THE EXPERIENCE OF MINDFULNESS AND ITS APPLICATION IN THE WORKPLACE: AN EXPLORATIVE STUDY

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CIPSHI	Institutional Committee for the Protection of Human Beings in Research
CITI	Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative
COVID-19	Coronavirus Pandemic
FMI	Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory
MAAS	Mindfulness Attention and Awareness Scale
MBI	Mindfulness-Based Interventions
MBCT	Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy
MBSR	Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction

CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL

Certificamos que hemos leído y evaluado este documento y que en nuestra opinión es adecuado en el alcance y la calidad de su contenido para el grado de Máster en Artes con especialidad en Psicología con área de énfasis en Psicología Industrial-Organizacional del Departamento de Psicología de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, Recinto de Río Piedras.

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ABSTRACT

In recent years mindfulness has become increasingly popular in the world of organizations. This popularity has led to mindfulness resources in organizations being developed faster than its scientific evaluation. There is little understanding on its meaning and implications for individuals in the context of the workplace as research has focused on quantitative method approaches and disregarded the voices of the individuals. For this reason, this study sought to describe the experience of mindfulness and explore its application and utility in the context of the workplace from a first-person perspective. The objectives that guided this thesis were: (1) to examine the contributions of previous research and identify gaps and controversies in mindfulness literature, (2) describe the experience of mindfulness in its practitioners, (3) discover how mindfulness is applied in the workplace by its practitioners, the challenges they face, and the perceived effects of its application, and (4) examine the relationship between the relational processes through which mindfulness is taught, practiced, and experienced to the way practitioners perceive its meaning and its social utility in the context of their workplaces. A total of four informants, who identified as mindfulness practitioners and had been actively practicing mindfulness for at least a year while they were employed, were recruited to participate in the study through a convenience sampling method. The participants were individually interviewed, and the data was analyzed through a thematic analysis. The findings of this study illustrate differences in the narratives and application of mindfulness when utilized in the context of the workplace and in daily lives. Mindfulness in the context of daily life was a planned activity in the informants' lives and was understood as a self-help tool which also had unexpected positive implications in the quality of life and relationships of the informants. Mindfulness in the context of the workplace was used as a stress management tool in moments of increased stress, which allowed them to cope with the

demands of their environment and meet the expectations of their jobs. It was also revealed that there were contradictions in the discourse and application of mindfulness initiatives in the workplace.

Key words: mindfulness, meditation, workplace, industrial-organizational psychology

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THE EXPERIENCE OF MINDFULNESS AND ITS APPLICATION IN THE WORKPLACE: AN EXPLORATIVE STUDY

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

In the last 15 years, mindfulness has become an increasingly common topic in the world of organizations (Purser, 2018). Large-scale companies such as Google, Aetna, General Mills, Ford Motors, among others have invested in mindfulness-based training for employees and managers as a means to improve well-being and manage stress in the workplace (Purser, 2018; Antanaitis, 2015; Lomas et al., 2018).

These mindfulness training programs derive from Jon Kabat-Zinn's Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program created in the late 1970s as an alternative treatment for patients who suffered from chronic pain (Hyland et al., 2015). The MBSR program integrates different practices, mindfulness being one of them, among other practices included are yoga, reading material, group interactions, explicit stress reduction practices, etc. (Kabat-Zinn, 1982). These practices are crafted specifically to attend stress felt by individuals. The program's success led to the adaptation of the MBSR program to treat other physical and mental health conditions (Lomas et al., 2018).

In recent years, there has been a rising interest in mindfulness programs in occupational settings, not only for staff suffering mental health issues but for workers in general (Lomas et al., 2018; Van Gordon et al., 2014). This has led to mindfulness training in the workplace to emerge as a separate field from MBSR training (Hyland et al., 2015), being referred to as Mindfulness-Based Interventions (MBI). MBI are interventions that are adapted from the MBSR program, distinguished for utilizing formal meditation techniques (namely, derivatives of MBSR programs) (Lomas et al., 2018; Van Dam et al., 2017). These interventions may vary in content and form depending on the populations for which they are adapted and the accompanying idiosyncratic objectives of investigators or stakeholders (Van Dam et al., 2017). Today,

organizations offer to customize mindfulness training programs intended to improve well-being in the workplace, performance, to develop adaptative resilience and emotional intelligence, to create effective work teams, among others, by relating the program to the organization's need and its culture (Antanaitis, 2015; SIYLI, 2020).

The popularity of mindfulness has grown to the point where it has become a billion-dollar business in the mental wellness economy (GWI, 2020). Forbes magazine featured mindfulness programs as "the next big thing in business leadership" as a result of its claimed benefits and profitability as a wellness initiative (Schenck, 2019). This enthusiasm with mindfulness has meant that mindfulness resources are developing faster than its scientific evaluation (Ingram, 2015; Heuman, 2014). Its use by corporations has been criticized for overstating mindfulness as a remedy to aid various types of human deficiencies (Purser, 2018; Van Dam et al., 2017). Furthermore, Purser (2018) argues that the mindfulness discourse adopted by corporations has privatized stress by placing the burden on employees to adapt individually to existing conditions and dismissing possible systemic causes.

There is minimal understanding of the alleged implications mindfulness has for people and organizations in the context of the workplace and what makes this phenomenon appealing to them (Cobb, 2016). Additionally, there is little to no research regarding the challenges that employees may face in the application of mindfulness in their workplace and any adverse effects that may result from this. Conclusions regarding its implications are typically drawn from self-reported questionnaires or business-related measures, such as health care costs and productivity (Antanaitis, 2015) that may not be attributable to mindfulness itself but to MBI. This study seeks to provide an insight on this matter by inquiring about practitioners' experience with mindfulness and its application in the workplace.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness has been defined across the literature in various ways. It is often conceptualized as an internal state or trait, with behavioral and neural correlates (Stanley & Longden, 2021). For this study, mindfulness will be defined as "awareness of present experience with acceptance" (Germer, et al. 2005). I selected this definition as I feel it represents the construct from a broad perspective. Nonetheless, the complexity of this construct requires further elaboration to be able to capture its meaning.

The term *mindfulness* is founded on the quality of "bare attention", which refers to "the clear and single-minded awareness of what actually happens to us and in us, at the successive moments of perception" (Thera, 1968, p. vii, as cited in Bodhi, 2011). This involves noticing what is emerging in the field of consciousness (in the present moment) "that neither linguistically nor conceptually elaborates on the bare facts of observed experience" (Kang & Whittingham, 2010, p. 165). In this sense, "to not conceptually elaborate refers to the capacity of relating to whatever is being noticed, with non-reactiveness, non-condemnation, acceptance, or non-interference" (Morales, 2021, p. 192). Another quality found in mindfulness is referred to as Clear Comprehension, which involves "the capacity to discern and comprises the investigative and ethical dimension of mindfulness" (Morales, 2020, p. 498). This represents "an aspect of our awareness that allows us to recognize whether our ways of relating to ourselves and others are harmful or, on the contrary, are conducive to personal and collective well-being (Thera, 2001, as cited in Morales, 2020).

Mindfulness can refer to both: (1) a state or quality of mind; and (2) a meditation practice designed to foster this (Lomas et al., 2018). In practicing mindfulness, people learn how to "observe one's thoughts and feelings as temporary, objective events in the mind, as opposed to

reflections of the self that are not necessarily true" (Fresco et al., 2007, p. 234). The practices typically develop three skills: the capacity to focus or stabilize attention, the ability to remain aware of the changing aspects of experience, and the capacity to relate to whatever one's experiencing in an accepting and caring manner (Pollak et al., 2014, as cited in Morales, 2021). One may coordinate specific times to practice mindfulness, but it is not necessary to do so as "in principle, there is no experience or activity in life where mindfulness can't be brought to bear" (Morales, 2021A, p.165). Mindfulness can be practiced while sitting, walking, standing, or lying down while relating to others or in solitary seclusion (Morales, 1986). What is considered important in the practice of mindfulness is to bring a present-centered focus to attention and a sense of compassionate acceptance to whatever we may experience (Morales, 1986).

Mindfulness in the Workplace

Mindfulness has been found to have positive relationships with workplace performance (Good et al., 2016; Dane & Brummel, 2013), work engagement (Leroy et al., 2013; Lu et al., 2021), employee wellbeing (Kersemaekers et al., 2018; Mellor et al. 2016), job satisfaction (Lu et al., 2021; Lin et al., 2020), and leadership (King and Harr, 2017; Arendt, 2019). These findings "support" mindfulness' claimed benefits as portrayed by popular media. Nonetheless, when further examining these studies one can identify the findings are essentially grounded on data collected from mindfulness-based interventions (MBI). These studies adopted similar strategies by implementing an MBI to assess the relationship of mindfulness with other variables through self-reported measurement scales. While this constitutes verifiable evidence, there is not much to say about what implications it has for individuals in their workplace. Furthermore, another significant limitation of these MBI studies is that they did not take into account if the participants were knowledgeable about mindfulness or if they had practiced or experienced

mindfulness before the intervention. Taking this into account may have information to add to the findings obtained.

Concluding whether or not mindfulness presents positive outcomes in the workplace is still unwarranted, for research on the application of mindfulness in the workplace is still scarce. Much of the research on mindfulness in the workplace has focused on the implementation of MBI, which is limited in reporting the outcomes of the intervention and not that of mindfulness. As mentioned earlier, although MBI includes mindfulness practices, there are other core processes involved in the program that can influence its outcomes (Bishop, 2002; Glomb et al., 2011). Therefore, the outcomes and findings obtained through MBI may not correspond to mindfulness itself.

Purpose and Research Questions

Much of the research on mindfulness has focused on assessing the outcomes of MBI through self-reported questionnaires. This has presented a limitation in understanding how mindfulness operates in individuals, the experiences they go through, what meaning it has in their lives, how they understand it, and how they may integrate this into their work lives. Furthermore, studies have generally not addressed whether or not participants practice mindfulness in their daily lives or if they had ever been associated with mindfulness, which may have an impact on the findings that are acquired. Considering these issues, the purpose of this study is to describe mindfulness practitioners' experience of mindfulness, how they understand their experience and how they integrate it into their distinct work environments.

The questions this research seeks to answer are:

1. How do mindfulness practitioners understand and describe the experience of mindfulness and its perceived effects in and out of the workplace and face the challenges of integrating it into their work lives?
2. How are the relational processes through which mindfulness is taught, practiced, and experienced related to the way practitioners perceive its meaning and its social utility in the context of their workplaces?

Objectives

The main objectives of this study are:

1. Examine the contributions of previous research and identify gaps and controversies in mindfulness literature.
2. Describe the experience of mindfulness in its practitioners.
3. Discover how mindfulness is applied in the workplace by its practitioners, the challenges they face, and the perceived effects of its application.
4. Examine the relationship between the relational processes through which mindfulness is taught, practiced, and experienced to the way practitioners perceive its meaning and its social utility in the context of their workplaces.

Method

To answer the research questions, I conducted an explorative study with a qualitative approach in which four (4) participants who identify themselves as mindfulness practitioners discussed their experience and its application and relevance in the workplace. The information was gathered through semi-structured interviews and analyzed utilizing the thematic analysis method.

Justification

This investigation presumes to contribute to the study and development of mindfulness in the field of psychology, workplaces, and the scientific community. This research project contributes to the understanding of the phenomenon of mindfulness primarily in two aspects. On one hand, it provides an insight into how the experience is applied in the workplace context. On the other hand, it takes into account the participant's role as an integral part of the study of the phenomenon. In a first-person account, by placing mindfulness in the context of real lives one can have a vivid illustration of how people perceive their lives, primarily focused in the workplace context, has been affected as a result of carrying out this practice.

By including the valuable attributes of the experience from a first-person perspective, this research project presents something distinct as to what has been usually done methodologically to investigate mindfulness. The methodology to conduct this project provides an insight into how the experience of mindfulness is constructed by individuals who incur in this practice in their daily lives and what aspects of the experience of mindfulness can be transferred to workplace contexts. The study seeks to provide an insight as to its utility in the workplace, perceived effects, benefits, challenges, and value.

For all these reasons, this study will contribute to the development of the study of mindfulness in the psychology field, particularly within industrial-organizational psychology.

Theoretical Framework

This research project approaches mindfulness from a relational perspective guided by social constructionist theory. The social constructionism theory's basic proposal is that "what we take to be the truth about the world importantly depends on the social relationships of which we are a part" (Gergen, 2015, p.3). This perspective abandons the pursuit of universal truth and

seeks to explore the social life that becomes possible through language and social interaction, and the meaning that is co-created from these interactions. To the social constructionist, ideas emerge from ongoing dialogue and do not belong to any individual. These ideas may not be judged as right or wrong, instead, they are viewed as multiple perspectives that are dependent on an individual's particular standpoint or tradition of understanding, that are useful for communicating with different people at different times.

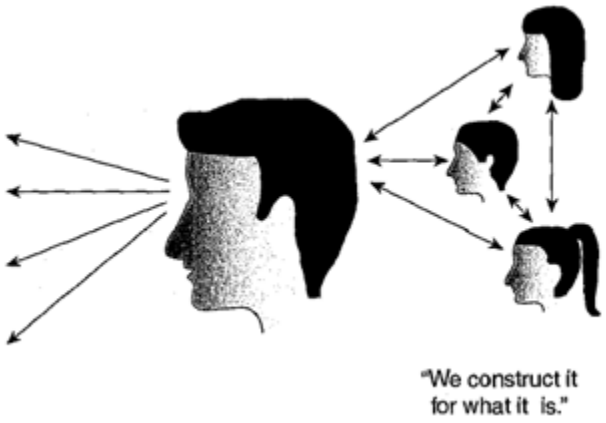
To elucidate this perspective, I will refer to Gergen's (2015) four constructionist proposals. The first proposal states that "the ways in which we describe and explain the world are not required by 'what there is'". There is no "truth" about what we make out of the world. 'What there is' results from the words that we assign to our perception of the world, indicating that through language we create meaning. Second, "the ways in which we describe and explain the world are the outcomes of relationships". This suggests that the meaning that is granted to our descriptions of the world is not an individual phenomenon. It is based on a social agreement that results from individuals coordinating their activities together.

The third proposal asserts that "constructions gain their significance from their social utility". Through relationships, we create reasonably reliable patterns of coordination (Gergen, 2015). This is to say that the meaning of our constructions is relative to the social context in which we are relating. When people say that a certain description is accurate, it is not being judged as to how well it represents the world. Rather, it is that the words that are being used in a certain description function as "truthful" within the rules of a particular game. Gergen (2015) utilizes the "game metaphor" to denote that in different social interactions there are various sets of conventions regarding what is acceptable and what is not, which is created collectively in our way of doing things together.

The fourth proposal is that "values are created and sustained within forms of life". To say "forms of life" refers to the words, actions, and objects that are part of our relationships. Gergen (2015) suggests that as we develop language and trusted patterns of living by relating to each other, we also develop values. These values can be explicit, but are typically implicit, meaning that "they are just present in our way of doing things" (Gergen, 2015, p. 12). The values that we favor are influenced by our relationships, and these distinguish our approaches and the "truths" we accept and go about. Figure 1 presents a summary of the discussed proposals.

Figure 1

Constructionionalist conception of knowledge: "We relate and I interpret"



Note. From *An Invitation to Social Construction* (3rd ed., p. 12), K. Gergen, 2015, Sage Publications.

Mindfulness is not regarded as a social constructionist practice (Morales, 2021). However, mindfulness within the Buddhist discourse (which will be further discussed in Chapter 2) is considered to correspond with social constructionism, for its fundamentals and meaning are only valid within a relational context (Maurits Kwee, 2021). The study of mindfulness within psychology has traditionally focused on configuring mindfulness as a practice centered on the

individual. This dates back to the 1960s in which researchers had been committed to identifying the underlying neurobiological processes that account for the presumed benefits of meditation (Kirmayer, 2015; Arístegui, 2021). Nonetheless, Arístegui (2021) argues that restricting the experience of mindfulness within the internal psychic domain of a singular person presents a limitation on the development and realization of the meaning of the practice itself. When we shift our understanding of mindfulness into the relational domain "we connect to traditions of understanding that recognize that we are always in relationship, regardless of whether we are relating to our personal experience, relating to others, or to nature" (Morales, 2020, p. 165). Mindfulness awareness within this context can operate as a relational presence in which the practitioner shifts present-centered, open, curious awareness from the individual to the relational field (Morales, 2020).

