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Mindfulness Practices Used During Crisis Leadership Reported by Minnesota Secondary School Administrators

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**Mindfulness Practices Used During Crisis Leadership Reported by
Minnesota Secondary School Administrators**

by

Anita M. Johnson

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

St. Cloud State University

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

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in Educational Administration and Leadership

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Abstract

The purpose of this quantitative study is to examine the extent to which a select group of Minnesota secondary school administrators report their level of awareness of mindfulness practices, use and frequency of practice, and perceived personal effectiveness of mindfulness strategies used during crisis leadership.

The results of this study intend to furnish school administrators and districts with an understanding of mindfulness strategies and the effectiveness of those strategies to implement during crisis leadership, ultimately impacting the overall well-being of the organization. The findings of the study may reveal select strategies and their importance during crisis leadership as experienced by Minnesota secondary school administrators.

Select voluntary administrators reported their level of awareness of mindfulness, mindfulness strategies, specifically guided meditation, movement, and mindful breathing, their frequency of use and personal perceived effectiveness implemented during crisis leadership. Most study respondents, 89.6% (n =87), reported having experienced a crisis during their career as an administrator and 75.0% of participants reported having an extreme awareness of mindfulness strategies such as guided meditation, movement, and mindful breathing. Participants also reported the use and/or practice of movement as a mindfulness strategy with a frequency of 3-4 times per week to effectively lead during times of crisis. 35.0% of participants reported the personal use/and or practice of these mindfulness strategies to be extremely effective regarding crisis leadership.

This suggests that various mindfulness strategies can be used as an effective way to lead during times of crisis. Utilizing mindfulness strategies during times of crisis encourages administrators to respond with thought-based decision-making skills rather than fear-based decision making. It allows administrators to detach from their fear-based emotions and be present in the moment and approach adverse situations with balance and an awareness of self.

Keywords: mindfulness, mindfulness techniques, crisis leadership, leadership, guided meditation, movement, mindful breathing, personal effectiveness

Acknowledgements and Dedication

This process has challenged me in every aspect of my life. Throughout this journey I moved away from the only home I've ever known to relocate half-way across the country, begin a new job in a new city, and start a new chapter of my life. My limits were tested, and my boundaries were pushed. I would not have completed my dissertation journey without the constant guidance, encouragement and support from Dr. Barron-Albers and Dr. Lewis, who pushed me every step of the way. I am forever grateful for their support and have them to thank for my success.

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My sincerest gratitude to my family, especially Moot. Thank you for believing in me, even when I didn't believe in myself. I love you guys so much and am thankful for your endless support, humor, patience, and love.

I dedicate my dissertation to my parents, Ann and Jerry Johnson and to my aunt, Mary Rada. Without them I would not have made it this far. They have taught me the value of hard work and the importance of education. There are not enough words to express my gratitude for your endless love and support. Because of you, I know I can achieve anything I set my mind to.

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Chapter I: Introduction

In the last few years, many have highlighted the benefits of being mindful. Until recently, research was focused primarily on the benefits of mindfulness in clinical settings (Jansen et al., 2021). Increasingly, however, researchers are also examining the effects of mindfulness in the workplace, suggesting that mindfulness training could be an antidote to stress among workers (Tuckey et al., 2018). reinforcing their resilience to adversity (Keng et al., 2011). More specifically, Shapiro et al. (2006) reported that mindfulness appears to play a role in optimizing several workplace processes that are vulnerable to the effects of stress, including decision making, problem solving and productivity.

In contrast, the existing research on the potential benefits of mindfulness for leaders is mostly theoretical in nature (Reb et al., 2014), with few empirical results available. For example, some authors confirmed that mindfulness in leaders had beneficial effects on their mental health (Roche et al., 2014), while other authors have found a relationship between leaders' mindfulness and employee well-being and performance (Reb et al., 2014). However, very few studies have investigated the relationship between leaders' mindfulness and specific leadership behaviors. Interestingly, two of these studies indicate that mindfulness is associated with more effective team management and interpersonal communication (Baron et al., 2018).

Crisis management and leading in crisis have not been a significant emphasis in teaching organizational behavior, strategic management, or leadership development. A few examples have shifted the trend. Waller et al., (2013) suggest that crisis management education ought to address team capability for dealing with crisis. Clemson and Samara (2013) showed that crisis

management simulations using narrative inquiry help determine transformative learning (Powley & Taylor, 2014).

Jaques (2012, p. 366) proposes that “crisis leadership has become a strong element of crisis management, yet much of the published research is primarily observational, based on the performance of leaders in crisis situations or prescriptions for preferred behavior.” Jaques (2012, p. 366) also stated, “similarly, much of the broader crisis management literature remains highly process-driven and tactical, with a strong emphasis on the ‘how to’ of getting ready for a crisis and what to do when it strikes.”

Jaques (2012) also states that it has been calculated that perhaps 90% of the crisis management literature focuses primarily on tactical response (Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992), even the most superficial treatments identify the importance of leadership in crisis response. This has led to an increasing examination of crisis leadership in both academic and practitioner publications.

Through a review of related literature, the following mindfulness strategies have emerged as effective tools to implement during crisis leadership; guided meditation, movement (yoga, walking, stretching), and mindful breathing. The literature suggests that the above mindfulness strategies have a positive influence on effective leadership during times of crisis. The review of related literature will focus on crisis leadership, mindfulness strategies, and the relationship between the two. The following themes identified within this chapter include:

- Crisis Leadership
- Mindfulness
- Studies of Mindfulness Practices

- Studies of Mindfulness and Leadership
- Explanation of Mindfulness Practices; guided meditation, movement, and mindful breathing.

Mindfulness-based awareness facilitates more flexible, adaptive responses, and contributes to the reduction of automatic, habitual, or impulsive reactions (Bishop et al., 2004; Ryan and Deci, 2004). Mindfulness is paying attention, in the moment, to internal and external experiences, in a non-judgmental way. It is simply noticing, without attachment or aversion, what is happening in any given moment—body sensations, thoughts, and emotions—and in the person’s environment (e.g., Bishop et al., 2004; Walach et al., 2006; Coholic, 2011; Vago & Silbersweig, 2012).

When considering the leadership process, leaders continue to receive the most attention (Chhokar, Brodbeck, & House, 2007; Hackmann & Wageman, 2005). Command and control leadership works well for immediate life-threatening crises (crime fighting, firefighting, triage in emergency situations; Grint, 2008). Other types of prolonged crises require distributive leadership due to needing leaders in multiple professions and at multiple locations.

In addition, skilled crisis leaders recognize the importance of following protocol while paradoxically deviating from it when situations demand it (Demiroz & Kapucu, 2012; Kapucu & Van Wart, 2008). The leaders in both crisis situations deviated from standard protocol, which required calculated risk-taking and creative thinking made possible by past experience (Bolden et al., 2016).

Statement of the Problem

Little research was found that examines or identifies how mindfulness practices are utilized by educational administrators to effectively lead during times of crisis. Research has shown that mindfulness practices have positively impacted leadership and individual well-being in times of crisis. Wooten and James (2008, p. 372) shared, although prior crisis management research has described how crises unfold across various phases, “there is virtually no research that identifies the knowledge, skills or abilities necessary to lead an organization through these phases.”

When an organization faces a crisis, leadership is required to guide the organization through this phase and ensure its survival (Mumford et al., 2007). In situations such as this, however, leadership cannot simply be a repetition of practices previously regarded as ‘good leadership’, as these may well have contributed to the failures that led to the crisis or a failure to respond adequately to the crisis.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative study is to analyze the extent to which a select group of Minnesota secondary school administrators report their level of awareness of mindfulness practices, use and frequency of practice, and perceived personal effectiveness of mindfulness strategies used during crisis leadership.

The results of this study intend to furnish school administrators and districts with an understanding of mindfulness strategies and the effectiveness of those strategies to implement during crisis leadership, ultimately impacting the overall well-being of the organization. The

findings of the study may reveal select strategies and their importance during crisis leadership as experienced by Minnesota secondary school administrators.

Research Questions

The following questions were developed by the researcher to guide the study:

1. To what extent do Minnesota secondary school administrators report their level of awareness of mindfulness practices?
2. Which mindfulness practices do Minnesota secondary school administrators report using during crisis leadership?
3. To what extent do Minnesota secondary school administrators report the frequency of use of mindfulness practices during crisis leadership?
4. To what extent do Minnesota secondary school administrators report their perceived personal effectiveness of mindfulness practices during crisis leadership?

Assumptions of the Study

Assumptions within a study are expectations, or “what you take for granted relative to your study” (Roberts, 2010, p. 139). Assumptions are “presumed to be true, often only temporarily or for a specific purpose...” (Vogt & Johnson, 2011 p. 16). The following are assumptions made by the researcher while conducting the quantitative study:

1. It is assumed that not all participants in the sample population will participate in the study.
2. It is assumed that study participants will answer the questionnaire honestly.

3. It is assumed that study participants have been exposed to, or are aware of, the practices of mindfulness examined in this study. The mindfulness practices examined in this study are guided meditation, movement, and mindful breathing.
4. It is assumed that not all participants have experienced a crisis during their career as administrators.
5. It is assumed that all participants are secondary school administrators in a Principal or Assistant Principal capacity who have schools with any configuration of secondary grades sixth through twelfth.

Delimitations of the Study

Delimitations “indicate to the reader how you narrowed your study’s scope. You control the delimitations—what will be included and what will be left out” (Roberts, 2010, p. 138).

Delimitations result from the design and execution of the study, choices that the researcher made (Simon & Goes, 2012).

Delimitations in the study include:

1. This study focused only on Minnesota secondary school administrators, both Principals and Assistant Principals who are active members of Minnesota Association of Secondary School principals (MASSP). Therefore, results of this study will only be generalized back to this population.
2. The researcher will limit participants who reported experiencing a crisis during their career as administrator.
3. The survey questions were kept brief to encourage a higher response rate and focused results from respondents.

4. Not all participants in the sample population participated in the questionnaire response.

Significance of the Study

Crisis leadership has become a strong element of crisis management scholarship, yet much of the published research is primarily observational, based on the performance of leaders in crisis situations or prescriptions for preferred behavior. Similarly, much of the broader crisis management literature remains highly process-driven and tactical, with a strong emphasis on the 'how to' of getting ready for a crisis and what to do when it strikes (Jaques, 2012, p. 366).

Although it has been calculated that perhaps 90% of the crisis management literature focuses primarily on tactical response (Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992), even the most superficial treatments identify the importance of leadership in crisis response. This has led to an increasing examination of crisis leadership in both academic and practitioner publications.

Mindfulness is a state of being openly attentive to and aware of what is taking place in the present moment, internally and externally (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Kabat-Zinn, 1982, 2009). The impact of practicing mindfulness on self- and social awareness and on self-regulation of emotions and behaviors has been well documented (e.g., Goleman & Davidson, 2017).

Crisis management and leading in crisis have not been a significant emphasis in teaching organizational behavior, strategic management, or leadership development. A few recent examples have shifted the trend. Waller et al. (2013) suggest that crisis management education ought to address team capability for dealing with crisis. Clemson and Samara

(2013) showed that crisis management simulations using narrative inquiry help determine transformative learning. (Powley & Taylor, 2014)

Mindfulness-based awareness facilitates more flexible, adaptive responses, and contributes to the reduction of automatic, habitual, or impulsive reactions (Bishop et al., 2004; Ryan & Deci, 2004). Mindfulness is paying attention, in the moment, to internal and external experiences, in a non-judgmental way. It is simply noticing, without attachment or aversion, what is happening in any given moment—body sensations, thoughts, and emotions—and in the person’s environment. (e.g., Bishop et al., 2004; Coholic, 2011; Vago & Silbersweig, 2012; Walach et al., 2006).

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined to assist the reader:

Crisis: Demiroz and Kapucu (2012) define crises as unforeseen emergency events, natural or manmade, that lead to unstable or dangerous conditions. Depending on magnitude, crises involve an individual, a group, an organization, a species or an entire society.

Crisis Leaders: Required crisis leader competencies include clarity of vision and values, decision making, problem solving, adaptability, team development, communication, and constant situational acuity (Demiroz & Kapucu, 2012; Kapucu & Van Wart, 2008; Klann, 2003).

Crisis Response Leadership Matrix: The crisis response leadership matrix provides a rubric for identifying the type of leader most equipped to lead an organization through a crisis given the crisis environment and organizational culture.

Crisis Response Leadership Principles: A set of corresponding principles that counterbalance the impact of the crisis realities and, when applied to crisis recovery, enable organizations to mitigate those effects and take actions that lead to a positive crisis recovery.

Leadership: Researchers Vroom and Jago (2007, p. 18) define leadership as “a process of motivating people to work together collaboratively to accomplish great things. Thus, during crisis, leadership becomes a group dynamic during which leaders and followers co-construct the reality of the situation and interact to achieve a shared outcome.

Mindfulness: Mindfulness is a state of being openly attentive to and aware of what is taking place in the present moment, internally and externally (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Kabat-Zinn, 1982, 2009). Kabat-Zinn (2013) described mindfulness as a method to change the way people see and respond to situations.

Mindful Breathing: This basic meditation exercise embodies the central features of mindfulness practice: intentionally paying attention to moment-by-moment experience with an attitude of acceptance (Kabat-Zinn, 1994, Shapiro et al., 2006). The primary focus of this exercise is on the direct perception of breathing rather than thoughts themselves.

Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR): “MBSR is based on training attention through straight- forward, secular, meditation techniques. It seeks to change our relationship with stressful thoughts and events, by decreasing emotional reactivity and enhancing cognitive appraisal” (Gold et al., 2009, p. 185).

