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Structural Pathways Linking Mindfulness, Spiritual Health and Leadership with Workplace Spirituality and Work-Life Balance among Teachers

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Abstract

Background/ problem: Teachers’ work demands can challenge work–life balance. Although mindfulness, spiritual health, perceived spiritual leadership, and workplace spirituality are relevant to well-being, their structural associations in faith-based educational settings remain underexamined.

Objective/ purpose: This study examined direct and indirect associations among mindfulness (awareness and acceptance), spiritual health, perceived spiritual leadership, workplace spirituality, and work–life balance (interference and enrichment).

Design and Methodology: A cross-sectional survey of 437 teachers from schools affiliated with the Catholic Education Council of Thailand used established measures. Data were analyzed using correlations and observed-variable path analysis within a structural equation modeling framework.

Results: The modified model showed acceptable fit (GFI = 1.00, AGFI = .99, RMSEA = .05, CFI = .99, TLI = .97, χ^2/df = 2.22). Awareness and acceptance were positively associated with spiritual health, and awareness with perceived spiritual leadership. Acceptance and perceived spiritual leadership were negatively associated with work–life interference. Spiritual health and perceived spiritual leadership were positively associated with workplace spirituality, which was positively associated with work–life enrichment. Significant indirect associations were observed through spiritual health, perceived spiritual leadership, and workplace spirituality.

Conclusion and Implications: The findings identify distinct correlates of work–life interference and enrichment. In faith-based schools, mindfulness, spiritual health, perceived spiritual leadership, and workplace spirituality may represent relevant areas for supporting teacher well-being.

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Rapid technological change, evolving educational expectations, and the long-term consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic have substantially reshaped teachers’ professional roles and working conditions worldwide. Drawing on an OECD report, Viac and Fraser (2020) emphasized that teachers’ working conditions are closely associated with stress, professional engagement, teaching quality, and broader occupational outcomes. These changing professional demands make work–life balance an important issue in educational and behavioral science research, particularly because teachers must continuously negotiate professional responsibilities, personal life roles, and value-oriented commitments within their school communities. Work–life balance, defined as an individual’s ability to integrate work, family, and personal life roles, contributes to greater satisfaction and engagement while mitigating stress and burnout (Greenhaus et al., 2003). Leadership styles play a pivotal role in employees’ ability to balance professional and personal responsibilities. Spiritual leadership—emphasizing vision, altruistic love, and hope/faith—has been shown

to promote intrinsic motivation and well-being while reducing work–family conflict (Fry, 2003; Hunsaker & Jeong, 2023; Li et al., 2025). In educational settings, spiritual leadership is particularly relevant because teaching is not merely technical work but a moral and value-oriented profession that depends on purpose, compassion, and service to others.

Workplace spirituality has gained growing recognition in behavioral science as a construct that enhances meaning, connection, and purpose in organizational life (Chongvisal, 2022; Milliman et al., 2003). It encompasses three interrelated dimensions: connection with self (inner awareness and self-acceptance), connection with others (valuing and nurturing interpersonal relationships), and engagement in meaningful work (perceiving work as purposeful and valuable). Promoting teachers' workplace spirituality is therefore essential for sustaining motivation, commitment, and well-being (Petchsawang & McLean, 2017). Importantly, spiritual health provides the foundation for workplace spirituality. Beyond physical and psychological well-being, spiritual health emphasizes individuals' pursuit of meaning, values, and connection to something greater than the self. Teachers with strong spiritual health are more likely to experience compassion and purpose in their work, thereby fostering higher workplace spirituality (Chongvisal et al., 2021). Mindfulness has also emerged as a foundational construct within behavioral sciences, reflecting individuals' nonjudgmental awareness of the present moment and acceptance of internal experiences (Bishop et al., 2004; Kabat-Zinn, 2003). It has been shown to strengthen spiritual health and leadership capacities such as empathy, authenticity, and humility (Mathad et al., 2019). This evidence suggests that mindfulness may exert both direct effects on spiritual health and leadership, and indirect effects on workplace spirituality and work-life balance through these mediators (Fry, 2003; Petchsawang & McLean, 2017).

Although multidimensional conceptualizations of mindfulness and work–life balance are well established, less is known about how their specific components function together within structural models of teachers' work–life balance, particularly in Thai educational settings. Mindfulness includes related but distinct dimensions, such as awareness and acceptance (Cardaciotto et al., 2008), while work–life balance reflects both negative and positive cross-domain processes, including work–life interference and work–life enrichment (Aboobaker et al., 2020; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Reshi & Teli, 2025). In the Thai context, prior research has developed and examined constructs related to spiritual health, workplace spirituality, and work–life balance among working adults; however, limited empirical attention has been given to how these constructs operate together among teachers in educational organizations where spirituality and moral formation are central to institutional life (Chongvisal, 2022; Chongvisal et al., 2021; Pannok & Chongvisal, 2025). Teachers in schools affiliated with the Catholic Education Council of Thailand (CETC) were selected as the target population because these schools explicitly integrate spirituality, moral education, service, and community values into their educational philosophy and organizational culture. This context is theoretically appropriate for examining how mindfulness, spiritual health, and spiritual leadership may shape workplace spirituality and teachers' work–life balance, as teachers in these schools are expected not only to perform instructional duties but also to enact value-oriented and spiritually grounded professional roles. The contextual homogeneity of this school network also provides a suitable setting for testing the proposed structural model within a clearly defined Thai educational context. Addressing this gap, the present study examines a multidimensional structural model linking mindfulness, spiritual health, spiritual leadership, workplace spirituality, and work–life balance among teachers in schools affiliated with CETC. This integrative framework advances behavioral science by clarifying how psychological, spiritual, and leadership-related factors contribute to teachers' work–life balance and workplace spirituality in a Thai educational context.

