

# THE INFLUENCE OF DISPOSITIONAL MINDFULNESS ON WORK ENGAGEMENT: THE MEDIATION ANALYSIS OF WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY AND ORGANIZATIONAL SPIRITUALITY, AMONG WHITE-COLLAR EMPLOYEES IN BANGKOK, THAILAND

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**Abstract:** The primary purpose of this investigation was to investigate the impact of dispositional mindfulness on white-collar employees' work engagement based on the Job Demands-Resources Model (JD-R model) and person-organization Fit Theory (P-O Fit); in doing so, the mediating role of workplace spirituality (personal job resources) and organizational spirituality (organizational job resources) were analyzed. The total sample of participants was 1,014 white-collar non-management employees in Bangkok. The following standardized scales were used to collect data for this research: The Philadelphia Mindfulness Scale Thai version (PHLMS\_TH), The Organizational Spiritual Values Scale (OSVS), Workplace Spirituality Scale (WPS), Thai Version-Job Content questionnaire (TJCQ), and the Utrecht and Work Engagement Scale-9 (UWES-9). Through structural equation modeling (SEM), direct and indirect models were developed and conducted to accomplish the research's purpose. The evaluation and comparison of the fit of these models revealed that the indirect model was better than the direct model, concluding the mediating role of workplace and organizational spirituality in a proposed relationship.

**Keywords:** Dispositional Mindfulness; Workplace Spirituality; Organizational Spirituality, Work Engagement

## Introduction

In the modern world, work plays a significant role in the lives of most employed individuals. Organizations expect optimum levels of physical and

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mental well-being from their employees, while employees are confronted with an alarming rise in unmanageable psychological job demands. To handle job demands effectively, adequate job resources are required on an individual and organizational level (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014). This research paid attention to the existing literature, which unequivocally demonstrated that dispositional mindfulness positively affected work engagement. The focus expands to utilizing job resources to enhance work engagement. However, job resources varied across different work settings. Spirituality is a state of mindfulness, whereas mindfulness is spiritual activity (Lazaridou & Pentaris, 2016), so the research area of job resources in the present study solely focused on spiritual resources to enhance work engagement. Spiritual resources, especially workplace spirituality (job resources at an individual level) and organizational spirituality (job resources at the organizational level) were found to influence the relationship between dispositional mindfulness and work engagement to handle existing psychological job demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014; Petchsawang & McLean, 2017). To be specific, the current proposed model was theoretically based on the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014) and Person-Environment (P-O) Fit Theory (Kristof, 1996).

### **Objective**

This research aimed to explore the impact of dispositional mindfulness on white-collar employees' work engagement in Bangkok, Thailand. In doing so, the mediating role of workplace spirituality (job resources at an individual level) and organizational spirituality (job resources at the organizational level) were considered and analyzed.

### **Hypotheses**

Hypothesis 1: Dispositional mindfulness will have a direct positive effect on work engagement.

Hypothesis 2: Workplace spirituality is the mediator between dispositional mindfulness and work engagement.

Hypothesis 3: Organization spirituality is the mediator between dispositional mindfulness and work engagement.

### **Literature Review**

This section began with an overview of the theoretical foundation of the present research. The research focused on the mechanisms to enhance work engagement through mindfulness, personal job resources (workplace spirituality), and organizational job resources (organizational spirituality). The notion was mainly based on the job demands-resources (JD-R) model and Person-Environment (P-O) Fit Theory.

### *Job Demands-Resources Model (JD-R Model)*

JD-R model was a relatively new concept in the Thai context. According to the JD-R model, job characteristics can be categorized into two broad categories: job demands and resources. Earlier development of the JD-R model focused only on job resources (organizational level); later, the model was expanded to examine personal and organizational job resources. Job resources were generally the most crucial predictors of work engagement in the motivational process. In contrast, job demands were generally the most important predictors of exhaustion in the health impairment process (Bakker & Demerouti 2014). This research adopted the JD-R model and investigated the motivational process considering both levels of job resources that led to the enhancement of work engagement. The selection of personal and organizational job resources was based on the fit of the personal and organizational properties in the work setting.

### *Person-Organization (P-O) fit Theory*

As stated by Palframan (2014), compatibility was the nature of the P-O fit theory. The more alignment between the person and the organization, the more likely it was that outcome factors (e.g., satisfaction, work engagement, organizational commitment) will be able to anticipate results with greater strength than either individual or organizational predictors alone. The main focus of job resources in this research was emphasized on P-O fit perceptions of employees on spiritual resources; the perception of fit between workplace spirituality (job resources at an individual level) and organizational spirituality (job resources at the organizational level) were investigated. The concept was in line with Palframan (2014) that while employees participated in work practices that had eroded their spirituality at work, they were inspired to strive for organizational environments. That mechanism provides an incentive for spirituality to be practiced in the workplace in order to develop congruence with their spiritual values.

