EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEPTION OF MINDFULNESS IN

EMAIL COMMUNICATION AND EMPLOYEE STRESS

by

Jacqueline Christine Snook

Liberty University

A Dissertation Proposal Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this quantitative study was to investigate the relationship between the perception of leadership mindfulness with email communication and employee stress. Foundational to this research was the theoretical basis of the Job Demands Resource model, the Buddhist philosophy of mindfulness, and the Bible. The framework provided a necessary structure for investigating the application of mindfulness to organizational behavior in terms of email communication practices. The study was conducted using a sample of 69 participants. The participants responded to a 33-item Likert inventory through Survey Monkey. Reliability was assessed to determine the consistency and trustworthiness of each item for the inventory. Two research questions were evaluated using a Pearson's r correlation. Research question 1 sought to understand the relationship between the perception of leadership mindfulness in email communication, specifically email quantity, email quality, and tone. The results indicated no significant correlation between the perception of leadership mindfulness and email quantity. However, a significant positive correlation between the perception of leadership mindfulness and email quality and email tone was found. Research question 2 sought to determine the relationship between the perception of leadership mindfulness in email communication and employee stress. The results indicated a significant positive correlation between the two variables. The results should be viewed with caution as other factors may also result in employee stress which are not explained through the perception of leadership mindfulness in communication. The findings indicate that the perception of leadership mindfulness is related to employee stress and email communication practices. The Bible teaches that people should be cognizant of how their actions affect others and should bring God glory.

Keywords: Mindfulness, Email, Quality, Quality, Tone, Stress

Copyright Page

Dedication

The journey to attain my doctorate was supported and facilitated by some caring mentors, who

saw my potential.

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A special thanks to my mother for always supporting me and providing me with encouragement

to meet my goals.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Introduction

This study seeks to investigate the relationship between the perception of mindfulness in connection with email communication practices and employee stress. Communication is an essential aspect of organizational behavior (Fan & Han, 2018). It is foundational to organizational knowledge sharing (Lee, 2022). Leadership style and employee trust levels promote open communication (Jiang & Chen, 2021). The way leaders communicate in emails establishes the perception employees perceive.

Background

Humans interact using communication (DeClerck & Holtzman, 2018). There are two forms of communication: verbal and nonverbal (Hung-Yue, et al., 2020). Verbal communication consists of spoken and written language (Richard, et al., 2020). Spoken communication can be face-to-face, where the sender and receiver are in the same space, or it can be done over distance using telephones or teleconferencing tools. Verbal communication can also be transmitted in writing. Nonverbal communication is seen in gestures that occur in a verbal conversation (Novack, et al., 2022), and in body language.

Regardless of the mode of communication, it occurs either synchronously or asynchronously (Ogwu, et al, 2020). Synchronous communication is when the participants are sharing information in real-time. Asynchronous communication is either written or recorded by the sender and reviewed later by the receiver. One form of asynchronous communication is information communication technologies (ICTs), which is electronic communication (Richard, et al., 2020). It includes recorded audio, video, and text-based communication. Text-based tools

such as text messaging, instant messaging, and emailing are used heavily by organizations for transferring information.

With a globalized society, email has revolutionized organizations (Tedone, 2022). Email communication promotes long-distance organizational operations through allowing staggered times for sending and receiving information. The asynchronous nature of email provides flexibility in its 24-hour communication channel. Conversely, this around-the-clock connection to one's workplace decreases employee wellbeing through a lack of ability to detach from job duties (Belkin, et al., 2020). Approximately 45% of employees demonstrate work-tethering and conduct work responsibilities outside of work hours. Regardless of the time sent, emailing encourages the sharing of ideas.

Email is a tool to promote organizational efficiency through knowledge sharing. This occurs when employees can communicate effectively (Choi, et al., 2018); however, employees that do not feel a sense of value and trust are less likely to share information with others (Jiang & Chen, 2021). Organizations that value their employees promote citizenship behaviors and increase productivity (Marinova, et al., 2019). Employee perception results from the organizational context. Perception of value is established with clearly communicated goals and objectives.

Communication patterns provide connectivity among employees (Norton, et al., 2018). The composition of an email conveys a message. Poor communication, such as text that contains typographical errors, creates a negative perspective (Blunden, & Brodsky, 2021). Organizational climate is influenced by the perception of the employee (Yuan, et al., 2020). The negative climate results in the employee stress level, absenteeism, and disconnectedness towards

organizational goals. Written communication goes through greater scrutiny because it must be well-written, grammatically correct, and carry a positive or neutral tone.

Leadership style and personality set the organizational context (Marinova, et al., 2019). The leader's direction either encourages or discourages employees. Employee satisfaction is influenced by the leader's style (Iqbal, et al., 2022). Likewise, turnover intentions demonstrate the climate of an organization. Key expressions in toxic climates are work environments that are negative or unpleasant for employees. Negative working conditions take a physical toll on employees that can cause stress and sleep disruption. With the increase in email communication and its asynchronous nature, leaders foster the blurring of boundaries in their expectations of workers (Reinke & Ohly, 2021).

Boundaries and norms provide a framework for understanding organizational expectations (Giurge & Bohns, 2021). Poor boundaries negatively affect the climate of an organization through reducing employee well-being (Reinke & Ohly, 2021). The blurring of lines between work and nonwork hours increases employee stress and anxiety. Employees who lack the ability to detach from work have lower levels of job productivity. Organizations need healthy workers to fulfill tasks and objectives (Santuzzi & Barber, 2018). Clear and appropriate boundaries are an essential component of organizational climate.

Organizational climate naturally occurs from the employee behaviors within the organization (Zhang, et al., 2017). Negative organizational climate characteristics are shown through employee incivility in communication practices, work avoidance, withdrawal, and low levels of well-being shown in employee stress levels, anxiety, and absenteeism (Iqbal, et al., 2022). Employees who are stressed based on working conditions may resort to workaholism behaviors to keep up with unmanageable job demands (Stich, et al., 2019). Ethical organizational

climates promote employee satisfaction which counters turnover ideation. Employees' perception of working conditions is presented in their megaphoning or the words they say about the job (Lee, 2022).

Positive organizational climates are presented in the words and behaviors of the employees (Marinova, et al., 2019). Positive employee interactions are demonstrated in knowledge sharing, helping other employees, and job completion. Contented employees are identified to have lower levels of turnover intention (Iqbal, et al., 2022).

Organizations that are led with a degree of mindfulness have been found to increase higher levels of employee well-being (Zhang, et. al., 2020). Mindfulness in electronic communication is needed to promote employee well-being (Bauer et al., 2017). Zhang, et. al., (2020) defines mindfulness as non-judgmental awareness of a person's own actions. There is an element of being present and in the moment of events that are occurring that provides the individual with a level of attention. The interaction between leaders and employees, leader-member exchange, influences job performance and goal outcomes (Arendt, et al., 2019). Leaders that demonstrate high levels of mindfulness in communication exhibit awareness of situations and the ability to listen non-judgmentally to the views of others.

Individuals that present mindful communication are shown in their mental presence in the immediate moment (Arendt, et al., 2019). Leadership mindfulness in communication promotes positive organizational climates through having the ability to respond to negative and stressful states in the moment. Increasing mindfulness in leadership communication promotes work-family balance of employees (Hulsheger, et al., 2018). This balance helps employees reduce stress and detach from work in their down time.

Biblical Foundation to the Background

The Bible provides instruction for how leaders are to treat their employees (*New International Version*, 1973/2011, Luke 10:7). Jesus indicated for those in authority to demonstrate their value for employees by paying them appropriately. Paul wrote for leaders to be just to their workers (Colossians 4:1) and for leaders to treat their subordinates in a manner mirroring Christ and the Church (1 Corinthians 1:10). Leadership style and the way communication occurs create the context.

Satisfied employees are more committed to their organization (Yuan, et al., 2020). Christians are instructed to conduct their behavior in a Christ-like manner (*New International Version*, 1973/2011, Ephesians 2:10). Paul instructed Christians to be good citizens and promote positive environments around them through their conduct and speech (Titus 3:1-2). When obeyed, this directive brings God glory (1 Corinthians 10:31). Christians should be mindful in their conduct when speaking. The Bible presents this idea in various contexts. King Solomon wrote that being careless with one's words can damage relationships (Proverbs 12:18). This is contrasted with the person that takes care in what he or she says provides a remedy for relationships. Like mindfulness on employee well-being, individuals that pay attention to the context promote healthy interactions rather than increasing stress.

Problem Statement

The Coronavirus pandemic abruptly changed working conditions by quickly transitioning employees to working remotely (Tedone, 2022). The abrupt shift for organizations to switch to remote working increased their use of information communication technology (ICT). This resulted in unclear employee expectations, but also caused employees to develop resilience in how to use emails (Gajendran, et al., 2022). There are various strategies for effectively using

email. Ineffective application of emailing results in a negative organizational perception, creating an unproductive atmosphere (Haesevoets, et al., 2020).

One major barrier in email communication is the lack of social cues (DeClerck & Holtzman, 2018). Email recipients that are disconnected from non-auditory communication have more ambiguity for the context being communicated and may lack social connectedness. A lack of social connectivity with others in an organization may have an impact on employee well-being. Research has indicated mixed results for the relationship between well-being and online communication (Bauer, et al., 2017).

Leadership communication directs the climate of an organization (Lee, 2022). The response leaders give to situations impacts the well-being of the members of the organization (Walsh & Arnold, 2020). Employees' perception of their value is influenced by the leadership style (Marinova, et al., 2019). Employees with a negative perspective of their value influence the level of productivity (Li, et al., 2018). Prior research has explored role ambiguity and negative worker outcomes (Marsh, et al.,2022). Leaders that lack an understanding of how to clearly communicate with employees will influence productivity. Mindfulness strategies as applied to communication practices can provide organizations with well-being regulation strategies. Leaders that apply awareness to email communication patterns promote interpersonal benefits such as emotional regulation and performance (Arendt, et al., 2019). Research on organizational mindfulness in communication has been limited.

Research has explored leader-member exchange theory (LMX on the mediators in communication between leaders and followers (Choi, et al., 2018). A mindful leader following LMX will be able to communicate more effectively through reflective responses (Arendt, et al., 2019). Mindfulness in communication positively influences successful outcomes for employee

welfare, but there is limited literature on the impact of mindfulness in leader communication. Therefore, further research in common organizational communication avenues such as email is needed.

Although some studies have investigated work-life boundaries in the adapting organizational context, there is a lack of research in electronic communications in connection with organizational climate. The present study contributes to increasing awareness of how email communication may influence employee work behaviors and an overall organizational climate. This study responds to the need to understand effective electronic communication for establishing organizational climate in various working contexts. This study also evaluates how the level of mindfulness in leaders' electronic communication influences organizational climate as demonstrated in the level of employee stress. Therefore, it is not currently known whether mindfulness in email communication influences employee stress.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative survey study is to examine the relationship between the perception of leadership mindfulness on email quantity, email quality, email tone, and employee stress.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Questions

RQ1: Is there a relationship between email quantity, email quality, email tone and the perception of leadership mindfulness?

RQ2: Is there a relationship between the perception of leadership mindfulness and employee stress?

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no relationship between email quantity, email quality, email tone and the perception of leadership mindfulness.

Hypothesis 2: There is no relationship between the perception of leadership mindfulness and employee stress.

Assumptions and Limitations of the Study

Assumptions to this study include the expectation that respondents are self-aware and able to respond honestly (Gajda & Zbierowski, 2022). It also assumes participants have the same standard or basis for rating criteria, in personality, relationship, ability, and awareness (Kong & Jolly, 2019). Another assumption is that employees accurately perceive leaders' mindfulness.

Limitations in this study include the method for finding relevant data. As this study uses quantitative data, the self-reporting method may not yield completely accurate responses (Gajda & Zbierowski, 2022). Participants may be susceptible to social desirability rather than honestly responding to items on the inventory. Although research has investigated some applications to mindfulness in an organizational context, there is a lack of recent relevant studies that investigate the implications of communication etiquette and mindfulness on organizational climate (Reinke & Ohly, 2021). As data will be collected at one time rather than in multiple phases to assess the variables, this may skew the results reported by participants (Liu, et al., 2019). Additionally, the data collection method is correlational, it does not explain causation to the variables only that there is an association between them (Alenick, et al., 2022).

Theoretical Foundations of the Study

The Job Demands Resources Theory

People spend a large portion of their lifetime in the workplace (Bakker & de Vries, 2021). Organizational working conditions place requirements on employees to produce outcomes

(Steffensen, et al., 2021). The influence of organizational processes on employees' performance, health, and well-being is explained using the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory (Demerouti & Bakker, 2022).

This study is built on the foundational framework of the Job-Demands Resources Theory (JD-R). It is the most widely used tool for positive psychology in occupational health (Galanakis & Tsitouri, 2022). There are two foundational postulates in the JD-R: employees have demands on their time, and employees have a finite number of resources (Tummers & Bakker, 2021). To respond to work demands, employees use personal resources (Bakker & de Vries, 2021). Examples of personal resources are outside sources brought by the employee's level of self-efficacy, resilience, motivation, or optimism.

The JD-R is applied to fields such as organizational behavior, human resource management, and occupational psychology, to better understand employee relations (Galanakis & Tsitouri, 2022). It provides an understanding that job demands are promoted by colleague support or diminished by unclear expectations (Park & Haun, 2018). The JD-R has two features: job demands and job resources (Tummers & Bakker, 2021).

Remote work obscures the distinction between work and home time (Demerouti & Bakker, 2022). This creates the need for assessing job demands and personal resources, which can be explained through the JD-R. It seeks to analyze the positives and negatives of working conditions for employees (Galanakis & Tsitouri, 2022). The JD-R model is used for understanding employee well-being and occupational health (Li, et al., 2022). This is done through looking at employee job demands and resources. These are understood through the lens of work engagement and burnout (Galanakis & Tsitouri, 2022).

Job Demands and Employee Well-being

The work context is influenced by job demands that create negative social and physical side effects on employees (Li, et al., 2022). Any task assigned to be accomplished in one's workplace is a component of job demands (Tummers & Bakker, 2021). There are three factors that influence work demands: psychological, social, and physical (Steffensen, et al., 2021).

Employees' level of fatigue from job demands placed on them at work are on a continuum scale (Bakker & de Vries, 2021). Work requirements create stress for employees. Leadership style promotes or detracts from the level of job demands on employees through their clarity, acknowledgement of work, and providing emotional support (Demerouti & Bakker, 2022).

Employee health concerns are influenced by the social welfare aspects of job demands (Nylen, et al.,2018). Having a lack of resources along with high demands creates burnout (Bakker & de Vries, 2021). The factors of burnout interfere with cognition, mood, and work productivity (Bakker & de Vries, 2021). There are strategies for responding to job demands which promote self-regulatory resources; however, reactive responses are destructive strategies (Demerouti & Bakker, 2022).

The JD-R originally was developed to provide a framework for stress and burnout of employees (Galanakis & Tsitouri, 2022). The demands placed on employees cause a drain to the worker, reducing the level of resources that employees can provide (Steffensen, et al., 2021). Lasting burnout of employees is a result of elevated stress levels (Bakker & de Vries, 2021).

Stress and burnout are lower in employees with higher levels of positivity (Bakker & de Vries, 2021). The level of demands placed on employees provides predictability for worker absenteeism (Steffensen, et al., 2021). The more drained the employee, the longer the absence from work. Psychosocial job demands that influence employees and create stress are the constant

connection to work and the inability to disengage from work-related activities such as email (Nylen, et al.,2018).

Poor work norms create a lack of detachment to disengage from work duties (Becker, et al., 2021). Having the inability to detach increases employee stress. Lack of well-being is created by continual exhaustion and burnout (Um & Bardhoshi, 2022). Self-efficacy helps employees recuperate, but burnout decreases the ability to replenish resources (Liu, et al., 2022). The JD-R helps to identify burnout and find solutions to promote self-efficacy.

Outside of one's work environment is the individual's time at home (Bakker & de Vries, 2021). This time is necessary for allowing the employee to rest and recover from the demands of their job. Employees that have a perception of a lack of control over higher levels of work demands are shown to have increased levels of work-related stress (Nylen, et al.,2018).

Long hours decrease employees' ability to relax and produce physical stressors that reduce the overall well-being (Liu, et al., 2022). Technology opens communication among large distances, but it creates additional stress through violating work-life boundaries (Becker, et al., 2021). Employees always being attached to work go against the physical needs of employees to rest. This form of job demands depletes the employee from being able to rest creating physical side effects (Liu, et al., 2022).

Resources available in the work environment will make job demands less strenuous (Demerouti & Bakker, 2022). Negative organizational working conditions decrease employee wellbeing (Steffensen, et *al.,* 2021). High volume of work demands inhibits job production, reduces motivation, and leads to burnout (Tummers & Bakker, 2021). Leadership direction influences the workplace environment for employees (Tummers & Bakker, 2021).

Leadership is a key indicator of employee wellbeing and performance (Tummers & Bakker, 2021). Employee's perception of leadership direction creates the work environment (Bakker & de Vries, 2021). Leadership style influences the employee's ability to have a balance between work and life (Tummers & Bakker, 2021). Leaders in organizations make sense of situations and make decisions on how to respond (Demerouti & Bakker, 2022).

The application of the JD-R is to support employee well-being and promote performance (Tummers & Bakker, 2021). Organizational leaders communicate norms and expectations that establish the level of boundaries for employees to follow. The application of technology communication tools such as emails are easily accessible from the employees' home and can cross personal boundaries (Becker, et al., 2021). Employee expectations to be highly productive are linked to working outside of office hours (Liu, et al., 2022). This increases employee reliance on personal resources, reducing recovery time.

Job Resources

Job resources are the personal and social resources of the employee (Tummers & Bakker, 2021). This can be supervisory support (Li, et al., 2022). Social resources are the support of others around the employee (Tummers & Bakker, 2021). Personal resources consist of the level of control the employee has over the work environment. Employee personal demands influence employee resilience, which increases employee attributes at their work (Demerouti & Bakker, 2022). Lower levels of job resources are linked with higher levels of burnout, exhaustion, and cynicism from employees (Demerouti & Bakker, 2022).

Growth and personal development as a response to tasks are job resources (Tummers & Bakker, 2021). Motivated employees desire to improve their abilities through having a desire to learn and grow (Demerouti & Bakker, 2022). Motivation is a key resource that leads to employee

engagement (Tummers & Bakker 2021). Leaders also provide motivation to employees, which supports employees' performance (Demerouti & Bakker, 2022).

Application of the JD-R analyzes employee performance and well-being in an organization's environment (Tummers & Bakker, 2021). Impaired psychological costs of personal demands result in negative behaviors such as workaholism (Demerouti & Bakker, 2022).

The JD-R focuses on understanding work conditions (Lui, et al., 2022). The Bible commands employers to be fair and just with their employees (*New International Version*, 1973/2011, Colossians 4:1). Jesus described the correct behavior for employers' treatment of employees in his parable of workers (Matthew 20:16). The owner of the vineyard treated each of the workers fairly and paid them what was promised to them.

The JD-R focuses on both job demands, but also on resources (Li, et al., 2022). Employees need to take care of their needs to be able to recover. Workaholism should be avoided. God provided this model by resting on the seventh day (*New International Version*, 1973/2011, Genesis 2:2-3). In the Bible, employees are instructed to produce fruits (Ecclesiastes 5:18).

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the application of non-judgment, which means having an acute awareness of one's surroundings and situational context (Arendt, et al., 2019). Extracted from the Buddhist practice, it focuses on having an internal awareness detached from personal emotion and self-reflection (Carlton, et al., 2018). It contains two components: acceptance and attention.

Through having awareness of the situation, the person applying mindfulness is intentional about the consideration of what is occurring (Carlton, et al., 2018). Mindfulness is purposeful

attention to the situation (Zhang, et. al., 2020). It is not an unintentional act, but rather the individual's intentional focus in the present moment. It encompasses a holistic understanding of an individual's awareness and insight to reality (Gajada & Zbierowski, 2022).

This acute awareness of one's situation provides the person with sensations of their physical condition (Hülsheger & Alberts, 2021). Understanding the context supports alleviating negative responses to situations. Negative environmental stimuli are avoided by situational awareness (DeClark & Holtzman, 2018). This reduces anger and aggression. Positive organizational interaction is promoted between leadership members and followers.

Trait mindfulness presents the connection between leadership qualities and organizational practices (Carlton, et al., 2018). Due to its focus on situational awareness, mindfulness fosters positive communication between leaders and followers (Arendt, et al., 2019). Leadership awareness to employee needs establishes mutual respect (Walsh, et al., 2018).

Mindfulness benefits employees through facilitating balance between work and family time (Hülsheger & Alberts, 2021). One aspect of mindfulness is through supporting employee mental detachment from work outside of work hours. Whereas a lack of mindfulness creates stress for employees.

There is a connection between higher levels of mindfulness and authentic behaviors exhibited by the individual (Zhang, et al., 2020). Mindfulness is a trait applied by the individual (Hülsheger & Alberts, 2021). The positive results of applying mindfulness include mental clarity, emotional regulation, focus, self-control, resilience, positive interpersonal interactions, and acceptance (Gajada & Zbierowski, 2022). Individuals present the trait of mindfulness differently (Hülsheger & Alberts, 2021). Mindfulness creates the context that increases self-

regulation techniques (Dibb-Smith, et al., 2019). The application of mindfulness reduces stress through promoting clear communication (Arendt, et al., 2019).

