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Walden University
2015

Abstract

The Perceptions and Lived Experiences of Leaders Practicing Mindfulness Meditation:

A Phenomenological Investigation

by

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MPA, California State University, East Bay (Formerly Hayward), 1997

BS, California State University, Sacramento, 1993

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Management

Walden University

November 2015

Abstract

Despite the gap between the demands of the global work environment and the maturity of its leaders, minimal research exists on the trend of the practice of mindfulness meditation and the developmental experiences of leaders, thereby resulting in a growing divide between theory and practice. Consequently, leadership scholars have little understanding of how an increasing number of leaders experience mindfulness meditation. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the perceived impact mindfulness meditation had on leader development for 20 manager-leaders who had a regular (at least 3 days a week) mindfulness-meditation practice. The primary recruitment strategy included outreach to potential participants affiliated with professionally oriented mindfulness groups on the social networking site, LinkedIn (geographic location was not relevant in this study). The primary conceptual framework was Day's conceptualization of leader development. The central research question addressed leaders' perceptions and experiences of the impact of mindfulness meditation on their development as leaders. A modified Stevick–Colaizzi–Keen data analysis procedure was used in this study. Key results included the identification of 10 core themes and the associated conclusion that leaders who want to contribute solutions to global challenges will have to access more of their potential, which may require consideration of techniques that foster vertical learning. The primary recommendation includes the serious consideration of mindfulness meditation by leaders and organizational decision makers of development investments. This study has implications for positive social change in that a better understanding of how leaders experience mindfulness meditation may provide direction for leaders and organizations about developmental practices that support leadership effectiveness.

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Dedication

May whatever benefit that results from this endeavor support leaders in their most

important journeys of all–their inner journeys to wholeness.

Acknowledgements

I owe my deepest gratitude to Beverly, my spouse, life partner, and best friend for her unwavering support, encouragement, and confidence in my ability to complete this doctorate journey. I also extend heart-felt appreciation to all the research participants who generously contributed to this study and my dissertation committee members whose guidance made this dissertation possible.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Mindfulness meditation is growing in popularity in the United States among the general public as a whole and among business leaders specifically (Boyce, 2011; Gelles, 2015; Gross, 2012; Schaufenbuel, 2014; Timm, 2010). Mindfulness meditation has roots in Buddhism and typically refers to meditation practices that bring gentle, unbiased attention and awareness to the moment, associated with cultivating qualities of acceptance, openness, and curiosity (Shapiro, Carlson, & Kabat-Zinn, 2009). However, many Western mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) are secular, straightforward, and accessible to diverse populations (Kabat-Zinn, 2005; Shapiro et al., 2009). Tan (2012) explained Google's commitment to offer mindfulness training to employees throughout the company to support them "succeed in life and work" (p. 3). However, scholarship has not yet caught up with this emerging trend of leaders increasing use of mindfulness meditation and other MBIs.

Currently, scholars have a minimal understanding of how leaders experience mindfulness meditation in their development. There is negligible discussion of mindfulness meditation and other contemplative practices in the leadership development literature (Dane, 2011; Ruderman, Clerkin, Connolly, & CCL, 2014). As a result, scholars have limited capacity to provide guidance or direction to the practitioner community in this area. In this study, I sought to close the gap between research and practice in how leaders perceive and experience mindfulness meditation.

A better understanding of how leaders experience the impact of mindfulness meditation in their development as leaders provides insight, direction, and guidance for individual leaders and organizations on developmental practices that support leadership

effectiveness. A greater understanding of practices that foster leader effectiveness will help facilitate positive organizational change, which will support greater organizational effectiveness and better allow companies to help solve humanity's most pressing challenges (Anderson & Ackerman-Anderson, 2010; Day, Zaccaro, & Halpin, 2004).

In this chapter, I present the background on leader development and mindfulness meditation, the research problem, the purpose of the study, research questions, the conceptual framework, the nature of the study, definitions, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, significance of the study, and a summary.

Background of the Study

Many organizations are gaining interest in the significance of leadership on organizational performance, with greater attention being paid to leadership as a potential competitive advantage. Therefore, organizations are investing in developing their leaders (Day, 2001). In 2010, organizations spent approximately 22% of their training budgets on leadership development interventions (O'Leonard & Bersin & Associates, 2011). Although no universal definition of leadership exists in the academic literature (Northouse, 2010), scholars offered a definition of leadership as an outcome of reciprocal commitments, interpersonal relationships, and voluntary social processes (Day & Halpin, 2004). Effective leadership necessitates effective leader development (Day, Harrison, & Halpin, 2012). Therefore, leader development will most likely receive increasing attention by individual practitioners and organizational decision-makers.

Given the growing complexity and volatility of the 21st century organizational environment, leaders must consider developmental movement from one stage to another as well as instrumental knowledge and skills in their formal leadership roles. Leadership

efficacy requires ongoing enlargement of knowledge and skills; however, a global organizational environment demands that leaders complement cognitive and intellectual growth by gaining greater access to other intelligences, including existential intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence, and interpersonal intelligence (Anderson & Ackerman-Anderson, 2010; Bird, Mendenhall, Stevens, & Oddou, 2010; Gardner, 1999; Petrie, 2011, 2014; Weiss & Molinaro, 2010). Hence, the 21st century organizational environment requires transformational shifts as it relates to how individuals and systems think about and approach leader and organizational effectiveness.

Greater organizational effectiveness requires greater leader effectiveness. Ultimately, "transforming individuals through leader development efforts also transforms organizations" (Day et al., 2004, p. 11). Shifts in knowledge, skills, and capacities alter individual thoughts, attitudes, emotions, and behavior within organizations thereby influencing and shaping work environments. Leaders and businesses have increasing interest in mindfulness meditation and MBIs (Gelles, 2015; Rauzi, 2013; Timm, 2010). Consequently, leadership scholars will want to remain open to the transformative potential of contemplative practices such as mindfulness meditation and MBIs.

MBIs have salutary effects on human functioning and behavior. Mindfulness meditation produces positive effects on self-awareness, interpersonal behavior, and mental health and well-being that last beyond the actual time an individual is formally meditating (Brown, Ryan, & Creswell, 2007; Hölzel et al., 2011; Siegel, 2014). As a result, over the last 25–30 years, psychotherapeutic programs have integrated mindfulness meditation practices. Furthermore, researchers have suggested an underlying neural mechanism to attain the psychological health and well-being benefits that result

from mindfulness meditation, including increases in regional grey matter density that represent lasting changes in brain structure, which may support improved mental functioning (Hölzel et al., 2011). Through the process of intentionally focusing nonjudgmental awareness on the contents of mind, the mindfulness (meditation) practitioner begins to observe or witness thoughts, sensations, and feelings (Shapiro, Carlson, Astin, & Freedman, 2006; Siegel, 2014). By cultivating the capacity to witness thoughts, physical sensations, and emotional states, practitioners begin freeing themselves from habitual patterns in ways that enhance self-mastery.

However, despite the expanding body of literature on the salutary effects of mindfulness meditation and the growing interest in MBIs from leaders and businesses, scholars have not thoroughly examined the topic in the leader development literature. Therefore, in this qualitative exploration, I aimed to help fill this gap in the literature by increasing an understanding of how leaders who have regular mindfulness meditation practices perceive its impact on their development as leaders. Better understanding of shared leaders' experiences provides insight into leader development for the individual leader and for organizations.

Problem Statement

A gap exists between the demands of the global work environment and the developmental maturity of its leaders. As highlighted by Weiss and Molinaro (2010) this developmental gap makes leaders and the organizations they lead vulnerable to costly missteps, performance declines, and legitimacy losses. The global work environment places increasing demands on leaders who are ill prepared to address these demands effectively (Anderson & Ackerman-Anderson, 2010; Baron & Cayer, 2011; Petrie, 2014;

Weiss & Molinaro, 2010). Bird et al. (2010) reported more than 50 competencies associated with global leadership effectiveness, which they organized into three comprehensive categories: perception management, relationship management, and self-management. As presented in Chapter 2, mindfulness scholars have indicated positive correlations between these three comprehensive categories and MBIs.

Prevailing leader development best practices (e.g., 360° feedback or multisource feedback [MSF]) fall short of meeting the need to develop 21st century leaders. This shortcoming is due in part to a lack of attention to the inner worlds from which leaders lead, which include psychological and emotional maturity (Anderson & Ackerman-Anderson, 2010; Ruderman et al., 2014; Scharmer & Kaufer, 2013). As a result, questions persist about when and why some best practice interventions work; how to optimally combine interventions; the potential of Internet technology; and the association between individual development and the effectiveness of working groups, teams, and organizations overall (McCauley & CCL, 2008). Petrie (2011) argued that the challenge is a developmental (i.e., how) challenge rather than a leadership (i.e., what?) challenge. Therefore, practitioners and scholars may need to shift more attention to cultivating psychological, emotional, moral, and spiritual maturity and not solely behavioral competencies.

To address this developmental void, leaders and businesses are turning to mindfulness meditation and other MBIs. Researchers have indicated the benefits of secular MBIs for general self-development, including the cultivation of psychological maturity and competencies associated with leader effectiveness (Brown et al., 2007; Gelles, 2015; Siegel, 2014; Schaufenbuel, 2014). However, presently, MBIs have

received negligible attention in the leadership development literature, thereby leaving a division between theory and practice to include the lack of understanding of the developmental experiences leaders have of MBIs. Therefore, in this study, I increase the scholarly understanding of how leaders perceive and experience the impact of mindfulness meditation in their development as leaders.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to understand the perceived impact mindfulness meditation has on leader development for 20 middle- to senior-level manager leaders who had a regular (at least 3 days a week) mindfulness meditation practice for at least 3 months. While not a significant factor in this study, participant geographic location was diverse and included manager leaders from several different countries. Leader development refers to the capacity of individuals to successfully fulfill leadership roles, responsibilities, and tasks, while emphasizing development of knowledge, skills, and abilities related to effective leadership (Day, 2001). Further insight into how leaders perceive the impact of mindfulness meditation may provide direction and guidance for individual leaders and organizations about developmental practices that support leadership effectiveness.

Research Questions

The central research question associated with this exploratory inquiry was the following: How do leaders perceive and describe their experiences of the impact of mindfulness meditation on their development as leaders?

Conceptual Framework

The primary conceptual frameworks were Day's (2001) and Day et al.'s (2012) conceptualizations of leader development. Day defined leader development as the capacity of individuals to fulfill leadership roles, responsibilities, and tasks successfully, while emphasizing development of knowledge, skills, and abilities related to effective leadership. Furthermore, Day et al. argued that the relationship between leader development and adult development is instrumental to any meaningful theory of leader development. Consequently, an integrative approach to leader development, grounded in adult development theory, would benefit leaders because "the human organism is a complex system that cannot be understood adequately based on any one particular discipline or theoretical perspective" (Day et al., 2012, p. 4). Therefore, leadership practitioners and scholars may need to become more open to explorations of general wellness as well as psychological, emotional, and spiritual maturation.

Adult development literature provides a promising foundation for a more comprehensive approach to leader development. Day et al. (2012) proposed three foundational components of adult development essential for an integrative approach to leader development: identity formation, moral development, and epistemic cognition (i.e., awareness and sensemaking). Identity, oriented in the work of Erikson, Loevinger, Kegan, and numerous other developmental psychologists, is a term that references how individuals view themselves in relation to different levels of the environment: others, society, and the planet. In addition, self-identity refers to the integration of various dimensions of the self, which changes and evolves over the lifespan. Identity and identity formation have significant implications for leader development because developing as a

leader, in part, requires viewing oneself as a leader (Day et al., 2012). Therefore, self-identity informs and directs decision-making and behavior in addition to moral maturity.

According to moral development theory, with roots in the work of Kohlberg, Gilligan, and others, individuals develop more complex, inclusive, and flexible views of right and wrong action over the lifespan due in part to life experiences such as formal education (Wilber, 2000b). As highlighted by Day (2012), practically every decision made by a leader has ethical implications. In addition, leaders are role models and frequently emulated by others, especially followers, and greatly influence organizational climate and culture (Day et al., 2012). Consequently, moral development, sequence and process, is significant to leader development along with epistemic cognition.

Epistemic cognition, which is influenced by individual differences and environmental factors, refers to the human ability to make sense of life experiences. This dimension of an integrative approach to leader development relies on Perry publication (as cited in Day et al., 2012). Development reflects a progressive capacity to recognize a relativistic view, but nonetheless make meaningful life commitments through self-knowledge and sensemaking (Perry as cited in Day et al., 2012). Identity formation, moral development, and epistemic cognition are three core elements of the Day et al. (2012) integrative approach to leader development extracted from adult development theory. In addition to these three core elements, an integrative approach to leader development may include reflective discernment, critical thinking, self-awareness, self-regulation, self-efficacy, developmental readiness, developmental potential, character, expertise, mental models, and wisdom.

Leader development is a complex phenomenon that necessitates an integrative approach grounded in adult development theory. In addition, Day et al.'s (2012) insistence on an integrative approach to leader development supports the growing call (e.g., Avolio, 2007; Chemers, 2014; Forman & Ross, 2013; Goethals & Sorenson, 2007) for an integrative framework to the parent field of leadership that includes individual subjective, individual behavioral, cultural, and environmental dimensions of leadership theory.

Secondary influences on the conceptual framework included Gardner's multiple intelligences (1983, 1999), Goleman's (1995) emotional intelligence (EQ), Senge's (2006) personal mastery and mental models, and Wigglesworth's (2012) spiritual intelligence (SQ). Gardner (1983) challenged the classical view of human intelligence as solely cognitive intelligence (IQ) by arguing for "relatively autonomous human intellectual competencies" or multiple intelligences that include linguistic, musical, logical mathematical, spatial, bodily kinesthetic, and personal (intrapersonal and interpersonal) intelligences (p. 8). Gardner (1999) added naturalistic and existential intelligences to the original seven competencies. Goleman (1995), influenced by the scholarship of Gardner as well as Salovey and Mayer, proposed that EQ consisted of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. Goleman argued that EQ was as significant as IQ for leader effectiveness, work success, and life fulfillment. In addition, a person could cultivate and strengthen EQ at any age.

Personal mastery refers to a high degree of self-awareness and self-regulation. As highlighted by Senge (2006) people with personal mastery have a unique sense of purpose underlying their vision and goals. They also view current reality as a friend, not a

foe. In addition, they are able to see opportunities in current reality rather than solely as problems. They are curious and committed to incessantly seeing reality more and more clearly. They feel a sense of connection to others and life itself. Last, they understand their uniqueness and their belonging to a larger creative process, which they realize they can influence, but cannot unilaterally control.

In addition, Senge (2006) highlighted mental models as foundational to personal learning as well as personal mastery. Mental models, deeply held assumptions or beliefs a person holds about the world, influence perception and action. Maturation and personal mastery require the surfacing of mental models to make unconscious assumptions and beliefs conscious. Once conscious, individuals can evaluate the legitimacy and utility of underlying assumptions and beliefs that inform action.

Spiritual Intelligence (SQ) is the capacity to maintain equanimity regardless of internal or external circumstances and includes a sense of unity with or relatedness to life in all its diverse expressions. Wigglesworth (2012) proclaimed that SQ, along with IQ, EQ, and physical intelligence, was a foundational intelligence for living a healthy and fulfilling life in the 21st century. Wigglesworth distinguished between the self of the ego or personality from the Self of his or her divine or original nature, grounded in God, as a person understands Him/Her's/It. Wigglesworth's proclamation about the essential nature of SQ in the 21st century has profound implications for individual leaders and organizations given that the topic of spirituality is often a forbidden one in the traditional work environment.

Nature of the Study

In this study, I relied on a qualitative paradigm and a phenomenological approach to explore leaders' perceptions and lived experiences of regular mindfulness meditation in their development as leaders. This approach was appropriate because it best fulfilled the research purpose to deepen my understanding of the perceptions and lived experiences of leaders who regularly practiced mindfulness meditation (Moustakas, 1994). Data collection consisted of in-depth, open-ended interviews with organizational leaders who regularly practiced mindfulness meditation. The data analysis technique was a modification of the Stevick–Colaizzi–Keen method (SCK) of analysis outlined by Moustakas (1994; see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Modification of Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen (SCK) Method
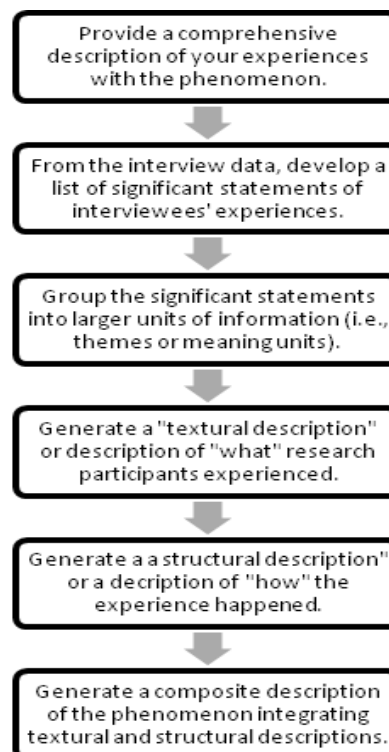
Figure 1. Modified Stevick–Colaizzi–Keen method.
Source: Adapted from *Phenomenological Research Methods,* by Moustakas, 1994, p. 121-122.

