

Evaluating a Train-the-Trainer Program “Taming the Adolescent Mind” for Filipino Youth Practitioners

Lucy Tan

lucy.tan@jcu.edu.au

James Cook University Singapore

Gabrielle Liamzon

Kaethe Del Mundo

Ateneo de Manila University

Karina Fernandez

Ateneo de Manila University

Research Article

Keywords: mindfulness training, train-the-trainer, school counsellors, self-efficacy, cultural adaptation, Philippines

Posted Date: October 14th, 2026

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-10874051/v1>

License:   This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

[Read Full License](#)

Additional Declarations: No competing interests reported.

Abstract

Objective

Mindfulness-based interventions are increasingly used to support wellbeing across diverse populations, yet their sound implementation depends on adequately training the facilitators who deliver them, particularly in contexts with a limited mental health workforce.

Method

This study evaluated a one-day, train-the-trainer adaptation of *“Taming the Adolescent Mind”* (TAM), a mindfulness program originally developed for direct delivery to adolescents, delivered instead to 29 school counsellors and postgraduate psychology students in the Philippines. Using a single-group, mixed-methods pre–post design, 29 participants (19 school counsellors, 10 postgraduate psychology students) completed a battery of tests measuring current levels of mindfulness and stress, as well as participants’ knowledge, skills, and attitudes regarding mindfulness immediately before and after training, together with open-ended qualitative items.

Results

Personal mindfulness and counsellor’s self-efficacy increased significantly from pre- to post-training. No significant changes were observed for mindfulness knowledge or attitudes toward mindfulness, largely reflecting favourable and high baseline scores on these measures. Qualitative responses reflected a more enriched and applied understanding of mindfulness and greater facilitation confidence following training, alongside persistent concerns about implementation feasibility, cultural and linguistic adaptation, and time constraints.

Discussions

Findings suggest that brief, one-day train-the-trainer formats can meaningfully strengthen facilitator self-efficacy and personal mindfulness among Filipino school counsellors, while underscoring the need for extended training dosage and systemic support to translate individual competency gains into sustained program delivery. This study extends the predominantly Western evidence base on brief mindfulness training to a Southeast Asian, collectivist professional context.

Introduction

Mindfulness has become one of the most widely disseminated approaches to improving wellbeing across populations, owing to its accessibility, adaptability across settings, and a growing evidence base spanning clinical and non-clinical groups (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Foale et al., 2024; Juniar et al., 2025).

These benefits may extend not only to the populations that mindfulness programs are directed toward (e.g., adolescents), but also to those who deliver such interventions: a substantial body of research links mindfulness training to strengthened practitioner functioning, including reduced burnout, greater self-compassion, and improved wellbeing among helping professionals (Suleiman-Martos et al., 2020). As individuals in training are equipped with the knowledge, confidence, and skills needed to run mindfulness interventions, they may become more prepared to also practice mindfulness themselves as a form of self-care, cultivating the reflective capacity, attentional stability, and therapeutic presence that underlie effective clinical work (Hunt et al., 2022; Sucich et al., 2022). Brief, structured training formats have attracted particular interest in this respect, offering a feasible entry point for practitioners facing heavy caseloads and limited training time; pre–post evaluations consistently report gains in state mindfulness, self-efficacy, and session-level functioning even after single-session or one-day workshops (Hunt et al., 2022).

Sound delivery of mindfulness programs at scale, however, depends on adequately preparing the facilitators who deliver them (Morledge et al., 2013). Although the benefits of mindfulness training for mental health professionals are well established, it remains unclear whether these benefits also accrue to practitioners within train-the-trainer programs specifically, where the explicit goal is to prepare individuals to teach mindfulness to others rather than to practice it themselves. Existing train-the-trainer research suggests that trainers gain not only technical proficiencies, such as facilitating group process and guiding mindfulness practice, but also relational skills as they prepare to teach others (Crane et al., 2013; Denkova et al., 2021; Gibbons et al., 2012). The structure of the program can support learning in multiple ways. Mindfulness-based intervention teacher training programs often follow a framework involving experience in an MBI course, formal teacher training, and supervised practice (Crane et al., 2010). *Experience* in an MBI course involves directly participating in an ongoing course to experience its benefits firsthand; *teacher training* involves professional training within the context in which the trainee intends to teach mindfulness; and *supervised practice* involves mentored delivery to trial groups with feedback from experienced mentors (Crane et al., 2010). Trainers are further encouraged to “embody” the practice rather than simply learn its content, which may in turn support the trainers’ own personal and professional development in a systematic, disciplined manner (Crane et al., 2010). Taking together, these findings suggest that mindfulness levels among trainers can improve even when this is not the direct intention of the training, though this remains an underexamined outcome relative to the trainer’s technical competencies.

An example of a mindfulness-based intervention is Taming the Adolescent Mind (TAM) and its corresponding train-the-trainer program. Briefly, TAM is a mindfulness-based group program originally designed for direct delivery to adolescents presenting with heterogeneous mental health difficulties, combining psychoeducation with experiential mindfulness practices such as breathing awareness, mindful eating, grounding exercises, body scan, and mindful listening. Full details of the original program, its theoretical basis, and its original clinical validation have been reported elsewhere (Tan & Martin, 2013, 2015). The TAM program has had various train-the-trainer formats to prepare professionals in various fields to deliver the program.

