

Exploring the Nexus of Mindfulness, Organizational Citizenship Behavior, and Creativity: Insights from University Students

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the relationships between Mindfulness, Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), and Creativity in an academic context. Grounded in Fredrickson's Broaden-and-Build Theory, the research examines how mindfulness, typically associated with cognitive flexibility and emotional regulation, influences creativity, alongside the role of OCB in fostering a collaborative environment. Using data from 390 university students, the study employs Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to test the proposed relationships. While OCB positively impacts creativity, a surprising negative direct effect of mindfulness on creativity emerges, suggesting that mindfulness, in some cases, may inhibit divergent thinking. These findings challenge existing theories on the universal benefits of mindfulness and call for a deeper exploration of its context-specific applications. The results provide significant implications for educational institutions seeking to balance mindfulness practices with strategies that encourage prosocial behaviors and collective innovation.

1. Introduction

Creativity has become a crucial competency in education, enabling students to approach complex problems innovatively, adapt to shifting circumstances, and foster intellectual and personal growth. In higher education, creativity is essential not only for academic success but also for preparing students to address real-world challenges with flexibility and insight. Recent research has highlighted the importance of psychological and social factors in cultivating creativity, pointing to mindfulness and Organizational Citizenship Behavior

(OCB) as two promising influencers of a creative academic environment (Alt et al., 2023; Tastanova et al., 2024). Despite their individual contributions, the combined impact of mindfulness and OCB on student creativity is underexplored, creating a significant gap in understanding their interaction and collective effects.

Mindfulness, often characterized as a state of non-judgmental present-moment awareness, has shown potential to enhance creativity by fostering emotional regulation, cognitive flexibility, and openness to new ideas (Brown & Ryan, 2003; He, 2023). Through mindfulness, students learn to focus on the present

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without being distracted by concerns from the past or future, theoretically encouraging creative thought by breaking down cognitive rigidity (Kevin et al., 2024). By promoting emotional balance and attentiveness, mindfulness can support mental states favorable for creative thinking. However, some studies reveal complexities in the mindfulness-creativity connection. Specifically, mindfulness's emphasis on present-moment awareness may sometimes inhibit divergent thinking, a core aspect of creativity requiring the exploration of multiple ideas and solutions (He, 2023). This effect points to the need for further exploration to identify the conditions under which mindfulness either fosters or limits creativity in academic settings.

In parallel, Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) embodies the voluntary, prosocial actions that students take to support their educational environment without the expectation of direct rewards. Students who exhibit OCB actively engage in helping their peers, contributing fully to group projects, and supporting a collaborative academic culture. This behavior fosters a culture of trust and mutual respect, which is conducive to creativity, as students feel safer experimenting with new ideas and sharing their perspectives (Agyabeng-Mensah et al., 2024). OCB not only builds positive group dynamics but also enhances the social and creative climate within academic settings (Jobbehdar Nourafkan et al., 2023). Despite its relevance, few studies have investigated how OCB interacts with mindfulness and their combined influence on creativity, highlighting a significant gap in literature.

The theoretical basis for this study integrates Fredrickson's Broaden-and-Build Theory with Self-Determination Theory, offering a dual perspective on how emotional and social factors interact to foster creativity. Fredrickson's Broaden-and-Build Theory suggests that positive emotional states expand cognitive and behavioral repertoires, allowing individuals to build enduring personal and social resources (Fredrickson, 2004). In academic settings, mindfulness and OCB can create such positive states, laying a foundation for creativity to flourish. When students engage in mindfulness, they foster emotional regulation and cognitive flexibility, essential components for creative thought. OCB, in turn, promotes a socially supportive environment where students feel free to explore ideas without fear of judgment, further encouraging creative engagement.

In complement, Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) emphasizes the importance of fulfilling

three fundamental psychological needs (autonomy, competence, and relatedness) in nurturing intrinsic motivation for creative work. Within this framework, mindfulness supports autonomy and competence by helping students manage their emotions and maintain focus, whereas OCB fulfills the need for relatedness by fostering a supportive social environment. Together, these elements create a holistic framework for understanding creativity in educational settings. Students who experience autonomy and competence through mindfulness, alongside the social connection that OCB brings, are more likely to be intrinsically motivated to engage creatively. Self-Determination Theory thus provides a robust framework for examining how mindfulness and OCB can synergize to create environments where creativity is actively encouraged and supported.