Definitions

Adult development: Adult development means the ongoing biological, cognitive, affective, valuative, behavioral, sociocultural, or spiritual development in young, middle, or late adulthood (Hoare, 2006).

Leader development: Leader development refers to the capacity of individuals to successfully fulfill leadership roles, responsibilities, and tasks, while emphasizing development of knowledge, skills, and abilities related to effective leadership (Day, 2001).

Leadership: Leadership is the outcome of reciprocal commitments, interpersonal relationships, and voluntary social processes (Day & Halpin, 2004).

Mindfulness: Mindfulness means "present-moment awareness, presence of mind, or wakefulness" (Goldstein, 2013, p. 13).

Mindfulness meditation: Mindfulness meditation refers to formal practices (breath awareness meditation or sitting meditation, walking meditation, and body scan meditation) that can enhance the capacity of mindfulness.

Assumptions

In this study, I presumed an adult development perspective that relied on the underlying assumption that human development is a lifelong process that can and does continue beyond childhood, particularly in cognitive, moral, self, and spiritual development. I assumed that research participants would authentically and thoroughly respond to the interview questions. I collected no additional data to verify their responses to the interview questions. I considered the subjective experiences of interviewees to be

valid perspectives of truth. Interviewees did not endure adverse consequences for any comments made during the meetings.

Scope and Delimitations

In this study, I addressed the gap between research and practice in how leaders perceive and experience mindfulness meditation in their development as leaders. I chose this focus because of the growing interest in and demand for effective and affordable leader development practices and the burgeoning interest in and practice of mindfulness meditation by individual manager-leaders and organizations.

The scope included open-ended, semistructured interviews with 21 persons who worked as middle or senior manager leaders and who had a regular mindfulness meditation practice as previously described. On issues of transferability, phenomenology does not allow for empirical generalizations or the establishment of functional relationships (van Manen, 1990). Nevertheless, I employed diversity as well as thick description to address issues of transferability, while also acknowledging the uniqueness embodied in phenomenological research.

Limitations

In this study, I explored leaders' perceptions and lived experiences of mindfulness meditation in their development as leaders. Consequently, I limited findings to the description of experiences of research participants. From a phenomenological and integrative perspective, the individual subjective perspective is foundational to understanding complex human and social phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994; Wilber, 2001). However, a comprehensive or integrative view of human and social phenomenon also requires an understanding of individual behavioral, cultural, and environmental

dimensions (Wilber, 2000a, 2000b, 2001). Therefore, although potentially beneficial, insights gained from the study are partial and must be understood in the context of a more holistic view of leader development and leadership.

In a qualitative phenomenological study, researchers should have a personal interest in what they seek to understand, as well as an intimate connection with the selected phenomena (Moustakas, 1994). Hence, I acknowledged having a personal interest in and personal experiences of leader development and mindfulness meditation. Therefore, I also acknowledged bias for mindfulness meditation as a potential developmental tool. However, I was aware of this bias, and the selected data analysis method, a modified version of the SCK method, helped me intentionally manage bias through its initial step (see Figure 1).

Significance of the Study

Significance to Practice

Better understanding of how leaders experience the impact of mindfulness meditation on their growth as leaders provides insight, direction, and guidance for individual leaders and organizations on practices that foster leader development. As outlined in Chapter 2, researchers have indicated the salutary effects of mindfulness meditation on healthy populations. For example, as highlighted by Gelles (2015), mindfulness meditation allows leaders to appreciate the changing nature of reality and begin to release attachment to particular perspectives and outcomes. Furthermore, regular and consistent mindfulness practice helps leaders identify and replace limiting habits by helping them recognize and embrace current strengths and weaknesses (Goldman &Schuyler, 2010).

While such findings are promising for all populations, they are particularly significant for leaders and organizations in that several capacities associated with mindfulness meditation correlate with essential competencies for 21st century leadership (e.g., perception management, self-management, and relationship management). Furthermore, findings such as the ones highlighted above are significant to the budding realm of leadership development theory.

Significance to Theory

This research is significant to theory because it helps fill the identified gap in the literature by increasing an understanding of how leaders who have a regular mindfulness meditation practice perceive its impact in their growth as leaders. As highlighted by Day et al. (2014), leadership development, to include leader development, is an active and nascent area of research and theory building that has emerged over the last 25 years.

While knowledge has increased over this period, understanding of the complex phenomenon of leader development is in its infancy, particularly as it relates to the growing interest and use of mindfulness meditation by leaders and organizations. Mindfulness meditation and other contemplative practices have minimal representation in the leadership development literature. However, leaders and organizations are turning to mindfulness practices in increasing numbers, which is significant to social change.

Significance to Social Change

Greater understanding of how leaders experience mindfulness meditation enhances an understanding of the potential of mindfulness practices for leadership development (intrapersonal and interpersonal). If, as indicated by the early exploration of mindfulness and the work environment (see Chapter 2), leaders consistently experience

more self-awareness, self-regulation, and tolerance of uncertainty from mindfulness practices, the probability for enhanced leadership effectiveness is highly favorable. Effective leadership contributes to organizations that are more effective in fulfilling their visions, missions, and strategic goals and solving humanity's most pressing global challenges.

Summary and Transition

As the pace of change and unprecedented global challenges facing organizations and humanity increases, the demand for transformational leader development also increases. The problem is that many leaders are not developmentally ready to effectively respond to the 21st-century global environment, and current approaches to leader development fall short of supporting the type of vertical learning required. The purpose of this qualitative inquiry was to understand the perceived impact mindfulness meditation had on leader development for 20 manager leaders.

In the central research question, I sought to gain insight into how leaders experienced mindfulness meditation in their growth as leaders. This research has implications for positive social change in that a better understanding of how leaders experience the impact of mindfulness meditation in their development as leaders may provide direction for individual leaders and organizations on developmental practices that support enhanced capacities. In Chapter 2, I present a review of the literature related to leader development.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

A review of the relevant literature provided a knowledge base on leader

development and an awareness of the rising interest in and practice of mindfulness

meditation by organizational leaders. However, the academic leadership literature

provided minimal coverage of this growing trend. Therefore, the need exists for

leadership scholars to better understand how leaders perceive and experience mindfulness

meditation in their evolution as leaders.

Literature Search Strategy

Leader development is a budding field of inquiry. In this literature review, I

explored the leader's developmental journey, leader development interventions,

organizational best practices, emerging trends, and leader development and mindfulness

meditation. The literature search strategy included historical and current (i.e., last 5 years)

timeframe searches of the terms *leader development, leadership development,*

mindfulness, meditation, mindfulness meditation, leadership development and

mindfulness, *leadership development and meditation*, *leadership development* and

mindfulness meditation, leader development and *mindfulness, leader development* and

meditation, and *leader development* and *mindfulness meditation*. Online research

databases used for the literature search included Business Source Complete, ABI/Inform

Complete, Emerald Management Journals, and Google Scholar.

Conceptual Framework

The primary conceptual basis for this literature review was leader development.

As highlighted by Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm, and McKee (2014),

Leadership is something that all organizations care about. But what most interests them is not which leadership theory or model is "right" (which may never be settled definitively), but how to develop leaders and leadership as effectively and efficiently as possible. (p. 79)

However, given the lack of a shared definition of leadership in the academic literature, scholars do not agree on a definition of leader development. The concept of leader development continues to receive growing attention in the leadership literature, since Day (2001) emphasized the distinctions between leader development and leadership development. Although not the first time the concept of leader development appeared in the leadership literature (e.g., Rost, 1993), Day reaffirmed that leader development refers to individual-based knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) connected to formal leadership responsibilities and functions, and leadership development is concerned with cultivating interpersonal KSAs.

Leader development definitions include various expressions of this constructive distinction. For example, Day and Harrison (2007) argued that effective leader development is primarily about the "differentiation and integration of leadership and personal experiences, values, and sense of self" (p. 366). Harms, Spain, and Hannah (2011) proposed that leader development includes "changes in the perceptions, motivations, competencies, and patterns of behavior of individuals in leadership positions" (p. 497). Van, McCauley, and Center for Creative Leadership (CCL, 2010) defined leader development, "as the expansion of a person's capacity to be effective in leadership roles and processes" (p. 45), whereas Day et al. (2012) stated that leader development includes some degree of qualitative or quantitative change.

Other scholars argued that leader development is about narrowing the gap between a person's self-identity requirements and the role of leader (e.g., Boyce, Zaccaro, & Wisecarver, 2010; Carroll & Levy, 2010). Although self-identity plays a significant role in leader development, a broader definition has greater utility. Therefore, in the practitioner literature, leader development generally refers to the growth of individuals with formal managerial positions and responsibilities (Van et al., 2010). In this study, leader development refers to the capacity of individuals to successfully fulfill leadership roles, responsibilities, and tasks, while emphasizing expansion of knowledge, skills, and abilities related to effective leadership (Day, 2001).

Despite the growing interest and attention in the leadership literature on leader development, researchers know little about what gets developed and how in leader development. Therefore, regardless of the working definition, the complex construct of leader development demands a diverse and multifaceted integrative theory (Day et al., 2012). Several critical theoretical components of an integrative theory of leader development include moral development, values-based leadership, critical thinking skills, self-awareness, identity development, skills acquisition and expertise, adult learning, and mental models (Day et al., 2012).

The inclusion of more diverse theoretical components and the more comprehensive leader development frameworks represent meaningful progress in the realm of leader development scholarship and practice. For example, O'Connell (2014) presented a broad framework of shared ideal characteristics for leader development that included (a) the ability to increase knowledge, integrate and apply that knowledge into practice, and perpetually increase skills throughout an individual's life; (b) universal

acceptance, empathy, and reverence for the diversity of the human family; (c) lifelong commitment to a purposeful and service-oriented life; (d) lifelong dedication to growth, authenticity, and integrity; and (e) an aperspectival philosophical and spiritual approach to all aspects of life.

Individual uniquenesses align with trajectories of leader development (Day, 2011). In addition, at least two fundamental assumptions underlie the leader development literature. Individuals can grow and transform, and people will do so if they have adequate resources and training (Anderson & Ackerman-Anderson, 2010). These underlying assumptions are significant to the leader development literature because they provide organizational decision makers with a rationale for investing in growth-oriented activities. In addition, these underlying assumptions have the potential to inspire individual leaders to proactively seek growth opportunities inside and outside the organization.

The leader competency model represents a dominate conceptualization of leader development (Ruderman et al., 2014; Vazirani, 2010); the concept of leader competencies is an ability or capability (Boyatzis, 2008). In practice, a growing number of organizations, for profit and not-for-profit, have some type of competency framework that identifies and describes competencies needed for effective leaders (Day et al., 2014; Ruderman et al., 2014; Vazirani, 2010). The competency movement has roots in the work of McClelland (1973), the work of the McBer consultancy firm in the 1970s, and the work of Boyatzis (all as cited in Bolden & Gosling, 2006).

With an emphasis on skills and abilities, leader competency models typically focus on instrumental or horizontal learning (Petrie, 2011; Ruderman et al., 2014) and

frequently assume a reactionary orientation (Day et al., 2004). Although informational learning has been an essential element of leader development, a growing need exists for vertical learning (Anderson & Ackerman & Anderson, 2010; Petrie, 2011, 2014, 2015; Ruderman et al., 2014). Vertical learning generally refers to stages of maturity in meaning making (Kegan & Lahey, 2009; Petrie, 2011, 2014, 2015) or perceptual shifts (Mezirow, 2000; Mezirow & Taylor, 2011). Vertical learning, grounded in adult development and personal transformation, typically assumes a proactive approach to leader maturity (Day et al., 2012; Petrie, 2011, 2014, 2015) such that an individual leader gains greater insight into underlying mental models and values.

Vertical learning frequently aligns with disorienting life events and critical reflection (Ligon & Hunter, 2010; McCauley & CCL, 2008, Mezirow, 2000; Mezirow & Taylor, 2011; Petrie, 2015). The growing interest in and emphasis on vertical learning represents another significant advancement for the field of leader development. Presently, three predominant threads in the current leader development literature include the leader's developmental journey, development interventions, and organizational best practices for leader development, each discussed below.

<div align="center">**Literature Review**</div>

The Leader's Journey

Bennis (2009) wrote, "The process of becoming a leader is much the same as becoming an integrated human being" (p. xxxii). Many factors shape leader development including life and career experiences (McCall, 2010).

Developmental experiences.

Work and career. Leadership abilities depend more on job experiences and supervisors and less on formal training (McCall, 2010). Experiences of leading and following are central to leader development (DeRue & Wellman, 2009; Petriglieri, Wood, & Petriglieri, 2011). Scholars generally categorize developmental experiences as superior relationships, early career experiences, short-term assignments, challenging assignments, various types of hardships, and various events, such as training programs (McCall, 2010).

Furthermore, leaders optimize developmental experiences by (a) using personal motivation and achievement orientation to maximize early life and career experiences; (b) cultivating personal strategies to acquire life balance; (c) committing to self-awareness and self-regulation; (d) acknowledging that a person cannot work alone, but honor an individual's strengths, and (e) adjusting a leadership style as required, while remaining true to values and principles (McDermott, Kidney, & Flood, 2011). However, many organizations continue to miss the mark in leveraging growth-oriented experiences by overemphasizing the competency approach (McCall, 2010).

DeRue and Ashford (2010) argued that practitioners and scholars should focus more on improving individual capacity to learn from developmental experiences and less on instituting the perfect systems to couple the right leader with the right growth-oriented experience. Although researchers do not agree about the influence of work and career experiences on leader development, overall, they agree with adult-development theory and the commonsensical view that although significant insight can result from a single event, growth typically occurs over the course of a leader's life as part of a continuous process.

Life. Life offers countless opportunities for learning and growth, including in the area of leader development. Evidence strongly indicates that growth experiences and the mental models that result are highly significant and demand attention from scholars and practitioners (Ligon & Hunter, 2010; Ligon, Hunter, & Mumford, 2008). Trait anxiety and openness to experience are fundamental to understanding the impact of leader development through experience (Popper & Amit, 2009). In addition, substructural differences in an individual's developmental lines affect growth as a leader (Popper & Amit, 2009).

Frequently childhood experiences provide the seeds for future leadership development to grow (Murphy & Johnson, 2011). Life experiences that demand new ways of seeing oneself and one's relationship to others and the larger world hold the most potential for learning and transformation. Furthermore, the type of life event and the tendency toward a particular leadership style correlate (Ligon et al., 2008).

From this view, the purpose of leadership education is to facilitate experiences that challenge existing ways of seeing. This model necessitates leaders reinterpret and make sense of life experiences toward more meaningful life narratives that support and accelerate leaders' development (Petriglieri et al., 2011). Accordingly, reflection and integration are essential elements of learning leadership from challenging experiences to foster greater self- and social awareness (DeRue & Ashford, 2010; Ligon & Hunter, 2011; Olivares, 2011).

However, anxiety and self-doubt, and the associated self-sabotaging actions that may occur, often arise from maladaptive interpretations of life experiences and may deter authentic engagement in growth-oriented experiences (Avolio & Hannah, 2008). Life

experiences are clearly a critical element of leader development and fertile ground for additional inquiry. In addition, although not negating the importance of support for maximizing the learning available from life experiences, as highlighted by Bennis (2009), "leaders are not born, but made, and usually self-made" (p. 35). Furthermore, only when leaders know who they are and what they deeply desire for their lives can they truly start living and leading (Bennis, 2009).

Leader self-development. Leader self-development is an important consideration in the leader-development literature. Reichard and Johnson (2011) defined leader self-development as any self-initiated action geared toward developing leadership capacities. Boyce, Zaccaro et al. (2010) added to this definition by proposing leader self-development requires the leader to initiate, continue, and assess their leadership growth in their leadership paradigms.

Leader development requires individual leaders to engage in deeper personal work, in conjunction with the acquirement of traditional KSAs; however, researchers give scant attention to self-development in the leadership literature (Petrieglieri et al., 2011). Although leaders must take responsibility for self-development in today's turbulent environment, leader development should be encouraged throughout the organization by executive leaders, supervisors, human-resources personnel, and the overall culture (Day, 2011).

