

A Study of the Practice of Contemporary Mindfulness During Work Breaks on Increasing Job Performance Levels in Hospitality Industry

Dr. W. Chen

Sheffield Business School, Sheffield Hallam University, Howard street, Sheffield, S1 1WB, UK

Mr. M. Wilton

Sheffield Business School, Sheffield Hallam University, Howard Street, Sheffield, S1 1WB, UK

Abstract

Hospitality employees often work under mental and physical pressure long hours which in turns affect their attitudes towards their job and job satisfaction. It has contributed to high staff turnover in the industry and caused major impacts on productivity and profitability. Many hospitality organisations are looking for efficient solutions to increase job performance levels. This study explores the effect contemporary mindfulness mediation during work breaks has on the job performance levels of restaurant employees which will enhance customer satisfaction and brand image of restaurants. Primary research was carried out through a survey to explore the relationship between being mindful and job performance levels of servers in the popular restaurant chain TGI Fridays. The results showed a weak correlation between a server being mindful and their job performance levels but Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) such as 'Calmness' and 'Focus' provided a stronger connection with scores from the Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) . The connection between effective work breaks and job performance levels was also examined which unearthed a greater level of correlation. From the results discovered it is recommended restaurants managers trial alternative ways of improving work breaks for their employees to improve their well-being and ultimately their job performance levels before introducing the costly practice of mindfulness meditation. However, the increasing number of studies showing a positive correlation between mindfulness meditation and job performance levels means hospitality managers should be aware of the practice and possibly incorporate it into schedules of employees in the future.

Keywords: Hospitality Management, Mindfulness, Meditation, Work Breaks, Job Performance Levels, Restaurants

Introduction

Hospitality and tourism is one of the world's fastest growing industries. More than 2 million people employed in hospitality industry in the UK and this number is more than 14 million in the United States; the global industry bookings reached \$1.6 billion in 2017 and it now accounts for a staggering 10.2% of global GDP (Langford and Weissenberg, 2017) The ability to help customers, meet their needs, or simply make them feel at home is a crucial component of almost every business today, which means wide range of businesses are hiring hospitality staff to form beneficial relationships with clients. However, hospitality enterprises suffer huge losses from high staff turnover, low job satisfaction and low performance.

There have been various studies carried out to discover how mindfulness at work can positively affect the emotional side of employees such as emotion regulation, emotional exhaustion, and job satisfaction (Hulsheger, Alberts, Feinholdt & Lang, 2013). However, due to lack of studies that identify how mindfulness can have a positive effect on job-performance levels especially in the hospitality industry has created the need for this study. This study aims to fill the gap and discusses whether the practice of contemporary mindfulness during work breaks can effectively increase job-performance levels of restaurant servers in hospitality industry. Restaurant employees often work long hours involving mentally and physically draining work which in turns affects their attitudes towards their job and their job-performance levels (Flaherty, 2016). According to a study carried out by Brown, Thomas and Bosselman (2015) there is currently a problem with working hours in the hospitality industry with 12.60% answering 'Long hours' when asked what the main reason would be if they left the industry with 41.10% having the same response when asked what the least desirable trait of the industry was. Organisations are currently trying to counter act these issues in other ways to improve job-performance levels. Recently, certain organisations in Sweden have took part, and ultimately failed, in the 'Umeå Experiment' which implemented 'six-hour work' days to attempt to increase the well-being of employees, resulting in increased job-performance levels and therefore profit (Carlström, 2016).

Organisations could be over-looking more efficient solutions to increase job performance levels whilst the employee is still at work through effective use of their work breaks by persuading their employees to carry out relaxing activities. An example of an alternative relaxing activity is meditation, presently known as mindfulness. Professor of Medicine Emeritus at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, Kabat-Zinn (1994, p. 4),

defines mindfulness as 'paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgementally.' By critically undertaking a literature review and carrying out appropriate primary research, this study will discuss and explore how hospitality managers can present these techniques, such as the modernised practice of mindfulness, and other adjustments to work breaks to increase their job-performance levels.

Literature Review

This literature review discusses the subject of mindfulness and effective works breaks and how both of these affect job performance levels within the hospitality industry. Meditation was founded in the sixth centuries by Siddhatta Gotama, which helped to develop the religion/philosophy known as Buddhism (Moore, 2016) and has been the foundation for Buddhist practices for centuries (Wright, 2015). Meditation has been recently redefined as contemporary mindfulness and according to Kabat-Zinn (2015), can be defined as paying attention to the present moment in a particular way non-judgementally whilst being non-reactive and openhearted as possible. Keng, Tan, Eisenlohr-Moul & Smoski (2017) argue that the aim of mindfulness is to create greater acceptance and awareness of a human being's emotions whereas Adair & Fredrickson (2015) believe it improves a person's sense of presence and helps to collect experimental evidence of a situation so they can react accordingly instead of jumping to conclusions. Furthermore, practicing mindfulness can be beneficial in various ways as stated by Bullis, Boe, Asnaani & Hofmann (2014) who explain a few benefits such as the positive effect the practice has on a person regarding their emotion regulation and stress response. However, Dholakia (2016) argues that mindfulness can also provide potential negative effects such as a person discarding positive thoughts, as well as negative ones, which contradicts the purpose of the practice.

Monteiro, Musten & Composon (2015) describe mindfulness as having two histories; the 2,000 year-old spiritual past and the about 30 year-old short secular past. They continue to explain that the traditional practice, founded in north-eastern India, is constantly being adapted to cater to Western approaches to wellness resulting in mindfulness becoming more contemporary at the expense of the traditional version. Harrington & Dunne (2014) express how contemporary mindfulness, also referred to as the 'Mindfulness Movement', has been adapted by the Western World over the last decades by applying mindfulness as a form of therapy to improve various physical and mental issues such as stress-reduction, performance anxiety, relationship problems, along with depression, anxiety and stress disorders.

