Mindfulness
https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-023-02228-y

COMMENTARY

Cultivating Global Health: Exploring Mindfulness Through an Organisational Psychology Lens

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Accepted: 15 September 2023

Abstract

The interface of public health and mindfulness as presented in Oman's review (*Mindfulness for Global Public Health: Critical Analysis and Agenda*) holds great promise and reveals fertile ground for future research and interdisciplinary exploration. Oman's framework is supported by compelling arguments, offering a balanced critique of mindfulness that identifies genuine applications and potential. This commentary notes key ideas in Oman's paper that carry important lessons for organisational research on mindfulness and explores how organisational psychology research and theory can contribute to this proposed integration of mindfulness into global health efforts. It begins by reviewing the close relationships between work, mindfulness, and health, identifying commonalities between mindfulness, health, and organisational research. This is followed by an illustration of organisational psychology's potential contributions to the alignment of mindfulness and health, focused on 2 of the 14 dimensions proposed by Oman (*Concern for Equity* and *Addresses Attentional Environments*). The commentary then draws on recent research and theoretical developments in mindfulness research within the workplace context to discuss the role of resilience and challenges in measuring mindfulness. Overall, this commentary aims to provide insights for organisational research while contributing to the integration of mindfulness and public health.

Keywords Organisational psychology · Mindfulness · Global health · Resilience · Measurement

It is an honour to be invited to provide a commentary on Oman's (2023) paper on the interface of public health and mindfulness, from an organisational psychology perspective. Oman's paper is certainly ambitious, reviewing the literature to present a comprehensive framework of 14 dimensions on which mindfulness and public health may be aligned. But it fulfils that ambition well, offering careful analysis to identify areas where these two fields are already benefitting one another and to highlight areas where the greater integration of mindfulness into global public health could lead to significant and substantial benefits for society at large.

Oman's (2023) framework is compelling, supported by strong arguments, and reveals promising avenues for future research and interdisciplinary exploration. Furthermore, the balanced critique of mindfulness that he presents, incorporating perspectives from both insiders and outsiders, serves to transcend the hype surrounding mindfulness and to recognise genuine applications of this practice. This not only identifies tangible benefits of mindfulness but also provides the basis for the formulation of clear and articulate research questions, leading towards deeper understandings and novel connections between public health and mindfulness.

This approach, grounded in evidence-based analysis and open to constructive critique, promises to shape a more comprehensive and effective framework for integrating mindfulness practices into the realm of public health. Inspired by this, I seek to provide commentary on how organisational psychology research and theory can contribute to this effort to integrate mindfulness into global health efforts.

Organisational psychology (also known as industrial/organisational (I/O), occupational or work psychology) is the scientific study of human behaviour in the workplace (American Psychological Association, 2013). It aims to understand how people perform individually, in groups, and in work organisations, in order to improve effectiveness and promote well-being (British Psychological Society, 2023). Work is known to play a critical role in individual and societal well-being, so I begin this commentary by providing a brief summary of the links between work, mindfulness,

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Published online: 26 September 2023

and health to provide a context for the following discussion. Subsequently, commonalities between mindfulness, health, and organisational research are identified, with comments on how the fields can inform each other.

Oman's (2023) framework consists of 14 dimensions or axes on which to compare mindfulness and public health orientations or activities. These are prevention orientation, importance of mental health, recognition of stress influence, multi-sectoral intervention, resilience orientation, epidemiologic foundations, multi-level interventions, addressing the attentional environment, concern for equity, cultural adaptation, administrative adaptation and community partnership, attending to religious factors, supporting intercultural and inter-religious competence, and finally, employing branding. I offer an illustration of how organisational psychology can contribute to the integration of mindfulness and health on two of these, namely, *Concern for Equity* and *Addresses Attentional Environments*.

The final sections provide in-depth discussion of two key themes in Oman's (2023) work: the role of resilience and challenges in the measurement of mindfulness. I aim to draw upon recent research and theoretical development in mindfulness research in the workplace context to address these pivotal issues. In providing this commentary, I hope to draw out valuable lessons for organisational research while contributing to the integration of mindfulness and public health, and the opportunity it presents to foster well-being and create a robust foundation for global health.