Understanding the effectiveness of train-the-trainer programs is particularly relevant in contexts like the Philippines, where mindfulness initiatives are still in their infancy and require significant development—particularly in preparing facilitators with the competencies needed to deliver these programs soundly (Alampay et al., 2020). This concern is of particular importance given that the country’s mental health workforce remains severely constrained relative to population needs. The national data indicates a small number of licensed psychologists and psychiatrists nationwide and a mental health worker-to-population ratio well below that of neighboring countries (Lally et al., 2019; Alibudbud, 2024). The passage of the Mental Health Act (Republic Act No. 11036) established a legal mandate for expanded mental health service delivery, but implementation continues to be constrained by workforce shortages, underinvestment, and the emigration of trained professionals. Allied professionals, such as school counsellors and postgraduate psychology trainees, are accordingly being asked to absorb rising service demand under considerable occupational strain, which makes brief, scalable, and culturally congruent training in self-regulatory and therapeutic-presence skills such as mindfulness especially relevant to this workforce. To date, however, few studies have evaluated a structured mindfulness training program among Filipino counsellors and counselling trainees (Villasanta & Ofreneo, 2022), leaving open whether outcomes reported in predominantly Western pre–post studies generalise to a Philippine, and more broadly Southeast Asian, professional context shaped by communal helping orientations and collectivist cultural norms.

The present study addresses this gap by evaluating a one-day, train-the-trainer adaptation of “Taming the Adolescent Mind” (TAM), a mindfulness program originally developed for direct delivery to adolescents (Tan & Martin, 2013, 2015), delivered instead to school counsellors and postgraduate psychology students in the Philippines as potential facilitators. The specific aims of the study include (1) assessing change in counsellors’ knowledge, self-efficacy, and attitudes regarding mindfulness from pre- to post-training; (2) assessing change in counsellors’ personal mindfulness levels and perceived stress from pre- to post-training; and (3) evaluating counsellors’ satisfaction with the training and their intention to apply mindfulness practices with students. These areas were selected to address the knowledge, skills, and attitudes commonly targeted within educational training programs (Gómez et al., 2004).

Five hypotheses were advanced. It was expected that, relative to pre-training, counsellors would report at post-training: significantly higher personal mindfulness (H1); significantly lower perceived stress (H2); significantly higher (skills) self-efficacy for delivering mindfulness-based practices to students (H3); significantly more positive attitudes toward mindfulness in schools (H4); and significantly higher mindfulness knowledge (H5). Training satisfaction, perceived relevance, and intention to use mindfulness with students were treated as exploratory, descriptive outcomes rather than as the subject of directional hypotheses.

To achieve these aims, the evaluation used a single-group pre–post design, building on prior brief intervention research (Hunt et al., 2022; Sucich et al., 2022). Rather than adapting the intervention content itself, this pilot drew on the broader cultural-adaptation literature (Listiyandini et al., 2023; Su et al., 2019) to inform local practitioners in a different cultural context, representing an initial step toward

culturally responsive delivery. The results extend existing pre–post evidence on brief mindfulness training beyond its predominantly Western evidence base and contribute empirical data toward the responsive integration of mindfulness into counsellor education in a non-Western, collectivist professional setting.

Methods

Design

This study used a single-group, mixed-methods pre–post evaluation design. Quantitative outcomes were assessed at two time points: immediately before the training (T1, pre-training) and immediately after the training (T2, post-training). A qualitative component was embedded through open-ended items nested within the knowledge, attitudes, and self-efficacy measures (eight items in total), together with eight additional open-ended items assessing feedback on the training administered at post-test only.

Participants

School counsellors and postgraduate students practicing in the Philippines were recruited to participate in the one-day TAM training and study. Purposive sampling was used: school counsellors who worked with adolescents were recruited through partner institutions of the host university, while postgraduate psychology students were invited from the Psychology program of the host university as part of their practicum training. A modest subsidized fee was collected from all participants to cover training materials. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. A validation of exemption ethical clearance was provided by the researchers' institution, as data collection formed part of standard educational practice with minimal risk, approved by the University Research Ethics Committee.

Twenty-nine school counsellors ($n=19$) and postgraduate psychology trainees ($n=10$) completed the questionnaires. Almost half (44.8%) of participants fell between 20–29 years of age, with all but one of the postgraduate trainees in this bracket; counsellors' ages were more evenly distributed, with over half falling between 30–39 years. Most counsellors had over 10 years of experience as a counsellor or teacher, while postgraduate trainees had prior work experience in mental health clinics and schools before the training. Almost half (48.3%) of the total sample had no prior mindfulness training, with only one postgraduate trainee having completed a formal course; among counsellors, over half had experienced either a short workshop ($n=10$) or a formal course ($n=4$). Regarding personal practice, more than half (51.7%) of participants described rarely practicing mindfulness (*"when I remember"*) or practicing once a week (27.6%).

Intervention

The intervention "Taming the Adolescent Mind" (TAM) was originally developed by Tan and Martin (2013, 2015) as a five-week, direct-to-adolescent mindfulness program for young people with heterogeneous

mental health presentations. For the present study, the TAM curriculum was adapted into a one-day train-the-trainer format for school counsellors: rather than being delivered directly to adolescents, the program, incorporating breathing awareness, mindful eating, grounding exercises, body scan, and mindful listening, was delivered to the counsellors themselves. The condensed program had the aim of building both their personal mindfulness practice and their capacity to subsequently teach these techniques to students. This adaptation was undertaken with permission from, and informed by, the original developer's published TAM protocol.

