

THE STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODEL DEVELOPMENT OF HOW MINDFULNESS PROMOTES EMPLOYEE CREATIVITY IN THE RESTAURANT BUSINESS

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ABSTRACT

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This study examined whether mindfulness can promote restaurant employee creativity, which is crucial in achieving a business competitive edge and sustainable viability, and its mechanism through interpersonal trust and knowledge sharing based on the social capital theory. This study was carried out in Bangkok's full-service restaurant context. Data were collected from 414 restaurant employees, accounting for an 82.80% response rate. A partial least squares structural equation model (PLS-SEM) was used for data analysis, and the Sobel test and bootstrapping were used to test mediating effects. The results showed that mindfulness empirically promotes employee creativity ($\beta = 0.093$; $p = 0.028$). Also, according to the PLS-SEM and Sobel test, confirmed by bootstrapping results, interpersonal trust ($t = 3.216$, $p = 0.001$) and knowledge sharing ($t = 3.053$, $p = 0.002$) can partially mediate the relationship. The results also revealed a positive partial mediation of knowledge sharing between interpersonal trust and employee creativity ($t = 9.875$, $p < 0.001$). These results contribute up-to-date and new knowledge in the related literature by supporting and advancing previous research, particularly the benefits of mindfulness, antecedents to employee creativity, and expansions to the social capital theory. This research implies that developing mindfulness in employees could play a beneficial role in improving their relationships with others, resulting in the promotion of their work creativity. In addition, the results provided valuable guidelines for restaurant management to promote employee creativity for sustainable business viability.

Keywords: Mindfulness; employee creativity; interpersonal trust; knowledge sharing; social capital theory; restaurant

1. INTRODUCTION

Restaurants are among the fastest growing businesses in the food service industry because they have a relatively low barrier of entry compared to others while generating fast cash revenue, attracting substantial interest from investors at all levels (Ratasuk, 2019, 2023a; Ratasuk & Charoensukmongkol, 2020; Ratasuk & Gajesanand, 2022, 2023). In 2023, the food service market in Thailand was valued at 30.61 billion USD and is projected to continue to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 7.71% to reach 47.79 billion USD by 2029 (Mordor Intelligence, n.d.). These numbers reflect the fierce competition in Thailand's food service

industry. As a significant section of the food service industry, restaurants require competitive advantages to survive and achieve sustainable success. According to Ratasuk (2019), the nature of the restaurant business requires employees to work together with others to share and provide ideas to mutually develop innovative foods, beverages, and service models to impress, attract, satisfy, and maintain their customers. Therefore, innovations at the employee level are crucial contributing features and offer competitive advantages to restaurants in competing with others. Innovation is broadly known to be a significant factor in developing business sustainability by enabling them to differentiate themselves from competitors (Ratasuk, 2019; Ratasuk & Charoensukmongkol, 2019, 2020). As a consequence, a desirable outcome required by restaurants is employee creativity (Lai et al., 2020; Ratasuk & Charoensukmongkol, 2019, 2020; Zhang et al., 2022).

In restaurants where employees always encounter pressure dealing with customers and co-workers in a fast-paced and dynamic work environment (Bufquin et al., 2021), an attribute like mindfulness can promote good relationships among colleagues. This is because mindfulness has been proven and evidenced as a critical factor allowing individuals to control their temper and behavior, enabling them to cooperate appropriately with others (Matta et al., 2022; Pervez et al., 2022; Xie et al., 2021). Therefore, this research proposes that mindfulness be examined as a critical factor in driving the creativity of restaurant employees and its role in promoting interpersonal trust and knowledge sharing as indirect routes to achieve employee creativity based on the social capital theory.

Mindfulness has been widely studied and found to be a determinant of various desirable organizational outcomes at the individual level, such as emotional intelligence, creativity, and work performance (Behan, 2020; Henriksen et al., 2020; Xie et al., 2021). Additionally, mindfulness has also been found to lower several undesirable outcomes, such as conflict, job burnout, job stress, depression, and job anxiety (Ghawadra et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2020; Park & Nam, 2020; Pflügner et al., 2021). However, its contributions to employee creativity promotion are still limited in the food service industry context, particularly to restaurant employee creativity (Baas et al., 2020; Byrne & Thatchenkery, 2019; Kalyar et al., 2021; Y. Wang et al., 2021).

