



# Operationalization of Mindfulness in Organization

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## ABSTRACT

Nowadays many companies are looking for management innovation as they are continuously trying to enhance the quality of their employees in order to improve the organization's ability to adapt to changes and competitive pressures. How to build an organization based on cooperation and solidarity and enhance the collective wisdom of members has become the focus of research. In the innovative exploration of some companies, the concept of leader mindfulness has been introduced into many companies (Google, Apple, Sony, ING, etc.). The related research in the field of management is still in its infancy. Because leader mindfulness is very valuable to organizations, this article aims to study the psychological construct of this concept, so as to encourage leaders to adopt active and effective ways to lead organizations. This work adopts a qualitative approach of research. On this basis a pilot study based on MBSR was conducted. The managers experienced an 8-week MBSR training and practice. We conducted in-depth interviews with them to analyze the internal structure of mindfulness and its impact on the trainees from the perspective of management practice. The results show that mindfulness training has a positive impact on managers' improvement of core abilities, including interpersonal skills and the ability to determine priorities, which are very important for improving management efficiency.

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## 1. Methodological Foundation of Our Research

This work is anchored in the qualitative research process. Qualitative research aims to understand and represent the experience of individuals as that they live it (Elliott *et al.* (1999) [2]). Thus it is interested in the meaning of the phenomenon of interest in order to support our understanding of this phenomenon, and not to the verification of a theory. Therefore, it is interested in the way in which individuals interpret the world around them (Willig (2013) [10]), which it does not view as an absolute truth (Elliott *et al.* (1999) [2]): the participant's interpretation of the phenomenon, as well as the interpretation of the researcher vis-à-vis the meaning given by the participant, are essential components of the qualitative research process, which enrich it (Willig (2013) [10]).

We have relied on a well know method of analysis in qualitative research called the *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis* (IPA) in order to investigate our research topic. This method aims to explore how people make sense of their personal and social environment (Smith & Osborn [6]). The aim is to understand and describe the way in which the participants experience the world around them, which explains

the phenomenological dimension of this method (Willig (2013) [10]). The perspective in this method is that of the subjective experience of the person and not that of an objective “reality”, this is why the method is called idiosyncratic (Ibid.). In order to adopt this perceptive, the posture is necessarily interpretative, and this on two levels: the researcher tries to give meaning to what the participant brings, who himself tries to make sense of what is happening to him (Smith *et al.* (2009) [7]), this is called double hermeneutics.

Thus, these three elements — phenomenology, idiosyncrasy and double hermeneutics — constitute the foundations of this method of analysis. This seems to be in line with our research topic which is to make an in depth investigation in order to understand the subjective experience of people who have participated in a mindfulness training session. The phenomenological dimension of the IPA particularly gets its full meaning here, as the phenomenological method seems to be in adequacy with our research topic, as mentioned previously.

### **Practical Application**

*Samples:* In accordance with its philosophical foundations, the IPA relies on small samples: the goal is by no means generalization; it is more about diving in depth in the exploration of phenomena of interest. As an indication, Smith & Osborn (2008) [6] say that for a student project, a sample of reasonable size would consist of 5 or 6 participants, a figure we have increased up to 7 participants. We therefore interviewed 7 people, who took part in a mindfulness program.

*The Semi-structured Interview:* The semi-structured interview is the best way to collect data for the IPA method, in particular because of its relevance for exploring the perception of participants (Smith & Osborn (2008) [6]). The semi-structured interview is based in part on an interview guide, Smith & Osborn (2008) [6] provide instructions to follow. Thusly we have experimented the implementation of a mindfulness training in order to analyze its effects on a group of senior executives. The empirical study that we carried out may be considered a quasi-experiment. A quasi-experiment is a study in which there is a change in a key variable but which is free from other criteria of pure experimentation: whether or not the participants are subjected to the experimentation by chance and comparison to a control group (Grant *et al.* (2008) [4]). However, this type of method allows taking into account the time dimension.

