The Impact of Power and Mindfulness on Empathy in Thai Contexts

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Abstract

The purpose of our study is to illustrate the combined effects of power and mindfulness on empathy in Thai contexts. How powerful individuals behave and manage their influence over others has important implications for societal well-being and social interaction. Because power has been shown to negatively affect interpersonal behaviors, potential factors guarding against the negative influence of power should be examined. We hypothesized that there would be a negative association between personal sense of power and empathy; a positive association between mindfulness and empathy; and that mindfulness would moderate the power-empathy relationship. A total of 191 (66 males, 125 females) Thai participants completed the study online and were assigned to either the high-power condition or low-power condition. The study consisted of a power priming procedure and four measures producing scores for sense of power, mindfulness, empathy, cognitive empathy and affective empathy. Our results revealed that power had a negative effect on cognitive empathy but not affective empathy or overall empathy. No relationship was found between mindfulness and empathy, which may be explained via differences in mindfulness within Eastern and Western contexts. Additionally, mindfulness was not found to moderate power-empathy relationships. Future research may explore different Thai samples and utilize different measures created for Eastern samples.

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Chapter 1

Rationale

As social beings, adaptive, appropriate, and positive interpersonal interactions are an important part of our social landscape. One of the most important aspects of these interactions is empathy (Rankin, Kramer, & Miller, 2005). Empathy has been implicated in adaptive social behavior such as prosociality, cooperation, and morality (Eisenberg & Miller, 1987; Hoffman, 2000; Decety & Cowell, 2014). In contrast, the lack of empathy has been implicated in aggressive and antisocial behavior (Miller & Eisenberg, 1988; Jolliffe & Farrington, 2004), and is a hallmark of mental disorders such as autism (Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004) and psychopathy (Blair, 2005). In this regard, the role of empathy in ensuring positive social interactions is apparent. Enabling us to act flexibly in social environments, empathy guards against social conflict and contributes to the maintenance of a healthy and well-functioning society (Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004; Reniers, Corcoran, Drake, Shryane, & Völlm, 2011).

As a multi-component construct, empathy has been examined in relation to personality differences, specifically with regard to inhibiting or encouraging variables. Several factors that have recently been studied in psychology literature are power and mindfulness. Power is an important determinant of one's position within a social hierarchy – be it within an organization, a group setting, or within intimate family relationships – and can have a profound effect on one's social outlook and behavior (Anderson, John, & Keltner, 2012). There is some evidence documenting the detrimental effects of power on components relating to social competence, namely the ability to take the perspective of others (Galinsky, Magee, Inesi, & Gruenfeld, 2006), to abide by social norms (Ward & Keltner, 1998), to develop interpersonal sensitivity (Keltner et al., 1993; Fiske, 1993), and to view others' actions and motives favorably (i.e., not driven by self-interest). Furthermore, power has been

indirectly linked to dominance and social influence, suggesting that higher power often leads to greater opportunities to change the behaviors, thoughts, or feelings of others (Anderson & Berdahl, 2002). On the other hand, the socially counterproductive effects associated with power have been shown to be reduced via mindful practices. The concept of mindfulness originated from Eastern psychology and has been defined as a state of present-focus and non-judgmental awareness (Kabat-Zinn, 1994; Bishop et al., 2004). Often centering on the idea of increasing one's overall well-being, literature on mindfulness within interpersonal contexts is rare. however, it been associated with improved social skills (Beauchemin, Hutchins, & Patterson, 2008), lower self-focused attention (Wei et al., 2015), and increased empathy (Winning & Boag, 2015; Trent, Park, Bercovitz, & Chapman, 2015). The study of mindfulness and its role in psychotherapy has garnered attention in the recent years and is of particular importance in East-West cross-cultural studies.

The combined effects of power, empathy and mindfulness has strong implications for our social behavior. With regard to these constructs, our present study attempts to elaborate on the interactive effects of one's personal sense of power (high power versus low power), mindfulness (the level of mindfulness present in one's life), and empathy (one's ability to empathize). While power and its effects on personality and socio-psychological attributes have often been examined in the context of leadership, little research has extensively studied the effects of power on one's overall ability to empathize. This brings in to question the ability of the powerful to act in the interests of others and themselves. Likewise, the majority of research on mindfulness has linked the practice of mindfulness and trait mindfulness to improved psychopathology, suggesting that mindfulness may have the potential to mitigate the effects of power (e.g., Seagal et al., 2002). In the present research, we examine the effect of power on cognitive and affective empathy and include mindfulness as a potential moderator for the relationship between power and empathy.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Empathy

According to Baron-Cohen and Wheelright (2004), empathy involves recognizing, appropriately responding to, and feeling in the self the emotions of others, and is often linked to prosocial behavior. While there is still debate surrounding the definition of empathy (Batson, 2009), the construct is commonly viewed as existing on two dimensions, in the form of affective empathy and cognitive empathy (Davis, 1983).

Affective empathy refers to one's emotional reactivity towards the emotions of others. One's emotional response can either be matched (e.g., feeling sad when another person is sad) or appropriate (e.g., showing concern towards the other who is sad) (Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004). One form of affective empathy, which is also considered empathy in its most basic form, is emotional contagion (De Waal, 2008). Emotional contagion allows one to experience the emotions of others without relying on conscious effort. More sophisticated systems of empathy, such as empathic distress, are built upon emotional contagion. Empathic distress is a feeling of distress vicariously elicited upon seeing distress of another (Hoffman, 1990). It is believed to promote prosocial behavior by producing an aversive state that is alleviated by helping another in distress (Hoffman, 2000; Decety, Bartal, Uzefovsky, & Knafo-Noam, 2016). In a series of studies, Cialdini, Schaller, Houlihan, Arps, and Beaman (1987) showed that having more empathy leads to experiencing higher empathic distress upon witnessing another's suffering. Levels of empathic distress also positively predicted the subsequent reported likelihood to help. These patterns, however, were not observed when distress could be reduced through other means, such as escaping from situation in which distress is occurring, or when participants were led to believe that their mood could not be improved.

Another dimension of empathy is cognitive empathy, which refers to the ability to construct and understand the mental states of others (Hogan, 1969; Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004). As a major component of cognitive empathy, perspective-taking refers to the ability to adopt the perspective of others (Shamay-Tsoory, Aharon-Peretz, & Perry, 2009). This ability may facilitate the formation and maintenance of social bonds by allowing individuals to mentally anticipate the behavior of others, and to act appropriately in social situations (Davis, 1983). By making the distinction between the self and others less clear, perspective-taking allows one to place oneself in the arbitrary position of others, and to subsequently act more prosocially, with less aggression and prejudice (Galinsky, Ku, & Wang, 2005). Moreover, it has been associated with greater identification with others (Davis, Conklin, Smith, & Luce, 1996); committing less attribution errors and stereotyping (Regan & Totten, 1975; Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000); as well as altruism and helping behaviors (Batson, 1991). In sum, in contrast to affective empathy, cognitive empathy is associated with higher-level cognitive processes involving accurate perception of emotional states outside of one's self. In studies of empathy, both affective and cognitive components of empathy should be addressed.