Relational mindfulness is described by Gale (2020) as "a participatory form of meditation aimed at the cultivation of discernment (wisdom) through practices illuminating how we are inter-beings-in-moment-to-moment-engagement". According to Surrey and Kramer (2013), it involves moment-to-moment engagement and careful sensitive noticing of "the texture of the relationship, the intensity of connection, the sudden or subtle shifts into disconnection, the sense of collaboration or division" (p. 103). Morales (2020A) suggests that "the awareness of being-in-relationship and interconnectedness can potentiate our capacity to participate collaboratively and dialogically in relationships, helping us to enrich our relational bonds and enhance the quality of our attention and care of the processes of relating" (p. 196). Relational mindfulness may lead to "social agency" (Arístegui, 2021) which allows the individual to enter the relational moment "with a genuine responsiveness that is open, engaged, and relationally attuned, without being

compulsively attached to beliefs and opinions and pre-understanding of right or wrong" (Morales, 2021, p. 195).

The social constructionist perspective enables me to shift the focus of mindfulness from the individual to the relational domain. This view highlights the role of relational processes in the co-creation of meaning and sustains that our ways of understanding and actions are constructed from engaging collaboratively and dialogically (McNamee, 2010). Rather than focusing mindfulness solely on the individual self, I expand the focus to include the relationships that are involved in the construction of its meaning to understand its social utility for people in the context of the workplace (McNamee, 2010).

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I will first present a brief description of mindfulness within the Buddhist discourse and its transformation in the Western world. Then I will describe mindfulness research studies conducted in the workplace and examine the available qualitative studies within the mindfulness literature. I will also examine predominant issues in mindfulness research and address the problematic tendency to attribute MBI outcomes to mindfulness. Finally, I will describe mindfulness research studies conducted in Puerto Rico.

Buddhist Mindfulness

Mindfulness is rooted in Eastern spiritual traditions, derived mainly from Buddhist teachings and training methods. The concept of mindfulness is the translation of the Pāli term *sati* which means "remembrance" or "bearing something in mind" (Bodhi, 2011). It implies "to adhere in a particular moment to the object of consciousness with a clear mental focus" (Rosch, 2007). Within the Buddhist discourse, mindfulness is considered a fundamental component of the Noble Eightfold Path, which is the way that leads to the cessation of suffering (Morales, 2020). Martínez-Pernía and colleagues (2020) establish that "the relevant sense of suffering here concerns the experience of suffering, and that the practice of mindfulness is something one could do on purpose to change the way we experience what happens to us" (p. 73). The practice of mindfulness sets the path to liberation from suffering (*dukkha*, in Pāli) by "being wakeful and awakened, i.e., not asleep, and attentively aware of the ins and outs at all six sense doors" (Maurits Kwee, 2021, p. 29). This implies that instead of avoiding unpleasant or painful experiences, "one is asked to allow, be present, to inquire, feel and notice from the 'inside', whatever is emerging regardless of whether it's experienced as distressing or not" (Morales, 2021, p. 194). Maurits Kwee (2021) delineates this teaching as the "skillful art of relating

peacefully within (as well as without) which is based on self-confronting with own body, speech, and mind, that is actions, thoughts, and feelings".

According to some early Buddhist scholars, mindfulness was practiced mainly by ancient monastics as part of the path toward enlightenment (Kirmayer, 2015). Enlightenment within the Buddhist discourse refers to the knowledge or wisdom, or awakened intellect of a Buddha. The individuals that formed part of the monastic community renounced their families, possessions, social position, and other mundane attachments and would have to go through a resocialization process to a different moral order that would ground their meditative practice (Kirmayer, 2015). Within this context, the practice of mindfulness involved having a clear framework of goals and an interpretative system that was grounded by a social context that gave meaning to the experience (Kirmayer, 2015). McMahan (2017) states that "in their origins, Buddhist meditation practices had explicit goals, both distant (transcending the world entirely in the bliss of nirvāṇa) and more proximate (creating and reinforcing certain attitudes, ethical orientations, sensibilities, and cognitive maps)" (p. 27).

Mindfulness in the Western World

The versions of mindfulness meditation that have been imported to clinical settings can be traced to Buddhist teachers (Kornfield, 1977, as cited in Kirmayer, 2015) that aimed to make meditation accessible to people who did not have much exposure to Buddhist doctrine. Mindfulness gained popularity in Western medicine and psychology in the late 1970s with the creation of the MBSR training program, developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn (1986), which was designed to be a complementary therapy to aid medical patients (Van Dam, 2017). During this period, Buddhist-derived mindfulness techniques were beginning to be taught in a secularized and compartmentalized manner to be integrated into contemporary therapeutic models

(McMahan, 2017; Panaoiti, 2015). With the secularization of mindfulness, the complex ideas and foundation of the Buddhist teachings that ground this construct were detached, reducing the complexity of what it meant and consisted of for monastics (Kirmayer, 2015).

Since then, the popularity of mindfulness has outreached clinical settings and has become a mainstream commercial phenomenon (Ingram, 2015; Purser, 2018).

As McMahan (2017) points out:

> "Currently, mindfulness has been attached to all sorts of social activities such as mindful: pregnancy, birthing, parenting, relationships, teaching, management skills, coaching, overcoming shyness, traveling, social activism, knitting, crafting, politics, sex, money management, leadership, investing, weight loss, consulting, tennis, writing, efficiency at work, hiking, selling, horsemanship, cooking, gardening, playing musical instruments, and overcoming addiction, stress, and grief." (p.35).

Large companies such as Google and General Mills started to integrate mindfulness-based programs to deal with work-related challenges configured to be due to stressful workplaces (Antanaitis, 2015; Purser, 2018). Due to its purported positive results, the implementation of mindfulness training programs in organizations has become very prominent in businesses. Today, MBI programs have been repackaged, promising to increase emotional intelligence, resilience, leadership, among others, while maintaining the same structure as the MBSR program (Antanaitis, 2015; Tomassini, 2016).

The term "corporate mindfulness" has been used to describe this social phenomenon in which the number of mindfulness-based interventions within large companies and organizations has burgeoned due to media coverage and other relevant factors (Purser, 2018; Tomassini, 2016).

Moreover, the implementation of mindfulness programs in organizations has been criticized for shifting the burden of initiative and responsibility from the organization to the individual (Tomassini, 2016). Within the discourse of corporate mindfulness, "stress is framed as a personal problem, located in the conditions of modern life, and mindfulness is the remedy to help employees work more efficiently and calmly within toxic environments" (Tomassini, 2016, p. 225).

There is an evident disconnect between Eastern and Western mindfulness. Denuding mindfulness from its core values and ethical underpinnings have contributed to transforming its meaning, reducing mindfulness to a self-help technique (Tomassini, 2016). While Jon Kabat-Zinn has argued that mindfulness involves universal aspects of human functioning which makes mindfulness transferable across contexts (Kabat-Zinn, 2015; Kabat-Zinn, 2002), other researchers have differed stating that the context and how the practice is carried out may influence its outcomes (Chiesa, 2011, Kirmayer, 2015).

Mindfulness Studies in the Workplace

Stanley and Longden (2021) argue that mindfulness research has consisted of hypothetico-deductive studies aimed to predict and control human behavior through psychometrics, experimentation, and randomized control trials. Most of the workplace mindfulness studies I examined are consistent with this statement.

In this section, I will be presenting mindfulness studies conducted in the workplace context. Most of these studies are quantitative method studies, characterized by the use of self-report questionnaires to evaluate the effect of a mindfulness-based intervention. Other studies focus on "measuring" mindfulness levels in individuals through psychometric scales and

establishing correlations with other constructs such as job satisfaction, performance, work engagement, wellbeing, burnout, perceived stress, resilience, etc.

In a study conducted by Dane and Brummel (2013), they found a positive relationship between mindfulness and job performance. Their study was done with service workers and managers in the American chain restaurant industry. The authors selected this work context to examine mindfulness in highly dynamic environments that require constant attention to different targets. They assessed mindfulness through the Mindfulness Attention and Awareness Scale (MAAS), developed by Brown and Ryan (2003). The MAAS is a 15-item scale that claims to assess core characteristics of dispositional mindfulness, namely, open or receptive awareness of and attention to what is taking place in the present (Brown and Ryan (2003). The servers' performance was rated by their managers utilizing a 5-point scale questionnaire. Dane and Brummel (2013) concluded that their findings suggest that mindfulness may be an important determinant of job performance.

Similarly, King and Harr (2017) examined the relationship between mindfulness and performance in Australian senior managers of a global engineering firm. Mindfulness was evaluated utilizing the MAAS scale and performance was rated by their immediate supervisors through a survey tool. They concluded that mindfulness was positively related to leadership self-mastery and leadership organizational transformation, which would potentially provide greater leadership behaviors.

Lin and colleagues (2020) explored the relationships between mindfulness and job satisfaction in nurses and the mediating roles of positive affect and resilience. Mindfulness was measured through the Chinese version of the MAAS scale, which was reported to have high validity and reliability. The study found that nurses' mindfulness was positively correlated with

job satisfaction and that it predicted job satisfaction. They further concluded that nurses with prominent levels of mindfulness have more positive affect, which supports their development of higher levels of resilience in the workplace, preventing negative experiences and burnout and enhancing their well-being and job satisfaction (Lin et al., 2020). Interestingly, the study compares their results with other studies that measured mindfulness levels on oncology nurses and pediatric nurses and suggested that mindfulness levels may vary between specialties. However, the study did not consider whether or not the nurses practiced mindfulness, which may be an aspect to contemplate when examining variations in mindfulness levels.

Leroy and colleagues (2013) examine the link between mindfulness, authentic functioning, and work engagement through an experimental study design. They implemented mindfulness training modeled after Kabat-Zinn's MBSR program. In addition to offering mindfulness practice sessions, the participants were encouraged to engage in informal mindfulness practices such as mindful coffee or lunch breaks, mindful conversations with boss or colleagues, and mindful concentration on specific work tasks (Leroy et al., 2013). By measuring mindfulness levels with Brown and Ryan's (2003) MAAS scale, the researchers concluded that mindfulness practices support the positive outcomes of work engagement.

Lu et al. (2021), examined the development of state mindfulness and its effect on emotional exhaustion, job satisfaction, and work engagement, by implementing a mindfulness-based intervention. The intervention was an 8-week program delivered through a mobile application that included educational reading material on mindfulness, mindlessness, and acceptance; meditation, breathing, and relaxation techniques; attentional awareness and body scanning exercises; material addressing how mindfulness techniques could be adapted to overcome potential workplace challenges. To measure the interventions' effectiveness, the

participants were asked to complete several self-report surveys after each weekly session. The authors concluded that the intervention increased the participants' weekly mindfulness levels, which then mediated the relationship between time and emotional exhaustion, work engagement, and job satisfaction.

Kersemaekers et al. (2018) developed a workplace mindfulness training program to evaluate the relationship between mindfulness and well-being and productivity. This program was based on MBSR and tailored to meet the needs and demands of the employees in the study. Through quantitative measures, such as the MAAS and FMI, they concluded that the program was associated with reductions in burnout and perceived stress and improvements in mindfulness, perceived well-being, and several aspects of team and organizational climate and personal performance.

Mellor et al. (2016) implemented an MBSR intervention to explore the effect of mindfulness training on employee well-being in their quasi-experimental study. They concluded that the participants' mindfulness skills and well-being increased after the mindfulness training. In addition to the self-reported quantitative measures, interviews were conducted focusing on perceived benefits and challenges during and after the training.

Limitations of MBI Studies in Mindfulness Research

One of the main limitations of MBI is that even though mindfulness is regarded as one of its key components, conclusions cannot be drawn on whether the findings are due to mindfulness itself. As Glomb et al. (2011) argue, although MBI programs include practices designed to develop participant mindfulness, it is important to note that mindfulness interventions that are adaptions of the MBSR program are implementing an intervention that is intended to reduce stress even if some techniques are expected to improve mindfulness.

The previously described studies provide evidence about the implications of MBI but are limited in determining whether the reported outcomes are due to mindfulness or result from other processes co-occurring within the MBSR program, such as relaxation or social support (Bishop, 2002). For example, in Lu and colleagues' (2021) study, the authors considered that the relational aspects of the interventions might have contributed to their interventions' positive outcomes. The participants of their study were work teams sent by their organizations to participate in a "mindfulness meditation program". From a relational perspective, the social interactions in which individuals participated during the program may have operated as an underlying process, influencing the implications of the intervention.

Furthermore, findings regarding MBI's effectiveness may be questionable as one carefully examines the studies' data collection methods. For example, in Mellor et al. (2016) one of the questions that were used in the interviews they conducted after employees participated in a mindfulness training program was: "What other benefits, in relation to your work or home life, have you experienced after going through this training program?". The question is formulated in a way that assumes that the intervention was beneficial, leading the participant to answer in a specific way that may not correspond to their views. While researchers may obtain a specific response that aligns with their research objectives, the disadvantage of implementing these types of questions is that it constrains the participants' answer to a particular response that may be highly susceptible to social desirability bias.

On another note, MBI across studies show significant differences in how mindfulness is conceptualized and practiced (Chiesa, 2011; Davidson & Kaszniak, 2015). When examining mindfulness studies Van Dam et al. (2017) suggests that researchers scrutinize the term 'mindfulness' that is used to deduce exactly what type of 'mindfulness' was involved and

examine what explicit instructions were given to participants for directing practice if there is a practice involved. Moreover, according to Morales (2021A), different mindfulness practices may highlight certain skills over others. Thus, it may be pertinent that outcome studies address the types of practices that are included in MBI to have a clearer understanding of the effect of a specific practice.

Mindfulness and its Controversies

Upon my initial research on mindfulness, I found myself continuously questioning what mindfulness meant and what it consists of, despite having examined a wide ray of scholarly articles and reviewing non-scholarly literature as well. The concept of mindfulness has been operationalized across studies as a state (see Brown and Ryan, 2003; Lau et al., 2006; Bishop et al., 2004), trait (see Gulick et al., 2019; Kaplan et al, 2018), skill (see Walach et al., 2006), practice and intervention (Chang & Stone, 2019). There does not seem to be a clear understanding of what it signifies. The confusion and research efforts to clarify what mindfulness is have led to multiple approaches in conceptualizing and operationalizing this complex construct. This has resulted in making mindfulness an umbrella construct, particularly in the field of psychology, where the term is used to describe various practices, processes, and characteristics (Kudesia, 2019; Dimidijan & Linehan, 2006; Van Dam et al., 2017).

There is an ongoing debate across the academic literature regarding the conceptual and methodological issues in the study of mindfulness (see Davidson and Kaszniak, 2015; Van Dam et al., 2017; Bishop, 2002). It is beyond the scope of this study to explore these issues. However, I do find it pertinent to mention some of these controversies to be able to examine mindfulness' research findings with a critical perspective.

Mindfulness Measurement

Research on mindfulness has focused significantly on the measurement of 'mindfulness' through self-reported psychometric instruments. The tendency to represent psychological constructs through quantitative methods derives from the Age of the Enlightenment which focused on accumulating objective knowledge from empirical data. The predominant theory of knowledge that emerged from the Enlightenment has been termed the representational theory of knowledge, which is "the belief that knowledge occurs when objects in the world are apprehended in the mind and represented through some symbol system" (p. 60). Barrett (2015) argues that the representational theory of knowledge continues to implicitly influence the field of organization studies. Focusing the study of mindfulness through quantitative methods restricts mindfulness to the individual domain.