The training was delivered by a co-investigator on this study, a licensed clinical psychologist with experience in child and adolescent clinical psychology. The one-day program totaled nine contact hours and combined didactic instruction on mindfulness concepts with experiential practice (e.g., guided breathing, body scan, mindful listening exercises) and role-plays, coupled with small-group discussion and case application.

Procedure

At the start of the workshop (T1), all participants completed a background questionnaire and the pre-training measures of mindfulness, perceived stress, attitudes toward mindfulness in schools, mindfulness knowledge, and counsellor self-efficacy. Immediately following the training (T2), participants completed the same mindfulness, perceived stress, attitudes, knowledge, and self-efficacy measures, together with a post-training feedback scale and additional open-ended questions addressing the most useful aspects of the training, suggested improvements, and intended application of mindfulness with students. Participants were also asked whether they had used mindfulness with students, the number of sessions delivered, the specific techniques used (breathing, grounding, body scan, mindful listening), and any barriers encountered.

Measures

Background questionnaire (pre-training only). A study-specific questionnaire captured participants' demographic information, including age range, years of experience as a school counsellor or sites of experience as a postgraduate student, prior mindfulness training (none, short workshop, or formal course), and frequency of personal mindfulness practice (never to very often).

Personal Mindfulness. The 24-item Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ-24; Bohlmeijer et al., 2011) was used to measure habitual mindfulness practices. Participants rated each item on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (very often). Items were reverse scored as needed and summed up to create a total mindfulness score. The Cronbach's alpha indicated good internal consistency of the scales at pre-test ($\alpha=.885$) and post-test ($\alpha=.920$).

Perceived Stress. A four-item scale assessed the frequency of stress-related experiences over the preceding month (e.g., feeling nervous or stressed; feeling unable to control important things), rated from 0 (never) to 4 (very often), consistent in content and format with brief versions of the Perceived

Stress Scale (Cohen et al., 1983). One item (confidence in handling personal problems) was reverse-scored, and all items were averaged to create a total score. The internal consistency of the scale was adequate, as indicated by the Cronbach's alpha of .873 at pre-test, but poor at post-test ($\alpha=.552$). The poor internal consistency is likely as the third item captures more of their self-efficacy to manage issues more than their actual perception of current issues, which was hypothesized to improve at post-test. The third item dropped in both scales to acquire adequate internal consistency ($\alpha=0.852, 0.7135$).

Skills Self-Efficacy. An eight-item, study-specific scale assessed counsellors' confidence in explaining mindfulness to students, leading breathing and grounding exercises, integrating mindfulness into counselling sessions, adapting activities across age groups, and recognizing when mindfulness may be inappropriate for a given student, rated from 1 (not confident) to 5 (very confident); the total score was the mean of all items, with higher scores reflecting greater self-efficacy. The internal consistency of the scale was excellent at pre-test ($\alpha=.903$) and post-test ($\alpha=.941$). Perceived competence was further assessed through two open-ended questions: "What challenges do you anticipate when facilitating mindfulness activities with students or groups?" and "What areas related to mindfulness facilitation do you feel you still need support or training in?"

Attitudes toward Mindfulness. A nine-item, study-specific scale assessed perceived appropriateness and utility of mindfulness for school counselling practice (e.g., mindfulness can improve students' emotional regulation; schools should incorporate mindfulness practices), rated from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), with a mean computed across items. The scale had excellent internal consistency at pre-test ($\alpha=.986$) and post-test ($\alpha=.973$). Attitudes were further explored through three open-ended questions: (a) "What are your current thoughts or feelings about using mindfulness practices in educational or group settings?", (b) "What benefits, if any, do you think mindfulness may offer in schools or group programs?", and (c) "What concerns or hesitations do you have about mindfulness practices or mindfulness-based programs?"

Knowledge of Mindfulness. A four-item, study-specific multiple-choice quiz assessed basic conceptual understanding of mindfulness (definition, common practices, applicable student outcomes, and appropriate activity duration). Scores were summed up to create a total score, and the percentage of correct answers was computed at both time points. Qualitative input was also gathered through three open-ended questions: (a) "In your own words, what does mindfulness mean to you?", (b) "What aspects of mindfulness would you like to learn more about during this workshop?", and (c) "What questions or uncertainties do you currently have about mindfulness practices?"

Post-training feedback (post-training only). Eight open-ended items elicited qualitative feedback on the most useful aspects of the training, suggested improvements, and planned application with students: (a) "What was the most useful part of the training?", (b) "What were the most important lessons or insights you gained from the training?", (c) "What skills, strengths, or competencies do you feel were strengthened through this workshop?", (d) "What challenges do you anticipate when applying mindfulness practices personally?", (e) "What difficulties do you anticipate when implementing

mindfulness activities with your target population?”, (f) “How do you plan to apply mindfulness practices in your current or future work settings?”, (g) “What could be improved in this training?”, and (h) “Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience in the workshop?”

