

Promoting job performance among teachers through work engagement in Hong Kong: The shared mediation model

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CITATION

Liang H, Vasudevan A, Bamini J, et al. (2024). Promoting job performance among teachers through work engagement in Hong Kong: The shared mediation model. *Journal of Infrastructure, Policy and Development*. 8(16): 7352. <https://doi.org/10.24294/jipd7352>

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 29 April 2024

Accepted: 5 July 2024

Available online: 27 December 2024

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Abstract: Work can be demanding, imposing challenges that can be detrimental to the job performance of employees. Efforts are therefore underway to develop practices and initiatives that may improve job performance and well-being. These include interventions based on mindfulness, inclusive leadership and work engagement. In the present study, authors have presented an association of inclusive leadership and mindfulness towards job performance through employee work engagement among secondary teachers in the context of Hong Kong. The sample size of 263 teachers working from three secondary schools in Sha Tin, Hong Kong has been incorporated in this study. A structured questionnaire designed on a 5-point Likert scale has been used based on purposive sampling by analysis of IBM SPSS 27 and Smart PLS version 4.0.9 by applying a structural equation modelling approach (SEM). The results indicated a strong positive influence on employee work engagement and job performance. Moreover, the bootstrap investigation showed that mindfulness and inclusive leadership were significantly associated with employees' work engagement in the presence of mediators' work engagement. This study adds to the very scarce literature on inclusive leadership and mindfulness. In addition, this research is the first study to test the mindfulness skill, inclusive leadership and job performance relationship. Furthermore, this is the first study to explore the concept of mindfulness and inclusive leadership in the Hong Kong context. Moreover, the findings of this research can be beneficial for future theory development on mindfulness skill and inclusive leadership in cross-cultural contexts.

Keywords: mindfulness skill; inclusive leadership; employee work engagement; job performance; secondary teachers; Hong Kong

1. Introduction

Organisations are becoming more and more aware of the potential of their workforce as a source of competitive advantage. Thus, as suggested by numerous academics (Lado and Wilson, 1994), understanding the organisational practises or programmes that lead to individual success can improve the overall organisational performance. In previous studies, it concluded that employees are an important asset of the firm and the ways that they are managed are critical to the success of the firm. The impact of evaluation on employee performance has always been a common concern of researchers, enterprises and decision-makers in various industries (Montreuil, 2022). Nevertheless, there is relatively little empirical attention to the potential long-term impact of performance evaluation, including employee skill

development (Davidescu et al., 2020). Hong Kong is a city and special administrative region of China on the eastern Pearl River Delta in South China with 7.5 million residents of various nationalities (Hong Kong in brief, 2022). It is counted among the most developed city in the world and has great potential becoming a global financial centre. On the education level, most challenging for the secondary of Hong Kong in enhancing employees job performance, which has resulted in the quality-compromise of the school' performance and prosperity. Evidence suggests that the middle grades are particularly difficult to teach, which highlights the importance of studying these associations in middle school teachers (Klassen and Chiu, 2011). Borman and Motowidlo (1993) proposed that job performance was bifurcated into task performance and contextual performance. In the perspective of task performance, inadequate classroom management is a specific aspect of low task performance that can contribute to teachers leaving schools in Hong Kong (Rozelle and Wilson, 2012). For the more, Ineffective instructional strategies are a specific aspect of low task performance that can contribute to teachers low teaching performance. Teachers tend to move towards traditional teacher-centred teaching methods instead of using innovative teaching methods and are relatively rigid in their classroom behaviour because of their inexperience in the profession (Ng et al., 2010). In perspective of contextual performance, lack of collaboration and teamwork among teachers in Hong Kong is a specific aspect of low contextual performance that can contribute to low teaching performance (Flores, 2005). The research revealed that teachers who reported lower levels of participation in decision-making processes and limited opportunities for involvement in school improvement initiatives experienced lower job satisfaction (Toropova et al., 2020). Thus, teachers are facing teaching performance problems and enduring heavy workloads. Quality of education not only fundamentally depends on the proficient knowledge of the teachers but also on job performance (Hennekam et al., 2020).

Additionally, the abrupt transition to online teaching left many secondary school teachers in Hong Kong unprepared to effectively utilize digital technology for instructional purposes due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Hong Kong Education Bureau (2023) revealed that a significant number of teachers lacked the necessary training and technical skills to navigate online platforms and employ digital tools for teaching, resulting in a decline in their teaching performance. Hong Kong Education Annual Report (2021–2022) indicated that the absence of face-to-face interaction and limited opportunities for real-time feedback led to decreased student engagement, ultimately affecting teaching performance. In this context, research on malleable factors that can improve teacher job performance are desirable. Thus, assessing the effectiveness of teachers has become a major theme in the education sector, which has become increasingly prominent for private schools in Hong Kong. The emphasis on evaluation is driven by two empirical conclusions: (I) teachers' ability to promote the growth of students' performance varies greatly; and (II) the quality of teacher-student interaction. Hence, considering the importance of understanding the mechanism of which contribute to people's performance, the researcher hopes to shed some lights in this area by revealing the factors influence employee job performance (Zainuddin et al., 2021).

