $p < .001$, accounting for 28.5 % of the total variance ($R^2 = .285$). Upon examining each component, only awareness ($\beta = .245$, $p = .032$) and acceptance ($\beta = .482$, $p < .001$) emerged as significant unique predictors. Notably, the acceptance component yielded a standardized coefficient nearly twice as high as awareness, suggesting it plays a dominant role in sustaining teachers' psychological well-being. In contrast, the dimensions of attention and present-focus did not provide statistically significant unique contributions ($p > .05$).

Given that acceptance component was identified as the primary psychological driver within the regression model, a more complex analysis was conducted to uncover the underlying mechanisms and boundary conditions of this relationship. This next stage of analysis investigates whether acceptance functions as a mediator that translates general dispositional mindfulness into mental health outcomes, while also examining the moderating role of age in determining the strength of these effects.

The results of the advanced model testing using the PROCESS Macro are detailed in Table 7. For the mediation analysis, the results reveal a full mediation effect. While dispositional mindfulness (X) significantly predicted acceptance (M) (Path a : $B = 0.679$, $p < .001$) and acceptance significantly

predicted mental health (Y) (Path *b*: $B = 0.658$, $p < .001$), the direct effect of mindfulness on mental health became non-significant once acceptance was included (Path *c'*: $B = -0.057$, $p = .551$). This mediation is statistically robust, as evidenced by the indirect effect (Effect = 0.447) and a 95% bootstrap confidence interval that does not include zero [0.239, 0.645].

Furthermore, the moderation analysis confirmed that age significantly moderates the relationship between mindfulness and mental health ($B = -0.048$, $p = .003$). This interaction indicates that the protective impact of dispositional mindfulness is not uniform across the lifespan; rather, it is significantly contingent upon the teacher's age, with younger teachers potentially deriving greater benefit compared with their more senior colleagues.

Table 7. Mediating and Moderating Analysis

Path	Coefficient (<i>B</i>)	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Mediation				
X → M (Path <i>a</i>)	0.679	0.094	7.22	<.001**
M → Y (Path <i>b</i>)	0.658	0.112	5.87	<.001**
X → Y (Direct Effect, <i>c'</i>)	-0.057	0.095	-0.60	.551 (ns)
Moderation				
Interaction (X x Age)	-0.048	0.016	-3.00	.003**
Indirect Effect (X → M → Y)	Effect 0.447	BootSE 0.103	LLCI 0.239	ULCI 0.645

Note. X = Dispositional Mindfulness, M = Acceptance, Y = Mental Health. LLCI and ULCI represent the 95% confidence intervals. ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

To ensure the stability and generalizability of the proposed mediation model, a robustness check was performed by controlling for gender as a covariate. The results of this comparative analysis are presented in Table 8. The analysis reveals that the path coefficients remained remarkably stable even after gender was included in the model. Both the path from Dispositional Mindfulness to Acceptance and the path from Acceptance to Mental Health showed negligible changes and maintained their high statistical significance ($p < .001$). Furthermore, the indirect effect remained consistent, shifting only slightly from 0.447 to 0.431 while remaining statistically significant. These findings confirm that the psychological mechanism of acceptance as a mediator of mental health is robust and not biased by the gender composition of the sample. This stability underscores the internal validity of the study's findings within the context of the teaching profession in Palu.

Table 8. Robustness Check: Model Stability Controlling for Gender

Path	Original <i>B</i>	Controlled <i>B</i>	Status
Mindfulness → Acceptance	0.679***	0.671***	Stable
Acceptance → Mental Health	0.658***	0.642***	Stable
Indirect Effect	0.447	0.431	Significant

The preceding quantitative analysis successfully maps the statistical relationships between dispositional mindfulness and mental health among the sampled teachers. To elaborate on *how* and *why* these relationships manifest in daily school environments, a qualitative follow-up was conducted. The subsequent section details the qualitative findings, highlighting the synergy

between individual psychological resilience and the local cultural wisdom of *Nosarara Nosabatutu* in mitigating occupational stress.

Following the quantitative analysis, the qualitative phase of this study was executed to gain a deeper, contextualized understanding of the lived experiences of secondary school teachers in Palu, Central Sulawesi, regarding their psychological well-being. The thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews yielded three interconnected themes that capture how these educators systematically navigate occupational stress and protect their mental health. Specifically, the narrative accounts illuminate the dynamic synergy between the teachers' internal psychological resources, namely dispositional mindfulness, and the collective support system embedded within the local socio-cultural philosophy of *Nosarara Nosabatutu*.

