#### Journal of Social Economics Research

2024 Vol. 11, No. 3, pp. 347-361 ISSN(e): 2312-6264 ISSN(p): 2312-6329 DOI: 10.18488/35.v11i3.3873 © 2024 Conscientia Beam. All Rights Reserved.



Impact of mindfulness dimensions on work engagement among white-collar employees during the new normal in Malaysia

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#### **Article History**

Received: 29 December 2023 Revised: 16 July 2024 Accepted: 30 July 2024 Published: 27 August 2024

#### **Keywords**

Acceptance Attention Awareness Mindfulness Present focus White collar employees Work engagement.

# **JEL Classification:**

TEL Classic and a

#### **ABSTRACT**

This study examines the impact of mindfulness dimensions on work engagement among white-collar employees during the new normal in Malaysia. Employees today feel disengaged from their company in an environment where productivity and performance are critical. Research has indicated that elevated mindfulness levels have positive effects on the workplace and are a strong indicator of employee engagement. Previous studies have not thoroughly examined the impact of various facets of mindfulness on employee work engagement following the pandemic. This study investigated the impact of the four dimensions of mindfulness on employee engagement. This study was based on positivist philosophy and a deductive approach. Data for this quantitative study came from 227 employees in Malaysia's private sector who were employed in white-collar jobs. We gathered the primary data using a survey strategy and a self-administered questionnaire. The study's findings demonstrate a positive and significant relationship between work engagement and the four dimensions of mindfulness. More specifically, work engagement was most impacted by the mindfulness acceptance dimension, followed by the mindfulness awareness dimension. The study provided implications for both employers and employees regarding organizational programs aimed at enhancing mindfulness and work engagement, particularly in light of emerging work trends like remote work culture. This study expanded on the understanding of mindfulness at work for future researchers by looking at how mindfulness affects work engagement for white-collar workers and provided fresh insights, such as the greatest influence of the mindfulness-acceptance dimension.

Contribution/Originality: The originality and contribution of this research relate to the impact of various facets of mindfulness on employee work engagement following the pandemic, which has not been thoroughly examined in past studies. This study expands on the understanding of mindfulness at work for future researchers by examining how mindfulness affects the work engagement of white-collar employees. Organizations should recognize the impact of the mindfulness-acceptance dimension, followed by the mindfulness-awareness dimension on work engagement.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

Currently, several companies are struggling with the problem of employee turnover, known as "great attrition." As highlighted in a report by McKinsey, several organizations are struggling with not knowing the reasons that drive employees to leave their jobs. Many will continue to struggle for one simple reason: They do not

understand why their employees are leaving in the first place (De Smet, Dowling, Mugayar-Baldocchi, & Schaninger, 2021). The report highlights that companies that do not understand why employees quit are at greater business risk. To gain a competitive advantage in attracting and retaining talent and increasing employee engagement, companies need to understand what is important to their employees today. Malaysia is also experiencing a shortage of skilled workers, and it is becoming increasingly difficult for companies to attract and retain talent (HR Asia, 2021). Previous studies Du Plooy and Roodt (2010) have found a relationship between employee work engagement and employee-to-employee retention and turnover. Hence, this study focused on employee work engagement to reduce turnover.

In the current work environment, several factors affect the work engagement and attrition of employees. According to McKinsey's report, employees desire a sense of purpose in their work, a sense of connection, and a sense of shared identity. As highlighted in this report, the most important need was that employees wanted to feel valued by their organization (De Smet et al., 2021). However, in today's work environment that emphasizes performance and efficiency, employees feel disconnected from their organization (Schohat & Vigoda-Gadot, 2010). Therefore, employees' work engagement is becoming increasingly important (Schaufeli, 2014; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). Work engagement indicates an employee's relationship or connectedness with their work and organization (Schaufeli, 2014). Employees' work engagement and employee engagement encompass employees' connections with their organization. Past studies have identified several antecedents of employee work engagement, including social support and performance feedback (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2009) and efficacy beliefs (Salanova, Llorens, & Schaufeli, 2011). Sun and Bunchapattanasakda (2019) identified individual factors that encompass physical energies and self-consciousness. The study by Malinowski and Lim (2015) revealed that higher levels of mindfulness are beneficial in the workplace, and higher levels of mindfulness are a significant predictor of work engagement and the general well-being of employees. Although previous research has examined the role of mindfulness as an important predictor of employee work engagement, there is still a dearth of studies that have thoroughly examined the effects of various facets of mindfulness on employee work engagement in Malaysia.