Johnson (2008) concurred with this sentiment and argued that, regardless of whether an organization incorporates leader self-development into its performance-management systems, ultimately individual managers and leaders must accept responsibility for their own learning and development. This responsibility includes

seeking challenging and cross-functional experiences, asking for sincere feedback, learning how to use feedback, learning to reflect on behaviors, and altering behavior when required (Johnson, 2008).

When leader self-development becomes an element of organizational strategy, the organization enhances its collective potential for adaptability (Reichard & Johnson, 2011). Van et al. (2010), referring to the mission of the CCL, stated they approach their work from the view that leader development is ultimately self-development. Consequently, they prefer to eschew classifying leaders or nonleaders, but focus on helping people be more effective in their various leadership roles and functions. Kouzes and Posner (2007) promoted a comparable view, arguing that leader maturation and effectiveness arise from self-development and self-mastery. Similarly, Reddy and Srinivasan (2015) argued that in the end, all leadership relates to self-leadership, in that leaders have to learn how to manage themselves and grow at the levels of thinking, feeling, and action, that facilitate greater effectiveness as leaders.

Conger and Benjamin (2006) argued that personal-growth programs fall short as a mechanism for developing leaders, because they often do not mirror workplace realities, which contributes to a higher probability of learner frustration after returning to the work setting. In contrast, Van et al. (2010) argued that essential capacities for leadership effectiveness, such as intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences, are synonymous with self- or personal growth.

Despite this debate on the value of leader self-development, scholars know little about what motivates individuals to accept responsibility for their own growth (DeRue & Ashford, 2010). Individual traits influence personal motivation, which may relate to the

likelihood of leader self-development (Boyce, Zaccaro, et al., 2010); however, trait theory falls short in explaining the complex phenomena of human motivation. Therefore, although human-resource professionals happily see more manager-leaders accept greater responsibility for their maturation, others may doubt the prevalence of individual motivation to truly engage in growth-oriented activities, particularly the deeper work of vertical learning required of the 21st-century leader (Kaiser & Kaplan, 2006; Petrie, 2011).

Leaders with higher work commitments and excellence orientations exhibited greater propensity to engage in self-development activities (Boyce, Zaccaro, et al., 2010). Therefore, Boyce, Zaccaro, et al. suggested that if organizational policies or norms require managers to engage in self-development activities, they should also have systems in place to identify managers with low propensity for self-development and supply those managers with additional support and resources. Toward that end, growing demands on leaders and organizations necessitate emphasis on self-development as a complement to formal leader-development programs (Orvis & Ratwani, 2010).

Thus, although by definition, the leader initiates, completes and evaluates leader self-development in practice, growth-oriented activities vary from those that are voluntary to those organizations encourage, thereby blurring the line between voluntary and involuntary developmental programs. The thread of inquiry on self-development, including additional insights into individual motivational factors and internal schematic obstacles, holds great promise for leader-development scholarship and practice. In addition, Hannah and Avolio (2010) emphasized the essential role of developmental

readiness (DR) for individual leaders and organizations to optimize learning opportunities.

Developmental readiness. Hannah and Avolio (2010) defined DR as "the ability and motivation to attend to, make meaning of, and appropriate new leader KSAAs (knowledge, skills, abilities, and attributes) into knowledge structures along with concomitant changes in identity to employ those KSAAs" (p. 1182). Boyce, Zaccaro, et al. (2010) argued that the significance of DR is far reaching and includes the potential to provide greater insight into which individual differences accelerate leader development and offer a new approach to increasing organizational-leadership capacity. However, although few trainers would argue that attendees of leader-development programs are equally ready, they rarely assess DR (Avolio & Hannah, 2008; Hannah & Avolio, 2010; L. A. Boyce, Zaccaro, et al., 2010).

In addition, leadership-research literature underrepresents DR and how it is determined (Day, 2011). Boyce, Zaccaro, et al. (2010) considered this underrepresentation incompatible with the more than $10 billion investment on leadership development per year, with minimal data supporting effectiveness. To correct that inconsistency, the authors proposed that more leadership research focus on DR, including metacognitive capacity (i.e., the capacity to think about thinking), which supports deeper processing and interpretation of developmental experiences.

However, Avolio and Hannah (2008) proposed that the literature from clinical psychology and education provides parallel concepts for DR and openness to change. The clinical literature suggests that DR for therapy is more significant than the therapist or the therapeutic technique. The authors also highlighted past findings of longitudinal pilot

experiments centered on emerging leaders and found that learning-goal orientation, efficacy, self-concept clarity, and metacognitive capacity synergistically interacted to boost leaders' DR. Therefore, Avolio and Hannah argued that leaders, in a supportive context, with greater DR, would be more able to reflect on and interpret experiences that might stimulate and accelerate positive leader development.

In contrast, Kaiser and Kaplan (2006) wrote that *sensitivities* frequently underlie unskilled behaviors that can derail managers and their organizations. The authors defined sensitivities as "a set of emotionally charged beliefs and expectations generalized from experience that serve to protect the individual from repeating a painful injury, physical or psychological" (p. 466). Without a baseline of intrapersonal competencies to regulate the impact of one's sensitivities on perceptions, motivations, and behaviors, performance deficits repeatedly surface in every work/life setting. Thus, growth-oriented interventions often do little to address a leader's underlying intrapersonal intelligence (Kaiser & Kaplan, 2006).

Consequently, enhancing leaders' DR will better prepare them for formal and informal developmental experiences, thereby maximizing return on investment (ROI; Boyce, Zaccaro, et al., 2010). Hannah and Avolio (2010) encouraged researchers to investigate the relationship between leader DR, organizational DR, intervention success, and ROI. In addition, Avolio, Avey, and Quisenberry (2010) argued that leader-development interventions should be evidence-based and demonstrate ROI. Without such practices and substantiation in place, senior-level leaders face the prospect of viewing leader-development interventions as a cost rather than an investment with the potential for strong returns.

Leader-Development Interventions

Today, widespread leader-development interventions include action learning, challenging job assignments, computer simulations, classroom-type leadership training, as well as MSF, executive coaching, and mentoring (Avolio, 2004; Day et al., 2014; Van et al., 2010).

Multisource feedback. MSF (also called 360-degree feedback) is one of the most popular leader-development interventions and includes self-ratings and several additional ratings from various other organizational players such as one's supervisor, colleagues, and direct reports (Day et al., 2014; S. K. Johnson, Garrison, Hernez-Broome, Fleenor, & Steed, 2012). MSF received much attention in the literature, due in part to data generated from the tool and process itself (McCauley & CCL, 2008). In addition, based on the argument that leaders need behavioral feedback to identify strengths and weaknesses, feedback-based interventions have several advantages, because they assist leaders to identify and clarify strengths and weaknesses and monitor progress (Conger & Benjamin, 2006).

However, research findings indicated that MSF leads to limited change (Hezlett, 2008). Although MSF can have utility in enhancing intrapersonal competencies such as self-awareness, feedback may not lead to positive individual change (Seifert & Yukl, 2010). More than one third of feedback interventions actually decreased performance, which may be due, in part, to leaders' frequent resistance, defensiveness, or shyness to deeply listen to feedback, integrate it, and use it (Kaiser & Kaplan, 2006). Accordingly, MSF requires that the leader employee be open and receptive to feedback and view it and the process as meaningful (Day, 2001).

Leaders also need to be realistic about developmental growth in that it typically requires significant time, attention, and perseverance before changes become part of the leader's self-expression. In addition, as highlighted above (see p. 10), researchers investigated feedback-oriented interventions simplistically, without consideration for the DR of the individual leader (Avolio, 2004). Furthermore, MSF, as frequently used, only teaches leaders how to adhere to the images others may have of them (Cashman, 2008), but does not facilitate deeper self-knowledge or authenticity.

Therefore, a growing demand exists for more holistically oriented MSF tools and processes such as the Leadership Circle Profile (R. J. Anderson, 2006) and 720-degree feedback (Cashman, 2008). Anderson's Leadership Circle Profile attempted to correct the shortcomings of traditional MSF instruments by including additional creativity competencies, as well as measuring leadership behavior at varying developmental stages. Cashman's 720-degree feedback begins with an integrated self-assessment (Inside-Out) followed by a broad-based traditional MSF session (Outside-In).

As evidenced by the literature, MSF interventions play an important role in leader maturation. However, as highlighted above, they have serious limitations, particularly for issues of DR and facilitating deeper self-knowledge. Another popular intervention, mentoring, has received less attention in the leadership literature, but has demonstrated positive developmental effects for participants, leaders, and followers.

Mentoring. Along with MSF, mentoring has garnered significant research attention, with findings indicating positive developmental effects for mentees and mentors (Lester, Hannah, Harms, Vogelgesang & Avolio, 2011; Van et al, 2010). Formal mentoring programs that last at least nine months may provide a context in which diverse

mentors can offer support to protégés of differing backgrounds (Weinberg & Lankau, 2011). Psychosocial support and role modeling may impact with greater significance than career support in the experience of the mentor and of the protégé (Weinberg & Lankau, 2011).

Career stages and professional-growth needs shape the type of mentoring and its emphasis (Freedman, 2009). Effective mentoring programs must focus not only on individual performance but also on organizational performance (Freedman, 2009). Therefore, understanding what makes mentoring work as a developmental practice might be more complex than originally anticipated (Baranik, Roling, & Eby, 2010). Factors such as perceived organizational support offer significant understanding of the correlation between mentoring support and work attitudes.

However, additional questions arise regarding other possible factors at play, as well as how various forms of mentoring support might have diverse explanations for their impacts on work performance (Baranik et al., 2010). Hence, organizational decision makers must give the utmost attention to selecting organizational mentors and to the design of the overall mentoring program, which should foster perceived organizational support overall, not merely the mentor–protégé relationship.

Organizational mentorship programs do not assure positive and productive mentor–mentee relationships (Solanksy, 2010). Gentry, Weber, and Sadri (2008) found that favorable ratings of direct reports of their manager's mentoring efficacy correlated with target managers' performance, indicated by their superior's appraisal. Furthermore, organizational cultures emphasizing performance orientation see mentoring as a

favorable relationship between managers and direct reports and a factor favorably associated with manager performance, as rated by superiors (Gentry et al., 2008).

The impact mentoring has on career outcomes ranges from moderate to weak (Kammeyer-Mueller & Judge, 2008). Overall, mentoring plays an infinitesimal role in career progression and success. In contrast, executive coaching, which has captured significant attention in the professional literature, is one of the fastest growing leader-development interventions (McCauley & CCL, 2008).

Executive coaching. Factors that support favorable developmental outcomes from organization-sponsored executive coaching include the coach's role and traits, the organization's selection process for coaching participants, individuals' orientation toward the coaching process, the costs and benefits (financial and nonfinancial) of the use of internal versus external coaches, and organizational supports and obstacles for the coaching process (Carey, Philippon, & Cummings, 2011).

Coaching achieved goals in five developmental areas: employee management, management relationships, goal setting and prioritizing, work engagement and productivity, and communication (Kombarakaran, Yang, Baker, & Fernandes, 2008). Several factors impact success for coaching programs, including the selection of quality coaches, solid organizational support, manager-leader commitment to coaching, and managerial support throughout the organization. However, coaching alone may not fulfill development goals in the identified areas for all leader participants, such that organizations may need complementary interventions (Van et al., 2010).

Nevertheless, coaching relationships with rapport, mutual trust, and commitment favorably predict coaching outcomes (Boyce, Jackson, & Neal, 2010). Therefore, client–

coach alignment (i.e., managerial and learning styles and job-related credibility) influences coaching-program success. Program coordinators should strongly consider this factor when making a client–coach match and supplement it when client–coach fit is weak (Boyce, Jackson, et al., 2010). In addition, organizations may strengthen coaching programs by combining coaching with other developmental interventions, particularly as they relate to favorably impacting organizational performance (Levenson, 2009; Reddy & Srinivasan, 2015).

Accordingly, Ely et al. (2010) provided several recommendations to organizations when evaluating the effectiveness of coaching programs. First, organizations should use multisource data when evaluating coaching programs, particularly when assessing changes in leader behavior. Coaching-program outcomes should include changes in attitude, performance, and retention in the leader and the leader's direct reports. Last, coaching-program evaluation efforts should include short- and long-term outcome measures to better capture and gauge change and impact (Ely et al., 2010).

In addition to the aforementioned mixed findings associated with today's most popular leader interventions, managers/leaders increasingly cannot support the type of development demanded by their current role and responsibilities in a complex global business environment (Petrie, 2011, 2014, 2015; Ruderman et al., 2014; Weiss & Molinaro, 2010). Therefore, leader-development interventions need to be part of a more comprehensive organizational commitment to learning and development, grounded in organizational best practices.

Organizational Best Practices for Leader Development

Organizational best practices provide an evidenced-based foundation for systemwide leader-development practices, processes, and strategies. McCauley and CCL (2008) reviewed seven major leader development benchmarking and best-practice studies conducted during 1998–2008. They found several regular themes: (a) alignment with the strategic vision, mission, values, and business strategy; (b) active support and engagement of top leadership; (c) a human resources and management partnership; (d) follower development as a performance measurement; (e) full integration of leader development with other human-resources processes; (f) leader-development opportunities for employees at all organizational levels with extra attention placed on high potential; (g) use of competency models and succession planning; (h) use of multiple leader-development interventions tailored to developmental needs, and (i) evaluation of leader-development interventions.

In reviewing organizational best practices for leader development, Amagoh (2009) highlighted several of the same practices found by McCauley and CCL (2008), including the necessity for a global perspective, long-term investment orientation, and the institutionalization of a leadership-development culture. Similarly, Weiss and Molinaro (2006) urged an eight-step integrated approach to organizational-leadership development that included many of the previous best practices as well as the need to establish a holistic strategy for integrated leadership development. Furthermore, Fulmer, Stumpf, and Bleak (2009) advised senior executives that organizations cannot develop future leaders with a disjointed approach. Rather, they must use a comprehensive evidence-based approach to

leaders and leadership development that is deeply integrated into the organization's core systems, structures, strategy, and culture.

Regardless of the specific tenets, the ideal approach to organizational-leader development is to connect it to leadership development such that leadership development goes beyond but includes leader development (Day, 2001). Organizational-leadership development should extend throughout the organization and link to strategy (Day, 2001). Organizations must accept and operationalize two beliefs that support leadership development as an organization-wide systemic process (Popper, 2005). These beliefs are that leadership develops continuously throughout the entire organization, formal and informal, and leadership development must be a cultural value in action.

All organizations and industries face unprecedented challenges in preparing employees to assume future leadership roles. Therefore, they must employ specific best practices that build their leadership pipeline: (a) fully develop the mentoring network by engaging all managers in mentoring relationships with all followers; (b) engage managers in identifying high-potential employees; (c) engage managers at every phase of the leadership-development process; (d) commit to a malleable and smooth succession process, with frequent updates of high potential, that engages multiple stakeholders; (e) cultivate a leadership-development culture that reinforces managerial engagement through formal structures and process; and (f) engage in ongoing assessment of leadership-development activities that model leader-development theory and evaluate understanding, behavior, and results (Groves, 2007).

In addition, organizational practices with the most influence on successful leadership development and retention are a comprehensive development strategy, support

from senior leaders, a solid succession and talent-pool planning process, engaging senior leaders in developing junior leaders, full senior-management engagement, an adequate development budget, and comprehensive evaluation (American Management Association, 2005).

Petrie (2011) offered additional general best-practice guidelines: (a) place more attention on development, and less on content, (b) connect leader development and work, (c) establish strong development networks in the workplace, and (d) make development a life-long process, not an occasional occurrence. Thus, leader and leadership development are organizational commitments, not simple programs for which human resources holds sole responsibility (Block & Manning, 2007).

Leader self-development should be part of a systemic leadership-development organizational strategy as well (Reichard & Johnson, 2011). In addition, when organizations approach leader development in this systemic and strategic manner, they naturally cultivate adaptability and resilience (Reichard & Johnson, 2011). Similarly, whereas individual-based leader development is essential for leadership, it is inadequate in itself, because leadership necessitates that self-development be integrated and viewed in the contexts of relationships, social systems, and organizational integration, and understood in the context of others, organizational structures, and social systems (Olivares, Peterson, & Hess, 2007).

Any comprehensive theory of leader development must contain an array of diverse content that includes moral development, values-based leadership, critical-thinking skills, self-awareness, identity development, skill acquisition and expertise, adult learning, and mental models as potential theoretical components (Day et al., 2012). The

development of leaders is one of the most important development functions of an organization, directly related to sustainable success (Goldman Schuyler, 2010). However, most organizations have yet to master the art and science of leader development. Therefore, senior staff must remain open to emerging trends that might enhance mastery of leader development in scholarship and practice (Goldman Schuyler, 2010).

