Team mindfulness, team commitment and team respectful engagement: the lens of the conservation of resources theory and the broaden-and-build theory

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Abstract

Purpose – This conceptual paper aims to present a model and propositions regarding the positive effect of team mindfulness on team commitment and how team respectful engagement moderates the positive effect of team mindfulness on team commitment.

Design/methodology/approach – This is a conceptual study that presents a model and propositions from an exploration of the previous literature by using the conservation of resources (COR) theory and the broaden-and-build theory.

Findings – The contribution of this study shows that team mindfulness has a positive effect on team commitment. Then, when team respectful engagement is high, it strengthens the positive effect of team mindfulness on team commitment. When team respectful engagement is low, it weakens the positive effect of team mindfulness on team commitment.

Research limitations/implications – The limitation of this research is that it only explains the causal relationships related to team mindfulness, team commitment and team respectful engagement through propositions built from the synthesis of various previous studies, without empirically confirming those relationships.

Practical implications – Teams should consider mindfulness training, such as mindfulness-based stress reduction. In addition, managers should also pay great attention to team respectful engagement, so that the interactions within the team are based on respect.

Originality/value – Limited research has been conducted to propose the model and propositions related to team mindfulness, team commitment and team respectful engagement by using the COR theory and the broaden-and-build theory.

Keywords Conservation of resources (COR) theory, Broaden-and-build theory, Team commitment, Team mindfulness, Team respectful engagement

Paper type Conceptual paper

Introduction

The development of modern organizations tends to be team-based (Yu & Zellmer-Bruhn, 2018). Teamwork in organizations allows for a faster and more adaptive response to environmental changes, which indicates that the team must have mindfulness. Zivnuska, Kacmar, Ferguson and Carlson (2016) explained that mindfulness has a positive effect on commitment. The effect of team mindfulness on team commitment in the team process can be strengthened by team respectful engagement that creates high-quality connections between the team members. Therefore, this paper aims to explain the relationship between the three constructs, namely, team mindfulness, team commitment and team respectful engagement, which are described later in this paper.

Mindfulness has attracted interest from various disciplines such as psychology, neuroscience and medical science. Mindfulness has become an emerging study in work settings and management science (Gunasekara & Zheng, 2019; Reb & Choi, 2014). Mindfulness is defined as an awareness of, and attention to, ongoing events (Brown & Ryan, 2003). Similarly, Hülsheger, Alberts, Feinholdt, and Lang (2013) defined mindfulness as a state of consciousness where one gives attention and awareness without judgement to current events. Based on these definitions, it can be concluded that mindfulness is an awareness of and attention to current events and experiences without judgment. Mindfulness has a positive effect on job performance and has a negative effect on turnover intention (Dane, & Brummel, 2014); it increases job satisfaction and reduces emotional exhaustion (Hülsheger *et al.*, 2013); it also has a positive effect on psychological well-being (Brown, & Ryan, 2003) and reduces stress (Bao, Xue, & Kong, 2015). Most of these studies into mindfulness have been at the individual level, whereas mindfulness research at the team level is still limited and requires further research (Good et al., 2016; Hülsheger, 2015). Good *et al.* (2016) stated the need to develop further research to show that mindfulness affects relational processes such as work teams, but this has not yet been carried out in a serious manner. A study conducted by Yu and Zellmer-Bruhn (2018) finally introduced the definition of team mindfulness and developed a measurement of the constructs of team mindfulness. Team mindfulness is defined as "a shared belief among team members that team interactions are characterized by awareness and attention to present events, and by experiential, nonjudgmental processing of within-team experiences" (Yu & Zellmer-Bruhn, 2018, p. 326). Team mindfulness is now related to a number of consequences, namely, relationship conflicts and social undermining (Yu & Zellmer-Bruhn, 2018) and work engagement (Liu, Xin, Shen, He, & Liu, 2020).

The challenge of exploring team mindfulness's research with various workplace outcomes has prompted this study to associate team mindfulness with team commitment. Team commitment is described as the psychological bond that the individuals feel toward their team (Singh & Gupta, 2015). Team commitment differs from organizational commitment in terms of the foci of commitment. The foci of commitment are conceptualized as employee attachments to specific entities such as individuals and groups (Becker, 1992). The foci of team commitment are the employees'' commitment to their work team, whereas

the foci of organizational commitment are the employees' commitment to their organization. Studies on the antecedents of different levels of commitment from these foci have not been explored (Bishop & Scott, 2000). According to Singh and Gupta (2015), organizations have placed a high value on teamwork, but little research has investigated team commitment. Therefore, this study attempts to provide a different view of the antecedent of team commitment to stimulate research in this area. The limited research into team mindfulness (Good *et al.*, 2016; Hülsheger, 2015) and team commitment (Singh & Gupta, 2015) has prompted this study to provide the model and propositions that need to be tested and further developed, with regard to the positive effect of team mindfulness on team commitment. This raises the first research question related to how team mindfulness affects team commitment. The limited understanding of the mechanisms that can explain this relationship, forms the first proposition, which is team mindfulness has a positive effect on team commitment.

