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How Do Mind-Body Practices Benefit Employees? A Daily Diary Study of Mind-Body Practices after Work and Employees' Next-Day Proactive Behavior

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ABSTRACT

Although it is becoming increasingly popular for organizations to offer programs of mind-body practices to their employees to improve their physical and mental health, the effects that after-work sessions of mind-body practices have on employees' work behavior remain unclear. Using the model of proactive motivation and experience sampling, this study explored the relationship between employees' mind-body practices after work and their proactive behavior in the workplace on the following day. A multilevel path analysis of data from 82 employees over seven consecutive workdays showed that employees' mind-body practices after work had a positive effect on their proactive behavior in the workplace on the following day. The relationship was mediated by next-day high-activated positive affect and problem-solving confidence. Furthermore, job control positively moderated the relationship between high-activated positive affect and proactive behavior but not that between problem-solving confidence and proactive behavior. We discuss the theoretical and practical implications of these findings, and propose future research directions.

KEYWORDS

Mind-body practices; proactive motivation; proactive behavior; non-work experiences

1 Introduction

Mind-body practices refer to a complex series of activities, such as meditation, Tai Chi, yoga, and Qigong, that are performed by individuals for the benefit of their physical and mental health [1–3]. These practices have been shown to regulate mood [4] and to help in the treatment of anxiety, depression, chronic pain, and various diseases [5–9]. Mind-body practices have their origins in Buddhism, in which they aim to free people from the trap of individualism and worldly pursuits with the ultimate goal of cultivating self-transcendence [10]. With the marketization and secularization of these practices in recent years, they have gained popularity not only in people's daily recreational activities but also as a part of corporate management, with more than 60 percent of Fortune 500 companies offering mind-body practices courses for their employees. Employees in organizations engage in mind-body practices mostly in the hope of regulating affect and adjusting their mindset to help them recover from work [11].

Researchers in social psychology have found that mind-body practices can enhance self-compassion (i.e., kindness toward and understanding of the self) [12,13], foster a sense of self-transcendence [10],



promote the formation of self-enhancement biases [3], generate positive consciousness [14,15], enhance well-being [13], and facilitate goal-setting [15]. In the organizational management context, mind–body practices can be categorized as a non-work experience, which studies have shown can predict work behavior [16]. For example, Ng et al. [17] found that Employees who engage in mind-body practices feel less burned out and more engaged in their work, and ten Brummelhuis and colleagues [18] found that physical activity during the working day, which can play a self-regulatory role, improved work concentration through increased self-efficacy but could also hinder work concentration through ego depletion. Considering these findings alongside the positive effects of engaging in mind–body practices for individuals, mind–body practices after work might influence employees’ work behavior, such as increasing proactive behavior in the workplace the following day. However, this relationship needs further exploration and verification by organizational management scholars.

Workplace proactive behavior is self-initiated change designed to improve work environments and work processes [19]. Such behavior among employees can improve organizational effectiveness and is a key factor in organizational success [20]. Workplace proactive behavior falls into a wide range of categories, such as innovative, voice, transformative, and organizational citizenship behavior [21–23]. The model of proactive motivation systematically explores the generation mechanism and boundary conditions of proactive behavior, which provides a useful framework for the literature on proactive behavior. Three motivational pathways for proactive behavior are proposed by the proactive motivation model: “can do” motivation, “reason to” motivation, and “energized to” motivation [24]. On the “can do” motivational path, individuals measure their abilities and assess the feasibility and associated risks of engaging in proactive behavior. On the “reason to” path, individuals come to perceive that there are compelling reasons—intrinsic, integrative, or deterministic—to engage in proactive behavior [24]. Both “can do” and “reason to” motivation are described as “cold” motivational states, the “energized to” motivational path reflects the “hot” motivational states associated with positive affect, especially high-activated positive affect [25]. Additionally, studies on the model of proactive motivation have discovered links between the development of proactive motivation and processes including affect regulation and improved self-perception [24].

The value of mind–body practices to regulate affect has been widely recognized [4], and studies have also found that participants who engage in mind–body practices report higher levels of self-evaluation and self-esteem [3,11]. Accordingly, we argue that an increase in proactive behavior is a likely form of improvement in employees’ workplace behavior as a result of engaging in mind–body practices after work and that this effect is conveyed through improvements in affect regulation and self-perception. Affect regulation refers to the capacity for mind–body practices to produce high-activated positive affect by fostering a sense of self-transcendence and reducing rumination [10], and improved self-perception refers to the effect of mind–body practices on helping employees to mobilize their attention more efficiently and analyze problems rationally [26], thus increasing problem-solving confidence.