A key component to organizational social factors is in the application of mindfulness practices (Kong & Jolly, 2019). Mindfulness promotes positive interpersonal interactions (Grapendorf, et al 2017). Through an awareness of the context of the situation, mindfulness fosters understanding within the communication of ideas for individuals. Aspects of mindfulness include five features: intentional awareness of the situation, emotion-free and nonjudgmental consideration, awareness and acceptance of others' perspective, non-reactive response to inner experiences, and a state of consciousness (Carlton, et al., 2018). Social environments are supported through the application of mindfulness (Grapendorf, et al 2017). This is because of the awareness of the situation surrounding the individual.

Mindfulness helps increase psychological traits for wellbeing in employees (DeClark & Holtzman, 2018). Wellbeing takes many forms that improve in the people who employ it. Positive emotional regulation is linked to the application of mindfulness (DeClark & Holtzman, 2018). It also increases health and reduces costs of healthcare (Carlton, et al., 2018).

Mindfulness positively promotes the work context. It provides employees with the ability to reduce stress through creating positive interactions (Bauer et al., 2017). Mindfulness helps or hurts the level of satisfaction of the individual (Arendt, et al., 2019). Lower levels of mindfulness increase employee and leadership stress levels, reduce productivity, and decrease work satisfaction. Employing trait mindfulness provides strategies to deal with negative experiences (Carlton, et al., 2018); however, through applying mindful techniques, employee performance is improved (Grapendorf, et al 2017). When applied to the organizational setting, mindfulness

promotes positive attitudes resulting in higher levels of citizenship behavior (Gajada & Zbierowski, 2022).

Pressures are placed on employees to produce business objectives; providing social support fosters a context which enables reaching the objectives (Gajada & Zbierowski, 2022). As mindfulness is presenting an awareness to situations, it makes clear when individuals are doing tasks out of obligation rather than self-created motivation (Bauer et *al.*, 2017). This fosters positive organizational objectives.

Mindfulness is the attention to one's situation (Carlton, et al., 2018). The Bible provides the context for appropriate Christian behavior. Jesus began teaching his disciples when a crowd gathered for his sermon on the mount to treat others with respect and in the way in which you would want to be treated (*New International Version*, 1973/2011, Matthew 7:12). After his conversion, in his letter to the church at Philippi, the Apostle Paul directed Christians to be aware of their actions and to be gentle in their dealings with others (Philippians 4:5).

One component is to be purposeful in one's actions (Zhang, et. al., 2020). The prophet Jonah preached the news of destruction to the people of Nineveh. The citizens of that town were purposeful in their repentance, which demonstrated their mindfulness in the information that was given to them (*New International Version*, 1973/2011, Jonah 3:1-10). Paul wrote to the church in Rome to live purposefully and not be enslaved to sin (Romans 6:1-23).

The main aspect of mindfulness is its nonjudgmental position of listening to the position of others (Hülsheger & Alberts, 2021). Jesus explained for individuals to not judge because they will be judged by the same measure that they used (*New International Version*, 1973/2011, Matthew 7:1-3). The prophet Moses related to the children of Israel to be truthful and to judge based on what is right rather than to promote their own agenda (Leviticus 19:15).

Definition of Terms

The following is a list of definitions of terms that are used in this study.

Asynchronous Communication – Asynchronous communication is defined as nonverbal communication that happens at different times (Ogwu, et al., 2020). It is text based (Richard, et al., 2020). The information is expressed by the sender at one time and later reviewed by the receiver (Ogwu, et al., 2020).

Electronic Workplace Incivility – Electronic workplace incivility is defined as disrespectful, insensitive, or rude communication or behaviors (Park & Haun, 2018). It is sent over technological means such as email or other digital information communication tools which interfere with workplace activities (Yuan, et al., 2020).

Email Aggression – Email aggression is defined as negative and noncivil communication sent by email (Zhou, et al., 2022). It is exhibited through bullying, hostile, confrontational, or demeaning content (Richard, et al., 2020), poorly constructed and grammatically incorrect text (Martin-Lacroux, 2017), overabundance, or sending after-hours (Park, et al., 2020).

Email Etiquette – Email etiquette is defined as the composer using appropriate grammatical rules for professionality (Lewin-Jones & Mason, 2014). Professional emails are free of spelling errors (Martin-Lacroux, 2017).

Mindfulness – Mindfulness is defined by having an acute and nonjudgmental awareness of the attitudes and receptiveness of participants in a particular situation (Zhang, et. al., 2020).

Communication Noise – Communication noise is defined as barriers that impede one's understanding and reduce the levels of trust between the participants (Lee, 2022). Noise includes incoherency in messaging through text errors (Holler, et al., 2018), not understanding the

meaning based on the tone used (Yuan, et al., 2020), having a lack of clarity (Cuskley, et al., 2021),

Email Communication Norms – Email communication norms are defined as the organization's standards and expectations around sending and responding to emails (Giurge & Bohns, 2021).

Organizational Mindfulness – Organizational mindfulness is defined as the nonjudgmental and purposeful awareness of the present situation (Carlton, et al., 2018). It includes emotional detachment and allows for acceptance of others' perspectives (Zhang, et. al., 2020).

Synchronous Communication – Synchronous communication is defined as information that is sent by one individual and understood by a receiver that occurs at the same time (Ogwu, et al., 2020). It can occur in person or through digital means.

Technology-Based Communications – Technology-based communications are defined as tools that promote employee collaboration through digital means (Park, et al., 2020). Examples of technology-based communication tools are email, FaceTime, and smartphones (Zhou, et al., 2022).

Toxic Organizational Climates – Toxic organizational climates are defined as the negative attitudes and behaviors presented by the members of the organization's working environment, often exhibited by high absenteeism and stress, and low productivity (Iqbal, et al., 2022).

Work-Life Boundaries – Work-life boundaries are defined as the lines that separate an employee's job duties to contracted time from that individual's home life (Park, et al., 2020).

Significance of the Study

As email communication has become such a prominent tool in organizations, understanding the implications of its impact on employee wellbeing is needed (Giurge & Bohns, 2021). This study will contribute to research on organizational practices in using information

technologies. It provides additional explanation to the body of research on perceived mindfulness in organizational leadership practices in conjunction with communication. Specifically, it will create additional awareness for the implications of mindfulness in communication practices in terms of frequency, quantity, and quality of emails.

Few studies investigating the use of email communication (Giurge & Bohns, 2021). Additionally, mindfulness as applied to leadership electronic communication has not been studied. This study will fill the gap in literature for effective application of email communication through employing mindfulness practices.

This study will raise awareness of organizational policy on effective email practices. It will bring attention to the need for mindfulness in terms of when messages are sent, what is expected for response time, and to the grammatical and thorough content of the message. For organizational leaders, this is to foster positive organizational climates, increase productivity, and promote employee well-being. Considering the theoretical implications of mindfulness will develop a richer application and understanding of mindfulness. This study will also deepen the application of leadership membership exchange theory through email communication practices.

Summary

Communication is prominent in organizational operations (Giurge & Bohns, 2021). The coronavirus pandemic accelerated the application of information communication technologies (Tedone, 2022). Email has become a primary tool for communication in the workplace (Haesevoets, et al., 2020). The asynchronous aspect of emailing provides organizations with the ability to communicate at any time and from any location (Ogwu, et al., 2020). Receiving emails at any time has heightened employee stress levels, reducing employee health (Park, et al., 2020).

Levels of mindfulness in leadership communication influence employee well-being (Walsh & Arnold, 2020). How and when leaders communicate with employees demonstrates the organization's values and climate. Emails that are too frequent, received after hours, poorly written, or carry improper tone leads to negative workplace environments.

Christians are directed to be respectful of others' boundaries (*New International Version*, 1973/2011, Matthew 7:12) and to not be loose with their words (Ephesians 4:29). Paul instructed Christians to be Christ-like in their actions (Philippians 2:5-6), and their mindfulness of communication (James 1:9), regardless of the work environment (Exodus 2:11-14). Effective communication is imperative to promoting organizational productivity. Mindfulness expressed in emailing supports employee well-being. Organizations promoting positive workplaces through mindfulness experience increased employee collaboration and production of objectives. Chapter 2 will provide a review of literature on leadership, mindfulness, and email communication in terms of quantity, quality, and tone, and employee stress.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Communication patterns are formed within the context of the society for which they reside (Koudenburg & Kashima, 2022). Companies are a microcosm of society, using human capital to develop objectives and meet their mission (Marinova, et al., 2019). These members of an organization create a culture (Giurge & Bohns, 2021). Since all companies are relational, they must exercise effective communication (Lee, 2022). Successfully meeting the company's objectives occurs when people clearly communicate with all members of the organizational team (Marinova, et al., 2019).

There are various forms of communication (Ogwu, et al., 2020). Communication can be expressed in nonverbal body language, or it can be verbal, such as in spoken or written words (Yuan, et al., 2020). Spoken communication includes in-person or over distance using audio devices, such as telephones, and includes pre-recorded messaging (DeClerck & Holtzman, 2018). Some examples of written communication include formal documents or training, such as organizational policies, instructions, and directions, or less formal, such as electronic mail (email), text (Giurge & Bohns, 2021), or instant messaging (Bauer, et al., 2017).

Organizations have transitioned to using email as a primary communication tool (Russell, et al., 2021). Once communication is put to written form, it acquires a permanence of tone and content that is difficult to eliminate (Yuan, et al., 2020). Poorly written, irrelevant, unclear, or concealed information often results in establishing negative opinions about the writer and/or subject (Park & Haun, 2018). The awareness of individuals in how they communicate in email influences the perception of the organization (Stich, et al., 2019).

The interactions between people demonstrate the relationship between those individuals (Yuan, et al., 2020). Positive communication is expressed mindfully which is shown through the clarity, tone, quantity, and timing (Arendt, et al., 2019). It is uplifting and inspiring, leading to healthy relationships (Zong, et al., 2022). Communication influences productivity levels: clear and concise communication increases motivation (Gajendran, et al., 2022). Negative communication demoralizes personnel and creates poor working conditions (Iqbal, et al., 2022). It is communication that lacks information, provides misinformation, or contains an overwhelming amount of content that causes barriers and hinders employee production (Giurge & Bohns, 2021).

The behavioral patterns of the members are an expression of an organization's climate (Zhang, et al., 2017). Many factors create the feeling and atmosphere of an organization (Jiang & Chen, 2021). These include the interaction of the people, the leadership directions and styles, and the policies (Marinova, et al., 2019). In interactions, tone often displays the relationship between individuals, such as between leader and subordinate, or the closeness of the individuals, such as whether enemy, acquaintance, or friend (Zhang, et al., 2017). Tone in communication influences the reception level of the information being transmitted. The delivery of content creates the feeling of the workplace (Novack, et al., 2022). Delivery may be evident through tone, such as bossiness, micromanaging, or disinterest in the subject (Russel, et al., 2022). The level of positivity in delivery style also shows the value placed on the relationship of the two individuals, such as whether the message is given friendly, as an interruption, hands-off, or too frequently (Zong, et al., 2022).

Description of Search Strategy

The Liberty University Jerry Falwell Library online database was used for searching for

relevant literature. Search results were limited to peer reviewed psychological journals in English that had a viewable full text online and had been published within the last 5 years. The initial search was under the keyword of "email." This yielded 22,310 results. A follow-up search under "email" and "work," "email" and "communication," "email" and "tone," and "email" and "stress" were also conducted. With the subsequent searches, duplication of studies appeared. A subsequent search using the key words of "email" and "etiquette" was conducted which included a source range from the past 10 years. The search criteria for the Biblical foundation were conducted using the topical index for the key concepts (*New International Version*, 1973/2011). These included working conditions, communication, respectful behavior, and gentleness in actions.

Review of Literature

Types of Communication

Communication involves a sender, a receiver, and a message (Giurge & Bohns, 2021). The receiver must receive the message accurately and with the correct perception to be able to respond appropriately. The purpose of communication is to exchange information between individuals (Hung-Yue, et al., 2020). It is a way humans interact and can be either for social or for business purposes. Social and business communication often overlap; there is a slight distinction between the two, yet communication in the workplace must adhere to a higher standard to maintain professionalism. Communication in the workplace is critical to explain processes or needs, encourage cooperation, make decisions, enact efficiencies, and, when done properly, enhance morale (Martin-Lacroux, 2017).

Verbal communication is audible including both face-to-face conversations and distance spoken language which is delivered in forms such as via the telephone, television, radio, DVDs,

and computers (Krason, et al., 2022). Verbal communication also includes text-based communication such as books, letters, electronic mail (e-mail) and instant messaging (Richard, et al., 2020).

Non-verbal communication is communication that is understood through gestures, tone, mood, body language and stature, where a person stands or sits in proximity to the speaker, and even appearance (DeClerck & Holtzman, 2018). Regardless of being spoken, written, or nonverbal, each medium is a form of communication that provides meaning to the receiver (Holler, et al., 2018). This study will focus on nonverbal communication through email in connection with aggression and tone.

Synchronous and Asynchronous Communication

There are two types of human communication: synchronous and asynchronous (Ogwu, et al, 2020). Both forms are forms of human interaction and promote shared meaning between two or more individuals. Regardless of the mode of communication, interpersonal skills are required to promote the effectiveness of the interaction (Hung-Yue, et al., 2020).

Synchronous Communication. Communication can occur synchronously when the communicator and receiver share information at the same time (Richard, et al., 2020). Face-to-face synchronous communication occurs when two or more individuals are conversing on a topic in front of one another (Holler, et al., 2018). It is in real time and includes both verbal and nonverbal (Krason, et al., 2022). There are a variety of formats for synchronous communication. It can be in-person in a shared location, transmission over the phone using verbally spoken content, or in written form sent over real-time chat software.

Phones promote additional social interactions (Hunter, et al., 2018). The application of telephones allows for additional synchronous verbal communication to occur when the sender

and receiver are not in proximity to each other. This form of communication lacks the non-verbal cues of gestures and body language available in face-to-face communication but allows for cues from tone and expression. Video conferencing enables both auditory and visual cues, but often has technical difficulties such as delayed or broken sound (DeClerck & Holtzman, 2018). With multiple people, it can be difficult to share without cutting off someone else due to the lack of group cues.

Gestures are considered an essential part of verbal communication to increase comprehension (Abney, et al., 2018). Gestures are physical movements that help explain the meaning of the words used by the speaker (Holler, et al., 2018). An individual's body movement and facial expressions provide additional signaling for the receiver to understand ideas being expressed (Krason, et al., 2022). Cues are presented to the speaker of the receiver's understanding of the spoken word (DeClerck & Holtzman, 2018). Individuals engaging in direct conversations provide clues through body language that clarifies ideas within the spoken word to both parties. Body language is expressed through stature, such as slouching, leaning on one's elbows, crossing arms or legs, yawning, or smiling, and appearing agitated or engaged. In-person receivers of information can communicate nonverbally through facial and behavioral responses to content being presented (Holler, et al., 2018).

Some elements of traditional communication are spoken words that are presented with tone, which provides the receiver additional information to understand the attitude of the speaker, such as anger or happiness (DeClerck & Holtzman, 2018). Tone is expressed verbally and implied nonverbally.

Asynchronous Communication. Asynchronous communication occurs at different times and can be written communication that is sent by the speaker and received later (Ogwu, et al.,

2020). Examples of this include letters, emails, procedures, policies, bylaws, or written texts such as books or essays. Another form of asynchronous communication would be audio or video recordings of content presented at a time other than the time of delivery. This includes recorded speech, lecture, or music, and television. Asynchronous communication does not provide body language cues and gestures (Blunden & Brodsky, 2021).

Email has become a primary form of organizational communication (Giurge & Bohns, 2021). Written text does not present underlying feelings of emotions that can be heard in the speaker's voice (Hung-Yue, et al., 2020). Tone and feeling are inferred and often misunderstood, particularly if the written word is not clear. Gestures and body language are also absent, leaving wider room for misinterpretation of the acceptance or effectiveness of the message (Novack, et al., 2022). Response is not instantaneous which may lead to misunderstanding intended tone.

Noise in Communication

There are elements that can create communication obstacles such as a lack of trust between individuals (Lee, 2022). The barriers in communication are noise. Noise is the lack of clarity that creates miscommunication or distractibility. Noise can be intentional. For in-person interactions, noise may result when facial or body expressions and words do not align (Krason, et al., 2022). Another form of noise in communication is the tone used. It clarifies or confuses the information transmitted (Cuskley, et al., 2021). If the speaker provides nonverbal cues that differ from the words stated, the receiver may not accurately decode the information provided. A primary example of noise in communication is the level of distraction that is created when the words expressed are unable to be understood. Lack of context, unknown vocabulary, poor syntax and grammar, and lack of clarity result in misunderstanding (Holler, et al., 2018). Misunderstanding caused by word choice or receptivity between the speaker and listener creates

noise in communication. This occurs more frequently in asynchronous written communication due to the lack of ability to ask clarifying questions, hear tone, or see gestures, and is aggravated by grammatical errors.

Technology-based communication

Technology-based communication increases the possibility for miscommunication and the need to increase employee problem-solving abilities (Gajendran, et al., 2022). The increase in asynchronous messages opens additional elements of confusion based on the nonverbal nature of the communication. Clear communication is valued by members within a company. Organizational employees identified accuracy in written communication as important (Martin-Lacroux, 2017). Written content that contains grammatical or spelling errors delays worker productivity and reduces the perception of level of quality. Poorly structured emails produce communication noise by creating a distraction from the intended meaning.

Text-based communication does not allow for response cues, which may result in miscommunication (Gajendran, et al., 2022). Face-to-face communication provides various verbal and nonverbal hints to indicate the intended meaning of dialog (Holtgraves, 2021). Verbal conversations present tone in the manner words are said or highlighted based on the phrasing. Facial expressions and hand-gestures can clue the receiver into meanings as well. Text-based communication, on the other hand, is limited in signaling indicated tone, which can cause misunderstandings in intended meaning. Email writers need to be intentional about the language used.

Technological Communication Tools

Clear communication is a necessary component to employee cooperation within organizations (Fan & Han, 2018). Organizational communication is the sharing of information to

affect the optimal performance of the company. There are many forms of communication occurring simultaneously within an organization. Digital text-based communication such as instant messaging and email are important for organizations (Gajendran, et al., 2022). The coronavirus pandemic (Covid-19) fostered an additional push for remote written communication as employees found themselves suddenly working at a distance from each other (Zhou, et al., 2022). Organizations can offer more flexible working conditions because of the development in technology (Santuzzi & Barber, 2018).

Information communication technology (ICT) promotes organizational productivity (Park, et al., 2020). ICT examples include smartphones, collaboration software such as Microsoft Teams, email, instant messaging, and virtual meeting software such as Zoom and WebEx. Organizations rely heavily on ICT options for employees that work remotely (Zhou, et al., 2022). Digital collaboration tools have provided organizations with ways employees can share information and knowledge over great distances and varying time zones.

Technology advancements have enabled increased information-sharing with organizational communication through electronic means (Giurge & Bohns, 2021). New software aids organizations' collaboration through asynchronous means. Email is a primary organization tool (Rosen, et al., 2019). Email has increased in use as a knowledge-sharing tool because of more employees working from home (Tedone, 2022). Asynchronous communication is shared information that does not take place in real time. Geographical and scheduling barriers are removed using asynchronous communication such as with email, collaboration boards, and forums.

Organizational Email Communication

Globalization has positively fostered organizations' use of technology to increase productivity and output (Kiely, et al., 2022). The increased level of alternative global working locations has resulted in companies relying on email communication (Tedone, 2022). Email communication is written information that is sent from the writer to the intended audience virtually using asynchronous delivery. ICTs, including email, benefit organizations (Gajendran, et al., 2022). Email allows the recipient of the message to read the content later from when the message was composed and sent.

Email aids organizations in communication via asynchronous measures through collaboration when time allows for inquiring or for responding to inquiries (Gajendran, et al., 2022). It adds flexibility to the ability to share knowledge. Telecommuting became a necessity to promote social distancing to avoid spreading Covid-19. The pandemic caused an increase in email usage (Tedone, 2022). Electronic knowledge-sharing practices increased, but application for how to use available tools was not highlighted, and the sudden adjustment to increased use of technology for communication resulted in miscommunication and overload. Email became a necessary tool during the pandemic. It helped organizations meet objectives, but the suddenness of the transition to distance-working did not allow for the implementation of regulations towards its use. Lack of prior normalization of organization expectation of email use created additional stressors for employees (Marsh, et al., 2022).

Having a social connection with other employees promotes higher work output among extroverts, who thrive when they interact with others (Tedone, 2022). Work emails take away from the social connectivity of human interaction, lowering stimulus and reducing job satisfaction (Russell, et al., 2022). These groups of employees prefer auditory communication

over written communication for performing their work. Job satisfaction is necessary for fostering a positive climate in the organization.

Organizational Communication Norms

There is an appropriate barrier in human interactions that provides the relational limits for what is considered appropriate such as physical, cognitive, or relational (Giurge & Bohns, 2021). This means that boundaries are the lines that distinguish acceptable versus inappropriate limitations for sharing ideas. Boundaries can be crossed when one of the participants behaves in a manner that violates trust or crosses the participants' line of appropriate conduct (Norton, et al., 2018). Decorum and sensitivity to others is essential in professional settings and in the communication that occurs within that setting.

