

MICRO-KINDNESS VERSUS MICRO-AGGRESSION: DAILY MICRO-BEHAVIOURS, AFFECT, AND WELL-BEING AMONG FULL-TIME CORPORATE EMPLOYEES

Anisha P. Gopal*¹, V Mohana Sundari ²

Research Scholar ¹, Assistant Professor ²

Faculty of Management, SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Kattankulathur, Tamil Nadu.

Article Received: 15 November 2025

*Corresponding Author: Anisha P. Gopal

Article Revised: 05 December 2025

Research Scholar, Faculty of Management, SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Kattankulathur, Tamil Nadu.

Published on: 25 December 2025

DOI: <https://doi-doi.org/101555/ijrpa.4605>

ABSTRACT

Workplace experiences are shaped by numerous small, routine interpersonal interactions that cumulatively influence employees' emotional experiences and well-being. Drawing on Affective Events Theory (AET) and emotional labour theory, this study examines how daily workplace micro-behaviours, including micro-aggressions and micro-kindness, influence employee well-being through affect, while also considering the roles of mindfulness, surface acting, and work environment features. A quantitative research design was adopted, and primary data were collected from 223 full-time corporate employees working in the IT, ITES, finance, and service sectors in Chennai. Data were analysed using correlation, regression, and mediation analyses. The results reveal strong and significant relationships among all study variables. Micro daily events, mindfulness, surface acting, and work environment features were found to significantly predict affect and employee well-being. Affect emerged as the strongest predictor of well-being, highlighting its central role in translating daily workplace experiences into longer-term well-being outcomes. The mediation analysis further confirmed that affect significantly mediates the relationships between micro daily events, mindfulness, surface acting, work environment features, and employee well-being. The findings support the core assumptions of Affective Events Theory by demonstrating that workplace experiences influence employee well-being primarily through affective reactions. By integrating both positive and negative micro-behaviours within a single empirical framework,

the study extends existing literature that has largely focused on micro-aggressions alone. The study also contributes context-specific evidence from an Indian corporate setting. Practically, the findings highlight the importance of promoting micro-kindness, supportive work environments, mindfulness practices, and reducing excessive surface acting to enhance employee well-being. Overall, the study underscores that small daily interactions matter significantly for sustaining employee well-being in contemporary organizations.

KEYWORDS: Micro Daily Events, Affect, Employee Well-Being, Mindfulness, Affective Events Theory.

INTRODUCTION

Work environments are composed of almost infinite small employee interpersonal moments such as brief comments, micro-requests, little affirmations, or even slights that, by accumulating, shape the employees' affective experience of their everyday life and their longer-term well-being. Large-scale research has named these brief interpersonal communication accounts as micro-events, and, in addition, it has been found that these events have a considerable impact on mood, engagement, and exhaustion if such intensive (daily/diary) methods are used for the study (Junça-Silva, 2023; Nie et al., 2021). Also, recent meta-analytic evidence unveils that very subtle interpersonal mistreatment (micro-aggressions) is very frequent and is associated with negative mental health outcomes, thus pointing to the considerable practical importance of the micro-behavior issue in the industrial setting (Salari et al., 2024).

Micro-aggressions are slight, most of the time ambiguous, acts of discrimination or invalidation which, even if they are minor, can cause significant negative affect and cumulative harm (for instance, emotional exhaustion increase and engagement decrease) (Williams, 2021; Salari et al., 2024). However, scientists have considered the positive side of the same behavior patterns, i.e., they have acknowledged micro-kindness or micro-affirmations that are small supportive acts resulting in the enhancement of inclusion and positive affect (Junça-Silva, 2023). The contrast of micro-aggressions and micro-kindness provides a useful empirical contrast for investigating the impact of valenced micro-events on daily mood and well-being.

Affective Events Theory suggests that employees' affective reactions to certain events in the workplace mediate the impact on their attitudes and longer-term states (for example,

engagement, exhaustion, and well-being) (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996; applied in recent diary studies: Junça-Silva, 2023). Recent diary and micro-event studies use AET to show that everyday negative micro-events (micro-aggressions, hassles) cause negative affect that leads in turn to daily reduction of engagement and increase of exhaustion; on the contrary, everyday uplifts or micro-affirmations are linked to positive affect and enhanced same-day well-being (Nie et al., 2021; Junça-Silva, 2023). Several diary wave research studies demonstrate that short, frequent recovery actions (micro-breaks) lead to increased recovery levels and workplace well-being through resource replenishment within the day; the support of the supervisor additionally strengthens these links (Nie et al., 2021; Albulescu et al., 2022). These findings highlight that small, habitual actions and supports are of importance for daily well-being, and they also suggest that interventions at the level of micro-interaction (encouraging micro-breaks, micro-affirmations, and supervisor recovery support) can be effective.

Meta-analytic evidence from randomized workplace trials indicates that mindfulness-based programs may result in the improvement of employee stress and well-being outcomes and may also lead to the enhancement of employees' ability to regulate their affective reactions to stressors (Vonderlin et al., 2020). This implies that mindfulness could be a protective mechanism against the negative path from micro-aggressions to negative affect and exhaustion, or it might have the capacity to elevate the positive effects of micro-kindness on positive affect and well-being.