Data Analysis

Statistical analyses were conducted using Jamovi 2.7.37. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, and frequencies) were computed for demographic characteristics and for all outcome variables at each time point. Prior to statistical analysis, normality was checked using the Shapiro-Wilk test, which indicated violations of normality for perceived stress ($p=.010$) and knowledge on mindfulness ($p<.001$), while the assumption of normality was met for personal mindfulness ($p=.083$), attitudes toward mindfulness ($p=.157$) and skills self-efficacy ($p=.124$). Paired-samples t -tests were used for normally distributed variables, and Wilcoxon signed-rank tests were used for variables that violated the assumption of normality. Effect sizes were reported as Cohen’s d for paired t -tests and rank-biserial correlations for Wilcoxon signed-rank tests. Responses to the open-ended items were analyzed qualitatively using inductive thematic analysis to contextualize the quantitative findings, consistent with the study’s mixed-methods design.

Results

Quantitative Findings

Personal Mindfulness. Participants’ mindfulness scores were in the upper half of the possible score range (24–120), with mean scores increasing from pre-test ($M = 78.21$, $SD = 10.972$) to post-test ($M = 81.86$, $SD = 12.597$). A paired-samples t -test indicated a significant moderate effect from pre to post test, $t(28) = -3.567$, $p=.001$, ($d=.6624$).

Perceived Stress. Participants reported moderate perceived stress at pre-test ($M = 2.23$, $SD = 0.762$) and post-test ($M = 2.14$, $SD = 0.658$). A Wilcoxon signed-rank test revealed no significant differences between time points, $W = 149$, $p=.481$.

Skills Self-Efficacy. A paired-samples t -test showed a significant increase in self-efficacy from pre-test ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 0.797$) to post-test ($M = 4.12$, $SD = 0.697$), $t(28) = -7.586$, $p<.001$, with a large effect size ($d = 1.4086$), indicating that participants’ confidence in delivering mindfulness-based practices improved substantially following the training.

Attitudes toward Mindfulness. Participants reported generally favorable attitudes toward mindfulness in schools at pre-test ($M = 4.45$, $SD = 0.797$) and post-test ($M = 4.48$, $SD = 0.784$), with most scores in the “agree” to “strongly agree” range. A paired-samples t -test indicated no significant difference between pre- and post-test, $t(28) = -0.280$, $p=.781$.

Knowledge on Mindfulness. Participants’ knowledge scores remained unchanged from pre-test ($M = 3.72, SD = 0.53$) to post-test ($M = 3.72, SD = 0.53$), with almost all participants scoring 75% or 100% correct at both time points. A Wilcoxon signed-rank test revealed no significant difference between T1 and T2, $W = 10.5, p = 1.00$.

Table 1
Summary of Pre- to Post-Training Outcomes

Outcome	Pre-test <i>M</i> (SD)	Post-test <i>M</i> (SD)	Test statistic	<i>p</i>	Effect size
Personal Mindfulness (FFMQ-24)	78.21 (10.97)	81.86 (12.60)	$t(28) = -3.567$	.001**	$d = 0.66$ (moderate)
Perceived Stress	2.23 (0.76)	2.14 (0.66)	$W = 149$	.481	not reported
Knowledge on Mindfulness	3.72 (0.53)	3.72 (0.53)	$W = 10.5$	1.00	not reported
Attitudes toward Mindfulness	4.45 (0.80)	4.48 (0.78)	$t(28) = -0.28$	.781	not reported
Skills Self-Efficacy	3.34 (0.80)	4.12 (0.70)	$t(28) = -7.59$	< .001**	$d = 1.40$ (large)
<i>Note.</i> FFMQ-24 = Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire–24 item; <i>rrb</i> = rank-biserial correlation (effect size for Wilcoxon signed-rank test); <i>d</i> = Cohen's <i>d</i> (effect size for paired-samples <i>t</i> -test). “Not reported” indicates the effect size was not given in the original text for this outcome. * $p < .05$, ** $p \leq .001$,					

Qualitative Findings

Shared Understanding of Mindfulness

The participants began the workshop with a shared, common definition of mindfulness as the practice of being aware of the present moment and acknowledging one’s thoughts, feelings, and sensations without judgment. One participant described this self-aware state as one that could “lead to less suffering.” After the program, this definition was enriched: mindfulness was now understood as intentional practice and a life skill that could cultivate compassion toward oneself and others, and was described in more concrete terms, referencing specific frameworks and practices [e.g., the R.O.A.M.(Regulate, Observe, Acceptance and Meaningful) framework, mindful eating, seeing thoughts as thoughts]. At the end of the program, one participant described mindfulness as “an accessible form of mental health intervention that anyone, even without a thorough or professional mental health background, can administer or practice.”

Perceived Importance of Mindfulness in Schools or Group Programs

Before training, participants identified cognitive benefits (e.g., improved focus, clarity, present-moment awareness, and emotional awareness), emotional benefits (e.g., stress and anxiety regulation), and behavioral benefits (e.g., greater self-control, productivity, and reduced impulsivity). One participant emphasized its value for adolescents:

Mindfulness should be encouraged to be practiced more and be taught to individuals, particularly adolescents, as this is a stage wherein people start to feel many emotions, particularly anxieties. Mindfulness can help in managing various emotions and feelings especially when stressors arrive.

After training, counsellors more specifically identified how particular mindfulness practices could address students' needs and saw how integrating mindfulness into schools could strengthen prevention efforts and potentially reduce demand on mental health services. As one participant articulated:

"Mindfulness may assist schools in reducing the negative emotions students may be facing in light of external and internal pressure. This may also reach those students who may not be comfortable in approaching their respective guidance counsellors or other adults that may help with their emotional state."

