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Permeating Presence: Examining the Effects of Mindfulness-trained Supervisors on Employee Performance

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Social Science Poster

Title: Permeating Presence: Examining the Effects of Mindfulness-trained Supervisors on Employee Performance

Presenter: Marquez, Pearl

Faculty Sponsor: Kole, James

Abstract:

Mindfulness is a process that uses sustained attention (Bishop et al., 2004) to be aware of the surrounding environment (Langer & Moldoveanu, 2000) while holding a non-judgmental orientation towards one's self and others (Bergomi, et al., 2012).

Mindfulness-Based Interventions (MBIs) teach mindfulness through different exercises, like breathing techniques to increase mindfulness. MBIs are becoming of interest to organizations due to the possibility of increasing job performance amongst employees (Shonin et al., 2014). MBIs have also been used to demonstrate the effects of trained mindfulness on intrapersonal relationships; however, these possible effects on interpersonal relationships have not been examined in an occupational setting. This present study assessed the effects of mindfulness-trained supervisors from a four-year university on the performance of their employees. Supervisors received a low-dose 6-week Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program. Supervisors were asked to randomly select three employees whom they directly oversaw, with one supervisor only directly overseeing two. Employee performance was assessed by both supervisors and employees through a self-report scale (Scotter & Motowidlo, 1996) during the first week of the program, the final week of the program, and a week following the program's end. Supervisors were also given mindfulness measures (Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale; Brown & Ryan 2003) to identify changes in mindfulness throughout the program. There was a (non-significant) linear trend in employee performance, with performance increasing steadily across the three time-points. However, the evaluation patterns varied between employees and employers. Supervisors rated employee job performance best one-week post intervention, while employees saw the greatest benefit during the final week of the program. Thus, MBSR training is a potentially useful way to improve interpersonal relationships in an occupational setting, in addition to improving job performance.