

## DOES MINDFULNESS TEACHER TRAINING MATTER?

### Background

Growing interest in mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) and increased demand for MBI teachers raises questions around safeguarding teaching standards. Training literature emphasises need for training and meditation experience, yet studies on impact of teacher experience on learning outcomes are scarce (Grepmaier et al 2007; Crane et al, 2010; van Aalderen et al, 2012), requiring further investigation. This pilot study aimed to compare well-being outcomes in MBIs taught by teachers with varying levels of training, teaching and meditation experience, and provide indications for further investigation into teacher qualifications.

### Methods

#### Participants:

- 9 MBI teachers (4 completed advanced teacher training - **T2**, 1 male, M age = 45; 5 completed higher level CPD MBI teacher training - **T3**, 2 males, M age = 52)
- 31 MBSR course participants (9 with T2 teachers, 22 with T3 teachers; 6 males, M age = 46)

#### Measures:

- Teacher Survey to assess demographics, training, and teaching and meditation experience.
- 5 Likert-style automated questionnaires for course participants: Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ), Self-Compassion Scale - Short Form (SCSSF), W.H.O. (Five) Wellbeing Questionnaire (WHO), Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) and course satisfaction survey.

#### Procedure:

Self-reports collected at before and after the MBSR course, and satisfaction scores at post-test. We compared participant outcomes between the two teacher groups T2 and T3, with stronger gains in mindfulness, self-compassion and wellbeing, and reductions in perceived stress predicted in courses delivered by teachers with a higher level of MBI teacher training.

**One of the first studies of MBI teacher impact on participant outcomes.**



*“The quality of MBSR as an intervention is only as good as the MBSR instructor and his or her understanding of what is required to deliver a truly mindfulness-based programme”*

Jon Kabat-Zinn, 2011

### Results

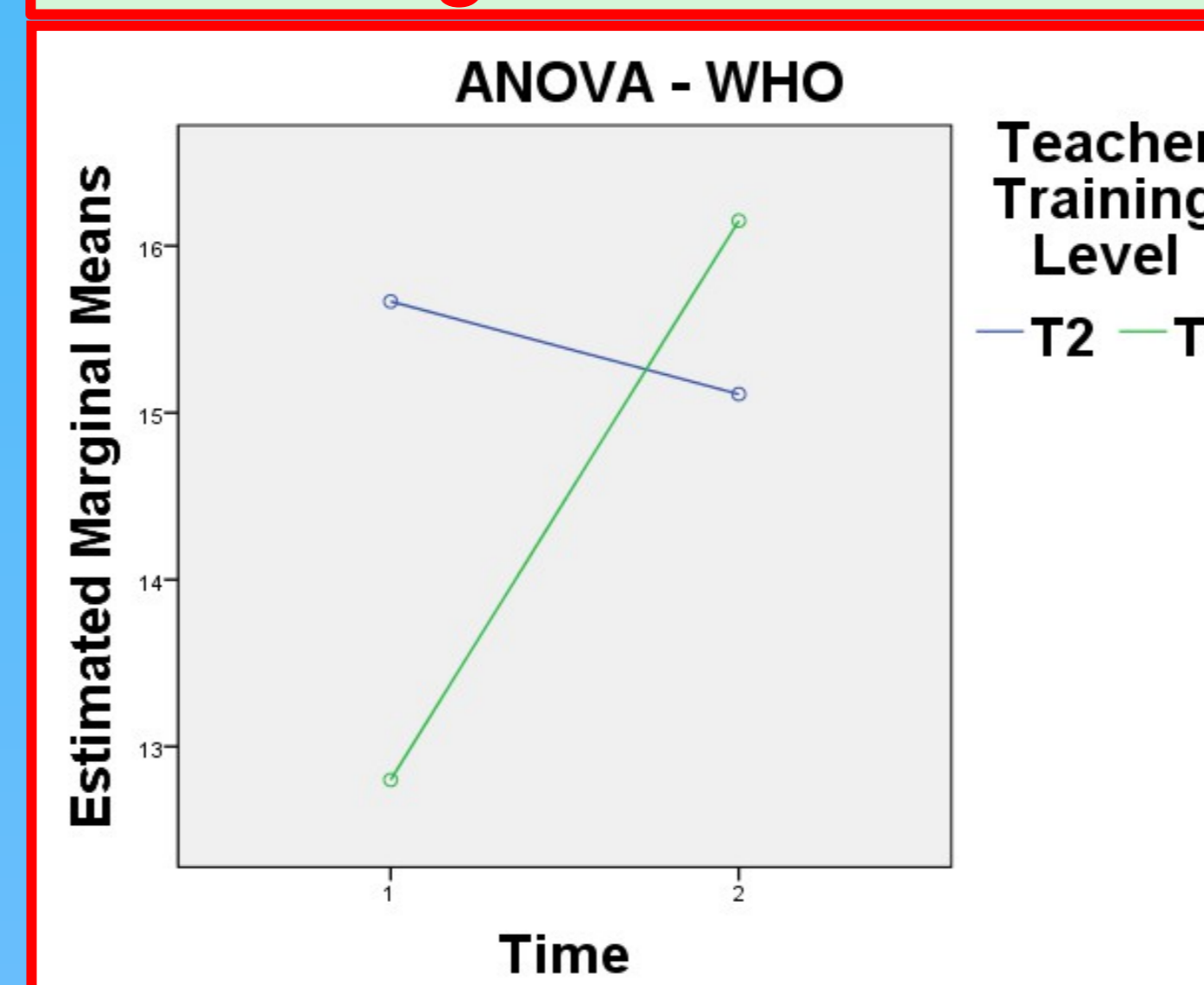
Independent-samples T-tests for all four mindfulness and wellbeing measures showed no significant differences at baseline between T2 and T3 groups. Gains on all four measures were higher for T3 than for T2.