Emerging Trends

Related emerging trends in the leadership literature (i.e., leader-development emphasis) include focus on leader development as leader authenticity, leader spirituality, vertical leader development, and innovative leader-development methods (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009; Day, et al., 2014; Petrie, 2011; Petrie, 2014; Petrie, 2015; Roche, Haar & Luthans, 2014; Ruderman et al., 2014). Innovative leader-development methods facilitate preparation for 21st-century challenges.

Leader authenticity. Given the plethora of corporate ethical scandals in recent history, the numerous global issues that challenge humanity's collective future, and the intense pressure on leaders to gain short-term profits, organizational interest grows in conceptualizing and actualizing leader authenticity (W. L. Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, & Walumbwa, 2005). Although the concept of authenticity has roots in ancient Greek philosophy, its modern conceptualization dates to the early 20th century (W. L. Gardner et al., 2005). More recently, Guignon (2004) wrote,

> The ideal of authenticity has two components. First, the project of becoming authentic asks us to get in touch with the real self we have within, a task that is achieved primarily through introspection, self-reflection or meditation. Only if we can candidly appraise ourselves and achieve genuine self-knowledge can we

begin to realize our capacity for authentic existence. Second, this ideal calls on us to express that unique constellation of inner traits in our actions in the external world—to actually be what we are in our ways of being present in our relationships, careers, and practical activities. (pp. 3–4)

Bass and Steidlmeier coined the term *authentic leadership* (AL) in the late 1990s (as cited in Ford & Harding, 2011), when distinguishing transformational leadership from pseudotransformational leaders who misuse and abuse their power for personal gain. However, Ford and Harding (2011) argued that, informed by object-relations theory, the authentic leader is unconsciously embedded in the organization; therefore, leaders do not have access to a subjective reality. The authentic leader relates to followers as objects to be manipulated and dominated in service of the leader's and organization's values and ends (Ford & Harding, 2011).

In stark contrast, Diddams and Chang (2012) praised the concept of AL as holding immense potential for developing effective leaders committed to the service of others. In addition, the authors urged the integration of vulnerability into the conceptualization of AL, to reduce the potential for defensiveness and immature self-schemas as authenticity, which they argued would foster employee satisfaction. In addition, leader authenticity or AL fosters higher psychological capital or positive psychological health, which promotes creativity and prosocial and ethical behavior in the work setting (Hannah, Avolio, Walumbwa, & Philosophy Documentation Center, 2011; Rego, Sousa, Marques, & Cunha, 2012). Therefore, W. L. Gardner, Cogliser, Davis, and Dickens (2011) urged enhanced attention to the design and implementation of interventions aimed to cultivating authenticity in leaders as well as comprehensive

evaluations. Without such attention to design, implementation, and evaluation, the

potential of AL could significantly degrade (W. L. Gardner et al., 2011).

As a result, Algera and Lips-Wiersma (2012) warned that AL may cause leaders

to lose sight of the complexity of human authenticity, which could greatly weaken its

potential to foster ethical behavior and a sense of meaningful work. The authors proposed

that AL theorists must continue to ask questions about how leaders and organizations stay

alert to the inherent tensions of power, purpose, and time that invariably challenge

individual and collective actualization of authenticity in organizations.

Toward that end, Avolio and Gardner (2005) outlined the elements of AL

development: (a) psychological capital, (b) positive moral perspective, (c) leader self-

awareness, (d) leader self-regulation, (e) leadership behaviors, and (f) a commitment to

learning and follower development. The conceptualization of leader authenticity and the

elements of authentic leader development relate to another emerging concept in the

leader-development literature: leader spirituality.

Leader spirituality. The field of leader spirituality is in an exploratory stage with

the most comprehensive theoretical frameworks laying in the work of Fry (2003) and

Fairholm (1998, as cited in Dent, Higgins, & Wharff, 2005). Dent et al. (2005)

emphasized that leadership and spirituality are two fundamental life constructs with deep

roots in the human narrative. Therefore, better understanding of their interrelatedness has

the potential to enhance quality of life at every level of society.

Fry (2003) proposed that spiritual leadership is essential for the type of

transformation needed in the adaptive organization of the 21st century. Fry argued that

the adaptive or learning organization has the potential to be a fundamental source of

meaning and purpose, inspiring stakeholders through vision, hope, faith, love, engagement, and shared commitment. The author urged distinctions between spiritual leadership and similar constructs such as servant leadership, stewardship, emotional intelligence, and transformational leadership. Fry also urged the establishment of validity for spiritual-leadership theory prior to broad-based application as a model of professional development.

The sense of calling as part of one's work, life coupled with the desire for harmonious human relationships, is fundamental to the concept of spiritual leadership (Fry, Vitucci, & Cedillo, 2005). Spiritual-leadership theory provides a new paradigm for the field of leadership because it includes, yet extends, the promising conceptualizations of authentic and servant leadership while providing reliable and valid spiritual-leadership-theory measures and a causal model of spiritual leadership.

Gehrke (2008) found that the quality of equanimity highly correlated with spiritual leadership. However, Gehrke found minimal correlation between a broad measurement of spirituality and socially responsible values. As a result, the author proposed that the relationship between spirituality and leadership may be much more complex and granular than currently considered, with leader development and spiritual development more correlated than the literature indicates. However, the author did not propose that spiritual development results in leader development; rather, the two may synergize in a way that cultivates spiritually oriented individuals and leaders. Furthermore, Wigglesworth (2012) found a strong positive correlation between stages of adult development and SQ, which the author defined as the capacity to maintain equanimity, despite circumstances while acting with wisdom and compassion.

In contrast, Tourish and Tourish (2010), in a strong critique against spiritual leadership in organizations, argued that the concept and ideal amounts to a "Faustian pact" (p. 218) that threatens the boundaries between employees' personal and professional lives through coercive power and domination. Therefore, the authors argued that the work environment was not the place for people to find their deepest meanings. However, results from Fry, Hannah, Noel, and Walumbwa (2011) indicated that values, attitudes, and actions associated with spiritual leadership (e.g., hope, faith, and love) foster a sense of calling and belonging associated with self and other motivation. This "value congruency," in turn, the authors argued, enhanced organizational commitment, productivity, and performance (Fry et al., 2011, p. 269).

Walker and McPhail (2009) found that Hispanic American, Caucasian, Asian American, and African American male and female community college chancellors and presidents both share and differ on beliefs related to spiritually oriented leadership. Their findings indicated that all participants viewed spirituality as central to their work as leaders in the community college context. Leaders with spiritual orientations are able to neutralize the turbulence of the 21st-century community college, emphasizing values, human relationships, symbolism, and renewal.

Chaston and Lips-Wiersma (2014) acknowledged the "double-edge sword" nature of spiritual leadership with the potential for highly personal relationships and the violation of interpersonal boundaries; meaningful purpose beyond profits and unreasonable demands on employee availability and time; and the usefulness of self-reflective practices and the lack of desire and motivation for personal exposure and vulnerability.

Consequently, in response to a growing call for a more integrated approach to leadership (Avolio, 2007; Chemers, 2014; Day et al., 2012; Komives et al., 2007; Weiss & Molinaro, 2010). Rego, Cunha, & Oliveira (2008) proposed viewing spiritual-leadership theory as a holistic model of leadership that acknowledges the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of human beings. This, the authors argued, was Maslow's objective in work on eupsychian management. Maslow's ideas on self-actualization and eupsychian management required the practicing manager-leader to take the famous teaching of Socrates to "know thyself" quite seriously.

Maslow and Stephens's (2000) work invited leaders to reflect and question their deeply held views about the nature of human nature. In addition, they required leaders to make an ongoing commitment to greater self-awareness and development, not from a stance of fixing problems, but from an empowered place of yearning to express unborn potential and contribute to something greater than oneself. Maslow and Stephens's ideas also encouraged leaders to view employees as fellow human beings with needs, emotions, thoughts, potential, and dreams, like themselves.

In addition, Maslow and Stephens's (2000) ideas require a whole-person approach to management leadership in contrast to solely viewing people from a behaviorist lens of rewards and incentives. This type of whole-person approach could help alleviate the growing fatigue with competency models of leader development and their overemphasis on horizontal development, highlighted by Petrie (2011) and others (e.g., Kegan & Lahey, 2009; Ruderman et al., 2014).

Vertical development. Petrie (2011) proposed that adult-development theory might help illuminate one of the underlying causes of competency-model fatigue: the

failure to discern between horizontal and vertical development. Horizontal development is the development of new KSAs, instrumental learning and most advantageous when the problem and known solutions are straightforward. In contrast, vertical development refers to the development of *cognitive meaning structures* (Kegan & Lahey, 2009) to more inclusive and complex levels.

Leaders experience growing pressure to handle complexity, collaborate and work with diverse populations, and accept responsibility for their development (Anderson & Ackerman-Anderson, 2010; American Management Association, 2005; McCauley & CCL, 2008; Weiss & Molinaro, 2010). These demands necessitate perceptual shifts or transformation of consciousness and new areas of functional expertise (Anderson & Ackerman –Anderson, 2010; Harung, Travis, Blank, & Heaton, 2009; McCauley & CCL, 2008; Weiss & Molinaro, 2010). Consequently, Petriglieri et al. (2011) highlighted growing curiosity about andragogical approaches that extend into the domain of intrapersonal intelligence by encouraging deeper reflection on how leaders' pasts shape their current perceptions, interpretations, and behavior.

Kaiser and Kaplan (2006) emphasized the opportunity to accelerate leader development by focusing growth-oriented activities on addressing personal weaknesses or "sensitivities" that have the potential to derail managers at all levels (p. 466). Helping leaders become aware of their sensitivities requires assisting them in gaining awareness of their defensive behavior; then learning how to recognize the physiological, emotional, and mental patterns associated with it, and how to disrupt the patterns and strengthen self-regulation. Reichard and Johnson (2011) argued that cultivating positive psychological capacities such as metacognition and self-regulation, through multiple

strategies, should be a key objective for organizational training and development programs. Similarly, Karp (2013) emphasized the need for leaders to cultivate greater self-awareness and self-mastery, which facilitate improvements in overall leadership effectiveness.

Scharmer and Kaufer (2013) proposed that the leader-development work of today requires an awakened heart and a deep inner shift from resisting the old to sensing and *presencing* a possible emerging future. Scharmer and Kaufer argued that sensing and presencing from the emerging future demands a personal transformation that frees leaders from the confines of the past and opens them to an emerging future that seeks to flow through them. These types of 21st century demands place increasing pressures on today's leaders to relinquish limiting identities and instead to form more inclusive identities (Barney, Wicks, Scharmer, & Pavlovich, 2015; Day, 2011; Kegan & Lahey, 2009).

A growing body of literature proposes that self-identity has the potential to expand over one's lifetime to include a more expansive and inclusive (individual, relational, collective) identity (Kroger, 2007; Wilber, 2000a). Day et al. (2004) acknowledged that intervening on an identity level might sound extreme. However, greater self-awareness typically evolves into the capacity to comprehend more complexity, which naturally involves a transition toward a more inclusive self-identity. Similarly, Ruderman et al. (2014) urged experimentation and innovation in approaches to leader development.

Innovative leader-development methods. Given the challenges and opportunities organizations face to develop leaders prepared for the challenges of the 21st century, organizations and leaders must remain open to innovative leader-development

methods while gleaning the wisdom provided by best-practice literature. Gallo (2007) argued that the complex organizational world requires an integrated approach to nurse-leader development that includes education, MSF, coaching, action learning, and mentoring. Day et al. (2012) declared leader-development theory must be integrative and diverse and include aspects such as identity formation, self-awareness, mental models, critical thinking, and technical skills. In addition, Chemers (2014) concluded that leadership theory and practice have reached a point that necessitates a more integrative or holistic view and approach.

As an example of innovative leader-development approaches, Manderscheid and Ardichvili (2008) offered the innovative use of a structured leader-assimilation process to develop and acclimate new leaders. However, the authors cautioned that a structured approach to leader assimilation requires proper preparation that includes a full explanation of intent, process, potential risks, and outcomes. The authors relied on a five-step leader-assimilation process informed by work developed by General Electric employees Ulrich and Schiavoni in 1973. The process includes five core steps:

1. An initial meeting between the facilitator and the new leader to fully explain the process and request that the new leader invite the team to participate.

2. A specified data-collection meeting between the facilitator and the team after the leader communicates support for the process and departs.

3. A summarization of the information gathered from the team.

4. A follow-up meeting between the facilitator and the new leader to discuss the summary.

5. A meeting between the leader and the team members to discuss the findings and develop a plan of action to move forward.

Additional innovative recommendations to leader development include Hart, Conklin, and Allen's (2008) conclusion that the use of appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2001) in leader-development initiatives resulted in enhanced self-awareness, greater commitment to the development of self and followers, and commitment to serving as organizational change leaders. Polsfuss and Ardichvili (2008) urged an inside-out approach to leader development through the use of three-principle psychology, evolved from earlier conceptualizations, including psychology of mind, neocognitive psychology, and health realization.

Three-principle psychology is a psychoeducation approach to leader development (Polsfuss & Ardichvili, 2008). Leaders have a natural and abundant capacity of psychological well-being available to them; and anyone can realize and actualize this capacity and live a fuller, healthier, more balanced and equanimous life regardless of the circumstances. Some scholars urge consideration of various types of meditation techniques for leader development (e.g., Baron & Cayer, 2011; Lee, 2012; Petrie, 2015; Roche, Haar, & Luthans, 2014; Ruderman et al., 2014; Schaufenbuel, 2014).

Mindfulness Meditation

As previously highlighted, mindfulness meditation is growing in popularity in the United States among the general public as a whole, and among business leaders specifically (Boyce, 2011; Gelles, 2015; Gonzalez, 2012; Marturano, 2014; Pickert, 2014; Rauzi, 2013; Schaufenbuel, 2014; Timm, 2010). Walsh and Shapiro (2006) defined meditation as "a family of self-regulation practices that focus on training

attention and awareness in order to bring mental processes under greater voluntary control and thereby foster general mental well-being and development and/or specific capacities such as calm, clarity, and concentration" (pp. 228-229). Historically, the family of meditation techniques falls into two general categories: concentration practices and mindfulness practices (Goleman, 1972 as cited in Shapiro, 2011). The focus of this section is mindfulness meditation, whereas the emphasis of this overall inquiry is leader development and mindfulness meditation.

The most prevalent understanding of mindfulness is "present-moment awareness, presence of mind, wakefulness" (Goldstein, 2013, p.13). Consequently, mindfulness-meditation practice involves intentionally cultivating "an open, accepting, and discerning attitude" through formal or informal practices (Shapiro et al., 2009, p. 13). Formal mindfulness practices include breath-awareness meditation (also referred to as sitting meditation), walking meditation, and body-scan meditation. Informal practices include bringing one's attention to the current task (Siegel, 2010, 2014).

Although mindfulness meditation has roots in Buddhism, many Western mindfulness-based practices are secular, straightforward, and completely accessible to diverse populations (Kabat-Zinn, 2005; Shapiro et al., 2009; Siegel, 2014). In addition, although the majority of mindfulness-meditation research is clinically oriented (e.g., chronic pain, substance abuse, and anxiety), researchers increasingly attend to its health-promoting and developmental potential. For example, Jain et al. (2007) found that mindfulness meditation and stress-reduction interventions reduced negative mental states and increased positive mental states for healthy college students. The authors determined

that mindfulness meditation reduced distraction and rumination, whereas relaxation methods failed to do so.

Presently, Eastern psychology and philosophy underlie four popular secular MBIs—mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR), mindfulness-based cognitive therapy, acceptance and commitment therapy, and dialectical-behavior therapy (Brown et al., 2007; Siegel, 2014)—that accentuate experiential, meditative techniques as the principal mechanism for self-development and transformation. Other popular MBIs orient toward a synthesis of Western and Eastern psychological approaches to greater well-being.

MBIs repeatedly demonstrate positive physiological and psychological outcomes in nonclinical and clinical populations (Siegel, 2014). For example, Kemeny et al. (2012) determined that an intensive 8-week investigation of MBI modified emotional and mental states and traits related to individual well-being and social solidarity. The authors determined that the MBI also held potential to enhance positive mental states and prosocial behaviors.

Moreover, mindfulness, as measured by the Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale, benefits individual well-being, fostered through mindfulness-based practices (Shapiro, Oman, Thoresen, Plante, & Flinders, 2008). Chiesa and Serretti (2010) determined that graduates of a 10-day mindfulness meditation retreat experienced reduced stress levels for up to 3 months following the retreat. The authors also found a reduction in stress values of a group of healthy meditators, compared to a control group. However, Newberg (2011) cautioned that although mindfulness practices have the potential to facilitate perceptual shifts and enhance acceptance, self-doubt and frustration

accompanying feelings of performance anxiety might hinder possible benefits. Therefore, one must have realistic expectations and patience when starting a mindfulness-meditation practice.