Mindfulness Strategies: Include but are not limited to body scan, tai chi, mindful breathing, yoga, walking meditation, meditation, mindful eating, and loving kindness meditation (Kabat-Zinn & Hanh, 2009).

Meditation: Meditation is a practice that has existed for over 5,000 years and is used for both healing and contemplative reasons; the word meditation is derived from the Latin “meditari,” which means “to engage in contemplation or reflection” (Chiesa & Malinowski, 2011, p. 407).

Movement: Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines movement as; An act of changing physical location or position or of having this changed. For purposes of this study the researcher provided examples of movement such as yoga, walking, stretching.

Reperceive: “shifting our relationship to experience, becoming less identified with it, and better able to see it with clarity and objectivity” (Shapiro, 2009, p. 558).

Resilience: “a quality that enables teachers to maintain their commitment to teaching and their teaching practices despite challenging conditions and recurring setbacks” (Brunetti, 2006, p. 813).

Workplace Mindfulness Training (WMT): A study of organizations that completed workplace mindfulness training (WMT). A framework of the perceived impact of mindfulness training on self-leadership and leadership capabilities. WMT exhibited impact on three self-leadership capacities: mindful task management, self-care and self-reflection and two leadership capacities: relating to others and adapting to change.

Yoga: Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines yoga as; A system of physical postures, breathing techniques, and sometimes meditation derived from Yoga but often practiced independently especially in Western cultures to promote physical and emotional well-being.

Organization of the Study

The study is presented in five chapters.

Chapter I contains an introduction to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, assumptions, delimitations of the study, definition of terms, and organization of the study.

Chapter II features a review of related literature and is organized according to the following themes: crisis leadership, mindfulness, studies of mindfulness practices, studies of mindfulness practices and leadership, and an explanation of mindfulness practices including guided meditation, movement, and mindful breathing.

Chapter III presents the methodology of the study and includes: the introduction, research problem, research purpose, research questions, research design, participants, human subject approval–Institutional Review Board (IRB), instrument of data collection and analysis, procedures, and summary.

Chapter IV reports the results and analyzes the data collected from the study and compiles it based on the findings. Chapter IV is segmented into the research overview, research methods, analysis, demographic information, research question one, and research questions two, three and four, and the summary.

Chapter V covers the summary of the findings and includes the research problem, research purpose, research questions, research design, conclusions of research questions one, two, three and four, limitations, recommendation for further research, recommendation for practice and the summary.

Chapter II: Review of the Literature

The review of literature suggests that mindfulness strategies have an influence on effective crisis leadership. The review of related literature focused on crisis leadership, mindfulness strategies, and the relationship between the two.

The following themes identified within this chapter include:

- Crisis Leadership,
- Mindfulness,
- Studies of Mindfulness Practices,
- Studies of Mindfulness and Leadership,
- Explanation of Mindfulness Practices; guided meditation, movement, and mindful breathing,
- Summary.

The purpose of this quantitative study is to analyze the extent to which a select group of Minnesota secondary school administrators report their level of awareness of mindfulness practices, use and frequency of practice, and perceived personal effectiveness of mindfulness strategies used during crisis leadership.

The results of this study intend to furnish school administrators and districts with an understanding of mindfulness strategies and the effectiveness of those strategies to implement during crisis leadership. The findings of the study may reveal select strategies and their importance during crisis leadership as experienced by Minnesota secondary school administrators.

Crisis Leadership

Crisis leadership has become a strong element of crisis management scholarship, yet much of the published research is primarily observational, based on the performance of leaders in crisis situations or prescriptions for preferred behavior. Similarly, much of the broader crisis management literature remains highly process-driven and tactical, with a strong emphasis on the ‘how to’ of getting ready for a crisis and what to do when it strikes. This review of literature provides a more strategic management perspective, looking specifically at the leadership role in crisis management (Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992).

Although it has been calculated that perhaps 90% of the crisis management literature focuses primarily on tactical response (Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992), even the most superficial treatments identify the importance of leadership in crisis response. This has led to an increasing examination of crisis leadership in both academic and practitioner publications.

Broadly, examination of crisis leadership has tended to fall into some well-established categories:

- Leadership qualities in crisis response (Boin & 't Hart, 2003; Garcia, 2006; James & Wooten, 2005; Klann, 2003; Wooten & James, 2008),
- The closely related field of the leader as crisis communicator/spokesperson (Cole & Fellows, 2008; Farmer & Tvedt, 2005; Kozacik, 2003; Levick, 2010; Lucero et al., 2009; Oliveira & Murphy, 2009),
- The leader in post-crisis sense making and recovery (Coombs, 2000; Hearit, 2006; Heath, 2004; Jaques, 2012; Seeger et al., 2005) and, sadly,

- Continuing focus on the leader as the actual cause of crises (Black, 2009, Dubrovski, 2009; O'Rourke, 2004; Seeger & Ulmer, 2003; Wade et al., 2008; Zahram et al., 2007).

Beyond these largely responsive roles, the emergence of the process approach to crisis management has focused increasing attention on crisis leadership in the management phases prior to the triggering event. This in turn has broadened the perceived leadership role far beyond crisis response and crisis communication (Dubrovski, 2009).

The Role of Leadership in Crisis

A key challenge here is the paucity of empirical research into crisis leadership. In fact, Schoenberg (2005) described crisis leadership as one of the most important yet least studied factors in crisis management. In the same vein, Wooten and James (2008, p. 372) lamented that, although prior crisis management research has described how crises unfold across various phases, “there is virtually no research that identifies the knowledge, skills or abilities necessary to lead an organization through these phases.

In this respect, an early conclusion by Pauchant and Mitroff (1992, p. 130) was that “the involvement of top managers is absolutely essential for developing a systemic strategy in crisis management and convincing others in the organization to cooperate.” Yet, their seminal study of top managers in major organizations in the US, Canada and France found at the same time that 50% of the managers interviewed still saw crisis management as a mostly technical issue and that the same proportion ‘considered crisis management efforts to be reactive in nature, to be applied strictly for the purpose of returning to “business and usual” as soon as possible.

Adding to this concern, Wooten and James (2008, p. 353) felt that theoretical development of the crisis management field is too much centered-on communication strategies and frameworks. “Viewing crisis management only through a communication lens, they said, undermines other important leadership responsibilities.”

Several authors have itemized what they believe are the roles and responsibilities of an effective crisis leader. For example, Boin et al. (2010) suggested five crucial tasks for leadership—sense making of the crisis, making decisions to deal with it, framing and making meaning of the crisis to stakeholders, terminating the crisis to restore normalcy and steering the organization to learn from the crisis. For their part, James and Wooten (2005) identified six core leadership competencies—building a foundation of trust, creating a new corporate mindset, identifying the (not so) obvious organizational vulnerabilities, making wise and rapid decisions, taking courageous action and learning from the crisis to effect change.

Although there are some elements of commonality between these and similar lists, James and Wooten pointed out: “The best organizational crisis leadership is generally not evident, because these organizations are less likely to experience a crisis, and when a crisis does occur, they are managed in such a way that the sensationalism of the crisis is weakened” (2005, p. 150).

Managing Crisis

Organizations are keenly aware of the potentially devastating impact of a crisis. Typically, when a crisis occurs, the response from the organization facing the crisis can range from pandemonium to a controlled, purposeful, and well-orchestrated crisis resolution, depending on the characteristics of the leadership team in place at the time and the prevailing

organizational culture. The response to the crisis will determine the trajectory of recovery and future organizational performance. In preparation, vigilant organizations should scan the horizon for signs of an impending crisis. Since the job of leadership is to address the crisis as quickly and effectively as possible, an enhanced environmental scan is prescribed by the CRLP that, unlike the traditional environmental scan, assesses how organizational culture and choice of leadership team both directly impact the probability of successfully managing a crisis (Lockwood, 2005).

Organizations, however, rarely allocate resources to crisis management preparedness since crisis management is not a part of their day-to-day operational activities. As stated by Hickman and Crandall (1997, p. 75): “Despite past disasters and the millions of dollars of damage they have rung up, many organizations are not prepared for a catastrophe to occur.” Crisis management readiness receives little to no attention under normal operating conditions for a variety of reasons, one of which is the belief that the organization is unlikely to be affected by a crisis. In an article on crisis management, Lockwood (2005) cited a 2005 Disaster Preparedness Survey which indicated that even after the 9/11 attacks, 45% of the organizations surveyed did not create or revise disaster preparedness plans.

Organizations rarely allocate adequate resources to prepare for crisis management. This stems from the notion that it is very difficult to anticipate a crisis. Lockwood (2005) presented five reasons why managers and organizations fail in this regard:

1. Denial of an impending threat to the organization.
2. A reluctance to make crisis preparedness a priority.
3. A lack of awareness of the risks inherent to the business.

4. Ignorance of warning signs accompanied by a failure to critically analyze the organization's own history or the disaster experiences of others in the industry or locale.
5. Reliance on weak, untested plans that will not effectively protect organizations in a real crisis.

Crisis Response Leadership Principles

How can an organization ensure that it is prepared and postured for a successful response when a crisis occurs? Having identified three realities of crisis management, the literature offers a set of corresponding principles that counterbalance the impact of the crisis realities and, when applied to crisis recovery, enable organizations to mitigate those effects and take actions that lead to a positive crisis recovery. Since all organizations are very likely to experience a crisis at some point in time, they can position themselves to maneuver through any crisis successfully by applying the Crisis Response Leadership Principles (CRLP) before the crisis occurs and choosing the appropriate leader at the onset of the crisis via the Crisis Response Leadership Principles

First crisis leadership principle: Crisis management requires more time and resources than initially perceived. An organization should manage expectations early to facilitate stakeholder ownership and acquire additional resources and time to expand the required operating space.

Second crisis leadership principle: Focusing on Public Relations distractions is misguided. Instead, an organization should focus efforts on resolving the crisis. It is critical to communicate that a clear action plan is being developed to deliver a successful crisis response.

Do not be tempted to declare victory too early because it erodes credibility and prolongs the actual crisis.

Third crisis leadership principle: Culture plays a huge role in the development and management of a crisis. Furthermore, leadership style matters—not all leaders are best suited for handling a crisis. Therefore, organizations must perceive, prepare, and position for crisis response by knowing the organization’s culture and leaders, and applying the CRLM based on crisis environment, organizational culture, and leadership style to select the right leader for the crisis.

The Crisis Response Leadership Matrix

The crisis response leadership matrix provides a rubric for identifying the type of leader most equipped to lead an organization through a crisis given the crisis environment and organizational culture. The crisis itself can be either internal (e.g., moral or ethical failures, an unanticipated change in leadership, poor oversight, product failures) or external (e.g., environmental disasters due to acts of nature, pandemic threats, targeted public acts, stock market crashes) to the organization. The three organizational cultures—hierarchy, clan/adhocracy, and elitist—are combined with the crisis environment to form the Crisis Response Leadership Matrix. Each cell is then populated with the leadership style—directive, transformational, cognitive, or transactional—best suited to manage the particular crisis. The Crisis Response Leadership Matrix is presented as Figure 1.

Figure 1*Crisis Response Leadership Matrix*

	Elitist Culture	Hierarchy Culture	Clan/Adhocracy
Internal Crisis	<i>Cognitive</i> <i>Directive</i> <i>Transformational</i>	<i>Directive</i> <i>Transformational</i>	<i>Transformational</i>
External Crisis	<i>Transformational</i>	<i>Transformational</i>	<i>Transformational</i>

Mindfulness

A commonly accepted definition of Mindfulness is a mental state characterized by non-judgmental awareness of present moment experience, including one's sensations, thoughts, bodily states, consciousness, and the environment, while encouraging openness, and acceptance (Bishop et al., 2004; Kabat-Zinn, 2003). As mindfulness and meditation have gained popularity, an increasing number of researchers began to study various practices and techniques. People can practice mindfulness in a variety of ways and is now recognized as having the potential to transform workplaces. Researchers suggest that mindfulness affects leadership because mindful leaders engage in behaviors that support the creation of trusting relationships.

The following sections will explain the impact of mindfulness on cognition, emotion, and behavior: Re-perceiving, Cognitive Capacity and Flexibility, Emotion and Behavior Regulation, Self and Social Awareness. Each of these components contributes to the practice of mindfulness. Mindfulness is paying attention, on purpose, non-judgmentally. This is facilitated by a

re-perceiving process that results in seeing reality clearly, without emotional attachment, and increases cognitive capacity and flexibility (Shapiro et al., 2006). This clarity and enhanced cognition allow leaders access to their own knowledge and skills, improving the leader's problem-solving and decision-making skills. We argue that mindfulness will enhance leader ability and the followers' perceptions of the leader as competent. This will reduce followers' perception of uncertainty and increase their willingness to be vulnerable.

Re-Perceiving

Shapiro et. al. (2006) proposes a model that suggests that intentionally attending with openness and non-judgmentalness leads to dis-identification or decentering and opens the possibility for a significant shift in perspective which they refer to as "re-perceiving." Re-perceiving is to be considered as a meta-mechanism of action that is associated with additional direct mechanisms that lead to change in attitudes and behaviors. Specifically, re-perceiving enhances one's capacity to take the perspective of another person and facilitates empathy.

