THE ROLE OF MINDFULNESS IN ENHANCING PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING: A MEDIATION ANALYSIS OFSELF-ESTEEM AND SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS

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Abstract:

This study explores the relationship between mindfulness and psychological well-being, examining the mediating roles of social connectedness and self-esteem among SMEs employees in Pakistan. A sample of 700 SMEs employees completed online questionnaires on mindfulness, social connectedness, self-esteem, and psychological well-being. Using Smart PLS for analysis, the results indicate that mindfulness is significantly related to psychological well-being. Furthermore, social connectedness and self-esteem mediate the relationship between mindfulnessand psychological well-being. Specifically, mindfulness directly and indirectly influences psychological well-being through self-esteem and social connectedness. The mediating effect of self-esteem was found to be stronger than that of social connectedness. This research contributes to understanding mindfulness's psychological mechanisms and effects on well-being, particularlywithin a collectivist cultural context like Pakistan, where social relationships significantly shape self-esteem and mental health. The findings provide valuable insights into enhancing the mental well-being of SMEs employees through MF practices and fostering social connections.

Keywords: Mindfulness, Psychological Well-being, Self-Esteem and Social Connectedness

1.0 Introduction:

Mindfulness (MF) is often described as a state of consciousness that fosters self-awareness and attention by encouraging an open, non-judgmental attitude (Brown & Ryan, 2003). This entails putting effort into the occurring processes without worrying about past or future occurrences (Brown et al., 2007). Zinn (2003) defined MF as purposeful, systematic, intentional paying of attention. One also needs to be fully attentive and have humility to the subject at hand, oneself, and others around you. According to these principles, people can reach a state of trained attention on the present experience without turning toward evaluation or judgment (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). The

subject of this work is MF, which has received considerable attention in recent years owing to its positive influence on everyday functioning, including psychological well-being (PWB) and mental health (Vujanovic et al., 2010). The studies argue that MF improves cognition, fostering positive actions and self-control (Ryan & Deci, 2001). The present study contributed to developing this heightened self-awareness and equipped individuals to respond to stress and everyday difficulties with positive feelings. As a psychological characteristic, MF is a conscious state characterized by awareness and non-judgment of the ongoing experience. In addition to enabling possible effects of the cognitive operation on attention, it makes it easier for the individual to interact with the surroundings (Brown & Ryan, 2003). This paper aims to review the available literature on the impact of MF on positive psychological states, with special attention paid to how SMEs employees mental health can be improved through MF. Much earlier research has suggested that MF alleviates stress and enables people to regulate their emotional responses, improving their PWB (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Because MF promotes individuals to focus on the present moments and respond to the events with less judgment, MF can ease anxiety and bring transparency. A feature of the research presented here is the consideration of social connectedness and self-esteem as moderating variables in the relationship between MF and PWB.

Carter and McKeown, interpersonal relatedness is having significant relationships and touching base with people who will provide social support. Membership is known to inflate PWB. Likewise, self-esteem or a perceived appraisal of one's worth and capability greatly affects people's mental well-being. People can afford the hassles and improve their psychological health when they relate to others and have positive self-images. In this context, MF might enhance well-being by increasing these mediators. Applying MF can promote relationship interaction because it assumes tolerance and non-criticism of others.

MF can improve the self-esteem variable to the extent that it increases self-acceptance, which leads to an increase in the level of the self-concept. By enhancing the operation of these mediators, MF can adequately enhance psychological health. Therefore, this work will fill this gap in the subject literature by establishing the relationship between MF, social connectedness and self-esteem in promoting positive mental health among SMEs employees. Knowledge of these processes can guide subsequent programs addressing psychological improvement via MF in learner populations exposed to numerous stressors within academic environments. Therefore, the study also focuses on MF as a crucial method for improving the mental state and psychological overload.

The present research aims to establish the moderator roles of self-esteem and social relatedness in the relationship between MF and positive psychological health. Several SMEs employees are said to have low levels of psychological health, a condition that brings about anxiety or depression. The research examines the psychological factors that contribute to the educative process of enhancing the employee's mental health. With a growing interest in MF, especially among SMEs employees, the present research had a poor understanding of the variables that have borne the relationship between MF and PWB. The current research is relevant and crucial because it will help increase knowledge regarding the mechanisms through which MF may positively affect mental health, emphasizing the two largely uninvestigated mediators of self-esteem and social connectedness.