Nevertheless, contemporary psychologists have adopted mindfulness as a supportive practice to enhance awareness and respond more constructively to personal and social situations (Bishop et al., 2004; Siegel, 2014). Mindfulness supported greater self-regulation and emotional well-being (Brown & Ryan, 2003). People who regularly engage in meditation consistently reported greater emotional well-being, particularly individuals who practiced more frequently at longer intervals (Keune & Perczel Forintos, 2010). Therefore, meditation, in a nonclinical setting, might support enhanced mental and emotional health (Keune & Perczel Forintos, 2010) as well as moral reasoning and decision making (Shapiro, Jazaieri, & Goldin, 2012).

Thus, although one can easily dismiss mindfulness as the latest fad in organizational development or the latest quick fix for an overly stressed society, the mounting body of scientific literature, indicating impressive benefits for clinical and healthy populations, challenges such a position (Glomb, Duffy, Bono, & Yang, 2011). Consequently, the time is appropriate to investigate the potential impact mindfulness might have on employee performance and well-being (Glomb et al., 2011).

Mindfulness, Employees, and the Work Environment

Dane (2011) concluded that mindfulness was a state of consciousness that had the potential to enhance or hinder task performance, depending on circumstances and conditions related to individual employees and their organizational environment. However, Dane and Brummel (2014) discovered a positive relationship between

workplace mindfulness and job performance and a negative relationship between

workplace mindfulness and turnover intention, but cautioned this relationship became

insignificant when they considered elements of work engagement. Moreover, findings

indicated that mindfulness practices may foster job satisfaction, help deter burnout in

emotionally demanding work environments (Hülsheger, Alberts, Feinholdt, & Lang,

2012), and support employee engagement (Leroy, Anseel, Dimitrova, & Sels, 2014).

Ismail, Coetzee, Du Toit, Rudolph, and Joubert (2013) found a negative

relationship between burnout and job satisfaction, mindfulness, and social support. Ismail

et al. also found a positive correlation between job satisfaction, social support, and

mindfulness. The authors concluded that organizations should include growth-oriented

activities focused on intrapersonal and interpersonal development to prevent burnout. Jha,

Stanley, Kiyonaga, Wong, and Gelfand (2010) found that working-memory capacity of

military personnel was enhanced by training in mindfulness practices and that those

enhancements may moderate negative moods. Jha et al. also suggested that mindfulness

training and practice may facilitate positive mood through mechanisms not yet fully

understood.

Shapiro et al. (2006) postulated "reperceiving" or perceptual shifting (i.e., vertical

development) is a metamechanism of mindfulness. Therefore, mindfulness practices may

simply foster, or, according to Wilber (2001), accelerate, the innate human capacity for

development, thereby expanding one's ability to objectively meet more of one's life

experience (Gelles, 2015; Gonzalez, 2012; Marturano, 2014; Scharmer & Kaufer, 2013;

Petrie, 2015; Wigglesworth, 2012). A growing number of leaders adopt mindfulness-

based practices, such as MBSR, as a secular and evidenced-based option for stress management and self-development.

Kabat-Zinn (1994) wrote, "Meditation is really about human development" (p. 81), whereas Day et al. (2012) declared that having a solid foundation in human development is essential to understand and intervene in leader development. This inherent synergistic dynamic between human development and leader development begs the question, "What do leadership scholars know about mindfulness meditation and leader development?"

Mindfulness Meditation and Leader Development

Currently, while practitioners garner increased interest in mindfulness meditation and leader development, scholars conduct few studies on this topic. Mindfulness meditation allows a leader to appreciate the changing nature of reality and begin to relinquish over-identification with particular views or outcomes (Gelles, 2015; Gonzalez, 2012; Marturano, 2014; Schaufenbuel, 2014). Moreover, regular and consistent mindfulness practice helps leaders identify and replace limiting habits by helping them identify and accept current strengths and weaknesses (Goldman Schuyler, 2010).

Opening up to one's daily experiences and learning to *be* offsets the persistent drive to achieve, which gives greater access to one's innate inner wisdom (M. Carroll, 2008). This opening offers leaders the opportunity to see and accept circumstances for what they are, not how they may wish them to be, before taking action (Gelles, 2015; Gonzalez, 2012; Marturano, 2014). In addition, cultivating mindfulness allows leaders to make smarter decisions, because they are more aware of their inner world and, therefore, better able to connect with others and the conditions in their environment (Boyatzis &

McKee, 2013; Scharmer & Kaufer, 2013; Wigglesworth, 2012). Whereas research on

mindfulness in the work setting is young, the evidence indicates that it may have the

potential to greatly contribute to several lines of management inquiry including leader

effectiveness (Goldman Schuyler, 2010).

Short-term workplace programs on mindfulness practices may be an effective

method for organizations to support the self-care and self-reflection necessary for

leadership effectiveness (Pipe et al., 2009). For example, mindfulness training may help

leaders develop the capacity to notice bodily sensations, thinking patterns, and behavioral

patterns. Such insights allow leaders to loosen the grip such habitual patterns have on

them and permits them to meet people and circumstances with more openness and

receptivity (Karssiens, van der Linden, Wilderom, & Furtmueller, 2014).

Roche et al. (2014) found a strong negative relationship in a diverse population of

leaders between leader mindfulness and dysfunctional mental health outcomes (e.g.,

anxiety and depression) and concluded that mindfulness and an individual's positive

psychological state of development may provide the type of psychological assets leaders

need to maintain mental wellness. Moreover, mindful leaders tend to have stronger

intrapersonal and interpersonal skills; therefore, they frequently become more effective in

fulfilling their leadership responsibilities and functions (George, as cited in Silverthorne,

2010). Consequently, Ruderman et al. (2014) concluded that mindfulness and other types

of contemplative practices offer leaders an assortment of techniques to interrupt habitual

thoughts and reactionary patterns while creating opportunities for reperceiving and

responding in ways that are more constructive. "Contrary to popular belief, cultivating

the capacity for mindfulness is not just a nice-to-have or something to be done for private

reasons: it is actually essential for sustaining good leadership" (Boyatzis & McKee, 2013, p. 140).

As Baron and Cayer (2011) cautioned, the practice of mindfulness is far from an instant remedy. Similarly, Goldman Schuyler (2010) warned that cultivating mindfulness is comparable to starting an exercise program rather than learning a particular management skill, which may explain its underrepresentation in the leader-development literature. Perhaps, as M. Carroll (2008) wrote,

> millions of people throughout history who practiced mindfulness meditation were rediscovering something about being human—something so simple and so deeply profound that it could only be understood intimately rather than scientifically; something so direct and authentic that it demands vulnerability and heart rather than ambition and achievement. (p. 3)

Summary and Conclusions

Leader development is an increasing priority for individual leaders and organizations. This literature review examined the leader-development literature and discovered major themes related to leaders' developmental journey, leader-development interventions, organizational best practices, and emerging trends.

Literature focused on a leader's developmental journey emphasized the importance of developmental experiences in work and life, self-development, and developmental readiness. The leader-development-interventions literature included an examination of an array of interventions, including the most popular and well-researched interventions, MSF, mentoring, and coaching. Interventions vary in the degree of

supporting evidence they engendered to support efficacy as a leader-development method.

The organizational best-practice literature emphasized leader-development practices such as a critical need for strategic and organizational alignment, engagement of senior leadership, a system-wide approach, and evaluation. Emerging trends in the leader-development literature included growing emphasis on leader authenticity, spirituality, vertical development, and innovative development practices. Consequently, scholars know a great deal about the complex phenomenon of leader development. However, scholars know little about *what* truly develops and *how* in the realm of leader development, particularly in vertical learning.

In addition, this literature review revealed growing interest in and evidence for the use of mindfulness meditation as a developmental tool among individual leaders and organizations. However, presently, minimal research on the topic of mindfulness meditation and leader development exists. Therefore, leadership scholars have nominal understanding of how a growing body of leaders experience mindfulness meditation on their development as leaders. Given this gap in the literature, this research focused on leaders' lived experience of mindfulness meditation on their development as leaders.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to understand the perceived impact mindfulness meditation had on leader development for 20 manager leaders who had a regular (at least 3 days a week) mindfulness meditation practice for at least 3 months. In this chapter, I present the research design and the rationale for choosing it. In addition, in this chapter, I describe the role of the researcher and the methodology, including a description of the participant population, the sampling strategy, and participant selection criteria. This chapter also includes explanations of the data collection instrument, procedures for participant recruitment, how I collected and analyzed the data, issues of trustworthiness, and ethical issues.

Research Design and Rationale

The central research question associated with this inquiry was the following: How do leaders perceive and describe their experiences of the impact of mindfulness meditation on their development as leaders? The primary data collection method to answer this inquiry was open-ended interviewing (see Appendix A). Open-ended interviewing was most appropriate because I sought to understand the perceptions and lived experience of organizational leaders who regularly practice mindfulness meditation (Giorgi, 2009; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002).

The central concept for this inquiry was leader development. Leader development refers to the capacity of individuals to successfully fulfill leadership roles, responsibilities, and tasks, while emphasizing the development of knowledge, skills, and abilities related to effective leadership (Day, 2001). The central phenomenon was

mindfulness meditation. The most prevalent understanding of mindfulness is, "present-moment awareness, presence of mind, wakefulness" (Goldstein, 2013, p. 13).

In this study, I used a qualitative phenomenological method to explore leaders' perceptions and lived experiences of regular mindfulness meditation in their development as leaders. The term phenomenology aligns with a qualitative research method and the 20th century philosophical movement in which it arose. As a research method, the term refers to the investigation of the meaning of first person experience or subjective consciousness (Grossman, 1995; Patton, 2002). The word phenomenon has roots in the Greek word, *phaenesthai*, which means to reveal itself or to appear (Moustakas, 1994). The fundamental question of phenomenological inquiry is "What is the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience of this phenomenon for this person or group of people?" (Patton, 2002, p. 104). Hence, the researcher constructs a description of the essence of a select human experience (Moustakas, 1994).

The origins of phenomenology, the philosophical movement, and the research method lie in the work of German philosopher Husserl (1859–1938; Moran, 2000). Influenced by teacher and mentor Brentano (1838–1917), Husserl believed science had to move beyond its sole focus on the physical world and explore the inner world of human experience to fulfill its potential as a discipline (Moran, 2000). Thus, Husserl was deeply interested in revealing meanings and essences in human knowledge (Moustakas, 1994). However, despite roots in Husserl's work, the phenomenological movement includes the work of several diverse and innovative thinkers, including Heidegger (1889–1976; Moran, 2000).

After the publication of Heidegger's seminal work in 1927, scholars recognized Heidegger as the co-originator of the phenomenological movement (Moran, 2000). However, Heidegger offered an alternative version of phenomenology to that of Husserl, emphasizing questions of being (i.e., ontology) over consciousness (Solomon, 2000). Heidegger also rejected the concept of *epoch* (bracketing or suspending a person's preconceived notions about a select phenomenon) and replaced it with the concept of *existenz,* describing the project of finding the essential human structures of being in the world or *Daesin* (Solomon, 2000).

Additional contributors to phenomenology included Scheler, Gadamer, Arendt, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty (Moran, 2000). Despite the diversity among these thinkers and others who make up the phenomenological movement, the most significant contribution of phenomenology continues to lie in its unapologetic stance for the necessity of the subjective view for the true understanding of the nature of knowledge (Moran, 2000). Consequently, phenomenological research begins and ends with lived experience and its ultimate aim "is to transform lived experience into a textural expression of its essence" (van Manen, 1990, p. 36). A phenomenological approach was appropriate for this project because it best fulfilled the research purpose to deepen the understanding of the subjective experience of leaders who regularly practice mindfulness meditation (Moustakas, 1994).

Role of the Researcher

As the researcher of this qualitative exploration, I fulfilled the role of interviewer by engaging in open-ended interviews with select participants (see Appendix A). Open-ended interviewing was most appropriate for data collection because I sought insight to

the lived experiences of organizational leaders who practiced mindfulness meditation (Giorgi, 2009). In a qualitative, phenomenological exploration, researchers should have a personal interest in what they seek to understand, as well as an intimate connection with the select phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). Therefore, I acknowledged having a personal interest and personal experience in both leader development and mindfulness meditation.

I also acknowledged bias for mindfulness meditation as a potential developmental tool. I was aware of this bias and with the selected data analysis method, a modified version of the SCK method (see Figure 1), I intentionally managed bias in its initial step: to describe a personal experience with the phenomenon under exploration to bracket or set it aside to meet the interviewee with openness and freshness. This research did not take place in my work environment. In addition, there were no other conflicts of interest or power differentials.

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

The sampling population for this qualitative exploration consisted of adults who served as organizational leaders—middle and senior managers—who had a regular mindfulness practice. The sampling strategy for this qualitative, phenomenological exploration included criterion sampling of participants who met the predefined criterion of importance (Patton, 2002): a person who worked in a manager leader position in an organization (middle or senior management) who had a regular (at least 3 days a week) mindfulness meditation practice for at least 3 months. My sampling strategy included recruiting potential participants using professionally oriented mindfulness groups on the social networking site, LinkedIn.

Once I secured approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB), I posted a recruitment announcement (see Appendix C) on the five largest mindfulness-oriented professional groups on LinkedIn. The announcement included my contact information and the URL to the designated website (http://www.dafrizzell.com). In addition, I used LinkedIn to identify members of the five largest mindfulness-oriented professional groups who worked as manager leaders and sent short individualized recruitment announcements (see Appendix D) to approximately 75 members of these groups. This method resulted in a potential pool of 28 participants. I contacted potential participants by e-mail and set up an initial introductory telephone meeting. In the introductory telephone meeting, I confirmed the fulfillment of the criterion and briefly reviewed the research purpose, research protocols and processes, and expectations. I invited potential participants to ask questions before concluding the introductory telephone call.

From this initial pool, I selected a sample of 21 (Note: One participant transcript was not included in the final analysis due to a discrepant factor. Please see Chapter 4 for more detail) people who met the criterion, with the intention of diversifying the sample population to include an equal number of male and female participants. Upon selecting participants, I wrote follow-up e-mails to participants selected and not selected to coordinate next steps and thank them all for speaking with me. In qualitative phenomenological research, the sample size ranges considerably; however, 20 to 30 participants is typically appropriate to reach saturation, given the in-depth nature of the approach (Polkinghorne, 1989), which held true for my final sample size of 20 participants.

Instrumentation

The data collection instrument I used for this qualitative inquiry was in-depth, open-ended interviews: one extended interview session per participant. I conducted interviews in person, by telephone, or by Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP; e.g., Skype). I used two digital audio recorders to record all the interviews (see Appendix A for the interview protocol).

Responses to the interview protocol provided sufficient data to answer the central research question associated with this qualitative study: How do leaders perceive and describe their experiences of the impact of mindfulness meditation on their development as leaders? However, I optimized emergent opportunities for appropriate follow-up questions that further illuminated leaders' lived experiences of mindfulness meditation on their development as leaders.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

As the researcher, I interviewed each participant at a mutually agreeable time and location conducive to respectful interviewing and audio recording. I held the majority of interviews through Skype, a telecommunications application software product that specializes in Internet video calls. Interviews lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes. I secured informed consent from all participants.

Participants exited the study in one of a few ways, depending on whether they were invited to participate in the research and if so, how that individual participation unfolded. For example, upon concluding the initial screening meeting with potential participants, I thanked them all, then scheduled interviews with the ones that met eligibility and released potential participants that did not meet the selection criterion.

Active coresearchers who completed the full interview process exited after all interviews were complete, transcribed, and verified for accuracy.

After completing the interview process and transcription of data, I sent a thank-you letter (see Appendix B) by e-mail to each coresearcher, along with the applicable interview transcript and a request for accuracy verification. After the publication of my dissertation on ProQuest, I will e-mail participants to inform them of our accomplishment, thank them again, and offer them an electronic version of the document, if desired.

Data-Analysis Plan

Responses to interview questions illuminated the central research question: How do leaders perceive and describe their experiences of the impact of mindfulness meditation on their development as leaders? I used a modified SCK method of analysis (Moustakas, 1994; see Figure 1) for the phenomenological data. In using the SCK method, I clustered significant statements taken from transcribed interviews into larger coding themes.

Further analysis of the data included generating a textural (i.e., "what" they experienced) description and structural description (i.e., "how" they experienced) from the transcripts, and included verbatim examples. In addition, I generated a composite description of the leaders' experiences of mindfulness meditation that integrated the textural and structural descriptions. The primary software used for the analysis was Word. However, given the nature of the phenomenological research method, to identify the essence or the intersubjective reality of the lived experience, I filtered out one discrepant case (see Chapter 4 for further information).