Although prior research has explored the independent effects of mindfulness and OCB on creativity, few studies have considered their combined impact. Mindfulness has often been lauded for its potential to enhance creativity, yet the nuanced relationship between mindfulness and creativity, where mindfulness may sometimes inhibit certain kinds of thinking, calls for closer investigation (He, 2023). This study seeks to fill these research gaps by exploring how mindfulness and OCB interact to foster creativity in a university setting. By doing so, it aims to contribute to the literature on creative development by examining the combined effects of mindfulness and OCB, especially in relation to the educational context.

Additionally, the integration of Fredrickson's Broaden-and-Build Theory with Self-Determination Theory offers a strong foundation for examining the mechanisms underlying the impact of mindfulness and OCB on creativity. The Broaden-and-Build Theory suggests that positive emotions, such as those fostered by OCB, broaden students' cognitive processes, encouraging them to explore diverse ideas. Self-Determination Theory emphasizes the significance of nurturing a supportive environment that fulfills students' intrinsic psychological needs, thereby fostering motivation for creativity. By aligning these theoretical frameworks, this study can better examine how emotional and social resources interact to create conditions favorable to creative engagement.

This research aims to contribute to the field of educational psychology by providing a comprehensive understanding of how mindfulness and OCB can collectively promote creativity. The results are

expected to offer actionable insights for educators and institutions seeking to cultivate creative, supportive academic environments that enhance both individual well-being and collaborative engagement. By fostering mindfulness practices that align with open awareness and encouraging OCB within the classroom, educators may be able to cultivate spaces that balance emotional stability with the freedom to explore ideas. This study has broader implications for strategies that educators and administrators can employ to nurture creativity within academic settings. Educational institutions might consider combining mindfulness practices that emphasize cognitive flexibility with programs encouraging OCB, such as peer mentoring and collaborative learning initiatives. By fostering an environment that supports both mindfulness and prosocial behaviors, institutions can create spaces that encourage students to engage deeply, collaborate, and think creatively. The insights gained from this research aim to inform educational practices that recognize the value of psychological and social resources in cultivating an academic culture that prioritizes both well-being and creativity.

2. Theoretical Framework - Research Methodology

2.1. Theoretical Framework

2.1.1. Theoretical Foundations

Fredrickson's Broaden-and-Build Theory provides a valuable foundation for this study by highlighting how positive emotions can expand a person's mental and behavioral range, allowing them to build meaningful personal and social resources (Fredrickson, 2004). These positive emotional states support cognitive flexibility and adaptability, both of which are essential for creativity. When individuals experience positive emotions, they're more likely to engage in creative problem-solving and prosocial behaviors, such as Organizational Citizenship Behavior. Together, these elements foster a collaborative and supportive environment that encourages innovative thinking. This theory is particularly useful in explaining how mindfulness, which promotes positive emotional states, can help expand cognitive capacity, thus enhancing creativity (He, 2023).

Self-Determination Theory, developed by Ryan and Deci (2000), complements this perspective by focusing on how satisfying fundamental psychological needs

(autonomy, competence, and relatedness) promotes intrinsic motivation and well-being. In academic settings, mindfulness practices can support students' autonomy and competence by helping them regulate their emotions and maintain balance. Meanwhile, Organizational Citizenship Behavior builds a sense of relatedness, as it encourages collaboration and mutual support among students. When students feel autonomous, competent, and connected to others, they are more intrinsically motivated, which in turn fuels creativity. By meeting these psychological needs, Self-Determination Theory offers a framework to understand how mindfulness and prosocial behaviors like OCB together create a supportive environment where creativity can flourish.

2.1.2. Mindfulness and Creativity

Mindfulness, defined as non-judgmental awareness of the present moment (Brown & Ryan, 2003), has been widely recognized for its role in fostering creativity. Mindfulness enables individuals to regulate emotions, focus on tasks, and approach problems with cognitive flexibility, which are all essential for creative thinking (He, 2023). In educational settings, mindfulness practices, such as meditation and yoga, help reduce stress and anxiety, freeing cognitive resources for creative processes (Tastanova et al., 2024). Kevin et al. (2024) demonstrated that digital mindfulness-based interventions enhanced students' creative potential, suggesting that fostering mindfulness in educational environments can significantly improve creativity. Cheng (2023) also highlighted the role of mindfulness in reducing anxiety and boredom, emotions that typically hinder creative thinking. By promoting emotional balance and cognitive openness, mindfulness allows students to think creatively and generate novel solutions to academic challenges.