Cognitive Capacity and Flexibility

Mindfulness has been shown to increase cognitive capacity, specifically working memory capacity. By being able to focus ones' attention, cognitive capacity is not wasted on mind wandering and irrelevant narratives or thoughts. The primary impact of mindfulness on cognition is through its influence on cognitive flexibility, which is facilitated through re-perceiving. Rather than being constrained by automaticity or reactivity, re-perceiving allows for a "beginner's mind." This allows for more accurate and complete processing of information. Glomb et al. (2011) differentiate between core (e.g., re-perceiving/decentering) and secondary processes (e.g., response flexibility) of mindfulness. They propose that the resulting self-regulation of thoughts,

emotions, and behaviors is the central benefit of a mindfulness practice. To be present in the moment and aware of what is taking place in your mind but also your surroundings.

Emotion and Behavior Regulation

Emotions are the result of the evaluative assessment of observed stimuli. Emotion regulation refers to how individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express them (Gross, 1998). Among others, Hölzel et al. (2011) found that mindfulness practice improves emotion regulation, especially in times of heightened anxiety or over stimulation. Mindfulness allows for objectively, without judgment, observing an event or one's emotional reaction to the event. This mindful processing of the stimulation promotes more neutral evaluations and results in possible reconstruction of a negative or stressful event as beneficial, meaningful, or benign.

Exposure, extinction, and reconsolidation are additional influences on emotion regulation (Hölzel et al., 2011). This is the process in which our brain practices mindfulness. During mindfulness practice, one learns to turn toward rather than avoid unpleasant thoughts or experiences, including unpleasant emotions (exposure). A result of that exposure is the discovery that the unpleasant emotions are transient and pass away (extinction) and a "sense of safety or well-being" can be experienced in their place (reconsolidation). Such non-reactivity leads to unlearning of previous connections and thereby providing freedom from habitual emotional reactions.

Mindfulness practice effects extend beyond improving emotional self-regulation (Atkins & Styles, 2015). It has been suggested that mindfulness facilitates a shift from treating self-referential statements as literal truths to flexibly engaging with them and allowing for a self-as-

process and self-as-perspective view of individual identity (Törneke, 2010). This type of shift is desirable in the work context as it results in more behavioral predictability and consistency and reduces uncertainty. Hölzel et al. (2011) provide a detailed summary of the neuroscientific findings related to changes in self-referential processing due to mindfulness. They show changes occur from a view of an unchanging self to one where the self becomes observable to the meditator through development of meta-awareness.

The efficacy of emotion regulation has been shown by the results of a meta-analysis on the effects of mindfulness programs. They showed that mindfulness is associated with less negative and more positive emotional tone (Eberth & Sedlmeier, 2012) and that mindfulness speeds up recovery from negative emotions (Keng et al., 2011). Both, more positive emotional tone and faster release of negativity are important to social interactions, relationships, and workplace climate.

Mindfulness promotes regulation of behavior that improves well-being (Brown & Ryan, 2003, 2004; Deci & Ryan, 1980; Ryan, 2005). The observant processing of internal and external stimuli facilitates the regulation of action through “the provision of choice that is informed by abiding needs, values, and feelings and their fit with situational options and demands” (Brown et al., 2007, p. 223). Mindfulness-based awareness facilitates more flexible, adaptive responses, and contributes to the reduction of automatic, habitual, or impulsive reactions (Bishop et al., 2004; Ryan & Deci, 2004). When one acts mindfully, one’s action is based on a chosen response made possible by the creation of a mental gap between the stimulus–response connection that shapes automatic behavior. Such chosen behavior is disengaged from its usual causes (Baumeister & Sommer, 1997).

Self and Social Awareness

Mindfulness is paying attention, in the moment, to internal and external experiences, in a non-judgmental way. It is simply noticing, without attachment or aversion, what is happening in any given moment—body sensations, thoughts, and emotions—and in the person’s environment. The positive impact of mindfulness on self-regulatory and self-referential processes allows such moment-to-moment open, accepting awareness, which results in increased self- and social awareness. The relationship between mindfulness practice and self- and social awareness and focus have been well-established (e.g., Bishop et al., 2004; Walach et al., 2006; Coholic, 2011; Vago & Silbersweig, 2012).

Studies of Mindfulness Practices

The process of an individual intentionally understanding themselves and their approach to any number of situations in a mindful manner is the shift mindfulness practices create (Didonna, 2008; Higgins, 1987; Shapiro et al., 2006; Vago & Silbersweig, 2012), improving opportunities to successfully navigating new situations and continuously gathering understandings of oneself (Hoy et al., 2006, p. 238). As mindfulness and meditation gained popularity in society, an increasing number of researchers began to study the techniques (Williams & Kabat-Zinn, 2011). People can practice mindfulness in a variety of ways, and findings indicate that Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) is an intervention that is beneficial for a wide range of issues.

The studies illustrated below prove the impact of mindfulness techniques on the participants’ mental health and leadership capabilities. A 2012 study focused on the ability of elementary school principals to create such an atmosphere (Fitzgerald, 2012). The study was

conducted in Oregon across six urban school districts. The participants were ten elementary school principals. The purpose of this study was to identify the leader's ability to utilize mindfulness practices to transform a school toward a more effective, collaborative culture.

The participants in this study took the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) (Avolio & Bass, 2004) and the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) (Brown & Ryan, 2003) conducted through interviews at their school-sites. After gathering the results of the data from both tests, data reported three principals were identified as 'transformational', having scored the highest in leadership qualities and mindfulness when establishing academic rigor and teacher effectiveness in their schools. Further analysis of the data revealed consistency with three responses from the interview regarding transformative leadership: integrity, risk-taking, and transparency/honesty.

The interviewers chose integrity as a quality in which a transformative leader must have. Their responses ranged from discussing the importance of communication to the power of relationships with coworkers. Along with integrity, another quality counted was teachers having the confidence to take risks. A part of risk-taking, as shown throughout the interview process, was trusting peers at work. In order to overcome challenges, a transformative leader must be willing to trust those around them and help those people become leaders as well. With this comes transparent, honest communication. School leaders having meaningful conversations with those they recognize as someone who needs it or deserves it can create opportunities for them and their school, further urging a present state of awareness mindfulness cultivates and is necessary from the leader (Didonna, 2009; Higgins, 1987; Hoy et al., 2006; Shapiro et al., 2006; Vago &

Silbersweig, 2012). The study brought to light the importance of school environments being mindful and having a moral compass, modeling expectations, and bettering others.

Hoy et al. (2006) further explore the impact of mindful leaders on mindful environments for teachers. The researchers identify the reliant culture of educational routines and standard practices, pointing out that the robustness of routines may stand unevolved even when confronted with issue. “Once habits are formed, it is difficult to break and respond in novel ways, especially if the routines have been successful. Mindful behavior of individuals and organizations is more than simply being alert; it is a habit of mind that scans for subtle changes that cause trouble (Hoy et al., 2006, p. 237). For educational environments to cultivate a mindful approach to all situations, rigid standards and practices within the environment must be retired (Hoy et al., 2006). “When teachers and administrators simply follow rules or comply with senseless orders, they are mindless...” (Hoy et al., 2006, p. 238), further exemplifying that “...the causes of mindlessness that influence daily behavior are repetition, narrow mindsets, preoccupation with ends rather than means, and context confusion” (Hoy et al., 2006, p. 238).

Due to mindfulness requiring individuals to be flexible, non-judgmental, and to have the ability to break their normalcies, routines are counterproductive of cultivating a mindful environment. Furthermore, Hoy (2003) differentiates the importance of mindful organizations over the number of collective mindful individuals in an organization. Ray et al. (2011) offered five processes to help organizational mindfulness: preoccupation with failure, Reluctance to Simplify, Sensitivity to Operations, Commitment to Resilience, and Deference to Expertise (Ray et al., 2011). Preoccupation with Failure implicates organizations to confront failures as commonplace, sharing mistakes and openly reporting problems (Ray et al., 2011). This creates a

culture that fails fast and often and is comfortable with openly failing for continual improvement. Reluctance to Simplify involves organizations refusing old ways of identifying new solutions, rather “seeking divergent views” (Ray et al., 2011, p. 190). Sensitivity to Operations focuses on organization’s awareness of present, relevant details to current situations with continuous adjustments (Ray et al, 2011).

Commitment to Resilience involves quick, accurate corrections to situational errors before anything can become worse (Ray et al., 2011). Finally, Deference to Expertise focuses organizations toward strategically utilizing individuals who have specific sets of knowledge regardless of their level or rank within the organization, “...recognizing that authority does not equate expertise” (Ray et al., 2011, p. 190).

Studies of Mindfulness and Leadership

Mindfulness training is a novel method of leader development but contrary to its rising popularity, there is a scarcity of research investigating how mindfulness training may affect leader capabilities (Rupprecht et al., 2019). Mindfulness is promoted as an effective leader development tool in popular literature (Bunting, 2016; Hougaard & Carter, 2018; Reitz & Chaskalson, 2016) and increasingly offered in leader development trainings. Leaders who are highly self-aware, identify strongly with being a leader and are highly self-efficacious are more likely to be effective leaders (Day & Dragoni, 2015). Furthermore, researchers highlight the importance of leaders’ ability to regulate (negative) emotions. Mindfulness training may be uniquely positioned to provide leaders with a method useful to engage in continuous self-development by providing them with a practical tool that aids them in gaining awareness and manage their own and others’ emotions more effectively.

A study conducted by Rupprecht et al. (2019) illustrates how leaders experience the effects of mindfulness training on leader capabilities. Rupprecht et al.'s study consisted of 13 leaders working in 6 different organizations that completed a 10-week workplace mindfulness training (WMT). The researchers conducted semi-structured interviews 6 to 12 months following course completion. Researchers then analyzed the data following thematic analysis steps and based on these findings, devised a framework of the perceived impact of mindfulness training on self-leadership and leadership capabilities. The data showed that WMT exhibited impact on three self-leadership capacities: mindful task management, self-care and self-reflection and two leadership capacities: relating to others and adapting to change. The results show that WMT may be a promising tool for self-directed leadership development and outline avenues for future research (Rupprecht et al., 2019).

Mindfulness training may be uniquely positioned to provide leaders with a method useful to engage in continuous self-development by providing them with a practical tool that aids them in gaining awareness and manage their own and others' emotions more effectively. While this is a developing research field, a variety of scholars have already laid out the potential of mindfulness training for leader development, suggesting it may impact leaders' information processing and decision-making (Sauer & Kohls, 2011), relationship quality and communication (Good et al., 2016), ability to adapt to organizational change (Hyland et al., 2015), and even change organizational culture (King & Badham, 2018; Kohl et al., 2013).

Figure 1 (Rupprecht et al., 2019) displays a framework of the outcomes of the analysis. Leaders indicated that the training impacted the development of self-leadership and leadership capacities. Additionally, leaders reported occasional spill-over effects to their teams or to the

organizational level. It is important to note that none of the interviewees mentioned experiencing any adverse effects to WMT—even after additional prompts from interviewers.

Leaders' improvements in self-leadership were evident in new skills concerning effective task management, self-care and self-reflection. The data suggests that the leaders used mindfulness to enhance their effectiveness and performance including becoming more aware of their personal limits of performance. Specifically, enhanced levels of self-awareness, attention and emotion regulation were applied as mechanisms of change to improve their effectiveness.

Rupprecht et al. also found that “leaders were using mindfulness skills, specifically self-regulation and emotion regulation, to continuously develop and evolve both as leaders and actively shape and form their formal and informal role. The leaders described both mental and behavioral shifts, often but not always with the former paving the way for the latter. For example, leaders gave comprehensive examples of how they changed their perception of others, and in turn related differently to them.

Following WMT, leaders recounted many instances where they perceived themselves as engaging in a more mindful way with followers. For example, they indicated that they listened in a more mindful way and that they experienced a greater ability to regulate their emotions and guide followers through emotional difficulties. “Leaders also recounted a greater acceptance of change and ability to focus on solutions” (Rupprecht et al., 2019).

The outcomes suggest that leaders improved three self-leadership capacities: mindful task management, self-care and self-reflection and two leadership capacities: relating to others and adapting to change. The effects of WMT may also expand to the level of the team and the organization.

Explanations of Mindfulness Practices

This study will focus on the following mindfulness strategies, guided meditation, movement, and mindful breathing. Mindfulness practices encourage characteristics necessary to effective crisis leaders by allowing administrators to approach any issue, regardless of context, equipped with an open mind and an understanding of types of inquiries that should be made. Germer (2004) promoted the use of mindfulness as a method to reduce suffering by allowing people to be in the moment and less reactive; instead of being “caught up” in the past or future, the goal was to remain in the present and accept that moment without judgement.

The concept of mindfulness originated from an “English translation of the Pali word *sati*” which “connotes awareness, attention, and remembering” (Germer, 2004, p. 25). Although the concept has been around for a long time, mindfulness is a word difficult to define (Chisea, 2011). Siegel et al. (2009) described mindfulness as a concept best understood if you experience it. Harris (2014) simplified and defined mindfulness as acknowledging the mind’s process without assigning value. This creates space for people to respond rather than react to situations; although people cannot control their feelings, they can control their behavior (Harris, 2014).

Germer’s (2004, p. 26) definition of mindfulness included: “(1) awareness, (2) of the present experience, (3) with acceptance.” Mindfulness is a method of awareness, in which a person chooses to pay attention to the present state. Mindfulness does not mean emptying the mind of thoughts and emotions; instead, it helps people regulate their emotions (Teper et al., 2013). Mindfulness encourages keeping a receptive state of mind, whereas the goal is to observe facts and to “be present” to reality rather than to react to it (Brown et al., 2007, p. 212). Instead of people experiencing an emotional reaction, mindfulness encourages people to feel the initial

emotion and then mobilize the regulatory emotions needed to control the emotion (Teper et al., 2013).