Technology overload results from organizational demands and norms (Grawitch, et al., 2018). Increased demands on employees create work aversion behaviors. Employees that withdraw from work tend to have increased incivility directed towards them as a result (Park, et al., 2020). Negative perceptions are directed at employees that are disengaged from the organizational community. Employees need strategies to adjust to the demands of stressors caused by email communication.

An organization's implementation of emails as a tool needs to be based on established norms (Yuan, et al., 2020). Emailing benefits organizations through saving time and promoting efficiency in production. It may also aid employees in energy conservation and provide mental breaks from other tasks (Russell, et al., 2022).

Conversely, employees can experience negative outcomes from electronic communication. Goal-driven employees can have their productivity inhibited by emails causing an interruption to their workflow (Russell, et al., 2017). Companies seek employees to produce

outcomes. Expectations placed on employees by the organization's attitude in connection to emails may foster barriers to that goal. One block created in connection to emails comes from diverting attention from a task towards an email. Organizations may provide the climate to allow employees the flexibility to determine if the task at hand can be completed before addressing emails (Stich, et al., 2019). A lack of flexibility impacts productivity.

Productivity issues arise through using email (Giurge & Bohns, 2021). Leadership behaviors and uses of emailing can positively or negatively influence employee perception of value within the organization (Zhang, et. al., 2020). Leadership behaviors create a level of clarity for organizational priorities and expectations. This shapes the understanding of employee initiative based on the direction of objectives (Rosen, et al., 2019). There are multiple components which influence the composition of emails. Email aggression is influenced through the frequency, quantity, timing, and clarity, and the expectation of response time, and builds a negative organizational tone.

Quantity of Organizational Emails

Covid-19 created an immediate shift for many organizations from conducting in-person work to operating from remote working locations (Zhou, et al., 2022). As the pandemic progressed, hybrid and telework continued as the standard for organizational structure. With the shift to distance-working environments, alternate communication methods, particularly email, are more heavily used (Tedone, 2022). The average number of emails received for a full time U.S. worker was 120 emails per day (Zhou, et al., 2018). The pandemic increased email usage approximately 95% (Tedone, 2022). Employees working remotely increased their asynchronous communication to collaborate and share knowledge with colleagues. Increasing emails as the primary form of communication can create either positive or negative messaging.

Proper etiquette is cautious when choosing recipients, blind copy recipients, and with using "reply to all" (Yuan, et al., 2020). Forwarding emails need context. Recipients that receive too many emails will not engage with all the emails and may miss important information. Their attitude towards the workplace turns sour and annoyed from the perception of overwork and distraction (Grawitch, et al., 2018). A repercussion of sending emails to too many people at once is that more than one person will reply at the same time, resulting in multiple chains of the original email. When sent to all original recipients, this causes great confusion, missed information, and often failure to read all responses.

Quality of Organizational Emails

Email communication is different from auditory verbal communication (DeClerck & Holtzman, 2018). Verbalized language has elements that promote the recipient's understanding of the message. This can be the type of tone providing a context for the usage of the words. Listeners can see expressions or physical movements that are being presented while the speaker is presenting. This enhances the level of understanding of the recipient. Gestures can provide clarity of ideas and reduce the time in understanding the information being communicated (Abney, et al., 2018). Movement creates a deeper understanding for the receiver of information. There is a cognitive connection between gestures used and language (Holler, et al., 2018). The person receiving the communication has additional information to take in a process to understand what is being expressed.

In contrast, email communication relies on the choice of words and grammatical structure to create tone and understanding (DeClerck & Holtzman, 2018). Written communication is subject to the reader's cognition of the words and intent. Subjectivity is also based on the reader's perceived relationship with the sender and possible mood at time of reading.

Professionalism in email communication is exhibited in the quality of composition, visual presentation of words, and use of visuals (Martin-Lacroux, 2017). Quality emails are professional in appearance and content. They employ standards of etiquette to remain professional and produce efficiency (Lewin-Jones & Mason, 2014). Professional email communication uses the subject line and signature. The writer of the message needs awareness of the intended recipient and the purpose of the content.

A standardization of procedures for using emojis has not been established (Rodrigues, et al., 2018). Tone can be communicated through emojis; however, emojis are inappropriate in a professional email, but proper use of all grammatical conventions is a necessity (Lewin-Jones & Mason, 2014). Tone should be checked for positivity, not sarcasm or negativity, and humor should be tempered, as it may be misunderstood (Giurge & Bohns, 2021). Slang in business emails should be avoided. Emails should be proofread before sending, and in some cases, have a second person review for thoroughness, clarity, and tone (Martin-Lacroux, 2017).

Errors in digital messaging cause misunderstanding and irritation for the recipient based on content provided (Martin-Lacroux, 2017). Typographical errors can be an expression of emotions and can lead the reader to unintended conclusions or reactions (Blunden & Brodsky, 2021). The way information is relayed may or may not be understood for the intended purpose.

Knowledge sharing in teams is effective when communication is quality not simply quantity (Giurge & Bohns, 2021). It is not about the volume of messages sent, but about the clarity of content being communicated. Employees feel their time and commitment to the company are not valued when they are forced to be glued to quantity rather than quality email and expected to respond immediately.

Being unable to disconnect from work after hours also relates to lack of clear communication (Giurge & Bohns, 2021). Clear communication from leaders creates a source of mental relief for employees. Employees establishing healthy work-family boundaries happens because of clear directions. Health factors such as stress are increased through poor communication.

Communication requires information to be sent by one individual and received by the responder (Giurge & Bohns, 2021). Clarity of the sent message determines how well the recipient understands the meaning and intent. The recipient's understanding of the message and its intent may be misread based on factors not considered by the sender (DeClerck & Holtzman, 2018). Correct meaning can be fleshed out through verbal communication, restating, paraphrasing, having additional dialog, and other techniques. Email is one-way communication that does not permit this instantaneous clarification.

Tone in Email Communication. The perception of tone inferred in written communication may be misinterpreted based on the lack of verbal and non-verbal cues (DeClerck & Holtzman, 2018). Written communication transmits a level of tone. The perception of meaning influences the reaction of messaging. The employee's perception manifests in the organizational climate (Jiang & Chen, 2021). Climate is influenced by the employee's perception. Egocentric bias explains individuals' lack of awareness of others' intentions or the ability to interpret feelings (Giurge & Bohns, 2021). The structure of how an email is written can influence the perception of tone.

A lack of awareness of the intentions of others produces stress that results from employees exerting extra effort to clarify unclear, passive, or sarcastic email content (Park & Haun, 2018). Written communication that contains spelling and grammatical errors results in

negative perceptions towards the writer. Sloppiness in composition is a demonstration of the opinion the writer has towards the recipient (Martin-Lacroux, 2017). Poor construction of written content is a form of passive aggression.

Organizational Boundaries

Lack of organizational boundaries fosters undesirable employee outcomes (Reinke & Ohly, 2021). Organizations establish the norms allowed for employee interaction. Constant access to technology software has enabled employees to share knowledge instantaneously. Asynchronous communication, such as email, enables communication to happen at any time of day (Rosen, et al., 2019).

Constant communication promotes knowledge-sharing, but it can be difficult to create appropriate boundaries from work (Reinke & Ohly, 2021). Humans have physical needs that must be met to recover from work demands. Employers need to create clear boundaries for employees to have to separate work duties and life outside of the organization (Giurge & Bohns, 2021). Blurred boundaries are unclear expectations that allow for job duties to encroach on employees or spillover of work into family life or bringing family issues into the workplace. Unclear boundaries disrupt employee off-time, which is important for reducing stress and providing detachment from the job. Feeling the expectation of needing to remain in touch via email, even off-hours, increases dissatisfaction and burnout (Santuzzi & Barber, 2018). Intentionality of the quantity and timing of emails is required for establishing the organizational climate.

Messaging tools provide access to work and result in constant connectivity to the organization (Reinke & Ohly, 2021) such as email applications that are downloaded on personal devices such as computers and cell phones. Mobile phones connected to work email notify the

individual of a received message when it arrives in the inbox. Communication can increase

productivity, but constant connectivity to email interferes with an employee's home time,

inhibiting the employee's ability to detach from job duties which increases stress (Tedone,

2022), and results in after-hours work (Belkin, et al., 2020). The constant access produces

outside-of-work-hours work, resulting in an unclear boundary line for the employees' work and

family times.

Having a perception of being required to work off-the-clock to continue to participate in

work-related tasks via email also creates a negative attitude towards the employer (Santuzzi &

Barber, 2018). Negative perception of one's expectation towards the operation develops an

unhealthy working condition, which increases toxicity for the employee. With the increased

after-hours communication, the perception of increased work requirements is communicated.

Negative perceptions arise from after-hours email caused by a feeling of the organization's lack

of value of the personal time of the worker. Whether explicitly or implicitly communicated,

after-hours emails are perceived by employees as an interruption or a demand being placed on

the employee's personal time (Russell, et al., 2017).

Overuse of email communication is perceived as demanding (Steffensen, et al., 2021).

The number of emails received influences the organizational climate. High volumes of emails

detract from productivity (Rosen, et al., 2019). The interruption creates stress through the lack of

time spent working on more important tasks. Emails are reported to take 28% of employees' time

(Giurge & Bohns, 2021). High volumes of emails disrupt employee workflow (Puranik, et al.,

2020) and place additional stressors on employees (Haesevoets, et al., 2020).

Employees that are constantly connected to organizations are reported to have increased

employee stress (Giurge & Bohns, 2021). High volumes of received emails result in overload

and job stress. The inability to disconnect from work adds to negative mental factors. Negative work behaviors result from the lack of separation from work as well. Workaholism is the addiction to constantly working. It is linked with tele-pressure that results in employees' lack of ability to disconnect from work related tasks outside of work hours (Santuzzi & Barber, 2018). Having a lack of time for work separation produces mental fatigue. The employee increasingly becomes more drained, which slows output of work productivity.

Email Professionalism

Email communication can cross boundaries when organizational expectation requires employees to work outside of work hours (Stich, et al., 2019). This creates additional stress on employees resulting in poor employee health and burnout. Disrespectful communication in emails negatively influences employee wellbeing and reduces organizational production (Yuan, et al., 2020). Interpersonal incivility can be expressed through electronic means such as rude or disrespectful email communication (Park & Haun, 2018). Electronic rudeness is reported to be included in 90% of emails (Yuan, et al., 2020). Organizations desire to have employees who interact in a professional manner. One form of rudeness is shown when the sender's expectation demands the responder to reply in an unrealistic time frame. Email communication can be unprofessional in various ways such as how the message is written for style, expression, or mode.

The norms applied in the organization's practice for email communication influence the positivity level in the climate (Russel, et al., 2022). The method for responding to a message or who is included in an email has the potential to create a negative or punitive connotation. The organizational expectation and climate are shown using reply, copy, blind copy, and bulk send (Haesevoets, et al., 2020). A connotation is created in who relates to the email. Emails that are

copied to participants who need to know information establish a knowledge-sharing element; whereas emails that are sent with supervisors copied establish a punitive tone.

Professionalism is evident in the expression of appropriate values and attitudes within an organization and is shown through employee interactions (Palazzeschi, et al., 2018). The ethical nature of organizations promotes job satisfaction and trust among members (Jiang & Chen, 2021). Professionalism in written form is necessary to maintain collaboration and respect among employees (Marsh, et al., 2022).

Work-life Boundaries

Boundaries between work and home have blended because of the Covid-19 pandemic (Tedone, 2022). Psychological depletion results from work email creating stress on employees (Russell, et al., 2022). Boundaries between work and family lines are blurred through the application of ICTs (Park, et al., 2020). ICT is a benefit to organizations by creating access around geographical barriers; however, employees' health may be negatively influenced because of the inability to disconnect from work.

Work-life boundary spillover results in impaired health of the employee, as well as lower levels of organizational commitment (Reinke & Ohly, 2021). After-hours emails aggravate employees' ability to disconnect from work. As email is accessible at any time, it can spill into after-hours, which impedes employee homelife resulting in burnout (Giurge & Bohns, 2021).

The frequency of email notifications increases employee long-term stress (Uther, et al., 2018). As received emails increase, the distinction between work and family time becomes obscured. The blurring of boundaries fosters employee detachment (Tedone, 2022). This disengagement from work reduces productivity.

Employees who receive an overabundance of emails report job spillover into family time (Russel, et al., 2022). The inability to detach from one's job creates many negative health problems. In addition to stress, mental fatigue, physical exhaustion, and sleep issues arise from work tele-pressure (Santuzzi & Barber, 2018). Continual access to work through email has created a problem for disconnecting work from family; however, disruptive emails are ignored more easily by employees with higher levels of self-control (Russell, et al., 2021).

The development of unhealthy work boundaries increases negative work behaviors (Grawitch, et al., 2018). Unhealthy boundaries promote stress through fostering workaholism. Employees engage in withdrawal work behaviors to counter stress (Park & Haun, 2018). Avoidance is an adaptive coping mechanism employees use for coping with stress (Park, et al., 2020). Stress from work results in the employee mentally disconnecting to reduce fatigue (Tedone, 2022). Employee absenteeism is a result of feeling unwell due to stress, or of avoiding stressful work situations (Park & Haun, 2018). Email communication has the potential for creating defiant or negative behavior experiences at work (Zhou, et al., 2018).

Blurred boundaries for employees working outside of business hours increases employee emotional exhaustion and inhibits detachment from work (Tedone, 2022). Passive or active aggression are examples of organizational incivility. Email incivility increases employee withdrawal. This is then transmitted from the employee to his or her partner (Park, et al., 2020). Negative email communication spills past the organization and creeps into employees' family lives.

Boundaries around email influence the level of connection employees have with their organization (Giurge & Bohns, 2021). Employees who receive high volumes of interrupting emails have reduced productivity and traits that are counterproductive to healthy worker

behavior. Three behavioral traits have been linked to a defensive response to workplace tele-pressure: workaholism, self-control, and neuroticism (Grawitch, et al., 2018). In contrast, employees who present higher levels of agreeableness are able to self-regulate negative situations through avoiding conflict and not engaging in stressful interpersonal relationships (Alenick, et al., 2022). Employees are healthier and happier when work hours are defined, and job duties do not extend past those hours.

Job satisfaction and productivity are negatively influenced by employees using electronic communication after hours (Reinke & Ohly, 2021). Increased work demands reduce the output of an employee. Additionally, leaders have reduced levels of productivity from email demands (Rosen, et al., 2019). Productivity hinges on the boundaries that are established with the use of email as a form of communication.

Health-related factors result from lack of attention to the quantity and time of email communication (Tedone, 2022). Blurred work boundaries increase health issues (Park, et al., 2020). Email incivility has been linked to negative employee wellbeing (Yuan, et al., 2020). Negative working conditions create one notable negative health implication for employee sleep difficulties. Emails provide various forms of stress (Giurge & Bohns, 2021). Lack of clarity and specificity in directions creates a lack of understanding for the employee to know how to meet and maintain directives. Email overload results in employee stress (Rosen, et al., 2019). Emails that are sent multiple times to communicate clearly create a sense of confusion based on a lack of confidence in the employee for completion of an assignment. Some personality traits are better at dealing with stress (Russell & Woods, 2020). Of the Big Five inventory of personality types, individuals that have higher levels of neuroticism are more successful in dealing with email stressors, as they engage in actions that create a sense of control for themselves.

Email interruptions create additional stress on employee wellbeing (Russell, et al., 2017). Workflow is disrupted when receiving emails. Notifications of new messages interrupt the productivity time an employee spends on other tasks to take the time to read and respond to messages that arrive in the employee's inbox. The interruption reduces employee workflow through sifting through the content of the email and mentally refocusing on the work task being conducted prior to the email (Rosen, et al., 2019). The delayed time of productivity increases stress on the employee's mental state through having a sense of urgency to complete assigned tasks.

Tele-pressure

Blurred boundaries are created from the overlap of constant work communication stepping into the employee's personal life (Reinke & Ohly, 2021). Tele-pressure is linked with poor work-life balance (Grawitch, et al., 2018). Tele-pressure is having a heightened psychological response needed to respond to work-related messaging (Tedone, 2022). Pressure to respond to messages as they come in creates anxiety reactions. There is an increasing workplace norm to immediately respond to emails (Giurge & Bohns, 2021). This passive pressure to be connected to one's communication tool adds to the sense of demands placed on emailing. Email demands reduce productivity. Employees have lower levels of work engagement because of tele-pressure (Santuzzi & Barber, 2018).

Tele-pressure has increased workplace stress for employees based on email quantity (Tedone, 2022). The perception of being required to respond immediately increases stress and disrupts workflow and interferes with personal time. Employee perception of organizational demands to constantly be connected to email negatively influences mental health (Marsh, et al., 2022). Feelings of being required to stay connected to one's email places stress on employees.

Tele-pressure decreases organizational commitment and productivity and increases health related factors such as causing sleep deprivation.

Incivility in Messaging

Social norms are less defined in email communication (Richard, et al., 2020). A lack of social norms promotes incivility such as antagonism which promotes toxicity within the organizational climate (Iqbal, et al., 2022). Workplace negativity creates undesirable attitudes from employees and often reduces productivity levels (Zhou, et al., 2018). Negativity in email communication is considered unprofessional work behavior (Yuan, et al., 2020).

Email incivility fosters negativity in organizational climates (Yuan, et al., 2020). Negativity in emails is influenced by the sentence structure and tone of the content. Incivility diminishes the employees' level of morale and reduces productivity through avoidant work behavior (Park, et al., 2020). This avoidant behavior towards work reduces the employees' motivation to progress on meeting objectives. Negative work conditions in a digital environment foster a poor organizational climate. The unhealthy work environment affects overall work behaviors, such as is seen in incivility in email content, and results in lack of production, shown in traits such as disengagement through non-participation, including spending time web surfing or using technology for unintended purposes (Zhou, et al., 2022). A lack of awareness of tone in emails produces undesirable employee behaviors.

Increased levels of remote work provide additional opportunities to correspond in a disrespectful manner (Zhou, et al., 2022). This can be shown in perceived aggressive or non-organizational citizenship behaviors that result in negative behaviors from employees. Incivility in emails results in defensive employee behaviors, including withdrawing from work (Park, et al., 2020). Disengagement in work creates a reliance on passive requests.

Incivility in communication interferes with organizational productivity through fostering an adverse atmosphere (Zhou, et al., 2022). It is shown through the amount or frequency of messages that are sent to the receiver. It violates mutual respect. Incivility of email content can be passive aggressive which spills past the work condition (Yuan, et al., 2020). It can cause employee distress at home which negatively impacts employee wellbeing. Additionally, incivility in the workplace is harder to identify as the hostile nature of the disrespect may be more ambiguous (Alenick, et al., 2022).

Negativity in emails not only spills into the employee's life, but also fosters a toxic climate that allows for incivility to pass from one employee to another (Yuan, et al., 2020). Inappropriate interactions between coworkers create negative motivational factors towards task completion. Workplace incivility was found to create work-life boundary issues due to depleting employee resources (Zhou, et al., 2019). Emailing has been found to increase hostility and aggression due to its more passive interaction style (Richard, et al., 2020).

Workplace email incivility increases negative work behaviors, such as cyberloafing (Zhou, et al., 2022). Cyberloafing involves the use of company time and equipment for personal internet searches and social media activities. Negative behavioral traits exhibited by employees take away from productivity and task completion. Incivility causes health issues and other factors.

Unprofessional behaviors such as digital aggression are email messages of harmful intent (Kim, et al., 2020). Digital aggression includes emailing content that is rude, insulting, threatening, or false, and when the message is intended to demean or degrade the recipient. Actions that are intended to harm another person are bullying (Baumann, et al., 2022). This is

power that is not evenly distributed between bullies and their victims. Technology has increased the ability for bullying behaviors.

Health-related factors result from lack of attention to the quantity and time of email communication (Reinke & Ohly, 2021). Blurred work boundaries increase health issues (Park, et al., 2020). Email incivility has been linked to negative employee wellbeing (Yuan, et al., 2020). Negative working conditions create one notable negative health implication for employees with sleep difficulties.

Leadership and Incivility

Leaders are responsible for establishing a positive climate through modeling appropriate behaviors (Alenick, et al., 2022). Leadership direction provides the context for organizational norms (Walsh, et al., 2018). Norms are created through observing what the organizational context demonstrates as acceptable behavior. Leadership styles can be positive or negative. Charismatic and ethical leadership approaches focus on emphasizing the positive within an organization.

Destructive leadership styles foster uncivil behaviors within the work context (Alenick, et al., 2022). Incivility from leadership is not as direct as abusive supervision (Liu, et al., 2019). Passive leaders do not respond to the presentation of negative work behaviors, thus failing to counter inappropriate interactions among employees and therefore allowing incivility (Alenick, et al., 2022).

Workplace incivility is ambiguous and often not an intentional act to do harm to another person (Walsh, et al., 2018). Destructive leadership influences organizational climate placing pressure on employees (Alenick, et al., 2022). Uncivil climates promote negative organizational

atmospheres and decrease employee wellbeing. Work production is negatively influenced when employees have reduced wellbeing.

Incivility creates stress and burnout for employees (Zhou, et al., 2019). Burned out employees find ways to conserve resources when under pressure. It also decreases employee creativity (Liu, et al., 2019). Lower levels of creativity impact motivation, knowledge sharing, and problem solving.

Communication Influence on Organizational Climate

Communication creates norms that are evidenced throughout the organizational climate (Yuan, et al., 2020). Communication is an indicator of an organization's working condition, such as may be revealed in overworked employees that are constantly connected to their job, or in promoting positivity and production of organization objectives. Positive communication reduces stress (Bauer, et al., 2017), whereas negative communication emotionally depletes employees and reduces productivity (Belkin, et al., 2020).