Power

Power has been broadly defined as "the capacity to influence other people" (Galinsky et al., 2006). It is typically considered to change as a function of holding valuable resources and having the ability to administer rewards or punishments to others. High-power individuals tend to have access to valued resources (e.g., wealth and information) and possess ability to reward or punish others. In contrast, individuals with low power tend to lack these resources and the ability to reward or punish others (Anderson & Berdahl, 2002).

Existing literature on power has focused on the possession of power. More specifically, those possessing high power have the capacity to control or influence others,

while those with low power are subjected to the control or influence of others. In this manner, power has been understood within a relationship-specific context where an interaction between two or more individuals is imperative (Emerson, 1962; Anderson et al., 2012). In concordance with this conceptualization of power, past experimental studies employing the power construct have assigned participants to situations simulating the control of resources. For example, participants are given a set of lottery tickets or an amount of money, and asked to allocate these resources to other people (e.g., Galinsky, Gruenfeld, & Magee, 2003; Anderson & Berdahl, 2002). Power was assessed based upon how much was kept versus how much was given away by the participant. Generally, individuals in the high-power condition tend to retain more resources and give away less, and vice versa.

Alternatively, power may be thought of as one's perception of, or personal belief in, their capacity to influence others, regardless of status or resource possession. This definition of power posits that an individual does not need to engage in the act of controlling others to experience a sense of power (Anderson et al., 2012). For instance, an individual may possess high sense of power if he or she influence others multiple social-relational situations, regardless of having actual resources or predisposed social power (Barnlund, 1962). In a study examining leadership, Kenny and Zaccaro (1983) proposed a model which associated the emergence of leadership with a stable personality trait. They noted, however, that leadership emergence was distinct from leadership effectiveness, which may be influenced more by situational factors than one's personality traits. Despite this distinction, the finding lends to the idea that powerful individuals who assume leadership roles consistently do so across different group situations.

On the other hand, it is possible for an individual in a position of power to possess a low sense of power due to dispositional personality traits or ineffectual use of power (e.g., improper management of employees). An example of this dynamic is parent-child

relationships. While a parent has complete control over a child's resources, he or she may experience a lack of power due to factors outside of their control (e.g., a child's personality and behavior) (Anderson et al., 2012). Likewise, individuals in supervisory roles in an organizational setting may experience low sense of power when desired or expected job outcomes are not met. These findings assist in the conceptualization of personal sense of power as a psychological state, rather than a relational concept, which embodies a cognitive perception of one's own capacity to influence and control (Anderson et al., 2012). Experiments employing the personal sense of power construct have thus relied on power manipulations which had participants recall a circumstance in which they possessed power (in the high-power condition), or a circumstance in which another possessed power over them (in the low-power condition). This power-priming procedure was consistently shown to be successful (e.g., Galinsky et al., 2003; Anderson et al., 2012; Mast, Jonas, & Hall 2009; Galinsky et al., 2006).

Although research examining the impact of power on empathy have been scarce, a few have documented the opposite effect of power on similar or related constructs, such as emotional complementarity, emotional reciprocity, empathic concern and compassion (e.g., van Kleef et al., 2008; Galinsky et al., 2006; Mast et al., 2009). Indeed, the presence of power systematically affects group processes and, like empathy, plays a large role in regulating one's social behavior. Power has been shown to encourage efficacious action (Galinsky et al., 2003), lead to better self-esteem and well-being, and to more positive affect and less negative affect (Anderson et al., 2012). In a study conducted by Galinsky et al. (2003), participants were told to occupy either a managerial position or a subordinate role (the former being a position of high power compared to the latter) and to engage in a game of blackjack, where they may choose whether or not they would like to take a card (to hit versus to stand). Participants who were assigned managerial positions showed an increased likelihood to take

a card, suggesting that power is associated with greater tendency to take risks and action. This lends support to the notion that high power individuals often assert themselves more, have access to resource-rich environments, have more freedom and agency, and experience more success (van Kleef et al., 2008; Fiske, 1993).

However, additional evidence suggests that power is often fueled by self-interest (Galinsky et al., 2003) and a need for dominance, which also affect risk-taking behavior, stereotyping, and emotional insensitivity (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006; Fiske, 1993; van Kleef et al., 2008). This may negatively impact one's social relations, as low power individuals are typically denied the resources and means with which the powerful are granted. Furthermore, compared to low-power individuals, high-power individuals maintain a more rigid and personal self-identity, adapt less to the identities of others, and may psychologically distance themselves from others (Galinsky et al., 2006). Consequently, power has also been associated with decreased perspective taking; erroneous judgment; diminished reciprocity of emotions in others; and less complex interpersonal relationships (Galinsky et al., 2006; van Kleef et al., 2008; Woike, 1994).

There are a number of premises on which power may affect empathy. First, because powerful individuals carry valuable resources and means, they would be less dependent on others. This implies that they have less need to communicate favorably with others, to understand, and to adapt to them. Indeed, priming in individuals with high power, compared to low power, has led to decreased accuracy in detecting and comprehending the perspectives and emotional states of others (Galinsky et al., 2006). Second, the powerful are often met with increased demands on attention. This posts difficulty to attend to others, leading to erroneous judgment of and appropriate response to the emotions of others (Fiske, 1993). Finally, the powerful have been shown to generally experience more positive affect than

negative affect, and thus may fail to respond with complementary or reciprocal emotions to the suffering of others (van Kleef et al., 2008; Galinsky et al., 2006).

Mindfulness

Mindfulness was developed initially as a Buddhist way of cultivating a frame of mind, through which one can view and experience his or her life. The concept has been increasingly incorporated as an Eastern, psychological state associated with improvement of psychopathology, and has been the focus of much medicinal and psychotherapeutic research (e.g., Seagal et al., 2002; Lepera, 2011; Well, 1999; Kristeller & Harlett, 1999; Marlart, 2002). The core goals of mindfulness practices are to foster a state of acceptance, non-judgment, and loving-kindness. They have been purposed to increase open-mindedness, mental clarity, and well-being; as well as to reduce depression, anxiety, and stress (Reb, Narayanan, & Chaturvedi, 2012; Kabat-Zinn, 1985). In a study by Seagal et al. (2002), mindfulness-based cognitive-behavioral therapy (MCBT) was shown to be significantly more effective at reducing relapse in depression than control groups. As a construct involving high regulation, attention, and present-moment awareness of one's self and the environment, mindfulness and power may function on similar cognitive and affective planes.