The model of proactive motivation puts forward multiple motivational pathways for proactive behavior, of which the “energized to” and “can do” pathways correspond to positive affect and perceptions of competence, respectively [24]. Accordingly, we propose that high-activated positive affect and problem-solving confidence are effective in transmitting and motivating the indirect effects of mind–body practices on next-day workplace proactive behavior. As the model of proactive motivation further suggests that personal and situational variables act synergistically to influence the generation of proactive behavior, we further propose job control as a potential moderator of the influence of personal motivation on proactive behavior. Job control refers to the extent to which employees have control over their work processes and job content, and thus represents the looseness of organizational constraints on employee behavior [27]. A high level of employee job control therefore represents low levels of restriction, with the organization allowing employees to adjust their work processes and job content [28]. Parker et al. [24] found that

lower levels of job control were one of the main inhibitors of proactive behavior. At higher levels, employees will have fewer concerns about the barriers to and consequences of engaging in proactive behavior. Therefore, we expect job control to enhance the positive effects of the proactive motivation (high-activated positive affect and problem-solving confidence) generated by mind–body practices on proactive behavior. Finally, we adopt a within-person approach to focus on the daily dynamic changes of employees’ proactive behavior because the level of proactive behavior of employees is not consistent and employees may demonstrate a higher degree of proactive behavior on some working days [16,29].

In summary, this paper proposes and tests a theoretical framework of how and when mind–body practices after work have an effect on proactive behavior in the workplace on the following day. Our three hypotheses are as follows: first, engaging in mind–body practices after work increases employees’ proactive behavior in the workplace on the following day; second, and based on the model of proactive motivation, high-activated positive affect and problem-solving confidence mediate the positive relationship between mind–body practices and proactive behavior along the two proactive motivation paths of affect and cognition; and third, employees’ perceived job control plays a positive moderating role in the relationships between high-activated positive affect and proactive behavior and between problem-solving confidence and proactive behavior. The conceptual model is presented in Fig. 1.

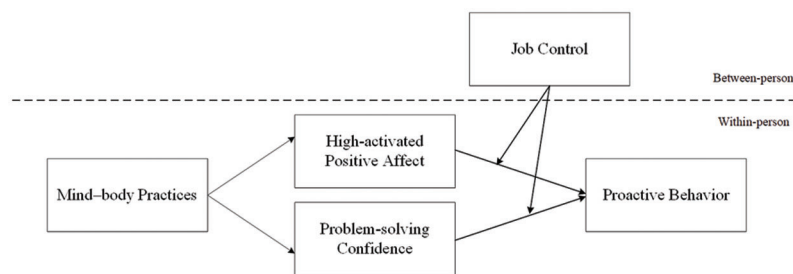


Figure 1: Theoretical model

Our study contributes to the literature in the following ways. First, we enrich the literature on mind–body practices by positioning them as a non-work experience and extending the scholarship, most of which has been situated in the field of social psychology [4,12,13], to the organizational management context. Second, we contribute to the literature on physical activities by using the model of proactive motivation, whereas the majority of studies have explored non-work experiences from a resource and recovery viewpoint [16,18,30,31]. Third, we advance the development and application of the model of proactive motivation by examining problem-solving confidence as a “can do” motivation, thus going beyond the most typical such motivation, that of role breadth self-efficacy [16,24]. Fourth, we contribute to the proactive behavior literature by examining the daily fluctuations in proactive behavior using a diary study method and by exploring the boundaries of the role of employees’ mind–body practices in their proactive behavior, thus providing an understanding of how work situations affect employees’ proactive behavior.

2 Theory and Hypotheses

2.1 Mind–Body Practices and Proactive Behavior

Workplace proactive behavior is initiated by employees and contributes to the improvement of the work environment and work outcomes [20]. One theoretical perspective on proactive behavior is the model of proactive motivation, which systematically describes the mechanism of generating proactive behaviors from the perspective of motivation. According to the relevant empirical research of the model of proactive motivation, the most typical and widely studied “can do” motivation is role breadth self-efficacy [32–34].

The model of proactive motivation has provided a useful theoretical framework for many studies exploring proactive behavior [16,35], suggests that the model of proactive motivation has the potential to serve as a valuable theoretical framework for examining the relationship between mind–body practices at the end of the working day with workplace proactive behavior on the following day. Specifically, the model of proactive motivation suggests that processes or activities that involve regulating affect and improving self-perceptions can motivate proactive behavior [24]. When performed as a leisure activity, mind-body practices are widely recognized for their affect regulation function [15,17,36,37]. The effectiveness of mind–body practices as an adjunctive treatment for psychological disorders such as anxiety and depression has been recognized and validated in a medical context [5–8]. In an organizational management context, engaging in mind–body practices has also been shown to reduce employees’ anxiety and stress levels, develop sustainable affect regulation, and enhance their well-being at work [17]. Furthermore, mind–body practices can serve as a form of spiritual training that helps individuals to adjust their self-awareness to have a higher self-enhancement bias [3] and a more positive self-evaluation [11]. Improved affect regulation allows individuals to manage negative affect more effectively while promoting positive affect, and improved self-perceptions enhance individuals’ perception of being capable of facing obstacles. Given that both of these benefits of mind–body practices have the potential to increase proactive behavior [24], we predict that engaging in mind–body practices at the end of the working day has a positive influence on employees’ workplace proactive behaviors on the following day. Accordingly, we formulated the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Employees’ engagement in mind–body practices after work is positively related to their next-day workplace proactive behavior.