The model and propositions certainly take into account the construct that strengthens the positive effect of team mindfulness on team commitment, namely, team respectful engagement. Respectful engagement is defined as "being present to others, affirming them, and communicating and listening in a way that manifests regard and an appreciation of the other's worth" (Dutton, 2003, p. 22). Research into respectful engagement has just begun to explore its mechanisms and consequences (Basit, 2019). Some research into respectful engagement is also still being carried out at the individual level (Basit, 2019; Gupta, Wang, & Cai, 2020), not least in the study by Carmeli, Dutton, and Hardin (2015), which has associated respectful engagement at the team level with team creativity. Thus, research related to team respectful engagement still needs to explore further.

The limited understanding of the moderating mechanism for team respectful engagement raises a second research question regarding how team respectful engagement strengthens the relationship between these constructs. This ultimately forms the second proposition, team respectful engagement moderates the positive effect of team mindfulness on team commitment. When team respectful engagement is high, it strengthens the positive effect of team mindfulness on team commitment. However, when it is low, it weakens the positive effect of team mindfulness on team commitment.

Thus, this study contributes to the exploration of the model and propositions (Figure 1) related to the positive effect of team mindfulness on team commitment and the role of team respectful engagement as a moderating variable. Then, in the next section, we explain the development of the previous research into team mindfulness, team commitment, team respectful engagement and the theory that underlies the relationship between these constructs and the propositions proposed.

Literature review and propositions development
Team mindfulness
Mindfulness is defined as an inherent capacity to direct one's attention and awareness to current events and experiences (Brown, Ryan, & Creswell, 2007). Previous studies have
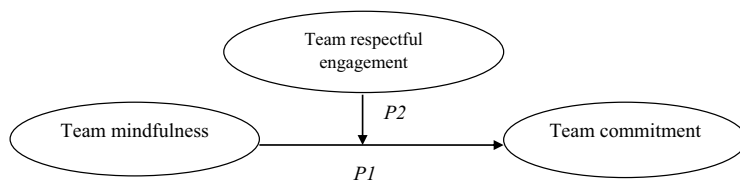
Figure 1.
Conceptual model

explained that mindfulness affects job performance and the turnover intention (Dane & Brummel, 2014), perceived stress (Bao *et al.*, 2015), work–family balance (Allen & Kiburz, 2012) and work engagement (Gunasekara & Zheng, 2019). Social processes have an important role in team performance (Good *et al.*, 2016). However, according to Good *et al.* (2016), there are still only a few studies that associate mindfulness with relational team processes. Yu and Zellmer-Bruhn (2018) introduced the definition of team mindfulness and also validated the measurement of the construct of team mindfulness. Team mindfulness has the same elements as individual mindfulness, namely, a present focus attention and experiential processing (Yu & Zellmer-Bruhn, 2018). Liu *et al.* (2020) also argue that teams and employees who are mindful pay a great deal of attention to an event, and mindfulness also significantly affects the physical and mental health of the team and the employees.

Team commitment

Team commitment is defined as the psychological bond that team members have to their team (Pearce & Herbik, 2004). Riketta and Van Dick (2005) explained that individuals have a tendency to identify themselves with teams or groups, compared to organizations, so they tend to be more committed to teams or work groups. This is because employees interact more often with their work team members, rather than with other members of the organization (Riketta & Van Dick, 2005). Team members who feel valued and supported by their team tend to be attached to the team (Paillé, 2009). Strong team commitment will make the team members more active and constructive and able to survive in unpleasant conditions (Mellahi, Budhwar, & Li, 2010). The more committed the team members are to the team, the more likely they are to work together for a long time (Porter, 2005). Therefore, members who are committed to their team are likely to benefit the organization by working hard on behalf of the team (Rousseau & Aubé, 2014).

