Mindful Leadership:

How Mindfulness and Meditation Contribute to Effective Leadership

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1. Abstract

Mindfulness is defined as “paying attention in a particular way, on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally” (Kabat-Zinn 2003, 145). Mindfulness meditation is a method and tool for mindfulness. Many studies show that mindfulness and meditation have a positive effect on both the mind and the body. Every aspect of our lives—family, work, health, education, recreation, and art—can be positively influenced by mindfulness practice.

Early studies are focused on how to heal all kinds of physical and psychological diseases through mindfulness practice and training. In recent years, the studies turned to the corporate life and the area of leadership.

This paper adds to this field by exploring how mindfulness and meditation can enhance the effectiveness of leadership through a mindfulness training pilot program in a German company; my role was that of participant observer role. My interest is how to link the theory to the application of mindfulness. This research demonstrates how mindfulness can be better understood among corporate organizations and managers, and therefore more properly applied.

Key words: Leadership, Effective Leadership, Authentic Leadership, Mindfulness, Meditation, Emotional Intelligence, Germany
2. Introduction

The world is changing fast and we are facing a storm of complexity, diversity, and uncertainty that make organizational and personal choices more difficult. As a result, business leaders and managers are even busier than before. However, they may not know what they are busy with and how they can be more successful and effective in this complex and uncertain world.

Tomorrow’s successful business leader will need to be a whole leader with Head (intellectual intelligence), Heart (emotional intelligence), and Guts (moral intelligence). Companies appear to have a great supply of leaders who are strategic, analytical, and purposeful. Leaders who have emotional intelligence and can develop talent, and who have clear values and the courage to do the right thing, are in shorter supply (Dotlich, Cairo, and Rhinesmith, 2007). Emotional intelligence (EQ) means to seek out and collaborate with many perspectives in a diverse world, and moral intelligence (MQ) is about learning to live with and manage ambiguity and paradoxes in an uncertain world.

Therefore, developing leaders who have not only a high intelligence quotient (IQ), but also a high EQ and MQ, is critically important for sustainable business success. Traditional approaches for leadership development may not enough. If you look at the leader and manager’s working life, stress, constant pressure, not enough time to think things through, endless emails (up to 150 per day), and at least thirty phone calls . . . the manager’s to-do lists are longer at the end of the day than they were at the beginning of the day, with no time to reflect, no room for creativity, or to finish a thought. In this fast-paced, competitive world that
carries a high risk of burnout, how can leaders maintain an inner balance and hold their values without compromising productivity?

How can executives be emotionally intelligent, empathetic, and maintain a holistic approach, while simultaneously operating within a results-oriented system?

Given such challenges, in recent years mindfulness and meditation are emerging on the business stage and drawing attention to the need for human well-being and leadership development. It has been proved to have a beneficial effect on the following.

**Health:** Body and mind are deeply connected, especially through our nervous system. Mindfulness meditation helps us to relax and consciously let go of stress, thus proving to have significant positive effects on our physical health and in strengthening the immune system. Hundreds of studies have demonstrated the effect on various diseases and conditions, including headaches, chronic pain, high blood pressure, and so forth.

**Cognition:** Mindfulness is the basis for all higher cognitive skills. Neuroscientists have demonstrated that mindfulness has a positive effect on memory, concentration, creativity, and perceptivity, among other things.

**Behavior and Mental Health:** Mindfulness strengthens our mental resilience, especially in terms of preventing or overcoming anxiety, burnout, depression, and sleep disorders.

The most important aspect of mindfulness is that it has a significant influence on social
interactions—the ability to listen attentively, to perceive other’s emotions, and to be authentic in our dialogue with others. It also helps with flexibility and seeing things from broader perspectives. These are critical skills for leaders and managers.

This paper will explore how mindfulness and meditation can have a positive effect on emotional intelligence and hence have an impact on effective leadership through the examination of a pilot mindfulness and meditation training program in a German organization. The relationship between mindfulness and stress management, decision making, communication, happiness, and so on, has been explored in the pilot program. I will use the data collected from the pilot program to do the analysis. I will also use myself as an instrument by taking a participant observer role in this mindfulness leadership pilot program because I am interested in how to apply the theories of mindfulness and see their impact. I will also bring my own practice experience and insights into the discussion. In the end, the analysis showed that mindfulness and meditation help with stress management, decision making, interpersonal skills, and happiness and well-being. These are also the most important elements of emotional intelligence. Mindfulness meditation is a tool to create a reflective space and enable a connection with the inner world at a deep level. I hope it can add another perspective and increased awareness within organizations for leadership development, to develop mindful strategies to cope with leadership challenges in this complex, diverse, and uncertain world. Mindful leadership can be explained as a mutual relationship between the leader and follower that is influenced by a leader’s mindfulness. As a next step, it can provide the possibility for mindfulness research in the workplace.
3. Literature Review

3.1 Leadership

Leadership has been conceptualized from various perspectives. “leadership is a complex phenomenon that touches on many other important organizational, social and personal processes. It depends on a process of influence, whereby people are inspired to work towards group goals, not through coercion, but through personal motivation.” (Bolden, 2004, 5).

According to Northouse, Leadership is defined as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (Northouse, 2010, 3). Leadership is summarized with two characteristics, according to these definitions: leadership is a process that involves influence, and leadership happens within the context of a group and involves common goals and purpose shared by leaders and their followers. According to the existing studies, leadership theories are commonly categorized into these aspects: trait (personality and cognitive ability), behavioral (skills), and contingency (situational) (e.g., Northouse, 2010).

**Trait-focused leadership:** Trait approaches dominated the initial decades of scientific leadership research and such approaches have again risen to prominence. Trait approaches (referred to as “great man theories”) focused on identifying the personality characteristics or traits shared by good leaders to distinguish effective from ineffective leaders (Northouse, 2010). These theories are based on the assumption that leaders are inborn rather than made, some people are natural leaders, endowed with certain traits not possessed by other people (Yukl, 2006). The leaders have certain innate characteristics or traits that distinguish them from others that will
contribute to management effectiveness (Stogdill, 1974).

