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## Mindfulness and its relationship with Work-Life-Balance with respect to employees of IT sector

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#### Abstract

Mindfulness and Work- Life Balance when clubbed together can lead to a number of positive outcomes in our personal and professional life. Mindfulness can help in maintaining the equilibrium of life by making a balance between work and life. Via analysis of data from 144 employees from 6 IT companies of National Capital Region of Haryana, this study investigates the relationship between mindfulness level of the employees and work-life balance. The study also aims to discuss mindfulness as an important HR practice in IT companies. In general, the data were introduced using SPSS statistics and processed by using pearson correlation and regression for independent samples. The results of the study have shown that a high level of mindfulness can lead to better work-life balance. The implications of the study are twofold: a) Personal Life implications – the mindfulness practices can lead to a better understanding of personal relations by bringing into mind the real meaning of life, b) the mindfulness practices lead to knowing the personal capabilities and virtues of the employees and hence results to more employee engagement at the work. Mindfulness practices hence bridge the gap between the personal life and professional life of a person. The managerial implications of the study are discussed further.

Keywords: Mindfulness, work-life balance, well-being, work-family conflict, IT sector

#### Introduction

As life keeps on changing, the responsibilities that a person may have and how they prioritize them also change over time. With the numerous overlapping roles that one might undertake, the balance between work and life has become very essential. Achieving a balance between our expectations, peer pressure, and external expectations helps to specify the harmony we strive for in life and triggers for achieving the overall balance that leads to Work-Life Balance. The urge to establish a new Work-Life Balance is obvious as it affects not only the work situation but also influences almost every other element of everyone's life. Family time is another important factor in determining work-life balance. Longer work hours have been connected to decreased satisfaction and a lack of work-family balance, whereas more time spent with children is positively correlated with perceived balance. Type of job is another determinant of Work-Life Balance. Job complexity and time management authority in particular have been positively linked to satisfaction with Work-Family Balance (Valcour, 2007) <sup>[37]</sup>. Results connected to work-family balance include life satisfaction, commitment to the company, family functioning, and job satisfaction (Allen *et al.*, 2010; Carlson *et al.*, 2009) <sup>[40, 41]</sup>.

Jobs are now less stable as lifetime careers and increasing dependence on technology have led people to stay linked to their jobs even while they are at home. Families have now gone through the changes like more number of dual-earner couples, an increase in divorce rates, the heterogeneity of family arrangements, and the increased proportion of women working (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000)<sup>[42]</sup>, which has made the environment for conflict between the work and family spheres more prevalent. Due to these developments, there is now a high prevalence of work-family conflict, with 85% of employees having ongoing family obligations and 45% of workers say there is some or a lot of conflict between their work and personal lives. These modifications have boosted employers' interest and led to further study on work and family issues and well-being.

Mental health is one of the important topics to concentrate on has emerged different ways to find solutions. Mindfulness is one of the solutions to deal with the problems of work-family conflict.

The present study begins with a discussion of work-family balance, along with its causes, contemporary organizational policies, and the gap that mindfulness might be able to patch. There are two different ways to approach work and life: working and living, and working and living mindfully. Higher levels of mindfulness are generally related to the consciousness and awareness of the surroundings and present situations. With the help of mindfulness practices, one can enhance personal well-being which can lead to polite conduct at home as well as at the workplace. It is fairly understood that the stress level of employees increases when work life and personal life are out of balance and employees bring their work home and bring their problems to their workplace.

