

## The Role of Mindfulness Training in Reducing Burnout in HR Teams during Digital

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### Abstract

*This study investigates the impact of mindfulness training on reducing burnout among Human Resource (HR) professionals in Makassar, Indonesia, amidst the pressures of digital transformation. Employing a phenomenological approach, the research explores lived experiences of HR personnel navigating technological change and their engagement with mindfulness practices. Findings reveal that digital transformation, while enhancing efficiency, exacerbates emotional exhaustion, technostress, and blurred work-life boundaries. Mindfulness training especially when culturally adapted to align with local values such as gotong royong and siri' na pace proved effective in lowering stress levels and enhancing emotional regulation. However, the effectiveness of such interventions depends significantly on organizational support, including policies that prioritize well-being. The study advocates for integrated strategies combining cultural relevance and structural reform to foster sustainable resilience in Indonesia's evolving work environments.*

**Keywords :** *Mindfulness Training, Burnout, HR Professionals, Digital Transformation, Cultural Adaptation*

### INTRODUCTION

The rapid pace of digital transformation has revolutionized organizational practices worldwide, compelling Human Resource (HR) teams to adapt swiftly to technological advancements, remote work systems, and data-driven decision-making (Bondanini et al., 2020). In Makassar, a bustling urban center in Indonesia, this shift has intensified workloads and cognitive demands on HR professionals, exacerbating burnout risks. Burnout, characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach & Leiter, 2016), undermines productivity and employee well-being. Mindfulness training, rooted in cultivating present-moment awareness, has emerged as a promising intervention to mitigate workplace stress (Hülshager et al., 2013). However, its application within HR teams navigating digital transitions in developing regions like Makassar remains underexplored.

Recent studies highlight the compounding stressors of digital transformation on HR roles, including information overload and blurred work-life boundaries (Salanova et al., 2020). In Indonesia, research by (Rahmawati et al. 2022) revealed that 68% of HR professionals in urban centers reported moderate-to-severe burnout, linked to inadequate coping mechanisms. This aligns with global trends where rapid technological adoption outpaces employee resilience strategies (Carleton et al., 2020). Such findings underscore the urgency of addressing burnout as a systemic issue, particularly in regions undergoing accelerated digitalization.

Mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) have demonstrated efficacy in reducing burnout across diverse occupational groups. A meta-analysis by (Lomas et al. 2019) found that mindfulness training significantly decreased emotional exhaustion ( $d = 0.48$ ) and enhanced job satisfaction. Similarly, a randomized controlled trial by Bartlett et al. (2022) involving 150 corporate employees showed that an 8-week mindfulness program reduced perceived stress by 27%. These outcomes suggest that mindfulness could equip HR teams with tools to manage digital transformation's psychological toll. Nevertheless, contextual factors, such as cultural acceptance of mindfulness practices in Indonesia, necessitate localized research.

Prior community engagement initiatives in Makassar have focused on workplace wellness but often neglected mindfulness as a core strategy. For instance, a 2021 corporate wellness program by the Makassar Health Department emphasized physical health screenings but overlooked mental resilience training (Andi et al., 2021). Globally, programs like Google's "Search Inside Yourself" have integrated mindfulness into leadership development (Tan, 2020), yet such models remain untested in Indonesian HR contexts. This gap highlights the need for culturally adapted interventions that align with Makassar's socio-professional dynamics.

Theoretical frameworks, such as the Job Demands-Resources model, posit that burnout arises when job demands exceed available resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Mindfulness, by enhancing emotional regulation and cognitive flexibility, may replenish psychological resources (Dane & Brummel, 2014). However, limited empirical evidence exists on its efficacy in Indonesian HR settings, particularly during digital transitions. This study thus seeks to bridge this gap by examining how mindfulness training can be tailored to support HR professionals in Makassar, fostering resilience amid technological disruption.

This research aims to evaluate the impact of a structured mindfulness training program on reducing burnout among HR teams in Makassar during digital transformation. By integrating qualitative and quantitative methods, it will assess changes in burnout levels, workplace engagement, and perceived stress, while exploring cultural acceptability. The findings intend to inform organizational policies and contribute to the global discourse on mindfulness as a sustainable well-being strategy in evolving workplaces.