This research investigated the equation model of how mindfulness promotes restaurant employee creativity, which can be developed by considering the mediating roles of interpersonal trust and knowledge sharing. These findings are expected to provide new and additional knowledge and evidence to the literature focusing on the contributions of mindfulness, interpersonal trust, and knowledge sharing to employee creativity in the restaurant business and the social capital theory used to explain the mechanism behind the relationships. They should also provide helpful guidelines to restaurant owners, managers, and human resource departments in developing their employees' creativity.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This research examined the role of mindfulness in promoting employee creativity by proposing interpersonal trust and knowledge sharing as mechanisms mediating its direct effect based on the concept of the social capital theory that explains the interactions among them. Before developing hypotheses, mindfulness, interpersonal trust, knowledge sharing, employee creativity, and social capital theory are defined and explained in detail.

2.1 Mindfulness

Mindfulness is generally defined as a state in which an individual is attentive and aware of what is happening around him or herself (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Charoensukmongkol & Puyod, 2022). Individuals with high mindfulness tend to be more focused and attentive to surroundings and moment-to-moment experiences with less distraction because mindfulness helps develop self-awareness and self-regulation (Charoensukmongkol & Puyod, 2022). Mindfulness also allows them to engage in non-judgmental assessments of stimuli, preventing them from criticizing their present experiences, which also enables them to interpret and cautiously react to their situations (Charoensukmongkol, 2020; Henriksen et al., 2020; Suthatorn & Charoensukmongkol, 2022). The concept of mindfulness has been studied in various business contexts as a critical antecedent to both desirable and undesirable organizational outcomes since it enhances psychological well-being and facilitates their ability to manage stress (Phungsoonthorn & Charoensukmongkol, 2022; Salcido-Cibrián et al., 2019; Suthatorn & Charoensukmongkol, 2022). Mindfulness is known to offset negative organizational factors, namely job stress, job anxiety, and job burnout (Ghawadra et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2020; Pflügner et al., 2021; Phungsoonthorn & Charoensukmongkol, 2022). Additionally, it has been recognized as a driver of positive organizational outcomes, such as creativity, job satisfaction, job performance, and work engagement (Ghawadra et al., 2020; Henriksen et al., 2020; Ngo et al., 2020; Tulucu et al., 2022).

2.2 Interpersonal trust

Interpersonal trust is defined as an individual's perception that others will perform upon their expectations or not harm their interests, and they are willing to accept the vulnerability based on their expectations (Rotter, 1967, 1980). Interpersonal trust has been recognized as essential in explaining various social phenomena, particularly workplace networking and relationship building and the social interaction process (Ratasuk, 2019, 2022; Ratasuk & Charoensukmongkol, 2019; Seriwatana & Charoensukmongkol, 2021). Interpersonal trust benefits all organizational levels by developing desirable outcomes while prohibiting undesirable organizational outcomes (Afsar et al., 2021; Ratasuk, 2019, 2020, 2022; Ratasuk & Charoensukmongkol, 2019). Interpersonal trust has been investigated in various contexts and industries and has been shown to enhance communication, relationships, cooperation, productivity, problem-solving, creativity, efficiency, social cohesion, economic benefits, and emotional well-being in organizations, while reducing stress, conflict, and other negative organizational factors (Afsar et al., 2021; Curado & Vieira, 2019; Ratasuk, 2022; Ratasuk & Charoensukmongkol, 2019). For example, the study of Kistyanto et al. (2022) revealed a positive contribution of interpersonal trust in promoting students' innovative behavior. Petrocchi et al. (2019) found that interpersonal trust influenced organizational learning in South Korea's manufacturing sector. In addition, Ratasuk (2022) unveiled the benefits of interpersonal trust in preventing hotel employees from leaving their jobs in Thailand.

2.3 Knowledge sharing

Knowledge sharing pertains to individuals' provision of knowledge, information, experience, and know-how to others for collaboration and integration to mutually solve problems, address issues, develop new ideas and products, improve work processes, or develop and implement policies and strategies (Albana & Yeşiltaş, 2021; Ratasuk & Charoensukmongkol, 2020). Knowledge sharing among employees has been regarded as a vital resource in generating sustainable competitive advantages dynamic environments (Ganguly et al., 2019; Ratasuk & Charoensukmongkol, 2020). Organizations have increasingly become dependent on human resources, particularly their employees' knowledge (Ratasuk & Charoensukmongkol, 2020). Organizations gain a sustainable competitive advantage based on employees' diverse expertise and skills and the integration of their accumulated knowledge and understanding, which they apply to their daily operations (Kim & Shim, 2018; Swanson et al., 2020). Knowledge sharing is a multifaceted process involving donors and collectors who donate and collect knowledge from others (Alhady et al., 2011). Knowledge sharing creates a pool of knowledge that can be converted to actual practices, which is an essential role of an organization (Ratasuk & Charoensukmongkol, 2020; Usmanova et al., 2021). Integrating diverse knowledge from employees is vital in goods and service development and knowledge management initiatives (Ratasuk & Charoensukmongkol, 2020; Singh et al., 2021a). The knowledge generated from the knowledge sharing process is a valuable organizational resource and asset, providing a competitive edge to businesses (Arsawan et al., 2022). Ratasuk and Charoensukmongkol (2020) found that knowledge sharing promotes innovation in international restaurant employees.