Perceived Challenges in Facilitating Mindfulness Sessions

Implementation and Sustainability in Schools and Programs. Although participants recognized the value of mindfulness, they also identified several challenges to implementing and sustaining mindfulness programs in schools and organizations. Pre-training, participants raised concerns about limited opportunities for teacher training, insufficient resources, and a lack of culturally appropriate materials for the Philippine context. They also questioned whether mindfulness activities in schools should be mandatory or voluntary, and how either approach might influence participants' motivation to engage or sustain participation. Participants also noted that integrating mindfulness into school activities often involves facilitating large groups, which may challenge both facilitators' delivery and participants' sustained engagement.

Post-training, participants' concerns shifted toward sustaining program implementation, including the need for adequate funding, strategies to address low enrolment and attrition, and translation of materials into local languages. Participants also emphasized the importance of maintaining implementation fidelity, noting that differences across facilitators' delivery styles could lead to inconsistencies in how mindfulness sessions are conducted.

Participant Receptivity. A further anticipated challenge centred on students' receptivity and willingness to engage in mindfulness activities. Participants expressed concern that students may be reluctant to participate due to boredom, discomfort, or skepticism, and questioned whether students would remain engaged throughout activities involving silence or sustained attention, particularly among adolescents less accustomed to reflecting on their thoughts, emotions, and present-moment experience. Participants also recognized that mindfulness may not be personally relevant or appealing to everyone; some noted that certain individuals may perceive mindfulness as overly spiritual, "hokey," or not to be taken seriously.

Adapting Mindfulness to Diverse Learners and Contexts. Participants anticipated challenges in adapting mindfulness practices to the diverse developmental, contextual, and individual needs of students. Concerns were raised about engaging younger audiences, given that children and adolescents may find it difficult to remain still or sustain attention. As one participant put it: *“I wonder if youth would buy into it. I wonder how to keep them engaged.”* Participants also questioned the appropriateness of conventional mindfulness practices for certain students or situations; some noted that students with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) may find traditional mindfulness exercises challenging, while others raised concerns about the accessibility of mindfulness for students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

Facilitator Competence and Confidence. Prior to training, participants expressed uncertainty about their own ability to facilitate mindfulness effectively, anticipating challenges in communicating concepts to adolescents, managing group dynamics, maintaining a calm and supportive atmosphere, and sustaining engagement. One participant shared: *“I think more of a lack of experience working with teenagers might be an obstacle or challenge, because I’m unsure of the dynamics that come into play as a facilitator interacting with teens.”*

Several participants attributed these concerns to limited experience and formal training in mindfulness facilitation; some described the workshop as their first opportunity to conduct a “real” intervention with actual participants. One participant reflected: *“Again, my concerns are centred around my ability to conduct sessions smoothly and confidently. I hope that with practice this is something I can overcome.”*

Beyond facilitation skills, participants also recognized personal limitations that could affect their effectiveness as facilitators, including difficulty maintaining their own mindfulness due to mind wandering, and uncertainty in their own confidence leading sessions. Participants acknowledged that overcoming these challenges would require investing more time in practicing delivery of scripts and familiarizing themselves with intervention materials and recognized the importance of personally engaging in mindfulness for their own benefit.

Feedback on Training

Participants found the facilitator knowledgeable and engaging. The main negative feedback concerned the training’s one-day duration: participants felt this did not provide sufficient time to consolidate conceptual knowledge of mindfulness theory, work through each TAM module, or practice facilitation. They felt the balance between learning mindfulness theory and working through the modules and practices was uneven, with more time needed for the latter. The program also offered limited time for participants to exchange facilitation experiences with one another and to collaboratively adapt TAM activities to the local culture, language, and context. Finally, space limitations and environmental noise within the training venue may have reduced participants’ ability to engage fully in the mindfulness exercises.

Discussion

Integration of Findings

This study evaluated a one-day, train-the-trainer adaptation of TAM for school counsellors and postgraduate psychology trainees in the Philippines. The findings suggest that the training was most effective in outcomes directly targeted through its experiential and skills-based approach. Specifically, the hypothesis that participants would report higher personal mindfulness following training (H1) and the hypothesis that they would report higher self-efficacy in delivering mindfulness-based practices to students (H3) were supported. In contrast, the hypotheses that participants would report lower perceived stress (H2), more positive attitude toward mindfulness in schools (H4), and higher mindfulness knowledge (H5) were not supported. The qualitative findings complement this pattern by showing that participants developed greater facilitation, confidence and a more applied understanding of mindfulness.

Participants' personal mindfulness increased significantly with a large effect size, supporting H1. Although the training primarily prepared participants to facilitate mindfulness rather than develop their own practice, its experiential format required participants to engage personally with mindfulness practices. The finding aligns with train-the-trainer research showing that practitioners may strengthen their own mindfulness while developing the skills needed to teach others (Crane et al., 2010; Gibbons et al., 2012) and with evidence linking mindfulness training to improved practitioner functioning and wellbeing (Suleiman-Martos et al., 2020). The result therefore suggests that personal practice and facilitator preparation may be closely connected in mindfulness-based training.

The largest improvement occurred in skills self-efficacy, supporting H3. Participants became substantially more confident in delivering mindfulness practices, consistent with the training's emphasis on experiential learning and facilitation practice. Before training, participants expressed uncertainty about communicating with adolescents, managing groups, sustaining engagement, and facilitating sessions confidently. After training, they described specific mindfulness frameworks and practices and identified how these could address students' needs. The qualitative findings reinforce the quantitative evidence that the training primarily strengthened perceived facilitation competence.