#### Background

#### Mindfulness

The origins of mindfulness can be found in the Buddhist practice process, and early researchers defined mindfulness as a state of present-focused attention. According to Thera (1970), mindfulness is a precise knowledge of what the heart perceives in a constantly changing sensory environment. Mindfulness is defined as "a present-centered, clear, non-judging, non-reactive and receptive form of awareness" (Kabat-Zinn, 1990; Brown et al., 2007) [19, 5]. According to studies on the subject, mindfulness appears to differ from person to person (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Allen & Kiburz, 2012) <sup>[4, 1]</sup>, meaning that different people may exhibit different levels of awareness (Giluk, 2009) [43]. According to Shapiro, Carlson, Astin, and Freeman (2006) <sup>[32]</sup>, people are better equipped to apply a larger variety of coping mechanisms when they intentionally bring awareness and acceptance to their present-moment experiences. By paying attention to the information in the present and allowing space between emotions and responses to them, clarity and self-regulated functioning are improved.

Clinical mindfulness research has grown significantly since the turn of the century (Lao *et al.*, 2016) <sup>[22]</sup>. Mindfulness research has now gained much importance pertaining to management studies where it is defined as "an acceptable attention and awareness of current events and experiences" (Brown *et al.*, 2007) <sup>[5]</sup>.

Numerous academics have recently proposed the idea of mindfulness as a psychological state that people can experience in a variety of contexts even in the absence of mindfulness training. Hugh-Jones *et al.* (2018) <sup>[44]</sup>; Creswell & Lindsay (2014) <sup>[6]</sup>; Lindsay & Creswell (2017) <sup>[7]</sup> used mindfulness-enhancing meditation techniques; these techniques are referred to as mindfulness treatments.

Studies have examined how several factors, including Job Satisfaction, task performance and leadership, relate to mindfulness (Glomb *et al.*, 2011; Dane, 2011; Reb *et al.*, 2013; Hulsheger *et al.*, 2013) <sup>[14, 8, 28, 45]</sup>. The use of mindfulness-based techniques enhances the mental health of workers (Virgili, 2015; Gregoire & Lachance, 2015) <sup>[38, 46]</sup>, work-performance (Reb *et al.*, 2015) <sup>[28]</sup>, Work-satisfaction (Hulsheger *et al.*, 2013) <sup>[45]</sup> and also decreases turnover intentions of the employees (Reb *et al.*, 2015; Dane & Brummel, 2011) <sup>[28, 9]</sup>. The association between mindfulness and working parents' vitality, sleep quality, and work-life

balance was examined by Allen & Kiburtz, 2012<sup>[1]</sup>. Researchers in organizational science are looking into the advantages of mindfulness in the workplace. More research is required to better understand how mindfulness affects employee well-being and work-life balance.

#### Work-life Balance

According to Shah (2017) [31], Sexton et al. (2017) [30], and Fernandez et al. (2016) <sup>[12]</sup>, there are various approaches to defining and evaluating work-life balance. Following Haar et al. (2018) <sup>[16]</sup>, Kelliher et al. (2018) <sup>[7]</sup>, Kalliath and Brough (2008) <sup>[20]</sup>, and other recent research, work-life balance have been divided into two sections. According to Kelliher *et al.*, 2018<sup>[7]</sup>, "work" can be defined as activities carried out for money by a permanent employee for a single employer. According to their definition, "life" refers to the responsibilities that participants have to take care of their families. Work-Life Balance is described by Haar et al. (2018) <sup>[16]</sup> as a "fit" between the two variables. The term "life" can be interpreted to mean obligations and responsibilities to one's family. Work-life balance is the sane division of time and energy between the obligations and commitments that come with having a family and going to work. According to Lee and Sirgy (2018) <sup>[24]</sup>, the significance of maintaining a work-life balance has "spillover effects" on every function one performs in life. Lee and Sirgy 2018 <sup>[24]</sup>, specifically investigated the relationship between role involvement in work and/or life and meeting the demands of the roles, which in turn results in overall happiness, growth, and the inclusion of prospective new roles. According to Feldtead and Henseke (2017) [11], the spillover effects may affect family, social, and interpersonal elements. There may also have an impact on education, according to Gangwisch (2014)<sup>[13]</sup>. While the advantages of having a work-life balance for oneself should not be understated, Wood et al. (2020)<sup>[39]</sup> highlight the advantages of having employees who have a healthy work-life balance for their employers. Benefits including increased engagement and retention rates are mentioned by Grawitch et al. The study by Barber et al. (2019) [3] also revealed decreased conflict, improved employee recovery, and better productivity in addition to the previously indicated advantages.