2.4 Employee creativity

Employee creativity involves generating novel and valuable ideas through creative thinking, leveraging expertise and skills, and drawing inspiration from personal background, experience, and qualifications (Jahanzeb et al., 2019; Shafi et al., 2020). It involves extensive intellectual engagement, encouraging employees to make efforts and work diligently, which is essential for achieving accomplishments (Yu et al., 2019). Employee creativity is essential in making necessary changes to improve products and services, contributing to sustainable organizational achievements and viability within the current dynamic and competitive business environment (Luqman et al., 2021; Pitafi et al., 2020). It has been empirically evidenced to produce preferable organizational outcomes, such as innovative work behavior, team and organizational innovation, and task performance (Pattnaik & Sahoo, 2021; Ratasuk, 2019; Ratasuk & Charoensukmongkol, 2020; Shafi et al., 2020; Slåtten et al., 2020). Employee creativity has been widely studied as a business and organizational outcome of various variables, such as various types of leadership, job satisfaction, mindfulness, emotional intelligence, and others (Chen et al., 2020; Han & Bai, 2020; Lee & Kim, 2021; Pitafi et al., 2020; Ratasuk, 2023b). For example, the study by Shafi et al. (2020) examined the role of transformational leadership in promoting employee creativity in Pakistani software firms. Y. Wang et al. (2021) explored how role stressors and job satisfaction influence employee creativity. In addition, Tu et al. (2020) investigated the influence of emotional intelligence on Chinese college students' creativity.

2.5 Social capital theory

The social capital theory has been chosen in this research to explain the potential contributions of mindfulness, interpersonal trust, and knowledge sharing to employee creativity since it has been used to explain phenomena from different fields, such as management, education, business, sociology, political science,

and others (Dubos, 2017; Kim & Cannella, 2008; Kreuter & Lezin, 2002). Social capital is the association and network between individuals living or working together in a particular society, which is considered a potentially valuable resource (Dubos, 2017; Häuberer, 2011). The theory suggests that social relationships and networks are vital resources for developing and accumulating human capital (Brooks & Nafukho, 2006; Dubos, 2017). The theory benefits both individual and organizational performance. For example, Swanson et al. (2020) indicated that social capital theory could explain how employee job performance and loyalty were promoted by knowledge sharing. The study by Singh et al. (2021b), and Cofré-Bravo et al. (2019) also revealed that social capital allows organizations to achieve creativity and innovation. In this study, the theory is adopted to explain how mindfulness allows individuals to control themselves by reflecting on their behaviors, developing better relationships, and networking with others (Boohene et al., 2020; Swanson et al., 2020) to promote their creativity through having interpersonal trust and knowledge sharing as mediators.

2.6 Mindfulness, interpersonal trust, knowledge sharing, and employee creativity

Aligning with the social capital theory that positive social relationships and networks play a crucial role in developing and accumulating human capital, mindfulness has been proposed in this research as a potential driver of employee creativity by allowing employees to reduce negative emotions and develop positive relationships and networks with others, fostering interpersonal trust among them (Baas et al., 2020; Balters et al., 2022; Byrne & Thatchenkery, 2019; Henriksen et al., 2020; Kuhl & Boyraz, 2017; Rothouse, 2020; Stedham & Skaar, 2019; Suthatorn & Charoensukmongkol, 2022; T. Wang et al., 2021). For example, Gip et al. (2022) discovered that mindfulness enhances the creativity of frontline service employees from the Philippines, Turkey, and the US. This finding is also aligned with the research of Cheung et al. (2020), who found a positive association between employee mindfulness and creativity via creative process engagement. According to the social capital theory, trust among employees and their networks are valuable resources for fostering their creativity since they allow employees to share and exchange their expertise, opinions, and experience. This can create a pool of a broad range of knowledge and resources among them, which is beneficial in developing new ideas for products, services, and work processes (Curado & Vieira, 2019; Han et al., 2020; Singh et al., 2021b). For example, Ratasuk and Charoensukmongkol (2019) revealed that interpersonal trust positively influences knowledge sharing among restaurant employee members, leading to employee innovation in international restaurant teams in Thailand. In addition, the study of Islam et al. (2022) found a significant mediation of knowledge sharing between trust and employee creativity in various organizations in Pakistan.