Trait theorists are primarily interested in the measurement of traits. Many measurements have been developed in the centuries e.g. Raymond Cattell's 16 personality factors and Hans Eysenck's three-factor theory. Many contemporary personality psychologists believe that there are five basic dimensions of personality, often referred to as the “Big 5” personality traits. The five broad personality traits described by the theory are extraversion(outgoing/energetic vs. solitary/reserved), agreeableness(friendly/compassionate vs. analytical/detached), openness(inventive/curious vs. consistent/cautious), conscientiousness(efficient/organized vs. easy-going/careless) and neuroticism(sensitive/nervous vs. secure/confident). The aspects in the Big Five model, e.g. Volatility and Withdrawal for Neuroticism; Enthusiasm and Assertiveness for Extraversion; Intellect and Openness for Openness/Intellect; Industriousness and Orderliness for Conscientiousness; and Compassion and Politeness for Agreeableness, contribute to effective leadership (McCrae and Costa, 1987; Northouse, 2010). The limitations of trait-focus leadership are that it is still focus on small set of individual attributes such as Big Five personality trains without integrations of multiple attributes. It is very difficult to explain the behavioral diversity for effective leadership with situational influences (Zaccaro 2007).

**Behavior-focused leadership:** In response to the early criticisms of the trait approach, theorists began to research leadership as a set of behaviors, evaluating the behavior of successful leaders, determining a behavior taxonomy, and identifying broad leadership styles. this leadership theory focuses on the actions of leaders not on mental qualities or internal states.
According to this theory, people can learn to become leaders through teaching and observation. In initial work identifying leader behavior, Fleishman (1953) observed that subordinates perceived their supervisors' behavior in terms of two broad categories referred to as “consideration” and “initiating structure” (Fleishman 1953). A considerate leadership style tends to focus on building good relationships and two-way communications with subordinates and are attentive to subordinates’ needs and feelings. On the other hand, initiating structure behaviors tend to focus on planning, communicating, and allocating tasks, and expect tasks to be completed to deadlines and to certain standards (Fleishman and Harris, 1962; cited in Glendon et al., 2006, Lekka et al., 2012). A well-known model called managerial grid is developed by Blake and Mouton based on the behavior leadership theory (Blake and Mouton, 1964). Blake and Mouton suggest five different leadership styles, based on the leaders' concern for people and their concern for task accomplishment. According to the model, the most effective leaders are those that exhibit a “team management or teamwork” leadership style, which involves not only focusing on goal achievement, but also being attentive to build trust and commitment from followers and interpersonal relationships within the organization (i.e., maintaining a balance between a concern for production and a concern for people). (Blake and McCanse, 1991).

**Contingency-focused leadership:** Leader effectiveness depends on the context; there is no specific leadership trait fit for all kind of situations. Different leadership styles will be best suited in different contexts/situations. Contingency leadership theories appear more
prominently in recent years: Fiedler contingency model, the path-goal theory and the Hersey situational theory.

Hersey situational theory: The situational leadership model is developed by Hersey. Hersey suggests four leadership-styles and four levels of follower-development. For effectiveness, the model posits that the leadership-style must match the appropriate level of follower-development. In this model, leadership behavior becomes a function not only of the characteristics of the leader, but of the characteristics of followers as well (Hersey, 1985).

Fiedler contingency model: A contingency model is developed by Fiedler in 1964. Fiedler situational contingency model contains the relationship between leadership style and the favorableness of the situation. Situational favorableness was described by Fiedler in terms of three empirically derived dimensions: Leader-member relationship (high if the leader is generally accepted and respected by followers); Degree of task structure (high if the task is very structured); Leader's position power (high if a great deal of authority and power are formally attributed to the leader's position). Situations are favorable to the leader if all three of these dimensions are high. (Fiedler, 1964)

Path-goal theory: The path-goal theory of leadership was developed by Robert House (House, 1974). According to House, the essence of the theory is "the meta proposition that leaders, to be effective, engage in behaviors that complement subordinates' environments and abilities in a manner that compensates for deficiencies and is instrumental to subordinate satisfaction and individual and work unit performance" (House, 1996). The theory identifies four leader
behaviors, achievement-oriented, directive, participative, and supportive, that are contingent to the environment factors and follower characteristics. Leaders are flexible and that they can change their style, as situations require.

**Transformational/transactional leadership:** Transformational leadership is a concept further developed by Burns (Burns, 1978). Burns defined transformational leadership as a process where leaders and followers engage in a mutual process of “raising one another to higher levels of morality and motivation” (Burns, 1978). Transformational leaders as those that are able to inspire individuals to meet goals (organizational, team) beyond their own and enable them to see the value of meeting those goals beyond their self-interests. It is different from transactional leaders. Transactional leaders focus on supervising and managing employees to achieve objectives and performance standard with rewards and punishment. The concept is further developed by Bernard M. Bass to help explain how transformational leadership could be measured, as well as how it impacts follower motivation and performance. (Bass, 1985)

**Authentic leadership:** Authentic leadership is an emerging leadership theory. It is rooted in positive organizational behavior, which focuses on the “study and application of positively oriented human resource strengths and psychological capabilities that can be measured, developed, and effectively managed for performance improvement” (Luthans, 2002, 698). Authentic leaders are defined as those who are self-aware, confident, genuine, optimistic, moral/ethical, balanced in terms of decision making, and transparent in enacting leadership (Avolio and Gardner, 2005; Avolio, Griffith, Wernsing, and Walumbwa, 2010). They are
described both as being “true to themselves and to others,” and behaving in way that is consistent with their beliefs and values and that will generate trust in their followers (Bass and Bass, 2008, 223).

There are several other leadership concepts built on and related to authentic leadership, such as reflective leadership, ethical leadership, sustainable leadership, and mindful leadership. All these leadership theories contribute to leadership development. The key question is what effective leadership should look like, and what its key characteristics should be. Effective leadership can be a good balance and combination of traits, behaviors, and situational theories.

**Effective leadership:** Manfred Kets De Vries summarized the concept of leadership as both property and process. “As a property, leadership is a set of characteristics—behavior pattern and personality attributes—that makes a leader more effective at attaining a set of goals. As a process, leadership is an effort by a leader, drawing on various based of power (an activity with its own skill set), to influence members of a group to direct their activities toward a common goal” (Kets De Vries 2006, P164). He suggested the effective leaders should possess clusters of competencies in three areas:

- personal competencies, such as achievement motivation, self-confidence, energy, and personal effectiveness
- social competencies, such as influence, political awareness, and empathy (Sociability and emotional intelligence are critical for effective and successful leaders.)
- cognitive competencies, such as conceptual thinking and a helicopter view
In addition, Dotlich, Cairo, and Rhinesmith (2006) described a “whole” leadership in their book *Head, Heart and Guts*. The authors contend that the old leadership paradigm that focused on brains and strong analytical skills is no longer enough to achieve long-term organizational success. The authors argue that today’s businesses need whole leaders, people who possess a range of qualities in three major areas: head (analytical abilities, Intellectual Intelligence [IQ]), heart (emotional intelligence [EQ]), and—what is too frequently absent—guts (the willingness to take risks, based on strong beliefs and values, which are reflected as moral intelligence). It is key to develop leaders who become effective by learning to be compassionate and brave, as well as savvy, and to be successful in a complex, matrixed, fast-moving world. Intellectual Intelligence (IQ) is the ability to drive for the bigger, broader picture in a complex world. Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is the ability to seek out and collaborate with many perspectives in a diverse world. Moral Intelligence (MQ) is the ability to learn to live with and manage ambiguity and paradoxes in an uncertain world. The context defines the leadership style and the context is constantly changing—now more than ever. Leadership is therefore a never-ending journey of action, reflection, learning, and action. The role as a leader depends on global context (what is happening in the world and where in the world are you working?); organizational context (what is your position and who are you responsible for in what type of organization?) and personal context (what are your personal motivations and preferences that influence your leadership style?).