Communication within an organization contributes to the working climate for employees (Arendt, et al., 2019). The attitudes and behaviors and the reaction to the norms in the communication between members of a company create the overall atmosphere. The long-term success of a business is based on the human capital of that organization (Marinova, et al., 2019). Although there are many things that create the climate, two primary contributors are: the leadership style and the employee's perception of the environment.

A key contributor to climate is personality (Hung-Yue, et al., 2020) and leadership style (Walsh & Arnold, 2020). Climate is based on the perception the follower has of the actions of the leader. There are five personality types that have been classified, which include agreeableness, extroversion, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness (Russell & Woods,

2020). The necessary personality fit for an organization varies, but the type influences the organizational atmosphere.

Organizational Health and Toxic Climate

Organizational climate is shown through the attitudes of the members (Marinova, et al., 2019). The climate can be either positive or negative in nature. A negative atmosphere characterizes toxic workplaces. Toxicity disrupts positive physical or emotional well-being of employees (Iqbal, et al., 2022). The attitudes and behaviors of employees demonstrate the climate within the organization (Lee, 2022). Employee communication is fundamental to establishing and maintaining the work environment. A positive organizational climate promotes the well-being of employees, as opposed to negative climates that do not prioritize employee conditions.

Healthy organizational climates are shown in the citizenship behavior of employees (Marinova, et al., 2019). Organizational citizenship behaviors are positive behaviors and actions employees make that contribute to the welfare of others within the organization. This nontoxic context is demonstrated through positive employee interactions. Positive peer interactions support organizational goals and buffer against negative working experiences. Employees provide emotional support to their coworkers through emotional regulation and cognitive maintenance of stimuli (Zong, et al., 2022). Employees without peer support do not have the natural emotional regulation buffer.

A negative organizational climate is shown through the lack of interest employees express towards their work (Lee, 2022). Visual representations of unmotivated workers include rude behavior towards others, minimal job performance, and high absenteeism. Quiet quitting, a trend for employees to do only the bare minimum of a job during the required hours of the job, is

an expression of lack of motivation (Park, et al., 2020). Employees that perceive assigned tasks to be illegitimate report higher levels of stress and disengage from job duties (Zong, et al., 2022).

Mental exhaustion of employees lowers the levels of organizational commitment (Steffensen, et al., 2021). Employees who are mentally exhausted with work become emotionally detached. Companies' expectations of after-hours work decrease employee psychological detachment, resulting in lower levels of employee well-being (Reinke & Ohly, 2021). Lack of psychological detachment from work increases employee stress. Individuals with higher levels of conscientiousness can manage the constant interruption of emails; however, this self-managing trait reduces overall well-being through a constant drain of its being exerted (Russell, et al., 2017); however, it also drains the employee's cognition. The ability to self-regulate negativity acts as a buffer for toxic factors. Conserving mental resources aids employees in managing psychological depletion (Russell, et al., 2022). Natural personality traits act as that buffer, enabling the employee to respond to the stressor and maintain a higher level of well-being.

Psychological detachment is defined as the ability to remove one's mental state from work-related tasks outside of work hours (Tedone, 2022). Employees who think about work while not on the clock experienced more unproductive behaviors and reported higher levels of feeling overwhelmed, whereas psychologically detached employees were more engaged at work (Reinke & Ohly, 2021). Employees who are overwhelmed with work outside of working hours develop nonproductive organizational behaviors such as avoidance, which is shown in the employees' absenteeism.

Unclear communication is one primary stressor on employees (Yuan, et al., 2020). Organizations seek to promote productivity of employees through establishing a healthy climate.

Clarity in organizational-established goals and the promotion of citizenship behaviors promotes organizational health (Marinova, et al., 2019). Employees that work in unhealthy contexts present unproductive behaviors.

Toxic climates reduce employee motivation, cognitive regulation, and interaction with others (Iqbal, et al., 2022). A toxic climate is shown in the negative communication between workers. This can be boss to subordinate, subordinate to boss, or peer to peer interactions. This communication could be direct putdowns, passive-aggressive nonverbal gestures, or lack of encouragement for job completion (Choi, et al., 2018). Employee perception creates or depletes the buy-in workers have towards organizational goals. Negative perception of the legitimacy of assigned tasks takes away from positive outcomes, whereas employees that receive positive reinforcement in the form of being allowed to perform their work successfully and/or being recognized for their contributions acquire emotional support from peers and can reduce cognitive loads (Zong, et al., 2022). The level of cognitive load promotes or depletes employee health.

Influence of Email on Toxicity

As email is a tool intended to promote knowledge-sharing among individuals, it also can be misused (Zhou, et al., 2022). The manner emails are constructed can be misunderstood based on the lack of social cues presented from the text-based communication platform. Inappropriate content or messaging that is not uplifting creates a negative impact on climate (Yuan, et al., 2020). Incivility in emails is a result of the sender violating mutual respect towards the recipient. Email expectations, such as overload of the number of emails, the expectation to respond to emails in off-time, and the work requested in the emails, create a negative climate (Giurge & Bohns, 2021).

Toxicity in organizations is influenced by negative email communication (Zhou, et al., 2022). Incivility results in reactive defensive behaviors from employees which cause them to withdraw from work. Depleted levels of cognitive emotion of employees inhibits the view of self (Zong, et al., 2022). This lowers the output the employee takes on developing his or her personal attributes outside of the organizational context. Imprecise or unhelpful email communication promotes negative working conditions.

Constant interruptions to workflow, or the perception of a lack of control will negatively influence employees, disrupting the employee's sense of satisfaction related to his or her employment (Iqbal, et al., 2022). Employees actively seeking to achieve goals efficiently are considered regulating job control (Russell, et al., 2021). Regulating focus promotes job satisfaction through creating a sense of accomplishment. Appropriate use of emailing can promote energy resources in employees. Personality type can influence energy levels. Some personality types will respond to email stimuli by depleting energy levels, while other types respond to email interactions in acquiring additional energy (Russell, et al., 2022). Email notification settings set appropriately can help promote positive results in emailing.

Leadership Climate

An organization's mission is achieved through goal-oriented behaviors (Zhang, et al., 2017). Organizational leaders seek employees that demonstrate commitment towards the company. For the leaders, the best workers are considered those that are wholly committed to completing work (Giurge & Bohns, 2021). Leaders desire employees who are loyal to the organization and seek to achieve the tasks assigned in an efficient and cooperative manner. Clear communication is key with leader-member exchanges (Arendt, et al., 2019). Since leaders seek

employees to complete objectives, leadership directives need to be revealed to their subordinates. The manner a leader communicates drives the organizational atmosphere (Iqbal, et al., 2022).

Leadership traits create the work context (Carlton, et al., 2018). Organizational climate is influenced by the managerial approach. Leadership style and directives establish the organizational tone to which employees respond (Iqbal, et al., 2022). A positive climate encourages commitment. Organizations with positive climates create an emotional attachment or bond for the employee (Marinova, et al., 2019). The established climate that is created by the leader or leadership team influences the operation of the organization.

Communication practice is an expression of the exchange between leaders and followers (Arendt, et al., 2019). Directives can be exchanged between leader and follower in various forms. The demeanor of the leader is shown through their frequency, medium, and tone of their communication. The pattern fosters the level of knowledge-sharing behaviors among employees (Iqbal, et al., 2022). The effectiveness of leadership in communicating with employees modulates the structures placed on employees, which results in productivity and goal-achievement. Employees perceive their value to the employer based on the communication practices (Jiang & Chen, 2021). Leadership awareness to communication patterns provides an avenue for modifying negative climate and cultivates the values of leadership.

Knowledge-sharing enables employees to accomplish work completion (Jiang & Chen, 2021). Organizational climate is influenced by leadership style. The values presented by leaders are exhibited in the leader's behaviors (Marinova, et al., 2019). The values set in the organizational culture create the context which allows or blocks the employees' interest in knowledge-sharing. The focus employees have in achieving goals is a result of the behavior shown by the leader (Choi, et al., 2018). Leadership style can motivate or demotivate the

subordinate. Motivating employees to be engaged with work is a complex task. Work engagement has several components. The components include the employee's state of mind, such as dedication and intensity to complete tasks (Zhu, et al., 2021). The willingness, type, and effectiveness of information sharing is impacted by the climate of the organization. Knowledge sharing hinges on the tone that is set in the workplace.

Actions of leaders demonstrate their value of employees' organizational contributions (Lee, 2022). Leadership treatment produces employees' understanding of organizational expectations. Organizations with positive, innovative climates create a perception of encouragement and elevated expectations (Marinova, et al., 2019). Climate promotes follower attitudes. Employees who understand their expectation to be of a producing nature will strive to reach that goal, rather than displaying indifferent expectations that allow for social loafing.

The behaviors of the leadership team communicate their expectations (Giurge & Bohns, 2021). Expectations provide the employee with a framework of the organizations' requirements and objectives. Having a framework to achieve tasks establishes a purpose for the employee. Passive leadership styles decrease the level of trust perceived by employees (Alenick, et al., 2022). The treatment of leaders towards employees presents a sense of value for the work accomplished and the level of trust the leader has towards the employee (Jiang & Chen, 2021). Behaviors such as actions and verbal interactions are the expressions of the norms of the organization.

The level of trust an employee has for the organization is shown through the positive or negative messaging the employee expresses (Lee, 2022). Positive perception instills in the employee empowering emotions, such as competence and self-determination (Marinova, et al., 2019). Employees who feel a sense of connectivity in their role have a sense of ownership to

their tasks and are more apt to goal setting and objective completion. Managers can reduce employee stress through communication patterns within the organization. To promote employee well-being, managers who focus on messaging that highlights emotional regulation, praise of employees, and encouraging participation in leisure activities, aid in regulating a positive climate (Zong, et al., 2022).

Employee Perception of Climate

The words expressed by employees present their views of that company (Lee, 2022). Communication patterns of employees influence the type of climate. Some of this is established by the leadership style and directives (Marinova, et al., 2019). Regardless of the climate being positive or negative for employee well-being, the established atmosphere influences the levels of employee productivity (Zhang, et. al., 2020). Employee behavior is an expression of the working condition within an organization. How an employee perceives the value of his or her contribution also motivates or demotivates the employee.

The perception of trust perceived by the employee influences the level of commitment (Giurge & Bohns, 2021). Employees operate on levels of trust (Furumo, 2018; Jiang & Chen, 2021). Workers who feel valued are more connected to the organization and demonstrate committed behaviors such as participation in organizational initiatives.

Employee well-being results from the expectation placed on him or her by organizational leadership (Tedone, 2022). Leaders who increase workload influence followers' perception. A greater workload decreases employee subjective well-being (Giurge & Bohns, 2021). Some employees may respond with stress towards the additional work, and this impacts overall performance.

Employees who have strategies to respond to stressors within the organization can safeguard themselves against unhealthy behaviors (Grawitch, et al., 2018). Employees with lower levels of self-worth have increased levels of workaholic behaviors, whereas individuals with higher levels of self-control are better suited for emotional success. Self-control enables individuals to avoid negative behaviors, and to focus on goal creation and accomplishment (Russell, et al., 2021). Employees respond to the climate established by their workplace.

Positive organizational climate establishes the norms which create beneficial employee behaviors (Marinova, et al., 2019). Healthy organizational climate promotes productive employee responses and citizenship actions. Citizenship behaviors are established through employee connectivity to organizations. Job satisfaction levels create the connection towards organization (Yuan, et al., 2020). Job completion benefits employees through positive feelings of success.

Citizenship Behaviors

Leadership directives establish organizational climate; however, it is also influenced by the attitudes and actions of the members that make up the organization (Zhang, et al., 2017). The level of citizenship behavior presented by employees directly influences the success of the organization (Marinova, et al., 2019). Citizenship behavior is the positive attitudes and actions exhibited by employees that promote the overall welfare of the organization. Employee adaptability increases citizenship behavior. The components of increased adaptability traits include enabling employees to apply creativity, take charge, and express helping behaviors (Marinova, et al., 2019). An employee who works to provide collaborative helpful behaviors towards others shows the citizenship nature of the individual.

Citizenship behaviors are presented through various traits through helping others (Marinova, et al., 2019). Organizations that have empowered employees have an overall more consistent climate that promotes goal setting and attainment (Jiang & Chen, 2021). Empowerment increases citizenship behaviors. Empowered employees feel connected to the organization and can foster positivity to produce helpful outcomes. Empowered employees promote positivity and increase symmetrical communication when working with others (Lee, 2022).

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is a thoughtful awareness of one's surroundings (Walsh & Arnold, 2020). Mindfulness is employing consideration prior to acting. It is gaining focus because of its application for interpersonal relationships (Arendt, et al., 2019). Mindfulness is a chosen behavior exhibited by individuals. It is the conscious act of attention (Dibb-Smith, et al., 2019), and it consists of non-judgmental attitudes, calmness, and paying attention in conversations (Arendt, et al., 2019), which increases social richness in understanding (Grapendorf, et al., 2017). Mindfulness in communication is an acute awareness of the message sent verbally and nonverbally. The individual's awareness of communication is considering what is being said, and how that language influences the receiver.

Mindfulness and Leadership

Organizations need unity to meet goals and fulfill objectives (Marinova, et al., 2019). For organizations, leaders need to be aware of the operations. Leaders need to be mindful of the components such as the stakeholders, the employees, the production, the loss of revenue, and the revenue gains. The purpose of the organization is to bring together stakeholders, and create meaning for its existence (van Ingen, et al., 2021). The awareness of employees is one of the

factors of a leader's mindfulness. Leaders' level of mindfulness promotes or inhibits the success of meeting objectives.

Personality changes the presentation of mindfulness (Hülsheger & Alberts, 2021). Leadership style also represents mindfulness. Charismatic leadership fosters a positive leader-member exchange (Arendt, et al., 2019). Leaders that focus on promoting positive employee interactions are mindful of their communication with their subordinates. Leaders decide whether they intend to build relationships with employees. Transformational leaders promote change within organizations through building trust (Jiang & Chen, 2021). Trust can be established in various ways. Acknowledging others' builds trust. Mindfulness is a conscientious state of being able to see other perspectives and view ideas those ideas nonjudgmentally (Carleton, et al., 2018). Employee well-being is developed through the leadership approach. Positive styles such as transformational leadership exhibit attention to the needs of employees, whereas destructive leadership approaches do not prioritize mindfulness strategies when managing followers (Walsh & Arnold, 2020).

Mindfulness in leadership provides direction to the organizational climate as a focus on employee well-being is considered (Walsh & Arnold, 2020). Mindfulness provides awareness of things outside of one's mind (Arendt, et al., 2019). Leaders who are aware of the needs of the employees and the tasks needing to be completed can provide clearer directions. Employees who are clear on job assignments can complete tasks. Task completion increases motivation and well-being. A lack of clarity for employees increases stress levels (Stich, et al., 2019). Organizations that have frequent interruptions to workflow occurring throughout the day reduce productivity and result in lower levels of task completion. Higher levels of stress inhibit job task completion.

Mindfulness in an organizational context promotes employee health (Walsh & Arnold, 2020). Automatic reactions are a response mechanism to feeling as though one has fallen behind in work. Leaders who apply mindfulness aid followers in emotional regulation (Arendt, et al., 2019). Self-regulation theory suggests a regulatory process for completing tasks. Leaders with higher levels of self-control will be more effective at regulating email behavior (Rosen, et al., 2019). Self-control is a component of mindfulness. When applied to emails, it promotes positive interactions.

Leaders who engage in mindful email communication uplift employees (Walsh & Arnold, 2020). How leaders communicate to employees for providing direction and disseminating information impacts the entire team context (Fan & Han, 2018). Workers who receive clear communication increase their workflow. Leaders who implement mindfulness satisfy employee psychological needs (Arendt, et al., 2019). Leadership level of mindfulness helps employees through establishing a positive organizational climate. Email communication is an avenue where leaders model their level of mindfulness.

Stress reduction and overall well-being has been associated with mindfulness (Bauer, et al., 2017). Leaders who employ lower levels of mindfulness in their emailing reduce employee productivity by creating work interruptions. Unaware email communication exhibited by organizational leaders can be evident in the frequency of messaging and the lack of attention to the content. Frequent email communication creates a disruption to productivity, which creates stress. Emails slow progress through breaking mental flow and shifting cognitive focus from one task to reading or responding to emails, or from seeing email notifications (Stich, et al., 2019).

Mindful Communication Practices

Mindfulness in communication goes beyond making judgments about what is said (Arendt, et al., 2019). Several factors go into mindful communication: awareness, openness, and not responding in a knee-jerk reaction. Leaders need to exhibit mindfulness in email composition. The well-being of the members of an organization is shown in their treatment.

Communication not only needs to be expressed clearly by the sender, but also actively listened to and received by the recipient (Arendt, et al., 2019). Mindfulness is a key element in clear communication. An expression of mindfulness in emails is attention to the time a message is sent. Nonurgent emails sent outside of work hours may communicate different expectations from the sender than as perceived by the receiver (Giurge & Bohns, 2021). Leaders who focus on when to send a message show the value placed on employees. Mindfulness can be shown in the composition of the text included in the message.

Applying mindfulness promotes breaking bad habits and developing new responses (Dibb-Smith, et al., 2019). Attention to detail within conversations draws awareness towards the content presented. Mindfulness provides an element of reflexivity as the person considers the situation at hand (Arendt, et al., 2019), enhances the experience of the communication (Grapendorf, et al., 2017), and increases the well-being of the recipient (Bauer, et al., 2017; Hülsheger, et al., 2013). Actively, this presents a level of respect for the receiver; passively, this demonstrates paying attention to content to show care for clear communication.

Biblical Foundations of the Study

Biblical Foundation Overview

The Bible provides directions on how humans are supposed to interact with one another: Jesus was sent as the example for appropriate conduct and behavior (*New International Version*, 1973/2011, Matthew 7:12, Matthew 9:10-17). There are passages on the way people

communicate. Other passages describe the interactions between people demonstrating a cognition to think about what they say. Paul indicated this by saying people need to be positive with the words they use (Ephesians 4:29). The Bible also directs how leaders and workers are to function.

Biblical View of Human Interaction

Communication is a component to human interaction which is built on a relationship of trust (Furumo, 2018). Christians are to have a relationship with God. In the wisdom literature of the Old Testament, there are instructions on word choice, particularly in being flippant in speech. The wisdom of King Solomon was known among the other nations in his day. He wrote advice on various topics. In the Proverbs, he described communication and the power of the tongue. Solomon indicated that the tongue could bring deadly fruit based on its ability to cut down others (*New International Version*, 1973/2011, Proverbs 18:21). King Solomon also wrote that people need to be cognizant of what they say rather than being hasty. He advised people to keep their words to a minimum (Ecclesiastes 5:2). This direction was provided for believers to watch what they say as there is a long-lasting impact of the words that come out of one's mouth. In the book of Proverbs, King Solomon wrote that the way a person responds to another can avoid confrontation (*Proverbs 15:1).

The New Testament addresses interpersonal communication. The apostle James wrote about this in his letter. He indicated that the brothers, Christians, are to be patient rather than rashly responding to another in anger (James 1:19). Titus instructed to not slander others (Titus 3:2). The Apostle Paul wrote in his letter to the Church at Ephesus that Christians are to be kind to others (Ephesians 4:29-32) and reminded the Church at Colossae that our actions and words should always glorify God (Colossians 3:17). Paul also wrote that the quality of content, salt, of

one's communication enables appropriate responses to inquiries (Colossians 4:6). In a different letter, to the church at Philippi, the Apostle Paul wrote to the church to behave in a manner that presented purity and excellence (Philippians 4:8). Paul also instructed Timothy to teach the believers to conduct themselves in a wise manner because useless talk brings down the godliness of the person (2 Timothy 2:16).

In contrast to Christian behavior, Paul wrote that the wicked speak with words of death (*New International Version*, 1973/2011, Romans 3:13-15). The wise writer wrote that a gentle word turns away wrath but that harsh words incite anger (Proverbs 15:1). Jesus condemned the Pharisees for their words. He compared their language and actions to that of the devils, indicating that their heart actions were presented in their words (Matthew 12:34). The Bible does not differentiate spoken words to written words, but it clearly identifies the connection between one's intentions. Although written communication, emails are not free of emotion. How the employer or employee perceives and responds to a message indicates the tone of the workplace. The Scriptures caution us to be mindful of our words.

Biblical View of Work Behaviors and Environments

Organizational working conditions that are created based on trust create a positive climate (Jiang & Chen, 2021). The way workers behave is an expression of the climate of the organization. The Bible begins by demonstrating how working diligently is a good thing. God modeled the working environment when He created the world. The creation narrative depicts how God worked and then rested (*New International Version*, 1973/2011, Genesis 2:3). After resting, God indicated that humans were to follow the action of working and then taking breaks. Man was made with a purpose of caring for the garden that was created (Genesis 2:15). The

narrative continues to describe God's work context for Adam and the rules that were given. Specifically, God instructed Adam not to eat of a tree.

Tasks that are outside of the role of a worker reduce the willingness of the employee to accomplish goals, or take on additional responsibilities (Zong, et al., 2022). King Solomon described that a worker's behavior shows the product of his or her labors (*New International Version*, 1973/2011, Proverbs 12:11-24). Later, King Solomon wrote that those that work have substance to show, in contrast to people that speak and do not actually do (Proverbs 14:23).