Following from previous definitions, mindfulness has also been conceptualized in Western psychology through a socio-cognitive framework. Langer and Moldoveanu (2000) proposed that mindfulness involved the ability to creatively attend to novel stimuli in one's environment, encouraging the perspective of an open-minded observer. Considered a non-meditative conceptualization of mindfulness, 'socio-cognitive mindfulness' encourages increased sensitivity to one's surroundings and likewise to the present moment (Trent, Park, Bercovitz, & Chapman, 2015). This was defined in opposition to mindlessness, which presupposes an automatic, routine process of being – without awareness or attention to one's external surroundings, actions, internal thoughts and emotions (Brown & Ryan, 2003). In this

regard, mindfulness can also be seen as a trait that identifies one's baseline level of mindful awareness in daily life (Reb et al., 2012).

For our present study, we propose that the conceptual bases underlying empathy and mindfulness function together to facilitate similar outcomes. Indeed, the ability to extend one's awareness of emotions outside of the self and to develop greater sensitivity to others' emotions in interpersonal relationships becomes especially beneficial in encouraging empathy and positive social environments. A number of studies have proposed that the presence of mindfulness may enhance empathy in social relations. For instance, Wei et al. (2015) demonstrated that mindfulness may assist counselors in reducing self-focused attention, thereby increasing the counselor's ability to relate to the client with kindness and compassion. A positive relationship between practicing mindfulness and improved empathic functioning was also observed in studies employing both self-report and non-self-report measures (e.g., Greason & Cashwell, 2011; Lesh, 1970; Keefe, 1979; Trent et al., 2015). Within marital relationships, mindfulness was shown to enhance one's ability to effectively identify and communicate emotions to one's partner, thereby improving marital satisfaction (Wachs & Cordova, 2007). Finally, a study by Reb et al. (2012) provided preliminary evidence for the benefits of mindfulness in interpersonal settings. A sample of 96 supervisors and employees completed an online survey measuring leader mindfulness, well-being measures and overall job performance. Findings showed that leader trait mindfulness was positively related to employee performance and negatively to emotional exhaustion and deviance (Reb et al., 2012). Trait mindfulness has also been shown to assist with ethical decision making when unethical decisions stem from a lack of awareness of others and of upholding self- focused ethical standards (Ruesdy, 2010). Individuals who scored high in trait mindfulness were found to cheat less often than those who scored low in trait mindfulness.

Conclusively, these findings suggest that mindfulness may produce desirable outcomes for both the mindful individual and the community with which he or she is involved.

The Current Study

Although previous research has established the relationships between power and empathy, and mindfulness and empathy, there has been no empirical study examining the combined interaction of empathy, power, and mindfulness. Premised on the notion that society and organizations are hierarchically structured, powerful individuals may assume highly influential roles and engage in behaviors that significantly affect the outcomes of individuals under their supervision. Thus, we propose that the ability of such individuals to empathize, and to identify factors that encourage or impede empathy, has great implications for ensuring positive social relations and the general well-being of a community or society.

Our present study aimed to explore the relationships between empathy, power, and mindfulness among Thai college students in the following ways. First, we intend to provide further evidence for the relationship between power and empathy. Much of current evidence has not addressed the direct relationship between power and empathy, and has only been suggestive of power's inhibitory influence on empathy. In addition, we want to examine whether cognitive and affective components of empathy are differentially influenced by power. Second, we aim to establish the relationship between mindfulness (as opposed to meditative mindfulness) and empathy. Current research on the practice of mindfulness has neglected the possibility that mindfulness may predispose or enhance one's ability to empathize, with reported effects often requiring engagement in meditative, structured or purposeful practices of mindfulness. Thus, we also aim to explore the influence of trait mindfulness, rather than state mindfulness, on empathy. Finally, we will attempt to describe the relationship between empathy, power, and mindfulness. Specifically, we want examine the effects of mindfulness on the relationship between empathy and power.

In summary, we hypothesize that:

(1) There will be a negative relationship between personal sense of power and empathy. Individuals in the high power condition will score lower in empathy than individuals in the low power condition. Additionally, power will negatively affect both cognitive and affective components of empathy.

(2) There will be a positive relationship between mindfulness and empathy. Individuals who score high in mindfulness will also score high on empathy. The opposite will be true of individuals who score low in mindfulness.

(3) Mindfulness levels will moderate the power-empathy relationship. Specifically, the power-empathy relationship will be weaker for those who score low in mindfulness than those who score high in mindfulness.

The hypothetical framework of this study is illustrated in Figure 1.
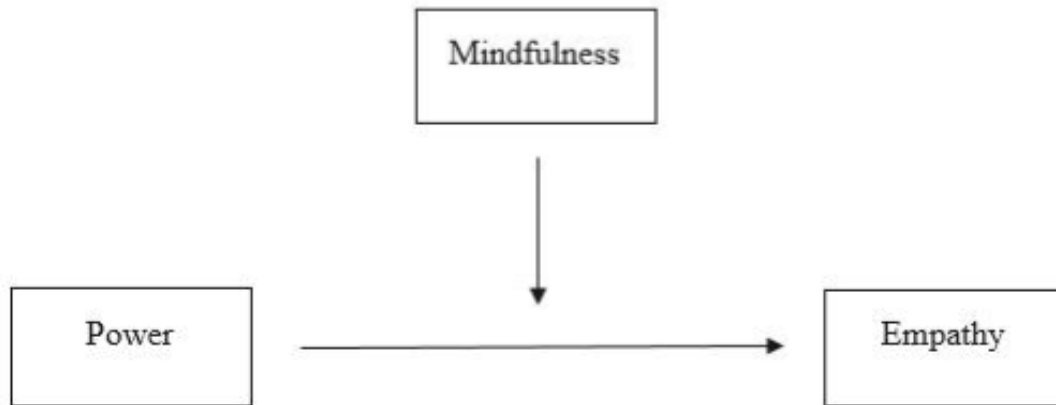
Figure 1. Moderation model of mindfulness on power-empathy relationship.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Design

The study employed a between-group quasi-experimental design. Independent variables included mindfulness and personal sense of power (high-power versus low- power conditions). The dependent variable was empathy (overall empathy, cognitive empathy and affective empathy).