Cultural psychology literature shows that people of different cultures have different social relationship models (Taylor et al., 2010). For example, people in Asian countries prefer to endure

Dutch tycoons rather than enjoy autonomy and personal freedom in relating harmoniously with other cultures. This differs sharply from Western cultures, which are individualistic and consider people unique and different from others (Kim et al., 2006). For example, using the Pakistani cultural perspective, people there are greatly endued with social relationships and recompensed for being affiliated with society (Zhao et al., 2014). This means that social connectedness, both its nature and its role, is determined by culture. This study will contribute to the literature by understanding how self-esteem and social relatedness moderate the link between MF and PWB and, by doing so, inform how MF interventions can be best introduced within different cultural members, enhancing employees well-being among SMEs employees from varying cultural backgrounds.

Hofstede has helped cultural characteristics, such as m and collectivism. In his 1991 study, he reveals that in egotistic cultures, like the cultures of Western countries, the autonomous self is defined as self-directed, and values are defined based on individualism and personality. On the other hand, the culture of collectivism, such as that of Pakistan and other works, posits that people operate in a web or network of relationships in a large society. In such societies, the family unit, the welfare of the society and orderliness methods are paramount to everyone. Compared with individualist cultures, in which people behave independently from others, collectivism incorporates stresses and unity between members belonging to the group (Hofstede, 1984). In collectivist cultures, people prefer their relationships and the stability of the community groups where they live, business, and work, best known as guanxi (Hofstede, 2001). This collectivism can be seen in 'Pakistani' thinking, where society is more of a united whole than the sum of individuals; certainly, Pakistani culture could not be considered similar to Swedish or American culture, which, on the Hofstede scale, is considered highly individualistic (Hofstede, 2001). The USA is an individualistic culture that prefers people with individualistic characteristics; China is a collectivist culture that values collectivist characteristics. It is established that individualist cultures value self-compile, while control cultures value self-culture and social order (Triandis, 1995).

The perception of self-esteem is also problematic from a cross-cultural perspective. For instance, Li et al. (2015) have compared self-esteem across the representative samples of East Asian participants and Western participants and indicated that the levels of self-esteem in East Asians are lower than those in people from Western societies. One can explain such a difference concerning a culture where the East prefers a collectivistic notion of well-being as opposed to the Western individualistic notion of well-being based on achievements and feelings. Indeed, it was confirmed that self-esteem correlates more with life satisfaction in individualistic cultures (Suh et al., 1998). In collectivist cultures, interpersonal relationship satisfaction or reconciliation is likely to correlate better with self-esteem than in individualistic cultures, and this is because of countries like China (Kang et al., 2003). In addition, awareness of norms common to the two societies, such as the density of interpersonal ties, reflects a higher GCC than in Western societies (Durkheim's, 1951, 1987). For instance, in Pakistan, people are closest to their friends and near dears, which enhances the culture of perceiving oneself as part of a city, nation, or globe. This contrasts with Western culture, where people tend to feel self-employed. The people of Eastern society, for instance, those of East Asian origin, use descriptions in terms of relations as opposed to the individualistic descriptions of the people of Western societies (Bond & Cheung, 1983). Self-connection, therefore, forms the basis of Eastern culture, in contrast to the functionality of self-sufficiency that portrays Western culture.

In continuation of such cultural observations, the present study aims to examine the relationship between MF and psychological health in a Pakistani sample. The present research aims to replicate the prior study on MF and well-being and the link between self-esteem and well-being. The present study examines social relatedness and self-acceptance as mediators between the identified variance of MF and psychological health. Based on existing research, three key hypotheses are proposed: The predicted hypothesis are as follows, (a) MF will have a positive correlation with PWB, (b) social connectedness will act as the mediator between MF and PWB, and (c) self-esteem will act as the mediator between MF and PWB. The study proposes two hypotheses to advance knowledge in MF and personality and its positive psychological impact in a collectivistic environment, focusing on the impact of culture on well-being.

2.0 Literature review:

2.1 Theory:

SDT, developed by Deci and Ryan (2000), emphasizes that human motivation is shaped by three innate psychological needs: self-determination, self-competence and self-relatedness. These needs are essential for the promotion of health, and relatedness can be closely associated with social integration and competence with self-worth. Mindfulness also fits well with SDT because, through its means, people are able to attend to their feelings and actions without the processes of evaluation. It does this in a way that improves self-organization as a form of self-governance (Brown & Ryan, 2003). Prescribing mindfulness means that the patients use their thought processes to understand the client better, which supports autonomy (Ryan et al., 2007). The cultural dimension of SDT, autonomy, helps individuals feel that they are in control of their actions, an aspect that enhances their well-being. SMEs employees under pressure by stressors that threaten or indeed undermine autonomy, mindfulness becomes a means to reclaim control at the psychological level to enhance resilience (Garland et al., 2015).