2.1.3. Organizational Citizenship Behavior and Creativity

OCB refers to voluntary, prosocial behaviors that go beyond formal requirements and contribute to the well-being of the academic or organizational environment (Posdakoff & MacKenzie, 1994). In educational contexts, OCB is expressed through actions like helping peers, participating in group work, and contributing to a positive academic atmosphere. These behaviors foster collaboration and mutual support, which are

essential for promoting creativity (Cheng et al., 2023). Research has shown that OCB enhances creativity by creating a supportive environment where students feel comfortable sharing ideas and collaborating with others (Agyabeng-Mensah et al., 2024). Zhang and Bartol (2010) also noted that OCB contributes to psychological empowerment, which is critical for creative engagement in academic settings. When students engage in OCB, they help create a learning environment that encourages creativity by promoting a culture of collaboration, trust, and mutual aid. The relationship between OCB and creativity is further supported by Cheng et al. (2023), who found that leader behaviors, such as humor, foster customer-oriented OCB, which in turn enhances creativity. In academic environments, OCB plays a similar role by creating a supportive atmosphere where students are encouraged to engage in creative thinking and problem-solving.

2.1.4. *The Interplay Between Mindfulness, OCB, and Creativity*

Mindfulness and OCB are closely intertwined in their ability to foster creativity. Mindfulness, by enhancing emotional regulation and cognitive flexibility, allows individuals to engage more fully in OCB, which in turn fosters a collaborative academic environment that supports creativity (Jobbehdar Nourafkan et al., 2023). Kevin et al. (2024) found that mindfulness-based interventions not only improved creative potential but also promoted a sense of responsibility and collaboration among students. This suggests that mindfulness can enhance both individual and collective creativity through its impact on emotional regulation and prosocial behavior. Tastanova et al. (2024) further demonstrated that mindfulness practices, such as yoga nidra, foster creativity by promoting relaxation and openness to new experiences. By reducing stress and promoting emotional well-being, mindfulness creates the psychological conditions necessary for creativity to flourish. These findings underscore the importance of mindfulness in fostering an academic environment where students can engage in creative problem-solving and contribute to the broader academic community.

2.1.5. *Research Model and Hypotheses*

The research model posits that mindfulness positively impacts both OCB and creativity, while OCB itself also enhances creativity. The interplay between mindfulness

and OCB contributes significantly to fostering a creative and collaborative academic environment. The model is based on previous literature that links these factors to positive academic and organizational outcomes (Jobbehdar Nourafkan et al., 2023; Kevin et al., 2024). The following hypotheses are formulated based on the theoretical foundations and previous studies:

Hypothesis 1: Mindfulness positively affects Creativity. According to Broaden-and-Build Theory, positive emotional states promoted by mindfulness expand cognitive flexibility, a key component of creative thinking (Fredrickson, 2004; He, 2023). Mindfulness practices allow students to reduce stress and approach problems with openness, facilitating creative thought. Kevin et al. (2024) found that mindfulness-based interventions significantly improved creative potential, supporting this hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2: Mindfulness positively affects Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB). Mindfulness promotes emotional regulation, which encourages prosocial behaviors, a critical aspect of OCB (Jobbehdar Nourafkan et al., 2023). By fostering well-being and emotional stability, mindfulness satisfies students' psychological need for relatedness, as highlighted in Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Hypothesis 3: Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) positively affects Creativity. OCB fosters collaboration and mutual support, which enhances creative engagement (Agyabeng-Mensah et al., 2024). Through prosocial behaviors, students build a community that encourages risk-taking and innovation, essential for creative problem-solving (Cheng, 2023; Zhang & Bartol, 2010).