Team respectful engagement

Respectful engagement is a contributor to high-quality connections, which encourage the strengthening of employees' attachments and increase the capacity for collaboration across units (Dutton, 2003). Respectful engagement also energizes and strengthens the capacity to relate to others and to ourselves with respect (Dutton, 2003). According to Dutton (2003), the five main strategies for creating respectful engagement are being present, being genuine, communicating affirmation, effective listening and supportive communication. The first three of these strategies (being present, being genuine, communicating affirmation) are the foundation for the next two strategies (effective listening and supportive communication), while presence is the main foundation for respectful engagement, as engagement will not be achieved without presence (Dutton, 2003). Furthermore, in its development, respectful engagement is not only measured at the individual level but also at the team level, which is called team respectful engagement. Respectful engagement is a new relational construct (Basit, 2019). Carmeli *et al.* (2015) have developed research into respectful engagement at the individual and team levels. Respectful engagement encourages acceptance and openness to bond with one another (Carmeli *et al.*, 2015).

Conservation of resource theory

The conservation of resources (COR) theory is a developing theory in the field of positive psychology (Hobfoll, 2010). The basic tenet of COR theory explains that those things which are valued centrally by individuals and groups will be highly sought after, then maintained, fostered and protected (Hobfoll, 2010; Hobfoll, Halbesleben, Neveu, & Westman, 2018). Another principle of the COR theory states that people can be protected from the loss of

resources, they can recover from those losses and gain resources by investing resources (Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018). The intended resources are object resources, condition resources, personal resources and energy resources (Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018). In this study, we argue that team mindfulness is a personal resource, along with self-efficacy and optimism. This refers to Gunasekara and Zheng (2019) who argued that mindfulness exceeds self-efficacy, self-confidence and optimism. Based on the principle of the COR theory, team mindfulness is an investment of resources so the team can benefit from other resources such as the quality of the team's focus of attention, which is improved and able to view situations that occur in the team objectively.

Broaden-and-build theory

The broaden-and-build theory was proposed by Fredrickson (1998). This theory explains that positive emotions broaden people's attention, cognition and actions, which result in building personal resources, physical resources, intellectual resources, social and psychological resources (Fredrickson, 2001). A happy team will show good team performance compared to an unhappy team (Peñalver, Salanova, Martínez, & Schaufeli, 2019). Team respectful engagement encourages open team relationships and the acceptance of respect. Carmeli *et al.* (2015) stated that the power of respectful engagement is related to acceptance and openness and is complementarity in individual interactions In addition, respectful engagement is a contributor to high-quality connections (Dutton, 2003). Respectful engagement also provides the psychological conditions needed to create positive social interactions (Gupta *et al.*, 2020). Respectful engagement provides a favorable social environment, respect, acceptance, appreciation and respect for team members.

Team mindfulness and team commitment

Team commitment is still an important construct for organizations (Powell, Galvin, & Piccoli, 2006). Kukenberger, Mathieu, and Ruddy (2015) explained that most research into team commitment tends to focus on the consequences of team commitment, such as extracurricular behavior and performance, but less attention has been devoted to the antecedents of team commitment. Previous research found that mindfulness has a positive effect on commitment at the individual level (Zivnuska *et al.*, 2016). Therefore, on the basis of this study, we argue that mindfulness at the team level also has a positive effect on team commitment.

Based on the COR theory, team mindfulness, as a personal resource, has elements of awareness, attention to the present moment and acceptance. Team mindfulness affects team commitment through three things. The first is, awareness. This is the first and most important fundamental aspect of mindfulness (Reb, Narayanan, & Ho, 2015). Team mindfulness encourages team commitment through increasing self-awareness of the team members' thoughts, emotions and behavior. The second is attention to the moment. Team mindfulness is expected to increase the team's concentration and commitment to contributing to the team's success. The third is acceptance. A team which is mindful has an element of acceptance and becomes less vulnerable to negative emotions, so it is able to align the values and goals of its members with the team's values and goals. This tends to cause the team to have a strong desire to stay together. A strong desire to stay in the team tends to motivate the members to act on behalf of the team and strive for its success. This tends to lead to team commitment.

The psychological mechanism that explains the relationship between team mindfulness and team commitment above can also be seen from the perspective of the intrinsic motivation theory. According to Ryan and Deci (2000), intrinsic motivation is defined as

performing an activity for the sake of intrinsic satisfaction rather than for other consequences. Neace, Hicks, DeCaro, and Salmon (2020) also explained that intrinsically motivated individuals have feelings of pleasure, so they tend not to be easily distracted when doing tasks. Mindfulness also has a strong relationship with intrinsic motivation (Neace *et al.*, 2020). When the team has mindfulness, it tends to be intrinsically motivated and is not easily distracted from its focus on doing the task. Therefore, the team will be motivated to have a high commitment to the team. Teams with high commitment will act in the interests of the team and strive to achieve the team's mission and goals independently (Li, Rubenstein, Lin, Wang, & Chen, 2018). Furthermore, the above explanation is consistent with the previous literature that shows mindfulness has a positive effect on commitment (Zivnuska *et al.*, 2016). Thus, this study formulates the following proposition.

