Chapter 2
An Overview of Mindfulness Based on Practical Rationality

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ABSTRACT

Though there has been an increase in the studies on mindfulness in organizations, the studies around its process have been scant. Most of the studies use only quantitative methods by collecting data based on scale-based questionnaires and doing further analysis to assess the impact of mindfulness on the organizational effectiveness as a whole. This chapter is an effort to explore the concept of mindfulness so that we can utilize it most effectively. The authors tried to connect several theories to the phenomena of mindfulness, for example, trait activation theory and broad and build theory. They present an alternate theoretical lens based on 'practical rationality,' which can substantiate the use of qualitative methods for collecting data on mindfulness and help develop a higher orientation of experience among individuals. The authors concluded that mindfulness is an individual-level process that workplace factors and systems can influence. In addition, the purpose of initiating mindfulness should not be towards more 'hedonic' reasons like stress management. Instead, the purpose should be more 'eudemonic.'

1. INTRODUCTION

Recently, mindfulness has received significant attention in psychology, spirituality and management studies. This is due to the general recognition that mindfulness can be the primary determinant of well-being, meaningfulness, and organisational effectiveness. Some studies have reported strong correlations of mindfulness with brain connectivity (Kilpatrick et al., 2011). 'Mindfulness' has been described as a "moment-to-moment experience of one's judgement" (Brown & Ryan, 2003). Mindfulness in Western practices finds its roots in the Buddhist traditions of 'Vipassana' and 'Mahayana' (Kornfielf, 2011).

The word 'Sati', a 'Pali' word from the Buddhist text, is from where mindfulness derives its meaning. 'Sati' means 'to remember' and 'awareness' (Bodhi, 2011). Most recent studies have dived deeper by applying mindfulness to behavioural science, neuroscience, and clinical studies. They have tried to understand the role of mindfulness in better regulation of thoughts and emotions. Mindfulness in the organisational context has been looked at from two sides – the 'Well-being perspective' (Saini, 2020), which includes 'emotional exhaustion, 'affective states', 'psychological detachment' 'job satisfaction' and the 'Functioning' perspective, which includes 'work engagement' 'creativity' etc. (Garg & Saini,2023; Reb et al.,2020). All of these have tried to look at from the viewpoint of 'impact' by using some existing theoretical explanations. Also, most have analysed mindfulness as a quantitative variable recorded through questionnaires, mapping them with appropriate scales like MAAS (Brown & Ryan, 2003) and FFMQ (Baer et al.,2006). Studies around the 'process' of mindfulness have been scant. Mindfulness is essentially a subjective phenomenon and thus requires a deeper qualitative lens and is looked upon.

In this chapter, we would like to present an overview of mindfulness by critically evaluating some of the recent studies on mindfulness and analysing whether they have been able to explain the process of mindfulness and its importance in the workplace setting(Saini,2020). We have also proposed an alternate theoretical lens, ' practical rationality' (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011), which can support qualitative mechanisms to record and analyse mindfulness in an organisational setting. In addition, we have justified using mindfulness not just for temporary benefits but to develop a higher orientation of experience.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

As mentioned above, mindfulness as a topic finds its roots in Eastern knowledge and traditions, which have been adopted and tailored to be applicable in a workplace setting. So, various clinical and non-clinical researchers have supported that being mindful is suitable for the individual, and the impact of it can be seen in various interrelated areas. This has been increasing over the period due to an increase in 'attention overload', 'stressors', and 'increased connectivity,' i.e., people can sit and conduct meetings anytime and from any location after the digital wave, and also an increase in multi-tasking (Reb et al., 2020). Most of the studies around mindfulness have looked at individual-level factors. Some individual-level factors studied as mediators include – 'empathy', 'paranoid cognition', 'sleep quality', 'creative process engagement', 'emotional stability', 'self-esteem' etc. Some moderators include – 'perceived leader humility', 'work engagement', and 'work experience'. Workplace factors like 'situational demands', 'job control', 'on-task attentional pull', 'off-task attentional pull', 'organisational caring climate', 'external challenges ', 'supervisor support', etc., have been studied as antecedents to mindfulness. From the perspective of outcomes, the factors have been both organisational and workplace levels, which include – 'job satisfaction', 'turnover intention', 'anxiety', 'burnout', 'emotional exhaustion ', self-compassion, 'employee creativity', 'job performance', 'task performance' 'prosocial behaviour', 'work engagement' etc.

Interestingly, whether the factors are antecedents, mediators, moderators or outcomes, they consider mindfulness an individual characteristic (Shahbaz & Parker, 2021). No recent studies have examined the possibility of group or team mindfulness (Liu et al., 2020). Even the organisational level factors like the role of HR in ensuring the systems are in a proper place wherein the HR needs to act as a 'business partner' in order to implement the work designs, listen to employee's voices and lead to their improved performance has not been looked upon in detail (Arrowsmith & Parker, 2013). Organisational level factors are essential because if the systems are not in place, then mindfulness would be impacted. Any

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