Several mindfulness measurement scales have been developed to objectively represent mindfulness. Some well-known instruments include the Mindfulness Attention and Awareness Scale (see Brown and Ryan, 2003), Freiburg's Mindfulness Inventory (see Buchheld et al., 2001), and The Toronto Mindfulness Scale (see Lau et al., 2006). I will not go into detail about each of these instruments. However, I do find it pertinent to describe the Mindfulness Attention and Awareness Scale (MAAS), for it is one of the most frequently used scales across studies. The popularity of this scale has led to it being translated and validated in other countries (see Cebolla et al., 2013; Lin et al., 2020). As mentioned previously, the MAAS is a 15-item scale that claims to assess core characteristics of dispositional mindfulness, namely, open or receptive awareness of and attention to what is taking place in the present (Brown and Ryan (2003). Dispositional mindfulness refers to "a greater tendency to abide in mindful states over time" (Brown et al, 2007, p. 218). Brown and Ryan (2003) define mindfulness as "an enhanced

attention to and awareness to current experience or present experience" (p. 822). The MAAS has been implemented to assess relationships between mindfulness and performance (Dane & Brummel, 2013; King and Harr, 2017), well-being (Mellor et al., 2016; Kersemaekers et al., 2018), productivity (Kersemaekers et al., 2018), and work engagement (Leroy et al., 2019; Lu et al., 2021) among others.

While some academics argue that there are significant limitations to mindfulness scales, they continue to be implemented as a means to obtain empirical knowledge about mindfulness. Among some of these issues is that mindfulness measurement instruments lack sufficient construct validity (Davidson & Kaszniak, 2015; Van Dam, et al., 2017). This limits our capability to determine how mindfulness (understood as a mental faculty) changes through instructions and guided practice, and assess how mindfulness affects cognitive capacities (Van Dam et al., 2017). Furthermore, the measurement and operationalization of mindfulness are challenged by the lack of consensus within the scientific community regarding how this construct is defined, consequently affecting the mindfulness practices included in MBI and the assessment of mindfulness as a mental faculty (Van Dam et al., 2017)

Another problematic aspect of the use of self-reported questionnaires is the participants' susceptibility to social desirability bias (Demetriou et al., 2015). Van Dam and colleagues (2017) suggest that this bias may be more pronounced after an MBI, as the participants often learn to expect improved attention, equanimity, etc. Moreover, something to consider when administering mindfulness self-report scales is how knowledgeable participants are about mindfulness. Scales are often administered disregarding whether participants are familiarized with the concept of mindfulness or if they have practiced mindfulness (Lueke & Lueke, 2019; Lin et al. 2020). This makes mindfulness self-reported measures vulnerable to limitations of

introspection, for participants may not necessarily know which aspects of mental states should be taken into account when making personal assessments (Van Dam et al., 2017).

From the social constructionist standpoint, Gergen (1994) states that 'facts' are products of relational processes of agreement among interacting people and 'objectivity' is a rhetorical achievement. Barrett (2015) adds that it is impossible to document 'objective facts', for "objectivity does not stand up for itself but has to be argued for by proponents using the rhetorical techniques of presentation, persuasion, and documentation that are accepted within the 'community discourse one is trying to persuade" (p. 63). Therefore, collecting data from quantitative methods does not imply that the knowledge we acquire is objective, for how we interpret and present findings results from a discourse that functions within a particular social context.

Mindfulness vs Mindfulness-Based

A recurring issue throughout the literature is the misconception that mindfulness and MBI imply equal things. There is a tendency to attribute MBI outcomes to mindfulness itself (Van Dam et al., 2017). MBI are lightly customized MBSR programs (Hyland, et al., 2015; Rosch, 2015) that include several key components of the program and are adapted to the population that is being trained. Some of the key components of MBSR that are found in MBI include the duration of the program, a group format, a spectrum of meditation techniques, hatha yoga postures, and the inclusion of didactic material and homework assignments in which participants are encouraged to bring mindfulness into situations of their lives (Kabat-Zinn, 1982). Even though MBSR includes mindfulness practices, the program's design and the other activities that are performed can influence the individual's perceived experience with "mindfulness".

Although there is limited scientific evaluation on mindfulness interventions in the workplace, the development of mindfulness resources in the workplace has increased significantly mainly due to the popular conception of mindfulness meditation's potential to improve well-being (Ingram, 2015). Mindfulness and its applications may have benefits for employees and employers, but we need to further understand what aspects of it make it beneficial and appealing to employees and organizations, and whether it is relevant in the workplace (Cobb, 2016; Dane, 2011).

Hyland and colleagues (2015) highlight reasons organizations may consider the implementation of mindfulness programs in the workplace based on their findings in the literature. These are: managing employee stress, improving high potential development, enhancing engagement, reducing burnout, and helping employees cope with organizational change. There are several things to consider when assessing the research on mindfulness. First, one of the critical issues in mindfulness literature is that a distinction is not made between mindfulness and MBSR, which are critically different as presented previously. The authors do not make a differentiation in their article of the findings in the presented studies addressed MBSR or mindfulness. Choi and Tobias (2015) comment on their work, stating that their overview is "fixated overwhelmingly on outcomes" (Choi and Tobias, 2015), and encouraging researchers to consider three main critical details when assessing research on mindfulness. These points are:

> "First, performance-related outcomes are largely researched using dispositional mindfulness measures that inform us little on how mindfulness may improve performance. Second, the reliance on self-reported measures of mindfulness, well-being, and performance, makes results vulnerable to many rater effects. Finally, many studies

> are based on laboratory experiments that lack control groups, which limit our ability to rule out the possibility that effects are from groups of people meeting together rather than the mindfulness practice itself." (p.632)

Qualitative Studies

In this section, I will be describing mindfulness studies done through the qualitative method and its general findings. There are few qualitative studies focused on the first-person perspective of mindfulness. The studies that will be described do not focus on how mindfulness is experienced in the workplace as there are no published works on the subject, within my reach at least. Some of the studies I will be addressing were conducted with a sample of people who identified as mindfulness practitioners and others with non-mindfulness practitioners who participated in an MBI. Considering that mindfulness has been prescribed various meanings across the literature, which affects how the phenomenon is studied, I highlight demographic aspects of the participants in each study and how the studies were conducted to provide a critical perspective on the findings described.

Morales (1986) explored the experience of mindfulness meditation in the daily lives of experienced meditators. This study deviates from other published mindfulness studies due to the particularity of the informants of the study. The participants were very familiarized and committed to meditation as a way of life, as they had been involved with mindfulness meditation for two years, at the least, and had participated in meditation retreats in the past. Based on the narrative of the participants, the findings of this study primarily indicated that the integration of meditation practice in an individual's life is guided by the meaning it has for the individual. Furthermore, "meditation impacted the quality of the lives of the practitioners from the point of view of how the individual related to their experience and the content of the experience"

(Morales, 1986, p. 154). The author also concluded that the continuous use of mindfulness meditation can lead to experiences of psychological and behavioral change (e.g., equanimity, self-trust, and self-mastery).

Stelter (2009) discusses the mindfulness meditation experiences of three different clinical clients who suffered from stress/sleeplessness, agoraphobia, and depression. For this study, the participants were involved in an MBSR-type course where they practiced several forms of meditation, including informal meditation (being aware of the moments and sensations in everyday activities such as brushing teeth or drinking tea), loving-kindness meditation, mountain meditation, etc. Some of the participants had associated with a form of mindfulness practice before as a recommendation from their psychologist but had not engaged in their practice. The findings of the author indicate that mindfulness initiated a change from a ruminative self-focus towards a perceptual self-focus (Stelter, 2009). Moreover, Stelter (2009) suggests that the participants were able to embody their mindfulness perspective (being non-judgmental and attentive in the present moment) as a more general mode of being. Finally, although the focus of the study was to describe the participants' experiences, not to evidence the effectiveness of the course, in general terms, the participants reported the intervention had positive outcomes in their lives.

Martin (2018) explored the influence of mindfulness meditation on the conceptualizations of the self. The participants of this study identified as devoted mindfulness meditation practitioners, trained by an Eastern-trained spiritual teacher or guide, and had been engaged in mindfulness meditation for at least 10 years. Through a thematic analysis, the author identified the benefits and negative effects of the participants' meditation experience on the self. Among the benefits were: enhancement of resilience to cope with hardships, an increase of their

awareness of the self at the intrapsychic level, improvement of their relationships with others, and enhancement of mid-body connection. The negative effect that was identified was emotional dysregulation, as participants would describe being hypersensitive at times, especially after extended meditations or meditation retreats. The findings suggest that participants experienced changes in their self-conception and self-functioning through meditation. The participants also described spiritual, transcendental, and compassionate qualities in the self and that was able to perceive "the transitory nature of their self and suffering" (Martin, 2018, p. 679) through meditation.

Proulx and colleagues (2020) study explored whether older African women's experiences would reveal patterns of stressors and strategies for coping with stress that could inform culturally tailored mindfulness classes for this population. Although the study is not focused on how participants experience mindfulness, it highlights participants' responses to meditation. The mindfulness intervention was modeled after the MBSR program and consisted of meditation practices, light yoga, and exercises illustrating how mindfulness can be incorporated into daily life. Participants expressed that meditation enabled them to deal with sadness and stress. They also highlighted that the MBSR classes allowed them to "bring them back to center".

Mindfulness Studies in Puerto Rico

Mindfulness research in Puerto Rico is scarce and even more so in organizational settings. Moreover, the studies that have been published focus on the implementation of an MBI program and the study of mindfulness traits in individuals.

Bonilla-Silva and Padilla-Infanzón (2015) explored the impact of a modified MBSR intervention on university students' academic stress levels, perceived stress, generalized anxiety, mindfulness levels. This study employed the quantitative method to explore the relationship

between mindfulness and the previous. Mindfulness was measured utilizing the MAAS scale. Its results reflected that the students' mindfulness levels increased after the intervention. Their findings pointed out that the intervention had positive effects on students' generalized anxiety and academic stress levels.

Cepeda-Hernández's (2016) study focused on describing the processes of emotional regulation and the dispositional mindfulness traits in male individuals who practiced or had practiced complementary alternative practices. These practices included meditation, reiki, yoga, hypnosis, regressions, visualization, breathing, relaxation, and affirmation exercises. The author did not specify which practices each participant had been involved with, or the length of time they had been familiarized with it. Cepeda-Hernandez's (2016) findings present dispositional mindfulness traits interacted with emotional regulation processes amongst the participants, facilitating more adaptative cognitive, emotional, and behavioral processes. Although this study does not focus on workplace contexts, the author includes the description of a participant's experience in his workplace where he displays dispositional mindfulness traits. The participant describes an encounter with a client that makes him uneasy, he notices the feelings and thoughts that arise through this, and to not ruminate in those negative thoughts that could lead him to psychological distress, he visualizes an alternate experience that is pleasant.

Final Remarks

There is still much to learn about mindfulness and its application in the workplace. Research on mindfulness in the context of the workplace is still very scarce, as researchers have focused on exploring MBI. This study aims to move the study of mindfulness towards an alternate direction by considering the discourses of those who experience it and the relational

processes involved in the construction of its meaning. Taking these aspects into consideration will allow me to understand its implications in the workplace in pragmatic terms.

CHAPTER III: METHOD

This study is designed to explore how mindfulness practitioners describe the experience of mindfulness and how the relational processes through which mindfulness is taught, practiced, and experienced are related to the way practitioners perceive its meaning and social utility in the context of their workplaces. It is approached through social constructionism, which essentially implies that meaning is created as people collaborate and interact (Gergen, 2015). This approach allowed me to design a study considering that each person's narrative is not individual, rather it results from their relational contexts. The application of mindfulness in the workplace is influenced by the diversities and complexities of people's relationships.

In the previous section, I discussed significant limitations regarding the assessment of mindfulness in the workplace, such as the use of self-reported scales, and other quantitative techniques to explore the outcomes of "mindfulness" on individuals. The use of controlled trials may allow for an increased level of control over study conditions to be able to detect relationships between psychological constructs, but they lack external validity (Surmitis et al., 2017). In the case of the questionnaires, the structure itself may force participants to answer in a way that does not correspond to their views (Demetriou et al., 2015). Furthermore, I highlighted the difficulties in defining mindfulness and how its multiple conceptualizations challenge our exploration of the construct. As researchers, we need to recognize how our lack of understanding and familiarity with a phenomenon adversely affects how data is collected and how results are interpreted (Morales, 1986). The disadvantage of utilizing quantitative methods is that they are inadequate to explore how people understand and apply mindfulness in the context of their work lives. For these reasons I considered a qualitative method study appropriate to address the research questions and objectives of this study.

The Qualitative Method

The main purpose of this study was to explore mindfulness practitioners' experience of mindfulness in the workplace; therefore, a qualitative approach provided a wider scope into this. The qualitative method allows for an in-depth description of specific practices in an attempt to make sense of or to interpret the phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Mertens, 2015). Considering the constructionist framework of this study, this method of research allowed me to focus on the meaning ascribed to mindfulness in people's work lives and attempt to represent how they construct this phenomenon. By implementing a qualitative method, the researcher is then devoted to representing the views and perspectives of the participants, as opposed to the values and meanings held by the researcher (Yin, 2010).

The qualitative method has several distinctive qualities. It focuses on the meaning participants hold about a particular issue, and not the one the researcher brings to the research (Creswell, 2014). It is characterized by the researcher's use of inductive logic, which denotes the researcher attempts to make sense of a situation without imposing preexisting expectations on the phenomena under study (Mertens, 2015). The researcher's role is configured as a key instrument in the study (Creswell, 2014), for it is guided by the information the researcher focuses on and the stand they take in the process of collecting and interpreting information. On another hand, this method allows for reflexivity throughout the research process, as the researcher reflects on their role in the study and how their background, culture, and experiences may potentially shape their interpretations, such as the themes they advance and the meaning they ascribe to the data (Creswell, 2014).

Research Design

The information was gathered through qualitative interviews (Yin, 2010). In this type of interview, the relationship between the researcher and participant is not strictly scripted. The qualitative interview follows a conversational mode that does not restrict the informant to a particular line of questioning. One of the distinctions of this method is that it does not inhibit the discovery process during the data collection phase (Yin, 2010). The researcher has an implicit agenda of study questions to guide the interview and a research protocol, but how the questions are brought about to the participants differ depending on the context and setting of the interview (Yin, 2010). This leaves the possibility to inquire about unexpected themes that may be encountered throughout the conversation (Yin, 2010).

The Role of the Researcher

My interest in this research subject surfaced after doing a brief research project on mindfulness interventions in the workplace for a course. Once the objectives of the project were achieved, I was left with more questions than when I started the project. After reading about mindfulness meditation and mindfulness interventions from different academic sources, I felt that there was not a consensus within the literature on what mindfulness is and what its implications are, if any, but the narrative in both the academia and practice presented mindfulness as the alternative for employee well-being and productivity with little supporting data. A few months later, the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown started. Being a moment of abrupt change and uncertainty, I decided to learn about meditation and practiced meditation on a daily basis for 10 to 30 minutes, perceiving that it would aid in keeping my thoughts “organized”. I practiced for around two months until the lockdown’s restrictions were lifted, and it was time to “return to the world”. During the brief period I practiced meditation, new questions surfaced on

the subject. I experienced moments of calmness, uneasiness, and self-reflection, which had not been anticipated when I started to practice, and began to question how these experiences could influence workplace performance and productivity, as I had read in many academic papers for my course project. Furthermore, I realized that each meditation experience was different from another and that "being calm" was not necessarily the depiction of my experiences as it was portrayed in popular media. For this reason, I approach this research project with curiosity, recognizing my ignorance and preconceptions on the subject as a non-meditator and with the intention of providing more clarity on the relevance of mindfulness within the context of the workplace.

Instruments

The instruments that were utilized for this study were a demographic information form and a qualitative interview guide. The demographic form collected basic information about each participant. The form essentially focused on collecting information regarding their type of employment, academic preparation, and other relevant information for the study.

