

Full Length Research Paper

Mindfulness and Employee Work-Outcomes in Government Owned Hospitals in Rivers State

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This study examined the relationship between mindfulness and employee's work outcomes of government owned hospitals in River State. Cross sectional survey research design was adopted in studying the two selected government owned hospitals. Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table of population and sample size determination was used to arrive at the numbers of respondents engaged for this study. The simple random sampling technique was used and 293 set of questionnaires were retrieved out of 310 copies of questionnaires distributed. The 293 copies of questionnaires retrieved from field survey were analyzed using multiple regression analysis to determine the relationship existing between the variables. The findings revealed mindfulness has a significant relationship with employee's work engagement and employees' wellbeing. Hence, it was concluded that organizations that instills mindful attention and awareness in her employees will have work engrossed employees that are always excited and happy about their work. This, therefore, prompted the recommendation that organizations should strive towards mindfulness interventions in the organization through mindfulness training and programs.

Keywords: Mindfulness, Employee Work Outcomes, Employee Work Engagement and Employee Well-being.

INTRODUCTION

In recent times, there has been a growing concern about the place of mindfulness in the workplace setting. This is predicated on the realization from evidence across various fields which posits that mindfulness is connected to certain aspects of the effective functioning of the workplace. Unfortunately, much empirical research has not been conducted on determining the impact of mindfulness on workplace work outcomes like it has spawned across other fields like clinical and counseling psychology (e.g. Bishop et al; 2004; Shapiro et al; 2008),

neuroscience (e.g. Cresswell et al; 2007; Davidson et al; 2003), social and personality psychology (e.g. Giluk, 2009; Niemiec et al; 2010), and medicine (e.g. Epstein, 1999; Santorelli, 1999).

But interestingly, the myriads of research conducted in this area have established a connection between mindfulness and psychological and physical well-being. For example, the study conducted by (Brown et al; 2007; Glomb et al; 2011) reveals that mindfulness has positive impact on vitality, like satisfaction and interpersonal

relationship. Most scholars therefore have argued that mindfulness enables people to regulate their thoughts, emotions and physiological reactions more effectively (Lakey et al; 2007; Masicampo and Baumeister, 2007; Papies et al; 2012).

The above findings points to the benefits of mindfulness in the workplace, but as a matter of concern, not much empirical verified proofs are within grasp as to the benefit of mindfulness within the workplace setting. Therefore, this research, aim to determine the impact of mindfulness on employee work outcomes.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Achieving organizational objectives among other factors is predicated by employee work outcomes in the workplace. But on the contrary, employee's work has suffered irrespective of the resounding motivational packages and incentives offered to employees. Is it that employees are not being attentive to or being aware of their expected level of job engagement?

It is in dare need to address this problem that this study is embarked on to examine the impact of mindfulness on employee work outcomes in government owned hospitals in River State. Hence, this study aims to ascertain the impact of mindfulness on employee work outcomes.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to empirically determine the impact of mindfulness on employee work outcomes.

Specific Objectives:

- i. To determine the impact of mindfulness on employee's work engagement.
- ii. To capture the effect of mindfulness on employee's well-being.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the stated objectives of this study, the following questions are asked:

- I. What is the relationship between mindfulness and employee work engagement?
- ii What is the relationship between mindfulness and employee well-being?

Statement of Hypothesis

For the purpose of making inference and drawing statistically valid conclusions in this study, the following hypotheses are formulated and stated in their null form:

H₀1: There is no significant relationship between mindfulness and employee work engagement.

H₀2: There is no significant relationship between mindfulness and employee well-being.

Conceptual framework as adopted from Brown and Ryan (2003) for predictor variables, Schaufeli and Bakker (2003) and Gisela and Tatiane (2013) for criterion variables respectively.

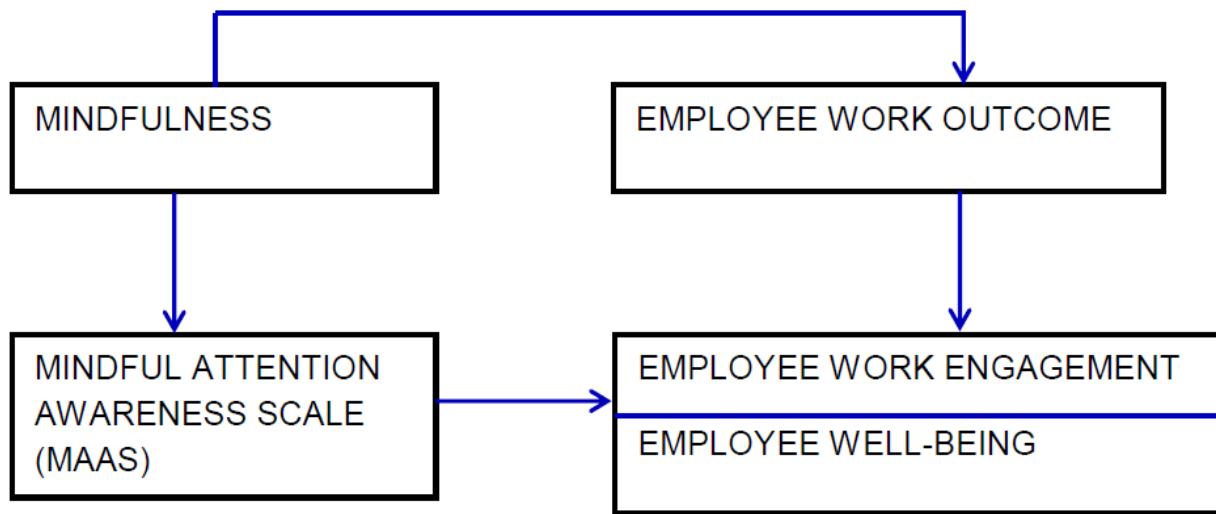
LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Mindfulness

