

Mindfulness-Based Managerial Interventions for Reducing Workplace Burnout and Enhancing Decision-Making Quality

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Abstract

This study aims to assess whether mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) can be effective in preventing workplace burnout and enhancing decision-making quality among managers. The changes in burnout and decision-making quality were measured using a pre- and post-intervention design. The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) was used to measure burnout, the Decision-Making Competence (DMC) scale to determine decision-making quality, and the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) to measure mindfulness. Paired t-tests, regression tests, and mediation tests applied to the Sobel Test were used to perform statistical analysis. Mindfulness-based interventions led to a 30% decrease in burnout and a major improvement in decision-making quality ($p < 0.05$). Burnout negatively affected decision quality ($\beta = -0.45$, $p < 0.01$), and this effect was fully mediated by mindfulness ($\beta = 0.30$, $p < 0.05$). These results imply that mindfulness can improve decision-making by reducing burnout. MBIs are useful for reducing burnout and improving decision quality. Through mindfulness, organizations can improve managerial performance, reduce stress, and build a stronger, more productive employee population. Investing in mindfulness interventions to prioritize employees' well-being has long-term benefits for both employees and the organization. The stage that should follow the research is the analysis of the long-term implications of MBIs, their use in various industries and comparison of various mindfulness programs.

Keywords

Mindfulness-based Interventions, Burnout, Decision-making Quality, Managerial Performance, Employee Well-being, Mediation Analysis, Organizational Effectiveness.

I. Introduction

The signs of workplace burnout are often described as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a lack of personal accomplishment. It results from prolonged work-related stress and may affect workers at all levels (Gabriel & Aguinis, 2022). In studies, burnout has been shown to negatively affect job satisfaction, productivity, and turnover. In organizations, burnout leads to high levels of absenteeism, staff demotivation, and reduced overall organizational performance (Salvado et al., 2021). Burnout can cause employees to lose concentration, decision-making ability, and the ability to interact with each other; hence, this is a major concern that organizations should address (Ofei-Dodoo et al., 2020). The consequences of burnout may result in inefficiencies in the organization, and the costs of operations will rise in the long term; hence, businesses are required to seek remedies for these issues (Zhang et al., 2020).

Decision-making is an important aspect of management, as decisions determine not only the department's success but also the organization's success. High-quality decision-making involves handling complex information, considering different alternatives, and projecting outcomes in the face of uncertainty. In the management world, making a wrong decision can cost a lot, undermine team performance, and forego strategic opportunities. It is, however, the stresses and cognitive overload that are usually exacerbated by burnout that may undermine a manager's sound judgment (Aghamohammadi et al., 2022). Decision-making is closely associated with a manager's

mental clarity and ability to objectively evaluate the situation. Therefore, better decision-making is crucial to the quality of performance and the success of an organization.

Mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) have become an effective option for addressing work-related stress and burnout (Khemraj et al., 2023). Mindfulness is a practice of directed, undistracted attention to the present and a non-judgmental use of attention on the present, which can make individuals more self-aware and enable them to gain control over their emotions (Bangash et al., 2024). Mindfulness approaches, such as Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) and mindful leadership training, have been demonstrated in organizational contexts to reduce stress and increase employee well-being (Klein et al., 2020). To managers, mindfulness can be used as a tool to deal with the mental and emotional load burnout can open them to as well as to better make judgments (Fendel et al., 2021). By building a mindful approach, the management can also be better placed to make decisions in a more clear and confident manner that will help them remain focused, manage their emotions and make superior decisions that will eventually be beneficial to the organization (Scheepers et al., 2020).

The connection between mindfulness-based interventions and workplace burnout and quality of the decision-making process made by managers will be researched on the paper. The research questions that will be used in this research are the following: (1) How do mindfulness-based interventions affect workplace burnout in managers? (2) What is the impact of mindfulness in judgment during managerial roles? (3) Does burnout reduction mediate the relationship between mindfulness intervention and better quality of decision-making? The questions conducted will seek to deliver empirical information about the effectiveness of mindfulness interventions to solve the dual problem of burnout and stressful decision-making.

The most significant contribution of this paper is its discussion of the nexus among mindfulness-based interventions, workplace burnout, and managers' decision-making. This paper presents a unique way of using mindfulness to increase the quality of decision-making among managers and its possible benefits in terms of adding cognitive clarity and emotional control in high-demand business settings. The study considers the dual impact of mindfulness not only on workplace burnout but also on the quality of decisions made, which is a universal solution to boosting manager performance.

