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FIVE MINUTE MEDITATION

USED TO IMPACT WORKPLACE MEETINGS

A Research Proposal

Presented to the Faculty of

The George L. Graziadio

School of Business and Management

Pepperdine University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

in

Organization Development

---

by

Jennifer Cornelius

August 2017

This research project, completed by

JENNIFER CORNELIUS

under the guidance of the Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the faculty of The George L. Graziadio School of Business and Management in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

IN ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT

Date: August 2017

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Abstract

The purpose of this research project was to explore the impact of a short-form mindfulness based intervention on the participant perception of workplace meeting effectiveness. Scholarship in the science of meetings estimates that nearly half of meetings in organizations are ineffective. Several reasons may exist for such perceived ineffectiveness but often include individual counterproductive meeting behaviors such as rumination and emotional labor. In a separate stream of emerging scholarship, mindfulness is related to a range of positive outcomes for individuals in organizations; including reductions in emotional labor and rumination. Outcomes were assessed qualitatively with eleven participants in a large technology company who regularly attend meetings. Results of the study demonstrated positive outcomes related to meeting citizenship behaviors, overall perception of meeting effectiveness and antecedents to counterproductive meeting behaviors. Consideration of the evidence on mindfulness as connected to meeting science is explored.

Keywords: Workplace Mindfulness, Workplace Meetings, Short-form Mindfulness

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To my incredible husband and my children, thank you for supporting me through this life changing journey. At a time that was most inconvenient for our life, you knew me well enough to know I had to finish, and that I am better for it. I love you.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In today's business environment, meetings are a foundational component to organizational functioning. At the time of this writing there are more than 25 million estimated meetings per day in the United States, with the average American worker spending at least six hours per week in meetings (Rogelberg, Scott, & Kello, 2007). Fortune 500 companies utilize meetings as a vehicle for many organizational activities and often spend more than 15% of their personnel budgets on time spent in meetings (Shanock et al., 2013). Participants in any given day can be called upon to attend meetings (either in person or virtually), to brainstorm, problem solve, define strategy, and/or build relationships. In an increasingly knowledge based economy, meetings have become a critical part of how organizations function to gain collective mindshare and solve organizational issues. Team collaboration and think tanks are common in large organizations and as a result, meeting volume in the last several years has continued to grow. As organizations have continued to seek to understand antecedents to organizational functioning, meeting science has emerged as an area of scholarship.

In the realm of meeting science, much of the current research explores how to enhance meeting effectiveness through structural (design factors) and process elements (Lehmann-Willenbrock, Allen, & Belyeu, 2016), as well as tips and tricks for building relationships and community in a meeting setting (Cohen, Rogelberg, Allen, & Luong, 2011). Ideas and strategies organizations are making to try to influence more effective meetings include building effective agendas and sharing them ahead of time, taking breaks at defined times, and carefully curating questions to stimulate discussions.

In addition to design and process characteristics used to influence meetings, social

aspects are being explored as a means for understanding how to improve meeting effectiveness (Baran, Shanock, Rogelberg, & Scott, 2012; Shanock et al., 2013). Community building and other best practices include social tips such as "pre-meeting talk" as a way of building connection ahead of meetings (Afif et al., 2013). One additional differentiator in meetings is how readily the participants demonstrate meeting citizenship. This term is generally described actions that participants take in meetings to enhance and support the objectives of the meeting (Baran, Shanock, Rogelberg, & Scott, 2012).

The primary aim of many of the meeting science improvement ideas are centered around interventions that happen in the context of the actual meeting itself and assume that all participants are willing and able to have a positive outlook and outcomes of the meeting (Allen, Lehmann-Willenbrock, & Rogelberg, 2015). Even with considerable research aimed at improving meetings, as many as half of meetings today are considered poor in quality (Rogelberg et al., 2007). Despite the practical importance of meetings to organizations they have been labeled a neglected social form in organizational studies (Schwartzman, 1986).

While meetings are common they can also be challenging because of the human dynamics that exist which impact effectiveness. So much so, that there body of work around counter-productive meeting behaviors (CMBs). These behaviors include surface-acting, or faking the appropriate emotion for the context (Byte, Scheff, Shame, Out, & Collins, 1979), rumination, the focus on possible causes and symptoms of sad feelings (Svendsen, Kvernenes, Wiker, & Dundas, 2016), criticizing others, and complaining. All

of these behaviors can be harmful to an effective meeting (Good et al., 2015; Lehmann-Willenbrock, Allen, & Belyeu, 2016; Shanock et al., 2013;).

A typical challenge in a large organization is that during a single day some individuals must manage the cognitive shifts between interactions with people, topics, and tasks going from meeting to meeting all day. These rapid cognitive shifts can create a "residue" of attention or what Kuo and Yeh (2015) define as thinking about the prior stimulus not the present one. This carry-over affect can influence individuals thinking and engagement in subsequent meetings throughout the day. In addition, a meeting participant may spend additional time experiencing 'meeting recovery syndrome', which requires them to do a mental reset from their experience in the previous meeting (Good et al., 2015; Shanock et al., 2013). The cost of ineffective meetings can be more than just an employee's time and an organization's bottom line. In a broader organizational sense, ineffective meetings can influence significant workplace outcomes such as employee well-being, performance, and relationships (Good et al., 2015).

In organizational settings, it is common for employees to adopt a cognitive mode of thinking that supports taking action, interpreting complexity, and setting and achieving goals in order to perform successfully (Walsh, 1995). This type of processing puts individuals into auto-pilot and they may function unconsciously based on their habits and previous experiences as a way of guiding their work and decisions. While effective in many situations, this type of environment can cause employees to demonstrate emotional behaviors and a potentially negative response. When this happens, this kind of negative behavior has the potential to limit creativity, miss subtle cues, and block out opportunities for innovation and thinking. In large organizations where work is guided through

meetings, the pace and perpetual need to act and perform is prevalent. Therefore, when meetings are ineffective, it is often because of how the participants have behaved versus what's commonly addressed in meeting design or process.

It is a fact that human behavior has a significant impact on meetings. Therefore, in looking at ways to improve meetings and thus improve organizational functioning, Organizational Development (OD) scholars have sought to understand alternative approaches to influencing human behavior in workplace settings. The concept of mindfulness, which originated from the Buddhist tradition, is an area that many organizations and scholars are exploring as it is known to have positive impacts on human functioning (Brown, Ryan, & Creswell, 2007). One current definition of mindfulness is the process of openly attending, with awareness, to one's present moment experience (Creswell, 2016). Given the benefits of mindfulness, which include more focused attention, openness, and moderated emotional capacity, mindfulness may serve as an antecedent to minimize counter-productive meeting behaviors (Allen, Yoerger, Lehmann-Willenbrock, & Jones, 2015). Mindfulness interventions train attention and they focus on developing skills that can support maintaining an open and accepting attitude toward experience. Mindfulness interventions have been shown to improve basic processes associated with better interpersonal functioning, such as managing stress and increasing perspective taking (Creswell, 2016). Good and colleagues (2015) speak to mindfulness in an organizational context and suggest that aspects of mindfulness impact workplace functioning because mindfulness affects "attention, cognition, emotions, behavior, and physiology in positive ways" (p. 2) and has been shown to have a direct impact on employee performance, relationships, and well-being. This growing body of

research makes a compelling case for why mindfulness may be a powerful organizational tool and has been explored in a variety of settings.

There has been an emergence of many types of mindfulness interventions which have evolved since Kabat-Zinn's (2003) first exploration of mindfulness as a tool for chronically-ill patients. Training programs around meditation and options for different durations (e.g., as short as five minutes), and methods (e.g., technology and apps) have made mindfulness more accessible than ever to a willing participant. Large and small organizations are promoting mindfulness training and offering employees workspaces that allow for meditating. Mindfulness practice can function as a tool at work that supports brining an individual into the present moment more readily using this technique. This premise supports that applying a mindfulness practice as an individual strategy ahead of a workplace meeting could enable the individual to "reset" and come into the present moment calmly and with intention into a meeting. This potential would allow an individual to show up differently in a meeting, thus minimizing the occurrence of counter-productive meeting behaviors and positively impacting their perception of the overall meeting effectiveness.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this research project was to explore the impact of a short-form mindfulness based intervention on the participant perception of workplace meeting effectiveness. Several questions were addressed: If an individual took part in a brief mindfulness-based intervention, would they demonstrate different behavior in a workplace meeting as a result? How might a mindfulness-based intervention conducted ahead of a workplace meeting influence the perception of meeting effectiveness for the

participant? How might an individual perceive the feasibility or incorporating brief mindfulness based interventions into work life? Finally, what implications, if any, does mindfulness-based interventions have in workplace meetings?