Literature Review

This section reviews the theoretical and empirical foundations for the proposed structural model linking mindfulness, spiritual health, spiritual leadership, workplace spirituality, and work–life balance among teachers in Thailand. It first discusses the theoretical perspectives that explain the relationships among psychological, spiritual, leadership-related, and work–life constructs. It then reviews workplace

spirituality and work–life balance, mindfulness as awareness and acceptance, perceived spiritual leadership, and spiritual health, leading to the development of the conceptual framework and hypotheses.

Theoretical Framework

This study draws on two complementary theoretical foundations to explain the proposed relationships among mindfulness, spirituality, leadership, and work–life balance. First, Fry’s (2003) spiritual leadership theory (SLT) emphasizes vision, hope/faith, altruistic love, calling, and membership as central to meaningful and value-oriented organizational functioning. Within educational settings, this perspective is relevant to understanding how teachers’ perceptions of spiritually oriented leadership may be associated with their experiences of work, well-being, and the integration of professional and personal life. In the present study, spiritual leadership is therefore examined from teachers’ perspectives as perceived spiritual leadership demonstrated by their school leaders or supervisors. Second, work–family enrichment theory (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006) explains how resources acquired in one life domain, such as psychological resources, meaning, energy, and social support, may be associated with positive experiences in another domain. This perspective supports the distinction between positive and negative aspects of the work–life interface and provides a theoretical basis for examining work–life enrichment alongside work–life interference. Together, these theoretical perspectives inform the proposed model in which mindfulness, represented by awareness and acceptance, is hypothesized to be associated with spiritual health and perceived spiritual leadership. Within this framework, perceived spiritual leadership is hypothesized to be associated with work–life interference and work–life enrichment, whereas spiritual health is hypothesized to be associated with workplace spirituality. These distinct pathways provide an integrated psychological, spiritual, and organizational perspective on teacher well-being within spiritually oriented educational contexts.

Workplace Spirituality and Work-Life Balance

Workplace spirituality refers to individuals’ awareness of their inner life, pursuit of meaningful work, and sense of belonging within organizations (Milliman et al., 2003). In Thailand, Chongvisal (2022) adapted this concept to emphasize self-connection, connection with others, and engagement in meaningful work. In educational settings, workplace spirituality plays a crucial role in fostering moral purpose, intrinsic motivation, and teacher well-being (Petchsawang & McLean, 2017). Evidence also suggests that workplace spirituality alleviates work–family conflict and strengthens psychological well-being (Aboobaker et al., 2020; Reshi & Teli, 2025). Work–life balance is traditionally defined as the ability to manage time, involvement, and satisfaction across work and personal domains (Greenhaus et al., 2003), yet recent studies conceptualize it as comprising two interdependent but distinct dimensions—work–personal life interference and work–personal life enrichment (Greenhaus et al., 2003; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). This dual-path framework parallels positive psychology’s distinction between hedonic and eudaimonic well-being, emphasizing that balance involves both minimizing strain and enhancing vitality.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness has gained growing scholarly attention in behavioral sciences, yet recent integrative reviews emphasize the need for deeper theoretical–practical convergence, particularly in leadership and well-being research. Kabat-Zinn (2003) defined mindfulness as cultivated awareness achieved through paying attention to the present moment without judgment, while Cardaciotto et al. (2008) highlighted awareness and acceptance of inner and external experiences with an attitude of openness. Contemporary interpretations describe mindfulness as a metacognitive capacity that enables leaders and employees to regulate emotions, maintain attentional control, and respond with compassion (Doornich & Lynch, 2024; Kaul et al., 2025). These mechanisms are grounded in two interrelated dimensions: awareness—the continuous observation of present experiences—and acceptance—the ability to acknowledge reality without avoidance or evaluative bias (Bishop et al., 2004). Empirical studies show that awareness facilitates reflective decision-making and cognitive flexibility, whereas acceptance reduces defensiveness and stress

reactivity (Mesmer-Magnus et al., 2017). Collectively, these findings suggest that mindfulness may shape individuals' inner life and outward behaviors differently across its two dimensions.

Spiritual Leadership

Spiritual leadership refers to a form of leadership that emphasizes vision, hope/faith, altruistic love, meaning, and membership as foundations for motivating individuals and shaping a spiritually meaningful work environment (Fry, 2003). Unlike leadership approaches that focus mainly on task performance, formal authority, or transactional exchange, spiritual leadership highlights the role of inner values, meaningful work, compassion, and a sense of belonging in organizational life. In this perspective, leaders are expected to communicate a compelling vision, demonstrate care and concern for others, and support a work climate in which individuals perceive their work as meaningful and connected to broader values. In the present study, spiritual leadership is conceptualized as teachers' perceptions of the spiritual leadership demonstrated by their school leaders or supervisors. It is therefore not measured as leaders' self-reported leadership behavior, but as teacher participants' perceived experience of leadership practices within their school context. Specifically, the construct reflects the extent to which teachers perceive their leaders as communicating vision, demonstrating hope/faith and altruistic love, and fostering a sense of meaning and membership in the workplace. This clarification is important because the study examines spiritual leadership from the viewpoint of teachers as organizational members, rather than from the perspective of principals, administrators, or supervisors themselves.

Spiritual leadership is particularly relevant in faith-based and spirituality-oriented educational organizations, where moral formation, service, community values, and spiritual meaning are often embedded in the institutional mission. In such contexts, teachers' perceptions of leadership may be closely related to how they experience workplace spirituality, relational support, and balance between professional and personal life. Prior studies have suggested that spiritual leadership is associated with positive organizational and psychological outcomes, including meaningful work, organizational commitment, psychological safety, and constructive work climates (Chen & Yang, 2012). Recent empirical evidence from Thailand also supports the relevance of spiritual leadership in contemporary organizational settings. Arthachinda and Charoensukmongkol (2024), for example, found that spiritual leadership was associated with psychological safety climate and team innovation in consulting teams, with occupational self-efficacy serving as a moderating factor. Although their study was conducted outside the education sector, it provides contextualized Thai evidence that spiritual leadership can be meaningfully examined in relation to supportive psychological climates and work-related outcomes.