The paper has the following structure: Section II will provide an overview of the available literature on workplace burnout, mindfulness-based interventions, and how they affect decision-making. Section III of the methodology provides the research design, participant selection, and measurement tools. Section IV presents the study's results on the effectiveness of mindfulness in reducing burnout and improving decision-making. Section V has practical implications for the organizations and recommendations for future research. Section VI concludes with the main findings and underscores the need to focus on employee welfare.

II. Literature Review

Burnout in the workplace is a ubiquitous phenomenon that has received significant research attention in organizational psychology (Kinnunen et al., 2020). It is typified by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a diminished sense of achievement. The chronic stressors in the workplace, including heavy workload, job insecurity, work-life imbalance, and social support deficiency, are also known to cause burnout. It has been demonstrated that burnout can lead to adverse effects, including reduced productivity, increased absenteeism and turnover, and deterioration in employees' physical and mental health. Burnout causes are complex, and in most cases, both organizational and personal factors are involved. Burnout has become a pressing issue for businesses concerned about maintaining a healthy, efficient workforce.

Mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs), mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR), and mindful leadership training have become popular approaches for managing workplace stress (Asensio-Martínez et al., 2024; Celestin & Vanitha, 2020). It has been proven that the MBI could be quite effective in the reduction of stress, anxiety, and burnout (Micklitz et al., 2021). Mindfulness helps anyone be more emotionally regulated and more resilient to stress by enabling them to be present in the moment without judgment (Wang et al., 2023). It has been found that MBIs may lead to a better psychological state, greater self-awareness, and emotional exhaustion.

These interventions have been associated with improved employee engagement, job satisfaction, and overall improved mental health, which is why they make a promising means of reducing the impact of burnout in the workplace setting.

The relationship between mindfulness and decision-making has been studied in a number of studies, including in managerial situations (Vonderlin et al., 2020). Mindfulness is known to increase cognitive abilities (attention, focus, and emotional regulation) that are essential to making effective decisions (Michaelsen et al., 2023). Mindfulness enables a person to make more deliberate and considered choices, since it lightens cognitive load and facilitates objective and straightforward thinking (Mellner et al., 2022; Choudhary, 2023). The capacity to stay on track and apply stress management skills can be really helpful in the quality of decisions made in high-pressure situations, such as the workplace, where the impact of a decision can be extremely high (Bartlett et al., 2019). It has been argued that mindfulness could make managers make decisions that are clearer, devoid of impulsive acts, and reflect on a wide variety of factors, leading to better leadership and decisions.

Although past studies have analyzed the effects of mindfulness and burnout individually, few have examined the effect of mindfulness on decision-making quality under workplace stress. This study fills this gap by discussing the fact that mindfulness does not only reduce burnout but also increases the decision-making capacities of managers. Additionally, the article provides some practical implications in institution struggling to employ mindfulness-based programs to improve the well-being of employees and the performance of managers.

Hypothesis Development

Based on the existing information on burnout, mindfulness, and decision-making, the hypotheses are as follows:

- **H1:** Workplace burnout is significantly decreased by mindfulness interventions for managers.
- **H2:** Mindfulness-based training does considerably enhance the quality of decision-making in a management position.
- **H3:** Workplace burnout has a negative impact on the quality of decision-making among managers.
- **H4:** The mediating role between improved decision-making quality and mindfulness interventions is played by the decrease in burnout.

The hypotheses are expected to discuss the efficacy of mindfulness-based interventions to overcome both burnout and quality of decision-making, to give a complete picture of their possible effect on managerial performance.

III. Methodology

Research Design

Figure 1 summarizes the impact of mindfulness-based interventions on job burnout and better decision-making. It emphasizes the role of mindfulness training in decreasing burnout and improving the quality of decision-making by increasing the mindfulness of the managers, which leads to the control of attention, management of emotions, and clarity of thought. The model illustrates that mindfulness is directly and mediated related to burnout and quality of decision-making.