Investigative studies on mindfulness have increased which spawned across various fields. But however, scholars have being confronted with the challenge to concretely translate the concept into a clearly practical measured construct. Hence, teachers, scholars, practitioners and researchers have defined mindfulness in various ways. The concept of mindfulness emanates from Buddhist Philosophy which sees mindfulness as an internal state that is difficult to observe and describe.

Thich, (1976) defines mindfulness as "keeping one's consciousness alive to the present reality. This means that mindfulness can be defined as "a receptive attention to and awareness of present events and experience" (Brown et al; 2007; Quaglia, et al; 2015). Chaiken (1980) argues that mindfulness keeps individual from thinking or behaving in absent minded ways by disrupting automaticity of mental process. This posits that mindfulness guides behaviour, thoughts, emotions towards the positive end even in the midst of existing or

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



occurring negative factors.

Hayes, et al; (2004) posits that mindfulness guides individual towards making choices that are more influenced by personal values and goals than internally posed fears or demands from the environment.

Mindfulness is popularized as a state of consciences. But the rate at which people assumes state of mindfulness differs among individuals, pointing to the fact that to experience the state of mindfulness might be dependent of trait (Brown et al; 2007; Brown and Cordon, 2009; Brown and Ryan, 2003).

Workplace Mindfulness

In recent time, workplace mindfulness have attracted the attention of scholars and researchers. This is because conducted studies have revealed trait like tendencies toward mindfulness, and mindfulness based on disposition among individuals (e.g. Baer, et al., 2006; Brown and Ryan, 2003; Lau et al; 2006). These studies posit that some individuals seem to be more mindful than the other. Therefore, there is varying degree to which people are mindful in their work setting, this is referred to

as “workplace mindfulness” (Eric and Bradly, 2013).

Apart from the trait tendency towards mindfulness, certain factors impacts on workplace mindfulness. For example, research reveals that individual can learn to focus their attention more mindfully within a given performance context through practice or training (Fehr andGelfand, 2012, Hulsheger, et al., 2013; Lee, 2012).

Attention

Attention means to appropriately direct focus amidst competing demands (Ocasio, 2011). It has to do with stability in focus, noticing mind wandering and returning to present moment (Hansenkamp et al; 2012). Discharging objective functions or delegated responsibilities is dependent on how an employee pays attention to the job demand. This, therefore, posits that attention depends on a conscious and focused mind which explains the concept of mindfulness.

Non-attentive employee is bound to be distracted through thought wandering, lack of focus which may cause anxiety, deviance and emotion exhaustion. This means that attention reduces the habitual allocation of

focus (Wadlinger and Isaacowitz, 2011).

Awareness

Awareness is a specific construct that operationalized mindfulness. In the words of Mikulas (2011), awareness refers to “One’s conscious experience of the contents of the mind”. Brown et al., (2007) defines awareness as “the conscious registration of stimuli, including the five physical senses, the kinesthetic senses, and the activities of the mind”. This, therefore, means that awareness has to do with doing, feeling, thinking, perceiving or sensing and knowing what one is doing. In the workplace setting, the degree to which individual is aware of what they do, how they feel and think differs. Brown, et al (2007) therefore argues that awareness of the internal and the external world in the present moment is the most specific aspect of mindfulness.

Awareness enables employees to know their thoughts and feelings but not necessarily reacting upon them (Brown and Ryan 2013). Awareness brings thought and intended action reversal or stepping back (Weick and Putnam 2006).

Work Engagement

Work engagement is defined as “a positive, fulfilling work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigour, dedication, and absorption” (Schaufeli et al., 2003). Kahn (1992) opines that personally engaging in work is a function of being psychologically present at work. As mentioned earlier, vigour is signified by high levels of energy and demonstration of mental resilience when carrying out your work. Dedication has to do with strong involvement in one’s work and to have experience of a sense of significance, being enthusiastic and facing challenge. Absorption has to do with being fully concentrated on your job and be happily tied to it as confirmed by (May et al., 2004), they argued that employees with high level of energy are enthusiastic and fully engrossed to their work as that time flies.