Importance of Study

The research around meeting science related to organizations is centered around design and process interventions as an enabler to meeting effectiveness, with some focus on interpersonal skills (Allen, Lehmann-Willenbrock, et al., 2015). Since the available research linking mindfulness-based interventions to workplace meetings is limited, this exploratory study seeks to establish an alternative method for enhancing meeting effectiveness by testing a method that would help participants enter a meeting more mindful. The mindfulness-based intervention used in the study was a short form mindfulness intervention. Based on the benefits of mindfulness practice, applying this approach to workplace meetings should yield positive participant outcomes as it relates to their own behavior and could also lead to shifting their perception of overall meeting effectiveness. In addition, as mindfulness is an individual activity, it is a benefit to note that meditation can be done by anyone, with any level of meditation experience, in any role in an organization, and at work.

Research Setting

The research took place with 11 participants, who were mid to senior level managers or individual contributors, in a Fortune 500 retail organization that does not currently offer mindfulness based training. The participants used a Mindfulness App to practice short guided meditations ahead of workplace meetings as often as they desired

over a three-week period. The participants were asked to self-identify their behaviors and mood before the meditation and workplace meeting and describe the behaviors and feelings afterwards. The participants were asked to send a brief voice memo to the researcher immediately following the meditation and meeting practice. Once the study period closed, participant phone interviews were conducted. The interviews were designed to survey and identify behavior change, if any; and to understand the participant's perception of overall meeting effectiveness because of their individual mindfulness practice.

Thesis Outline

Chapter 1 explored the connection between the importance of workplace meetings and highlighted the opportunities related to meeting effectiveness. It suggested that mindfulness could serve as an antecedent to counter-productive meeting behaviors. It also suggested that mindfulness based interventions could serve to positively impact participant behavior and the perception of meeting effectiveness. This chapter also described the relevance and importance of the study and highlighted the value that its findings may provide. Chapter 2 focuses on a review of existing literature and research relevant to the aforementioned topics. Chapter 3 highlights the research objectives, the design, and the methodology used to gather data. Chapter 4 describes the findings of the study. Chapter 5 contains study conclusions, interpretations, recommendations, implications, and directions for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this research project was to explore the impact of a short-form mindfulness based intervention on the participant perception of workplace meeting effectiveness. This study addresses the question: How might a short mindfulness-based intervention conducted ahead of a workplace meeting influence the perception of meeting effectiveness for the participant?

A review of the existing literature revealed that although the topic of workplace mindfulness has increased in relevance, the available literature around the impact of mindfulness on workplace meetings is limited. To sufficiently explore the current knowledge and identify gaps, several topics were reviewed. This chapter provides and examination of the studies and literature related to meeting science, meeting effectiveness practices, mindfulness, workplace mindfulness and meeting science, and mindfulness based interventions and instruments (MBIs).

Meeting Science

Meetings are a critical part of organizational functioning in today's business environment. People meet nearly every single day in organizations and these meetings which occur both in-person and virtually serve as the cornerstone for collaboration in the workplace. In fact, managers in large organizations (defined herein as those with more than 500 employees) spend over 75% of their time preparing for, attending, and leading meetings (Romano & Nunamaker, 2001; Van Vree, 1999). Meetings are used to share information, coordinate, plan future actions, deliberate, collaborate to solve problems, make decisions, and serve as a way of building organizational culture and community

(Tracy & Dimock, 2004). In addition to such practical uses, participation in meetings may also relate to less tangible benefits, like increases in employee empowerment (Allen et al., 2016). Allen and colleagues (2016) found that meetings have the potential for positive boosts to employee empowerment and can function as sense making episodes for employees which they link to value in organizations. Meetings can also serve as a place where social action takes place in organizations and can contribute to employees living out the vision and mission of the organization (Van Vree, 2011).

Schwartzman (1989) was amongst the first scholarly researchers to take a scientific approach to the study of organizational meetings, specifically with a focus on Western culture. Schwartzman (1989) described meetings as gatherings of two or more individuals that are prearranged and happen for a work-related interaction. In her work, meetings are considered an organizational tool that can support decision making, problem solving, and resolve conflict. Meeting science as a content area has continued to be explored with an emphasis around understanding methods and techniques for effective meetings. In terms of types of meetings, there are many variations in organizations. Romano and Nunamaker's (2001) research suggests that 45% of all meetings in organizations are staff meetings, 22% are taskforce meetings, and 21% are information-sharing meetings. They also summarize meeting types and capture aspects of meeting structure (stand-up vs. sit-down), types relative to who's attending (staff meeting), and purposes (decision-making, information sharing, etc.) to encourage thinking about the factors that are primary to meetings.

Allen and colleagues (2015) produced a first contemporary book that focused specifically on meetings in the workplace. *The Cambridge Handbook of Meeting Science*

provides insights about how to define meetings and each chapter is organized to help the reader understand activities that should take place before, during and after meetings to make the meetings meaningful for all individuals involved.

Meeting Effectiveness

Meetings are typically defined as effective if the attendees believe that their goals have been met (Rogelberg et al., 2006). Whilst this definition provides an evaluation of meetings in general, much of the research around meeting effectiveness has focused on design or process characteristics within the meeting as predictors of success (Allen et al., 2014). Cohen and colleagues (2011) studied meeting characteristics spanning four categories of design characteristics (i.e., temporal, psychical, procedural, and attendee) and found that when these details were attended to, they positively impacted the perceptions of the meeting quality. Examples include the facility, lighting and seating, and procedures such as the agenda and facilitator (Cohen et al., 2011; Leach et al., 2009). Further, when a meeting has a task oriented focus, enables open communication, uses a systematic approach, and has timelines or deliverables set ahead, meetings tend to be more effective (Nixon & Littlepage, 1992).

The research proposes that meeting effectiveness can be influenced in many ways, and that an individual's perceptions can be influenced before, during, and after meetings take place. Meetings are also shown to substantially impact employee attitudes and behaviors outside the meeting context (e.g., Allen et al, 2014; Fogelberg et al., 2006; Rogelberg et al., 2010).

Attendee experience just prior to a meeting can carry over into the actual meeting and change the meeting experience, as well as subsequent evaluations or judgments of

meeting effectiveness (Allen et. al, 2014). Mirivel and Tracy (2005) suggest that various forms of “pre-meeting talk” (small talk, work talk, meeting preparatory talk, and shop talk) can impact the content, processes, and outcomes of meetings in the workplace. They also offer that necessary social bonding and group identity can be built during the pre-meeting phase and have an overall impact on the participants' perceived meeting effectiveness. Specifically, the use of “small talk” at the start of a meeting has been shown to help people feel more comfortable with each other and reduce uncertainty thus allowing more intimacy between the participants in the meeting setting (Allen, Lehmann-Willenbrock & Landowski, 2014).

Baran and colleagues (2012) offer a perspective around behaviors in meetings that promote and support meeting processes through a mix of effective meeting practices as well as meeting citizenship behaviors. Their model (2012) suggests that there are several factors that influence meetings including the relationship with an employee’s supervisor, the perceived support of the organization, good meeting practices, supervisor fairness, and meeting citizenship behaviors. Of interest are meeting citizenship behaviors, which are driven by the individual, and have a key impact on the individual’s perception of overall meeting effectiveness. According to (Baran et al., 2012), the behaviors that make up meeting citizenship as demonstrated by the participants are:

- I express my true opinions in meetings
- I communicate my ideas in meetings
- I speak up in meetings
- During meetings, I volunteer information that may help solve someone else’s problem
- I try to make our meetings more productive
- If I don’t agree with the group during a meeting, I say so
- If given the opportunity beforehand, I provide input regarding the meeting agenda
- I come prepared to meetings

This research is important in understanding that there are factors that are determined by the participant in the participation of the meeting that can have an impact on the perceived outcome. Effective management of meetings could prove incredibly valuable to leaders and to organizations. However, research suggests that as many as half of meetings today are considered poor in quality (Schell, 2010).

