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PROMOTING PROACTIVE EXTRA-ROLE SERVICE BEHAVIORS THROUGH EMPOWERING LEADERSHIP: THE ROLE OF MINDFULNESS

Abstract

Purpose: Based on Conservation of Resources Theory, this study aims to understand how employees' level of mindfulness serves as a boundary condition capable of negatively conditioning the process through which empowering leadership affects employees' proactivity and extra-role service (ERS) behaviors.

Design/Methodology/Approach: A total of three hundred and sixty-one Spanish frontline employees in the hospitality sector collaborated in this research. We tested our hypotheses using a bootstrapping method to perform a regression study employing the PROCESS macro developed for Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Findings - As expected, our results confirmed the direct and indirect positive effects between empowering leadership and ERS. However, these effects nearly disappeared when employees exhibited high levels of mindfulness.

Originality/Value - Worker ERS behavior is a key way for hotels to distinguish themselves from competitors. Paradoxically, ERS is discretionary and not part of the employee's formal duties. Although mindfulness is often promoted to enhance organizational functioning, our study highlights its drawbacks in hospitality. Hotel work requires proactive decision-making, and we found that mindfulness curbs this, thereby impeding ERS. This study suggests that mindfulness may act as an anchor in service work environment.

Keywords: Extra-role Service Behaviors, Mindfulness Trait, Proactive Personality, Empowering Leadership Style, Hotel Employees, Spanish hospitality industry.

1. Introduction

In hotel work, employee extra-role service (ERS) refers to frontline worker behaviors intended to provide a service experience that meets, or even exceeds, guest expectations, going beyond the employee's formal duties (Garg & Dhar, 2016). Recent hospitality research has identified empowering leadership (ELSH) as a leadership style that positively influences proactive employee behavior (e.g., Hoang et al., 2021; Rescalvo-Martin et al., 2022a). This influence is fundamentally attributed to ELSH's ability to foster more autonomous, adaptive, and self-regulated employees (Huertas-Valdivia et al., 2019). Meanwhile, employee proactive personality (PP) is a trait that encourages personal initiative and proactive behavior (Crant, 2000; Crant et al., 2016), helping employees address service challenges (Wang et al., 2017). Thus, research shows that in an ELSH-led workplace, individuals with PP remain attentive, adapt to uncertainty, anticipate changes, and develop ERS behaviors to navigate evolving service scenarios.

Where then is the controversy? This approach appears to contradict the emerging management research on the value of mindfulness in the workplace. Mindfulness is the ability to focus on the present moment without judging or anticipating future events (Brown et al., 2007). According to Eby et al. (2020), practicing mindfulness means that "an individual is not reflecting about the future, but rather experiencing life as it is happening" (p.58). Mindfulness has demonstrated significant positive effects on service performance in hospitality. For example, it helps reduce the impact of negative coworker gossip on customer service (Babalola et al., 2019), mitigates the effects of customer incivility on proactive service (Jang et al., 2020), and moderates the negative impact of perceived pressure on ERS (Rescalvo-Martin et al., 2022b). Similarly, recent work by Fan et al. (2022) suggested that hotel service employees with high mindfulness levels were less likely to engage in customer mistreatment, likely because mindfulness reduces

their susceptibility to self-regulatory depletion. Furthermore, Yan et al. (2023) suggest, based on a meta-analytic study, that mindfulness after ELSH is one of the key drivers of proactive customer service performance reported in hotel management literature from 2013 to 2023.

However, these studies have not addressed the inherent inconsistency between fostering employees' ability to anticipate changes and adapting their behavior to potential service contingencies, while also promoting mindfulness, which encourages them to stay focused on the present without judging or evaluating future situations. This incongruity could lead to undesirable effects on ERS and may explain some of the mixed results of mindfulness research in the workplace (e.g., Dane, 2011, 2015; Remmers et al., 2015). It is also essential that research on this topic considers the negative effects of mindfulness to fully understand its influence in the workplace—something that has so far been considered only rarely (see Yan et al., 2023). In conclusion, researchers studying mindfulness should acknowledge that focusing on the present may not benefit all tasks, particularly those requiring foresight.

In short, hotels compete by promoting ERS behavior among employees. It is crucial to examine the mechanisms that affect ERS, especially emerging management strategies such as mindfulness, which show mixed results. To fill this knowledge gap, we proposed a moderated mediation model to address the following research question:

RQ: Can mindfulness level serve as a boundary condition influencing how an empowering leadership style directly and indirectly promotes ERS?

This study contributes significantly to both theory and practice. It addresses the need for further research on how mindfulness affects workplace outcomes (Bajaba et al., 2021). Our findings offer a novel perspective on the negative impact of mindfulness on hotel employees' PP and their engagement in ERS, both of which are highly valued in the industry. Unlike previous

studies on mindfulness in hotel services (Babalola et al., 2019; Jang et al., 2020; Rescalvo-Martin et al., 2022b), our data suggest that mindfulness, along with ELSH, may hinder hotels in cultivating proactive behaviors such as ERS. We have shifted our focus from viewing mindfulness as a compensatory factor for negative aspects, as seen in prior studies, to recognizing it as a limiting factor in positive processes. This perspective enhances our understanding of its effects on hotel operations. Our findings revealed a downside to mindfulness, suggesting that further research is needed before mindfulness as can be considered an asset for hospitality organizations.

2. Literature review, hypothesis development, and research model

2.1. Conservation of resources (COR) theory

COR theory suggests that individuals protect themselves from resource loss by actively preserving their resources (Hobfoll, 1989). This theory supports our moderated mediation model by offering an explanatory framework. Mindfulness is widely recognized as a psychological resource that helps conserve other resources, such as the ability to make objective evaluations and maintain focus at work (e.g., McNall et al., 2021). However, constant attention depletes the workers' limited cognitive and emotional resources, requiring them to prioritize where to focus. The more resources devoted to one task, the fewer resources remaining for others. According to COR theory, workers with higher mindfulness may prioritize conserving their psychological resources when faced with processes that could deplete or threaten them. Developing employee proactivity, which involves forward-thinking, may drain the energy of individuals highly focused on the present. However, mindfulness helps employees conserve psychological resources by allowing them to concentrate their energy on the present task (Montani et al., 2018). In short, we propose that frontline workers with high mindfulness view their present-focused attention as a

vulnerable resource, particularly when work requires mental and physical effort for future tasks, such as proactive behaviors. To protect this resource, they may prioritize mindfulness over future-focused actions (Hobfoll, 1989).