In the present research we have contributed to the design of the mindfulness training program and we evaluated its potential impacts, without further interfering with the organizational functioning. However, beyond this experimental dimension, the field of our research can also be thought of as a single case study. The case study consists in the study of a phenomenon within its real context, when the borders between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Yin [12]), which is the case of the analysis of changes in the behaviors of managers after following mindfulness training. A case study can be used to understand a reality, test a theory or construct a theory (Yin [12]). Our approach is essentially in an exploratory perspective: this consists of discovering the singularity in time and in space of poorly understood processes without trying to generalize the results (Rispoli [5]). Here, our goal is to test the general idea according to which mindfulness can have impacts on managerial practices. A single case study can provide elements of in-depth understanding of the phenomena studied, in particular by taking into account the time dimension (here over a year and a half) and triangulation (crossing representations of the same phenomena). But it cannot claim external validity. This means that the results that we present here should not be considered as truths that can be generalized but only as avenues for further research, to be explored and validated through additional research.

*The Experimentation:* 7 senior executives (6 agro economists and one manager) volunteered to follow a classic mindfulness-based stress reduction program, Mindfulness Based Stress Management (MBSR), during their working time. The participating company is a Malian textile company, whose policy promotes transformational leadership and innovative approaches to management. All the participants have a strong implication in their work, a long experience of supervision and the exercise of management. The chosen mindfulness program is the MBSR (Mindfulness Based Stress Management) protocol, developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn and his team. It has been the

subject of numerous publications since over 20 years, for clinical applications. It is increasingly used for non-medical applications. The content of the MBSR program is secular and free of religious references. The protocol takes place over 8 weeks, at the rate of 2 hours of face-to-face per week in a group, plus a half-day mini-retreat and personal exercises offered to participants. The total face-to-face time is 20 hours.

*Program Sequence:* The program initially planned for 8 weeks ended up over 12 weeks given the constraints of the participants' agenda. The sessions took place within the company, in a room that preserves the privacy of the participants. A number of individualized "catch-up" sessions were organized by the instructor during trips to abroad of participants. These sessions took place via Zoom and were very popular with participants, which underlines their involvement in the monitoring of the program.

The initial motivations of the participants vary widely and range from simple curiosity and "Openness to something non-Cartesian", in search of "personal development", through more operational and targeted expectations (search for more efficiency, stress reduction. . .).

Following the training, all the participants wished to extend the practice within the framework of one session every two weeks, during the lunch break, with the same instructor. These sessions still last, two years after the training. Long-term results should therefore be interpreted in this context of support for individual practice via a group of practice.

## 2. Data Collection

In order to measure the impact of the mindfulness training program, we have conducted longitudinal research for a period of one and a half year.



**Figure 1:** Chronology of the longitudinal study

We conducted a total of 20 in-depth 360-degree interviews (with participants but also of their collaborators in the organization) in three stages: Before the start of the training with the participants on a life story model [9] in order to understand their professional career, their relationship to work, their style of management and their motivations to follow the training; about 3 months after the end of the program in order to collect participants' perception on the impact of training, 1 year after the end of the program with a new series of interviews with the participants, but also with their  $n + 1$ , 2 employees on average for each participant, the assistant of management of the company who is in contact with most of the participants, the trainer and a look cross between peers. The interviews were conducted on the basis of thematic interview guidelines, according to the semi-directive approach. The process was iterative in order to take full advantage of the longitudinal approach. The  $n - 1$  interviewed were not informed of the nature of the training followed by their superior in order to limit bias as much as possible.