White-collar workers include professionals, administrators, technical employees, and "office workers" who work at the corporate or business level. White-collar workers are those who earn a higher average wage and perform highly skilled work. They do not perform manual labor in their workplace (Investopedia, 2021). The absence of empirical studies on the impact of each facet of mindfulness on the engagement of white-collar employees highlights a gap in the current literature. In addition, the pandemic has disrupted businesses and created new business models, and exponential technology and ways of working have changed how organizations work. This has brought about changes on a behavioral, cultural, and organizational level. Because of the major changes in the environment, previous studies on the relationship between mindfulness and employee engagement may be considered outdated.

To investigate the impact of each aspect of mindfulness on white-collar employee engagement, research questions, and hypotheses were developed based on the Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 2008) and the Broaden and Build Theory of Positive Emotions (Fredrickson, 2001). The study specifically focused on how different aspects of acceptance, awareness, attention, and present focus affect work engagement. Feldman, Hayes, Kumar, Greeson, and Laurenceau (2007) identified four dimensions of mindfulness: awareness of experience, attention regulation skills, a focus on the present moment, and an acceptance or nonjudgment attitude toward the moment. Journals and other sources provided the most recent information on each research question and hypothesis. The study problem and questions were in line with the research design, data collection, and testing methodology.

In the present study, the researcher empirically tested the effects of the different facets of mindfulness, namely attention, awareness, focus on the present, and acceptance, on the work engagement of employees in Malaysia. We anticipate the findings will foster a deeper understanding of employee engagement through mindfulness practices. This will lead to higher performance and lower employee turnover. This may also help organizations achieve their

goals despite facing challenges amid uncertainties created by the pandemic. From a theoretical perspective, this study added new insights into the current knowledge about the impact of the facets of mindfulness on the work engagement of white-collar employees.

#### 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

# 2.1. Theoretical Support

The impact of mindfulness practices that elicit positive emotions on employees' work engagement can be examined through the lens of the Broaden-and-Build theory of positive emotions. According to Fredrickson (2004) an increase in positive emotions would result in a person's thought-action repertoire being expanded. According to this theory, it is possible to hypothesize that mindfulness have a positive impact on employee's work engagement. Bakker and Demerouti (2007) have proposed the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model as an additional relevant theory. This theory states that job demands and resources affect an employee's performance. The use of job resources has an impact on employee engagement. In this sense, mindfulness can encourage employees' resilience and have an impact on their output and level of engagement. The Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 2001) emphasizes observational learning. Observational learning is a common component of mindfulness practices, and it can increase workplace engagement.

#### 2.2. Mindfulness

Scholars and researchers have defined mindfulness from different angles. In general, mindfulness means that a person is fully present in the moment and pays attention to their thoughts, feelings, and surroundings without judgment. Mindfulness promotes awareness and acceptance of the present experience (Goyal et al., 2014). According to one secular definition, mindfulness is a person's open awareness and attention focused on the present (Brown, Ryan, & Creswell, 2007). Marlatt and Kristeller (1999) added that mindfulness is the act of giving undivided attention to present experience. Brown and Ryan (2003) stated that mindfulness is a heightened level of attention and awareness of the present moment. Hyland, Lee, and Mills (2015) also clarified that mindfulness can be characterized as a person's "awareness focused on the present." Mindfulness is described as "focusing on a particular way: intentionally, in the present moment, and without judgment" (Kabat-Zinn, 1994). In other words, as Kabat-Zinn (1994) stated, mindfulness is "focusing in a particular way: intentionally, in the present moment, and without judgment." According to this view, mindfulness describes a person's awareness and attention to what is happening or occurring in the present moment. A person's awareness is the consciousness they are experiencing. Therefore, we can view mindfulness as a multi-faceted construct. Most scholars view mindfulness as a current focus without judgment.

The four dimensions of mindfulness typically cited by scholars include awareness of experience, the ability to regulate attention, a focus on present experience, and an attitude of acceptance or non-judgment toward present experience (Feldman et al., 2007). The first dimension, experiential awareness, refers to being aware of one's experience, including physical sensations, thoughts, and emotions, as well as any external events, such as sights and sounds (Brown & Ryan, 2003). The next dimension is sustained focus. Focusing on the continuous flow of internal and external stimuli requires a person to pay sustained attention. When a person is attentive, he or she focuses on the object of observation. The third dimension, focusing on the present moment, refers to attention to the internal and external phenomena taking place at any moment of awareness, whether conscious or unconscious (Baer, 2003). The last dimension is acceptance or non-judgemental experience of thoughts, feelings, and experiences as they are as soon as they come into consciousness without labeling them as good or terrible, desirable or undesired, significant or trivial (Germer, Siegel, & Fulton, 2005).

