



“Mechanisms and practices of mindfulness in the workplace”

Day: Wednesday 11th July 2018 Time: 9:00 – 10:15 am Track: Mindfulness in Society

The role of mindfulness and mindfulness-based interventions in organizations has been getting increasing attention in recent years. In this symposium various aspects of mindfulness in relation to professional life will be explored. The first presenter will discuss a review of the effects of different types and durations of mindfulness based interventions in the workplace . The second presenter will describe results of a field intervention study of an MBSR training for employees that addresses work-specific mechanisms and job satisfaction. The third presenter will discuss a pre-post research design in which the benefits and feasibility of the Mindfulness in a Frantic World Training are evaluated for employees of a multinational company. The last presenter will discuss a qualitative study in which the influence of MBSR on the professional development of medical doctors is investigated.

Symposium overview

- Presenter 1** **Chris Tamdjidi** - Examining the effect sizes of different formats of mindfulness intervention in the workplace
- Presenter 2** **Ute Hulsheger** - Mindfulness, Autonomous Self-regulation and Job Satisfaction: Results from an Organizational Intervention Study
- Presenter 3** **Esther de Bruin** - The Unilever Study: Positive Effects on Personal Goals, Well-Being, and Functioning at Work after the Mindfulness in a Frantic World Training
- Presenter 4** **Hiske van Ravesteijn** - The influence of MBSR on the professional development of medical doctors: a qualitative study
- Chair:** **Michael Chaskalson**



Examining the effect sizes of different formats of mindfulness intervention in the workplace

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Many workplaces are struggling with the effects of stress – both on employees and on management. Mindfulness based interventions are increasingly being introduced in workplaces to help relieve stress, and improve overall well-being and engagement. Naturally there is pressure to shorten the length of the intervention - to save time and cost. However, there is also the expectation that longer interventions lead to better results. This paper offers a review of data on 5 different types of interventions, with over 2000 participants. The interventions range from a 2-year deepening training, a 10-week live workplace training, a 6-week live workplace training, a peer group based workplace training and a 6-week webinar based training. For all formats participants completed pre and post assessments. The data was gathering from the beginning of 2014 to the beginning of 2018. We see that mindfulness interventions have in all formats lead to a decrease in perceived stress and an improvement in the self-report ability to handle stress – but with large variations in effect size. The duration of the intervention is a factor in the determination of the effect sizes - but not the only one. We discuss the magnitude of the variance in effect sizes over the time of the intervention and some of the other factors playing a role in the effect sizes of the outcomes.



Mindfulness, Autonomous Self-regulation and Job Satisfaction: Results from an Organizational Intervention Study

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Background and objectives: Recent years have witnessed a steep surge in interest in the role of mindfulness and mindfulness-based interventions in organizations. Studies have revealed beneficial effects of employee mindfulness for a host of outcomes, including work engagement, work family balance, and job satisfaction. Yet, more needs to be learned about the work-specific mechanisms that drive potential positive effects of mindfulness for work outcomes. With the present study we address this need by investigating the effectiveness of an 8-week MBSR training on job satisfaction. We built upon self-determination and on affective events theory and propose a sequential mediation model. Specifically, we argue that mindfulness promotes autonomous self-regulation during work activities, thereby increases positive and decreases negative affective experiences during work which, in turn, benefits job satisfaction.

Methods: We used a field intervention study with a quasi-experimental design. Employees of 3 different organizations received an 8-week MBSR training. They were compared to a matched control group consisting of employees of the same 3 organizations with similar occupations. A total of 95 employees participated in the study. In order to be able to track fine-grained changes in study outcomes, measurements took place before the intervention and once per week during the intervention resulting in 8 measurement occasions. Data was analyzed with growth-curve modeling allowing assessing differences between the intervention and the control group over the 8-week study period.

Results: A comparison of change trajectories of the intervention and the control group did not reveal significant differences in core outcome variables (job satisfaction, autonomous self-regulation, positive and negative affect). However, supplementary analyses taking participants' self-reported daily mindfulness practice into account revealed positive effects of the intervention for participants who engaged in regular practice as compared to participants who did not and as compared to the control group.

Discussion and conclusion: Study findings shed light on the processes underlying the mindfulness-job satisfaction relationship. Furthermore they highlight the importance of formal and informal mindfulness practice for the effectiveness of mindfulness-based interventions in organizations.



The Unilever Study: Positive Effects on Personal Goals, Well-Being, and Functioning at Work after the Mindfulness in a Frantic World Training

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Background: Organizations are confronted with a constant need for efficiency, which affects the working atmosphere, often typified by velocity, time pressure, competition, job insecurity and information overload, which may lead to stress, burnout, work-life dis-balance, and lowered work functioning. This study evaluated an 8-weeks onsite group-based mindfulness program, applied in a large multinational company, based on 'Mindfulness in a frantic world' (Williams, Penman, & Cullen, 2013).

Methods: Self-selected employees (n = 150) completed measurements at wait-list, pre-test, post-test, two- and six months after the training (follow-up 1 and 2).

Results: High feasibility and acceptability were demonstrated, as nearly all participants followed at least five out of eight sessions, evaluated the training very highly (8.3 out of 10), and 42% and 33% were still meditating respectively two and six months later. Overall, during the wait-list period no changes were found, whereas significant improvements immediately after the training, lasting two and six months later, occurred on personal goals (large ES), psychological well-being: stress, depression, anxiety, happiness, positive and negative affect (medium to large ES), and on work-related measures: drop-out from work (from 46% to 16%), physical and mental workability (7.3 to 8.1 out of 10, and 7.0 to 8.2 out of 10, respectively), work engagement, functioning within the company and communication styles (small to medium ES).

Discussion: In conclusion, this 8-week mindfulness training in a multinational company was evaluated highly, had a high attendance rate, and lead to direct and long term positive effects on personal goals, psychological well-being, and work functioning.



The influence of MBSR on the professional development of medical doctors: a qualitative study

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Background and objectives: In addition to developing diagnostic and clinical skills, an important task for postgraduate medical education is stimulating the professional development of doctors. Teaching medical professionalism is challenging and is often left largely to the informal and hidden curricula. However, an intervention that might be beneficial for medical doctors is Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR). The authors implemented MBSR as a optional course for medical residents and qualitatively explored how it influences them professionally.

Methods: The authors conducted 19 in-depth, face-to-face interviews with residents who had participated in an MBSR course. Medical and surgical residents, across a range of disciplines, participated. The authors used the constant comparison method to analyze the data.

Results: The analysis of the data resulted in five themes: (1) awareness of thoughts, emotions, bodily sensations and behavior; (2) increased self-reflection; (3) acceptance and non-judgment; (4) increased resilience; and (5) relating to others. Residents indicated that the MBSR training increased their awareness and self-reflection at work, and they were more accepting towards themselves and towards their limitations. Furthermore, they mentioned that they were more resilient and better at setting priorities and limits. They improved their self-care and work-life balance. In addition, residents indicated that the training made them more aware of how they communicated. They asked for help more often and they seemed to be more open towards feedback. Lastly, they indicated an increased sense of compassion for others.

Discussion and conclusion: This study indicated that mindfulness training can serve as a tool to cultivate important professional competencies for medical doctors. However, it remains unknown if the experienced changes in behaviour of the residents had a positive effect on patients and colleagues. Further studies will have to examine the effects of MBSR for medical doctors on the way in which they provide care to patients and in their collaboration with other health care workers.