## 3. Results Analysis

The life stories were the subject of a first synthesis in order to clearly understand the initial state of each participant according to 4 criteria: management style and the perception of his role / report at work / personal and professional issues / motivations and expectations regarding the training. Interviews at more than three months were the subject of an initial thematic analysis in order to emerge the themes without a theoretical a priori. They were

then subject to double-coded thematic. The intermediate results have enriched the interview guide for the 3rd round. Individual summaries of the key points were made and served as a reminder for the interviews of the third round. The third round was subject to a double thematic coding, distinguishing between participants and other respondents in order to take full advantage of 360° feedback. The data was finally synthesized in 3 distinct ways:

- a thematic and transversal analysis in the form of summary tables highlighting the topics by participant, distinguishing the topics confirmed by the 360° of those mentioned by the participants alone;
- a summary analysis in the form of diagrams identifying the links between topics mentioned by participants in order to show a dynamic view of the data;
- a vertical analysis in the form of a summary table per participant reporting how each person has changed over time.

The proposed program was entirely followed by all participants. The program arouses strong (a) long-term satisfaction, (b) supported by practices integrated into daily life participants, and (c) the establishment of a practice group.

(a) *Long term satisfaction*: All the 7 participants have followed the entire program. If the main difficulty has been to find time to do the required personal exercises during the training, participant satisfaction has proven to be strong and stable over time. This satisfaction is related to the fact that they all perceived that the new skills learnt during the training are sustainable. As Assim points out, “there was no degradation, sometimes, during the training we forget everything, this has remained stable”.

(b) *Practices integrated by the participants individually and collectively*: 1 year after the training, all participants continue to implement mindfulness in their professional and personal lives on a daily basis in the form of small “rituals” of mindfulness. The most common approach consists in sparing time for oneself: “I put my alarm clock a few minutes earlier and I gain much time “[Assim]”, I stop for 1 or 2 minutes [...] several times in the day” [Paul]. Some other practices allow refocusing just before starting demanding activities “I take 3 minutes before each video conference to do 2 minutes of refocusing and one minute to be sure that my network is ok” [Nabintou]. This great benefit of integration and appropriation of informal practices is also reflected through the development of collective organizational rituals, such as the fact of including times of meditation at the start of a meeting and sometimes in the middle of a meeting when team effectiveness wanes.

(c) *A practice group*: The participants realized that the training was only one step in a personal and collective journey which was supposed to last. The idea of a practice group has emerged naturally: “We thought that the training has been beneficial to us all and we all wanted it to continue. Everyone comes, not all the time, but everyone comes” [Fouraba].

The practice group is perceived as “fairly informal and less restrictive” [Paul] and at the same time as a kind of safeguard against the risk of forgetting the practice: “because in the end we are obliged despite everything not to deviate completely” [Radouane].

More than 2 years after the training the practice group continues, and after a short period of break, it has been revitalized by the arrival of new participants ( $n - 1$  having followed the program recently).

(d) *The impact of the training on the managerial practices is reflected in:*

- a change of style (more participatory/transformational) that improves relationships with employees and among peers,
- a change of posture: more global vision of the mission and the challenges,
- better emotional management of situations (less pressure felt and transmitted and less responsiveness).

Table 1 shows codings and examples of verbatim on these dimensions.

Overall, the training has evolved the participants' representation of their manager role. If they are happy to claim a participatory style before the training, many of them evoke the image of a manager-coach after the training that means a manager who supports employees instead of directing them.