#### 2.3. Work Engagement (DV)

Employee work engagement or involvement has recently received a lot of attention and research (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008; Roof, 2015; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). Employee engagement, according to Schaufeli and Bakker (2010), involves relationships with the organization, whereas work engagement symbolizes a person's relationship with his or her work. Work engagement, according to Kahn (1990) is "an act of expressing preferred self via simultaneous investment of cognitive and affective energy into job performance that enhances connections to work and with others" (Kahn, 1990). Deloitte defines employee engagement as an employee's emotional commitment to their organization, vision, and goal. Employee levels of work engagement are characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, & Bakker, 2002). This shows that work engagement is also a multi-faceted construct. According to previous research, work engagement has been linked to several positive and advantageous outcomes. Employee engagement has been linked favorably to individual change readiness (Lee, Wang, & Liu, 2017) affective organizational commitment, and work performance (Karatepe, Beirami, Bouzari, & Safavi, 2014) according to studies done in different regions of the world. Studies have also linked work engagement to intrapreneurial employee behavior, personal resources, affective organizational commitment, extra-role performance, occupational commitment, and identification with the organization (Ahuja & Gupta, 2019; Lin et al., 2020). Karatepe, (2013) found an inverse connection between work engagement and turnover intentions. Studies have also shown the relationship between mindfulness and work engagement (Gunasekara & Zheng, 2019). This shows that mindfulness is associated with multiple human resource-related outcomes.

Past studies have also found an association between mindfulness and work engagement (Fiaz & Fahim, 2023; Goyal & Sharma, 2023). The findings of Goyal and Sharma's (2023) study of 284 knowledge workers revealed that mindfulness contributes to employee work engagement. Fiaz and Fahim (2023) study of 331 employees stated that mindfulness encourages employees to improve work engagement. Chen, Li, and Xing (2022) study involving 129 employees revealed that mindfulness training contributes to work engagement. Huang et al., further confirmed the contribution of mindfulness to employee engagement through a study involving 537 social workers. Present focus and acceptance of the current reality is a crucial component of mindfulness, which can increase employee adaptability in the workplace, leading to optimal work performance and engagement (Kroon, Menting, & van Woerkom, 2015). The study by Malinowski and Lim (2015) revealed that mindfulness was a significant and positive predictor of work engagement and the general well-being of employees. The study emphasized that mindfulness enhances employees' work engagement by boosting their optimism and hope. The study by Rosenzweig, Reibel, Greeson, Brainard, and Hojat (2003) revealed that vigor, a sub-dimension of work engagement, increased when employees engaged in mindfulness. Another study by Leroy, Anseel, Dimitrova, and Sels (2013) further confirmed that mindfulness was positively and significantly related to work engagement. The results from a study by Liu, Xin, Shen, He, and Liu (2020) revealed that an employee's mindfulness positively impacts his or her work engagement. Gunasekara and Zheng (2019) studied the influence of the four facets of mindfulness, that is, "attention," "awareness," "present focus," and "acceptance," and their impact on work engagement. The study found that each of the four facets was positively and significantly related to work engagement. In a later study by Zheng and Gunasekara (2022) the results revealed that positive emotions displayed by employees about being mindful will lead to an improvement in their engagement.

# 2.4. Relationship between Attention Dimension of Mindfulness and Work Engagement

Past studies have shown a positive relationship between mindfulness and employee engagement, with engaged employees more committed to contributing to the performance and success of the organization (Ghadi, Fernando, & Caputi, 2013; Malinowski & Lim, 2015; Zheng, Ni, Liu, & Liang, 2023). The research by Zheng et al. (2023) provided evidence of the effect of mindfulness on work-related outcomes. The results showed that the dimensions of mindfulness that encompass awareness, attention, and acceptance have a significant effect on outcomes of interest,