2.2.*Empowering leadership and employee PP*

PP refers to a "relatively stable behavioral tendency" of individuals who seek to alter their environment by engaging in proactive behaviors (Bateman & Crant, 1993, p.105). It is characterized by driven, goal-oriented actions (Parker et al., 2010). Workers with PP aim to modify their surroundings and create a different future. They proactively seek information, explore opportunities, and anticipate rather than react. PP encourages workers to adapt their approaches to improve job performance (Bateman & Crant, 1993).

Non-standardized service situations, such as those in hotels (Madera et al., 2017), require proactivity to foster change-oriented behaviors (Buil et al., 2019). However, PP depends on workers' initiative and discretion, which they may or may not exercise. Employees may possess PP, but choose not to act proactively. Thus, the work environment plays a key role in determining the extent to which employees develop PP. Leadership style significantly influences employee behavior (Martin et al., 2013). ELSH, recognized as highly effective in the hospitality sector (Huertas-Valdivia et al., 2019), involves delegating authority and encouraging autonomous decision-making, training, and information sharing (Lin et al., 2019). ELSH enhances employees' internal drives and enables them to take independent actions, fostering positive changes in their roles (Martin et al., 2013).

As an individual's PP requires independence and motivation (Rank et al., 2007), ELSH can facilitate this. Therefore, we anticipate that an ELSH approach that allows subordinates to

make autonomous decisions will encourage employees to utilize their PP and take the initiative to seek improvements. We therefore propose the following hypothesis:

H1: ELSH relates positively to employees' PP.

2.3. Proactive personality and ERS

ERS refers to voluntary behaviors displayed by workers aiming to provide exceptional services to guests (Bettencourt & Brown, 1997). It includes spontaneous actions that go beyond employees' prescribed job responsibilities, contributing to the organization (Bettencourt & Brown, 1997; Raub & Robert, 2010). Hospitality research emphasizes that employee ERS involves small gestures and attentiveness during service to evoke positive emotional responses and meet customer needs (Garg & Dhar, 2016). Employees engage in behaviors beyond their job descriptions because of their intrinsic motivations (Wang et al., 2017).

Previous research identifies PP as a trait that drives employees' voluntary behavior to anticipate and respond to environmental factors (Buil et al., 2019). In hotel work contexts, PP encourage proactive behaviors similar to ERS. Du et al. (2021) found a positive relationship between frontline employees' PP and creative task performance in Chinese hotels. Additionally, a meta-analysis of 105 studies by Doan et al. (2021) revealed that PP is consistently linked to increased employee motivation for discretionary proactive behaviors such as organizational citizenship behavior.

In summary, existing research suggests a positive relationship between PP and ERS. Therefore, we propose that employee PP significantly influences ERS actions, enabling employees to address diverse customer needs and issues. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H2: The employee's PP has a positive effect on ERS.

2.4. The mediating role of PP

As hypothesized above, employees with PP traits feel comfortable in an ELSH-enabled autonomous work environment, as they seek a sense of control achieved through their autonomous initiative and influence over their environment (Bateman & Crant, 1993; Martin et al., 2013). Recently, PP has been identified as a key factor enabling hotel employees to effectively adapt to guests' changing needs and nonstandard service encounters (Yang et al., 2020). When employees' PP is facilitated (or promoted) by an ELSH-created context that grants autonomy, they are more likely to engage in discretionary proactive behaviors such as ERS (Crant, 2000; Crant et al., 2016). Proactive employees who perceive that ELSH supports and encourages autonomy will not hesitate to go beyond their prescribed roles to achieve both personal and organizational goals by increasing proactive service behaviors (Huertas-Valdivia et al., 2019).

Given previous research, motivating PP may help explain the relationship between ELSH and ERS, as it satisfies employees' need for autonomy, efficacy, and trust. Since we expect PP to act as a mediator between ELSH and ERS, we propose the following hypothesis:

H3: PP positively mediates the relationship between empowering leadership and ERS.

2.5. The moderating role of mindfulness: mindfulness trait as a boundary condition

Mindfulness is the ability to focus attention and awareness on the present moment (Brown et al., 2007). High levels of mindfulness involves concentrating on the here and now avoiding concerns about future issues or past events (Smallwood & Schooler, 2006).

Recent management studies have examined mindfulness to assess its positive effects on human functioning in organizations (Brown et al., 2007; Glomb et al., 2011). Research shows that mindfulness enhances the work environment by increasing task dedication and efficiency (Glomb et al., 2011) and contributes to emotional awareness, self-maintenance, and psychological health (Brown et al., 2007). Kim and Park (2023) explored how mindfulness improve task performance among Korean service industry employees, enhancing workplace outcomes. Similarly, studies in public service contexts have also reported positive effects of mindfulness. For instance, Lin et al. (2022) found that mindfulness improves job satisfaction and reduced turnover intentions. Warrier et al. (2022) highlighted that, beyond stress reduction, mindfulness differentially influences subdimensions of organizational role stress among IT service employees. In the hospitality sector, mindfulness helps employees manage the negative effects of performance pressure on extra-role service behaviors (ERS) (Rescalvo-Martin et al., 2022b), mitigate the impact of customer incivility on proactive service performance (Jang et al., 2020), and moderate the effects of coworker gossip on customer service performance (Babalola et al., 2019). Fan et al. (2022) studied hotel service employees in southern China, finding that those with high trait mindfulness experienced less self-regulatory depletion and were less likely to engage in deviant behaviors such as mistreating customers. Additionally, Yan et al. (2023, in a meta-analysis of 42 studies, found that empowering leadership has the most significant impact on proactive customer service performance, followed by mindfulness.