In this study, self-esteem as a moderating variable between mindfulness and psychological wellbeing implies that the practice of mindfulness is favourable to self-image. According to SDT, self-esteem is a measure of perceived competence, which is necessary for self- and social relatedness to meet the SDT need for competence (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Mindfulness achieves this by decreasing self-criticism and increasing self-kindness, which greatly boosts self-acceptance, which is the basis of self-esteem as postulated by (Pepping et al., 2013). The effect of mindful on self-esteem corresponds to the notion that only when one feels competent can he or she feel that he or she is doing well emotionally and effectively (Randal et al., 2015). When SMEs employees change their attitude towards achievements and start accepting them without criticizing themselves, their feelings get better, and they become healthier.

Another component of SDT is relatedness; in this study, it is depicted by social relatedness, a feeling of acceptance and inclusion in one's social context. Self-connection, in collectivist cultures such as that of Pakistan where this study is set, has a significant role in the wellbeing of the individuals, (Taylor et al., 2010). In this case, mindfulness promotes friendly interaction because being fully aware of the existing relationship with the subject enhances their vulnerability and allows them to embrace their suffering (Birnie et al., 2010). Because mindful individuals do not dwell on the past or pass judgment on themselves or others, they are able to relate to others, which

meets this basic psychological need for relatedness. This concurs with evidence that mindfulness can enhance interpersonal relationships, hence enhancing social relatedness (Trautwein et al., 2014). Hence, one of the tenets of SDT, the relatedness component, is fulfilled: enhancing people's well-being through relationships.

SDT is convinced that the fulfilment of all three psychological requirements autonomy, competence, and relatedness results in higher psychological quality (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Mindfulness, which meets these needs, is, therefore, a comprehensive model of human functioning that is directly relevant to SMEs employees experience, especially where stress, social affiliation and self-evaluations are salient (Jose et al., 2012). Studies show that mindfulness promotes improved affect control and lowered stress levels (Hanley et al., 2014); both are useful when coping with complicated social and academic. Through mindfulness, employee's psychological needs will be met, hence reducing stress and a boost in the level of satisfaction with the employees academic and social lives (Kozlowski, 2013). Self-determination theory also emphasizes the role of culture-appropriate variables in describing psychological wellbeing. In collectivist cultures where maintaining relationships with others and interdependence is significantly valued, relationships play a huge role in self-esteem and, therefore, in wellbeing, according to Hofstede (2001). As for SDT, the role of its relatedness aspect is prominent in the Pakistani context because people's worth is defined by relationships (Zhao et al., 2014). Introducing SDT in this study offers a systematic view of how mindfulness, through self-esteem and social connectedness, is connected to culturally derived aspects of well-being and establishes that meeting psychological needs is vital across cultural perspectives.

Table 1: Prior studies related to Mindfulness

Study	Context	Predictors	Outcomes	Findings
Brown & Ryan(2003)	General adult population	Mindfulness	Psychologi calwell- being	Mindfulness positively impacts well- being by increasing self-regulationand present-moment awareness.
Baer et al. (2006)	Individual s practicing mindfulne ss meditation	Mindfulne ss practices	Emotional regulation and stress reduction	Mindfulness improves emotional regulation and reduces perceivedstress.
Kabat-Zinn (1993)	Clinical patients with chronic pain	Mindfulne ss meditatio n	Pain management andquality of life	Mindfulness aids in pain reduction and improves patients' quality of life.
Pepping et al.(2013)	University students	Mindfulness	Self-esteem andwell-being	Mindfulness enhances self-esteem, promoting higher psychological well-being.

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Jose et al. (2012)	Adolescents	Social connectedness, mindfulness	Psychological well-being	Mindfulness and social connectedness contribute to better mental health and life satisfaction in adolescents.

2.2 Mindfulness and Psychological Well-being

PWB is a positive balance between emotional states, such as happiness, and the optimal functioning of personal and social life (Deci & Ryan, 2008). The areas include social contacts, physical health, academic accomplishment and achievement of individual goals (Khan et al., 2015). The literature shows that MF is relevant to improving PWB to a very large extent (Baer et al., 2008). Recently, several studies have effectively linked MF to well-being with several other variables, such as spirituality (Bajaj & Badri, 2016), burnout, and subjective well-being (Beshai et al., 2016). It makes them self-forbid themselves in ways that enable them to get on with what they desire to do to get well. They can distinguish between an idea and a piece of information, helping them find how to lead a judgment less life. Brown et al. (2007) state that MF leads to a promotion of mood states and a reduction of stress.