With 488,000 work related stress, depression or anxiety cases being reported within the workplace in Great Britain in 2016 (Health and Safety Executive, 2016) the need to improve the wellbeing of employees is rapidly increasing. However, the increasing number of studies, proving that mindfulness self-helps books or recordings can have positive effects for a person, has created the possibility for companies to adopt the practice as a way of improving their employee's wellbeing. Chade Meng Tan, former software engineer and motivator at Google, composed his book titled 'Search Inside Yourself' (Tan, 2010) which involved a personal development growth program through the practice of mindfulness. Not only did his book help Google introduce its employees to the practice of mindfulness and improve their well-being, it was also implemented by the likes of Microsoft, Samsung, Disney and Facebook for the same purpose and have all seen the benefits of the practice. However, Marx (2015) argues that there is not sufficient evidence to prove that mindfulness has a strong enough connection with job performance therefore, there is a risk that implementing the practice is not cost effective for companies.

Smith (2015) discusses the increasing number of companies implementing mindfulness practice to improve their employee's well-being and ultimately their job performance levels. Marr (2012) identified 75 Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) for managers to measure the job performance levels of their employees which are agreed by Farh, Seo & Tesluk (2012). Mumber (2014) discovered that practicing mindfulness continuously within the workplace improves one KPI, error prevention, whilst Leroy, Anseel, Dimitrova & Sels (2013) identified another, employee engagement. Although these findings support the reasoning behind Smith's (2015) observation, Hafenbrack (2017) argues that mindfulness could have a possible negative effect as the practice can involve accepting and enduring any negative emotion explored which could have an effect on an employee's productivity levels. However, in conjunction with Bruyne et al. (2013), he does agree that practicing mindfulness can benefit employees with regards to focusing on a particular task depending on the mental state of the employee.

Although Petchsawang & Duchon (2012) agree that practicing mindfulness positively affects the overall job performance levels of employees, they argue that these effects are only present when mindfulness is practiced frequently and not straightaway. This suggests that introducing mindfulness to employees individually is a costly way of improving job performance levels and is unlikely to be sustained until sufficient evidence is provided (Marx, 2015). Despite this, Gordon, Shonin, Zangenah & Griffiths (2014) believe that mindfulness can be cost effective by utilising Mindfulness-Based Interventions (MBIs) which involves one mindfulness instructor training a group of employees how to be more mindful resulting in improved job performance levels. The suggestion that using MBIs are cost-effective is confirmed by Malarkey, Jarioura & Klatt (2013) whose trial

discovered that MBIs are also sustainable. Huffington (2015) acknowledges this discovery and expresses that mindfulness training is the only sustainable way forward for companies as well as their employees.

A popular form of training employees to be mindful is through Meditation Awareness Training (MAT) which focuses on the relationship between work-related wellbeing and job performance levels (Shonin & Gordon, 2014). A study performed by Shonin, Gordon, Dunn, Singh & Griffiths (2014), discovering whether this form of training positively impacts job performance levels of employees in the Hospitality industry by using a Role-Based Performance Scale (RBPS), resulted in an average of 19.6% increase in the employees RBPS score. Another study within the Hospitality industry was carried out by Dane & Brummel (2013) who found a positive relationship between workplace mindfulness and job performance in regard to leadership skills and performances which is supported by a similar study carried out by King & Haar (2017).

As the Hospitality industry consists of a variety of unique personalities amongst employees, Shiba, Nishimoto, Sugimoto & Ishikawa (2015) discuss how this factor prevented their study from finding an absolute correlation between mindfulness and job performance due to the different biological changes the practice would have on different types of people including different demographics and behavioural risk factors. However, they did find a positive connection between mindfulness and employee engagement including energy levels but is counteracted by Taylor & Millear (2016) who argue that mindfulness only has a small effect on the likes of emotional exhaustion, cynicism and reduced professional efficacy which all can prevent increased job level performances.

Rathi & Lee (2016) express how emotional exhaustion can be caused by requiring hospitality employees to display forced emotions throughout their shift which decreases their job performance levels. The link between emotional exhaustion and job performance levels has been highlighted further by Sun & Pan (2008) who declare that the link was dependant on certain demographics of an employee such as age. Another issue for employees within the hospitality industry has been identified by McNamara, Bohle & Quilan (2011) who discovered that a number of full-time workers found excessive hours to be an issue, which according to Ragone (2013), has no substitute. This leads onto the recent suggestion to increase work breaks for employees which has been discovered to provide benefits for employees such as reducing stress and increasing enjoyment, creating a catalyst for health awareness and behaviour change, and improving enhanced workplace social interaction which all arguably increases job performance levels (Taylor et al., 2013).

Additionally, Smith (2015) expresses that research proves that including more breaks into the day increases creativity and more focused thinking along with Woods, Johanson, Sciarini & Wood (2012) who strongly suggest that companies should encourage their employees to take frequent breaks to decrease stress and increase their job performance levels. However, Fritz, Ellis, Demsky, Lin & Guros (2013) insist that the activities carried out during these work breaks have a greater positive effect on the employee than the effects of taking a break itself. They found that performing relaxing activities during these breaks increases relaxation levels for employees resulting in increased attentiveness, decreased fatigue and improved overall job performance levels. This is supported by Krajewski, Sauerland & Wieland (2011) whose study found that performing progressive muscle relaxation (PMR) meditation techniques during lunch breaks, was more beneficial for the stress hormone cortisol compared to a standard work break.

Another earlier study, carried out by Krajewski, Wieland & Sauerland (2010), found that the location of the break was just as important as the activity performed during this time. They found that PMR had a more advanced positive effect on lowering stress levels of an employee when the technique was performed in a separate room to the employee's place of work which suggests work breaks are more effective when they are situated away from the work space. These results are also supported by Growth Business (2015) who state that providing employees a separate facility away from the parameters of the workplace not only improves concentration, promotes well-being and increases job satisfaction but also encourages employees to actually take a break.

The act of encouraging employees to take breaks is ethicised by Kuhnle, Zacher, Bloom & Bledow (2016) who found that work engagement and performance levels are increased the more an employee takes self-initiated breaks. They also found that taking multiple short breaks instead of taking just one individual longer break has the same positive effect. Bennie, Timperio, Crawford, Dunstan & Salmon (2011) agree with these suggestions but insist that carrying out a type of physical activity for desk-based employees during these short breaks is the most effective activity to improve job performance levels.