For teachers in schools affiliated with CETC, perceived spiritual leadership may be especially relevant because these schools explicitly integrate spirituality, moral education, service, and community values into their organizational culture. Teachers in such settings are expected not only to perform instructional duties but also to participate in value-oriented and spiritually grounded educational work. Therefore, teachers' perceptions of spiritual leadership may be linked with their spiritual health, workplace spirituality, and work-life balance. In the present study, perceived spiritual leadership is positioned primarily in relation to teachers' work-life balance rather than as a direct antecedent of workplace spirituality. This specification is based on the view that teachers' perceptions of leadership practices—such as vision, hope/faith, altruistic love, care, and support—are closely related to how they experience role demands, work-related strain, and the integration of professional and personal life. Prior studies on spiritual leadership have linked this form of leadership with work-family conflict, enrichment, and other work-related outcomes, suggesting its relevance to the work-life interface (Hunsaker & Jeong, 2023). Therefore, the present model focuses on the associations between perceived spiritual leadership and the two dimensions of work-life balance, namely work-life interference and work-life enrichment.

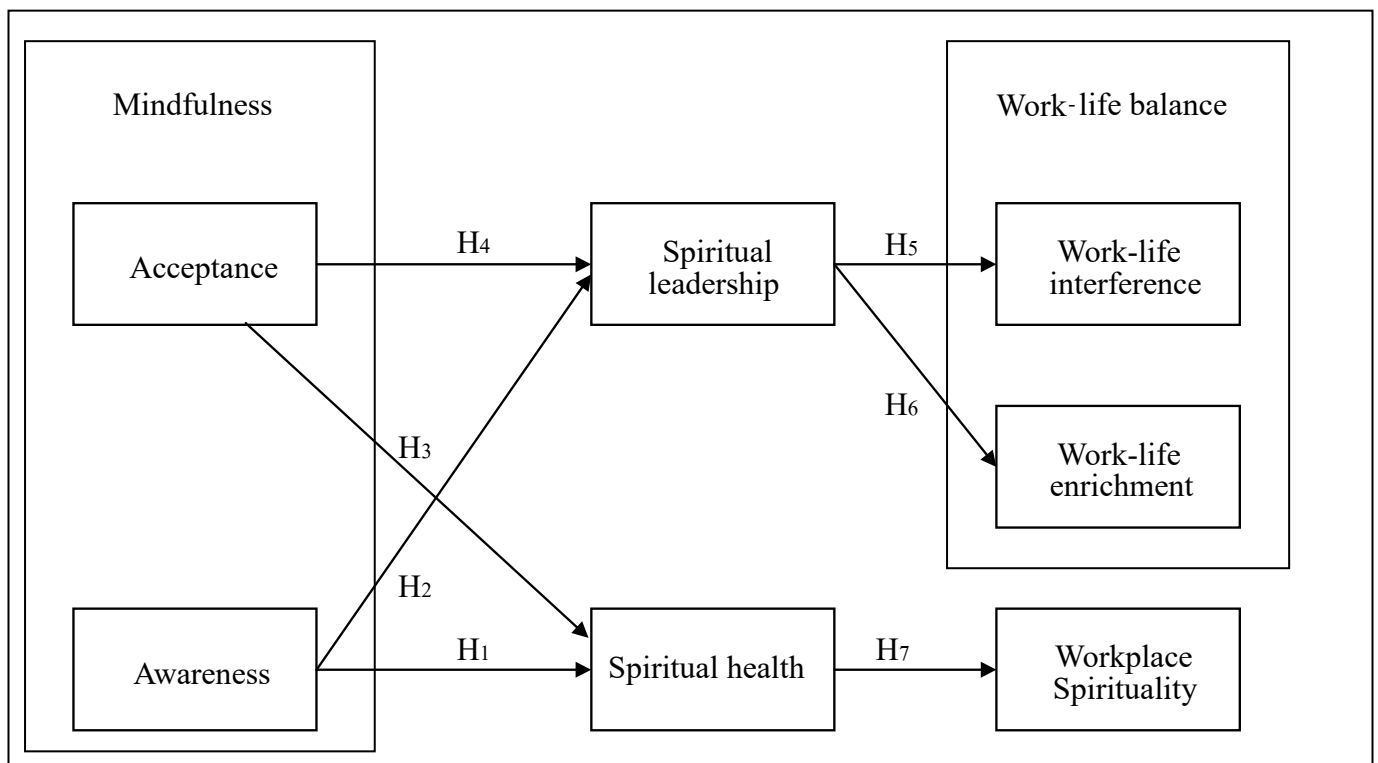
Spiritual Health

Spiritual health represents a central dimension of holistic well-being that transcends the physical and psychological domains. It reflects an individual's sense of purpose, interconnectedness with others, and

alignment with moral or transcendent values. Within the Thai context, Chongvisal et al. (2021) conceptualized spiritual health as comprising three domains—cognitive knowing, experiential states, and supporting factors—emphasizing its practical importance in educational and organizational environments. Empirical studies demonstrate that spiritual health nurtures compassion, inner peace, and resilience (Mathad et al., 2019) and serves as a key predictor of workplace spirituality (Petchsawang & McLean, 2017).