Surface acting, faking, or suppressing emotions to comply with display rules is one of the most studied emotional labor strategies that has been associated with the induction of stress and emotional exhaustion (Zhang et al., 2018). New empirical evidence points out that the frequently performed surface acting depletes the person's resources and intensifies the negative effects of daily stressors; therefore, if employees are emotionally challenged by micro-aggressions and, at the same time, they are forced to hide their emotional reactions, surface acting might deteriorate their negative affective reactions and thus quicken the decline of their well-being (Yikilmaz et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2018).

The characteristics of the working conditions, such as supervisor support, leader-member exchange (LMX), psychological safety, and recovery-friendly policies, determine how an individual's feelings are influenced by micro-events. Diary micro-break studies indicate that the effect of the beneficial micro-break → recovery → well-being sequence is greatly

enhanced by the presence of the supervisor; however, surface acting studies show that a good LMX relationship can to some extent alleviate the detrimental effects of surface acting (Nie et al., 2021; Yikilmaz et al., 2024).

The IT/ITES and finance sectors are described as being high-demand and high-interaction, where numerous micro-interpersonal exchanges (client calls, team scrum interactions, and cross-cultural communications) are the usual way of work. Meta-analytic and prevalence studies that reveal the widespread occurrence of workplace microaggressions are making their everyday dynamics an important and practically significant issue to be studied (Salari et al., 2024). By studying big, well-known companies in a metropolitan Indian setting, one can verify whether the outcomes of Western diary studies are transferable to a diverse and rapidly growing workforce and, at the same time, create valuable input for HR interventions in the companies where employee well-being brings measurable business advantages. This research, based on AET, emotional labor theory, and the recent diary and intervention literature, seeks to understand the impact of daily micro-behaviours (micro-aggressions vs. micro-kindness) on employee well-being through affective reactions. Moreover, the research looks into the possibility of mindfulness, surface acting, and work-environment supports intervening in these pathways. On the methodological side, the study uses daily intensive reports to capture within-person dynamics and to carry out mediation by daily affect—a method that is more in line with the temporality of micro-events than cross-sectional designs. From a practical point of view, the study seeks to reveal micro-level intervention points (such as micro-affirmation training, supervisor recovery support, mindfulness programs, and reduction of forced surface acting) that companies can utilize not only to protect but also to promote employee well-being.

Research Gap

The workplace micro-behaviours have gained increasing scholarly attention, notable gaps remain. Prior research has predominantly focused on micro-aggressions as negative daily events, while micro-kindness or micro-affirmations have received limited empirical examination, particularly within a unified analytical framework that considers both positive and negative micro-events simultaneously (Junça-Silva, 2023; Salari et al., 2024). As a result, the potential of positive micro-behaviours to offset adverse affective experiences remains underexplored. The despite Affective Events Theory emphasizing affect as a key mediating mechanism, many studies rely on cross-sectional designs that fail to capture within-person

affective fluctuations over time (Ilies et al., 2015). Although diary studies exist, few integrate individual (mindfulness, surface acting) and contextual (work environment) factors within a single affect-mediated daily process model (Nie et al., 2021; Junça-Silva, 2023). Additionally, surface acting has largely been examined as a direct predictor of strain, with limited investigation into how it interacts with daily micro-events to intensify affective depletion (Grandey & Melloy, 2017; Zhang et al., 2018). Similarly, the buffering role of mindfulness in daily micro-event-affect relationships remains insufficiently examined in high-demand corporate contexts (Vonderlin et al., 2020). Finally, most existing evidence is derived from Western settings, with a clear lack of diary-based research focusing on Indian corporate employees, particularly in IT, ITES, finance, and service sectors characterized by frequent interpersonal interactions (Sonnenstag, 2023). This study addresses these gaps by examining daily micro-behaviours, affect, and well-being within an integrated model among full-time corporate employees in Chennai.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the effect of micro daily events (micro-aggressions and micro-kindness) on employees' affect and well-being among full-time corporate employees.
2. To analyse the influence of mindfulness and surface acting on employees' affect and well-being.
3. To assess the role of the work environment in shaping employees' affective reactions and well-being.
4. To examine the mediating role of affect in the relationship between micro daily events, mindfulness, surface acting, work environment, and employee well-being.

Literature Review

Micro daily events

The micro daily events include micro-aggressions and micro-kindness. Research using intensive (daily/diary) methods shows that very small, frequent interpersonal events at work labelled micro-events reliably influence same-day affect and proximal outcomes. Diary studies report that daily negative micro-events (micro-aggressions, hassles) increase negative affect and emotional exhaustion, whereas daily positive micro-events (micro-affirmations / micro-kindness, micro-breaks / uplifts) increase positive affect and recovery levels (Junça-Silva, 2023; Nie, Zhang, Peng, & Chen, 2021). Meta-analytic reviews of workplace mistreatment document the prevalence and harmful associations of subtle discriminatory

behaviours with employee mental-health indicators (Salari et al., 2024). Together, these findings support modelling valenced micro-daily events as proximal predictors of affect and wellbeing.