2.2 “Energized to” Motivation: High-Activated Positive Affect

Mind–body practices have been affirmed by many scholars as a useful form of psychological and physiological relaxation [4,16]: Bruning et al. [38] found that physiological indicators of stress decreased significantly in individuals after they engaged in mind–body practices, and Lindsay et al. [4] found that these practices promoted positive affect in daily life, especially perceptions of well-being. Mind–body practices have also been shown to act as an adjunctive treatment for mental illness and are used to reduce depressive symptoms [39]. Therefore, we believe that engaging in mind–body practices at the end of the working day has an influence on employees’ positive affect. Specifically, mind–body practices require individuals to let go of external distractions and focus on their own body or breathing rhythms [40,41]. This aspect of mind–body practices can distract employees from work-related anxiety and anger [42], thus providing a respite from the precariousness of the mind and body. Second, mind–body practices aim to cultivate a self-transcendent state of mind and encourage individuals to view things in a non-judgmental manner, thus helping them to assess stressful events at work more objectively and independently [10,43]. Third, mind–body practices can help to avoid the excessive intrusion of negative affect while stimulating positive affect by reducing rumination and compulsive and recurring thoughts on stressful events at work [42].

Although most studies of the affect have distinguished between negative and positive affect, the activation of affect has been largely ignored. Positive affect is divided into high activation and low activation types [44]. High-activated positive affect is a highly aroused sense of being active, strong, and happy, whereas low-activated positive affect is a less aroused sense of sedation and calmness [45]. Employees are more likely to experience positive activation and serenity, because as previously noted, engaging in mind-body practices helps to digest bad affect, build a sense of self detachment, and boost the potential to acquire positive affect [45–47]. Accordingly, we expect that engaging in mind–body practices at the end of the working day positively influences employees’ high-activated positive affect and low-activated positive affect on the following day.

Furthermore, the positive impact of mind–body practices on high-activated positive affect is likely to trigger the “energized to” motivational path to proactive behavior, and this is consistent with the proactive motivation model’s statement that low-activated positive affect is unrelated to proactive behaviors [24,29,48]. Accordingly, we anticipate that high-activated rather than low-activated positive affect mediates the relationship between mind-body practices and proactive behavior. As high-activated positive affect is positively related to a promotion focus [48], individuals experiencing high-activated positive affect are more likely to set challenging goals and strive to accomplish them [49]. Meanwhile, negative events are less salient and the possible positive consequences of proactive behavior more likely to be captured [48]. Combining the above discussion with the relationship predicted by H1, we hypothesize that mind–body practices increase employees’ proactive behaviors through high-activated positive affect:

Hypothesis 2 (H2): High-activated positive affect mediates the positive relationship between employees’ engagement in mind–body practices after work and their next-day workplace proactive behavior.

2.3 “Can do” Motivation: Problem-Solving Confidence

One of the main emphases of mind–body practices is the use and training of attention [40]. The participants in Valentine et al. study [50] improved their attention over time after a brief mind–body practices intervention, and Mrazek et al. [41] demonstrated that mind–body practices can improve concentration, working memory, and recognition memory. As the mental skills acquired through mind–body practices can be used in work domains [15], we believed the improved attention and thought processes generated by engagement in mind–body practices may increase problem-solving confidence at work.

Specifically, employees who have engaged in mind–body practices experience less drifting of thoughts and thus retain focus during problem-solving. Second, these employees pay less attention to irrelevant information, thus minimizing distractions. Third, these employees have significantly greater efficiency in using their attention during problem-solving and are thus able to mobilize cognitive resources more efficiently to solve the problem [26]. Employees who have engaged in mind–body practices are likely to perceive a state of total concentration and feel more comfortable mobilizing their cognitive resources and working memory to solve problems. Meanwhile, having engaged in mind–body practices trains employees to think outside of themselves, emphasizing a third-party perspective on events, reducing worries about the future and rumination on the past, and helping them to look at problems more objectively [10,42]. When individuals perceive that they are more focused, efficient, and objective in their approach to problems at work, they are likely to have greater confidence in solving them.

We assign problem-solving confidence to the “can do” motivational path on the model of proactive motivation and therefore as a motivation for subsequent proactive behavior. Before engaging in proactive behavior, employees need to assess the risk, feasibility, and likely consequences [24]. Employees engaging in proactive behavior may face unpredictable environments, need to deal with a variety of complex dilemmas, and face uncertainty about the consequences [51]; for example, employee-initiated voice behavior might bring the risk of blame and disregard from leaders [52]. As individuals with greater problem-solving confidence tend to perceive themselves as capable of coping with the risks that accompany proactive behavior and to have a higher willingness to overcome various types of obstacles, they are more likely to initiate proactive behavior. Combining these considerations with H1, we hypothesize that mind–body practices increase employees’ proactive behavior by positively influencing their problem-solving confidence:

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Problem-solving confidence mediates the positive relationship between employees’ engagement in mind–body practices after work and their next-day workplace proactive behavior.

2.4 The Moderating Effect of Job Control

The model of proactive motivation posits a synergy of personal and situational variables influencing the production of proactive behavior [24]. Studies of individual proactive behavior suggest that perceived level of job control is the key boundary condition for whether individuals actively engage in proactive behavior that entails some risk [28,53]. When the level of job control is high, the work environment provides employees with a high degree of freedom to engage in work behavior; when it is low, the work environment is more restrictive in terms of employee behavior, which needs to be confined to the limits set by the organization [54]. Job control is critical to the implementation of proactive behavior for two reasons: first, lower levels of job control require individuals to play established job roles and allow little room for personal factors to influence work behavior [55]; second, proactive behavior often implies change, which is discouraged in low job control environments [56].

