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## Qualitative Study on At-Risk Hispanic Adolescents engaged in Social Emotional Learning and Mindfulness Practices

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**Abstract:** The following study highlights the importance of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and provides a descriptive overview of the Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) organization competencies at both the national and state level. Qualitative data was collected during a study conducted on at-risk Hispanic high school students who engaged in a mindfulness yoga program. Adolescents voluntarily participated in 12 weeks of mindfulness yoga (24 classes) and provided post essay responses to questions associated with the five core competencies of SEL: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. Evidence aligned with SEL competencies after 24 mindfulness yoga sessions through implicit yoga instruction (absence of explicit direct instruction) were coded and reported accordingly. Overall, findings indicate consistencies with previous research on mindfulness yoga programs in the schools of the impactful benefits of healthy behaviors and mental wellness for adolescents at-risk. Documented conclusions from this study showcase an increased positive impact on SEL categories of self-awareness, self-management, and decision making.

**Keywords:** *Hispanic adolescents, mindfulness practices, social emotional learning (SEL), yoga in the schools*

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### Introduction

Social emotional learning (SEL) in academic school systems across the country have yielded limited attention nor been a focus for many school districts nationwide. Cultural diversity and advanced technologies have transformed how academic school systems function and educate students. The call for reforming educational school systems to meet student needs is essential in this evolving global society. Educational systems are tasked with both educating students and providing resources to support their mental wellness in order to reach academic success. Social emotional learning skills are resources that can provide student support in both areas.

Students at-risk are often described as students or groups of students who are considered to have a higher probability of failing academically or withdrawing from school. This refers to students who may experience such circumstances as homelessness, incarceration, teenage pregnancy, serious health issues, domestic violence, transiency, learning disabilities, disciplinary problems, grade retentions, behavioral concerns, or mental health concerns that could adversely affect educational performance. In this evolving global society of diverse students experiencing variable circumstances, it is important to provide students with support and opportunities to develop their SEL skills. Mindfulness yoga embedded with SEL skills is a preventive mechanism to guide all students, especially students at-risk, towards a positive mindset of growth.

Butzer et al. (2016) hypothesized a framework that would suggest a theoretical research model for approaching school-based yoga interventions and implementation into schools. The model, the framework for this study, is comprised of three competencies: mind body awareness, self-regulation, and physical postures which can have a positive impact on mental health and wellness (Butzer et al., 2016; Durlak et al., 2011).

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## Literature Review

### *CASEL and National Social Emotional Standards*

In 1994, the organization Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) emerged in response to addressing concerns of fundamental factors prompting problematic student behaviors that were arising across the country. The organization evolved as a collaboration amongst various groups including educators, psychologists, and public health professionals all focused on positive youth development. They developed goals and guiding principles CASEL (2013a, 2013b) which now serve as the leading national guides for school based Social Emotional Learning (SEL) interventions. SEL is described as the progressive development through which students effectively apply knowledge, attitudes, and mental skills necessary to comprehend and manage emotions, exercise empathy towards others, work towards maintaining positive relationships, and establish and achieve positive goals within the process (CASEL, 2015a; Weissberg et al., 2015; Zins et al., 2004). In theory according to CASEL (2015a), social emotional learning are skills that can be taught within daily teaching practices, embedded into curriculum frameworks, as policies or organizational structural strategies, or as free-standing lessons. The overarching goal of SEL programs is to produce students with core competencies in five key areas: *self-awareness* (awareness of one's thoughts and emotions and how they can impact their behaviors), *self-management* (the ability to regulate one's own thoughts, emotions, and behaviors under varying circumstances; inclusive of stress management and self-motivation), *social awareness* (appreciating the perspectives of others with diverse backgrounds and employing empathy), *relationship skills* (establishing and maintaining healthy positive relationships) and *responsible decision making* (the ability to make positive choices about personal behavior and social interactions) (CASEL, 2015a). There is strong evidence that implementation and promotion of SEL is linked to beneficial student outcomes (Durlak, 2015).

CASEL (2013b) and CASEL (2015b) provide organized competencies and descriptive systematic evidence-based reviews of SEL Programs. According to CASEL (2015b) programs are categorized as SELet Programs, Complementary Programs, SEL-Related and Promising Programs. Criteria descriptors determine category designation and overall solid program design that promote students' development across the five social and emotional competencies outlined, descriptive implementation process timeline of multiyear and ongoing training and support, and research evaluations of program impact.