The following section provides a detailed explanation of these themes, supported by descriptive analysis and illustrative verbatim quotations

Theme 1: Dispositional Mindfulness as an Individual Stress Shield.

The thematic analysis indicates that dispositional mindfulness serves as a primary psychological shield for teachers, granting them the capacity to detect early physiological and emotional manifestations of occupational stress. Rather than engaging in automatic, emotionally reactive behaviors when facing classroom disruptions, highly mindful educators deliberately utilize a cognitive pause to choose a composed response. This individual regulatory mechanism is prominently illustrated in the narrative of Teacher A (34 years old):

"...Previously, when the children were difficult to manage, I would immediately lose my temper and have a headache for days. I acknowledge that I am tired. I take a deep breath, accept that the situation is indeed challenging, and then warm them gently. As a result, I don't feel as stressed when I go home..."

This account demonstrates that present-moment acceptance prevents minor classroom stressors from escalating into prolonged physical distress. Similarly, this internal anchoring mechanism enables teachers to manage systemic and bureaucratic pressures. When confronted with heavy administrative workloads, mindful teachers mitigate their anxiety by restructuring their cognitive focus toward immediate tasks. As articulated by Teacher B (42 years old):

"...The administrative demands are overwhelming. However, I have learned to focus on what I am doing right now, one thing at a time. There's no need to think about tomorrow just yet. It has significantly reduced my anxiety..."

This short excerpt confirms that narrowing one's attention to the present moment effectively blocks the anticipatory anxiety commonly induced by overwhelming workloads.

Theme 2: Collective Synthesis (*Nosarara Nosabatutu*) as a Communal Catharsis.

The data further reveal that dispositional mindfulness does not lead to individualistic isolation; instead, its non-judgmental facet enhances interpersonal empathy among faculty members. When this psychological openness converges with the local cultural philosophy of *Nosarara Nosabatutu* ("we are brothers and sisters, we are one"), it generates a powerful collective coping mechanism that lowers the risk of professional burnout. Teacher C (29 years old) described this socio-cultural synergy during their interview:

"...Mindfulness helps me avoid easily judging my colleagues. Additionally, we have the principle of Nosarara Nosabatutu here in Palu. So, when I see another teacher overwhelmed, we immediately take turns to help. We feel that we share the same fate; if one suffers, everyone feels it. This sense of brotherhood is what keeps our mental health intact..."

This passage underscores that mindfulness acts as an enabler for prosocial behavior, allowing the cultural ethos of solidarity to be genuinely actualized rather than merely functioning as a normative slogan. Consequently, the teachers' lounge transforms from a high-stress environment into a safe space for communal emotional support and shared coping. This shared resilience is further corroborated by Teacher D (50 years old):

"...In the teachers' lounge, we often sit together simply to listen to each other's grievances without mutual blame. This awareness to look out for one another is the essence of Nosarara Nosabatutu. Realizing that we are not alone in facing the constantly changing curriculum is the best form of reassurance..."

Evidently, the combination of a non-blaming awareness (dispositional mindfulness) and communal responsibility (*Nosarara Nosabatutu*) constructs a highly functional social support system that helps buffer teachers against the institutional strains of shifting educational policies.

Theme 3: Harmonious Teacher-Student Relationships Rooted in Culture and Awareness

Lastly, the convergence of internal psychological tranquility and the internalized values of *Nosarara Nosabatutu* fundamentally shape how educators perceive their students. Rather than viewing disruptive students as behavioral burdens or threats to classroom control, teachers reframe these students as integral members of a shared community who deserve compassionate guidance. Teacher A (34 years old) explicitly reflected on this cognitive shift:

"...When I can remain calm [mindful], I remember that these children are also our children, in accordance with the principle of Nosarara Nosabatutu. Viewing them as 'siblings' or our own children allows me to teach with compassion, rather than seeing it as a burden..."

This narrative reveals that individual mindfulness practices provide the emotional bandwidth necessary to operationalize cultural empathy in the classroom. Through a harmonious relationship between teacher and student, this integrated approach ultimately fosters compassionate teaching, which may contribute to sustaining teachers' long-term mental well-being.

Discussion

The results of this study showed that teachers demonstrated strong dispositional mindfulness, characterized by a well-developed internal psychological resource to manage professional challenges. The strong overall mindfulness reflects an ingrained capacity for situational awareness, likely stemming from both individual practice and the region's cultural ethos. The strong dispositional traits serve as a foundation for effective classroom management and student interaction.