For hospitality employees, whose positions involve constant physical activity, other activities during these short breaks should be applied which involve rest (Li, Wong, & Kim, 2017). However, Paskin (2008) declares that it may not be possible for hospitality workers to take frequent short breaks as they are only entitled to one 20-minute break after working for over six hours, which legally means that they can work up to twelve hours with just one 20-minute break. Despite this, Rekik, Cordeu & Soumis (2010) believe this law should be ignored by managers who should create a shift schedule for their employees that involve multiple breaks which will benefit both employee and management due to the positive effect it has on an employee's job performance levels.

Methodology

In terms of research methods, by utilising multiple methods, it enables methodological triangulation, a systematic approach conceptualised by Denzin (1989), which accordingly to Gray (2013), increases the validity of the data collected. Methodological triangulation in this study will provide both quantitative and qualitative data through numerical data and narrative data. Ekinici (2015) empathises that for the questionnaire to provide reliable results the questions asked must be the right questions and to the right people and that all participants are asked the same questions in the same order so responses can be accurately compared. As the aim of the research is to discover whether the use of mindfulness during work breaks can effectively improve job-performance levels of restaurant servers, questionnaires are designed to be given to workers in a restaurant as they're the most relevant people to involve in the research. Therefore, servers of the restaurant 'TGI Fridays' have been chosen to be included in this research. TGI Fridays has been chosen due to its high level of focus on customer service and job performance levels of their employees resulting in them owning 4.6% of the market share of full-service restaurants in the UK placing them 8th overall (Passport, 2017). TGI Fridays was founded in the USA in 1965 and expanded to the UK in 1986 resulting in the opening of 65 restaurants across the country and has become a location to celebrate special occasions serving American styled food and beverages. Managers of TGI Fridays constantly observe the job performance levels of their employees and are passionate about improving their job performance levels as much as possible.

Questionnaires have been given to the servers of both the Sheffield and Meadowhall (Major shopping mall outside of Sheffield) restaurants to provide a significant number of participants which will result in more accurate and a higher frequency of results. Managers from these restaurants have also been required to participate as they are needed to score their employees on their Job Performance Levels (JPLs). Each participant is required to complete an adjusted, but relevant, Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS), used by Brown & Ryan (2003), which will represent how mindful each participant is (See Appendix 1). MAAS uses the Likert scale, explained by Burns (2000) as a scale that involves participants being asked to indicate their agreement to a set of attitude statements and states that the validity and reliability are reasonably high due to the homogeneous scales and increases the probability that a unitary attitude is being measured. The Likert scale ranges from 1-6 (1 representing Almost Always and 6 representing Almost Never) which creates the opportunity to analyse numerical data. Using the same scale, managers of the participant are required to score each participant on a number of items that represent their JPLs (See Appendix 2) which will be used to detect any relationship between mindfulness levels and JPLs. The JPLs will be calculated using 10 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). These 10 KPIs have been chosen as they are regarded as the most important to managers of TGI Fridays when scoring the JPLs of their servers. The following are the chosen KPIs:

- Focus
- Speed
- Efficiency
- Teamwork
- Friendliness
- Attentiveness
- Attitude
- Leadership
- Calmness
- Openness

A separate questionnaire (See Appendix 3), which focuses on work breaks and their effects, will also be provided to participants. The main purpose of this questionnaire is to explore the length of breaks, actions carried out during these breaks and the level of relaxation felt by the participant after their break and to discover whether any of these have a relationship to their JPLs. To gather qualitative data, an open question will also be included which asks each participant how they think work breaks can be improved for themselves and servers in general. This will give a first-hand insight to how servers want their breaks to be adjusted to improve their shifts and arguably their JPLs.

To ensure the confidentiality of each participant's answers, and their JPLs provided by their managers, a blank, thick piece of paper will be inserted in-between each set of questions to decrease the likelihood of managers seeing the answers provided by the participants and vice versa. Each participant will remain anonymous throughout the research and their results will be electronically stored which will be password protected and destroyed after one year of storage. To increase the accuracy of the results, only one manager from each store will score the participants on their JPLs so that a consistent scoring system will be provided. Also, all results were collected on the same day and time to cancel any risk of mood changes within the managers which may affect the JPLs scores they provide. To increase the validity of the results, servers who have not had at least one year experience of serving in the hospitality industry will not be asked to complete a questionnaire as

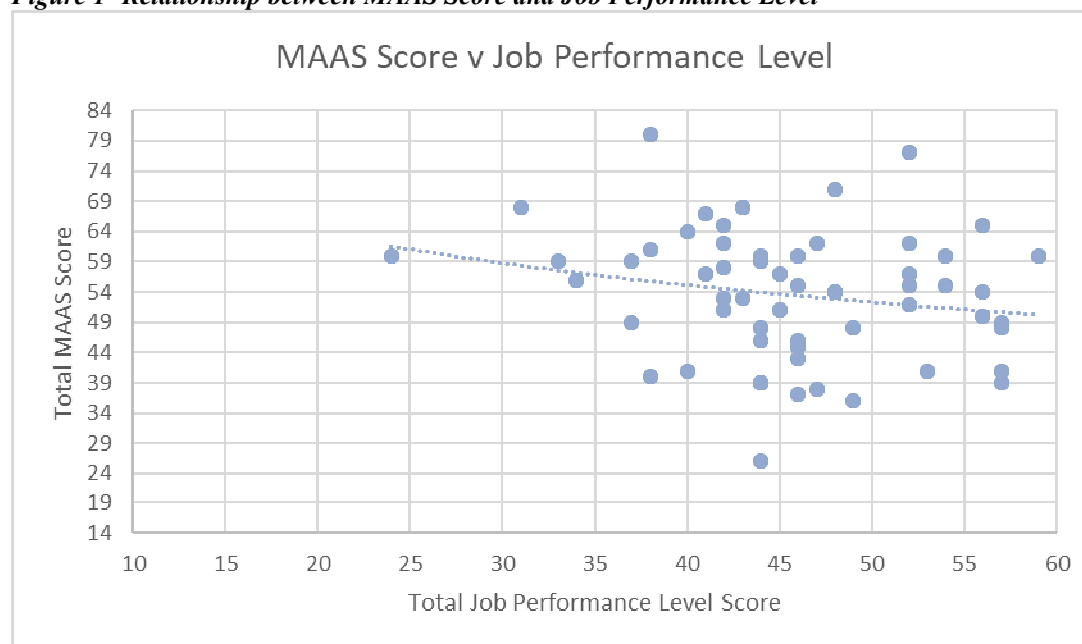
arguably they have not been in the job role long enough to provide reliable and experienced data.