The New Testament also directs leaders and followers how they are to act. Employee trust is a biblical concept shown in the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30. The "wicked" servant was unmotivated to accomplish his task of investing the talent. The moral of the parable is to motivate positive stewardship of appropriate workmanship, and doing the will of God (Tönsing, 2019). Employee trust is an outcome of positive leadership communication. Workers are directed to respect their bosses because it glorifies God (*New International Version*, 1973/2011, Colossians 3:22-23) and leaders are commanded to be fair and kind to their employees (Colossians 3:4-4:1).

The Bible provides workers with instructions on how to behave as well. Titus directed Christians to be respectful for those in authority over them (*New International Version*, 1973/2011, Titus 3:1). Paul wrote in his letter to the church at Rome for Christians to obey those over them because leaders are put into authority by God (Romans 13:1-5). In Paul's second letter to Timothy, he wrote that those who work hard should be the first to receive the product of their labors (2 Timothy 2:6). How a worker acts and interacts within an organization creates the climate and presents the level of value placed on the employee.

A person's actions and behaviors demonstrate his or her character. That person needs to present his or her ability–rather than social loafing–onto others (*New International Version*, 1973/2011, Galatians 6:4-5). The Apostle Paul directed Christians in Ephesus to behave morally because the church is a representation of God to nonbelievers. Paul explained appropriate Christian behavior includes how a person talks, to not putting others down, and to be honest (Ephesians 4:17-32). Paul also wrote that Christians are commanded to look after the needs of others (Philippians 2:4).

As applied to an organizational context, leaders are to be concerned with the function of the organization, and to be concerned with the needs of the employees. In contrast to a positive context, a toxic organizational climate was shown in the treatment of the Israelites while they were in Egypt. Moses responded with violence after witnessing an Egyptian murdering an Israelite man (*New International Version*, 1973/2011, Exodus 2:11-13). Later in the book of Genesis, Moses approached Pharoah with a message from God to release the Israelite slaves from bondage. Pharaoh's response was to increase the level of suffering for the people by making forced-labor more difficult (Exodus 5:1-6). God heard the pleas from the Israelites and responded with ten plagues. Negative working conditions can include a lack of clarity to one's job description, or the wages being earned for the labor. Jacob worked seven years to earn Rachel as his wife. His working conditions were not positive as his uncle Laban continued to change his wages. This was shown in his having to work 14 years for the bride of his choice (Genesis 29:1-13).

Biblical View of Mindfulness

Mindfulness in an individual is having the ability to see other perspectives (Carleton, at al., 2018). Christians are directed to be mindful in their actions. King Solomon wrote that people

who employ mindfulness in their speech exhibit discernment (*New International Version*, 1973/2011, Proverbs 10:19). He later continued that speaking rashly damages others whereas being thoughtful or wise heals (Proverbs 12:18). Later in the book of Proverbs, Solomon explains that wise people show their knowledge in their words and fools present their ignorance (Proverbs 16:23 & 18:2-17). The Apostle Paul instructed that one's actions are intended to bring glory to God (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Summary

Email has progressed to be one of the primary forms of communication in organizations (Giurge & Bohns, 2021). With the increased use of this tool, organizations need appropriate norms established to support employee well-being (Marsh, et al., 2022). Unclear organizational email expectations blur boundaries for work-life expectations. Having a lack of clearly identified duties and boundaries between work and home creates stress on employees because of being always on the clock (Park, et al., 2020). Organizations need to promote appropriate email interaction between leaders and their followers (Walsh & Arnold, 2020). Fostering a positive organizational climate is key for retaining employees rather than creating stress (Giurge & Bohns, 2021). Scriptures provide direction for appropriate communication in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. King Solomon wrote that the manner a person responds reduces or avoids angry confrontations with others (*New International Version*, 1973/2011, Proverbs 15:1). In the New Testament, Paul instructed people to have their words be as salt providing tact to the content being presented (Colossians 4:6).

Committed employees express the positive climate of an organization (Marinova, et al., 2019). Organizational climate impacts the wellbeing of employees (Iqbal, et al., 2022). The tone of an organization is based on the levels of trust among the members (Jiang & Chen, 2021).

Employees with higher levels of perceived value in organizations create a positive climate. The value stems from the legitimacy of assigned tasks (Zong, et al., 2022). Organizational productivity exhibits the level of employee well-being.

Positive employee interactions and a shared interest in the welfare of others are characteristics of a positive organizational climate (Zhang, et al., 2017). Employee health relates to the climate of the organization (Iqbal, et al., 2022). Toxicity is the result of negative working conditions which are presented in negative megaphoning behaviors by employees (Lee, 2022). Organizations desire employees that are satisfied with their job and committed to organizational objectives. The Apostle Paul directed Christian leaders at Colossae to be just and fair towards their workers (*New International Version*, 1973/2011, Colossians 4:1). Jesus commanded Christians to treat others with respect (Matthew 7:12).

Leaders that think before acting can increase job satisfaction to promote a positive climate (Walsh & Arnold, 2020). Leaders who employ mindfulness promote positive organizational outcomes. Mindfulness is doing something with a purposeful intent (Zhang, et. al., 2020). The level of thought leaders apply in their employee interactions sets the environment for work expectations, which promotes or reduces work-life boundaries (Hulsheger, et al., 2018). Lack of mindfulness may facilitate negative perceptions from employees and create negative feelings towards the organization. Stressed employees have reported higher levels of burnout and work detachment (Belkin, et al., 2020). In his letter to the church at Colossae, Paul admonished to be mindful of words and actions (*New International Version*, 1973/2011, Colossians 3:17).

Chapter 3 provides the description for researching leadership email mindfulness and its relationship to employee stress. It provides the methodological type and instrumentation for data collection. The information will provide the design of the study for how the study will research

the purpose of this study. It provides an explanation for data collection and analysis for how data will be assessed.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHOD

Overview

The purpose of this quantitative survey study was to examine the relationship between the perception of leadership mindfulness on email quantity, email quality, email tone, and employee stress. A Pearson r was used to measure the relationships between mindfulness, stress and the constructs. The study included a survey inventory that measures the perception of leaders' mindfulness between the relationship in email communication and employee stress. The survey tool consisted of items for mindfulness, stress, email tone, number of emails, and the quality of content in email messages. The relationship between variables was assessed using a multiple regressions analysis. Items for each variable that were included in the inventory were combined into a singular unified survey tool.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The research questions for each of the focus areas were:

Research Questions

RQ1: Is there a relationship between email quantity, email quality, email tone and the perception of leadership mindfulness?

RQ2: Is there a relationship between the perception of leadership mindfulness and employee stress?

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no relationship between email quantity, email quality, email tone and the perception of leadership mindfulness.

Hypothesis 2: There is no relationship between the perception of leadership mindfulness and employee stress.

Research Design

The chosen research methodology for this study was a quantitative approach. The purpose of this study was to investigate the perception of leadership mindfulness in electronic communication and its influence on employee stress. The quantitative method was used to investigate the relation between the variables. The rationale for the selection of this design method was that each of the variables was represented numerically to acquire the data. This was beneficial for presenting results visually using graphs and tables. The application of quantitative data produced generalizable data.

Data was collected using a survey. Participants completed an inventory consisting of items assessed using a Likert scale. The survey included a section to collect demographic information. Components of the inventory consisted of items to assess the perception of leadership mindfulness, email quantity, email quality, email tone, and employee stress. The electronic survey was distributed via email, which increased participation with individuals who use email as a communication tool. Data was assessed using a Pearson's r correlation. A frequency analysis of demographic results including age, sex, years with the company, and race was conducted (see Table 1).

The population consisted of full-time employees who live in the United States. Participants were recruited through social media posts and through contacting organizations by email. Consent from organizational leaders was acquired prior to recruitment (Appendix B). Participants who consented to participate indicated their consent by electronically signing the Informed Consent form on the survey tool. A 33-item Likert scale survey tool was used to collect responses from full-time employees. The inventory had items for the variables of perception of leadership mindfulness, email quantity, email quality, email tone, and employee stress. Included

results were from completed responses, who met the demographic requirements (Appendix E) and responded during the data collection period. The survey responses were confidential and allowed participants to opt out at any time throughout the data collection. The inventory tool was approved by the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB).

A correlation analysis was conducted to analyze the significance of the relationship between variables for each hypothesis. Inventory items were examined for their correlation with employee stress within each hypothesis. The correlations demonstrated by each of the tests helped to present common themes between mindfulness, email communication, and employee stress. After the correlation analysis was determined as significant, a post hoc analysis was conducted to determine the level of significance in the variable groups. The application and use of a quantitative study provided quantifiable data to support the findings.

The purpose of this research was to examine the perception of leadership mindfulness on email communication practices and employee stress. A Pearson's r correlation was used to analyze the collected data. This study was designed to provide organizations with tools for understanding employee well-being. Email has increased to be a primary communication tool; this study sought to understand the relationship between the perception of leadership mindfulness and email communication practices and the relationship between the perception of mindfulness and employee stress.

Participants

A survey tool was distributed via social media and email to potential participants. A demographic section was included with the survey instrument. The unified instrument was distributed via Survey Monkey (see Appendix D). Participants included in the study consisted of both male, female, and non-identified participants 18 years or older, who speak English, and are

employed full time in public organizations within the United States. Organizational permission was acquired prior to recruiting participants within those companies. Social media was also used to recruit participants.

Four key elements were required for inclusion within the study: participant's age, employment type, living in the United States, and the number of emails the employee interacts with in a day. Responses from individuals who did not live in the United States, are younger than 18 years of age, are not full-time employed, or do not interact with 25 or more emails in a day were excluded from the results. Additionally, incomplete results were excluded from the results.

To determine the minimum sample size needed, a power analysis was computed. This was done using G*Power with an a priori bivariate correlation. As shown in Figure 5, to calculate the minimum sample size, one-tailed was selected as the hypotheses are directional, an alpha level of .05 and a power of .80 was input (see Appendix E). The calculations determined that a minimum sample size of 67 was needed. A required 15% attrition rate was included resulting in the minimum sample size of 77 necessary for being recruited.

Study Procedures

Participants in this study were recruited using an electronic survey. Distribution of the survey was posted on social media and sent to organizations throughout the United States. Prior to completing the inventory, participants were informed of the nature and purpose of the study. Participation in the study was anonymous and voluntary. Responses were assigned a random generated numeric code. Participants were allowed to withdraw at any point in the study. Demographic information was collected for reporting purposes.

Reliability and validity were assessed for item responses prior to calculating results. Item responses for each section, mindfulness, email quantity, email quality, email tone, and employee

stress were each averaged to produce five individual scale variable scores. The scale data made the results parametric. A Pearson's r was used to assess each hypothesis. The results are depicted on individual scatter plots (see Figures 1-4). The analysis of each hypothesis showed the influence of the perception of leadership mindfulness in email quantity, email quality, email tone, and employee stress.

<div align="center">**Instrumentation and Measurement**</div>

The instrument tool was administered using Survey Monkey. The survey included a demographic section at the beginning of the inventory. The instrument contained items for organizational mindfulness, email tone, email quantity, email quality, and employee stress. Two inventories were used for collecting data: the Mindfulness in Communication Scale (Arendt, et al. 2019) and the ICT Demands Scale (Day, et al., 2012). The inventory consisted of 33 items.

Mindfulness in Communication Scale

Arendt, et al. (2019) developed the Mindfulness in Communication scale. Mindfulness in communication was assessed using five-items from the inventory. Three categories for the perception of leadership mindfulness included: paying attention, non-judgmental attitude, and calm during conversations. Each section had three factors of mindfulness in email communication. Paying attention: supervisor's full attention, feeling that the supervisor is impatient, and feeling that the supervisor is half listening. Non-judging attitude included: the supervisor listens first and then forms an opinion, the supervisor forms an opinion prior to listening, and the supervisor has and sticks with preconceived opinions. Supervisor calmness contained: calm in tense situations, easily agitated, and easily angered over things that are not liked. The inventory used a 6-point Likert scale (1= *strongly disagree* to 6 = *strongly agree).*

The tool was assessed for validity by Arendt, et al. (2019) using a population of 351 participants which included an initial sample of 147 leaders and 204 followers. The sample was taken from organizational employees in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. A factor analysis was used to assess each item. The reliability test was $r = .66$ to $r = .76$. The measure for validity ranged from .68 - .81. APA PsycTests® subscription membership provides permissions for the use of this inventory for non-commercial and educational purposes (see Appendix C).

ICT Demands Scale

The independent variable of email quantity was measured using items from ICT Demands Scale developed by Day et al., (2012). The ICT Demands Scale is an eight-dimensional measure of 28 items. Items included on this measure are rated on a five-point Likert scale (0 = *Never*, 4 = *Almost Always*). The eight dimensions the survey measures include: (a) Hassles, (b) Response expectations, (c) Availability, (d) Workload, (e) Lack of control, (f) Learn, (g) Monitor, (h) Poor communication. From the inventory, 8 items were used to measure email quantity. These include: (1) expectation to respond to emails, (2) expectation for availability via email, (4) receipt of a high volume of email, (5) expectation to check email outside of work hours, (6) contact outside of work hours, (10) control over emails received, and (25) volume of emails creates additional work. The Cronbach alpha levels for each of the eight subscales measured from .70 to .79. Validity was reported by Day et al., (2012) using item correlations which ranged from $r = .41$ to $r = .68$. A copy of the permission letter is included in Appendix C.

<div align="center">

Operationalization of Variables

</div>

Email quantity - This is a ratio-scale variable. The email quantity section on the survey tool consisted of 8 Likert scaled items from the ICT Demands Scale (Day et al., 2012). It was measured using ordinal scaled items. The items were averaged to make a continuous scaled item.

Components for this variable included frequency of messaging, number of emails sent/received, and the time when email was received.

Email quality – This is a ratio-scale variable. The email quality section of the survey tool included 6 Likert scaled items from the ICT Demands Scale (Day et al., 2012). It was measured using ordinal scaled items. The items were averaged to make a continuous scaled item. Items in this section included spelling errors, missing words or phrases, and contradictions of content.

Email tone – This is a ratio-scale variable. Email tone scores were from 4 Likert scaled items from the ICT Demands Scale (Day et al., 2012). It was measured using ordinal scaled items. The items were averaged to make a continuous scaled item. This variable included components for passive aggression, incivility, and text features.

Employee stress – This is a ratio-scale variable. Employee stress was measured using responses to a Likert scale for 10 items from the ICT Demands Scale (Day et al., 2012). It was measured using ordinal scaled items. The items were averaged to make a continuous scaled item. Components of this section included employee perception of control of the environment, response to work duties, ability to complete work tasks, and response to work related irritants.

Perception of leadership mindfulness - This variable is a ratio-scale variable. The perception of leadership mindfulness was measured using 5 Likert scale items from the Mindfulness in Communication scale (Arendt, et al., 2019). This section was measured using ordinal scaled items. The items were averaged to make a continuous scaled item. This section included items assessing the employee's perception of leadership mindfulness.

Data Analysis

The relationships measured in this study were between the perception of leadership mindfulness, email quantity, email quality, email tone, and employee stress. Data was collected

using SurveyMonkey and analyzed using quantitative measures. The ordinal data from the survey was averaged resulting in a continuous variable. Participants with missing answers on the survey were excluded. Missing answers occurred either from participants skipping questions, or by the participant abandoning the survey before answering all of the questions. The data distribution was assessed for skewness, symmetry, and kurtosis.

SPSS v.29 was used to perform a Pearson's r correlation test to examine the relationship between the perception of leadership mindfulness, email communication, and employee stress. The Pearson's r is a parametric test. This test has 5 assumptions: the variables are interval ratio, data is a normal distribution, there are no outliers, the sample is random, and there is a linear relationship between the two variables.

Scoring of the data for the inventory was accomplished through individual analysis of each of the items for each section. The 5 sections on the inventory include: 5-items for mindfulness, 4-items for email tone, 8-items for email quantity, 6-items for email quality, and 10-items for employee stress. These were measured by calculating the score for each item then averaging the total to create a singular scale variable. Using the averaged scale variables, a Pearson's r correlation was used to assess the significance of the relationship between variables. The results were represented using a scatter plot diagram of the data providing a visual presentation of the relationship of variables.

Delimitations, Assumptions, and Limitations

Delimitations

Choices made for this study include the use of the Pearson's r correlation. There are five assumptions for a Pearson correlation. For the five assumptions, the data: is normally distributed, is ratio scale, does not contain outliers, shows a linear relationship, and is a random sample. The

variables were tested to determine a correlation. The research boundaries were assumed and set by the researcher. This created a guideline to focus on the primary variables of interest.

Limitations

One limitation to this study includes the ability to generalize the collected data. The population was acquired by participants from a select group of organizations who granted permission to distribute the survey and individuals who responded to social media postings, this limited the generalizability by making the population a convenience sample (Kim, et al., 2020). After conducting the correlation, the data may be difficult for organizations to modify or adjust practices to improve norms. The primary limitation in this design is that correlational data does not provide a cause and effect, therefore the results are inconclusive as to what causes the results that are identified in the connection between variables. The method for collecting data may also skew the results, as the participants were recruited via email and social media, and therefore their responses to email stimuli may be predetermined.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

The research method for this study employed the use of a parametric test using a Pearson's r correlation. This was based on the ratio scale data that was collected using a Likert scale. A minimum sample of 67 participants was needed for determining the correlation between mindful emails and employee stress. Participants were recruited via social media and email requesting they respond to an online survey tool. A total of 101 participants were recruited. Excluding incomplete or unqualified responses, the population sample totaled 69. Participants responded to a 33-item inventory that contained sections on leadership mindfulness, email tone, email quantity, email quality, and employee stress. Data was analyzed using SPSS version 29. Collected data was acquired through Survey Monkey and was downloaded and recorded on a

spreadsheet. It was then reviewed and organized in SPSS v.29. Graphic representations of the data were developed and reported.

Chapter 4 details the analysis of data with the summary of the outcomes of the correlations. It presents the analysis of SPSS results of the correlation analysis for each of the variables. The results of Pearson's r correlation demonstrated the relationship between the independent variables of perception of mindfulness, email quantity, email quality, and email tone and the dependent variable of employee stress. The results and findings are discussed in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Overview

The purpose of this quantitative correlational research study was to examine the relationship between the perception of leader mindfulness in email communication and employee stress levels. Three components of email mindfulness were examined with stress for employees within the United States. These were: the number of emails received, quality of email content, and the tone of the email.

Two research questions were posed to investigate the problem statement. The first sought to determine if a relationship existed between email quantity, email quality, email tone and the perception of leadership mindfulness. The second research question sought to determine if there was a statistically significant relationship between the perception of leadership mindfulness and employee stress.

This chapter includes a description of the sample and relevant demographic characteristics. It describes the data analysis procedures that were used. It explains the methods used for preparing the data, clearing, and evaluating the statistics for testing the hypothesis. The results of the analysis of the relationship between mindfulness, email communication, and employee stress were presented indicating the statistical significance of each result.

The collected data was analyzed using SPSS v.29. This chapter describes the preparation and analysis of raw data, test assumptions, analysis procedures, and description of results. The data was ranked and therefore a Pearson's r correlation was used. A summary of findings was presented.

The following guiding research questions and hypotheses were investigated:

Research Questions

RQ1: Is there a relationship between email quantity, email quality, email tone and the perception of leadership mindfulness?

RQ2: Is there a relationship between the perception of leadership mindfulness and employee stress?

Descriptive Results

The extent of the relationship between the perception of leadership mindfulness in email quantity, quality, tone, and employee stress is unknown. This study used a quantitative methodology to examine the significance of the relationship between variables. The problem statement was addressed through two posed research questions. The first question sought to understand the relationship between the perception of leadership mindfulness in email communication. The second posed the question of the relationship between employee stress and the perception of leadership mindfulness.

Demographic Analysis

The initial review of data was inspected for incomplete data and responses from participants who did not meet study criteria. Out of the 101 responses, 24 were excluded for incomplete results. Out of the remaining 77 responses, an additional 8 responses, although completed, did not meet the participation criteria and were excluded from the final analysis. The final sample size was n = 69.

Of the 69 subjects who participated in the study, there were 54 females (78.3%), 13 males (18.8%), and 2 other (2.9%). Participants represented were in the following age groups: 18-29 (n = 2; 2.9%), 30-45 (n = 25; 36.2%), 46-55 (n = 25; 36.2%), and over 55 (n = 17; 24.6%). Participants indicated their ethnicity: African American (n = 2; 2.9), American Indian (n = 1, 1.4%), Hispanic/Latino (n = 3, 4.3%), Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (n = 1, 1.4%),

Other (n = 4, 5.8%) White (n = 58, 84.1%). They also indicated their highest level of education:

high school diploma (n = 5; 7.2%), technical school (n = 2; 2.9%), 2-year degree (n = 10; 1.4%),

bachelor's degree (n = 29; 42.0%), master's degree (n = 22; 30.4%), doctoral degree (n = 1;

1.4%). Participants indicated their role in their organization: entry level (n = 12; 17.4%), skilled

professional (n = 38; 55.1%), team lead (n = 9; 13.0%), lower-level management (n = 5; 7.2%),

and upper-level management (n = 5; 7.2%).