Barriers to Effective Meetings

There are strategies that have been shown to enhance a meeting with the right design and process characteristics (Allen, Lehmann-Willenbrock, et al., 2015; Allen, Lehmann-Willenbrock, & Sands, 2016). Yet still, there are many barriers to effective meetings. One reason that meetings can be ineffective is due to the number of meetings and the duration of meetings that a participant is required to attend. The concept of "meeting load" in a typical workday can have significant impact on a participant. Meeting load refers to the frequency and time spent in meetings (Cohen et al., 2011). Participants can be required to shift from working on one topic and then having to shift their thinking to another topic as they attend their next meeting. In a study on meeting load, Luong and Rogelberg (2005) found that by the theory of *Activity Regulation* (Zijlstra et al., 1999), daily fatigue can be explained and related to meeting effectiveness. Activity regulation theory suggests that the execution of work tasks are goal-directed activities, and when an interruption occurs, such as the start or end of a new meeting, the regulation of activity and cognitive schema is disrupted because the person must modify his or her action plans. Luong and Rogelberg (2005) share that interruptions put an additional demand on the mental resources needed for action and impact the regulation of other cognitive activities. Ultimately, they found a significant correlation between

number of meetings and daily fatigue and subjective workload. Ergo, employees who have more meetings appear to be more drained at the end of the workday and feel they have more work to do generally.

Another factor in addressing meeting effectiveness is the impact of participant behavior within the meeting process. When participants in meetings are designing solutions and taking responsibility, these behaviors that are positively linked to the participant's overall perception of meeting effectiveness (Kauffeld & Lehmann-Willenbrock, 2012). Derailing or dysfunctional behaviors such as losing one's train of thought or complaining are negatively linked to perceived meeting effectiveness by participants (Kauffeld & Lehmann-Willenbrock, 2012). CMBs occur when actions taken by the meeting participants cause dysfunction or hinder the progress of the meeting (Lehmann-Willenbrock et al., 2013). These behaviors include placing blame on other attendees, engaging in irrelevant discussion, and complaining, amongst other behaviors (Kauffeld & Lehmann-Willenbrock, 2012; Lehmann-Willenbrock et al., 2013). Other behavioral barriers to effective meetings include rumination (Carmody et al., 2008), counterfactual thinking (Roese, 1997), prospection (Gilbert & Wilson, 2007) mind-wandering (Smallwood & Schooler, 2006) and surface acting (Hothchild, 1983). In studies conducted by Rogelberg and colleagues (2006) and Scott and colleagues (2013) the relationship between surface acting in meetings and potential negative effects on employees well-being in the form of emotional exhaustion was analyzed. Surface acting, which is defined as faking the appropriate emotional context (Hothchild, 1983), can be a contributing factor emotional exhaustion and lead to the perception of an ineffective meeting.

Meetings can create a context where decisions are made and information is shared, and it therefore could be assumed that an attendee could have various emotions related to content and to the people in the meeting. Based on organizational norms it may not be acceptable to demonstrate authentic negative emotions and one might choose to display neutral emotions to save face with other participants (Shanock et al., 2013). Hulsheger and Schewe's (2011) found that the degree to which an individual needed to exert more or less emotional labour, resulted in behaviors such as surface acting, which has strong connections to emotional exhaustion, psychological strain, psychosomatic complaints, and ultimately had a negative effect on job satisfaction.

To further explore the impacts of emotional regulation on meetings Deifendorff, Richard and Yang (2008) examined employee self-reported usage of various emotional regulation strategies in the workplace which included situation selection, situation modification, and others. They assessed the types of discrete negative emotions and negative affective events associated with their use in a meeting setting and found that each strategy tended to align with a distinct set of discrete negative emotions and affective events. The consequence of this behavior can lead to "meeting recovery syndrome" where in attendees spend time cooling off due to frustration, (Doyle & Strauss, 1982) and complaining to others (Schwartzman, 1995). The costs to organizations in productivity and employee engagement can be significant given so many employees spend time in the realm of emotional labour and well-being.

While much has been discovered about how employees feel about meetings, progress has generally been made around improving meeting effectiveness using design and processes characteristics and strategies (Allen, Lehmann-Willenbrock, et al., 2015).

The existing research primarily focuses on the external factors that one meeting facilitator can employ to an effective meeting (Allen, Lehmann-Willenbrock, et al., 2015; Cohen et al., 2011). What has not yet been explored are interventions that could enable a participant to prepare and change their mindset before attending a meeting which is why mindfulness is being suggested. There are gaps in the research when it comes to understanding what types of interventions could influence the thinking of participants ahead of a workplace meeting.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness, grounded in Buddhist traditions, has been explored for centuries as a way focusing the mind and being attentive of the present. It is only in the last 20 years that Western cultures are also beginning to explore mindfulness as a catalyst to health and wellness. Robust research exists now around mindfulness, and it has gained attention over time as it is viewed as a way of promoting well-being and increasing human functioning (Brown & Ryan, 2003). In a review of mindfulness research John Kabat-Zinn (2003) defines mindfulness as:

> The awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment….Mindfulness is often spoken of synonymously as "in-sight" meditation, which means a deep, penetrative non- conceptual seeing into the nature of mind and world. This seeing requires a spirit of perpetual and persistent inquiry—as in, "What is this?"—toward whatever arises in awareness, and toward "who is attending," "who is seeing, "who is meditating (p. 144-145).

Mindfulness offers an alternative to divided attention and mind-wandering. Using a meditative approach, self-examination can be achieved that enables an individual to demonstrate open observation to the environment. Therefore, minimizing the typical

cognitive approach to external stimulus (Brown & Ryan, 2003). Though some research argues that the consciousness achieved through mindfulness can be cultivated through meditative practice but does not require meditation (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Conze, 1956). Some of the key benefits of mindfulness are its impacts to functional domains of cognition, emotion, behavior, and physiology (Good et al., 2015). Bringing one's consciousness into the present allows an individual to help break mental processing habits such as mental images, self-talk, emotions, and impulses to act (Good et al., 2015). This type of cognitive change supports maintaining a calm demeanor, happier attitude, and more open and creative existence. There is also considerable research that links mindfulness to cognitive performance and flexibility (e.g., Smallwood & Schooler, 2015) as well as creativity and divergent and convergent thinking (Colzato, Ozturk, & Hommel, 2012). Mindfulness also has been shown to meditate negative emotions significantly. In a rumination and anger study conducted by Borders and Lu (2016), they found that trait mindfulness moderated the associations with state anger and proved that mindfulness decreases emotional reactivity. Given some of the previously mentioned challenges around meeting effectiveness, mindfulness serves to provide antecedents to counterproductive meeting behaviors by allowing participants to meditate their reactions in the moment.

Workplace Mindfulness

Workplace Studies. Management research has helped organizations understand great leadership philosophy and help leaders learn empathy, however, the pace and high stress environments that now exist in corporate America require more. Employees too, are looking for ways to calm their lives down, amid an unstable world and focus on the

present. Because of the benefits of mindfulness, workplace mindfulness training is becoming increasingly common in organizations. There are numerous studies in workplace mindfulness and the field of neuroscience that demonstrate benefits in a workplace setting. It is reported that 13% of U.S. workers report engaging in some type of mindfulness practice (Olano et al., 2015). Good and colleagues (2015) provide perhaps the most comprehensive integrative review of mindfulness in the workplace by looking specifically at the impacts on employee performance, relationships, and well- being (See Figure 1). With the wealth of research that exists around improving well- being, task performance, and human functioning through mindfulness, it is not a surprise that organizations want to understand the potential impacts in their environments.