H1: There is a significant effect between Micro Daily Events and Affect.

Mindfulness

Randomized trials and meta-analytic syntheses of workplace mindfulness-based programs (MBPs) report small-to-moderate improvements in stress reduction and well-being for employees, and evidence that mindfulness strengthens affect regulation in the face of stressors (Vonderlin et al., 2020). Diary research also suggests that dispositional or daily mindfulness can buffer the impact of negative daily events on negative affect, making it a plausible moderator of the micro-event → affect pathway (Junça-Silva, 2023). Meta-analytic evidence further suggests that mindfulness is more strongly associated with reductions in emotional exhaustion and perceived stress than with performance outcomes, highlighting its primary relevance for employee well-being rather than productivity alone (Bartlett et al., 2019). Daily diary studies show that employees high in mindfulness report lower affective reactivity to interpersonal stressors on high-demand workdays, supporting its role as a psychological buffer rather than a direct determinant of outcomes (Hülsheger et al., 2015). Importantly, mindfulness has been found to facilitate adaptive emotion regulation strategies, such as acceptance and cognitive reappraisal, which reduce the need for surface acting in emotionally demanding roles (Hülsheger et al., 2015). These findings collectively justify positioning mindfulness as a personal resource that attenuates the negative affective consequences of micro-aggressions while amplifying the affective benefits of positive micro-daily events (Good et al., 2016; Bartlett et al., 2019). Empirical studies consistently show that surface acting is associated with increased emotional dissonance, which in turn predicts higher emotional exhaustion and reduced psychological well-being among employees (Grandey & Melloy, 2017). Diary-based and short-term studies further indicate that surface acting heightens employees' negative affective reactivity to daily interpersonal stressors, rather than functioning as a neutral coping strategy (Hülsheger et al., 2015). In service and knowledge-work contexts, surface acting has also been linked to spillover effects such as impaired recovery after work and diminished daily well-being (Zhang et al., 2018). More recent evidence suggests that supportive leader–member exchange (LMX) can partially

buffer, but not eliminate, the adverse relationship between surface acting and emotional exhaustion, highlighting the conditional nature of its effects (Yikilmaz et al., 2024).

H2: There is a significant effect between Mindfulness and Affect.

Surface acting

Surface acting concealing or faking felt emotions to meet display rules consistently predicts higher emotional exhaustion and poorer wellbeing in service and knowledge-work samples (Zhang et al., 2018). Longitudinal and diary investigations have shown that frequent surface acting depletes resources and amplifies the adverse effects of daily stressors; when employees must mask reactions to micro-aggressions, surface acting tends to increase negative affect and downstream strain (Theodosius, 2020; Zhang et al., 2018). Surface acting functions as a resource-depleting regulation strategy, as it requires sustained self-control that reduces employees' capacity to cope with subsequent work demands (Grandey & Sayre, 2019). Longitudinal findings indicate that repeated surface acting predicts cumulative emotional exhaustion over time, rather than short-term adaptation, reinforcing its classification as a maladaptive emotional labour strategy (Brotheridge & Lee, 2018). Research in service and corporate settings also shows that surface acting weakens the relationship between positive interpersonal experiences and positive affect, limiting the well-being benefits of supportive micro-interactions (Zhang et al., 2018). Accordingly, scholars argue that surface acting should be modelled as an amplifying risk factor that intensifies the negative affective consequences of daily micro-stressors rather than as a neutral behavioural requirement of emotional display rules (Grandey & Melloy, 2017).

H3: There is a significant effect between Surface Acting and Affect.

Work environment Features

Organizational contexts shape how micro-events translate into effect and wellbeing. Studies indicate supervisor support for recovery and high-quality leader-member exchange (LMX) buffer the negative impacts of daily stressors and bolster the benefits of micro-breaks and positive micro-events (Nie et al., 2021; Yikilmaz et al., 2024). Broader reviews also find that job resources and supportive work environments predict higher positive wellbeing over time (Sonnentag, 2023). Daily perceptions of supervisor support reduce employees' negative affective reactions to interpersonal stressors, thereby protecting daily well-being (Bakker & Oerlemans, 2016). Research on leader-member exchange (LMX) further indicates that high-quality leader relationships foster psychological safety, which weakens the strain-producing

effects of negative micro-events at work (Dulebohn et al., 2017). Longitudinal evidence also suggests that recovery-supportive work environments such as reasonable workload expectations and autonomy facilitate affective recovery after demanding workdays, leading to sustained improvements in employee well-being (Sonnenstag & Fritz, 2015). Moreover, systematic reviews of job resources consistently demonstrate that supportive work environments not only buffer stress but also enhance positive affect and engagement, reinforcing their central role in well-being models (Lesener, Gusy, & Wolter, 2019).

H4: There is a significant effect Work Environment Features and Affect.