Issues of Trustworthiness

Credibility

According to Moustakas (1994), "In accordance with phenomenological principles, scientific investigation is valid when knowledge sought is arrived at through descriptions that make possible an understanding of the meanings and essences of experience" (p. 84). Consequently, I addressed creditability or internal validity by strictly following the SCK method of data analysis for phenomenological research. In addition, I used member transcription verification and reflexivity.

Transferability

For external validity or transferability, van Manen (1990) cautioned, "Phenomenology does not allow for empirical generalizations, the production of law-like statements, or the establishment of functional relationships" (p. 22). Nevertheless, I employed diversity, as well as thick description, to honor the intention of external validity while also acknowledging the uniqueness embodied in the phenomenological approach.

Dependability

To ensure dependability, I adhered to Walden University's quality standards and guidelines. In addition, I engaged with my dissertation committee and incorporated recommendations and suggestions, particularly for issues of trustworthiness and ethical procedures.

Confirmability

For confirmability, the SCK method honored the core concept of *bracketing* (suspending one's preconceived notions about a select phenomenon) as essential to

phenomenological research (see Figure 1). This fundamental element of

phenomenological research is inherently reflexive, thereby fulfilling the standard of

confirmability.

Ethical Procedures

To adhere to the ethical principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice

(Walden University, 2010), I secured IRB approval (#01-09-15-0236156). I presented

material to potential participants by inviting them to participate in a voluntary interview-

based research project on leader development and mindfulness meditation. The

recruitment material (see Appendices C–F) outlined the structure of the interview

sessions and informed potential participants that interviews would be digitally recorded.

In addition, the recruitment material included a brief explanation of the research

purposes, including the purpose of fulfilling the requirements of my doctoral dissertation.

Furthermore, the recruitment material included my short, professional biography and a

link to my public LinkedIn professional profile.

When following up with potential research participants, I sent them an overview

and participant-consent form (see Appendix G) that included a succinct but thorough

overview of the research. The research overview contained material that outlined the

procedures, an invitation to partake in a voluntary study, and a consent form. In addition,

I reviewed all pertinent details covered in the overview packet with each interviewee

prior to the initial interview session, which included an opportunity for them to ask

clarifying questions and complete a participant-information sheet (see Appendix H).

I treated all research participants with respect and dignity and in full compliance

with IRB standards throughout the entire research process. I included no vulnerable

populations, as defined by the IRB standards, directly for this research. Furthermore, each research participant received and signed an informed-consent form (see Appendix G) that adhered to IRB standards. In addition, the consent form included my contact information with telephone and e-mail options. I reviewed the consent form with the participant, prior to the full-interview session. Furthermore, participants had the opportunity to review transcribed interviews intended for publication, at which time they were given the opportunity to clarify or correct the interview data, as well as withdraw material from their interview transcript.

In addition, to protect the confidentiality of participants, I did not include names on transcripts. Transcripts are in my possession, and transcription files are password protected. In addition, digital audio files are in my possession and password protected. Consent forms and participant-information sheets will remain in a locked storage box for 5 years, after which time they will be destroyed. Furthermore, the consent form included the section, "Dissemination," which outlined potential future uses of the interview data, including conference presentations, articles, and books.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to understand the perceived impact mindfulness meditation has on leader development. The qualitative phenomenological-research paradigm is the optimal research design to investigate the subjective experience of persons who have lived experiences in the phenomenon under exploration (Giorgi, 2009; Moustakas, 1994). As described throughout Chapter 3, the participant population was the manager-leader who had a regular mindfulness meditation practice.

The role of the researcher for this qualitative phenomenological study was that of the interviewer. The primary recruitment strategy was targeted outreach through five organizations with professional mindfulness-oriented groups on LinkedIn. The data-collection instrument was in-depth, open-ended interviewing and the data-analysis method was a modified version of the SCK method of analysis (Moustakas, 1994; see Figure 1) of phenomenological data.

In addition, I was deeply committed to fulfilling issues of trustworthiness and ethical integrity. Therefore, these issues received significant attention and due diligence in adherence to standards associated with IRB approval. In the next chapter, Chapter 4, I present the qualitative results and evidence of trustworthiness.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study was to understand the perceived impact mindfulness meditation had on leader development for 20 middle- to senior-level manager leaders who had a regular mindfulness meditation practice. The central research question associated with this inquiry was the following: How do leaders perceive and describe their experiences of the impact of mindfulness meditation on their development as leaders? In this chapter, I present the study setting, participant demographics, data collection method, data analysis technique, evidence of trustworthiness, results, and a summary.

Research Setting

The sampling strategy was purposeful criterion sampling. Therefore, although the sample was diverse, all interviewees worked in manager leader positions with organizations (middle or senior management) and had regular mindfulness meditation practices. The shared setting or context of the participants, derived from the structural description included life and relationships in general; organizational life; change (personal and organizational); work relationships; high stress, high demand, and turbulent work environments; time and task pressures; interpersonal conflicts; challenging interactions with stakeholders; high-stake communications; periods of struggle; and constant incoming work and deadlines (see Table 2).

Demographics

Twenty one manager leaders who met sample criterion (see p. 58) engaged in this study. However, due to a discrepant factor, I dropped one participant from the analysis and demographic summary (see Data Collection section below). The sample consisted of

13 males and seven females. Two manager leaders were 30-39 years of age, six were 40-49 years of age, eight were 50-59 years of age, and four were 60-69 years of age. Ten manager leaders held middle management positions and 10 held senior management positions. Four interviewees had less than 4 years in management, three had 6 to 10 years, one had 11-15 years, five had 16-20 years, and seven had over 20 years in management. Eleven manager leaders worked in the for-profit sector, eight worked in the nonprofit sector, and one worked in the public sector. One manager leader had 3-12 months of mindfulness practice, seven had 13-36 months of practice, four had 37-72 months of practice, one had 73 months to 10 years of practice, and seven had over 10 years of mindfulness practice (see Table 1).

Table 1

Demographic Data

Demographic category	Year
Gender	
Male	13
Female	7
Age	
30–39	2
40–49	6
50–59	8
60–69	4
Position	
Middle management	10
Senior management	10
Years in management positions	
<5	4
6–10	3
11–15	1
16–20	5
more than 20	7
Sector	
For profit	11
Not-for-profit	8
Public	1
Years of mindfulness practice	
3–12 months	1
13–36 months	7
37–72 months	4
73 months–10 years	1
more than 10 years	7

Data Collection

Twenty one manager leaders engaged in single in-depth interviews, which

allowed for saturation. After initial, brief telephone meetings and collection of informed

consent forms, I conducted interviews either in-person (one session), by telephone (two

sessions), or by Skype (16 sessions and Go-To-meeting, one session). The duration of the

interviews ranged from 35 to 60 minutes. I recorded all interviews using two digital audio

recorders.

Although I implemented the data collection plan presented, I made minor

variations to adjust for real-time learning. For example, in addition to posting the

recruitment announcement to the five largest mindfulness groups on LinkedIn, I also used

LinkedIn to send recruitment announcements (see Appendix D) to individual group

members, primarily an MBSR graduate group. In addition, I posted recruitment

announcements with related professional discussion groups, Academy of Management,

Management Education and Development; Academy of Management, Organizational

Development and Change; and the Association for Contemplative Minds in Higher

Education.

Data Analysis

I used a modified SCK method of analysis (Moustakas, 1994; see Figure 1) of

phenomenological data to move inductively from significant statements to 15 themes:

(a) enhanced self-awareness, (b) greater self-regulation, (c) more tolerance for ambiguity,

(d) more integrated/balanced leadership, (e) motivated by a personal/professional crisis,

(f) deeper listening and being present, (g) greater self/other empathy and compassion,

(h) improved work relationships, (i) greater inner calm and peace, (j) enhanced focus,

insight and wisdom, (k) commitment to the practice, (l) organizational life and mindfulness, (m) personal transformation, and (n) less self-centeredness.

Textural and structural descriptions were generated for each of the 15 themes, then analyzed for unique participants and total related words (see Table 3). Subsequently, themes with more than 10 unique coresearchers were identified, which resulted in 10 final themes. Finally, composite descriptions were generated for each of the 10 final themes (see Table 2).

To remain open to possible emerging opportunities, I interviewed one manager leader who had a mindfulness-oriented practice rooted in the Christian contemplative tradition, known as centering prayer. However, all other interviewees had a secular-oriented practice, primarily MBSR, a Buddhist-oriented practice, or a combination of the two. Therefore, I filtered out this one discrepant case and did not include it in the demographic summary or data analysis.

Table 2

Final Themes with Structural Elements

Themes	Structural Elements
Integrated/Balanced Leadership	Organizational life. All work relationships, particularly with direct reports. Stressful situations. Busy work life.
Greater Self-Regulation	Life and organizational life. Managing depression and anxiety with and without medication. Interpersonal conflict. Difficult and highly emotional communication. Work stress. Working with and in bureaucratic systems.
Commitment to the Practice	Not tapping into community support. Retreats, MBSR teacher's practicum. Chaotic work days. Set time for practice in the morning. Supportive life practices—inspirational reading, yoga, time in nature, regular check-ins throughout the day. Meditation retreats. Interactions with colleagues and patients. Setting up a routine. Keeping a group practice. Integrating into life—commute.
Enhanced Self-Awareness	Life and work work/organization. Meetings. Phone call or other work situations. Coworkers. Stress & relationships. Engaging with coworkers and students. Retreat setting. Conflictual situations. Physical manifestations and sensations. Mindfulness experiments. Physical sensations. MBSR class. Difficult tasks, activities, and projects. New position in the company. Work with kids.
Improved Work Relationships	All work relationships: interpersonal, team, group, coworkers, direct report, and superiors.
Greater Inner Calm and Peace	Work relationships. Other life choices (how to spend time, organize schedule, and prioritize sleep). Work projects. Change. Turbulent work conditions. Opportunities and solutions. Improved performance as a leader. Crazy work environment. Downsizing and reorganization. Increased responsibility. Supportive life choices—exercise. Better physical health. Illness and death of spouse. Positive lifestyle changes. Better communication. High-stress work environment.
Greater Self/Other Empathy and Compassion	Work relationships—all. Meetings. Self and others' shortcomings and mistakes. Realization of a bigger picture.
Deeper Listening and Being Present	Work environment. Relationships. Difficult and emotional losses (death of grandmother) for direct report. Meetings. Interviews with approx 50% of employees. Busy schedules, high-stress environment. Interactions with coworkers. Slowing down and being there for students.. Talking less, listening more. Difficult conversations with direct reports. Interactions with employees and vendors. Not reacting. Less reactive. More silence. Work drama. Visiting each staff personal daily and checking in. Better relationships. Less concern and action for promotion or advancement. More coworkers seeking guidance. Culturally diverse work environment.
Motivated by a Personal/ Professional Crisis	Depression and anxiety. MBSR Class. Overwhelming emotions. Struggling at work and in life. Retreats. Crisis. Mindfulness Courses. Crisis. Difficult time in life. Up against the wall. Craziness in the world. Wife's illness and death. Loss of father when teenager. ADHD.
Greater Tolerance for Ambiguity	Organizational life. Work relationships. High demands, change, reorganizations, stressful situations and pressure.

Note. MBSR = mindfulness-based stress reduction; ADHD = attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

To ensure credibility and adherence to the ethical principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice (Walden University, 2010), I secured IRB approval on January 6, 2015 and maintained integrity of IRB guidelines throughout the process. In addition, I followed the SCK method of data analysis for described in Chapter 3 and used member transcription verification and reflexivity.

Transferability

As outlined in Chapter 3, I employed diversity and thick descriptions to ensure transferability. Sample diversity included balanced representative of interviewees by gender, age, position, years in management, employment sector, and years of mindfulness practice. Thick descriptions entailed use of multiple reviews of interview data, audio and written, as well as multiple paragraph contextualization to ensure integrity and transferability.

Dependability

To ensure dependability, I adhered to Walden University's quality standards and guidelines. In addition, I actively engaged with my dissertation committee throughout the process and incorporated recommendations and suggestions, particularly for issues of trustworthiness and ethical procedures. In addition, as previously highlighted, I adhered to the SCK method of data analysis as well as member transcript verification.

Confirmability

For confirmability, the SCK method honored the core concept of *bracketing* as essential to phenomenological research (see Figure 1). This essential element of

phenomenological research is inherently reflexive, thereby fulfilling the standard of confirmability. The bracketing process included an initial self-interview along with data analysis to surface themes associated with my developmental experiences of mindfulness meditation. Consequently, bracketing and reflexivity allowed for surfacing potential preconceptions while processing interview data with deep listening and fresh seeing.

Study Results

From 20 verbatim transcripts, I extracted approximately 404 significant statements. Arranging significant statements resulted in 15 working themes. Analyzing themes for unique theme representation and words dedicated to each theme resulted in 10 final themes (see Table 3). Themes with 10 or fewer total unique coresearchers were dropped from further analysis. Table 2 includes the 10 final themes along with corresponding structural elements elucidated from the structural description, Step 5 of the SCK data analysis method.

Table 3

Final Themes With Unique Participants and Total Related Words

Theme	Total unique participants ($N = 20$)	Total words related to theme
More Integrated/Balanced Leadership	18	5794
Greater Self-Regulation	17	6585
Commitment to the Practice	17	4259
Enhanced Self-Awareness	17	7199
Improved Work Relationships	16	5233
Greater Inner Calm and Peace	14	3442
Greater Self/Other Empathy and Compassion	14	3664
Deeper Listening and Being Present	12	3574
Motivated by a Personal/Professional Crisis	11	1495
More Tolerance for Ambiguity and Uncertainty	11	3594

Theme 1: More Integrated and Balanced Leadership

Through the context of organizational life in work relationships, particularly with direct reports, stressful situations, and high demands, 18 of 20 leaders experienced more integration or balance in their approach to leadership as a result of their mindfulness practice. Below are supporting quotations from coresearchers.

> And you know, I feel like I work hard, I am responsible. There are times when I say, 'okay, that is enough for today, shut the computer the off because now I need my other time. If I don't have that, tomorrow is not going to be [a] great day because I am going to be tired or whatever.' So having that wisdom to do that, which I could not do before. I would not turn it off. I had to get everything done. (Female small-business owner and former senior healthcare executive)

I think probably my initial thought is that with the practice you realize you are not

the Lone Ranger. You are a part of a group at work and a part of a team. If you

think in terms of Peter Carroll, the coach of the Seattle Seahawks, he has a

metaphor he uses for the 12 players--that it's one heartbeat. And I think

mindfulness gives you a perspective that you are just one part of a much larger

picture, group, whatever your image is. And you have a part to play. You don't

need to be the star of the show, you don't need to be the head of the class, the

front of the table, it's not about achieving something. It's about harmony with the

other people in the team to allow the whole team to act in a unified way. (Male

senior manager with a Canadian healthcare facility)

Oh, I think I am a much better manager than I was 3 years ago. Much better. I

think that I manage with an iron hand and that it particularly, well, it's almost the

Hillary thing. You know, if you're a man you're a strong leader, if you're a

woman you're a bitch. And I always felt like I needed to be tougher, I needed to

be, you know, I needed to be tougher. And I don't need to be tougher. (female

senior executive and business owner)

The other thing I didn't mention was it has allowed me to be more vulnerable

around the people that I lead. And not, I don't know that I really started to explore

vulnerability directly from the meditation, but I don't think I would have been

able to explore it and practice it if I didn't have my meditation practice. And, then

they [employees] see you as more of a person too, more of a well-rounded person,

as opposed to just this image of boss or whatever. (Male senior executive and

business owner)

 [Mindfulness practice] allows me a lot greater awareness of umm--feelings and

emotions that others are exhibiting as well because I'm open—I am not so

focused on the outcome. I am focused on the process and that is a shift. It is not

about outcome all the time. Umm--so there is a greater sense of satisfaction

around that. (Female senior manager in the information-technology industry)

Thus, more integrated or balanced leadership style represented the first and most

represented theme followed by greater self-regulation.

Theme 2: Greater Self-Regulation

In and through the context of life in general and organizational life specifically,

situations such as managing depression and anxiety without medication, interpersonal

conflict, difficult and highly emotional communications, work stress and demands, and

working with and in bureaucratic systems 17 of 20 leaders experienced greater self-

regulation from their mindfulness practice.