Work, Mindfulness, and Health

The World Health Organisation (WHO) promotes an integrated approach to health and notes that work organisations have a "responsibility to ensure health and safety in the workplace, and to promote the health and well-being of their employees, their families and communities" (World Health Organisation, 2005, p. 5). While people often think of physical health as influencing work productivity, the figures indicate that more working days are lost due to work-related mental health problems (stress, depression, and anxiety) than physical health issues (HSE, 2018). But work and employment are key positive contributors to health as well: from increasing access to healthcare in some countries (e.g. the USA) to the general salutary mental health effects of being employed rather than unemployed (van der Noordt et al., 2014). The research and theory on mindfulness in a work context, then, is a critical element of the global public health effort.

Whether measured in terms of mindfulness practice or dispositional mindfulness traits, mindfulness is now accepted as broadly beneficial in the work context, with research demonstrating positive effects on employee well-being and performance (Good et al., 2016). As the research in this area develops, we are starting to recognise that mindfulness is not a panacea to all workplace ills and there are some work situations where mindfulness may be detrimental. For example, being mindful can increase the depletion of self-control that occurs when someone is obliged to display certain emotions at work, and this results in lower performance (Lyddy et al., 2021). Oman's (2023) framework of alignment between mindfulness and global health provides a structure for exploring the nuances of mindfulness research, as the next section demonstrates.

Nuances in Mindfulness Research

In the arguments and reviews of evidence provided by Oman (2023), three key issues were identified that are of particular relevance in the field of mindfulness research at work. These are how bridging concepts are used and misused, the individual vs communal nature of mindfulness and mindfulness as a preventative or curative practice.

Bridging Concepts

Bridging concepts are used to connect mindfulness to new religious or cultural contexts in order to introduce the practice in a way that suits the context (Oman, 2023). The adoption of mindfulness, originally a spiritual practice, into the secular workplace is an example of how successful these bridging concepts can be; mindfulness training is now offered to employees in 88% of employee support programmes (Business Group on Health, 2022).

In the organisational psychology literature, as with the broader mindfulness literature, mindfulness is conceptualised in terms of trait mindfulness or mindfulness practice and training, and both are associated with higher performance in a range of jobs and tasks, using a variety of performance measures (Good et al., 2016). The links between mindfulness and psychological outcomes such as distress, anxiety, stress, and well-being have been convincingly demonstrated in the work context too (Bartlett et al., 2019; Good et al., 2016). In addition, reviews indicate that mindfulness is associated with improved communication and better relationship quality at work, thereby enhancing teamwork and leadership (Urrila, 2022).

Mindfulness training in a work context can be categorised as either mindfulness-based interventions, where learning mindfulness is the main focus, or mindfulness-informed interventions, which promote mindfulness indirectly, for example by including breathing exercises (Michaelsen et al., 2023). Meta-regression indicates that these different approaches to training are differentially effective, with MBSR, for example, being more effective than many other

types of training for improving well-being but meditation courses being more effective than other types of training for improving physical health (Michaelsen et al., 2023). So while reviews like this can conclude that mindfulness is beneficial, there is still a substantial amount of variability in outcomes that cannot yet be explained (Michaelsen et al., 2023). This is likely due to some distinct challenges and shortcomings of mindfulness research in work organisations, such as the difficulty of conducting randomised control trials in a work context, the need for manipulation and compliance checks, and concerns about how mindfulness training is adapted to the workplace (Jamieson & Tuckey, 2017).

In fact, this latter concern is growing, with researchers noting that the adoption of what used to be a spiritual practice into the secular workplace has resulted in a loss of fidelity. For example, Amazon recently announced they would introduce "AmaZen" booths into their workplaces: small mindfulness booths where employees could engage in guided meditations or receive positive affirmations from videos (Gault, 2021). Unfortunately, this is not as extreme an example of the misuse of mindfulness in work organisations as one might hope, and it highlights the importance of specifying what exactly the "mindfulness practice" that we are researching consists of.