Despite the high levels of positive affect, the overall mental health score remains in the moderate category. This categorization indicates that while teachers possess the emotional tools to remain optimistic, their total psychological well-being is undergoing a process of adaptive

stabilization. This moderate standing is significant when compared to previous research, which suggests that mental health levels often fluctuate during periods of transition, such as the post-pandemic return to classical learning or the rapid shift toward digital platforms (Puswiartika, et al., 2021).

Although total scores offer a broad overview of the participants' psychological state, an analysis of individual dimensions is necessary for a more detailed understanding. This approach identifies how specific cognitive and affective components contribute to teachers' mental health in Palu. Therefore, the following sections discuss each component of dispositional mindfulness and dimension of mental health to identify the factors that support psychological resilience.

The descriptive results for the dispositional mindfulness components reveal a compelling cognitive-affective gap among teachers in Palu. The very strong score in the attention component indicates that these educators possess a high degree of cognitive vigilance and situational awareness. Attention is a component of mindfulness that allows teachers to regulate attention while completing work. This attention regulation can save mental resources needed to work when compared to working "auto-pilot" and a "mind-wandering" state of mind, which will consume limited mental resources on matters outside the context of work (Levinthal & Rerup, 2006).

This finding aligns with the definition of mindfulness as a state of being attentive to and aware of what is taking place in the present (Brown & Ryan, 2003). In the demanding environment of Indonesian schools, this high level of attention likely reflects teachers' need to remain constantly alert to classroom dynamics and to the rapid flow of administrative tasks through digital platforms. However, the moderate acceptance component score showed that the teachers are acutely focused on their duties but struggle to non-judgmentally accept mounting pressures. Mindfulness is not merely about cognitive focus but requires the cultivation of non-judgmental receptivity to optimize mental health (Puswiartika et al., 2025). The acceptance component showed the teacher's tendency to become a role model for students in accepting everything they encounter in adaptive and constructive ways. The more mindful the teachers are, the more objective they will be and can focus on developing the potential of their students. In addition, teachers can accept the strengths and weaknesses of the students (Verdorfer, 2016).

The mindful individuals can open themselves up to new things (Langer & Moldoveanu, 2000). Mindful individuals can also better manage their thoughts and emotions daily (Long & Christian, 2015). Awareness is a component of mindfulness in a teacher's tendency to recognize and understand the emotional conditions and needs of themselves and others (Brown et al., 2007; Dane, 2011). Furthermore, teachers can provide positive and constructive responses to various work situations that must be faced (Beverage et al., 2014). The following mindfulness component is present-focus, enabling teachers to focus on the work at hand at this time. Besides, being fully present in interactions with students can allow teachers to better recognize the needs of others and the type of support those students need (Reb & Atkins, 2015).

Furthermore, these descriptive findings are in line with the previous study that found the strong level of dispositional mindfulness among teachers in Sigi Regency, Central Sulawesi. The existence of local wisdom values of *Nosarara Nosabatutu*, owned and developed in the Sigi community, will make it easier for teachers to cultivate dispositional mindfulness within themselves to be more optimal. The values of local wisdom *Nosarara Nosabatutu*, such as humanity, empathy, mutual assistance, consensus, caring for others, and protecting nature, will enable teachers to develop dispositional mindfulness, which is characterized by full awareness and full acceptance of every situation, condition, and reality that occurs in the implementation of their daily work (Ratu et al., 2023).

Individuals' mindfulness tendencies can be influenced by the collectivist cultural characteristics widely embraced by communities in Eastern countries, including Indonesia (Catak, 2012). This collectivist culture also plays a crucial role in teachers' teaching processes in schools.

Collectivist culture, which prioritizes harmony, alignment, and concern for others, influences the teaching styles of teachers in schools. Specifically, the collectivist culture of the Kaili people, reflected in the *Nosarara Nosabatutu* culture of peace, has been internalized by every teacher.

After examining the components of dispositional mindfulness, the next step is to explore how this internal capacity manifests in the mental health of teachers. A comprehensive understanding requires an analysis of specific mental health aspects to identify the practical impact of the respondents' psychological state on their daily lives. The following section discusses positive and negative affect as the primary aspects of mental health among teachers in Palu, aiming to uncover the key factors that support their psychological resilience.