However, since there is limited theoretical development on how mindfulness enhances or hinders employee performance in hotel work, it is premature to conclude that mindfulness is advantageous in all contexts (Dane, 2011; Glomb et al., 2011). Dane (2015) suggests that while mindfulness is beneficial in some circumstances, it may not be an optimal state of mind for all

work-related duties or situations. Examining when mindfulness impacts employee actions, Dane (2011) notes that its effects vary depending on the task environment and individual's experience level. Glomb et al. (2011) argue that mindfulness may conflict with organizational cultures that prioritize swift transformation and multitasking—two characteristics typical of hotel work. Furthermore, Remmers et al. (2015) report that mindfulness could impair employees' autonomous decision-making due to its negative influence on intuitive performance. Another stream of research suggests that detaching from the present moment allows for daydreaming, a mental state in which attention disconnects from environmental stimulation (Smallwood & Schooler, 2006). A substantial body of literature on PP indicates that proactive workers achieve favorable outcomes through future-oriented thinking (Parker et al., 2010), which requires a degree of mind wandering. Such findings have led some authors to question whether promoting mindfulness initiatives is always beneficial (Bajaba et al., 2021), particularly in work contexts such as hospitality, where autonomous decision-making, employee proactivity, and discretionary proactive behaviors such as ERS are essential for successful service delivery.

At the theoretical level, COR theory implies that employees strive to obtain, retain, and protect valuable resources when threatened by loss (Hobfoll, 1989). Mindfulness, as a personal resource, is associated with strong concentration in the present moment (Babalola et al., 2019). However, this can deplete mental resources, leading employees to feel discouraged from allocating resources to future tasks or tasks involving uncertainty, such as proactive behavior. Therefore, we propose that mindfulness can influence the relationship between ELSH and ERS behaviors. The above literature review helps us to understand how this influence occurs. ELSH enhances employees' PP, fostering their intrinsic motivation to engage in future-oriented changes (Parker et al., 2010). Meanwhile, mindfulness, as a resource, keeps employees focused on the

present (Hobfoll, 1989). Thus, we expect mindfulness to act as an anchor, limiting employees' future projections hindering their proactivity. Based on this reasoning, we propose the following hypothesis:

H4: The direct relationship between ELSH and employees' PP is moderated by the level of mindfulness, such that the relationship is weaker when mindfulness is stronger.

Moreover, the arguments used to develop H3 and H4 also suggest a moderated mediation model, where the indirect relationship between ELSH and ERS behaviors via employees PP depends on the level of mindfulness. According to COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989), employees with high mindfulness may prioritize conserving the resource of present-focused awareness, leading to reduced motivation for employee proactivity. This suggests that employees' PP and mindfulness interact to determine extra-role service behaviors. Thus, when high mindfulness weakens the positive effect of ELSH on employees' PP (as proposed in H4), it also prevents employees from developing the proactivity necessary to engage in discretionary service behaviors such as ERS (as proposed in H3). Consequently, we expect mindfulness to act as a moderator in the indirect relationship between ELSH and ERS through employees PP. Therefore, we propose the following moderated mediation hypothesis:

H5: Mindfulness moderates the indirect positive effect of empowering leadership on the extra-role service behaviors of hotel employees through employees' proactive personalities, such that the indirect positive effect is weaker when mindfulness is stronger.

2.6. *Research model*

Based on COR theory, this study examined the negative moderating effect of mindfulness on both the direct and mediated relationships between ELSH, PP, and ERS. As illustrated in Figure

1, we expect PP to positively mediate the impact of ELSH on ERS behavior. Our key contribution is that varying employee mindfulness levels may negatively moderate the positive effects of ELSH on PP and its indirect effects on ERS, potentially reducing these effects to nearly zero. Consistent with previous studies on ERS in the hospitality sector, we include sex, age, and job position as control variables (Huertas-Valdivia et al., 2019; Rescalvo-Martin et al., 2022a).

(Figure 1)

3. Method

3.1. Sample

The study participants were employees of a hotel in Spain. Following previous empirical research in the hospitality industry (e.g., Garg & Dhar, 2016; Huertas-Valdivia et al., 2019), we applied two selection criteria: (1) hotels were chosen from a geographic area accessible to the research team to facilitate data collection; and (2) employees with frequent and intense customer contact were selected, as ERS was the study's dependent variable—specifically, concierges (11%), wait-staff members (12%), reservation agents (24%), front desk staff (47%), and other frontline positions (6%).

Based on these criteria, we obtained 361 valid questionnaires. The sample consisted of employees who worked in hotels with one to five stars. Of the participants, 51% identified themselves as male, with 23% holding university degrees, while 49% identified as female, with 33% holding university degrees. The participants' mean organizational tenure was 4 years, and their mean age was 31. Most of the participants (94%) had permanent contracts.

Finally, we assessed the sample size adequacy using the F-statistical test for linear multiple regression (Faul et al., 2009). Assuming medium effect sizes (<0.150), a 0.05 error

probability, and 0.85 power, while considering up to 5 predictors, the results indicated that a minimum of 102 observations were required to ensure sufficient statistical power for testing the proposed relationships. The sample size was sufficient, with 361 observations.

3.2. Data collection and common method bias

To control for common method bias in our self-reported data, we followed Podsakoff et al. (2003) during the data collection process. The questionnaire included instructions stating that there were no correct or incorrect responses. Separate sections were used to minimize participant fatigue, which could impact response accuracy. The study variables were not explicitly identified to avoid influencing employee responses. Finally, the researchers collected the completed questionnaires in sealed envelopes. For statistical checks, we conducted Harman's single-factor test (Podsakoff et al., 2003), developing an EFA limited to one factor. The results showed that one factor accounted for a representation value of less than 39% of the variance, %, which was well below the established threshold. Additionally, we examine a common method model (Podsakoff et al., 2003. The fit indices for this model indicated poor alignment with the confirmatory factor analysis validation. We also evaluated potential common method bias using the correlation marker technique (Lindell and Whitney, 2001). Our results showed that the correlations between PP, ELSH, and mindfulness were greater than those of the marker variable (sustainability) included in our survey. Therefore, we conclude that common method bias is not a significant concern in our data.

