

ABSTRACT

The theme of this study is about the discovery of emergent mindfulness, whilst on a journey to discover mindfulness in stress management in the workplace. Emergent mindfulness is defined as the mindfulness that has developed within the individual due to various factors such as family background, culture, home and school environment and genetics (Gottfredson, 1998), (Jārvilehto, 2006), (Lesk, 2007), (McDaniel and Samovar, 2015) and (Triandis and Suh, 2002). According to Goldenberg and Goldenberg, (2013), the inter-generational impact also works towards shaping the individual. Emergent mindfulness is not the mindfulness arrived at from the disciplined path of meditation mentioned in the Buddhist scriptures. However, the individual has qualities that are similar to those that have arisen from the aforementioned scriptural path, as well as new qualities identified in this study, and has the ability to manage occupational stress. Mindfulness, as identified in the scriptures is a way of dealing with the negative impacts of life stressors, on the way to reaching a stage of emotional maturity and well-being. The ancient Eastern scriptures that dictate this method also state that people did reach such a higher stage by this practice, both in India and in Sri Lanka. According to the works of Bodhi, (1994), Gunaratana, (1997), Hanh, (2002), Nyanaponika Thera, (1962), Rahula, (1978) and Soma Thera, (1981), orthodox Buddhist philosophy dictates a path of meditation to achieve mindfulness. This study, revealed that the qualities that result from emergent mindfulness are similar to the qualities espoused as resulting from mindfulness from the orthodox scriptural path, though new qualities were also identified. Initially, a literature review was carried out on stress (Aamodt, 1999), (Albrecht, 1979), (Cooper, Dewe and O Driscoll, 2001), (Duyck, 2008), (Hudiburg, 1996) and (Winefield, 2003). The relationship between stress and performance in the workplace is an established one, as reflected in the literature review. Thereafter, the Buddhist method of mindfulness was reviewed (mentioned above), and revealed that it was an integration of mind, body, emotions and mental objects. Mental objects mentioned in mindfulness, are the description of negative emotions arising from prolonged cognitive reflection, and this it is observed, is the only method that sets apart mental objects from mind and emotions, whereas all other methods treat it mainly as emotions. Any extreme emotion is regarded as a negative emotion in Buddhism. Emotional intelligence was reviewed, to assess its impact in the workplace and included a review of the works of Goleman, (1995, 1998, 2004), Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee, (2003) and (Lynn, 2005) and others. Thereafter, cognitive intelligence was reviewed, to assess the actual relationship between cognition and affect, cognition and physical capacity, and the impact of cognitive intelligence in the workplace. (Eysenck and Keane, 1990), (Krishnamurti, 1973), (Krishnamurti and Bohm, 1999), (Morita, 1998), (Sternberg, 1985, 1998, 2003 and 2005). The review also revealed that according to Eysenck and Keane, (1990) every emotion is preceded by at least a minimal thought process. This was validated by Professor Paul Ekman in the works of Goleman, (2004) who mentions the evaluation process prior to an emotion. Spiritual intelligence, when reviewed, revealed that it was based on the understanding that both cognition and emotion were necessary for spiritual intelligence to be present, and was a other-centered and transcendent type of intelligence according to the works of McMullen, (2003), Noble, (2001), King, (2008), Zohar and Marshall, (2001), and Zohar, (2004), among others. This set it apart from emergent mindfulness and mindfulness that are based on realism. Finally, Successful Intelligence Theory was examined, and it was observed that mindfulness has some commonalities within this theory. (Sternberg, 1985, 1998, 2003 and 2005). However, due to major areas of divergence between the two, mindfulness and emergent mindfulness may be regarded as having their own unique theoretical identity. In the 20th century, emotional intelligence (EQ) was introduced as a way to mitigating stress in the workplace. (Goleman, 1995, 1998, 2004) However, a closer examination suggests that it was designed as a way to address emotional stress. At the same time, although emotional intelligence training has been in place for more than two decades, according to the World Health Organization, (2005) and Soleil, (2017), stress continues to increase, with the South East

Asian region being no exception to the rule. Country reports indicate that organizations worldwide are spending large sums of money xi on medical insurance, health care and the negative impacts of absenteeism due to stress. (Shukla, 2012), (Kompier and Cooper, 1999), (Lee, Buse and Fustukian, 2002), (Mackay, 2004). This indicates that an effective method of stress management is yet to be adopted. In this scenario, the key question is whether mindfulness would be better at managing all types of stress in the workplace. On the basis of the literature review, a conceptual framework was drawn up from sensitizing concepts which had the cognitive and emotive intelligences, interlinking within the spiritual, with mindfulness arising from the inter-relationship of all these three intelligences, giving rise to the management of stress. The sensitizing concepts attributed to this model assisted in the recognition of mindfulness and emergent mindfulness in the environment at data analysis stage, and it must be noted that such guidance was required as advocated by Clarke (2005), as this was an under-developed area. A qualitative methodology, the Grounded Theory method as advocated by Glaser and Strauss, (1967) and as adapted by Strauss and Corbin (1990) and (1997) was identified after two pilot studies and one test questionnaire. This methodology consisted of selection of two contrasting study centers, where the leaders would be the subject of the study. The methodology consisted of personal interviews, substantiated by focus group interviews. These results are in turn further substantiated by observations at four branch offices of each organization, Colombo Stock Exchange material and media articles on the subjects of the study and their organizations. Extensive data analysis was carried out in terms of open, axial and selective coding methods (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Core categories were identified, along with the related sub-categories. The findings revealed that a form of mindfulness existed but was not exactly the same as that arrived at from the scriptural path of meditation. Hence, this form of mindfulness was termed as emergent mindfulness, a new construct that emerged from Grounded Theory. As regards the leaders' assessment, one leader's main strength was his spiritual direction in the workplace, which helped him overcome obstacles to progress in the workplace, but due among other factors, to a lack of attention to physical intelligence, did not result in creation of mindfulness, and thereby diminished his capacity to manage stress. The other leader had never engaged in meditation, but possessed emergent xii mindfulness, and practiced this to some perfection in the workplace. He also had a better awareness of his physical component and was able to utilize his emergent mindfulness to overcome stress in the workplace. Finally, it is theoretically and practically reasonable that emergent mindfulness exists and manages stress in the workplace. It also reveals that whilst spiritual intelligence exists and can tap into the unknown potential within the individual, yet, in the absence of a proper integration of mind, body and emotions, stress cannot be minimized. Hence, emergent mindfulness is recommended along with emotional intelligence, as a method of managing stress in the workplace, and if implemented, may be the answer to the rising incidence of stress in organizations. Certainly, the focus in the future is on mind over matter and according to The Economist, (2018) technology is moving towards the new frontier – focusing thoughts to control the computer. Developing emergent mindfulness would thereby add value to an individual's ability to perform effectively – stress free, in the future workplace as well.