Since the early 2000's there have been studies and research that have demonstrated effects of mindfulness in the workplace (Bohlmeijer, ten Klooster, Fledderus, Veehof, & Baer, 2011; Dane, 2011; Good et al., 2015; Hulsheger et al., 2012) There are very few in the realm of corporations available at present however, some exist in the healthcare and trade space. Dane (2011) suggests that mindfulness effects may demonstrate positive outcomes when associated with dynamic task environments and specifically with individuals with skilled task expertise. Dane (2008) found through a field study of trial lawyers that,

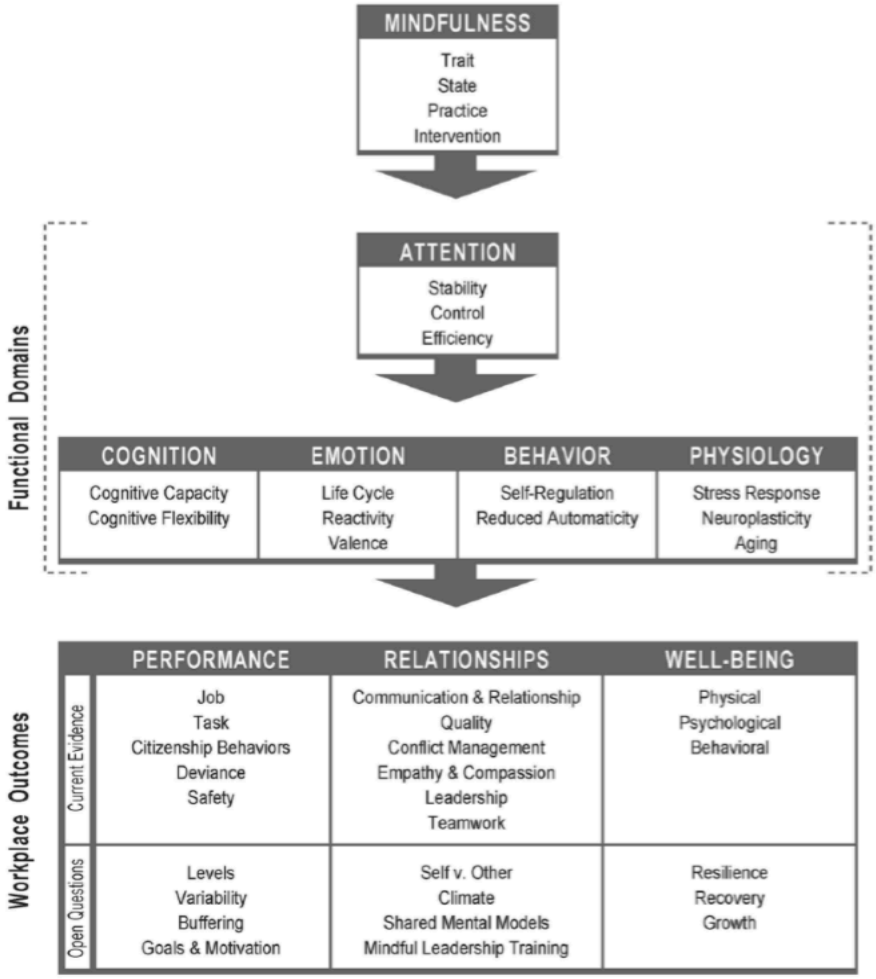
> Because of the dynamic nature of trials (i.e., a continual stream of unpredictable events), it is imperative for lawyers to gain as much information as possible from the court- room environment to make effective decisions. Mindfulness was found to play a key role toward this end because it permits lawyers to attend to a wide range of phenomena, including the reactions of the judge, jury members, and opposing lawyers—critical inputs for making decisions about when and how to employ their arguments and other persuasive tactics (p. 1006).

An exploratory study with 299 adults working in various sectors in organizational settings conducted by Malinowski and Lim (2015) using the Five Factor Mindfulness

Questionnaire FFMQ: Baer et at., 2006) found that that non-reactivity and non-judging were important mindfulness skills in the workplace.

Figure 1

Integrative Framework Relating Mindfulness to Workplace Outcomes



Reprinted with permission from Good and colleagues (2015)

In addition, they found the more mindful a participant was, the higher their work engagement and well-being tended to be. In a study conducted by Hulsheger and colleagues (2012), 219 employees received mindfulness training and completed a diary

for five days documenting their progress. Results revealed that participants in the mindfulness intervention group experienced significantly less emotional exhaustion and more job satisfaction. The mindfulness self-training effectively meditated the employee's ability to surface act. More specifically, Hulsheger and colleagues (2012) stated: "By deliberately turning attention to the present moment with a non-judgmental attitude, mindful individuals stand back and witness their thoughts and feelings more objectively, without being immersed in them" (p. 383).

Short form mindfulness (such as brief meditation) has also been explored in workplace settings in the last several years (Hafenbrack, 2017). Hafenbrack (2017) coined the idea of "on-the spot" mindfulness interventions and explored meditating consequences of four aspects of job performance. Hafenbrack (2017) links past and present mindfulness research, and states that counter-productive work behaviors (Allen, Yoerger, et al., 2015) , negotiation performance, escalation of commitment, and motivation to achieve goals can all be achieved with the necessary conditions for an "on-the-spot" intervention using a framework. Hafenbrack (2017) argues that this type of intervention can reduce negative affect and self-threat. For example, in settings where individuals or groups experience external manifestations, negative affect can be reduced through an "on the spot intervention". This type of intervention would allow the carry over emotional experience that would typically take place to be stopped using the brief meditation. In cases of feeling of a self-threat mental response, a brief mindfulness intervention also can help reduce a threatening mental response by bringing one's attention into the present moment. Kuo and Yeh (2015) found that a brief mindfulness practice, just five minutes, can help reduce the carryover effect caused by a previous task

and eliminated task-set inertia. These short interventions make a case for how mindfulness is being considered in today's dynamic business environments.

Other workplace studies have emerged that link mindfulness to employee well-being as a measured indicator. Reb, Narayan and Ho (2013) explored both awareness and absent mindedness as they relate to well-being and performance in the workplace. Using self-report and manager surveys they could identify that mindfulness positively impacted awareness in the workplace and led to better self-reported well-being. Mindfulness is also known to enhance the self-monitoring of emotions, expressions of positive emotions, reduced negative emotions, and overall emotional regulation (Davis & Bjornberg, 2015; Eberth & Sedlmeier, 2012).

Relevance of Workplace Mindfulness. The cognitive processing requirements that individuals naturally demonstrate in a workplace setting serve as an ideal space to test the impacts of workplace mindfulness. Even just five minutes has been proven to make a difference in a workplace setting (Kuo & Yeh , (2015). As previously mentioned, Good and colleagues (2015) explored human functioning in the workplace and help to make sense of the dichotomies that exist between conceptual processing (Walsh, 1995) and experiential processing; which is at the core of mindfulness (Brown et al., 2007). While cognitive processing is valuable and can be effective in making decisions quickly based on current experience and knowledge, it can limit one's ability to be open and think differently. A disadvantage to conceptual processing is that the thoughts that occur are often repetitive, biased, and judgmental and can take on emotions surrounding worry and rumination, among others (Good et al., 2015). Unintended consequences of conceptual processing can pull an individual away from what is taking place in the present and create

significant interpersonal barriers (Brown & Ryan, 2003). In addition, surface acting (Hochschild, 1983) can be a symptom of low emotional labour and well-being. If an individual does not have enough emotional labour available they may not be able to meet the social expectations that are inevitably required in the workplace (Humphrey, 2012). These common workplace symptoms can be positively influenced given the benefits of mindfulness.

Using experiential processing, and taking in the experience in the present (Brown et al., 2007) an individual can observe something for what it is, by recognizing facts and suspending judgement. If an individual focused on building a habit around focusing attention on what is being observed, this can then enable them to manage their emotions, stay calm, and be present in the moment to what is happening.

Good and colleagues (2015) examined the impact of mindfulness on human functioning by connecting the functional domains of mindfulness and attention to cognition, emotion, behavior, and physiology to demonstrate the potential outcomes of mindfulness in the workplace (See Figure 1). Good and colleagues (2015) proposed that mindfulness used in the workplace can influence outcomes in performance, relationships, and well-being. In addition, they suggest that while mindfulness is an individual activity based on one's own interpersonal behavior, it can impact a workgroup which can be significant in an organizational context.