Therefore, the following hypotheses presented in Table 1 were proposed:

Table 1: Proposed hypotheses

Hypotheses	
H1	Mindfulness has a positive impact on employee creativity.
H2	Interpersonal trust positively mediates the association between mindfulness and employee creativity.
H3	Knowledge sharing positively mediates the association between mindfulness and employee creativity.

3. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of mindfulness in promoting employee creativity and other variables that potentially influence the creativity of restaurant employees in Bangkok.

3.1 Sample and data collection procedure

Even though there is some available data on the number of restaurants in Thailand, according to Statista Research Department (2024), in 2020, there were around 530,000 registered restaurants in Thailand, which continued to rise in the following years, the number of restaurant employees in Bangkok is unknown. Therefore, the researcher aimed to obtain the final minimum data of 400 permanent employees of full-service restaurants in Bangkok, considered adequate at a 95% confidence interval (Serdar et al., 2021). Stratified random sampling was utilized in selecting the correspondents, allowing the sample to be chosen with equal opportunity using simple probability, enhancing the quality and accuracy of statistical analyses by ensuring that the sample was representative of the entire population while also allowing for more nuanced insights into subgroup differences (Neyman, 1992). The researcher planned to approach 500 respondents to guarantee the sufficiency of the final data as the 50 districts of Bangkok were arranged into 10 area groups. Five restaurants were randomly selected and approached in each area group for permission to collect data. Restaurant managers were requested to schedule a convenient time and day for the data collection. Ten qualified employees were randomly selected and invited to participate voluntarily. Self-administered questionnaires were employed. Prior to questionnaire distribution, the respondents were informed about their anonymity and rights to leave the study anytime.

3.2 Measurements

Scales adapted from prior research in the related literature were employed to measure all latent variables since they have been proven valid and reliable. Each scale includes several question items measured using a Likert scale with five points, from strongly disagree to strongly agree. A 15-item mindfulness scale modified from Black et al. (2012) and Brown and Ryan (2003) was employed to assess mindfulness. A six-item interpersonal trust scale of Ratasuk (2022) was adopted to measure interpersonal trust. A five-item knowledge sharing scale employed by Ratasuk and Charoensukmongkol (2020) was used to measure knowledge sharing. An eight-item employee creativity scale adapted from Lee and Kim (2021) was used to measure employee creativity.

3.3 Control variables

This study included four control variables: gender, age, education, and income (Table 2). Due to their common usage in earlier research, these variables were chosen as control variables, all of which have been found to affect individual-level factors and outcomes (Ratasuk, 2020). They were chosen as control variables due to the empirical evidence of their significant impacts on mindfulness and creativity (Antwi et al., 2019; Chen et al., 2021; Khan & Abbas, 2022).

3.4 Data analysis method

Partial least square structural equation modeling, or PLS-SEM, was engaged to evaluate the suggested study model. To estimate the factor loadings of measurement items, model pathways, and standardized regression coefficients, PLS-SEM incorporates a principal component analysis (PCA), path analysis, and a set of regression analyses (Lin et al., 2020). PLS-SEM performs effectively on a complex research model investigating several relationship paths among variables compared to CB-SEM (Dash & Paul, 2021). Moreover, unlike other CB-SEMs requiring a large sample size to assure normal data distribution, PLS-SEM effectively produces more accurate results when limited sample size or non-normally distributed data (Hair et al., 2012). Even though the sample size of this study is considered to be significant, it does not confirm normal distribution. The WarpPLS program (version 8.0) was employed as it is the most up-to-date version equipped with many additional functions compared to its previous versions. However, prior to the PLS-SEM analysis, there were specific analyses to perform to confirm the model quality, such as descriptive statistics, tests of convergent and discriminant validity and reliability, multicollinearity and common method bias (CMB), normality tests, tests, and model-fit indices.

The research ethics committee of Panyapiwat Institute of Management approved this research and granted the reference number PIM-REC 045/2565.

4. RESULTS

Of the 500-target sample initially approached, 414 people, or 82.80% of respondents, agreed to participate in the research. Of these, 180 were men, representing 43.48% of the respondents, while 234 were women (56.52%). Most respondents were in the age range of 21–30 years old (65.22%), followed by 18–20 years (18.36%). The average monthly income was 10,001 to 20,000 baht for 184 people (44.44%), while 28.98% made less than 10,000 baht per month. The majority of respondents (60.39%) held bachelor's degrees, while 20.53% had attained lower or equivalent high school/vocational certificates.

