EXPLORING THE LINKAGES BETWEEN MINDFULNESS AND TOURIST EXPERIENCE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO HARYANA STATE

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ABSTRACT

Mindfulness in tourism involves tourists attentively making conscious choices before, during, and after the trip. It involves open acceptance of experiences without undue pre-judgment and awareness that shapes reflections and recollections. Mindfulness builds a greater sense of association with environments, so tourists can observe more details and culture-specific elements. This results in a more authentic travel experience. The present paper explores the effect of tourist mindfulness on the tourist experience, with special reference to Haryana. The study surveyed 250 tourists including domestic and foreign, and the data was analyzed using PLS SEM 4. Further, the bootstrapping method was also employed to assess the significance of the relationships between variables. The study revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between mindfulness and tourist experience in Haryana State. Mindfulness in tourism can significantly enhance traveler experiences by fostering authentic, immersive, and meaningful engagements with destinations, benefiting both tourists and providers. Its integration promotes sustainable travel practices while addressing the growing demand for transformative tourism. The paper also discusses theoretical and practical implications, as well as limitations and potential avenues for future research.

Keywords: Tourist Mindfulness, Tourist Experience, Haryana Tourism, Learning Experience, Awareness, Attention, Non- Judgement, Escape Experience, Enjoyment Experience

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has emerged as a prominent and steadily growing global sector, mostly due to its multitude of advantages, such as the positive impacts it brings to the destination, the tourists themselves, and the broader geopolitical environment (Punia, 1994). Tourism has long been a domain of leisure and exploration, with travelers seeking relaxation, adventure, and cultural enrichment. Recently, this sector has witnessed exceptional growth owing to globalization, technological advancements, and an increasingly interconnected world.

The tourism sector in India is vast and diversified, which ranges from historical visits and cultural experiences to adventure tourism and wellness

tourism. India is a paradise for tourists, and at the same time, it is one of the best places to visit in the tourism industry (Aramberri, 2004). India is home to 38 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, including iconic landmarks such as the Taj Mahal, Jaipur City, and the Qutub Minar (Meskell, 2018). Every year, millions of people visit these places, which helps the economy grow and promotes culture exchange. Beyond historical sites, India's energetic cultural celebrations including Diwali, Holi, and Durga Puja, add even more interest. These events highlight the rich customs of the nation and draw guests from all around, hence enhancing India's reputation as a top cultural tourism destination (Shoeb-Ur-Rahman, *et al.,* 2018). Additionally, India's diverse natural landscapes are one of its greatest assets. Apart from this, from the snow-capped Himalayan peaks to the golden beaches of Goa, from the backwaters of Kerala to the deserts of Rajasthan, natural attractions abound throughout India (Sajnani, 2001). Moreover, with several national parks and wildlife sanctuaries like Ranthambore, Jim Corbett, Kaziranga, etc., drawing nature enthusiasts and wildlife photographers, wildlife tourism makes up a significant portion of India's tourist business (Bobdey, *et al.,* 2023). The Indian government had been anticipating favourable prospects in the tourism industry for a new source of economic momentum and has, therefore, initiated several projects in promoting tourism in India.

Haryana, a state in India with a rich historical legacy and vibrant cultural heritage, stands out as a promising destination for tourism. Known for its deep-rooted traditions, historical landmarks, and scenic landscapes, Haryana offers a unique blend of history, spirituality, and modern attractions (Punia, 1994). From the revered region of Kurukshetra, home of the epic battle of the Mahabharata, to modern metropolises such as Gurugram, Haryana seamlessly combines ancient heritage with contemporary development. Haryana has strategically planned its tourism development to showcase the state's richness and potential in both domestic and international tourist markets.

It is believed that tourism in Haryana first originated with the formation of the Haryana Tourism Corporation (HTC) in 1974, established by the state government to handle and take charge of state tourism activities. It had been playing a pivotal role in the infrastructure development, events organization, and marketing of Haryana as a prime tourist location.

Tourism, being a consumer-driven product, depends on understanding tourist behavior for its sustainable growth, as tourists are the principal consumers responsible for eliciting demand (Han, 2021; Streimikiene *et al.,* 2021). The motivations, preferences, and decisions of tourists are critical in determining which travel services will be most popular and provide impetus for travel experiences. It is a multifaceted phenomenon influenced by various factors, including cultural upbringing, socioeconomic status, technological advances, and lifestyle choices/preferences (Cohen *et al.,* 2014). Tourist behavior has far-reaching consequences for the strategic location of destinations and tourism business success. Responsible tourism is a growing area of concern regarding sustainability, with tourists turning more toward responsible travel choices (Arya *et al.,* 2024). Sustainably and mindfully aware travelers desire to lessen their environmental impact, connect responsibly with local people, and help maintain the places they explore (Beall *et al.,* 2021). The practice of mindfulness among tourists can contribute to an improved experience, ultimately attracting more visitors.

Mindfulness, defined as paying purposeful attention to the present moment while developing nonjudgmental awareness, is generally recognized for having a major impact on people's experiences and perceptions of their surroundings (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). Including mindfulness in travel is a step toward more meaningful, introspective travel that will help guests to establish a strong relationship with their environment and themselves. Although research on mindfulness in travel is still under development, studies indicate that travelers who practice mindfulness while on their vacations might have more happiness and satisfaction from their visits (Keskin *et al.,* 2017). Conscious travelers often exhibit ecological and socially conscious actions, which links mindful travel to enhanced sustainability and ethical behavior (Creswell *et al.,* 2014). In the context of tourism experiences, it has the potential to significantly impact the visitor's trip quality (Bagaria & Nirmala, 2023). A tourist

experience is referred to as a continuous stream of emotions and thoughts, which take place during conscious time (Kang & Gretzel, 2012). This phase is a psychological state that an individual goes through while touring (Otto & Ritchie, 1996). Many important elements, such as learning, escape, and enjoyment, are included in this interaction.