So mindfulness training itself, it--so paying attention to what's happening in the

moment, allows me to be, you know, to be nonreactive in situations, in

challenging situations, that anybody that's worked especially in any sort of

leadership position, [has] happen. And that reactivity is-- I think [is] a huge

obstacle in dealing with other people in general. (Male middle manager and

scientist)

Let me speak on it (the topic) based on what I told you [were] the reasons why I originally went into it (mindfulness training and practice), for my wife being ill and me being able to be present. So what I feel [is] one of the major things that it does for me [is] that it allows me to connect to the moment, so I don't overreact and I don't underreact and I see things or I'm able to see things moment by moment. (Male senior manager and administrator in higher education)

There are good people in my organization who previously knew that I was such a fire-brain and that they could stoke the embers to get a response. And they would do that quite often, and I would usually have these reactions just 'cause they knew they were going to happen. But now through the mindful practice I'm aware of who I am and what responses I'm having to any situations. And I've been far more mindful of what's going on and can temper those responses right down or be far more appropriate or yeah, appropriate in my response in the way that I'm acting and behaving towards others. (Male middle manager with a New Zealand educational institution)

A middle manager in the UK retail industry remarked, "I consider what I say and how I say it to a much more balanced way." Similarly, 17 of 20 leaders experienced greater self-regulation from their mindfulness practice.

Theme 3: Commitment to the Practice

The continued cultivation of mindfulness through a regular and consistent formal practice, informal practices (e.g., mindful eating), periodic retreats, being part of a

mindfulness-oriented group or community, and other supportive practices such as exercise and inspirational reading were stated commitments expressed by 17 of the 20 leaders interviewed.

> I would say that I've been pretty consistent (with my practice), but there have been times where life has been crazy busy, or I haven't had that community support or tapped into it, and have sort of drifted away. But, I always come back to it. I never take more than a couple of months off. And try to incorporate it in, as I said, everything I do, but really try and sit down and have a formal sitting practice every day, even if it's just for 5 minutes. (Female middle manager and researcher)

> I mean truly, I think there is an aspect of kind of like no turning back. I'm not going to go back to—no matter how hard the practice is or how hard it is to be very aware, I know the sort of pain and the feeling of loss and how difficult it is for the alternative, to kind of just rest in our comfort zones and not examine the way we do things. (Male middle manager in the health and wellness industry)

> You know, it's a difficult thing. It takes time, and for me it has to become a habit. I have to try and do it at the same time. I am—my goal for myself is at least 5 mornings a week. I don't always achieve that goal but I generally try. What I found was I had all sorts of excuses for myself if I didn't, if I left it too far along in my day. So now, I was getting up at 6:40 every morning, I mean 6:10 every morning, and now I get up at 5:40 every morning, because there are no other

demands on my time at that hour. That's when I try to do it. (Male senior

executive and business owner in the healthcare industry)

Likewise, this type of commitment to the practice was a theme for 17 of 20

interviewees.

Theme 4: Enhanced Self-Awareness

Through the context of organizational life that includes meetings, conversations

with coworkers at every level, interactions with other stakeholders, interpersonal

conflicts, new jobs and positions in the company, difficult and stressful tasks and

timelines, 17 of 20 leaders experienced enhanced self-awareness as a developmental

result of their mindfulness practice.

I think with this practice you become more aware of things that really matter to

you about decisions being made and you speak your truth about it, even if you're

in disagreement with other people. But because you're doing it in the context of

having the mindfulness practice, you're doing it in a very calm, deliberate way.

So it's not that you're getting angry or you want to create an argument with

somebody or something, it's just a very calm disagreement that you express and

really raise awareness around something else that's more important to you. (Male

senior executive for a Canadian hospital)

So, it has helped me to notice how I am in relationship and how I come across. It

has helped me to continue to refine how I am with others so that I can work better

with people. It has helped me to manage conflict with people when there is

conflict, better. It's helped me to just kind of have a better sense of my strengths and weaknesses and how to bring that into meetings and working with the team. (Female middle manager in the personal-development industry)

I think another piece that I just thought of is I think I have greater emotional elasticity as a leader because of mindfulness. What I mean by that is I'm more aware now of things that are tweaking me and in the awareness of that, I'm more apt to take a step backwards if I'm kind of feeling out of sorts or something is frustrating or I was caught off-guard or surprised by something. Or on the positive end, being aware of, oh my gosh, wow she—almost everybody who reports to me is a she, so I have two guys out of my 23 people that report, but usually it's a she who I get really kind of energized by if I'm hearing something that is kind of a moment of breakthrough for them or insight or just something they've done that wow, I want to celebrate that, that was awesome, that was great. So I think that emotional elasticity has come to me from mindfulness. (Male middle manager in the healthcare industry)

Similarly, 17 of 20 leaders experienced enhanced self-awareness as a developmental result of their mindfulness practice.

Theme 5: Improved Work Relationships

Through the context of work relationships—interpersonal, team, group, coworkers, direct report, superiors, and other stakeholders—16 of 20 leaders experienced improved work relationships as a developmental result of their mindfulness practice.

Sitting helps me slow down, and I think it has helped me—um--in all my

interactions with coworkers, um, so that you don't have, you know, if you feel

irritation you feel it first before you react and, ah um, you know, you--if you feel

anger, you feel that too, before you react. So, it kind of--I guess for me, it's

slowed me down enough to, um, to make those kind of more difficult

relationships better or more positive. (Female middle manager in higher

education)

So I think that's, I don't know how to quite encapsulate that, but I think maybe

remembering a bigger context of my relationship with the direct report and never

just being too goal-oriented to remember that there's a relationship happening as

well. (Female middle manager and technical writer)

So the relationships become more collaborative. I think that invitations to be

participating in things tend to increase because people see you as telling it like it

is but doing it in a way that's not combative. So I think you'd have to look at each

individual relationship, but I think that the relationships tend to grow. (Male

senior manager with a Canadian-based hospital)

 So it has switched. It has changed a lot of things. I think even with my

relationships with people. So, letting go of the blame and how things should be

done and really saying, 'how can we work together? We all want the same thing?'

So, I think I am a little--much more compassionate type of leader now than I was

before just because of my own understanding of myself. (Female business owner

and former senior healthcare executive)

A male middle manager in the health and wellness industry explained, "But what

the practice actually taught me was the importance of interconnection and the power of

connecting with other people" and a male middle manager and scientist stated,

"Relationships become much more pleasant [laughs] and--yes, very pleasant and actually

also more productive, I think."

A male middle manager in the UK retail industry stated, "I think it's helping me

work better with people, enabling them to work better with people," and a female middle

manager with a personal development organization explained, "Yeah, so well, I guess the

things that I mentioned, it has helped me to improve relationships with people that I

manage." Likewise, 16 of 20 leaders experienced improved work relationships as a result

of their mindfulness practice.

Theme 6: Greater Inner Calm and Peace

Through the contexts of high-stress work relationships, work relationships, life

choices (e.g., how to spend time, organize schedule, and prioritize sleep.), personal and

organizational changes, turbulent work conditions, increased responsibility, and family

illness and loss, 14 of 20 interviewees experienced greater inner calm and peace as a

result of their mindfulness practice.

It's interesting, through a downsizing, I started practicing formally, approximately

2, 2 and a half years ago, almost 3, in the middle of that time period, we had a

major reshuffle or reorganization by my employer, so my role expanded in size by

about 40 to 50% of what it was previously. So we had two smaller departments, the two were merged and became one super department. So we still had the same amount of hours in a day to get the work done, still the same amount of limited resources, however, I found that myself that through mindfulness I'm able to better handle and focus on the different tasks that are coming at me at any given time. I'm able to free my mind to keep that calm atmosphere and a particular focus on the paths [projects] given, and I'm also able to complete more tasks in a more timely manner. (Male middle manager working in higher education in New Zealand)

I think too there's a sense of peace you get when you meditate. It really is a stress reducer and anxiety reducer. And, I don't know if you [have to] do (experience) that necessarily….but it's a really nice byproduct that I think allows you to be a better leader. (Female middle manager and marketing researcher)

…you know, as an educator I hate to use the term 'feel better,' …but I do feel better. I feel calmer. I'm trying to not just keep using the same buzz words, but I do—I feel calmer, I feel less stressed, I oftentimes meditate at night and I sleep so much better when I do than when I don't. I literally feel like my heart rate and my blood pressure lowers. I physically feel my heart rate lower, and I just feel, I don't know. I'll use this word. I feel like a conqueror. I feel like I can do anything. (Male senior manager in higher education)

A female senior manager in information technology explained, "Oh, there is a much bigger sense of calm for me because there is time. There isn't as much frantic energy being expended. It is a lot more--softer. It's not a hard push." Similarly, 14 of 20 interviewees expressed greater inner calm and peace as a result of their mindfulness practices.

Theme 7: Greater Self/Other Empathy and Compassion

Through contexts of life choices (how to spend time, organize schedules, and prioritize sleep), work relationships and projects, turbulent work conditions, high-stress work environments, improved performance as a leader, downsizing and reorganization, increased responsibility, and better communication, 14 of 20 participants experienced greater self and other empathy as a result of their mindfulness practice.

> Another thing is just a kind of emotional empathy. Like I think I'm much better
> able to read emotional states. I think I'm still working on that, but a lot of times I
> can very quickly pick up on, 'Oh, this person is distraught right now. I can't really
> come down on them about some technical question. I need to, like, address their
> personal issues.' And, so that empathy is, again, something that builds very
> naturally. (Male middle manager and professor)

> I tend to be quite self-critical and mindfulness helps me be more—umm--well,
> forgiving sometimes, to say, 'okay, this is not, you are not living up to your own
> expectations,' but try not to be so, so, hard on myself with that, and say, 'okay,
> well, you are trying, you know what you tried to do and that is your effort and if,
> if you are not happy with it, okay, not happy with it but—umm--work goes on and

life goes on' and it, yeah, maybe be more forgiving would be a good expression.

(Male middle manager and production manager in Switzerland)

I've used mindful self-compassion prior to some very difficult conversations that

I've had to have with team members. Sometimes performance improvement kinds

of conversations. And looking at how can I as a leader be as empathetic as

possible when I'm delivering, say, a complaint that's been shared by a patient or a

family member or even an employee to an employee kind of thing. So, those are

probably some of the key ways that I'm noticing right now. (Male middle

manager in the healthcare industry)

I think the mindfulness path has relieved a great deal of anxiety and self-

judgment, 'cause when I think back on how I used to see myself as a leader, it

was really kind of frightening when I think back on it, because I think I was fairly

full of myself. Either full of my own anxiety and insecurity and just too conscious

of that, not being able to get a grip on—I've always been a perfectionist, so when

I know that there's something I don't know or I'm talking to people who have an

expertise that I don't have, it was very easy for me to go to a place of insecurity

and I don't do that anymore. (Female middle manager and technical writer)

Likewise, 14 of 20 participants experienced greater self and other empathy as a

result of their mindfulness practice.

Theme 8: Deeper Listening and Being Present

Twelve of the 20 leaders interviewed reported deeper listening and a sense of being present to others as fellow human beings and to the moment as a result of their mindfulness practice, particularly in the context of organizational life with busy schedules, high-demand work environments, difficult interactions, and work relationships of all types.

> I guess also, like, being kinder to people. That's also coming up. Although, again, something I'm still very much working on. When I just noticed, like, today I felt like I spent some time with a student and, you know, rather than trying to rush him through the problems that he was having, I actually sat there and listened to him and, you know, tried to not give away too much—this was a homework problem he was struggling with—not give away too much, but still, you know, assist, and that's always a tricky balance. (Male middle manager and professor)

> I think that if I had one management skill that I have developed that's key, it's listening, and I tended to talk, and I still probably do more than I'd like to, you know, tend to talk more than I listen. (Female senior executive in the healthcare industry)

> Being able to listen more or being able to understand where people [have] disagreements—um--you know. I work at a place that has a lot of cultural things and cultural—um--barriers because, my new place, our office is in France. We cover all the Americas, and there are a lot of cultural barriers to be able to listen

and let people—um--say, whether—um--letting people speak and seeing their

differences and being able bridge that gap. It is a little bit easier [now]. It's not

things I didn't know to do. It is just I know to do them better. (Male middle

manager and lawyer)

I think the biggest benefit I've noticed is the willingness to, uh--listen and to

really, you know--pay attention and to, you know--not get lost in my own

thoughts and, um--react. I think listening, which is an important aspect of

leadership is, um--was the biggest benefit for me and then some of the other

fringe benefits such as, you know--empathy and compassion and, uh--for others

and myself. (Middle manager and physician)

Similarly, 12 of the 20 interviewees expressed deeper listening and a sense of

being present to others as fellow human beings and to the moment as a benefit of their

mindfulness practice.

Theme 9: Personal/Professional Crisis

In regard to motivation for seeking out mindfulness meditation as a

developmental tool, 11 of 20 leaders sought out mindfulness due to personal or

professional crises.

At the time, I was really struggling with depression and anxiety, and it had been

recommended for me to take that (Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction) class.

And the unexpected side effect was the really powerful impact of helping me

create a daily mindfulness practice, which for me is a combination of meditation,

daily taking time out for just mindfulness moments, trying to do things in general,

everything I do, more mindfully, being more aware of it. (Female middle manager and marketing researcher)

Well, I didn't really know what else to do. It was kind of like, I mean, there was some curiosity about it, but I was also in a place where I felt like, you know, I'll kind of try whatever to see if I can, you know, kind of get back to normal, whatever that is supposed to mean. And so it was a very emotional time, and I was like, 'Okay, well, I'll try this thing and see what happens.' After that, of course, I learned a lot more and saw kind of how things worked a little better. (Male middle manager and professor)

I sometimes jokingly say when people ask me about this--there is nothing like a life crisis to get you interested in meditation! I do feel there was a bit of that as well. There was a sense that I had gone through some difficult times and this interest had always been there in a way. Well, maybe you could say mysticism and philosophy and at the right time with an opportunity and I took it. It was a mixture of being in a life situation I was ready for and the opportunity was there-- but it was a viable path for me to go. (Middle manager and production manager in Switzerland)

So, I thought, 'well, I better take that stress management class.' I said, 'because I have tried everything else and now I am really up against the wall and I have to

do this so let me take the class.' (Small business owner and former senior health care executive)

But in terms of my more recent delving into it (mindfulness), it's been maybe, umm--about 3 years, 2 and a half to 3 years where I've been seriously getting into meditation, and to be perfectly honest with you, what prompted me was my wife's illness and being able to get myself to a place of being able to deal with and handle that. (Male senior manager and administer in higher education)

Likewise, a personal or professional crisis was a motivating factor for starting a mindfulness practice for 11 of 20 leaders.

Theme 10: More Tolerance for Ambiguity

Through the context of organizational life that includes work relationships, high demands, perpetual change, reorganizations, stressful situations, and constant pressures, 11 of 20 leaders reported more tolerance for ambiguity as a developmental benefit of their mindfulness practice.

I think embracing that sense of adventure, that sense of adventure and sometimes adrenaline that I had been avoiding [with] people sometimes …because I associated it with maybe danger or risk, but now being much more comfortable living on that leaning-toward perspective as opposed to kind of leaning on the safe side of the fence. (Male middle manager in the health and wellness industry)

And I think in the past I probably would have made a much quicker perhaps more decisive decision in the moment and not embraced that time of interim or uncertainty. So I think mindfulness allowed me to do that and to say 'it's okay not to have all the answers right now,' and let it kind of be. (Male middle manager in the health care industry)

I look back now and that was probably one of the best times of my life and I gave up my career and all my money. I gave up security. I was in this place of not knowing what was going to happen next, like, I am such a planner, and I used do strategic planning, and now I do not know (laugh), even letting go of that and letting things unfold, putting in the effort but letting things unfold, letting go, it was so … it was great. (Female business owner and former senior health care manager)

A male middle manager and lawyer commented, "Oh, the other, I forgot. The ability to deal with change. It's much, much easier to deal with change. Um, um, that is very important, especially in the work place." A male senior executive in the health care industry in Canada stated, "Well, I think that I'd say that your capacity or my capacity to tolerate ambiguity has gone up. My capacity to tolerate many different ways to get something done has gone up, relative to versus speed and efficiency" (Male senior executive in the healthcare industry). Similarly, 11 of 20 leaders expressed more tolerance for ambiguity as a developmental benefit of their mindfulness practice.

Summary

In response to the central research question—How do leaders perceive and describe their experiences of the impact of mindfulness meditation on their development as leaders—the majority of the 20 leaders interviewed reported more integrated leadership styles, greater self-regulation, commitment to the practice, enhanced self-awareness, improved work relationships, greater inner calm and peace, greater self and other empathy, deeper listening, motivated by personal or professional crises, and more tolerance for ambiguity.