While there is still more research needed to substantiate the business impacts of mindfulness in organizations, leaders around the world are spending time exploring the benefits of mindfulness practices.

Mindfulness Based Interventions and Instruments

An increasing number of studies have sought to understand the impact of mindfulness in a variety of settings. The early research focused on clinical applications and looked for impact on patients with chronic health issues or mental health settings. There are many options in terms of ways to explore mindfulness. Good and colleagues (2015) spoke about mindfulness in doses and believe that the does may play a role in the effectiveness of the mindfulness practice.

Programs. John Kabat-Zinn developed a mindfulness based stress reduction (MBSR) program in 1979 and began offering it through an outpatient stress reduction clinic as a way of understanding the impacts of mindfulness. Early interventions included mindfulness-based stress reduction (Kabat-Zin, 1982, 1990) and mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT; Segal, Williams, & Teasdale, 2002). In both programs the focus included a 45-minute formal meditation practice daily. In terms of outcomes, a clinical intervention study with cancer patients demonstrated that increases in mindfulness over time related to declines in mood disturbance and stress (Brown & Ryan, 2003). Generally, the objective of the programs is to develop awareness of thoughts and emotions and understand an individual's reactions. Regularity or a routine mindfulness practices tend to have a lasting effect.

Short Interventions. Other approaches have been tested which involve a variety of shorter exercises which can be practiced without meditation. Creswell (2016) shares that the current evidence demonstrates that even a very brief mindfulness intervention (e.g., 5-10 minute guided mindfulness inductions, 3-4 session mindfulness meditation training) can buffer reactions and reduce impulses. Mindfulness practices include those that focus

attention on something specific such as the breath, an object or through intentional movement (Good et al., 2015) These practices are often integrated into training programs, such as the well-validated Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction program (Karat-Zinn, 2003), which includes lecture, discussion, and practice and have recently adapted for workplace settings (e.g., Good et al., 2015; Hülsheger, Alberts, Feinholdt, & Lang, 2013). What has been learned from the various studies is that mindfulness can be developed as a set of skills that an individual can develop and practice over time and can be measure as a trait or a state.

Instruments. In terms of instruments, there are two basic approaches used for assessing mindfulness: 1) self-report questionnaires and 2) engagement in mindfulness practices (Davidson, 2010; Good et al., 2015). Mindfulness was originally observed as a one-dimensional construct with an instrument that could yield a single score (Brown & Ryan, 2003). The 15-item Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) developed by Brown and Ryan (2003) provides a way of measuring an individual's frequency of mindful states overtime to see the impact on overall well-being. Other instruments such as the 30- item instrument Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory (FMI; Bucheld, Gross, & Walach, 2001) have also emerged to measure the general tendency to be attentive and aware in the present moment. The Five Factor Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ; Baer, Smith, Hopkins, Krietemeyer, & Toney, 2006) is one of the most popular trait measures today.

With the emergence of the smart phone and the use of Apps, mindfulness practice has become more accessible than ever. Apps like Headspace and Simple Habit are enabling users to meditate anytime and anywhere. While there are untested questions

about the safety and validity of these programs there is considerable energy by many to explore mindfulness in this way. Though there are no research streams on the relative efficacy of these programs relative to in-person group based approaches (e.g., MBSR) at this time, initial studies suggest that these internet and smartphone mindfulness interventions may have benefits (e.g., Boettcher et al., 2014, Lim et al., 2015). The research indicates that mindfulness interventions have been shown to impact a broad range of outcomes in random control tests (Creswell, 2016).

Mindfulness and Meeting Science

While there are not currently any studies linking mindfulness to meeting outcomes there is some evidence to suggest that mindfulness may be a useful intervention for meeting effectiveness. As previously stated, typical barriers to meetings include behaviors which include mind wandering, rumination, counterfactual thinking, complaining, and surface acting. In the workplace setting where these behaviors have the potential of impacting both current and future meetings throughout the day they pose great risk to an individual to be successful in achieving meeting outcomes and employee well-being. Given the benefits of mindfulness which include being in the present moment, emotional regulation, openness, and the ability to break mental processing habits, these barriers may be counteracted. The impact of mindfulness in a meeting setting can create present centered attention, emotional regulation, and creativity and flexibility. This positive outcome has the potential to increase meeting citizenship behaviors, as well as enable the participant to shift their perception of more effective meetings.

Conclusion

In summary, this chapter examined literature on meeting science, meeting effectiveness, barriers to effective meetings, mindfulness, workplace mindfulness, mindfulness based interventions, and instruments as a way of demonstrating how mindfulness can impact workplace meetings. Meeting science research primarily focuses on the design and process characteristics of effective meetings and does not address successful individual emotional regulation strategies to address counterproductive meeting behaviors. This review highlighted gaps in the existing body of knowledge around understanding individual interventions that can positively impact workplace meetings. Mindfulness practice is proven to increase attention and awareness and have positive impacts on employee well-being, task performance, and emotional regulation. Good and colleagues model (2015) demonstrates that mindfulness improves attention, emotion, cognition, and impact the domains of workplace outcomes in performance, relationships and well-being. Though recent research has begun to see the impacts of mindfulness on workplace outcomes overall, it is compelling to consider what kind of impact mindfulness may have on workplace meetings and is yet to be explored.

Chapter 3: Research Methods

The purpose of this research project was to explore the impact of a short-form mindfulness based intervention on the participant perception of workplace meeting effectiveness. The intent is to better understand how a mindfulness-based intervention could bring about different behavior from the participant in a workplace meeting and therefore influence their perception of meeting effectiveness. This chapter consists of the research design and procedure, the research sample and setting, data collection methodology and measurement, interview protocol, and the data analysis and interpretation.

Research Design

The foundation of the research design was in part derived from a review of existing literature and analysis around meeting science and emerging scholarship related to mindfulness in the workplace. Qualitative data collection using two different methods was used to gather insights, reactions, and feelings of those who participated in the study. The design involved the use of two Apps: *Simple Habit* (for guided meditation), and *Voice Memo* (for participant to record in the moment reflections). In addition, a phone interview after the three-week study was conducted with each participant. Participants could freely discuss and share information at will without concern of consequence.

Procedure

The participant's instructions first began by signing and informed consent for their participation in the study (Appendix A). For Part A of the study were to complete a five-minute guided meditation from the *Simple Habit* app before they attended a meeting as often as they would like over the course of a three-week period. The meditations in the

app offered a selection of themes for the participant to choose from (i.e.; morning, taking a break, commute, walking, at work, tough day, etc.). After the five minutes, participants were instructed to take a moment to self-reflect and assess aspects of demonstrated mindfulness during the workplace meeting; behavioral or mood descriptions of what they experienced. Finally, using the prompts below, they were asked to record a brief voice memo:

1. How would you describe the way you felt right after the meditation? How was that different than how you felt before the meditation?
2. In what ways if any do you think the brief meditation impacted your experience of the meeting? Or your behaviors in the meeting, if at all?

In Part B, which began three weeks after the start of the study, the participants were asked to participate in an interview with the researcher to discuss their overall experience. The purpose of the interview was to achieve two outcomes: 1) to understand the participant's experience with the mindfulness-based practice and behavior in the subsequent workplace meeting and 2) to understand if and how the mindfulness practice had an impact on the participant's perception of the overall meeting effectiveness.

Research Sample and Setting

The population of this study consisted of 11 mid to senior level managers and individual contributors in various departments in a large technology company. This organization utilizes meetings (face-to-face or phone) as a primary mechanism for organizational functioning. The sample included participants with mindfulness experience ranging from beginner (had never mediated before) to several that had taken a mindfulness training program. In addition, all participants in the study did not have a regular (daily) meditation practice at the time of the study. Of the 11 participants, two were male and nine were female. Ages ranged from early thirties to about 50 years old.

All participants in the sample attend or lead meetings regularly, either in person, or virtually, as a part of their day to day work. The study was designed to work both in person or virtual based on the use of the technology.