The previous research examining that mindfulness skill is associated with lower levels of emotional burnout, cynicism, turnover intention, and missed work days, and to higher levels of professional efficacy, job satisfaction, and job performance (Abenavoli et al. 2013; Hülsheger et al., 2012; Taylor and Millier 2016). Previous studies in public management and human resource management (HRM) show that, inclusive leadership are focused on facilitating group members feeling part of the group (belongingness) and retaining their sense of individuality (uniqueness) while contributing to group processes and outcomes (Dane and Brummel, 2014). Researcher argue that explanations of job performance functions that are purely based on environmental factors are too convenient and simplistic. To form a complete understanding of the development of such job performance successfully run by three major predictors are thoroughly examined. To acquire stronger insight into the complexities of job performance among teachers in Hong Kong, we pose the following research question: What are the key factors that determine the improvement of job performance among teachers in Hong Kong? As teaching performance among teachers constitutes one of the main challenges job performance faces, we examine the role of employee work engagement as a mediator in this study. More specifically, researcher seeks to accomplish the following objectives:

- 1) To examine how mindfulness skill and inclusive leadership affect job performance.
- 2) To examine how mindfulness skill and inclusive leadership influence employee work engagement.
- 3) To examine the mediation role of employee work engagement in the relationship between mindfulness skill and inclusive leadership and job performance

2. Literature review

2.1. Mindfulness skill and job performance

Manfulness is usually defined as a psychological state, in this regarded, mindfulness is interpreted as a state of being that varies from person to person. Regulations of attention, awareness, having a present focus, and acceptance of experiences in a non-judgmental way are the basic mindfulness constituents (Feldman et al., 2007). Langer (1989) began to represent MDF as a psychological feature and pointed out that it is the “default state” of cognitive processing, assuming three aspects of MDF, such as (a) seeking novelty behaviour, that is, individuals who seek novelty and view each situation as an opportunity to learn; (b) participating (EGM)-individuals who may observe more details about their involvement in the current situation; and (c) Novelty Generation (NP)-Novelty generation behaviour is a way to generate more innovative information in the current context. Middle managers receiving MDF guidance program exhibited huge enhancement in supervisor-rated JP weigh against to their initial performance and to that of a control group (Shonin et al., 2014). Tiwari and Garg (2019) stated that mindful individuals may be better able to disengage from redundant thoughts and emotions that disrupt task or event and facilitate persistent engagement with intended tasks. It is worth noting that employees with high levels of mindfulness can better counteract hostile working conditions by using a receptive state of consciousness and simultaneously observing ongoing internal and external events

(Hülshager et al., 2013). Therefore, employees' mindfulness should enhance their ability to cope with the negative consequences of workplace exclusion and promote their successful adaptation to this situation (Ioannou et al., 2022). That is to say, mindfulness should enable employees to better manage the self-defeating tendencies caused by workplace exclusion (Jahanzeb et al., 2019), which in turn will reduce the need for them to show passive resignation.

Research has shown that mindfulness can affect the functioning of teams and organizations, and numerous previous studies have shown a direct relationship between employee mindfulness and work performance (King and Haar, 2017). Regarding the indirect relationship between mindfulness and work performance, Ngo et al. (2020) proved through empirical research that creative process participation and employee creativity mediate the relationship between mindfulness and work performance of service employees, which is a new breakthrough in research of the indirect influence mechanism of mindfulness. Mindfulness prevents mind wandering by maintaining focus in the present. Mindfulness as a personal resource can help individuals maintain a state of concentration at all times, avoid possible distractions in the workplace, and increase productivity (Huang et al., 2022). As a result, mindful individuals are able to direct their attention to related needs rather than distraction, they are better able to direct their attention to their tasks with greater stability, control and efficiency, resulting in expanding their effective attention skills. Therefore, they might be able to comprehend information more effectively and act more logically as a result (Ngo et al., 2020), thereby guaranteeing the quality of work by reducing individual errors due to inattention, while at the same time controlling and stabilizing the current task by effectively controlling and stabilizing attention to information to help individuals demonstrate better task performance.

A higher level of mindfulness helps to focus more easily on work and perform effective tasks. Employees with high concentration can consider environmental details and maintain more attention, which may lead to rapid identification of potential problems (Good et al., 2016). Therefore, such employees are more likely to make fewer mistakes and complain less and dangerous situations caused by carelessness (Schmertz et al., 2009). In addition, mindfulness makes it easier for people to be aware of multiple perspectives, methods, and their processing speed, thereby gaining significant skills in problem-solving (Glomb et al., 2011). For example, a Randomized controlled trial of 53 school teachers aged between 22–60 years showed that mindfulness based intervention improved overall well-being, teaching efficacy and burnout/time pressure (Jennings et al., 2013). Another the US study in 2016, Harris et al. (2016) applied mindfulness techniques consisted gentle yoga and meditation practice to 64 school educators in the US and findings indicated intervention participants improved significantly in their classroom management, decreased in self-reported daily physical symptoms and two physiological indicators (cortisol levels and blood pressures) compared to control. A study of workplace mindfulness in 98 staff in the American restaurant industry found a positive association between workplace mindfulness and job performance, and a significant negative association with staff turnover (Dane and Brummel, 2014). The research results on mindfulness techniques seem to provide good results in reducing psychological barriers for school educators

and improving work performance. Due to the positive impact of mindfulness on job performance, it is predicted that:

H1: Mindfulness skill is positively related to job performance among teachers.

2.2. Inclusive leadership and job performance

Nembhard and Edmondson (2006) initially described leader inclusivity as the words and actions of leaders, which invite and thank others for their contributions. Inclusive leadership can create an inclusive environment within an organization, helping employees gain valuable resources for themselves (such as work and career opportunities, autonomy, psychological security, and happiness) (Carmeli et al., 2010; Rudy et al., 2007). Therefore, inclusive leadership can be seen as a valuable resource for subordinates. The social exchange theory is used to explain the relationship between inclusive leadership and job performance. Blau's (1964) social exchange theory explains that when individuals believe that another person is right and fair to them, they feel obligated to reciprocate beneficial behaviour. Inclusive leaders have successfully addressed subordinates' challenges (usability), encouraged communication and discussion (accessibility), and are willing to listen to subordinates' new ideas (openness) (Carmeli et al., 2010). By collaborating with such leaders, subordinates can gain energy resources (such as information) (Ioannou et al., 2022) and emotional resources (such as happiness) (Mor Barak and Levin, 2002). According to the theory of social exchange and reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960), when employees obtain resources in an organization, they are more likely to develop a sense of responsibility (Song et al., 2009) and reward them through high-performance or creative work (Hollander, 2009). Many published studies have pointed out that under inclusive leadership, subordinates may exhibit both intra-role work behaviour (such as innovative work behaviour) (Javed et al., 2017) and out-of-role behaviour, such as voice behaviour (Jiang, 2020) and OCB (Tran and Choi, 2019).

