Chapter 14

Innovating Through Reflective Learning in Mindful Organizations:
Effects of Authentic Leadership

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ABSTRACT

In the 21st century, being affected by the demanding business atmosphere and fierce competition among players, contemporary organizations have changed their priorities. The rivalry among ambitious organizations created knowledge-based economies that are possible through effective learning and high levels of organizational awareness. In this chapter, it is suggested that these requirements for effective learning and high awareness in companies address the need for mindful individuals and mindful organizations. And mindfulness in organizations are good for establishing meaningful ways to promote organizational learning and creates the baseline for more innovative work atmospheres. Furthermore, authentic leadership, most congruent leadership style for positive work atmospheres which is charachterized by authenticity, transparency, and high levels of awareness, has been presented as a suitable leadership style for mindful and innovative organizations. And moreover, it is proposed that under authentic leadership, mindful organizations will be succesful in benefting from reflective learning which will contribute to higher levels of innovativeness.

INTRODUCTION

Mindfulness can be described a state of mind that center attention and to bring awareness to the present moment (Stone, 2014). It is a receptive state of mind in which awareness of present experience ensured through attention (Niemiec et al. 2010). Having its roots in its roots in Eastern meditation traditions mindfulness can be accepted as an ancient spiritual construct that is alive for about two milennia (Brown et al., 2007). According to the belief system of Buddhists, mindfulness is a method of attentive thinking.

Generally being mindful is accepted as being "here and now", namely experiencing the present fully (Herndon, 2008, p. 32). According to Buddhist approach mindfulness has "the characteristic of not wobbling, namely not floating away from the object. It hinders confusion and causes non-forgetfulness" (Bodhi, 2000). It is useful in keeping the mind steady like a stone rather than letting it move unconciously (Bodhi, 2000). Ellen Langer's (1989) approach to mindfulness is a good representative of Western approach to mindfulness. According to Langer mindfulness can be described as differentiating actively and refining existing differences, creating new discrete categories out of routines and adobting a more detailed understanding of the context. And Krieger (2005) define it as a psychological state wherein people prefer to adobt active data processing during performing their jobs. And with the aim of attaining their goals they actively analyze, categorize, and make distinctions regarding their data. In an other point of view, mindfulness is something related to remembering, namely it is about deliberately remembering a situation, event or object in the present, not from the past (Weick and Sutcliffe, 2006).

In mindfulness, we can talk about being receptive and open to present-moment (Bishop et al., 2004). High level of awaeness of the moment and concentrating fully on the present work and high levels of consciousness (Rosch, 2007; Kabat- Zinn, 2005) charachterizes mindfulness. Moreover, this state of mind involves the power to focus on the the current moment objectively and submissively (Baer, et. al. 2004). That is to say, it is about normalizing the present moment, not being preoccupied with past memories, obsessions, fantasies, too much future plans and excessive worries regarding the future (Baer et. al., 2004).In other words Mindfulness is significant for both quality and conservation of one's attention. It is a kind of enriched awareness that helps individuals or groups notice more about details, and gain the ability to notice and answer early signs of trouble (Rerup 2005).

Mindfulness is significant in counteracting undisciplined minds. According to Weick and Putnam (2006), a disciplined mind is a result of the perfect union of agility, awareness, mindfulness, and focused attention (Weick and Putnam, 2006: 277). In fact, mindfulness work together with concentration in order to control attention. This combination excludes mental hindrances and creates a calmer, more focused mind (Weick and Putnam, 2006). Mindfulness is a nonreactive and nonjudgmental awareness. When you are mindful, you do not pursue anything, you are in a state of mind without any agenda other than to be awake (Kabat-Zinn, 2002, p. 69).

Moreover, mindfulness, can also be described as the reversal of normalizing since it is about deciphering and pairing situations with routines. Infact, mindfulness weakens the inclination to simplify and strengthens the tendency to diversify. Thus, less-mindful practices are more inclined to normalize, where as more-mindful practices more inclined to anomalize. In this point, by the term anomalize it is meant that mindfulness creates the baseline for capturing unique details, differences, problems, discrepancies, and probable outliers that may slow down the processes (Weick and Sutcliffe, 2006).

Individual-level mindfulness is different from other kinds of attention-related constructs. To give an example, mindfulness resembles the concepts of absorption and flow in the point that each of them encompasses directing one's attention to present-moment actions. But, mindfulness is a bit different from these other two concepts since it encompasses wide attentional breadth—which is shaped by directing one's attention towards both external and internal events simultaneously (Sutcliffe and Vogus, 2016).

On the one hand, mindfulness creates many advantages for individuals. First of these advantages is equanimity, namely, calmness. Mindful individuals often experience evenness of temper especially in difficult situations (Kabat-Zinn, 2005), that is to say it reduces emotional reactivity (Baer, 2003). Moreover, people higher in dispositional mindfulness prone to be anxious less often (Krishnakumar and Robinson, 2015). They behave calmly and they do not panicky activity. Also it buffers too much

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