3.3. Measurement

We measured the variables using established management research scales, as these instruments have been tested for factor structure, internal consistency, reliability, and discriminant and

convergent validity. All scales used a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Table I provides details of the items and properties of each scale.

ELSH serves as the independent variable in our framework. We adopted a five-item scale from Martin et al. (2013). Two items with loading factors below 0.5 were eliminated (Hair et al., 2010). Loadings ranged from 0.705 to 0.846. Cronbach's alpha confirmed the validity of the scale with a value of 0.815.

We measured PP, which serves as the mediator construct, using a ten-item scale developed by Seibert et al. (2001). Six items with loading factors below 0.5 were eliminated (Hair et al., 2010). Loadings ranged from 0.715 to 0.847, and Cronbach's alpha, at 0.838, ensured adequate construct validity.

ERS, the dependent variable in our model, was measured using a five-item scale developed by Bettencourt and Brown (1997). Loadings were between 0.891 and 0.746, while a value of 0.905 was obtained for Cronbach's alpha, establishing adequate validity.

Mindfulness, the moderator construct in the proposed model, was measured with the ten-item scale developed by Yu and Zellmer-Bruhn (2018). One item with a loading factor below 0.5 was eliminated (Hair et al., 2010). Cronbach's alpha was 0.920, and the loadings ranged from 0.736 to 0.863.

Control variables. Previous research indicates that demographic information on workers, such as age, gender, and job position, could be associated with employee ERS (Huertas-Valdivia et al., 2019; Rescalvo-Martin et al., 2022a). Therefore, we included these factors as control variables.

3.4. Data analysis

For data examination we used SPSS v.25 and EQS 6.4 to evaluate validity and reliability of the measurement tools. To exam the suggested associations, we employed PROCESS (Hayes, 2013), a macro for SPSS. PROCESS allows researchers to select preprogrammed models based on their estimation needs and to define the roles of variables, such as independent, dependent, mediator, moderator, and covariate. It calculates all path coefficients, standard errors, t- and p-values, confidence intervals, and additional statistics (Hayes et al., 2017). PROCESS employs OLS regression to determine the parameters of each equation individually; therefore, the calculation of regression parameters in one equation does not influence the parameter estimation in any of the other equations in the model (Hayes et al., 2017). In mediation (Model 4) and conditional process (Model 7), key statistics such as conditional indirect effects and the moderated mediation index often have irregular sampling distributions, requiring the integration of parameter estimates from multiple equations (Hayes et al., 2017). Therefore, the inference also relies on bootstrapping techniques in PROCESS (Hayes, 2013; Shrout & Bolger, 2002). Specifically, to conduct direct and mediation analyses (H1 to H3; Model 4 of PROCESS) and moderated mediation analysis (H4 and H5; Model 7 of PROCESS), we used a bootstrapping method based on 10,000 bootstrap samples and computed 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals (Zhao et al., 2010). This approach provides a more reliable estimation of indirect effects without assuming normality, which is often required in other techniques (Busser et al., 2022). Bootstrapping generates a sample distribution of indirect effects through repeated resampling, producing confidence intervals (CI). If the CI excludes zero, the relationship is considered significant (Shrout & Bolger, 2002). The interval estimate of the moderated mediation index allowed us to test whether the indirect effect changed with the moderator (Hayes, 2015).

4. Results

4.1. Measurement model

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to test validity at the construct level. Factor loadings for each item were significant and greater than 0.5 for all but three items, which were eliminated. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was greater than 0.5 for all variables (AVE_{ELSH}= 0.6, AVE_{PP}= 0.6, AVE_{ERS}= 0.67, $AVE_{Mindfulness}$= 0.61; see Table I). Additionally, the composite reliability (CR) of all variables was greater than 0.7 (Table I), confirming convergent validity (Hair et al., 2010). We also confirmed discriminant validity, ensuring that for each construct, the square root of the AVE (Table II) exceeded all correlations (Hair et al., 2010). CFA offered results for NFI=0.840, NNFI=0.900, RMSEA=0.054, CFI=0.910 and χ^2=2.07, confirming a good fit between the proposed model and the empirical data.

(Tables I and II)

4.2. Correlation analysis

Results of the correlation test indicated that ELSH had no significant relationship with age (r=-0.086, p_{value}>0.01), However, we found significant associations with gender (r=-0.145, p_{value}<0.01), job position (r =-0.100, p_{value}<0.01), PP (r=0.361, p_{value}<0.01), ERS (r=0.291, p_{value}<0.01), and mindfulness (r=0.519, p_{value}<0.01). Conversely, PP showed correlation values indicating a significant correlation with ERS (r=0.349, p_{value}<0.01) and mindfulness (r=0.434, p_{value}<0.01). Lastly, the values obtained for ERS indicated negative and significant correlations with gender (r=-0.131, p_{value}<0.05) or job position (r=-0.208, p_{value}<0.01), while the relationship with mindfulness was significant and positive (r=0.4, p_{value}<0.01).

4.3. Hypothesis testing

H1 proposes a positive relationship between ELSH and PP, and H2 suggests that PP is positively correlated with ERS. H3 posits an indirect relationship between ELSH and ERS via PP. We tested these hypotheses using Model 4 of the PROCESS macro, with ELSH as the independent variable, ERS as the dependent variable, and PP as the mediator. The results included the following: i) H1 estimation (see Model A in Table III), ii) H2 estimation (see Model B in Table III), and iii) the significance of PP's indirect effect on the ELSH-ERS relationship, that is, H3 estimation (see Model B in Table III). Results in Table III confirmed H1 and H2, as ELSH and PP were positively associated (β=0.358, t_{value}=7.127, p_{value}<0.001) and PP was positively related to ERS (β=0.285, t_{value}=5.565, p_{value}<0.001). These findings are also consistent with the correlation analysis results.