### *Dispositional mindfulness*

Dispositional mindfulness describes individuals' organic level of mindfulness during daily activities and circumstances. It illustrated an innate personal ability without any kind of meditation practice that can indicate how individuals appear attentive in daily situations (Ma & Siu, 2020). In the working climate, mindfulness initiatives were introduced in the workplace to boost the levels of consciousness and maximize the positive impact on employee efficiency and well-being (Malinowski & Lim, 2015). Dispositional Mindfulness (Trait mindfulness) was measured with the Thai version of the

Philadelphia Mindfulness Scale (PHLMS\_TH, Silpakit, Silpakit, & Wisajun, 2011)

#### *Work Engagement*

Work Engagement was a positive organizational attribute that was a better fitter forecaster of job performance than any other factor (Bakker, 2011). Work Engagement was frequently described as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Bakker, 2011). However, work engagement impacted organizations and showed an increase in the likelihood of a positive result in the work environment at the individual level, including personal growth and personal development. Although work engagement seems to boost positive organizational results, engaged employees can often be involved in unmanaged work-related problems related to negative effects on work-related outcomes. So, employees must have sufficient job resources to deal with the difficulties that might occur in the workplace setting (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014). Work engagement was measured with the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale-9 (UWES-9; Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006).

#### *Workplace Spirituality as Personal Job Resources*

Spiritual states can function as personal job resources, the intrinsic motivators of goal-directed action and participation in spirituality at work (Miner, Bickerton, Dowson & Sterland, 2015). Workplace spirituality involves developing a sense of connectedness with and compassion for others, cultivating a mindful inner consciousness while pursuing meaningful work, and promoting transcendence in work (Petchsawang & Duchon, 2009). High levels of individual spirituality were found in employees who utilize their personal job resources appropriately, which positively correlates with common spirituality aspects, individuals' well-being, and other favorable work-related consequences (Bickerton, 2013). Religion is a topic to be avoided in a workplace setting, and spirituality in the workplace must be separate from the practice of religion (Petchsawang & Duchon, 2009). Thus, this research considers the religious aspect of workplace spirituality as being outside the scope of its intentions. Workplace Spirituality is considered a mediator in this study, assessed with the Workplace Spirituality Scale developed in the Asian context by Petchsawang and Duchon (2009).

#### *Organizational Spirituality as Organizational Resources*

Organizations can enhance employees' well-being by ensuring that they provide organizational resources that their employees need and ensure that employees' values are recognized. Organizational Spirituality was defined by Kolodinsky, Giacalone & Jurkiewicz (2004) as an understanding of spiritual values exhibited by the organizational structure within an organizational

atmosphere that employees represented. It is crucial to note that organizational support perceived by individuals can be more critical than actual support obtained. This research employs organizational spirituality as the organizational job resource to match workplace spirituality, considered a personal job resource, as mentioned earlier in this section. Organizational spirituality was a mediator factor in this study which was measured with The Organisational Spiritual Values Scale (OSVS) that was developed by Kolodinsky et al. (2004)

## **Method**

### *Participants*

397 participants who were white-collar employees in non-management position, employed in Bangkok, were employed for psychometric properties investigation, and another 617 participants were employed for model testing. Out of 1,014 participants were male (n=77, 7.6%), female (n=935, 92.2%) and other (n=2, 0.2%), aged ranges 18 – 29 years old (n=340, 33.3%), 30 – 39 years old (n=392, 38.7 %), 40 – 49 years old (n=210, 20.7 %), 50 - 59 years old (n=64, 6.3%), 60 years old and above (n=8, 0.8 %), employees who worked in non-management position, the respondents' position were senior employees (n=218, 21.5%), junior employees (n=255, 25.1%) and administrative (n=541, 53.4%), working hours per week was far less than 40 hours (n=186, 18.3%), around 40 hours (n=606, 59.8%), far more than 40 hours (n=181, 17.9%) and uncertain (n=41, 4%). This research is conducted by employing the services of a research company for participant selection using a convenience sampling method.