Data Collection and Measurement

The data collection for this study took place in two parts. Participants were given the option to complete their reflections using the *Voice Memo* app, an interview with the researcher, or both. All 11 participants completed both parts of the data collection processes. Both the voice memo recordings and phone interviews were transcribed and then analyzed.

The interview protocol was designed to be open-ended (Table 1). Beginning with open-ended interviews, as opposed to asking specific questions targeted at validating a hypothesis and predetermined key themes, was intended to help remove researcher bias from informing the data. Interviews were targeted for a one-hour duration, but participants could continue longer, or end sooner, depending on their schedule and interest level. The primary purpose of these interviews was to gather as much information as possible.

Table 1

Interview Protocol

Duration: 30-60 minutes
1. How many mindfulness studies have you participated in prior to this study? 2. How many mindfulness training programs have you participated in prior to this study? 3. What was your motivation for participating in this research study? 4. What is the biggest obstacle for you when it comes to participating in an effective meeting? 5. What are the primary factors for you that contribute to an effective workplace meeting? 6. What behaviors did you demonstrate differently in your workplace meeting as a

result of the mindfulness practice you did?

7. What was your overall experience using participating in the mindfulness exercises through the app?
8. What is your aptitude to continue this practice?

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Once responses from the research participants were gathered and transcribed they were coded and categorized by theme and frequency. These qualitative data were then used to supplement and clarify the following questions:

1. What is the relationship of mindfulness to effective workplace meetings?
2. What type and degree of impact might mindfulness have on a participant's perception of meeting effectiveness?

The behavioral data was analyzed into themes and then was categorized and compared with meeting citizenship behaviors (Lehmann-Willenbrock et al., 2016) to illustrate the connection to the participants perception of an effective meeting.

Conclusion

Chapter 3 provided an overview of the research methodology that was implemented in this study and included the research design, research sample and setting, data collection and measurement, the interview protocol guide, the data analysis and interpretation, and the protection of human subjects. Chapter 4 provides an analysis of the collected data.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Research Findings

The purpose of this research project was to explore the impact of a short-form mindfulness based intervention on the participant perception of workplace meeting effectiveness. This chapter summarizes an in-depth content analysis of the qualitative data gathered from this study. This chapter will present the key themes that emerged as a result as well as answer the research question.

Both the interviews and the voice memos demonstrated consistent themes and were therefore consolidated into a set of overall themes because of the study. The themes will be articulated in two parts to be able to demonstrate the behaviors described before the meditations and after the meditations. This chapter will also highlight the impact on the workplace meeting.

Key Themes

To begin understanding the motivation of each of the participants each individual was asked why they were interested in participating in the study. All 11 participants shared three common themes: 1) they were interested in improving their meeting effectiveness, 2) they had personal interest in mindfulness, and 3) they all saw an opportunity to be more mindful. Through the data collection themes emerged which gave an indication of the participant's state of mind navigating a typical day of meetings at work. Three common themes emerged amongst the participants: busy mind, rumination, and stress or anxiety. As the participants reflected on their behavior in workplace meetings because of the guided five-minute meditation there were five common themes. These themes include improved focus and presence, calm demeanor, active listening, increased openness, and happiness. Two key conclusions were found because of the

study. First, 10 of 11 participants reported that the meditation positively impacted their behavior in the context of the workplace meeting. Second, all 11 participants stated that they will continue to use the five-minute meditation ahead of workplace meetings.

Before the Meditation

All 11 participants described their work environments as fast paced and packed with meetings. They described how they go from topic to topic all day long in the meetings that they attend and that very often their schedules do not allow for any time between the meetings that they attend. In addition, 10 of the 11 participants shared that the most difficult part about participating in this mindfulness study was making time in their calendars for the meditation. The data collected from the participants about how they felt before they completed their meditation resulted in three themes. Participants consistently described behaviors related to a busy mind, rumination, and feelings of stress and anxiety. Table 2 illustrates exemplar quotes related to each theme.

Table 2

Before the Meditation: Sample Quotes

Theme	Characteristic Quote	
Busy Mind	*"My mind was swirling with so many different emails that had come in over the weekend."* *"I knew I was going to be back to back all day and my mind was busy planning."*	8
Rumination	*"I was holding on to something bad that had happened over the weekend and I couldn't get it out of my head."* *"I was frustrated from a previous meeting and I kept replaying what had happened, it was just so negative."*	4
Stress and Anxiety	*"I was so stressed; I had had a bad flight and I knew it was going to be a long day."* *"I was really anxious about the day because I had so much to do."*	5

Busy Mind. It was apparent in collecting the data that for many participants the number of meetings and volume of topics they had to work on and the planning that was required in their day to day caused them to have a busy mind. Eight participants described how much they had to think about in a given day and talked even more about the amount of action that would have to be taken as a result of the meetings that they attended. They described behaviors and feelings such as swirling, spinning, being occupied, and chaotic. They stated that these thoughts in their mind made it difficult at times to feel in control of what they were doing or planning to do. They also shared experiences of multitasking and missing out on details as a result. Several described that they didn't feel present in what they were doing because they were thinking about something else. Participants talked about how not having a break between the meetings they attended sometimes made it difficult not to confuse topics or concerns from previous meetings into new meetings. When asked why they didn't take breaks between meetings many participants stated that there wasn't enough time in the day to take a break and get their work done.

Rumination. Four of the 11 participants described behaviors where they continued to think about negative emotions of something that had happened prior and continued to think about them throughout the day. This rumination caused them to be distracted, and consumed by the thoughts thus making it difficult to be present in the moment. During one story shared by a participant she shared how she believes in hindsight that she may have created a new story about what happened by thinking about it so much. This type of behavior can serve as a huge distraction to interactions and can

be very difficult to turn off. One participant reported that ruminating caused them to feel more stress and anxiety as it can feel like there is no resolution.

Stress and Anxiety. The fast paced and collaborative nature of the work environment of the participants puts a cognitive demand on its employees. In many cases, and for five of the study participants they described their typical work day as stressful. When asked about how they felt before the meditation they described that because of the demand and number of meetings they attend they often feel anxious and stressed. They described that they don't have the time to think and plan and feel that they are often working from a reactive place as they approach their work. When asked about how that shows up for them in meetings they shared stories about feeling the need to multitask and get things done simultaneously as a way of achieving some level of productivity.

In analyzing the data from participants related to how they felt before the meditations it was clear that the behaviors of a busy mind, rumination, and stress and anxiety all had a negative effect on how participants felt they were showing up both at work and in the meetings they attend. All participants agreed that they believed that taking a break ahead of a meeting when they had done so in the past had a positive impact on them. All participants were curious about what the meditation might do for them. At least two of the participants were skeptical that the meditation would make a positive difference.

After the Meditation

In nearly every case, the participants articulated a positive behavior change because of the meditation. Of the approximately 58 total meditations completed by the 11 participants (average of 5.2 per participant), 86% of the time the participants expressed

that the meditation had a positive impact on how they perceived meeting effectiveness. In 95% of cases the participant stated that they felt that the meditation had an impact on their own behavior in a positive way. The participants were readily able to share the most common behaviors they demonstrated because of the meditation. Table 3 includes a sample of exemplar quotes that illustrate the participant's words and experience in each theme, as well as the number of participants who mentioned a behavior that fell within a theme.

