The Role of Knowledge of ADHD, Stress, and Mindfulness Skills in Predicting Pre-Service Teachers’ Responses to Students with ADHD

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Introduction

- Approximately one child in every U.S. general education classroom has ADHD (Knickmeyer et al., 2014).
- Teachers should enter the classroom with knowledge of ADHD and the skills to support these students’ development.
- Teachers can support students with ADHD by:
  - Perceiving student’s behavioral problems as less serious
  - Managing emotional distress
  - Investing in student treatment and classroom practices
- Teachers’ background may influence their responses to students with ADHD
  - Knowledge of ADHD: Pre-service teachers lack an understanding of ADHD (Pomanski et al., 2018).
  - Stress: Negatively impacts teachers’ capacity to support students (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).
- Mindfulness skills: Theorized to be related to supportive interactions with students (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

Research Questions

RQ1: Are 1) knowledge of ADHD, 2) stress, and 3) mindfulness skills associated with teachers’ responses to students with ADHD?

- Multiple linear regression models
- Main effects for knowledge of ADHD, stress, and mindfulness skills
- Controlling for personal diagnosis of ADHD, experience teaching children with ADHD, and current semester
- Models 1a-c: Knowledge of ADHD to outcomes
- Models 2a-c: Stress to outcomes
- Models 3a-c: Mindfulness to outcomes

RQ2: Do mindfulness skills moderate the association between stress and teachers’ responses to students with ADHD?

- Main effect of stress and interaction of stress*mindfulness skills were added to Model 3

Method

- Knowledge of ADHD
  - Knowledge of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Scale (38 Items)
  - Sample item: “Children are frequently distracted by mild stressors.” (Gotha, 2003).
- Stress
  - Perceived Occupational Stress Scale (4 Items)
  - Sample item: “I work too hard under pressure.” (Lazarus et al., 1996).
- Mindfulness Skills
  - Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (15 Items)
  - Sample item: “I am good at letting words just pass between my mind and my body.” (Gott et al., 2011).

Results

- No significant associations were found between predictors and outcomes

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<th>Table 1. Regression Models (1a-c) Testing Knowledge of ADHD</th>
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| Figure 1. Association between knowledge of ADHD and perceptions of seriousness |

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<tr>
<th>Table 2. Regression Models (1a-c) Testing Experience Teaching Student with ADHD</th>
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| Figure 2. Moderation was not significant |

| Figure 3. Distribution of knowledge of ADHD |

Analyses

RQ1: Are 1) knowledge of ADHD, 2) stress, and 3) mindfulness skills associated with teachers’ responses to students with ADHD?

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Discussion

- Teachers’ knowledge of ADHD was consistent with literature indicating that there are gaps in pre-service teachers’ understanding of ADHD (Pomanski et al., 2018).
- Knowledge of ADHD, stress, and mindfulness skills did not predict:
  - How serious pre-service teachers perceive the student’s behavior problems to be
  - Level of emotional distress pre-service teachers feel as a result of a child with ADHD’s behavior
- Pre-service teachers’ willingness to help implement learning assistance and changes to the classroom environment for students with ADHD
- Previous experience teaching students with ADHD predicted pre-service teachers’ perceiving students’ behavioral problems as more serious
- Findings are inconsistent with studies in Australia that found a relationship between knowledge of ADHD and responses to students with ADHD (Ohan et al., 2008, Ohan et al., 2011).

Implications

- Understanding pre-service teachers’ knowledge of ADHD is vital to identifying training deficits in teacher education programs
- Still need to identify the construct impacting teachers’ responses to students with ADHD
- Results provide insight for interventions to facilitate teachers’ supportive responses when working with these vulnerable students

References

Scan the QR code for references

Acknowledgements

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Scan the QR code for more info on the WITY Lab!