Guided Meditation

Mindfulness practices usually involve meditation. The word meditation is derived from the Latin “meditari,” which means “to engage in contemplation or reflection” (Chiesa & Malinowski, 2011, p. 407). Meditation as a practice has been in existence for over 5,000 years used for both healing and contemplative reasons (Dakwar & Levin, 2009). Mindfulness and meditation are skills. Chiesa and Malinowski (2011) noted “mindfulness” and “meditation” are two words often used for multiple processes, making the true meaning difficult to capture with one definition. Kabat-Zinn (1982) described “mindfulness meditation” as detached self-observation. People practicing mindfulness meditation have a goal of changing the way they see themselves, through being aware of their body, their emotions, and the attention of their mind (Hölzel et al., 2011).

Mindfulness meditation practice teaches people to observe their thoughts, all thoughts are treated as equal, and people are taught to simply note thoughts as they come. “Mindfulness meditation is an integrative form of meditation that aims to cultivate awareness of the participant’s current experience (notably their thoughts and feelings), as well as an attitude of non-judgement towards this experience” (Lea et al., 2015, p. 53).

Movement

Movement as defined by Merriam-Webster Dictionary; An act of changing physical location or position or of having this changed. For purposes of this study the researcher provided examples of movement such as yoga, walking, stretching.

Mindful Breathing

This basic meditation exercise embodies the central features of mindfulness practice: intentionally paying attention to moment-by-moment experience with an attitude of acceptance (Kabat-Zinn, 1994, Shapiro et al., 2006). The primary focus of this exercise is on the direct perception of breathing rather than thoughts themselves.

Summary

Chapter II outlined the related literature regarding mindfulness practices and leadership during times of crisis. Chapter III will introduce the methodology of the study, and outline the research design, participants, data collection, and data analysis.

Chapter III: Methodology

The purpose of this quantitative study is to analyze the extent to which a select group of Minnesota secondary school administrators report their level of awareness of mindfulness practices, use and frequency of practice, and perceived personal effectiveness of mindfulness strategies used during crisis leadership. Chapter III provides the details of the quantitative study, including methodology, participants, instrumentation, data analysis, and procedures and timeline.

Crisis management and leading in crisis have not been a significant emphasis in teaching organizational behavior, strategic management, or leadership development. A few recent examples have shifted the trend. Waller et al. (2013) suggest that crisis management education ought to address team capability for dealing with crisis. Clemson and Samara (2013) showed that crisis management simulations using narrative inquiry help determine transformative learning (Powley & Taylor, 2014).

Jaques (2012, p. 366) proposes that “crisis leadership has become a strong element of crisis management, yet much of the published research is primarily observational, based on the performance of leaders in crisis situations or prescriptions for preferred behavior.” Jaques (2012, p. 366) also stated, “similarly, much of the broader crisis management literature remains highly process-driven and tactical, with a strong emphasis on the ‘how to’ of getting ready for a crisis and what to do when it strikes.”

Jaques (2012) also states that it has been calculated that perhaps 90 percent of the crisis management literature focuses primarily on tactical response (Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992), even the most superficial treatments identify the importance of leadership in crisis response. This has

led to an increasing examination of crisis leadership in both academic and practitioner publications.

The review of literature suggests that the following factors influence crisis leadership. These have emerged as effective mindfulness strategies in managing crisis leadership. Mindfulness-based awareness facilitates more flexible, adaptive responses, and contributes to the reduction of automatic, habitual, or impulsive reactions (Bishop et al., 2004; Ryan & Deci, 2004). Mindfulness is paying attention, in the moment, to internal and external experiences, in a non-judgmental way. It is simply noticing, without attachment or aversion, what is happening in any given moment—body sensations, thoughts, and emotions—and in the person's environment. (e.g., Bishop et al., 2004; Coholic, 2011; Vago & Silbersweig, 2012; Walach et al., 2006).

When considering the leadership process, leaders continue to receive the most attention (Chhokar et al., 2007; Hackmann & Wageman, 2005). Required crisis leader competencies include clarity of vision and values, decision making, problem solving, adaptability, team development, communication, and constant situational acuity (Demiroz & Kapucu, 2012; Kapucu & Van Wart, 2008; Klann, 2003).

Command and control leadership works well for immediate life-threatening crises (crime fighting, firefighting, triage in emergency situations) (Grint, 2008). Other types of prolonged crises require distributive leadership due to needing leaders in multiple professions and at multiple locations.

In addition, skilled crisis leaders recognize the importance of following protocol while paradoxically deviating from it when situations demand it (Demiroz & Kapucu, 2012; Kapucu & Van Wart, 2008). The leaders in both crisis cases in this study deviated from standard protocol,

which required calculated risk-taking and creative thinking made possible by past experience (Bolden et al., 2016). As these two cases demonstrate, experienced leaders also need experienced followers.

Overview of Related Literature

The review of literature suggests that mindfulness strategies have an influence on effective crisis leadership. The review of related literature focused on crisis leadership, mindfulness strategies, and the relationship between the two. The following themes identified within chapter II include:

- Crisis Leadership
- Mindfulness
- Studies of Mindfulness Practices
- Studies of Mindfulness and Leadership
- Explanation of Mindfulness Practices; guided meditation, movement, and mindful breathing

Problem Statement

Little research was found that examines or identifies how mindfulness practices are utilized by administrators to effectively lead during times of crisis. Much of the research on crisis leadership and mindfulness has explored the two concepts as separate entities. As crisis situations become more frequent in the education system and settings, this study is intended to explore how administrators use select mindfulness strategies to navigate crisis situations. Research has shown that mindfulness practices have positively impacted leadership and individual well-being in times of crisis. Wooten and James (2008, p. 372) shared, although prior

crisis management research has described how crises unfold across various phases, “there is virtually no research that identifies the knowledge, skills or abilities necessary to lead an organization through these phases.”

When an organization faces a serious crisis, leadership is required to guide the organization through this phase and ensure its survival (Mumford et al., 2007). In situations such as this, however, leadership cannot simply be a repetition of practices previously regarded as ‘good leadership’, as these may well have contributed to the failures that led to the crisis or a failure to respond adequately to the crisis.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this quantitative study is to analyze the extent to which a select group of Minnesota secondary school administrators report their level of awareness of mindfulness practices, use and frequency of practice, and perceived personal effectiveness of mindfulness strategies used during crisis leadership.

The results of this study intend to furnish school administrators and districts with an understanding of mindfulness strategies and the effectiveness of those strategies to implement during crisis leadership. The findings of the study may reveal select strategies and their importance during crisis leadership as experienced by Minnesota secondary school administrators.

Research Questions

The study examined Minnesota secondary school administrators’ perceptions of crisis leadership and mindfulness strategies who are active members of Minnesota Association of

Secondary School Principals (MASSP) through the following questions developed by the researcher to guide the study:

1. To what extent do Minnesota secondary school administrators report their level of awareness of mindfulness practices?
2. Which mindfulness practices do Minnesota secondary school administrators report using during crisis leadership?
3. To what extent do Minnesota secondary school administrators report the frequency of use of mindfulness practices during crisis leadership?
4. To what extent do Minnesota secondary school administrators report their perceived personal effectiveness of mindfulness practices during crisis leadership?

Research Design

The study used a quantitative approach based on a forced choice survey with the goal of identifying the level of awareness of mindfulness strategies, frequency of use and/or practice of mindfulness strategies, and the perceived personal effectiveness of mindfulness practices reported by select Minnesota secondary school administrators during crisis leadership.

The survey was comprised of multiple-choice items, Likert scale, and Ordinal scale responses. This survey type was chosen to allow for consistency with administering the same questions to participants, to survey a large number of participants efficiently and to allow the ability to standardize data when analyzing the results to determine specific patterns of frequency that emerged once the data was collected.

A quantitative research approach was used to administer the survey. According to Bergin (2018, p. 19) “Quantitative research is research that focuses on numbers and quantification of

concepts or relationships between concepts. Often the goal of quantitative research is to uncover findings that can be generalizable beyond a single case or context.” The results of the study were used to examine Minnesota administrators practices specifically, and to examine patterns and trends that emerged through the data that was collected.

Variables

A dependent variable is a variable representing the outcome you are interested in. It is the variable whose values you are attempting to predict or explain in your data analysis. An independent variable is a variable that you believe might impact or predict the dependent variable that you’re interested in (Bergin, 2018).

Gender—An independent variable that will be considered is gender.

Years of Experience—An independent variable that will be considered is years of experience as an administrator, in a principal or assistant principal capacity.

Level of Awareness—A dependent variable that will be considered is level of awareness of mindfulness practices.

Frequency—A dependent variable that will be considered is frequency of use and/or practice of mindfulness strategies.

Perceived Personal Effectiveness—A dependent variable that will be considered is perceived personal effectiveness of mindfulness practices used during crisis leadership.

Pilot Testing

A pilot study is a preliminary smaller-scale study that allows a researcher to test and refine research methodologies before conducting the actual, larger study (Bergin 2018). Once the survey was drafted, it was piloted in the Fall of 2021 to a group of licensed administrators,

principals and assistant principals for additional feedback and revisions. Once that process was completed, the researcher contacted MASSP to assist with the administration of the survey for members to participate.

The questionnaire was developed to survey public secondary school administrators in Minnesota to report their level of awareness of mindfulness strategies, frequency of use and/or practice of mindfulness strategy, and perceived personal effectiveness of mindfulness practices. The questionnaire will utilize multiple choice and Likert scale responses. Self-reported categorical data such as gender and years of experience as an administrator will be gathered in the questionnaire.

Participants

The population of the study are secondary school administrators, in the state of Minnesota. The sample population of the study included current, active members (1,200) of Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP) across the state of Minnesota. The researcher worked directly with MASSP to gain permission to survey their members. A convenience sampling was used as the researcher had access to the list serve of potential participants. A criterion sampling was also used to only include participants who have reported having experienced a crisis. The list of potential participants was generated by the list serve provided by MASSP. Participants were invited to complete the survey through an email link provided by MASSP.

MASSP is currently comprised of 1,200 active secondary administrators. According to MASSP, 96% of secondary administrators are members of the organization in the state of Minnesota and the organization is segmented into eight divisions (Capitol, Central, Hennepin,

Northeast, Northern, Southeast, Southwest, and Western) that represent different parts of the state. Members of MASSP were surveyed because of the high percentage of administrators that are part of the organization state-wide that maintain membership. Furthermore, participants that were eligible to participate met the following criteria of having reported experiencing a crisis during their career as administrator, have an awareness of mindfulness, and have used and/or practiced mindfulness strategies during crisis leadership. Participants that did not meet the criteria were not eligible to participate in the study.

Instrument of Data Collection

The study will employ a quantitative approach and will include a survey. The survey design was influenced by data collection instruments created from previous mindfulness studies. The 7-item survey was used to collect data from participants using the Qualtrics. The researcher constructed the survey in consultation and collaboration with the St. Cloud State University Statistical Consultant and Research Center.

It is understood that the electronic questionnaire administered via Qualtrics are to be anonymous, and no IP addresses collected by Qualtrics were used in the research study. The electronic questionnaire information was gathered in order to identify whether there are correlations between participant-reported demographics, and their level of awareness of mindfulness strategies, frequency of use and/or practice of mindfulness strategies, and perceived personal effectiveness of mindfulness strategies regarding crisis leadership. The questions were developed by the researcher after reviewing the literature and using the guiding research questions of the study.

A cover letter was provided, explaining to participants the reason for the research, the nature of the study, informed consent, and researcher contact information. The researcher provided a multiple choice, Likert scale, and Ordinal scale survey for participants to report self-identifying demographics such as gender, and years of experience in addition to reporting their level of awareness of mindfulness strategies, frequency of use and/or practice of mindfulness strategies, and perceived personal effectiveness of mindfulness strategies regarding crisis leadership. Participants are anonymous and any identifying demographic information such as age, race, and location were not collected. The questionnaires were coded and analyzed to determine significant percentages and common themes.

Data Analysis

The researcher consulted the St. Cloud State University Statistical Center to determine how the data would be analyzed and reviewed based on the four research questions. Simple Descriptive Statistics will be used to report frequency distribution of the raw dataset.

Descriptive statistics can give us an overall understanding of the characteristics of our sample data and help us uncover any extreme values or atypical patterns in our data.

Deriving descriptive statistics is often an important first step in the quantitative data analysis process, to gain greater insight into the features of one's sample before endeavoring to generalize from that sample to a population. (Bergin 2018)

Data were collected from participants who are secondary school administrators and active members of Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP).

Study activities included electronically surveying administrators and gathering information regarding participants to report self-identifying demographics such as gender, and

years of experience in addition to reporting their level of awareness of mindfulness strategies, frequency of use and/or practice of mindfulness strategies, and perceived personal effectiveness of mindfulness strategies regarding crisis leadership.

For the items within the survey, the questions consisted of a variety of response options. Response options included multiple choice, a Likert scale comprised of the following choices: *not at all, slightly aware, somewhat aware, moderately aware, extremely aware*, as well as a numerical Likert scale comprised of the following choices: 0, 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7+ and 1-5 years of experience, 6-10 years of experience, 11-15 years of experience, 16-20 years of experience, 21+ years of experience.

The survey was given to participants to gather self-reported demographics such as gender, and years of experience in addition to reporting their level of awareness of mindfulness strategies, frequency of use and/or practice of mindfulness strategies, and perceived personal effectiveness of mindfulness strategies regarding crisis leadership. The goal was to survey administrators from across the state to explore mindfulness strategies as it relates to crisis leadership.