The current study explores the effects of mindfulness on the tourist experience within the state of Haryana. Although several past studies have examined various dimensions of tourist behavior, psychological engagement, and experience, limited research has investigated the concept of mindfulness in the context of the tourist experience in Haryana, India. Previous research has also examined customer satisfaction, or destination attractiveness but has not specifically examined how mindfulness in its explicit form as a psychological state—influences the learning, escapism, and enjoyment experience of tourists while traveling. Understanding tourist behavior is vital for the tourism sector in the face of technological advancements, changing consumer preferences, and global events. The research extends beyond traditional academic inquiry and provides a basis for developing strategies that are commensurate with the desires of conscious travelers in an increasingly competitive marketplace. Moreover, with Haryana emerging as a significant tourism hub, it is imperative to analyze how mindfulness-oriented approaches can enhance visitor experiences within this regional context. The upcoming sections of this article unfold as follows: Introduction, literature review, research methodology, data analysis and discussion, implications, and future research of the study.

SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

The incorporation of mindfulness in the domain of tourism research conflates psychological aspects with their operational repercussions on the ground. Placing mindfulness in the context of travel experiences grounds tourism research within psychology, furnishing an excellent platform from which to start developing further integration between these two research fields and a solid base for future undertakings in the domain of tourism management. Mindfulness while traveling might significantly enhance the mental and emotional well-being of the tourist. It might enhance relaxation, reduce stress and anxiety, and improve overall pleasure (Loureiro *et al.,* 2020). As such, tourists are likely to feel happy and satisfied with their return journey back home after traveling. This might affect post-trip attitude toward the destination (Stankov & Filimonau, 2023), due to the reason that mindful tourists are more willing to share nice experiences and maintain a good mouth-of-word status, thereby also influencing the destination image about future visitors. Additionally, despite growing global interest in mindfulness and its place in wellness tourism, there is a lack of empirical studies examining the connection between mindfulness and tourist experiences in culturally and historically rich, yet emerging tourism destinations, such as Haryana. Haryana has unique tourism offerings, yet how mindfulness contributes to visitors' engagement, satisfaction, and overall experience is under-researched.

TOURISM IN HARYANA: EMERGING FRONTIERS

Haryana is quickly evolving into a diverse tourism location that hosts history, nature, adventure, spirituality, and urban attractions. Historic locations, including the Mahabharata Circuit in Kurukshetra, the Ibrahim Lodi Tomb in Panipat, and the Sheikh Chilli's Tomb in Thanesar, highlight its brilliant history. Wildlife attractions are underway, like the Gurugram Wildlife Safari and the World Herbal Forest in Morni Hills. Adventure tourism can be enjoyed at Dhosi Hill's volcanic terrain, which will soon have an aerial ropeway and glass bridge. Spirituality tourism is reasonable to visit, which includes Mata Mansa Devi and Sheetla Mata, whereas urban tourism is available at Gurugram's Kingdom of Dreams and Cyber Hub. Government efforts, including the Surajkund Crafts Mela and the development of infrastructure, including the Pipli-Jyotisar Sarasvati Riverfront, will further enrich the tourism potential of Haryana. Haryana is a dynamic environment; it is establishing itself as a prime travel destination, combining tradition and modernity.

Table 1: Tourism in Haryana: Emerging Frontiers

Category	Tourist Attractions	Highlights
Historical & Cultural	Kurukshetra, Panipat, Thanesar Surajkund Mela, Panipat Battlefields, Farrukhnagar Fort, Pinjore Gardens, Kartik Cultural Festival, Pinjore Heritage Festival	Mahabharata Circuit, Historic Tombs & Battle Sites
Wildlife & Nature	Morni Hills, Sultanpur Bird Sanctuary, Brahma Sarovar, Gurugram Wildlife Safari, Sultanpur, Kalesar	Safari Park, Bird Sanctuary, National Park
Adventure & Eco	Dhosi Hill, Morni Hills, Damdama Lake	Trekking, Boating, Ropeway, Rock Climbing
Religious & Spiritual	Mata Mansa Devi, Sheetla Mata, Jyotisar Tirtha	Pilgrimage Sites, Meditation Retreats
Urban & Modern	Kingdom of Dreams, Cyber Hub, Manesar	Entertainment, Nightlife, Luxury Resorts
Govt. Initiatives	Surajkund Mela, Sarasvati Riverfront	Handicrafts Fair, Tourism Infrastructure

Source: Internet and Social Media

LITERATURE REVIEW & HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Tourist Mindfulness (TM)

Mindfulness is a kind of mental activity and state of awareness that implies concentrating one's attention on the current moment without making judgments about it (Iacob *et al.,* 2024; Bansal & Punia, 2023). It is, therefore, the process of intentional non-judgmental observation of your thoughts, feelings, sensations, and your environment (Brown & Ryan, 2003). According to Lindsay *et al*. (2018) and Chan & Chu (2024), mindfulness refers to a nonjudgmental and open approach to focusing one's attention on the present time. Mindful employees are more likely to make decisions independent of others' opinions (Bishop *et al.,* 2004). Mindfulness techniques, often cultivated through meditation, can be applied in various aspects of life to reduce stress (Eck *et al.,* 2023; Bansal *et al.,* 2025), enhance emotional regulation, improve concentration, and increase self-awareness. By fostering mindfulness (Errmann *et al.,* 2021), individuals can lead more fulfilling and balanced lives, and it has been integrated into various fields, including healthcare, education, and personal development, as a valuable tool for promoting mental and emotional well-being (Farkic *et al.,* 2021).