such as engagement. Attention, which is the first subdimension of mindfulness, is composed of sustained attention. The act of concentrating conscious awareness on the current experience for a prolonged period is referred to as the "attention" aspect (Bishop et al., 2004; Brown & Ryan, 2003). We expect employees to concentrate more intently on their work or goal when they are more mindful. Attentiveness enhances the quality of in-the-moment interactive encounters (Brown & Ryan, 2003). Others contend that giving something extended thought expands one's perspective on it, which enhances effective interpersonal communication (e.g., Dane & Brummel, 2014; Hyland et al., 2015). Sustained attention positively impacts employees' mental health outcomes, including a decrease in ruminative processes (Chambers, Lo, & Allen, 2008). This may result in increased engagement at work. Dane and Brummel (2014) and Hyland et al. (2015) study also supported the positive relationship between workplace mindfulness and job performance. Employees' mental health outcomes are positively impacted by their sustained attention, which includes a decrease in ruminative processes (Chambers et al., 2008). Therefore, past studies generally point to increased engagement at work due to mindfulness.

In the research of Gunasekara and Zheng (2019) the researchers suggest that the attention aspect of mindfulness is significantly associated with work engagement. Based on self-determination theory, Leroy et al. (2013) explained that mindfulness can directly influence work engagement by making employees more focused and attentive. The literature review posits the following hypothesis:

H1: There is a relationship between the attention dimension of mindfulness and work engagement among white-collar workers in Malaysia.

#### 2.5. Relationship between Present Focus Dimension of Mindfulness and Work Engagement

"Present focus" is another aspect of mindfulness (Feldman et al., 2007). Kabat-Zinn (2000) described this phenomenon as being "here and now" to prevent the mind from wandering. Several researchers suggest that an increased level of "attention" ability due to "awareness" may support "present concentration" (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Dane, 2011). According to Brown and Ryan (2003) embracing the present moment is a crucial aspect of mindfulness. Increased mindfulness can help people accept the way things are rather than repress their negative feelings. According to Brown and Ryan (2003) workers who possess a higher degree of mindfulness can manage unwanted distractions because they are in a state of "focus on the present.". These workers have the ability to maintain self-control, concentrate their attention on the tasks at hand, and give their work their all. Employees creativity and curiosity about novel experiences increased when they focused on the present moment (Haas & Langer, 2014). According to Dane and Brummel (2014) there is also a suggestion that being present enables individuals to view things with greater objectivity, leading to more accurate conclusions. It is anticipated that there is a positive correlation between work engagement and the present focus dimension of mindfulness, drawing on the research of Gunasekara and Zheng (2019). We developed the following hypothesis to test it further:

H2: There is a relationship between the present focus dimension of mindfulness and work engagement among white-collar workers in Malaysia.

# 2.6. Relationship between Awareness Dimension of Mindfulness and Work Engagement

A further facet of mindfulness involves awareness. Mindfulness has been referred to as an awareness state. According to Malinowski and Lim (2015) this level of awareness entails attentional abilities as well as a non-evaluative mindset toward both internal and external events. Leroy et al. (2013) findings based on the Self-Determination Theory, clarified that by raising internal awareness, mindfulness can have an indirect impact on an employee's level of work engagement. Brown et al. (2007) claimed that by raising self-awareness of feelings, thoughts, and behaviors, mindfulness helps workers in their professional capacities. This will further boost motivation and inspire workers to work harder and exert more effort. Dane and Brummel (2014) posit that workers possessing high attention spans may intentionally select and concentrate on completing tasks within specific

environments. According to the research by Gunasekara and Zheng (2019) the authors suggest that the awareness dimension of mindfulness is moderately associated with work engagement. Another study by Liang et al. (2018) indicated that the awareness dimension is more critical than the acceptance dimension of mindfulness. With higher awareness, employees can regulate dysfunctional emotions, and this can lead to higher performance and engagement. We developed a hypothesis for further testing.

H3: There is a relationship between the awareness dimension of mindfulness and work engagement among white-collar workers in Malaysia.

#### 2.7. Relationship between Acceptance Dimensions of Mindfulness and Work Engagement

Developing a non-judgmental attitude toward accepting the current circumstances, as they are the fourth facet of mindfulness (Feldman et al., 2007; Kabat-Zinn, 2000). Bishop et al. (2004) referred to this feature as "acceptance" of a person's inquisitive or self-attitude of inquiry and receptive mindset toward their current moment and experiences. Acceptance of the current focus and experience is one of the essential components of mindfulness, according to Brown and Ryan (2003). By accepting the current moment as it is fully experienced, mindfulness instructors who accept the current circumstance do not bring any preconceived notions about what the current moment should or should not be (Bishop et al., 2004). It was found that the "acceptance" element is an emotion control technique that supports the growth of each worker's personal resilience and emotional intelligence (Malinowski & Lim, 2015; Reb, Narayanan, & Ho, 2015).