Firstly, inclusive leadership helps create an environment where subordinates are treated equally without making distinctions between in-group and out-group members (Li and Tang, 2022). Thus, an inclusive environment eliminates employees' sense of ignorance and exclusion in the workplace. Every employee needs to belong and desires to be valued; if both of these needs are met, his survival and benefit to the organization will be amazing. A sense of belonging is considered a basic need. On the other hand, positive behaviors should follow from forming to consolidating social bonds or participating in groups. Therefore, if supervisors give employees autonomy to be included, employees will reciprocate by making extra efforts. Similarly, when supervisors support and recognize employees' behaviors, employees will also reciprocate the supervisor's kindness, resulting in more work performance. In addition, employees will respond to supervisors' inclusive leadership by making extra efforts in the workplace and proactively strengthening reciprocal relationships with their supervisors (Nguyen et al., 2019). Inclusive leadership provides a platform where employees from different departments, levels, and demographic boundaries work together to solve common problems through participatory decision-making. Employees' absorption of different views is not always a sign of managers' confidence, care, and respect for employees, but it brings employees intrinsic rewards

at work. According to social exchange theory, when inclusive leadership is adjusted from a low level to a moderate level, supervisors encourage employees to participate in decision-making, which forces employees to reciprocate by demonstrating extraordinary work performance (Gong et al., 2023). Inclusive leadership fosters mature relationships with employees in which leaders and employees trust and support each other as a team. And the same connections and mature relationships are reciprocated to keep employees motivated to work for the benefit of the organization, prompting them to participate in more voluntary behaviors such as helping others, working overtime, providing services beyond imagination, and generating customer-centered citizenship behaviors and prosocial behaviors in service (Ke et al., 2022). In addition, inclusive leadership can effectively encourage subordinates, stimulate their intelligence, challenge the status quo, think creatively, and discover and adopt innovative ways of working, thereby providing high-quality services and novel solutions. Inclusive leadership can therefore promote task performance and enable employees to demonstrate more innovative and prosocial service behaviors. Therefore, we propose the following research hypotheses:

H2: Inclusive leadership has a positive impact on job performance among teachers.

2.3. Mindfulness skill and employee work engagement

When employees can maintain active observation and attention to the current internal and external stimuli, they can maintain a high degree of vigilance and sensitivity to their own internal experiences and external situations in their daily work (Bartlett et al., 2021). Meanwhile, employees with high mindfulness can be free from the interference of various unnecessary factors because they are in a focus on the present state (Jichul Jang et al., 2020). By actively manipulating and controlling attention, people can focus their attention on tasks and then devote themselves wholeheartedly to their work. Mindfulness may influence work engagement in three ways. (1) Stable attention. Achieving a sustained and stable focus on the present is a central feature of mindfulness. The individual is aware of the clarity and vividness of the experience because of their state of receptive attention, so the individual is immersed in happiness and will become more proactive in participating in activities (Xu et al., 2022); (2) Self-awareness. Brown et al. (2007) believe that mindfulness supports work by enhancing self-awareness of emotions, thoughts, and behaviours, supporting action based on one's own core or true self-consciousness, and fostering more autonomous motivation; (3) Self-regulation. Specifically, mindfulness can help individuals better manage themselves and reduce autonomous behaviour (Glomb et al., 2011). Hence, it can be expected that employees with high mindfulness can obtain positive psychological resources such as job involvement by adjusting and controlling their own cognition, attention, and emotion. As a result, the following hypotheses is made:

H3: Mindfulness skill has a positive impact on work engagement among teachers.

2.4. Inclusive leadership and employee work engagement

Work engagement is a state of mind characterized by vigor, dedication, and immersion in work related matters (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Employees' work engagement is strongly linked with leadership in organizations since leaders not only motivate employees but also increase their work engagement by supporting their subordinates (Ma and Tang, 2022). When inclusive leaders come across as open, accessible, and available, they can inspire employees to reciprocate in the form of improved work engagement by devoting their emotional, cognitive, and physical resources (Amabile and Pratt, 2016). We posit that this expected effect of inclusive leadership on work engagement is also valid, particularly because this style of leadership focuses on employee needs, which is a key factor in crafting an engaged workforce (Shafaei and Nejati, 2023). As such, we anticipate that inclusive leadership can increase employees' engagement in the education sector with their work tasks. As work engagement is the energy that employees expend to complete their work tasks, their willingness to put in the effort to achieve tasks, and the extent of their absorption in such related work (Aboramadan et al., 2020), inclusive leadership can enhance work engagement by motivating employees through its open approach. Against this background, we posit:

H4: Work engagement has a positive impact on work engagement among teachers.

2.5. Employee work engagement and job performance

Work engagement is a positive and active attitude toward working that this intrinsic motivation drives individuals to become engrossed in their work, thereby improving their job performance. Studies have shown that work engagement has a positive effect on job performance (Karatepe and Aga, 2016; Shin et al., 2020). However, in the context of education, studies on the effect of employees' work engagement on their job performance have been scant. Engaged employees display positive emotions (Jolly and Lee, 2021), which expand their range of thoughts and actions and allow them to effectively integrate diverse ideas (Khan et al., 2022). The facilitation of idea generation and integration is helpful to job performance. Furthermore, the vigour, dedication, and absorption of engaged employees motivate them to concentrate on and devote their energy to their work, which in turn promotes their job performance (Christian et al., 2011). Indeed, empirical evidence suggests that proactive behavior is essential to employee outcomes in Asian cultures (Shin and Eom, 2014). Therefore, we propose:

H5: Work engagement has a positive impact on job performance among teachers.