MF has been linked with reduced stress and chronic pain (Creswell & Lindsay, 2014). Several authors have proved this by saying that MF helps enhance PWB. MF are better disposed to evaluate their lives positively than to pursue a third perspective (Garland et al., 2015). Hanley et al. (2014) confirmed the connection between MF and mental health, including the component of emotional regulation. In all aspects, MF helps the buyer get a better view of life, enhancing his acceptable psychological level.

Table 2: Prior studies related to psychological well- being

Study	Context	Predictors	Outcomes	Findings
Ryff & Keyes (1995)	General adult population	Psychological well-being factors (e.g., autonomy, purpose)	Life satisfaction, mental health	High psychological well-being correlates with increased life satisfaction and better mental health.
Diener et al.(2015)	Global population samples	Subjective well-being	Happiness, life satisfaction	Higher subjective well-being is associated with increased happiness and lifesatisfaction.
Keyes (2002)	Adolescentsand adults	Social well-being, psychological well-being	Positive functioning, reduced mental illness	Psychological well-being enhances positive functioning and reduces mentalillness risks.

Deci & Ryan (2008)	Various life domains	Self-determination needs (autonomy, competence, relatedness)	Overall psychological health	Meeting self-determination needs supports optimal psychological health and well-being.
Seligman (2011)	General population	Positive psychology interventions	Increased life meaning, engagement	Positive psychology interventions improve life meaning and engagement, enhancing well-being.

2.3 Mindfulness, Social Connectedness and Psychological Well-being

MF can become even more robust when individuals have social interactions or relationships to support their need to feel connected or supported. Social relatedness, featuring as a connection that grows out of positive interpersonal transactions, fosters attachment to the people in an individual's life and institutions as well as community, which enables one to cope with life's adversities more effectively (Arslan, 2018; Ungar et al., 2013). Such a sense greatly contributes to improved or enhanced mental health because it assists in establishing emotional stability, social support and stress resilience (Malone et al., 2012). There is proof in the literature that social connectedness can link with the well-being of society, and such fellowship is said to influence such qualities. Evidence suggests that MF, which is the method of paying attention to present experiences without judgment, helps to have a better relationship between self-monitoring and emotional regulation. Numerous investigations also show that MF is positively associated with social relatedness. Therefore, MF improves the personal experience of life and personal relatedness with others and strengthens PWB.

MF has also been connected with facilitating relational intimacy (Beitel et al., 2005; Kabat-Zinn, 1993). Social integration thus seems to play varying roles in reducing emotional ill health, depression and anxiety (Williams & Galliher, 2006). In addition, MF was shown to promote perceptions of interpersonal relatedness (Trautwein et al., 2014). Such findings stem from MF increasing self-observation of responses to experiences, thus enabling individuals to understand how external situations affect others' behaviours (Block-Lerner et al., 2007). It may also lead to more perception of relatedness and empathy, for MF helps people view things from other people's angles (Birnie et al., 2010). As a result, there is an enhancement in the extent of empathy and personal relatedness that enhances feelings of connectedness that are positively associated with MF (Barnes et al., 2007). Kozlowski (2013) has pointed out that MF enhances the ability to listen carefully and appreciate peoples' feelings, control one's emotions, and experience personal happiness. These benefits improve emotional intelligence and encourage healthier catharsis, making relating with other people healthy.

Dispositional and State MF positively correlate with reduced levels of Emotional Stress, Effective Communication and enhanced perception of Relationships at Positive Change (Barnes et al., 2007). Social belonging, defined as the perception of connection with other people or the feeling

of not being isolated (Lee & Robbins, 1995), is on the same level as another inherent need for rationality (Seppala et al., 2013, p.10). People with lower levels of social integration exhibit symptoms that point to social anxiety and poor social interaction (Seppala et al., 2013).

Studies show that social inclusion greatly improves self-ordered values of PWB in youth, underlining the importance of social relations in mental health (Jose & Afifi, 2012). The cause of social interaction is an initial sense of belonging, meaning and support in dealing with life's occurrences. Self-determination theory of social psychology has a concept of relatedness recommending that relations are healthy; for instance, people feel healthier when they nurture and maintain friendly relations (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Research also claims the types of social relations to mental and physical well-being. Baumeister and Leary (1995) revealed that belongingness is connected with well-being. Additionally, MF, or orientation to the present time, enhances social relationships, as mindful people exhibit more empathy and compassion, creating relationships (Yamaji & Hiroki, 2014). Social integration becomes especially essential when the person has a history of emotional abuse because social detachment evidences anxiety and depression (Jose et al., 2012). To this end, this study investigates whether social connectedness moderates the relationship between MF and subjective well-being, identifying how social connection could enhance mental health in individuals with MF skills and strengthening it into more effective interventions for promoting civility and social relatedness.