Findings and Discussion

To focus on one sector in the hospitality industry, 100 survey questionnaires have been disseminated to both Sheffield and Meadowhall TGI Fridays restaurants and finally 72 servers participated in this study with every participant answering both the work breaks questionnaire and MAAS with a designated manager scoring them on their JPLs. 11 participants declared that they only work between 0-10 hours on average per week. Due to these participants having less experience because of their minimal hours, it was decided that including their data would decrease the validity of the overall results so their data was disregarded. From the remaining 61 participants, whose results were approved, 36 were female whilst 25 were male which increases the validity of the results as it is a close representation of the balance of males and females working in the hospitality industry discussed by Berkeley Scott (2012) who state that females made up 60% of the workforce in the Hospitality and Tourism industries in 2012. However, the majority of participants fell between the ages of 18-21 which is a poor representation of the average age of waiting staff found by Statista (2011) who discovered that 26 was the average age of waiting staff in 2011 which therefore, decreases the level of validity of the results.

As numerical data was produced through the MAAS and JPLs, it was vital to analyse the relationship between the two sets of data to discover any correlation between them. Firstly, the data was inputted into an Excel spreadsheet and was used to calculate the overall MAAS and JPLs of each participant which made it possible to analyse the relationship between the two. Each participants MAAS and JPLs was plotted against each other in a line graph (See Figure 2) to visually show the relationship between the two sets of data. A 'CORREL' formula was then used to numerically provide a number between the values of -1 and 1 to calculate whether the two sets of data had a strong or weak correlation. The closer the value is to -1 or 1 and the further away the value is from 0 the stronger the correlation is with -1 providing a negative correlation and 1 providing a positive correlation. If the correlation value calculated is positive it indicates that the higher MAAS a person has, the higher their JPLs should be and if the correlation value calculated is negative it indicates the higher MAAS a person has, the lower their JPLs should be.

Figure 1- Relationship between MAAS Score and Job Performance Level



The correlation between the overall MAAS and JPLs of all participants was first calculated which provided a correlation value of -0.1166. As the value is closer to 0 than -1 it suggests there is a weak correlation between MAAS and JPLs which theoretically means that being more mindful does not improve someone's job performance levels. If anything, due to the correlation value being negative, it suggests that the less mindful a server is the better their job performance levels are. These results counteracts those provided by King & Haar (2017) who found a positive relationship between being mindful and job performance levels of senior managers working for an engineering firm. Arguably, a valid explanation as to why a weak correlation was found could be due to the variety of different personalities and ages found in the Hospitality industry, in particular this study, which was also an issue for Shiba, Nishimoto, Sugimoto & Ishikawa (2015) who used this explanation to justify why they did not find an absolute correlation between mindfulness and job performance levels due to different demographics and behavioural risk factors in servers.

Due to the weak correlation between the overall MAAS and JPLs, the correlation between individual questions from the MAAS and individual KPIs from the JPLs were explored. The strongest correlation found between these individual measures was question 9 of the MAAS which states 'I get so focused on the goal I want to achieve that I lose touch with what I'm doing right now to get there' and the KPI 'Calmness'. The totaling of these scores resulted in a correlation of -0.3841 (See Figure 3) which suggests that the less calm a person is the more likely they are to get preoccupied on a future task rather than focusing on the task in the present moment. However, it could be argued that 'thinking ahead' is a form of focusing and is essential for restaurant servers which suggests being less calm can be beneficial for their job performance levels. Furthermore, the strongest positive correlation of all 10 KPIs, and total MAAS score of the participants, was 'Focus' resulting in a correlation of 0.1533 (See Figure 4) which, even though is a weak correlation, does suggest that 'Focus' is positively influenced the most by being more mindful and therefore the most important KPI. This suggestion is also supported by both Hafenback (2017) and Bruyne et al. (2013) who argue that practicing mindfulness, and therefore becoming more mindful, can benefit employees with regards to focusing on a particular task.