Human Subjects Approval–Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Once the study proposal was approved by the committee, the researcher the researcher obtained the necessary approvals through St. Cloud State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to proceeding with the study.

The researcher provided details of the study regarding permission documents, consent forms, the study procedures, any ethical implications, data collection and security procedures. Participant identities were not collected. Anonymity will be assured in the research study as

names and any identifying information will not be gathered. Data will be securely stored and destroyed after 1 year. Participants will not receive any benefits for taking part in the survey and the researcher will not influence the results. There will be minimal risk involved with participation in the study.

Procedures and Timeline

Participants were initially sent an invitation to participate in the survey the beginning of December 2021 and was open through December 15, 2021. The invitation contained the explanation to participants and outlined the reason for the research, the nature of the survey, informed consent, researcher contact information and the link to the online survey (Appendix A).

Once the survey tool was sent out, the researcher monitored the rate of responses that were submitted. Once the data was collected, the researcher examined and analyzed results based on the four research questions and the patterns that emerged from the data. Comparisons also looked at years of experience, level of mindfulness awareness, mindfulness strategies used and/or practiced, and frequency of use to determine if there was any significance in the factors identified or any patterns or trends that emerged from the data. Simple descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data and correlate items on the survey.

Summary

Chapter III outlined the methodology of this study in the research problem, research purpose, research question, research design, participants, IRB process, instrument of data collection, data analysis and procedure and timeline. Chapter IV will report the findings of this study and Chapter V will provide an in-depth summary of the study, conclusions and recommendations for future research.

Chapter IV: Results

Crisis management and leading in crisis have not been a significant emphasis in teaching organizational behavior, strategic management, or leadership development. A few examples have shifted the trend. Waller et al. (2013) suggest that crisis management education ought to address team capability for dealing with crisis. Clemson and Samara (2013) showed that crisis management simulations using narrative inquiry help determine transformative learning (Powley & Taylor, 2014).

Jaques (2012, p. 366) proposes that “crisis leadership has become a strong element of crisis management, yet much of the published research is primarily observational, based on the performance of leaders in crisis situations or prescriptions for preferred behavior.” Jaques (2012, p. 366) also stated, “similarly, much of the broader crisis management literature remains highly process-driven and tactical, with a strong emphasis on the ‘how to’ of getting ready for a crisis and what to do when it strikes.”

Jaques (2012, p. 366) also states that it has been calculated that perhaps 90 percent of the crisis management literature focuses primarily on tactical response (Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992), even the most superficial treatments identify the importance of leadership in crisis response. This has led to an increasing examination of crisis leadership in both academic and practitioner publications. Mindfulness-based awareness facilitates more flexible, adaptive responses, and contributes to the reduction of automatic, habitual, or impulsive reactions (Bishop et al., 2004; Ryan & Deci, 2004). Mindfulness is paying attention, in the moment, to internal and external experiences, in a non-judgmental way. It is simply noticing, without attachment or aversion, what is happening in any given moment—body sensations, thoughts, and emotions—and in the

person's environment. (e.g., Bishop et al., 2004; Walach et al., 2006; Coholic, 2011; Vago & Silbersweig, 2012).

When considering the leadership process, leaders continue to receive the most attention (Chhokar et al., 2007; Hackmann & Wageman, 2005). Command and control leadership works well for immediate life-threatening crises (crime fighting, firefighting, triage in emergency situations) (Grint, 2008). Other types of prolonged crises require distributive leadership due to needing leaders in multiple professions and at multiple locations. In addition, skilled crisis leaders recognize the importance of following protocol while paradoxically deviating from it when situations demand it (Demiroz & Kapucu, 2012; Kapucu & Van Wart, 2008).

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Research has shown that mindfulness practices have positively impacted leadership and individual well-being in times of crisis. Wooten and James (2008, p. 372) shared, although prior crisis management research has described how crises unfold across various phases, "there is virtually no research that identifies the knowledge, skills or abilities necessary to lead an organization through these phases." When an organization faces a crisis, leadership is required to guide the organization through this phase and ensure its survival (Mumford et al., 2007).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this quantitative study is to analyze the extent to which a select group of Minnesota secondary school administrators report their level of awareness of mindfulness practices, use and frequency of practice, and perceived personal effectiveness of mindfulness strategies used during crisis leadership. The goal is to survey administrators from across the state of Minnesota to explore mindfulness strategies as they relate to crisis leadership.

The results of this study intend to furnish school administrators and districts with an understanding of mindfulness strategies and the effectiveness of those strategies to implement during crisis leadership. The findings of the study may reveal strategies and their importance during crisis leadership as experienced by Minnesota secondary school administrators. This study may help gauge participants views on mindfulness practices during times of crisis.

Research Methodology

The researcher opted to use a quantitative approach to collect the data from approximately 1,200 participants using an electronic survey. The survey was created and administered to active members of Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP). The survey was administered over a 2-week period and specifically targeted principals and assistant principals who self-reported having experienced a crisis during their career as an administrator. This study is a quantitative study with the goal of identifying administrators' reported level of awareness of mindfulness, frequency of use and/or practice of mindfulness strategies, and their perceived personal effectiveness in relation to crisis leadership. Study data were gathered via administration of a Qualtrics survey.

The survey contained seven items with the first three survey items addressing participant self-reported demographics such as gender, years of experience, and reported experience of crisis as an administrator. The demographic survey items employed multiple choice questions with skip logic built into the survey if the participant did not meet the targeted criteria. Skip logic allows the respondent to move to a different part of the survey based on how they respond to certain questions. In this case, if respondents answered no to survey item three, they have not experienced a crisis during their career as an administrator were not able to proceed to the end of the survey and their participation ended.

The quantitative study conducted consisted of administering a survey to administrators, both principals and assistant principals regarding their level of awareness of mindfulness, frequency of use of mindfulness practices, and their perceived effectiveness in relation to crisis leadership. Survey items 1-3 specific to administrator demographics inquired the following:

1. Gender
2. Years of Administrator Experience
3. Participant Reported Experience of Crisis as Administrator

Survey items 4-7 gathered descriptive statistical data specific to administrator level of awareness of mindfulness strategies, personal use of mindfulness strategies, frequency of practice of mindfulness strategy, and perceived personal effectiveness of mindfulness strategy regarding crisis leadership. Three mindfulness strategies were listed in the survey as identified through the research: guided meditation, movement, and mindful breathing.

Participants were administered survey items specific to their level of awareness of mindfulness strategies. Participants indicated their level of awareness by the choices of *Not at all aware, Slightly Aware, Somewhat Aware, Moderately Aware, Extremely Aware*.

Once participants reported their level of awareness of mindfulness strategies, they were administered survey items specific to their personal use of mindfulness strategies, guided meditation, movement, and mindful breathing. Participants indicated their level of use with the choices of *Select All That Apply*. This specific survey item allowed participants to select 1, 2, or all 3 of the item options.

Next, participants were administered survey items specific to their frequency of use of mindfulness strategies, guided meditation, movement, and mindful breathing. Participants indicated their frequency of use on an Ordinal scale with the of *0, 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, and 7+* (times per week).

Finally, participants were administered survey items specific to their perceived personal effectiveness of use of mindfulness strategies, guided meditation, movement, and mindful breathing regarding crisis leadership. Participants indicated their perceived personal effectiveness on a Likert scale with the choices of *Not at all effective, Slightly effective, Somewhat effective, Moderately effective, Extremely effective, and Did Not Practice this Strategy*.

Chapter IV reports the findings of the study. Survey questions employed in securing responses from study participants were developed by the researcher after reviewing the literature. The data were analyzed, and findings were reported by each research question.

Research Questions

The research questions of the study sought to explore participant self-reported demographics, and administrators' reported level of awareness of mindfulness, frequency of use of mindfulness practices, and their perceived effectiveness in relation to crisis leadership. The study's research questions are as follows:

1. To what extent do Minnesota secondary school administrators report their level of awareness of mindfulness practices?
2. Which mindfulness practices do Minnesota secondary school administrators report using during crisis leadership?
3. To what extent do Minnesota secondary school administrators report the frequency of use of mindfulness practices during crisis leadership?
4. To what extent do Minnesota secondary school administrators report their perceived personal effectiveness of mindfulness practices during crisis leadership?

Data Analysis

Analysis of the data was compiled and collected using a Qualtrics survey, the researcher consulted with the St. Cloud State University Statistical Consultant and Research Center to analyze the data and report descriptive statistics using frequency distributions regarding administrators' reported level of awareness of mindfulness, frequency of use of mindfulness practices, and their perceived effectiveness in relation to crisis leadership. The data were downloaded into Excel spreadsheets, and frequency distributions and percentages were reported from the dataset. The researcher consulted the Statistical Center at St Cloud State University to compute frequency distributions on the survey responses for each survey question.

The study sample consisted of 1,200 possible participants, 99 of those possible participants completed the demographic survey items. However, participation decreased due to respondents not completing the survey. Participants were prompted to respond using a multiple-choice response for the first three survey items and Likert scale or Ordinal scale for survey items four-seven. Survey item three reported participants experience of crisis as an administrator. Of the 99 total participants, 87 participants reported yes, 7 participants reported no, and 3 participants reported unsure. Participants who reported no to having experienced crisis as an administrator were eliminated from the survey using skip logic, leaving 90 valid participants. Participants who reported yes or unsure to the survey item progressed to the next question. This study focused only on administrators who have experienced crisis and the mindfulness strategies they employed during that time.

The survey link was administered through MASSP via email over a 2-week time period. There were 2 reminder emails sent out to potentially increase the response rate. The survey link was closed at the end of the survey timeframe. The final response rate was 8.25%.

Study Sample

The study consisted of a convenience sample of 1,200 active members of Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP) across the state of Minnesota. The participants of the study were secondary school administrators—Principals or Assistant Principals in the state of Minnesota. The possible participant list was generated by MASSP. Of the 1,200 potential participants, 99 chose to participate in the study, yielding an 8.25% response rate.

Furthermore, participants that were eligible to participate met the following criteria of having reported experiencing a crisis during their career as administrator, having an awareness of

mindfulness, and having used and/or practiced mindfulness strategies during crisis leadership.

Participants that did not meet the criteria were not eligible to progress in the study.

Demographic Information

The survey collected select demographic information of participants related to gender, years of experience, and participant reported crisis experienced as an administrator. The first demographic question reported participant gender. Gender was broken down into the following categories of Male, Female, Non-Binary/Third Gender, and Prefer not to disclose. The next demographic question reported participant years of experiences as an administrator. Years of experience were broken down into the following categories of 1-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, 16-20 years, and 21+ years. The final demographic question reported having experienced a crisis as an administrator. Participant reported crisis experienced as an administrator was broken down into the following categories of Yes, No, and Unsure. Participants that chose no, they have not experienced crisis during their time as an administrator were filtered out of the survey using skip logic as they do not meet the study criteria. Tables 1-3 illustrate the data collected from demographic survey items one-three.

Table 1*Participant Reported Gender (n = 99)*

<i>Gender</i>	<i>Frequency (f)</i>	<i>Percent (%)</i>
<i>Male</i>	53	53.54
<i>Female</i>	46	46.46
<i>Non-Binary/Third Gender</i>	0	0.00
<i>Prefer not to disclose</i>	0	0.00
<i>Total</i>	<i>n = 99</i>	100

Table 1 presents data obtained from the first survey item: Gender. The response options were as follows; Male, Female, Non-Binary/Third Gender, and Prefer not to disclose.

There were 99 valid responses to the first survey item, of which 53.5% ($n = 53$) of participants self-reported male gender and 46.4% ($n = 46$) of participants self-reported female gender. 0.0% of participants reported non-binary/third gender, and 0.0% preferred not to disclose their gender. Although, the gender reported was fairly balanced, majority of respondents identified as male gender.

Table 2*Participant Reported Total Years of Administrative Experience (n = 99)*

<i>Years of Administrative Experience</i>	<i>Frequency (f)</i>	<i>Percent (%)</i>
<i>1-5</i>	22	22.22
<i>6-10</i>	31	31.31
<i>11-15</i>	21	21.21
<i>16-20</i>	16	16.16
<i>21+ years</i>	9	9.09
<i>Prefer not to disclose</i>	0	0.00
<i>Total</i>	<i>n = 99</i>	100

Table 2 presents data obtained from the second survey item: Years of experience as an administrator. The response options were: 1-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, 16-20 years, and 21+ years.

There were 99 valid responses to the second survey item of which 22.2% ($n = 22$) of participants reported they have 1-5 years of administrative experience, 31.3% ($n = 31$) of participants reported they have 6-10 years of administrative experience, 21.2% ($n = 21$) of participants reported they have 11-15 years of administrative experience, 16.1% ($n = 16$) of participants reported they have 16-20 years of administrative experience, and 9.0% ($n = 9$) of participants reported they have 21+ years of administrative experience. 0.0% of the participants preferred not to disclose their years of experience as an administrator.

The reported data has a balanced spread of frequency counts and percentages regarding participant reported years of experience. Majority of respondents, 31.3%, reported having 6-10

years of administrative experience, followed by 22.2% of participants having 1-5 years of experience. The least reported years of experience was 9.0% of participants having 21+ years of experience as an administrator.

Table 3

Participant Reported Experienced Crisis During Time as Administrator (n = 97)

<i>Experienced Crisis</i>	<i>Frequency (f)</i>	<i>Percent (%)</i>
<i>Yes</i>	87	89.69
<i>No</i>	7	7.22
<i>Unsure</i>	3	3.09
<i>Total</i>	<i>n = 97</i>	100

Table 3 presents data obtained from the third survey item: Have you experienced a crisis during your time as administrator? The response options were: Yes, No, Unsure.