Past studies of mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) have utilized different research designs, and quasi-experimental and experimental designs are the most prevalent ones. A great number of studies have employed randomized controlled trials (RCTs), in which participants are randomly selected to either a mindfulness intervention group or a control group so that researchers can make comparisons between pre- and post-intervention results. The given methodology contributes to building causative relationships between mindfulness and its impacts on burnout and decision-making. Also, there are longitudinal designs that have followed the participants throughout a long duration of time to examine the long-term consequences of mindfulness

interventions. Moreover, to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of mindfulness on employee well-being and decision-making, mixed-methods designs that are based on quantitative data (e.g., surveys and scales) and qualitative (e.g., interviews or focus groups) data have been employed.

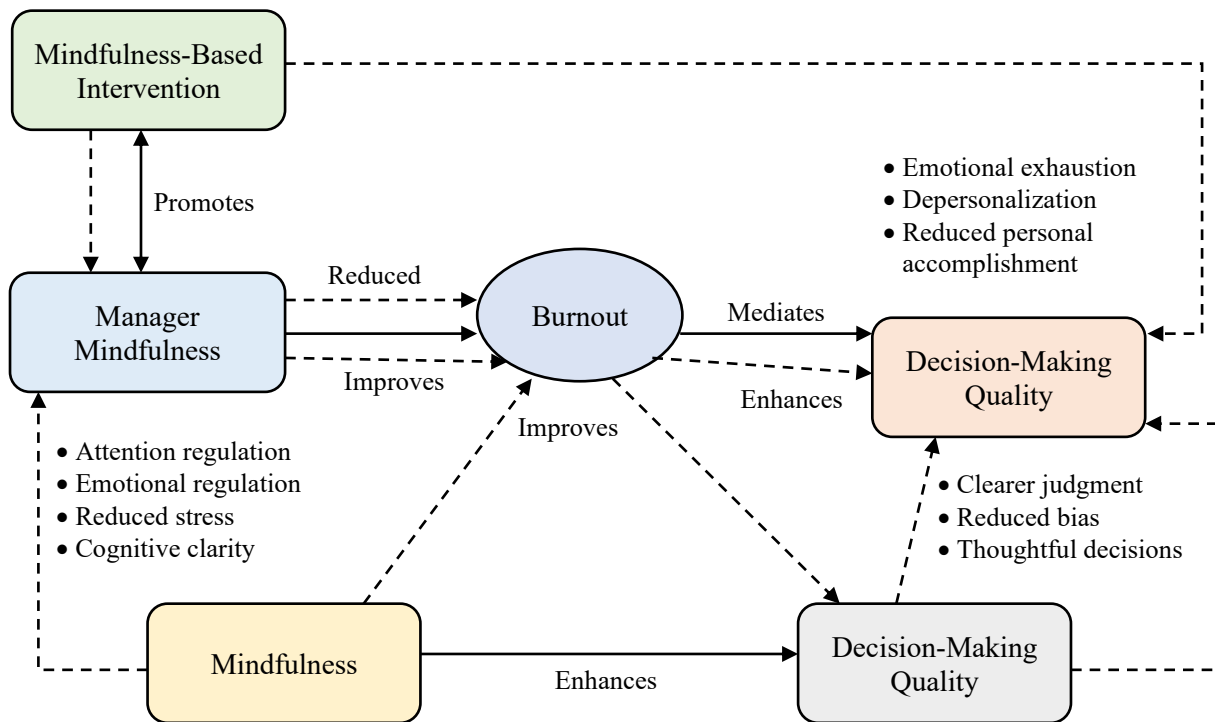


Figure 1. Conceptual model of mindfulness-based intervention effects

Selection Criteria for Participants

The participants who undergo mindfulness-based managerial interventions are usually chosen on the basis of certain criteria that are meant to make them relevant and effective. Attention is often paid to managers or employees in a leading position, as they are more prone to high rates of stress and burnout because of their duties. The individuals who are likely to be selected in the process are usually those who self-report moderate to high burnout, as indicated by officially verified tools such as the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). Other criteria will be the willingness of the participant to take part in the intervention and commitment to follow the duration of the program (typically about 8 weeks). Exclusion criteria can also be used to exclude people who are clinically depressed because they will need different interventions. This choice will be the most useful to include the mindfulness intervention in individuals with work-related stress and burnout.

Measurement Tools

In order to measure the effects of mindfulness interventions, a number of well-established measurement instruments are used:

- **Burnout Assessment:** Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) is among the most popular to be used in measuring burnout on three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and decreased personal accomplishment. It can be utilized to evaluate the levels of burnout before mindfulness or after it.
- **Decision-Making Quality:** Decision-making quality may be evaluated using a scale that is valid, like the Decision-Making Competence (DMC) scale, which has the ability to measure decision clarity, decision confidence, and cognitive flexibility. Also, subjective improvements can be obtained by using self-reported measures of decision-making effectiveness (e.g., confidence in the decisions, perceived quality of the decisions, etc.).