Figure 2- Relationship between MAAS Question 9 and 'Calmness' KPI

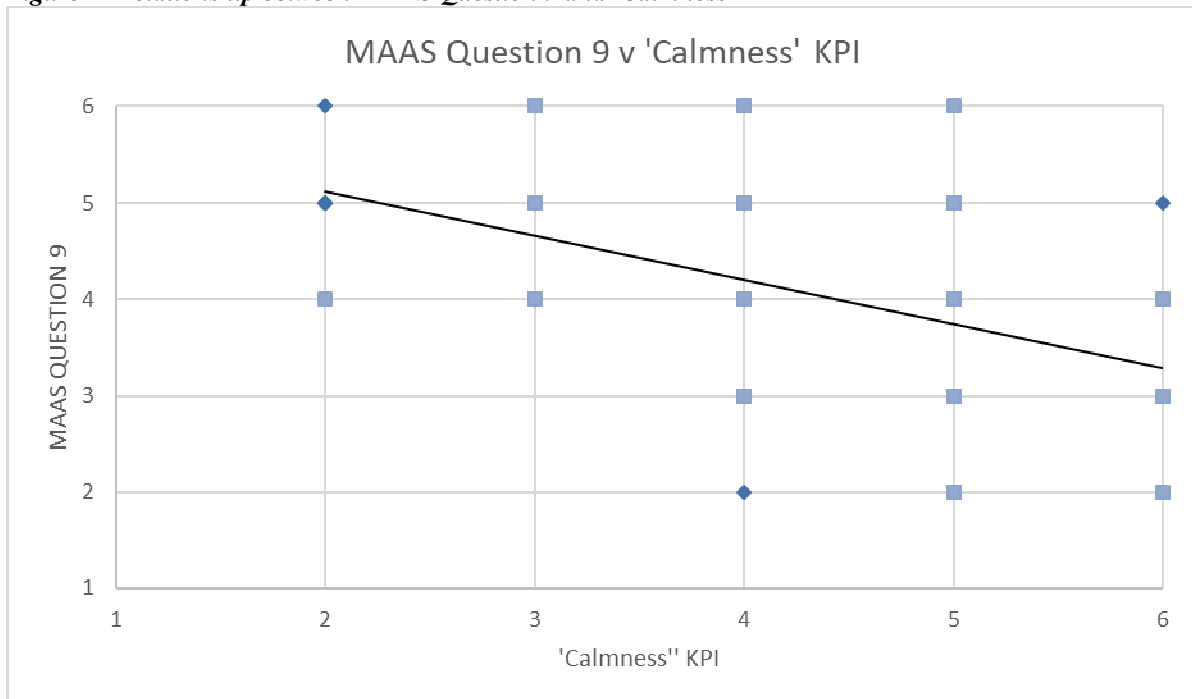
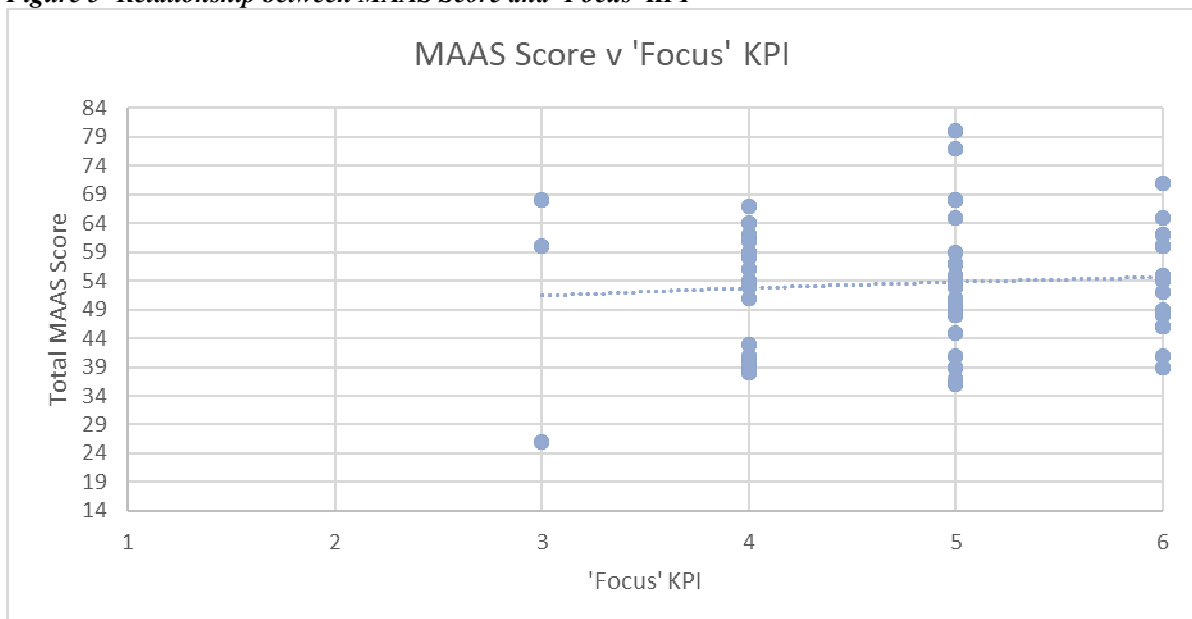


Figure 3- Relationship between MAAS Score and 'Focus' KPI



Although the majority of correlations between the MAAS and JPLs proved to be weak, the 'Work Break Questionnaire' provided considerably stronger relationships between answers. Over 73% of participants who answered 'Yes,' when asked if they felt more relaxed after taking a break, had the same response when asked if they felt their job performance levels increased after taking a break. Interestingly, the relationship between gaining some form of relaxation from a work break, and the positive effects it has on job performance levels afterwards, is also recognised by Fritz, Ellis, Demsky, Lin & Guros (2013) who discovered that feeling more relaxed after taking a break, by performing relaxing activities, has a significant improvement on overall job performance levels. The suggestion made by Krajewski, Sauerland & Wieland (2011) that performing a type of meditation during a work break is more beneficial than a standard break, may not appeal to restaurant servers as the majority of participants answered 'No' when asked if they have ever performed any form of meditation before. However, over 70% of participants said they would be interested in taking part in a mindfulness meditation program, such as Meditation Awareness Training, to increase job performance levels, which according to Shonin, Gordon, Dunn, Singh & Griffiths (2014), has a positive correlation.

Another interesting result provided by the 'Work Break Questionnaire' was the strong relationship between the participant's preferred break length and their job performance levels. Although there wasn't a stand out answer between 'Multiple Short Breaks' and 'One Long Break', over 75% of those who answered the foremost out of these two options also stated that they felt their job performance levels increased after a break. Kuhnle, Zacher, Bloom & Bledow (2016) support this result by expressing their preference for short breaks, instead of one long break, which is also encouraged by Rekik, Cordeu & Soumis (2010) who state that multiple short breaks should be implemented within the Hospitality industry. Also, within the qualitative part of the questionnaire, multiple participants expressed that having 'shorter, more frequent breaks' and 'more regular breaks' would improve work breaks for servers in the future which suggests that servers are not satisfied with having an individual longer break which could negatively affect their attitude towards their job and therefore their job performance levels.

Other recurring answers were present from the feedback of the qualitative part of the questionnaire involving the location of a work break itself. Many participants expressed their desire for a 'staff room away from the restaurant' and 'a separate area for staff to be able to take your mind off work' within their place of work which they feel would improve overall job performance levels. This links with the argument made by Krajewski, Wieland & Sauerland (2010) and Growth Business (2015) who both discovered the benefits of employees taking their work breaks outside the parameters of the workplace which included lowering levels of stress, improving concentration and job satisfaction. Interestingly, many participants also stated that in order to improve work breaks they need to be 'completely uninterrupted', a topic that was not addressed in the literature review. Participants frequently stated that their current breaks were currently interrupted by the likes of managers which resulted in an unproductive work break and negatively affected their overall attitude towards work.