2.2. *Research Methodology*

This study adopts a quantitative research design, utilizing survey-based data collection to examine the relationships between mindfulness, OCB, and creativity in university students in Vietnam. A structured survey involving 390 university students across various disciplines was conducted in May 2024. The sample was obtained using convenience sampling, ensuring diversity in academic backgrounds. The survey was distributed both online and in person to ensure a diverse sample. The total sample size of 390 is consistent with previous studies exploring similar constructs (Zhang & Bartol, 2010; Brown & Ryan, 2003). The questionnaire used a Likert scale to

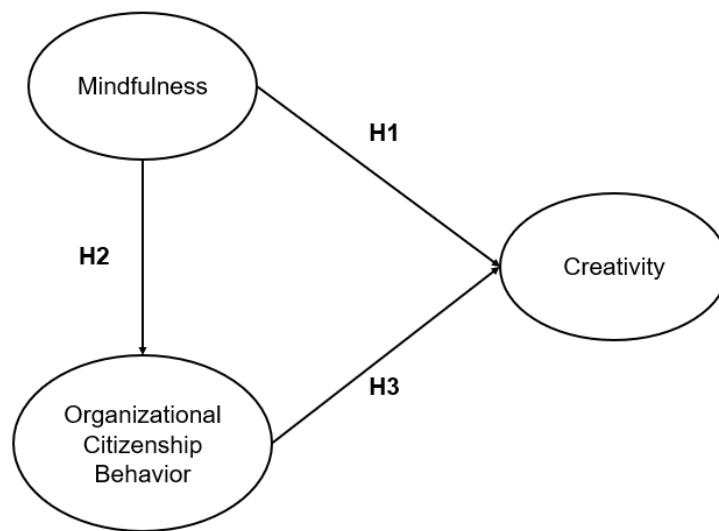


Figure 1. Research model

measure mindfulness, OCB, and creativity.

The measurement scales used in this study were drawn from validated instruments in the literature. Mindfulness was measured using the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ), developed by Brown and Ryan (2003). The FFMQ assesses mindfulness through facets such as observing, describing, acting with awareness, and non-judging. Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) was measured using a 10-item scale developed by Posdakoff and MacKenzie (1994), which assesses prosocial behaviors such as helping others, participating in group work, and showing initiative in academic environments. Creativity was measured using a 6-item scale adapted from Zhang and Bartol (2010), which assesses behaviors such as idea generation, problem-solving, and risk-taking.

Data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with AMOS software, which allows for the simultaneous testing of multiple relationships between variables. SEM was chosen because it enables the researchers to test both the direct and indirect effects of mindfulness and OCB on creativity. The model fit was assessed using several fit indices, including the chi-square statistic, Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), ensuring that the model was a good fit for the data.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Results

The sample for this study consisted of 390 university

students. 69% were female and 31% male, indicating a significant majority of female participants. The academic year distribution shows that first-year students made up 37.9%, and second-year students constituted 52.6%, with the majority being underclassmen. Third-year students comprised 8.5%, and fourth-year students were just 1%. In terms of age, the majority of respondents were 18-20 years old (59%), followed by 20-22 years (38.7%), with few older students. The sample was drawn from various academic disciplines, with Business Administration students making up 41.8%, followed by Public Relations and Communication at 36.4%, and Commerce at 15.4%. The remaining students were from fields like Accounting, Tourism, and Finance, representing smaller proportions. This diverse demographic suggests varied engagement with creativity and OCB across disciplines.

The reliability and validity analysis conducted for this study ensures that the measurement scales for Creativity (CT), Mindfulness (MF), and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) are robust and appropriate for further analysis. Cronbach's Alpha values for all scales demonstrate acceptable to good internal consistency. Specifically, the 6-item Creativity scale showed Cronbach's Alpha of 0.774, while the Mindfulness scale had a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.810. The 2-item OCB scale also showed satisfactory reliability with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.767. These values confirm that the items within each construct reliably measure their respective dimensions, and no items need to be removed to improve reliability significantly.