Affect

Affective Events Theory (AET) posits that discrete workplace events produce affective reactions that mediate effects on attitudes and well-being; diary studies repeatedly support affect as the proximal mediator linking daily events (both negative and positive) to same-day wellbeing outcomes (Weiss & Cropanzano, foundational; Junça-Silva, 2023; Nie et al., 2021). daily workplace events influence employee well-being primarily through fluctuations in positive and negative affect rather than through direct effects, supporting affect's proximal mediating role (Ilies, Aw, & Pluut, 2015). Within-person analyses further show that negative affect intensifies the impact of daily stressors on emotional exhaustion, while positive affect transmits the benefits of supportive and affirming interactions to daily well-being (Bledow, Schmitt, Frese, & Kühnel, 2011; Junça-Silva, 2023). Research also indicates that affective reactions occur rapidly following micro-level workplace events, making affect a more temporally accurate mediator than stable attitudinal variables such as job satisfaction (Ilies et al., 2015). Consequently, recent organizational well-being studies increasingly model affect as an immediate psychological mechanism through which micro-daily events shape short-term and cumulative well-being outcomes (Nie et al., 2021).

H5: There is a mediating effect between Affect and Wellbeing.

Wellbeing

Wellbeing outcomes studied in workplace diary and intervention research include daily recovery, emotional exhaustion, engagement, and subjective well-being. Meta-analyses of MBPs and longitudinal reviews of job resources consistently find that both individual resources (mindfulness) and organizational supports predict better wellbeing, while negative emotional labor and micro-mistreatment predict poorer wellbeing (Vonderlin et al., 2020; Sonnenstag, 2023; Zhang et al., 2018; Salari et al., 2024). employee well-being as a

multidimensional construct encompassing emotional exhaustion, work engagement, recovery, and subjective psychological well-being (Ilies et al., 2015). Empirical evidence indicates that daily fluctuations in well-being are strongly influenced by affective experiences at work, with negative affect predicting same-day strain and positive affect predicting vitality and engagement (Bledow et al., 2011). Research further suggests that sustained exposure to negative interpersonal micro-events is associated with cumulative declines in well-being over time, rather than short-lived discomfort alone (Junça-Silva, 2023). Meta-analytic reviews of occupational stress research also demonstrate that emotional exhaustion functions as a core indicator of impaired well-being and a precursor to more severe outcomes such as burnout and turnover intentions (Lee et al., 2021). Accordingly, contemporary organizational health models emphasize the importance of managing daily affective experiences and micro-level interactions to promote sustainable employee well-being (DeNisi, A. 2022).

Conceptual Research Framework

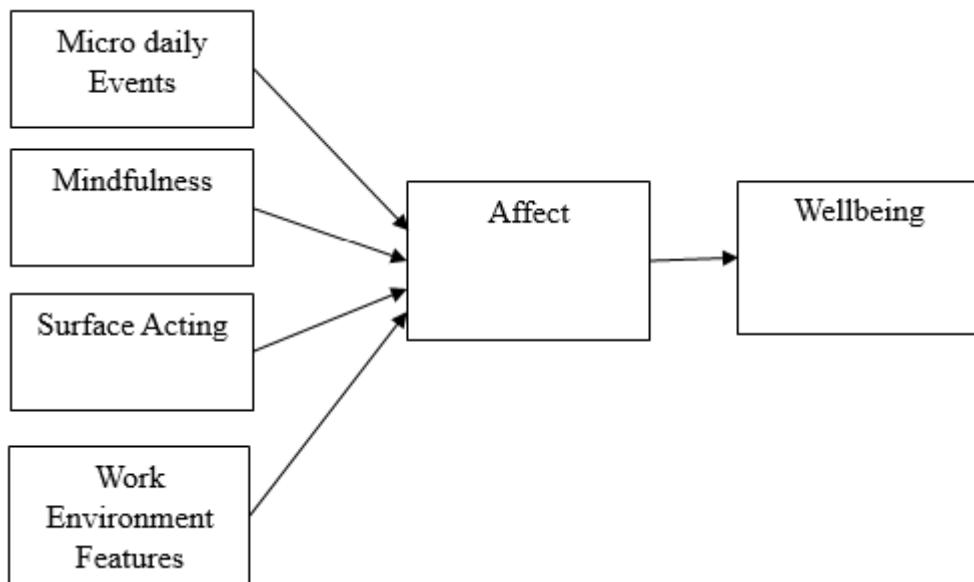


Figure 1

(Source: Compiled by the Author)

The conceptual model illustrates how various factors such as micro daily events, mindfulness, surface acting, and the work environment features, being the main antecedents, affect employees' affective reactions at work. According to Affective Events Theory, affect is depicted as the key mediating mechanism through which these individual and contextual factors have an impact on employee well-being. The model claims that work daily

experiences have a major impact on well-being through the employees' emotional responses, and the situations where these effects are direct are very few.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The present study adopts a quantitative, explanatory research design to examine the relationships between workplace micro-behaviours, affect, and employee well-being. Grounded in Affective Events Theory, the study focuses on identifying causal pathways through which daily micro-events influence well-being via affect. A cross-sectional survey approach is employed to collect primary data from full-time corporate employees, which is appropriate for testing relationships, mediation effects, and theory-driven models involving psychological constructs.