Table 1

Participant Demographics (N = 69)

Demographic Category	N	Percentage
Gender		
Male	13	18.8
Female	54	78.3
Other	2	2.9
Age		
18-29	2	2.9
30-45	26	37.7
46-55	24	34.7
Over 55	17	24.6
Ethnicity		
African American	2	2.9
American Indian	1	1.4
Hispanic/Latino	3	4.3
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1	1.4
Other	4	5.8
White	58	84.1
Education		
High School Diploma	5	7.2
Technical School	2	2.9
2-year degree	10	14.5
Bachelor's degree	29	42.0
Master's degree	22	31.9
Doctoral degree	1	1.4
Role		
Entry level	12	17.4
Skilled professional	38	55.1
Team lead	9	13.0
Lower-level management	5	7.2

Upper-level management	5	7.2
Years at the Organization		
0-4	25	36.2
5-9	20	29.0
10-14	7	10.1
15 or more	17	24.6
Location		
In office	48	69.6
Hybrid	18	26.1
Remote	3	4.3

Note. N = 69.

Study Findings

Two correlation analysis tests were performed using SPSS v.29 to examine the

relationship between the perception of mindfulness, email communication, and employee stress.

Scores for mindfulness were assessed using the 10 items from the Mindfulness in

Communication Scale (Arendt, et al. 2019). The scores in this section ranged from 0 to 5. The

reliability was assessed using a Cronbach alpha analysis. The internal consistency was analyzed

to assess the various aspects of each identified construct. After reviewing the scores for each

item in the Mindfulness in Communication Scale, the internal consistency was stronger when

excluding item 1. Therefore, items 2-10 were used in the final calculations. This variable was

used in comparison with Email Quantity (8 items), Email Quality (6 items), Email Tone (4

items), and Employee Stress (10 items). These variables were taken using the ICT Demands

Scale (Day, et al., 2012). Values for the ICT Demands Scale had scores which ranged from 0 to

4.

A Pearson's r was used to calculate and examine each correlation. Prior to assessing the

significance of the correlation between the variables, the four assumptions were met. All

variables met the criteria for being continuous, there was a linear relationship between each of

the paired variables as shown in figures 1-4, there were no significant outlier variables, and the variables were approximately a normal distribution (Lund Research Ltd, 2018).

The Relationship Between Mindfulness and Email Quantity, Email Quality, and Email Tone

The first research question helped to determine the statistical significance between the perception of mindfulness and email quantity. The null hypothesis stated there is no relationship between the perception of mindfulness and email quantity, email quality, and email tone.
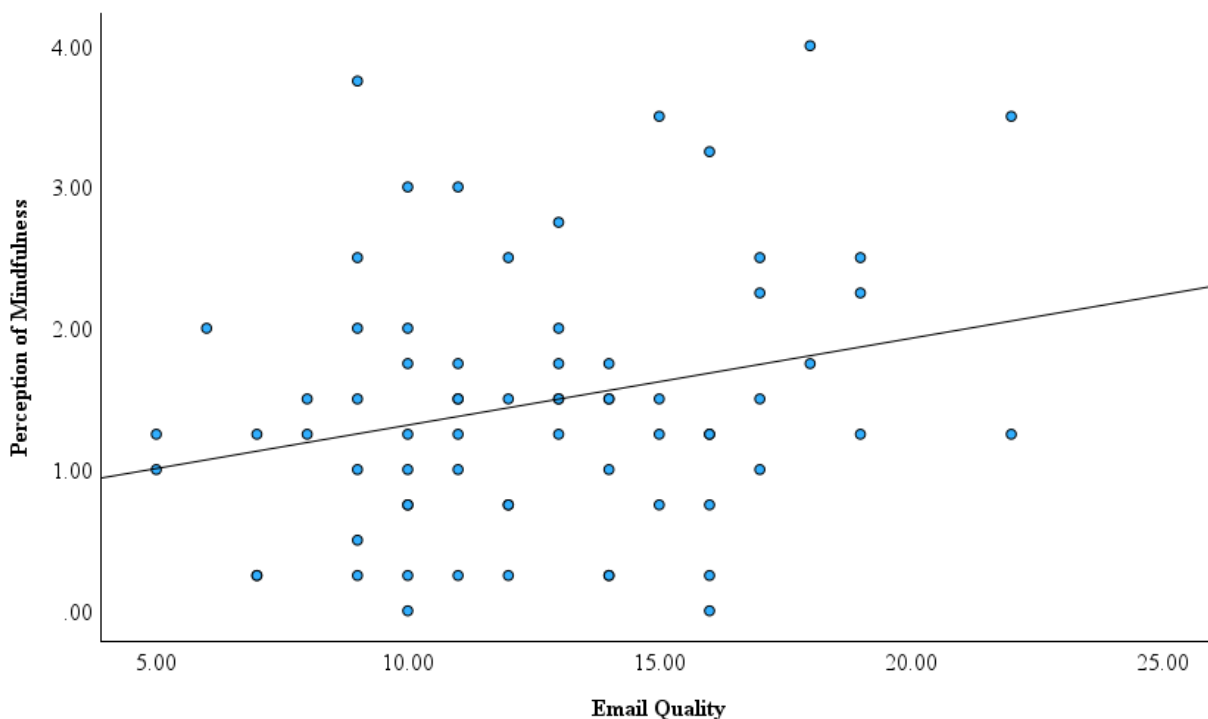
Perception of Leadership Mindfulness and Email Quantity

A one-tailed Pearson's correlation test was run to assess the strength of relationship between mindfulness and email quantity (Table 2). A total of 69 participants were recruited. Correlation coefficients were computed with the perception of mindfulness and email quantity. Using the Bonferroni approach to control for Type 1 error across the 3 correlations, a *p* value of less than .05 (.05/10 = .005) was required for significance. The correlation did not result in a significant statistic for Email Quantity ($r = 0.14$, p = .131). The correlation for Quantity and Mindfulness was r(67) = 0.131, p = .14. As the perception of leadership mindfulness and email quantity was not found to be statistically significant, therefore the null hypothesis failed to be rejected for research question 1 (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

*Email Quantity and the Perception of Mindfulness Scatterplot*
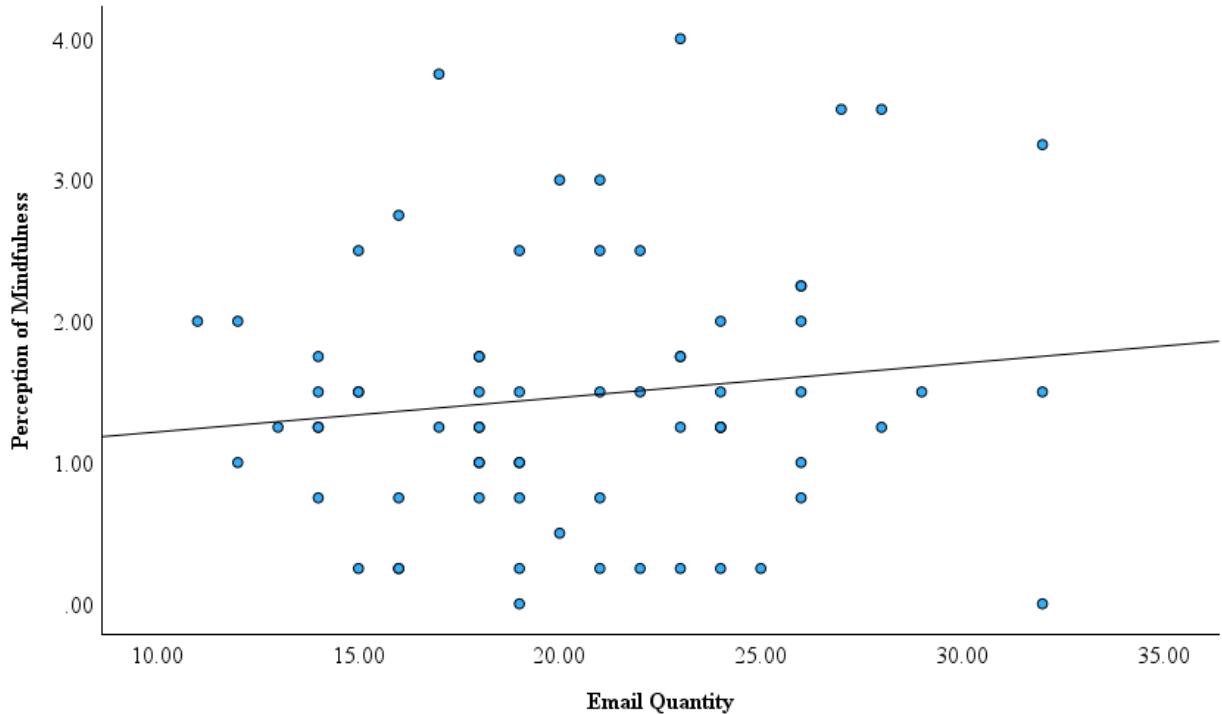
Perception of Leadership Mindfulness and Email Quality

A one-tailed Pearson's correlation test was run to assess the strength of relationship between the Perception of Leadership Mindfulness and Email Quality (Table 2). A total of 69 participants were recruited. Correlation coefficients were computed with the perception of mindfulness and email quality. The R^2 of .0625 indicated that 6.25% of the variance in email quantity was explained by the perception of leadership mindfulness. The results indicated a small effect size. The significance for this correlation is found in Table 2 (see Appendix E). As the Perception of Leadership Mindfulness and Email Quality was found to be statistically significant, the null hypothesis was rejected for hypothesis 1 for research question 1 (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Email Quality and the Perception of Mindfulness Scatterplot

Perception of Leadership Mindfulness and Email Tone

A one-tailed Pearson's correlation test was run to assess the strength of Perception of Leadership Mindfulness and Email Tone (Table 2). A total of 69 participants were recruited. Correlation coefficients were computed with the Perception of Leadership Mindfulness and Email Tone. Using the Bonferroni approach to control for Type 1 error across the 3 correlations, a p value of less than .05 (.05/10 = .005) was required for significance. Pearson's correlation was significant between mindfulness and email tone ($r = 0.42$, $p < .001$). The correlation for Email Tone and the Perception of Leadership Mindfulness was $r(67) = 0.42$, $p < .001$. The R2 of .176 indicated that 17.6% of the variance in Perception of Leadership Mindfulness and Email Tone. The results indicated a medium effect size for the relationship between the Perception of Leadership Mindfulness and Email Tone. The significance for this correlation is found in Table 2. Since the perception of leadership mindfulness and email tone was found to be statistically

significant, the null hypothesis was rejected for hypothesis 1 for research question 1 (see Figure 3).

Figure 3

Email Tone and the Perception of Mindfulness Scatterplot
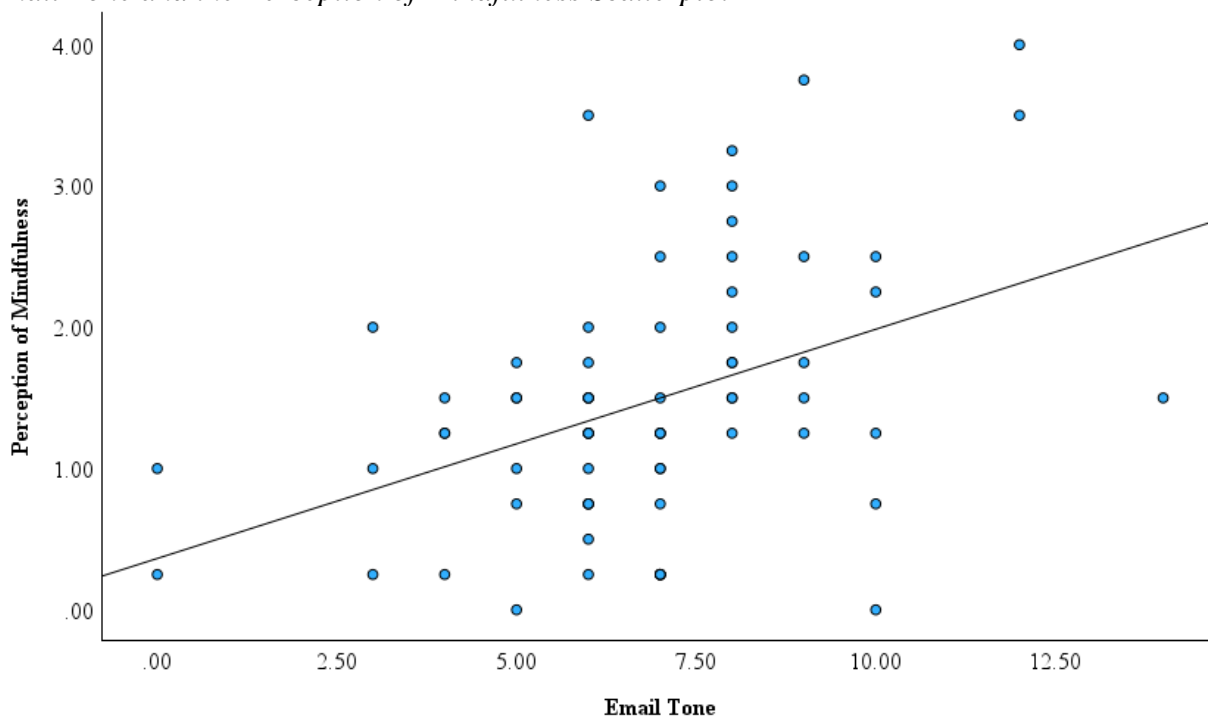
Results on the Perception of Leadership Mindfulness and Email Communication

The results of the correlational analysis presented in Table 4 two out of three correlations were statistically significant and had a small to medium correlation greater than or equal to .25. The correlations of the perception of mindfulness and email quantity measured were lower and not significant. The significance for this correlation is found in Table 2 (see Appendix E). In general, the results suggest that the perception of mindfulness influences email tone and the quality of writing. A summary of the relations between the predictor variables and the outcome variable is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Pearson Correlation Between the Perception of Mindfulness and Email Communication

Correlations

		Mindfulness AVG w/o item 1	Quantity Averaged Scores	Quality Averaged Scores	Tone Averaged Score
Mindfulness AVG w/o item 1	Pearson Correlation	1	.131	.252*	.416**
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.142	.018	<.001
	N	69	69	69	69

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

Mindfulness and Employee Stress

Research question 2 analyzed if there is a statistical significance in the relationship between the perception of leadership mindfulness and employee stress. The null hypothesis for the second research question indicates that employee stress will have no relationship with the perception of leadership mindfulness. The alternate hypothesis says that there will be a positive relationship between the perception of leadership mindfulness and employee stress. A Pearson's r correlation was used to compare the perception of leadership mindfulness with employee stress. Analysis of the correlations indicated the strength of connection between the variables being compared. The level of significance was set at $\alpha = .05$ which indicates that for the correlations to be considered significant, the value required has to be below the set α level ($p < .05$). The correlation for Mindfulness and Employee stress was significant $r(67) = 0.41$, $p < .001$. The $R2$ of 0.2025 indicated that 20.3% of the variance in the employee stress was explained by the perception of leadership mindfulness. The significance for the correlation is found in Table 3.

Table 3

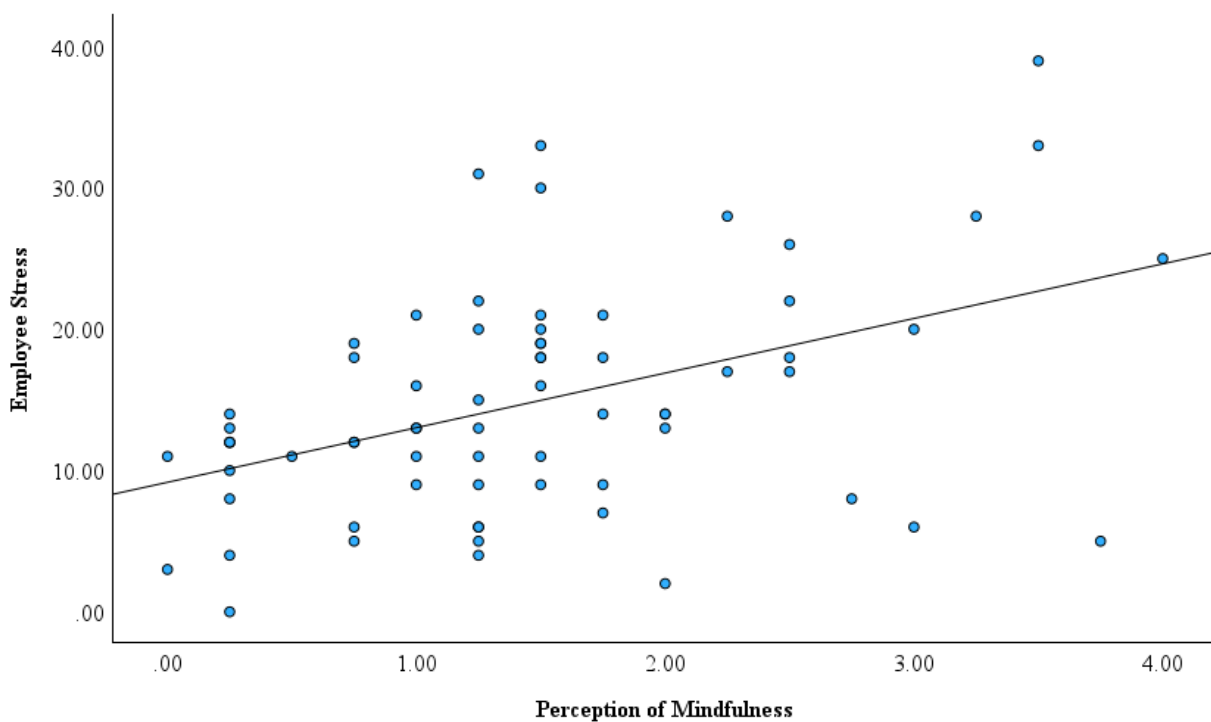*Correlation Between the Perception of Mindfulness and Employee Stress*

Correlations

		Mindfulness Averaged Scores	Stress Averaged Scores
Mindfulness Averaged Scores	Pearson Correlation	1	.408[**]
	Sig. (1-tailed)		<.001
	N	69	69

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

This provides evidence that as the perception of leadership mindfulness increases, employee stress decreases. The null hypothesis was rejected because p value was less than .05. The results indicated a significance between the Perception of Mindfulness and Employee Stress had a strong medium effect. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected for hypothesis 2 in research question 2 (see Figure 4).

Figure 4

Perception of Mindfulness and Employee Stress Scatterplot

Correlation coefficients were computed with employee stress and the perception of mindfulness. Using the Bonferroni approach to control for Type 1 error across the 3 correlations, a *p* value of less than .05 (.05/10 = .005) was required for significance. The results of the correlational analysis presented in Table 5 show that the correlation was statistically significant and was greater than .35. The results suggest that employee stress is influenced by the perception of leadership mindfulness.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the perception of leadership mindfulness, email communication, and employee stress. Pearson's correlations were used to answer both research questions. The perception of mindfulness was found to be significant on email quality and tone. A significant correlation between the perception of mindfulness and employee stress was also found. The study findings, implications, and limitations are discussed in chapter 5.

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the perception of leadership mindfulness, email communication, and employee stress. Two hypotheses were posed. Hypothesis 1 focused on the connection between mindfulness and email communication. Email communication included email quantity, email quality, and email tone. A Pearson's correlation was used to assess the results. The relationship between mindfulness and email quantity was not significant. The correlations for mindfulness with both email quality and tone were significant. The effect size for email quality was small and email quality was medium. Hypothesis 2 investigated the relationship between mindfulness and employee stress. A Pearson's correlation was used to assess the data. The results indicated a significant correlation

which resulted in rejecting the null hypothesis. The effect size for this was small. The study

findings, implications, and limitations are discussed in chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Overview

Email as a form of communication has become a primary method used in organizations. Employees who receive high volumes of emails have reported an increase in job interruption and lower productivity (Rosen, et al., 2019). Communication with negative or angry tones increases employee stress (Yuam, et al., 2020). Employees with high levels of stress demonstrate unproductive work habits such as absenteeism (Richard, et al., 2020). Mindfulness is an awareness of the situation and context (Walsh & Arnold, 2020). In work context, leadership mindfulness is the awareness of the needs of the employee.

Summary of Findings

The purpose of the quantitative correlational study was to examine the relationship between the perception of leadership mindfulness in email communication and employee stress. It was posed that there would be no relationship between the perception of mindfulness and email communication being email quantity, email quality, and email tone. A Pearson's r correlation was used to analyze the relationship between the perception of mindfulness in email quantity, email quality, and email tone. The results showed a strong correlation between mindfulness and email quality and email tone. Therefore, the first question was found to be false. A second question was posed to determine if there was no correlation between the perception of mindfulness and employee stress. A second Pearson's r was used to assess the relationship between the perception of mindfulness and stress. The results showed that there was a relationship, therefore this question was also disproven.

Discussion of Findings

The following section summarizes the results of Chapter 4 in connection with each research question and hypothesis. Conclusions on the findings are also presented.

The Relationship Between Mindfulness and Email Quantity, Quality, and Tone

The intent of research question 1 was to examine the relationship between the perception of mindfulness and email communication (i.e., email quantity, email quality, and email tone). The hypothesis for research question 1 was developed to assess the statistical significance of the relationship between the perception of mindfulness and email communication. Data was collected using the Mindfulness in Communication Scale (Arendt, et al. 2019) and the ICT Demands Scale (Day, et al., 2012). Individual items were averaged to make each variable continuous.

Perception of Leadership Mindfulness and Email Quantity

Hypothesis 1 sought to determine if there was a relationship between the perception of mindfulness and email quantity. Data was analyzed using a correlation analysis. The results showed no statistical significance. The results indicated that email quantity cannot predict an employee's perception of a leader's mindfulness.