(Table III)

The mediation effect of PP on the ELSH-ERS relationship (H3) was tested using Preacher and Hayes's (2008) bootstrapping method for indirect effects via Model 4 of the PROCESS macro. The analysis revealed that ELSH's indirect effect on ERS through PP was both positive and significant (indirect effect=0.102, $CI._{95}$= from 0.046 to 0.168; CI using a bootstrap test based on 10,000 samples). Inspection of the direct effect of ELSH on ERS (c'=0.157, p_{value}<0.01) indicated partial mediation by Baron and Kenny (1986) as the ELSH—ERS path remained significant. Consequently, H3 was supported.

Hypothesis 4 proposed that mindfulness would weaken the effect of ELSH on PP, whereas Hypothesis 5 suggested that higher mindfulness levels would reduce the indirect impact of ELSH on ERS via PP. We tested these hypotheses using Model 7 of the PROCESS macro, with ELSHELS-H as the independent variable, ERS as the dependent variable, PP as the mediator, and mindfulness as the moderator. The results provided the following: i) the estimation

of H4 (see Model C in Table III, ii) the estimation of H5 via the significance of the conditional indirect effect of ELSH on ERS at different mindfulness levels, as well as the index of moderated mediation (see Model C in Table III).

The interaction of ELSH x Mindfulness in Table III (Model C) had a negative and significant effect on PP (β=-0.083; t_{value}=-2.781; p_{value}<0.01), confirming our proposal for H4. Similarly, the analysis showed that under a low mindfulness condition, the conditional effect of ELSH on PP was strong and positive (β=0.182; t_{value}=3.580; p_{value}<0.001). However, under high and medium mindfulness conditions, we found that the conditional effect of ELSH on PP remained positive but was not significant or weak.

Figure 2 illustrates the predicted PP values for high, moderate, and low levels of ELSH and mindfulness. As shown, high ELSH increase PP when mindfulness is low and the reverse occurs at high mindfulness. To examine the ELSH–mindfulness interaction effect on PP, we used the Johnson and Neyman method to chart the moderator's ranges, identifying ELSH as a significant predictor of PP within a 95% confidence interval. Figure 3 shows that the relationship between ELSH and PP becomes insignificant when mindfulness exceed 5.55.

(Figure 2 and 3)

Model 7 of the PROCESS macro (see Model C in Table III) reveals that the indirect effect of ELSH on ERS via PP was weak and insignificant with high or moderate mindfulness but stronger and significant with low mindfulness (β=0.054; $CI._{95}$=0.021,0.094; CI applying a bootstrapping test based on 10,000 samples). Moderated mediation analysis also showed that both effects differed significantly (index =-0.024; $CI._{95}$=-0.046,-0.004; CI applying a bootstrapping test based on 10,000 samples). Thus, the results demonstrated differences in the

conditional effects of low, medium, and high mindfulness (see Model C in Table III), confirming H5.

5. Conclusions, discussion and implications

5.1. *Discussion*

This study established and verified a moderated mediation model to explore how mindfulness affects frontline employees' proactivity (traits and behaviors). Interestingly, increased mindfulness weakened both ELSH's direct influence on employee PP and its indirect effect on ERS through PP, reversing the previous positive links. Because hotel workers must constantly adapt to new challenges, mindfulness may reduce their proactivity and adaptability. These results and conclusions are discussed in the literature.

First, the existing literature recognizes leadership style as a key determinant of employee outcomes (Buil et al., 2019). ELSH is linked to various work outcomes, including in- and extra-role service behaviors, self-management, and innovation (Huertas-Valdivia et al., 2019). Our findings support this literature and extend it by analyzing PP as a mediator between ELSH and the proactive behaviors required in hotel work, particularly ERS. We confirm and extend Raub and Robert's (2010) findings that in-role and extra-role service behaviors result from various incentive procedures. Additionally, we provide empirical evidence that PP influences both behaviors, as noted by Buil et al. (2019), and mediates the relationship between extra-role behaviors and leadership style. Finally, Martin et al. (2013) found that ELSH boosts employees' feelings of competence and autonomy, enhances intrinsic motivation, and promotes proactive behavior. Our results are consistent and provide additional empirical evidence supporting the conclusions of Martin et al. (2013).

Second, our findings indicate a negative and potentially harmful impact of mindfulness through a moderated mediation effect, in contrast to prior research that has primarily emphasized its benefits (e.g., Bajaba et al., 2021; Brown et al., 2007; Glomb et al., 2011; Parker et al., 2010). Thus, our results challenge and complement existing findings, clarifying inconsistencies in the literature. Kim and Park's (2023) research indicated that mindfulness positively affects employees' task performance in service contexts through psychological resilience, which contradicts our findings. This discrepancy may stem from the nature of these variables. Task performance typically relates to in-role tasks, whereas extra-role service behaviors are rooted in employee proactivity and willingness. A possible explanation for this contradiction may relate to employees' level of proactivity in the type of performance task studied.

Third, in the specific context of hotel services, a few studies have reported positive effects of mindfulness, which differ from our findings. These studies emphasize the ability of mindfulness to mitigate harmful elements in the work environment that negatively affect service, such as stress from performance pressure (Rescalvo-Martin et al., 2022b), customer incivility (Fan et al., 2022; Jang et al., 2020), various dimensions of perceived employee stress (Warrier et al., 2022), and coworker gossip (Babalola et al., 2019). Unlike our study, these prior studies did not examine the influence of mindfulness on the positive processes essential to the sector, such as the ELSH relationship explored here.

Finally, while the literature review shows a trend of viewing mindfulness as a beneficial organizational tool, another line of research argues that it may be premature to consider it an unequivocal ally, suggesting its positive effects may depend on the specific context and tasks involved (e.g., Dane, 2011, 2015; Glomb et al., 2011). While research demonstrating negative effects of mindfulness in service contexts is limited, recent studies support our findings. For

example, Yang and Xu (2024) highlight mindfulness behavior as a "double-edged sword" that can disconnect employees from hotel services by amplifying the negative effects of leadership styles on employee well-being. Our results are consistent with those reported by Yang and Xu (2024).