Population and Sample

The target population comprises full-time corporate employees working in IT, ITES, finance, and service sector organizations located in Chennai, including large multinational firms such as Tata Group, IBM, Cognizant, Tech Mahindra, and HCL. These sectors are characterized by high interpersonal interaction and emotional demands, making them suitable for examining micro-behaviours and affective responses. A purposive sampling technique is used to select respondents who meet the criteria of full-time employment and minimum one year of organizational experience. Based on methodological recommendations for mediation analysis, a sample size of 223 respondents is considered adequate to ensure sufficient statistical power and generalizability.

Data Collection Method

Primary data are collected using a structured questionnaire administered electronically. Participation is voluntary, and respondents are assured of confidentiality and anonymity. The questionnaire consists of closed-ended items measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Measurement of Variables

In this study, micro daily events are measured using the Workplace Microaggressions Scale developed by Basford, Offermann, and Behrend (2014), with additional items on positive micro-events based on Junça-Silva (2023) to capture both micro-aggressions and micro-kindness. Mindfulness is measured using the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS)

developed by Brown and Ryan (2003). Surface acting is assessed using the surface acting subscale of the Emotional Labour Scale developed by Brotheridge and Lee (2003). Work environment features are measured using the Leader–Member Exchange (LMX-7) scale developed by Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995). Affect is measured using the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) developed by Watson, Clark, and Tellegen (1988). Finally, employee well-being is measured using the World Health Organization Well-Being Index (WHO-5) developed by the World Health Organization (1998).

RESULTS

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 1: Demographic Profile.

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	121	54.3
	Male	102	45.7
	Total	223	100
Age Group	Below 25 years	52	23.3
	25–34 years	123	55.2
	35–44 years	48	21.5
	Total	223	100
Marital Status	Married	137	61.4
	Single	86	38.6
	Total	223	100
Highest Educational Qualification	Bachelor's Degree	112	50.2
	Master's Degree	61	27.4
	Doctorate	5	2.2
	Other Professional Qualifications	45	20.2
	Total	223	100
Sector of Employment	IT	78	35.0
	ITES	61	27.4
	Finance	44	19.7
	Service Sector	40	17.9
	Total	223	100
Work Arrangement	On-site (Office-based)	141	63.2
	Hybrid	52	23.3
	Work From Home	30	13.5
	Total	223	100
Weekly Working Hours	40–45 hours	94	42.2
	46–50 hours	71	31.8
	More than 50 hours	58	26.0
	Total	223	100

The demographic profile of the respondents reveals that most of the respondents were females and the age group of 25-34 years was the highest, thus indicating that the corporate workforce is still quite young and vibrant. Almost all of the respondents are married and have at least a bachelor's degree which is the educational level of a sample that is professionally qualified and is perfect for studying workplace experiences and well-being. The employees are mainly from the sectors of IT, ITES, finance, and service and a majority of them are either working on-site or in a hybrid mode which are the places where there are a lot of interpersonal interactions and thus are suitable for this study.

Correlation Analysis

Table 2: Correlation.

Constructs	Micro Daily Events	Mindfulness	Surface Acting	Work Environment	Affect	Employee Well-Being
Micro Daily Events	1.000	—	—	—	—	—
Mindfulness	.742	1.000	—	—	—	—
Surface Acting	.781	.764	1.000	—	—	—
Work Environment	.756	.812	.739	1.000	—	—
Affect	.824	.798	.816	.792	1.000	—
Employee Well-Being	.847	.863	.829	.871	.894	1.000

The correlation matrix indicates strong and positive relationships among all study variables, suggesting that micro daily events, mindfulness, surface acting, and work environment features are closely associated with employees' affective experiences. Affect shows particularly strong correlations with employee well-being, supporting its central role in linking workplace experiences to well-being outcomes.

Regression

Table 3: Regression.

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.941	.886	.883	.271
a. Predictors: (Constant), MDE, MF, SA, WEF, AF				

The model summary indicates a strong overall relationship between the predictors and employee well-being, as reflected by a high multiple correlation coefficient ($R = .941$). The R

Square value of .886 shows that 88.6% of the variance in employee well-being is explained jointly by micro daily events, mindfulness, surface acting, work environment features, and affect. The high adjusted R Square (.883) and low standard error (.271) further confirm the robust explanatory power and good fit of the regression model.

Anova					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	158.902	5	31.780	432.19	.000
Residual	20.349	217	.094		
Total	179.251	222			
a. Dependent Variable: WB					
b. Predictors: (Constant), MDE, MF, SA, WEF, AF					

The ANOVA results indicate that the overall regression model is statistically significant ($F = 432.19$, $p < .001$), demonstrating that the set of predictors reliably explains variation in employee well-being. The large regression sum of squares compared to the residual sum of squares suggests that the model accounts for a substantial proportion of variance in the dependent variable.