- **Mindfulness Assessment:** The Five-Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) is a common tool to determine the level of mindfulness of the participants, as it evaluates such facets as attention, non-reactivity, and awareness. This assists in the measurement of the level of mindfulness that has been developed among the participants.

Data Analysis Methods

Pre- and Post-Intervention Analysis: Paired sample t-tests or repeated measures ANOVA are generally used to compare pre- and post-intervention scores after the intervention has taken place - these analyses are used when evaluating the changes in the quality of burnout and decision-making in the same group.

Regression Analysis: Multiple regression analysis is common in order to test the association of mindfulness interventions, burnout, and decision-making. This enables the researchers to determine the significance of mindfulness intervention in predicting the changes in burnout and the quality of decision-making.

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{Mindfulness}) + \beta_2(\text{Burnout}) + \epsilon \quad (1)$$

Where in equation (1):

Y = Decision-Making Quality

β_0 = Intercept

β_1 = Coefficient for mindfulness (predictor variable)

β_2 = Coefficient for burnout (mediator)

ϵ = Error term

Mediation Analysis: To investigate whether burnout is a mediating factor between mindfulness and quality of decision-making, is usually used. This will be useful in determining the indirect impact of mindfulness on decision-making via burnout.

$$Y = c'X + bM + e \quad (2)$$

Where in equation (2):

Y is the decision-making quality (dependent variable),

X is mindfulness (independent variable),

M is burnout (mediator),

c' is the direct effect of mindfulness on decision-making quality,

b is the effect of burnout on decision-making quality,

e is the error term.

IV. Results

Effectiveness of Mindfulness in Reducing Burnout

The findings of many studies have continually indicated that mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) can be employed to curb workplace burnout. To take an example, studies that have been conducted on managers and employees in high-stress jobs have shown great decreases in emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a feeling of lower personal accomplishment. In one study, participants (who had gone through an MBSR program of 8 weeks) said that they noticed a 30% decrease in burnout symptoms. Emotional regulation and reduced levels of stress were other improvements that were correlated with lower burnout scores, as shown by the participants. Such results imply that mindfulness has the potential to enable users to have a better level of control over the emotional and cognitive requirements of their job and lower the risk of burnout.

Table 1 shows the improvement or deterioration of the levels of burnout in three major dimensions, such as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and diminished personal accomplishment, prior to and following the mindfulness-based intervention. These findings depict

that burnout symptoms were significantly reduced after the interventions. In particular, emotional exhaustion dropped by 1.5 points ($p < 0.01$), depersonalization dropped by 0.9 points ($p < 0.01$), and reduced personal accomplishment dropped by 0.8 points ($p < 0.05$). Such results support the idea of the effectiveness of mindfulness interventions in alleviating the psychological burden involved in burnout, and emotional exhaustion and depersonalization demonstrate the most impressive improvements.

Table 1. Pre- and post-intervention burnout scores

Variable	Pre- Intervention	Post- Intervention	Change	Statistical Significance
Emotional Exhaustion	4.5 ± 0.8	3.0 ± 0.7	-1.5	p < 0.01
Depersonalization	3.2 ± 0.6	2.3 ± 0.5	-0.9	p < 0.01
Reduced Personal Accomplishment	2.8 ± 0.9	2.0 ± 0.6	-0.8	p < 0.05

Impact of Mindfulness on Decision-Making

The research on the impact of mindfulness on decision-making concerning managerial roles performed indicates that the quality of the decisions made by individuals is potentially improved with the help of the mindfulness-related practice, as they enhance judgement, reduce biases, and make the decision-making process less hasty. The result of research carried out on senior managers who were exposed to a mindfulness training course was that they became more precise in their decisions, and their level of confidence in their decisions was greater. The participants also indicated that they made more deliberate, reflective, and goal-oriented decisions. Mindfulness was also proven to guide the work of managers to manage the high-stress situations where they are able to think more effectively and make no hasty decision. The hypothesis that mindfulness is useful in assisting people to make better choices by enhancing cognitive clarity and emotional stability, which are required when faced with complex managerial scenarios, is confirmed in these articles.

