

**THE USE OF MEDITATION AS A STRATEGY FOR  
STRESS MANAGEMENT AND THE PROMOTION OF  
WELLNESS IN TEACHERS: AN EDUCATIONAL  
PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY**

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**SOLI DEO GLORIA!**

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## **ABSTRACT**

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The teaching profession is generally regarded as one of the most stressful occupations across the world. Teachers are, however, persons and as such function not only as teachers, but also as citizens, parents, spouses, house owners and so on, which make them experience multiple stressors in their personal lives. Apart from the implementation of various new policies in the sphere of education, such as Outcomes-Based Education and Inclusive education, teachers are also subjected to various social-political changes and stressors like extreme levels of crime, affirmative action and the secondary effects thereof, and so on in a new democracy. These changes and stressors are often experienced as stress which, due to a spill-over effect, often affect the other domains of life of teachers as persons.

In order to understand human experience, behaviour, problems and phenomena, such as stress, one needs to take a meta-approach to analyse and then synthesise all the contexts of human existence – biological, intra-psychic, ecological and metaphysical – to obtain an eco-systemic and holistic view and understanding. These contexts of existence can both function as potential sources of stressors, or can reflect the potential effects of stress – the detail will depend on an individual person's situatedness. These sources of stressors or effects of stress can impinge on personal wellness – where wellness is seen as a holistic construct which embraces all the contexts of human existence.

Due to the experience of elevated levels of stress by a large number of teachers and the resultant negative effect on their wellness – also vice versa – there exists a genuine need for strategies for stress management and the promotion of wellness. The teaching, learning and practise of Clinically Standardized Meditation is one such a strategy open to teachers. Findings from this study suggest that Clinically Standardized Meditation is an effective strategy for stress management and the promotion of wellness in teachers.

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## OPSOMMING

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Die onderwysprofessie word in die algemeen beskou as een van die mees stresvolle beroepe in die wêreld. Onderwysers is egter persone en as sodanig funksioneer hulle nie net as onderwysers nie, maar is ook burgers van die land, ouers, huweliksmaats, huiseienaars, ensovoorts, wat veroorsaak dat hulle veelvoudige stressors in hulle persoonlike lewens ervaar. Afgesien van die implementering van verskeie nuwe beleidsrigtings in die onderwysomgewing, soos Uitkomsgebaseerde Onderwys en Insluitende Onderwys, is onderwysers ook aan verskeie sosio-politieke veranderings en stressors blootgestel, soos baie hoë vlakke van misdaad, regstellende aksie ensovoorts, en die sekondêre gevolge daarvan in 'n nuwe demokrasie. Hierdie veranderinge en stressors word dikwels as stres beleef wat, weens 'n oorspoel-effek, dikwels alle ander terreine van die persoonlike lewe van onderwysers beïnvloed.

Ten einde menslike belewenis, handeling, probleme en verskynsels soos stres te verstaan, behoort daar van 'n metabenadering gebruik gemaak te word om 'n analise en sintese van al die kontekste van menslike bestaan – biologies, intrapsigies, ekologies en metafisies – te maak ten einde 'n ekosistemiese en holistiese sienswyse en verstaan en te verwerf. Hierdie kontekste van bestaan kan beide funksioneer as potensiële bronne van stressors, of kan die potensiële effekte van stres reflekteer – die besonderhede hang af van 'n individuele persoon se omstandighede. Die bronne van stressors of die uitwerking van stres kan nadelig inwerk op 'n persoon se welstand ("wellness") – waar welstand gesien kan word as 'n holistiese konstruk – wat al die kontekste van menslike bestaan insluit.

Weens onderwysers se ervaring van hoë stresvlakke en die gevolglike negatiewe effek op hulle welstand – asook die omgekeerde daarvan – bestaan daar 'n werklike behoefte vir strategieë vir streshantering en die bevordering van welstand. Die onderrig, leer en beoefening van Klinies Gestandaardiseerde Meditasie is so 'n strategie wat vir onderwysers beskikbaar is. Bevindinge uit hierdie studie dui daarop dat Klinies Gestandaardiseerde Meditasie 'n effektiewe strategie vir streshantering en die bevordering van welstand van onderwysers is.

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