

Reviewer/Examiner: Prof Dr Cecile Nieuwenhuizen
Chair of the SARChI Research Chair
College of Business and Economics
University of Johannesburg
South Africa

Date: 20 May 2025

REVIEW OF THE PhD DISSERTATION OF ANNA THOMPSON

Title: THE BENEFITS OF THE REGULAR PRACTICE OF MINDFULNESS TECHNIQUES ON INNOVATIVE WORK BEHAVIOR.

Under supervision of:

Promotor: Prof. UEK dr hab. dr h.c. Piotr Buła

Co-Promotor (pomocniczy): dr Agnieszka Żak

The review is based on the decision of the Council for Academic Discipline of Management and Quality Sciences of the Krakow University of Economics and the contract concluded on 11 April 2025, no RDC-R-2025/15.

1. OVERVIEW/GENERAL REMARKS

The research topic is unique, focusing on an area that has not been researched before. The literature overview, research approach and findings proved that the study contributes significantly to the field of mindfulness and innovative work behaviour. More specifically, the impact of mindfulness on innovative work behaviour in an organisation dependent on it for competitive advantage.

It was a privilege and a pleasure to examine the study titled “The benefits of the regular practice of mindfulness techniques on innovative work behavior” by Mrs Anna Thompson.

The thesis is adequately structured with a well-formulated goal, research questions and hypotheses. The research framework and methodology are adequately described and followed. The study and findings are novel, and the results are a contribution to the field of mindfulness and innovative work behaviour.

Her study has distinctive merit, and therefore, I recommend that she **pass with distinction** to commence the next phase of the PhD process.

2. DETAILED REVIEW

The detailed evaluation of the doctoral dissertation is prepared taking into account following five criteria:

Literature

Research methodology

Results and analysis

Contribution of the study

Structure of dissertation, language and editing.

Conclusion

2.1 Literature

The literature is discussed extensively in Chapters 1, 2 and 3.

The literature review is well organised, and the relevant concepts are explained in detail and supported by relevant sources. The distinctions between related concepts such as creativity and innovation are discussed in sufficient detail.

The structure of the literature is good as it starts by discussing and describing the broader concepts and narrows them down to the specifics of the study. For example, starting with Innovation in general and concluding Chapter 2 with innovation at the individual level in an organisation. In the second chapter (2.2) the concept “innovative work behaviour (IWB)” that is included in the title of the study is defined and elaborated on in detail. The three associated dimensions of IWB are discussed adequately. The individual innovation competence Figure 2.1 that the candidate developed (based on the work of Hero, Pitkajarvi & Matinheikki-Kokko, 2021) and the discussion that follows elucidates the concept and the seven associated domains. Similarly, the mapping of the skills most critical to the three stages (idea generation, idea promotion and idea implementation) of IWB is presented (Figures 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5) and summarised (with a detailed annexure) eloquently.

The sources used on mindfulness are recent and good for publication opportunities. The 2024 review of Scopus publications (Figure 3.1) on mindfulness and the 2014 to 2023 review on meditation ensure updated references. Mindfulness, meditation, well-being and work engagement are discussed in detail, and the relevance to the study is explained. The impact of meditation on personal characteristics (Table 3.4) provides a detailed explanation and shows the areas with the highest (and lowest) impact. The same applies to future orientation, creative thinking, social, project management and other skills. Figures 3.3 to 3.8 effectively summarise the result of the impact of meditation on the topics investigated, and the wordle clouds (Figures 3.9 to 3.12) illustrate it well.

The concepts relevant to the study, individual innovative competencies, individual innovative behaviour and mindfulness or meditation are well synthesised in Chapters 1 to 3.

The bibliography contains an impressive 603 sources, of which 58 (10%) are recent (from the past eight years, since 2018). Note that the literature referenced is good, but more recent references should be added to ensure relevance to the current situation. This is especially important if the candidate plans to publish articles based on her thesis in academic journals. Referencing of classic work in the field of innovation, entrepreneurship, work engagement and other topics relevant to the study (for example, Drucker, Schumpeter, Amabile, Kanter, Schaufeli, etc) is commendable. The work is good and publishable as articles, but journals will require updated references.

2.2 Research methodology (assumptions, objectives, hypotheses, methods);

Chapter 4

The population of the study are enterprise architects and non-architects employed Capgemini, an international technology and professional services company. Fifty-four employees from various countries participated in the study. These represented architects and non-architects, and experienced meditators and non-meditators. The study took place over a period of six months.

An appropriate abridged wellness questionnaire was adapted by the candidate and used throughout the study. Participants had to complete it four times during the duration of the study. In addition, a questionnaire to measure IWB was completed by participants, their managers and colleagues. Participants also completed a short monthly IWB scale. The combination of these served as the data for the empirical study.

2.3 Analysis and results

Chapter 5 is a highly technical statistical analysis chapter. The data collected in the form of completed questionnaires over the six-month period were analysed. Questionnaires were self-assessments by the participants and, for peer review purposes, completed by colleagues and managers.

The statistical analysis is adequately explained and discussed, concluding that the study is of sound design and its findings are credible.

The statistical analyses of all the relevant data and correlations are described in detail and correctly, supported by graphs, figures and tables in Chapter 5. No mistakes were identified.

From section 5.3, the results of the preceding statistical analyses are expertly interpreted, and the research questions and hypotheses are addressed. The confirmation or negation of hypotheses is indicated.

Hypotheses confirmed that:

H1 Wellness by long-term meditators did not change over the course of the study.

H2 Wellness by to-date non-meditators who chose to meditate during the study improved over the course of the study

H3 The practice of meditation has a positive impact on wellness.

H4: The assessment of innovative work behaviour by non-meditators improved over the course of the study.