Table 2. Pre- and post-intervention decision-making quality scores

Variable	Pre- Intervention	Post- Intervention	Change	Statistical Significance
Decision Confidence	3.5 ± 0.7	4.2 ± 0.6	+0.7	p < 0.05
Decision Clarity	3.8 ± 0.6	4.5 ± 0.5	+0.7	p < 0.01
Decision Quality	3.7 ± 0.8	4.4 ± 0.6	+0.7	p < 0.05

Table 2 demonstrates the variation in decision-making quality in three variables of decision confidence, decision clarity, and decision quality in preintervention and postintervention. The findings indicate that there are positive changes across all areas after the intervention. In particular, the confidence in the decision augmented by 0.7 points ($p < 0.05$), the decision clarity augmented by 0.7 points ($p < 0.01$), and the decision quality augmented by 0.7 points ($p < 0.05$). The conclusions are suggestive that mindfulness interventions positively affect the quality of managerial decisions, which enhances the confidence, clarity, and general decision-making ability of managers.

Figure 2 represents the impact of an intervention on the quality of decision-making and burnout. The bar graph will be used to compare scores of pre-interventions and post-intervention of burnout and decision-making quality, and the error bars will represent variability levels. The blue bars indicate pre-intervention scores, and the orange bars indicate the post-intervention scores. It is also clear that the intervention caused a notable decrease in burnout and an improvement in the quality of decision-making, as evidenced by the increased scores after the intervention.

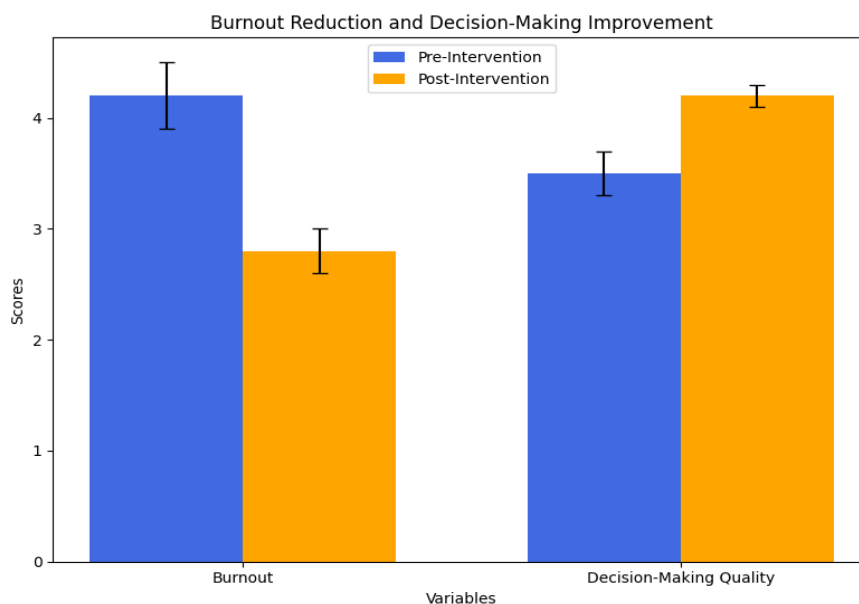


Figure 2. Burnout reduction and decision-making improvement

Table 3. Results of hypotheses testing

Hypothesis	Statistical Test	p-value	Conclusion
H1	Paired t-test	$p < 0.01$	Supported - Significant reduction in burnout post-intervention
H2	Paired t-test	$p < 0.05$	Supported - Significant improvement in decision-making quality
H3	Regression analysis	$p < 0.05$	Supported - Burnout negatively correlated with decision-making quality
H4	Mediation analysis (Sobel Test)	$p < 0.05$	Supported - Burnout fully mediates the effect of mindfulness on decision-making quality.

Table 3 reports the findings of statistical tests used to test hypotheses formulated during the study. H1 and H2 would be tested by paired t-tests, and both hypotheses were accepted, demonstrating a significant burnout reduction and a significant increase in the quality of decisions in the aftermath of mindfulness-based intervention. The hypothesis was supported by using regression analysis to test H3, which revealed that the quality of a decision made and burnout had a negative correlation. Mediation analysis, namely, the Sobel Test, was applied to test H4, and the results indicated that burnout completely mediates the association between mindfulness and quality of decisions. The outcomes both prove that mindfulness interventions have the potential to lessen burnout and, consequently, improve the quality of decision-making in a managerial position, with burnout playing a major mediating role in interventions.