As defined above, workplace proactive behavior is an attempt by employees to change themselves or their work environment and therefore has transformative properties [51,56]. Lower levels of job control are therefore likely to hinder the process of transforming proactive motivation into proactive behavior, thus weakening the hypothesized relationships between high-activated positive affect and proactive behavior and between problem-solving confidence and proactive behavior. High-activated positive affect enhances employees' approach action tendency [48] and predisposes them to see positive consequences from proactive behavior, but lower job control conveys negative signals about the organizational approval of out-of-role behaviors [27] and is thus likely to increase employees' concerns about the negative consequences of engaging in proactive behaviors. Furthermore, employees with higher problem-solving confidence are more likely to initiate proactive behavior and to feel confident in overcoming barriers to engaging in this type of behavior, but lower job control presents employees with apparently insurmountable barriers at the organizational level and reduces their appraisal of the feasibility of carrying out proactive behavior successfully. We therefore hypothesize that higher levels of job control increase the positive effects of high-activated positive affect and problem-solving confidence on proactive behavior:

Hypothesis 4 (H4): In the relationship between employees' engagement in mind–body practices after work and their next-day workplace proactive behavior, job control moderates the positive relationships between (a) high-activated positive affect and proactive behavior and between (b) problem-solving confidence and proactive behavior, such that these positive relationships are stronger when the level of job control is higher.

On the model of proactive motivation, mind–body practices are processes through which employees regulate their affect and improve their self-perceptions, stimulating the “can do” and “energized to” motivation [24] and thus leading to subsequent proactive behavior. In this process, job control signals the extent to which the organization supports employees' job autonomy [27] and at higher levels it is likely to strengthen the positive relationship between proactive motivation (high-activated positive affect and problem-solving confidence) and proactive behavior, which is in turn likely to amplify the positive indirect relationship between mind–body practices and proactive behavior through high-activated positive affect and problem-solving confidence.

Hypothesis 5 (H5): In the relationship between employees' engagement in mind–body practices after work and their next-day workplace proactive behavior, job control moderates the positive indirect relationship between mind–body practices and proactive behavior through the motivational pathways of (a) high-activated positive affect and (b) problem-solving confidence, such that these positive indirect relationships are stronger when the level of job control is higher.

3 Method

3.1 Participants and Procedure

The sample consisted of full-time employees holding various positions at eight information service companies in China. The selected companies offered discounted or free mind–body practices to their

employees and urged them to participate. With the consent and assistance of the companies' human resources departments, we posted the recruitment information, which included information about the requirements (completing an initial questionnaire and then a self-reported questionnaire three times a day for 7 days). During the data collection period, we did not artificially interfere with whether or not participants engaged in mind-body practices. Participants were selected based on the criteria of full-time employees with regular commuting hours, a certain amount of daily mind-body practices, so as to ensure that the research questions we are concerned about can be captured. These participants are fluent in using a smartphone to fill out the electronic questionnaire. The participants were offered compensation for participation in the form of a Jingdong e-card worth 200 RMB. During the 2-week recruitment period, 103 employees expressed interest in participating. An internet social networking (WeChat) group was formed to disseminate the questionnaires. An initial questionnaire was sent to the participants to collect demographic information and cross-level moderating variables (i.e., perceived level of job control) before the start of the formal daily survey.

Approximately a week later, the participants received three brief daily surveys—an early morning survey, a morning survey, and an afternoon survey—on seven consecutive working days. The early morning survey was scheduled at 8 a.m. and measured the participants' sleep quality and the amount of time they were engaged in mind-body practices the previous night, the morning survey was scheduled at 10 a.m. and measured the participants' high-activated positive affect and problem-solving confidence at that moment, and the afternoon survey was scheduled at 6 p.m. and measured the participants' workplace proactive behaviors for the day. On average, the participants completed the early morning survey at 8:25 a.m., the morning survey at 10:30 a.m., and the afternoon survey at 6:21 p.m.

To arrive at our analytic sample of 82 participants and 570 daily observations, we excluded 21 participants who completed less than three sets of daily surveys. Multiple independent t-tests indicated no significant differences between the attrition sample and the final sample in terms of gender, age, education level, years of work experience, and job control. In the final sample, 73.2% of the participants were female; 34% were younger than 25 years old, 48.9% were 25 to 35 years old, 14.7% were 35 to 45 years old, and 2.3% were 46 years old and above; 19.5% held a college degree or less, 71.9% a bachelor's degree, and 8.6% a graduate degree or above; and 81.8% had worked for less than 5 years.

3.2 Daily (Within-Person) Measures

Except for the measurement of daily mind-body practices, the key continuous variables were measured using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree).

Daily mind-body practices. To measure daily mind-body practices in the early morning survey, we drew on the approach taken by Lanaj et al. [57] to measure nighttime cell phone use. Specifically, we measured time spent on mind-body practices using a single-item: "How long did you spend on mind-body practices (yoga, meditation, Qigong, or Tai Chi) last night?" The responses were coded in minutes.

High-activated positive affect. We used Warr's 4-item scale [58] ("enthusiastic," "excited," "inspired," and "joyful") to measure high-activated positive affect in the morning survey. The average α for the 7 days was 0.857.