ANOVAs revealed significant interactions between group and time factors for WHO ( $F(1,27) = 4.575, p = .042$ ) and PSS ( $F(1,25) = 3.053, p = .093$ ) scores. Paired-samples T-tests revealed significant main effect changes over time in WHO ( $t(19) = -4.544, p < .001$ ) and PSS ( $t(19) = 5.931, p < .001$ ) scores only for T3 participants.

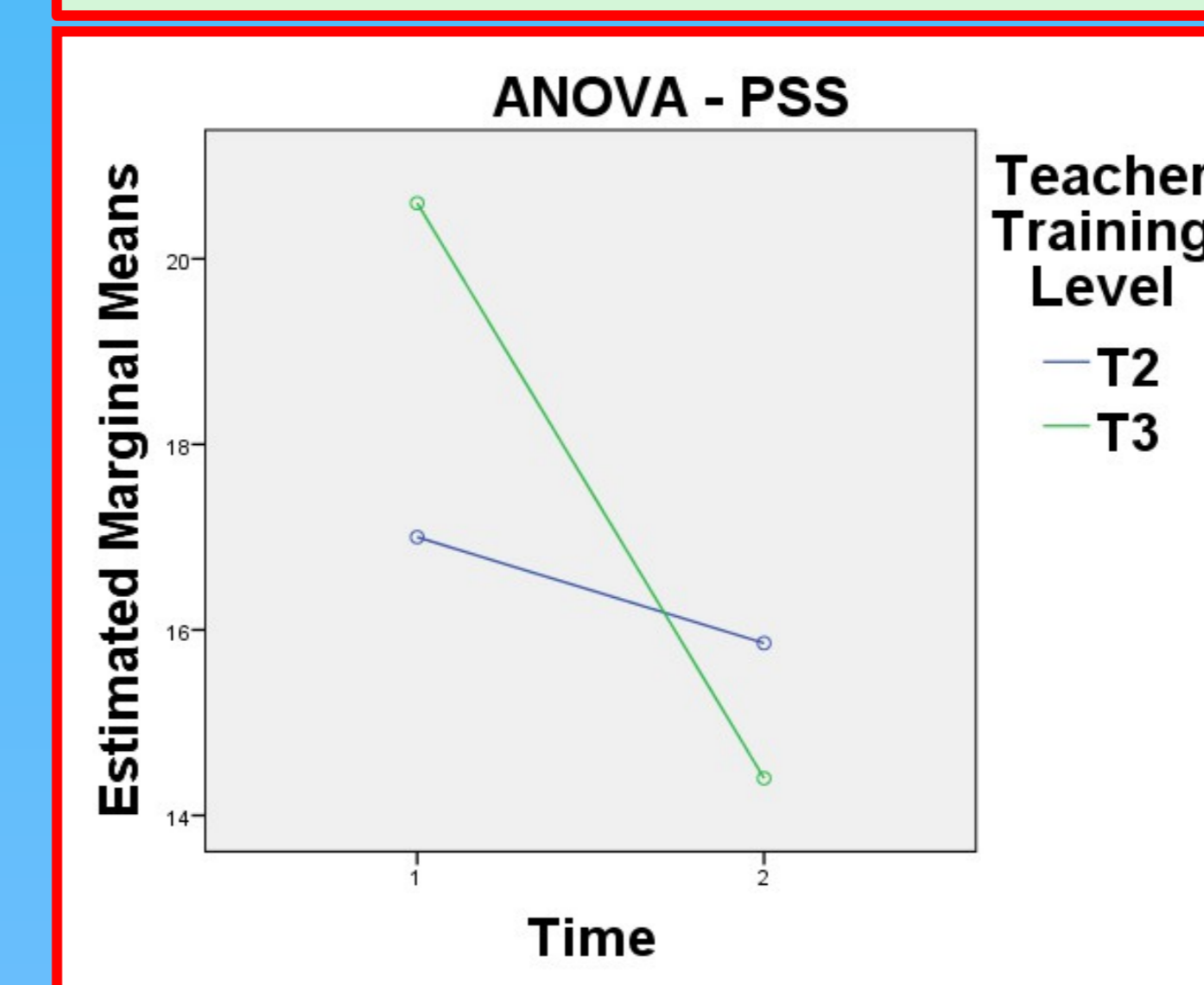
Independent-samples T-tests of Course Satisfaction scores between T2 and T3 also showed significant main effect ( $F(29) = 2.059; t = -2.634, p = .013$ ).