There were 97 valid responses to the third survey question, of which 89.6% ($n = 87$) of participants reported yes, they have experienced crisis during their time as administrator, 7.2% ($n = 7$) reported no, they have not experienced crisis during their time as administrator, and 3.0% ($n = 3$) participants reported they were unsure if they have experienced crisis during their time as an administrator. The majority, 89.6% ($n = 87$) of participants reported yes, they have experienced a crisis during their time as an administrator. This illustrates the majority, 89.6% of Minnesota public secondary school administrators have experienced a crisis during their time as an administrator.

Of the 99 total participants, 2 participants did not complete this portion of the survey resulting in 97 valid participants completing survey item three. Of the 97 participants, 87 of

those participants reported yes, 7 participants reported no, and 3 participants reported unsure. The 7 participants who reported no to experiencing crisis as an administrator were eliminated from the survey as they did not meet the study criteria, leaving 90 valid participants. Participants who reported yes or unsure to the survey question progressed to the next question. This study focused only on administrators who have experienced crisis during their time as an administrator and mindfulness strategies employed during that time.

Research Question One

Research question one examines participants reported level of awareness of mindfulness practices using the following question:

To what extent do Minnesota secondary school administrators report their level of awareness of mindfulness practices?

Survey item four prompted participants to select responses from the following Likert-type scale: “Not at all aware, Slightly Aware, Somewhat Aware, Moderately Aware, Extremely Aware.” Table 4 presents data obtained from the fourth survey item:

Please indicate your level of awareness of the following mindfulness practices:

Mindfulness: A practice in which you focus on being intensely aware of what you're sensing and feeling in the moment, without interruption or judgment. Practicing mindfulness involves a variety of strategies, methods to relax the body and mind and ultimately to help reduce stress. The following survey will only focus on Guided Meditation, Movement, and Mindful Breathing.

Table 4 illustrates the frequency distribution results for each mindfulness strategy, Guided Meditation, Movement, and Mindful Breathing.

Table 4*Participant Reported Level of Awareness of Mindfulness Strategy (n = 85)*

<i>Mindfulness Strategy</i>		<i>Not at all Aware</i>	<i>Slightly Aware</i>	<i>Somewhat Aware</i>	<i>Moderately Aware</i>	<i>Extremely Aware</i>
<i>Guided Meditation</i>	(f)	8	16	14	31	16
	(%)	9.41	18.82	16.47	36.47	18.82
<i>Movement</i>	(f)	3	2	14	32	34
	(%)	3.53	2.35	16.47	37.65	40.00
<i>Mindful Breathing</i>	(f)	4	6	15	35	25
	(%)	4.71	7.06	17.65	41.18	29.41

Note. Frequency (f) Percent (%)

There were 85 valid responses to the fourth survey item regarding participant level of awareness of the following mindfulness practices: guided meditation, movement, and mindful breathing. Of the 90 valid participants, 5 did not complete this survey question resulting in 85 valid responses. In all measurements respondents cited movement as their highest level of awareness of mindfulness strategies.

Participant reported level of awareness for guided meditation are as follows. There were 85 valid responses. Of which 9.4% ($n = 8$) of participants reported they were not at all aware of guided meditation as a mindfulness practice, 18.8% ($n = 16$) of participants reported slightly aware of guided meditation as a mindfulness practice, and 16.4% ($n = 14$) reported somewhat aware of guided meditation as a mindfulness practice, 36.4% ($n = 31$) of participants reported moderately aware of guided meditation as a mindfulness practice, and 18.8% ($n = 16$) of participants reported extremely aware of guided meditation as a mindfulness practice.

Participant reported level of awareness for movement as a mindfulness practices are as follows. There were 85 valid responses, of which 3.5% ($n = 3$) of participants reported they were not at all aware of movement as a mindfulness practice, 2.3% ($n = 3$) of participants reported slightly aware of movement as a mindfulness practice, and 16.4% ($n = 14$) reported somewhat aware of movement as a mindfulness practice, 37.6% ($n = 32$) of participants reported moderately aware of movement as a mindfulness practice, and 40.0% ($n = 34$) of participants reported extremely aware of movement as a mindfulness practice.

Participant reported level of awareness for mindful breathing as a mindfulness practices are as follows. There were 85 valid responses, of which 4.7% ($n = 4$) of participants reported they were not at all aware of mindful breathing as a mindfulness practice, 7.0% ($n = 6$) of participants reported slightly aware of mindful breathing as a mindfulness practice, and 17.6% ($n = 15$) reported somewhat aware of mindful breathing as a mindfulness practice, 41.1% ($n = 35$) of participants reported moderately aware of mindful breathing as a mindfulness practice, and 29.4% ($n = 25$) of participants reported extremely aware of mindful breathing as a mindfulness practice.

The sample size decreased from $n = 90$ to $n = 85$ due to participants not completing the survey. Data shows majority of participants have a moderate to extreme awareness of mindfulness strategies. 40.0% of participants reported having an extreme awareness of movement as a mindfulness strategy, followed by mindful breathing with approximately 29.4% reported, and lastly guided meditation with 18.8% reported extreme awareness.

Research Question Two

Research question two examines participants reported use and/or practice of mindfulness strategies used during crisis leadership using the following question:

Which mindfulness practices do Minnesota secondary school administrators report using during crisis leadership?

Survey item 5 prompted participants to select responses from the following options: “Select All That Apply.” This specific survey item allowed participants to select 1, 2, or all 3 of the given options. Table 5 presents data obtained from the fifth survey item:

Please indicate which of the following mindfulness strategies you practice personally.

Table 5*Participant Reported Personal Use of Mindfulness Strategy*

<i>Mindfulness Strategy</i>	<i>Frequency Count (f)</i>
<i>Guided Meditation</i>	19
<i>Movement</i>	55
<i>Mindful Breathing</i>	45
<i>I do not practice any of the above strategies</i>	20

There were 85 valid responses to the fifth survey item: *please indicate which of the following mindfulness strategies you practice personally*. Participants were to select all mindfulness practices that apply. Participants could select as many options as appropriate. 19 out of 85 participants reported personally practicing guided meditation. 55 out of 85 participants personally reported practicing movement. 45 out of participants reported personally practicing mindful breathing. 20 out of 85 participants reported they do not personally practice any of the strategies listed above.

Research Question Three

Research question three examines the frequency of use in which administrators practiced mindfulness strategies during crisis leadership using the following question:

To what extent do Minnesota secondary school administrators report the frequency of use of mindfulness practices during crisis leadership?

Table 6 presents data obtained from the sixth survey item: *Please indicate the frequency in which you practiced the following mindfulness strategies during crisis leadership.*

Survey item 6 prompted participants to select responses from the following options: “0 times per week, 1-2 times per week, 3-4 times per week, 5-6 times per week, 7+ times per week.”

Table 6

Participant Reported Frequency of Practice of Mindfulness Strategy

<i>Scale (Times Per Week)</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>1-2</i>	<i>3-4</i>	<i>5-6</i>	<i>7+</i>	<i>Total</i>	
<i>Guided meditation</i>	<i>(f)</i>	58	12	5	2	1	78
	<i>(%)</i>	74.36	15.38	6.41	2.56	1.28	
<i>Movement</i>	<i>(f)</i>	19	18	21	14	7	79
	<i>(%)</i>	24.05	22.78	26.58	17.72	8.86	
<i>Mindful Breathing</i>	<i>(f)</i>	32	19	12	10	7	80
	<i>(%)</i>	40.00	23.75	15.00	12.50	8.75	

Note. Frequency (f) Percent (%)

Participant reported frequency of use for guided meditation as a mindfulness strategy are as follows. Of the 85 valid participants, 7 did not complete this survey question resulting in 78 valid responses. Responses were reported from 78 participants. Majority of respondents 74.3% ($n = 58$) reported practicing guided meditation with a frequency of 0 times per week, 15.3% ($n = 12$) of participants reported practicing guided meditation with a frequency of 1-2 times per week, 6.4% ($n = 5$) of participants reported practicing guided meditation with a frequency of 3-4 times per week, 2.5% ($n = 2$) of participants reported practicing guided meditation with a frequency of 5-6 times per week, and 1.2% ($n = 1$) of participants reported practicing guided meditation with a frequency of 7+ times per week.

Participant reported frequency of use for movement as a mindfulness strategy are as follows. Of the 85 valid participants, 6 did not complete this survey question resulting in 79 valid responses. Responses were received from 79 participants. 24.0% ($n = 19$) of respondents reported practicing movement with a frequency of 0 times per week, 22.7% ($n = 18$) of participants reported practicing movement with a frequency of 1-2 times per week, 26.5% ($n = 21$) of participants reported practicing movement with a frequency of 3-4 times per week, 17.7% ($n = 14$) of participants reported practicing movement with a frequency of 5-6 times per week, and 8.8% ($n = 7$) of participants reported practicing movement with a frequency of 7+ times per week.

Participant reported frequency of use for mindful breathing as a mindfulness strategy are as follows. Of the 85 valid participants, 5 did not complete this survey question resulting in 80 valid responses. Responses were received from 80 participants. 40.0% ($n = 32$) of respondents reported practicing mindful breathing with a frequency of 0 times per week, 23.79% ($n = 19$) of

participants reported practicing mindful breathing with a frequency of 1-2 times per week, 15.0% ($n = 12$) of participants reported practicing mindful breathing with a frequency of 3-4 times per week, 12.5% ($n = 10$) of participants reported practicing mindful breathing with a frequency of 5-6 times per week, and 8.7% ($n = 7$) of participants reported practicing mindful breathing with a frequency of 7+ times per week.

Research Question Four

Research question four examines the perceived personal effectiveness of mindfulness strategies using the following research question:

To what extent do Minnesota secondary school administrators report their perceived personal effectiveness of mindfulness practices during crisis leadership?

Table 7 presents data obtained from the seventh survey item: *Please indicate the level of perceived personal effectiveness of the following mindfulness strategies regarding crisis leadership.*

For this question participants selected responses from the following options: “Not at all effective, Slightly effective, Somewhat effective, Moderately effective, Extremely effective, and Did not practice this strategy.” Frequency of response was calculated for the perceived effectiveness of each mindfulness strategy.

Table 7*Participant Reported Level of Perceived Effectiveness of Mindfulness Strategy*

		<i>Not at all Effective</i>	<i>Slightly Effective</i>	<i>Somewhat Effective</i>	<i>Moderately Effective</i>	<i>Extremely Effective</i>	<i>Did not practice this strategy</i>
<i>Guided Meditation</i>	(f)	7	6	13	11	8	35
	(%)	8.75	7.50	16.25	13.75	10.00	43.75
<i>Movement</i>	(f)	1	5	8	24	28	14
	(%)	1.25	6.25	10.00	30.00	35.00	17.50
<i>Mindful Breathing</i>	(f)	5	5	10	22	19	19
	(%)	6.25	6.25	12.50	27.50	23.75	23.75

Table 7 reveals the perceived personal effectiveness rankings align with rank means scores of 4.28 for mindful breathing, 4.40 for guided meditation, and 4.44 for movement. In all measurements respondents cited movement as their highest level of perceived personal effectiveness of mindfulness strategies regarding crisis leadership. There were 80 valid responses to the seventh survey item of their level of perceived personal effectiveness regarding mindfulness strategies used during crisis leadership.

Participant reported perceived personal effectiveness of guided meditation as a mindfulness strategy are as follows. Responses were reported from 80 participants. 8.7% ($n = 7$) of respondents reported that guided meditation was not at all effective in regard to perceived personal effectiveness in crisis leadership, 7.5% ($n = 6$) of participants reported guided meditation was slightly effective in regard to perceived personal effectiveness in crisis leadership, 16.2% ($n = 13$) reported guided meditation was somewhat effective in regard to perceived personal effectiveness in crisis leadership, 13.7% ($n = 11$) of participants reported guided meditation was moderately effective in regard to perceived personal effectiveness in crisis leadership, 10.0% ($n = 8$) of participants reported guided meditation was extremely effective in regard to perceived personal effectiveness in crisis leadership, and 43.7% ($n = 35$) of participants reported they did not practice this mindfulness strategies.

Participant reported perceived personal effectiveness of movement as a mindfulness strategy are as follows. Responses were reported from 80 participants. 1.2% ($n = 1$) of respondents reported that movement was not at all effective in regard to perceived personal effectiveness in crisis leadership, 6.2% ($n = 5$) of participants reported movement was slightly effective in regard to perceived personal effectiveness in crisis leadership, 10.0% ($n = 8$) reported movement was somewhat effective in regard to perceived personal effectiveness in crisis leadership, 30.0% ($n = 24$) of participants reported movement was moderately effective in regard to perceived personal effectiveness in crisis leadership, 35.0% ($n = 28$) of participants reported movement was extremely effective in regard to perceived personal effectiveness in crisis leadership, and 17.5% ($n = 14$) of participants reported they did not practice this mindfulness strategies.

Participant reported perceived personal effectiveness of mindful breathing as a mindfulness strategy are as follows. 2% ($n = 5$) of respondents reported that mindful breathing was not at all effective in regard to perceived personal effectiveness in crisis leadership, 6.2% ($n = 5$) of participants reported mindful breathing was slightly effective in regard to perceived personal effectiveness in crisis leadership, 12.5% ($n = 10$) reported mindful breathing was somewhat effective in regard to perceived personal effectiveness in crisis leadership, 27.5% ($n = 22$) of participants reported mindful breathing was moderately effective in regard to perceived personal effectiveness in crisis leadership, 23.7% ($n = 19$) of participants reported mindful breathing was extremely effective in regard to perceived personal effectiveness in crisis leadership, and 23.7% ($n = 19$) of participants reported they did not practice this mindfulness strategies.