**Table 1**

Practice of management: Coding and examples of verbatim

Dimension	Topic	Sub-topic	Idriss	Assim	Nabintou	Tapha	Radouan	Paul	Fouraba	Verbatim
Management practices	Management style	Manager coach/participating management/transformational	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	"I change my posture/more focused on the support role and therefore manager coach" [Idriss]
		Delegation/transfer of responsibilities/team autonomy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	"He may delegate a little more, that's right, this last year, it is true that he is asking other people to be responsible, to have a little more autonomy" [Paul's employee]
		Listening/opening/availability to situations and collaborators	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	"He's showing more understanding. The problems were the same before but they used to listen less" [Tapha's employee]
		Improvement of team relations/working atmosphere	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	"Relationship between us are perhaps getting healthier, with more listening ability and showing respect for others" [Assim's employee]
	Vision and efficiency	Sense of efficiency/performance	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	"We sit down and discuss, it's a lot more productive" [Fouraba's employee]
		Relationship to objectives/less focus		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	"I've been looking less at the results for a year. To answer the question I must admit that the results are better, but I am less driven by the result" [Nabintou]
		Broader vision	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	"He sees things from a much more broader perspective (...). He gained in maturity, and when he does something, he knows much better where he is heading to" [Idriss's superior]
		Self-confidence/feeling skillful	✓	✓			✓		✓	"To express certain issues [...] now I'm definitely a lot more comfortable to do it in an honest and polite way" [Radouan]
	Emotional dimension	Consideration of emotions/emotions integration	✓			✓	✓	✓		"Mindfulness is really beyond Understanding words, there are the emotions and all that they can generate" [Radouan], "Getting to name the emotions quite simply" [Tapha]
		Sense of alignment	✓	✓	✓	✓				"I say to myself", "How am I feeling and what is just for me?", "this is the real question that I am ask, [...] if it's right for me, it'll be right, too for others" [Assim]
		Less reactivity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	"Better self-control. Or better control of external aggressions" [Paul], "Maybe he's less impulsive, it's maybe a little more structured" [collaborator of Fouraba]
		Less stress	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	"Stress has drastically lowered" [Assim], "I think she's less stressed" [Nabintou's collaborator]

✓: Topic mentioned in the participant's speech/ ✓: topic confirmed by 360° feedback.

Dark gray: Topic mentioned and largely confirmed by the 360° feedback.

Light gray: Recurring topic (6 participants out of 7) but less strongly mentioned in the 360° feedback.

One year after the training, the participants strongly relativize the centrality of their role and say they are working to reduce their ego. They also report being more attentive, more open, more available to their employees and tend to over-react less and less. The ability to get out of the automatic modes of functioning and to be more present-centered renews the vision, as one participant put it: "if I go through my department and visit another office, mostly I will look at how it is now" [Assim]. They seek to more and more involve their employees, to help

them progress and make them autonomous. They delegate more.

These evolutions are confirmed by the employees as well as by the superiors of the seven executives. Employees do not see the changes as miraculous, but they are fairly unanimous in considering that their superiors are more attentive and more available: “He is less stressed, he is more attentive”, “she takes our opinions into account more”, “one positive point is the fact of involving the people below him in the development of plans”. As for the  $n + 1$ s, they generally perceive a feeling of positive development. One of them note that Idriss “is more in touch with his teams”, another that Assim manifests “more openness, is more able to integrate everyone”.

### **More Global Vision**

All the executives in the sample highlighted that the mindfulness training has helped them gain in wisdom and that they now experience a feeling of greater clarity in complex situations. Fouraba claims for example to have “developed a much broader vision”, Radouan mentions having “much clearer ideas”, and Assim states that “the basic data to make a decision are sometimes clearer”. They feel less overwhelmed, more present and more able to focus on what is needed and move on from one subject to another in a chosen way and without dispersion. The 360° feedback confirms this evolution perceived by some  $n + 1$  (“Assim gained height, took a step back, with a better vision”) but also by the teams (“he takes a further step back from what he did before” [collaborator of Assim]).

As a result, they say they reconsider their position and focus on the meaning of their job instead of always targeting financial outcomes. A participant mentions reconsidering his position to pursue sometimes unattainable goals: “the training helped me realize this, and then to assume the choice not to accept certain objectives” [Tapha]. Someone else evokes “having another philosophy” [Nabintou]. For the participants, goals are always part of the life of the company, but their place in the overall perception of performance has evolved. However, if 6 out of 7 participants consider that they have relativized the importance of goals achievement, this does not appear explicitly in the 360° feedback. However, employees stress that they feel less pressure from their manager.

