

Mindfulness and job performance: a study of Australian leaders

Elizabeth King *Macquarie University, Australia*

Jarrod M Haar *Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand*

Mindfulness relates to being aware of the present reality and living in the moment, and, while linked to well-being, it has only recently been tested on specific leader samples. Despite attention, the links between mindfulness and job performance are scarce, with the performance of leaders especially so. The present study tests self-reported mindfulness from 84 Australian leaders towards two forms of leadership performance as rated by their immediate manager. Using structural equation modelling, we find mindfulness is positively related to leadership self-mastery and leadership organizational-transformation. The best fit for the data was a full mediation model: mindfulness predicting leadership self-mastery, predicting leadership organizational-transformation. Furthermore, we tested for the moderating effects of tenure duration and found that mindfulness was especially beneficial for leadership self-mastery at low tenure duration. Findings suggest that leadership performance may ultimately be enhanced by having leaders who are more mindful and present at work.

Keywords: job performance, leaders, leadership performance, mediation, mindfulness

Key points

- 1 Mindfulness is positively related to leadership self-mastery and leadership organizational-transformation.
- 2 Findings support a full mediation model: mindfulness predicting leadership self-mastery, predicting leadership organizational-transformation.
- 3 Tenure plays a moderating role on mindfulness towards both performance dimensions.
- 4 Leadership performance is enhanced by having leaders who are more mindful and present at work.

When the context of work is dynamic, complex and uncertain, leaders cannot rely on experience-based wisdom alone to guide them (Motowidlo and Van Scotter 1994). When the future is rapidly changing, performance results from a leader's capacity to respond

Correspondence: Professor Jarrod M Haar, Department of Management, Faculty of Business, Auckland University of Technology, Private Bag 92006, Auckland, 1010, New Zealand; e-mail: jarrod.haar@aut.ac.nz

Accepted for publication 12 January 2017.