Summary

The majority, 53.5% ($n = 53$) of participants identified as male administrators. Of the total participants, 31.1% ($n = 31$) reported having 6-10 years of experience as an administrator. Majority of participants, 89.6% ($n = 87$) reported experiencing a crisis during their time as an administrator. Participants reported their level of awareness of the following mindfulness strategies, guided meditation, movement, and mindful breathing. Results are as follows:

Most participants, 40.0% ($n = 34$), reported an extreme awareness of movement as a mindfulness practice, followed by 29.4% ($n = 25$) participants who reported an extreme awareness of mindful breathing as a mindfulness practice, and 18.8% ($n = 16$) of participants reported having an extreme awareness of guided meditation as a mindfulness practice. Out of 80 total responses, 26.5% ($n = 21$) of total participants reported use and/or practice of movement as

a mindfulness strategy with a frequency of 3-3 times per week regarding crisis leadership. Of the 80 valid responses, 35.0% ($n = 28$) reported the use and/or practice of movement as a mindfulness strategy was extremely effective regarding crisis leadership.

Of the 99 participants, 55.0% ($n = 54$) reported use and/or practice movement as a mindfulness strategy, 45.0% ($n = 44$) of participants reported use and/or practice of mindful breathing as a mindfulness strategy, 19.0% ($n = 19$) of participants reported use and/or practice of guided meditation as a mindfulness strategy, and 20.0% ($n = 20$) participants reported they do not use and/or practice any of the listed mindfulness strategies.

This illustrates that majority of the participants have experienced crisis during their time as an administrator, have a high level of awareness of mindfulness strategies and have used/and or practiced movement as a mindfulness strategy with moderate to extreme perceived personal effectiveness with a frequency of 3-4 times per week during crisis leadership.

Chapter V includes the conclusions, discussion, limitations, and recommendations. Findings in Chapter V are based on the study conclusions as well as correlations to the literature review. Additionally, the researcher presents recommendations for future research into mindfulness strategies during crisis leadership for administrators.

Chapter V: Conclusions, Limitations, and Recommendations

The purpose of this quantitative study is to analyze the extent to which a select group of Minnesota secondary school administrators report their level of awareness, frequency of use, and perceived effectiveness of mindfulness strategies used during crisis leadership. Additionally, this study examined mindfulness strategies used in managing crisis leadership reported by administrators and the significance of use to effectively lead during times of crisis.

To secure a more comprehensive understanding of administrators' awareness and implementation of mindfulness strategies, a quantitative survey asked a series of multiple choice, Likert scale, and Ordinal scale questions. The questions provided participants with the opportunity to share their level of awareness and personal experience with mindfulness strategies during crisis leadership.

The results of this study intend to furnish school leaders and districts with an understanding of mindfulness strategies and the effectiveness of those strategies to apply during crisis leadership. The findings of the study may reveal which mindfulness strategies are most effective, have the highest frequency of practice, and the importance of mindfulness strategies during crisis leadership as experienced by Minnesota secondary school administrators.

Based on related literature, mindfulness strategies used during heightened times of stress, anxiety, and fear can significantly improve decision making skills, encourage a clear thought-process and decrease fear-based reactions. Organizations today are confronted by challenges brought by globalization, growing cultural differences in the workforce, enhanced connectivity and a constant drive for efficiency. Passmore (2019) discussed these forces for change and the

potential for mindfulness as a tool to help both employees and organizations to be better able to manage the challenges of “the modern age.”

Research Questions

The research questions of this study explored Minnesota secondary school administrators’ and their awareness of mindfulness, frequency of use of mindfulness practice, and the perceived personal effectiveness of mindfulness strategies used during crisis leadership.

The following questions were developed by the researcher to guide the study:

1. To what extent do Minnesota secondary school administrators report their level of awareness of mindfulness practices?
2. Which mindfulness practices do Minnesota secondary school administrators report using during crisis leadership?
3. To what extent do Minnesota secondary school administrators report the frequency of use of mindfulness practices during crisis leadership?
4. To what extent do Minnesota secondary school administrators report their perceived personal effectiveness of mindfulness practices during crisis leadership?

Conclusions

This chapter includes the conclusions, discussions, limitations and recommendations for further research and practice. Findings in this chapter are based on the study conclusions. The following section presents the results for each research question. The researcher also provides their feedback about the outcomes of the study.

Research Question 1: To what extent do Minnesota secondary school administrators report their level of awareness of mindfulness practices?

Research question 1 examines the level of mindfulness awareness of Minnesota secondary school administrators. The research question was answered through responses to the fourth survey item: Please indicate your level of awareness of the following mindfulness practices: guided meditation, movement, and mindful breathing. The participants selected responses from the following options: “Not at all aware, Slightly Aware, Somewhat Aware, Moderately Aware, Extremely Aware.” The results of each mindfulness strategy used in this study are listed below.

The sample size decreased from $n = 90$ to $n = 85$ due to participants not completing the survey. According to the study results, data shows majority of participants have a moderate to extreme awareness of mindfulness strategies. 40.0% of participants reported having an extreme awareness of movement as a mindfulness strategy, followed by mindful breathing with approximately 29.4% reported, and lastly guided meditation with 18.8% reported extreme awareness. From the data provided, this suggests that majority of participants have a firm awareness of mindfulness and the strategies provided in this study.

There was a small percentage of participants who had little to no awareness of the mindfulness strategies used in this study. This finding is supported by the research of Passmore (2019), ‘mindfulness has exploded in popularity, with the development of multiple health-based programs, leading to greater coverage in academic journals and lifestyle magazines. In response, organizations also have looked to mindfulness as a possible tool to enhance wellbeing and performance. Companies as diverse as Google and the US Army have looked to mindfulness to support employee development. There has also been a similar growth in specialist providers in the area of mindfulness (Passmore, 2019).

This finding also matches the professional experiences of the researcher who has participated in district provided professional development regarding mindfulness, has attended required well-being and self-care workshops, and has encountered many school leaders who are knowledgeable about the use of mindfulness. The professional experience of the researcher supports the study results, which indicate administrators have a moderate to high level of awareness of mindfulness strategies.

Participants reported movement as their highest level of awareness as a mindfulness strategy. Movement used as mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) are among many popular alternative stress-reduction modalities beneficial for adults as evidenced by their widespread use in the United States (Wall, 2005).

Research Question 2: Which mindfulness practices do Minnesota secondary school administrators report using during crisis leadership?

Research question 2 examines Minnesota secondary school administrators reported use of mindfulness practices, guided meditation, movement, and mindful breathing. The research question was answered through responses to the fifth survey item: Please indicate which of the following mindfulness strategies you practice personally. Participants were prompted to ‘Select All That Apply’ which allowed respondents to select 1, 2, or all 3 of the mindful strategies provided.

There were 85 valid responses to the fifth survey item. Participants were to select all mindfulness practices that apply. 19 participants reported personally practicing guided meditation. 55 participants personally reported practicing movement. 45 participants reported

personally practicing mindful breathing. 20 participants reported they do not personally practice any of the strategies listed above.

Majority of participants reported using movement as a mindfulness strategy during crisis leadership, which correlates with participant reported levels of mindfulness awareness. Participants reported a high level of awareness of movement as a mindfulness practice as well as highest reported personal use. Movement can be used during times of crisis to effectively lead through adversity with a sense of clarity, mental stability, and sharp decision-making skills. Mindfulness used as a cognitive exercise can positively impact one's ability to navigate through challenges.

The researchers professional experience supports the data as movement is incorporated into staff meetings and professional development and encouraged by administrators which indicated administrators' level of awareness and understanding of movement as a beneficial mindfulness practice.

Examples from the literature may help explain why leaders don't regularly use mindfulness practices. In their 2016 study, Good, et al said, "Leadership has not been extensively studied by mindfulness researchers." The possible lack of research may have an impact on the use of mindfulness strategies in leaders. In actual experience, the researcher has not encountered any leaders who have said they use mindfulness strategies to navigate through high stress challenges at work.

In an earlier finding of this study, leaders reported a lack of awareness related to mindfulness. It could be that this lack of awareness contributes to the lack of use of mindfulness strategies by leaders. In Reitz et al. (2020) a clear relationship between awareness and use was

established. Their research concluded that without awareness and understanding of a concept, it's difficult to implement it. More research examining the relationship and use of mindfulness by leaders should be conducted.

Research Question 3: To what extent do Minnesota secondary school administrators report the frequency of use of mindfulness practices during crisis leadership?

Research question 3 examines the frequency of use of mindfulness practices of Minnesota secondary school administrators. The research question was answered through responses to the sixth survey item: Please indicate the frequency in which you practiced the following mindfulness strategies during crisis leadership. Participants selected responses from the following options: "0 times per week, 1-2 times per week, 3-4 times per week, 5-6 times per week, 7+ times per week." The frequency results of each mindfulness strategy used in this study are listed below.

Based on the study results, there was a balanced range of frequencies across mindfulness strategies practiced per week. Specifically, movement as it was reported as the most frequently practiced mindfulness strategy. The results show that perceived personal effectiveness increases with frequency of use. The findings also suggest that movement, when practiced with a frequency of at least 1-2 times per week during crisis leadership have a high perceived personal effectiveness in leading during times of crisis. The researcher speculates that when movement is practiced with a frequency of at least 1-2 times per week, administrators are better equipped to navigate through times of crisis with clarity, mental stability, and in-the-moment decision making skills.

The findings also match the professional experiences of the researcher who has encountered many administrators who practice movement as a mindfulness strategy on a regular weekly basis, several times per week. However, the frequency of practice increased during times of crisis as a method to improve mental stability, proactive decision-making skills, and cognitive clarity. Specifically with respect to the association between physical activity and mood, evidence indicates that moderate exercise improves mood or helps maintain it at high levels (Peluso, & Andrade, 2005).

Responses were received from 78 participants in regard to frequency of use and/or practice of guided meditation as a mindfulness strategy- majority of respondents 74.3% ($n = 58$) reported practicing guided meditation with a frequency of 0 times per week, 15.3% ($n = 12$) of participants reported practicing guided meditation with a frequency of 1-2 times per week, 6.4% ($n = 5$) of participants reported practicing guided meditation with a frequency of 3-4 times per week, 2.5% ($n = 2$) of participants reported practicing guided meditation with a frequency of 5-6 times per week, and 1.2% ($n = 1$) of participants reported practicing guided meditation with a frequency of 7+ times per week. Movement can include but is not limited to; yoga, stretching, walking, running, and or any other activity that involved physical movement.

Responses were received from 79 participants regarding frequency of use and/or practice of movement as a mindfulness strategy. 24.0% ($n = 19$) of respondents reported practicing movement with a frequency of 0 times per week, 22.7% ($n = 18$) of participants reported practicing movement with a frequency of 1-2 times per week, 26.5% ($n = 21$) of participants reported practicing movement with a frequency of 3-4 times per week, 17.7% ($n = 14$) of

participants reported practicing movement with a frequency of 5-6 times per week, and 8.8% ($n = 7$) of participants reported practicing movement with a frequency of 7+ times per week.

Responses were received from 80 participants regarding frequency of use and/or practice of mindful breathing as a mindfulness strategy. 40.0% ($n = 32$) of respondents reported practicing mindful breathing with a frequency of 0 times per week, 23.79% ($n = 19$) of participants reported practicing mindful breathing with a frequency of 1-2 times per week, 15.0% ($n = 12$) of participants reported practicing mindful breathing with a frequency of 3-4 times per week, 12.5% ($n = 10$) of participants reported practicing mindful breathing with a frequency of 5-6 times per week, and 8.7% ($n = 7$) of participants reported practicing mindful breathing with a frequency of 7+ times per week.

Research Question 4: To what extent do Minnesota secondary school administrators report their perceived personal effectiveness of mindfulness practices during crisis leadership?

Research question 4 examines the perceived personal effectiveness of mindfulness practices of Minnesota secondary school administrators during crisis leadership. The research question was answered through responses to the seventh survey item: Please indicate the level of perceived personal effectiveness of the following mindfulness strategies regarding crisis leadership. Participants selected responses from the following options: “Not at all effective, Slightly effective, Somewhat effective, Moderately effective, Extremely effective, and Did not practice this strategy.”

The study results suggest that select mindfulness strategies are an effective resource in leading during times of crisis. The findings are supported by the literature, Baron et al. (2018), shares from a recent article, “some authors confirmed that mindfulness in leaders had beneficial

effects on their mental health (Roche et al., 2014), while other authors have found a relationship between leaders' mindfulness and employee well-being and performance (Reb et al., 2014, p. 168).

The researcher speculates that this professional group of workers prefer to practice movement and mindful breathing as opposed to guided meditation. The results suggest that guided meditation is not a commonly practiced mindfulness strategy among this population, which may be due to lack of awareness, lack of time to practice this strategy, or lack of perceived value. The study results show that movement has nearly the same personal perceived effectiveness of mindful breathing, yet movement is practiced more frequently with higher perceived personal effectiveness in leading during times of crisis.