Participants

A total of 249 Thai people participated in the study online. The link to the study was distributed to participants via social networks (e.g., Facebook pages and www.pantip.com). Our target sample consisted of only university students. Thus, in our initial scanning, 54 participants were eliminated due to unidentified student statuses or identified non-student statuses. Data distribution in each power condition were then checked for outliers. Four participants whose scores were 2 SDs away from their group means were eliminated. A total of 191 participants remained, 66 and 125 of which were male and female, respectively. The mean age was 21.86 ($SD = 4.19$). Participant-scanning procedure is illustrated in Figure 2. Participation in the study was voluntary.
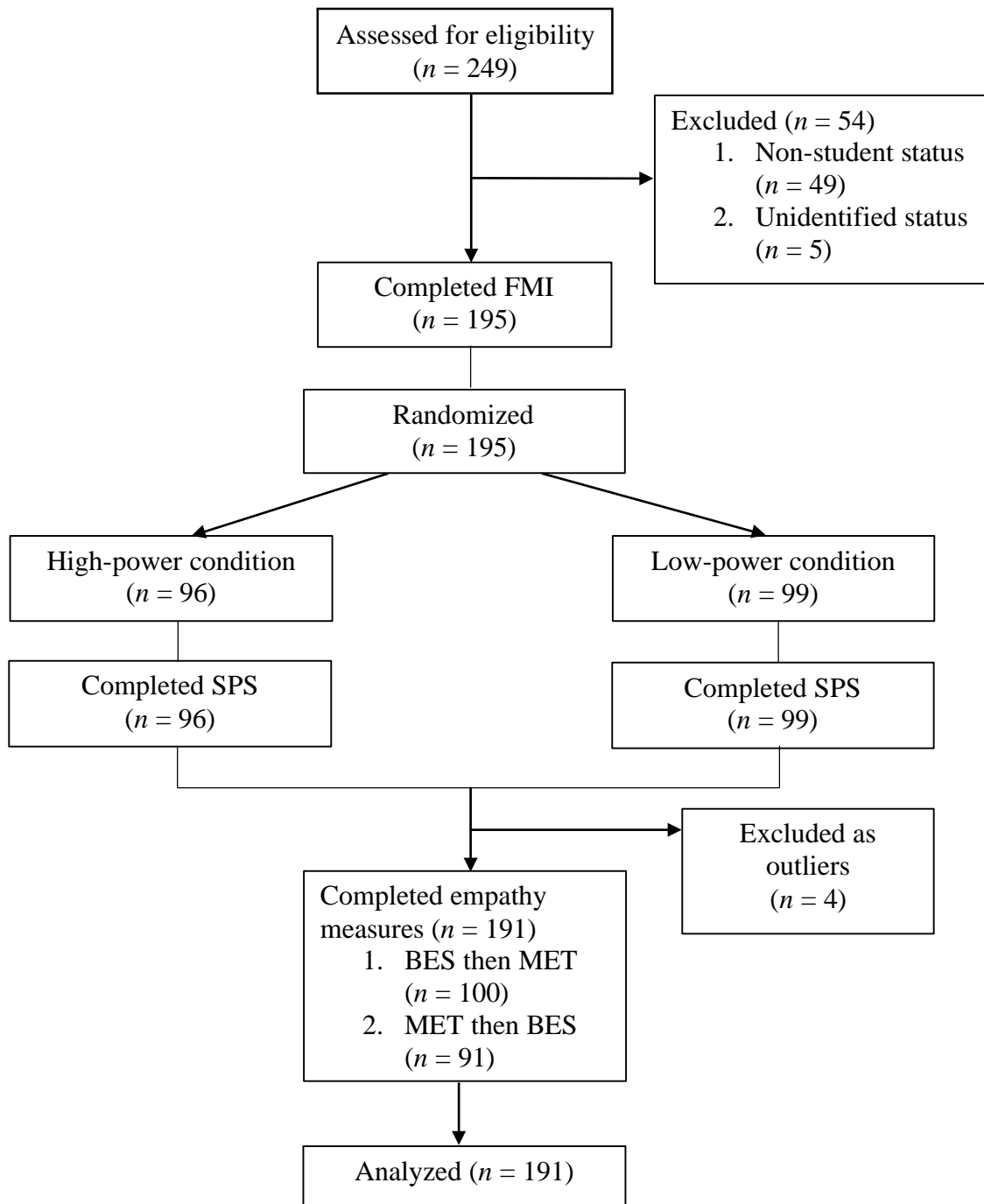
Figure 2. Participant flow diagram

Manipulation

Power. The manipulation of power was adapted from Galinsky et al. (2003) and involved a cognitive priming technique intended to induce high and low power within participants (see Appendix A). A Thai version was developed through back-translation and used in the current study. The manipulation consisted of two parts. In the first part, participants were asked to write about a personal experience in which they either had power or did not have power. Participants in the high-power condition were asked to write about a situation in which they had power and were able to control, influence, or evaluate others. On the other hand, those in the low-power condition were asked to write about a situation in which they had no power and were subject to the control or evaluation of others. In both conditions, participants were required to write no lesser than 200 to 300 characters. In the second part, participants were presented with a scenario in which either themselves or a friend were given seven lottery tickets for the chance to win a 5000-Baht coupon at a restaurant. Those in the high-power condition were told that the tickets were given to them, and then asked how many tickets they would give to a friend and how many they would keep for themselves. Those in the low-power condition were told that the tickets were given to their friend, and then were asked to predict how many tickets their friend would give to them and how many he or she would keep to himself or herself. A pilot study was conducted to test the effectiveness of the power manipulation in 32 participants. The independent t-test revealed that the manipulation was able to separate participants into two groups, $t(30) = 2.69$, $p = .012$, with participants in the high-power condition ($M = 31.75$) reporting a higher sense of power than those in the low- power condition ($M = 27.15$).

Material and Measures

Demographic Variables. At the beginning of the study, participants were asked to fill out their demographic information, including gender, age, and student status.

Mindfulness. The Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory (FMI; Walach, Buchheld, Buttenmüller, Kleinknecht, & Schmidt, 2006) is a self-report measure of mindfulness. A Thai version was developed through back-translation and used in the current study. The scale consisted of 14 items which assessed four components of mindfulness: present-moment awareness, non-judgment towards the self and others, openness to negative emotional states, and process-oriented insight understanding. The scale was rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = "strongly disagree" and 5 = "strongly agree"), and produced an overall score of mindfulness. Examples of the FMI items were "I am open to the experience of the present moment" and "I am impatient with myself and with others" (see Appendix B). Higher scores indicate higher levels of mindfulness. The CITC values of the items ranged from .25 to .66. Overall, the FMI showed good internal consistency ($\alpha = .82$).

Power. The Sense of Power Scale (SPS; Anderson et al., 2012) is a self-report measure of sense of power. A Thai version was developed through back-translation and used in the current study. The measure consisted of eight items rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = "strongly disagree" and 5 = "strongly agree"). Each item was preceded with the statement "In my relationships with others." The scale produced an overall score where higher scores indicated a higher personal sense of power. Examples of the SPS items were "I can get him/her/them to listen to what I say" and "Even if I voice them, my views have little sway" (see Appendix C). The CITC values of the SPS items ranged from .14 to .67. Overall, the SPS showed good internal consistency ($\alpha = .78$).

Empathy. Two measures of empathy were employed in this study. The first was the Basic Empathy Scale (BES; Jolliffe & Farrington, 2006). A Thai version was developed through back-translate. As a self-report measure, the BES contained 20 items and tapped into two components of empathy: affective empathy and cognitive empathy. The scale was rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = "strongly disagree" and 5 = "strongly agree"), and provided an

overall score of empathy. Examples of the BES items were "I can understand my friend's happiness when she/he does well at something" and "I find it hard to know when my friends are frightened" (see Appendix D). The CITC values of the BES items ranged from .14 to .48. Overall, the BES showed good internal consistency (α = .81).