According to the Australian Institute of Business (2015), maintaining a work-life balance has three advantages. First, there is a lower possibility of burnout. Second, attention is sharpened. Stress is finally reduced. According to the author of the article "Benefits of Mindfulness," stress reduction ranks as the top benefit for people who start practicing mindfulness (Benefits of Mindfulness, 2015).

#### Work-life Balance and Mindfulness

According to recent studies, mindfulness and work-life balance are directly related (de Vibe *et al.*, 2018)<sup>[48]</sup>. More specifically, the study describes this association as a decrease in emotional reactivity, an improvement in general well-being, and an improvement in self-awareness (Halverson-Ramos, 2016)<sup>[17]</sup>. Additionally, author Halverson-Ramos particularly lists a few advantages of mindfulness, including increased concentration, enhanced working memory, increased cognitive flexibility, and stress reduction. According to studies, striking the work-life balance through mindfulness requires a "problem focus" on goals in light of the aforementioned advantages (Laurie &

Blandford, 2016)<sup>[3]</sup>. Psychological stressors are the link between mindfulness and work-life balance (Sirgy & Lee, 2018; Michael et al., 2018; Song, 2020) [34, 25, 35]. Other researchers have demonstrated a direct connection between mindfulness and work-life balance, including Panisoara et al. (2019)<sup>[27]</sup> and Michel et al., and it is this association that can boost total work-life satisfaction. According to some researchers, these coping mechanisms can be learned in our personal as well as professional lives and are classified as ingrained habits, occurring naturally mechanisms of coping, or learned coping mechanisms (Amazue & Onyishi, 2016) <sup>[2]</sup>. According to research by Kiburz *et al.* (2017) <sup>[21]</sup>, finding a proper work-life balance is an ongoing battle for persons who have family responsibilities. Additionally, their research demonstrates how a person's perspective on integrating knowing mindfulness into their work-life balance can lessen conflict.

#### **Materials and Methods**

The Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) has been created by Brown and Ryan, 2003 [4] to measure the mindfulness level of people, which is considered an attentive state of mind. This is a 15-item scale that was designed to measure the level of mindfulness, namely, "a receptive state of mind in which attention, informed by a sensitive awareness of what is occurring in the present, simply observes what is taking place". People vary in the attention and presence level of their mind to present events and experiences. Mindfulness is in some studies considered an inherent quality that differs from person to person due to self-regulation, discipline, and personality. The MAAS evaluates the individual differences in the state of mindfulness over time. The scale measures the perception of respondents towards a variety of self-regulation and wellbeing constructs. This scale has excluded attitude, motivation, and mood to keep mindfulness as a neutral construct. The Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale strongly correlates with rumination, self-reflection, and selfconsciousness.

This study assessed one dependent variable, i.e. work-life balance with a correlation and regression analysis, with 15 independent variables (MAAS). Here, we are examining the direct Impact of mindfulness on Work-Life-Balance.

MINDFULNESS	IMPACT ON,	WORK LIFE
		BALANCE

**Fig 1:** Theoretical framework

Given below are the 15 statements of MAAS which are to measure your level of mindfulness that are about someone's everyday experience.

MF1. I could be experiencing some emotion and not be conscious of it until sometime later.

MF2. I break or spill things because of carelessness, not paying attention, or thinking of something else.

MF3. I find it difficult to stay focused on what's happening in the present.

MF4. I tend to walk quickly to get where I'm going without paying attention to what I experience along the way.

MF5. I tend not to notice feelings of physical tension or discomfort until they really grab my attention.

MF6. I forget a person's name almost as soon as I've been told it for the first time.

MF7. It seems I am "running on automatic" without much awareness of what I'm doing.