Table 3: Prior studies related to social connectedness

Study	Context	Predictors	Outcomes	Findings
Lee & Robbins (1995)	College students	Social connectedness	Belongingness, mental health	High social connectedness correlates with a strong sense of belonging and better mental health.
Jose et al. (2012)	Adolescents	Social support, social connectedness	Life satisfaction, psychological well-being	Social connectedness and support are significant predictors of well-being in adolescence.
Baumeister &Leary (1995)	General population	Need to belong	Emotional stability, reduced loneliness	The need for belongingness influences emotional stability and reduces feelings of loneliness.
Williams & Galliher (2006)	Adolescents	Peer and family connectedness	Self-esteem, psychological well-being	Family and peer connectedness contribute to higher self-esteem and better mental health in adolescents.
Hutcherson etal. (2008)	General population	Social connection interventions	Positive emotions, empathy	Interventions to increase social connection lead to higher positive emotions and empathy levels.

2.4 Mindfulness, Self-Esteem and Psychological Well-being

The authors of the present problem state that self-esteem, one of the components of self-image, is a mixture of an emotional and an evaluative component of self-image, which is essential for a favorable psychological experience (Leary & Baumeister, 2000). It is consistent with people's identity and overall opinion regarding their value. Researchers recently associated MF with higher self-esteem, and the results indicate that those who are more mindful pay more attention to themselves and treat themselves more gently and kindly (Randal et al., 2015). MF involves disengagement from self-criticism attributable to adverse experiences in life, thus encouraging acceptance and self-less evaluation (Ryan et al., 2007).

Self-esteem plays a constructive psychological protective role; the higher the level, the better the well-being and the lower the robustness to anxiety and depression (Yan et al., 2021). Another factor is social inclusion. The fact is that people with many friends have high levels of self-esteem and low levels of psychological disorders (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Based on these linkages, Self-esteem could work as a partial mediator between MF and well-being since MF helps accept the self, and self-esteem strengthens the self. While previous research made associations between MF, self-esteem, and well-being, it could be further explored to see if self-esteem is indeed one-way MF enhances psychological health.

Table 4: Prior studies related to social connectedness

| Study	Context	Predictors	Outcomes	Findings
Lee & Robbins (1995)	College students	Social connectedness	Belongingness, mental health	High social connectedness correlates with a strong sense of belonging and better mental health.
Jose et al. (2012)	Adolescents	Social support, social connectedness	Life satisfaction, psychological well-being	Social connectedness and support significantly predict well-being in adolescents.
Baumeister & Leary (1995)	General population	Need to belong	Emotional stability, reduced loneliness	The need for belongingness influences emotional stability and reduces loneliness.
Williams & Galliher (2006)	Adolescents	Peer and family connectedness	Self-esteem, psychological well-being	Family and peer connectedness contribute to higher self-esteem and better mental health in adolescents.
Hutcherson et al.(2008)	General population	Social connection interventions	Positive emotions, empathy	Interventions to increase social connection lead to higher positive emotions and empathy.
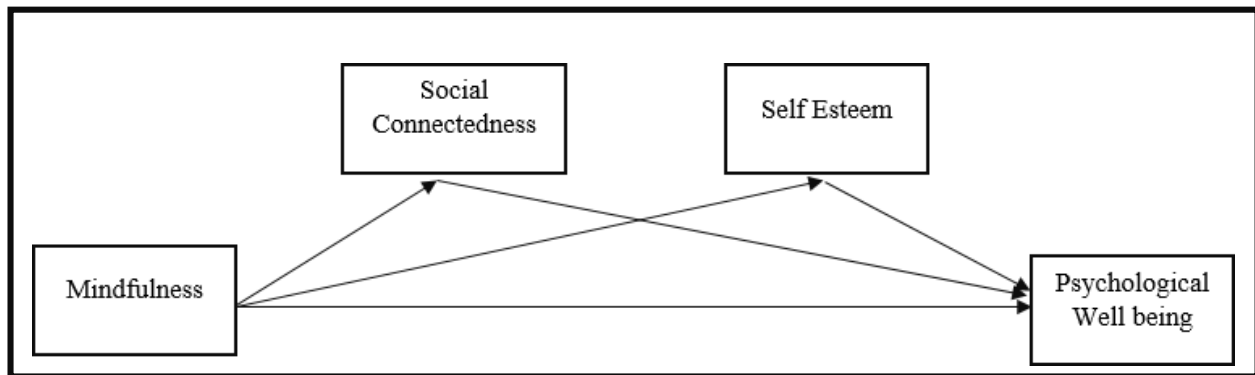
Figure 1: Research Model(source : Rehman et al., 2023)

3.0 Methodology:

The present study involved 700 employees of SMEs of Pakistan. The larger number of participants was comprised of upper and middle level employees. Participants completed self-generated online questionnaires regarding MF, which referred to social relationships, self-esteem, and psychological wellbeing. All the participants were informed that they could decide to stop responding to the questionnaires at any time they wanted, and they all signed consent forms before the start of the study. It took about 15 minutes to complete the questionnaires.