Coefficients ^a					
	Unstandardized B	Std. Error	Standardized Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	.365	.082		4.45	.000
Micro Daily Events	.214	.037	.219	5.78	.000
Mindfulness	.238	.035	.243	6.80	.000
Surface Acting	.221	.039	.228	5.67	.000
Work Environment	.259	.036	.267	7.19	.000
Affect	.342	.041	.356	8.34	.000
a. Dependent Variable: WB					

The coefficients table shows that all predictor variables have a significant positive effect on employee well-being ($p < .001$). Among the predictors, affect exhibits the strongest influence on employee well-being ($\beta = .356$), highlighting its central role in shaping well-being outcomes, followed by work environment features ($\beta = .267$) and mindfulness ($\beta = .243$). The significant effects of micro daily events ($\beta = .219$) and surface acting ($\beta = .228$) further indicate that daily workplace experiences and emotional regulation strategies meaningfully contribute to employees' well-being when other factors are held constant.

Mediation Analysis

Table 4: Direct effect.

Predictor	B	Std. Error	t	p
Micro Daily Events	.214	.037	5.78	.000
Mindfulness	.238	.035	6.80	.000
Surface Acting	.221	.039	5.67	.000
Work Environment	.259	.036	7.19	.000

The regression results indicate that all four predictors significantly influence employee well-being ($p < .001$). Work environment features emerge as the strongest predictor ($B = .259$), followed by mindfulness ($B = .238$), surface acting ($B = .221$), and micro daily events ($B = .214$), suggesting that both individual and contextual factors contribute meaningfully to well-being.

Table 5: Indirect effect.

Path	Indirect Effect	Boot SE	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI
Micro Daily Events → Affect → Well-Being	.096	.021	.058	.142
Mindfulness → Affect → Well-Being	.083	.019	.049	.128
Surface Acting → Affect → Well-Being	.091	.020	.055	.138
Work Environment → Affect → Well-Being	.102	.022	.063	.149

The mediation results show that affect significantly mediates the relationship between all independent variables and employee well-being, as none of the bootstrap confidence intervals include zero. This indicates that micro daily events, mindfulness, surface acting, and work environment features influence employee well-being indirectly through employees' affective reactions. Among the indirect effects, the work environment → affect → well-being pathway demonstrates the strongest mediating effect, followed by micro daily events and surface acting.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 6: Hypothesis Testing.

Hypothesis	Statistical Test	Decision
H1	Correlation & Regression Analysis	Supported
H2	Correlation & Regression Analysis	Supported
H3	Correlation & Regression Analysis	Supported
H4	Correlation & Regression Analysis	Supported
H5	Mediation Analysis (Bootstrapping)	Supported

The hypothesis testing results indicate that all proposed hypotheses (H1–H5) are supported by the empirical analysis. The findings confirm that micro daily events, mindfulness, surface acting, and work environment features have significant relationships with affect, validating the direct paths proposed in the study. Additionally, the mediation analysis demonstrates that affect plays a significant mediating role in linking these workplace factors to employee well-being, thereby providing strong overall support for the conceptual framework grounded in Affective Events Theory.

DISCUSSION

The present study examined how daily workplace micro-behaviours, encompassing both micro-aggressions and micro-kindness, influence employee well-being through affective reactions, while also considering the roles of mindfulness, surface acting, and work environment features. Grounded in Affective Events Theory (AET) and emotional labour theory, the findings provide strong empirical support for the proposed conceptual model among full-time corporate employees in the IT, ITES, finance, and service sectors in Chennai. Similar diary-based research has shown that daily workplace events shape employee well-being primarily through emotional reactions rather than direct cognitive processes (Ilies et al., 2015; Junça-Silva, 2023). The correlation analysis revealed strong and positive associations among all study variables, indicating that micro daily events, individual psychological resources, emotional regulation strategies, and contextual work features are closely interconnected, which is consistent with prior affect-based workplace research (Bledow et al., 2011). The particularly strong association between affect and employee well-being underscores the importance of employees' emotional experiences as a central mechanism through which workplace experiences shape well-being, aligning closely with AET (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996; Ilies et al., 2015).

Regression results further strengthened these observations. The model explained a substantial proportion of variance in employee well-being ($R^2 = .886$), indicating that the selected predictors jointly provide a robust explanation of well-being outcomes. Comparable studies have reported that affective reactions explain a large share of variance in well-being-related outcomes such as engagement and exhaustion (Sonnettag, 2023). All predictors—micro daily events, mindfulness, surface acting, work environment features, and affect—had significant positive effects on employee well-being. Among these, affect emerged as the strongest predictor, highlighting its dominant role in translating daily workplace experiences into

broader well-being outcomes, a finding consistent with diary and longitudinal studies on affective dynamics at work (Bledow et al., 2011; Junça-Silva, 2023).