The second measure of empathy was an adapted, Thai version of the Multifaceted Empathy Test (MET; Edele, Dziobek, & Keller, 2013). The original version of the MET consisted of 40 picture stimuli depicting people expressing various emotions. For each picture, participants were asked two questions. The first was used to assess cognitive empathy and provided an overall score of state cognitive empathy. Participants were asked "What emotion is this person feeling?" and had to choose the best answer out of four given choices (one target and three distractors). Correct answers were awarded one point each; wrong answers were awarded zero points. The second question assessed affective empathy and provided an overall score of state affective empathy. Participants were asked "How much do you empathize with this person?" and had to rate their answer on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = "Not at all" and 5 = "Very much").

As an adaptation to a Thai sample, the MET was back-translated from English to Thai and was modified through an assessment of inter-rater agreement. Three clinical and counseling psychology professors and two Masters students in counseling psychology were asked to complete the test. Pictures that retained incorrect identification of the emotion presented were eliminated based on a criterion which required correct identification from at least four raters. Twenty-three of the original 40 pictures were retained. Additionally, the discriminatory power for each picture were calculated for cognitive and affective empathy. Participants were divided into either low- or high-scoring groups, with cut points based on mean scores. This grouping was then used as an independent variable in an independent *t*-test. Six pictures showed no significant discriminatory power and were eliminated. Only 17

pictures were used in data analyses. Additionally, a significant positive correlation between the BES and MET was found ($r = .27$, $p < .01$), indicating concurrent validity of empathy measures.

Procedure

Participants completed the study online via a distributed Google Form link. They were first required to read and voluntarily state their agreement with the content and direction of the study on an informed consent page. Participants who agreed to the terms were led to the second and third pages to provide demographic information and complete the FMI, respectively. They were then asked to toss a coin. This was used to randomly allocate participants into different power conditions. Those who indicated that they landed on a head were assigned to the high-power condition, and those who landed on a tail were assigned to the low-power condition. After the power manipulation, participants completed the SPS and were asked to toss a coin a second time. Those who landed on a head were led to the page containing the BES, followed by pages containing the MET. Those who landed on a tail were led to pages containing the same tests in the reverse order (the MET before the BES). This was done to counterbalance the order effect across the sample. After completing the empathy tests, participants were required to submit their data, which signaled the end of the study.

Data Analysis

Data analyses were performed using SPSS, version 23. Scores from each measure were first analyzed through descriptive statistics, which provided the distributed means and standard deviation of the scores. All three hypotheses were then tested using moderated multiple regression (MMR) analysis.

Chapter 4

Results

Manipulation Check

An independent *t*-test was conducted to compare sense of power scores between high-power and low-power conditions. Results showed that on average those in the high-power condition ($M = 28.51$, $SD = 0.42$) scored significantly higher on the SPS than those in the low-power condition ($M = 26.51$, $SD = 0.51$), $t(189) = 2.69$, $p = .008$. This suggests that the power manipulation was successful.

Another independent *t*-test was conducted to test for the order effect associated with the BES and MET. Results revealed no significant differences between participants who completed the BES before the MET nor after. Specifically, scores between participants who completed the BES before the MET ($M = 72.78$, $SD = 9.311$) and those who completed the BES after the MET ($M = 73.37$, $SD = 9.32$) were not significantly different, $t(189) = - 0.44$, *ns.*. Also, scores for cognitive and affective empathy were not significantly different between participants who completed the BES before the MET ($M = 12.28$, $SD = 2.05$; $M = 50.40$, $SD = 14.30$, respectively) and those who completed the BES after the MET ($M = 12.02$, $SD = 2.08$; $M = 52.04$, $SD = 12.33$, respectively), $t(189) = 0.86$, *ns.*; $t(189) = -0.85$, *ns.*, respectively.

Preliminary Analyses

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Power, Mindfulness, BES, and Cognitive and Affective Empathy

(MET Cognitive and Affective) (N = 191)

	Min	Max	*M*	*SD*	Highest Possible Score
Power	13.00	40.00	27.38	4.67	40.00
Mindfulness	31.00	70.00	51.66	7.26	70.00
Empathy (BES)	44.00	96.00	73.06	9.29	100.00
Empathy (MET)	28.00	96.00	63.34	13.30	102
Cognitive Empathy (MET Cognitive)	5.00	16.00	12.16	2.06	17
Affective Empathy (MET Affective)	17.00	84.00	51.18	13.39	85

An analysis of descriptive statistics was carried out for each measure. These results are summarized in Table 1. Furthermore, a series of Pearson's correlations were carried out to determine the zero-order relationship between our measures. Results revealed a positive and significant correlation between power and mindfulness. Consistent with prior research, a significant negative correlation between power and cognitive empathy was also found. However, neither power nor mindfulness showed a significant relationship with empathy as measured by both the BES or MET. In addition, significant and positive correlations between the two measures of empathy (the BES and MET) were observed, as well as significant relationships between gender and empathy. Gender was negatively correlated with empathy as measured by the BES, and cognitive empathy as measured by the MET. For this reason, gender was included as a control variable in further analyses. In addition, we observed a

significant positive correlation between age and mindfulness. Preliminary analyses are

summarized in Table 2.

Table 2

Inter-correlations between Gender, Age, Power, Mindfulness, Empathy (BES), and

Cognitive and Affective Empathy (MET Cognitive and Affective) (N = 191)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Gender	-	.05	-.06	.10	-.19**	.06	-.22**	.10
2. Age		-	.05	.18**	-.04	.07	-.07	.08
3. Power			-	.37**	-.01	-.04	.12*	-.05
4. Mindfulness				-	-.04	-.04	-.09	-.02
5. Empathy (BES)					-	.27**	.17*	.24**
6. Empathy (MET)						-	.04	.98**
7. Cognitive Empathy (MET Cognitive)							-	-.12
8. Affective Empathy (MET Affective)								-

Note Gender was dichotomously coded (Male = 1, Female = 0).
* $p < .05$ (1-tailed).
** $p < .01$ (1-tailed).

Main Effects and Interactions

A series of MMR analyses were conducted to test the main effects and interactions of

power and mindfulness on empathy. For all analyses, SPS and FMI scores were mean-

centered to reduce multi-collinearity and were used as independent variables. Scores on the

BES, overall MET, MET cognitive empathy, and MET affective empathy, were used as

dependent variables in the first, second, third, and fourth analyses, respectively. As gender

was shown to affect scores on the BES and MET cognitive empathy, gender was placed in

the first block to control for this effect. Mean-centered SPS and FMI scores were placed in

the second block. Scores for interactions, calculated by multiplying mean-centered SPS and

FMI scores, were placed in the third block.