Problem-solving confidence. We used 11-item scale by Heppner et al. [59] to measure problem-solving confidence in the morning survey. A sample item is "I can solve most problems even if there is no obvious solution at first." The average α for the 7 days was 0.943.

Proactive behavior. In the afternoon survey, we measured proactive behavior using a 9-item scale developed by Griffin et al. [60]. A sample item is "I have developed new and improved ways to help my work unit perform better." The average α for the 7 days was 0.946.

3.3 Between-Person Moderators

Job control. We measured job control using a 6-item scale developed by Gonzalez-Mulé et al. [61], in which participants are asked to report their perceived level of organizational job control according to their real experiences at work. A sample item is “To what extent do you agree that your job allows you to make a lot of your own decisions?” The average α for the 7 days was 0.917.

Control variables. We used sleep quality as a control variable in the morning survey, with a single-item measure asking “How was your sleep quality last night?” derived from Buysse et al. [62]. We also controlled for the participants’ proactive behavior on the previous day, as Cangiano et al. [63] showed that employees’ past proactive behavior can motivate their future proactive behaviors.

3.4 Analytic Strategy

Because this study involved nested data, with daily observations (Level 1) nested within participants (Level 2), we conducted a multilevel pathway analysis with Mplus 8.3, modeling the impact pathways as fixed effects for data analysis and hypothesis testing. Specifically, the within-person variables (mind-body practices, high-activated positive affect, problem-solving confidence, proactive behavior, and sleep quality) were modeled at Level 1 and the between-person variables (age, gender, education, time, job control) were modeled at Level 2. We used group-mean centering for all Level 1 variables and between-person centering for all Level 2 variables. In testing for indirect effects and conditional indirect effects, we adopted the Monte Carlo simulation procedure (20,000 replications) and computed the 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals [64].

4 Results

4.1 Analysis Results

Before testing the specific hypotheses, we ran a series of null models through Mplus 8.3 to check the within-individual variance of the main variable. The results showed that the proportion of within-individual variation for the main variable was 31.68%–49.30%, indicating the need for multilevel modeling. The specific results are provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Percentage of within-person variance among daily variables

Variable	Within-individual variance(e^2)	Between-individual variance(r^2)	Within-individual variance(%)
Mind-body practices	124.097***	139.196***	47.13%
High-activated positive affect	0.561***	0.577***	49.30%
Problem-solving confidence	0.654***	0.685***	48.84%
Proactive behaviors	0.543***	1.171***	31.68%

The descriptive statistics and correlations are shown in Table 2. Before testing the hypotheses, we conducted a multi-level confirmatory factor analysis (MCFA) with three within-person variables (high-activated positive affect, problem-solving confidence, and proactive behavior) and one between-person variable (job control), excluding variables measured by single items [65]. The MCFA results indicated that the 4-factor model was a good fit ($\chi^2/df = 2.303$, $p < 0.001$; RMSEA = 0.048, CFI = 0.906, TLI = 0.897, SRMRwithin-person = 0.042, SRMRbetween-person = 0.074) and significantly better than that of alternative models (e.g., the 3-factor model combining high-activated positive affect and problem-solving confidence). In summary, our main variables showed good discriminant validity.

Table 2: Means, standard deviations, and correlations among study variables

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Level 2 (between-person level)													
1. Gender	1.73	.444	-										
2. Age	1.85	.747	-0.157***	-									
3. Education level	2.85	.609	0.122**	-0.128**	-								
4. Working years	2.40	1.143	-0.271***	0.615**	-0.234**	-							
5. Job control	4.939	1.180	0.161***	0.006	-0.121**	-0.004	-						
Level 1 (daily level)													
6. Sleep Quality (T)	5.46	1.088	0.083*	-0.016	-0.002	-0.087*	0.054	-	0.053	-0.046	-0.120**	-0.094*	-0.124**
7. Proactive Behavior (T)	5.115	1.315	0.027	-0.052	-0.011	0.009	0.544***	0.068	-	0.024	-0.003	-0.007	-0.060
8. Mind-Body Practices (T)	36.15	16.264	0.038	-0.050	-0.011	0.060	0.007	-0.031	0.214***	-	0.485***	0.444***	0.495***
9. High-Activated Positive Affect (T+1)	4.585	1.071	-0.088*	0.030	0.119**	0.025	-0.134**	-0.108**	0.170***	0.515***	-	0.457***	0.630***
10. Problem-Solving Confidence (T+1)	4.375	1.161	-0.077	-0.069	0.126**	-0.012	-0.317***	-0.069	0.107*	0.516***	0.581***	-	0.688***
11. Proactive Behavior (T+1)	5.117	1.313	0.038	-0.001	-0.031	0.040	0.625***	-0.027	0.588***	0.438***	0.445***	0.383***	-

Notes: N = 570 days (82 participants). Below diagonal = between level estimates. Above diagonal = within level estimates.
 * $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$ *** $p < 0.001$.