P1. Team mindfulness has a positive effect on team commitment.

Team respectful engagement as the moderator

Respectful engagement encourages the formation of more human interpersonal relationships (Carmeli *et al.*, 2015). Respectful engagement is based on interpersonal experiences that refer to quality relationships (Friedman, Carmeli, & Dutton, 2018). Previous research has included respectful engagement as a moderator (Gupta *et al.*, 2020). This study places respectful engagement at the team level, which is called team respectful engagement (Carmeli *et al.*, 2015). Team respectful engagement is expected to act as a moderator at the team level. Based on the broaden-and-build theory (Fredrickson, 1998), team respectful engagement creates positive emotions such as love through sincere and humane treatment, so that these positive emotions broaden the scope of the team's attention and thinking. Previous studies confirmed that respectful engagement provides positive feelings to individuals, because individuals are valued and respected as part of a group (Friedman *et al.*, 2018; Gupta *et al.*, 2020). Friedman *et al.* (2018) and Gupta *et al.* (2020) also explained that respectful engagement creates motivational conditions to bond and feel interpersonal experiences. Team respectful engagement provides a comfortable environment within the team, which reinforces the positive effect of team mindfulness on team commitment.

The psychological mechanism that explains respectful engagement moderating the effect of team mindfulness on team commitment can be seen from the point of view of the intrinsic motivation theory. Ryan and Deci (2000) stated that intrinsic motivation refers to performing something because of its inherent pleasure. Respect in the workplace is based on the team's experience that interactions in a team are characterized by mutual respect. LaGree, Houston, Duffy, and Shin (2021) explained that respected individuals will tend to collaborate, have positive communication and increase the willingness of other team members to realize a shared vision. Furthermore, respectful engagement is formed by relationships among team members who accept and respect each other and are affirmed as part of the team (LaGree *et al.*, 2021). It creates feelings of pleasure and interest in the team, so the team is intrinsically motivated and creates a harmonious atmosphere within the team. It is consistent with previous research that found respectful engagement also shows strong support for positive outcomes (Gupta *et al.*, 2020; LaGree *et al.*, 2021). Then, team respectful engagement reinforces the positive effect of team mindfulness on team commitment. Thus, this study formulates the following proposition.

P2. Team respectful engagement moderates the positive effect of team mindfulness on team commitment. When team respectful engagement is high, it strengthens the

positive effect of team mindfulness on team commitment, and conversely, when it is low, it weakens the positive effect of team mindfulness on team commitment.

Discussion

Mindfulness has become an emerging topic in the organizational and management fields. Research into team mindfulness has also begun to attract the attention of researchers. Team mindfulness was introduced by Yu and Zellmer-Bruhn (2018) as a shared perception that arises from team interactions regarding the quality of team thoughts. This study explains the important role of team mindfulness in relation to team commitment, by considering team respectful engagement as a moderating variable. Although there is still little research into these three constructs, this study attempts to overcome the limitations in this research area through the model and propositions we built. Several previous studies that have investigated this area can be seen in

The previous studies in Table 1 have provided a reasonably clear understanding, that there are still a limited number of studies into team mindfulness (Liu *et al.*, 2020; Yu & Zellmer-Bruhn, 2018). Based on the previous studies, we only found two studies that examined team mindfulness. This study offers a research stimulus in the area of team mindfulness related to team commitment. We refer to the study by Zivnuska *et al.* (2016), which explains the effect of mindfulness on commitment at the individual level. Thus, we also expect that team mindfulness will also have a positive effect on team commitment. As can be seen in Table 1, at the individual level, respectful engagement also acts as a moderator (Singh & Gupta, 2015). Therefore, by referring to the previous studies, this study proposes team respectful engagement as a moderating variable.