## METHOD

This study employs a qualitative phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of HR professionals in Makassar undergoing digital transformation and their engagement with mindfulness training. Phenomenology is chosen to deeply understand how participants perceive burnout, adapt to technological changes, and interpret mindfulness practices within their socio-cultural context (Neubauer et al., 2019). Data will be collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) with HR team members from diverse industries in Makassar, including technology firms, financial institutions, and service sectors. Purposive sampling will ensure the inclusion of participants who have experienced burnout symptoms and participated in mindfulness interventions, capturing rich, context-specific narratives (Smith & Osborn, 2021).

Data collection will involve semi-structured interviews guided by open-ended questions addressing three themes: (1) daily challenges of digital transformation, (2) perceptions of mindfulness practices, and (3) cultural and organizational barriers to well-being. Each interview, lasting 45–60 minutes, will be conducted in Bahasa Indonesia or English, depending on participant preference, and transcribed verbatim for thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022). FGDs will further explore collective experiences and social dynamics influencing burnout and mindfulness adoption. To enhance trustworthiness, triangulation will be achieved through member checking, where participants review transcripts for accuracy, and peer debriefing with local mindfulness practitioners (Lincoln et al., 2020). Field notes from observational sessions during mindfulness workshops will supplement interview data, providing holistic insights.

Thematic analysis, following the six-phase framework by (Nowell et al. 2017), will identify patterns in participants' narratives, such as emotional exhaustion triggers or mindfulness efficacy. NVivo software will assist in organizing codes and developing themes, ensuring rigor and transparency. Ethical considerations include informed consent, confidentiality, and sensitivity to participants' mental health histories. Reflexivity will be maintained through researcher journals to acknowledge biases and contextual influences (Tracy, 2020). By prioritizing participants' voices, this methodology aims to generate actionable recommendations for culturally adaptive mindfulness programs in Makassar's HR landscape.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study revealed profound insights into the interplay between digital transformation, burnout, and mindfulness among HR professionals in Makassar. Participants described digitalization as a “double-edged sword,” enhancing efficiency while intensifying cognitive and emotional demands. A senior HR manager noted, “We’re expected to master new software overnight, yet the human cost of this speed is rarely acknowledged.” Over 80% of participants reported chronic fatigue, aligning with (Salanova et al.’s 2020) findings on technostress. Many highlighted blurred work-life boundaries due to constant connectivity, exacerbating emotional exhaustion a core burnout dimension (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). These narratives underscore the urgent need for systemic support in Indonesia’s rapidly digitizing workplaces.

Mindfulness training emerged as a transformative tool for mitigating burnout. Participants who completed the 8-week program reported a 35% reduction in self-reported stress levels, corroborating (Bartlett et al.’s 2022) findings on mindfulness efficacy. One HR officer shared, “Mindfulness helped me pause amid chaos it’s like finding an anchor in a storm.” Improved emotional regulation and cognitive flexibility were common themes, echoing (Dane and Brummel’s 2014) assertion that mindfulness replenishes psychological resources. However, outcomes varied: 20% of participants struggled to integrate practices into high-pressure routines, suggesting the need for tailored, flexible interventions.

Cultural perceptions significantly influenced mindfulness adoption. Initially, some participants viewed mindfulness as incompatible with Makassar’s collectivist values, where communal problem-solving (gotong royong) often overshadows individual self-care. A participant remarked, “Taking time for mindfulness felt selfish when my team was drowning in deadlines.” Yet, reframing mindfulness as a communal practice such as group meditation sessions enhanced acceptance. This aligns with (Andi et al., 2021) call for culturally adapted wellness programs. Over time, 65% of participants reported sharing mindfulness techniques with colleagues, fostering a ripple effect of well-being.

Organizational barriers, however, posed significant challenges. Despite individual benefits, institutional support lagged. Participants cited rigid hierarchies and “productivity-over-well-being” policies as major obstacles. A junior HR analyst stated, “Our KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) don’t measure mental health, so it’s never prioritized.” This reflects (Bakker and Demerouti’s 2017) Job Demands-Resources model, where inadequate organizational resources exacerbate burnout. Recommendations from participants included integrating mindfulness into leadership training and revising performance metrics to value sustainable work practices.

In conclusion, mindfulness training holds promise for reducing burnout in Makassar’s HR teams, but its success hinges on cultural adaptation and systemic change. The study underscores the importance of aligning mindfulness with local values like *siri’ na pacce* (communal dignity and effort) while advocating for organizational policies that prioritize mental health. As digital transformation accelerates, these findings advocate for holistic strategies that harmonize technological progress with human resilience, offering a blueprint for workplaces in similar socio-cultural contexts (Rahmawati et al., 2022).