Synthesizing the reviewed literature, the present study proposes an integrated theory-driven path model linking mindfulness, spiritual health, perceived spiritual leadership, workplace spirituality, and work–life balance. Mindfulness, represented by awareness and acceptance, is conceptualized as an antecedent psychological factor that may influence teachers’ inner spiritual resources and their perceptions of leadership within the school context. Spiritual health refers to teachers’ sense of meaning, connectedness, moral grounding, and inner harmony, whereas perceived spiritual leadership refers to teachers’ perceptions of the extent to which their school leaders or supervisors communicate vision, demonstrate hope/faith and altruistic love, and foster meaning and membership. Workplace spirituality reflects teachers’ experience of meaningful work, connection with others, and alignment between personal and organizational values, while work–life balance is represented by both work–life interference and work–life enrichment. Based on this synthesis, the study hypothesizes that awareness and acceptance are differentially associated with spiritual health and perceived spiritual leadership (H1–H4). Within this framework, spiritual health is positioned as the more proximal antecedent of workplace spirituality because both constructs emphasize inner life, meaning, connectedness, and harmony. Prior studies have suggested that spiritual health is associated with workplace spirituality by enabling individuals to derive meaning, cultivate supportive relationships, and experience spiritual values in the workplace (Petchsawang & McLean, 2017). By contrast, perceived spiritual leadership is specified primarily in relation to work–life balance because leadership practices are more directly connected with teachers’ perceptions of work demands, support, role expectations, and the integration of professional and personal life. Accordingly, in the initial conceptual framework, perceived spiritual leadership is hypothesized to be associated with work–life interference and work–life enrichment (H5–H6), whereas spiritual health is hypothesized to be associated with workplace spirituality (H7). The conceptual framework derived from this synthesis is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1
Proposed Conceptual Framework



Method

Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional survey design to examine structural associations among mindfulness, spiritual health, perceived spiritual leadership, workplace spirituality, and work-life balance among teachers in schools affiliated with CETC. In the hypothesized model, mindfulness, represented by awareness and acceptance, was specified as the exogenous predictor, while spiritual health and perceived spiritual leadership were specified as intermediate endogenous variables. Workplace spirituality was specified as an endogenous variable associated with spiritual health, whereas work-life balance was represented by work-life interference and work-life enrichment. The hypothesized relationships were tested using observed-variable path analysis within a structural equation modeling (SEM) framework based on composite or subscale scores.

Sample

The study population consisted of 33,502 teachers from schools affiliated with CETC, based on official 2023 data. Teachers from these institutions were intentionally selected as the target population because CETC schools explicitly integrate spirituality, moral education, and community values into their organizational culture. This contextual homogeneity provided a suitable environment for investigating mindfulness, spiritual health, and spiritual leadership within a work setting where spirituality is deeply embedded in daily professional practice. Participants were selected based on voluntary participation and their alignment with the characteristics of the target population. According to Kline (2011), a sample of approximately 200 participants is generally considered adequate for SEM, while Hair et al. (2019) recommend at least 20 observations per observed variable. For the seven observed variables in the present model, the latter guideline corresponds to 140 participants. The final sample of 437 teachers exceeded both the 200-participant benchmark and the 140-participant ratio-based guideline and was therefore considered adequate for the present observed-variable path analysis.

Instruments

Six instruments were employed in this study.

1. Personal information questionnaire: This instrument consisted of seven items in multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blank formats, covering demographic and occupational information such as gender, age, marital status, educational level, years of service, current job position, and school affiliation.

2. Mindfulness scale: Mindfulness was measured using the Thai version of the Philadelphia mindfulness scale (PHLMS_TH) developed by Silpakit et al. (2011), translated from Cardaciotto et al. (2008). The scale includes 19 items rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = never to 5 = very often) across two dimensions: awareness and acceptance. The awareness dimension consists of 10 positively worded items, with a sample item such as “I am aware of what thoughts are passing through my mind.” The acceptance dimension consists of 9 reverse-worded items, with a sample reverse-worded item such as “I try to distract myself when I have unpleasant feelings.” All acceptance items were reverse-coded before computing the scale score so that higher scores reflected greater acceptance. Internal consistency was good for both awareness ($\alpha = .82$) and acceptance ($\alpha = .82$).

3. Spiritual health scale: Spiritual health was assessed using the instrument developed by Chongvisal et al. (2021), comprising 38 items rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). A sample item is “I know what the true value of life is.” In the present study, the instrument yielded high internal consistency ($\alpha = .94$).

4. Spiritual leadership scale: Spiritual leadership was measured using the 31-item scale developed by Chongvisal (2023), based on Fry et al. (2005). The scale assessed teachers' perceptions of the spiritual leadership demonstrated by their school leaders or supervisors. Participants were asked to report the extent to which they perceived their leaders as demonstrating spiritual leadership qualities in the school context. The items were rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). A sample

item is “My organizational leader ‘walks the talk’ as well as ‘talks the talk’.” The 31-item measure demonstrated high internal consistency in this sample ($\alpha = .94$).

5. Workplace spirituality scale: Workplace spirituality was measured using Chongvisal’s (2022) instrument, which contains 54 items rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = very low to 5 = very high). The scale assesses three domains: self-connection, connection with others, and meaningful work. A sample item is “I feel a sense of belonging to the group, community, or organization of which I am a member.” The internal consistency estimate was very high in the present study ($\alpha = .98$).

6. Work–life balance scale: Work–life balance was measured using the scale developed by Pannok and Chongvisal (2025), drawing on the work–life balance measure reported by Fisher-McAuley et al. (2003). The scale comprised 12 items rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree), covering two subdimensions: work–life interference and work–life enrichment. The work–life interference subscale consists of 8 items, with a sample item such as “My work roles and responsibilities leave me with no time for my family.” The work–life enrichment subscale consists of 4 items, with a sample item such as “My family encourages and supports me in my work.” Reliability was high for work–life interference ($\alpha = .91$), whereas work–life enrichment showed relatively lower internal consistency ($\alpha = .65$). Given the lower reliability of the enrichment subscale, findings involving this dimension should be interpreted with caution, and future studies should consider using expanded or separate measures to assess work–life enrichment and work–life interference more comprehensively.