5.2. Theoretical implications

Based on our discussion, this study offers key theoretical insights into the factors shaping hospitality employees' proactivity and their effects on ERS behavior. First, we clarify ELSH's role by identifying PP as a mediator that drives frontline employees' commitment to proactive ERS behaviors, which are essential for hotel competitiveness. Our findings confirm that workers' PP, supported by ELSH, positively affects ERS. Empowered by autonomy, these employees not only engage in extra tasks that benefit customers but also actively solve problems. Thus, we propose that PP is both an antecedent of ERS and a mediator linking ELSH to enhanced ERS. Autonomous employees are motivated to improve their services, address issues, and seek continuous improvement.

Second, it offers a novel perspective on the drawbacks of mindfulness in hotel work. Our findings reveal that mindfulness has a negative and potentially harmful effect on ERS. Although previous research focusing on in-role tasks that do not require proactivity suggested that high mindfulness levels can be beneficial, our study proposes that this influence may not apply to all tasks or work environments. In contrast, we suggest that when task performance demands proactivity, as is the case with ERS, mindfulness may hinder performance.

Furthermore, we shifted the analysis perspective from viewing mindfulness as a compensatory factor for negative elements to recognizing it as a boundary condition for positive processes in the hospitality sector. This approach offers a comprehensive understanding of the

effects of mindfulness on hotel work. From this perspective, we propose that mindfulness can inhibit employees' initiatives to explore new ideas underlying proactive behavior by anchoring them to the present.

Finally, we applied COR theory as a theoretical explanation for how mindfulness practices, in conjunction with an autonomous environment, can harm proactive employee behaviors. This approach enhances our knowledge of the detrimental impact of mindfulness on employees who need be proactive in environments where decision-making autonomy is essential. In summary, COR theory shifts the analysis of mindfulness from being a compensator of negative factors to a boundary condition for essential positive processes. This perspective enhances our understanding of the influence of mindfulness on hotel work. We propose that mindfulness could inhibit employees' initiative to explore new ideas that promote proactive behavior (ERS) by keeping them anchored in the present moment.

5.3. Practical implications for management

This study has several practical implications. First, it helps hotel leaders understand effective strategies for improving customer service and enhancing customer satisfaction. The findings indicate that hotels benefit from hiring proactive individuals for roles involving direct customer interactions. Studies confirm that proactive employees deliver better outcomes by demonstrating determination, while non-proactive individuals are often indifferent and complacent about the current situation. Proactive employees, when given the right incentives, enhance customer satisfaction and handle contingencies effectively. HR teams should use psychometric tests and structured interviews to identify proactive candidates. Training can focus on developing skills such as anticipating guest needs and problem solving. Simulations and role-playing can help employees learn to anticipate their needs and resolve issues quickly.

Second, hotels should hire empowering leaders to effectively stimulate workers. ELSH provides employees with the autonomy to make decisions, fostering greater effort and engagement, including intrinsic motivation. The synergy between proactive employees and ELSH enhances ERS, benefiting customer satisfaction and loyalty. To achieve this, leaders also need training in ELSH skills, allowing staff such as receptionists or janitors to resolve guest issues independently. Regular performance reviews emphasize empowering leadership.

Finally, hospitality firms should be cautious about adopting seemingly positive employee behavior trends that may not fit all roles. For instance, mindfulness tools should be assessed beforehand as their effectiveness can vary and may conflict with the development of employee proactivity. In hospitality, success relies on workers' initiatives to recognize changes and seize opportunities. Managers should avoid mindfulness practices in proactive roles as they do not foster initiative or extra-role services. For example, supervisors can use the Eisenhower matrix for task organization and implement internal competition for new recipes or crisis scenarios to help employees anticipate future needs and challenges.

5.4.Limitations and future research

This research, like others, has limitations. It relies on self-reported questionnaires to assess employees' perceptions of their roles and experiences, raising concerns about common method bias. Although self-reporting is considered the best way to evaluate individual perceptions of leaders and intentions for extra-role behaviors, we implemented controls in the data collection process (Podsakoff et al., 2003) and addressed common method bias through statistical remedies in Section 3.2. The correlation matrix (Table II) shows correlations below 0.519***, which is far from the threshold for common bias. Future studies should incorporate objective measures or third-party assessments to reduce the response bias and validate our findings. Second, this study

employed cross-sectional empirical data for the analysis. While the evaluated research model is sophisticated and explanatory, it does not establish causality, but allows for the selection or rejection of relevant hypotheses based on empirical evidence. Therefore, future studies should consider longitudinal research to provide additional insights into the potential causes and a deeper understanding of the functioning of the study variables. Finally, this study focuses on frontline hospitality workers in Spain. Future studies could compare our results with those from other regions or cultures to provide broader insights into the impacts of ELSH and PP on ERS as well as the effects of mindfulness practices on PP.

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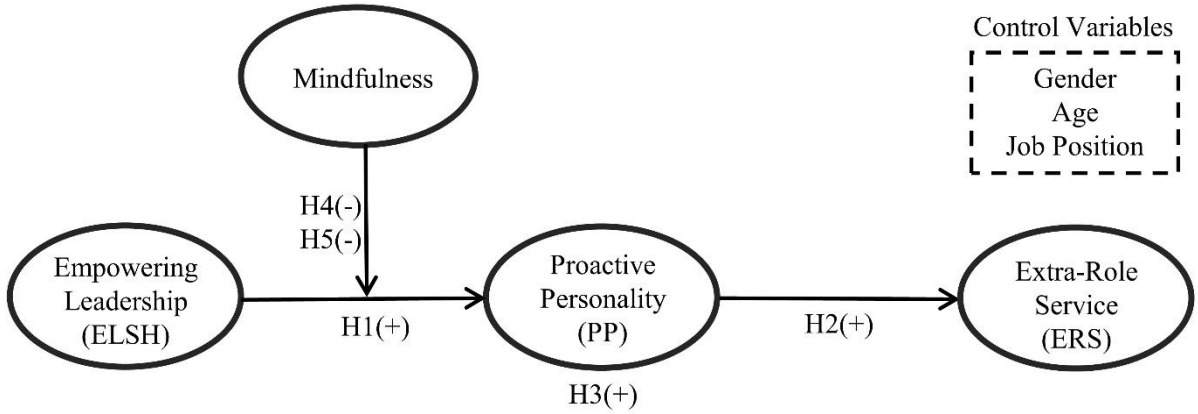