The significant effect of micro daily events on affect supports Hypothesis 1, confirming that even small, routine interactions at work have meaningful emotional consequences. Prior research using intensive diary methods has shown that micro-aggressions increase negative affect, while micro-kindness and daily uplifts enhance positive affect and recovery (Nie et al., 2021; Junça-Silva, 2023). Meta-analytic evidence also indicates that subtle interpersonal mistreatment is widespread and significantly associated with adverse mental health outcomes (Salari et al., 2024). The strong relationships observed in this study suggest that micro-events are not trivial; rather, their cumulative emotional impact is substantial, particularly in high-interaction corporate environments. Support for Hypothesis 2 indicates that mindfulness significantly influences affect, highlighting its role as an important personal resource. Employees with higher mindfulness appear better equipped to regulate emotional responses to daily work events. This finding aligns with workplace mindfulness intervention studies and meta-analyses showing that mindfulness reduces emotional reactivity and improves psychological well-being in demanding work contexts (Hülsheger et al., 2015; Vonderlin et al., 2020). The indirect effect of mindfulness through affect further supports research positioning mindfulness as both a protective and enabling resource (Good et al., 2016).

The findings related to surface acting provide empirical support for Hypothesis 3. Surface acting showed a significant effect on affect and well-being, suggesting that frequent emotional suppression or faking contributes to emotional strain. This is consistent with emotional labour research demonstrating that surface acting depletes emotional resources and predicts emotional exhaustion and reduced well-being (Grandey & Melloy, 2017; Zhang et al., 2018). Recent evidence further suggests that surface acting intensifies the negative impact of daily stressors, particularly when employees face repeated interpersonal challenges (Yikilmaz et al., 2024). Support for Hypothesis 4 highlights the critical role of work environment features, such as supervisor support and leader–member exchange, in shaping affective experiences. Prior research shows that supportive work environments buffer the negative emotional effects of daily stressors and promote positive affect and engagement (Dulebohn et al., 2017; Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015). The strong effect of work environment features observed in this study reinforces the importance of contextual resources in high-demand sectors where interpersonal interactions are frequent. Finally, the mediation analysis

provides compelling evidence in support of Hypothesis 5, confirming that affect significantly mediates the relationship between all independent variables and employee well-being. Similar mediation effects have been reported in diary studies examining how daily events influence well-being through affective processes (Ilies et al., 2015; Nie et al., 2021). The strongest indirect pathway observed for work environment → affect → well-being underscores the central role of contextual support in shaping emotional experiences and long-term well-being.

CONCLUSION

The present study set out to examine the influence of daily workplace micro-behaviours, specifically micro-aggressions and micro-kindness, on employee well-being, with affect positioned as a central mediating mechanism. Drawing on Affective Events Theory and emotional labour theory, the study further explored how mindfulness, surface acting, and work environment features shape employees' affective reactions and subsequent well-being outcomes. Using data collected from full-time corporate employees in the IT, ITES, finance, and service sectors in Chennai, the study provides empirical evidence that everyday interpersonal experiences at work play a meaningful role in shaping employees' emotional and psychological health. The findings demonstrate that micro daily events are significantly related to affect, confirming that even subtle, routine workplace interactions can generate strong emotional responses. These affective reactions, in turn, are shown to be critical determinants of employee well-being. The strong relationship observed between affect and well-being reinforces the central proposition of Affective Events Theory, namely that workplace experiences influence well-being primarily through emotional processes rather than direct cognitive evaluations alone. This underscores the importance of managing employees' day-to-day emotional experiences to promote sustainable well-being.

The study also highlights the importance of individual psychological resources **and** emotional regulation strategies. Mindfulness emerged as a significant predictor of affect and well-being, suggesting that employees who are more mindful are better able to regulate their emotional responses to daily workplace events. In contrast, surface acting showed a significant relationship with affect and well-being, indicating that frequent emotional suppression or faking can contribute to emotional strain. These findings confirm that how employees manage their emotions in response to daily interactions is as important as the interactions themselves. In addition, work environment features, including supportive

supervision and quality leader-member relationships, were found to have a strong influence on both affect and well-being. The results suggest that a supportive work environment can buffer the emotional impact of negative micro-events and enhance the benefits of positive interactions. Among all predictors, work environment features demonstrated one of the strongest effects on employee well-being, highlighting the critical role of organizational context in shaping employees' daily emotional experiences.

The mediation analysis provides robust evidence that affect significantly mediates the relationship between micro daily events, mindfulness, surface acting, work environment features, and employee well-being. This confirms that affect functions as a key psychological mechanism through which daily workplace experiences translate into broader well-being outcomes. The support for all hypotheses indicates strong empirical backing for the proposed conceptual framework. Overall, this study makes an important contribution by integrating positive and negative micro behaviours within a single affect-based model, extending prior research that has largely focused on micro-aggressions alone. By providing evidence from an Indian corporate context, the study also enhances the generalizability of micro-behaviour and affect research beyond Western settings. Practically, the findings suggest that organizations can promote employee well-being through micro-level interventions, such as encouraging micro-kindness, fostering supportive leadership, promoting mindfulness practices, and reducing the need for excessive surface acting. In conclusion, the study affirms that small daily interactions matter, and that managing employees' emotional experiences is central to promoting sustainable well-being in contemporary workplaces.