Ainsworth et al. (2023) highlight the tension that exists between improving access to mindfulness while preserving its fidelity. Mindfulness can certainly be viewed as readily accessible within mainstream work organisations now, but the extent to which the mindfulness training employees receive relates to true mindfulness practice can certainly be questioned. This challenge is likely to be a significant one in the broader global health field too, where presenting mindfulness successfully in different contexts, while relying on having good bridging concepts, runs a similar risk of losing its key components. It is important to recognise where a bridging concept might be changing the nature of mindfulness itself and thereby be reducing the potential positive contribution of mindfulness to health.

Communal Mindfulness

A critical example of how the concept of mindfulness may have changed as it was adopted into the workplace is the loss of the communal aspect. One of the key components of mindfulness as it was originally practised was this community focus (Ainsworth et al., 2023; Oman, 2023). *Communal mindfulness* involves both practicing mindfulness with others and an emphasis on how the community of mindfulness practitioners could benefit the group and wider society, rather than the individual benefits for the practitioner. While mindfulness in work organisations is often presented as a way to improve organisational well-being, this broader, more integrative, communal element seems to have all but disappeared.

There is some limited organisational research on how mindfulness may contribute to a better work environment. For example, mindfulness is positively related to organisational citizenship behaviour (a pro-social behaviour in the workplace) (Hülsheger & Alberts, 2021), and the practice of mindfulness has been shown to improve the quality of leaders' collaboration and relationships with their subordinates by enabling them to have increased contextual awareness (Urrila, 2022). Additionally, a recent study with educators has indicated that communal practice of mindfulness can help individuals develop connections with self and others, ultimately resulting in a supportive community of colleagues who developed new professional competencies at work (Hwang et al., 2021). But despite these promising findings, the focus remains on individual mindfulness rather than developing a community of practice.

Originally, when mindfulness training was taken into the workplace, it was based on Kabat-Zinn's Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction programme (Kabat-Zinn et al., 1985) and involved training over several weeks with a skilled practitioner/tutor and a community element of learning with others. Pressures such as cost reduction and attempts to increase accessibility have led to the increasing proliferation of shorter training courses, including online self-training (Althammer et al., 2021) or self-training via an app (e.g. Bostock et al., 2019), thus reducing and even eliminating the human contact that was part of the original practice. WHO's definition of Public Health is a welcome reminder that the aim of well-being programmes and health interventions should be to "provide conditions in which people can be healthy and focus on entire populations, not on individual patients" (World Health Organization, 2015, p. 249). Individual health cannot be separated from community health at work any more than it can in the rest of life.

Mindfulness as Preventative or Curative

A further commonality between the issues raised by Oman (2023) and current issues within organisational research on mindfulness is how mindfulness should be best situated in the process of building health. Organisational psychology has a long tradition of recognising stress as a key factor in work-related health. Additionally, in research on the value of interventions to reduce stressors or improve stress coping, mindfulness plays a prominent role (Eby et al., 2019).

Many countries have significant health and safety laws in order to hold employers responsible for their employees' physical, and increasingly, mental health. Occupational risk management is a process involving the analysis of risks and potential interventions at three levels: primary (remove the risk), secondary (reduce the risk), and tertiary (rehabilitate after exposure). The literature on stress at work has adopted the same model for understanding stressors, so in terms of

mental risks, there are legal requirements for employers to identify potential stressors and remove them where possible. Where not possible, employers need to ensure that employees are provided with the means to reduce the impact of that stressor on their health and, if this fails, are provided with appropriate rehabilitation so that they can take up their duties safely and effectively again.

However, because stress is a subjective experience with individual variation in the extent to which each stressor may affect someone (Cooper & Payne, 1988), in practice, employers may try to shift the responsibility for mental health onto the individual employee. One way this may be done is by providing employees with generic mindfulness training to deal with stress at work and not addressing the original causes of this stress. For example, surveys consistently show that employers tend to react to employee ill health rather than take preventative steps to protect well-being and only 15% of UK workplaces adopt benchmarked practices to identify and prevent causes of stress (CIPD, 2019). Yet around 50–60% of UK employers offer training to build individual resilience to stress, including mindfulness training (CIPD, 2022).