Mindfulness is a nascent area of study, having existed for just 30 years (Frauman & Norman, 2003); there is not enough literature about the notion of mindfulness in the context of tourism (Moscardo & Pearce, 1986; Moscardo, 1996; Frauman & Norman, 2003). The use of mindfulness in tourism correlates with enhanced educational outcomes, improved well-being, and increased satisfaction in tourist environments. It involves meticulous observation of information and awareness of nuanced changes in context and perspective (Langer *et al.,* 2012; Moscardo, 2009). Mindfulness, which had its roots in Buddhist practices, emerged as a mainstay in psychological and health applications and then recently became part of the major elements that improved travel quality. In this regard, mindful tourists are those who accept their present emotions and thoughts without response or judgment, thereby concentrating only on the physical sensations felt at their destination (Bishop *et al.,* 2004). In a mindful setting, visitors are more likely to stay around, enjoy themselves, and participate in the activities offered, such as learning a national dance and getting fascinating and informative insights than they are in desiring to leave. This procedure ensures that the visitor leaves the place with useful knowledge (Dutt & Ninov, 2016). Research indicates that visitors who engage in mindfulness, characterized by attentiveness, awareness, and non-judgmental observation of their thoughts and perceptions of their surroundings, generally have a more favorable travel experience (Kang & Gretzel, 2012). Owing to this, some key aspects of tourist mindfulness include present-moment awareness, non-judgmental observation, present focus, and attention (Baer *et al.,* 2004; Brown & Ryan, 2003). One can gain a more sophisticated understanding of mindfulness by gaining an understanding of each sub-dimension.

Attention: Attention indicates the individual's ability to pay attention to and concentrate on what they are doing in the moment. "Being present" is giving one's undivided attention to the here and now (Brown & Ryan, 2003). Attention emphasizes

the deliberate concentration tourists maintain in their presence during different stages of their encounter (Edensor, 2000). During the pre-trip period, concentration is evident as travelers diligently seek information, thoughtfully evaluate travel options, and organize their itineraries. Tourists exhibit heightened attention, engaging with local culture and actively participating in activities during the trip. This concentrated focus improves the quality of their encounters and cultivates a more profound connection with the destination. Tourists who consciously engage with their environment while traveling are more inclined to create positive and lasting memories, hence enhancing their overall pleasure and increasing the probability of return trips (Pearce, 2012).

Non-judgment: Non-judgmental denotes travelers embracing an open and receptive attitude, refraining from immediate evaluative assessments of their encounters (Chen *et al.,* 2010). During the absorption phase, non-judgment is apparent when tourists emotionally connect with the destination without imposing preconceived beliefs. Non-judgmental tourists exhibit greater flexibility in cultural experiences, rendering them more receptive to new encounters (Napoli & Bonifas, 2013).

Awareness: This quality flourishes as travelers think back on their adventures during the reflection phase. Travelers who are hyper-aware take in everything around them, from the sights and sounds to the local cuisine and perfumes (Anaya & Lehto, 2023). Developing strong recollections is greatly aided by this aspect of attention.

Tourist Experience (TEX)

The tourist experience refers to the overall encounter and impact that a traveller has when visiting a destination or engaging in travel-related activities. (Bigné *et al.,* 2001) It encompasses a wide range of factors, including the physical environment (Hosany *et al.,* 2022), cultural interactions, emotional responses, and personal reflections. A positive tourism experience can create lasting memories and satisfaction for travellers, while a negative experience can deter them from returning or recommending the destination (Stankov & Filimonau, 2023). Tourism research has identified three distinct elements of the tourist experience: enjoyment experience, learning experience, and escape experience (Kang & Gretzel, 2012; Eck *et al.,* 2023).

Learning Experience: This type of experience pertains to the retention of different cultures, new facts learned, and new ideas gained while traveling. Participating in events that foster learning and comprehension of the destination's history is a part of it. Travelers can enrich their cultural immersion experiences in culturally significant destinations by participating in museums, guided tours, and other interactive cultural activities. Positive learning experiences link to greater fulfillment and intentions to return (Abubakar & Mavondo, 2014).

Escape Experience: According to Chen *et al.* (2017), when people travel, they emotionally and psychologically disconnect from their everyday lives, which gives them a sense of relief, rejuvenation, and a temporary break from their daily duties; this is called the escape experience.

Enjoyment Experience: The term "enjoyment experience" refers to the positive feelings received from participating in various cultural, recreational, and culinary activities while on vacation (Chen *et al.,* 2020). It is a reflection of the tourists' subjective enjoyment of different parts of the trip. Tourists remember places that emphasize giving memorable experiences.

Tourist Mindfulness (TM) and Tourist Experience (TEX)

The practice of mindfulness improves the lives of tourists at every stage of their journey, from planning to reflection (Tung & Ritchie, 2011). Following that, researchers delved into the link between mindfulness and how memorable tourist experiences are, and they found that paying more attention at tourist attractions made the experiences more memorable overall (Dutt & Ninov, 2016; Kaya *et al.,* 2024). Numerous studies (Moscardo, 1996; Frauman & Norman, 2003) indicate that tourists who engage in mindfulness are more likely to immerse themselves in their environments and attain a profound comprehension of the locations and attractions they explore. Mindfulness practices such as openness and true presence can enhance communication with tour guides and other service providers. The tourist fosters an environment conducive to communication and connection by attentively listening to the guides' stories, demonstrating interest in and gratitude for their

knowledge, and keeping an open, compassionate attitude (Stankov & Filimonau, 2019; Zhao & Agyeiwaah, 2023; Kaya *et al.,* 2024). Research conducted by Van Winkle & Backman (2008) and Rubin *et al*. (2016) demonstrates that individuals with heightened mindfulness levels tend to pursue learning-oriented activities, while those with lowered mindfulness are inclined towards escapism. The non-reactive nature of mindfulness leads to an open-minded approach, without discrimination; it makes one subjective to deepening and enhancing a travel experience. Furthermore, research (Tung & Ritchie, 2011) reveals that mindful travelers report enhanced enjoyment, improved memory recall, and superior perceived service quality. Empirical analyses enable the researchers to affirm and further develop this theory by drawing essential conclusions on the relatedness between mindfulness and the travelers' experience. Based on the aforementioned discussion, it is hypothesized that:

H$_1$: Tourist Mindfulness (TM) Positively Influences the Tourist Experience (TEX) among Haryana Tourists.
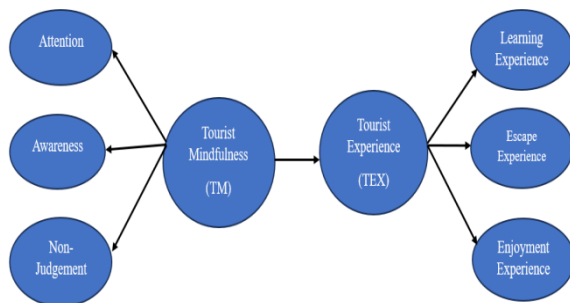
PROPOSED CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework
Source: PLS-SEM Output

The hypothetical/ proposed Research Model represents all the variables that will be used in this particular research study.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Measurement Development

The study employed a quantitative research design to collect data from tourists in Haryana. Our research instrument, i.e., the questionnaire, consisted of two sections. The first section of the survey had demographic questions, i.e., age, gender, marital status, occupation, and leisure travel. This data helps in discovering trends and variances across diverse responder groups, so enriching the findings and improving generalizability.

The second section comprised the statements to measure the study constructs: tourist mindfulness and tourist experience. These statements were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting strongly disagree and 5 denoting strongly agree. The study constructs have been thoroughly examined using Likert-scale assessments, recognized for their dependability in obtaining individual experiences. Furthermore, reliability assessments (e.g., Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and rhoA) were also performed to confirm internal consistency.

Tourist Mindfulness

We accessed tourist mindfulness, dividing its three dimensions adapted from Kang & Gretzel, 2012, i.e., attention (5 items), awareness (4 items), and non-judgment (4 items), into a 13-item scale. The sample items are: "I was attentive while engaging in recreational activities and attractions available at the destination", "I was aware of my personal safety and took measures for a safe travel experience", and "I embrace and appreciate cultural differences without judging them".

Tourist Experience

We adapted 11 statements from Eck *et al.,* 2023 for measuring tourist experience, which involves three dimensions: learning experience (4 items), escape experience (4 items), and enjoyment experience (3 items). The sample statements include: "Interactions with local experts or guides enriched my learning about the destination," "I immersed myself in the destination and forgot about daily routines," and "I derived a lot of pleasure from the destination."

DATA COLLECTION

The study targeted tourists from Haryana as the primary population for data collection. The term "tourist from Haryana" to all visiting Haryana whether domestic, foreign, or both. In accordance with the proposed study's objective, a sample of 50 tourists from one district each of six administrative divisions of Haryana will be selected. A convenience sampling method was employed to

select participants, ensuring ease of access and efficient data gathering. This sampling was chosen due to its practicality in accessing participants efficiently within the constraints of time and resources. Primary data were collected using a structured survey questionnaire comprising validated scales and items adapted from previous research. Existing studies in tourism have effectively used structured questionnaires to investigate psychological traits such as mindfulness and experience. This approach guarantees alignment with previous research while providing novel insights pertinent to Haryana State. The data collection process involved both online and offline methods to accommodate respondents' preferences. The online approach included distributing the questionnaire via email, while the offline method involved direct, face-to-face interactions with tourists. Over a six-month period, from June 2024 to Nov. 2024, researchers distributed 300 questionnaires through these channels. Researchers returned a total of 250 completed questionnaires, achieving an impressive response rate of 83.33%. Furthermore, to estimate the minimum sample size requirement, we specifically used G*Power software. A power analysis with an effect size of 0.15 and an alpha level of 0.05 required a minimum sample size of 200 respondents to achieve a power of 0.80. Thus, our sample size of 250 respondents exceeds this criterion, providing strong support for the statistical analyses conducted.

DATA ANALYSIS

We used Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) for data analysis with SmartPLS version 4, due to its efficacy in evaluating data in management studies. (Ringle *et al.,* 2024). SmartPLS was perfect for this study as it helps us to analyze multiple relationships at the same time while taking into account measurement errors in the variables (Hair *et al.,* 2019; Ringle *et al.,* 2020). It can be used with small sample sizes and provides enhanced versatility for complex models (Hair *et al.,* 2019). In our study, using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), we evaluated both the outer model (measurement) and the inner model (structural), following the data screening procedures outlined by Hair *et al.,* 2019. While assessing the measurement model, this study applied a two-stage process.

Initially, the reliability and validity of the first-order variables (indicators) (MF_att, MF_awr, MF_nj, LE, EE, EJE) were investigated. Next, the measurement model of second-order latent constructs (TM and TEX) was assessed (Rasoolimanesh *et al.,* 2019). Finally, we evaluated the structural model to measure the hypothesized relationships among second-order latent constructs.

Common Method Bias

We evaluated common method bias (CMB) before model estimation. Common Method Bias (CMB) may occur in investigations using instruments that assess latent variables on comparable scales. This study evaluated the factors using a 5-point Likert scale and performed a full collinearity test to rule out the possibility of CMB. When using the full collinearity method, an endogenous random variable is compared to the constructs' internal VIF values. A value beyond 3.3 signifies a CMB problem, as per Kock and Lynn (2012). In our study, none of the inner VIF values exceed 3.3, indicating the absence of the CMB issue.