H1 = ELSH is positively related to hotel employees' PP.
H2 = PP is positively related to hotel employees' ERS.
H3 = PP positively mediates the effect of ELSH on hotel employees' ERS
H4 = Mindfulness negatively moderates the direct effect of ELSH on hotel employees' PP
H5 = Mindfulness negatively moderates the indirect effect of ELSH on hotel employees' ERS

Figure 1. Research model

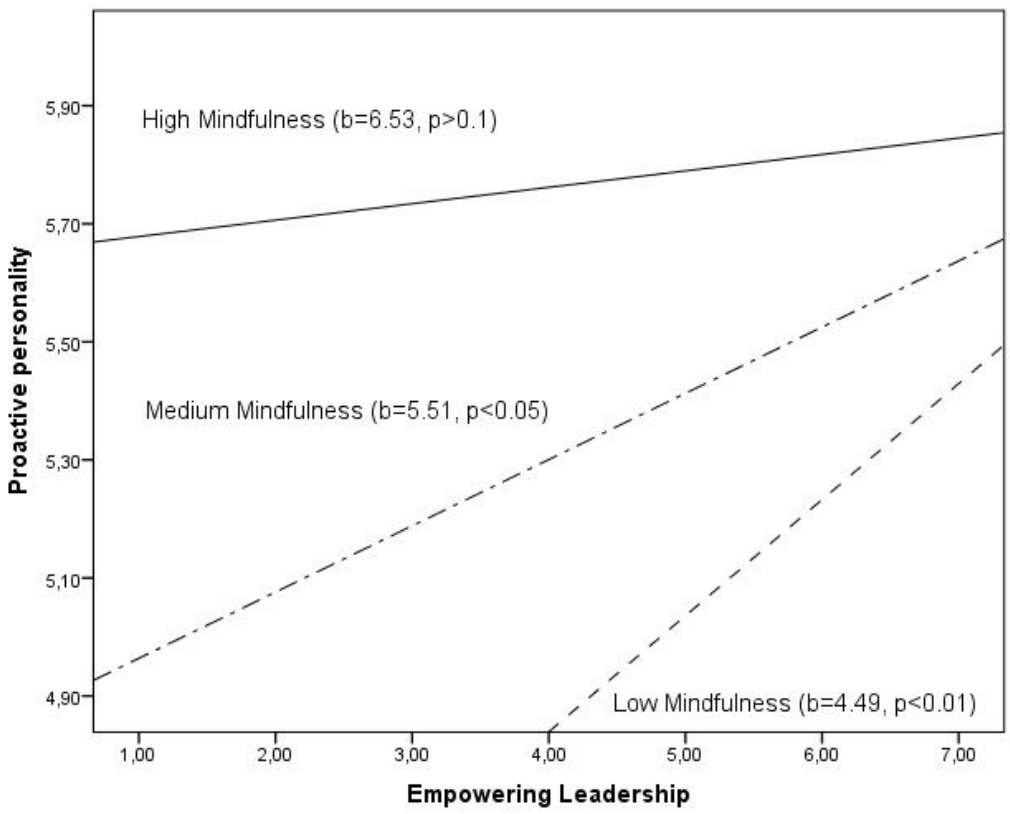

Figure 2. Moderation of mindfulness in the empowering leadership-proactive personality relationship

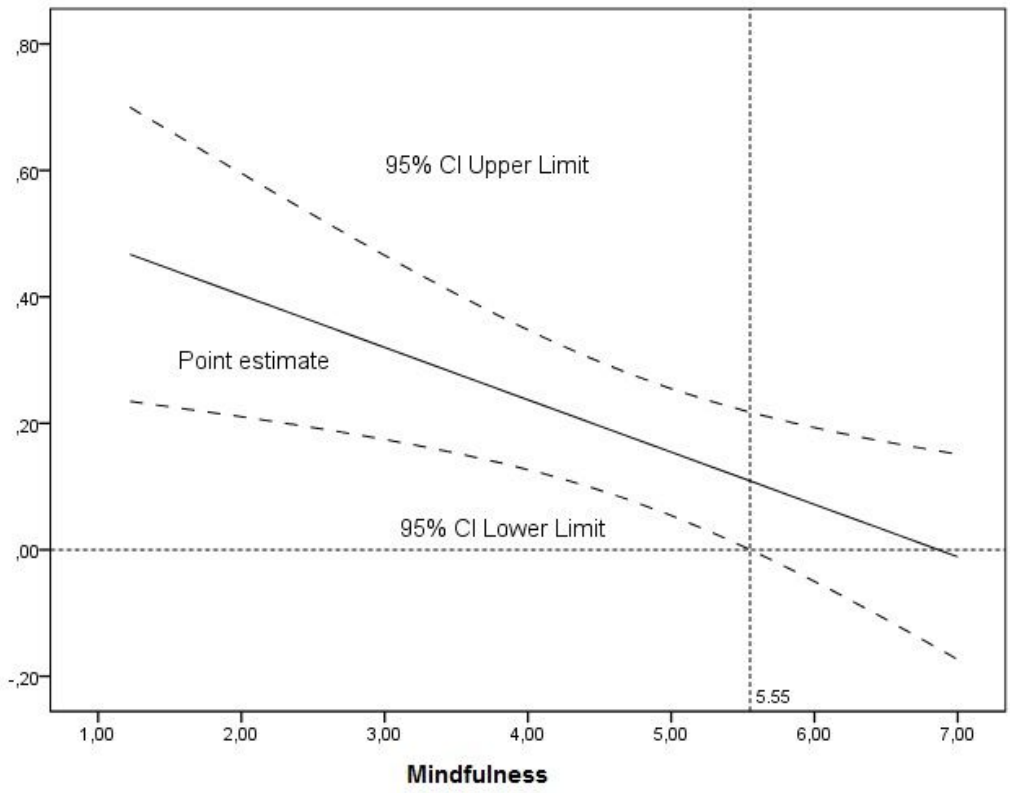

Figure 3. Influence of empowering leadership on proactive personality vs. moderator (mindfulness) with region of confidence bands