MF8. I rush through activities without being really attentive to them.

MF9. I get so focused on the goal I want to achieve that I lose touch with what I am doing right now to get there.

MF10. I do jobs or tasks automatically, without being aware of what I'm doing.

MF11. I find myself listening to someone with one ear, doing something else at the same time.

MF12. I drive places on "automatic pilot" and then wonder why I went there.

MF13. I find myself preoccupied with the future or the past.

MF14. I find myself doing things without paying attention.

MF15. I Snack without being aware that I'm eating.

A researcher has to simply compute the mean of all the 15 items included in the scale to score the scale. If the score is high, it means the level of dispositional mindfulness is high and high levels of positive affect, high self-esteem, self-actualization, and optimism, and lower levels of negative affect, anxiety, depression, and anxiety.

#### Sample

The study's target audience consisted of IT professionals working for IT companies based in New Delhi, India's capital, as well as the National Capital Region, which includes the cities of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh that border New Delhi geographically. In order to strengthen the study's external validity, the study has concentrated on regions with a variety of cultural backgrounds. This has allowed for the inclusion of people from various perspectives and cultural backgrounds. The study employed purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling strategy, in which organizations are contacted by higher-level managers who then disseminate the questionnaire to their subordinates. 200 questionnaires were distributed across several organizations out of which 168 filled questionnaires were returned. From those returned, the author considered 144 questionnaires after removing the outliers.

#### **Participants**

The study is concentrated on the professionals in IT sector of National Capital Region. The sampling unit covered professionals from the age group below 25 to above 50 years, selected through a Random sampling technique. The data was collected from all the levels of management and the experience of the employees lay between different groups from 0 to above 20 years.

#### Measures

The data has been collected by a survey questionnaire with the help of "Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS)", developed by Brown and Ryan (2003), and all the data is collected through primary responses with the help of Google Forms and directly floating the questionnaire. Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) is a 15-item response set, measured on the 6-point Likert scale where 1 Almost Always; 2= Very frequently; 3= somewhat frequently; and 4= somewhat infrequently; 5= Very infrequently and 6= Almost never. After receiving the response set, the data has been analyzed in SPSS to get the results.

**Results:** The foremost step that the researcher took in the analysis of the study was to remove the inconsistency of the data. This was done by eliminating the responses that were not present in the standard deviations of the study. After the data cleaning, the sample size was reduced to 144 from 168.

The analysis was then done by considering the sample size of 144. Table 1 shows the reliability statistics of the sample with the help of Cronbach's alpha. The strength of internal consistency was found to be adequate as the value of reliability statistics was found to be 0.958 (N=144, n=16).

Table 1: Reliability statistics of the variables

Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
.958	16

Table 2 exhibits the central tendency using the descriptive statistics of independent variables. The table depicts the initial assumptions of the study are correct. All the variables are found to have almost the same impact on the variables of the study, with the highest mean of M15 (4.01), with MF12 being second (3.95). The lowest mean was found to be MF1 (3.00), but it is not so far.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of	f the respondents of Mindfulness
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	Ν	Mean	Std. Deviation
MF1	144	3.00	1.496
MF2	144	3.74	1.625
MF3	144	3.57	1.616
MF4	144	3.31	1.589
MF5	144	3.16	1.527
MF6	144	3.46	1.664
MF7	144	3.69	1.584
MF8	144	3.57	1.558
MF9	144	3.11	1.565
MF10	144	3.73	1.565
MF11	144	3.30	1.622
MF12	144	3.95	1.715
MF13	144	3.22	1.526
MF14	144	3.72	1.603
MF15	144	4.01	1.519
On a scale of 1 to 6 Strongly Agree to strongly disagree), Do you think your Work Life Balance has improved?	144	3.28	1.712
Valid N (List wise)	144		

These variables also have a consistent central tendency which implies that the mean values of these variables lie between 3.00 to 4.01 and the standard deviation value lies between 1.4916 to 1.715 of the complete population. Table 3 explains the correlation analysis between mindfulness and the work-life-balance of IT professionals. All the variables are found to have low to moderate correlation, so the condition of multicollinearity is ruled out. It can also be seen that there are no major violations to conduct linear regression analysis. It was found that even though some of the variables are found to have a high correlation with our dependent variable, i.e. work-life-balance.