4.2 Hypothesis Testing

As shown in Table 3, daily mind–body practices were positively related to next-day workplace proactive behavior ($B = 0.033$, $SE = 0.005$, $p < 0.001$), thus supporting H1. After thereby confirming that daily mind–body practices positively influenced next-day employee proactive behavior, we tested H2 and H3 by introducing two mediating variables into the multi-level regression equation. High-activated positive affect ($B = 0.388$, $SE = 0.067$, $p < 0.001$) and problem-solving confidence ($B = 0.450$, $SE = 0.066$, $p < 0.001$) were positively associated with proactive behavior but the positive relationship between mind–body practices and proactive behavior weakened ($B = 0.008$, $SE = 0.004$, $p < 0.05$). These results indicated that high-activated positive affect and problem-solving confidence partially mediated the positive relationship between daily mind–body practices and next-day workplace proactive behavior. We further verified the specific indirect effects. From a multilevel mediation analysis based on 20,000 Monte Carlo bootstrapping samples, we found that the indirect effect of mind–body practices on proactive behavior through high-activated positive affect was 0.013 with a 95% bias-corrected bootstrap confidence interval (CI) of [0.007, 0.019] and through problem-solving confidence was 0.016 (95% CI [0.009, 0.022]). These results support both H2 and H3.

Table 3: Multilevel path modeling results

Variable	Proactive Behavior (T+1)									
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Level2: Between Level										
Intercept	4.253***	0.299	1.611***	0.288	1.676***	0.267	5.457***	0.188	5.121***	0.084
Job Control							0.721***	0.087	0.695***	0.083
Job Control * High-Activated Positive Affect (T+1)							0.137**	0.044		
Job Control * Problem-Solving Confidence (T+1)									0.050	0.052
Level1: Within Level										
Sleep Quality (T)	-0.029***	0.008	-0.008*	0.004	-0.009*	0.003	-0.017**	0.005	-0.021*	0.009
Proactive Behavior (T)	-0.020	0.034	-0.032	0.025	-0.035	0.024	-0.040	0.032	-0.043	0.020
Mind–Body Practices (T)	0.033***	0.005			0.008*	0.004				
High-Activated Positive Affect (T+1)			0.388***	0.067	0.345***	0.066	0.665***	0.057		
Problem-Solving Confidence (T+1)			0.450***	0.066	0.419***	0.063			0.637***	0.052
Between-Person Variance	1.024***	0.225	1.250***	0.246	1.215***	0.252	0.586***	0.140	0.553***	0.130
Within-Person Variance	0.399***	0.048	0.210***	0.030	0.205***	0.031	0.236***	0.040	0.182***	.029

Notes: N = 570 at the daily level; N = 82 at the individual level. Unstandardized coefficients are reported in the table.

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$ *** $p < 0.001$.

H4a posited that the positive relationship between high-activated positive affect and proactive behaviors is stronger with a higher level of job control. As shown in Table 3, the interaction term between high-activated positive affect and job control significantly and positively predicted proactive behavior ($B = 0.137$, $SE = 0.044$, $p < 0.001$), thus supporting H4a. The interaction patterns are depicted in Fig. 2, which shows that when the level of job control was higher (+1 SD), the positive relationship between high-activated positive affect and proactive behavior was stronger ($B = 0.826$, $SE = 0.077$, $p < 0.001$), and when the level of job control was lower (-1 SD), the positive relationship between high-activated positive affect and proactive behavior was weaker ($B = 0.503$, $SE = 0.076$, $p < 0.001$), with a significant difference between the two levels of job control ($B = 0.323$, $SE = 0.103$, $p < 0.01$), thus supporting H4a. H5a predicted that job control moderates the indirect effect of mind-body practices on proactive behavior through the mediation of high-activated positive affect. The indirect effect was stronger when work control was higher (indirect effect = 0.018, 95% CI [0.0117, 0.0260]) and weaker when work control was lower (indirect effect = 0.010, 95% CI [0.0044, 0.0155]), with a significant difference between the two indirect effects (differences = 0.009, 95% CI [0.0021, 0.0165]), thus supporting H5a.

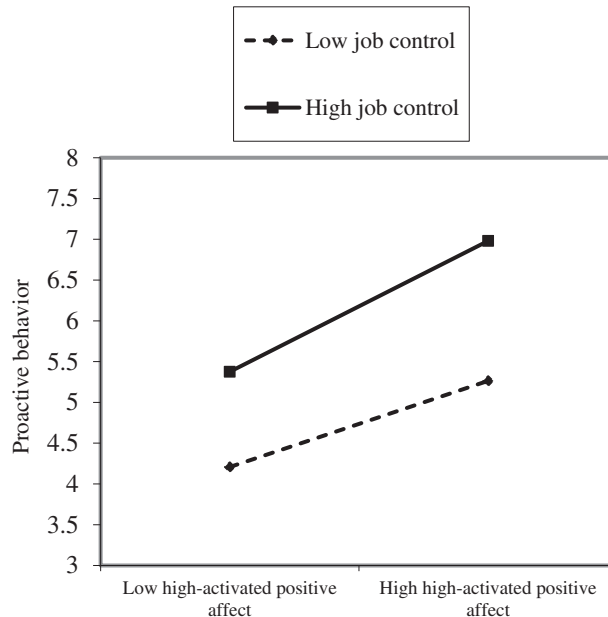


Figure 2: The moderating role of job control on the relationship between high-activated positive affect and proactive behaviors