Table 2: Correspondents' characteristics and descriptive statistics

	Control Variables	Descriptive Statistics
Gender	Male	180 (43.48%)
	Female	234 (56.52%)
Age	18–20 years old	76 (18.36%)
	21–30 years old	270 (65.22%)
	31–40 years old	35 (8.45%)
	41–50 years old	20 (4.83%)
	51–60 years old	8 (1.93%)
	Older than 60 years old	5 (1.21%)
Income	Lower than 10,000 baht	120 (28.98%)
	10,001–20,000 baht	184 (44.44%)
	20,001–30,000 baht	75 (18.12%)
	30,001–40,000 baht	26 (6.28%)
	40,001–50,000 baht	5 (1.21%)
	More than 50,001 baht	4 (0.97%)

Table 2: Correspondents' characteristics and descriptive statistics (continued)

	Control Variables	Descriptive Statistics
Education	High School	85 (20.53%)
	Associate Degree	64 (15.46%)
	Undergraduate	250 (60.39%)
	Master Degree	13 (3.14%)
	Doctoral Degree	2 (0.48%)

Prior to the SEM analysis, criteria needed to be met. Convergent and discriminant validity, reliability, and model fit indices were tested. The convergent validity was examined using factor loadings, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) for consideration (Cheung et al., 2023; Cheung & Wang, 2017). With Cheung and Wang (2017) and Cheung et al. (2023) recommending that all should be no lower than 0.5, all factor loadings of all constructs in this study ranged from 0.709 to 0.887. Table 3 also shows that the lowest CR value of 0.938 was above the minimum of 0.7 to be satisfactory, while the AVE values ranged from 0.699 to 0.796, also above the recommended minimum of 0.5, indicating a lower level of error (Hair et al., 2011; Hair et al., 2020). Therefore, the data's convergent validity was satisfactory.

Table 3: Convergent validity (Factor Loadings, CR and AVE)

Construct	Items	Factor Loadings	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	
Mindfulness (MF)	MF1	You can't become aware of your emotions until much later.	0.841	0.972	0.699
	MF2	You often break things because you are careless, not paying attention, or not thinking.	0.837		
	MF3	You find it difficult to focus on what is happening in the present.	0.864		
	MF4	You often walk quickly to get where you are going, not paying attention to your surroundings.	0.833		
	MF5	You often don't notice or ignore feelings of body tension or discomfort until someone touches you.	0.874		
	MF6	You tend to forget a person's name almost as soon as someone tells you their name for the first time.	0.775		
	MF7	You often work without much thought or awareness of what you're doing.	0.887		
	MF8	You tend to rush through work without paying attention to others.	0.844		
	MF9	You tend to be so focused on the goals you want to achieve that you don't pay attention to whether or not what you're doing is right.	0.856		
	MF10	You work until you don't realize what you're doing.	0.861		
	MF11	You find yourself working and listening to others speak at the same time.	0.709		
	MF12	You drive without thinking to a place and wonder why you went there.	0.847		
	MF13	You find yourself preoccupied with the future or the past.	0.78		
	MF14	You find yourself often doing things without paying attention to your surroundings.	0.847		
	MF15	You often eat without realizing you are eating.	0.864		
Interpersonal Trust (Trust)				0.938	0.718
	Trust1	Your co-workers will be sincere and honest when problems arise.	0.805		
	Trust2	Your colleagues help you make important decisions.	0.843		
	Trust3	Your co-workers are always happy to help you.	0.85		
	Trust4	Your co-workers are always honest with you.	0.885		
	Trust5	Your co-workers can always be trusted.	0.845		
	Trust6	You have great trust in your co-workers.	0.852		

Table 3: Convergent Validity (Factor Loadings, CR and AVE) (continued)

Construct	Items	Factor Loadings	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Knowledge Sharing (KS)			0.951	0.796
	KS1	You share experiences and knowledge with colleagues.	0.871	
	KS2	You share your experience and knowledge with your colleagues within the store.	0.896	
	KS3	You can gain new knowledge from the experience and knowledge of specialists or colleagues in the shop.	0.913	
	KS4	You can gain new knowledge from the experience of specialists from companies who come to help the store.	0.89	
	KS5	Overall, colleagues share their experiences and knowledge.	0.892	
Employee Creativity (Create)			0.965	0.777
	Create1	At work, you suggest new ways to achieve a goal or objective.	0.87	
	Create2	At work, you come up with new ideas and practices to improve performance.	0.873	
	Create3	At work, you suggest new ways to increase the quality of work.	0.887	
	Create4	At work, you encourage and support others' ideas.	0.878	
	Create5	At work, you show creativity when given the opportunity.	0.884	
	Create6	At work, you plan and schedule the implementation of new ideas.	0.897	
	Create7	At work, you have innovative ideas.	0.885	
	Create8	At work, you are creative in solving problems.	0.878	

Note: MF = Mindfulness, Trust = Interpersonal Trust, KS = Knowledge Sharing, Create = Employee Creativity

The heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) was used to verify the data's discriminant validity. The findings shown in Table 4 demonstrate that the HTMT criterion was satisfied since every value was below the ceiling value of 0.85, as recommended by Henseler et al. (2015).