H5 Assessment of innovative work behaviour of architects was higher and improved more than non-architects over the course of the study.

H6 Assessment of all three dimensions of innovative work behaviour by long-term meditators did not change over the course of the study.

H7 The assessment of all three dimensions of innovative work behaviour by to-date non-meditators who chose to meditate during the study improved over the course of the study

H8 Assessment of all three dimensions of innovative work behaviour of architects improved more than non-architects over the course of the study.

An interesting additional result of the study is that there is a statistically significant negative correlation between how participants self-assessed their level of idea promotion and how peers assessed their idea promotion.

2.4 Theoretical contribution and practical implications of the study:

Chapter 6

Long-term meditators participated as a control group to determine whether continuing to meditate would affect their wellness. The results showed that continuing to meditate during the study had no statistically significant impact on their wellness. This proved satisfactorily their contribution as a control group and confidence in the findings of the study.

The contribution of the study is the following:

Mindful meditation has an impact on the wellness of long-term meditators, most notably on their emotional wellness and the least on their intellectual wellness. These findings reflect to-date scientific evidence and understanding of the impact of mindful meditation.

Mindful meditation has a positive impact on the wellness of architects.

Concerning is the implication of meditation on the well-being of architects. The candidate elaborates on this finding and makes valuable recommendations supported by extant literature.

The impact of meditation on individual facets of wellness is presented as a contribution of the study.

Mindfulness is a lever for innovative work behaviour as mindful meditation has a positive impact on employee engagement, which is manifested in the innovative work

behaviour of architects. Thus, mindful meditation can be used by individuals and organisations that want to benefit from innovative work behaviour to enhance this behaviour.

Mindfulness as a lever for three discrete dimensions of innovative work behaviour
In summary, the impact of mindful meditation varies on the three dimensions of innovative work behaviour of meditators:

mindful meditation has a significant impact on idea promotion and idea implementation abilities of architects, with statistically higher abilities in both compared to non-architects and the positive impact on idea implementation exhibited by architects can be habituated within three to six months.

commendable is that the candidate continuously reflects and refers to literature related to a topic that she researched. This provides a clear perspective of her contribution to the body of knowledge in her field of research.

The limitations of the study and areas that are recommended for future research are:

The study did not determine the impact of reframing and emotion regulation on the three different dimensions of innovative work behaviour.

The strong effect on idea implementation should be investigated further, as it is unclear what underlying competences and skills are highly sensitive, and which of the benefits of mindful meditation impacts idea implementation most.

The study did not determine the impact of the other components and of their interaction on the three IWB dimensions.

The study would benefit if it tested the impact of meditation against all the identified personal innovation capabilities and skills.

The longitudinal study took place over six months only.

The design focused exclusively on the impact of mindful meditation on wellness and IWB dimensions, and therefore made it less relevant to non-architects

The small sample size of 54 respondents.

Structure of dissertation, language and editing.

The thesis is well written, reader-friendly, interesting and a pleasure to read.

The structure of the thesis is perfect as a logical process has been followed. Firstly, the literature review (Chapters 1, 2 and 3) provided an excellent background to all the concepts relevant to the study. These included the three primary concepts: Innovation as a core strategic capability; innovative work behaviour as a strategic competence, and mindfulness as an enabler of strategic competence. The literature review is followed by an identified research gap: no study to date has identified the benefits of mindfulness techniques on innovative work behaviour or the benefits of regular, longer-term practices of mindful techniques on innovative work behaviour of those whose work responsibilities include innovative work behaviour. The gap is aptly aligned with the research problem, research questions and hypotheses.

This is then followed by an extensive description of the research approach (Chapter 4) in which the candidate explains the research framework and methodology, how she has done the research and why it was done in the chosen manner. The detailed analysis and interpretation of the results are followed by a Chapter that clearly describes the contribution and implications of the study.

Some minor typos were observed, but not irrelevant to report on for correction as some may be according to the preferred style of the UEK. The work may benefit from a final proofreading to attend to typos.

Note that for one reference, no date is included:

Tushman, M. L, O'Reilly, C. A., Ambidextrous Organizations: managing evolutionary and revolutionary change, California Management Review, 38(4)

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study is extensive and thorough, with clear insight into relevant literature and previous studies. The literature review provided comprehensive information and background on the importance and relevance of concepts and research related to the study. These include innovation as a core strategic capability, innovative work behaviour as a strategic competence, and mindfulness as an enabler of strategic competence.

The research framework and methodology are appropriate for the study and are described and followed adequately. The research methods followed, statistical analysis and interpretation of the results combined proved that the candidate can do independent empirical research at a doctoral level.

The study contributes to the body of knowledge of mindfulness and meditation on innovative work behaviour in an organisation dependent on it for competitive advantage.

It is recommended that the candidate, with her promoters, publish articles in academic journals to ensure that the scientific contribution is shared with scholars and researchers in the fields of mindfulness, meditation and innovative work behaviour.

Based on all factors, the PhD dissertation of Anna Thompson, titled:

“The benefits of the regular practice of mindfulness techniques on innovative work behavior” with Promotor: Prof. UEK dr hab. dr h.c. Piotr Buła and Promotor pomocniczy dr Agnieszka Żak at Kraków University of Economics, Poland. The thesis is original and provides new insights, uses unique data, and employs innovative methodologies, as well as meets all legal and formal requirements for a PhD thesis.

Therefore, I am satisfied and honoured to recommend to the Council for Academic Discipline of Management and Quality Science of the Krakow University of Economics that I pass the PhD candidate, Anna Thompson, with distinction and that she be admitted to the public defence of this thesis.



Prof Dr Cecile Nieuwenhuizen

Johannesburg, South Africa 20 May 2025