Research implications and limitations

In conclusion, the results produced regarding the relationship between an employee being more mindful and their job performance levels did not present a strong enough correlation to suggest that mindfulness meditation can greatly improve job performance levels for servers in the hospitality industry. However, the study arguably had a number of limitations that could have prevented more accurate results. One limitation involves not being able to assess job performance levels before and after a participant had performed a form of meditation which was not possible to do due to the 'hands-on' job roles of restaurant servers in comparison to desk-based employees. Another limitation within the study was the number of variables regarding the participants involved. The servers at TGI Fridays were very inconsistent regarding their demographics, average working hours per week and average time spent on each break which decreased the reliability of results, a similar issue also found by Shiba, Nishimoto, Sugimoto & Ishikawa (2015) in their study which was previously mentioned in the report. Despite the disappointing outcome of results involving the overall relationship between being mindful and job performance levels, there was more profound and positive evidence when observing the level of mindfulness in relation to individual KPIs, in particular 'Calmness' and 'Focus'. 'Calmness' had a negative but strong correlation with question 9 of the MAAS which highlighted that the less calm the participant is the more they are able to focus on the task at hand. Furthermore, although it proved to be a weak correlation, the KPI 'Focus' proceeded to have a positive correlation with the level of mindfulness suggesting that being more mindful improves the level of focus for a restaurant server supported by results found previously addressed by Hafenback (2017) and Bruyne et al. (2013). The discovery of the relationship between being mindful and the 'Calmness' and 'Focus' KPIs could unearth the desire to focus on these two KPIs in future studies depending on how valuable being less calm and more focused are to restaurant servers and their overall job performance levels.

Although there was discouraging evidence found linking levels of mindfulness to job performance levels, the data found regarding work breaks and job performance levels is evidently more promising. The strong

correlation between taking multiple short breaks and feeling relaxed with job performance levels after taking a break indicates the demand to explore the potential implementation of these conditions into the work breaks of restaurant servers. Not only is this supported by the likes of Fritz, Ellis, Demsky, Lin & Guros (2013) and Kuhnel, Zacher, Bloom & Bledow (2016), it is clear from the quantitative data derived from the 'Work Break Questionnaire' that there is a demand to incorporate more relaxing and shorter breaks from restaurant workers themselves through the introduction of interrupted breaks and staff rooms that will increase their attitude towards their job which arguably increases their job performance levels.

On the subject of mindfulness meditation, it is difficult to disclose from this study whether practicing a form of mindfulness meditation during a work break is directly linked to improving job performance levels of servers due to the lack of participants confirming that they have any experience of the practice. The results unearthed by this study suggests that ensuring restaurant employees feel relaxed after taking a work break is more important and beneficial to companies than focusing on implementing mindfulness meditation practices due to lack of evidence provided linking it to improved job performance levels. However, since over 70% of participants stated that they would be interested in participating in a mindfulness meditation program, such as MAT to improve their job performance levels, it would not be challenging for companies to persuade their employees to take part which is beneficial for those undertaking research to explore the relationship between mindfulness meditation and job performance levels.

It is recommended that a greater number of these types of studies exploring the relationship between mindfulness meditation and job performance levels are carried out before companies in the hospitality industry introduce the practice to their employees during work breaks through the likes of costly mindfulness based courses. Nonetheless, less cost effective alternatives, such as improving work breaks for employees by providing a superior work space and staff rooms, should be tested to attempt to improve the well-being of their employees and ultimately their job performance levels. Future research in the field could extend to study gender difference, age difference and culture difference's impacts on job performance and contemporary mindfulness.

References

- Adair, K. C. & Fredrickson, B. L. (2015). Be open: Mindfulness predicts reduced motivated perception. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 83, 189-201.
- Barker, K. K. (2014). Mindfulness meditation: Do-it-yourself medicalization of every moment. *Social Science & Medicine*, 106, 168-176.
- Bennie, J. A., Timperio, A. F., Crawford, D. A., Dunstan, D. W., & Salmon, J. L. (2011). Associations between social ecological factors and self-reported short physical activity breaks during work hours among desk-based employees. *Preventive Medicine*, 53(1), 44-47.
- BerkeleyScott. (2012). *Gender equality in the hospitality industry*. [Online] Available: <http://www.berkeley-scott.co.uk/gender-equality-in-the-hospitality-industry/> (March 2 2017)
- Brown, E. A., Thomas, N. J., & Bosselman, R. H. (2015). Are they leaving or staying: A qualitative analysis of turnover issues for Generation Y hospitality employees with a hospitality education. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 46, 130-137.
- Brown, K. W., & Ryan, R. M. (2003). The benefits of being present: Mindfulness and its role in psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84(4), 822-848.
- Brunye, T. T., Mahoney, C. R., Giles, G. E., Rapp, D. N., Taylor, H. A., & Kanarek, R. B. (2013). Learning to relax: Evaluating four brief interventions for overcoming the negative emotions accompany math anxiety. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 27, 1-7.
- Bullis, J. R., Boe, H. J., Asnaani, A., & Hofmann, S. G. (2014). The benefits of being mindful: Trait mindfulness predicts less stress reactivity to suppression. *Journal of Behaviour Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry*, 45, 57-66.
- Burns, R. B. (2000). *Introduction to research methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Carlström, V. (2016, August 2016). Sweden's latest six-hour work day experiment was a complete failure. *Business Insider Nordic*. [Online] Available: <http://nordic.businessinsider.com/swedens-latest-six-hour-work-day-experiment-was-a-complete-failure-2016-8/> (Feb 12 2017)
- Cavanagh, K., Strauss, C., Forder, L., & Jones, F. (2014). Can mindfulness and acceptance be learnt by self-help?: A systematic review and meta-analysis of mindfulness and acceptance-based self-help interventions. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 34(2), 118-129.
- Center for Mindfulness. (2010). Other MSBR programs worldwide. *University of Massachusetts Medical School*. [Online] Available: <http://www.umassmed.edu/cfm> (Feb 2 2017)
- Dane, E. & Brummel, B. J. (2013). Examining workplace mindfulness and its relations to job performance and turnover intention. *Human Relations*, 67(1), 105-128.
- Denzin, N. K. (1989). *The Research Act* (3rd ed.). Englewood cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Dholakia, U. (2016). The Little-Known Downsides of Mindfulness Practice. *Psychology Today*. [Online]