Previous research has established that the acceptance facet of mindfulness has a significant association with work engagement (Gunasekara & Zheng, 2019). However, a study by Liang et al. (2018) stated that the acceptance dimension is less critical compared to the awareness dimension. We developed a hypothesis for further testing.

H4: There is a relationship between the acceptance dimension of mindfulness and work engagement among white-collar workers in Malaysia.

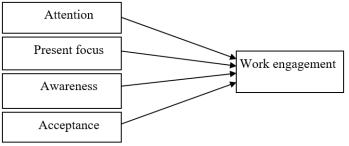


Figure 1. The conceptual framework.

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework of this study. The independent variables are the four dimensions of employee attention, present focus, awareness, and acceptance. The dependant variable is work engagement.

# 3. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

# 3.1. Research Design

The research model for this study was based on quantitative research. We selected a quantitative research model because it provides a method for testing objective theories through the analysis of variable relationships. The variables in this study had measurements so that statistical tools could be used to analyze the data (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). In this quantitative study, theories were tested deductively and built into a study that protects against bias and seeks to generalize the findings. The quantitative research design is more aligned with the postpositivist worldview. Based on the positivist philosophy, this study employs nonexperimental research methods to measure the relationship between the variables. In this design, primary data was collected in one "snapshot."

Data analysis was based on structural equation models that include causal paths and the identification of the significance of the relationships among variables (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016).

This study design is different from the other studies because it examined the different facets of mindfulness and work engagement of "white collar" employees in the private sector in Malaysia. According to the researcher, this is the first research of its kind in the 'new normal' era. A questionnaire was designed based on questions adapted from past studies. The positivist paradigm conducted the study objectively, excluding opinions or personal viewpoints. The data reliability and validity were checked.

#### 3.2. Sample Size and Sampling Technique

It was impractical to collect data from the entire population to address this study's research issue; hence, a sample was chosen. This was significant for this study since the data collection instrument utilized was a questionnaire, which was critical for the study's conclusions. The non-probability sampling method, which is convenience sampling, was chosen because it improves efficiency and is non-time-consuming. This was a carefully controlled non-probability sampling, and as stated by Cooper and Schindler (2011) non-probability sampling can provide good and meaningful results. Cooper and Schindler emphasized that choosing a sampling method does not affect the research quality. This is important when the researcher only has a limited amount of time to devote to this study. Because fewer people are involved, data collection and organization are easier to manage. According to the rule of thumb suggested by Roscoe (1975) sample sizes of more than 30 and fewer than 300 are adequate for most research. Comrey and Lee (1992) graded a factor analysis sample of 50 as very poor, 100 as poor, 200 as fair, 300 as good, 500 as very good, and 1000 as excellent. Consequently, 200 participants in the sample size was adequate for this investigation.

#### 3.3. Instrumentation

The current study used a questionnaire to collect primary data from respondents. The 12 items on the Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale-R (CAMS-R) (Feldman et al., 2007) served as the basis for the questionnaire used in this study. We also incorporated questions from (Gunasekara & Zheng, 2019). The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (17 items) (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003) was used to measure employee engagement. Additionally, this study has employed the Likert scale (e.g., 1 = highly disagree to 5 = highly agree) to gauge the respondents' responses to each item on this survey.

#### 3.4. Data Collection and Analysis

Primary data for data interpretation in this quantitative research was collected through a questionnaire distributed electronically and by hand to selected Malaysian white-collar workers. Numerical codes were assigned to responses and entered into an Excel spreadsheet, before being uploaded into the SPSS system (Version 26) for analysis. We generated descriptive statistics, and multiple linear regression analysis was used to determine the significance of relationships between mindfulness facets and work engagement. We conducted reliability testing to verify the accuracy of the data.

#### 4. RESULTS

### 4.1. Participants' Demographics

Three hundred white-collar workers in Malaysia's private sector received questionnaires from the researcher. For this study, a sample size of 200 was ideal. We obtained a total of 227 responses in three months. Follow-up via soft reminders was done. The focus of this study was Malaysian white-collar workers, so the majority of participants are in the 30 to 39-year-old age range. The first age group comprises 135 (59.5%) participants who are employees under 30. The second age group, which makes up 87 (38.3%) of the total participants, is the 30 to 39-

year-old age range. There are 4 (1%) participants in the age group from 40 to 49, which is the third age group, and 1 (0.4%) participant in the age group from 50 to 59, which is the last age group. The majority of the participants are female, while there are also some male participants. There were 135 (59.5%) female participants and 92 (40.5%) male participants that made up the total. Most of the participants knew what mindfulness was.