On the other hand, the training did not significantly reduce perceived stress, providing no support for H2. Although stress decreased slightly, a single day of facilitator training may not provide sufficient exposure to change a broad and multifaceted construct influenced by workload, occupational demands and other ongoing stressors. The finding is consistent with research suggesting that brief mindfulness interventions may have more limited effects on broader psychological outcomes than longer interventions (Hunt et al., 2022). Thus, the improvement in personal mindfulness did not translate into an immediate reduction in perceived stress.

The lack of change in attitudes and knowledge similarly provides no support for H4 and H5, but the baseline scores of knowledge-quiz items offer an important explanation. Participants already held

favorable attitudes toward mindfulness and demonstrated high levels of knowledge before training, leaving limited room for measurable improvement. The qualitative findings nevertheless showed that participants developed a more nuanced and applied understanding of mindfulness. Their descriptions shifted from a general focus on present-moment awareness and non-judgment to specific frameworks, practices and applications for students. This suggests that the training may have deepened and contextualized existing knowledge without substantially changing performance on a brief factual assessment.

The findings position the one-day TAM training primarily as a facilitator preparation and skills-development intervention, rather than a standalone stress-reduction or psychoeducational program. Its strongest effects emerged in outcomes that participants could directly experience and practice during training. At the same time, the qualitative findings show that increased self-efficacy did not eliminate implementation concerns. Participants continued to identify barriers involving funding, attrition, facilitator fidelity to the material, translation, cultural adaptation, participant receptivity, and adapting practices for diverse learners. These concerns highlight a distinction between individual facilitator competence and organizational readiness: strengthening facilitators may be necessary for implementation but does not, by itself, ensure sustainable delivery. Organizational resources, continued practice and supervision, and implementation support therefore remain important, particularly within contexts facing broader mental health workforce and resource constraints (Lally et al, 2019).

The cultural context further informs these implementation concerns. Much of the mindfulness training literature comes from North America, Europe, and Australia, where the models, metaphors, and assumptions underlying mindfulness programs have largely developed within individualistic cultural contexts (Harrell, 2018). Differences in how individuals understand self, wellbeing, and communal responsibility may influence how mindfulness programs are perceived and applied across settings. Although this study did not directly assess participants' individualist-collectivist orientations, cultural-adaptation research suggests that mindfulness programs may require contextualization to improve their relevance and acceptability. For example, adaptations in China incorporated socially oriented coping and dialectical thinking (Su et al., 2019), while an Indonesian mindfulness program incorporated local language and cultural considerations (Listiyandini et al., 2023). Consistent with this literature, participants in the present study identified translation, cultural relevance, and contextual adaptation as important considerations for implementing mindfulness in Philippine schools. They also questioned whether conventional practices would suit students with different developmental, socioeconomic, and individual needs. These findings highlight the importance of examining how mindfulness programs can be appropriately adapted to Philippine contexts rather than assuming their direct transferability from Western settings.

At the same time, participants already viewed mindfulness as relevant to students' wellbeing, particularly for stress, emotional regulation, attention, and self-awareness. This initial acceptability may partly explain the lack of change in attitudes following training. However, because the study did not directly measure cultural orientation or compare culturally adapted and non-adapted programs, the findings

cannot establish that participants' favorable attitudes resulted from collectivist values or cultural congruence. Instead, they indicate that this particular group of counsellors and psychology trainees entered the training with generally favorable views of mindfulness and subsequently developed a more concrete understanding of how it could be applied in school and community settings.

Limitations

One limitation is the single-group, pre-post design itself: without a comparison or control condition, the changes reported here cannot be attributed to the training with any confidence, since testing effects, demand characteristics, and simple regression to the mean remain equally plausible explanations. The sample was also small ($N = 29$) and combined two groups with quite different levels of professional experience, i.e., practicing school counsellors and postgraduate trainees, which limits statistical power and makes any comparison between the two groups tentative at best.

Timing is a related concern. Outcomes were measured only immediately after training, with no follow-up, so whether the gains in mindfulness and self-efficacy held beyond the workshop, or shaped how participants worked with students afterward, is simply not known. The knowledge, attitude, and self-efficacy measures were also written specifically for this study rather than psychometrically validated elsewhere, and the knowledge quiz may have been too coarse an instrument to register change, given how well participants already scored at baseline.

Sampling and delivery raise further caveats. Participants opted into the training and paid a subsidized fee to attend, which is likely selected for counsellors and trainees already inclined toward mindfulness rather than a representative slice of the workforce. And because a single facilitator delivered the training at a single site, it remains an open question how well these results would generalize to other trainers or settings.

Implications

Despite these limitations, the findings carry several practical and theoretical implications. Practically, the results suggest that brief, one-day train-the-trainer formats can meaningfully strengthen facilitator self-efficacy and personal mindfulness even within a resource-constrained mental health workforce, supporting the feasibility of scalable training models as the Philippines works toward the aims of the Mental Health Act (Republic Act No. 11036). At the same time, participants' own feedback calling for more time on modules and practice, more opportunity to collaboratively adapt materials to the local context, and language translation; suggests that training dosage and duration should be reconsidered where resources allow, and that structured opportunities for peer exchange and local adaptation should be built into future iterations of the training rather than left to participants' own initiative. The gap identified between individual self-efficacy gains and persistent systemic implementation concerns further suggests that trainer-focused interventions may need to be paired with organizational or policy-level supports (e.g., dedicated implementation time, funding, and translated materials) to translate individual competency into sustained program delivery. Theoretically, this study contributes empirical data from a non-Western, collectivist professional context to a literature that has been overwhelmingly

generated in Western settings and offers preliminary support for the transportability of a Western-derived train-the-trainer model when adapted for a Southeast Asian counselling workforce. Future research would benefit from controlled or comparative designs, validated outcome measures, longer-term follow-up capturing actual mindfulness delivery to students, and more explicit assessment of the cultural congruence that this study's findings suggested but did not directly measure.