2.6. Mediating factor: employee work engagement

Work engagement is also considered to be an important construct that promotes organisational success (Ghadi et al., 2013; Kahn, 1990; Malinowski and Lim, 2015), enhances organisational commitment (Bakker and Schaufeli, 2008), increases employee wellbeing (Malinowski and Lim, 2015) and job satisfaction (Cetinkaya and Yesilada, 2022). It is believed that workplace engagement is essentially driven by individual employees, especially by their awareness of work environment, attention to

their tasks, present focus on engaging in what they do on their tasks, and non-judgemental attitude of accepting challenging work with effective emotion regulation strategy. Awareness, attention, presence focus and attitude are four fundamental facets of mindfulness (Elsaied, 2020). It is argued that engaged workers are energetic, resilient and enthusiastic about their work, thus would face work-related challenges persistently and positively, and likely be more satisfied with their jobs (Lee et al., 2022). These findings support the notion that mindfulness skill can be improved by improve work engagement to enhance the overall job performance as work engagement is opposite to emotional exhaustion and burnout (Hülshager et al., 2012; Schaufeli et al., 2006). Hence, based on the discussion, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H6: Work engagement mediates the relationship between mindfulness skill and job performance among teachers.

Inclusive leadership shows accessibility, openness and availability to their employees. It motivates the employees to participate fully in their given tasks and dedicate themselves mentally, emotionally, and their physical resources to the organization (Wu and Li, 2023). Leaders also encourage their workers to work hard and contribute to their organizations at higher level. Therefore, being accessibility, openness and availability to their employees' leaders creates more job satisfaction in employees and also positive effect on work engagement. Ly (2024) also argued that work engagement brings more positive attitude towards job performance and inclusive leadership. They identified 29 critical success factors for project out of which 45% relate to manager's leadership style and 31% factors related to engagement and commitment of project team. Inclusive leadership motivates its workforce to reach to the depth of their work so can become more involved. It brings greater sense of work engagement and employees bring innovative ideas to improve work performance leading to greater likelihood of organization success (Gupta et al., 2017). Therefore, we formed the following hypothesis:

H7: Work engagement mediates the relationship between inclusive leadership and job performance among teachers.

Based on the above listed argument, a number of factors, as supported by previous research, determine job performance. The research framework used in this study is presented in **Figure 1**.

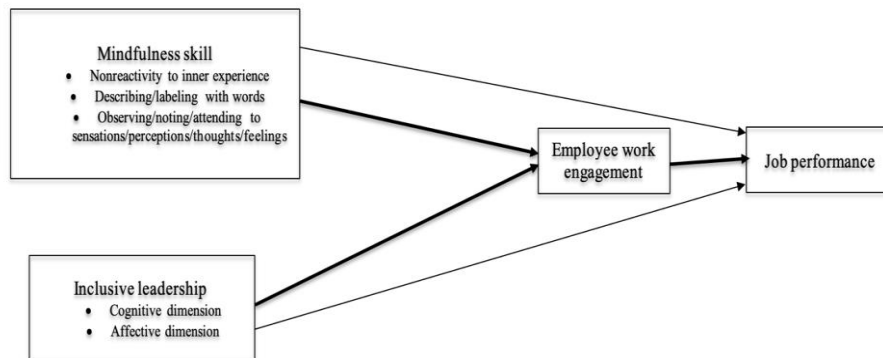


Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

3. Research method

3.1. Sample and procedure

The design of the study was cross-sectional. The survey questions were asked in English. Secondary teachers working in Hong Kong were targeted in this research. We also indicated the following items as the survey eligibility criteria: possessing a degree or master's qualification; currently working as a junior or senior teacher and currently having a minimum of 4 years of working experience in Hong Kong. The beginning of the survey explained items such as the purpose, and eligibility criteria, and then asked for informed consent. In addition to the questions related to the main survey variables, we asked demographic questions such as gender, age and education level. The survey was placed online due to its convenience to the participants that was thought to be more convenient to them instead of using paper surveys. The survey link was sent to participants in an invitation email. To collect data, we used nonprobability techniques of convenience and purposive sampling as follows: we emailed the survey to contacts HRM in three secondary schools in Hong Kong and HRM sent the survey to the target academic staff. Additionally, we posted the survey link to two social media sites that included groups or pages for Hong Kong secondary teachers. According to Cooper and Schindler (2003), factors such as non-availability of the population or high costs, may lead researchers to use nonprobability sampling techniques. In this study, convenience and purposive sampling techniques were used to reach participants from secondary schools. The questionnaires (refer to Google link) were distributed to the academics by contacting their HR manager and by mail. The researchers sent out approximately 360 questionnaires, but only 263 were returned and analysed, representing a response rate of approximately 73.05%.

3.2. Measurement instruments

This study used a structured questionnaire. Multi-item scales were used to measure job performance, mindfulness skill, inclusive leadership and employee work engagement. A questionnaire was developed from past studies and modified to suit the context of the study. Respondents answer on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree (Refer to Appendix).

The twenty-four items scale is used to assess job performance. Job performance has been measured using Instructional Development and Effectiveness Assessment (IDEA) developed by Canshin and Perrin (1978) (Refer to Appendix).

There are 39 items in mindfulness skill was adopt from Baer et al. (2006), which is including three dimensions: nonreactivity to inner experience, describing/labelling with words and observing/noting/attending to sensations/perceptions/thoughts/feelings (Refer to Appendix).