Integrating mindfulness with global public health may provide a driver to rectify this reactive rather than proactive stance. Oman (2023) makes a strong case for mindfulness as part of the global health focus on prevention rather than cure. While mindfulness at work can certainly reduce stress reactivity and subsequent unhealthy behaviours (Baer et al., 2012; Chen & Grupe, 2021; Vasiljeva et al., 2023), it does not negate the employer's responsibility to remove or reduce the stressors themselves.

Dimensions of Alignment and Organisational Mindfulness Research

Oman (2023) identified 14 dimensions of potential alignment or tension in the relationship between mindfulness and public health. While it is likely that organisational research could interface with all the axes of integration, in this section, I offer specific comments on just two of these axes.

Dimension A9 *Concern for Equity* is identified as having a partial alignment between public health and mindfulness, and Oman (2023) notes that the research in mindfulness has some way to go. While mindfulness practice is theoretically for everyone, disadvantaged groups are less likely to access and use mindfulness interventions (Creswell, 2017). We need further research with these populations to test the generalisability of the overwhelmingly positive effects of mindfulness currently reported in the literature. An example of how doing this research can provide insights is given in a study of mindfulness training with a previously understudied population, unemployed youth, which demonstrated that a low-dose mindfulness-based intervention (MBI) reduced participants' feelings of distress (Roemer et al., 2021). But the study also found that the MBI was more effective for those who had higher well-being and dispositional mindfulness to start with. Given that unemployment is associated with higher distress/lower well-being (Waddell & Burton, 2006), this implies that we should be cautious in assuming that MBIs will be as effective for unemployed populations as for employees and reiterates the importance of broadening our research contexts.

A further equity concern of relevance in the organisational field is simply the access that workers may have to mindfulness training. Mindfulness is certainly popular in white collar work and at various management levels, but there is less research investigating mindfulness in blue collar workers. A notable exception to this was a study conducted with blue collar workers in Mexico that demonstrated some positive effects on job satisfaction via a reduction in boredom (Wihler et al., 2022). Yet even this study measured trait mindfulness only and did not evaluate mindfulness training. A survey of mindfulness practices in the US workforce identified significantly lower mindfulness practice among blue collar than white collar workers that could not be adequately explained by socio-demographic factors and likely reflects inequity in access and differences in beliefs about its value (Kachan et al., 2019). Indeed, this same survey noted that it was unable to identify even a single mindfulness intervention study for blue collar workers. There is a clear and substantial need for research around mindfulness and mindfulness training for these forgotten workers.

In Dimension A8 *Addresses Attentional Environments*, Oman (2023) notes how important an understanding of attentional environments is. That is, an awareness of how environmental features influence how and where people pay attention is essential for the alignment of mindfulness and public health. He refers to organisational research here, showing that the increased connectivity of the modern workplace has led to a requirement for employees to be always available or responsive to work demands and thereby reducing well-being (Von Bergen & Bressler, 2019). Efforts by governments to regulate this "attentional health" through allowing for workers' rights to disconnect can be seen as a way of attempting to improve the attentional environment. The importance of uninterrupted, focused time for work has long been recognised in the occupational literature, from research on the beneficial effects of flow states, where people report complete absorption in a task (Czikszentmihalyi, 1990; Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009) to more recent popular books on the necessity of protecting our time for "Deep Work" (Newport, 2016).

Mindfulness research offers an interesting perspective on how we might be able to resist an attentional environment that does not lend itself to high-quality, in-depth work.

While mindfulness does not reduce the negative effect on performance of switching attention from one task to another (Jankowski & Holas, 2020), there are indications that targeted mindfulness practices could be beneficial in reducing the number of attention switches or interruptions. For example, accessing social networking sites at work is a common distraction, but providing mindfulness training to employees reduced the number of self-distractions they reported (Mehmood & Siu, 2020). And on the other side of the attentional environment spectrum, mindfulness can also help employees to maintain their attention and concentration on a boring or monotonous task. A recent study found that more mindful employees perceived their tasks as less boring and were more satisfied with their jobs, resulting in higher quality, though not quantity, outputs (Wihler et al., 2022). Future work on attentional environments could investigate the role of mindfulness in building resilience to distractions in modern workplaces, which feature open plan offices or always-connected workers.