Conclusion

This study provides preliminary evidence that a one-day, train-the-trainer adaptation of TAM can strengthen personal mindfulness and self-efficacy among Filipino school counsellors and postgraduate trainees, extending brief mindfulness training evidence to a Southeast Asian, collectivist professional context. At the same time, the absence of change in stress, attitudes, and knowledge, together with participants continued concerns about implementation, suggest that a single day of training builds individual confidence more readily than it resolves the broader resourcing and contextual barriers to sustained mindfulness delivery in Philippine schools.

Declarations

Author Contribution

L.T. was responsible for the conceptualization, design, training and original writing of this study; G.L. and K.D.M. were responsible for the recruitment, data collection and analyses; K.F. was responsible for the overall project. All authors contributed to the final writing.

References

1. Alampay, L. P., Tan, G., Tuliao, L. J. T., Baranek, A. P., Ofreneo, P., Lopez, M. A. P., Fernandez, G. D., Rockman, K. G., Villasanta, P., Angangco, A. P. V., Freedman, T., Cerswell, M. L., L., & Guintu, V. (2020). A pilot randomized controlled trial of a mindfulness program for Filipino children. *Mindfulness*, 11, 303–316. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-019-01124-8>
2. Alibudbud, R. (2024). Navigating the Philippine mental health system for the nation's youth: Challenges and opportunities. *BJPsych International*, 21(3), 56–58.
3. Bohlmeijer, E., Ten Klooster, P. M., Fledderus, M., Veehof, M., & Baer, R. (2011). Psychometric properties of the five-facet mindfulness questionnaire in depressed adults and development of a short form. *Assessment*, 18(3), 308–320. <https://doi.org/10.1192/bji.2024.5>
4. Brown, K. W., & Ryan, R. M. (2003). The benefits of being present: Mindfulness and its role in psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84(4), 822–848. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.84.4.822>
5. Cohen, S., Kamarck, T., & Mermelstein, R. (1983). A global measure of perceived stress. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 24(4), 385–396. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2136404>

6. Crane, R. S., Eames, C., Kuyken, W., Hastings, R. P., Williams, J. M. G., Bartley, T., Evans, A., Silverton, S., Soulsby, J. G., & Surawy, C. (2013). Development and validation of the Mindfulness-Based Interventions – Teaching Assessment Criteria (MBI:TAC). *Assessment*, 20(6), 681–688. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1073191113490790>
7. Crane, R. S., Kuyken, W., Hastings, R. P., et al. (2010). Training teachers to deliver mindfulness-based interventions: Learning from the UK experience. *Mindfulness*, 1, 74–86. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-010-0010-9>
8. Denkova, E., Barry, J., Slavin, L., Zanesco, A. P., Rogers, S. L., & Jha, A. P. (2021). Investigating the impact of peer-trainer delivered mindfulness training on cognitive abilities and psychological health. *Mindfulness*, 12, 2645–2661. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-021-01713-6>
9. Foale, S., Botma, Y., & Heyns, T. (2024). Mindfulness-based interventions to support wellbeing of adults in low socio-economic settings: A realist review. *BMC Complementary Medicine and Therapies*, 24(1), 52. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12906-023-04263-7>
10. Gibbons, C., Felteau, M., Cullen, N., Marshall, S., Dubois, S., Maxwell, H., Mazmanian, D., Weaver, B., Rees, L., Gainer, R., Klein, R., Moustgaard, A., & Bédard, M. (2012). Training clinicians to deliver a mindfulness intervention. *Mindfulness*, 5, 232–237. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-012-0170-x>
11. Gómez, P. J., Céspedes Lorente, J. J., & Cabrera, R. V. (2004). Training practices and organisational learning capability: Relationship and implications. *Journal of European Industrial Training*, 28(2-3-4), 234–256. <https://doi.org/10.1108/03090590410527636>
12. Harrell, S. P. (2018). Soulfulness as an orientation to contemplative practice: Culture, liberation, and mindful awareness. *Journal of Contemplative Inquiry*, 5(1), 9–32.
13. Hunt, C. A., Goodman, R. D., Hilert, A. J., Hurley, W., & Hill, C. E. (2022). A mindfulness-based compassion workshop and pre-session preparation to enhance therapist effectiveness in psychotherapy: A pilot study. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, 35(3), 546–561. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09515070.2021.1895724>
14. Juniar, D., van Ballegooijen, W., Kleygrewe, G., van Schaik, A., Passchier, J., & Riper, H. (2025). Stress management interventions for university students in low- and middle-income countries: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Frontiers in Digital Health*, 7, 1603389. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fdgth.2025.1603389>
15. Lally, J., Tully, J., & Samaniego, R. (2019). Mental health services in the Philippines. *BJPsych International*, 16(3), 62–64. <https://doi.org/10.1192/bji.2018.34>
16. Listiyandini, R. A., Andriani, A., Kusristanti, C., Moulds, M., Mahoney, A., & Newby, J. M. (2023). Culturally adapting an internet-delivered mindfulness intervention for Indonesian university students experiencing psychological distress: Mixed methods study. *JMIR Formative Research*, 7, e47126. <https://doi.org/10.2196/47126>
17. Morledge, T. J., Allexandre, D., Fox, E., Fu, A. Z., Higashi, M. K., Kruzikas, D. T., Pham, S. V., & Reese, P. R. (2013). Feasibility of an online mindfulness program for stress management—A randomized,