MA measurement was done using the 15-item MAAS developed by Brown and Ryan (2003); the scale has established internal consistency and validity. Measures of PWB adopted an "18-item" instrument developed by Ryff and Keyes (1995). Overall social interaction was measured with Lee et al.'s (2001) revised 20-item scale, whereas self-esteem was measured with Rosenberg's (1965) 10-item scale employing the four-point Likert scale. As for the reliability and validity of the scales, all of them were high, which ensured accurate measurement of the study's variables. This systematized and reliable procedure allowed us to comprehensively analyze the relations between MF, social relatedness, self-esteem, and psychological well-being.

4.0 Data analysis:

Before performing the regression analysis, exploratory assessments of the dataset should be made to ensure the high accuracy or reliability of the results. This involves handling missing values, outliers, and distribution tests, commonly called skewness and kurtosis tests. After the data has been cleansed and verified, further diagnostics checks, such as the variance inflation factor (VIF), are conducted to check the degree of multicollinearity. Lack of data averts uniformity in variation and could lead to biased estimations in regression analysis. This problem is solved using different approaches such as mean imputation, mode imputation, multiple imputations, and other complicated imputations (Little & Rubin, 2002). Missing values should be thoroughly examined to understand their pattern before deciding the imputation method or dropping missing data points. No significant missing data points were identified, and any minor instances were addressed using appropriate imputation techniques. The dataset is now complete and ready for regression analysis. Outliers can significantly affect the regression coefficients, leading to erroneous interpretations. Techniques like Z-scores or boxplots are commonly used to detect outliers. Outliers that cannot be justified contextually should be handled appropriately through transformation or exclusion (Barnett & Lewis, 1994). Outliers were detected using Z-scores and boxplots. Any extreme values

that could distort the analysis were reviewed contextually. After examination, necessary transformations or exclusions were applied to ensure that outliers do not unduly influence the results.

Skewness indicates asymmetry in the distribution, while kurtosis refers to the tail behaviour of the distribution compared to a normal distribution. The threshold for skewness is typically ± 2, while kurtosis should be close to 3 for a normal distribution. Other transforms, such as log transforms, may be needed to stabilize the variance if either of the metrics in the pair has a high value, a sign of non-normality. Finally, we examined the distribution of data for skewness and kurtosis. Values closer to ± 2 exhibit skewness while kurtosis is near 3; both values are tolerable, meaning that the data ordinarily has a near normal distribution. No further changes were required for the tender. The result of gradient descent can be either written back to disk or displayed on the screen as a rigid picture. This leads to a situation where analysts find it difficult to decide how much each predictor is responsible for the observed changes when the large standard errors are attributed to multicollinearity. Kutner et al. (2004) suggest that where variables are correlated, they should be deleted or aggregated where the VIF value is more than 10. The results from the 700 analysis show no multicollinearity problem and that all the independent variables have VIF values below the cutoff point 10. In this way, the regression model solves the concern of overestimating the variables' contribution while underestimating the variability in the estimate.

4.1 Validity Statistics:

Table 5: Validity statistics

Variables	Items	Loadings	Cronbach Alpha	CR	AVE
Mindfulness			**0.796**	**0.870**	**0.629**
	MF1	0.763			
	MF2	0.686			
	MF5	0.785			
	MF6	0.658			
	MF9	0.648			
	MF11	0.663			
Psychological well being			**0.866**	**0.893**	**0.584**
	PWB2	0.832			
	PWB5	0.886			
	PWB6	0.863			
	PWB11	0.881			
	PWB12	0.871			
	PWB13	0.818			
Self-connectedness			**0.942**	**0.952**	**0.713**
	SEC1	0.736			
	SEC2	0.667			
	SEC3	0.738			
	SEC4	0.658			
	SEC5	0.648			
	SEC6	0.663			
	SEC7	0.710			
	SEC8	0.675			
	SEC9	0.763			
	SEC11	0.754			
Self esteem			**0.842**	**0.925**	**0.742**
	SE1	0.754			
	SE2	0.875			
	SE3	0.832			
	SE4	0.675			
	SE5	0.745			
	SE6	0.845			

Using loadings, Cronbach's Alpha, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE), the table 1 presents the psychometric properties of four variables: MF, PWB, self-connectedness, and self-esteem. MF has above-average internal consistency (Cronbach, 1951) with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.796, considered acceptable (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Its CR value of 0.870 indicates satisfactory reliability, and the AVE of 0.629 meets the minimum criterion

of 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), suggesting that the items explain more than half of the variance in the construct. The item loadings for MF range from 0.648 to 0.785, with all loadings above the threshold of 0.60, signifying adequate convergent validity.