H4b proposed that the positive relationship between problem-solving confidence and proactive behavior is stronger when the level of job control is higher. As shown in Table 3, the positive predictive effect of the interaction term between problem-solving confidence and job control on proactive behavior was non-significant ($B = 0.049$, $SE = 0.053$, n.s.), which does not support H4b. The interaction patterns are depicted in Fig. 3, which shows that when the level of job control was higher (+1 SD), the positive relationship between problem-solving confidence and proactive behavior was stronger ($B = 0.695$, $SE = 0.085$, $p < 0.001$), and when the level of job control was lower (-1 SD), the positive relationship between problem-solving confidence and proactive behavior was weaker ($B = 0.578$, $SE = 0.076$, $p < 0.001$), but as the difference was non-significant ($B = 0.117$, $SE = 0.123$, n.s.), H4b was not supported and the conditional indirect effect in H5b was therefore not tested.

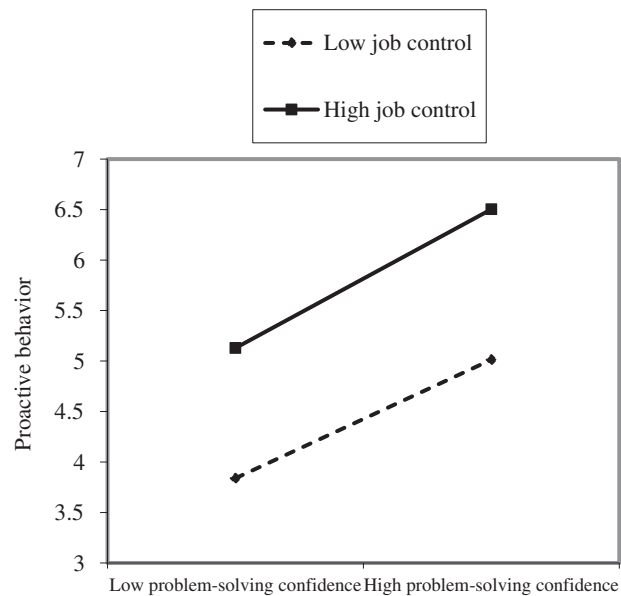


Figure 3: The moderating role of job control on the relationship between problem-solving confidence and proactive behaviors

5 Discussion

In this study, we examine (a) whether mind–body practices at the end of the working day affect proactive motivation and proactive behavior in the workplace and (b) the potential moderating effect of employees’ perceived level of job control in the positive relationship between proactive motivation and proactive behavior. The results of a 7-day experience sampling study revealed that mind–body practices at the end of the working day positively predicted employees’ next-day workplace proactive behavior through high-activated positive affect and problem-solving confidence. We also found that job control played a positive moderating role in the relationship between high-activated positive affect and proactive behavior but not in that between problem-solving confidence and proactive behavior. This suggests that problem-solving confidence is a stronger proactive motivation and because it represents a stronger certainty in employees that they can succeed in proactive behavior, lower levels of job control do not inhibit the positive relationship between problem-solving confidence and proactive behavior to a significant extent.

5.1 Implications for Theory

The study has three main theoretical implications. First, it contributes to the literature on mind–body practices by applying the model of proactive motivation. Although scholars in social psychology have laid an important foundation for the study of mind–body practices [3,4,10,12–15], little is known about the role of such practices in the context of organizational management. Our study introduces mind–body practices to organizational management scholars and verifies that engaging in mind–body practices at the end of the working day can predict workplace proactive behavior by eliciting proactive motivation. Meanwhile, although organizational practice has acknowledged the advantages of mind-body practices for employees [3], few academics have examined the full mechanism by which these practices assist both individuals and firms. In filling this research gap, we found that individuals who engaged in mind–body practices experienced more high-activated positive affect and problem-solving confidence, and subsequently engaged in more proactive behavior. Our study thus provides an understanding of how mind–body practices as a non-work experience influence work behavior, and we encourage future

researchers to further explore the mechanisms that influence the relationship between mind–body practices and work behavior during non-working hours.

Second, our study expands on the literature on non-work experiences in organizational science. Scholars have explored a range of non-work experiences, including commuting experiences, physical activities, online leisure, learning mastery activities, and annoying events [16,18,30,31,65,66]. Mind–body practices differ somewhat to the non-work experiences explored in previous studies in their encouragement of living in the present and self-transcendence [10,43]. It is not only a kind of leisure and relaxation activity, but also a kind of spiritual training, aiming to cultivate the individual’s awareness of self-detachment. For instance, prior study that concentrated on the employees’ outside-of-work physical fitness activities overlooked the mind-body practices linked with physical and mental training [18,30]. In contrast to physical fitness activities, mind-body practices typically have lower levels of intensity and lower physical strength requirements, with a greater emphasis on inner spiritual dialogue [11]. Thus, the inclusion as a kind of the non-work experiences, the research on mind-body practices enriches the existing literatures. Furthermore, studies on the non-work experiences (e.g., physical fitness activities, online leisure, etc.) have mostly taken a resource recovery and replenishment perspective [16,18,30,31], with few studies having examined the effects of the non-work experiences on proactive motivation and behavior, despite the importance of proactive behavior for organizational development. Drawing on the model of proactive motivation, our study shows that post-work mind–body practices are associated with proactive behavior in the workplace on the following day through two mechanisms of proactive motivation. By bringing a motivational perspective to the study of the non-work experiences, we clarify that the non-work experiences have more than restorative value and can enhance employee initiative.

