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Less or More? The Curvilinear Linkage between Workplace Interruptions and Task Performance – The Moderating Role of Mindfulness

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Abstract

This study tests the interactive model of workplace interruptions such as intrusions, distractions, discrepancy detections, and breaks with task performance. Specifically, we suggest the curvilinear role of workplace interruptions in predicting task performance. In addition, we explore how mindfulness moderates these nonlinear relationships. Using time-lagged multi-sourced survey data from 323 supervisor-subordinates working in manufacturing, retail, and service industries, our results show significant inverted U-shaped relationships of intrusions and breaks with employee task performance. Furthermore, these relationships are significantly moderated by employee's mindfulness. We confirmed that workplace interruptions might not be necessarily bad, but the level of occurrence coupled with an individual's psychological resource, i.e., mindfulness, predicts employees' task performance. Based on these findings, we discuss the importance of workplace interruptions and mindfulness resources for effective performance.

Keywords: Workplace interruptions, task performance, mindfulness, nonlinearity

Track: Organizational Psychology