PWB (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.866) also shows strong internal consistency and reliability, as the CR of 0.893 is well above 0.70, and the AVE of 0.584 meets the acceptable threshold. Similarly, self-connectedness exhibits excellent reliability (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.942) and convergent validity with a CR of 0.952 and AVE of 0.713, indicating that the items capture a significant portion of the variance. The loadings range from 0.648 to 0.763, confirming the construct's robustness. In the last analysis, the self-esteem measure enjoys substantial reliability (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.842, CR = 0.925), high convergent validity (AVE = 0.742), and high validity (AVE = 0.742). Hair et al. (2010) affirmed that self-esteem is valid and consistent with loadings ranging from 0.754 to 0.875.

4.2 Discriminant Validity:

Table 6: HTMT ANALYSIS

Variables	1	2	3	4
Mindfulness	▉			
Psychological well being	0.572	▉		
Self-connectedness	0.480	0.707	▉	
Self esteem	0.561	0.675	0.521	▉

The table 2 provides the correlations of MF with well-being, self-connection, and self-esteem for discriminant validity using the HTMT ratio of correlations. HTMT is a more conservative measure of discriminant validity, and values below 0.85 can be considered satisfactory discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015). The correlation between MF and PWB amounts to 0.572, below the threshold of 0.85, meaning these concepts differ. Similarly, discriminant validity is acceptable since the correlation between self-connectedness and MF is 0.480 and between MF, self-esteem and 0.561 are below the cut-off. Higher and positive values of self-connectedness (r = 0.707) and self-esteem (r = 0.675) with lower and negative values of age demonstrate the discriminant validity of the model. However, the values exceed the recommended threshold of HTMT = 0.85. The coefficients obtained are less than the threshold and, thus, indicate that there is no significant connection between self-connectedness and self-esteem: 0.521. Based on the HTMT analysis, the discriminant validity between these constructs is supported, as all values are comfortably below 0.85, indicating that each construct measures a distinct aspect of mental well-being.

4.3 Hypotheses Results:

Table 7: Results

	Original sample	Sample mean	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values
MF -> PSYWB	0.544	0.545	0.056	9.214	0.000
MF -> SEC	0.142	0.138	0.067	2.297	0.022
SEC -> SE	0.513	0.519	0.061	8.379	0.000
SE -> PSYWB	0.548	0.549	0.057	3.542	0.000
Indirect effect					
MF -> SEC -	0.274	0.284	0.048	5.528	0.000

>PSYWB					
MF->SE ->PSYWB	0.350	0.375	0.052	4.258	0.000

The results of the hypotheses testing using Smart PLS show several significant direct and indirect effects between MF, PWB, self-connectedness, and self-esteem. The direct effect of MF on PWB (MF -> PWB) has a coefficient of 0.544 with a t-value of 9.214 and a p-value of 0.000, indicating a strong and significant positive relationship between MF and PWB. Similarly, MF positively impacts self-connectedness (MF -> SEC), with a coefficient of 0.142, a t-value of 2.297, and a p-value of 0.022, showing a statistically significant but weaker relationship. The path from self-connectedness to self-esteem (SEC -> SE) is significant, with a coefficient of 0.513, a t-value of 8.379, and a p-value of 0.000, suggesting that higher self-connectedness leads to increased self-esteem. Additionally, self-esteem significantly predicts PWB (SE -> PSYWB) with a coefficient of 0.548, a t-value of 3.542, and a p-value of 0.000, indicating that higher self-esteem enhances PWB.

The indirect effects are also noteworthy. The mediation effect of self-connectedness in the relationship between MF and PWB (MF -> SEC -> PSYWB) is significant, with a coefficient of 0.274, t-value of 5.528, and a p-value of 0.000, indicating that self-connectedness partially mediates this relationship. Similarly, the mediation effect of self-esteem in the relationship between MF and PWB (MF -> SE -> PSYWB) is significant, with a coefficient of 0.350, t-value of 4.258, and a p-value of 0.000, suggesting that self-esteem also plays an important mediating role in linking MF to PWB. All hypotheses are supported, as the p-values are below the 0.05 significance level.