RESULTS

Sample Profile

The demographic composition of the sample population (presented as Table 2) offers a nuanced glimpse into the preferences and behaviors of individuals engaged in tourism within Haryana. With a slight majority of males at 58.1% and females at 41.9%, the sample appears evenly distributed across genders, ensuring a comprehensive analysis of tourism dynamics. Marital status reveals a near parity, with 54.0% married and 46.0% unmarried respondents, facilitating comparisons between these groups' travel patterns. The age spectrum is broad, ranging from below 20 years to above 40 years, with the 31-40 age group dominating at 32.3%, followed by 21-30-year-olds at 24.3%. Occupationally, the private sector dominates at 39.0%, while students constitute 28.4%, reflecting a diverse workforce and student population contributing to tourism activities. Leisure travel frequency varies widely: 20.8% travel less than every six months, 6 months to 1 year 31.6%, 1 year to 3 years 73%, and 24.3% travel only every three years or more.

Table 2: Sample Profile

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	145	58.1
	Female	105	41.9
Marital Status	Unmarried	115	46.0
	Married	135	54.0
Age	Below 20	67	26.8
(in years)	21-30	61	24.3
	31-40	81	32.3
	Above 40	41	16.6
Occupation	Student	71	28.4
	Govt. Employee	40	16.0
	Private. Employee	98	39.0
	Businessman	41	16.6
Leisure Travel	Less Than 6	52	20.8
	6 months to 1 year	79	31.6
	1 year to 3 years	58	23.3
	More Than 3 years	61	24.3

Source: Primary Data

Assessment of Measurement Model (First Order)

The first step in evaluating PLS-SEM results involves assessing the first-order measurement model. We evaluated the measurement model by examining indicator loadings, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. We checked the construct reliability by examining the outer loadings of all the indicators (MF_att, MF_awr, MF_nj, LE, EE, and EJE) and trying to get a value higher than 0.70. In our study, as shown in Table 3, all factor loadings exceed the threshold; thus, there is no issue with construct reliability. We further checked the internal consistency of the reflective constructs using composite reliability (CR), Cronbach's alpha (α), and rhoA. All the α, CR, and RhoA values were above the 0.7 benchmark (Hair *et al.,* 2019), thus establishing the reliability of the measurement model for each construct at first order. Convergent validity was confirmed by the AVE values, which were all greater than 0.50 (Hair *et al.,* 2019), showing that the constructs explained more than half of the variance in their respective indicators. Table 3 shows the results for reliability and convergent validity at first order.

Table 3: Construct's Reliability and Validity (First Order)

Constructs	Indicators	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	rhoA	Composite Reliability	AVE
Mindfulness_Attention (MF_att)			0.934	0.935	0.950	0.792
	MF_att_1	0.879				
	MF_att_2	0.877				
	MF_att_3	0.882				
	MF_att_4	0.903				
	MF_att_5	0.908				
Mindfulness_Awareness (MF_awr)			0.911	0.913	0.937	0.792
	MF_awr_1	0.919				
	MF_awr_2	0.902				
	MF_awr_3	0.890				
	MF_awr_4	0.842				
Mindfulness_Non-judgement (MF_nj)			0.927	0.928	0.948	0.82
	MF_nj_1	0.898				
	MF_nj_2	0.902				
	MF_nj_3	0.898				
	MF_nj_4	0.926				
Learning Experience (LE)	LE_1	0.908	0.928	0.929	0.949	0.822
	LE_2	0.911				
	LE_3	0.901				
	LE_4	0.906				
Escape Experience			0.935	0.935	0.953	0.836

(EE)						
	EE_1	0.929				
	EE_2	0.905				
	EE_3	0.913				
	EE_4	0.911				
Enjoyment Experience (EJE)			0.901	0.901	0.938	0.835
	EJE_1	0.922				
	EJE_2	0.920				
	EJE_3	0.899				

Note(s): EE= Escape Experience, EJE= Enjoyment Experience, LE= Learning Experience, MF_att= Mindfulness Attention, MF_awr= Mindfulness Awareness, MF_nj= Mindfulness non-judgement
Source: PLS-SEM Output

Measurement Model (Second Order)

Table 4 provides an assessment of the reliability and validity of constructs in the second-order measurement model. The constructs evaluated are Tourist Mindfulness, and Tourist Experience. For the Mindfulness construct, indicators include Attention, Awareness, and Non-Judgement. Furthermore, for the Tourist Experience, indicators include Escape Experience, Enjoyment Experience, and Learning Experience. Loadings for each indicator are high, indicating a strong relationship between the indicators and the construct. We evaluate the second-order measurement model based on its reliability and validity. Reliability of the model is assessed by evaluating the indicator

reliability followed by checking internal consistency via composite reliability (CR) and Henseler's rhoA for all latent constructs within the suggested threshold level of 0.70 (Hair *et al.,* 2019; Hair & Alamer, 2022). We examined the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) to establish the convergent validity of constructs that were above the threshold value of 0.50 (Hair & Alamer, 2022). Overall, Table 4 shows the constructs' reliability and validity in the second-order measurement model. It shows that the indicators accurately measure their own constructs and have good convergent validity.

Table 4: Construct's Reliability and Validity (Second Order)

Constructs	Indicators	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	rhoA	Composite Reliability	AVE
Tourist Mindfulness (TM)			0.941	0.942	0.948	0.586
	MF_att	0.881				
	MF_awr	0.856				
	MF_nj	0.825				
Tourist Experience (TEX)			0.936	0.937	0.945	0.612
	LE	0.864				
	EE	0.879				
	EJE	0.822				

Note(s): TEX= Tourist Experience, TM=Tourist Mindfulness
Source: PLS-SEM Output

Discriminant Validity (First Order & Second Order)

The next important step was to check the discriminant validity using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the HTMT ratio (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015). Discriminant validity is the degree to which a construct is empirically distinct from the other latent variables in the model. Tables 5 and 6

display discriminant validity using the Fornell-Larcker Criterion and HTMT ratio among first-order (MF_att, MF_awr, MF_nj, LE, EE, EJE) and second-order constructs (TEX, TM). The Fornell-Larcker criterion (1981) states that a construct is discriminately valid when the square root of its AVE is greater than its correlations with other constructs. The results show that each construct has a stronger relationship with itself than with other

constructs, which is a good sign of discriminant validity. Furthermore, we calculate the HTMT by comparing the mean value of item correlations across constructs to the geometric mean of average correlations within the same construct. Table 6 displays correlations between constructs, with

higher correlations along the diagonal indicating weaker discriminant validity. All HTMT ratios were below the essential threshold of 0.85. These results, given in Tables 5 and 6, indicated that the model had no concerns with discriminant validity.