Responses were reported from 80 participants regarding perceived personal effectiveness of use and/or practice of guided meditation as a mindfulness strategy. 8.7% (n = 7) of respondents reported that guided meditation was not at all effective in regard to perceived personal effectiveness in crisis leadership, 7.5% (n = 6) of participants reported guided meditation was slightly effective in regard to perceived personal effectiveness in crisis leadership, 16.2% (n = 13) reported guided meditation was somewhat effective in regard to perceived personal effectiveness in crisis leadership, 13.7% (n = 11) of participants reported guided meditation was moderately effective in regard to perceived personal effectiveness in crisis leadership, 10.0% (n = 8) of participants reported guided meditation was extremely effective in regard to perceived personal effectiveness in crisis leadership, and 43.7% (n = 35) of participants reported they did not practice this mindfulness strategies.

Responses were reported from 80 participants regarding perceived personal effectiveness of use and/or practice of movement as a mindfulness strategy. 1.2% (n = 1) of respondents reported that movement was not at all effective in regard to perceived personal effectiveness in crisis leadership, 6.2% (n = 5) of participants reported movement was slightly effective in regard to perceived personal effectiveness in crisis leadership, 10.0% (n = 8) reported movement was somewhat effective in regard to perceived personal effectiveness in crisis leadership, 30.0% (n = 24) of participants reported movement was moderately effective in regard to perceived personal effectiveness in crisis leadership, 35.0% (n = 28) of participants reported movement was extremely effective in regard to perceived personal effectiveness in crisis leadership, and 17.5% (n = 14) of participants reported they did not practice this mindfulness strategies.

Responses were reported from 80 participants regarding perceived personal effectiveness of use and/or practice of mindful breathing as a mindfulness strategy. 6.2% (n = 5) of respondents reported that mindful breathing was not at all effective in regard to perceived personal effectiveness in crisis leadership, 6.2% (n = 5) of participants reported mindful breathing was slightly effective in regard to perceived personal effectiveness in crisis leadership, 12.5% (n = 10) reported mindful breathing was somewhat effective in regard to perceived personal effectiveness in crisis leadership, 27.5% (n = 22) of participants reported mindful breathing was moderately effective in regard to perceived personal effectiveness in crisis leadership, 23.7% (n = 19) of participants reported mindful breathing was extremely effective in regard to perceived personal effectiveness in crisis leadership, and 23.7% (n = 19) of participants reported they did not practice this mindfulness strategies.

Limitations

Limitations in a study are factors which the researcher cannot control, “particular features of your study that you know may negatively affect the results or your ability to generalize”

(Roberts, 2010, p. 162). Limitations for the study included:

1. The small sample size, 8.25%, in the online survey limits the ability to generalize the study’s findings to all administrators in Minnesota.
2. Within the survey participation timeframe, many districts across Minnesota had various scheduled holiday breaks and non-contractual days. This could have potentially resulted in MASSP members not taking the survey.
3. Participant reporting errors in the data collection instrument. The sample size decreased as participants did not complete the survey in its entirety.
4. Resurgence of the pandemic created additional barriers for response rate. The resurgence of the pandemic prompted mandated guidelines and restrictions in which districts and administrators were to adhere to.

Recommendations for Further Research

“Recommendations for ways the topic of your study can be advanced and how future studies might contribute to the field.” (Roberts, 2010). Through this study, recommendations for further research were identified as the following:

1. The study be replicated with elementary school administrators in schools with K-5th grade configuration.
2. Conduct a qualitative study using open-ended responses to obtain greater detail of the impact of mindfulness strategies used during times of crisis.

2. Additional questions be added to the survey to increase the data gathered on other mindfulness strategies not originally included in the study and the likeliness of administrators employing mindfulness strategies during times of crisis.
3. Another study should be conducted to explore in more depth the possible reasons school leaders aren't more aware of mindfulness.
4. Conduct a study which compares gender to reported use of mindfulness strategy.
5. Further research should explore the mental health and well-being of school administrators.

Recommendations for Practice

Based on the research gathered throughout this study, as well as information gathered from the study results, I recommend administrators, practitioners, and districts consider the following:

1. Leadership preparation programs and professional organizations should conduct informational sessions on mindfulness. These sessions would raise school leaders' awareness and could increase their use of mindfulness techniques.
2. Educational organizations should provide professional development on incorporating mindfulness strategies into daily schedules. Allowing practitioners, the opportunity to explore mindfulness techniques. Intentional practice and sustained application would likely raise leaders' awareness of mindfulness strategies and frequency of use.
3. Based on related literature suggesting mindfulness strategies used during heightened times of stress, anxiety, and fear can significantly improve decision making skills, encourage a clear thought-process and decrease fear-based reactions, the researcher

suggests that mindfulness strategy training be included in all crisis intervention and prevention professional development. This would likely increase leaders' use of mindfulness strategies during times of crisis.

Summary

The primary purpose of this quantitative study is to analyze the extent to which a select group of Minnesota secondary school administrators report their level of awareness of mindfulness practices, use and frequency of practice, and perceived personal effectiveness of mindfulness strategies during crisis leadership.

The results of this study are intended to furnish school administrators and districts with an understanding of mindfulness strategies and the effectiveness of those strategies to implement regarding crisis leadership. The findings of the study may reveal select strategies and their importance during crisis leadership as experienced by Minnesota secondary school administrators.

From the study data, the researcher concluded that 89.6% of study participants had experienced a form of crisis during their time as an administrator and 75.0% of participants reported having an extreme awareness of mindfulness strategies such as guided meditation, movement, and mindful breathing. Participants also reported the use and/or practice of movement as a mindfulness strategy with a frequency of 3-4 times per week to effectively lead during times of crisis. 35.0% of participants reported the personal use/and or practice of these mindfulness strategies to be extremely effective regarding crisis leadership.

This suggests that various mindfulness strategies can be used as an effective way to lead during times of crisis. Utilizing mindfulness strategies during times of crisis encourages

administrators to respond with thought-based decision-making skills rather than fear-based decision making. It allows administrators to detach from their fear-based emotions and be present in the moment and approach adverse situations with balance and an awareness of self.

Mindfulness strategies can be implemented with very little training or experience and are always available to practitioners. Mindfulness can be used as an effective tool and resource in navigating and leading during times of crisis.

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Appendix A: Data Collection Instrument–Administrator Survey

Mindfulness Practices Used During Crisis Leadership Reported by Minnesota Secondary School Administrators.

Demographics	
Gender	Years of Experience as Administrator
<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Binary/Third Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to disclose	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-5 years of experience <input type="checkbox"/> 6-10 years of experience <input type="checkbox"/> 11-15 years of experience <input type="checkbox"/> 16-20 years of experience <input type="checkbox"/> 21+ years of experience <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to disclose

Crisis Leadership
<p>Crisis: Demiroz and Kapucu (2012) define crises as unforeseen emergency events, natural or manmade, that lead to unstable or dangerous conditions. Depending on magnitude, crises involve an individual, a group, an organization, a species or an entire society.</p>
Have you experienced a ‘crisis’ in your time as principal?
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to disclose

Level of Awareness					
Mindfulness:					
<i>Mindfulness is a practice in which you focus on being intensely aware of what you're sensing and feeling in the moment, without interruption or judgment. Practicing mindfulness involves a variety of strategies, methods to relax the body and mind and ultimately to help reduce stress. The following questionnaire will only focus on Guided Meditation, Movement, and Mindful Breathing.</i>					
Please indicate your level of awareness of the following mindfulness practices:	Not at all Aware	Slightly Aware	Somewhat Aware	Moderately Aware	Extremely Aware
<p style="text-align: center;">Guided Meditation</p> <p><i>A type of meditation practice which is led by a narrator or teacher. Meditation can be defined as techniques intended to encourage a heightened state of awareness and focused attention.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<p style="text-align: center;">Movement (Yoga, Walking, Stretching, etc.)</p> <p><i>A variety of movements to promote physical and emotional well-being.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<p style="text-align: center;">Mindful Breathing</p> <p><i>The primary focus of this exercise is on the direct perception of breathing rather than thoughts themselves.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Use of Practice	
Please indicate which of the following mindfulness strategies you practice personally: <i>Select all that apply</i>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Guided Meditation</p> <p><i>A type of meditation practice which is led by a narrator or teacher. Meditation can be defined as techniques intended to encourage a heightened state of awareness and focused attention.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<p>Movement (Yoga, Walking, Stretching, etc.) <i>A variety of movements to promote physical and emotional well-being.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Mindful Breathing <i>The primary focus of this exercise is on the direct perception of breathing rather than thoughts themselves.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>I do not practice any of the above mindfulness strategies</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Frequency					
Please indicate the frequency in which you practiced the following Mindfulness strategies during crisis leadership:	Times Per Week:				
<p>Guided Meditation <i>A type of meditation practice which is led by a narrator or teacher. Meditation can be defined as techniques intended to encourage a heightened state of awareness and focused attention.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5-6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7+
<p>Movement (Yoga, Walking, Stretching, etc.) <i>A variety of movements to promote physical and emotional well-being.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5-6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7+
<p>Mindful Breathing <i>The primary focus of this exercise is on the direct perception of breathing rather than thoughts themselves.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5-6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7+

Perceived Level of Effectiveness During Crisis Leadership					
Please indicate the level of perceived personal effectiveness of the following mindfulness strategies regarding crisis leadership:	Not at all Effective	Slightly Effective	Somewhat Effective	Moderately Effective	Extremely Effective
<p>Guided Meditation <i>A type of meditation practice which is led by a narrator or teacher. Meditation can be defined as techniques intended to encourage a heightened state of awareness and focused attention.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<p>Movement (Yoga, Walking, Stretching, etc.) <i>A variety of movements to promote physical and emotional well-being.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<p>Mindful Breathing <i>The primary focus of this exercise is on the direct perception of breathing rather than thoughts themselves.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Appendix B: Administrator Survey Consent Cover Letter

Dear Participant:

My name is Anita Johnson, and I am a doctoral candidate at St. Cloud State University. I am conducting a study examining Mindfulness Practices Used During Crisis Leadership Reported by Minnesota Secondary School Principals. It is my understanding that you are a member of MASSP – Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals. I am inviting you to participate in this research study by completing the attached questionnaire link.

I am interested in your experience as a principal or assistant principal, and your personal use of mindfulness practices during times of crisis. The following questionnaire will require approximately 5 minutes to complete and asks you to respond to a series of statements and Likert-scale questions.

The purpose of this quantitative study is to analyze the extent to which a select group of Minnesota secondary public-school administrators report their level of awareness of mindfulness practices, use and frequency of practice, and perceived personal effectiveness of mindfulness strategies during crisis leadership.

The results of this study intend to furnish school administrators and districts with an understanding of mindfulness strategies and the effectiveness of those strategies to implement during crisis leadership. The findings of the study may reveal select strategies and their importance during crisis leadership as experienced by Minnesota secondary public-school principals. This data will be published in a dissertation and be housed in the repository at St. Cloud State University. The publication will also be made available electronically.

There is no compensation for responding nor is there any known risk. To ensure that all information remains confidential, your submission via the link provided corresponds to a participant number. There will be no identifying information collected during this survey and is completed anonymously. Participation is strictly voluntary, and you may refuse to participate at any time. All efforts to protect your identity and keep information confidential will be taken.

Completing the questionnaire will indicate your willingness and consent to participate in this study. If you choose to participate in this project, please answer all questions as honestly as possible and submit the completed questionnaire promptly. If you require additional information or have questions, please contact me at the email address listed below.

Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Anita Johnson

Amjohnson17@go.stcloudstate.edu

This study was reviewed and approved by the International Review Board (IRB) of St. Cloud State University. Questions concerning your rights as a participant in this research may be addressed to the IRB chairperson. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to the Department Chair, Dr. John Eller at jfeller@stcloudstate.edu.

Appendix C: IRB Approval



Institutional Review Board (IRB)

720 4th Avenue South AS 210, St. Cloud, MN 56301-4498

Name: Anita Johnson
Email: amjohnson17@go/stcloudstate.edu

IRB PROTOCOL DETERMINATION: Exempt Review

Project Title Mindfulness practices used during crisis leadership reported by secondary public school principals

The Institutional Review Board has reviewed your protocol to conduct research involving human subjects. Your project has been: **APPROVED**

Please note the following important information concerning IRB projects:

- The principal investigator assumes the responsibilities for the protection of participants in this project. Any adverse events must be reported to the IRB as soon as possible (ex. research related injuries, harmful outcomes, significant withdrawal of subject population, etc.).

- For expedited or full board review, the principal investigator must submit a Continuing Review/Final Report form in advance of the expiration date indicated on this letter to report conclusion of the research or request an extension.

-Exempt review only requires the submission of a Continuing Review/Final Report form in advance of the expiration date indicated in this letter if an extension of time is needed.

- Approved consent forms display the official IRB stamp which documents approval and expiration dates. If a renewal is requested and approved, new consent forms will be officially stamped and reflect the new approval and expiration dates.

- The principal investigator must seek approval for any changes to the study (ex. research design, consent process, survey/interview instruments, funding source, etc.). The IRB reserves the right to review the research at any time.

If we can be of further assistance, feel free to contact the IRB at 320-308-4932 or email ResearchNow@stcloudstate.edu and please reference the SCSU IRB number when corresponding.

IRB Chair:

Dr. Mili Mathew
Chair and Graduate Director
Assistant Professor
Communication Sciences and Disorders

IRB Institutional Official:

Dr. Claudia Tomany
Associate Provost for Research
Dean of Graduate Studies

OFFICE USE ONLY

SCSU IRB#: 2055 - 2681	Type: Exempt Review	Today's Date: 11/19/2021
1st Year Approval Date: 11/19/2021	2nd Year Approval Date:	3rd Year Approval Date:
1st Year Expiration Date:	2nd Year Expiration Date:	3rd Year Expiration Date: