

Bridging Cultures in Academia: The Role of Mindfulness in Enhancing Intercultural Communication and Social Capital among Scholars

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Abstract

Studies that comprehensively incorporate mindfulness therapies and the theory of intercultural communication into the investigation of social capital are lacking in the body of existing literature. This restricts our comprehension of how these important components interact and affect social relationships in academic communities as a whole. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate how mindfulness practices affect cross-cultural communication and, in turn, build social capital in academic environments. A mixed method was adopted in the study. In the first stage, focused group interviews are employed in the first stage with seven groups of nine Australian alumni, for a total of 63 participants who have experience conducting research and teaching abroad or in multicultural settings. In the second stage, 149 alumni were surveyed, and Process Macro SPSS's Hayes model was used to analyse the data. The results showed that those who practice mindfulness are more likely to approach cross-cultural encounters with a greater awareness of and respect for different points of view. According to the findings, mindfulness can be a potent instrument for boosting perception of the community, networking, trust and safety, scholarly participation, citizen power, life values and diverse perspectives among academics. Scholars who engage in mindfulness practices have the potential to cultivate closer ties within academic communities, which could result in joint research opportunities, information exchanges, and career assistance. This study might offer academics a fresh theoretical viewpoint that improves the conceptual frameworks for mindfulness practice for enhancing academic social capital via intercultural communication.

Keywords: Mindfulness, Intercultural Communication, Social Capital, Academic Culture.

Introduction

In the evolving landscape of academia, the dynamics of social interactions among scholars play a pivotal role in shaping the intellectual and collaborative fabric of educational institutions (Boix Mansilla, Lamont, & Sato, 2016). In academia, social capital (SC), defined as the networks, relationships, and shared values within an academic community, is a cornerstone for fostering innovation,

knowledge exchange, and collaborative research endeavors (Gonzalez-Brambila, 2014). However, as academia becomes increasingly globalized, the intersection of intercultural communication (ICC) and the cultivation of SC remains a largely unexplored terrain. To explore this ground, the research initiates using mindfulness (MFN) as a mindtool for better ICC in enhancing academic social capital. MFN- the practice of focusing your awareness

on the present moment over and over again—can be done during formal meditation or everyday activities (Kabat-Zinn, 2023). By doing this, those who practice MFN may increase the capacity to communicate with people from diverse cultures, which is defined as intercultural communication (Byram, 2020). This mentioned innovative approach includes cultural variations in interpreting MFN, potentially open up the framework for adopting MFN practices in SC enhancement. At the same time, the new approach generates the need for culturally sensitive model to enhance academic SC.

This research endeavor arises in response to a significant knowledge deficit: the current body of literature provides limited understanding of how the incorporation of MFN practices might impact ICC and, as a result, enhance SC within the academic community. As universities and research institutions become more culturally diverse, understanding the mechanisms through which MFN contributes to effective ICC becomes imperative for fostering inclusive and collaborative academic environments (Raewf & Mahmood, 2021). This research justifies MFN intervention in ICC and academic SC is crucial as it promotes awareness, empathy, and open-mindedness. It helps individuals navigate diverse cultural contexts, fostering effective communication and building positive relationships. Additionally, MFN can enhance academic SC by improving collaboration, reducing biases, and creating an inclusive learning environment.

This study focuses on Australian alumni, who received their scholarship from Australian governments with experience in teaching and research in their intercultural environments. Their participation adds a specific and valuable dimension to the study. The insights from individuals with firsthand experience in these contexts contribute contextually relevant information to the literature, shedding light on the transformative potential of MFN in fostering understanding, empathy, and collaboration among scholars from diverse cultural backgrounds. By exploring the intricate interplay between MFN, ICC, and SC, this research aims to provide valuable contributions

to both theoretical frameworks and practical applications within the unique context of global academic communities. Additionally, resource disparities, varying levels of awareness, and differing views on the role of MFN may pose obstacles to its effective implementation across diverse societies (Van Doesum et al., 2021). This study empirically shed light on the positive impact of MFN on cross-cultural communication and SC in the academic settings of Australian Alumni Network. Drawing from the backdrop, the findings offer a fresh theoretical perspective, enriching existing the conceptual framework that derive from the reality, potentially to exploring SC in other academic contexts.

There are two stages of the research process, first qualitative stage will analyse data from focused-group interviews and thematic analysis. Secondly, the quantitative stage adopts a survey research design by optimizing conditional correlational analysis. The finding helps answer two main research questions: (1) How do mindfulness practices affect the mechanisms of intercultural communication that increase social capital among scholars? (2) To what extent does mindfulness affect social capital through intercultural communication? These research questions aim to unravel the intricacies of the relationship between MFN, intercultural communication, and social capital within the academic context, offering a comprehensive exploration of the study's objectives.

The next session will be the examination of theory on SC in academic settings and the identification of the gap in studies that integrate ICC theory and MFN interventions. Then, based on relevant theories, hypotheses developments will be provided. After that, mixed research methods of the study will be discussed with the description for the two stages of study and strategies for analysis, both qualitative and quantitative. Next, the results will be presented in two parts, interview results and survey results. In the end, there will be a discussion about the findings and the study's significance. Finally, the research conclusion will include limitations and suggestions for future research.

Theoretical Background

Social Capital in academic settings.

The existing literature on SC in academic settings reflects a growing recognition of the pivotal role that interpersonal relationships play in shaping the collaborative and innovative fabric of educational institutions. Scholars have extensively explored the concept of social capital, emphasising its influence on knowledge sharing, collaboration, and overall academic success (Mishra, 2020). Studies have investigated the intricate networks and relationships among faculty, students, and academic staff, such as (Azorín, Harris, & Jones, 2020), highlighting the positive impact of strong social ties on research productivity, career development, and educational outcomes, established by (Aytekin, Murphy, Yildiz, Doğan, & Ceyhan, 2022). Additionally, research has explored the implications of SC for institutional effectiveness and the creation of supportive academic environments (Kasemsap, 2014). While the majority of the literature has focused on traditional aspects of SC within local academic communities, there is a notable gap in understanding how SC is influenced by intercultural dynamics and MFN practices. This research seeks to contribute to this evolving discourse by examining the intersection of MFN, intercultural communication, and social capital, providing fresh insights into the complexities of social relationships within the diverse landscape of contemporary academic settings.

Integrate intercultural communication theory and mindfulness interventions.

The existing literature on SC in academic settings has made substantial strides in understanding the dynamics of interpersonal relationships among scholars. However, a discernible gap emerges concerning studies that holistically integrate ICC theory and MFN interventions to enrich SC within this context. Numerous studies explore traditional aspects of social capital, such as collaboration, knowledge sharing, and career development such as Chang and Chuang (2011) and Singh, Mazzucchelli,

Vessal, and Solidoro (2021). However, there is a dearth of research that explicitly examines the intersection of cultural diversity, MFN practices, and their combined impact on SC among scholars. Understanding how MFN influences ICC and contributes to the development of robust SC is a vital area that remains largely unexplored. This gap hinders a comprehensive understanding of the nuanced interplay between diverse cultural backgrounds, MFN, and the creation of supportive academic communities. Therefore, this research seeks to address this specific gap by unravelling the mechanisms through which MFN practices may enhance ICC and, consequently, contribute to SC within the unique and diverse landscape of contemporary academic settings.

Hypothesis Development

Following the research lines in the literature, it is mainly argued that the mediating role of ICC serves as the linchpin, elucidating how the benefits of MFN are channeled into the development of social capital, particularly when scholars demonstrate a high level of intercultural competence.

Mindfulness and intercultural communication

The positive relationship between the MFN practices of scholars and their intercultural competence is a compelling argument supported by an emerging body of research, such as (Bùi, 2023; Y. H. Chang, 2023; Tuleja, 2021). MFN, characterized by heightened awareness and non-judgmental attention to the present moment, has been shown to foster cognitive flexibility, emotional regulation, and increased empathy – all of which are fundamental components of intercultural competence (Y. H. Chang, 2023). Scholars engaged in MFN practices are better equipped to navigate the complexities of diverse cultural contexts, demonstrating an enhanced ability to appreciate and understand perspectives different from their own (Nadeem & Koschmann, 2021). Moreover, MFN cultivates a sense of openness and curiosity, essential traits in fostering effective cross-cultural communication (Tuleja, 2014). As scholars immerse themselves in MFN, they not only

deepen their self-awareness but also develop the capacity to approach intercultural interactions with respect, empathy, and a genuine curiosity about diverse worldviews (Heselmeyer, 2014). This positive correlation underscores the transformative potential of MFN in shaping scholars into more culturally competent individuals, thereby contributing to the fostering of inclusive and collaborative academic communities. Thus, it is proposed:

Hypotheses 1: The mindfulness practice of scholars is positively related to their intercultural competence.

Intercultural communication and social capital

The correlation between scholars' MFN practice and their intercultural competence is a robust and well-substantiated argument in the realm of academic discourse. For examples, Khukhlaev, Novikova, and Chernaya (2022) investigate the relationship between interpersonal MFN, intergroup anxiety, and ICC efficacy among international students enrolled in universities in Russia. Before that, there was an investigation that shows MFN plays a moderating role in the link between anxiety, uncertainty, and the efficacy of ICC among students in Pakistan, by Nadeem and Koschmann (2021). Recently, Huang (2023) utilize artistic techniques to examine the concept of 'intercultural MFN' as expressed by students while reflecting on their intercultural experiences at a university in the United Kingdom. Most studies mention MFN, characterized by intentional awareness and non-judgmental engagement with the present moment, offers a profound avenue for enhancing intercultural competence among scholars. Through regular MFN practice, scholars develop heightened self-awareness, emotional regulation, and expanded cognitive flexibility – all crucial components of intercultural competence (Wen, Zhang, Liu, Du, & Xu, 2021). This heightened awareness allows scholars to approach cross-cultural interactions with a clearer understanding of their own cultural biases and an increased capacity for empathy. MFN cultivates a mindset of openness and curiosity, essential qualities in navigating diverse cultural

landscapes (Hensley, 2020). Scholars who engage in MFN practices exhibit a more profound appreciation for cultural differences, fostering effective communication and collaboration across diverse academic contexts. Thus, the positive relationship between MFN practice and intercultural competence not only enriches individual scholars but also contributes significantly to the cultivation of inclusive and globally-minded academic communities. Based on this justification, it is hypothesized as follows:

Hypothesis 2: Scholars' intercultural communication is positively related to the social capital they embrace.

Mindfulness impacts on intercultural communication and social capital

The intricate interplay between ICC, MFN practice, and social capital among scholars forms a compelling arguments, as seen in Burton and Vu (2021), so it is suggested that the relationship is nuanced and strengthened by a high level of intercultural competence. MFN practice fosters a heightened awareness and adaptability, qualities that align closely with the demands of ICC (Drigas & Mitsea, 2020). Scholars who engage in MFN practices are better equipped to navigate the complexities of diverse cultural interactions, cultivating a more profound understanding of their own cultural biases and a greater capacity for empathy. Importantly, as scholars exhibit a high competence in intercultural communication, the benefits of MFN practices are likely to be magnified. The skilful navigation of cultural diversity, informed by intercultural competence (Zhang & Zhou, 2019), amplifies the positive impact of MFN on social capital. In contexts where scholars possess advanced ICC skills, the relationship between MFN practice and SC becomes more pronounced. The combination of MFN, intercultural competence, and SC thus forms a synergistic alliance, contributing not only to individual scholarly development but also to the establishment of robust, inclusive academic communities.

Hypothesis 3: Intercultural communication will mediate the relationship between mindfulness

practice and social capital, in such a way that the relationship will be stronger when scholars have a high competence in intercultural communication.

Together, these above hypotheses propose an intricate model wherein MFN practices

enhance intercultural competence, which, in turn, positively influences scholars' ability to accumulate social capital. As illustrated in figure 1, the theoretical framework provides a holistic understanding of the interplay between MFN, ICC, and SC within the context of scholarly interactions.



Figure 1: The study framework of MFN interventions into the relationship between Intercultural communication and social capital

Methods

In the realm of existing literature, there is a discernible gap in studies that holistically integrate MFN therapies and the theory of intercultural communication, specifically within the investigation of SC in academic settings. This research methodological choice is motivated by the need to address this gap and offer a comprehensive understanding of the intricate interactions between MFN, ICC, and social SC. The mixed-method approach adopted in this study (Hirose & Creswell, 2023), utilizing both focused group interviews and surveys, allows for a multifaceted exploration of the research questions.

For the first phase, the study adopts focused group interviews (Knott, Rao, Summers, & Teeger, 2022) among 63 experienced Australian alumni, divided into 7 groups, provided qualitative insights into the lived experiences and perceptions of scholars engaging in MFN practices, offering depth and context to the quantitative survey data in the next phase. This was followed by a thematic analysis based on Nvivo software (Allsop, Chelladurai, Kimball, Marks, & Hendricks, 2022). By grouping participants together to discuss the relationship among MFN, IC, and SC, the researcher's could develop a framework based on the participant's ideas. The theme analysis, which is based on the the multi-dimensional model of SC which has emerged

through our work, developed by (Boeck & Fleming, 2005)

In the second phase, the large survey sample, including 149 surveys, was analyzed through the Hayes model (Coutts & Hayes, 2022; Hayes & Preacher, 2014) and via Process Macro SPSS, ensures statistical rigor and generalizability of findings. This combination of qualitative and quantitative methods aims to capture the richness of scholars' experiences while providing robust empirical evidence. The chosen approach is well-suited for unravelling the complexities of the relationships between MFN, intercultural communication, and social capital, contributing valuable insights to both theory and practice in the field of academic social capital.

Measure

Mindfulness was self-reported by the participants by then the reduced15-item scale by Baer, Carmody, and Hunsinger (2012). The five facets of MFN include: observing, describing, acting with awareness, nonjudging of inner experience, and nonreactivity to inner experience. The original scales is 39 item, initiated by Baer, Smith, Hopkins, Krietemeyer, and Toney (2006). Each item of the scale is rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging between 'I strongly disagree' (1 point) and 'I strongly agree' (5 points). MFN was assessed based on participants' self-reported engagement in related practices.

Intercultural communication was rated using 13-item scales, revised by Türkoğlu, Kavuran, and Ay (2023). This Intercultural Communication Apprehension Scale was developed by McCroskey in 1997 to determine if individuals have communication apprehension for establishing effective and sustainable communication (Neuliep & McCroskey, 1997). The original scale is composed of 14 items, and the Turkish reliability and validity scale included 13 items (Ay, Kavuran, & Turkoglu, 2018). Each item of the scale is rated on a five-point. ICC dimension was measured through self-evaluations of skills in navigating cross-cultural encounters.

Social capital was measured with 11-item scale, 7-point Likert scale survey questions, developed by (Ji et al., 2010), including six Bridging Social Capital questions and five Bonding Social Capital questions. This scales is based on Putnam's Social Capital theory and its online application (Ji et al., 2010). Each item of the scale is rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging between 'I strongly disagree' (1 point) and 'I strongly agree' (7 points).

SC was gauged by examining participants' reported involvement in joint research

opportunities, information exchanges, and career assistance within their academic networks.

Result

Finding 1

The theme analysis illustrates that MFN can serve as a powerful tool in improving ICC among scholars by promoting cultural sensitivity, reducing biases, enhancing listening skills, and fostering empathy. These positive outcomes contribute to the development of stronger SC within academic communities. Based on the the multi-dimensional model of SC which has emerged through our work, developed by (Boeck & Fleming, 2005) within eight aspects: Perception of the community; Network Bonding/ Bridging; Feelings of Trust and Safety; Reciprocity; Participation in Local Community; Citizen Power/ Proactivity; Values of Life; and Diversity. Below is Table 1 which shows the meaningful relationship between the three dimensions of MFN, ICC and SC as described initially as predictor, mediator, and outcomes, respectively. Then this correlation will be tested in the second phase.

Table 1: Mindfulness in Enhancing Intercultural Communication and Social Capital among Scholars

MFN as a Predictor	ICC as a Mediator	SC as an Outcome
<i>DIVERSITY</i>		
Fosters awareness of the present moment, promoting attentiveness and sensitivity to cultural nuances.	approach communication with a heightened understanding and respect.	respect for diverse perspectives that lead to become more open-minded and attuned to potential cultural impacts
<i>FEELING OF SAFETY AND TRUST</i>		
encourages individuals to observe thoughts without judgment this reduces bias.	and leads to reduced stereotyping and biases, allowing scholars approach interactions with an open mind	lead to a willingness to understand others that cultivate feeling of safety and trust.
<i>NETWORK BONDING/ BRIDGING & RECIPROCITY</i>		
helps scholars manage stress and emotional reactions in challenging intercultural situations.,	contributes to more positive and constructive communication, even in cross-cultural contexts	lead to the enrichment of networks/ bonding within the scholarly community; mutual understanding and exchange

VALUES OF LIFE

cultivates empathy by encouraging individuals to connect with their own emotions. develop a greater understanding other emotions, fostering more empathetic and compassionate intercultural interactions. direct to the consideration of their values, norms, and outlook in life, *stronger Self-awareness*

PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL-ACADEMIC COMMUNITY

MFN contributes to the development of trust and positive relationships. establish stronger connections with colleagues from diverse cultural backgrounds, initiate participation in academic activities that cultivate a sense of belonging leading to a richer academic environment.

CITIZEN POWER AND PROACTIVITY

Individuals build their power through MFN practice thanks to their focus on their purpose of living and professional development. develop stronger connections within academic communities, lead to collaborative research opportunities. With knowledge sharing, and professional support, scholars to become citizen power and proactive in social development

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

MFN equips individuals with tools for effective conflict resolution, facilitating more constructive resolution. in intercultural communication, where misunderstandings may arise, mindful scholars can approach conflicts with a calm and rational mindset build a safe and peaceful atmosphere where everyone can have their voices to be heard.

Finding 2

Table 2: Descriptive statistics and study dimension correlations

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Mindfulness	149	2.17	7.00	5.1547	1.06571
Intercultural Com	149	1.75	6.63	4.7508	1.00731
Social Capital	149	1.67	6.00	4.2864	1.06685
Valid N (listwise)	149				

Reliability Statistics	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	Based on N of items
	.792	.789	3

Correlations

		Mindfulness	Intercultural Com	Social Capital
	Pearson Correlation	1	.428**	.592**
Mindfulness	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	149	149	149

	Pearson Correlation	.428**	1	.256**
Intercultural Com	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.002
	N	149	149	149
	Pearson Correlation	.592**	.256**	1
Social Capital	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.002	
	N	149	149	149

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

To begin with, the survey data collected for this study encompassed responses from 149 alumni (N=149). As shown in Table 2, there is no control about age and gender differences among participants. The key participants are scholars who share experience in research and teaching abroad or in multicultural settings. The three scales with Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items (.789) show their reliability. Correlation analyses revealed a positive and statistically significant relationship between mindfulness practices and heightened intercultural communication competence (see Table 2, Correlations). The result (in Table 2) showed at model summary that MFN(X) had a significant effect on ICC (W) and SC (Y), $R = .54$, $R\text{-sq} = .29$, $P = .000$. The coefficient of MFN effect on both ICC and SC was also statistically significant. In particular, this shows $p < 0.02$, and the Confident Interval (CI) shows $(-4.8689, -.3038)$ does not contain 0 in between the lower level (LLCI) and upper level (ULCI). Besides, this test also initially reveals an evidence for direct effect of MFN on ICC, $p = .000$, $CI = (.9832, 1.9015)$. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was supported; MFN predicts ICC.

Next, the result (in Table 3) also illustrate that ICC has significant relationship with SC, the effect of interaction term of SG and PL on PSI in this test is also significant $p = .0000$, $CI = (.8497; 2.1115)$ does not contains 0. Hence, hypothesis 2 was supported; ICC predicts SC.

Finally, as shown in (Table 3), the boost trapping test revealed a conditional indirect influence of MFN on SC at ICC levels. It shows a conditional interaction between the three dimensions, $p = .000$. The test result further demonstrates that CI do not contain 0 in between LLCI and ULCI (.4131, .7730), $p = .000$ for the low level of ICC, and LLCI and ULCI (.0366, .3946), $p = .018$ at the average level of ICC. However, the test result demonstrates that CI do contain 0 in between LLCI and ULCI $(-.3199, .1849)$, $p > 0.5$ for the high level of ICC. As a result, ICC's mediating role is critical when at its low and average impact on the nexus between MFN and SC. However, the test shows that there is no mediation of the ICC on the relationship of MFN and SC if the level of ICC is high. Hypothesis 3 was partially supported: ICC mediate the effect of MFN on SC.

Table 3: The impact of Mindfulness on intercultural communication and social capital.

Model 1: Outcome (Y): SC, Predictor (X): MFN, Mediator (W): ICC;

Sample Size:149; OUTCOME VARIABLE: SC

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.5425	.2943	.7309	20.1578	3.0000	145.0000	.0000

Model

coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
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constant	-2.5864	1.1549	-2.2395	.0266	-4.8689	-.3038
MFN	1.4424	.2323	6.2087	.0000	.9832	1.9015
ICC	1.4806	.3192	4.6382	.0000	.8497	2.1115
Int_1	-.2831	.0592	-4.7853	.0000	-.4000	-.1662

Product terms key:

Int_1 : MFN x ICC

Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):

	R2-chng	F	df1	df2	p
X*W	.1114	22.8991	1.0000	145.0000	.0000

Focal predict: MFN (X)

Mod var: ICC (W)

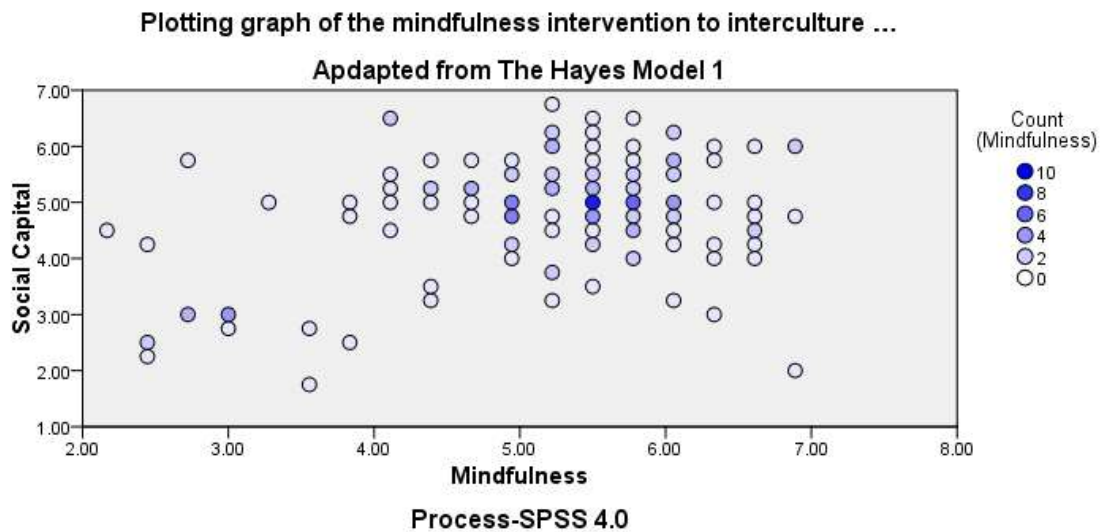
Conditional effects of the focal predictor at values of the moderator(s):

	ICC	Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
	3.0000	.5931	.0910	6.5148	.0000	.4131	.7730
	4.3333	.2156	.0906	2.3801	.0186	.0366	.3946
	5.3333	-.0675	.1277	-.5286	.5979	-.3199	.1849

Note: Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output: 95.0000

The dot graphs plotting (Fig.1) display the direct and indirect effects of the independent variable (MFN) on the dependent variable (SC) through the mediator (ICC). The magnitude and direction of the dot show how MFN effects on

SC directly and indirectly through ICC. Highlight any patterns or trends, such as the strength of the mediation effect. Where the dots are darker and thicker show the stronger impacts.



Correlation among Mindfulness-Intercultural Communication and Social Capital

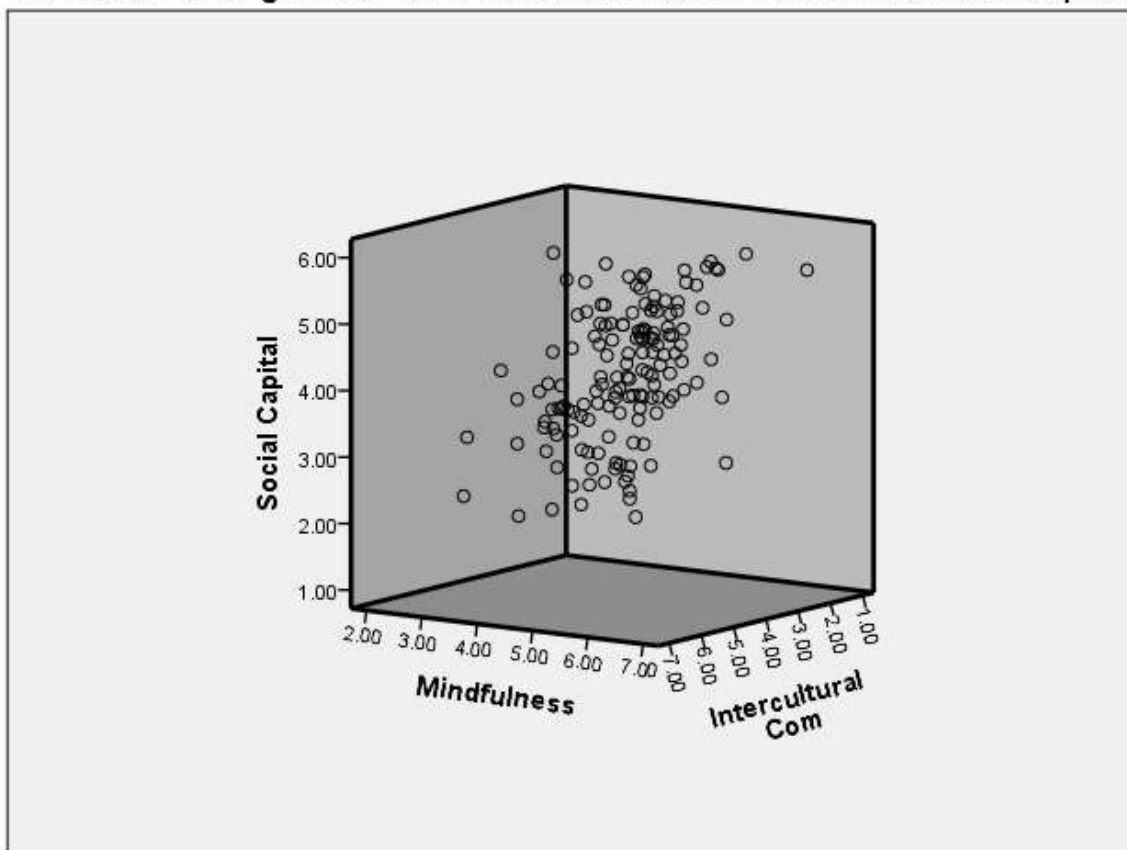


Figure 2: Dot Plotting Display the direct and indirect effects of MFN on SC through ICC

Overall, these findings suggest a potential pathway through which MFN positively influences SC, mediated by enhanced competence in ICC within academic environments.