Having discussed specific commonalities and then illustrative examples of contributions on two of Oman's (2023) 14 dimensions, in the following sections, I focus in more depth on two underlying themes of Oman's framework: the role of resilience and issues around mindfulness measurement.

Mindfulness and Resilience

The central thesis of Oman's (2023) paper is that mindfulness can contribute to global public health by building resilience in individuals, communities, and whole populations. Resilience can be understood in many ways but is essentially about being able to recover quickly or easily from setbacks and disruptions. Within the organisational literature, a further element in the definition of resilience is the ability not just to "bounce back" from but to grow in the face of adversity (Good et al., 2016; Hartmann et al., 2020). This is combined with a recognition that both work organisations and individuals can show resilience and that resilience should be viewed as an organisational process (Hartmann et al., 2020) or an individual capacity that develops over time (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017) rather than a fixed aptitude. These process models emphasise the importance of resilience mechanisms—that is, how resilience has its effects—as well as factors that promote resilience in determining outcomes over time.

At the individual level, resilience in organisational research is often conceptualised as part of psychological capital. Psychological capital is a higher order construct consisting of specific personal resources we can draw on to meet challenges, namely, hope, optimism, self-efficacy, and of course resilience (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017). The four resources are synergistic and positively related to job performance and satisfaction. But perhaps most importantly for mindfulness research, these resources are malleable and can be developed by targeted intervention (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017; Luthans et al., 2007).

Resilience and mindfulness have been shown to interact in predicting positive outcomes in the workplace (Craven et al., 2022) and MBSRs can improve levels of resilience in employees (Diachenko et al., 2021). There is good evidence that mindfulness promotes resilience through several pathways. For example, by aiding in adopting a more objective perspective on potential stressors, mindfulness may enable employees to experience those stressors to be less threatening (Good et al., 2016). In addition, because mindful employees show greater flexibility in responses, they are more likely to be able to find positive ways through a difficult situation and experience growth as a result (Good et al., 2016).

Organisational-level mindfulness differs somewhat from the definition of individual mindfulness drawn from Eastern spirituality. It is not simply an aggregate of individual employee mindfulness but an emergent property of the collective group. While it shares similarities in terms of "quality of attention", the focus in organisational mindfulness is on processes or practices that enable the organisation to detect and respond to unexpected events (Wang et al., 2021), that is, a "rich awareness of discriminatory detail and a capacity for action" (Weick et al., 2008, p. 37). In the model by Weick et al., a commitment to resilience is one of five processes by which organisational mindfulness can be developed.

Interest in organisational resilience has grown dramatically, from around 10 publications a year on the topic in the early 2000s to over 300 a year by the end of the 2010s (Raetze et al., 2022), and there is significant variety in how resilience is conceptualised in these publications (Hillmann & Guenther, 2021). However, similarly to the view of resilience as a developing capacity for individuals, Raetze et al. (2022) provide a process framework for organisational resilience research in terms of three themes over the lifespan of an organisation: developing resilience, being proactive in preparing for future adversity, and reacting resiliently to an adverse event. Emerging research indicates that organisational mindfulness can indeed contribute to developing organisational resilience at all three stages of readiness, response, and recovery (Wang et al., 2021). By ensuring appropriate allocation of awareness, organisational mindfulness identifies early potential signals and encourages readiness and preparedness. By supporting emotional detachment, mindfulness reduces negative reactions to crises and supports response and adaptation in the moment. And finally, by aligning attention towards key issues, mindfulness

fosters concentrated effort in recovery and adjustment (Wang et al., 2021).

In the majority of the literature, the beneficial effects of mindfulness and resilience are well supported. However, it should be noted that resilience may sometimes be maladaptive if it serves to conceal vulnerability and inhibit actions to address risk (Mahdiani & Ungar, 2021). For example, being *too* resilient may be a sign of self-enhancement or emotional withdrawal at the individual level or over-reliance on coping ability and therefore hidden fragility at the organisational level. Resilience may also be used to encourage people to tolerate inequity rather than address the causes of a problem (Mahdiani & Ungar, 2021), something of particular concern within a global health context. We should be cautious, therefore, in promoting mindfulness solely as a means to increase resilience to crises and instead focus on its utility in more upstream applications such as identifying and addressing the causes of crises and acting to prevent them as much as possible.

Measuring Mindfulness

A recurrent theme in Oman's (2023) paper centres around the need to effectively demonstrate the utility of mindfulness while reiterating the apparent difficulty of measuring mindfulness. Self-report measures of mindfulness are referred to as having "widely disputed / questioned validity" four times in the paper (Oman, 2023). A thorough review of mindfulness measures is beyond the scope of this commentary (readers may wish to refer to Van Dam et al., 2018), but in this section, I offer comments on mindfulness measurement from the perspective of organisational psychology. First, I provide an alternative view of self-report measures. Second, I offer alternatives to self-report measures of mindfulness by focusing on mindfulness functions and outcomes. Third, I consider the noted need for contextualisation of mindfulness, its interventions, and its measurement as discussed in Dimensions A10 to 14.

Self-report Measures of Mindfulness

Given the reliance that Oman (2023) places on so many research findings in mindfulness that are based on self-report measures, it is odd that he makes such disparaging remarks about the measures themselves. There are certainly real concerns with self-report mindfulness measures, from ambiguity in construct validity through to research participants' limitations of introspection meaning they may not be able to report accurately on their own mindfulness (Rosch, 2015; Van Dam et al., 2018). This meta-cognitive confound in self-report measures is a common challenge (Sutton & Medvedev, 2023). But even the authors of the mindfulness measurement evaluations referred to in Oman's paper do not recommend abandoning self-report altogether. Instead, they recommend good research practice of adopting multimodal measures and urge researchers to precisely specify the aspect of mindfulness and its function that they are addressing (Van Dam et al., 2018). Psychology in general and applied psychology fields such as organisational psychology have built significant expertise in developing and validating measures of complex, abstract concepts, and this expertise should not be dismissed because there are limitations.

There are certainly well-established measures to assess state mindfulness and trait mindfulness, on a range of different facets and a range of contexts. For example, recent systematic reviews evaluate measures of mindfulness for children and adolescents (Bender et al., 2023) and mindfulness skills in people with personality disorders (Caletti et al., 2020). In their review of measures relevant to the workplace, Qu et al. (2015) noted a similar concern to Oman (2023) in that some self-report measures did not demonstrate criterion validity, but were still able to recommend two measures. More recently, a work-specific measure of mindfulness has been developed which evaluates four sub-facets (Describing, Nonreactivity, Nonjudging, and Act with Awareness) and demonstrates reliability, construct, and criterion validity (Hülsheger & Alberts, 2021). Researchers and practitioners wishing to evaluate mindfulness therefore have a range of measures available to them.

The sensitivity of different measures to change following MBIs has also been evaluated in a systematic review, so that researchers can choose the most appropriate measure for their study (Baer et al., 2019). Drawing on this expertise, choosing methods and measures appropriate to their research question will allow researchers to identify the malleable aspects of mindfulness as well as address the need for population-level overviews of patterns of trait mindfulness.

Alternatives to Self-report Measures

As a result of his critique of self-report measures, Oman (2023) makes the welcome call for alternative measures of mindfulness. In addition to the use of carefully chosen and validated self-report measures of mindfulness, therefore, a complementary approach to measurement could be to measure more distal outcomes. This is a common approach in organisational research, where the aim is often to demonstrate the effect of interventions on downstream or multilevel outcomes such as job satisfaction, engagement, or even organisational performance (Sutton & Atkinson, 2023). As Van Dam et al. (2018) recommend, mindfulness research should focus on the functions that change with mindfulness training. One of the closely related concepts of relevance to mindfulness and public health is of course resilience, which Oman (2023) presents as the central linking factor. Hillmann

and Guenther (2021) and Raetze et al. (2022) provide recent, thorough reviews of established measures of resilience at both individual and organisational levels that could be helpful for researchers.

In addition to identifying the functions associated with higher levels of mindfulness, such as higher motivation or better work attitudes (Hülsheger & Alberts, 2021), more experimental approaches will provide convincing evidence of the effects of specific improvements in mindfulness. For example, we have good evidence of the effect of MBIs on participant well-being, but what cognitive changes result from participants engaging in MBIs? Evidence from studies in the armed forces indicate that mindfulness training significantly improves attention and working memory (Zanesco et al., 2019) and may protect from attentional performance decline during intensive training (Roemer et al., 2023). Establishing the functions that change with mindfulness will allow researchers to triangulate these more objectively measured outcomes with self-report measures of mindfulness in future research.

Contextualisation of MBIs

Establishing the effect of mindfulness training relies, of course, on clarity about what is involved in that training, yet MBIs differ substantially (e.g. Creswell, 2017). As Oman (2023) notes in the discussions of Dimensions A10 to A14, contextualisation is a shared vital concern for mindfulness and public health practitioners. The contextualisation and adaptation of MBIs is necessary in order to improve uptake and ensure that the expected benefits of an intervention are gleaned in a new context, but the greater the adaptation, the more risk that the eventual intervention no longer resembles the one for which we have the evidence.

The extensive variation in mindfulness training in the workplace reflects the construct ambiguity that has been criticised in mindfulness measures. To what extent can the training delivered by "mindfulness-based coaching" (Shelly & Zaidman, 2023) be considered equivalent to a "smartphone mindfulness meditation app" (Bostock et al., 2019)? And if participants in both studies report improvement in well-being and job outcomes, to what extent can we conclude this is due to "mindfulness" training? Similarly, recent work has indicated that employees prefer brief, informal mindfulness practices to longer, more formal practices; and yet the type of practice did not affect the extent of positive benefit from MBSR training (Verger et al., 2021). Findings like these, taken in isolation, may encourage work organisations, or indeed health systems, to focus their attentions on rather tokenistic attempts at developing mindfulness.

A similar issue arises when established mindfulness training programmes are tailored for a new context. Kabat-Zinn's original 8-week MBSR programme has been significantly adapted and tailored to different contexts, to the extent that in some cases it may be barely recognisable. But a good example of clarity and transparency in the tailoring process is provided by the MBAT programme for the US military (e.g. Zanesco et al., 2019), which maintains high fidelity in reproduction by ensuring training for its trainers and working with local experts to assist with tailoring to new contexts (Roemer et al., 2023). A high level of clarity and detail of mindfulness training content, delivery, timescales, materials, and instructors—not to mention theoretical underpinnings—is essential if the potential contribution of mindfulness to global public health is to be realised.

Conclusion

In this commentary, I have identified interconnections between mindfulness research in work organisations and Oman's (2023) examination of mindfulness in global public health. The primary focus was on the concept of mindfulness as a preventative resource, shedding light on how certain employers may misuse mindfulness training to evade their responsibility in risk reduction. Second, I illustrated how mindfulness research in work organisations can contribute to the dimensions of potential alignment between mindfulness and global health, by focusing on two in particular: research with understudied populations and developments in understanding attentional environments at work. Third, I discussed in depth the contributions that organisationally situated mindfulness research can make to the underlying thesis of Oman's framework: that mindfulness can help to build resilience. Drawing on evidence from individual and organisational research, resilience was conceptualised as a process in which mindfulness plays a critical role. Finally, the commentary provides a critique and response to the issues of measurement raised in Oman's paper. While acknowledging the relevance of self-report measures of mindfulness, I advocate for the importance of triangulating such measures with other objective indicators. Additionally, I highlight the need for transparency and clarity in mindfulness training to establish its effectiveness. Ultimately, this commentary underlines the value of Oman's framework for aligning mindfulness and public health, emphasising the potential contributions of organisational psychology research and theory to this endeavour.

Funding Open Access funding enabled and organized by CAUL and its Member Institutions

Declarations

Conflict of Interest The author declares no competing interests.

Research Involving Human Participants and/or Animals Not applicable: no primary data.

Informed Consent Not applicable: no primary data.

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