	MF1	MF2	MF3	MF4	MF5	MF6	MF7	MF8	MF9	<b>MF10</b>	<b>MF11</b>	<b>MF12</b>	<b>MF13</b>	<b>MF14</b>	<b>MF15</b>	WLB
MF1	1.															
MF2	.685**	1.														
MF3	.599**	.685**	1.													
MF4	.550**	.581**	.674**	1.												
MF5	.490**	.541**	.510**	.616**	1.											
MF6	.559**	.603**	.511**	.440**	.566**	1.										
MF7	.499**	.612**	.627**	.595**	.585**	.500**	1.									
MF8	.552**	.674**	.631**	.560**	.582**	.603**	.781**	1.								
MF9	.463**	.548**	.547**	.529**	.519**	.453**	.618**	.585**	1.							
MF10	.520**	.649**	.614**	.602**	.574**	.448**	.707**	.754**	.655**	1.						
MF11	.392**	.595**	.532**	.406**	.435**	.485**	.521**	.546**	.510**	.605**	1.					
MF12	.510**	.628**	.598**	.514**	.484**	.474**	.725**	.678**	.554**	.670**	.611**	1.				
MF13	.453**	.489**	.527**	.441**	.552**	.522**	.616**	.588**	.613**	.555**	.510**	.627**	1.			
MF14	.525**	.614**	.592**	.593**	.519**	.503**	.661**	.670**	.554**	.694**	.582**	.656**	.684**	1.		
MF15	.575**	.752**	.698**	.647**	.614**	.648**	.757**	.771**	.579**	.751**	.628**	.779**	.644**	.751**	1.	
WLB	.399*	.556**	.618**	.572**	.507**	.395**	.705**	.719**	.479**	.689**	.486**	.653**	.522**	.651**	.746**	1.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis between the variables

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

After the researcher found the correlation among the variables, the next step was to analyze the cause and effect relationship among the variables. This was done by using linear regression, and the results have been shown in Table 4. Mindfulness was regressed with work-life balance, to get the hypothesized relationship.

This study intended to find the impact of Mindfulness on work-life-balance of IT professionals. In this study, it can be seen that M1, M2, M3, M4, M5, M6, M7, M8, M9, M10, M11, M12, M13, M14 and M15 show statistically results. All the variables showed a statistically significant and positive impact on the behavior of the employees.

Table 4: Regression analysis model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.824ª	.678	.641	1.026

a. Predictors: (Constant), M1, M2, M3, M4, M5, M6, M7, M8, M9	,
M10, M11, M12, M13, M14, M15.	

	ANOVA <sup>a</sup>									
	Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.				
	Regression	284.210	15	18.947	18.008	$.000^{b}$				
1	Residual	134.679	128	1.052						
	Total	418,889	143							

a. Dependent Variable: On a scale of 1 to 6 (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree), Do you think your work-life-balance has improved?

b. Predictors: (Constant), M1, M2, M3, M4, M5, M6, M7, M8, M9, M10, M11, M12, M13, M14, M15.

	Coefficients									
	Model		andardized efficients	Standardized Coefficients	Т	Sig.				
L	-	В	Std. Error	Beta						
	(Constant)	294	.259		-1.136	.258				
	M1	142	.086	124	-1.639	.104				
	M2	060	.098	057	615	.540				
	M3	.165	.088	.156	1.870	.064				
	M4	.062	.088	.058	.710	.479				
	M5	.042	.084	.038	.503	.616				
	M6	160	.079	155	-2.016	.046				
1	M7	.140	.103	.130	1.355	.178				
ľ	M8	.298	.109	.271	2.736	.007				
	M9	088	.083	080	-1.057	.292				
	M10	.127	.105	.116	1.201	.232				
	M11	037	.077	035	478	.634				
	M12	.064	.090	.065	.714	.476				
	M13	015	.092	013	161	.872				
	M14	.118	.095	.110	1.239	.218				
L	M15	.385	.136	.342	2.835	.005				

a. Dependent Variable: On a scale of 1 to 6 (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree), Do you think your work-life-balance has improved?