The analysis of mental health aspects provides a clearer picture of the teachers' emotional states, showing a strong balance between positive and negative experiences. The positive affect aspect recorded a high score, indicating that teachers in Palu frequently experience emotions such as optimism, enthusiasm, and gratitude. This emotional vitality is likely supported by the cultural values of *Nosarara Nosabatutu*, which foster strong communal bonds and collective resilience among educators in Central Sulawesi. The positive emotional states are essential for maintaining professional motivation and fostering warm interactions with students (Ratu et al., 2023). Conversely, the negative affect aspect was found to have a low score, suggesting that teachers are generally successful in managing feelings of sadness, anger, or anxiety. This low level of negative emotion indicates a significant capacity for emotional regulation, which is a key outcome of mindfulness practices. By reducing reactivity toward professional stressors, teachers can avoid prolonged distress, even when facing high workloads or administrative changes.

Having mapped the descriptive characteristics to understand the baseline conditions of teachers' dispositional mindfulness and mental health, the crucial next step is to examine the structural relationship between these variables. While the preceding descriptive analysis serves as an empirical foundation showing data distribution, drawing robust conclusions regarding the direction, strength, and significance of this relationship requires further rigorous testing. Consequently, the subsequent section employs inferential statistics to evaluate these dynamics.

The mediation analysis using the PROCESS Macro showed that acceptance, as one of the dispositional mindfulness components, fully mediates the relationship between dispositional mindfulness and teachers' mental health. When acceptance was integrated into the model, the direct effect of mindfulness on mental health became statistically non-significant, whereas the indirect effect was robust and statistically significant. This finding demonstrates that a high level of dispositional mindfulness among teachers in Palu does not automatically impact into better mental health unless it is accompanied by the capacity to process experiences non-judgmentally or acceptance. This directly aligns with the Monitor and Acceptance Theory (MAT), which posits that cognitive monitoring without an accepting stance can increase affective reactivity to daily stressors (Lindsay & Creswell, 2017).

Through thematic analysis in the qualitative phase, vivid and concrete psychological phenomena can be deconstructed. Teachers with high dispositional mindfulness experience reduced stress, not because their workload is reduced, but rather because of their capacity for self-regulation. Teachers who can "pause" and focus on the present task directly break the chain of anticipatory anxiety (anxiety about the future), often triggered by mounting administrative demands. This internal calm explains why mental health indicators in the quantitative survey showed excellent scores in the mindful teacher group. Dispositional mindfulness, manifested through a non-judgmental attitude (not being easily judged), serves as a gateway to the sincere internalization of the *Nosarara Nosabatutu* values. Teachers who are fully aware can lower their individual egos, transforming the teacher's room into a psychologically safe ecosystem. A sense of "one fate and one brotherhood" triggers prosocial behavior in which teachers share emotional burdens and tasks. This explains why social connectedness quantitatively acts as a powerful

mediator in maintaining teachers' mental well-being. This local culture functions as a collective catharsis that prevents work stress from developing into more severe mental disorders.

Furthermore, awareness and acceptance function as distinct components, with acceptance serving as the primary driver of distress reduction. In the framework of current educational challenges, heightened awareness without acceptance might cause teachers to over-focus on their professional burdens, leading to hypervigilance and subsequent burnout (Zarate et al., 2019). Conversely, psychological acceptance serves as an internal buffer against stress. This empirical mechanism strongly supports the utility of the mindfulness framework, which proves that structured self-love and self-acceptance optimizations are foundational to enhancing psychological well-being and mitigating distress (Puswiartika et al., 2024).

In an educational setting, mindfulness was sufficient to reduce teachers' emotional exhaustion directly (Schulze-Hagenest et al., 2023). On the other hand, the authors found that the mechanism underlying dispositional mindfulness requires full mediation by the acceptance component, highlighting the unique psychological state of teachers in Palu. Under high-pressure environments, the awareness of stress without active acceptance may lead to hypervigilance rather than well-being, making acceptance an urgent bridge.

The path analysis further confirms that the protective impact of mindfulness on mental health is not uniform across all demographics but is significantly moderated by age. This negative interaction coefficient indicates that dispositional mindfulness plays a much more vital role in safeguarding the psychological well-being of younger, early-career teachers than that of their more senior colleagues.

This phenomenon can be explained through the lens of modern Technostress Frameworks (Saleem et al., 2024), which show that early-career educators are highly vulnerable to role ambiguity and digital overload as they attempt to establish their professional identity while navigating rapid systemic transformations. According to lifespan developmental studies, the older individuals naturally develop stable, alternative emotion regulation strategies, such as situational selection and cognitive reappraisal that are accumulated over decades of professional and personal survival (Urry & Gross, 2010).

Younger teachers, lacking this long-term experiential buffer, rely far more heavily on immediate psychological traits, such as dispositional mindfulness, to maintain equilibrium. This emotional vulnerability during early adulthood aligns with the elevated anxiety profiles identified by Puswiartika et al. (2021) among college students undergoing situational transitions at Universitas Tadulako. For younger teachers in Palu, mindfulness serves as a necessary anchor to withstand immediate workplace stressors.