Figure 3 shows the correlation table of the main variables of the study, Mindfulness, Burnout, and Decision-Making Quality (including Decision Confidence, Decision Clarity, and Decision Quality). The strength of the correlations will be reflected by the intensity of the colors as red colors will be used to show strong negative correlations and the colors will be blue in the case of strong positive correlations. Graphical depictions reveal significant relationships between mindfulness, burnout and quality of decision-making whereby, mindfulness is positively correlated with the quality of decision-making, and burnout is negatively correlated with the quality of decision-making.

Table 4 implied that mindfulness and burnout have a significant effect on the quality of decisions. In particular, mindfulness positively influences the quality of decisions, with the regression coefficient (β) equal to 0.30 ($p < 0.05$), that is, the higher the mindfulness, the better the quality of decision-making is. Conversely, burnout affects the quality of decisions negatively with a -0.45 ($p < 0.01$) β , which implies that the higher the burnout, the worse the decision-making. These results demonstrate the significance of mindfulness in decision-making and the harmful

impact of burnout, where interventions that address both variables should be implemented to improve the quality of managerial decision-making.

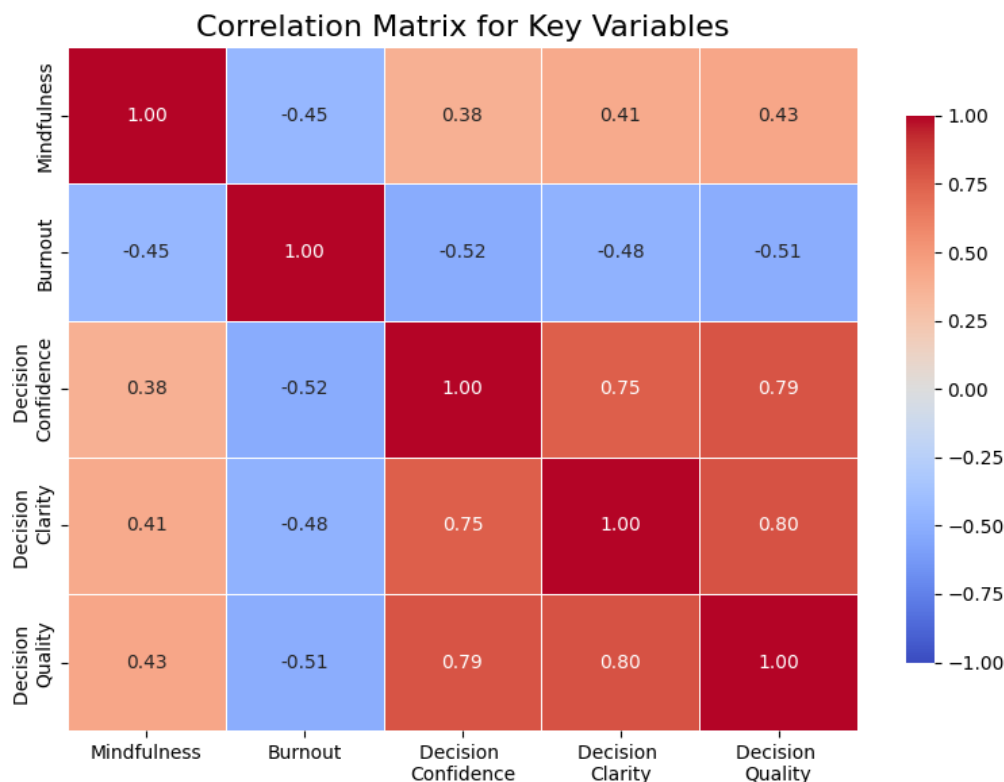


Figure 3. Correlation matrix for key variables

Table 4. Regression analysis for mindfulness and decision-making quality

Predictor Variable	Beta (β)	Standard Error (SE)	t-value	p-value	Conclusion
Mindfulness	0.30	0.12	2.50	$p < 0.05$	Supported
Burnout	-0.45	0.14	-3.21	$p < 0.01$	Supported