Table 5: Discriminant Validity using the Fornell-Larcker Criterion (First Order & Second Order)

	EE	EJE	LE	MF_att	MF_awr	MF_nj	TEX	TM
EE	0.914							
EJE	0.611	0.914						
LE	0.607	0.584	0.907					
MF_att	0.179	0.100	0.134	0.890				
MF_awr	0.193	0.061	0.138	0.640	0.889			
MF_nj	0.310	0.185	0.323	0.565	0.585	0.906		
TEX	0.879	0.822	0.864	0.165	0.161	0.327	0.782	
TM	0.262	0.134	0.227	0.881	0.856	0.825	0.250	0.766

Note(s): EE= Escape Experience, EJE= Enjoyment Experience, LE= Learning Experience, MF_att= Mindfulness Attention, MF_awr= Mindfulness Awareness, MF_nj= Mindfulness non-judgement, TEX= Tourist Experience, TM=Tourist Mindfulness
Source: PLS-SEM Output

Table 6: Discriminant Validity using the HTMT Criterion (First Order & Second Order)

	EE	EJE	LE	MF_att	MF_awr	MF_nj	TEX	TM
EE								
EJE	0.666							
LE	0.649	0.637						
MF_att	0.191	0.109	0.142					
MF_awr	0.207	0.067	0.151	0.692				
MF_nj	0.332	0.202	0.347	0.605	0.635			
TEX	0.936	0.898	0.928	0.175	0.172	0.350		
TM	0.278	0.145	0.242	0.939	0.924	0.883	0.265	

Note(s): EE= Escape Experience, EJE= Enjoyment Experience, LE= Learning Experience, MF_att= Mindfulness Attention, MF_awr= Mindfulness Awareness, MF_nj= Mindfulness non-judgement, TEX= Tourist Experience, TM=Tourist Mindfulness
Source: PLS-SEM Output

Structural Model Assessment

Once the measurement model was deemed satisfactory, the next step in evaluating the PLS-SEM results was to assess the structural model. We first examined the inner VIF (variance inflation factor) values to address potential multicollinearity concerns. Since all of the inner VIF values were less than 3, it meant that there were no major multicollinearity issues with the model's variables (Hair *et al.,* 2019; James *et al.,* 2013). Next, the R² value of the endogenous construct was evaluated. R² represents the explanatory power of the model, indicating the variance explained in each endogenous construct (Shmueli & Koppius, 2011). Tourist mindfulness explained 6.3% of the variance in tourist experience, as shown by an R² value of 0.063. The standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) is a commonly used metric in PLS-SEM

for assessing model fit, with values below 0.08 signifying a good fit (Henseler *et al.,* 2013). For this model, the SRMR value was 0.079, indicating an excellent model fit. Table 7 presents the results.

We further evaluated hypotheses by employing the consistent PLS algorithm in SmartPLS 4. We conducted bootstrapping using 5,000 subsamples to evaluate the significance of the path coefficients. Table 7 and Figure 2 demonstrate support for our study's hypothesized relationship. Our study's main hypothesis (H1) posited that tourist mindfulness (TM) has a positive and significant effect on tourist experience (TEX) among tourists in Haryana. The standardized path coefficient for this relationship is (β = 0.250, p = 0.000), which means that the mindfulness of Haryana tourists is a strong predictor of their tourist experience. Therefore, we support H1.

PLS Predict and RMSE

Furthermore, SmartPLS 4 assessed this model's out-of-sample predictive power using Q2, which was derived from the PLSpredict process, and found that it was greater than zero. This analysis demonstrated that it was appropriate for predicting constructs. The second key prediction measure is root means square error (RMSE), which is

calculated as the square root of the mean of squared differences between predictions and actual observations. All of the RMSE values in the theorized model were lower than those in the untheorized model, demonstrating that these DVs are extremely predictive. (Hair *et al*. 2019). Table 7 shows the Q2 and RMSE results.

Table 7: Structural Model Assessment

Relationships	Std. beta	p-value	t-value	BC 95% CI	Significance	VIF
H1 TM -> TEX	0.250	0.000	5.189	[0.194; 0.415]	Yes	1.238
Constructs				R^2	Q^2	
TEX				0.084	0.070	
Model Fit (SRMR)				0.079		
RMSE				0.970		