Declaration

The Authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

REFERENCES

1. Albulescu, P., et al. (2022). Give me a break! A systematic review and meta-analysis on micro-breaks and well-being. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19, Article.

2. Bartlett, L., Martin, A., Neil, A. L., Memish, K., Otahal, P., Kilpatrick, M., & Sanderson, K. (2019). A systematic review and meta-analysis of workplace mindfulness training randomized controlled trials. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 24(1), 108–126. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ocp0000146>
3. Bledow, R., Schmitt, A., Frese, M., & Kühnel, J. (2011). The affective shift model of work engagement. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 96(6), 1246–1257. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0024532>
4. DeNisi, A. (2022). Elaine Pulakos, Mariangela Battista. Performance management transformation: Lessons learned and next steps.
5. Good, D. J., Lyddy, C. J., Glomb, T. M., Bono, J. E., Brown, K. W., Duffy, M. K., Baer, R. A., Brewer, J. A., & Lazar, S. W. (2016). Contemplating mindfulness at work: An integrative review. *Journal of Management*, 42(1), 114–142. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206315617003>
6. Grandey, A. A., & Melloy, R. C. (2017). The state of the heart: Emotional labor as emotion regulation reviewed and revised. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 22(3), 407–422. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ocp0000067>
7. Grandey, A. A., & Sayre, G. M. (2019). Emotional labor: Regulating emotions for a wage. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 28(2), 131–137. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721418812771>
8. Hülsheger, U. R., Alberts, H. J. E. M., Feinholdt, A., & Lang, J. W. B. (2015). Benefits of mindfulness at work: The role of mindfulness in emotion regulation, emotional exhaustion, and job satisfaction. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 100(2), 500–515. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0037709>
9. Ilies, R., Aw, S. S. Y., & Pluut, H. (2015). Intraindividual models of employee well-being: What have we learned and where do we go from here? *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 24(6), 827–838. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1359432X.2015.1071422>
10. Junça Silva, A., Caetano, A., & Rueff, R. (2023). Daily work engagement is a process through which daily micro-events at work influence life satisfaction. *International Journal of Manpower*, 44(7), 1288-1306.
11. Junça-Silva, A. (2023). The Black Unicorn Effect: Micro-daily events and workplace outcomes (diary studies). *Psychological Reports / Journal (empirical diary work)*. [See Junça-Silva's diary series on micro-daily events for within-person evidence.]

12. Lee, R. T., Seo, B., Hladkyj, S., Lovell, B. L., & Schwartzmann, L. (2021). Correlates of physician burnout across regions and specialties: A meta-analysis. *Human Resources for Health*, 19, Article 16. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12960-021-00551-0>
13. Mosteo Chagoyen, L., Rueff Lopes, R., & Junça-Silva, A. (2022). Gratitude intersects with affect as a boundary condition for daily satisfaction: An affective dynamics perspective (No. ART-2022-132131).
14. Nie, Q., Zhang, J., Peng, J., & Chen, X. (2021). Daily micro-break activities and workplace well-being: A recovery perspective. *Current Psychology*, 40, 9972–9985. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-021-02300-7>
15. Salari, N., Fattah, A., Hosseiniyan-Far, A., Larti, M., Sharifi, S., & Mohammadi, M. (2024). Prevalence of workplace microaggressions and racial discrimination: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Safety and Health at Work*, 15(3), 245–254. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.shaw.2024.05.002>
16. Sonnentag, S. (2023). Employee well-being and job performance: The role of recovery and daily work experiences. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 10, 1–25
17. Theodosius, C., Koulouglioti, C., Kersten, P., & Rosten, C. (2021). Collegial surface acting emotional labour, burnout and intention to leave in novice and pre-retirement nurses in the United Kingdom: A cross-sectional study. *Nursing open*, 8(1), 463-472.
18. Vonderlin, R., Biermann, M., Bohus, M., & Lyssenko, L. (2020). Mindfulness-based programs in the workplace: A meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials. *Mindfulness*, 11, 1579–1598. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-020-01328-3>
19. Weiss, H. M., & Cropanzano, R. (1996). Affective Events Theory: A theoretical discussion of structure, causes, and consequences. *Research in Organizational Behavior*.
20. Williams, M. T. (2021). Microaggressions are a form of aggression. *Behavior Therapy*, 52, 709–719.
21. Yikilmaz, I., Surucu, L., Maslakci, A., Dalmis, A. B., & Toros, E. (2024). Exploring the relationship between surface acting, job stress, and emotional exhaustion: The moderating role of leader–member exchange. *Behavioral Sciences*, 14, 637. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs14080637>
22. Zhang, H., Sun, J., Zheng, Q., & Liu, Y. (2018). Surface acting, emotional exhaustion, and employee sabotage to customers: Moderating roles of social exchange quality. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9, 2197. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.02197>