Table 3

Main Effects and Interaction of Power and Mindfulness on Empathy (BES) (N = 191)

	β	R	R^2	ΔR^2	F	ΔF
Step 1		.19	.036		7.00**	
Gender	-.19**					
Step 2		.19	.036	.001	2.35	.06
Gender	-.19*					
Power	-.01					
Mindfulness	-.02					
Step 3		.19	.036	.000	1.76	.01
Gender	-.19*					
Power	-.01					
Mindfulness	-.02					
Power x Mindfulness	-.01					

Note Gender was dichotomously coded (Male = 1, Female = 0).
* $p < .05$.
** $p < .01$.

Results of the first MMR analysis are shown in Table 3. Gender had a significant main effect on empathy as measured by the BES. However, after controlling for gender, neither power nor mindfulness had significant main effects on empathy. Also, no significant interaction was observed.

Table 4

Main Effects and Interaction of Power and Mindfulness on Empathy (MET) (N = 191)

	β	R	R^2	ΔR^2	F	ΔF
Step 1		.06	.004		0.75	
Gender	.06					
Step 2		.08	.006	.002	0.37	0.19
Gender	.07					
Power	.02					
Mindfulness	.03					
Step 3		.09	.008	.002	0.39	0.46
Gender	.07					
Power	.02					
Mindfulness	.04					
Power ×Mindfulness	.05					

Note Gender was dichotomously coded (Male = 1, Female = 0).
* $p < .05$.
** $p < .01$.

Results of the second MMR analysis are shown in Table 4. Gender had no significant main effect on empathy as measured by the MET. After controlling for gender, no significant main effects or interactions of power and mindfulness on empathy were observed.

Table 5

Main Effects and Interaction of Power and Mindfulness on Cognitive Empathy (MET

Cognitive) (N = 191)

	β	R	R^2	ΔR^2	F	ΔF
Step 1		.22	.047		9.27**	
Gender	-.22**					
Step 2		.27	.073	.026	4.90**	2.64
Gender	-.20**					
Power	-.16*					
Mindfulness	-.13					
Step 3		.27	.074	.001	3.71**	0.19
Gender	-.20**					
Power	.16*					
Mindfulness	-.13					
Power × Mindfulness	-.03					

Note Gender was dichotomously coded (Male = 1, Female = 0).
* $p < .05$.
** $p < .01$.

Results of the third MMR analysis are shown in Table 5. Gender had a significant

main effect on cognitive empathy as measured by the MET. After controlling for gender,

power showed a significant and negative main effect on cognitive empathy. However, no

main effect of mindfulness was found. Also, no significant interaction was observed.

Table 6

Main Effect and Interaction of Power and Mindfulness on Affective Empathy (MET Affective) (N = 191)

	β	R	R^2	ΔR^2	F	ΔF
Step 1		.10	.009		1.74	
Gender	.10					
Step 2		.11	.012	.003	0.74	0.24
Gender	.10					
Power	-.04					
Mindfulness	-.01					
Step 3		.12	.015	.003	0.69	0.55
Gender	.09					
Power	-.05					
Mindfulness	-.02					
Power × Mindfulness	.05					

Note Gender was dichotomously coded (Male = 1, Female = 0)
* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$

Results of the fourth MMR analysis are shown in Table 6. Gender did not have a significant main effect on affective empathy as measured by the MET. After controlling for gender, no significant main effect or interaction of power and mindfulness on affective empathy was observed.

Chapter 5

Discussion

Our study aimed to explore the relationships between sense of power, mindfulness and empathy within a sample of Thai university students. Our results showed that power had a negative effect on empathy, specifically on cognitive but not affective empathy. This is partially in line with our first hypothesis. However, inconsistent with the second and third hypotheses, there was no significant relationship between mindfulness and empathy, nor a significant interaction between mindfulness and power on empathy.

Consistent with Hypothesis 1, our study indicated that individuals with a higher sense of power showed lower cognitive empathy but not affective empathy or overall empathy. This implies is that individuals with a high sense of power are less likely to accurately identify and understand the emotions of others. This finding is in line with previous studies by Galinsky et al. (2006) and Decelles et al. (2012), which showed that power diminished the ability to take the perspective of others and also increased self-focused interest. The finding may be explained via the idea that powerful individuals often depend less on others, and thus have less need to attend to or to communicate favorably with others (Galinsky et al., 2006). Premised on this notion, empathy may not be an immediate requirement in their social interactions. Alternatively, power may prevent one from mentally disengaging from the self and allocating attention towards others, leading to a diminished ability to empathize.

On the other hand, no significant effect was found for power on affective empathy. This finding is not supportive of a study by Kleef et al. (2008), which demonstrated that power diminished emotional reciprocity and complementarity, causing high-power individuals to feel less distress and compassion towards another's suffering. Two findings from previous studies may explain this lack of association. First, high-power individuals have been shown to react with emotion only in situations where doing so is beneficial to their

personal goals (Van Kleef & Cote, 2007). Second, high-power individuals often gravitate towards and report more positive baseline emotions than low-power individuals, as well as less motivation to emotionally connect with others (Anderson & Berdahl, 2002). Taken together, these findings suggest that for high-power individuals, the ability to 'feel with' others is less a priority than the ability to 'discern' emotions in others, especially in situations where their goals cannot be met or where distress is more likely to occur. However, more data is needed to confirm this theory.

Inconsistent with Hypothesis 2, our study also showed that mindfulness did not predict overall empathy nor cognitive or affective empathy. This finding is not supportive of previous studies showing significant relationships between mindfulness and cognitive and affective empathy (Trent et al., 2015; Fulton & Cashwell, 2015), perspective-taking (Gilroy, 2011; Hoops, 2009; Kingsbury, 2009) and self-compassion (Birnie, Speca, & Carlson, 2010). The failure to detect a significant effect of mindfulness may be explained in several ways. First, scores on mindfulness may have been affected by the lack of a mindfulness induction procedure or mindfulness-based intervention. (i.e., mindfulness training, Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction). Previous studies on mindfulness were conducted to test the effectiveness of an intervention or form of therapy (e.g. Kristeller & Hallett, 1999; Beauchemin, Hutchins, & Patterson, 2008). Thus, significant scores on mindfulness measures were dependent upon the success of these procedures. However, due to resource and time limitations, these procedures were not employed in the current study to induce mindfulness. Second, mindfulness may be interpreted differently by Thai participants. According to Schmidt (2011), notions of mindfulness in the West have been secularized and removed from its original spiritual, Eastern, Buddhism-based descriptions. Instead, the concept has been adapted to suit Western, quantifiable scientific approaches and is primarily associated with the act of meditation. By contrast, Eastern mindfulness (originally termed *sati*) is considered

integral to the Buddhist way of life that many Easterners have internalized rather than practiced. Cultivating mindfulness is a dynamic process involving direct experience, reflective introspection and mindful engagement. It is also deeply embedded within Buddhist teachings that place meditation as merely one in a range of other practices to engage in mindfulness (Rosch, 2007; Christopher, Charoensuk, Gilbert, Neary, & Pearce, 2009). The majority of previous studies on mindfulness, including those previously mentioned, have focused on participants from Western populations. As a consequence of this conceptual discrepancy between mindfulness in Eastern and Western contexts, responses to the FMI might have been an incomplete representation of mindfulness as understood by Thai participants. However, more data is needed to confirm this theory.