According to the CASEL (2015b) Guide for Middle and High Schools, five programs fell under the SEL-Related approaches or were considered supplements of SEL. Of the five programs SEL-Related in this category, one program focused on managing anxiety and building self-esteem (*Mindfulness in the Schools Program*), two focused on breathing techniques and relaxation (*Learning to Breathe and SKY Schools*), and the following two programs incorporated yoga, breathing, and meditation techniques (*Kripalu and Transformative Life Skills*). It is important to note that mindfulness practices are not currently included in the CASEL five competency clusters (mentioned earlier) due to the early and limited progress of research and practice in this field.

Incorporating CASEL competencies into state standards allows schools to more easily deliver SEL instruction. Many schools do not have comprehensive SEL programs because teachers are not trained, the programs don't align with the school's mission, or the belief that programs may take time away from achievement or state test preparation (Lawson et al., 2019). Lawson et al. (2019) found that "implementation of a modular SEL program would require extensive implementation support, including training, supervision, and monitoring of intervention integrity and outcomes" (p. 465). To minimize this issue, many states, including Texas, include CASEL standards in the state Health and Physical Education Standards. While the inclusion of state standards does allow for SEL instruction with minimal disruption for districts, "this placement may cause SEL components to be overlooked or potentially lost among other school requirements" (Eklund et al., 2018, p. 323). In order to capitalize on the benefits of SEL while maintaining the integrity of state standards and other requirements, implicit rather than explicit SEL instruction may be more advantageous and should be further explored. Implicit instruction would allow SEL to be incorporated into classes, particularly Health and PE, without setting aside specific blocks of time for SEL instruction.

### *SEL in Texas*

In Texas, the CASEL SEL competencies are tied to Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) health standards. While this may limit exploration and fulfillment of the SEL competencies, it does make them more measurable. For 9-12 grade, the SEL competencies are paired with the following TEKS standards. The SEL competencies include *self-awareness*, *self-management*, *relationship skills*, *social awareness*, and *decision-making skills*. The TEKS standards associated with *self-awareness* are examining the causes and effects of stress and expressing needs in healthy ways. For *self-management*, the TEKS standards are developing strategies for managing stress, coping with anxiety and depression, and creating and applying strategies for communicating emotions, needs and wants. TEKS objectives paired with *relationship skills* include evaluating the effects of relationships on health, maintaining positive relationships in promoting a healthy community, and evaluating communication skills to build healthy relationships as well as demonstrating consideration and respect for others. The TEKS standards associated with *social awareness* are demonstrating empathy and analyzing ways to show disapproval of inconsiderate behavior as well as explaining the effects of such behavior. Finally, *decision making skills*

are presented in several TEKS standards such as identifying decisions that promote health and applying health-promoting decisions (Move This World, 2020). Overall, attaching the SEL competencies to TEK standards allows Texas schools to more fully explore social emotional learning as the TEKS objectives must be met. In this way, Texas schools are embedding SEL into the curricular framework statewide.

Adolescence is a notoriously difficult time for students. During this period, mental health issues may emerge, students experience more stressors, and grades may decline. SEL programs can help counteract some of these problems by providing “frameworks for prevention of emotional and behavioral problems in children and adolescents” (Boncu et al., 2017, p. 36). As Boncu et al. (2017) found, the social and emotional skills taught by SEL programs help minimize problems experienced by adolescents as students learn to become more self-aware and self-managing. More specifically, Morrish et al. (2018) found that self-management through mindfulness can be particularly helpful in adolescents. Mindfulness promotes well-being in adolescents and “can support...[self-management] skills via regulation of attention to momentary emotional, cognitive and physical experiences” (Morrish et al., 2018, p. 1554). While mindfulness can promote well-being in teenagers, mindsets can determine how they react to social difficulties or other stresses. Yeager (2017) found that when students believe that “traits and labels are malleable and have the potential to change” they react more positively to conflict (p. 87). A growth mindset is related to all five CASEL core competencies: *self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, responsible decision making, and relationship skills*. Once students realize that characteristics and aspects of personality are not fixed, they display “greater social-emotional resilience in the face of daily stresses” (Yeager, 2017, p. 87). Because adolescents believe that they and others can change, they become more empathetic and more prone to establish healthy relationships.