Although the present study used translated and adapted instruments, a full item-level confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was not conducted. The structural model was estimated using composite or subscale scores representing the focal constructs, rather than a full latent-variable measurement model in which every questionnaire item was specified as an observed indicator. This decision was made because several instruments contained a large number of items, including the spiritual health scale (38 items), the spiritual leadership scale (31 items), and the workplace spirituality scale (54 items). Including all items simultaneously in an item-level CFA would have resulted in a highly complex measurement model with more than 150 observed indicators and a large number of estimated parameters relative to the sample size of 437 participants. Previous methodological literature has emphasized that sample size requirements in SEM and CFA depend not only on the number of participants, but also on model complexity, the number of indicators and factors, factor loadings, missing data, and overall model quality (Kline, 2011; Wolf et al., 2013). Therefore, the present study focused on scale-level reliability and structural relationships among composite constructs rather than revalidating each instrument at the item level.

Procedure

Data were collected from July to August 2024 through both paper-based and online questionnaires using Google Forms, which were distributed to participating teachers. Returned questionnaires were screened for completeness before analysis. Descriptive statistics—frequency, percentage, and mean—were computed for demographic data, while mean, standard deviation, variance, and Pearson’s product–moment correlation were calculated for all study variables. Observed variable path analysis within a SEM framework was conducted using jamovi (version 2.6.25). This approach was selected because the study focused on testing theoretically specified structural relationships among composite or subscale scores rather than estimating a full latent measurement model. Although SEM can be estimated using composite indicators when constructs include multiple dimensions, most constructs in the present study were represented by a single primary score. Specifying these constructs as latent variables would therefore have resulted largely in single-indicator latent constructs and would not have substantially changed the structural interpretation of the model unless additional assumptions about measurement error were imposed. The observed variable model was therefore considered a parsimonious and interpretable approach for evaluating the proposed relationships.

Model fit was evaluated using the chi-square statistic (χ^2), the chi-square to degrees-of-freedom ratio (χ^2/df), the goodness-of-fit index (GFI), adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), comparative fit index (CFI), and Tucker–Lewis index (TLI). The fit indices were considered collectively rather than relying on a single criterion. CFI and TLI values close to or above .95

and RMSEA values close to or below .06 were considered indicative of relatively good model fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999), while a χ^2/df ratio below 3.0 was considered acceptable (Carmines & McIver, 1981; Hair et al., 2019). GFI and AGFI were used as supplementary fit indices, with values closer to 1 indicating better fit. Because the chi-square statistic is sensitive to sample size, it was interpreted together with the other fit indices rather than as the sole criterion for evaluating model fit (Bentler & Bonett, 1980; Kline, 2011).

Results

Sample Characteristics

A total of 437 teachers from schools affiliated with CETC participated in the study. The majority were female (86.5%, $n = 378$), aged 41–50 years (31.8%, $n = 139$), and single (48.1%, $n = 210$). Most participants held a bachelor's degree or equivalent (84.4%, $n = 369$) and had been employed in their current school for 10 years or less (43.7%, $n = 191$). In terms of professional roles, three-fourths (75.1%, $n = 328$) were classroom teachers, while half of the respondents (50.3%, $n = 220$) worked at diocesan schools outside the Archdiocese of Bangkok.

Descriptive Results

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations among the study variables. Positive correlations ranged from .01 to .76, with the strongest positive correlation observed between spiritual health and workplace spirituality ($r = .76$, $p < .001$). Negative correlations ranged from $-.03$ to $-.61$, with the strongest negative correlation observed between awareness and acceptance ($r = -.61$, $p < .001$). Given the relatively strong negative correlation between awareness and acceptance, the scoring procedure for the acceptance subscale was rechecked. All reverse-worded acceptance items were confirmed to have been correctly reverse-coded before the subscale score was computed; therefore, the negative correlation was not attributable to an uncorrected scoring error. Consistent with the Philadelphia Mindfulness Scale, awareness and acceptance were treated as distinct mindfulness dimensions (Cardaciotto et al., 2008). Collinearity diagnostics yielded VIF values of 1.10–3.03 and tolerance values of .33–.91, indicating that problematic multicollinearity was unlikely. Nevertheless, the relatively strong negative correlation warrants cautious interpretation.

Table 1
Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations among the Study Variables

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Awareness	3.76	0.59							
2. Acceptance	2.67	0.53	-.61***						
3. Spiritual health	4.21	0.46	.35***	-.08					
4. Spiritual leadership	4.22	0.52	.18***	-.03	.65***				
5. Workplace spirituality	4.38	0.42	.31***	-.07	.76***	.69***			
6. Work-life interference	2.62	0.95	.11*	-.26***	-.04	-.12*	-.03		
7. Work-life enrichment	4.02	0.65	.20***	.01	.40***	.32***	.45***	.01	

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Hypotheses Testing Results

Because the data were collected from the same group of respondents using self-report questionnaires, common method variance was examined using Harman's single-factor test before interpreting the structural model. Following Podsakoff et al. (2003), all measurement items were entered into a single-factor analysis to examine whether one general factor accounted for the majority of the covariance among the measures. The single factor explained 28.10% of the total variance, below the commonly used 50% threshold. This

preliminary diagnostic did not indicate that a single general factor accounted for the majority of variance. Accordingly, no statistical adjustment was made to the structural paths or indirect effects, and the reported estimates remained unchanged. Before testing the hypothesized structural paths, demographic and role-characteristic variables were examined as potential control variables. Specifically, gender, age, marital status, caregiving responsibility, and organizational tenure were screened for their associations with the main variables in the proposed model. Categorical variables were dummy-coded where appropriate, and bivariate associations were examined using the .05 significance level. The results showed that none of these demographic or role-characteristic variables was significantly associated with the model variables at the .05 level. Therefore, these variables were not included as control variables in the structural model. This decision was made to maintain model parsimony and avoid adding covariates that were not empirically related to the focal constructs in the present sample.