Note(s): TM= Tourist Mindfulness, TEX= Tourist Experience
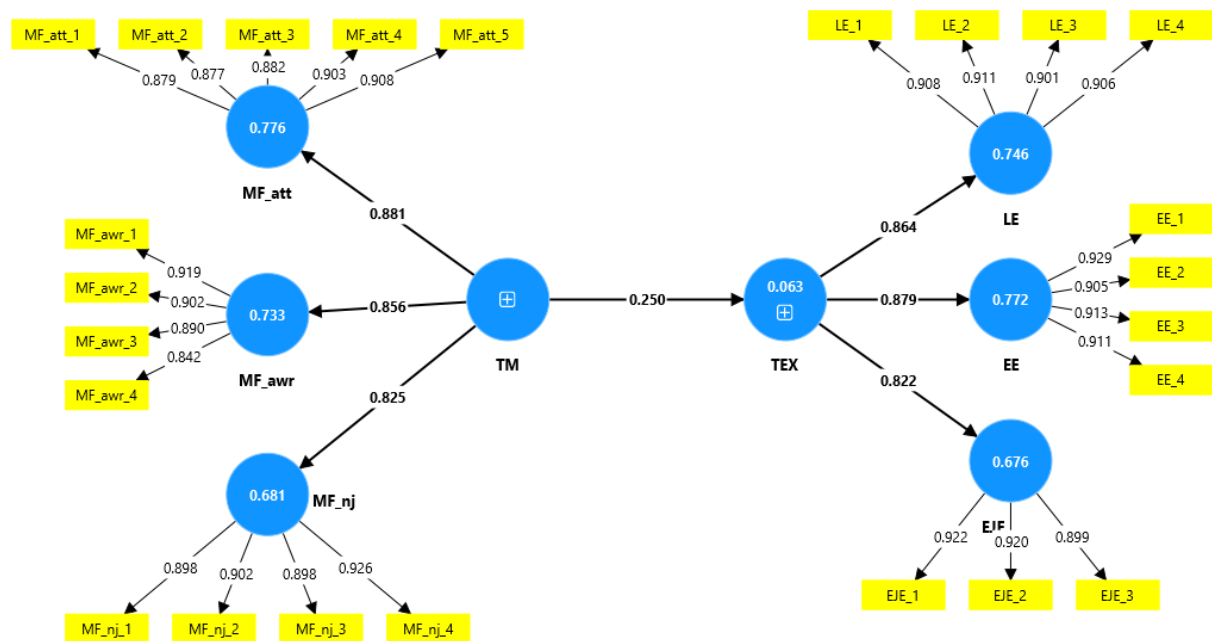**Source:** PLS-SEM Output

Figure 2: Results of Structural Model

Source: PLS-SEM Output

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Tourism has consistently been perceived as a means of escaping the monotony of daily life, providing opportunities for cultural enrichment, exploration, and relaxation. The tourism sector has embraced mindfulness, a concept linked to meditation and stress relief recognizing its influence on visitor experiences. Key mindfulness components, such as non-judgment, awareness, and attention, play a significant role in shaping how

tourists engage with their surroundings (Farkic *et al.,* 2021). Mindfulness is the current buzzword in mental state. This practice involves being aware of one's thoughts, emotions, and environment without judgement and fully present.

The current study hypothesis (H1) states that: Tourist Mindfulness (TM) positively influences the Tourist Experience (TEX) among Haryana tourists, which is significant. This finding suggests that visitors who practice conscious behaviors defined by present-moment awareness, attention to sensory

stimuli, and nonjudging acceptance are probably going to have a more fulfilling and gratifying travel experience. Mindfulness in tourism can significantly enhance traveler experiences by fostering authentic, immersive, and meaningful engagements with destinations, benefiting both tourists and providers. Its integration promotes sustainable travel practices while addressing the growing demand for transformative tourism. Mindful visitors strengthen their relationship with the location by being more alert to cultural aspects, emotionally balanced, and sensory nuances.

Additionally, by emphasizing Haryana, an Indian state, as the focus of our study, we highlight how its rich history, natural surroundings, and cultural variety can help tourist mindfulness increase respect for regional customs and eco-tourism, known for its rich heritage, deep-rooted traditions, and vibrant rural culture, significantly shaping the perceptions and expectations of tourists visiting the state. The cultural identity of Haryana, marked by folk traditions, festivals, cuisine, and historical sites, plays a crucial role in influencing tourists' preferences and experiences. Additionally, Haryana's societal values, including hospitality (Atithi Devo Bhava), agrarian lifestyle, and emphasis on traditional art forms, contribute to the way tourism is perceived and marketed. These cultural aspects align with our study's focus by affecting tourists' motivations, decision-making processes, and overall satisfaction levels. Moreover, factors such as local customs, attitudes toward visitors, and the prominence of religious and heritage tourism further shape tourist behavior. Higher satisfaction, returning visits, and positive word-of-mouth may all follow from this favorable effect. Stakeholders in the tourism industry could capitalize on this by promoting experiences and mindfulness-oriented events. More study is required, nevertheless, to investigate the long-term effects of mindfulness on tourist satisfaction as well as moderating factors. Such practices could be an effective way for tourism businesses to promote well-being and happiness among their guests. For instance, they could use techniques associated with mindfulness in the practice, such as stress reduction training, nature walks, or guided meditation, for this purpose. Destinations could also give the visitor the tools or training to make thoughtful connections with their environment. Such tools and training might involve reflective writing or culture walks based on mindfulness.

Theoretical Implication

The theoretical implications of mindfulness in tourism are expected to strengthen our knowledge of numerous key concepts in the area, including sustainability, cultural involvement, quality of experience, and well-being. Mindfulness questions established tourist experience paradigms from Haryana that have favored more extroverted forms of activity and attractions. Mindfulness allows us to change the focus from "doing" to "being". It questions the limitations placed on the quality of experience with the fresh concepts suggested nowadays. Conventional approaches to assessing tourist pleasure, including calculating the number of attractions visited and assessing facilities and services, fall short of completely capturing the great satisfaction obtained from meaningful, conscious, and immersive experiences. This kind of strategy emphasizes psychological and emotional participation over surface satisfaction, therefore broadening the understanding of a positive travel experience.

In tourism, mindfulness might provide a conceptual foundation for understanding how to improve the flow experience by means of awareness. It suggests that tourists who practice mindfulness might more easily reach a "flow" state, marked by strong absorption in the activity or surroundings, therefore enhancing their whole trip experience. Emphasizing present-moment awareness and environmental sensitivity, mindfulness improves and balances existing tourist sustainability models. Mindfulness and sustainability have a relationship wherein those who practice mindful living are more inclined to respect local cultures, reduce waste, and select environmentally responsible choices. This approach extends the concept of sustainable tourism to also include awareness of one's ideas and sentiments while traveling ethically, therefore going beyond just consideration of environmental or financial aspects.