Perception of Leadership Mindfulness and Email Quality

The second element investigated in hypothesis 1 sought to assess if there was a relationship between the perception of leadership mindfulness and email quality. A correlation was used to analyze the data. The correlation was determined to be significant which indicated that only 6% of employees' perception for the leader's mindfulness may explain email quality. This leaves 94% of perception of mindfulness on email quality as unidentified. The results should be understood and applied with caution.

Perception of Leadership Mindfulness and Email Tone

The third component of hypothesis 1 was to investigate the relationship between the perception of leadership mindfulness and employee stress. A correlation was conducted to determine the strength of this relationship. It was found to be significant. The results were significant, however, the results also indicated that only 18% of changes in an employee's perception of a leader's mindfulness may be explained by the leader's email tone, leaving 82% unexplained. Therefore, using a leader's email tone to predict the perception an employee would have about their leader's mindfulness, should be taken with trepidation.

The Perception of Leadership Mindfulness and Employee Stress

Research question 2 examined the relationship between employee stress and the perception of mindfulness. The hypothesis for research question 2 was developed to assess the statistical significance of the relationship between employee stress and the perception of leadership mindfulness. Data was collected using the Mindfulness in Communication Scale (Arendt, et al. 2019) and the ICT Demands Scale (Day, et al., 2012). Individual items were averaged to make each variable continuous. A positive correlation between the employee stress and the perception of leadership mindfulness was statistically significant. However, the results indicated that only 20% of the changes in an employee's stress can be explained by the perception of the leader's mindfulness. This leaves 80% of employee stress unexplained. Using the results to predict employee stress from the perception of leadership mindfulness should be applied with caution as the employees stress level can be affected by other factors within the remaining 80%.

The study by Arendt, et al. (2019) provides additional evidence of a positive correlation between leadership dispositions using mindfulness and the followers' wellbeing. The present

study expands on the mindfulness literature for promoting individual wellbeing through organizational practices. Additionally, Iqbal, et al. (2022) investigation found a relationship between toxic organizational climates and employee retention. This study affirms findings on toxic workplace interactions and employee stress. Studies have shown that organizational climate is established through leadership direction and influences employee trust and productivity (Jiang & Chen, 2021).

Biblical Foundation and Findings

The findings support concepts presented in the Bible. Christians are instructed to demonstrate mindfulness in words and deeds (*New International Version*, 1973/2011, Colossians 3:17). Paul wrote for Christians to be mindful so that their actions bring God glory (1 Corinthians 10:31). King Solomon explained that mindful people demonstrate knowledge, whereas people acting ignorantly are foolish (Proverbs 16:23 & 18:2-17).

Positive communication interactions are highlighted in the Bible. In his wisdom literature, King Solomon explained that one should think before doing to calm a situation (*New International Version*, 1973/2011, Proverbs 10:19). The apostle James echoed this concept in his directions for people to be slow to respond and slow to become angry (James 1:19). Healthy work environments are shown through what the employees can produce (Marinova, et al., 2019). King Solomon showed that more production occurs when the environment is less toxic (*New International Version*, 1973/2011, Proverbs 12:11-24). Paul directed leaders to treat their employees well (Colossians 3:22-23). He also instructed employees to be diligent workers.

Implications

Two research questions guided this research study. The relationship between the

perception of mindfulness and email communication and the relationship of the perception of

mindfulness and employee stress were reviewed for practical organizational application.

Perception of Mindfulness and Email Communication

This research study sought to investigate the relationship between mindfulness and email

communication. There is currently a limited body of research on mindfulness in connection with

organizational applications (Arendt, et al., 2019). The present study found statistically significant

correlations between the perception of mindfulness and email quality and the perception of

mindfulness and email tone. This suggests that mindfulness may lead to better communication;

however, organizations should be aware that there are additional factors that may also influence

email communication practices other than just mindfulness.

Given the findings of this study, organizational training programs would be warranted for

teaching mindful awareness in text-based communications (Bauer et al., 2017). The study

provides implications of improving communication practices through focusing on mindfulness in

organizational situations and context for promoting positive working environments.

This research contributes to literature on leadership mindfulness. It adds to the findings of

Walsh and Arnold (2020) that organizational leadership treatment influences employee

wellbeing. This study found that as the perception of mindfulness increases, email quality and

email tone increase. It also supports mindfulness theory posed by John Kabat-Zinn for leaders to

have an awareness of stress placed on employees (DeClark & Holtzman, 2018). Email tone and

email quality had a positive correlation with the perception of mindfulness. This suggests that

leadership awareness to the needs of employees is exhibited in their email communication content.

Perception of Mindfulness and Stress

The implications of the results of this research project contributed to the body of research for understanding conditions that impact employee wellbeing. The primary implication discovered is the relationship between how employees perceive leadership mindfulness and the connection between employee stress levels. This research question was developed to increase organizational awareness of employee stress when situational awareness is not present. The study findings support Psychological Contract theory which establishes an interpersonal contract between two individuals for organizations and employee behavior (Choi, et al., 2018).

Stressful situations in organizations will occur. The results of this study indicated that 20% of employee stress is explained through a lack of perception of leadership mindfulness. This implies that other factors contribute to the other 80% of employee stress. Organizations need to promote positive climates that help rebuild depleted employee energy to foster overall work success (Giurge & Bohns, 2021). Burnt-out employees decrease organizational goals, which is an expression of a lack of awareness in the climate where the employee works.

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Limitations

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There were limitations in this study. The first limitation was that the population was restricted to full time employees that live within the United States. This limits the overall generalizability of the findings to this region. As this was a correlational study, it also limits the full understanding of the extent to which the perception of mindfulness plays in connection with email communication and employee stress. Subsequent studies that have additional resources would be wise to consider a mixed method for organizing and assessing data results.

Another limitation of this study was the focus on leadership's communication practices and the level of mindfulness in employees' stress. As communication is an interaction between two or more individuals, mindfulness in email tone and email quality would have been stronger had the focus been any emails received. Organizational climate is set by the leader, but employee behavior contributes to overall climate (Lee, 2022).

Recommendations for Future Research

The results for this research study added to the body of literature surrounding mindfulness. Future research on employee wellbeing and mindfulness is warranted based on the findings of this study. Additional focus on other aspects of mindfulness in organizational communication methods would help to facilitate a greater understanding for employee wellbeing. More research is required to identify other factors that influence employee stress beyond the results that were discovered in the present study.

It is recommended that subsequent studies broaden the scope of topic within the research question and hypothesis. Specifically, opening the focus to include other interpersonal exchanges such as verbal communication, instant messaging, texting, and phone calls, would be beneficial. As climate is established through multiple factors, having a tiered study approach to focus on subgroups of communication exchange, leader-leader, employee-employee, and leader-employee, would provide a deeper understanding of the factors that establish wellbeing for all organizational members.

Summary

The current research study was designed to answer two research questions. Research question 1 sought to investigate the correlation between the perception of leadership mindfulness and email communication. A statistically significant correlation was found between the

perception of mindfulness and email quality and email tone. Practical implications for organizational application include positively influencing employee wellbeing in connection with email communication expectations. The findings can help support organizations to improve effective communication practices by leaders employing mindfulness.

Leaders having an awareness of the needs of employees was investigated in research question 2. Hypothesis 2 explored the relationship between the perception of mindfulness and employee stress. This second hypothesis proved to have a positive correlation which was statistically significant. This resulted in the null hypothesis being rejected. Leadership awareness of employee situations decreases employee stress. Toxic organizational climates inhibit production (Iqbal, et al., 2022). Organizations can apply mindfulness training to increase leadership awareness of situations and promote lower levels of employee stress. Positive organizational climates increase employee retention and overall satisfaction (Jiang & Chen, 2021). The implications of leadership mindfulness can positively influence the overarching organizational culture through promoting employee well-being (Walsh & Arnold, 2020). Future research is warranted to further explore the implications of mindfulness in email communication and employee stress.

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https://doi.org/10.3389%2Ffpsyg.2022.719856

APPENDIX A: IRB LETTER OF APPROVAL

Date: 8-4-2023

IRB #: IRB-FY23-24-61
Title: EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED EMAIL MINDFULNESS AND EMPLOYEE STRESS
Creation Date: 7-14-2023
End Date:
Status: Approved
Principal Investigator: Jacqueline Snook
Review Board: Research Ethics Office
Sponsor:

Study History

| Submission Type | Initial | Review Type | Expedited | Decision | Exempt |

APPENDIX B: RECRUITMENT INFORMATION AND LETTERS

Recruitment Criteria

Criteria to be included in this study will consist of the responses presented in the demographic section of the survey tool. The inclusion criteria are employees who are full time employed in America. The participant must indicate interacting with 25 or more emails a day.

Organization Permission Emails

Hello.

My name is Jacqueline Snook. I am a doctoral student under the supervision of Dr. Jerry Green in the College of Psychology at Liberty University. I would like to invite your employees to participate in a research study titled, "Perception of Mindfulness in Email Communication and Employee Stress." This study is to help foster positive organizational practices for promoting employee wellbeing in connection with email communication.

Responses will be kept confidential. Your organization's name will not be published with the findings of this study.

With your permission, please send the following email to your employees. If this is done, please reply to this email indicating your organization's consent.

Kind regards,

Jacqueline Snook

Jacqueline Snook

Recruitment Letter Email

21 July 2023

Dear Human Resources:

As a graduate student in the School of Psychology at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The purpose of my research is to investigate the relationship between the perception of mindfulness in email communication and employee, and I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be full-time employed, 18 years of age or older, and interact with (send and/or receive) a minimum of 25 emails a day. Participants, if willing, will be asked to respond to a 33-item survey using Survey Monkey. It should take approximately 15 minutes to complete the survey. Participation will be completely anonymous, and no personal, identifying information will be collected.

To participate, please click here to complete the attached survey.

Sincerely,
Jacqueline Snook
Doctoral Candidate

Recruitment Social Media

ATTENTION FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES: I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree at Liberty University. The purpose of my research is to investigate the relationship between the perception of mindfulness in email communication and employee stress. To participate, you must be 18 years of age or older, employed full-time, and interact with (send and/or receive) a minimum of 25 emails per day. Participants will be asked to respond to a 33-item survey, which should take about 15 minutes to complete. If you meet the study criteria and would like to participate, please click here. A consent document is provided as the first page of the survey.

APPENDIX C: INVENTORY PERMISSION LETTERS

PsycTESTS

Mindfulness in Communication Scale

PsycTESTS Citation:
Arendt, J. F. W., Pircher Verdorfer, A., & Kugler, K. G. (2019). Mindfulness in Communication Scale [Database record]. Retrieved from PsycTESTS. doi: https://dx.doi.org/10.1037/t74118-000

Instrument Type:
Inventory/Questionnaire

Test Format:
Items are assessed on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree.

Source:
Reproduced by permission from: Arendt, Johannes F. W., Pircher Verdorfer, Armin, & Kugler, Katharina G. (2019). Mindfulness and leadership: Communication as a behavioral correlate of leader mindfulness and its effect on follower satisfaction. Frontiers in Psychology, Vol 10. doi: https://dx.doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00667.

Permissions:
Test content may be reproduced and used for non-commercial research and educational purposes without seeking written permission. Distribution must be controlled, meaning only to the participants engaged in the research or enrolled in the educational activity. Any other type of reproduction or distribution of test content is not authorized without written permission from the author and publisher. Always include a credit line that contains the source citation and copyright owner when writing about or using any test.

PsycTESTS®

Information and Communication Technology Demands Scale

PsycTESTS Citation:
Day, A., Paquet, S., Scott, N., & Hambley, L. (2012). Information and Communication Technology Demands Scale [Database record]. Retrieved from PsycTESTS. doi: https://dx.doi.org/10.1037/t36895-000

Instrument Type:
Inventory/Questionnaire

Test Format:
This 27-item measure utilizes a five-point scale (0 = Never, 4 = Almost Always).

Source:
Day, Arla, Paquet, Stephanie, Scott, Natasha, & Hambley, Laura. (2012). Perceived information and communication technology (ICT) demands on employee outcomes: The moderating effect of organizational ICT support. Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, Vol 17(4), 473-491. doi: https://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0029837.

APPENDIX D: INFORMED CONSENT

Title of the Project: Perceived Mindfulness in Email Communication and Employee Stress
Principal Investigator: Jacqueline Snook, Doctoral Candidate, Psychology Department, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be 18 years of age or older, full-time employed, and send and receive a minimum of 25 emails per day. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to explore the relationship between employee's perception of mindfulness in email communication and stress.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to respond to an online 33-item survey which is estimated to take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include increasing awareness of email demands on employees. Through developing an understanding of workplace expectations for employees to promote healthy work conditions.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

Data will be stored on a password-locked computer for three years. After this time, all electronic records will be deleted.

How will you be compensated for being part of the study?

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time, prior to submitting the survey, without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please exit the survey and close your internet browser. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Jacqueline Snook. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact me. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Jerry Green.

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the IRB. Our physical address is Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515; our phone number is 434-592-5530, and our email address is irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

Before agreeing to be part of the research, please be sure that you understand what the study is about. You will be given a copy of this document for your records/you can print a copy of the document for your records. If you have any questions about the study later, you can contact Jacqueline Snook using the information provided above.

Consent to participate
- Agree to participate
- Disagree to participate (please exit the survey)

APPENDIX E: MINDFULNESS, EMAIL COMMUNICATION AND STRESS INVENTORY

Demographics

Dear Participant:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the quantitative research study on organizational climate

and mindfulness. Please complete the following demographic information. All information

disclosed is meant for general reporting purposes only. Demographic responses will not be

identifiable by participants.

- Identify your gender:
    1. Male
    2. Female
    3. Other
- Select your age group:
    1. 18-29
    2. 30-45
    3. 46-55
    4. Over 55
- Select your ethnicity:
    1. White
    2. African American
    3. American Indian or Alaska Native
    4. Asian
    5. Hispanic-Latino
    6. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
    7. Other
- Select your highest level of education:
    1. High school diploma or GED
    2. Technical school training or college certificate
    3. 2-year degree
    4. Bachelor's degree
    5. Master's degree
    6. Doctoral degree
- Select your role within your workplace:
    1. Entry-level and Support Positions
    2. Skilled professional
    3. Team lead

    4. Lower-level management
    5. Upper management
- How many years have you been with your current employer?
    1. 0-4 years
    2. 5-9 years
    3. 10-14 years
    4. 15 or more years
- What is your employment status?
    1. Part time (please exit the survey)
    2. Full time
- What is your work location?
    1. Remote
    2. Hybrid
    3. In Office
- How many emails do you interact with (receive and/or send) in a day?
    1. 24 or less (please exit the survey)
    2. 25 or more
- I live in the United States
    1. Yes
    2. No

Survey

Perception of Leadership Mindfulness

1 *Strongly Disagree*	2 *Disagree*	3 *Partially Disagree*	4 *Partially Agree*	5 *Agree*	6 *Strongly Agree*

- My supervisor responds to my emails in a manner which demonstrates attention to the content.
- My supervisor seems impatient with the manner emails are written.
- My supervisor only half-responds to messages sent in emails.
- In email responses, my supervisor seems easily agitated (worked up)
- When my supervisor does not like something, his/her emotions are expressed in email responses.

Email Quantity

0 *Never*	1 *Seldom*	2 *Occasionally*	3 *Frequently*	4 *Almost Always*

- I receive a high volume of emails which I am expected to respond to immediately.
- I am expected to be accessible via email at all times throughout the day.
- I receive high volumes of email from coworkers throughout the day.
- I am expected to check email when I am out of the office.
- I am frequently contacted by email about work issues outside of regular work hours.

- I do not have control over the amount of work emails I receive.
- High volume of emails creates more work for me.
- High volumes of email make me work longer hours at work and at home.

Email Quality

0 *Never*	1 *Seldom*	2 *Occasionally*	3 *Frequently*	4 *Almost Always*

- I receive unclear emails from coworkers throughout the day.
- I receive emails that are easy to misinterpret due to how it is written.
- I find it rude of colleagues to send me poorly written emails.
- I do not have control over the quality of the emails I receive.
- Unclear emails create more work for me.
- Unclear emails make me work longer hours at work and at home.

Email Tone

0 *Never*	1 *Seldom*	2 *Occasionally*	3 *Frequently*	4 *Almost Always*

- I receive emails with a negative tone from coworkers throughout the day.
- I receive rude emails from my colleagues.
- I have misinterpreted the tone of emails I receive.
- I do not have control over the tone of the emails I receive.

Employee Stress

0 *Never*	1 *Seldom*	2 *Occasionally*	3 *Frequently*	4 *Almost Always*

- I feel stressed about my work's email response expectations.
- I am stressed over my workplace's expectations of email accessibility.
- I feel stressed from coworkers emailing me throughout the day.
- I feel stressed from the expectation to check email when I am out of the office.
- I feel stressed over receiving emails about work issues outside of work hours.
- I feel stress from receiving emails that are able to be misinterpreted.
- I feel stress from receiving rude emails.
- I feel stressed over the lack of control I have with my work emails.
- I feel stressed because emails create more work for me.
- Email demands make me stressed because I work longer hours.

APPENDIX E: TABLES

Table 1

Participant Demographics (N = 69)

Demographic Category	N	Percentage
Gender		
Male	13	18.8
Female	54	78.3
Other	2	2.9
Age		
18-29	2	2.9
30-45	25	36.2
46-55	25	36.2
Over 55	17	24.6
Ethnicity		
African American	2	2.9
Hispanic/Latino	3	4.3
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1	1.4
Other	4	5.8
White	58	84.1
Education		
High School Diploma	5	7.2
Technical School	2	2.9
2-year degree	10	14.5
Bachelor's degree	29	42.0
Master's degree	22	31.9
Doctoral degree	1	1.4
Role		
Entry level	12	17.4
Skilled professional	38	55.1
Team lead	9	13.0
Lower-level management	5	7.2
Upper-level management	5	7.2
Years at the Organization		
0-4	25	36.2
5-9	20	29.0
10-14	7	10.1
15 or more	17	24.6
Location		
In office	48	69.6
Hybrid	18	26.1
Remote	3	4.3

Table 2

Correlation Between the Perception of Mindfulness and Email Quantity, Email Quality, and

Email Tone

Correlations

		Mindfulness AVG w/o item 1	Quantity Averaged Scores	Quality Averaged Scores	Tone Averaged Score
Mindfulness AVG w/o item 1	Pearson Correlation	1	.131	.252*	.416**
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.142	.018	<.001
	N	69	69	69	69

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

Table 3

Correlation Between the Perception of Mindfulness and Employee Stress

Correlations

		Mindfulness Averaged Scores	Stress Averaged Scores
Mindfulness Averaged Scores	Pearson Correlation	1	.408**
	Sig. (1-tailed)		<.001
	N	69	69

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics of Participant Perception of Mindfulness, Email Communication, and

Employee Stress Measure

Variable	*M*	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis	Range	Minimum	Maximum
Mindfulness	9.32	3.33	.731	1.34	18	1	19
Quantity	20.46	5.05	.326	-.42	21	11	32
Quality	12.55	-3.85	.308	-.28	17	5	22
Tone	6.83	2.41	-.070	1.67	14	0	14
Stress	14.86	8.16	.700	.36	39	0	39
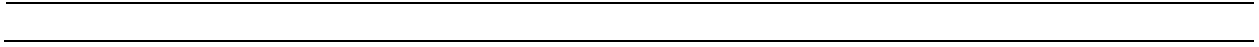
APPENDIX G: FIGURES