# 4.2. Reliability Test

Reliability refers to how well the scale's components "hang together." We commonly measure the internal consistency using the Cronbach alpha coefficient. A scale's Cronbach alpha coefficient should ideally be greater than 0.7 (Pallant, 2010). In this study, Cronbach's Alpha was used to assess the variables' reliability. As per DeVellis (2003) an ideal Cronbach alpha coefficient for a scale is one that is above 0.7. Furthermore, Nunnally (1978) recommends that the reliability statistics have a minimum level of 0.7 points. With a Cronbach Alpha of =0.904, mindfulness is the predictor variable, and internal consistency was very good. Regarding the four facets of mindfulness, Attention (IV1), Present Focus (IV2), Awareness (IV3), and Acceptance (IV4) have Cronbach alpha values above 0.7. A value of 0.902 for the dependent variable, work engagement, is considered good. Therefore, the test results demonstrate that the Cronbach alpha value of the independent and dependent variables was higher than 0.7. Based on the recommended ideal level of Cronbach alpha (DeVellis, 2003; Nunnally, 1978) it is evident that the study established the reliability of the data.

#### 4.3. Pearson Correlation Analysis

A statistical method for determining the degree of correlation between two variables is correlation analysis (Pallant, 2010). The Pearson Product-Moment coefficient was utilized in this investigation. A Pearson Correlation value between -1 and 1 indicates that there is a correlation between the variables, according to Pallant (2010). Two variables have no relationship when the correlation value is 0. Perfect positive association is present, particularly at a score of 1.00. If the result is -1.00, the variable under investigation has a perfect negative association. The attention dimension and work engagement have a significant and positive correlation, as indicated by the correlation value of 0.900 between the two variables. The present focus component and work engagement have a correlation value of 0.887. This demonstrated a strong and favorable correlation between these two variables. The awareness component and work engagement have an association statistic of 0.904. The two variables have a strong and positive correlation, as shown by this result. The acceptance dimension of mindfulness and work engagement had a 0.925 correlation. This finding indicated that there was a substantial correlation between employees' work engagement and the acceptance dimension.

Table 1 presents the Pearson Correlation Results. The results show that all the independent variables are positively and significantly related to the dependent variable.

Attention Present focus Awareness Acceptance Engagement Attention Pearson correlation 1 Sig. (1-tailed) 0.889\*\* Present focus Pearson correlation 1 Sig. (1-tailed) 0.000 $0.877^{**}$ Awareness Pearson correlation  $0.873^{*}$ Sig. (1-tailed) 0.000 0.000 Acceptance Pearson correlation 0.869\*0.897\*\*0.812\*1 Sig. (1-tailed) 0.000 0.000 0.000 Engagement Pearson correlation  $0.900^{*}$ 0.887  $0.904^{*}$ 0.925\*\* 0.1 0.000Significance 0.000 0.000

Table 1. Pearson correlation results.

Note: \*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

#### 4.4. Multiple Regression Test and Model Fit Summary

According to Pallant (2010) a collection of methods known as multiple regression is typically employed to investigate the correlation between a single continuous dependent variable and a group of independent variables. This study simultaneously entered each independent variable into the model. The predictive power, or significance, of the independent variable was investigated. A positive value of multiple R indicates that there is a significant and positive linear association between the dependent variable and the four sub-dimensions of mindfulness. The R square, also referred to as coefficient, signifies the proportion of the cumulative variation in the dependent variable resulting from the alterations in the independent variables. In this study, the R square value of 0.897 was high. This implies that there is a positive linear relationship between work engagement and the mindfulness dimensions. These four independent variables roughly explained the variance in work engagement at 89.70 percent. In summary, the results show that the four dimensions of mindfulness are significant factors affecting white-collar workers' work engagement in Malaysia. The F-test statistic shows that there is a 485.116 variance between sample means (F), and the model is acceptable because the p-value at the significance level is 0.000 (less than 0.05).

Table 2 presents the model summary of this study. Based on the results, the regression model fits the data, and the predictors collectively contribute significantly to explaining the dependent variable.

Measurement	Value	
Multiple R	0.947	
Coefficient of determination (R square)	0.897	
F value	485.116	
Adjusted R square	0.895	
Significance.	0.000	

Table 2. Model fit summary.