### **Better Management of Emotions**

Unsurprisingly, given the very nature of the program, managers say they are less stressed. Employees perceive them as generally less stressed and transmitting less pressure. The participants believe that they have developed a greater consideration of the emotional dimensions, whether theirs or those of their collaborators. Following the training session, they limit inappropriate reactions related to negative emotions. They seek to “name just emotions” [Tapha] in order to better react to negative emotions. They develop less reactivity, which is expressed through the idea of appeasement: “that soothes relationships” [Nabintou]. When a conflictual situation arises, hindsight is larger and more reactions are cooler. Employees evoke more self-control from their managers. “He gets a lot less angry and if he gets annoyed, he realizes it and apologizes”. Another observes that in the past year “he has not had a hurtful word” when it had happened before and he experienced it very badly. However, the change is not miraculous. A collaborator of Fouraba praises his new capacity to transmit positive emotions (“more serenity”) but evokes moments when he is “with his head in the handlebars as before”. The observed changes vary and differ according to the participants’ initial capacity to manage emotions.

To sum up we can see that the managers who have followed the mindfulness training evolve in their management style, in the perception of their role and in the management of their emotions. These different aspects interact on each other and developments in one of these fields feed the transformations of others.

### **A More Balanced Relationship at Work**

The training has an impact on the relationship at work: it helps prevent burnout, brings participants to re-examine their work-life balance, and seems improve recovery times. (Table 1) shows codings and verbatim on these dimensions. The 360° feedback is not very relevant here since these topics hardly manifest themselves explicitly in the workplace.

## Prevention of Burnout and Balance in the Relationship at Work

Three of the seven participants (Radouan, Paul and Fouraba) have developed a radical awareness which led them to question their relationship to work. They expressed the idea that the training saved them from a potential burnout. In the end, they now seek to dedicate a specific place to work in their life. It is also the three participants who mostly stressed the importance of the support group (see Table 2). Two of them have realized during training that they had a potentially pathological relationship to work (over-engagement, workaholism). For those who developed a healthier relationship to work (the other four participants), the training appears to support a reasonable level of engagement and help maintain a certain balance between work and non-work. "I find that I take more time to do things" [Assim]. The benefits are direct for the participants as well as for their relatives.

In the end, the ability to step back related to mindfulness supports the quest for the right balance, allowing a sustainable engagement and avoid the risk of disengagement or over-engagement.

**Table 2**

Relationship to work: Coding and examples of verbatim

Dimension	Topic	Sub topic	Idriss	Assim	Nabintou	Tapha	Radouan	Paul	Fouraba	Verbatim
Relationship to work	Stress	Stress prevention					✓	✓	✓	"It helped me not to collapse, not to go crazy. It probably helped me not to be in burnout."
		Ability to momentarily stop working	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	"Before, he couldn't stop working. He used to work even on weekends, all the time. He was always connected at work. Now, he is able to take time for himself from time to time." [Secretary]
	Balanced relationships to work	Reasonable rhythm and limit	✓				✓		✓	"I allow myself to leave a little earlier than before". [Idriss]
		Putting into perspective the place of work	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	"I'm able to find the real place of work in my life". [Radouan]
		Better balance of life		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	"I have got more and more personal projects. So that's good for me". [Paul]
	Recovery	Off-work quality	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		"I am much more attentive to my children. I spend more time with them". [Tapha]
		Rest quality		✓	✓				✓	"It allows, if I'm awake, either to stay in bed and relax, or to fall asleep." [Nabintou]

✓ : Topic mentioned in the participant's speech      ✓ : Topic confirmed by the 360° feedback.

Light gray: recurring topic (6 out of 7 participants).

A central difficulty with mindfulness trainings concerns the stability of results over time. In the case of our sample, the results seem to be progressive and, as shown by the two situations presented in Table 3.