Focused and Present. The most prominent theme from the data was about how the guided meditations increased the participant's ability to clear their minds from the various topics that were in their awareness ahead of the meditation. More than half of the participants shared stories about how the meditation allowed them to pause and create focus on what they were about to experience the meeting. Participants spoke about being more present in the conversations and indicated that they made the choice not to multitask and were more attuned to what was happening in the room if the meeting was in person. By not checking emails or looking at their phones, participants shared that they were more engaged in the meeting and ensuring that it stayed focused on the purpose. The participants demonstrated that by being attentive and focused in the present moment they could avoid using typical cognitive automated response. Two participants shared that through the course of the study and several meditations they found that they were taking time to prepare ahead of the meetings and giving themselves a bit more of a break. Even further one participant stated:

> I'm noticing that after I do the meditation even carrying on into the day, I have a little bit of a different perspective, you know getting back to center, being optimistic, bringing back an energy of positivity; so that is different

from before I meditate sometimes where it's a little bit more anxious and stressed

Table 3

After the Meditation: Sample Quotes

Theme	Characteristic Quote	
Focused and present	"I actually think this is a really great way of breaking up the time in your day to help your brain be able to move on to the next topic without being bogged down by other things I was thinking about. I was really able to focus on the topic at hand and be fully present." "I did it in between a set of back-to-back meetings. It helped me to actually focus on the next meeting...so I found myself looking forward to the opportunity to actually clear my brain and go into my next meeting a bit more focused. I found myself being able to concentrate versus multitasking so I thought it was a productive use of my few minutes."	7
Calm and relaxed	"It created some focus and actually allowed me to kind of calm down a little bit and just be prepared for the meeting that I had with this morning." "I found it really helpful, initially, because I just got some upsetting family news. It really helped me calm down, through focusing on my breathing. Definitely helped when I then went into that meeting." "I had an hour and half long meeting. I think it definitely helped with that. I think I potentially would've gone in and started shouting had I not done the meditation."	5
Active listening	"So, in reflection, it actually allowed me not to be reactive to some of the issues that are going on, but really listen, seek to understand, and also support our partners, which I think really lent to a great meeting." "I found is that it actually allowed me truly focused on that one task right now, so truly take in all the information."	3
Openness	"I'd say there was definitely a mental clarity piece. And I don't know if that came from the relaxation component, but I do remember being … Clear thought, and ready." "It kind of centered me so I wasn't so wound up, and it was more of an experience, like hey, this is what we're going to go through. This is what we're going to talk about, versus the content of the meeting. The content's really important, but it just kind of allowed me to step back a little bit."	3
Happiness	"There was one time though I do recall very specifically, that it generated, it brought some feelings of happiness. That happiness actually did last through the majority of the day. It was interesting because I noticed it. I'm like, gosh, I guess I haven't been happy in a long time! It was like, just joy. It was just like, okay cool. When you have fun doing your work, and you're excited to connect with people." "So I was feeling really tired and I wanted to see if it would give me more energy versus make me more tired, and it did. It worked… I felt more ready to take on all the meetings and I know the intention is to allow you to sort of meditate more, it helped me actually get energized for the day."	2

Seven participants in total agreed that the mindfulness practice increased their focus and allowed them to be more present in the meeting.

Calm and Relaxed. Several participants reported experiences of having received difficult news or feeling stressed or anxious during the study. They also described how they were carrying those emotions into meetings before they did the meditation. Five of the 11 participants described how the meditation helped them calm down or relax in a way that was effective. The guided meditations focused on breathing as part of the five minutes and appeared to diffuse a situation for one participant who indicated that they may have "shouted" during the meeting without the meditation. Another participant shared about a moment where they were able to diffuse emotions in a positive way,

> I was in one particularly stressful meeting where we were making some changes to next week's meeting. I was able to use this (the meditation) in order to prepare me for my next meeting, where I was leading the team through some information that needed to be positive. I thought what was really helpful was allowing my mind to go from being a little bit stressed from the first call to being more calm, and neutral. It was actually really helpful because, if I hadn't done it, I might have let that negativity or the stress come through in my next meeting. It was well worth the five minutes.

Active Listening. Active listening requires that an individual make a conscious decision to understand what another person is saying. At its best, active listening is effective when a person is keeping their focus on really paying attention to what the other person is saying and not trying to let one's own thoughts take over. Three of the 11 participants reported an increase in their active listening skills during their meetings because of the meditation. These participants described how they were paying careful attention to other meeting attendees words and body language and could ask better questions as a result. In a reflection by a participant he stated that

> I was reactive going into this meeting, and pretty frustrated actually. The meditation helped me really slow down and listen and I was able to seek to understand which made the meeting much smoother in the end.

Participants shared that by using active listening they observed more productive conversations and that in those meetings they stayed focused on the objective.

Increased Openness. Three of the 11 participants shared meeting experiences where they demonstrated increased openness. They described this behavior by sharing stories about what was happening in their minds during the meetings because of the meditation. One participant shared that they could "suspend judgment and stay really neutral" during the meeting. They went on to describe how the meeting could have been a tense exchange of differing perspectives but instead was in their opinion far more neutral and open and allowed all participants to really hear what each other had to say. Another participant shared an experience with a guided mediation and went on to state,

> The meditation was really centered around how we view others with compassion, and that others are going through a very similar experience in terms of wants, and desires, and challenges, and hopes, and dreams that we are. So taking that into a meeting and remembering that people are human, first of all, was really kind of the meditation today. That was helpful in my meeting this morning, because it just created a little bit more of a common ground.

The feeling described as being "open" by another participant who typically leads meetings, allowed them to be more focused on and supportive of the other individuals in the meeting.

Happiness. The last theme that emerged were sentiment expressed by two participants as a feeling happiness. One participant shared that the meditation "cultivated a feeling of happiness and joy" as they participated in their workplace meeting. They went on to say that during the meeting they were playful and that they had more energy

and creativity as they approached the work. Another participant talked about the feelings of happiness carrying throughout rest of the day, they stated:

> My days can be incredibly busy, but with my meditation today actually what was different than some of the other meditations is that actually it cultivated a feeling of happiness. Going into meetings throughout the day, there was just a little bit more of a playfulness that I experienced because I had given myself just a moment to kind of get present with myself, so, I think that really impacted my meetings throughout the day because I could just very, very easily relate to the person that I was meeting with because I had this feeling of joy. So, it was a pleasant experience. A little bit different from the prior sessions that I've had, and overall just great to feel happy.

Conclusion

In nearly every case the participants had a positive experience with the meditation and its impact on their behavior and perception of meeting effectiveness. All participants indicated that they would carry forward the practice of the five-minute meditation ahead of meetings. This chapter outlined the research findings and summarized the key themes of the data that was discovered. Chapter 5 will conclude the study, and reflect on how the findings either confirm or refute the hypotheses as well as summarize the implications of the study. In addition, this chapter will explore the limitations and recommendations for future exploration around mindfulness practice and workplace meetings.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This study explored the emerging trend of the impact mindfulness in the workplace. The intention of the present study was to provide a starting point for understanding: How might a mindfulness-based intervention conducted ahead of a workplace meeting influence the perception of meeting effectiveness for the participant? If an individual took part in a brief mindfulness-based intervention would they demonstrate different behavior in a workplace meeting as a result? How might an individual perceive the feasibility or incorporating brief mindfulness based interventions into work life? Finally, what implications, if any, does mindfulness-based interventions have in workplace meetings? This chapter concludes this research study by identifying whether the data gathered supports or refutes the data uncovered in the literature review, discusses the connections between mindfulness and meeting citizenship behaviors and finally highlights the limitations and implications for practice in the field.

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this research project was to explore the impact of a short-form mindfulness based intervention on the participant perception of workplace meeting effectiveness. In the literature review portion of this study the researcher proposed that given the benefits of mindfulness described which include more focused attention, openness, and moderated emotional capacity, that mindfulness may serve as an antecedent to minimize CMBs. While the data was limited to connect mindfulness to workplace meetings specifically, the research conducted by Good and colleagues (2015) suggested that aspects of mindfulness could impact workplace functioning in the areas of attention, cognition, emotions, behavior, and physiology in positive ways and had been

shown to have a direct impact on employee performance and well-being. In addition, the research also indicates that an attendee's experience just prior to a meeting can carry over into the actual meeting and change the meeting experience, as well as subsequent evaluations or judgments of meeting effectiveness (Allen et al., 2014).

The outcome of the study supported that the mindfulness practice did have an impact on the participant's behavior and emotion and ultimately influenced their perception of an effective workplace meeting. The behavioral themes that were identified as demonstrated in the meetings by the participants included: improved focus and presence, calm demeanor, active listening, increased openness, and happiness.