Inconsistent with Hypothesis 3, no moderating effect of mindfulness was detected on the power-empathy relationship. In interpreting our data, we kept in mind that power and mindfulness are both culturally-nested constructs. Similar to mindfulness, the concept of power may be bound to Western culture. Generally speaking, collectivist Eastern cultures are more likely to value community-based goals than individualist Western cultures (Datu, 2014). Because culture affects how individuals think, feel and interact, the differences in these goals may affect how individuals exercise power. Specifically, the idea that possessing power opens up opportunities for personal gain and success may be limited to Western populations. Eastern populations which place a higher value on community may exercise power for prosocial and altruistic outcomes that benefit themselves and their community. Despite a significant effect of power on empathy, a Western-based power priming procedure may have activated responses that were inconsistent with an Eastern understanding of power. Combined with cultural differences in mindfulness, this may have interfered with the detection of an interaction effect where both mindfulness and power were conceptually skewed.

Strengths, Limitations, and Future Study

The current study had several strengths and limitations. One strength was our direct manipulation of power, which allowed for the establishment of a causal relationship between power and empathy. Including the procedure also allowed for better control of confounding variables associated with power. Another strength of the study was the customization of empathy measures. Because the BES was designed to measure empathy as a trait rather than a state (in cases where the onset of empathic feeling is subject to situational changes), the MET was included to account for empathy as a state. Furthermore, the MET measured both cognitive and affective empathy and allowed for more complex interpretations of the data. This also prevented the possibility that changes in empathy following the power manipulation may have been missed by the BES. By relying on participants' responses to visual stimuli rather than self-report, the MET also reduces the potential for socially desirable responses (Dziobek et al., 2008). Finally, modifying our Thai version of the MET ensured that the measure was sound and appropriate for our Thai sample.

The study was, however, limited in both scope and generalizability. Firstly, although the online nature of the study allowed for variation in demographic data and a large sample size, it limited the monitoring of participants. Informal participant feedback expressed that their attention and effort waned towards the end of the study, suggesting that the study's duration can be shortened. While this was expressed by some participants, other participants did not express any difficulty or confusion completing the study.

Secondly, including only university students in the sample may have limited the generalizability of our results across the Thai population. Power has been shown to be inconsistent across different social contexts and relationships (Anderson, Spataro, & Flynn, 2008). While examining responses to the power manipulation writing prompt, the majority of participants expressed similar experiences of power that occurred during group-based

university coursework or within family relationships (i.e., power differences between siblings, cousins, or parents). Few responses described experiences within organizational settings or supervisor-supervisee roles mentioned in previous studies. Thus, the similarity of reported experiences and lack of variation within our participant pool restricts the generalizability of our findings to Thai university students. Future replications may consider samples of working-age individuals or retirees and may also compare age, gender, or socioeconomic-related differences in levels of empathy, mindfulness and sense of power.

Thirdly, we postulate that cultural differences associated with variables used in the study may have influenced the study's outcomes. As mentioned previously, both power and mindfulness are constructs heavily influenced by Thai culture and Buddhist beliefs. Current literature describing power within Thai societies is sparse. Likewise, existing measures of mindfulness that have been created for Eastern populations have not undergone extensive validity and reliability testing, nor have they been used extensively across different samples. As a result, the use of the FMI – a Western-based measure of mindfulness – may have underrepresented the presence of mindfulness within our Thai sample. In addition to using Eastern-based measures of mindfulness, future studies may also consider specific behavioral components of each construct; for example, helping behavior linked to empathy (Cialdini, 1987), role-play power situations (Anderson & Berdahl, 2002), or detection of novel stimuli to indicate mindfulness (Langer & Moldoveanu, 2000). A power manipulation strategy involving role-play may be more effective in simulating experiences of high and low power. For example, one can physically handle more coins than the experimenter or fellow participant in a high-power condition. Doing so may enhance the strength of the power manipulation as an experienced, rather than recalled, situation. Overall, these modifications may be more substantially supported by existing literature and may strengthen the study's interpretive power.

Conclusion

While there is some evidence establishing the relationships between power and empathy, and mindfulness and empathy, this study was the first to examine the combined effects of all three variables and to provide data relevant to the Thai community. Specifically, the study aimed to describe the relationships between power, mindfulness and empathy in a Thai sample. Results showed that mindfulness was not significantly related to empathy, but that higher power was associated with lower empathy. Additionally, mindfulness did not play a moderating role on the power-empathy relationship. Future studies may be shorter in duration and utilize an Eastern-based measure of mindfulness, a different power manipulation strategies, or compare data between different samples from the Thai population.

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Appendix A

Power Manipulation

High-Power Condition

Part I. ขอให้ท่านเล่าเหตุการณ์ ที่ทำให้ท่านมีความรู้สึกว่า ท่านมีอำนาจเหนือผู้อื่น ซึ่งอำนาจในที่นี้

หมายถึงการที่ท่านมีความสามารถที่จะควบคุมผู้อื่น ให้ผู้อื่นทำในสิ่งที่ท่านต้องการได้ หรือเป็นสถานการณ์ที่

ท่านสามารถประเมินผู้อื่นได้ ขอให้ท่านเล่าหรือบรรยายเหตุการณ์หรือสถานการณ์ที่ท่านมีอำนาจนั้น โดยเล่า

ถึงสถานการณ์นั้น ว่าเกิดอะไรขึ้นและท่านรู้สึกอย่างไร

Part II. ขอให้ท่านจินตนาการว่า ท่านได้รับคูปอง จำนวน 7 ใบ ซึ่งสามารถใช้ในการชิงโชคเงิน

รางวัลมูลค่า 5,000 บาท ณ ภัตตาคารแห่งหนึ่ง ขอให้ท่านระบุจำนวนคูปองดังกล่าวว่าท่านจะแบ่งให้เพื่อน

ของท่านท่านหนึ่งกี่ใบ และให้ตัวท่านเองกี่ใบ

Low-Power Condition

Part I. ขอให้ท่านเล่าเหตุการณ์ ที่ทำให้ท่านมีความรู้สึกว่า ผู้อื่นมีอำนาจเหนือตัวท่าน ซึ่งอำนาจในที่

นี้หมายถึงการที่บุคคลมีอำนาจ หรือมีความสามารถที่จะควบคุมท่าน โดยทำให้ท่านต้องทำสิ่งที่เขาต้องการได้

หรือเป็นสถานการณ์ที่ผู้อื่นสามารถประเมินท่านได้ ขอให้ท่านเล่าหรือบรรยายเหตุการณ์หรือสถานการณ์ที่ผู้