The interview guide that was developed for this study takes into consideration the thematic guidelines proposed by Morales (1986) in his study about the experience of mindfulness in everyday life. To ensure that the interview guide was focused on the objectives of the study I created a matrix in which I purposefully aligned possible interview guide questions with my research questions. This strategy allowed me to identify any possible gaps in the collection of data before starting the process (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). The matrix contains a list of twenty-six (26) preliminary questions divided into four (4) themes (See Appendix B). From the drafted questions, I selected 10 open-ended questions for the interview guide (Appendix C).

The purpose of the interview guide was to serve as a reminder of topics considered to be directly relevant to the objectives of the study and is not meant to operate as a questionnaire does (Yin, 2010). In other words, it was meant to function as a conversational guide rather than to delimit the conversation within the set of questions that I formulated. The open-ended questions were developed broadly, for my intention is to generate a dialogue, rather than lead the participant to a specific answer. Anderson (2014) explains the nature of the conversation within the constructionist approach in the following paragraph:

> "Participants in collaborative-dialogue are always on the way to learning and understanding and being careful to not assume or fill in the meaning and information gaps. In other words, participants mutually 'inquire into' something that has relevance for them. This learning, understanding, and carefulness require responsiveness in which a listener (who is also a speaker) is fully attentive and present for the other person and their utterances, whether expressed orally or otherwise. This also requires being aware of, showing acknowledgment of, and taking seriously what the other person has said and the importance of it. … This aim to learn and understand does not refer to asking questions to gather or verify information, facts, or data. Questions, as is any utterance, instead are posed as part of the conversational-dialogical process: to learn and understand as best one can what the other person is expressing, and hopes will be heard. It is a responsive, interactive process rather than a passive one of surmising and knowing the other and their words based on pre-understanding such as a theory, hypothesis, or experience dialogical social beings as suggested by Bakhtin (1986), Buber (1970), and Wittgenstein (1953) and by Shotter's interpretations and extensions of Bakhtin's and Wittgenstein's perspectives." (p. 66)

Selection of Participants

The constructionist approach of this study replaces the dualistic subject-object/researcher-researched paradigm and places the researcher in a collaborative relationship with participants (McNamee, 2010). Therefore, throughout this study, the participants may be referred to as informants or collaborators as well.

The informants were selected considering several criteria. One of the basic criteria involves the degree of familiarity with mindfulness and their employment status. The informants considered themselves consistent mindfulness practitioners and were employed at the moment of the study. In anticipation of the challenges in recruiting informants that upheld the basic criteria in Puerto Rico, the level of familiarity and commitment was not rigorously delimited. Nonetheless, I understood that to obtain an in-depth description of the experiences of mindfulness practitioners, a basic level of familiarity and commitment needed to be decided. Having this present, the selection criteria further included: (1) individuals that are 21 years old or older, (2) who self-describe as mindfulness practitioners, and (3) consider to have consistently practiced mindfulness for the last 6 months, and (4) are were willing to discuss their experience and its application and relevance in the workplace.

The informants were identified through a purposive sampling method. Through this method, the purpose for selecting the collaborators is to have those that will yield the most relevant and information rich data given the topic of study (Yin, 2010). For this study, I published a flyer through social media which included the selection criteria to participate in the study, the estimated time of the interview and my contact information.

Due to the nature of the sampling method, it was anticipated that some of the recruits could be known individuals, friends, colleagues or relatives. Mertens (2015) points out a

contentious issue of the status of the interviewer as a friend or stranger, for the nature of this relationship may have an impact on the information that is collected. If there is a friendship between the interviewer and interviewee, the interviewee may feel greater rapport and be more willing to disclose information (Mertens, 2015). On the contrary, if the interviewer is a stranger, the interviewee may feel a greater sense of safety in responding according to what they think considering they will not see the interviewer again (Mertens, 2015). The social constructionist framework recognizes that there is no value-free place from which to stand. This perspective focuses on the meaning and knowledge that emerge from the different ways in which we are in relation to others. Therefore, whether the participant is familiar or a stranger to the researcher is not understood as a limitation or advantage in the collection of data. Instead, it represents different discourses that result from our ways of being in a relationship.

Research Protocol

The research protocol was be presented to the institutional review board of the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus, known as the Institutional Committee for the Protection of Human Beings in Research (CIPSHI, for its acronym in Spanish). Once authorization from CIPSHI to proceed with the research project was received (on June 2nd of 2022), I began the process of recruiting informants for the study by publishing the flyer of the study in social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

The initial contact was done by my collaborators through social media direct messaging, email or telephone communication in which they expressed their interest in collaborating for the research study as they understood they complied with the selection criteria. I thanked them for their interest in participating and provided them a link via email to complete the informed

consent form which also contained the demographic information questionnaire. Finally, we scheduled a convenient date and time for the interview.

Considering that the interviews were carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic, the interviews were conducted via video call, following the virtual interview guide and recommendations established by CIPSHI (see CIPSHI, 2020). Implementing a qualitative interview calls for intense listening and a systematic effort to hear and understand what people tell you (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, as cited in Yin, 2010). Taking this into consideration it was decided the interviews were video recorded, with the consent of the informants, to be able to focus on the conversations and capture the narrative when the data is transcribed. This also allowed me to focus on nonverbal portions of the conversation as well, such as facial expressions, body language, and other mannerisms (Creswell, 2014).

Prior to conducting the individual interviews, I sent the participants a link to complete the informed consent form and sociodemographic information form through the *Google Forms.* When the form was completed, the participant was able to save a digital copy of the form. The informed consent form presented the details of the study, including the description and purpose of the study; the procedure; how the data will be collected and stored, and who will have access to it; the risks and benefits of the study; confidentiality statement; voluntary participation statement; and the researcher's and the university's institutional review board's contact information. The participants were asked for authorization to record the interview for transcription purposes.

Protection of Human Beings

I anticipated that my informants could feel discomfort when sharing their experiences during the interview process. This discomfort could vary between individuals. For this reason, I

highlighted before the interview that their participation was completely voluntary and that they could refrain from answering questions or choose to abandon the study with no penalization. I informed the participants that they will not benefit directly from this study or receive any compensation for their participation.

The participants were advised that any questions, complaints, or claims regarding their rights as participants in the study could be addressed with the compliance office of the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras Campus. They were advised that the contact information could be found in their copy of the informed consent form (Appendix E). I also provided my personal telephone information and institutional email address to answer any questions regarding the study and/or to provide the results of the study.

I also informed the participants that my thesis committee could have access to the data collected in its raw form, as well as the informed consent sheet for validation purposes. I stored the digital files on my personal computer, which requires a password to be accessed. To further protect the participants' privacy, I saved the files in a password-protected folder, with a different password from the computer. The files will be stored for a maximum of three (3) years after the investigation has been finalized. After this time, I will delete the digital files and empty the trash to ensure the files are permanently erased, and I will shred any printed documents before discarding them. Furthermore, I did not identify any of the documents with the name of the participants or any information that may distinguish them, except for the informed consent sheet. The data and information that may directly identify the participants was managed confidentially. Moreover, the participants were informed that the results would be presented in a written report and my thesis defense at the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras Campus, and that the results may be reported in academic journals or professional research forums. Finally, before the data

collection phase I ensured to complete the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) program certification for conducting psychology research.

The Participants

A total of four (4) participants were interviewed for this study. All interviews were conducted in Spanish. The collaborators were Puerto Rican, and all but one were living in Puerto Rico at the time of the interview. To maintain confidentiality and facilitate the presentation of the data, I assigned pseudonyms to each of the participants.

María

This woman in her mid-20s works as a quality engineer in a national defense organization in the United States. She is currently living in the United States but works remotely from her home. At the time of her interview, she had been practicing mindfulness meditation for three years. María was very open when sharing the personal and difficult experiences that led her to practice with very little probing on my part. Our conversation was very nourishing as we were able to explore more in-depth the application of the practice of mindfulness and its social acceptability within her workplace. She expressed enthusiasm for the project, for she wishes it would be a topic that is more discussed and accepted in the workplace.

José

This man in his late 50s is an engineer that works managing projects in a pharmaceutical organization in Puerto Rico. At the time of his interview, he had been practicing mindfulness meditation for around six years. He seemed to me to be well-informed about scientific research regarding mindfulness and was particularly interested in mindfulness within neuroscience. For around one year and a half before the interview, José had also been practicing mindfulness with a

group dedicated to practicing zazen meditation. I met him for the first time during the interview as he had been referred to me by a family member of my work colleague. Our conversation was very nourishing in the sense that we were able to concretely discuss differences in the experience of mindfulness within the workplace and outside of the workplace.

Alfred

This man in his late 20s works as a concierge in the luxury hospitality industry in Puerto Rico. At the time of his interview, he had been practicing mindfulness meditation for around one year. I had met him as a work colleague a few years before the interview. I found Alfred to be a very open person, especially when sharing personal experiences and difficulties that led him into the practice. Our conversation was very nourishing as we were able to go in-depth about the relational aspects of his practice.

Elizabeth

This woman in her mid-20s works as a server in a multinational breakfast restaurant chain in Puerto Rico, while she completed her nursing degree and revalidation to practice. At the time of her interview, she had been practicing mindfulness meditation for around two years. Elizabeth is a distant relative whom I had kept a connection with through social media. Although Elizabeth was very open in sharing the personal difficulties that lead her to initiate her practice, she did not go into much detail about those personal experiences. I decided not to pry as I sensed that she did not feel as comfortable elaborating on her experiences as my other collaborators did. Nonetheless, she was very responsive throughout our interaction.

The Interview Process

The interviews were conducted in the month of June of the year 2022. Each person was interviewed once for a period of no less than one hour. The conversations were initiated by expressing my interest in learning about the participants' experience with mindfulness in and out of the workplace and was continued following the guidelines that were developed. When the interviews were finalized, I thanked the participant for their collaboration and their time.

Analysis

The data analysis phase occurs as a simultaneous process to the data collection phase in which an informal analysis is carried out by assessing the adequacy of the data (Yin, 2010). For example, while interviews are going on researchers may be analyzing an interview collected earlier, writing memos, and organizing the structure of the final report (Creswell, 2014).

For the formal data analysis phase, I employed a thematic analysis. The thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting themes within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is characterized for being a flexible and accessible form for analyzing qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This analysis was conducted within the constructionist framework, focusing on examining how events, realities, meanings, experiences, and so on are the effects of a range of discourses operating within a context (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The themes or patterns were identified through an inductive approach. The inductive analysis is a process of coding the data without trying to fit it into a preexisting coding frame, or the researcher's analytic preconceptions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Utilizing an inductive approach allowed me to organize the participant's narrative in smaller pieces to be analyzed. The coding was conducted following the guidelines in Braun and Clarke (2006).

Braun and Clarke (2006) summarize the data analysis process in five phases. The first phase involves familiarizing oneself with the data. In this phase of the analytic process, I transcribed the interviews and organized my notes from the interview process. The interviews were transcribed literally, aided using Trint™, an audio transcription software that converts audio and video files to text. Once the data was transcribed by the software I relistened each audio recording to ensure that the transcription was done accurately. Some of my participants made use of gestures to express their experiences. In anticipation of the transcription process, when pronounced gestures were made by my collaborators, I asked them during the conversation to explain the meaning of their gesture, to be able to fully capture what they were intending to express rather than to assume. Once the transcription was completed, I re-read all of the data to further familiarize myself with the information that was gathered as this would be the foundation of the rest of the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

In the second phase of the analysis, I generated initial codes. Coding is the process of organizing the data by bracketing chunks of text and writing a word representing a category in the margins (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). The codes can stick close to the original data, and even be labeled based on the actual language of the participant (known as in vivo codes) (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2010). As the coding progresses the researcher may start to understand how the data may relate to broader conceptual issues (Yin, 2010) and new codes may be generated.

Once all the data had been coded, I searched for themes, which constitutes the third phase of the analysis. In this phase, the researcher starts to analyze the codes and considers how different codes may be combined to form an encompassing theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In the fourth phase, the themes that were generated were reviewed by verifying if each theme had enough supporting data. First, the themes were revised considering the text that was extracted in

the second phase to form the codes. In this case, if the themes were not deemed appropriate to represent the data, the theme would be reworked by creating a new one, discarding it, or identifying if the data extracts fitted within a different theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). When the codes were refined a candidate thematic map was developed. The candidate thematic map was then revised to determine if it reflected the meanings evident in the data set as a whole (Braun & Clarke, 2016).

The fifth phase involved defining and naming the themes. In this phase the researcher identifies the essence of what each theme is about and further refines it determining what aspect of the data each theme captures. Each theme is further analyzed by "identifying the 'story' that each theme tells, considering how it fits into the broader overall 'story' that is being told" (Braun & Clarke, 2016, p. 92). Once the data was analyzed it was discussed to reflect on the relevance of mindfulness practices in the workplace, which will be seen in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

Outline of Themes and Subthemes

Theme 1: The Meaning of Mindfulness

a. Awareness of Thoughts and Emotions
b. Eradication of Personal Distress
c. Perceived Effects in Daily Life

Theme 2: The Context of Mindfulness

a. Learning of Mindfulness
b. Guidance
c. Practice in Daily Life

Theme 3: Mindfulness in the Context of the Workplace

a. Practice in the Workplace
b. The Collateral Effect

Theme 4: Recovery from Stress at the Workplace

Theme 5: Perceptions of Mindfulness Initiatives in the Workplace

Theme 6: Challenges

This chapter is structured to intially describe how mindfulness is understood by my participants and the motives for initiating their practice. Then I will describe the narratives on how mindfulness was learned and how it was practiced by my collaborator's in their daily lives. This to introduce how mindfulness is perceived when transferred to the context of the workplace and the implications that are identified by my informants. Several of the categories I developed

may overlap as they include perceived effects or consequences from my collaborators' practices as these also contributed to their validation of their narratives. Finally, I will address the challenges of mindfulness within the context of the workplace as expressed by my informants.

The interviews were conducted in Spanish, so the quotations that will presented throughout this chapter are translations from Spanish to English which were assisted by Google Translate, a web-based machine translation service. Some of my collaborators made use of colloquialisms, slang, or sayings, which when translated do not necessarily reflect its meaning, therefore I translated these fragments of the text. At other times, my collaborators made use of English-spoken words or phrases. These were transcribed as they were stated.

Theme 1: The Meaning of Mindfulness

This theme describes what I understood to be essential components in the meaning of mindfulness. While the understanding of mindfulness varied from person-to-person (which will be described throughout the following sections), I identified some consensus in their understanding of mindfulness from the experiences that they shared. This is elucidated in three subthemes: awareness of thoughts and emotions, eradication of personal distress, and perceived effects in daily life, which outline how mindfulness was perceived by my collaborators and the implications their practice had on their daily lives.

Awareness of Thoughts and Emotions

This subtheme refers to an active distinction of what one is feeling and thinking from what is occurring in the present moment. What mindfulness implicated for my collaborators varied from person to person (which will be discussed in the following sections). Nonetheless, there was a general understanding of being able to notice and discern thoughts from emotions from what is happening in the present moment through the practice of mindfulness. Elizabeth

described *mindfulness* as a moment in which she is "at peace with herself" and can "organize her thoughts and separate what is emotional and what is logical". Alfred and María spoke of mindfulness as a moment in which one is "connected" to what one is feeling or experiencing. María described her experience with mindfulness as "a moment to be with your senses, to do grounding and to be in the present... To take the time to stop everything that you are doing and deal with whatever is going on in the moment". Alfred described his experience as follows:

> "It's like when you get to that point where you realize that you can really connect with your thoughts and your feelings, your emotions and everything, and separate it from your actions and know clearly how it's affecting you or how it's going to affect you or influence whatever action you have afterward" (Alfred).

José spoke of "looking" at thoughts and emotions pass by and not engaging with them. This is elucidated in the following anecdote:

> "The other day something happened... [He did not recall] Something stupid and it made me very angry. But I realized... [and] I looked at him [what he was feeling] 'oh look I am angry' [he said to himself]. Then other thoughts associated with what happened came back, but still, they are just thoughts. I realized it made me very angry, [and] you're going to feel it, but not with the intensity where you continue making up a novel ["que sigues elaborando la novela por ahí pa' arriba", in. Spanish] (José).