The hypothesized model was first tested using path analysis within a SEM framework. Because the initial model did not achieve satisfactory fit, theoretically defensible model modifications were considered. The non-significant paths from acceptance to perceived spiritual leadership (H4) and from perceived spiritual leadership to work–life enrichment (H6) were removed during model trimming. Four supplementary paths were subsequently retained, linking acceptance with work–life interference, perceived spiritual leadership with spiritual health and workplace spirituality, and workplace spirituality with work–life enrichment. These paths were theoretically consistent with prior work on mindfulness and work–family processes (Allen & Kiburz, 2012; Cardaciotto et al., 2008; Hülshager et al., 2013; Michel et al., 2014), spiritual leadership and well-being (Fry, 2003; Li et al., 2025), leadership and workplace spirituality (Chen & Yang, 2012; Petchsawang & McLean, 2017), and workplace spirituality and enrichment (Garg, 2017). Modification indices and expected parameter changes were used only as diagnostic information, and paths were retained only when theoretically defensible and empirically supported. These additions were treated as theoretically grounded post-hoc paths rather than a priori hypotheses. Because the modified model was tested in the same sample, the supplementary paths require validation in an independent sample.

The modified model demonstrated acceptable fit with the empirical data: $\chi^2(11) = 24.42, p < .05, \chi^2/df = 2.22$, GFI = 1.00, AGFI = .99, RMSEA = .05, CFI = .99, and TLI = .97. Regarding the seven a priori hypotheses, H1, H2, H3, H5, and H7 were supported, whereas H4 and H6 were not supported. Specifically, awareness showed significant positive paths to spiritual health (H1; $\beta = .34, p < .001$) and perceived spiritual leadership (H2; $\beta = .18, p < .001$), while acceptance showed a significant positive path to spiritual health (H3; $\beta = .15, p < .001$). Perceived spiritual leadership showed a significant negative path to work–life interference (H5; $\beta = -.13, p < .01$), and spiritual health showed a significant positive path to workplace spirituality (H7; $\beta = .54, p < .001$). By contrast, the paths from acceptance to perceived spiritual leadership (H4) and from perceived spiritual leadership to work–life enrichment (H6) were not significant and were removed during model trimming; consequently, these two paths are not shown in Table 2, which presents the retained direct effects.

Table 2

Path Analysis Results: Direct Effects of Predictor Variables on Outcome Variables

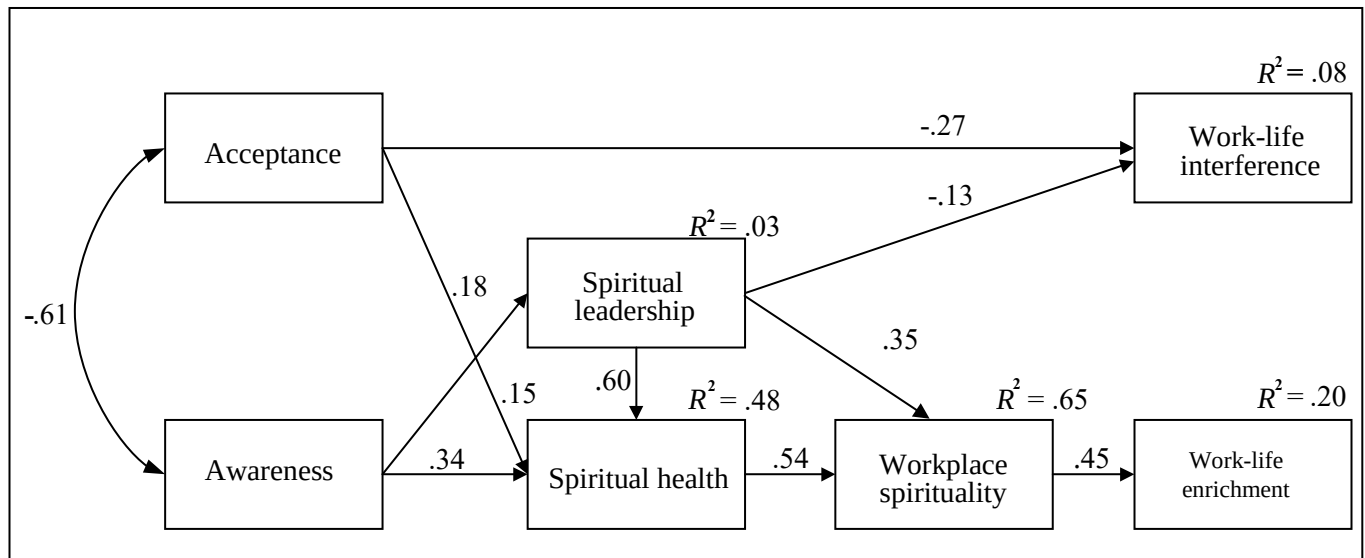
Direct effect	Estimate	SE	95% Confidence Intervals		β	z	p
			Lower	Upper			
1. Awareness to SH	0.26	0.03	0.19	0.33	0.34***	7.66	< .001
2. Awareness to SL	0.16	0.04	0.07	0.24	0.18***	3.73	< .001
3. Acceptance to SH	0.13	0.04	0.05	0.20	0.15***	3.39	< .001
4. Acceptance to WLI	-0.49	0.08	-0.65	-0.32	-0.27***	-5.83	< .001
5. SH to WS	0.49	0.03	0.42	0.56	0.54***	14.46	< .001
6. SL to SH	0.52	0.03	0.46	0.58	0.60***	16.96	< .001
7. SL to WS	0.28	0.03	0.22	0.34	0.35***	9.40	< .001
8. SL to WLI	-0.24	0.08	-0.40	-0.07	-0.13**	-2.80	< .01
9. WS to WLE	0.69	0.07	0.56	0.82	0.45***	10.38	< .001