- Available: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-science-behind-behavior/201604/the-little-known-downsides-mindfulness-practice> (March 10 2017)
- Ekinci, Y. (2015). *Designing research questionnaires for business and management students*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Farh, C. I. C. C., Seo, M., & Tesluk, P. E. (2012). Emotional Intelligence, Teamwork Effectiveness, and Job Performance: The Moderating Role of Job Context. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 97(4), 890-900.
- Flaherty, D. (2016). How to retain great employees. *Nation's Restaurant News*, 50(15), 84.
- Flick, U. (2014). *An introduction to qualitative research* (5th ed.). Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.
- Fritz, C., Ellis, A. M., Demsky, C. A., Lin, B. C., & Guros, F. (2013). Embracing work breaks: Recovering from work stress. *Organizational Dynamics*, 42(4), 274-280.
- Gordon, W. V., Shonin, E., Zangenah, M., & Griffiths, M. D. (2014). Work-Related Mental Health and Job Performance: Can Mindfulness Help? *Int J Ment Health Addiction*, 12(2), 129-137.
- Gray, D. E. (2013). *Doing research in the real world* (3rd ed.). London: SAGE Publications.
- Growth Business. (2015). How the break room can help you to solve the productivity puzzle. [Online] Available: <http://www.growthbusiness.co.uk/how-the-break-room-can-help-you-to-solve-the-productivity-puzzle-2499131/> (April 23 2017)
- Hafenbrack, A. C. (2017). Mindfulness Meditation as an On-The-Spot Workplace Intervention. *Journal of Business Research*, 75, 118-129.
- Harrington, A. & Dunne, J. D. (2014). When Mindfulness Is Therapy. *American Psychologist*, 70(7), 621-631.
- Health and Safety Executive. (2016). Work related stress, anxiety and depression statistics in Great Britain 2016. *Health and Safety Executive*.
- Hulsheger, U. R., Alberts, H. J. E. M., Feinholdt, A., & Lang, J. W. B. (2013). Benefits of Mindfulness at Work: The Role of Mindfulness in Emotional Regulation, Emotional Exhaustion, and Job Satisfaction. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 98(2), 310-325.
- Huffington, A. (2015). The Huffington Post. *ReWork: Rethinking Work and Well-being*. [Online] Available: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/arianna-huffington/rework-rethinking-work-and-well-being-_b_6097036.html (April 4 2017)
- Kabat-Zinn, J. (1994). *Wherever you go, there you are: Mindfulness meditation in everyday life*. New York: Hyperion.
- Kabat-Zinn, J. (2015). Mindfulness. *Mindfulness*, 6, 1481-1483.
- King, E. & Haar, J. M. (2017). Mindfulness and job performance: a study of Australian leaders. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources*, 35(1).
- Krajewski, J., Sauerland, M., & Wieland, R. (2011). Relaxation-induced cortisol changes within lunch breaks - an experimental longitudinal worksite field study. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 84(2), 382-394.
- Krajewski, J., Wieland, R., & Sauerland, M. (2010). Regulating Strain States by Using the Recovery Potential of Lunch Breaks. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 15(2), 131-139.
- Kuhnel, J., Zacher, H., Bloom, J. D., & Bledow, R. (2016). Take a break! Benefits of sleep and short breaks for daily work engagement. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 1-11.
- Langford, G., and Weissenberg, A., (2017) 2018 Travel and Hospitality industry outlook, [Online] Available: <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/us/Documents/consumer-business/us-cb-2018-travel-hospitality-industry-outlook.pdf> (March 19, 2018)
- Leroy, H., Anseel, F., Dimitrova, N. G., & Sels, L. (2013). Mindfulness, authentic functioning, and work engagement: A growth modelling approach. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 82, 238-247.
- Marr, B. (2012). *Key performance indicators: the 75 measures every manager needs to know*. Harlow: Pearson.
- Marx, R. (2015). Accessibility versus Integrity in Secular Mindfulness: A Buddhist Commentary. *Mindfulness*, 6(5), 1153-1160.
- McNeill, P., & Chapman, S. (2005). *Research methods: Textbook* (3rd ed.). New York: Taylor & Francis.
- McNamara, M., Bohle, P., & Quinlan, M. (2011). Precarious employment, working hours, work-life conflict and health in hotel work. *Applied Ergonomics*, 42, 225-232.
- Monteiro, L. M., Musten, R.F., & Compson, J. (2015). Traditional and Contemporary Mindfulness: Finding the Middle Path in the Tangle of Concerns. *Mindfulness*, 6(1), 1-13.
- Moore, M. J. (2015). Buddhism, Mindfulness, and Transformative Politics. *New Political Science*, 38(2), 272-282.
- Mumber, M. (2014). Effect of Mindfulness Training on Mindfulness Level in the Workplace and Patient Safety Culture as a Past of Error Prevention in Radiation Oncology Practice: A Pilot Study. *International Journal of Radiation Oncology, Biology, Physics*, 90(1), 748.
- Passport. (2017). *Full-Service Restaurants in the United Kingdom*. [Online] Available: <http://www.portal.euromonitor.com.lcproxy.shu.ac.uk/portal/analysis/tab> (March 18 2017)