Table I. Exploratory and confirmatory analysis

Factor/Item	EFA	Cronbach´s Alpha	CFA	AVE	CR
Empowering Leadership					
My supervisor shares important responsibilities with his/her employees	0.828	0.815	0.705	0.600	0.820
… teaches employees how to solve problems on their own	0.880		0.846		
… lets employees make important decisions	0.856		0.768		
Proactive personality					
I love being a champion for my ideas, even against others' opposition	0.782	0.838	0.768	0.600	0.860
I excel at identifying opportunities	0.849		0.764		
If I believe in an idea, no obstacle will prevent me from making it happen.	0.828		0.715		
I can spot a good opportunity long before others can	0.821		0.847		
Extra-Role Service					
Voluntarily assists customers even if it means going beyond job requirements	0.831	0.905	0.746	0.670	0.910
Helps customers with problems beyond what is expected or required	0.876		0.845		
Often goes above and beyond the call of duty when serving customers	0.888		0.891		
Willingly goes out of his/her way to ensure that a customer is satisfied	0.858		0.794		
Frequently goes out of his/her way to help a customer	0.813		0.802		
Mindfulness					
It is difficult for me to stay focused on what is happening in the present(R)	0.754	0.920	0.782	0.610	0.930
I rush through activities without really being attentive to them (R)	0.751		0.741		
I listen to coworkers with one ear while doing something else at the same time (R)	0.796		0.818		
I do things without paying attention (R)	0.741		0.708		
I criticize coworkers for having irrational or inappropriate thoughts or emotions (R)	0.802		0.813		
Some of my thoughts or emotions are inappropriate (R)	0.836		0.863		
I am aware of thoughts and feelings without over-identifying with them.	0.782		0.779		
I am friendly to coworkers when things go wrong.	0.791		0.797		
I experience moments of peace and ease, even when things get hectic and stressful	0.788		0.736		

Notes: R= reverse-scored; EFA=Factor loading analysis; CFA=Factor loading analysis; AVE=Average Variance Extracted; CR=Composite Reliability.
The degrees of skew ranged from 1.31 to −1.95, and the absolute value was <3, Kurtosis of the items ranged from 0.6 to 5.3, and the absolute value was <8.

Table II. Discriminant validity, variables correlation, and descriptives

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.Age	-						
2.Gender	0.103**	-					
3.Job position	0.004	0.161***	-				
4.ELSH	-0.086	-0.145***	-0.100*	**0.775**			
5.PP	-0.052	-0.079	-0.011	0.361***	**0.775**		
6.ERS	-0.002	-0.131**	-0.208***	0.291***	0.349***	**0.817**	
7.Mindfulness	-0.100***	-0.086	-0.086	0.519***	0.434***	0.400***	**0.783**
Mean	4.461	1.500	7.320	5.894	5.465	5.999	5.510
Standard Deviation	1.774	0.500	4.563	1.094	1.008	1.041	1.020

Notes: ELSH=Empowering Leadership; PP=Proactive Personality; ERS=Extra-Role Service; Values in bold indicate the square root of the AVE.
*pvalue<0.1; **pvalue<0.05; ***pvalue<0.01

Table III. Results

Model	Effect	SE	t-value	p-value	LLCI 95%	ULCI 95%	Hypotheses results
Mediation Model (Model 4 PROCESS macro)							
Model A Outcome: PP (R^2=0.132)							
ELSH	0.358	0.046	7.127	0.000	0.239	0.421	*H1 Supported*
Age	-0.018	0.028	-0.368	0.713	-0.066	0.045	
Gender	-0.030	0.102	-0.582	0.561	-0.261	0.142	
Job position	0.029	0.011	0.581	0.562	-0.015	0.028	
Model B Outcome: ERS (R^2=0.193)							
ELSH	0.165	0.049	3.182	0.002	0.060	0.254	
PP	0.285	0.053	5.565	0.000	0.190	0.398	*H2 Supported*
Age	0.034	0.028	0.697	0.486	-0.036	0.075	
Gender	-0.059	0.102	-1.206	0.229	-0.324	0.078	
Job position	-0.179	0.011	-3.697	0.000	-0.063	-0.019	
Indirect effect of ELSH on ERS via PP	0.102***	0.031			0.047	0.168	*H3 Supported*
Moderation Model (Model 7 PROCESS macro)							
Model C Outcome: PP (R^2=0.233)							
ELSH	0.568	0.152	3.740	0.000	0.270	0.867	
Mindfulness	0.784	0.170	4.615	0.000	0.450	1.117	
ELSH x Mindfulness	-0.083	0.030	-2.781	0.006	-0.141	-0.024	*H4 Supported*
Age	0.002	0.027	0.076	0.940	-0.051	0.055	
Gender	-0.054	0.096	-0.559	0.576	-0.244	0.136	
Job position	0.009	0.011	0.815	0.416	-0.012	0.029	
Conditional effect of ELSH on PP at different levels of Mindfulness							
Mindfulness (Low)	0.182***	0.051	3.580	0.000	0.082	0.282	
Mindfulness (Medium)	0.099*	0.057	1.750	0.081	-0.012	0.211	
Mindfulness (High)	0.035	0.070	0.496	0.620	-0.103	0.173	
Moderated Mediation model (Model 7 PROCESS macro)							
Conditional indirect effect of ELSH on ERS via PP at different levels of Mindfulness							
Mindfulness (Low)	0.054***	0.019			0.021	0.094	
Mindfulness (Medium)	0.029	0.019			-0.003	0.071	
Mindfulness (High)	0.010	0.023			-0.030	0.061	
Index of moderated mediation	-0.024	0.011			-0.046	-0.004	*H5 Supported*

Notes: ELSH=Empowering Leadership; PP=Proactive Personality; ERS=Extra-Role service; SE=Standard Error; LLCI=Lower Limit of Confidence Interval, ULCI=Upper Limit of Confidence Interval; Bootstrap sample size=10000; ***p_{value}<0.001; *p_{value}<0.01