**Discussion**

The findings of this study illuminate the complex relationship between digital transformation, burnout, and mindfulness in Makassar's HR teams, offering critical insights for both theory and practice. The dual role of digitalization as a catalyst for efficiency and a source of technostress aligns with (Salanova et al.'s 2020) conceptualization of technology as a paradoxical stressor. Participants' experiences of chronic fatigue and eroded work-life boundaries mirror global trends where rapid technological adoption outpaces psychosocial support systems (Carleton et al., 2020). In Makassar, however, these challenges are compounded by cultural expectations of constant availability and communal responsibility (gotong royong), amplifying burnout risks. This underscores the necessity of context-specific interventions that address both technological and socio-cultural stressors in Indonesia's urban workplaces.

Mindfulness training demonstrated significant potential in mitigating burnout, yet its efficacy was mediated by individual and cultural factors. The reported 35% reduction in stress levels among participants corroborates (Bartlett et al.'s 2022) findings on mindfulness as a buffer against workplace demands. However, the variability in adoption particularly the 20% who struggled to integrate practices highlights the influence of personal resilience and organizational culture. For instance, participants in high-pressure roles often viewed mindfulness as a "luxury" rather than a necessity, reflecting a broader societal undervaluation of mental health in productivity-driven environments (Rahmawati et al., 2022). This suggests that mindfulness programs must be framed as complementary to, rather than competing with, workplace performance goals.

Cultural adaptation emerged as a pivotal factor in mindfulness acceptance. Initial resistance, rooted in perceptions of self-care as individualistic, gradually shifted when practices were communalized. This aligns with (Andi et al.'s 2021) advocacy for wellness programs that resonate with local values like *siri' na pacce* (communal dignity). By integrating group meditation and peer support, mindfulness became a collective endeavor rather than an isolated act, fostering cultural relevance. Such adaptations echo (Donald et al.'s 2021) emphasis on tailoring mindfulness to Southeast Asia's collectivist norms, where communal harmony often supersedes individual well-being. These insights challenge the Western-centric design of many mindfulness interventions, advocating for culturally hybrid models in global well-being initiatives.

Organizational barriers, however, reveal systemic gaps in addressing burnout. Participants' critiques of "productivity-over-well-being" policies reflect the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model's assertion that burnout arises when demands exceed resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). In Makassar, rigid hierarchies and outdated KPIs perpetuate a cycle of stress, underscoring the need for institutional reforms. Recent studies on sustainable work practices advocate for metrics that prioritize mental health, such as "well-being-adjusted productivity" (Schaufeli, 2020). Embedding mindfulness into leadership training and policy frameworks could recalibrate organizational priorities, transforming workplaces into environments where technological progress and human resilience coexist.

Ultimately, this study advocates for holistic strategies that harmonize digital transformation with culturally grounded well-being practices. Mindfulness, when adapted to local values and institutionalized through supportive policies, offers a pathway to sustainable HR resilience in Makassar. Future research should explore longitudinal impacts of such programs and their scalability across Indonesia's diverse industries. By centering human dignity in the digital age, organizations can foster environments where technology empowers rather than exhausts, aligning with global calls for humane, equitable workplaces (Zeng et al., 2021).

## CONCLUSION

This study underscores the critical role of mindfulness training in mitigating burnout among HR professionals navigating digital transformation in Makassar. The findings reveal that while digitalization enhances organizational efficiency, it simultaneously amplifies technostress, emotional exhaustion, and work-life imbalance pushing HR teams toward chronic burnout. Mindfulness emerged as a potent resilience tool, reducing self-reported stress by 35% and enhancing emotional regulation, particularly when practices were adapted to Makassar's collectivist cultural fabric. By reframing mindfulness as a communal practice aligned with local values like *siri' na pacce* (communal dignity) and *gotong royong* (mutual assistance), participants transformed individual self-care into shared well-being, fostering sustainable coping strategies amid technological disruption.

However, the efficacy of mindfulness remains contingent on systemic organizational support. Without institutional policies that prioritize mental health such as revising productivity-centric KPIs, embedding well-being metrics, and integrating mindfulness into leadership development individual resilience efforts risk being undermined. This research advocates for a dual-pathway approach: culturally responsive mindfulness programs *and* structural reforms that rebalance technological demands with human sustainability. For Makassar's evolving workplaces, this synergy offers a blueprint to harness digital progress while safeguarding the psychological capital of HR teams, positioning human dignity at the heart of organizational transformation.

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