Table 4: HTMT ratio

	MF	Trust	KS	Create
MF				
Trust	0.093***			
KS	0.177***	0.699***		
Create	0.184***	0.684***	0.828***	

Note: *** = p -value \leq 0.001, MF = Mindfulness, Trust = Interpersonal Trust, KS = Knowledge Sharing, Create = Employee Creativity

Confirming the discriminant validity, Table 5 also indicates that the square root of all variables' average variance extracted (AVE) values was greater than their correlations with other variables. Therefore, it could be concluded that the data collection tool and the data collected were accurate at a satisfactory level, as recommended by Fornell and Larcker (1981). Also, from Table 5, composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha for all variables were between 0.921 and 0.972, which is higher than 0.7 total, thus concluding that the data acquisition tool and the collected data were reliable (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Thus, the reliability was at a satisfactory level. Next, the full collinearity tests were performed to test multicollinearity among the variables and common method bias (CMB). Petter et al. (2007) and Kock (2015) suggested that the full VIF should not exceed 3.3 to be ideal. Table 5 shows that the highest VIF was 2.992, lower than 3.3. Therefore, the model has no serious multicollinearity issue and is free from CMB.

Table 5: Correlations and reliability test results

	MF	Trust	KS	Create	Gender	Age	Income	Education
MF	(0.836)							
Trust	0.080***	(0.847)						
KS	0.163***	0.649***	(0.892)					
Create	0.178***	0.643***	0.784***	(0.882)				
Gender	0.064	-0.063	-0.091	-0.026	(1.000)			
Age	0.170***	0.215***	0.113*	0.103*	0.061	(1.000)		
Income	0.212***	0.227***	0.145**	0.154**	0.052	0.573***	(1.000)	
Edu	0.141**	0.164***	0.265***	0.213***	0.008	0.337***	0.329***	(1.000)
Composite reliability	0.972	0.938	0.951	0.965	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
Cronbach's alpha	0.969	0.921	0.936	0.959	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
Full Collin.VIF	1.092	1.997	2.992	2.874	1.025	1.583	1.586	1.242

Note: * = p -value ≤ 0.05 , ** = p -value ≤ 0.01 , and *** = p -value ≤ 0.001 , MF = Mindfulness, Trust = Interpersonal Trust, KS=Knowledge Sharing, Create =Employee Creativity

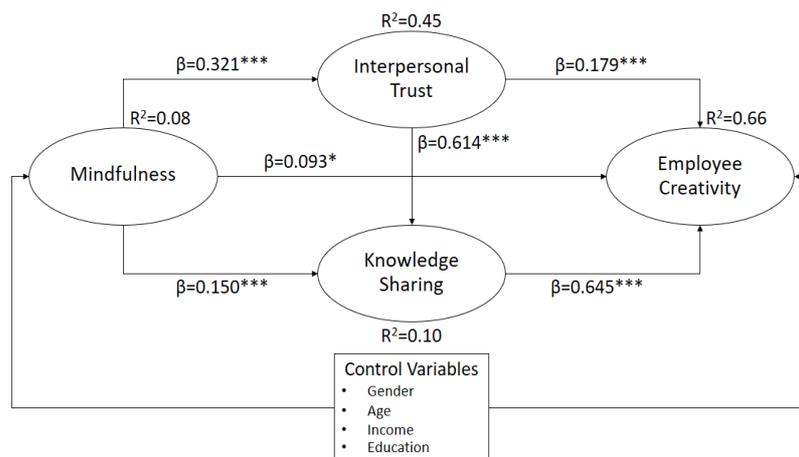
The 10 measurement criteria in the model fit indices, shown in Table 6, represent the data quality used in the PLS-SEM analysis, indicating that all 10 criteria were satisfactory.

Table 6: Model fit indices

Model fit indices	Coefficient	Criteria	Result
Average path coefficient (APC)	0.243***	Significant if ≤ 0.05	Significant
Average R-square (ARS)	0.322***	Significant if ≤ 0.05	Significant
Average adjusted R-square (AARS)	0.318***	Significant if ≤ 0.05	Significant
Average variance inflation factor (AVIF)	1.357	Acceptable if ≤ 5 , ideally ≤ 3.3	Ideally
Average full variance inflation factor (AFVIF)	1.799	Acceptable if ≤ 5 , ideally ≤ 3.3	Ideally
Tenenhaus GoF index (GoF)	0.531	Small ≥ 0.1 , medium ≥ 0.25 , large ≥ 0.36	Large
Simpson's paradox ratio (SPR)	0.100	Acceptable if ≥ 0.7 , ideally = 1	Ideally
R-square contribution ratio (RSCR)	0.100	Acceptable if ≥ 0.9 , ideally = 1	Ideally
Statistical suppression ratio (SSR)	0.100	Acceptable if ≥ 0.7	Acceptable
Nonlinear bivariate causality direction ratio (NLBCDR)	0.850	Acceptable if ≥ 0.7	Acceptable