Third, we contribute to the proactivity literature through our application of the model of proactive motivation. The model of proactive motivation proposes three paths of proactive motivation: “can do” motivation, “reason to” motivation, and “energized to” motivation [24]. Our findings verify the effects of mind–body practices on “energized to” and “can do” motivation in the forms of high-activated positive affect and problem-solving confidence, respectively. “Can do” motivation refers to individuals’ ability to assess their ability to complete proactive behavior before initiating it. With role breadth efficacy having been considered as a typical “can do” motivation [32–34], we contribute to the literature by validating the value of problem-solving confidence on this motivational pathway to proactivity. Furthermore, we found that job control did not moderate the positive relationship between problem-solving confidence and proactive behavior, which suggests that problem-solving confidence is the stronger proactive motivator. As the differences in the predictive role of different forms of motivation on proactive behavior have not been explored, we encourage future researchers to adopt the model of proactive motivation as a theoretical framework to explore the mechanisms underlying the production of workplace proactive behavior and to distinguish the effects of different proactive motivations.

5.2 Implications for Practice

The results of this study have three main practical implications. First, organization managers should be aware that employee initiative is not a stable trait and that it can change on a daily basis due to various factors, such as leadership style, job design, and individual experiences [19,24,67]. This understanding can remind managers to pay attention to fluctuations in employees’ proactive behavior and to adjust their management practices to enhance employee initiative in a timely manner. Our findings also suggest that engagement in mind–body practices at the end of the working day positively influences employees’ high-activated positive affect and problem-solving confidence on the following day, which in turn has a positive effect on their proactive behavior in the workplace. Given that Ouyang et al. [16] also demonstrated that off-job mastery can promote proactive behavior through “can do” motivation, we encourage managers to adapt practices to enhance employee initiative, such as informing employees of appropriate mind–body

practices and providing them with skills training and other non-work experience opportunities that can contribute to their psychology and performance.

Second, our findings suggest that a higher level of job control enhances the positive relationship between high-activated positive affect and proactive behavior. Job control reflects the looseness of the behavioral restrictions placed on employees by an organization. When the level of job control is low, employees have greater psychological barriers to engagement in proactive behavior. Managers should therefore look to give employees more job autonomy when appropriate to help transform proactive motivation into workplace proactive behavior. Our finding that job control did not play a significant moderating role in the positive relationship between problem-solving confidence and proactive behavior suggests that problem-solving confidence is a relatively strong proactive motivator and is thus less constrained by work contextual factors. Managers should therefore look to develop the overall level of problem-solving confidence of their employees through experience sharing or skills training to increase the occurrence of proactive behavior in the workplace.

Third, our findings provide some insights for employees. Our results suggest that engaging in mind–body practices at the end of the working day is likely to be beneficial for the next day’s work, whereas Ten Brummelhuis et al. [18] found that physical activities can often deplete physical resources and thus overwhelm employees in their subsequent work. Mind–body practices avoid this risk by concentrating on relaxation, and thus might be a better option for after-work activities. Even employees who are saturated with work should plan after-work activities that are beneficial to their physical and mental state and personal development, establish the concept of combining work and rest, and engage in appropriate relaxation activities.

5.3 Limitations, and Future Directions

This study has four main limitations. First, the measurement of all of the variables in this study was through the participants’ self-reports, which raises concerns about common method bias. We measured the collection variables in three daily sessions during the study period in an attempt to minimize the impact of common method bias by separating the measurement of the predictor, mediator, and outcome variables over time. However, the potential bias was not completely addressed and future studies could use supervisor and colleague ratings to measure employees’ proactive behavior. In addition, we used a single item to measure the amount of time employees were engaged in mind–body practices, and although similar studies have taken the same approach and demonstrated its validity, researchers should adopt other means of recording and measuring daily mind–body practices in future studies, such as taking readings from an exercise recording device.

Second, our study design did not allow us to derive a stronger validation of the causal relationship between the main variables. Furthermore, although potential confounding factors were controlled (sleep quality and proactive behavior on the previous day), there are other probable influences on proactive behavior, such as negative affect, proactive personality, and desire for control. Future studies should control influences on proactive behavior more closely and adopt experimental designs to minimize the risks of reverse causality.

Third, we focused on the mind–body practices undertaken after employees finish work, and engaging in mind–body practices before, during, and after the working day might have different effects. As mind–body practices require little space and the time spent on them is flexible, future research should consider the time of engagement in mind–body practices for a more complete understanding of their effects. In addition, we chose employees’ perceived level of job control as a boundary condition of proactive motivation, and future studies could analyze this boundary from other perspectives (e.g., employee traits).

Fourth, our study examines two motivational pathways in the model of proactive motivation while neglecting “reason to” motivation. As non-work experiences may be associated with all three motivational pathways [16], we encourage researchers to explore the potential influence of mind–body practices on “reason to” motivation. It appears from our findings that there are differences in the effects of different motivational pathways, but this requires validation and we encourage researchers to explore these differences further to enrich the development and application of the model of proactive motivation.

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