No significant correlations were found between Teacher Training Level and other teacher variables.

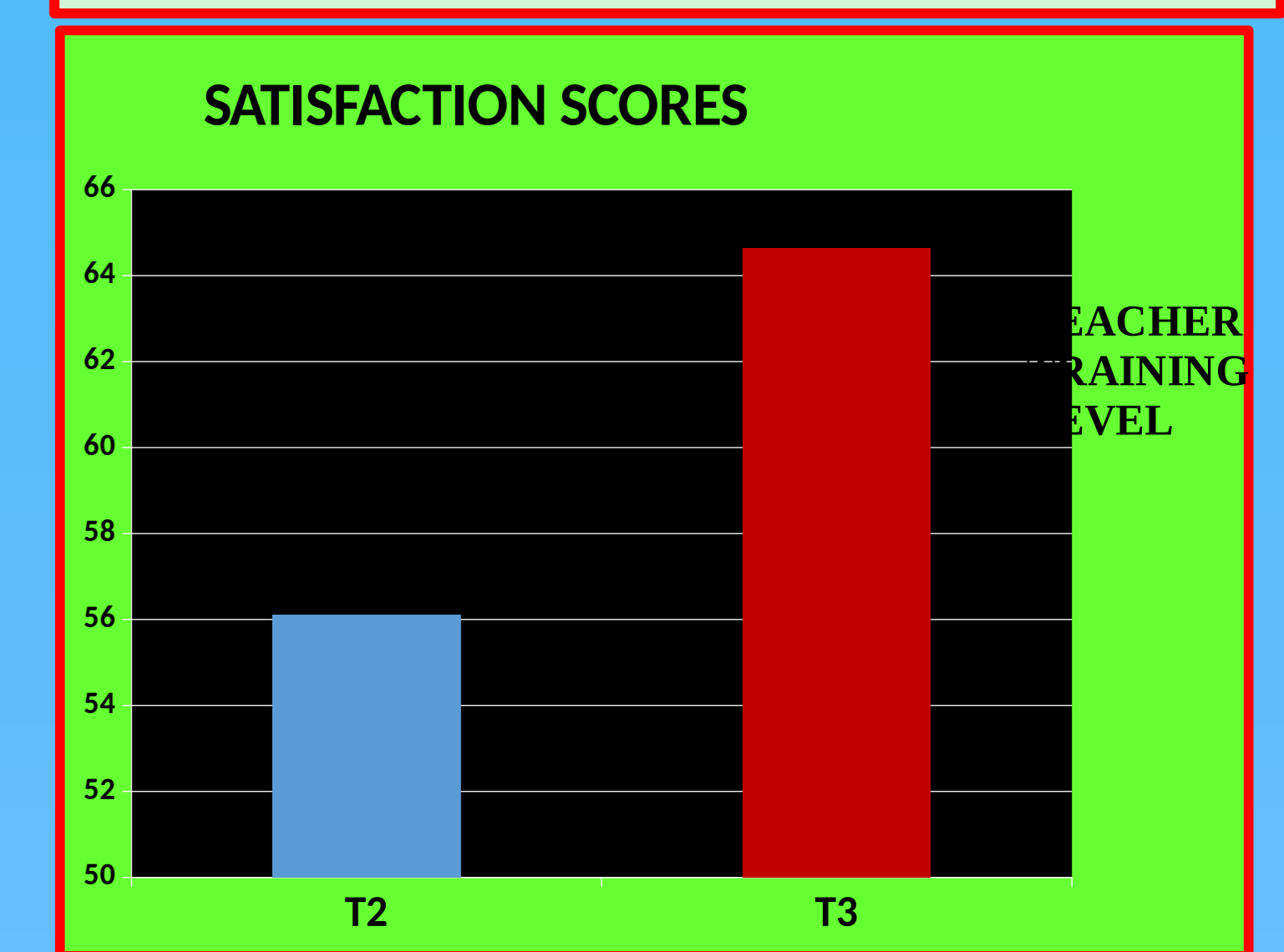
#### Wellbeing - WHO



#### Perceived Stress - PSS



#### Course Satisfaction



### References

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### Conclusions

- Higher level of MBI teacher training may be linked to higher wellbeing outcomes and lower perceived stress outcomes amongst MBSR course participants.
- Higher level of MBI teacher training may also be associated with greater course satisfaction experienced by MBSR course participants.
- Further research is required with larger sample groups to investigate the relationship between mindfulness teacher training and course participant outcomes.