#### Managerial implications

Being mindful of obligations to both one's professional and personal lives can help employees at this time when almost everyone has suffered a disturbance to their ability to maintain a healthy work-life balance. Making judgments with mindfulness both during the working and with reference to one's own personal responsibilities is a challenge that is constantly changing. Some behaviors are as mindless as breathing since they are our conditioned responses to our environment. Others need preparation and thought, and it is in these activities that there is a chance that they will have an impact on our overall WLB.

#### Limitations of the study

There are certain expected limits, as there always are with research. First and foremost, it's possible that the participants' self-awareness (introspection) isn't sharp enough to produce accurate data. Because the study relied on self-report to collect its data, common method bias may have an impact on the assessment measures. This study has a few notable flaws that should be pointed up. First, the study makes the supposition that the respondents will be able to appropriately translate their reflection during the survey. Second, a survey served as the foundation for obtaining data. Self-report surveys have the risk of having participant bias in any or all of the responses. The participant's inability to understand the survey's questions is another fundamental problem. The participant's inability to comprehend the question being posed is a fundamental restriction that can reduce the data's actual worth. Finally, the participants' identities as workers in the IT sector in NCR limit the generalizability of the study across cultures. Some of the WLB tests, according to Dex and Bond (2016), only apply to participants who have children, which suggests a significant restriction. These limitations and obstacles are undoubtedly inescapable, however leveraging limitations and challenges from previous and ongoing research helps lessen the difficulties and restrictions of this study.

#### **Recommendations for future research**

According to research, stress management education assists workers in maintaining a healthy work-life balance in environments with high levels of stress. The results of this study could serve as a springboard for current and future research to generate further research questions and data, assisting in the launch of new organizations. Accurate knowledge of mindfulness at work fosters more advanced study and more efficient use, which may benefit both workers and companies. HR professionals should think about incorporating mindfulness as part of employee development programs that help employees balance their work and personal lives to bring the overall well-being of the employees.

#### Conclusion

Information technology has seen a lot of changes in the last few decades. Unlike traditional organizations that were very much rigid and inflexible, modern IT organizations are very flexible for change. It has also created a lot of opportunities for the new generation. IT professionals are trying their best to become proactive from reactive. Nowadays, leadership is not limited to people with management titles, instead, it is based on the capability to foster collaboration, communicate, manage social relationships, and influence others. It needs to be aligned with the concept of being receptive to the opinion of others. It also requires one's emotional well-being, mental presence, higher positive aspects, lower negative aspects and positive attitude towards others. It needs one to have self-confidence, know one's strengths and weaknesses, and be assured of their skills. This purpose can be achieved by remaining mentally present at the workplace. Practice the ability of mental presence isn't straightforward. One has to adhere to this habit regularly. This mindfulness employees helps them to remain focused on their work, reducing stress levels and thus results in mental well-being, performance improvement, good work-family balance, and enhanced job satisfaction levels. Although there is a lot of research on mindfulness across many disciplines, there needs to be more research on workplace mindfulness. This study looked at the effects of mindfulness on employees' work-life balance in a rapid workplace environment. It has been found that mindfulness has a beneficial effect on work-life balance.

Therefore, this study will assist organizations in putting the research study's conclusions into practice. The results of this study significantly support the idea that organizations should provide instruction in mindfulness meditation because it will decrease employee turnover intentions and increase job satisfaction through improved work-family harmony and mindfulness training.

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