However, the question of time is central in the implementation of a program of this type. At the start of the training, participants experienced a period of "enthusiasm" which supports the practice. Then, all realize that the time of training is very short with regard to the goal. They said that this session is only the beginning of a long and demanding road.

After 3 months, the benefits are clearly noticeable by the participants. If they are convinced of the personal benefits, they are less sure of its impact on their professional environment which they could hardly measure.

After one year, the benefits seem to be well established regardless of the intensity of the formal personal practice: participants seem to be convinced that the benefits are being noticed in their professional environment. Some of them have initiated significant changes in their managerial posture and professional practices while others remain faithful to their management style while shifting it towards more listening and openness.

More than two years after the end of the training session, the practice group continues. Some are present on a

**Table 3**

Relationship to work: Codings and examples of verbatim

Pre-training evaluation	Participant's profile	<p>Assim: the Cartesian agro economist who has a balanced relationship to work.</p> <p>Agro economist by education, 20 years of experience in the company.</p> <p>Management training acquired on the ground; he has followed some professional seminars. He has never followed some personal development training before. He defines his management style as participatory. He works a lot, but tries to combine professional life and private life (2 children). He is self-organized but he sometimes has to work in the extra hours.</p> <p>Perceives himself as very Cartesian but wants to discover the "work on oneself training".</p> <p>His motivations to follow the mindfulness training are: well-being at work and stress reduction.</p>	<p>Fouraba: the enthusiastic manager who has a pathological relationship to work.</p> <p>Manager by education, he is over-invested in work "Until I get sick of it."</p> <p>He has a background in management. His style is rather a directive one, with hyper-control, less delegating.</p> <p>Very high level of stress, heavy workload during the week but he tries to spend weekends with family (2 young children).</p> <p>His motivation to follow the training are: hope to find a better way to find balance in personal life, to cope with stress at work and to better manage teams</p>
	Participant's perception	<p>Ability to step back in face of difficult situations, to let it go, ability to trust, feeling to coach more his collaborators, and better support them, pay less attention to objectives, and more attention to the direction of action to be taken and communicated. Develop healthier relationships, more listening ability and more respect towards others.</p>	<p>Became aware of his workaholic profile, try to be less obsessed by work as a unique source of reference, even if there is still a long way to go, try to delegate more even if it's still hard. Less in the pursuit of the objective instead, more and more concern in the way to reach it, more peaceful in relationships with coworkers.</p>
Post-training evolution	The perception of $n+$	<p>He is more able to open up to others and accept them and to integrate everyone. He knows better how to say things as they really are.</p>	<p>He gained in wisdom, he alternates between more "Zen" periods much more "Zen", when he is cool and "less speed" and periods when it is really tense again.</p>
	The perception of $n-$	<p>He tries to make us more self-reliant Take a step back from situations Less pressure on objectives: request to do what is possible to go in the right direction.</p>	<p>He delegates more, he pays attention to the pressure he generates, he seems more serene and balanced in relationship.</p>

very regular basis while for others it has become a space of resourcing when undergoing difficult periods. This sustainability of the effects of the program has recently resulted in the launch of two new training groups designed for another group of participants.

#### 4. Discussion: Summary of Results, Avenues of Research

The standard MBSR training program, as designed in a medical setting, seems to be suitable for business context. In the context of the experiment that we have analyzed, it has been well appreciated. The practices have been



integrated and have occupied a significant place in the personal and professional life of managers. They have evolved over time and this evolution has been maintained. This training seems to have had a real effect, but of varying intensity, on the practices of leadership, the management of emotions and the relationship to work of all participants, and these impacts have been corroborated by the triangulation of the analyzes with the  $n + 1$  and  $n - 1$ . These results are very encouraging and permit to strengthen the hypothesis of potentials benefits of the practice of mindfulness in the field of management: mindfulness can be a lever for change of managerial behavior, develop emotional skills and develop a more balanced relationship at work.