Note: *** = p -value ≤ 0.001

4.1 PLS-SEM results



Note: * = p -value ≤ 0.05 and *** = p -value ≤ 0.001

Figure 1: The PLS-SEM Results

Figure 1 presents the results of PLS-SEM, showing relationships among all the variables, which are summarized below.

Hypothesis 1 suggests that mindfulness positively impacts employee creativity. The results from PLS-SEM presented a significant and positive association between mindfulness and employee creativity ($\beta = 0.093$; $p = 0.028$). Thus, hypothesis 1 is empirically supported.

The results also revealed a positive influence of mindfulness on interpersonal trust ($\beta = 0.321$; $p < 0.001$) and knowledge sharing ($\beta = 0.150$; $p < 0.001$). They also showed that interpersonal trust positively influences knowledge sharing ($\beta = 0.614$; $p < 0.001$) and employee creativity ($\beta = 0.179$; $p < 0.001$). Lastly, a positive impact of knowledge sharing on employee creativity ($\beta = 0.645$; $p < 0.001$) was reported.

Hypothesis 2 suggests that interpersonal trust positively mediates between mindfulness and employee creativity. Referring to the results from the Sobel test, suggested by Preacher and Leonardelli (2001), and the PLS-SEM results, interpersonal trust positively and partially mediates between mindfulness and employee creativity ($t = 3.216$, $p = 0.001$). This is aligned with the bootstrapping indirect effect test ($\beta = 0.057$, $p = 0.049$, effect size=0.034) which met the threshold that effect sizes lower than 0.02 are too weak to be considered, as suggested by Kock (2014). Hence, hypothesis 2 is also empirically supported.

Hypothesis 3 suggests that knowledge sharing positively mediates the influence of mindfulness on employee creativity. According to the results and the Sobel test results ($t = 3.053$, $p = 0.002$) and the PLS-SEM and its bootstrapping indirect effect results ($\beta = 0.097$, $p = 0.002$, effect size = 0.034), knowledge sharing positively and partially mediates between mindfulness and employee creativity. Thus, hypothesis 3 is supported.

Moreover, further investigation was conducted and showed, according to the Sobel test ($t = 9.875$, $p < 0.001$) and PLS bootstrapping indirect effect results ($\beta = 0.396$, $p < 0.001$, effect size = 0.033), that knowledge sharing also positively and partially mediates between interpersonal trust and employee creativity. The results also unveiled that the total effects of mindfulness on employee creativity ($\beta = 0.375$, $p < 0.001$, effect size = 0.120) are empirically significant.

Lastly, the PLS-SEM analysis showed that the effects on mindfulness among the four control variables, namely gender, age, income, and education, only income ($\beta = 0.176$, $p < 0.001$) and education ($\beta = 0.113$, $p = 0.010$) are significantly associated. At the same time, none is statistically associated with employee creativity.

5. CONCLUSION

This research examined the contributions of mindfulness in promoting employee creativity in Bangkok's casual fine dining restaurants and its mechanism through interpersonal trust and knowledge sharing. The findings give restaurant owners and managers guidelines to promote decent work relationships and environments, encouraging employee creativity in their restaurants. The PLS-SEM and the Sobel test results support the three hypotheses proposed. The findings show that restaurant employees with superior mindfulness tend to have higher creativity, so it can be inferred that employee members' mindfulness contributes to their employee creativity as a whole, aligning with prior research (Baas et al., 2020; Rothouse, 2020; T. Wang et al., 2021). For example, Cheung et al. (2020) disclosed that mindfulness has both direct and indirect positive impacts on employee creativity. In addition, Gip et al. (2022) revealed that employees' mindfulness fosters their creativity via positive emotions. It may be because in the restaurant work environment, which is dynamic and fast-paced, employees are required to be interactive with supervisors, colleagues, and customers at all times, and therefore mindfulness enhances their focus allowing them to take control of their emotions, interact with others, and facing situations enabling them to be more open to synergize and mutually create new ideas for creative menu items, service models, and work processes.