### *Benefits of Mindfulness and Yoga*

Because yoga focuses on mind-body connection, it can very effectively be used to implicitly teach SEL strategies, particularly in middle and high school settings. Both mindfulness and growth mindset can be taught within a yoga practice, leading to growth in each of the CASEL core competencies. The growth mindset approach views mistakes as learning opportunities and overcoming obstacles are all part of the growth mindset process. The more experiences encountered in life’s journey the brain grows and changes in response to one’s own experiences. This is described as “neuroplasticity”, the power of the human brain to adapt and change in response to one’s experiences (Brock & Hundley, 2016; Siegel, 2015). Mindfulness practices including yoga provide experiences within the realm of social emotional practices. Yoga as an SEL strategy has many benefits. Bergen-Cico et al. (2015) found that “incorporating sustained repetitive mindful practices...had a beneficial impact on students’ long-term and global self-regulation” (p. 3456). In their study, “mindful practices” included the practice of yoga and meditation. Self-management helps students become more adaptable, more able to meet long-term goals, and, importantly, more able to display a growth mindset in demonstrating the ability to “change one’s actions in an effort to reach a goal” (Bergen-Cico et al., 2015, p. 3456).

Furthermore, Butzer et al. (2015) found that yoga may help offset decreases in high school grades. While some SEL programs show evidence of increased academic performance, they may sometimes be difficult to implement because of time constraints. In some schools, it may be possible for mindfulness yoga to be practiced in Physical Education classes. In the study by Butzer et al. (2015), students practiced yoga, mindfulness and meditation in Physical Education class two to three times per week for twelve weeks. Their findings suggest that “participation in a school-based yoga interventions may have had a preventative effect by reducing the likelihood of declines in GPA over time” (p. 4). Students also reported feeling less academic stress, possibly as a result of self-awareness and self-management cultivated into their yoga practice. The authors also reported that mindfulness yoga interventions may help students exhibit a growth mindset by teaching them to alter their responses to problems that arise in order to achieve their goals.

Newman et al. (2020) studied the effects of breathing techniques as an SEL program with respect to gender and ethnicity. Because people from different ethnic backgrounds process and respond to stressors differently, it is important to understand which SEL strategies may be more effective for certain populations. In their study, Newman et al. (2020) studied a “standardized biopsychosocial program which interweaves evidence-based controlled breathing techniques into a SEL curriculum designed to be appropriate across diverse gender and ethnic populations” (p. 20). The program was designed to encompass the CASEL core competencies. While their research confirmed that students learned SEL strategies and increased positive outcomes regarding the CASEL competencies, they did not find “significant differences by gender or ethnicity” (p. 22). The results suggest that the program adequately addressed ethnic-specific factors that may have led to any differences in outcome. In their study of SEL interventions and achievement loss associated with middle school transition, Rosenblatt and Elias (2008) also failed to “show ethnic differences in transitional achievement” (p. 550). However, researchers in both cases believe additional studies are needed in this area as previous work has shown ethnic differences in response to SEL intervention programs.

The benefits of mindfulness and yoga extend to at-risk students as well. Wisner and Starzec (2016) studied the effect of mindfulness training in students enrolled in an alternative high school. The students’ challenges included poverty, alienation, life stressors, and low academic preparation, all of which put them at a higher risk of dropping out. After integrating mindfulness and mediation into the curriculum, the researchers concluded that “mindfulness skills...provided an important source of personal empowerment and growth for adolescents” (Wisner & Starzec, 2016, p. 255). Despite

having limited control over their environment, students were able to increase self-regulation and contribute to “positive social relationships” (Wisner & Starzec, 2016, p. 255). In addition, Fishbein et al. (2016) tested the impact of mindful yoga interventions in high-risk youth. They found that “students who received yoga interventions...were rated by their teachers as having improved social functioning (Fishbein et al., 2016, p. 524). After the intervention, students exhibited more positive social skills, and importantly, they were able to “identify uncomfortable emotions and [let] them pass rather than [react] impulsively” (Fishbein et al., 2016, p. 525).

## Methodology

### *Research Design & Measures*

The following qualitative research design implemented a school-based yoga intervention program intended to examine Social Emotional Learning (SEL) core competencies during Physical Education class. Qualitative data was collected during a study conducted on at-risk Hispanic high school students who engaged in a yoga in the schools' program who voluntarily participated in 12 weeks of yoga (24 classes) during regularly scheduled PE. Participants provided post essay responses to questions associated with regards to the five core competencies of SEL: *self-awareness*, *self-management*, *social awareness*, *relationship skills*, and *responsible decision making*. For the 49 participants, the data was coded accordingly to the descriptors identified for each category: *self-awareness*- I feel, I realized, named emotions, I like/don't like, I learned, and my goals, *self-management*- relax/relaxed, control stress, how I act, calm, what I can do, and I have control, *social awareness*- other people's emotions and feelings, empathy, I know what that feels like/I know how he/she feels, solve conflict, and peer pressure, *relationship skills*- how I can help others, listening to others, responding to others, being helpful, appreciating family/friends, and asking for help, *responsible decision making*- what I learned to guide behavior, how I affect others, and how my decisions affect me. The data was coded based on these five core competencies. For consistency and validity, the standard measure applied was intercoder reliability in which two different researchers came to an understanding and discussed any inconsistencies on how to code the same content.

The framework proposed by Butzer et al. (2016) was the theoretical research model approach (mind body awareness, self-regulation, and physical postures) for implementation of the school-based mindfulness yoga interventions for this study. The post essay prompt for all students asked that students respond to the following questions: Describe the yoga class you participated in this semester. Describe any changes you may have experienced due to your participation in (Mindfulness Yoga) physically, mentally, emotionally, or health wise. Describe, if any, changes in your food habits/eating patterns in your home environment (traditional homemade foods, restaurant take out foods, healthy meals, etc...) from the start of the 12 weeks until now.

### *Participants*

The participants in this study are from an established partnership between the public schools and the local university in South Texas. All students enrolled in this designated high school campus require dual university college enrollment as part of their 4-year high school standard curriculum plan. All participants are required to apply to this public high school for admittance and part of the recruitment criteria descriptors include students who are first generation college goers, students who are identified as at-risk, students lacking access to meet college readiness standards, and students who are identified as Limited English Proficient. The student population at this campus included 99% Hispanic, .47% Asian, .23% White, and .23% Multiracial. Students were eligible for voluntary participation in the study if they were enrolled as a high school freshman at this designated high school in South Texas. The high school curriculum for all students requires enrollment in a College Physical Fitness class for 1 hour of college credit as part of students' freshman curriculum pathway. 54 total adolescents voluntarily opted to participate in the mindfulness yoga in the schools' program. Due to attrition, 5 students did not complete the requirements (2 withdrew and 3 non submission responses) from the study with a total of 49 participants throughout the duration of the study. A total of 41 identified as female and 8 identified as male. Because the participants were minors, both parental consent and adolescent assent was required. Adolescent freshmen were not compensated for their participation in the research and were informed that at any time they could withdraw from the study without any penalty. The study proposal was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board at Texas A&M International University and by the School District that opted to participate in the study.

### *Experimental Conditions*

The mindfulness yoga classes consisted of 24 lesson-secular curricula developed by the researcher. The curriculum was developed reflective of Adolescent Yoga research in the field, Kripalu Yoga Philosophy, and the CASEL Social Emotional Learning (SEL) core competencies: *self-awareness*, *self-management*, *social awareness*, *relationship skills* and *responsible decision making*. The curriculum design reflects *Best Practices for Yoga in Schools* (Childress & Harper, 2015) and mirrors previous yoga in the schools' interventions (Butzer et al., 2016; Felver et al., 2015; Noggle et al., 2012). The curriculum design was also informed by an external consultant who is an expert in Adolescent Yoga and a trainer with Kripalu School of Yoga.

The 60-minute class consisted of traditional mind and body mindfulness practices of yoga inclusive of breathing exercises (5 minutes), yoga postures and stretching exercises (40 minutes), and deep relaxation and meditation techniques (5 minutes). The remaining 10 minutes of the course were utilized for connecting with students virtually (Q&A), attendance purposes, checking in with students, and allowing students down time before their next online course. For each of the 12 weeks, different themes were embedded weekly into the breathing and meditation timeframe: gratitude, mind body connections, self-worth (self-esteem), positive behaviors, positive relationships, empathy, compassion, healthy choices, abandonment of negativity, challenges are there to help us grow, focus and concentration, nonjudgement, and healthy thoughtful responses determine outcomes (healthy eating food rules). The mindfulness yoga classes were delivered by the researcher and co-researcher. The researcher has 26 years of experience in the education field teaching grade levels from elementary through high school and university teaching and holds a PhD in Curriculum and Instruction. The researcher of this project has been practicing and teaching yoga for 8 years and holds a Registered Yoga Teacher (RYT) certificate with Yoga Alliance and additional training hours with the Kirpalu Center for Yoga and Health. The co-researcher holds a Master of Education in Kinesiology degree and has taught Kinesiology at the community college and university levels for over 17 years and overall fitness instruction experience combined 24 years. She holds a 200-hour Registered Yoga Teacher (RYT) certificate with Yoga Alliance and an additional 200-hour certification with YOGAFIT.