5. Discussion:

The current study aimed to explore the link between MF and PWB, focusing on social connectedness and self-esteem as potential mediators in this relationship. The findings revealed that social connectedness and self-esteem independently mediate the link between MF and PWB, supporting the proposed mediation model. This model posits that MF plays a part in determining PWB by increasing perceived social relationships and self-worth. I discussed these findings as enhancing MF has implications for PWB concerning interpersonal and intrapersonal processes.

According to the study's first hypothesis, it was unveiled that there is a positive correlation between MF and PWB among SMEs employees. This concurs with other studies highlighting the psychological benefits of using MF on people (Kozlowski, 2013). The reasons for obtaining this result can be discussed further because people with more MF pay attention to present situations and accept them, which is closely connected with more adaptive uses of cognitive reappraisal (Garland et al., 2015). In the same way, other research works also speak of the relationship where there is the specification that MF correlates with PWB to a greater extent than with subjective well-being (Hanley et al., 2014). Further, this study supports previous findings on the correlation between social integration and life satisfaction (Jose et al., 2012; Malone et al., 2012) together with that of (Chao et al., 2012) and self-esteem and PWB (Sowislo & Orth, 2013).

This study has also shown that social connectedness and self-esteem mediate the relationship between MF and PWB. Those who score high on the MF scale are likely to have high self-esteem and PWB, more so than others. Other studies have confirmed this; they have highlighted MF as having a positive impact on the subject's PWB and self-esteem (Kong et al., 2016; Wang & Kong, 2020). Another researched theme was social integration supporting psychological health (Kong et al., 2016).

This research was mainly done among SMEs employees, thereby providing the study with a new perspective on the existing research. In the previous works devoted to SMEs employees, and especially in the Chinese context, little attention has been paid to the mediating roles of social connectedness and self-esteem in the relationship between MF and PWB. This research contributes to understanding the psychological factors favorable to the well-being of SMEs employees. The study also hints at the possibility that mindful exercises help those who feel quite isolated and have low self-esteem because these practices lessen the degree to which one might come down hard on one's thoughts and feelings. Also, MF maintains, enhances or creates social relationships as it differs positively on perceived connection and self-worth.

This research aimed to provide mediational tests of the path model relating MF to psychological health through social integration and self-acceptance. This study implies that there is a need to improve the SMEs employees PWB. MF, social support, and self-acceptance programs may be most effective for the identified type of SMEs employees. Earlier studies have suggested that social integration and better social affiliation are major predictors of positive psychological and bodily health and social well-being (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). since social connectivity and self-esteem are vital elements affecting well-being, the show-and-change programs aimed at developing these qualities may cause massive changes in SMEs employees psychological state. In addition, and contrary to negative thinking, MF improves self-esteem (Pepping et al., 2013). Suppose, via grounded training, a new aspect of the self is discovered. In that case, increasing mindful consciousness may improve PWB in relations with others, self-reports, and feelings of connectedness, of which well-being is positively predicted (Brown et al., 2007).

Despite the valuable contributions of this study, there are several limitations to consider. First, self-reporting tools to measure MF, social connectedness, self-esteem, and PWB may introduce subjectivity into the findings. Future research could address this limitation by employing a combination of methods, such as longitudinal designs, to test the mediation models more robustly and establish a clearer causal relationship between MF and PWB. Additionally, utilizing different research designs could help reduce potential biases. Second, while this study focused on social connectedness and self-esteem as mediators, other potential mediators, such as family dynamics, cultural norms, and values, should also be investigated to strengthen MF and PWB theories. Including these factors in future studies could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how MF affects PWB in different contexts. Another limitation of this study is its sample, which consisted solely of SMEs employees. Future research should replicate the study with more diverse populations to generalize the findings. This would provide a broader perspective on the relationship between MF, social connectedness, self-esteem, and PWB across different demographic groups. Lastly, the study used the unidimensional Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) to assess MF. Although this scale is widely used and well-validated, future research should incorporate multifaceted MF measures, such as the Five Facet MF Questionnaire (FFMQ) or the Freiburg MF Inventory (FMI), to gain a deeper understanding of the various aspects of MF and how they relate to PWB. Despite these limitations, the study significantly contributes to the growing body of research on MF and well-being. MF is becoming increasingly important within positive psychology, and researchers continue to progress in understanding its mechanisms. This study advances our knowledge of the relationships among MF, PWB, social connectedness, and self-esteem, particularly in a SMEs employees population. The findings suggest that professionals working with employees may want to design intervention programs to enhance MF, social

connectedness, and self-esteem to improve PWB. This is especially relevant for SMEs employeesliving away from their families and friends and experiencing isolation or disconnection.

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