- controlled trial. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, 46(2), 137–148. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12160-013-9490-x>
18. Republic Act No. 11036 (2018). *Mental Health Act*. Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines. <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/downloads/2019/01jan/20190122-IRR-RA-11036-RRD.pdf>
 19. Su, N., Si, G., & Zhang, C. Q. (2019). Mindfulness and acceptance-based training for Chinese athletes: The mindfulness-acceptance-insight-commitment (MAIC) program. *Journal of Sport Psychology in Action*, 10(4), 255–263. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21520704.2018.1557772>
 20. Sucich, J. T., Lehrer, J., Breitbart, V., & Julliard, K. N. (2022). Mindfulness training for community-based psychotherapists: A feasibility study. *Pilot and Feasibility Studies*, 8, 250. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40814-022-01205-x>
 21. Suleiman-Martos, N., Gómez-Urquiza, J. L., Aguayo-Estremera, R., Cañadas-De La Fuente, G. A., De La Fuente-Solana, E. I., & Albendín-García, L. (2020). The effect of mindfulness training on burnout syndrome in nursing: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 76(5), 1124–1140. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.14318>
 22. Tan, L., & Martin, G. (2013). Taming the adolescent mind: Preliminary report of a mindfulness-based psychological intervention for adolescents with clinical heterogeneous mental health diagnoses. *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 18(2), 300–312. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1359104512455182>
 23. Tan, L., & Martin, G. (2015). Taming the adolescent mind: A randomised controlled trial examining clinical efficacy of an adolescent mindfulness-based group program. *Child and Adolescent Mental Health*, 20(1), 49–55. <https://doi.org/10.1111/camh.12057>
 24. Villasanta, A. P. V. P., & Ofreneo, M. A. P. (2022). Finding the introspective voice: Listening to public school teachers' narratives of their mindfulness journey. *Journal of Constructivist Psychology*, 35(1), 146–177. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10720537.2020.1739580>

Figures

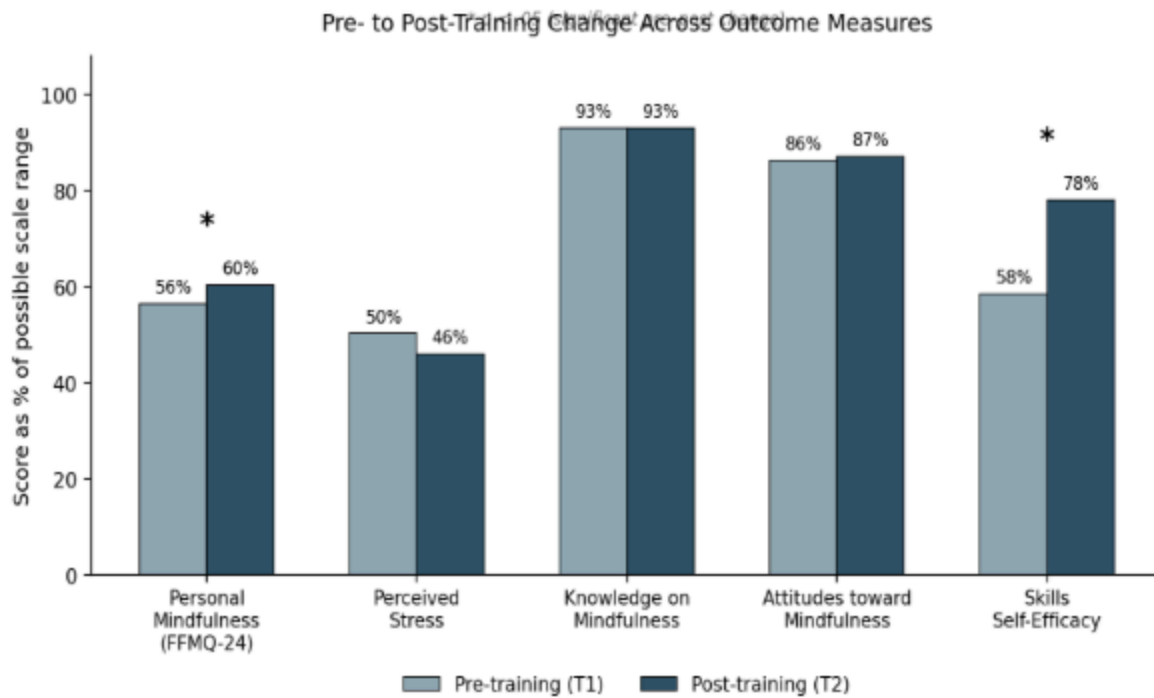


Figure 1

Pre- to post-training scores across the five outcome measures, expressed as a percentage of each measure's possible scale range to allow direct visual comparison. Asterisks denote a statistically significant pre-post change ($p < .05$).