The psychological mechanism of the positive effect of team mindfulness on team commitment is based on the COR theory, in which a team tries to acquire, maintain and protect things that are considered valuable by the team (Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018). These things that are considered valuable are called resources. Team mindfulness, as a resource, increases a team's focus on current events and makes the team more appreciative of the team experience so that the team is able to survive within its organization, and this leads to team commitment. Team members who are committed to the team will work together for a

Authors	Research area
Basit (2019)	Respectful engagement is related to task performance and affective commitment
Carmeli *et al.* (2015)	The relationship between respectful engagement and creative behavior is mediated by relational information processing, at both the individual and team levels
Gunasekara and Zheng (2019)	Mindfulness is related to work engagement at individual level
Gupta *et al.* (2020)	Respectful engagement, at individual level, moderates the negative relationship between interactional justice and the perceived cost of tacit knowledge sharing. Respectful engagement is also positively related to willingness to share tacit knowledge
Liu *et al.* (2020)	Team mindfulness as a moderating variable in the indirect effect of individual mindfulness on work engagement, which is mediated by recovery level
Yu and Zellmer-Bruhn (2018)	Team mindfulness, as an antecedent and a moderating variable, is related to task conflict, relationship conflict, and social undermining
Zivnuska *et al.* (2016)	Mindfulness as an antecedent of resource accrual, well-being, and organizational attitudes. Mindfulness has direct and indirect effects on turnover intentions and affective commitment

Table 1.
Previous studies

longer time and tend to share values and goals with the team. The team is also encouraged to contribute to the organization and act on behalf of the team.

Based on the broaden-and-build theory (Fredrickson, 1998), team respectful engagement is considered to be a moderator that reinforces the positive effect of team mindfulness on team commitment. Team respectful engagement encourages positive emotions which broaden the scope of the team's attention, thoughts and action. It creates conditions that provide a positive experience for the team with respect, acceptance and appreciation for the team members. The positive conditions created by team respectful engagement are expected to strengthen the positive effect of team mindfulness on team commitment.

The relationship between team mindfulness, team commitment and team respectful engagement can be seen through the intrinsic motivation theory. Teams with high mindfulness will have awareness and concern regarding current events, so they are more intrinsically motivated because they tend to have feelings of pleasure and enjoy the experience in the team. In addition, the team becomes more motivated and focused on the tasks within the team, which leads to team commitment. The psychological mechanism of team respectful engagement as a moderator can also be seen in terms of the intrinsic motivation. Team respectful engagement forms positive emotions within the team, so as to create a more conducive atmosphere. Furthermore, the team is intrinsically motivated because interactions within the team are characterized by mutual respect. Therefore, team respectful engagement is predicted to strengthen the positive effect of team mindfulness on team commitment.

Implications
Organizations can consider the propositions developed in this paper as part of their team development policies. Teams are advised to consider team mindfulness training with the aim of increasing team commitment. Training programs related to team mindfulness include mindfulness-based stress reduction. As also suggested by Liu *et al.* (2020), the most famous mindfulness training methods are mindfulness stress reduction and mindfulness cognitive therapy. Managers should also pay great attention to team respectful engagement. Managers are also expected to be role models in interacting with subordinates, for example, by treating individuals humanely and with dignity. Thus, when respectful engagement is implemented properly in the organization, it is hoped that a harmonious and conducive atmosphere can be created that strengthens the positive effect of team mindfulness on team commitment.

Limitations and directions for future research
This study only explains the causal relationship through propositions built from the synthesis of previous studies, without confirming the relationship empirically. Therefore, future research is expected to be able to further test these propositions through empirical research. This study seeks to provide empirical guidance that can be useful for future research. Team mindfulness can be measured using a survey instrument from Yu and Zellmer-Bruhn (2018), which consists of ten items. An example of these items in the questionnaire is "It is difficult for the team to stay focused on what is happening in the present (R)" (Yu & Zellmer-Bruhn, 2018, p. 347). Furthermore, team commitment can also be measured using a survey instrument from Bishop and Scott (2000), which consists of eight items. One of these items in the questionnaire is "I find that my values and the team's values are very similar" (Bishop & Scott, 2000, p. 444). Then, team respectful engagement is also measured using a survey instrument consisting of nine items from Carmeli *et al.* (2015). An example of these items in the questionnaire is "Team members here appreciate how valuable

their team members' time is" (Carmeli *et al.*, 2015, p. 15). Future research can also consider other measurements and instruments, but at least this study has provided an initial direction regarding the causal relationship of team mindfulness, team commitment and team respectful engagement.

Conclusion

The study of mindfulness is an emerging subject in the field of management. This study aims to present a model and propositions regarding the positive effect of team mindfulness on team commitment and how team respectful engagement moderates the positive effect of team mindfulness on team commitment. So, we conclude that team mindfulness has a positive effect on team commitment. A mindful team will process the experience in the group by being aware of, and giving attention to, the present without contemplating the past. This instills in the team a strong desire to remain in the team, which has a positive effect on team commitment. The next conclusion is that team respectful engagement strengthens the positive effect of team mindfulness on team commitment. Team respectful engagement is formed from high-quality connections that encourage the creation of a harmonious atmosphere within the team, thereby strengthening the positive effect of team mindfulness on team commitment.

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