อื่นมีอำนาจเหนือท่าน โดยเล่าถึงสถานการณ์นั้น ว่าเกิดอะไรขึ้นและท่านรู้สึกอย่างไร

Part II. ขอให้ท่านจินตนาการว่า เพื่อนของท่านมีคูปอง จำนวน 7 ใบ ซึ่งสามารถใช้ในการชิงโชค

เงินรางวัลมูลค่า 5,000 บาท ณ ภัตตาคารแห่งหนึ่ง ขอให้ท่านระบุจำนวนคูปองดังกล่าวว่าเพื่อนของท่านจะ

แบ่งให้ท่านกี่ใบ และให้ตัวเขา/เธอเองกี่ใบ

Appendix B

Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory (FMI)

ขอให้ท่านอ่านข้อคำถามด้านล่างต่อไปนี้ และพิจารณาประสบการณ์ของตัวท่าน ในช่วง 2

สัปดาห์ที่ผ่านมาจนถึง ณ ปัจจุบัน ซึ่งคำตอบของท่านไม่มีผิด และไม่มีถูก

1. ฉันเปิดรับประสบการณ์ที่มีในปัจจุบัน

2. ฉันรับรู้ถึงร่างกายของตนเอง ไม่ว่าขณะรับประทานอาหาร ทำอาหาร ทำความสะอาด หรือพูดคุย

3. เมื่อฉันรับรู้ว่าตนเองใจลอย ฉันจะค่อย ๆ ดึงตนเองกลับมาสู่ปัจจุบัน

4. ฉันทำให้ตนเองพึงพอใจอย่างที่ตนเป็นได้

5. ฉันสนใจเหตุผลที่อยู่เบื้องหลังการกระทำของฉัน

6. ฉันรับรู้ความผิดพลาด และความยุ่งยากที่ตนเองมีโดยไม่ตีโพยตีพาย

7. ฉันอยู่กับประสบการณ์ที่มีในปัจจุบัน

8. ฉันยอมรับประสบการณ์ที่ไม่น่าพึงพอใจ

9. ฉันเป็นมิตรต่อตนเอง แม้ว่าฉันจะทำอะไรผิดพลาด

10. ฉันเฝ้าสังเกตความรู้สึกต่าง ๆ ของตนเอง โดยไม่จมไปกับความรู้สึกเหล่านั้น

11. เวลาเจอสถานการณ์ยุ่งยาก ฉันสามารถหยุดตนเองไม่ตอบสนองไปทันที/ไม่ทำอะไรบุ่มบ่าม

12. ฉันยังรู้สึกสงบและผ่อนคลาย แม้ว่าจะเจอช่วงเวลาที่วุ่นวาย และตึงเครียด

13. ฉันอารมณ์เสียง่ายทั้งกับตนเอง และผู้อื่น

14. ฉันยังสามารถยิ้มได้ แม้ว่าฉันจะรับรู้ว่าบางครั้งฉันก็ทำให้ชีวิตของตนเองยุ่งยาก

Appendix C

Sense of Power Scale (SPS)

ในการตอบคำตอบต่อไป ขอให้ท่านนึกถึง ความสัมพันธ์ของท่านกับผู้อื่น

1. ฉันสามารถทำให้คนอื่นรับฟังในสิ่งที่ฉันพูดได้

2. สิ่งที่ฉันต้องการมักไม่ค่อยมีน้ำหนักมากนักสำหรับผู้อื่น

3. ฉันสามารถทำให้คนอื่นทำในสิ่งที่ฉันต้องการได้

4. แม้ฉันจะพูดออกมา ความคิดของฉันมักมีผลเพียงเล็กน้อยเท่านั้น

5. ฉันคิดว่า ฉันมีอำนาจมาก

6. ความคิด และการแสดงความคิดเห็นของฉัน มักไม่มีใครสนใจ

7. แม้ฉันจะพยายาม แต่ฉันมักไม่ได้สิ่งที่ฉันต้องการ

8. ถ้าฉันต้องการ ฉันก็จะได้เป็นคนตัดสินใจ

Appendix D

Basic Empathy Scale (BES)

กรุณาอ่านข้อความแต่ละข้ออย่างตั้งใจและระบุความเห็นของท่านว่าเห็นด้วยหรือไม่เห็นด้วยมากน้อยเท่าไร

ข้อความแต่ละข้อไม่มีถูกหรือผิด และไม่มีข้อความลวง

1. อารมณ์ของเพื่อนๆฉันไม่มีผลกระทบต่อฉันมากนัก

2. หลังจากที่ต้องใช้เวลากับเพื่อน ที่กำลังมีเรื่องเศร้า โดยทั่วไปฉันรู้สึกเศร้าด้วย

3. ฉันเข้าใจความสุขของเพื่อน เมื่อเขาทำบางสิ่งได้ดี

4. ฉันรู้สึกหวาดกลัว เมื่อดูตัวละคร ในภาพยนตร์สยองขวัญ

5. ฉันจมอยู่กับอารมณ์ของคนอื่นๆได้ง่าย

6. ฉันพบว่า เป็นเรื่องยากที่จะรู้ว่าเพื่อนๆฉันกำลังหวาดกลัว

7. ฉันไม่ได้รู้สึกเศร้าเมื่อเห็นคนอื่นร้องไห้

8. ความรู้สึกของคนอื่น ไม่ได้รบกวนใจฉันเลย

9. เมื่อใครบางคนรู้สึกเศร้า ฉันสามารถเข้าใจว่าพวกเขารู้สึกอย่างไร

10. โดยทั่วไป ฉันสามารถบอกได้ว่า เพื่อนๆของฉันกำลังกลัว

11. บ่อยครั้ง ฉันรู้สึกเศร้า เมื่อดูรายการทีวี หรือภาพยนตร์เศร้าๆ

12. บ่อยครั้ง ฉันสามารถเข้าใจ ว่าคนอื่นๆรู้สึกอย่างไร ก่อนที่พวกเขาจะบอก

13. การเห็นใครบางคนกำลังโกรธ ไม่ได้ส่งผลต่อความรู้สึกของฉัน

14. โดยทั่วไป ฉันสามารถบอกได้ว่า ผู้คนกำลังเป็นสุข

15. ฉันมักรู้สึกกลัวไปด้วย เมื่อฉันต้องอยู่กับเพื่อน ที่กำลังกลัว

16. โดยทั่วไป ฉันตระหนักรู้ได้ไว เมื่อเพื่อนกำลังโกรธ

17. บ่อยครั้ง ฉันมักคล้อยไปกับความรู้สึกของเพื่อนๆ

18. การที่เพื่อนๆ ไม่มีความสุข ไม่ได้ทำให้ฉันรู้สึกอะไร

19. โดยทั่วไป ฉันไม่ได้ตระหนักรู้ถึงความรู้สึกของเพื่อนฉัน

20. ฉันมีปัญหา ที่จะบอกว่า เมื่อไหร่ที่เพื่อนฉันกำลังมีความสุข