### **Research Instrumentation**

A five-part self-administered survey questionnaire in electronic form was employed as the research instrument that contained relevant standardized tests that measured variables included in this study. Part I of the questionnaire was a brief personal profile of the participants, which identifies the respondents' demographic information, and the other parts consisted of the following standardized scales, including the 20-item The Philadelphia Mindfulness Scale Thai version (PHLMS\_TH; Silpakit, Silpakit, & Wisajun, 2011), 22-item Workplace Spirituality Scale WPS; Petchsawang & Duchon, 2009), 20 items The Organizational Spiritual Values Scale (OSVS; Kolodinsky et al., 2004), and the Utrecht and 9-item Work Engagement Scale-9 (UWES-9; Schaufeli et al., 2006). Most of the instruments are Thai versions except for The Organizational Spiritual Values Scale (OSVS), which was translated to Thai based on the Translation-Back-Translation technique. The psychometric properties were evaluated via Reliability Analysis, Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and Exploratory factor analysis (EFA).

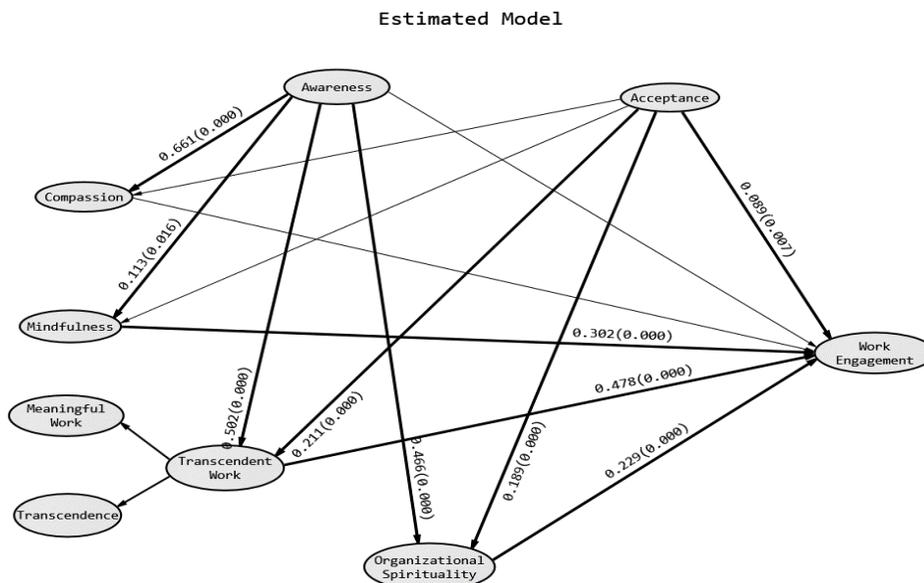
## Result

The findings of instruments validation showed Cronbach's Alpha for all instruments ranged from 0.85 to 0.95. While Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) were employed to test two models, the nine factors (first-order constructs) model, and the eight factors (second-order constructs) model, all fit the data set relatively well. However, the eight factors (second-order latent factor) model, in which meaningful work (MEWK) and transcendence (TRAN) were used to represent transcendent work (TRANW) as a second-order construct and vigor (EVG), dedication (EDD), and absorption (EAB) were used to represent work engagement (WE) as a first-order construct, fit the data better.

The current research was descriptive in nature and used path analysis and Structural Equation Modeling to apply correlation-covariance techniques. The proposed models for current research can be divided into two research models to investigate the direct and mediation effects. Model 1 was the direct model, which represents the direct model with a structural linkage between dispositional mindfulness (in the form of its two underlying factors, namely, awareness and acceptance) and works engagement. Model 2 was the indirect (mediation) model, which hypothesized relationships between dispositional mindfulness and work engagement are posited to be mediated by workplace spirituality (personal job resources; in the form of its three underlying factors, namely, compassion, mindfulness, and transcendent work) and organizational spirituality (organizational job resources). The process of this study was to test if there were a mediating effect between workplace spirituality and organizational spirituality or if the direct effect was better for explaining those relationships. In the case all variables of mediating effect were not presented, direct paths were represented in that same mediation model.

The selected models (Model 2: the indirect model) fit indices were goodness-of-fit statistical tests showed good model fit indices for SEM base model with  $\chi^2/df$  was 3.404, GFI was 0.902, CFI was 0.954, TLI was 0.944, PNFI was 0.770 and RMSEA was 0.062. Hence, this research concluded that the indirect (mediation) model was present and accounted for.

The path coefficients for the SEM model are shown in Figure 1, indicating that ten proposed relationships were significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). Bold lines illustrate the significant path coefficients. Meanwhile, indicators, error variance, and structural and error covariances were removed from the figure for clarity.



