

Perception of Mindfulness in IT Sector: An Evidence from Pakistan

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Abstract

The aim of current research is to analyze the perception of “Mindfulness” in IT sector of Pakistan through difference in demographic profile like age, gender, position and experience. The statistical cosmos of the study was consisting of 300 employees from different IT firms through methodology of simple random sampling. The sample data has been collected through self-administered questionnaire. The statistical tool SPSS has been used to analyze the data. The results indicated that to a significant degree, the perception diverse depending on the respondent’s variation in the demographic profile. Therefore, cultivating awareness about the mindful work force and importance of the mindfulness in the organizations at broader level and in the IT organizational workforce on the narrowed level can be well thought-out and effectual strategy to reduce the poor performance effect that influences the employees of the organizations.

Keywords: *Mindfulness, IT Sector, Mindful, Demographic Profile, IT Workplace.*

Introduction

Mindfulness is the concept by which organization can predict the workplace outcome of their employees. For the fruitful outcomes of the mindfulness, it is mandatory that employees have proper concepts and understanding of the concept of mindfulness. Mindfulness is powerful tool of an individual by which he/she can enhance his/her ability in the workplace as the mindfulness is an important aspect in the workplace environment. Mindful employees think with open-mind (Lyddy et al., 2021) and a mindful individual reacts according to the circumstances and working environment (Shankland et al., 2021).

IT employees often work in high-pressure environments with tight schedule and complex problem-solving. Mindfulness practices can help in reducing stress and improve mental health. Mindfulness techniques can enhance an IT employee's ability to concentrate on workplace tasks, which is essential in the IT sector where attention and precision are critical. Mindfulness can stimulate creativity and innovation by allowing employees to approach challenges with an open and clear mind. It encourages extra ordinary thinking, which can be beneficial in IT where creative mental processes are often needed. Mindfulness helps individuals to make more rational and complex decisions by reducing impulsive reactions and promoting a thoughtful and measured approach. It improves productivity by reducing disorderr, enhancing time management, and fostering a sense of purpose in the tasks being done. In the IT sector, teamwork and collaboration are often essential. Mindfulness practices can improve communication skills, making it easier

for IT professionals to work effectively in teams. IT jobs can be demanding and lead to burnout if not managed properly. Mindfulness can help employees to achieve a better balance life with respect to workplace by allowing them to disconnect from work and recharge during their personal time.

The IT sector is known for its rapid changes and unpredictable challenges. Mindfulness can help employees develop greater resilience to stress and adapt more effectively to changing circumstances (Shankland et al., 2021). Mindfulness has been linked with a numerous physical health benefits, such as lower blood pressure, improved immune system or immune balanced system, and better sleep. Companies that promote mindfulness and provide resources for employees to practice it may see improved retention rates. Employees who feel better in thinking can stay easily in the organization.

Review of Literature

Research shows that mindfulness is one of the important emotional aid to emotional breakdown (Soumya & Sathiyaseelan, 2021). Organizations are using mindfulness as a tool to solve these problems. According to Quaglia et al., (2016), mindfulness helps individuals to regulate their emotions. As mindfulness is directly associated with strong emotions (Shepherd & Cardon, 2009). According to Good et al., (2016), mindfulness is negatively associated with emotional reactivity. This means that high level of mindfulness results in less emotional reactivity and lower emotional exhaustion (Cheung et al., 2020). In the organizational workplace, mindfulness influences most of the aspects regarding thoughts, behaviors and emotions (Brown et al., 2007). Work stress can be mitigated by deploying mindfulness at workplace. Work stress increases the negative emotions. Employees with high mindfulness can help the employees to control on negative emotions and it enables employees to focus on present to avoid work stress (Liu et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2017). Mindfulness improves the emotion regulation and emotion management (Roemer et al., 2015). Mindfulness increases the amount of tolerance and resilience (Krishna, 2014) which is associated with emotional maturity (Jalili Nikoo et al., 2018). According to his findings, mindfulness is positively associated with emotional maturity. Mindfulness-to-Meaning Theory asserts that mindfulness allows one to decenter from stress appraisals into a metacognitive state of awareness that impacts positively in emotion regulation.

Mindfulness is an important aspect in workplace environment. Individuals with absent mind affect the performance of other individuals. As individual's skill and experience is regarded as the internal resource of any individual but according to conservation of resources (CORs) theory, mindfulness is an important internal resource of an individual (Hobfoll, 2001).