Mindful Behaviors and Meeting Citizenship

The overall results of the study show an impact on the participant's perception of meeting effectiveness using a mindfulness intervention. As previously stated meeting citizenship behaviors are an important factor for consideration in relation to effective meetings. Baran and colleagues (2012) defined meeting citizenship as

> Meeting attendees' discretionary actions that maintain and enhance a positive social and psychological context in support of meeting objectives. Much like organizational citizenship behavior, meeting citizenship behaviors attend to actions employees perform in meetings such as speaking up about issues, volunteering helpful information, providing input to agendas, eliciting participation from others, and otherwise assisting in the meeting process. Good meeting citizens, therefore, are people who assist the meeting facilitator by actively engaging in creating an effective meeting environment (p. 337) .

While meeting citizenship is traditionally thought of as primarily influenced by the leader-member exchange as well as organizational support, the researcher suggests that behaviors related to mindfulness may also influence meeting citizenship. Table 4 compares the thematic behaviors of mindfulness discussed as a result of the study as compared to meeting citizenship behaviors. As discussed previously, mindfulness

interventions train attention and they focus on developing skills that can support maintaining an open and accepting attitude toward experience (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). As indicated in meeting science research common barriers were mind wandering, rumination, surface acting, and complaining. Participants in the study indicated that the meditation allowed them to be focused and present during the duration of the meeting and invested in having successful outcomes. They indicated that they could better prepare and plan which would also allow one to contribute to an agenda if given the opportunity ahead of time, because they would have thought through what the meeting would be about. This behavior also promotes a desire to help the meeting be productive and focused on problem solving.

Table 4

Mindful behaviors connected to Meeting Citizenship behaviors

Mindful Behavior	Meeting Citizenship Behavior
Focused and Present	• During meetings, I volunteer information that may help solve someone else's problem. • I try to make our meetings more productive. • If given an opportunity beforehand, I provide input regarding the meeting agenda. • I come prepared to meetings.
Calm	• I speak up in meetings. • If I don't agree with the group during a meeting, I say so.
Active Listening and Open	• I express my true opinions in meetings. • I communicate my ideas in meetings.

The study also resulted in participants who could better manage their emotions in a meeting context and stay calm. This behavior enables a meeting participant to better

able to regulate their feelings in a meeting and can more appropriately express opinions and ideas which promotes meeting good citizenship behavior. Lastly, meeting behaviors focused on active listening and openness allowing a participant to engage in a more constructive and creative way. Many of the overall benefits of mindfulness such as, present centered attention, emotional regulation, and experiential processing, were reported to be experienced by participants as hypothesized.

Practical Implications

This research reinforced the value of a mindfulness practice as a way of demonstrating more positive behaviors in workplace meetings. It was found that the short meditation using the app could be utilized easily in the workplace setting and could apply to any meeting context because it requires little effort to incorporate into someone's workday. The biggest challenge to imbedding a brief mindfulness practice into workplace meetings is the participant's ability to make the time to dedicate to the practice.

Recommendations

With the speed of today's work environment and the evolution of technology, it can make it more challenging than ever to find a moment to disconnect. The emergence of mindfulness in the workplace continues to gain relevance as organizations begin to invest in the health and wellness of their employees. Furthermore, with the development of apps like *Simple Habit* its making it easier than ever to have a guided meditation experience. If organizations are interested in experiencing the positive outcomes of behaviors associated with mindfulness the culture of back to back meetings will have to change. If organizations can appreciate the benefits of highly productive meetings through promoting mental breaks for its employees a potential shift could be realized in

overall meeting effectiveness. Mindfulness as a tool for keeping the mind healthy and present centered is increasingly being validated as a powerful intervention. Given the results of this study and of previous research a natural extension of this work would be to look deeper into other mindfulness based practices that could be used in other workplace settings. In addition, utilizing group mindfulness based practices at the start of a meeting would be interesting to explore.

Study Limitations and Suggestions for Additional Research

There were several limitations associated with this research design. First, the participants were at varying levels of experience with a mindfulness practice. Based on their current practice or lack thereof the frequency of meditations varied significantly by participant. Given the open-ended nature of the number of meditations, it created a disparity between the average of the meditations per person that also impacted how frequently themes emerged.

Second, the current study was primarily limited by a small sample size. Additionally, the sample was drawn on an availability basis from individuals that the researcher had previous contact with, or was referred to by another facilitator. It can be assumed that the individuals who ended up participating in the study had a relatively positive outlook on mindfulness as a topic, which could have impacted the results of the study. The study was also qualitative therefore it included no objective data to support the findings. Lastly, there was no control group as a point of comparison. The connection between mindfulness as a strategy for promoting effective meeting citizenship behaviors is one that could be an area for further research. For example, future scholars may want to employ a mindfulness intervention and distribute surveys to include measures of meeting

citizenship behaviors to see if there is long term impact on meeting effectiveness and/or expand the sample size using control group methodology. Lastly, an additional area of consideration would be to understand the impact of trait mindfulness and its relationship to meeting effectiveness.

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Appendix A

Informed Consent Waiver

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

Workplace Mindfulness: The impact of Meditation on Workplace Meetings

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Jennifer Cornelius and Dr. Darren Good, PhD at Pepperdine University. Your participation is voluntary. You should read the information below, and ask questions about anything that you do not understand, before deciding whether to participate. Please take as much time as you need to read the consent form. You may also decide to discuss participation with your family or friends. You will be given a copy of this form for your records.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to explore the impacts of guided meditation on a participants perception of workplace meetings.

STUDY PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to use the Simple Habit Meditation app, 5 minute meditations, ahead of workplace meetings as many times as you'd like 3/31/17- 4/17/17. After each meditation then meeting you will be asked to use *Voice Memo*s to record a brief summary of your experience using the prompts the researcher has provided. At the end of the two- week period you will be asked participate in an interview. If you participate in an interview, the researcher will schedule a phone interview with you at your convenience. Interviews are expected to take approximately one hour, and will include open-ended questions about your overall experience with the meditations and workplace meetings. The interview will be audio-recorded, then transcribed by the researcher. You will be asked to avoid stating your name or company name during the interview to maintain anonymity. The purpose for audio-recording is to allow the researcher to pay attention to what you are saying, and ask good questions during the interview, rather than attempting to type responses at the same time. The audio-recording will not be shared with anyone.

All participants will be given access to the aggregate study results, reported in the final study documentation.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There is minimal risk associated with participation in this study. Risks include fatigue or boredom during the interview. Participants may feel uncomfortable with certain questions during the interview, or may feel uncomfortable recounting events from the study period. Since interviews will take place by phone or WebEx, and will be scheduled at the

convenience of the participant, it is not anticipated that this study will be disruptive to the individual's ability to complete usual job tasks.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

Benefit to participants will include the ability to share their knowledge and experiences about mindful awareness practice. The research will contribute to the mindfulness community's understanding of the impacts in workplace settings. If participants find benefit in practicing brief mindfulness exercises this can contribute to overall participant well- being.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The records collected for this study will be anonymous as far as permitted by law. However, if required to do so by law, it may be necessary to disclose information collected about you. Examples of the types of issues that would require me to break confidentiality are if you disclosed any instances of child abuse and elder abuse. Pepperdine University's Human Subjects Protection Program (HSPP) may also access the data collected. The HSPP occasionally reviews and monitors research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research subjects.

The data will be stored on a password protected computer in the principal investigator's place of residence. The data will be stored for three years and then destroyed. The data collected during interviews will be audio-recorded, then transcribed by the researcher. Responses to the interview questions will be de-identified and coded. Only the researcher will have access to the raw data.
Major themes and aggregate data will be reported in a final paper for Pepperdine University.

SUSPECTED NEGLECT OR ABUSE OF CHILDREN

Under California law, the researcher(s) who may also be a mandated reporter will not maintain
as confidential, information about known or reasonably suspected incidents of abuse or neglect
of a child, dependent adult or elder, including, but not limited to, physical, sexual, emotional, and
financial abuse or neglect. If any researcher has or is given such information, he or she is required to report this abuse to the proper authorities.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Your participation is voluntary. Your refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may withdraw your consent at any

time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

ALTERNATIVES TO FULL PARTICIPATION

The alternative to participation in the study is not participating or only completing the items
for which you feel comfortable.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information, and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study.

Your Name (Please Print): _____

Your Signature: _____
Date: _____