Eradication of Personal Distress

This category refers to the experiences of personal distress that led my collaborators to initiate their practice of mindfulness, which as well has validated the utility of the practice for them and contributed to sustaining the practice.

My collaborators shared that they had originally initiated their practice in times of personal difficulties characterized by emotional turmoil. For example, José mentioned that what drove him to practice was his desire to find an alternative to treat his anxiety disorder, for he did not want to be medicated. María mentioned her journey toward her practice began while she was a college student when she had gotten out of an abusive relationship for which she was looking for accessible alternatives to "canalize her emotions". Alfred and Elizabeth initiated their practice to deal with the loss of a close family member. Alfred recurred to mindfulness meditation to be able to "process" his grandmother's passing when he returned to work. He exposes his experience in the following way:

> "When I lost my grandmother, that was very hard... After she died, while I was processing it, I continued to work... I had moments where I would leave my work area and go to the restroom, put a timer for 10 minutes and disappear… because I needed it because I couldn't continue working, because I couldn't process whatever I was doing, especially in the work that I was in" (Alfred).

Elizabeth initiated her practice to manage the "compiled" emotions that surfaced when her mother passed away. By "compiled emotions" she referred to the emotions she had been trying to manage as a result of family situations she was facing while trying to finish her nursing degree. This difficult situation caused a disturbance in her life which resulted in her taking time off work. It also affected her academically as she was in the process of finishing her degree at the time. She described her experience with mindfulness as follows:

> "Mindfulness has helped me with anger management because a few years ago... [takes a deep breath] well, the thing about my mom, not gonna lie, that has had a very negative

> impact on me, and I have been working on it. Through mindfulness, I have managed to work with anger attacks and anxiety attacks" (Elizabeth).

While my collaborators began their meditation practice for specific reasons they continued to practice, for they saw that their lives were impacted positively. They noticed a difference in their lives, if they "abandoned" it for some time. José, who had initiated his practice as an alternative treatment for what he described to be an anxiety disorder, shared that through his practice he was able to "heal" from hurtful experiences he lived with his grandfather. He described this experience as follows:

> "I always had a lot of resentment about the things my grandfather said about me. He didn't want me to go to university and wanted me to stay with him. Some things hurt a lot. So there have been moments in meditation when thoughts of things from the past that remained like scars or wounds came to me, they surface... I start to look at them, and the wound just heals. [To the point] That I can talk about it without a problem" (José).

Perceived Effects in Daily Life

This subtheme reflects the effect of the sustained practice of mindfulness on the quality of life and relationships as perceived by my informants. One can notice somewhat of an overlap with the previous section. I previously discussed the experiences that led my collaborators to initiate their mindfulness practice, which they described to have resulted as beneficial in their lives in times of personal difficulties. However, in this section I elaborate on the perceived effects that were unprecedented when my collaborators decided to commit to practicing mindfulness, which were not necessarily accounted for when they initiated their practice.

Alfred attributed the improvement in his quality of life to mindfulness. He felt that his practice has had a positive impact on the way he relates in his intimate relationships and how he takes care of his body, and particularly, his eating and sleeping habits. For instance, he stated: "I think it helps you a lot to be able to know when you have to go to sleep and respect your sleep a lot in the sense that if you're sleepy, don't fight it, go to bed and maybe before that [before practicing mindfulness] I didn't take it into account so much" (Alfred).

Like Alfred, Elizabeth and María felt that their relationships benefitted from their continued practice. For example, Elizabeth shared that her practice has helped her "connect more with people, and to be more of a listener". While María stated:

> "I think it's the source of a lot of things in how my relationships have changed with people... That is part of knowing yourself and being mindful. You begin to know yourself so much that you surround yourself with people who respect you... In my relationship [a romantic relationship] it has helped me a lot" (María).

Theme 2: The Context of Mindfulness

This theme contextualizes how mindfulness was taught and practiced. It is broken down into three subthemes that group my participants' experiences when they were acquainted with mindfulness, how they learned about the practice, and how they practice mindfulness.

Learning of Mindfulness

This subtheme describes the initial phase in my informants' journey to understanding and learning about mindfulness which was characterized by the search for information.

My informants initially recurred to mindfulness meditation during times of personal difficulties. Some of them became intrigued by the practice through someone with whom they

had a relationship with (e.g., a friend, psychologist, client). This in turn, led them to initiate an exploration of mindfulness by reviewing reading material such as books or information resources available through the internet.

María gained interest in mindfulness after she had experienced yoga with a friend, who was a yoga instructor and had invited her to practice yoga to help her "canalize her emotions", when she was going through a difficult time in her life. María confessed that at the beginning she "took it as a joke", for she did not believe in it. However, at one point she shared that she "started to feel it" and as she discovered that "it was real" she decided to attempt the practice with more seriousness. She summarizes the latter in the following text:

> "I started with yoga and from there I saw that some types [of yoga] worked for me so I became like obsessed, like 'wow... what is this?' So, from there I started to google information on the internet on different techniques, I also used Youtube..." (María).

As María gained interest in meditation, she came across a "transcendental meditation" when searching for guided meditations. She shared that what she experienced in this meditation validated the "effect" of meditation. She stated the following:

> "The first time I did a transcendental meditation was because I was on that journey to look for new techniques. I went to YouTube and typed 'meditation' [in the search bar], and when you put that on YouTube, sometimes you get another word with what you typed and it said, 'transcendental meditation' and I wondered 'what is this?'. […] [At that moment] I was at work… in an internship and there was no one on the floor, only me. So, I did it. I was on the chair and well I got scared and got up from the trance because I started to hear electric currents. This... Like electric waves or something. And then I get

> up because I get scared… Later, I go to my boyfriend and tell him 'Look, you have to try this because it's really cool' ["brutal", in Spanish]. My boyfriend saw himself in third person and my mom saw colors, but I haven't seen colors or anything." (María).

Elizabeth had become familiar with mindfulness through her psychologist who had recommended mindfulness techniques. However, at the time, Elizabeth did not fully engage in the practice. Elizabeth had also participated in what she described to be "workshops that help you manage your life... that focus on working with the traumas that one faces throughout one's life". She shared that although these workshops did not focus on mindfulness, she was "given tools to be able to practice mindfulness". During our conversation, as she recalled this experience, she shared to have come to realize that the workshops were influenced by "Zen" and "Buddhism". She mentioned that she participated in these workshops, which were carried out in a group format, throughout five weekends, where reading material was given and discussed regarding "different aspects of one's life". She further elaborates on the nature of the workshops in the following text:

"In those workshops, different exercises of different things that marked one's life were worked on. They gave you an explanation of a particular subject and after that an exercise was done regarding what was talked about. Through many of these exercises I was able to see how my past had marked me in different aspects. A lot of work was also done regarding the inner child, and with the relationship of father/offspring and mother/offspring" (Elizabeth).

While Elizabeth came to know about mindfulness through these experiences, it was when her mother passed away that she initiated her exploration as she perceived it as a "necessity", for she considered that it helped her "keep the mind in peace to be able to continue, because living is very complex". She elaborates on her experience in the following comment:

“When I entered the university for the first time, I recognized that I required some kind of psychological help, because I had difficulties in managing time, managing emotions, and at that time the psychologist spoke to me about different techniques that help with mindfulness, but I was not able to practice it at its fullest. However, in the last few years, it has been more like a necessity, rather than a want” (Elizabeth).

Elizabeth then recurred to internet resources to understand what mindfulness consisted of and how to engage in its practice. She stated the following: “Through YouTube, I looked for videos that explained what it consisted of, and I started with the guided meditations to learn how to carry it out”.

Alfred had come to know of mindfulness through a book he read. However, it was through an interaction with a client that he gained interest in initiating his exploration. He learned that this client meditated as he had asked Alfred to call him after a specific time so that he would not interrupt his meditation, and later they engaged in a conversation about “how meditation can help you in your work, your life and also how you eat”.

He mentioned that this client, who shared the same profession as him, “stood out” from the people that he had met that practiced mindfulness meditation, for he saw him as a “role model”. Alfred mentioned that one of the reasons why he saw the older gentleman as a role model was that he perceived this person to be both physically and mentally healthy considering his age and success in the industry. He shared that this interaction influenced him in exploring mindfulness more.

"One person I met that stood out was a guest who stayed with us, who is a Concierge and is a 'Golden Keys’ [pertaining to a professional association of hotel concierges]. He must have

been around 50 or 60 [years old], but he has worked in the industry for a long time and he's a person that seems to be very wise, who takes great care of their body [...] I saw him as a role model because of how he would talk to you. He is a person who spoke to you very slowly, but not boring, well in detail and he listened to you. The conversation was back and forth, it was not one-sided" (Alfred).

In contrast to my other informants, José did not mention having learned about mindfulness through another person. He came to know of mindfulness meditation by researching alternative methods to treat what he described as his anxiety disorder. His exploration of mindfulness is described in the following comment:

> "There was a time when I had a horrible anxiety. I even took medication. Then, looking for alternatives to not be medicated, I started searching the internet... By doing research I found out about mindfulness. I even saw Jon Kabat-Zinn's presentations. Very encouraging... I sometimes share the links with other people who have asked me... I even bought books" (José).

Guidance

This subtheme highlights *guidance* as an essential component in my collaborator's journey in the practice of mindfulness. I refer to the term *guidance* as the experience of instruction and direction in learning the practice of mindfulness. All my collaborators shared that they initiated their practice through guided meditations. Some utilized different tools like YouTube, an online video-sharing and social media platform, and online podcasts to search for guided meditations. Alfred mentioned that he would often search for meditations related to how he wanted to feel, for example, whether he wanted to feel "energetic" or "calm", etc. While José

used audio recordings, he had also enrolled in a course offered by a clinical psychologist in a health and wellness institute where he had face-to-face direction.

María described her practice utilizing guided meditations as follows:

> "You look for a quiet place where you don't have distractions, you sit... You sit in a way, that is comfortable where you can be relaxed but not lying down, so you don't fall asleep. It's like sitting down, relaxed. You can do the traditional lotus position… You put your headphones on, and you follow what he [the voice from the guided meditation video recording] tells you. And he basically begins by saying that you concentrate on the sound that he is going to play, which are sound waves. Then you start with your meditation and start with a very long type of meditation, until without realizing it you find your rhythm and he stops telling you what you have to do. He stops telling you to breathe, to stop concentrating on the sound until without realizing it you already enter a flow of breathing, and you are only listening to the sound, and you do not have any other thought. Only the sound and the flow of your breath" (María).

Once my informants were able to concentrate on their practice without guidance, they eventually renounced the guided meditations and continued their practice independently.

José described his experience the following way: "The fact that they were guided at the beginning was something that helped me, because starting by yourself, being almost 40 minutes there like this [he closes his eyes] and not having the discipline… It's like when you start exercising. At first you say, 'what the devil! [ah, diablo!] is this' and you exercise for a short time. Maybe you start with using little weights, with a lot of music and stopping more in between. You use certain things that help you in the process. In the same way, with mindfulness

you start with guided meditations. They help you a lot…[However], the only thing that you are doing is following what they [the voice] tell you and they help you to concentrate, but you don't develop your capacity of attention unless you start to let go of this and try harder. But at first this helps you understand what it is about" (José).

Elizabeth shared: "I started with the guided meditations. I started trying that way, since quieting the mind was quite complex, but over time I realized that it's a practice that one can achieve little by little" (Elizabeth).

María stated that she initially utilized guided meditations but as she continued reading and learning about different "techniques" she would adjust her practice depending on what "worked" for her. She expressed: "I read about different techniques but in the end when I practice them and do them, I adjust my practice to what works for me specifically" (María).

Alfred shared: "After while I realized that it was best, or at least what worked for me depending on how I wanted to carry it out, was to be in silence" (Alfred).

Practice in Daily Life

The practitioners reported that they separate a specific time during the day to withdraw from social contact to practice mindfulness meditation by themselves. The time of practice varied between a five-minute and thirty-minute span, depending on the practitioner's preference. For Alfred, five to seven minutes every day is his "sweet spot" and what he described that "works for him". However, at one point, when he had more spare time, specifically when the COVID pandemic started, Alfred shared he would practice for thirty minutes every day, which he now described to be a "ridiculous" amount of time. José sits every day for around 30 minutes. Some of the informants practiced once a day, while others practiced three to four times a week.

They typically sit to meditate, and, on occasions, some would lay down facing upwards. Elizabeth and María would prefer to play “meditation music”, instrumental music or sound waves in the background to aid their practice, while José and Alfred preferred to meditate in silence.

The specifics regarding the way they practice varied from person to person, as they mentioned they tried different approaches until they found those that “worked” for them. For example, some would focus their attention on their breath by counting each inhalation and exhalation, while others would follow their breathing exercise with a “body scan” in which one would bring awareness to different parts of the body in synchronization with the breath. Alfred described his practice as follows:

> “For me being silent is better because you really get into your head, and you can hear what you are thinking and pay attention to it. And there are times that it's also difficult like... It's not silencing your mind, but there are times that it's very difficult for you to reach that point where thoughts pass as they arrive, [where] you listen to it... you know, you interpret it, you understand it and you let it go. You don't hold on to it, you just let it flow and then obviously another one comes, until maybe there comes a point that it pauses. […] I start with the breath. Inhaling through the nose, exhaling through the mouth. I think I do it about, more or less, ten times repeated and after that I do a scan of my body, so I start like that, from bottom to top or from top to bottom, trying to, well… If I feel my feet on the ground because I'm sitting in a chair, then I feel that the feet are touching the floor. I am raising the knees, ‘ok they are bent’. [Then sensing] The thighs… I feel my hands until I reach my head with the idea of also, if when I reach my shoulder it hurts, well, I'm going to feel it… And then, well, I know that there is something

> uncomfortable or strange there, for example. So first I start with the breath, then the body scan and I really don't know how to tell you how I finish, because when the alarm rings is when I always kind of finish. After a while you wait for the alarm because you already know more or less how much five minutes are" (Alfred).

José mentioned that he would "label" what was happening in the moment of his meditation practice to keep his attention centered on the present moment (e.g., inhaling, exhaling, feeling, thinking, remembering). On other occasions he would focus on his breath. He describes his practice in the following way:

> "I use my breath. I love that. I don't complicate my life with strange things. I go from one to ten and start again with one to achieve concentration. If I see that I am riding a lot [on a thought] or go a lot on automatic, I vary it. For example, there are times when I do this: I start counting from one when I exhale only, but then I go on automatic, and I realize this if I continued counting until twelve or thirteen and then I say, 'this got screwed ["*se chavó la cosa*", Puerto Rican colloquialism], I'm in automatic'. What I do is I change. Then I decide to only count the inhalations or sometimes I start a few minutes without counting, without labels, just paying attention to my breathing. If I see that I can sustain it more [the concentration], I stay. Now, if I see that I am riding on my thoughts too much and I am moving away quickly, I use the label. There is another label that I have used when I was walking 'inhale, exhale, inhale', but with the awareness that I am doing it. Then suddenly you see that a thought has arrived. Now, there are thoughts that come very strong and even if you realize it, you got on it [the thought] and you wandered. 'Look, I remembered such a thing... I got screwed ["*me fastidié*", Puerto Rican colloquialism], I got hooked on one [a thought] (José).

José further elaborated on what did not "work" for him to achieve concentration. He describes his experience in the following:

> "I have had a lot of trouble with meditation with sounds. For some reason, I always go back to the breathing part. She [mindfulness instructor] spoke of loving kindness. That doesn't work for me at all ["*tres demonios*", Puerto Rican colloquialism], it never does me good" (José).

Elizabeth describes her typical meditation practice as follows:

> "I put a yoga mat, I put on a speaker with wave music or a soundtrack that is calm, I put a candle and there I begin to focus on keeping my mind at peace and calming my heart through my breaths… I take it until the moment that I feel calm… [Other times] I lay on my back and just stare at the ceiling and hold my breath for like up to four counts. And then let go, until I feel completely at peace" (Elizabeth).