The research we have carried out focuses on a small sample, in a particular context, with a given trainer. These results therefore have no external validity and are not generalizable as it is. However, the exploratory analysis of the effects of mindfulness in managerial practices raise promising and completely concordant avenues of research with those proposed by Good *et al.* (2016) [3].

### **Mindfulness and Work Relationship**

The results we obtained show that mindfulness training allows the adoption of a healthier relationship to work. However, they do not permit to clearly distinguish between effects related to the practice of mindfulness and the effects due to the only work of introspection inherent in the approach proposed in this session. Likewise, the beneficial impact of improving the work schedule may explain some of the changes observed, in particular through the effect of greater psychological distance from managers (Sonnentag *et al.* (2010) [8]). The different factors are in fact closely interrelated and not all improvements can be credited to mindfulness. It seems more correct to imagine that mindfulness induces a new dynamic of management of virtuous resources, triggering a spiral of additional resource. Mindfulness could be seen as a new key resource, that is to say a resource allowing an individual to manage to the best of its available resources (Brummelhuis & Bakker (2012) [1]). It is therefore necessary to develop research on the link between the practice of mindfulness and set of resources to improve the relationship at work.

### **Towards Mindful Leadership**

The first results presented here show that the practice of mindfulness has permitted an evolution of the way of managing and the managerial posture of the participants. However, it is not possible at this stage to link mindfulness and different leadership styles. The concept of Mindful Leadership as popularized particularly by M.F.R.K. de Vries (2014) [11] invades the managerial and media environment and many coaches and consultants are claiming this new current of thought. However, the concept of mindful leadership is neither defined nor demonstrated. The results of our research show the interest in describing the relationships between mindfulness and the emerging leadership styles. As for the improvement of emotional management, this seems to be favored by mindfulness but it depends on the emotional skills of managers who have a direct impact on their leadership. Thus mindfulness could be a mediator of the development of intelligence emotional. It therefore seems premature to speak of mindful leadership as a separate management style.

### **The Research Limitation**

The main limitation to the implementation of mindfulness trainings in contemporary organizations seems to be related to the fact that mindfulness approach can be subversive to contemporary management practices in organizations and to models that underlie often the cartesian and rationalist approaches.

Mindfulness, if we disregard the negative representations that it may cause (effect of fashion, esoteric practice, imposture. . . ) is a fairly simple approach to implement because it relies on individuals and does not aim, at least initially, to transform organizations. However, our results illustrate that its practice leads people who adopt this technique to re-examine certain aspects of organizations. Mindfulness is built on the questioning of utilitarianism, which may seem subversive in contemporary organizations. Thus, the business executives of our sample claim to have taken distance to their goals. According to them, for more performance of course, but we can question the

capacity of a speech of this type to sensitize the leaders of contemporary organizations. Thus, from an innocuous approach, there may be profound challenges to the organizational and managerial status quo.

In addition, the transformation process initiated is slow and requires the appropriation of long term, far from the frantic rhythms of contemporary management. Thus the dissemination of this approach comes up against the risk inherent in an alternative approach and perceived as potentially subversive of performance. Mindfulness shakes up people, their perceptions, their postures, their way of doing things and in return shakes up the organizations.

## 5. Conclusion

The emergence of mindfulness in organizations raises many questions and raises reactions often excessive, on the negative register as on the positive register. The question of a wide distribution of these tools in the business world is being debated. There is now a very strong gap between the media enthusiasm for corporate meditation and the reality of its deployment which still marginal. The research is yet in its infancy to understand the issues and the effects of this deployment. Many avenues of research are emerging out of it. It therefore seems essential to us to better understand the perceptions of all the stakeholders and analyse them in other frameworks. What are the obstacles to managerial innovation and the levers of dissemination? Finally, we can question the place of this new device, halfway between training, personal development, therapy and coaching in today's organizational programs.

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