Therefore, emotional intelligence in management is emphasized as a critical capability for effectiveness in today’s leaders.
3.2 Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is defined as a “set of emotional and social skills that influence the way we perceive and express ourselves, develop and maintain social relationships, cope with challenges, and use emotional information in an effective and meaningful way” (Mayer, Salovery, and Caruso, 2002). Reuven Bar-On originally developed a model that captured emotional intelligence by dividing it into five general areas or realms and fifteen subsections or scales (Bar-On, 1997). It was updated by the Multi-Health Systems (MHS) staff (2011), and named EQ-I 2.0. This model of emotional intelligence provides a holistic view of emotional intelligence.

Self-Perception

This realm of emotional intelligence is concerned with what we generally refer to as the “inner self.” It determines how in touch with your feelings you are, how good you feel about yourself and about what you are doing in life. Success in this area means that you are aware of your feelings, feel strong, and have confidence in pursuing your life goals. It embraces three perspectives.

*Self-regard* is respecting oneself while understanding and accepting one’s strengths and weaknesses. Self-regard is often associated with feelings of inner strength and self-confidence. *Self-actualization* is the willingness to persistently try to improve oneself and engage in the pursuit of personally relevant and meaningful objectives that lead to a rich and enjoyable life.
Emotional self-awareness includes recognizing and understanding one’s own emotions. This includes the ability to differentiate between subtleties in one’s own emotions while understanding the cause of these emotions and the impact they have on the thoughts and actions of oneself and others. Emotional self-awareness is the basis on which most of the other elements of emotional intelligence are built, the first step toward exploring and coming to understand oneself, and toward change. Obviously, what you do not recognize, you cannot manage. Without self-awareness, though you might sincerely try to address problems one by one, you would end up going round in circles.

**Self-Expression**

The self-expression realm deals with the way you face the world. It includes emotional expression—the ability to openly express one’s feelings verbally and non-verbally; assertiveness—communicating feelings, beliefs and thoughts openly, and defending personal rights and values in a socially acceptable, inoffensive, and nondestructive manner; and independence—the ability to be self-directed and free from emotional dependency on others.

**Interpersonal**

The interpersonal realm concerns “people skills”: the ability to interact and get along with others. It is composed of three scales. Interpersonal relationships involve the skill of developing and maintaining mutually satisfying relationships that are characterized by trust and compassion. Empathy is about recognizing, understanding, and appreciating how other
people feel. Empathy involves being able to articulate one’s understanding of another’s perspective and behaving in a way that respects others’ feelings. Social responsibility includes willingly contributing to society, to one’s social groups, and generally to the welfare of others. Social responsibility involves acting responsibly, having social consciousness, and showing concern for the greater community.

**Decision Making**

The decision-making realm involves the ability to use one’s emotions in the best way possible to help solve problems and make optimal choices. Its three scales are problem solving, reality testing and impulse control. Problem solving is the ability to find solutions to problems in situations where emotions are involved. It includes the ability to understand how emotions impact decision making. Reality testing is the capacity to remain objective by seeing things as they really are. This capacity involves recognizing when emotions or personal bias can cause one to be less objective. Impulse control is the ability to resist or delay an impulse, drive, or temptation to act and involves avoiding rash behaviors and decision making.

**Stress Management**

The stress-management realm concerns the ability to be flexible, tolerate stress, and control impulses. Its three scales are flexibility, stress tolerance, and optimism. Flexibility is the ability to adapt emotions, thoughts, and behaviors to unfamiliar, unpredictable, and dynamic circumstances or ideas. Stress tolerance means coping with stressful or difficult situations and
believing that one can manage or influence situations in a positive manner. Optimism is an indicator of one’s positive attitude and outlook on life. It involves remaining hopeful and resilient, despite occasional setbacks.

**Happiness**

There is also an independent indicator of happiness. Happiness is the ability to feel satisfied with life, to enjoy oneself and others, and to experience zest and enthusiasm in a range of activities.

Howard E. Book, the author of the book *EQ Edge*, argued that understanding the constant and shifting under-the-surface balance between our intra- and interpersonalskills (EQ), and our enduring, repetitive characteristic limitations (CCRT), the more we are able to leverage our competencies (EQ), overcome our limitations, and become more successful in our workplace. Some practical and technical approaches have been introduced in *EQ Edge*. Enhancing EQ offers benefits for everyone’s quality of life; it is a crucial leadership skill.

**3.3 Mindfulness and Meditation Contribute to Emotional Intelligence**

What are mindfulness and mindfulness meditation about? The mind has an innate capacity for mindfulness. Mindfulness is both an inward and outward awareness of the present moment that incorporates all of our senses. We can direct our awareness to focus on our thoughts or perceptions. This is being mindful. A widespread definition for mindfulness is from Kabat-Zinn, the founder of mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR): “paying attention in a
particular way; on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment to moment” (Kabat-Zinn 2003, 145). The word “mindfulness” is derived from Buddhist teachings. One of the fundamental Buddhist texts related to mindfulness is Sati (Jotika and Dhamminda, 1986). The core meaning of “sati” includes “awareness,” “attention,” and “remembering” (Brensilver, 2011; Kang and Whittingham, 2010; Siegal, Germer, and Olendzki, 2009). Awareness is the background “radar” of consciousness, continually monitoring the inner and outer environment. It can be defined as the ability to perceive, to feel, to be conscious of events, objects, thoughts, emotions, or sensory patterns (Brown and Ryan, 2003). Awareness that is more focused on oneself is called self-awareness (Crisp and Turner, 2010). Attention is a process of focusing conscious awareness, providing heightened sensitivity to a limited range of experience (Westen, 1999). “Remembering” is not the memory of the past; it is to retain the awareness and attention from moment to moment (Siegal et al., 2009). The concept of mindfulness is also extended to the psychological process of self-adjustment, adaptability, acceptance, and compassion (Bishop et al., 2004; Tusaie and Edds, 2009).