In this study, the Beta (B) value serves as the basis for the standardized coefficient. Every beta value in this study is positive. The p-value signifies the established significance level. A p-value of less than 0.05 in this study indicates that every independent variable significantly and favorably affects the dependent variable (Pallant, 2010). Four variables—attention, present focus, awareness, and acceptance—have significance levels (p<0.05) of 0.014, 0.001, 0.000, and 0.000, respectively. All variables have a significant and positive impact on the dependent variable, as indicated by a significance value of less than 0.05. The formula for this equation is  $y=c+\beta1x1+\beta2x2+\beta3x3+\beta4x4$ . This represents the regression coefficients, which express the amount that the dependent variable, y, changes with each unit change in the predictor variables. With a p-value of less than 0.05 and a positive Beta (B), it was evident that all four hypotheses were supported. The mindfulness practice's acceptance dimension had the biggest effect on workers' engagement at work. The awareness dimension's impact followed suit. The present focus and attention dimensions also have a positive and significant effect on employee engagement.

Table 3 presents the magnitude and statistical significance of the predictor variables for the dependent variable. The results show that all four predictor variables are positively and significantly related to the dependent variable.

Model	TT		Standardized	t	Sig.		
	Unstandardized coefficients		coefficients				
	В	Std. error	Beta				
(Constant)	-205	0.92		-2.2275	0.027		
Attention	0.140	0.057	0.148	2.467	0.014		
Present focus	0.191	0.056	0.180	3.403	0.001		
Awareness	0.257	0.056	0.249	4.560	0.000		
Acceptance	0.393	0.059	0.410	6.717	0.000		

Table 3. Regression coefficients.

# 5. DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, CONCLUSION, AND LIMITATIONS

#### 5.1. Discussion

The study's goal was to investigate the connection between the four dimensions of mindfulness and employees' work engagement. The study's findings confirmed a significant undimensional connection between mindfulness and work engagement. When looking at the effect of each dimension, the findings also indicate that all four dimensions of mindfulness which are attention, present focus, awareness, and acceptance, are significantly correlated with the dependent variable, which is work engagement.

The first hypothesis was to investigate the impact of mindfulness's attention dimension on employees' work engagement. The results showed that the attention dimension had a positive and significant association with work engagement. The findings are consistent with past research (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Gunasekara & Zheng, 2019). As Brown and Ryan (2003) explained, attentiveness improves interactive encounters' quality. Attention also broadens perspectives on experience, which improves successful interpersonal communication (Hyland et al., 2015). The study by Gunasekara and Zheng (2019) revealed that mindfulness positively and significantly influences work engagement. In this study, the impact was positive but considered low as the Beta value was only 0.148.

The second hypothesis was to examine the influence of the current focus dimension of mindfulness on employees' work engagement. The results showed that the attention dimension had a positive and significant association with work engagement. The impact was considered low as the Beta value was only 0.180. The findings are consistent with past research (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Gunasekara & Zheng, 2019). As explained by Brown and Ryan (2003), the acceptance of the present focus is a critical component of mindfulness. Higher levels of mindfulness can lead to acceptance of present events instead of suppressing employees' negative emotions. Employees with a higher level of mindfulness are able to control various unwanted interferences because they are in a state of "focus on the present."

The next hypothesis was to investigate the influence of the mindfulness awareness on employee work engagement. The results showed that the awareness dimension had a positive and significant association with work engagement. The impact was the second highest after the acceptance dimension was considered moderate as the Beta value was 0.249. The findings are consistent with past research (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Dane & Brummel, 2014; Gunasekara & Zheng, 2019). As Brown et al. (2007) explained, mindfulness supports an employee's work by increasing self-awareness of emotions, thoughts, and behaviors. This further increases motivation, encouraging employees to put in more effort.

The last hypothesis was to examine the influence of the mindfulness acceptance on employee work engagement. The results showed that the awareness dimension had a positive and significant association with work engagement. The impact was the highest among the four predictors. The findings are consistent with past research (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Gunasekara & Zheng, 2019; Malinowski & Lim, 2015). The result points out that the acceptance dimension has the strongest and most positive relationship toward work engagement, with a significance value of 0.000 (p<0.01) and a high beta value (0.410). As Brown and Ryan (2003) explained, one of mindfulness's critical requirements is acceptance of the present focus and experience. The "acceptance" aspect was discovered to be an emotion control method that aids in the development of emotional intelligence and personal resilience in individual workers (Malinowski & Lim, 2015). As Feldman et al. (2007) explained, employees with high acceptance or non-judgmental toward present experience cultivate a non-judgmental attitude of accepting the present reality as it is.