There are 13 items for inclusive leadership was adopt from Ashikali (2019), which is including two dimensions: affective dimension and cognitive dimension (Refer to Appendix).

This study uses a 9-item scale to measure work engagement were adapted dimensions of engagement by Schaufeli et al. (2006) shortened version (Utrecht Work Engagement Scale-9 [UWES-9]) (Refer to Appendix).

4. Data analysis

4.1. Measurement model

We used structural equation modelling (SEM) to ensure rigorous tests of construct validity, convergent validity and discriminant validity to estimate the research model. To test our hypotheses on causal relations between latent factors and their observed indicator variables, we opted for confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) which takes into account the assessment of the fit between observed data and an a priori conceptualized, theoretically grounded model (Mueller and Hancock, 2001). Data were analyzed by the PLS v4.0.9. The higher-order construct is included to reduce the number of relationships in the structural model; and so that the PLS path model is more parsimonious and easier to understand (Hair et al., 2013). The results showed that all the items loading were higher than 0.5, the AVEs were higher than 0.5, and also the CR were above 0.7 (**Table 1**). This study used HTMT technique by Henseler et al. (2015) in assessing discriminant validity. As shown in **Tables 2** and **3** below, all the values are lower than the required threshold of HTMT.85 (Kline, 2011) and HTMT.90 (Gold et al., 2001), this indicates that discriminant validity has been ascertained. Therefore, this measurement model tested a confirmatory factor analysis with latent variables, variances and covariances specified. In the measurement model, all latent constructs are correlated.

Table 1. Results of the measurement model.

First-order construct	Second-order construct	Items	Factor loading	CR	AVE
Nonreactivity to Inner experience		MS4	0.810	0.902	0.697
		MS9	0.826		
		MS29	0.826		
		MS33	0.876		
Describing/labelling with words		MS7	0.829	0.916	0.731
		MS27	0.870		
		MS32	0.848		
		MS37	0.871		
Observing/noticing/attending to sensation/perceptions/thought/feelings	Mindfulness skill	MS36	1.000	–	–
		Nonreactivity to Inner experience	0.445	0.848	0.448
		Describing/labelling with words	0.487	0.852	0.454
		Observing/noticing/attending to sensation/perceptions/thought/feelings	0.150	0.824	0.423
Cognitive dimension		IL1	0.831	0.947	0.748
		IL2	0.857		
		IL3	0.861		
		IL4	0.879		
		IL5	0.878		
		IL6	0.884		

Table 1. (Continued).

First-order construct	Second-order construct	Items	Factor loading	CR	AVE		
Affective dimension	Inclusive leadership	IL7	0.816	0.945	0.709		
		IL8	0.835				
		IL9	0.846				
		IL10	0.798				
		IL11	0.863				
		IL12	0.872				
		IL13	0.863				
		Cognitive dimension	0.490			0.852	0.454
		Affective dimension	0.542			0.857	0.462
		Employee work engagement				EWE1	0.834
EWE3	0.840						
EWE4	0.761						
EWE5	0.837						
EWE6	0.855						
EWE7	0.844						
EWE8	0.763						
EWE9	0.848						
Job performance				JP1	0.780	0.981	0.689
		JP2	0.782				
		JP3	0.745				
		JP4	0.822				
		JP5	0.848				
		JP6	0.858				
		JP7	0.820				
		JP8	0.845				
		JP9	0.840				
		JP10	0.845				
		JP11	0.806				
		JP12	0.877				
		JP13	0.886				
		JP14	0.881				
		JP15	0.839				
		JP16	0.847				
		JP17	0.875				
		JP18	0.846				
		JP19	0.792				
		JP20	0.874				
		JP21	0.835				
		JP22	0.795				
		JP23	0.771				
		JP24	0.791				

Note: MS = Mindfulness Skill; IL = Inclusive leadership; EWE = Employee Work Engagement; JP = Job Performance.

Table 2. Discriminant validity of constructs (HTMT 0.90 criterion).

	EWE	IL	JP	MS
EWE				
IL	0.818			
JP	0.798	0.859		
MS	0.796	0.87	0.738	

Note: MS = Mindfulness Skill; IL = Inclusive leadership; EWE = Employee Work Engagement; JP = Job Performance.

Table 3. Discriminant validity of constructs (Fornell-Larcker Criterion).

	EWE	IL	JP	MS
EWE	0.827			
IL	0.769	0.967		
JP	0.773	0.821	0.83	
MS	0.733	0.792	0.689	0.909

Note: MS = Mindfulness skill; IL = Inclusive leadership; EWE = Employee Work Engagement; JP = Job Performance.

4.2. Structural model

Prior to evaluating the structural model, it is crucial to ensure that there is no lateral collinearity issue in the structural model. Since multiple predictors are tested, this study refers to the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) to assess multicollinearity issue. A full collinearity test was conducted to determine if any constructs reflect variance inflation factor (VIF) values equal to or greater than 3.3 (Kock and Lynn, 2012). The results showed that the pathological VIF range of all constructs was 3.391 to 4.854 (refer to **Table 4**), confirming once again that CMV was not a serious issue in this study. As shown in **Table 4** all the VIF values are lower than 5 (Hair et al., 2014).

Table 4. Full collinearity testing.

MS	JP	IL	EWE
3.759	3.723	4.854	3.391

Note: a. Dependent Variable: RAND;

b. MS = Mindfulness Skill; IL = Inclusive leadership; EWE = Employee Work Engagement; JP = Job Performance.

The structural model is presented in **Table 5**, with annotation of path coefficients (β) and portions of variance explained (R^2), and the results of hypothesis testing by determining the significance levels of path coefficients are summarized in **Table 5**.