Due to Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) restrictions, the classes were not delivered in a face-to-face setting, as was originally intended. The 2-way interactive live (synchronous) via ZOOM platform was the online delivery method of instruction for mindfulness yoga classes. The researcher taught the curriculum and modeled throughout the 60-minute class. The co-researcher modeled and provided visual oversight of adolescent engagement of all aspects of the course from breathing techniques to posture alignment and adjustments needed as participants worked through the transitional movements from one posture to the other. Technology was supported by and provided by the school district and the University for online delivery. The ZOOM platform allowed for a visual of all students throughout each practice session to address adjustments or modifications for each posture as a means of supporting students to avoid injury and encourage active engagement through a collaborative effort between researcher and co-researcher.

## Results

In the category of self-awareness, 53% of participants repeatedly reported feeling, learning, realizing certain emotions or experiences post intervention. Participants indicated evidence of developing self-awareness by described feelings or the ability to identify/articulate feeling a certain way, described that they learn, learned, learning/taught me, described realize, realized, realizing, became aware of, and described that they noticed or saw. Examples of the 53% reported in the self-awareness category for example "feeling more active," "feeling mentally clam," "feel less crazy," "noticed inner peace," "realized things that I needed to fix," "realize that I was calmer and more peaceful," "feel happier." The following statements identified by participants represent the 53% that developed an awareness from their participation in the intervention of the ability to directly know and perceive, to feel, or to be cognizant of events representative of a growth mindset after participating in yoga. Regarding the self-management category, 43% of participants reported repeated evidence of the following coding terms: relaxed, relaxing, and calm. Participants indicated evidence of developing mechanisms for handling stress, practicing mindfulness, and demonstrating control of impulsive behaviors. For example, 43% of participants reported "more focus," "better concentration," "ability to manage anxiety and stress," "could now solve issues without anger," "could breathe through stress," "manage focus and control mood," and "manage staying calm and relaxed." Interestingly, it should be noted that of the 43% that identified in the self-management category, 25 participants used the same coded terms "concentration, focus, or mindfulness" as an attribute of their post intervention experiences. In addition, it should also be noted that 21 of the 43% that identified in the self-management category reported that they managed to stay "calm" under various stress situations or in day-to-day functionality.

Participants in the social awareness category .02% experienced expressing empathy or engaging in solving conflict. There was limited evidence in the responses regarding the social awareness category. There was also no evidence of any deep understanding of those/others who may hold different opinions. This may be attributed to the social isolation that participants were experiencing due to COVID-19 isolation and restrictions. Participants were online during the study and the inability to practice or limited contact with others did not allow participants to fully engage in this category experience.

Participants in the relationship skills category documented 12% reported listening, responding and connecting with family. There was limited evidence reported regarding maintaining nor establishing positive relationships. This may also be attributed to the social isolation that participants were experiencing due to COVID-19 restrictions, so the development of relationships outside the household was limited. It is important to note that the 12% that did identify within this category noted "appreciating family" and that the isolation at home allowed them to reconnect and become closer with family members within their household.

Of the participants in the decision-making category, 41% reported what was learned/changed within their own decision-making process. There was clear evidence reported by participants on responsible decision making regarding adapting behaviors. For example, coded terms repeatedly identified in their essay responses consisted of the following: students reported that they were encouraged, motivated, inspired, they decided to change habits, they have started to/stop doing.

They will try to or have increased and will use information I learned. Exact quotes included, “decision to eat healthy makes me happy,” “decision to channel my grief through loving those around me and myself more,” “I decided to calm myself when overwhelmed,” “inspired and motivated to stop thinking bad thoughts,” and “encouraged to continue yoga to feel better.” Collectively these connect with the growth mind set approach in that participants reported responsible decision making and adapting behaviors.