# 5.2. Implications

This study looks into how four facets of mindfulness, namely attention, awareness, present focus, and the acceptance dimensions, affect white-collar professionals' work engagement in Malaysia under the country's new normal. The pandemic and other environmental changes have altered the work culture and other employee outcomes, such as employee engagement. This underscores the significance of this research and its potential

theoretical and practical implications. To secure sustainable business growth, organizations must pay a lot of attention to mindfulness at work to improve employee engagement. Theoretically, this study is important because it expands on the understanding of mindfulness at work for future researchers by looking at how mindfulness affects work engagement, particularly for white-collar workers. Furthermore, the majority of research to date views mindfulness as a singular concept (e.g., (Khan, Singh, Kaur, & Arumugam, 2020; Zheng et al., 2020)) and this research looked at the four facets of mindfulness. Additionally, the study's findings challenge prior understanding of the components of mindfulness and how they affect employee engagement at work. This study, by examining all four aspects of mindfulness and considering new workplace norms such as remote work cultures, has updated knowledge and provided a more contemporary perspective to previous studies. This study provided fresh insights, such as the greatest influence of accepting oneself and not passing judgment on the situation as it is. Consequently, a novel viewpoint on augmenting employee engagement could be considered.

From a practical point of view, this research will help organizations recognize the effect of mindfulness at work to enhance work engagement further while working amid a new work culture. In this study, the acceptance or non-judgment toward present experience had the highest impact on the work engagement of white-collar employees. The awareness dimension took precedence. Therefore, business organizations should place a higher focus on the acceptance dimension, followed by the awareness dimension. Training programs should place a higher priority on the acceptance and awareness of the dimensions of mindfulness. Hiring policies and practices should also focus on incorporating mindfulness into the recruitment process. Furthermore, employees' acceptance of the present and awareness are crucial as they are working amid the new work culture brought about by the pandemic and changes in the environment. In terms of work culture, employees must be encouraged to accept the present reality and establish a non-judgmental attitude about their present work experiences.

#### 6. CONCLUSION

To sum up, this research has yielded fresh perspectives on the existing body of knowledge. The acceptance aspect of mindfulness had the biggest influence. Nonetheless, during the "new normal," all four dimensions significantly and favorably impacted white-collar employee engagement. This study clarifies that the "acceptance" element is an emotion control technique that supports the development of each worker's personal resilience and emotional intelligence by emphasizing the critical role of the acceptance dimension of mindfulness. Employee engagement levels rise as a result. Furthermore, the positive and noteworthy impacts of awareness, present focus, and attention facets provide organizations with proof and avenues through which mindfulness can enhance workers' job engagement. Organizations should concentrate on hiring highly mindful workers and looking for ways to raise the mindfulness levels of current employees in light of the evidence that mindfulness enhances work engagement.

#### 7. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

First and foremost, this study only includes respondents who are white-collar workers in Malaysia. This limits the results' generalizability to employees in other nations and blue-collar workers. We could duplicate or expand future research to other countries and blue-collar employees. Second, this was a cross-sectional study, and data was collected in a snapshot for analysis. We recommended a longitudinal study to collect data multiple times for better outcomes. This will take into account changes in personnel recovering from the epidemic, as well as other environmental variables. Third, this study only looked at the four sub-dimensions or characteristics of mindfulness's impact on work engagement. Future studies should consider the impact of mindfulness on other constructs, such as employee contextual performance and retention. Lastly, this study did not examine the effect of team mindfulness on employees' work engagement. There can be differences between individual mindfulness and team mindfulness. Therefore, future studies should consider team mindfulness.

Funding: This study received no specific financial support.

**Institutional Review Board Statement:** The Ethical Committee of the Asia Pacific University of Technology and Innovation, Malaysia has granted approval for this study on 3 February 2022 (Ref. No. APU/EFA/01/2022).

**Transparency:** The authors state that the manuscript is honest, truthful, and transparent, that no key aspects of the investigation have been omitted, and that any differences from the study as planned have been clarified. This study followed all writing ethics.

Data Availability Statement: The corresponding author can provide the supporting data of this study upon a reasonable request.

**Competing Interests:** The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

**Authors' Contributions:** All authors contributed equally to the conception and design of the study. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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