Discussion

The findings of this study shed light on the crucial intersection of MFN practices, intercultural communication, and the formation of SC within academic communities. This research is more likely to be consistent with Huang (2023), who discuss intercultural MFN from the UK's university background, similar to the ideas of Bui (2023), who discuss intercultural competence development based on MFN inquiries from Canadian institutions. By combining the theory of ICC and MFN interventions, the current research extends the knowledge to a more comprehensive understanding of how these elements intersect and influence social capital. This integration

may provide a novel theoretical perspective that advances existing frameworks.

The results affirm the positive impact of MFN on ICC and social capital. This affirmation strengthens the ideas of (Burton & Vu, 2021) on right MFN and SC development. As well, this result continues to uphold an academic culture with respectful leadership and followers' knowledge sharing via a social MFN lens, mentioned by Gerpott, Fasbender, and Burmeister (2020). In process of practicing MFN, scholars displayed a heightened awareness and respect for diverse viewpoints (Dietz et al., 2017), emphasizing the potential of MFN as a powerful instrument for cultural sensitivity. This heightened awareness, in turn, contributed to a reduction in prejudices, development of empathy, and improvement of listening skills among academics. At the bottom line, going through the process, the academics enhance their social capital.

The test result above indicates that if the scholars have high competence of ICC, this height does not play its mediating role between the relationship of their MFN on SC. This is a novel discovery after the investigation in the second phase of the study, as mentioned in the test hypothesis 3. One potential explanation could be that high competence in ICC might diminish the mediating impact because individuals with advanced skills in this area may already possess a strong foundation for effective cross-cultural interaction. In such cases, the additional influence of MFN practices might not substantially alter the established relationship between ICC competence and social capital. So, further investigation or alternative statistical analyses may be needed to explore and clarify this observed patterns in the data.

This research introduces the idea that MFN interventions can play a crucial role in shaping positive social relationships among scholars, providing a fresh perspective. The research contributes to filling a gap by specifically applying the concept of SC mindfully to scholars in academic settings. While SC is a broad concept, this study narrows the focus to provide a unique understanding of how social relationships among scholars are influenced by ICC and MFN. The practical implications of these findings extend beyond individual benefits. Scholars engaging in MFN practices demonstrated the potential to cultivate stronger ties within academic communities. This study followed the stream of research such as Shankland and Rosset (2017), Rechtschaffen (2014), and Shankland and Rosset (2017). These scholars discussed positive psychology that enhanced SC manifested in increased opportunities for joint research endeavors, facilitated information exchanges, and offered mutual career assistance. Such outcomes underscore the broader positive influence of MFN on the social fabric of academic environments.

Conclusion

This research contributes a fresh theoretical perspective, enriching existing frameworks for understanding the dynamics of SC in the context of MFN and intercultural communication. The studies within two phases provides practical insights for academia the integration of MFN practices into academic settings holds the potential to enhance individual well-being and cross-cultural communication skills. This understandings can foster a more collaborative, inclusive, and supportive academic community. The use of a mixed methods approach, combining group-focused interviews and surveys, allows for a more nuanced exploration of the research question. This methodological choice enhances the depth and breadth of the findings, providing a comprehensive view of the impact of MFN on international communication and social capital. Focusing on Australian alumni with experience in teaching and research in intercultural environments adds a specific and valuable dimension to the study. The insights from individuals with first hand experience in these contexts contribute contextually relevant information to the literature.

While the study contributes valuable insights into the relationship between MFN practices, cross-cultural communication, and SC in academic settings, it is essential to acknowledge certain limitations. Firstly, the research primarily focuses on Australian alumni, potentially limiting the generalizability of findings to a broader international academic context. Additionally, the study's mixed-method approach, although comprehensive, may introduce biases or challenges in effectively capturing the nuanced dynamics of MFN impact on social capital. The reliance on self-reported data, especially in surveys, raises concerns about response biases and social desirability. Furthermore, the cross-sectional nature of the research design hinders the establishment of causal relationships. Longitudinal studies would be necessary to explore the sustainability and long-term effects of MFN practices on cross-cultural communication and SC within academic communities. Despite these limitations, the

study provides a foundation for future research and prompts critical reflection on the integration of MFN in academic environments.

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