As far as the individual's performance is concern, mindfulness is powerful tool of an individual by which he/she can enhance his/her ability in the workplace. Individual mindfulness in an organization is encouraged to improve individual's performance (Badham and King, 2021) because mindfulness enables an individual to think with open mind and behave not like a machine or in mindless ways. An individual with absent mind affects negatively others performance and a mindful person affects others performance positively (Sutcliffe et al., 2016). A mindful individual reacts according to the circumstances and working environment (Shankland et al., 2021). In high-stress workplace, individual mindfulness plays an important role to avoid unpleasant consequences as individuals with mindfulness have more psychological flexibility (SC, 2004). Individual mindfulness directly impacts on the individual performance as well as task performance (Choi et al., 2022).

Objectives of the Study

The study throws light to achieve following objectives;

- To analyze the perception of mindfulness of employees of IT sector of Punjab Pakistan.

- To understand the difference of perception of mindfulness in the IT workplace regarding demographics.

Materials and Mehtods

This study considered the population of employees of IT sector of Punjab Pakistan. A random selection of 8 IT firms (PASHA registered) was made from three major cities of large province Punjab. A random sample of 300 IT sector employees from different departments was selected through simple random sampling and targeted through a personal interview or via questionnaire. This sample included employees with different demographic profile employed in different departments of IT firms.

Instrument

A questionnaire was prepared with two section. First section having seven items related to demographics of employees. This demographic section contained questions about gender, age, qualification, job type, employment experience, nature of employment and skills. Second section was for the measuring perception of mindfulness in the IT related workplace. Perception of mindfulness was measured from M.A.A.S scale developed by Brown and Ryan (2003). Seven items selected from this scale which involve the questions about workplace mindfulness (Dane and Brummel., 2014). Five points Likert scale ranging from “Strongly Disagree=1” to “Strongly Agree=5” was used to measure the response. The reliability and validity was measured though alpha values (Table 1). To ensure precision and accuracy of data and elimination of any anonymous reservations related to confidentiality, each participant was personally acquainted with the purpose of the study.

Table 1: The Reliability Estimates of statements

Statements	Alpha Value
My work becomes worthless due to thinking of something else.	.78
It is difficult to me to stay focused on present happening.	.81
I tend to walk without paying attention along the way.	.69
I forget a person name if it was told to me first time.	.71
I feel non-attentiveness during some activities.	.78
I feel preoccupied with the future or the past.	.88
Mostly I do things without paying attention.	.70

The mean score of mindfulness was calculated. One way ANOVA was used to check whether the mean score of mindfulness was significantly different on the basis of age, gender, qualification and experience of the IT sector employees (the demographic variables). Significant value less than 0.05 suggests that there is significant difference among different group of variable in accordance with a particular statement.

Results and Discussion

One way ANOVA to determine Gender Wise Differences in mindfulness Perception

Various statements regarding the mindfulness were focused to one way ANOVA on the differences of Gender (Table 2). Out of seven statements of mindfulness, three statements were found to be significantly differ on the basis of gender. To be more precisely, perceptions of IT employees were: It is difficult to me to stay focused on present happening, I forget a person name if it was told to me first time, I feel non-attentiveness during some activities, significantly varied. Similarly the statements that are not significantly varied are, My work becomes worthless due to thinking of something else, I tend to walk without paying attention along the way, I feel preoccupied with the future or the past, Mostly I do things without paying attention.

Table 2: One way ANOVA to determine Differences depending on Gender

Statements	Male	Female	F	Sig
My work becomes worthless due to thinking of something else.	2.41	2.11	2.432	.212
It is difficult to me to stay focused on present happening.	2.77	2.27	32.156	.000
I tend to walk without paying attention along the way.	3.24	3.22	3.788	.367
I forget a person name if it was told to me first time.	2.66	2.71	9.456	.000
I feel non-attentiveness during some activities.	3.76	2.89	21.322	.001
I feel preoccupied with the future or the past.	2.98	3.70	3.279	.387
Mostly I do things without paying attention.	2.56	2.10	1.256	.862

One way ANOVA to determine Ager Wise Differences in Perception of mindfulness

Various statements regarding the mindfulness were focused to one way ANOVA on the differences of Age (Table 3). Out of seven statements of mindfulness, two statements were found to be significantly differ on the basis of age. To be more precisely, perceptions of IT employees were: My work becomes worthless due to thinking of something else, I tend to walk without paying attention along the way, varied significantly. Similarly the statements that are not significantly varied are: It is difficult to me to stay focused on present happening, I forget a person name if it was told to me first time, I feel non-attentiveness during some activities, I feel preoccupied with the future or the past, Mostly I do things without paying attention.