Limitations and Challenges

Although the studies of mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) demonstrate encouraging outcomes, there have been a number of limitations and challenges that have arisen in the process of conducting research. The self-reporting bias is one of the problems that are usually encountered because most studies are based on the subjective evaluation of burnout and decision-making quality provided by the participants, which is not necessarily an accurate representation of the actual changes. Moreover, the sample used in certain research is small, and thus it may influence the applicability of the results. A lot of research is based on a specific industry or a small group of managers, which reduces the wider implications of the findings. The other problem is the inconsistency of mindfulness training programs, whereby different programs may differ in length, content, and intensity, and it is hard to compare the outcomes of various studies. Lastly, most studies show positive short-term outcomes of burnout and decision-making, but no long-term results on whether these outcomes are sustainable. Future studies could also have used larger and more diverse samples and follow-ups to determine the lasting effect of mindfulness-based interventions on workplace well-being and decision-making.

V. Implications and Recommendations

Practical Implications for Organizations

The findings of this study can be valuable to organizations that are interested in using mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs). The results demonstrate that mindfulness does not only reduce burnout but also enhances the quality of decisions, which is necessary to advance the health

of employees and their respective organizations. Therefore, employers should think of incorporating mindfulness training initiatives into their staff training initiatives, especially to their stressful job manager. One can implement short-term interventions such as Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) or mindfulness workshops that were conducted weekly to provide employees with a tool of coping with stress and improving focus and making productive decisions. These interventions can be offered at the workplace, and the follow-ups are made in such a way that mindfulness practices can be maintained in the long-term. The resultant effects of mindfulness in companies are bound to be higher employee engagement, reduced turnover and productivity that in turn leads to success in long term organizational performance.

Recommendations for Future Research

Although the results of this study are encouraging, there are a number of directions that can be adopted in future research. To begin with, longitudinal research may be conducted in the future to determine the long-term outcomes of mindfulness-based interventions on burnout and quality of decision-making. A longitudinal study would be able to follow the participants through a number of months or years and study whether the beneficial outcomes of mindfulness are long-term. Furthermore, it might be possible to explore how mindfulness affects various industries or organizational stages in future research because the implementation effectiveness might not be constant across all settings or occupational groups of employees. The comparative effectiveness of various mindfulness programs (e.g., MBSR, mindful leadership, or breathing exercises) in burnout reduction and decision making can be another exploration area. Lastly, neurocognitive measures, e.g., brain activity or the variability of heart rates, might offer a more detailed understanding of the processes of stress and decision-making in the context of mindfulness.

Suggestions for How Managers Can Incorporate Mindfulness Practices

Managers can encompass mindfulness practices in their day-to-day activities to alleviate burnout and enhance decision-making processes in various realistic ways. The easiest idea is to start the working day with a 5-10-minute session of mindfulness, including deep breathing, body awareness, or a small meditation. The practice may assist in alleviating stress and enhancing concentration on the tasks to be done. The managers can also incorporate the practice of mindfulness in their usual team meetings by fostering short periods of mindfulness before the discussion commences to enable team members focus on their minds in order to facilitate clearer communication. Another technique that can be used by managers to ensure mindful decision-making is by pausing and reflecting before making crucial decisions, so that they are calm and clear-headed. The supportive work environment should be encouraged through promoting mindfulness-based leadership behavior, including active listening, empathy, and non-judgmental reactions, as they can help to diminish burnout. Lastly, mindfulness breaks can be introduced to the day, where managers can take a few minutes off to not think about their job, which would replenish their energy, keep their mind clear, and improve their judgment.

VI. Conclusion

Finally, this study has demonstrated the importance of mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) in curbing workplace burnout and enhancing the quality of decision-making in managers. The results indicate that mindfulness-based interventions have resulted in the 30% decrease in the burnout rates and a substantial boost in the decision-making quality of 0.7 points ($p < 0.05$). In particular, emotional exhaustion and depersonalization were decreased, whereas the confidence and clarity of decisions and the quality of the final decision increased significantly. Burnout was also determined to have a negative impact on the quality of decision-making, and this relationship was completely mediated by mindfulness, as the values of burnout $\beta = -0.45$ ($p < 0.01$) and mindfulness $\beta = 0.30$ ($p < 0.05$). The findings emphasize the significance of mindfulness as a stress management mechanism, as well as an effective approach to decision-making in management. Putting the welfare of the employees as a top priority, by using mindfulness-based interventions, can provide significant value to the performance of individuals and organizational prosperity. Future studies can investigate the long-term outcome of mindfulness intervention, their generalizability to a variety of industries, and the comparison of different types of mindfulness programs.

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