H1 is not supported since ($\beta = 0.037, t = 0.559, p > 0.05$). Specifically, strong and statistically significant evidence was found in support of hypothesis H2 ($\beta = 0.564, t = 8.005, p < 0.05$). Similarly, statistically significant support is found for H3 ($\beta = 0.131, t = 1.93, p < 0.05$). In addition, the results also revealed that inclusive leadership positively influences employee work engagement, and H4 is supported as well ($\beta = 0.284, t = 3.015, p < 0.05$). Our study found significant evidence supporting hypothesis H5 ($\beta = 0.344, t = 4.489, p < 0.05$).

Regarding the indirect hypothesis of mediating, employee work engagement mediated the relationship between the mindfulness skill and job performance ($\beta =$

0.045, $t = 1.711$, $p < 0.05$), employee work engagement mediated the relationship between inclusive leadership and job performance ($\beta = 0.098$, $t = 2.257$, $p < 0.05$) were found to have a significant positive indirect relationship with job performance, via employee work engagement as mediator. Thus, H6 and H7 are supported.

Table 5. Result of the structural model analysis (hypothesis testing).

Relationship	Std.beta	Std.dev	t value	P value	PCI LL	PCI UL	R ²	f ²
IL → JP	0.564	0.07	8.005	0.000	0.443	0.674	0.723	0.338
MS → JP	0.037	0.066	0.559	0.288	-0.121	0.104		0.000
EWE → JP	0.344	0.077	4.489	0.000	0.225	0.48		0.157
MS → EWE → JP	0.045	0.026	1.711	0.044	0.009	0.097		0.003
IL → EWE → JP	0.098	0.043	2.257	0.012	0.039	0.178		0.0096
IL → EWE	0.284	0.094	3.015	0.001	0.111	0.422	0.678	0.051
MS → EWE	0.131	0.068	1.93	0.027	0.022	0.242		0.014

Note. MS = Mindfulness Skill; IL = Inclusive leadership; EWE = Employee Work Engagement; JP = Job Performance.

4.3. PLS-Predict

Further to that as suggested by Shmueli et al. (2019) proposed PLS predict, a holdout sample-based procedure that generates case-level predictions on an item or a construct level using the PLS-Predict with a 10-fold procedure to check for predictive relevance. Shmueli et al. (2019) suggested that if all the item differences (PLS-LM) were lower than there is strong predictive power, if all are higher than predictive relevance is not confirmed while if the majority is lower than there is moderate predictive power and if minority then there is low predictive power. Based on **Table 6**, all the indicator of the PLS-LM were lower than predictive power, thus we can conclude that the PLS model has a strong predictive power in this study.

Table 6. PLS-Predict.

Item	PLS RMSE	LM RMSE	PLS-LM	Q ² predict
EWE1	0.752	0.78	-0.028	0.515
EWE3	0.73	0.77	-0.04	0.468
EWE4	0.949	1	-0.051	0.33
EWE5	0.864	0.919	-0.055	0.423
EWE6	0.676	0.71	-0.034	0.511
EWE7	0.798	0.835	-0.037	0.414
EWE8	0.894	0.941	-0.047	0.384
EWE9	0.742	0.757	-0.015	0.473
JP1	0.694	0.742	-0.048	0.527
JP10	0.745	0.795	-0.05	0.465
JP11	0.735	0.786	-0.051	0.463
JP12	0.7	0.725	-0.025	0.499
JP13	0.675	0.726	-0.051	0.54
JP14	0.722	0.746	-0.024	0.454

Table 6. (Continued).

Item	PLS RMSE	LM RMSE	PLS-LM	Q ² predict
JP18	0.731	0.762	-0.031	0.457
JP19	0.789	0.831	-0.042	0.421
JP2	0.712	0.768	-0.056	0.465
JP20	0.704	0.721	-0.017	0.511
JP21	0.726	0.734	0.008	0.463
JP22	0.776	0.809	-0.033	0.354
JP24	0.832	0.871	-0.039	0.365
JP3	0.819	0.872	-0.053	0.439
JP4	0.71	0.747	-0.037	0.495
JP5	0.723	0.768	-0.045	0.477
JP8	0.652	0.658	-0.006	0.507
JP9	0.705	0.723	-0.018	0.462
JP15	0.709	0.748	-0.039	0.469
JP16	0.698	0.723	-0.025	0.489
JP17	0.719	0.735	-0.016	0.455
JP6	0.656	0.707	-0.051	0.571
JP7	0.684	0.726	-0.042	0.518
JP23	0.777	0.772	0.005	0.383

Note: MS = Mindfulness Skill; IL = Inclusive leadership; EWE = Employee Work Engagement; JP = Job Performance.

5. Discussion and implications

The research outcomes of this study underline the importance of mindfulness and inclusive leadership in terms of shaping employee job performance, which is found to be positively related to employee work engagement. These findings have particular implications for research and practice/the management community.

This research contributes to the literature in several ways. First, this article adds to the very scarce literature on mindfulness and inclusive leadership (Randel et al., 2016). This study also contributes to the limited research on investigating the effects of mindfulness and inclusive leadership (Choi et al., 2015). Furthermore, this is the first study to test the research model given in this study and points that work engagement serves as a mediator on the association between mindfulness, inclusive leadership and job performance. This is a valuable contribution because it provides new perspectives into looking at research. The results of this study may motivate future researchers to test work engagement as a potential mediator of the relationship between mindfulness, inclusive leadership and different employee outcomes. Additionally, the article contributes to the limited research examining job performance in the context of Hong Kong. Moreover, this study offers new approaches to enhancing the job performance of secondary teachers. There is limited empirical research on the mindfulness and inclusive leadership of teaching professionals and this study adds to the literature by developing a research model that investigates the organizational factors that affect teaching professionals' job performance. In addition, to our

knowledge, this is the first research that examines mindfulness and inclusive leadership in the Hong Kong context. The outcomes of this research emphasize the importance of mindfulness and inclusive leadership in the Hong Kong context, while the findings can benefit future theory development on mindfulness and inclusive leadership in cross-cultural contexts. Overall, this study adds to the extant research on the positive effects of mindfulness and inclusive leadership on employee attitudes and outcomes.