In the case of María and Elizabeth, when asked to elaborate on what they described to be "different mindfulness techniques", they mentioned they would do yoga or journal. Their experiences are described in the following:

> "I've been doing different types of techniques for about three years until I've found the ones that fit me. What I've found is that not all techniques work for everything, so I use them differently. If it's an emotion that I'm having, a 'trigger' because of a trauma that I have, well what works for me is a type of flow yoga, but if I am having a lot of thoughts in my head, or a type of anxiety, well, what works for me is sitting down and writing it down. So, it's not like only one thing works for me. I take the different techniques and use and practice them depending on what is happening to me" (María).

> "I have different forms depending on how I feel emotionally. When it's to calm the heart, in which I feel it is leading me towards an anxiety attack, I use that [breathing exercises]. If I feel that I have many compressed emotions, […] what I tend to do is write what I feel. I put the date, I put with a title, and I start to write what is on my mind" (Elizabeth).

The amount of time they would meditate was also influenced by the length of their practice. Some compared their practice to exercising or doing sports in the sense that the time one can concentrate and hold their attention would progress as one continues to practice consistently. The participants also recognized that the experience one may have with mindfulness can vary from one person to another. They all underlined that the way they characterize their practice or the experiences they obtain from it, were specific to them and that it may not be the case for other people.

Theme 3: Mindfulness in the Context of the Workplace

This theme includes the experiences of mindfulness in the context of the workplace. It is organized into two subthemes that group my participants' experiences when practicing mindfulness in their workplaces and the unprecedented effects their practice has had on their work lives.

Practice in the Workplace

Most of my informants applied their mindfulness practice in their workplaces. For María and José, this implied withdrawing sporadically and inconspicuously from their social context to carry out a brief meditation in moments of increased stress. While Alfred shared to have done the same as María and José in the past, he currently tries to apply mindfulness in his workplace by having mindful conversations. Elizabeth on the other hand did not share to apply her mindfulness practice while in her workplace. Instead, she would schedule specific times during the week to

practice mindfulness as a means to “be calmer”. In the following, I will elaborate on my collaborators’ experiences in practicing mindfulness in their workplaces.

María, who works remotely from her home, shared that when she feels excessively stressed when working and if her workload permits it, she takes a moment to discretely step away from her computer and do a mindfulness practice to return “recharged” and continue working. She described her experience as follows:

> “Those 15 minutes that it took me to meditate, when I come back, well, I come back as if I had recharged, basically. You feel it. You feel a recharge” (María).

Similarly, José shared that when he experiences anxiety that is too much to bear, he steps away to his office, which is in a more secluded area, and takes “ten to fifteen minutes” to do a brief meditation to help him relax. He described his experience the following way: “Sometimes I go to my office when I feel like my heart is going to come out of my mouth, I sit, I relax, it helps me relax...” (José). José ensured to highlight that his practice itself is not responsible for relaxing him, but it aids in achieving so.

On the other hand, for Alfred mindfulness practice in his workplace meant having “intuitive conversations” with his clients. Alfred describes his experience in the following:

> "Sometimes at work you have very irrelevant conversations, you are talking about this and after five minutes you forgot about it, but [other times] you try to have a concrete conversation. For example, yesterday I had a family that checked-in and they came directly to where I was because they had several things booked for their stay and they wanted to talk about everything they reserved outside the hotel. They had a fishing tour, and the gentleman was very interested in fishing, it was one of the main things he wanted

> to take advantage of on his vacation. The daughter was very worried about her brother because he had a gluten allergy so she was very interested in ensuring that all the places where they were going to eat could accommodate that. They also had a rainforest tour, so they wanted to know how that worked. So, you get really involved in giving them more information, but not that it's boring, but trying to answer all the questions that you imagine they are going to ask you, and those that you imagine they have that maybe they don't ask you. And at that point I think it's like, it's kind of mindfulness because you really care about what's going to come out of your mouth. You are not talking just to talk" (Alfred).

Applying mindfulness in his conversations implicated a learning experience and a foundation for a deeper human connection. He describes this experience as follows:

> "When you speak with an intention and when you have a deep conversation like that, I think you see the result at the end of the conversation because they are people who are going to ask you your name, they are going to shake your hand, give you a hug, give you a kiss or something and there is going to be a connection that there would not be if I had had a superficial conversation [...] When you can look at someone in the eyes, speak to them and listen, it's positive... You get a lot out of conversations" (Alfred).

The Collateral Effect

"It doesn't relax me. It helps me relax. The approach that is always given is that the goal of mindfulness is to relax you. No, that's a collateral effect that you get" (José).

This subtheme refers to the unforeseen perceived effects of the practice of mindfulness in the context of the workplace. In the previous theme section, I elaborated on the perceived effects

of the practice of mindfulness in my informants' daily lives. As I mentioned before, my collaborators initiated their practice in times of personal difficulties to "free themselves from suffering". However, while this was the focus of their practice, most of them noticed unforeseen effects on the way they would perceive their lives and how they relate to others which was reflected in their work areas. For example, José spoke about the ease of the "sense of competition" with his co-workers, which was related to the conflicts that were generated by the budget and resource management within his organization. He described his appreciation of this effect as follows:

> "My co-workers at one point noticed, they tell me 'We see you more equanimous, more focused, calmer when you're working with us'… What I have noticed is that by being more equanimous you become more assertive. So, since you're not in the competition, this creates a lot of power for you. When you speak, people listen...The fact that you can be more centered, and calmer, gives you a lot of power. Because at the same time you don't talk just to talk" (José).

Moreover, like José, both Elizabeth and Alfred, mentioned a sense of calmness that emerges through their sustained practice of meditation that consequently affects how they relate to their experience in their workplaces. Elizabeth mentioned that it has helped her "be calmer" when facing challenging encounters with clients as she shared the following: "Being with the public and facing different types of situations has led me to use mindfulness techniques to be calmer (Elizabeth)". Moreover, for Elizabeth, being able to "canalize" her emotions, considering the difficult situations that she has encountered in recent years, has helped her improve her performance in her workplace. She expresses her appreciation in the following text:

> "It has helped me channel my emotions and be able to come to peace with myself. Mindfulness has helped me organize my thoughts and separate between what is emotional and what is logical. It has helped me improve my performance in the work area" (Elizabeth).

Alfred explained how this effect is reflected in his workplace as follows:

> "Later you realize that it helps you a lot to be calmer in meetings, to think more clearly. A short meditation helps a lot because I feel that you absorb a little more of what read or if you do it later too because you take time to process what is happening. You actually take your time. You don't just go along" (Alfred).

Theme 4: Recovery from Stress at the Workplace

This theme addresses challenging workplace scenarios that surfaced in my conversations with my collaborators. My informants spoke of the stressful circumstances in their workplaces that at times would prompt them to recur to mindfulness to acquire a calmer state.

As I previously mentioned, in my conversation with José he expressed that his journey in learning mindfulness was initiated by his desire to find an alternate way to manage what he described to be an anxiety disorder. However, as we got into the conversation, he revealed that the "horrible" anxiety he was experiencing was influenced by his role in the organization in which he was working at the time. At that time, he was a manager in the maintenance of chemical plants in a manufacturing organization. Performing maintenance would typically generate conflict amongst the employees, for this meant that a production line would have to be paused causing a delay in achieving the required amount of a product within a specific time. Although he is no longer working in the same role, he describes his "work industry" in general

terms as “very demanding”, specifically in Puerto Rico. José describes this aspect of his workplace in the following excerpt:

> “Look the industry in general is very demanding, especially with certain professionals. So, their idea is to somehow ‘squeeze the juice out of you’, as we would say vulgarly here, then you fall into a game where you are responsible and want to comply. There comes a time when the commitment is so high, and the workload is so much that you do not realize that it is loading you with very strong stress” (José).

Like José, María spoke of feeling increased stress at times as a result of the “pressure” to lead her work team by ensuring that the team complies with their daily responsibilities and that they achieve the company’s annual goals. At times, this would lead her to step out of her work area and do a meditation or practice a short “flow yoga” to achieve a calmer state to avoid “lashing out” at her colleagues due to the stress that was felt as she understands that this may “create animosity” within her team. María described her situation as follows: “I am the team leader, so I have to organize my team. That puts me under a lot of pressure and sometimes I have to step out from the computer and do some flow yoga or something because it gives me so much stress” (María). As I further discussed with María her work context, she expressed that she felt that her team needed additional employees to comply with their workload.

At the beginning of our conversation, Elizabeth spoke of practicing mindfulness often due to the “complexity” of working in customer service, for she feels that through mindfulness she can “keep her mind at peace to continue [with her daily life]”. As I continued to converse with Elizabeth regarding the context of her workplace, she described several difficulties that have surfaced in her workplace as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, such as the rotation of management personnel and having too few staff members to operate effectively. Oftentimes, this

had resulted in bringing about frustration and increased stress. Elizabeth describes her experience in the following excerpt:

> "I have had a couple of clients who have disrespected me simply because I am their server and it is a bit tedious that there are times that one as a person who is simply going to do a job well gets disrespected, even when you are doing everything possible to get the food to the table... Not all clients are like this but having to deal with customer service has led me to work with my emotions... Being in a job where you have to do about five things at the same time because there are times when, since we are so short-staffed, I have had to be a waitress, be involved in the kitchen, taking out dishes..." (Elizabeth).

Theme 5: Perceptions of Mindfulness Initiatives at the Workplace

Through my conversations, I discovered that two of my collaborators had participated in their companies' efforts to integrate mindfulness into their workplaces. In this section I describe their organizations' initiatives and highlight how my participants position themselves amongst these initiatives, how they evaluate them and question them.

José's organization attempted to implement mindfulness intervention through a brief presentation that was conducted by a psychologist during what he described as a "horrible transition" mandated by the organization's corporate body that disrupted the work environment. His impression of this intervention is described in the following text:

> "The person who gave it [the presentation] gave it very well. But there are a lot of things that you are not going to realize in the first instance because they told you so in an hour and a half presentation" (José).

In María organization, mindfulness was integrated as a wellness initiative in which the employees had access to app-based mindfulness courses, which could also offer monetary compensation if a certain number of "wellness exercises" were completed within a given time frame. She described her impression of these initiatives in the following way:

"I don't use it and I don't know anyone from the company who uses it either, because in the end I think that you feel that it's correlated to work… Also, these applications are not so 'free'. For example, 'ah you want to win $100, you have seven days to do this challenge', and I feel that if you are going to do mindfulness they cannot pressure you in any way, because then you're not doing it for the real reasons" (María).

For my informants these efforts were not necessarily aligned with their understanding of the practice of mindfulness, specifically on two levels: how it is taught and why it is practiced. For José, how mindfulness is taught is of significant importance, for a certain level of understanding, commitment, and dedication to the practice of mindfulness is necessary to learn it. He perceived his organization's effort to incorporate mindfulness as follows:

> "I was in a corporation that at the very end started using it. They even gave us a presentation and everything. I already knew, but... It was a moment of a very horrible transition, so they saw value in it and were using it. The thing is that all this starts from a frame of reference. I mean, you don't become a mindfulness practitioner because you saw a session in a presentation. No, you need someone to guide you initially. And when I say to guide you, it's not that one day someone gave you an hour and a half and you're already an expert in that. […] This requires a broad workshop where the person brings their concerns about what did not work for them because it requires a certain

> individuality in the process, in a way that you take it to a maturity where it can be useful to you" (José).

For María, why mindfulness is practiced is an integral component of its meaning. While her organization offers mobile application-based mindfulness courses to aid in stress management, she felt that one's practice should be guided by "real reasons" which she defined in her case to be a genuine personal commitment to take care of one's body and mind and not driven by obtaining compensation or influenced by one's work.

Furthermore, María perceived a dissonance between the organization's wellness program's efforts and what is done. She describes her appreciation as follows:

> "In my work, it's kind of weird. It's like a taboo I have or a secret... I don't think that if I give a reason like 'I am yellow [meaning "away status" in an online communication platform] because I am here meditating for fifteen minutes', people will understand... Yes, they give you the applications, but it is not something that they really tell you 'to take fifteen minutes a day...'" (María).

Theme 6: Challenges

This theme addresses the challenges perceived by my informants in integrating mindfulness in their workplaces. The challenges that were expressed were mainly related to the performance or consistency of their practice.

One of the perceived challenges in integrating mindfulness in the workplace was having the time to do so. For example, as mentioned previously, Alfred would apply mindfulness in his conversations with clients, but this is would happen whenever he had settled his tasks for the day. He further elaborated on this stating: "When you're really 'rushed', you don't have time for

anything... not even to breathe... and sometimes that happens a lot". For María, having the time to practice mindfulness was related to being permitted to take a brief time to practice. María shared: "At work, I think the difficulty is in expressing that you need the time to step out [to do mindfulness]". I further inquired if mindfulness was something that she could do in the midst of doing or if she would always need to step out to what she expressed: "I don't know if you can do that […if so] that's very difficult".

For José, although he sometimes carries out a brief mindfulness meditation while in his workplace, he expressed that the experience when he practices at his office in comparison to practicing at his home is not the same. He describes the contrast in his experiences in the following text:

> "There are people who meditate with their thoughts. Here comes one (he mimics as if he were watching a thought arise). 'I'm watching you punk ["títere" in Puerto Rican slang]'. You watch it pass by, and then another one arrives, and you let it pass. There have been times when I have achieved this. Not at work, obviously. But there have been moments. It does happen. It is not as common as I would like…(José)"

José further shared that one of the challenges he faces is being able to bring his attention to the present moment while in the presence of others in the context of his work life. He shared: "It takes me time. I have to be alone, I can't be with people, I'm not there yet…". In contrast to what my other collaborators expressed, José understands that one can eventually get to a point in which one does not have to "step out" in solitude to do mindfulness.

Alfred shared that one challenge he has in practicing mindfulness is that sometimes he is not able to concentrate enough to perform his meditation which can result in an unwanted experience. He describes this as follows:

"It happens to me a lot that you simply can't... what I told you about thought comes, you understand it, you look at it and it passes. Well, imagine that, but instead of one at a time, like 5 million at a time, crazy ["algarete", in Spanish]. Then it goes and comes back, and you get that feeling that you have a lot of things happening at the same time, as you would have in your day to day, but it's worse because you're with your eyes closed, calm and you shouldn't feel that way, but you're feeling that way. If it's like that [the experience], it's very negative or I don''t like it so much. In those cases, I sometimes stop the session and say, 'forget it, I can't' because maybe you have so many things [going on] that you say 'it's not the time now' and then you keep doing what you're doing until you can do it [meditate] again (Alfred).

While Elizabeth did not share to apply her practice in her workplace, she described one of the main challenges in carrying out her practice as follows: "Keeping the mind blank, silent, as described by several people who do mindfulness for longer periods. I feel that this is already a bigger challenge because I cannot spend half an hour meditating... I have my limit (Elizabeth)"

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

Introduction

In this chapter, I will discuss the learnings and findings described in the previous chapter and how these answer the questions that guided this research project.

From a personal perspective, I was able to learn, enrich, and challenge my knowledge and understanding of mindfulness meditation through traditional and contemporary sources of literature that were within my reach, and appreciate how the construction of its meaning is influenced by different social contexts. From an academic and practical perspective, the findings acquired through this research contributes to the current literature on mindfulness by providing a detailed description from a first-person perspective of how mindfulness is understood in and out of the workplace by those who consider themselves mindfulness practitioners. This allows us to understand whether a mindfulness approach toward workplace affairs is appropriate or suggests a social utility for individuals.

The questions that guided this research project were the following:

1. How do mindfulness practitioners understand and describe the experience of mindfulness and its perceived effects in and out of the workplace and face the challenges of integrating it into their work lives?
2. How are the relational processes through which mindfulness is taught, practiced, and experienced related to the way practitioners perceive its meaning and its social utility in the context of their workplaces?

Each of the questions was answered in this research. Nonetheless, although an in-depth description of how mindfulness was experienced was desired, and this was not attained. Instead,

my conversations focused mainly on what the participants perceived to obtain through mindfulness which also validated for them its continued practice.

How Mindfulness is Understood

I did not perceive consistency regarding how mindfulness was understood by the collaborators. I discovered that much of what the informants understood of mindfulness was derived from multiple traditions, mainly from the Western appropriation of mindfulness. Their interpretation of the practice was influenced by the sources through which they obtained information and their level of immersion and dedication to mindfulness. While the collaborators of this study had different levels of knowledge of mindfulness, it was mainly utilized as a self-help tool.

For the informants of this study, mindfulness was an activity that emerged within a specific social context (i.e., in seclusion or a group meditation context). The decision to initiate their practice was related to the eradication of personal distress generated by difficult situations they had been facing at a particular moment in their lives. However, their practice was sustained as they perceived that mindfulness had an unexpected positive effect on their quality of life and relationships. This perception of mindfulness as a self-help tool is sustained by the self-improvement discourse, of bettering oneself, that dominates in American culture (Payne, 2021). This is due to how Buddhist tradition was integrated as a form of self-improvement in Euro-American society, which is said to have been actively molded by teachers from Asia as a response to Western sensibilities (McMahan, 2008; Payne, 2021). This is not to state whether there is a correct or incorrect view of mindfulness. Rather, it is to highlight the way that narratives influence preconceptions of mindfulness.

When comparing these findings with other qualitative studies that consider how mindfulness is understood by its practitioners, one can perceive how the meaning of mindfulness may vary depending on the social context and particular standpoint in which individuals are situated. For example, in Morales' (1986) study, the informants' practice was anchored on a set of values through which they led their lives. However, the informants that were recruited to participate in that study on the experience of mindfulness in everyday life had been practicing meditation for at least three to seven years. These meditators had some relationship with a meditation center that conducted retreats in mindfulness meditation in the state of Massachusetts in the United States during the 1980s, which is a time when mindfulness meditation was emerging and spreading through the West. According to Morales (1986), for these informants, their practice "formed an integral part of their lives within the existential and attitudinal framework which meditation practice provided" (p. 98). Moreover, he stated the following:

> "The commitment to a mode of being and a meditation practice which shaped the values and the direction through which a meditator led his life, emerged from a desire to create something unique and meaningful out of one's existence. It arose from a vision which compelled one to seek a quality of being which could serve as a link to deeper purposes and loftier ways of being. It was also tied to a deeply felt need to understand, transcend, and become free from dissatisfaction, unfulfillment, and psychological pain" (p. 98).

A more recent study conducted by Ihl and colleagues (2020), in which they explored the interpretations of mindfulness within the context of the workplace, demonstrates the construction of the meaning of mindfulness when learned within the workplace context. The researchers of this study collected these interpretations from organization managers, mindfulness consultants (who offered mindfulness training in organizations), and the employees who participated in a

mindfulness training program offered in their workplace which was described to offer adapted versions of MBSR and MBCT training. They evaluated the interpretation of mindfulness from an organizational level, a group level, and an individual level. The participants in this study had not been familiarized with mindfulness until after they participated in the adapted training program. The researchers found that the meanings and benefits that were attributed to mindfulness varied depending on the context. The interpretations collected through individual interviews revealed to "range from a business utilization (organizational level), through more relational practices (group level), to individual practices for personal circumstances and self-actualization within and beyond the realm of work (individual level)" (p. 1121).

Interestingly, while the informants of these studies were all situated in the Western context, the narratives of mindfulness varied across studies, for how mindfulness was taught and learned were significantly different. In one case being more closely tied to spiritual traditions while in others in a secularized manner. Moreover, even when taught in a secularized way, the meaning of mindfulness varied across studies depending on the context in which it is taught and the utility that is linked to it.

How Mindfulness is Experienced

How mindfulness was experienced by the collaborators was not unitary. Although similarities could be identified, there was not a homogeneous description of how it was experienced, instead, these perceptions varied from person to person. Moreover, while an in-depth description of the experience of mindfulness was desired, the conversations tended to shift mainly toward the perceived effects of the practice.

The practice of mindfulness for the informants of this study focused on the quality of bare attention. As mentioned in Chapter 2, "bare attention" involves noticing what is emerging in

the field of consciousness (in the present moment) “that neither linguistically nor conceptually elaborates on the bare facts of observed experience” (Kang & Whittingham, 2010, p. 165). The term “bare attention” was not verbalized by my informants, however, how it was implicit in their descriptions of the practice.

Most of the informants shared to experience “observing” their thoughts and emotions as separate entities. Others spoke of “seeing thoughts arise” and “letting them pass” during their practice of mindfulness. This narrative stems from the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta discourse within the Buddhist teachings. The discourse is divided into four sections, about mindfulness of the body, feelings, mind, and mind-objects (also called dhammas) (Anālayo, 2010), in which the instructions include “contemplations directed toward observing the arising and passing away of these phenomena in the stream of experience” (Purser, 2014, p. 3).

One collaborator who confronted “painful” experiences lived with his grandfather during his meditation and said he was able to “heal” this experience by “looking at the wounds that surfaced”. Similarly, in Lomas and colleagues' (2014) study about the experiential challenges associated with meditation practice, one of the participants of the study shared an experience during his mindfulness meditation practice in which he “was ‘confronted’ with ‘painful feelings’ relating to a childhood trauma he had suppressed for years” (p. 6). In this case, Lomas et al. (2014) further elaborated that for some participants, mindfulness was not helpful at times as it “made them aware of their phenomenological distress, without being able to deal with it” (p. 7). The participants of this study had been practicing different types of meditations (which included mindfulness, loving-kindness meditation, Six Element, and others) between zero to twenty years. Although the details regarding the “trauma” experienced by this participant and the instructions being followed to perform the meditation were not revealed, this suggests that responses to

similar experiences can vary from person to person, as well as the outcomes obtained from its practice. Being able to navigate these experiences may also be influenced by how one understands mindfulness. Purser (2018) argues that "the understanding (and practice) of mindfulness, as 'a moment-to-moment non-reactive non-judgmental awareness', as defined by Kabat-Zinn (2002, p. 69), lacks any reference to discerning skillful from unskillful actions or any type of striving to either abandon unwholesome states or cultivate wholesome ones". Therefore, further research is necessary to understand these challenges and what actions are appropriate to guide practitioners through their experience.

On another note, one informant shared having experienced hearing electric waves during what she described as a guided "transcendental meditation", and that when she prompted her mother and partner to try this type of meditation (both of whom were non-meditators), they both experienced seeing colors and seeing oneself "in third person". Similarly, in Stein's (2004) study, in which he explored the subjective experience of transcendental meditation of South African men and women who had been practicing transcendental meditation regularly between one to fifteen years, some participants described having experienced seeing colors and having an out of body experience (observing oneself from outside the body) during their meditation. According to Kretschmer (1962), these visualizations and symbolic fantasies are induced during meditation when a general relaxation of the body has been achieved.

This informant's experience can also be compared to the findings of Maupin's (1965) study where he explored the individual differences in response to a Zen meditation exercise, which was one of the first qualitative studies conducted on the experience of meditation (according to Morales, 2023, personal communication, January 31, 2023). In his study, Maupin (1965) identified different patterns in the descriptions of the experiences of the participants

which were categorized as “types”. The experience of the informant of the present study would correspond to a pattern in which body sensations occur, which Maupin (1965) described to be “often reminiscent of hypnotic phenomena in which sensations like ‘vibrations’ or ‘waves’ were reported, or the subject feels their body is ‘suspended’ or ‘light’” (p. 191). While this experience provided validation of the effectiveness of meditation for my informant, when seen through the Buddhist lens (Morales, 2023, personal communication, January 31, 2023), this experience is seen as a phase of internal distractions to reach the stillness of meditation (Maupin, 1965). In the case of the participant, this was not seen as a distraction in her practice. Instead, it suggested the meditation’s potential of producing an effect, whether desired or not. This also reflects the level of knowledge or familiarity that this informant had regarding the Buddhist traditions that underlie the practice of mindfulness, which may influence how these experiences are interpreted and what they mean for the individual.

How Mindfulness Was Taught and Practiced

The sources of information through which mindfulness was learned by the collaborators were mainly derived from Western conceptualizations of mindfulness. Their knowledge on the subject was mainly derived from books, online video-sharing platforms, podcasts, and research publications.

The different adaptations of how mindfulness is taught may likely influence how it is understood. For example, one of the collaborators came to know of mindfulness through a workshop that she participated in which shared a similar approach to the MBSR program and included language derived from psychotherapeutic traditions (i.e., inner child). This collaborator exclusively practiced mindfulness once the activities of the day had been finalized and was also the only informant to report not integrating mindfulness in the context of the workplace. This

may be due to the therapeutic approach through which she learned mindfulness and the utility that is associated with it according to this viewpoint.

Mindfulness was practiced amongst the informants in seclusion for a predetermined period. Seclusion in this case refers to separating a specific time during the day to practice mindfulness by themselves in a private place. Their practices involved sitting or lying down on the floor, typically focusing on the breath. This was a planned activity in their daily lives, and while some reported to have practiced mindfulness in their workplaces, this was typically done spontaneously, in seclusion as well. The instructions that they followed to practice mindfulness meditation involved the use of the breath to achieve concentration and body scans. What distinguished the practice of mindfulness in the workplace context and the context of daily life was mainly the amount of time dedicated to the practice and the motive to practice.

The use of the breath in mindfulness meditations derives from the early Buddhist discourses in which the instructions of the mindfulness of the breathing took the form of sixteen steps and within time these steps were eventually reduced to two steps, the focus on the breath as one inhales and exhales (Anālayo, 2019). Anālayo (2019) further argues that the "focus" on the breath and "mindfulness" of the process of breathing is to be considered related but distinct mental qualities. Moreover, Ridderinkhof and colleagues (2017) suggest that "a mindfulness exercise with a focus on the breath does not fully capture the mindfulness construct" (p. 262). Whether the participants' experiences of mindfulness were achieved by focusing on the breath remains unclear as in some cases, when guided meditations were utilized, they would follow additional instructions. However, these were not elucidated in our conversations.

Mindfulness in the Workplace

Similar to the findings of Ihl and colleagues' (2020) study, the findings of this study illustrate that the understanding of mindfulness, and its related practices can vary depending on the context in which my collaborators situate their practice. I discovered that the experience and practice of mindfulness within the workplace were not necessarily the same as within the context of daily life. Within the context of daily life, mindfulness consisted of a planned practice that contributed to perceived personal benefits for their state of mind, personal relationships, and the way they relate to others. Within the context of the workplace, the collaborators reported utilizing mindfulness in moments of increased stress, which for some was mainly related to their job demands. The way that mindfulness was implemented was by withdrawing from a stressful situation to do a brief meditation in a private space, in which the person would focus on the breath for several minutes. Although most of the informants shared that their practice served as an aid for workplace-related stress, they did not necessarily describe their practice as a stress management technique. Some of the reported workplace situations that lead the informants to withdraw themselves were related to not having enough personnel to attend to the workload, being in a fast-paced working environment, and the interpersonal conflicts generated by business demands.

Interestingly, when two of the collaborators spoke of the workplace situations that created stress for them, they justified these situations to be part of the nature of the work. In one case, since the job position the collaborator occupied was "entry-level", she understood that she was expected to handle a variety of problem-solving tasks to potentially grow within the company. In another case, high job demands, and interpersonal conflict were denoted as characteristics embedded within the job industry with which one was expected to deal with.

These informants also shared that their companies had introduced mindfulness resources to their workplaces. In one case it was offered as part of the company's workplace wellness program and in another, it was introduced as an aid to manage stress during a period of organizational restructuring in which the company's ownership was transitioning to another owner. This resonates with the current trend of mindfulness in corporations as argued by Titmuss (2016) in which corporations bring mindfulness tools to people "to reduce their stress levels and develop the power of attention in order to focus more clearly on the aims of the corporation to achieve targets in a focused and relaxed environment as possible" (p. 185). This perpetuates the use of mindfulness to help employees cope with the culture of a competitive workplace that a company depends upon to meet economic goals and mitigates the harmful cultural effects instead of reforming that culture (Caring-Lobel, 2016).

On another note, when speaking of the mindfulness tools offered by their organizations, the informants shared critiques regarding how mindfulness was presented. During the time these mindfulness resources were available in the informants' workplaces, they had already been actively practicing mindfulness. However, they did not utilize the resources presented by their companies, instead, they recurred to their sources of knowledge and training to execute their practice. The informants' critiques of these resources revealed their perceptions of how mindfulness should be offered by organizations, which included: that personalized guidance is given and that it should be "disconnected" from work. To consider that mindfulness should be offered disconnected from work may be due to the understanding of the practice as a self-improvement tool for personal circumstances for this participant. When comparing this with Ihl and colleagues' (2020) study, mindfulness was interpreted amongst the participants as a self-actualization practice within and beyond the realm of work. However, in this case, mindfulness

was taught within the context of the workplace. In the case of the informant of this study, mindfulness was learned in the context of daily life, which may influence the relevance that is attributed to mindfulness within the workplace. Moreover, the informants also shared their perceptions on how it should be approached by the practitioner, which included: personal motives, commitment, and dedication to the practice.

It was also revealed that there were contradictions in the discourse and application of mindfulness initiatives in the workplace. In one case, even though the corporation provided mindfulness resources as part of the company's workplace wellness program (which may be utilized during work hours), the use of mindfulness in the workplace is not encouraged or even spoken of. Interestingly, in both this study and in Ihl and colleagues' (2020) study, one of the participants described mindfulness as a "taboo" within the workplace context. For this reason, the participants felt discomfort in openly practicing mindfulness or communicating their interest in the practice mindfulness with colleagues and managers. Ihl et al. (2020), reported that for some employees openly exercising mindfulness in the workplace was associated with losing status or being stigmatized, for the employees who privately practiced mindfulness feared others' negative social reactions.

While the findings of previous studies regarding mindfulness in the workplace have reported that mindfulness has an impact on workplace productivity, performance, or job satisfaction (Ihl et al., 2020; Dane and Brummel, 2013; King and Harr, 2017; Lu et al., 2021, Lin et al. 2020; Kersemaekers et al., 2018), the collaborators of this study did not report an impact on these areas. Instead, they reported that mindfulness allowed them to cope with the demands of their environment and enabled them to meet the expectations of their jobs.

Participants indicated that practicing mindfulness had secondary effects in their relationships within workplace: they were able to relate better with others, whether it was by compassionately relating to clients facing difficult situations, “not lashing out” at colleagues, not “being in competition” with coworkers or being “more of a listener” with others. For some, this was due to being “calmer” or “grounded”. For others, showing compassion and connecting with others during conversations was perceived to be a type of mindfulness. Nonetheless, it was not clearly defined if this was an outcome of mindfulness practice or if it was an active decision to practice mindfulness while speaking with others. Therefore, this may be a matter to explore in future research. Ihl and colleagues (2020) had similar findings in terms of how relationships are perceived to be affected, in which at a group level the participants mentioned the following benefits of mindfulness: reduced interpersonal conflict, stronger cooperative behavior, improved social skills, and more respectful interaction.

Challenges

The participant’s expressions towards mindfulness were essentially positive, as they perceived their practice benefitted their lives and their interactions with others. Amongst the main challenges identified were maintaining the discipline to continue practicing and achieving concentration.

Some of the collaborators shared that being able to observe one’s thoughts and emotions and letting them pass was not a consistent experience, for a certain level of concentration was necessary to get to this point and it was not always achieved. For one person this depended on the place in which they were situated. For example, when practicing mindfulness in the workplace, one informant indicated that he was unable to experience “observing” his thoughts and letting them pass. This may be due the intention that is set on the practice within the

workplace context, which in this case was to relieve felt stress rather than to cultivate mindfulness. Another participant indicated that it was difficult to get to this point when several things are going on in his day. In this case, he ceased his practice and resumed it at another point of the day. The difficulties in focusing the attention on what is being experienced may also be limited by the demands of daily life and the workplace. Within the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta discourse these are seen as distractions in the practice of mindfulness, for which the Buddha recommended to "temporarily change one's practice and develop a calm (samatha) object of meditation, in order to cultivate internal joy and serenity" (p. 64) and once the mind has calmed down one can return to their practice of Satipaṭṭhāna meditation (Anālayo, 2010).

Implications for Practice

When considering whether to implement mindfulness training programs in the workplace, organizations should first consider the issue that is expected to be addressed through these interventions. If organizations wish to provide mindfulness training as a tool to aid in employees' perceived stress, other aspects related to the work conditions should be taken into consideration. The findings of this study pointed towards mindfulness being utilized in the context of the workplace as a means to manage perceived stress due to job demands. Offering mindfulness interventions for employees to manage work-related stress instills the narrative that employees are responsible for their felt stress and disregard the workplace dynamics that can be addressed to improve the effectiveness of the relationships and processes that may have a more direct impact on performance and productivity within organizations. As Tinline and Cooper (2019) suggest, the solution to work-related stress is management, not mindfulness. By focusing well-being interventions on coping mechanisms to work under stressful conditions, rather than

on managing the root causes of stress that can be harmful, one is making the individual responsible for their felt stress.

Mindfulness was mainly perceived amongst my informants as a beneficial practice at a personal level which had a positive implication on the relationships they sustained in the context of daily life and the workplace. The relevance of mindfulness in the workplace was shared to mainly focus as a means to recover from stressful situations and, although unexpected, was shown to help relate better with others. Taking this into consideration, I suggest shifting the conversation of mindfulness in organizations from the individual to the relational domain, adopting the approach of relational mindfulness. As previously mentioned, Morales (2020) argues that the awareness of being-in-relationship can potentiate our capacity to participate collaboratively and dialogically in relationships, helping us to enrich our relational bonds and enhance the quality of our attention and care of the processes of relating. Instead of focusing on how people can benefit from mindfulness in terms of individual performance or productivity, the approach of relational mindfulness presents the alternative to develop the relational practices and processes in which the members of an organization participate, which are essential in organizing, sustaining, creating, and developing the activities of people working together (Subirana Vilanova, 2021). Subirana Vilanova (2021) further argues:

> "Relational practices are essential to take organizations from a command-and-control culture to a future in which organizations develop the promoting of dialogic processes of learning involving the whole system; that is, they involve greater numbers of people sharing their vision, their knowing, and their experience to bring more clarity to the decision-making process, as they take into account the diversity of voices involved in the

organization. In return, this will foster wellbeing, commitment, and shared responsibility" (p. 249).

Limitations

This study was limited by the established length of the interviews. Each interview had a duration of around one hour. However, to meet the established objectives through each conversation and not exceed the stipulated time for the interview, I was restricted to assessing each information objective at a more superficial level. My skillfulness in navigating the conversation may have also limited the content obtained in each interview as this was my first experience conducting semi-structured interviews.

Recommendations

This research project contributes to the field of mindfulness in organizations by including the narratives of the perspectives of mindfulness from a first-person approach. However, how the informants understood mindfulness was not clearly distinguished throughout my interviews, as the conversations tended to shift mainly toward the outcomes of the practice. While some of the aspects of the experience of mindfulness could be appreciated through the experiences shared, it is recommendable that future research focuses on obtaining in-depth descriptions through qualitative method approaches. Furthermore, while the informants described themselves as consistent mindfulness practitioners for more than one year, their levels of expertise and experience did not necessarily correspond to the amount of time they had been practicing mindfulness, which is something that may be useful to consider for future projects when determining the criteria for selection of participants.

To expand on the perceived experiences of mindfulness and its relevance in the context of the workplace as an individual practice, I recommend conducting a mixed methods approach

research in which one can evaluate the impact of different meditation practices on individuals in the workplace context by having an experimental and control group and subsequently interviewing the participants on their experiences and their interpretations of the practice. Moreover, to evaluate the implications of the different traditions of understanding of mindfulness in the interpretation of the practice, an experimental study can be designed to compare the ways in which mindfulness is understood when taught within the framework of MBSR interventions and within other mindfulness meditation traditions. Finally, I suggest that future research on the study of mindfulness in the workplace should focus on relational mindfulness approaches.

Final Remarks

In the third chapter of this paper, I mentioned that when I initiated this research project as part of a class course I was left with more questions on the subject even when the objectives of that project had been achieved. While the questions I had were clarified through this thesis, new questions surfaced as this project was finalized. Some of the questions these are:

1. Does mindfulness have the potential to be a vehicle through which workplace dynamics and relationships can be developed to achieve better organizational practices?
2. What are the workplace dynamics dominating in the organizations that are investing in mindfulness resources?
3. What aspects of mindfulness make the practice attractive to workers?
4. What aspects of mindfulness make workplace wellness initiatives unattractive to workers?
5. Do the implications of mindfulness differ when it is utilized as a self-help tool or as a stress management technique?

6. How can practitioners relate to their experience when confronted with phenomenological distress through their practice?

I am hopeful that these questions can be answered in the future as more research is necessary to understand this phenomenon that is widely being used by organizations.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Sociodemographic Information Form

Cuestionario de Información Sociodemográfica

Instrucciones: En este formulario encontrará preguntas en las que debe escoger entre las alternativas disponibles y marcarla con una equis (x) o escribir alguna información breve en el espacio provisto. Por favor, seleccione sólo una alternativa a menos que indique lo contrario.

1. ¿Con cuál género se identifica?

   ____ Hombre

   ____ Mujer

   ____ Transgénero

   ____ No binario

   ____ Otro, especifique: _____

2. ¿Cuál es su edad? _____

3. ¿Cuál es la preparación académica más alta que tiene en este momento?

   ____ Escuela superior

   ____ Grado técnico

   ____ Grado asociado

   ____ Bachillerato

   ____ Maestría

   ____ Doctorado

   ____ Otra, especifique:

4. ¿En qué sector trabaja?

____Público

____Privado

____Otro: _____

5. ¿En qué tipo de industria trabaja?

____Servicios de salud

____Industria de alimentos

____Hospitalidad

____Farmacéutica

____Agricultura

____Educación

____Manufactura

____Ventas

____Servicios financieros

____Telecomunicaciones

____Otro: _____

6. ¿Qué posición ocupa donde trabaja? _____

7. ¿Cuánto tiempo lleva ejerciendo dicha posición? _____

8. Horas de trabajo a la semana:

____ Tiempo completo

____ Tiempo parcial

9. ¿Cuánto tiempo lleva practicando mindfulness? _____

10. ¿Con cuánta frecuencia practica mindfulness? _____

Appendix B

Interview Questions Matrix

Interview Questions	Research Questions	
	1. How do mindfulness practitioners understand and describe the experience of mindfulness and its perceived effects in and out of the workplace and face the challenges of integrating it into their work lives?	2. How are the relational processes through which mindfulness is taught, practiced, and experienced related to the way practitioners perceive its meaning and its social utility in the context of their workplaces?
The description of mindfulness		
What does mindfulness mean to you?	X	
How does it impact your thoughts and emotions?	X	
How does it impact your relationships?	X	
What does it mean to be "mindful" and "not be mindful"?	X	
What do you do when you practice mindfulness?	X	
What are the guidelines you follow to practice mindfulness?		X
The context		
Where did you learn mindfulness?		X
How did you learn mindfulness?		X
Do you practice mindfulness in specific contexts?		X
Are there any contexts that facilitate this practice?		X
If so, what is it about this context that facilitates this practice?		X
Do your practice mindfulness with other people?		X
If so, how is your experience different when practicing with other people rather than individually?		X
How do you practice mindfulness in your workplace?	X	
Are there any challenges in practicing mindfulness in your workplace?	X	
The experience of mindfulness (daily life/workplace)		
How do you describe the experience of mindfulness?	X	
In problematic situations, do you bring mindfulness to bear?	X	
How easy is it for you to stay mindful?	X	
What makes it easy?	X	
What makes it difficult?	X	
The effects of mindfulness practice (daily life/workplace)		
What effects does mindfulness have in your life?	X	
What effect does mindfulness have in your work life?	X	
How does mindfulness impact your relationships in your workplace?		X
What challenges arise from practicing mindfulness?	X	
What makes mindfulness useful for you in your workplace?		X

Appendix C

Interview Guide

1. What does mindfulness mean to you? / ¿Qué significa mindfulness para tí?
2. What has been your experience with mindfulness? / ¿Cuál ha sido tu experiencia con el mindfulness?
3. How and where do you practice mindfulness? / ¿Cómo y dónde practicas mindfulness?
4. What effect has this had on you? / ¿Qué efecto ha tenido esto en tí?
5. What has led you to continue practicing mindfulness? / ¿Qué te ha llevado a continuar practicando mindfulness?
6. Do you practice mindfulness with other people? / ¿Practicas mindfulness con otras personas?
7. Where do you work and what do you do in your workplace? / ¿En dónde trabajas y qué haces en tu trabajo?
8. What relevance does your mindfulness practice have in your workplace? / ¿Qué relevancia tiene tu practica de mindfulness en tu rtrabajo?
9. Are there any challenges in integrating mindfulness in your workplace? / ¿Existen retos en la integración del mindfulness en tu trabajo?
10. Does your practice have an impact on your relationships in and out of the workplace? If so, how? / ¿Tu practica tiene algún impacto en tus relaciones dentro y fuera del trabajo? De ser así, ¿cómo?

Appendix D

Informed Consent Form

Consentimiento Informado: Entrevista

Investigación: La experiencia de mindfulness y su aplicación en el contexto laboral: un estudio explorativo

Descripción

Está invitado/a a colaborar en una investigación sobre la experiencia de mindfulness su aplicación en el contexto laboral. Esta investigación es realizada por Adriana M. Salas Díaz, estudiante de maestría en Psicología Industrial Organizacional de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, Recinto de Río Piedras (UPR-Río Piedras). El propósito de esta investigación es describir la experiencia de mindfulness y explorar cómo es aplicado en el contexto laboral

Usted fue invitado/a a colaborar porque cumple con los siguientes criterios de elegibilidad: se considera practicante de mindfulness, ha practicado mindfulness durante los últimos seis (6) meses, está empleado/a, y tiene 21 o más años de edad. Se espera que en este estudio participen cerca de cuatro a seis personas por disponibilidad.

Su participación tomará aproximadamente una (1) hora en donde conversaremos acerca de su experiencia con el mindfulness y su aplicación en el contexto laboral. Esta entrevista será grabada en audio con el propósito de facilitar la transcripción y análisis.

Riesgos y beneficios

Los riesgos asociados a este estudio son mínimos. Usted podría sentir incomodidad por las preguntas realizadas pues podían provocarle reflexión sobre aspectos de su vida. De sentirse incomodo o incomoda, puede abandonar el estudio en cualquier momento sin incurrir en alguna penalidad. Su participación no conlleva beneficios directos ni incentivos para usted.

Confidencialidad

Su identidad será protegida tomando las siguientes medidas de seguridad. Los documentos y datos serán almacenados en la computadora personal de la investigadora, cuyo acceso requiere de contraseña, en un cartapacio protegido también por contraseña. El periodo de almacenamiento de los datos será de tres (3) años una vez finalizada la investigación. La información que maneje en la computadora o dispositivo que utilice puede ser intervenida o revisada por terceras personas. Estas personas pueden tener acceso legítimo o ilegítimo como un familiar, patrono, intrusos o piratas informáticos (“hackers”), entre otros. Además, en la computadora o dispositivo puede quedar registro de la información que acceda o envíe por Internet. Al terminar este periodo, se destruirán los documentos en formato digital y con una trituradora de papel los que estén impresos. No se identificará ningún documento con su nombre, solamente esta hoja de consentimiento.

La información o datos que pueda identificarlo/a directa o indirectamente serán manejados confidencialmente. Esto es que solo el comité de tesis seleccionado por la investigadora tendrá acceso a los datos crudos o que puedan identificarlo/a, incluyendo esta hoja de consentimiento.

Oficiales de la UPR-Río Piedras o de agencias federales responsables de velar por la integridad en la investigación podrían requerirle a la investigadora los datos obtenidos en este estudio, incluyendo este documento. Los resultados de este estudio podrían ser reportados en revistas académicas y foros profesionales de investigación.

Derechos

Si leyó este documento y decidió participar, por favor, entienda que su participación es completamente voluntaria y que tiene derecho a abstenerse de participar o a retirarse del estudio en cualquier momento, sin ninguna penalidad ni pérdida de sus derechos. También tiene derecho a no contestar alguna pregunta en particular. Además, tiene derecho a recibir una copia de este documento.

Si tiene alguna pregunta o desea más información sobre esta investigación, por favor, comuníquese con Adriana M. Salas Díaz al (787) 205-5919 o escribiendo a adriana.salas@upr.edu, o con el supervisor de la investigación, Dr. Edgardo Morales Arandes, escribiendo a emorapr@outlook.com. Si tiene preguntas sobre sus derechos como participante, reclamación o queja relacionada con su participación en este estudio, puede comunicarse con la Oficial de Cumplimiento de la UPR-Río Piedras, al (787) 764-0000, extensión 86773 o escribiendo a cipshi.degi@upr.edu.

Su firma en este documento significa que ha decidido participar en esta investigación después de leer y discutir la información presentada en esta hoja de consentimiento, que autoriza a que esta entrevista sea grabada, que tiene o es mayor de 21 años de edad y que recibió copia de este documento. Si desea recibir el informe final de este estudio, favor indíquelo a continuación. La copia será enviada mediante correo electrónico.

__Sí deseo recibir copia del informe ___ No deseo recibir copia del informe

_____	_____	_____
Nombre de la persona participante	Firma	Fecha

Discutí el contenido de esta hoja de consentimiento con la persona arriba firmante.

_____	_____	_____
Nombre de la investigadora	Firma	Fecha

Appendix E

Certification of the Institutional Committee for the Protection of Human Beings in Research (CIPSHI)

Autorización CIPSHI #2122-108

RC **RRP-Proyecto CIPSHI <cipshi.degi@upr.edu>**
To: Adriana M Salas Diaz; **Cc:** EDGARDO MORALES ARANDES
Thursday, June 2, 2022 at 2:07 PM

Estimada señora Salas:

Las condiciones establecidas por el Comité Institucional para la Protección de los Seres Humanos en la Investigación (CIPSHI) para autorizar el protocolo *La experiencia de mindfulness y su aplicación en el contexto laboral: un estudio explorativo* (**#2122-108**) se cumplieron apropiadamente.

Por lo tanto, el protocolo está aprobado.

*La realización de las actividades presenciales con intervención o interacción con seres humanos como sujetos de estudio propuestas en los protocolos que el CIPSHI autorice están sujetas a las instrucciones institucionales y estatales. Es responsabilidad de los/as investigadores/as protegerse y proteger a los/as posibles participantes durante el periodo de emergencia de salud pública y seguir las instrucciones correspondientes que pueden ser variantes según se desarrollen los ev*entos.El procedimiento para solicitar autorización para investigaciones de campo durante el periodo de emergencia por el COVID-19 se encuentra en: https://cutt.ly/Bgly89v y en http://graduados.uprrp.edu/cipshi/ .

Recuerde conservar copia de los documentos de su protocolo, especialmente de la(s) hoja(s) de consentimiento o asentimiento informado. La versión de la(s) hoja(s) de consentimiento o asentimiento aprobadas por el CIPSHI es la que debe reproducir y entregar a los participantes de la investigación.

Cualquier modificación *posterior a esta autorización requerirá la consideración y reautorización del CIPSHI. Además, debe notificar cualquier incidente adverso o no anticipado que implique a los sujetos o participantes. Al finalizar la investigación, por favor envíe el formulario Notificación de Terminación de Protocolo.*

Le deseamos éxito.

Atentamente,

Myriam L. Vélez Galván, MA
Oficial de Cumplimiento
Decanato de Estudios Graduados e Investigación
Universidad de Puerto Rico, Recinto de Río Piedras
18 Ave. Universidad STE 1801
San Juan PR 00925-2512
Email: cipshi.degi@upr.edu
787-764-0000, Ext. 86773
Webpage CIPSHI: http://graduados.uprrp.edu/cipshi/

Appendix F

Participant Recruitment Flyer