Interestingly, the finding that younger teachers benefit more from mindfulness stands in contrast to conventional lifespan developmental theories. According to the Socioemotional Selectivity Theory (Carstensen et al., 1999), older adults typically exhibit stronger emotional regulation and benefit more from mindfulness because their future time perspective motivates them to prioritize emotional meaning and well-being. Furthermore, the senior teachers showed a stronger positive relationship between mindfulness and job satisfaction compared to their younger peers. The contrary result found in Palu suggests a contextual shift: in post-disaster and digitally transforming landscapes, younger teachers face an unprecedented level of technostress, making dispositional mindfulness a far more critical immediate survival resource for them than for senior colleagues who possess years of experiential stability.

The validity of this meditational framework is reinforced by the robustness check, which controlled for gender as a covariate. Even after adjusting for gender, the path coefficients remained exceptionally stable and maintained their high statistical significance. This stability underscores the internal validity of the study, proving that the psychological mechanism of acceptance as a pathway

to mental health operates uniformly across gender categories, matching the universal psychological resilience standards in recent emotion regulation literature (Gross & Thompson, 2007).

The current study's strength is the use of advanced analytical modeling. Rather than relying on simple correlational data, this study successfully maps out how mindfulness works (through mediation) and for whom it is most effective (through moderation) using a rigorous moderated mediation approach via the PROCESS Macro. The other research strength is socio-cultural integration. This research effectively bridges Western psychological constructs with the indigenous cultural values of the Kaili ethnic group in Central Sulawesi. The teachers' capacity for mindfulness is contextualized within the internalization of Nosarara Nosabatutu, which fosters empathy, communal harmony, and systemic resilience, validating the cultural roadmap initiated by Ratu et al. (2023).

Implications

This study theoretically enriches educational psychology and guidance counseling literature in Indonesia by demonstrating that the affective component of mindfulness (acceptance) is a much more dominant predictor of teacher mental health than its purely cognitive dimension (attention). Based on these findings, education authorities in Palu City and school administrators should design structured, preventive psychoeducation programs, particularly targeting early-career teachers during their initial induction and orientation phases, to optimize emotional regulation and support long-term psychological well-being. Developing mindfulness techniques in everyday life not only boosts teachers' dispositional mindfulness and work productivity but also fosters intrinsic motivation and a sincere, wholehearted service behavior toward students. Ultimately, this internalization process can be sustained through regular follow-ups, thematic slogans, and simple collaborative practices between teachers and principals during morning briefings or routine meetings that incorporate accessible techniques such as mindful breathing, mindful movement, and the mindful inner smile.

Limitations and Further Research

The current study also has some limitations. The relatively small sample size limits the immediate generalizability of these findings to the broader population of secondary school teachers across Central Sulawesi Province. Because the data were collected at a single point in time, the mediation pathways cannot establish temporal causality over a long-term horizon. Relying on subjective questionnaires introduces the possibility of social desirability bias, where participants might align their responses with normative professional expectations. Future studies can use longitudinal and experimental designs as methodologies. Future studies should also evaluate these pathways causally using randomized controlled trials (RCTs) that employ structured toolkits, such as the Mindfulness Intervention Guide for self-love optimization (Puswiartika et al., 2024). Subsequent research should employ randomized sampling techniques across a larger, more diverse, multi-regional sample of schools to enhance the model's external validity. Given the administrative constraints teachers face, future research should explore the development of web-based digital psychoeducation platforms. Combining brief, accessible mindfulness practices with local cultural symbols could offer an efficient mental health resource for modern educators.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that while teachers possess strong dispositional mindfulness as an internal psychological resource for managing professional challenges, their overall mental health score remains in the moderate category, indicating adaptive stability. The mediation analysis reveals that this relationship is fully mediated by acceptance, demonstrating that a high level of dispositional mindfulness among teachers in Palu does not automatically translate into better

mental health unless accompanied by the capacity to process experiences non-judgmentally. Furthermore, path analysis confirms that this protective impact is significantly moderated by age, playing a far more vital role in safeguarding the psychological well-being of younger, early-career teachers than their more senior colleagues. Consequently, these findings underscore the urgent need for Education Authorities in Palu City and school administrators to design preventive psychoeducation programs that explicitly integrate mindfulness techniques into teachers' everyday lives to optimize emotional regulation and long-term well-being.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

All authors contributed to the development of this manuscript and agreed to the final version of this article.

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