The current study intended to explore the relationship between mindfulness skills and inclusive leadership in secondary teachers and whether work engagement mediated this relationship. According to the findings of this study, there was a positive relationship between mindfulness skills and inclusive leadership in secondary teachers. The teachers who are more proficient at managing their mindfulness are more likely to develop a mental, emotional, and psychological attachment to their teachings; they also feel satisfied, motivated, and become totally and passionately engaged in their professional role. It was also found that there was a positive relationship between work engagement and job performance among secondary teachers. People can have prosperous and meaningful lives by having work engagement, which acts as a beneficial guiding mindset. The reason for this is that people who have access to psychological resources, like work engagement, are more joyful and more engaged at work.

The findings unveil a wealth of promising implications, both theoretically and practically, that contribute novel insights to the realm of job performance. Theoretically, our research enriches the existing literature on job performance by illuminating the intricate mediating role of work engagement in the dynamic relationship between mindfulness skill and inclusive leadership. This discovery resonates harmoniously with prior studies, affirming the paramount importance of work engagement as a potent resource capable of buffering against stress and fostering well-being within the workplace (Li and Chen, 2023). By unravelling the mediating effect of work engagement, our study unveils the hidden mechanisms that propel the connection between mindfulness skill and inclusive leadership, adding depth and nuance to the understanding of secondary teachers' job performance.

The findings of this study also have implications for practice and the managerial community. These outcomes are especially important for effectively managing human capital within the education industry (or any industry seeking to promote and benefit from a more diverse workforce). In such an environment of increased employee diversity, mindfulness and inclusive leadership (as an inclusionary practice) can be valuable to any organization (or industry) trying to capitalize on the potential advantages of a diverse workforce (Shore et al., 2018). Thus, the outcomes of this study may be beneficial in understanding the effective leadership of education leaders, particularly in ensuring the inclusion of minority employees.

Moreover, the findings of this study also highlight the importance of mindfulness and inclusive leadership to effectively lead teaching professionals, in particular for employee work engagement and job performance. Randel et al. (2018) pointed out that encouraging inclusive leadership and mindfulness behaviours can improve the work experience of all workgroup members and the effectiveness of their groups and organizations. Thus, we recommend that organizational leaders cultivate mindfulness

and inclusive leadership by demonstrating openness, availability and accessibility toward their employees and create work environments in which employees' ideas are valued. To ensure that leaders exhibit such behaviours, organizations may offer mindfulness practice and inclusive leadership training to their education leaders. Through such training, organizations can help education leaders to understand the significance of mindfulness, inclusive leadership and to develop their mindfulness, inclusive leadership skills and abilities. Furthermore, organizational human resources practices such as performance evaluations and promotions can be aligned with an inclusive leadership style to support its application. For example, for the promotion and hiring of education leaders, organizations may consider adding assessments to measure candidates' inclusive leadership capabilities.

Furthermore, as job performance is a very good predictor of important employee, team and organizational outcomes, organizations need to find ways to create and sustain a high level of employee energy and involvement at work. This current study proposes that one way for organizations to improve job performance is through employee work engagement. For positive work engagement, organizations need to ensure that their procedures and policies are transparent and fair in terms of how decisions are made related to rewards, promotions, resource allocation, etc. Creating favourable work engagement is especially vital for cultural contexts, such as Hong Kong, in which favouritism and similar preferential treatment given to in-group members are common and have a negative impact on employee outcomes. To encourage transparent and fair decision-making processes, organizations can offer proper training and incentives to teaching professionals. In sum, this present study points out that work engagement is positively related to job performance and work engagement mediates the association between mindfulness, inclusive leadership and job performance. We also provide further support to the significance of leader inclusiveness and mindfulness in the development of employee work engagement. Overall, this research provides additional support to the literature and managerial practice about the positive effects of mindfulness and inclusive leadership in organizations.

6. Limitations and further research

We should also note some limitations of this study. First of all, we collected the data with a single source, which may cause common method variance. We also used convenience and purposive sampling, which can limit the generalizability of the survey results. To mitigate some of these limitations, future studies can collect data from multiple resources. In addition, to increase the generalizability of the results, further studies can be conducted with larger samples. In addition, the data were collected via an online survey to ensure the confidentiality of the responses. This practice limited the ability to track, which participant from which organization completed the survey. Future research can also add additional variables to the research model, such as other types of organizational behaviour (innovation behaviour). In addition, turnover intention is typically very high in the teaching profession and talent retention is of particular concern in the education industry. Thus, in future studies, it would be beneficial to add employee turnover intention as a variable to the research

model. Furthermore, this study was conducted on secondary teachers in Hong Kong; therefore, we cannot be sure about the generalizability of results to other industries or countries. The research model can be tested in other industries or professionals in other countries for the comparison of the findings.

Author contributions: Conceptualization, HL; methodology, HL; software, HL; validation, HL, AV, GBS and JB; formal analysis, HL; investigation, AV (Asokan Vasudevan); resources, AV (Asokan Vasudevan), GBS, AV (A. Vasumathi) and JB; data curation, AV (Asokan Vasudevan) and AV (A. Vasumathi); writing—original draft preparation, HL; writing—review and editing, HL; visualization, AV (Asokan Vasudevan), GBS, LX and JB; supervision, AV (Asokan Vasudevan) and AV (A. Vasumathi); project administration, AV (Asokan Vasudevan); funding acquisition, AV (Asokan Vasudevan) and LX.