The findings also revealed that interpersonal trust and knowledge sharing mediate the influence of mindfulness on employee creativity, which is concurrent with various previous studies (Ratasuk, 2019; Ratasuk & Charoensukmongkol, 2019). Positive emotions and attitudes like interpersonal trust among employees and fostering pleasant relationships and networks are, as shown this study, driven by their mindfulness (Dayan et al., 2019; Stedham & Skaar, 2019). Mindfulness is valuable in human resource development producing organizational favorable outcomes like knowledge sharing and employee creativity (Arslan et al., 2021; Dubos, 2017). The results align with the study by Khan and Abbas (2022) that mindfulness can promote creativity via positive feelings and emotions. Kuhl and Boyraz (2017) found a significant positive impact of mindfulness on trust and social support among trauma-exposed college students of a public university in southeast US. Rechberg (2023) also found in their extensive literature review that individuals can use mindfulness to benefit knowledge and the ability to share knowledge. Moreover, Ratasuk and Charoensukmongkol (2019) found that interpersonal trust allows international restaurant employees to become more innovative by sharing their knowledge and experience with their colleagues. It may be because mindfulness improves self-awareness and emotional regulation, reduces reactivity and impulsive behaviors,

and encourages non-judgmental awareness, allowing employees to foster trust and mutual respect within the employees, reduce misunderstandings and conflicts, thereby building trust, and tend not to make reckless judgments or assumptions about their colleagues. This leads to a more accepting and trusting work environment. Besides increasing employees' focus by reducing distractions and improving concentration, it promotes non-defensive attitudes, encouraging them to be open to discussions and exchanges with other employees to share their knowledge and experience. Once employee members trust each other and feel free to exchange ideas and information, they tend to generate creative solutions and collectively solve complex problems. This mechanism encourages diverse perspectives and a free flow of ideas.

5.1 Academic contributions

This investigation supplies new understanding and confirmation on the roles of mindfulness in encouraging employee creativity in the restaurant business context and their indirect relationships via interpersonal trust and knowledge sharing shaped by the concept of the social capital theory. Even though mindfulness has broadly been investigated in various contexts, it is relatively restricted in restaurant research and requires additional investigations. In addition, although mindfulness has been spotlighted among scholars as a significant factor in growing several desired organizational outcomes, this research model examined the mechanism of how mindfulness contributes to employee creativity, both directly and indirectly, through developing interpersonal trust and encouraging knowledge sharing. Previously, this integrated model had not been evident. Therefore, the findings not only contribute beneficial novel knowledge, additional evidence, and expansion to relevant literature on mindfulness, employee creativity, interpersonal trust, and knowledge sharing studies, but also broaden the usage of the social capital theory, which can benefit future related studies.

5.2 Practical contributions

The findings can also practically contribute to the restaurant business with guidelines beneficial to restaurant owners, managers, or human resource departments in developing employee creativity, which gives a competitive advantage over others, allowing them to achieve sustainable viability. Firstly, mindfulness should be applied as an additional recruitment and talent acquisition criterion by requiring candidates to test their mindfulness for employment consideration. Secondly, mindfulness training, such as meditation training and practice and other training that encourages their focus, are recommended to all employees at all levels. Thirdly, restaurants are suggested to provide a work environment and facilities that enhance employees' mindfulness, such as a decent resting area where employees can relax during their breaks, as well as appropriate working hours, shifts, and workloads. Fourthly, restaurants are advised to hold a daily employee meeting where employees can express, exchange, and brainstorm their thoughts and opinions, mutually create new things, and solve problems together to build and encourage strong relationships and networks and interpersonal trust for knowledge sharing among them. Lastly, recreational group activities or events allowing all employees to gather and socialize, such as parties, field trips, and sport days, are recommended to build and support strong bonds and connections among them where interpersonal trust can grow.

5.3 Limitations

This research still has some limitations to consider. Firstly, although the sample size of this research is sufficient with 414 respondents, they can only represent casual fine dining restaurant employees in Bangkok, so the findings may be varied and not valid in other restaurant contexts. Secondly, all variables in this research model were measured using the Likert scale, which may result in suffering subjective bias. Thirdly, as the results showed that employee creativity has a 0.66 R^2 value, there should still be other potential variables that can influence employee creativity and could have been included in this research that may provide even more fascinating results and contributions to the literature. Examples include intrapreneurship, job satisfaction, job stress, job burnout, communication effectiveness, and employee engagement. Finally, the cross-sectional nature of this research's data collection may have restricted the findings to only correlations between the variables rather than causal relationships.

5.4 Recommendations for future studies

Considering the findings on the contributions of mindfulness to employee creativity, along with the mediation of interpersonal trust and knowledge sharing among casual dining restaurant employees in Bangkok, it would be fascinating to apply this research model in other restaurant contexts, such as in different restaurant categories and different countries, or even in different businesses or industries. Also, future research is recommended to add or switch to other potential variables mentioned earlier for new and additional valuable knowledge

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