Mindfulness is a state of active, open attention on the present. When you are mindful, you observe your thoughts and feelings from a distance, without judging them to be good or bad. Instead of letting your life pass you by, mindfulness means living in the moment and awakening to experience. Paying attention “on purpose,” paying attention “in the present moment,” and paying attention “nonjudgmentally” are the features of functioning mindfulness.
This mindful state allows us to recognize and understand things that, with a restless, inattentive mind, we have blind spots to, or miss altogether. When we engage in activities or thoughts with mindfulness, we can engage more deeply—and better see the meaning in them. Mindfulness is the basis for all higher cognitive abilities, concentration is an aspect of this. Recent reviews have summarized the evidence of the efficacy of these mindfulness interventions for persons with cancer, chronic medical conditions, pain, and various diseases (Foley et al., 2010; Grossman et al., 2007; McCracken, Gauntlett-Gilbert, and Vowles, 2007; Pradhan et al., 2007). Some studies also showed clinical efficacy and durability for depression, relapse prevention, anxiety reduction, and other psychological disorders, and demonstrated significant improvements in stabilizing emotion, enhanced well-being, happiness, and quality of life (Brown, Kasser, Ryan, Linley, and Orzech, 2009; Creswell, Way, Eisenberger, and Lieberman, 2007; Goldin and Gross, 2009, Segal et al., 2010).

Mindfulness meditation is a well-known method within Buddhism to develop our mind’s potential. Today there are many mindfulness methods derived from the ancient tradition of mindfulness meditation that can be integrated into one’s everyday life. Through the introduction of mindfulness-based training, organizations are now integrating scientific findings on mindfulness and neurophysiology into the workday and the corporate culture. A pioneer mindfulness-based training program, “Search Inside Yourself,” was developed by Tan (2012), one of the original engineers at Google by adapting the Kabat-Zinnne ditative model (2005) to aid individual development. This program, developed in 2007, linked mindfulness and emotional intelligence as a way to increase personal fulfillment and efficiency in the
workplace. The seven-week program is focused on attention training (cognition), self-knowledge, and self-mastery (emotion) to create useful mental habits to develop trust and productive collaborations. And later on other organizations like General Mills, Intel, Sony companies as well adopts the mindfulness training for the employees and managers that espoused by Langer (1989, 1997).

However, though the study of mindfulness has been much in terms of psychology and clinical practice, it is relatively recent for any discussion on mindfulness to be held in the field of management (Reb, Narayanan, and Chaturvedi 2014). Reb et al. (2014) also stated that there is a lack of research that documents how someone’s mindfulness will impact others in the workplace, though Shao and Skarlicki (2009) posited that empirical research is starting to inform the role of mindfulness in the workplace. For instance, studies suggest mindfulness to be positively related to job satisfaction, job engagement, job performance, work-related well-being, work-related stress, emotional issues, and turnover intentions. These disparate positions point to a gap in understanding the progression of the use of mindfulness in the workplace. Compared with the other tools in leadership development, mindfulness is still at the emerging stage.

This study is not something new. It is another area of experiential research that provides further evidence for the effect of mindfulness meditation on emotional intelligence, and hence contributes to effective leadership. I hope more and more mindfulness meditation can be applied in corporate settings and integrated into leadership programs to develop effective and
mindful leadership. Mindfulness meditation can help to build the ability to maintain undivided internal and external awareness of what is happening in each moment, and is a fundamental leadership skill. The results of mindfulness skills are clear decision making, efficient time management, self-knowledge, and the ability to access an intuitive wisdom.

The objective of this study is to add to this field by exploring in a participant observer role how mindfulness meditation can enhance the effectiveness of leadership through a mindfulness training pilot program in a German organization. This work can serve as a reference on how to help mindfulness to be better understood among entrepreneurs and managers, and therefore more appropriately applied.
4. Methodology and Data Collection

4.1 Description of the research setting

In terms of methodology I have opted for a qualitative approach using a participant observer role.

This qualitative research be described as taking a phenomenological or descriptive approach, or a hermeneutic or interpretive approach (Polkinghorne, 1983), which is often used for social sciences. Qualitative research in the social sciences seeks a greater understanding of how something is experienced. This will be an effective approach to collecting data for my research, as it was mainly focused on experiencing.

This study will use the some data directly collected from the pilot program, which used psychometric tests, based on standard established testing procedures in neurophysiological research. A Perceived Stress Questionnaire (PSQ), FMI/MAAS (Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory and Mindful Attention Awareness Scale), and questions regarding productivity and collaboration, that is, self-reporting tools and methodologies, were used to collect the input from participants. PSQ uses the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) (Cohen, Kamarch, and Mermelstein, 1983), which is one of the more popular tools for measuring psychological stress. It is a self-reporting questionnaire that was designed to measure “the degree to which individuals appraise situations in their lives as stressful” (Cohen, Kamarch, and Mermelstein, 1983, 385). The Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) was created specifically to capture attention and
awareness in daily life (Brown and Ryan, 2003). The FMI was developed by Buchheld, Grossman, and Walach (2001) as a quantitative measure for self-evaluation of mindfulness to be used in research—assessing changes in mindfulness pre- and post-mindfulness meditation. Pre-test and post-test were conducted for the participants, using the above tools to measure the change. It was also provide the data support for the results came from qualitative research. This combination worked well. However, this study is not focused on the measurement tools, but on the results and analysis, and combined with self-observations, experiences, and reflections.

As mentioned in the introduction, this study was focused on understanding how mindfulness was applied in organizations and how it created a positive impact on effective leadership. The study examined a pilot mindful leadership training program in a German company. There were two groups of fifteen participants in the pilot program. All of them were voluntary participants, and all of them had leadership or staff management responsibilities in the organization. One group comprised business leaders and another group human resources leaders. The objective for this pilot program was to introduce mindfulness into the organization and see the acceptance and effectiveness for leadership development.

In addition, I used myself as an instrument for the research in a participant observer role. I was one of the participants and I am interested to explore how mindfulness theories apply in the workplace. I also used my own experience, observations, and intervention during the program.

4.2 Framework of Mindful Leadership Pilot Program
The Mindful Leadership Pilot Program is part of the cooperation project initiated by Kalapa Leadership Academy and University of Applied Sciences Coburg/University of Munich GRP Institute. The objectives of the Mindful Leadership Pilot Program are to offer the participants a broad range of themes, methods, and approaches to the topic of mindfulness, to practice the implementation of these in working life, to cultivate and strengthen concentration, emotional intelligence, leadership skills, and positive collaboration through mindfulness-based methods, and in doing so to provide evidence for the effectiveness of mindfulness-based methods. A further goal is to demonstrate the positive impact of mindfulness on organizational culture and collaboration, and to make this information available so that it can be applied in the workplace.

The mindfulness leadership program was composed of two full days at the beginning and in the end, with eight modules in between. Each module lasted two and a half hours. This pilot program was started in April 14th, 2015, and finished by July 22nd, 2015. It lasted more than three months, covering important topics that impact the effectiveness of leaders and managers on daily basis, as shown in the table below. Each module has a good combination of theory and practice.
The components of the program are directly tied to the day-to-day roles of leaders and managers.

**Mindfulness and Concentration**

The workday is characterized by over-stimulation, frenzy, and high pressure to perform. We do multiple things simultaneously, and cannot always complete them, meaning that we are constantly in the middle of something, or of many things. Concentration, focus, and resilience are becoming more and more essential. Multi-tasking, emails, and time pressure can interrupt and harm our cognitive abilities and emotional abilities if we do not manage them properly and
mindfully. For instance, emails interrupt our attention—and we let ourselves be interrupted. Fifty percent of email users say that they check their email every thirty mins, 35 percent said they check them every fifteen mins. However, software installed on users’ computers showed that that many people check their e-mail fifteen to thirty times in an hour. A study showed that 70 percent of emails are read within six seconds of being received and that it takes an average of sixty-four seconds to return to a task after reading a brief email (Jackson, Dawson, and Wilson, 2002).

**Mindfulness and Emotion**

A key concern of the pilot program was how to be aware of emotions and manage them through mindfulness.

Various methodologies and tools of mindfulness and meditation were introduced and applied across the program, such as meditation, a focus on breathing or sounds, a body scan, mindful walking, and aimless walking, for instance. A body scan involves scanning the body systematically by tuning into every part of the body. Its purpose is to experience what sensations are in the body: sensations of warmth or cold, openness, tightness, pulsing, tingling... One can just become aware of any and all sensations without judging them. This exercise helps to simply cultivate awareness, and thereby strengthening mindfulness of the body and bodily states.

A reflection space was created. Self-reflection following with a ten minutes meditation exercise
was to start with each model. Some questions were asked. For example, “What sits well with me? What did I really understand? What has worked for me? What did I appreciate? What helped me? What is still wobbly? Where do I need more experience?”

As homework, participants were asked to do ten minutes of meditation per day, starting at the beginning of the program, and to follow up with self-record and a report.
5. Results and Analysis

As mentioned above, the data was collected throughout the process, with results, reflections, and feedback from participants from the test at the beginning of the pilot program and the test at the end of the pilot program. I used the data for the analysis and also linked it to my own experience, observation, and reflections.

5.1 Mindfulness Practice

The statistics based on the self-recording and self-reporting showed that the group of human resource (HR) leaders (Group 1) practiced over 70.14 sessions with 821.57 minutes in total and the group of business leaders (Group 2) practiced for 60.25 sessions with 607.12 minutes during the pilot program. This made an average of 11.71 minutes per day for Group 1 and 10.08 minutes per day for Group 2. The result is aligned with the instruction with ten minutes per day and showed overall that participants were actively practicing. However, it was actually built up step by step. During the reflection time that was part of each module, participants discussed their mindfulness practice at home. At first they said that it was very difficult to maintain a focus on their breathing for ten minutes. Some people reported that they became used to it after a certain time. A few people reported that it was still hard for them to get through it. My own experience was that it is very hard in the beginning, especially to meditate at home, because there is no guide from the teacher. Ten minutes seemed too long. I opened my eyes several times in the ten minutes and looked at my alarm. After about one month, I think I am fully settled in the ten minutes. I sit down and peacefully enjoy the ten minutes with only myself
inside. I keep meditating every morning, except in special situations. Some people reported that they do it in the evening. Some people reported they do it in the first ten minutes in the office before their other colleagues came in. Each individual can find his or her own ideal time. More than 90% participants expressed they will continue practicing mindfulness very regularly or intend to practice often from the feedback survey.

5.2 Positive effects from mindfulness practices

The result from the neurological tests showed that cognitive abilities in executive control improved. The results from the tests ("+" showed in the result at below table means positive effect) showed a significant decline in worries, perceived tension, perceived demands and pressure in both Group 1 and Group 2, and a significant increase in happiness, mindfulness, acceptance, and presence. The results also showed a significant increase in productivity and concentration and an increased freedom for decisionmaking and creativity. These are the key aspects contribute to emotional intelligence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>At the beginning of the pilot program</th>
<th>At the end of the pilot program</th>
<th>Difference (+ mean positive effect)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Worries</td>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>+0.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>+0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived tension</td>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>+0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>+0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Items</td>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>At the beginning of the pilot program</td>
<td>At the end of the pilot program</td>
<td>Difference (+ mean positive effect)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived demands and pressure</td>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>+0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>+0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>+0.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>+0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mindfulness</td>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>+0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>+0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>+0.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>+0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence</td>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>+0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>+0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Productivity and concentration</td>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>5.04</td>
<td>+0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>+0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision making and creativity</td>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td>5.39</td>
<td>+0.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>5.11</td>
<td>5.31</td>
<td>+0.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Worries, perceived tension, perceived demands and pressure can cause stress. In psychology, stress is a feeling of strain and pressure. Small amounts of stress may be desired, beneficial, and even healthy. Positive stress helps improve athletic performance. It also plays a factor in
motivation, adaptation, and reaction to the environment. Excessive amounts of stress, however, may lead to bodily harm. Stress can increase the risk of strokes, heart attacks, ulcers, dwarfism, and mental illnesses such as depression (Sapolsky, Robert 2004).

Stress can be external and related to the environment, but may also be created by internal perceptions that cause an individual to experience anxiety or other negative emotions surrounding a situation, such as worries, fears, pressure, discomfort, etc., which they then deem stressful. Therefore, perception is related to individual experience. The same situation can be experienced differently and provoke different reactions from different people. It may be associated with early experiences as child. This was not discussed in detail in the group, but I am aware of it in my own experience.

Normally in the working environment, people experience stress or perceive things as threatening when they do not believe that their resources for coping with obstacles (stimuli, people, situations, etc.) are enough for what the circumstances demand. When we think the demands being placed on us exceed our ability to cope with them, we then perceive stress. Several common challenges of work were raised in the group discussion; too many emails need to be replied to each day, a diversified team in different countries and time zones, a calendar full of meetings, dealing with difficult performance issues, coping with a variety of changes (business strategy, organization, environment, etc.), multi-tasking, etc.

One major aspect of workplace pressure is email. Email has become a major tool of contemporary working life. Everyone has a company cell phone and can check and reply to
emails at anytime, anywhere. When you send out an email request, you are expecting to receive a prompt response. Conversely, we try to reply to others’ email as quickly as possible. Therefore, people become addicted to or dependent on email. It can be an emotional burden. Emails affects aspects of our live in a variety of ways, causing reduced sleep, relationship difficulties, and other effects of stress.

Another big interruption is multi-tasking. Within organizations, multi-tasking is sometimes required and recognized as a means of high productivity in the organization. But many studies have looked at multi-tasking and come to the clear conclusion that it is inefficient. For example, a study showed multi-tasking can triple or even quadruple the error rates in complex task processing—and the more complex a task is, the greater the increase in error rate. Another study looked at reaction times of subjects performing repetitive tasks or alternating tasks (Rogers and Monsell, 1995). A further study mentioned that when the complexity was higher, task switching led to significant increases in reaction times. The sum of these switching costs was estimated to be at times as high as 40% of the time taken to complete cognitive tasks (Rubinstein, Meyer, and Evans, 2001). Multi-tasking leads to poorer decision making.

Worries, perceived tension, perceived demands and pressure are measurable and contribute to stress awareness and management. Through the theories and technical skills learning, including discussion, reflection, and mindfulness meditation practice, participants reported that they became more aware of some bad habits in daily management such as email interruption and multi-tasking. The report showed that these negative emotions—including worries, perceived
tension and perceived demands and pressure—are reduced over the mindfulness practice. I was able to observe the people become gradually more relaxed from the beginning to the end of the program.

Paying attention in the present moment is one of the key elements of mindfulness according to the literature review. Our mind is normally very busy with all kinds of thoughts expressing anger, craving, depression, revenge, self-pity, and so on. Mostly, these thoughts are about the past or future. The past no longer exists and the future is just fantasy until it happens. The one moment we can actually experience, through guided mindfulness meditation, is the present moment, the one we seem to avoid. The mindfulness meditation practice during the pilot program teaches the process of noticing thoughts and purposefully directing awareness away from such thoughts and towards the present moment. Participants in the group reported that it is difficult in the beginning to be in the present. But when we are aware that our thoughts have run away, we just need to focus on the breathing in order to return to the now. Through repeated practice, a space of freedom was created where calmness and contentment could grow. For example, each time we went to the class, I noticed that the people became calm after the reflection and ten-minute meditation opening in each module. Just being present in the class, escaping from work, made participants feel calmer and happier.

Happiness is defined in EQ as the ability to feel satisfied with life, enjoy oneself and others, and have fun. Happiness is associated with a general feeling of cheerfulness and enthusiasm and it is a by-product and/or barometric indicator of an overall degree of emotional intelligence.
and emotional functioning. Real happiness is not only driven by external factors: the most important is from inside.

The following table demonstrates the effects of happiness as a driver of performance (Rock, 2009).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Danger/Fear</th>
<th>Reward/Happiness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive abilities</td>
<td>Cognitive abilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fewer new ideas</td>
<td>• More insights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Retreat/rejection</td>
<td>• More alternatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Perceptual mistakes</td>
<td>• More engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tunnel vision</td>
<td>• Fewer perceptual mistakes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More activity in brain stem</td>
<td>Less activity in brain stem, more conscious decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relying on established patterns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on self, survival, defense</td>
<td>Broader focus - on others, the whole, taking responsibility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data source: David Rock – the Neuroscience of Engagement

Acceptance not only means the acceptance of external things and the environment: the central discussion here is more about self-acceptance, learning how to let be and to let go. Compassion is practiced as well, as a step beyond sympathy and empathy. Sympathy means being open to someone and their suffering, whereas empathy means to understand and even vicariously experience another person’s situation and emotional state. Compassion takes it a step further: a person feels empathy and then a desire to help alleviate the suffering of the other person.
Research has shown that, interestingly enough, compassion can be more effective, especially in avoiding burnout and exhaustion for helpers. A study of Jonathan Haidt of New York University showed compassion and curiosity increase employee loyalty and trust. Feelings of warmth and positive relationships at work have a greater sway over employee loyalty than the size of a paycheck (Seppala, 2015).

The practice of compassion meditation helped participants change their perspectives on issues such as how to deal with underperforming employees, or how to have difficult conversations, for example asking someone to leave the company. Participants reported in the group that with compassion learning and practice, they felt more at ease in tough conversations with their own staff and also with others.

Mindful aimless walking was used as a basis for discussion about the practice of happiness. All the participants went outside the training room and walked around aimlessly. In the beginning, people felt embarrassed because the workers in the office building could see us from the window, but after a while, the people relaxed and focused on their own walking. The people reported they felt very good; they felt greater inner peace after the aimless walking. Some people said they never walked like this. Either they walked fast, thinking as they walked, or they did sports to relax. This was an interesting experience, to just walk without thinking. Happiness reflection is also an interesting exercise, it required participants to spend time reflecting on what good things they had experienced in the last three days. Did they appreciate them? How would the experience have been different if they had taken a little more time to
appreciate those things? Participants were given homework: to reflect daily on three good things that have happened to them. This also gave people an opportunity to learn to appreciate things, not only for the benefit of others but also for themselves. It contributed to self-acceptance and happiness as well.

5.3 My Own Observation and Experience

I used myself as a tool to observe and experience what was happening to me and how the mindfulness and meditation functioned on me. I am convinced the mindfulness and meditation benefited my emotional intelligence from different perspectives.

Emotional Self-Awareness

Based on the learning journey in EMCCC, I had the chance to learn broader and deeper from Self & Intrapersonal, Self – Other & Interpersonal to Family & System Dynamics and leadership and organization dynamics with many clinical approaches and perspectives. I liked the clinical paradigm summarized by Manfred Kets De Vries (2006, 8) below:

- What you see is not necessarily what you get.
- All human behavior, no matter how irrational it appears, has a rationale.
- We are all products of our past.

The meta-force that underpins these three premises is the vast unconscious. A considerable part of our motivation and behavior takes place outside conscious awareness. There were many tools and practices such as CCRT and Role Biography (Long, 2006) in the EMCCC program
that helped me to understand people’s behaviors, including my own, under the surface, and improved my self-awareness.

The mindfulness and meditation practice gave me the opportunity to explore myself with conscious attention. I could closely observe and sense in mindfulness meditation my body, my mind, and my emotions by going deeper into my inner theater, my fears, hopes, and motivations that were hidden in my daily, busy life. For example, when I am doing meditation focusing on breathing, I can feel where is tension and where there is pain in my body. When I am aware of these tensions and pains, they are naturally reduced. The same applies to emotions and some other negative feelings or experiences. During mindfulness meditation, my mind was still wandering, with lots of thoughts coming and going, like watching a movie. In the beginning, I unconsciously tried to control my feelings and thoughts, but after practising, I learned not to control them and let them flow in and flow out. I am just an observer, observing them peacefully, without control or judgment, and I draw my attention to focus on breathing when it goes to somewhere else. When the mind is wandering away, we can just gently draw it back to focus on breathing. It is like watching a movie; the difference is that I do not put myself into the scene. After learning and practice, I can easily notice my emotions in different situations, such as in meetings, having conversations with others, and in some interactions with the people in my personal life. And I have learned not to make judgments or to try to exert control. My practice brings more perspectives than a single way of thinking. Meditation and mindfulness contribute better ideas and strategies for problem solving and decision making.
An Example of Reality Testing and Decision Making

Reality testing and decision making are core elements of emotional intelligence. Decision making is a critical capacity for an effective leader. As discussed in the literature review, the world we are living in has become more and more complex. Hence, the context for decision making is becoming more and more dynamic. The traditional tools the leaders are trained in might not help in making the right decisions in such a dynamic context. We often hear employees complain that bosses change their decisions and ideas from time to time, which puts pressure on the subordinates and also significantly impacts their effectiveness and business success. This project and previous research have shown that mindfulness and meditation offer tools that support sound decision making. I experienced myself in the program how mindfulness and meditation contribute to my ability to make decisions: they give me the space to think through the things clearly and digest the emotions that impact on my decision making, such as anger and fear.

Here I can offer an example from my own experience. I received a notice from one of my subordinates just before the Christmas holiday in 2015. He had received a job opportunity from another company, and he was asked to join as soon as possible. My immediate reaction was to be very angry and anxious because he had just transferred from an external contract to the company contract; he was motivated by this change and had said he would definitely stay in this position for another year and a half. But two weeks later, he told me he decided to leave because he received the offer from another company for a role he had been seeking for a long
time. I was anxious because there were two important projects he was working on, and it was not possible to find a replacement because of the Christmas holidays. What should I do? I sat down and closed my eyes to start meditating. I could feel my body was very tense and the anger was around my heart. By focusing on my breath, I calmed down and relaxed my body gradually. I allowed the thoughts come and go in my mind. After twenty minutes, I had completely calmed down and the anger was basically gone. I looked at the situation and did a reality check in my mind. I realized first that I had to accept the facts. Second, it would not be as bad as I thought when I heard his resignation message—he had finished the major work on two projects. I should appreciate his efforts and obviously the situation was much better than over a year ago. I started to do the reality check and think about the solutions: how to reallocate the tasks, who else could take over and continue with the projects, what would be the temporary solutions for capacity challenges, how to communicate with business and local organizations. After that, I came back to him and said I understood his decision and discussed with him calmly the possible solutions and his departure date. We had a very good conversation. He gave me some helpful suggestions and promised to stay until the end of January to finish some important tasks for the projects and do a good handover. I appreciated his commitment and help and got the overall situation under control.

In this case, the mindfulness meditation gave me the opportunity to cool down and have the space to work on my feelings instead of reacting immediately with wrong emotions. Actually I found also the mindfulness and meditation contributed to my ability to find better solutions. When I have tough problems to solve, as with the above example, I have some good ideas come
to my mind during the meditation that I could not think about without being mindful.

Therefore, it is not surprising to me to see the change that appeared in the reports as the program progressed from module to module, and I have been further convinced by my own experience, observations, and reflections in my participant observer role.
6. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate how mindfulness and meditation can be applied in corporate life and its impact on effective leadership. Results showed that mindfulness and meditation were negatively correlated with mental distress, worries, perceived tension, perceived demands and pressure, and positively correlated with happiness, acceptance, presence, productivity, concentration, decision making and creativity. These results are consistent with earlier studies that reported relationships between mindfulness and mental distress (e.g., Baer et al. 2006; Bowlin and Baer 2012; Kiken and Shook 2012), and well-being (e.g., Brown et al. 2009; Brown and Ryan 2003). Self-perception (emotional self-awareness, self-regard), stress management (flexibility, stress tolerance, optimism), decision making (impulse control, reality testing, problem solving) and interpersonal (interpersonal relationships, empathy and social responsibility) skills are the important component of emotional intelligence. Therefore mindfulness was positively related to emotional intelligence, which is consistent with earlier research reporting the relation between emotion intelligence and mindfulness (e.g., Baer et al. 2006; Brown and Ryan 2003; Schutte and Malouff, 2011).

Mindfulness and meditation training can be a useful method for effective leadership development by contributing the positive effect on IQ, EQ, and MQ.

Mindfulness and meditation can improve cognitive skills including attention and concentration.

In many organizations, the workday is characterized by overstimulation, frenzy, and high pressure to perform. We do multiple things simultaneously, and cannot always complete them,
so that we are constantly in the middle of something or many things. Our mind discursively jumps from one theme to the next. We are unable to feel a sense of inner restfulness. We are, in a sense, chasing our own tails. Our attention wanders and we are unable to be mindful or relaxed. The problem is not too much stress, but rather too little rest and relaxation. Concentration, focus, and resilience are becoming more and more essential. Mindfulness training teaches our mind to pause, let go of our discursive thought patterns, and come to a natural state of peacefulness. Extensive scientific research has shown that this actually changes the structure of the brain. The habitual way we react to situations—our habitual stimulus-response—can often be a source of stress to ourselves and others. Through mindfulness training, such as the mindfulness and meditation pilot program, we cultivate the ability to slowdown, react, and perceive differently.

Similarly, mindfulness and meditation can contribute to emotional intelligence. In mindfulness training, the ability to slowdown, settle, and reconnect with ourselves allows for a contact and development similar to that which comes from good coaching.