These results are consistent with my experience of mindfulness meditation, which I initially encountered in 2000 through the work of Kabat-Zinn and the University of Massachusetts Center for Mindfulness. I completed a formal mindfulness course, MBSR, in May 2010 at which time I started a daily practice, which I have maintained. My primary motivation for doing so was related to interpersonal challenges I was having in the workplace at the time. In addition, the results are consistent with the growing body of research literature, which I will address in the next and final chapter, Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to understand the perceived impact mindfulness meditation had on leader development for 20 manager leaders who had a regular mindfulness meditation practice. I relied on a qualitative paradigm and a phenomenological approach to exploring leaders' perceptions and lived experiences of regular mindfulness meditation in their development as leaders. I conducted this research because many leaders are ill prepared to meet the challenges of 21st century organizational life due to a developmental gap between the demands of the global work environment and the maturity of its leaders (Petrie, 2014; Weiss & Molinaro, 2010; Wigglesworth, 2012).

Individual leaders and organizations have a growing interest in the use of mindfulness meditation and other contemplative practices for developmental purposes. According to the findings of this study, mindfulness meditation fostered self-awareness, self-regulation, tolerance for ambiguity, integrated/balanced leadership, deeper listening, greater self/other empathy and compassion, improved work relationships, and inner calm and peace for the majority of the leaders interviewed. In this final chapter, I present the interpretations of the findings, limitations of the study, recommendations, implications, and the conclusion.

Interpretation of Findings

The findings from this study are consistent with the growing body of literature on the salutary and developmental potential of mindfulness meditation. For example, the themes of greater self-regulation and self-awareness align with work by Karssiens et al. (2014) who concluded that mindfulness training enhanced leaders' ability to recognize

and govern physical sensations, emotions, thoughts, and nonproductive habitual patterns. Furthermore, Bishop et al. (2004), Boyatzis and McKee (2013), Brown and Ryan, (2003), Gonzalez, (2012), and Ruderman et al. (2014), as highlighted in Chapter 2, support a potential correlation between mindfulness and self-awareness.

The themes of deeper listening, greater self/other empathy, and improved work relationships align with work by Boyatzis and McKee (2013), Goldman Schuyler (2010), Newberg (2011), and Wallace and Shapiro (2006). For example, Boyatzis and McKee proposed mindfulness training and practice often enhance the ability of leaders to connect or resonant with stakeholders, thereby improving the quality and productivity of work relationships.

Last, the themes of greater calm and peace align with the work of Chiesa and Serretti (2010), Hülsheger et al. (2012), Jain et al. (2007), Jha et al. (2010), Keune and Perczel Forintos (2010), and Roche et al. (2014) as highlighted in this literature review. For example, Jha et al. concluded that mindfulness practices helped foster positive moods in military personnel, and Roche et al. determined that mindfulness and an individual's positive psychological state might support the type of psychological resiliency leaders need to maintain mental well-being.

Three comprehensive categories represent the competencies associated with global leader effectiveness: perception management, relationship management, and self-management (Bird et al., 2010). Although I cannot generalize this study's findings to all leaders, the findings align with these broad leadership competency categories identified by Bird et al. (2010). The findings also align with the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 on leader self-development (e.g., Boyce et al., 2010; Petriglieri et al., 2011; Reichard &

Johnson, 2011) and leader authenticity (e.g., Diddams & Chang, 2012; Hannah et al., 2011; Rego et al., 2012). The findings also complement literature highlighted in Chapter 2 on vertical learning, which emphasized the need for leaders and organizations to consider vertical growth along with horizontal growth in their development plans and investments (e.g., Joiner & Joseph, 2006; Kegan & Lahey, 2009; Petrie, 2011, 2014, 2015).

Although works in the literature review did not represent some themes that emerged from the study (e.g., commitment to the practice and motivated by a personal or professional crisis), findings do not contradict literature presented in Chapter 2. However, the findings do help expand on the knowledge in the literature review, particularly in the potential of mindfulness meditation as a developmental technique for leaders and organizations. This developmental potential is congruent with the original purposes of mindfulness meditation, self-observation, self-knowledge, and self-liberation. However, limitations exist for this study and for the potential of mindfulness meditation for leader development.

Limitations of the Study

As previously indicated, I have an interest in and experiences of leader development and mindfulness meditation, which is congruent with phenomenological explorations (Moustakas, 1994). Hence, a bias exists for mindfulness meditation as a potential developmental tool, which may have positive and negative implications. The potential positive implication of this bias is that it sparked my curiosity and motivation to explore the topic of leader development and mindfulness. The potential negative implication of this bias is that it could limit my ability to hear and tell the stories of

coresearchers. Therefore, although I used a data analysis method that helped manage this bias through bracketing, reflexivity, thick descriptions, and transcript verification, my bias could have clouded interpretation of the data and is a possible limitation of the study.

In addition, the findings from this study are limited to the subjective perceptions and experiences of the research participants. Although the subjective perspective is essential to understanding a complex human and social phenomena such as leadership development (Forman & Ross, 2013; Laszlo, 2012; Moustakas, 1994; Wilber, 2001), an integrative view of such phenomenon also requires an understanding of individual behavioral, interpersonal, and systems (social and natural) dimensions (Chemers, 2014; Eisenbeiss, 2012; Forman & Ross, 2013; Laszlo, 2012; Wilber, 2001). Therefore, although beneficial, limited insights accrued from this study that must be viewed in the context of a more holistic view of leadership development.

Recommendations

Vast opportunities for future research exist. Possible areas for research include additional collection and analysis of first person data to determine if leaders' experiences consistently mirror findings of other clinical and nonclinical populations. If not, additional first person, leader-centered studies could inform the creation or selection of more precise assessment instruments for greater statistical insight of desirable leader capacities (e.g., EQ assessments).

Furthermore, developmental stage assessments such as Sentence Completion Tests (e.g., Maturity Assessment Profile; Cook-Greuter, 2010), the Leadership Circle Profile (Anderson, 2006), and Subject–Object Interviews (Kegan & Lahey, 2009) could be informative. In addition, organizational case studies that include observation,

interviews (leaders and stakeholders), and historical performance data (financial and nonfinancial) analysis might prove illuminating. Moreover, research opportunities exist in longitudinal studies of leaders who make commitments to long-term regular mindfulness practices, evaluative examinations of new or existing MBIs, and experimental studies.

Implications

Mindfulness meditation, and other contemplative practices are not new. They have roots in the world's ancient wisdom traditions. What is new, however, is the scale at which they are available. In the past, these techniques, practices, and teachings were only available to a select few, such as members of priestly classes or monks and nuns. Today, they are available to anyone and everyone with access to the Internet. This mass availability of mindfulness meditation and other contemplative practices is unprecedented. Therefore, the potential implications are far reaching.

First, the implications for positive change on the individual level are promising. As evidenced by these findings and other studies highlighted in Chapter 2, mindfulness meditation has salutary and transformative potential for individual leaders who regularly, consistently, and skillfully practice. Although one transformed leader may not be able to transform an entire organization, "transforming individuals through leader development efforts also transforms organizations" (Day et al., 2004, p. 11).

Whereas one transformed leader with greater self-awareness and self-regulation can make a positive difference in an organization, investment in mindfulness training for multiple leaders or leadership teams might transform entire organizations. In turn, although beyond the boundaries of this study, transformed organizations have the

potential to transform societies and the world. As captured in the ancient wisdom of Lao

Tsu, founder of Taoism:

If there is to be peace in the world,

There must be peace in the nations.

If there is to be peace in the nations,

There must be peace in the cities.

If there is to be peace in the cities,

There must be peace between neighbors.

If there is to be peace between neighbors,

There must be peace in the home.

If there is to be peace in the home,

There must be peace in the heart (Lao Tzu, n.d.).

Recommendations for practice include a consideration of mindfulness meditation

and other contemplative practices by individual leaders and organizational decision

makers of leader development investments. However, mindfulness meditation is not a

panacea or quick fix for leaders or organizations, nor is it an easy or pleasurable "do

when you please" activity, as it requires a long-term commitment to regular self-

observation and self-honesty, which includes facing the shadow sides, dark and golden,

of the psyche.

The Eastern approach to mindfulness, with roots in Buddhism, is part of a

comprehensive path known as the Nobel Eightfold Path. Although one does not need to

be or become a Buddhist to practice mindfulness, the Eightfold Path includes three

general categories of practice, ethical conduct (right or skillful speech, action, and

livelihood), mental discipline (right or skillful effort, concentration, and mindfulness), and wisdom (right or skillful understanding and thinking; Gunaratana, 2012). Therefore, without consideration of and commitment to these other dimensions, the transformative potential of mindfulness meditation is limited.

As highlighted by Reddy and Srinivasan (2015), leaders and organizations must consider the goals and objectives of leadership development. If they desire vertical growth, they must initiate interventions that will facilitate such learning, which may require serious investigation of firmly held assumptions and beliefs about leader development. Organizations cannot force or mandate vertical growth. However, they can invest in, offer, encourage, and support leaders in exploring and experimenting with mindfulness meditation and other contemplative practices when conditions are suitable (i.e., leader readiness, openness, and discipline).

Conclusion

Humanity faces unprecedented global challenges such as climate change, terrorism, water scarcity, growing social inequality in countries, and economic instability (Guillén & Ontiveros, 2012). Humanity's collective future is every capable adult's responsibility. However, those of us who serve in leadership positions have greater responsibility and opportunity to help solve our most pressing global challenges and midwife a positive future with equal opportunity for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Currently, however, a gap exists between the demands of the global environment and the capacities of leaders to respond to challenges with innovative, cooperative, and collaborative action for a healthy, peaceful, equitable, and sustainable planet.

Consequently, leaders who yearn to make a difference and positively contribute to real solutions will have to access more of their potential. Traditional ways of learning, being, and acting will not suffice. People must open their hearts and minds to techniques and practices that foster vertical learning and transformation, not with blind faith, but with genuine willingness and courage to experience for themselves whether these practices make a real difference in their lives.

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Appendix A: Participant Interview Protocol Form

Research Project: The Perceptions and Lived Experiences of Leaders Practicing

Mindfulness Meditation

Date of the interview: _____Time of interview: _____

Location of interview: _____

Interviewee:_____Interviewer/Researcher: Denise Frizzell

Questions

1. What is your experience with mindfulness meditation on your development as

    a leader?

2. How did you first learn about mindfulness meditation?

3. How has mindfulness meditation influenced how you see yourself as a leader?

4. How has mindfulness meditation influenced how you express yourself as a

    leader?

5. How has your mindfulness practice influenced your work relationships?

6. What motivated you to pursue this practice and what motivates you to

    continue mindfulness meditation?

7. What else would you like to share with me as it relate to your development as

    a leader?

(Reminder: Thank the individual for participating in the interview and study. Review
next steps and assure him or her of the confidentiality of responses.)

Appendix B: Participant Thank You Letter

Date:

Dear_____:

Thank you for meeting with me in and sharing your experience of mindfulness meditation on your development as a leader. I greatly appreciate your generous sharing of personal thoughts, feelings, and experiences.

Enclosed is a transcription of your interview. Would you please review the entire document and confirm whether it accurately captures your experience of mindfulness meditation on your development as a leader? If, after reviewing the transcript, you realize that something important about your experience is missing, please feel free to add comments, in a different color font or using the comments feature, which further elaborates your experiences. However, please do not edit the transcript for grammatical corrections, as the way an experience is verbally expressed is critically important to this work.

Please return your transcript along with any/all comments, clarifications, or elaborations within two weeks (insert date). Again, thank you for your generous participation in this study and your willingness to share your experiences. If you have any questions related to this verification process or the study, please contact me.

With appreciation and gratitude,
Denise Frizzell

Appendix C: Participant Recruitment Item 1

General Recruitment Announcement

Would you like to help advance mindful leadership via participation in a research study?

If yes, and you currently hold a formal leadership position in an organization (middle-senior management), and have a regular mindfulness practice, I invite you to learn more about possible participation in a doctorate research project on leader development and mindfulness by visiting, www.dafrizzell.com.

Appendix D: Participant Recruitment Item 2

Sample Recruitment Outreach Memo

Dear [NAME],

Hello. My name is Denise Frizzell, and we are in the LinkedIn UCSC's CFM Mindfulness Based Interventions (MBIs) Group, 2nd level connection. I share a personal and professional interest in mindfulness, particularly in the realm of leadership.

Presently, I am completing a dissertation for a doctorate program on mindfulness and leader development, and actively recruiting participants. Thus, I wonder if you might be open to helping to advance mindful leadership via participation in a research study? You may find out more about the study by visiting www.dafrizzell.com.

Thanks for considering this request. I hope to hear from you.

Kind regards,
Denise

Denise Frizzell
www.dafrizzell.com

Denise Frizzell, PhD (c)
PhD Candidate
School of Management and Technology
Walden University

Appendix E: Participant Recruitment Item 3

Study Opt-In Form

Yes, I would like to learn more about participating in this study. Please contact me.

Please complete this form and return it via email to denise.frizzell@waldenu.edu or

mail it in the pre-paid envelope included in this mailing:

Ž I am interested in learning more about this study. Please contact me using the following information:

Name: _____

Telephone(s): _____

Best time and day to call:_____

Email: _____@_____

Appendix F: Participant Recruitment Item 4

General Overview of the Study

Research topic: Leader Development and Mindfulness Meditation

Type of study: Qualitative

Type of data collection: Interviews

Purposes of study: The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study is to understand the perceived impact mindfulness meditation has on leader development for manager- leaders who have had a regular (at least 3 days a week) mindfulness-meditation practice for at least 3 months. Another purpose is to complete a doctorate dissertation in partial fulfillment of requirements associated with a doctorate degree with Walden University.

Structure of the interview sessions: The structure of the participant interview sessions are as follows: initial interview (after a short phone meeting), approximately 45-60 minutes. Interviews will be digitally recorded and handled in a professional and confidential manner (please see Additional Information below).

Researcher Information: As a young adult, I served in the U.S. Air Force and Air Force Reserves. Since that time, I have worked as an administrator-manager for over 15 years in health and human services. I am currently a doctorate student with Walden University and an adjunct faculty with Dean College in Franklin, MA. For additional professional information, you may visit my public Linked In profile at http://www.linkedin.com/pub/denise-frizzell/9/1b3/782/

Additional Information: Upon receiving your Opt-In Form, I will contact you to set up a time for a short initial phone meeting. Also, I will email you an Overview Packet that includes additional information on the research purpose, research protocols and processes, expectations, and a consent form.

Researcher Contact Information:
Email: denise.frizzell@waldenu.edu/Phone: XXX-XX-XXXX

Appendix G: Study Overview and Participant Consent Form

You are invited to take part in a study of leader development and mindfulness meditation. As the researcher, I am inviting manager-leaders, people serving in middle and senior level management positions, who have had a regular mindfulness meditation practice for at least 3 months, to be in this study. This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Denise Frizzell, who is a doctorate student at Walden University.

Background Information:
The purpose is to understand the perceived impact mindfulness meditation has on leader development for manager-leaders who have had a regular (at least 3 days a week) mindfulness-meditation practice for at least 3 months.

Procedures:
If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to participate in the study by engaging in the following:
- A brief phone meeting, approximately 10 minutes
- An initial interview at a mutually agreeable meeting time and place, approximately 45-60 minutes
- Interview transcription review and verification via email, approximately 30 minutes

Here are a few sample interview questions:

1. What is your experience with mindfulness meditation on your development?

2. How did you first learn about mindfulness meditation?

3. How has mindfulness meditation influenced how you see yourself as a leader?

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind during or after the study. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:
Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as emotional uneasiness; however, being in this study will not pose risk to your safety or wellbeing.

Being in this type of study also brings benefits to include the sense of meaning, purpose, and satisfaction associated with contributing to the advancement of human knowledge and understanding of complex phenomenon such as leader development.

Privacy:
Any information you provide will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Data will be kept secure by using pseudonyms in the transcripts for all names of participants. In addition, transcripts will remain in the researcher's possession, and all transcription files will be password protected. Digital audio files, consent forms, and participant information sheets will remain in a locked storage box. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Dissemination
Select verified transcribed interview data will be used in the dissertation. Other possible uses of the interview data may include conference presentations, articles, and books.

Gifts, Compensation, or Reimbursement
No gifts, compensation, or reimbursements are included for study participation.

Contacts and Questions:
You may ask any questions you have now, or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via my cell at XXX-XX-XXXX or email at denise.frizzell@waldenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 1-800-925-3368, extension 3121210. Walden University's approval number for this study is 01-09-15-0236156 and it expires on January 8, 2016.

The researcher will give you a copy of this form to keep.

Statement of Consent:
I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By signing below, I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above.

Printed Name of Participant

Date of consent   _____

Participant's Signature

Researcher's Signature   _____

                                         _____

Appendix H: Participant Information & Coding Sheet

Name:_____

Gender: M / F

Age Range:
_____20–29
_____30–39
_____40–49
_____50–59
_____60–69
_____70+

Management Position:
____Middle
____Senior

Years in Management:
____Less than 5 years
____6 to 10 years
____11 to 15 years
____16 to 20 years
____over 20 years

Current Sector:
___For Profit
___Nonprofit
___Government
___Hybrid