Table 3: One way ANOVA Age (Years) wise differences in perception

Statements	<25	25-35	>35	F	Sig
My work becomes worthless due to thinking of something else.	2.5	2.87	2.11	13.124	.000
It is difficult to me to stay focused on present happening.	2.345	2.1	2.00	2.671	.321
I tend to walk without paying attention along the way.	2.56	2.786	3.12	15.50	.000
I forget a person name if it was told to me first time.	2.9	3/21	2.157	2.09	.100
I feel non-attentiveness during some activities.	2.678	2.77	2.14	1.10	.230
I feel preoccupied with the future or the past.	3.45	3.22	2.11	2.349	.110
Mostly I do things without paying attention.	3.67	2.19	2.578	2.19	.200

One way ANOVA to determine job position Wise Differences in Perception of mindfulness

Various statements regarding the mindfulness were focused to one way ANOVA on the differences of job position (Table 4). Out of seven statements of mindfulness, four statements were found to be significantly differ on the basis of position of job. To be more precisely, perceptions of IT employees were: I tend to walk without paying attention along the way, I forget a person name if it was told to me first time, I feel preoccupied with the future or the past, Mostly I do things without paying attention, varied significantly. Similarly the statements that are not significantly varied are: My work becomes worthless due to thinking of something else, it is difficult to me to stay focused on present happening, I feel non-attentiveness during some activities.

Table 4: One way ANOVA to determine Position differences in Perception

Statements	Developer	Designer	Manager	F	Sig
My work becomes worthless due to thinking of something else	1.223	3.10	3.66	2.31	.212
It is difficult to me to stay focused on present happening	2.350	2.42	2.123	3.23	.100
I tend to walk without paying attention along the way	2.67	3.52	1.89	9.242	.000
I forget a person name if it was told to me first time.	2.789	2.88	2.90	11.32	.001
I feel non-attentiveness during some activities	3.43	3.32	3.88	.785	.210
I feel preoccupied with the future or the past	1.890	3.89	2.79	15.12	.000
Mostly I do things without paying attention	2.568	2.78	2.015	8.20	.000

One way ANOVA to determine job Experience Wise Differences in Perception of mindfulness

Various statements regarding the mindfulness were focused to one way ANOVA on the differences of job Experience (Table 5). Out of seven statements of mindfulness, two statements were found to be significantly differ on the basis of experience of job. To be more precisely, perceptions of IT employees were: I feel non-attentiveness during some activities, mostly I do things without paying attention, varied significantly. Similarly the statements that are not significantly varied are: My work becomes worthless due to thinking of something else, It is difficult to me to stay focused on present happening, I tend to walk without paying attention along the way, I forget a person name if it was told to me first time, I feel preoccupied with the future or the past.

Table 5: One way ANOVA Experience (Years) differences in Perception

Statements	<2	2 to 5	>5	F	Sig
My work becomes worthless due to thinking of something else	2.223	3.21	2.78	2.134	.17
It is difficult to me to stay focused on present happening	2.44	2.1	3.9	2.34	.216
I tend to walk without paying attention along the way	3.229	2.89	2.786	1.667	.128
I forget a person name if it was told to me first time.	3.34	3.129	2.79	2.890	.100
I feel non-attentiveness during some activities	2.14	2.23	3.12	7.142	.000
I feel preoccupied with the future or the past	2.450	1.98	2.76	3.01	.201
Mostly I do things without paying attention	2.76	2.78	2.33	11.201	.001

Conclusion and Discussion

This study uses the approach of perception about mindfulness in the IT sector workplace settings such as under stress job setting, non-attentiveness in job related activities, absent mind for the future or past, not paying attention on present, unawareness about something happening, forgotten some information and activities with thinking something else.

The current study focuses whether the mindfulness exists or not in IT sector employees as in such environment, mindful employees play significant role in there and overall performance. The gender influences significant divergences when it came to positive estimations about mindfulness, paying attention and awareness of the employees with the surroundings of workplace. Similarly, age, job position and job experience influence divergence significantly in positive estimation of mindfulness and the different perceptions of mindfulness with open minded employees and aware individuals with their workplace circumstances. IT sector of Pakistan is facing hurdles to competing international market. So there is a need to explore this construct more deeply with interaction of emotions which are direct associated with mindfulness.

Future Research Direction

As the IT employees are more stressed and this stress directly affect their performance. There is a need to investigate the mindfulness concept in IT firms. Perception of mindfulness must be analyzed in the IT sector employees as their performance is directly linked with stress and emotions. There is a need to investigate effect of mindfulness on IT employee's performance with considering their emotional attitude.

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