The basis of the mindfulness idea is positive psychology more especially, the ways mindfulness techniques improve emotional control, reduce stress, and increase happiness. Combining mindfulness with travel offers a fresh theoretical perspective on how it could enhance mental health and well-being. Mindfulness adds a psychological element to the tourist experience by reducing travel-induced stress and improving overall emotional well-being. This idea supports tourism

well-being theories, as it shows that a trip's emotional and psychological effects may assess its quality.

Practical Implication

The practical implications emphasize the use of theoretical ideas derived from mindfulness in realistic tourist contexts. To improve the visitor experience and tourism business management, it is vital to turn mindfulness into tangible practices and tactics.

Initially, the attraction of travelers in Haryana with their mindfulness and well-being priorities to mindfulness-based tourism products and services would generate new business ventures. Through special products and services that promote awareness, travel companies can leverage an increasing interest in health and relaxation. Travel agencies may offer some of the yoga, mindfulness retreats, meditation destinations, and guided meditation trips for tourists who wish to associate more intimately with their personal surroundings. A nature resort may add daily yoga classes or mindfulness walks to combine the practice of meditation with the surrounding natural environment.

Second, tourism providers would be trained and educated to handle guests more effectively because attentive service forms greater and more enjoyable relationships between people and guests. Mindfulness techniques may be able to train tourism professionals, such as tour guides and hospitality workers, to ensure that their service quality improves toward pleasing their guests. Tour professionals who embrace mindfulness at work reduce their stress, improve their concentration, and increase their capacity to empathetically respond to the needs of visitors. Incorporating the principles of mindfulness in customer service might help the tour operators in Haryana to improve service quality and tourist satisfaction, as it helps train the employees on being composed, present, and attentive.

Thirdly, tourism businesses can encourage more authentic and meaningful cultural experiences by encouraging responsible interaction with local cultures and encouraging tourists to engage with unfamiliar cultures with sensitivity and curiosity, especially in Haryana Tourism. Mindfulness can create a more respectful and sensitive interaction between residents and visitors in the context of

cultural tourism. Tourism industry businesses can offer activities or tours that promote cultural interaction with a mindfulness focus. At Haryana historical or cultural sites, the guided tour can include a reflective pause that would allow visitors to take in the surroundings before moving on. This approach would leave little room for cultural insensitivity and exploitation but a lot of room for tourists to participate in cultural activities with dignity and respect.

Fourthly, Haryana tourism operators can promote sustainable practices by implementing green tourism facilities, encouraging reduced waste, and demonstrating sensitivity to regional environments. Tourism operators can apply mindfulness to encourage tourists to adopt sustainable behavior. Mindful tourists are usually more aware; thus, they often respect nature and social boundaries much more. To promote sustainability, service providers can begin mindfulness-based initiatives that emphasize the need for tourists to reduce their waste, practice responsible consumption, and participate in community-led conservation efforts. In an effort to instill a sense of responsibility in visitors, a destination can offer mindfulness training that emphasizes the value of regional animal preservation and sustainable tourism practices.

Fifthly, tourism organizations in Haryana may develop experiences more tailored to thoughtful travelers' different needs. Awareness can significantly personalize trip experiences. Mindfulness provides a structure through which tourists can personalize their experiences according to their psychological, emotional, and spiritual needs. A tourist might choose a mindfulness trip by design, where the focus is to recharge and reflect by visiting a secluded place or engaging in wellness activities. Customizing travel experiences in the light of mindfulness can add more enjoyment and attachment to the destination.

Ultimately, the implementation of mindfulness presents numerous challenges that match its promise. The fast pace and high-demand context of contemporary travel may not consistently align with mindfulness, as travelers often aim to maximize experiences within a very limited time. Tourism businesses have to balance demand for quick, action-packed itineraries with demand for mindfulness-oriented experiences from the travelers. Companies operating in the tourism

industry have an agenda to design mindfulness experiences accordingly so that they support rather than detract from the customer journey. Additionally, if a mindfulness experience lacks authentic marketing, commercialization erodes its benefits.

In summary, mindfulness gives a solid base for enhancing the tourist experience by promoting present-focused awareness, stress reduction, and deeper connection with the surroundings and the local culture. There has been an increasing demand for authentic, life-changing tourist experiences, and mindfulness promotes meaningful traveling, which corresponds with this need. However, challenges persist, including potential widespread acceptance and the risk of commercialization. Integrating mindfulness into tourism will benefit both tourists and providers when these two groups of people enhance the travel experience and advocate for sustainability. Future studies should explore mindfulness in Haryana tourism more deeply and carefully assess how well it is used and its lasting impact on visitor involvement and well-being.

LIMITATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The current investigation exhibits certain deficiencies. Initially, our study relied solely on self-reported measurements and a convenience sampling approach, which increased the likelihood of common-method bias. In the future, research should use sampling methods that are based on chance, like random or stratified sampling, or combine convenience sampling with quota or purposive sampling to lessen bias and make the results more applicable to a wider group. Further, the data is cross-sectional and can only demonstrate a correlational relationship between our target variables, not causality. Future studies should incorporate longitudinal designs to examine causality, using experimental approaches, and adopt mixed-method strategies. Next, studies of mindfulness in tourism need to more systematically examine its long-term effects on travel outcomes. Longitudinal analysis could investigate changes in the effect, behavior, and memoirs of visitors after a visit, considering how mindfulness practice affects these outcomes. Furthermore, one might compare the levels of well-being and satisfaction and more holistic connections to the place made by mindful travelers versus non-mindful travelers as comparative research.

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