The results from Exploratory Factor Analysis

Table 1. Validity and Reliability Test

	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	MF	CT	OCB
MF	0.762	0.517	0.033	0.769	0.719		
CT	0.753	0.504	0.066	0.753	-0.181**	0.710	
OCB	0.783	0.647	0.066	0.847	0.097	0.257**	0.805

(EFA) further validate the underlying structure of the measurement model. The KMO measure of sampling adequacy was 0.750, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($\chi^2 = 1450.286$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that the dataset is suitable for factor analysis. The structure matrix extracted three factors corresponding to the constructs of Creativity, Mindfulness, and OCB, with factor loadings between 0.598 and 0.813 across items. These findings align with the theoretical model, confirming the distinctiveness of the measured constructs.

To confirm the robustness of the constructs, we performed a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), which demonstrated a strong fit with the data. The model's Chi-square (χ^2) value of 26.850 (with 17 degrees of freedom, $p = 0.060$) and a CMIN/DF ratio of 1.579 comfortably fall within accepted thresholds, indicating that the observed data align well with the model's structure. This conclusion is supported by additional fit indices, including a Comparative Fit Index (CFI) of 0.987, Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) of 0.979, and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) of 0.039. These indices meet or surpass recommended fit standards, affirming the reliability and applicability of the measurement model in analyzing the hypothesized relationships.

In terms of construct validity, both convergent and discriminant validity were upheld across all constructs, as shown in the Model Validity Measures. Composite Reliability (CR) scores were robust for each construct, with Mindfulness (MF) at 0.762, Creativity (CT) at 0.753, and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) at 0.783, all exceeding the conventional 0.70 threshold, which confirms strong internal consistency. Convergent validity was further supported by Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values, with 0.517 for MF, 0.504 for CT, and 0.647 for OCB. Additionally, Maximum Shared Variance (MSV) values for each construct remained below their AVE values, and inter-construct correlations did not exceed the square root of the AVE for each construct. These results validate discriminant validity, indicating that each construct is capturing distinct dimensions within the model.

This study offers insights into the nuanced dynamics between mindfulness, Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), and creativity in educational settings. Our analysis reveals a negative direct effect of mindfulness on creativity ($\beta = -0.157$, $p = 0.002$), which challenges the prevalent view that mindfulness enhances creativity by promoting emotional regulation and cognitive flexibility (He, 2023; Kevin et al., 2024). While mindfulness often encourages present-moment awareness, this focused attention might narrow cognitive scope, potentially inhibiting divergent thinking, a crucial element of creativity. This counterintuitive finding suggests a complex interplay where mindfulness could enhance emotional stability while constraining cognitive expansiveness, underscoring the need for further research into the specific conditions under which mindfulness fosters or restricts creativity.

Conversely, Organizational Citizenship Behavior positively influences creativity ($\beta = 0.259$, $p < 0.001$), reinforcing the notion that prosocial behaviors foster environments conducive to creative expression (Agyabeng-Mensah et al., 2024; Zhang & Bartol, 2010). OCB encourages a collaborative, open, and supportive atmosphere that nurtures creative engagement. In academic contexts, behaviors like assisting peers and actively participating in group tasks promote a sense of inclusion and collective exploration, where students feel comfortable expressing and developing creative ideas.

Interestingly, the analysis found that the link between mindfulness and OCB was not statistically significant ($\beta = 0.078$, $p = 0.139$). This suggests that while mindfulness may positively affect individual well-being, it does not directly translate into increased prosocial behaviors within academic settings. This opens up avenues for future research to examine potential indirect pathways or moderating factors that might explain how mindfulness indirectly influences OCB, possibly through mechanisms like stress reduction or enhanced interpersonal relationships. A deeper understanding of these nuanced relationships could clarify how mindfulness supports both individual and group dynamics, particularly in academic