Coming into contact with oneself is a prerequisite for self-knowledge as well as empathy, both of which are essential for a socially intelligent leader. A number of management researchers see emotional intelligence and empathy as indicators for the success of leaders as significant as their technical knowledge. In parallel, neuroscientists have discovered that we all have mirror neurons in our brains—not only can we perceive the emotions of others, but their experience is also naturally mirrored back in our brain. So, empathy is natural—we feel what
others feel. Thus, empathy is not something we must learn, but rather learn to perceive, to consciously experience.

In mindfulness training, we begin to cultivate this innate capacity. We become aware of ourselves and our emotions, and therefore can better work with them.

Sustainability is a natural desire. One must simply have the head space that is cultivated through mindfulness meditation to reflect on the consequences of one’s own actions. This is why many people, not least those in charge at Google, are convinced that mindfulness meditation can be a significant contribution to a successful future for the corporate world. Every person, every manager is interested in the well-being of their employees and the environment, but they often do not have enough headspace, or are so caught up in the cycle of stress and exhaustion that they are unable to take action for a sustainable work practice. Natural results of mindfulness meditation include slowing down, less stress, better perception, attention, empathy and an interest in sustainability. Mindfulness in everyday management is a very pragmatic pathway to a more compassionate and sustainable style of leadership.

Mindfulness has been proven to create positive effects in corporate settings with current studies. But whether it will occupy a permanent place in the corporate world is not yet clear. Mindfulness requires and demands curiosity and experimentation, which sometimes are in conflict with the practices in fast-paced organizations and may be ignored.

Here are some recommendations based on the participant observer role of the pilot program.
• Mindfulness and meditation training should not be a one-time training. It is not like other leadership skills training, where you sit in the training room for two or three days and learn the skills. It is better if it extends over a period of time to provide the people enough time with their practices and reflections to form a habit of consistent mindful meditation. Otherwise, the effect will be not optimized.

• Consistent practice: practice, practice and practice. It is important to keep consistent meditation. It is not necessary to allow very long each time for the meditation—ten minutes per day is better than thirty minutes per week. Mindfulness and meditation is a tool and a process; it can be effected only through practice.

• Build up successful experience and stories. Start with small departments that are in a difficult situation with work pressures. Chaos is often a good motivation to try something new.

• It is better to find a group of people with curiosity and passion. The people can share and encourage each other to keep practising.

• Increase the awareness of top leadership and foster a culture to support the concepts and practices. First try it out, then expand. For example, the pilot program in this company is sponsored by the board member who is responsible for human resources. Some concepts and practices will be applied in the leadership program and the employee training program. And in their innovation center, a few small rooms called “thinking tanks” provide people with space for reflection.
7. Limitations and Future Research

Several important limitations of this study must be mentioned.

The first limitation is that the data relied on self-reporting measures. Self-reporting measures are subjective by nature and vulnerable to bias. And the research was limited to leaders/managers themselves, without the subordinates’ view being explored.

The second limitation is that the methods of this study were based on a small sample and limited to one company in one country, although some leaders have regional and global responsibilities.

In spite of these limitations, the current study extended our insight into a complicated interplay among mindfulness, emotional intelligence, and effective leadership. This study also provides preliminary evidence that mindfulness and meditation training can be used in leadership development in corporate settings. These findings may provide valuable guidance on how mindfulness and meditation can be applied in organizations to improve the emotional intelligence and effectiveness of leadership. Mindfulness and meditation are already widely used in clinical applications, but their application in organization and leadership is just emerging and need to be further developed. There are already some studies about mindfulness in certain areas such as problem solving (Langer and Moldoveanu, 2000), decisionmaking (Fiol and O’Connor, 2003), performance (Dane, 2011; Shao and Skarlicki, 2009), change management (Aviles and Dent 2015), and leadership (Dhiman, 2009; Sethi,
2009; Braibant, 2013; Kir, 2013) etc. Future research can continue to explore mindfulness and compassionate and sustainable leadership.

Furthermore, another interesting research area might be how mindfulness and meditation contribute to positive power. Dr. Hawkins defined levels of power to illustrate the hidden determinants of human behavior (Hawkins, 2002). He argues that the personality can be described in a scoring system that ranges from 0 to 1000 (0 being the lowest score, 1000 being absolute enlightenment or pure awareness). These levels of consciousness permeate the individual’s entire perspective and dictate the way they relate to their life experiences (Hawkins, 2002). For Hawkins, moving upward into higher states of consciousness is the only way to make meaningful progress in one’s life. Sadly, the average individual only moves up 5 points in their entire lifetime. However, a focused effort to move into higher states can lead to incredible leaps of awareness in relatively short periods of time (Hawkins 2002, 75–85). Improving the level of power may positively contribute to human well-being and leadership.

Moreover, mindfulness and meditation training’s broad use in organizations is still a long way off. Further research can address how mindfulness and meditation can be integrated into employees’ and leaders’ training. Organizational mindfulness can also be a direction for future research.

In addition, most research still comes from the west, even though meditation is originally eastern. It will be worthwhile to do more research in eastern areas to support individuals,
organizations, and leadership development as business strategies shift from the western to eastern, since rapid development causes conflict and challenges for human beings.
8. Conclusion

The intent of this program of studies was to demonstrate the role of mindfulness in the corporate setting and in effective leadership. The results showed that it has a positive effect on emotional intelligence and hence the effectiveness of leadership, which is consistent with previous studies. This study also provides a concrete example how mindfulness and meditation training can be used in an organization. Within the field of leadership development, there is a seemingly endless array of tools that are intended to support leaders. Nevertheless, it seems there are many leaders who do not actually know how to lead. Something seems to be missing, but what? Mindfulness training is more than simply acquiring a new tool. Mindfulness and meditation create a reflective space for leaders. They cultivating selfknowledge, self-awareness, and presence, which enable intelligent social interactions. One could say that mindfulness is the glue that holds all of the aspects of holistic leadership together.

Although it seems the effects of mindfulness and meditation are proven, their practice is still far from being fully recognized and utilized in the corporate world. Some misconceptions about mindfulness continue to delay their application. For example, mindfulness is regarded as moving slowly. Mindfulness does have a lot to do with slowing down and letting go of frenzy and stress. When we are mindful, we are also focused, concentrated, and efficient, but not necessarily slower. Mindfulness meditation may have been too esoteric for the corporate environment, but that is changing now. More and research is being conducted in the corporate world, and some pioneers like Google have shown how relevant and essential mindfulness can
be. Kalapa Leadership Academy is doing a large study about mindfulness in working life that cover more and more companies. All kind of efforts from institutes, companies and individuals will help to promote mindfulness and eventually benefit individual well-being, organizational success, and a harmonious society.
9. References