Note. SH: Spiritual health, SL: Spiritual leadership, WS: Workplace spirituality, WLI: Work-life interference, WLE: Work-life enrichment, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

In addition to the a priori hypotheses, four theoretically grounded post-hoc paths were retained as supplementary findings in the modified model. Acceptance showed a significant negative path to work–life interference ($\beta = -.27, p < .001$). Perceived spiritual leadership showed significant positive paths to spiritual health ($\beta = .60, p < .001$) and workplace spirituality ($\beta = .35, p < .001$). Workplace spirituality also showed a significant positive path to work–life enrichment ($\beta = .45, p < .001$). These four paths were not specified as a priori hypotheses in the initial conceptual framework. The final modified model, including the supported a priori paths and the four supplementary paths, is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Final Path Model of the Relationships among the Study Variables



Note. All displayed path coefficients and the correlation are significant at $p < .05$.

Table 3

Path Analysis Results: Indirect Effects of Predictor Variables on Outcome Variables

Indirect Effect	Estimate	SE	95% Confidence Intervals		β	z	p
			Lower	Upper			
1. Awareness to SH to WS to WLE	0.09	0.02	0.06	0.12	0.08***	5.67	< .001
2. Awareness to SL to SH to WS to WLE	0.03	0.01	0.01	0.04	0.03***	3.34	< .001
3. Awareness to SL to WS to WLE	0.03	0.01	0.01	0.05	0.03**	3.29	< .01
4. Awareness to SL to WLI	-0.04	0.02	-0.07	-0.01	-0.02*	-2.24	.03
5. Acceptance to SH to WS to WLE	0.04	0.01	0.02	0.07	0.04**	3.15	.001
6. SL to SH to WS to WLE	0.18	0.02	0.13	0.22	0.14***	7.55	< .001
7. SL to WS to WLE	0.19	0.03	0.14	0.25	0.16***	6.97	< .001
8. SH to WS to WLE	0.34	0.04	0.26	0.42	0.24***	8.43	< .001

Note. SH: Spiritual health, SL: Spiritual leadership, WS: Workplace spirituality, WLI: Work-life interference, WLE: Work-life enrichment, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Several significant indirect associations were identified (see Table 3). Awareness was indirectly associated with work–life enrichment through three pathways involving spiritual health, perceived spiritual leadership, and workplace spirituality (β range = .03–.08), and with lower work–life interference through perceived spiritual leadership ($\beta = -.02$). Acceptance was indirectly associated with work–life enrichment through spiritual health and workplace spirituality ($\beta = .04$). Perceived spiritual leadership and spiritual health also showed indirect associations with work–life enrichment through workplace spirituality (β range = .14–.24).

Discussion and Conclusion

Discussion of Main Results

The present study examined the structural relationships among mindfulness, spiritual health, perceived spiritual leadership, workplace spirituality, and work–life balance among teachers. The findings provided support for most of the hypothesized relationships and extend prior behavioral science research by illustrating how psychological, spiritual, and leadership-related factors are associated with teachers' work–life balance. First, both awareness and acceptance were significantly and positively associated with spiritual health. This pattern is consistent with prior research linking mindfulness with spiritual well-being, present-moment awareness, self-compassion, and related aspects of psychological functioning (Chongvisal et al., 2021; Mathad et al., 2019). These findings suggest that awareness and acceptance may represent distinct mindfulness-related resources associated with teachers' spiritual health.

Second, awareness, but not acceptance, was significantly associated with perceived spiritual leadership. Teachers reporting higher awareness also tended to perceive stronger spiritual leadership demonstrated by their school leaders or supervisors, consistent with theoretical perspectives linking mindfulness-related awareness with sensitivity to interpersonal and value-oriented aspects of organizational experience (Fry, 2003). Because both variables were teacher-reported and the study was cross-sectional, this association should not be interpreted as evidence that teachers' awareness changes leaders' behavior or that leaders themselves are more mindful. Awareness and acceptance also showed a relatively strong negative correlation. The reverse-worded acceptance items were correctly reverse-coded, indicating that this pattern was not attributable to an uncorrected scoring error. Importantly, an Italian validation of the Philadelphia mindfulness scale similarly reported a negative correlation between awareness and acceptance ($r = -.25, p < .01$) while supporting its two-factor structure (Simione et al., 2022). Conceptually, awareness reflects noticing present-moment experiences, whereas acceptance reflects a nonavoidant and nonjudgmental stance toward them; thus, greater awareness does not necessarily imply greater acceptance. Taken together, these conceptual distinctions and prior evidence indicate that the negative direction of the association is theoretically and empirically plausible, although its considerably stronger magnitude in the present study ($r = -.61$) warrants cautious interpretation and further examination.

Third, spiritual health was strongly and positively associated with workplace spirituality. Teachers reporting higher spiritual health also tended to report greater workplace spirituality, a pattern consistent with prior research linking inner meaning, connectedness, and spiritual well-being with meaningful and relational experiences at work (Chongvisal et al., 2021; Petchsawang & McLean, 2017). This finding is consistent with the theoretical positioning of spiritual health as a proximal correlate of workplace spirituality, particularly within the faith-based educational context examined in this study.