### Discussion

The findings in this study support Butzer et al.’s (2016) hypothesized framework for a theoretical research model for approaching school-based yoga interventions comprised of three competencies: mind body awareness, self-regulation, and physical postures can have a positive impact on social behaviors, mental wellness, and healthy behaviors which are all interrelated in nature. Overall, findings reported in this study, indicate that there are consistencies with previous research on mindfulness yoga programs in the schools and the benefits it can provide for adolescents at risk (Boncu et al., 2017; Butzer et al., 2016; Durlak, 2015; Felver et al., 2015). Collectively, the two least reported SEL categories were *social awareness* and *relationship skills*. The lack of evidence of participants identifying with these two SEL categories can certainly be attributed to the social isolation that the participants were experiencing during the duration of the study. It is also evident that attempting to teach these skills online seems rather contradictory since they both involve communication with the outside world and those around us which was limited in an online ZOOM environment.

The SEL *decision-making* category 41% reported what was learned/changed within their own decision-making process. Evidence reported by participants on responsible *decision making* regarding adapting behaviors is consistent with the previous research on the benefits of mindfulness and practicing yoga (Yeager, 2017). Yeager’s (2017) research suggests mindfulness participation provides a platform for adolescents to believe that they and others can change through better *decision making*.

The two highest reported SEL categories were *self-awareness* and *self-management*. Examples of both categories reported “feeling mentally clam,” “noticed inner peace,” “realized things that I needed to fix,” “realize that I was calmer and more peaceful,” “more focus,” “better concentration,” “ability to manage anxiety and stress,” “could breathe through stress,” “manage focus and control mood,” and “manage staying calm and relaxed.” Overall, these responses documented validate an awareness and realization of and for developing mechanisms for handling/managing stress by demonstrating control of impulsive behaviors. All these reported findings are significant and provide valuable insights that are consistent and reflect previous research (Butzer et al., 2016; Felver et al., 2015; Morrish et al., 2018). Furthermore, Bergen-Cico et al. (2015) found that “incorporating sustained repetitive mindful practices...had a beneficial impact on students’ long-term and global self-regulation” (p. 3456). This is consistent with *self-awareness* and *self-management* in that it is the pathway for a growth mindset.

### Conclusion

The benefits for participants are clear in the findings and aligned with previous research. Mindfulness yoga practices (as described in this study) provide experiences interconnected with social emotional practices that provide opportunities for the human brain to adapt and change in response to one’s experiences (Brock & Hundley, 2016; Siegel, 2015). This study serves as a model in support of the theory that social emotional learning skills do not need to be taught extrinsically or explicitly in order to be effective. Collectively, participants reflected responsiveness for all five SEL categories through the intrinsic or implicit method of mindfulness practice. On a larger context, it is important to prepare future generations of students to practice and develop skills that sustain them in an evolving multicultural society with diverse demands and respect for humanity and global issues. SEL skills provide the foundation for the preparation of future generations, particularly for those students at-risk. Mindfulness yoga practices may serve as a preventive mechanism for at-risk adolescent mental health.

### Recommendations

Recommendations for future researchers include studies inclusive of face-to-face delivery of mindfulness practices to examine the potential benefits of yoga in the school programs. Attention to more stringent methodologies and differences between studies with a focus on similar study designs for replication for future studies should be considered. Recommendations for educators and practitioners include, but not limited to, collaborating with schools within their communities and seeking out how SEL skills are being implemented, if at all. Connecting with schools and understanding potential pathways for SEL implementation are pathways for setting in motion conversations and awareness on this subject. Furthermore, there is evidence to continue to build on this area of research, particularly Hispanic adolescents at-risk, which could yield significant health and wellness benefits for future adolescents in academic environments.

### Limitations

This study has its limitations. Study was limited by small sample population size, limited to 12 weeks of mindfulness yoga practices, and was delivered online. Due to COVID-19 restrictions and the impact of circumstances including isolation and environmental factors, these variables may have impacted the overall findings. It is important to recognize that

outcomes may vary if the study is conducted in a face-to-face environment. Additional research is needed to continually evaluate any short- and long-term effects of SEL and mindfulness yoga practices in schools.

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### Authorship Contribution Statement

Sanchez: Contributed as the concept and design researcher, data analysis/interpretation, review of literature, revision and editing processes. Kazen: Contributed to the data analysis/interpretation, review of literature, revision and editing processes.

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