Conflict of interest: All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript. The authors declare no conflict.

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Appendix

Table A1. Measurement of mindfulness skill.

Mindfulness skill	1	2	3	4	5
1. When I'm walking, I deliberately notice the sensations of my body moving.					
2. I'm good at finding words to describe my feelings.					
3. I criticize myself for having irrational or inappropriate emotions.					
4. I perceive my feelings and emotions without having to react to them.					
5. When I do things, my mind wanders off and I'm easily distracted.					
6. When I take a shower or bath, I stay alert to the sensations of water on my body.					
7. I can easily put my beliefs, opinions, and expectations into words.					
8. I don't pay attention to what I'm doing because I'm daydreaming, worrying, or otherwise distracted.					
9. I watch my feelings without getting lost in them.					
10. I tell myself I shouldn't be feeling the way I'm feeling.					
11. I notice how foods and drinks affect my thoughts, bodily sensations, and emotions.					
12. It's hard for me to find the words to describe what I'm thinking.					
13. I am easily distracted.					
14. I believe some of my thoughts are abnormal or bad and I shouldn't think that way.					
15. I pay attention to sensations, such as the wind in my hair or sun on my face.					
16. I have trouble thinking of the right words to express how I feel about things.					
17. I make judgments about whether my thoughts are good or bad.					
18. I find it difficult to stay focused on what's happening in the present.					
19. When I have distressing thoughts or images, I "step back" and am aware of the thought or image without getting taken over by it.					
20. I pay attention to sounds, such as clocks ticking, birds chirping, or cars passing.					
21. In difficult situations, I can pause without immediately reacting.					
22. When I have a sensation in my body, it's difficult for me to describe it because I can't find the right words.					
23. It seems I am "running on automatic" without much awareness of what I'm doing.					
24. When I have distressing thoughts or images, I feel calm soon after.					
25. I tell myself that I shouldn't be thinking the way I'm thinking.					
26. I notice the smells and aromas of things.					
27. Even when I'm feeling terribly upset, I can find a way to put it into words.					
28. I rush through activities without being really attentive to them.					
29. When I have distressing thoughts or images, I am able just to notice them without reacting.					
30. I think some of my emotions are bad or inappropriate and I shouldn't feel them.					
31. I notice visual elements in art or nature, such as colors, shapes, textures, or patterns of light and shadow.					
32. My natural tendency is to put my experiences into words.					
33. When I have distressing thoughts or images, I just notice them and let them go.					
34. I do jobs or tasks automatically without being aware of what I'm doing.					
35. When I have distressing thoughts or images, I judge myself as good or bad depending what the thought or image is about.					
36. I pay attention to how my emotions affect my thoughts and behavior.					
37. I can usually describe how I feel at the moment in considerable detail.					
38. I find myself doing things without paying attention.					
39. I disapprove of myself when I have irrational ideas.					

Table A2. Measurement of inclusive leadership.

Inclusive leadership		1	2	3	4	5
1.	Encourages me to discuss diverse viewpoints and perspectives to problem solving with colleagues					
2.	Makes sure I have the opportunity to express diverse viewpoints					
3.	Stimulates me to exchange different ideas with colleagues					
4.	Encourages me to use colleagues' diverse ethnic-cultural backgrounds for problem solving					
5.	Makes sure that I use colleagues' diverse ethnic-cultural backgrounds as a source for creativity and innovation					
6.	Stimulates me to learn from colleagues' ethnic-cultural backgrounds					
7.	Stimulates me to actively participate in the team					
8.	Makes sure I am treated as an equal member of the team					
9.	Tries to prevent me to think in negative stereotypes about other colleagues					
10.	Tries to prevent employees to form groups that could exclude other colleagues					
11.	Makes sure I have the opportunity to be myself in the team					
12.	Communicates the benefits of ethnic-cultural diversity for the team to employees					
13.	Makes sure I have the opportunity to have a voice in the team					

Table A3. Measurement of employee work engagement.

Employee work engagement		1	2	3	4	5
1.	At my work, I feel as though I have a lot of energy					
2.	At my job, I feel strong and vigorous					
3.	I am enthusiastic about my job					
4.	When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work					
5.	I feel happy when I am working intensely					
6.	I am proud of the work that I do					
7.	I am immersed in my work					
8.	I get carried away when I'm working					
9.	My job inspires me					

Table A4. Measurement of job performance.

Job performance		1	2	3	4	5
1.	Understand student ideas and questions					
2.	Express interesting and challenging ideas about the subject					
3.	Use tests, papers, projects, etc., that closely related to the course purpose					
4.	Care about students as people					
5.	Give understandable explanations of course materials					
6.	Ask interesting and stimulating questions					
7.	Give tests, projects, etc., that cover the important points of the course					
8.	Show interest in student ideas					
9.	Speak in an understandable voice					
10.	Suggest clearer ways for students to express their ideas					
11.	Give quizzes, papers, projects, etc., that help students to learn					

Table A4. *(Continued)*.

Job performance

12. Make helpful comments about student work.
 13. Review material in ways that help students remember it.
 14. Give projects, tests, or assignments that require original or creative thinking.
 15. Create opportunities for students to use the material they learn.
 16. Make helpful suggestions about what kinds of things to study for a test.
 17. Show how the subject relates to other areas of knowledge.
 18. Speak with expressiveness and variety.
 19. Am sensitive to student feelings about the subject.
 20. Provide helpful instructional materials (such as worksheets, study questions, unit objective).
 21. Identify strong points of student work.
 22. Use good examples and illustrations.
 23. Try different ways of teaching when students have trouble learning.
 24. Enjoy teaching.
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