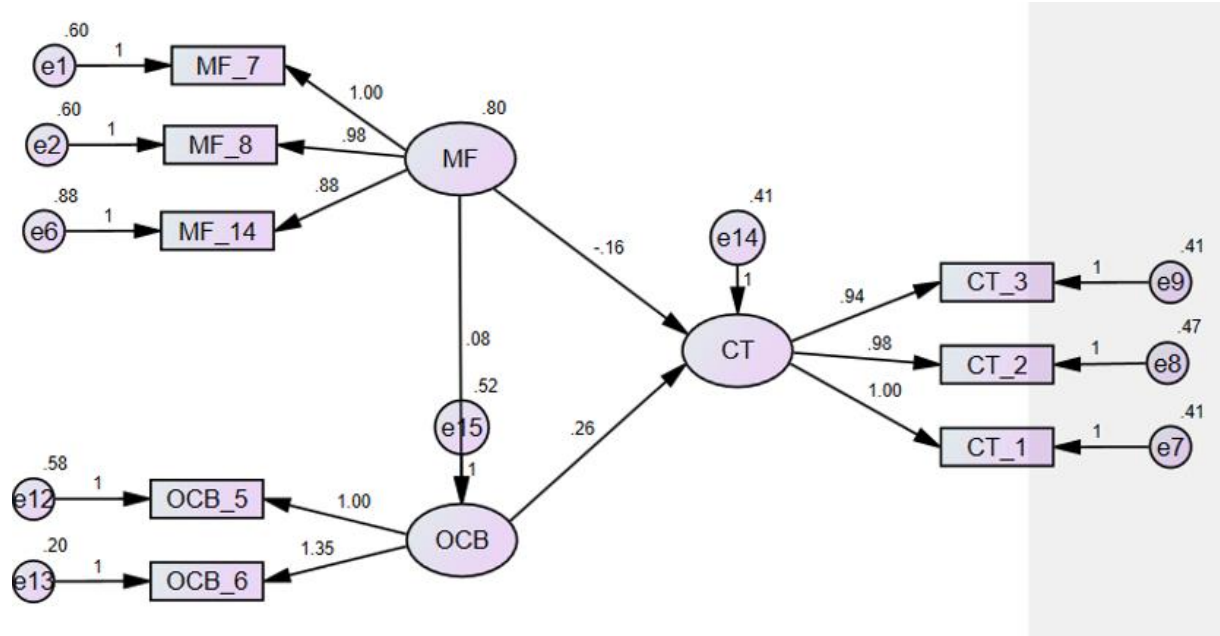


Figure 3. Structural Equation Modeling

environments that value both individual achievement and collective success.

These findings highlight the intricate interactions between mindfulness, prosocial behavior, and creativity in academic settings. The observed negative effect of mindfulness on creativity suggests the importance of context when applying mindfulness practices, especially in educational environments that require balancing focus with imaginative thinking. Meanwhile, the positive role of OCB in fostering creativity emphasizes the value of a supportive academic culture. These findings underscore the importance of carefully designed mindfulness interventions that account for the specific cognitive demands of creative tasks, as well as strategies that promote collaborative engagement through OCB.

3.2. Discussion

This study explores the intricate dynamics among mindfulness, Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), and creativity within an academic setting, providing fresh insights into how emotional, cognitive, and social factors can shape students' creative capacities. Findings reveal that while OCB significantly boosts creativity, mindfulness unexpectedly shows a direct negative impact on it, challenging some conventional assumptions about mindfulness's role in enhancing creativity. These results suggest a more nuanced

interaction, highlighting the essential role of social behaviors like OCB in cultivating an environment conducive to creativity.

The negative relationship between mindfulness and creativity observed in this study highlights a significant departure from the conventional view that mindfulness universally enhances creative capacities. While mindfulness supports emotional regulation and focus, it appears that its present-focused nature may inadvertently narrow cognitive scope, limiting divergent thinking required for creativity (He, 2023; Cheng, 2023). For instance, in academic settings emphasizing precision or immediate problem-solving, mindfulness could enhance performance by reducing distractions. However, in tasks requiring brainstorming or the generation of novel ideas, this narrowed focus might hinder the expansive thinking essential for creativity. This aligns with Tastanova et al. (2024), who argue that mindfulness practices, such as yoga nidra, may enhance emotional well-being but do not necessarily boost creativity across all contexts. Conversely, Kevin et al. (2024) found positive effects of mindfulness on creativity, suggesting that task structure and contextual demands are critical moderators of this relationship.

This context-specific effect implies that in high-stress environments, the focus-enhancing aspect of mindfulness might be beneficial for problem-solving, but in less demanding, more open-ended settings, this present-focused approach could limit imagination. This

aligns with Fredrickson's Broaden-and-Build Theory (2004), which suggests that while positive states like mindfulness might broaden cognitive and behavioral repertoires, the extent of this broadening depends on environmental factors. In some contexts, mindfulness may provide emotional benefits but also constrain the expansive thinking required for creativity.