**Figure 1. Path Coefficients for The SEM Model**

Suppose there is all mediators effect between those mentioned relationships. In that case, this research will conclude that there is the mediation effect in the proposed model, and hypothesis 1 will be rejected, and the null hypothesis will be retained. Not only focusing on all the all-mediators effects, but this research also intended to explore each specific mediating relationship separately. The analysis of total and specific mediating effects were summarized and shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Analysis of Mediation Effects (Specific Mediation Effects)**

Specific mediation effects (Awareness --> Work Engagement)					Specific mediation effects (Acceptance --> Work Engagement)				
AW-->(COM)-->WE					AC-->(COM)-->WE				
Statistics	BMDE	SIE	AMDE	Remarks	Statistics	BMDE	SIE	AMDE	Remarks
Coeff	-0.146	0.054	-0.092	No	Coeff	-0.108	-0.001	0.109	No
SE	0.099	0.073	0.120	mediat	SE	0.043	0.003	0.043	ion
P	0.117	0.500	0.399	ion	P	0.017	0.348	0.017	No
AW-->(MIND)-->WE					AC-->(MIND)-->WE				
Coeff	-0.013	0.078	-0.092	Partial	Coeff	0.110	0.001	0.109	No
SE	0.129	0.041	0.120	mediat	SE	0.047	0.021	0.043	ion
P	0.820	0.038	0.399	ion	P	0.032	0.974	0.017	No

Specific mediation effects (Awareness --> Work Engagement)					Specific mediation effects (Acceptance --> Work Engagement)				
AW-->(COM)-->WE					AC-->(COM)-->WE				
Statistics	BMDE	SIE	AMDE	Remarks	Statistics	BMDE	SIE	AMDE	Remarks
AW-->(TRANW)-->WE					AC-->(TRANW)-->WE				
Coeff	0.459	0.550	-0.092	Full	Coeff	0.234	0.124	0.109	Partial mediation
SE	0.145	0.094	0.120	mediat	SE	0.052	0.032	0.043	
P	0.004	0.002	0.399	ion	P	0.003	0.001	0.017	
AWAR-->(ORGS)-->WKEN					ACCP-->(ORGS)-->WKEN				
Coeff	0.153	0.245	-0.092	Partial	Coeff	0.163	0.053	0.109	Partial mediation
SE	0.134	0.076	0.120	mediat	SE	0.045	0.018	0.043	
P	0.275	0.005	0.399	ion	P	0.003	0.003	0.017	
AWAR-->(ALL MEDIATORS)-->WKEN					ACCP-->(ALL MEDIATORS)-->WKEN				
Coeff	0.728	0.820	-0.092	Full	Coeff	0.287	0.178	0.109	Partial mediation
SE	0.111	0.106	0.120	mediat	SE	0.043	0.040	0.043	
P	0.006	0.003	0.399	ion	P	0.003	0.004	0.017	

*Note: AW=Awareness, AC=Acceptance, ORS=Organizational spirituality, WE=Work Engagement, COM=Compassion, MIND=Mindfulness, TRANW=Transcendent work, DE=Direct effect, SIE=Specific mediation effect, TIE=Total mediation effect, AMDE=After mediation direct effect, BMDE=Before mediation direct effect*

As illustrated in Table 1, the results showed a full mediating effect of all mediators (compassion, mindfulness, transcendent work, and organizational spirituality) on the relationship between awareness and work engagement since the direct relationship was not statistically different after considering the mediating effect (Table 1: p-value of Before direct mediation effect (BMDE), Specific mediation effect (SIE) and After direct mediation effect (AMDE) was 0.006, 0.003 and 0.399, respectively). However, the results showed partial mediation of all mediators on the relationship between acceptance and work engagement. Since the direct relationship still existed after considering the mediating effect and the standardized coefficient After the direct mediation effect was significantly reduced (AMDE,  $\beta = 0.287$ ) compared to Before the direct mediation effect (BMDE,  $\beta = 0.109$ ), hence, the direct relationship between acceptance and work engagement was weaker after introduced all mediators into the model. So, there was a mediating effect in the proposed model. Hypothesis 1 will be rejected, and the null hypothesis will be retained.

To be specific, the mediating effects for workplace spirituality and organizational spirituality as the mediators were presented, except for compassion as a mediator between dispositional mindfulness (awareness and

acceptance) and work engagement. There was also no mediating effect of mindfulness on the relationship between acceptance and work engagement. Specifically, while considering compassion and mindfulness as the mediators, there was no statistically significant change in the relationship between an independent variable (awareness and/or acceptance) and a dependent variable (work engagement; Table 1). So, hypothesis 2 and hypothesis 3 were partially accepted.