Well-Being

Employee well-being refers to “the overall quality of an

employee’s experience and functioning at work” (Grant, et al., 2007). It consists of psychological, physical, and behavioural aspects which include employee mood and resilience (Ryan and Deci, 2001). Employee well-being is significantly related and beneficial to both employee and organizational performance based on its impacts on absenteeism, turnover intention, employee physical and psychological health (Danna and Griffin 1999).

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts the cross-sectional survey design on two government-owned hospitals in Port Harcourt viz: University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospitals (UPTH) and Braiwaite Memorial Specialist Hospitals (BMSH). This research design was used since the respondents were not under the control of the researcher, the study involves collection of data from respondents at different locations and time, and that the study involves the analysis of interrelationships among variables (Levin, 2006; Samkange, 2012). The target population involves the employees of the organizations being the unit of analysis. The simple random sampling technique was used to assure good representation of each member of the population.

Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination table was used to arrive at a sample size(s) of 310 employees of the population size (N) 1600 of the organizations under study. A five-point Likert scale questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection and the data generated was analyzed using Multiple Regression statistical tool.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

From the table, the model summary reports R values of .817^a and .917^a representing the correlation coefficient values indicating strong positive relationship between mindful attention awareness scale and work engagement and employees’ wellbeing respectively. Also an adjusted R Square value of .666 (66.6%) indicating the change in work engagement as caused by mindfulness also .841 (84.1%) change witnessed in

Table 1. Model Summary for Mindfulness on Work Engagement and Well being.

| Model Summary | | | | |
|---------------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
| 1 | .817 ^a | .667 | .666 | .930 |
| 1 | .917 ^a | .842 | .841 | 1.056 |

a. Predictors: (Constant) Mindfulness

Table 2. Regression output for Mindfulness and Work Engagement and Employees' Well being.

| Coefficients ^a | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------|
| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | T | Sig. |
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | 7.183 | .342 | | 20.983 | .000 |
| | Mindfulness | .514 | .019 | .817 | 27.506 | .008 |
| 1 | (Constant) | 13.167 | .417 | | 31.541 | .000 |
| | Mindfulness | .355 | .023 | .625 | 15.586 | .015 |

a. Dependent Variable: Work engagement and Well being

employees' wellbeing was accounted for by mindfulness.

Findings

From the tested hypothesis, the following findings were made

1. Mindfulness has a significant relationship with employee's work engagement.
2. Mindfulness has significant relationship with employee well-being.

Discussion of Findings

The results of the tested **H₀₁** suggest that there is a significant relationship between mindfulness and employee's work engagement. The finding support an earlier report by Gonzalez, et al., 2006; Leroy et al., 2013 that mindful awareness leads employees to be more engaged to their work. This means that an increase in mindful awareness will have a corresponding increase on employee's work engagement. The result also agrees with the submission of Kahn, 1991; May, et al., 2004 that mindful attention triggers employee's work engagement.

This asserts that a highly focused employee will be highly engrossed to his or her work.

In like manner, the result of tested **H₀₂** reveals a significant relationship between mindfulness and employee well-being. This finding agrees with the argument of (Luthans et al., 2007) that mindful attention awareness builds resilience which enable an employee to bounce back from adversity, manage conflict, overcome failure and makes an employee to see challenges at work as a means of development.

CONCLUSION

As evident in the findings, mindfulness impacts on the level of employee's work engagement. Management concern towards instilling mindful attention and awareness in the employee results in employee's desire to be more engrossed and shows enthusiasm toward work which will drive the organization towards achieving set goals.

Also, from the findings, mindfulness has a positive relationship with employee well-being. Employee with mindful attention and awareness feels cheerful, feels

excited at work. Such employees see positives tendencies in challenges at the workplace and also bounce back easily from adversity. Management concern toward instilling mindful attention awareness in employee will help reduce employee emotion exhaustion, deviance, turnover intention, burnout and cynicism respectively.

RECOMMENDATION

Base on the research analysis and conclusions above, the following recommendations are made which will be of benefit to government owned hospitals, public and private organizations.

Because mindful attention awareness enhances employee's work engagement, organization should strive toward mindfulness interventions in the organization which will simultaneously improve on employee's vigor, dedication and absorption which will make the organization to achieve predetermined goals.

Also, organization should build mindful employees through mindfulness training and programs. Mindful employees are critical asset of the organization as they display organizational citizenship behavior, express job satisfaction. Hence, increasing their output which in turn have positive impacts on the organization.

Contribution to Knowledge

This study has made a resounding scholarly contribution to the evolving mindfulness literature in the workplace setting. It serves as a reference material to the academic community. And also, it is very useful and important in every work settings where the inner feelings of individuals determine physical and quantifiable work outcomes.

Limitations and Suggestion for Future Studies

The measures of employee work outcomes (work engagement and well-being) used in this study are limited. For further research, other employee work outcomes like team spirit, communication quality, resilience, job satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behaviour can be used. Also, this study can be applied in the manufacturing sector, banking sector, textile industry,

telecommunication sector or any work setting where employee work outcomes is integral to achieving organizational goals.

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