Conversely, the positive relationship between OCB and creativity found in this study aligns well with existing literature, which emphasizes the value of prosocial behaviors in creating collaborative environments where creativity can thrive. OCB involves behaviors that support a positive environment, such as assisting peers, actively participating in group work, and contributing to an inclusive academic atmosphere. Agyabeng-Mensah et al. (2024) and Cheng et al. (2023) found that such behaviors foster collaboration and mutual support, generating an atmosphere that supports open idea-sharing and collective problem-solving. In these settings, OCB enables students to feel comfortable sharing ideas and working together, which naturally fosters creativity.

This finding aligns with Zhang and Bartol's (2010) research, which suggests that OCB promotes psychological empowerment, critical for engaging in creative endeavors. In an academic setting, students exhibiting OCB help create a supportive and collaborative culture that facilitates creative exploration. Cheng et al. (2023) similarly show that OCB within groups encourages trust and collaboration, vital elements of the creative process. Through OCB, students foster both individual creativity and an academic culture that emphasizes collective innovation.

Furthermore, Asthana's (2021) study on MBA students shows that OCB, when supported by mindfulness and resilience, enables students to manage high-stakes academic challenges effectively by enhancing social support. Asthana's work suggests that while mindfulness alone might not directly increase creativity, it can indirectly foster a positive environment for OCB. When combined with resilience, mindfulness helps students engage in prosocial behaviors that create supportive networks, enhancing a positive learning environment and reinforcing the study's findings.

Yaakobi and Weisberg (2020) add another layer, demonstrating that OCB enhances quality, efficiency, and creativity when combined with collective and occupational efficacy. Within academic environments, this implies that fostering OCB can increase collective efficacy among students, promoting a space where

individuals feel empowered to share creative ideas. This shared responsibility builds a foundation for both individual and group creative problem-solving. Their findings underscore that while individual skills contribute to creativity, the social context and behaviors of those around us significantly shape the creative process.

Fredrickson's Broaden-and-Build Theory plays a critical role in interpreting the positive impact of OCB on creativity. This theory proposes that positive emotions, often encouraged through prosocial behaviors, expand cognitive resources and build social bonds essential for creativity. In academic environments, students engaging in OCB create an environment rich with positive interactions and trust, generating a feedback loop that promotes creative thinking. The positive relationship between OCB and creativity suggests that institutions prioritizing prosocial behaviors can expect to see greater creative output.

Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) complements this perspective, focusing on how intrinsic motivation fosters creativity. According to this theory, fulfilling basic needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—is essential for nurturing intrinsic motivation. In this study, mindfulness supports autonomy and competence by enhancing students' emotional stability and self-regulation. Meanwhile, OCB fulfills the need for relatedness, helping students develop a supportive academic community. Together, mindfulness and OCB contribute to an environment that promotes intrinsic motivation, which in turn nurtures creativity.

These insights hold valuable implications for educational practices. The observed negative association between mindfulness and creativity suggests that while mindfulness can aid emotional regulation, it may need adaptations to avoid hindering creative thinking. Educational institutions could consider incorporating mindfulness practices that encourage open awareness rather than strict present-focus, which Tastanova et al. (2024) suggest may balance emotional regulation benefits with cognitive openness, supporting creativity. To leverage the benefits of mindfulness without hindering creativity, institutions could incorporate mindfulness practices emphasizing open awareness, such as mindfulness meditation focusing on expansive thinking, rather than strict present-focus. For example, introducing guided visualization exercises alongside mindfulness training could balance emotional regulation with the cognitive flexibility necessary for

creative thinking. Additionally, fostering OCB through group-based projects, peer mentoring, and collaborative workshops can create an inclusive academic culture that encourages innovation. Institutions should also train educators to design tasks that integrate mindfulness and OCB to maximize creative outcomes.

The positive effect of OCB on creativity further underscores the importance of fostering a collaborative academic culture. Programs that encourage peer mentoring, group projects, and collaborative learning create conditions where prosocial behaviors flourish, ultimately enhancing creativity. Group-based problem-solving and collaborative learning initiatives align with findings by Alt et al. (2023), showing that programs emphasizing teamwork and collective creativity lead to greater perceived innovation and creativity among students. By promoting OCB through collaborative projects, educational institutions can build a supportive academic culture where students feel empowered to share and develop ideas.