## **Discussion**

The essence of the investigation indicated that workplace spirituality and organizational spirituality are crucial in workplace settings, and dispositional mindfulness was found to impact spirituality at both personal and organizational levels which in turn benefit employees and organizations in terms of enhancing work engagement.

Spirituality in organizations is a complicated matter that was shaped by individual spirituality. The framework of organizations that provides managerial intuition into enhancing spiritual development among employees can strengthen the organization's capacity to promote increased effort and efficiency among their staff (King & Nicol, 1999).

However, the organizations' costs in order to enhance spirituality in the workplace setting can be relatively high, not just in terms of hiring new staff but also in terms of developing current employees for the changing organizational environment to successfully integrate spirituality into the workplace since Nnadede (2018) suggested that employees who lacked the mindfulness trait and were not completely engaged in their jobs were associated with a lack of spirituality in the working sense. So, organizations can be considered to recruit new employees who show certain dispositional mindfulness traits that match the organizational spiritual level or offer mindfulness mediation that can help them cope with mental challenges in the workplace setting to benefit both organizations and employees themselves.

Even though this research concluded that workplace spirituality and organizational spirituality mediated the relationship between dispositional mindfulness and work engagement, it is important to note that some dimensions of workplace spirituality did not show the mediating effects.

Compassion neither presented any meditating effect on the relationship between mindfulness (with both awareness and acceptance dimensions) and work engagement nor had a direct effect on work engagement. Although the result was unexpected, it could still be explained since compassion can be seen

as "bearing the suffering of others" (Figley, 2002, p. 1434). It is possible that positive feelings that are gained from compassion may result in compassion fatigue, which is the drawback of doing individuals' work (Remegio, Rivera, Griffin & Fitzpatrick, 2021). According to Sukcharoen, Sakunpong, and Sripa (2020), compassion in the Thai context involved spiritual relatedness, so compassion combined with cultural values led to the expectation that Thai individuals should be perpetually compassionate toward themselves and others. It is possible that excessive demands for compassion can lead to compassion fatigue in the Thai white-collar working population.

In addition, there was also no mediating effect of mindfulness on the relationship between acceptance and work engagement. As Cavanagh, Strauss, Forder, and Jones (2014) suggested, one way to describe acceptance and mindfulness was as two very closely related notions. Acceptance is similar to mindfulness because both concepts are concerned with the present state. So, mindfulness may not need as a personal job resource to enhance positive work-related outcomes when trait acceptance is presented.

### **Limitation of the Study**

The current research has some limitations that should be acknowledged when investigating the findings. Firstly, this research focused only on non-management samples because the existing literature supports that employees with management positions generally present relatively high work engagement. Therefore, findings from this study should be interpreted cautiously when applied to other positions of employees. It is also important to note that, even though this research directly explored spiritual aspects, it did not take any religious perspective into account. Moreover, the study was drawn from a single geographic area and mainly were female participants, which can be included a relatively limited number of spiritual values in a work-related setting; findings should be interpreted cautiously when applied to other cultures or other populations.

### **Managerial Implication**

Since dispositional mindfulness is crucial to raising work engagement, organizations can start from the recruiting process partially based on their dispositional mindfulness level. Recruitment can be considered the spiritual compatibility between employees and organizational values, which work engagement occurs when individuals consider themselves to be aligned with their organizations. Moreover, not only personal resources are important to promote work engagement, but also organizational resources; organizations should establish a healthy and moral work atmosphere, including culture,

policy, and human resource practices which may all contribute to promoting workplace spirituality that can lead to the enhancement of work engagement.

### **Conclusion**

The key objective of this research was to determine how to apply spiritual resources (personal and organizational level) in the JD-R model. To answer the primary question, workplace spirituality (personal job resources) and organizational spirituality (organizational job resources) were found to mediate the relationship between dispositional mindfulness and work engagement. The findings align with Malinowski and Lim (2015), that four psychological resources (hope, self-efficacy, resiliency, and optimism) had a mediation effect on the relationship between mindfulness and work engagement. This research concluded that spiritual resources (workplace and organizational spirituality) could also be considered important resources in a work context.

This research also expanded the evidence for the JD-R model of the interaction between personal and organizational job resources to enhance work engagement. The present study was consistent with Bakker and Demerouti (2014) that while focusing on work-related spiritual resources, this research concluded that workplace spirituality could be considered as a personal job resource, while organizational spirituality was considered as an organizational resource that influences how employees utilized available job resources, which in turn can enhance the employees' work engagement level.

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