Figure 5

G*Power Population Analysis
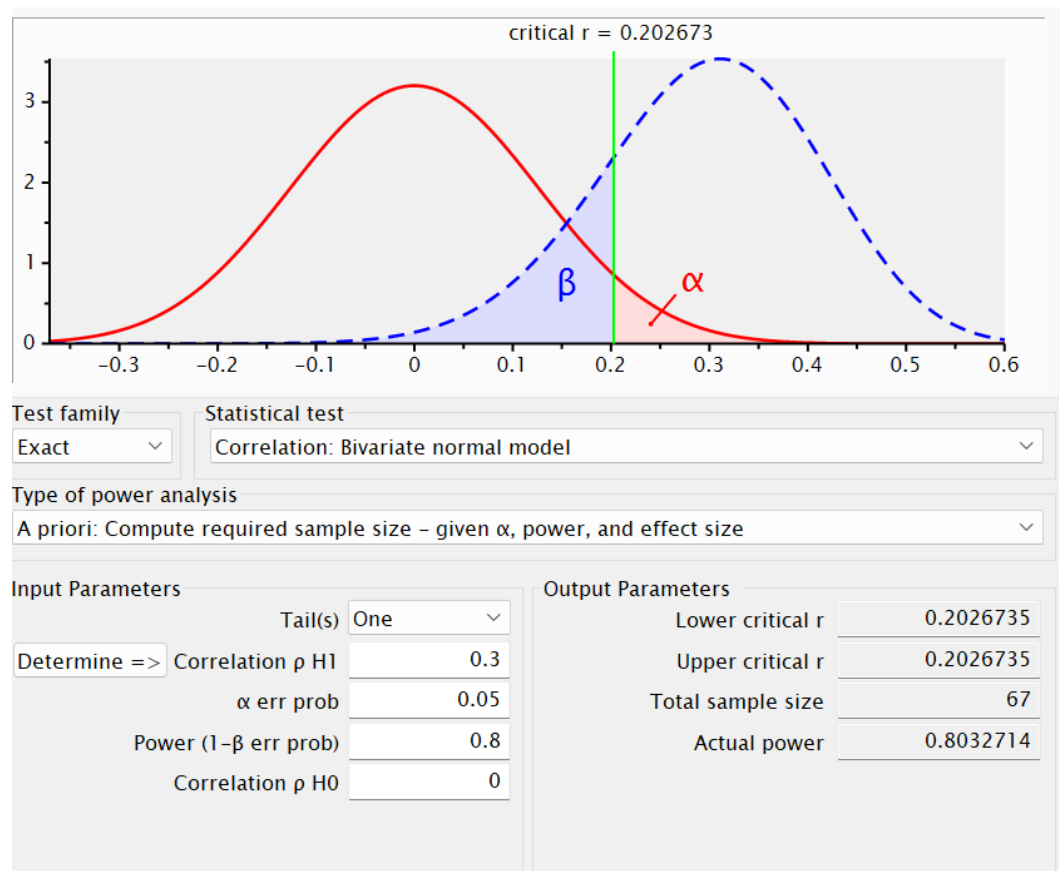
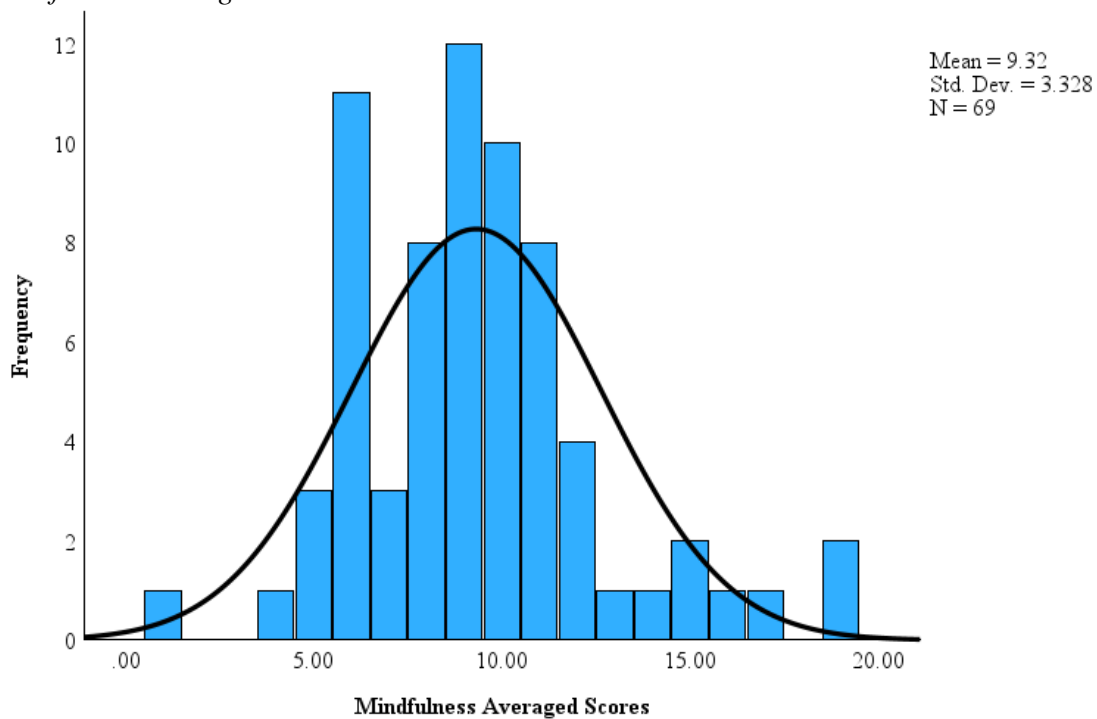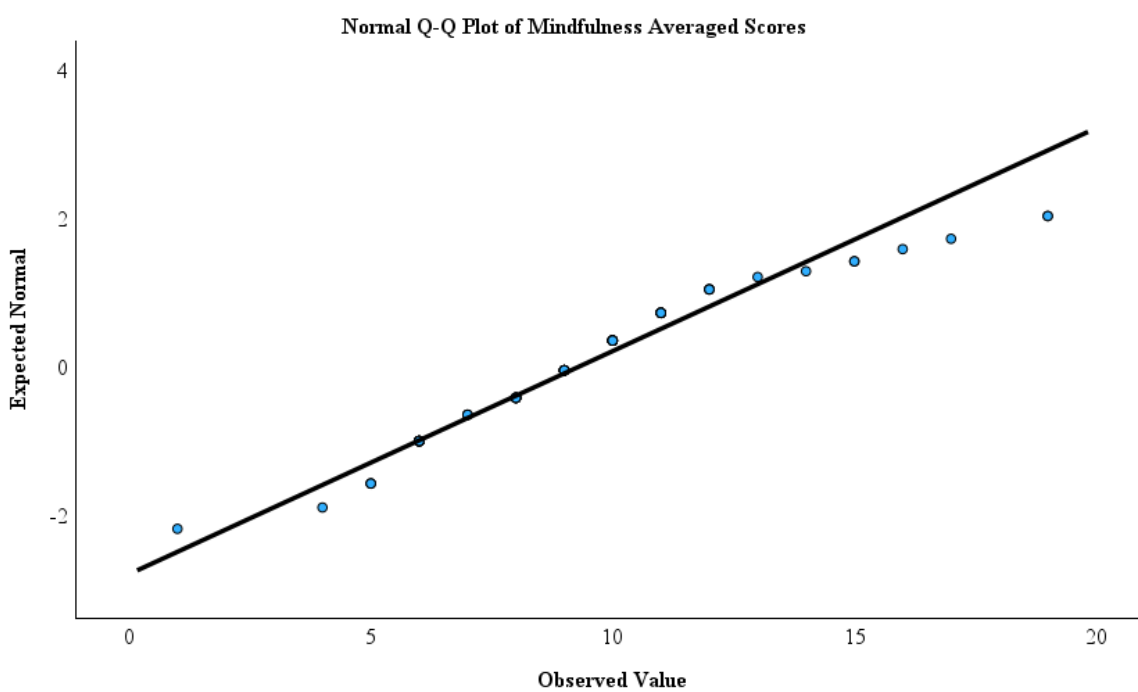*Note.* The calculations were determined for a directional correlation.

Figure 6

Mindfulness Histogram

Figure 7
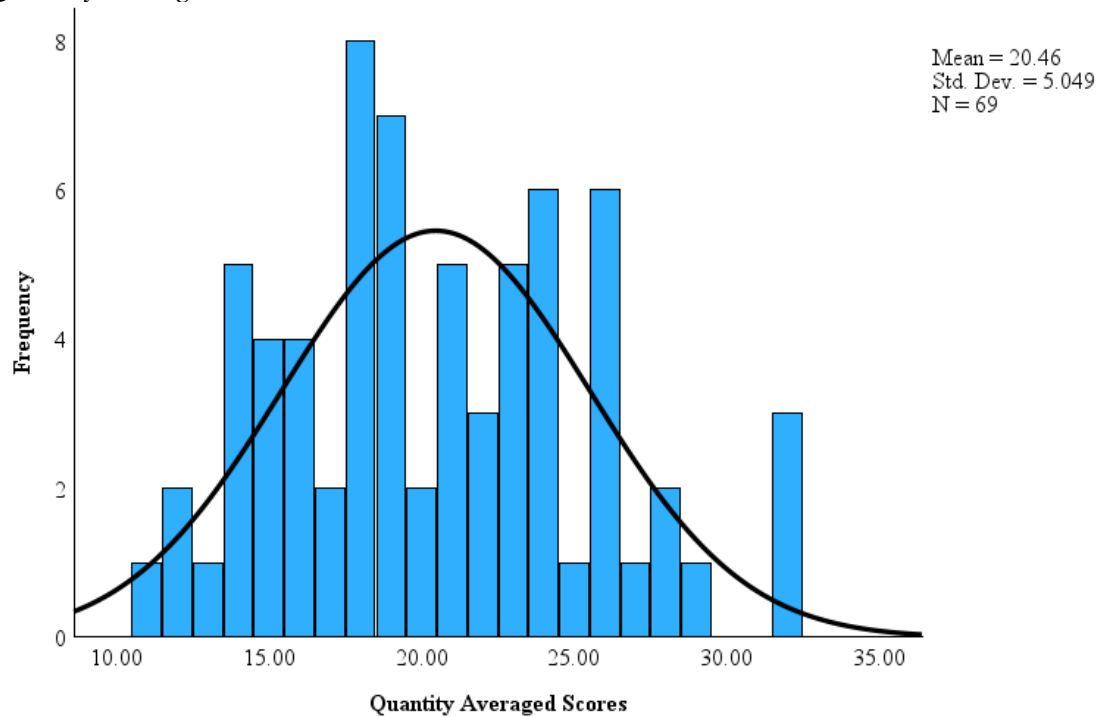
Mindfulness Q-Q Plot

Figure 8
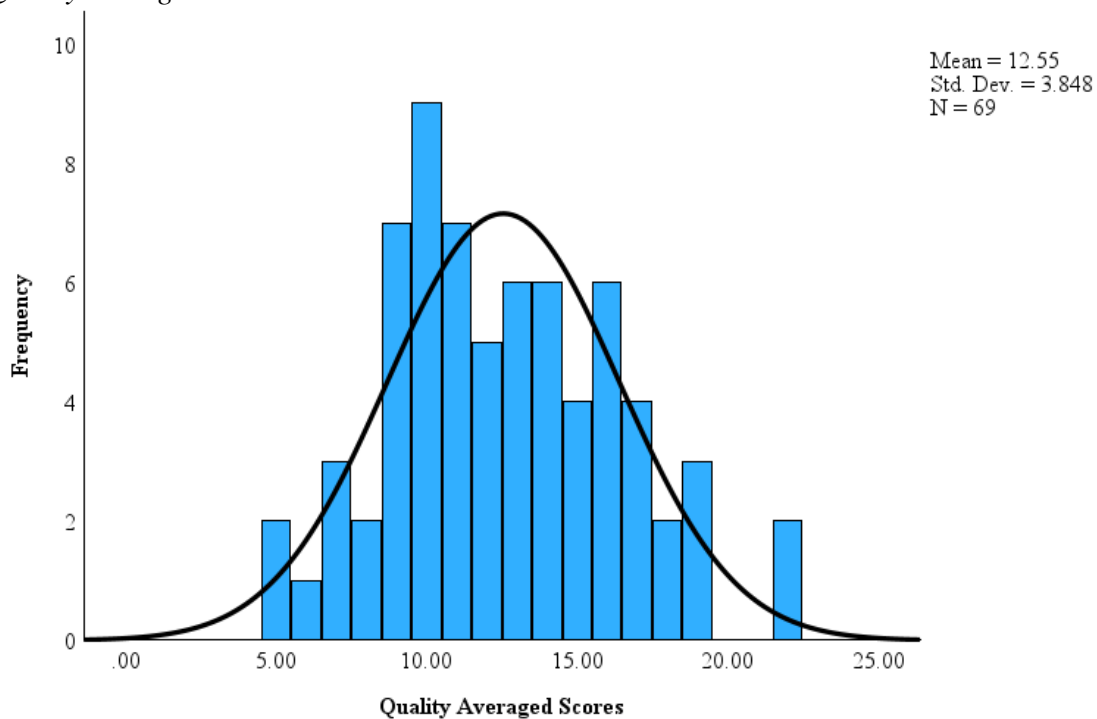
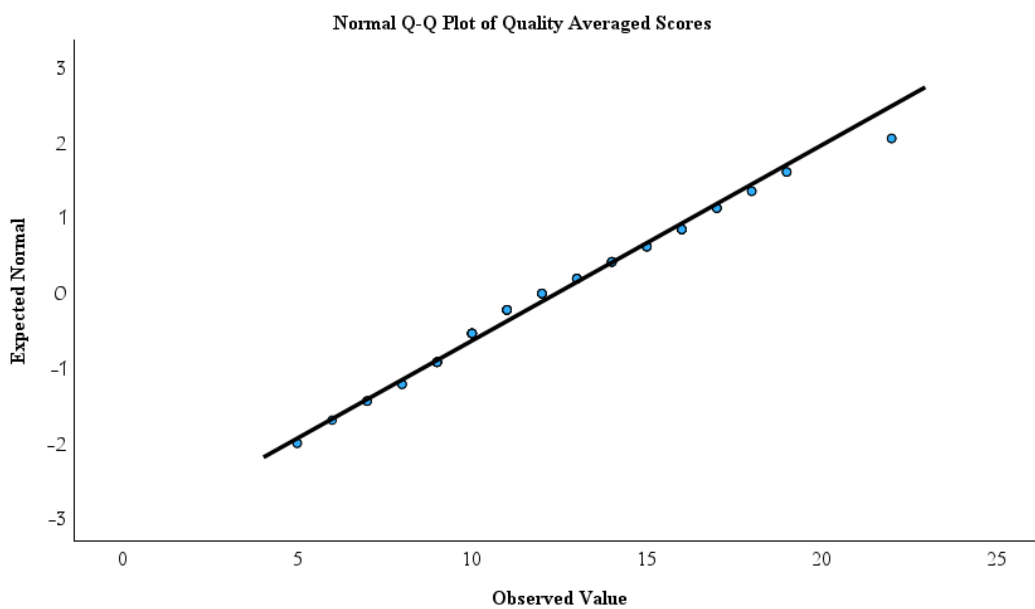*Quantity Histogram*

Figure 9

Quantity Q-Q Plot

Figure 10

Quality Histogram

Figure 11

Quality Q-Q Plot

Figure 12
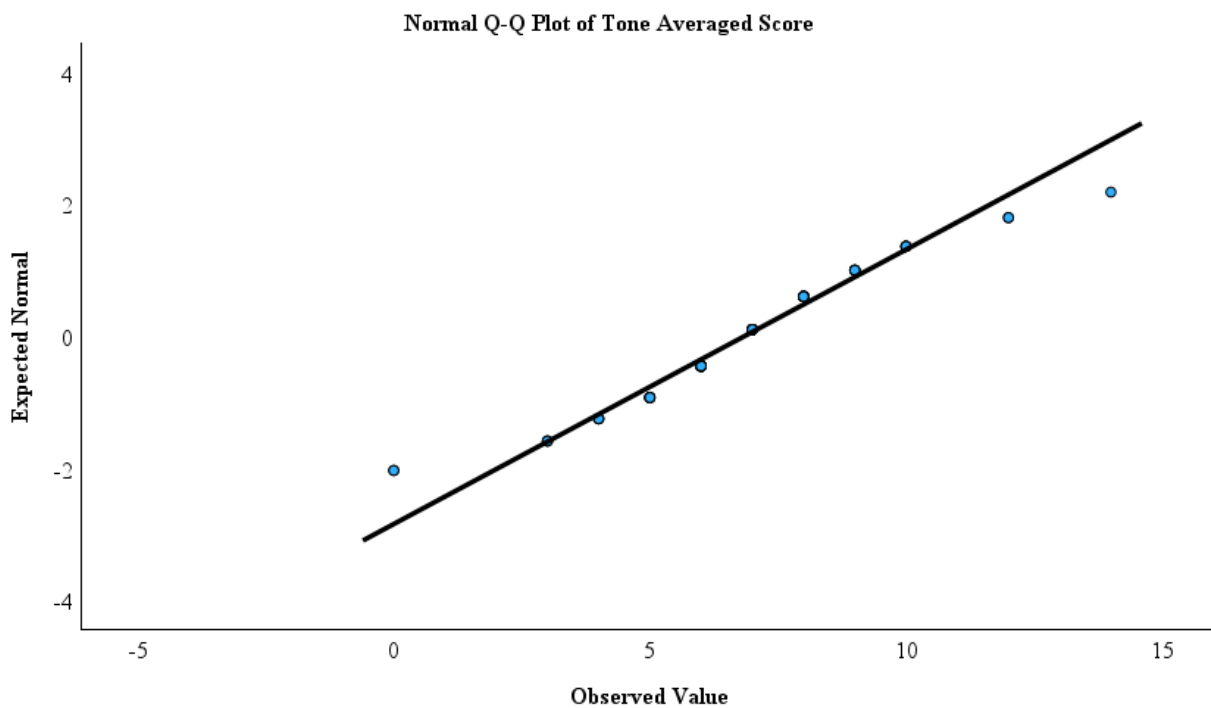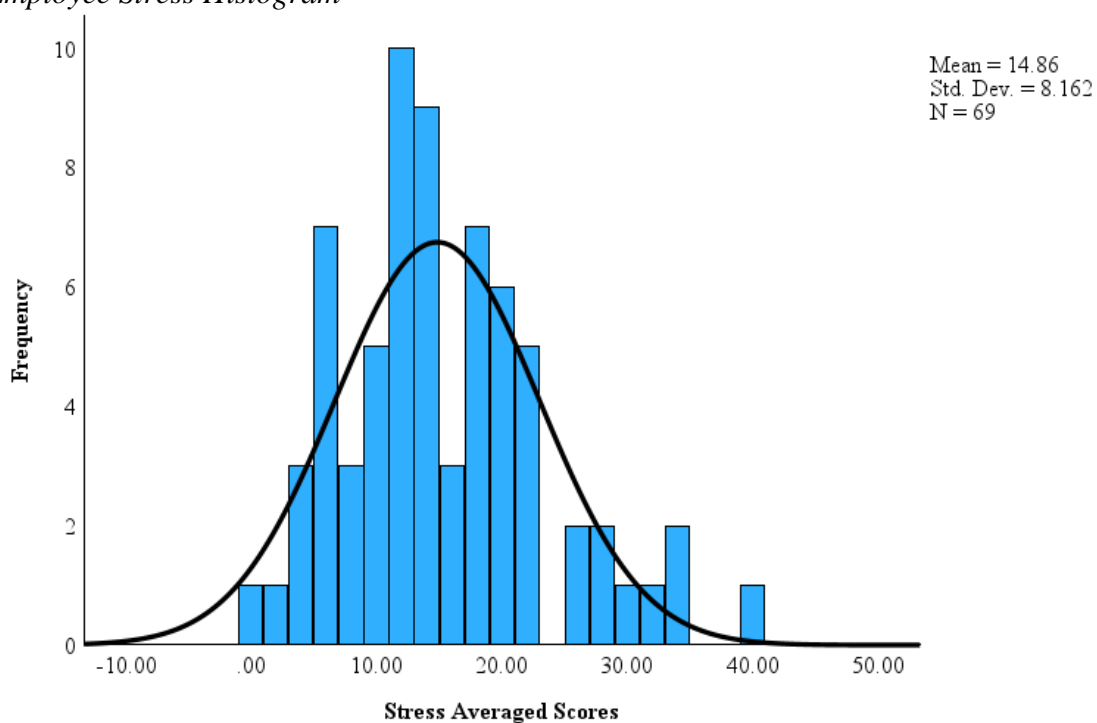
Tone Histogram
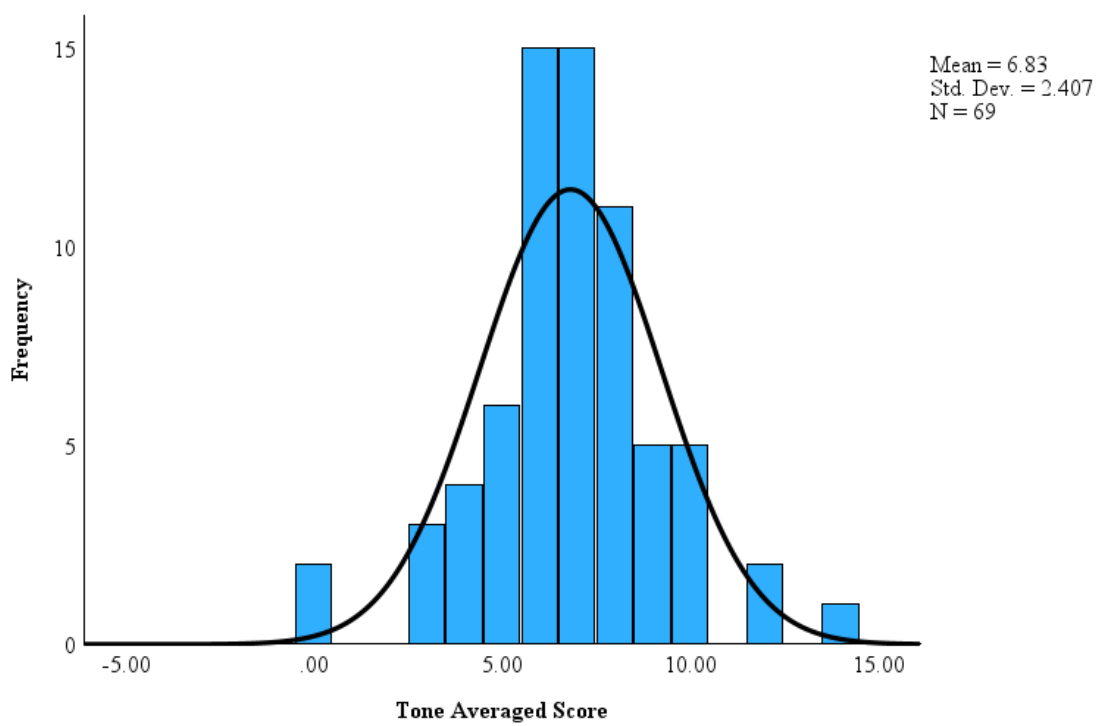
Figure 13

Tone Q-Q Plot

Figure 14

Employee Stress Histogram

Figure 15

Employee Stress Q-Q Plot