Fourth, perceived spiritual leadership was negatively associated with work–life interference and was indirectly associated with work–life enrichment through workplace spirituality. The latter association is consistent with the resource-gain perspective of work–family enrichment theory (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006), although the cross-sectional design does not establish the temporal or causal ordering of these relationships. Perceived spiritual leadership was also positively associated with spiritual health and workplace spirituality, suggesting that teachers who perceived stronger spiritual leadership from their school leaders or supervisors tended to report higher levels of these spirituality-related experiences. These supplementary paths are broadly consistent with prior research on spiritual leadership and employee well-being (Hunsaker & Jeong, 2023), but they should be interpreted cautiously because they were added during model modification and tested in the same sample. Finally, workplace spirituality was positively associated with work–life enrichment. Teachers reporting greater meaning, connection, and value alignment at work also tended to report greater positive enrichment between their work and personal lives, consistent with prior research linking workplace spirituality with positive work-related experiences (Garg, 2017).

Limitations and Future Research Direction

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the cross-sectional design does not establish temporal or causal relationships among mindfulness, spiritual health, perceived spiritual leadership, workplace spirituality, and work–life balance. Longitudinal or experimental research is therefore needed to examine the direction and stability of these associations over time. In addition, all focal variables were assessed using self-report questionnaires, which may be susceptible to common method and social desirability biases. Although Harman’s single-factor test indicated that one factor accounted for 28.10% of the variance, this test should be regarded as a preliminary diagnostic rather than definitive evidence that common method variance was absent (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Future studies could incorporate multi-source or longitudinal data to reduce reliance on a single measurement source. Moreover, because the theoretically modified model was developed and tested using the same sample, its supplementary post-hoc paths require validation in an independent sample.

Second, the use of purposive sampling and the restriction of the sample to teachers from schools affiliated with the Catholic Education Council of Thailand limit the generalizability of the findings. Spirituality, moral education, service, and community values are explicitly embedded in this organizational context; therefore, the observed associations may not operate in the same manner in secular public schools, other religious school systems, or non-educational organizations. The predominantly female sample (86.5%) also warrants consideration because gendered work and caregiving expectations may be relevant to experiences of work–life balance (Emslie & Hunt, 2009). Future studies should examine the model in more diverse educational settings and samples.

Third, several measurement limitations warrant caution. The study used composite or subscale scores and did not conduct a full item-level confirmatory factor analysis; consequently, comprehensive evidence of convergent and discriminant validity was not established in this sample. Given the complexity and number of indicators that would have been required, future studies with adequate samples should examine the full measurement structure of the translated and adapted instruments (Kline, 2011; Wolf et al., 2013). In addition, the very high reliability of the workplace spirituality scale ($\alpha = .98$) may partly reflect scale length or item overlap, whereas the work–life enrichment subscale showed relatively low internal consistency ($\alpha = .65$); findings involving work–life enrichment should therefore be interpreted cautiously. Finally, awareness and acceptance were strongly negatively correlated ($r = -.61, p < .001$). Although the acceptance items were correctly reverse-coded and collinearity diagnostics did not indicate problematic multicollinearity, these dimensions should continue to be treated cautiously as distinct components of mindfulness (Cardaciotto et al., 2008), and their measurement properties should be examined in future Thai teacher samples.

Implications for Behavioral Science

The findings contribute to behavioral science by showing that mindfulness, spiritual health, perceived spiritual leadership, and workplace spirituality are jointly associated with distinct dimensions of teachers’ work–life balance within a faith-based educational context. Conceptualizing mindfulness as awareness and acceptance (Cardaciotto et al., 2008) and work–life balance in terms of both interference and enrichment (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006) provides a more differentiated view of how psychological and work-related resources are related to teachers’ well-being. The observed associations involving perceived spiritual leadership and workplace spirituality are also consistent with theoretical and empirical work linking spiritually oriented leadership and meaningful work with employee well-being and the work–life interface (Aboobaker et al., 2020; Fry, 2003; Hunsaker & Jeong, 2023). Thus, the study offers a context-specific framework for examining psychological, spiritual, and leadership-related factors as interrelated correlates of workplace spirituality and work–life balance rather than as isolated constructs.

Practically, the findings may inform reflection and professional development in Catholic or other faith-based schools where spirituality, moral education, service, and community values are embedded in organizational life. In such settings, schools may consider opportunities that support mindfulness, spiritual

well-being, value-oriented leadership, and meaningful workplace relationships, while recognizing that the present cross-sectional findings do not establish the effectiveness of any specific intervention. Perceived spiritual leadership may be particularly relevant because spiritually grounded leadership has been associated with teacher well-being and work–life outcomes in prior research (Hunsaker & Jeong, 2023; Li et al., 2025). Application beyond faith-based schools should remain context-sensitive; in secular educational settings, related processes may be expressed through ethical leadership, meaning at work, collegial support, and teacher well-being rather than explicitly spiritual terminology.

Conclusion

This study identified significant associations among mindfulness, spiritual health, perceived spiritual leadership, workplace spirituality, and work–life balance among teachers in schools affiliated with CETC. Spiritual health and workplace spirituality emerged as central correlates linking mindfulness- and leadership-related factors with work–life outcomes. The distinct associations observed for work–life interference and work–life enrichment highlight the value of examining these two dimensions separately in understanding teachers’ work–life balance within faith-based schools.

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Declarations

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Ethical Approval Statement: This study was approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of Kasetsart University, Thailand (protocol code: COA67/020, date of approval: April 9, 2024).

Declaration of Generative AI: During the preparation of this work, the authors used generative AI tools (namely ChatGPT) only for language editing, including grammar checking and improving sentence clarity. All conceptual development, data analysis, creation of figures and tables, interpretation of results, and theoretical arguments were conducted exclusively by the authors.

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