Finally, this study challenges conventional assumptions about mindfulness's direct role in creativity, revealing that its influence may depend on the type of tasks and academic settings. While mindfulness aids in emotional regulation, it may restrict divergent thinking, suggesting a need for flexibility in mindfulness applications within academic settings. The positive role of OCB in fostering creativity emphasizes the importance of social and collaborative engagement in academic environments. Through frameworks like Fredrickson's Broaden-and-Build Theory and Self-Determination Theory, this study demonstrates that both individual mindfulness and collective prosocial behaviors are essential for cultivating creativity. These insights provide a foundation for future research to explore how these dynamics operate across various educational and organizational settings.

While this study focuses on academic settings, the findings have broader implications for other environments, such as workplaces and interdisciplinary teams. In corporate settings, mindfulness practices could be tailored to the nature of tasks, promoting focus for analytical roles while fostering open awareness for creative departments. Similarly, fostering OCB in professional teams through leadership-driven initiatives, such as recognition programs and team-building exercises, can enhance collective creativity. Moreover, cross-cultural considerations should be addressed, as mindfulness practices may have varying effects depending on cultural attitudes toward individualism

and collaboration, which can influence both OCB and creativity.

4. Conclusion

This study provides meaningful insights into how mindfulness, Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), and creativity interact within an academic context. The results reveal a significant positive relationship between OCB and creativity, reinforcing prior research that suggests collaborative behaviors create environments supportive of innovative thinking (Agyabeng-Mensah et al., 2024; Zhang & Bartol, 2010). By engaging in OCB, actions such as helping peers and contributing positively to group dynamics, students contribute to a social atmosphere that encourages creative exploration and problem-solving. This prosocial behavior aligns well with Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), which emphasizes that fulfilling fundamental psychological needs like relatedness fosters intrinsic motivation, which in turn drives creativity. In this context, OCB fulfills the need for relatedness, allowing students to experience a supportive, collaborative learning environment that promotes creativity.

Unexpectedly, the study found that mindfulness has a direct negative effect on creativity, which challenges the traditional view that mindfulness universally enhances cognitive flexibility and creative problem-solving. Although mindfulness has been associated with emotional regulation and stress reduction, this finding suggests a more complex dynamic. Studies by Kevin et al. (2024) and He (2023) support mindfulness as a means to improve mental well-being, theoretically contributing to creativity. However, this study's results suggest that while mindfulness may help students stay grounded and focused, it can also narrow cognitive focus, potentially inhibiting the divergent thinking necessary for creativity. Cheng (2023) and Tastanova et al. (2024) similarly observed that while mindfulness practices like yoga nidra may foster emotional stability, they may not enhance creativity in all contexts, indicating that mindfulness practices in academic settings might need to be adapted based on specific goals.

The findings highlight a need for educational institutions to consider a balanced approach. Incorporating mindfulness practices that promote open awareness and cognitive flexibility, rather than strict focus, may better support creativity while retaining the emotional benefits of mindfulness. Such

adaptations would align with Fredrickson's Broaden-and-Build Theory (2004), which suggests that positive emotional states expand cognitive and behavioral repertoires, encouraging students to build personal and social resources conducive to creativity. By balancing mindfulness with prosocial activities that enhance OCB, institutions can create learning environments that nurture both emotional well-being and creative potential.

The study also identifies areas for further research. The unexpected negative link between mindfulness and creativity suggests a need to explore different mindfulness practices, such as focused attention versus open awareness, to better understand their specific impacts on creativity (Tastanova et al., 2024). Future studies could also examine these dynamics across various academic and organizational settings to assess whether similar patterns emerge in different contexts. Longitudinal research could provide additional insights into how the relationships among mindfulness, OCB, and creativity evolve over time, especially as students' progress and face increasingly complex creative challenges. Finally, this study suggests that while mindfulness aids emotional regulation, OCB appears more effective in supporting creativity. Integrating the principles of both Self-Determination Theory and Broaden-and-Build Theory, the findings underscore the importance of fostering social engagement alongside emotional balance to optimize creative outcomes in educational settings.

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