- Petchsawang, P., & Duchon, D. (2012). Workplace spirituality, meditation, and work performance. *Journal of Management, Spirituality & Religion*, 9(2), 189-208.
- Ragone, G. L. (2013). Initiative, risk and long hours key to growth: successful hospitality executives share their secrets to success. *Hotel Management*, 228(6), 6-53.
- Rathi, N. & Lee, K. (2016). Emotional exhaustion and work attitudes: Moderating effect of personality among frontline hospitality employees. *Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality & Tourism*, 15(3), 231-251.
- Rekik, M., Cordeau, J., & Soumis, F. (2010). Implicit shift scheduling with multiple breaks and work stretch duration restrictions. *Journal of Scheduling*, 18(1), 49-75.
- Shiba, K., Nishimoto, M., Sugimoto, M., & Ishikawa, Y. (2015). The Association between Meditation Practice and Job Performance: A Cross-Sectional Study. *PLoS One*, 10(5), 1-13.
- Shonin, E. & Gordon, W. V. (2014). Managers' Experiences of Meditation Awareness Training. *Mindfulness*, 6(4), 889-909. (Feb 21 2017)
- Shonin, E., Gordon, W. V., Dunn, T. J., Singh, N. N., & Griffiths, M. D. (2014). Meditation Awareness Training (MAT) for Work-related Wellbeing and Job Performance: A Randomised Controlled Trial. *Int J Ment Health Addiction*, 12(6), 806-823.
- Sun, L. & Pan, W. (2008). HR practices perceptions, emotional exhaustion, and work outcomes: A conservation-of-resources theory in the Chinese context. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 19(1), 55-74.
- Tan, C. M. (2012). *Search Inside Yourself*. London: Harper Collins.
- Taylor, N. Z. & Millier, P. M. R. (2016). The contribution of mindfulness to predicting burnout in the workplace. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 89, 123-128.
- Taylor, W. C., King, K. E., Shegog, R., Paxton, R. J., Evans-Hudnall, G. L., Rempel, D. M., ... Yancey, A. K. (2013). Booster Breaks in the workplace: participants' perspectives on health-promoting work breaks. *Health Education Research*, 28(3), 414-425.
- Woods, R. H., Johanson, M. M., Sciarini, M. P., & Wood, P. J. (2012). *Managing hospitality human resources* (5th ed.). Lansing, MI: American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute.
- Wright, J. (2015). Mindfulness. *International Encyclopaedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences* (pp. 549-553). Edinburgh: Elsevier Limited.

Appendices

Appendix 1- Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale

Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale						
Instructions: Below is a collection of statements about your everyday experience. Using the 1-6 scale below, please indicate how frequently or infrequently you currently have each experience. Please answer according to what <i>really reflects</i> your experience rather than what you think your experience should be and treat each item separately from every other item. All answers will remain confidential.						
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Almost	Almost	Very	Somewhat	Somewhat	Very	
Never	Always	Frequently	Frequently	Infrequently	Infrequently	
1. I could be experiencing some emotion and not be conscious of it until sometime later.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. I break or spill things because of carelessness, not paying attention, or thinking of something else.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. I find it difficult to stay focused on what's happening in the present.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. I tend to walk quickly to get where I'm going without paying attention to what I experience along the way.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. I tend not to notice feelings of physical tension or discomfort until they really grab my attention.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. I forget a person's name almost as soon as I've been told it for the first time.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. It seems I am 'running on automatic' without much awareness of what I'm doing.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. I rush through activities without being really attentive to them.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. I get so focused on the goal I want to achieve that I lose touch with what I'm doing right now to get there.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. I do jobs or tasks automatically, without being aware of what I'm doing.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. I find myself listening to someone with one ear, doing something else at the same time.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. I find myself preoccupied with the future or the past.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. I find myself doing things without paying attention.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. I snack without being aware that I'm eating.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Appendix 2- Job Performance Levels

Job Performance Level						
Instructions: Below is a collection of key performance indicators (KPIs) relating to a server's job performance levels. Using the 1-6 scale below, please rate how each server performs in relation to each KPI. Please be honest with each rating and treat each item separately from every other item. All answers will remain confidential.						
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Very Poor	Below Expectations	Satisfactory	Good	Above Expectations	Exceptional
Focus	1	2	3	4	5	6
Speed	1	2	3	4	5	6
Efficiency	1	2	3	4	5	6
Teamwork	1	2	3	4	5	6
Friendliness	1	2	3	4	5	6
Attentiveness	1	2	3	4	5	6
Attitude	1	2	3	4	5	6
Leadership	1	2	3	4	5	6
Calmness	1	2	3	4	5	6
Openness	1	2	3	4	5	6

Appendix 3- Work Breaks Questionnaire

Work Break Questionnaire	
1. Sex	
Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Age	
18-21 <input type="checkbox"/> 22-25 <input type="checkbox"/> 26-29 <input type="checkbox"/> 30+ <input type="checkbox"/>	
3. How many hours do you work on average per week?	
0-10 <input type="checkbox"/> 11-20 <input type="checkbox"/> 21-30 <input type="checkbox"/> 31-40 <input type="checkbox"/> 40+ <input type="checkbox"/>	
4. How many hours do you work on average per shift?	
0-4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5-8 <input type="checkbox"/> 9-12 <input type="checkbox"/> 13+ <input type="checkbox"/>	
5. How many minutes do you spend 'breaking' overall on average per shift?	
0 <input type="checkbox"/> 1-15 <input type="checkbox"/> 16-30 <input type="checkbox"/> 31-45 <input type="checkbox"/> 46-60 <input type="checkbox"/> 61+ <input type="checkbox"/>	
6. How many minutes do you spend on average each break?	
0 <input type="checkbox"/> 1-5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6-10 <input type="checkbox"/> 11-15 <input type="checkbox"/> 16-20 <input type="checkbox"/> 21-25 <input type="checkbox"/> 26-30 <input type="checkbox"/>	
31-35 <input type="checkbox"/> 36-40 <input type="checkbox"/> 41-45 <input type="checkbox"/> 46-50 <input type="checkbox"/> 51-55 <input type="checkbox"/> 56-60 <input type="checkbox"/> 61+ <input type="checkbox"/>	
7. Do you prefer to take multiple short breaks or one long break? (Please provide a reason for your choice)	
Multiple short breaks <input type="checkbox"/> One long break <input type="checkbox"/> No Preference <input type="checkbox"/>	
8. Out of the following, what is the main reason for taking a break?	
Eat/Drink <input type="checkbox"/> Smoke <input type="checkbox"/> Socialise <input type="checkbox"/> Electronics (Phones) <input type="checkbox"/>	
Fresh Air <input type="checkbox"/> Listen to Music <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise (Going for a Walk) <input type="checkbox"/> Rest (Sitting Down) <input type="checkbox"/>	
9. Do you feel more relaxed after having a break?	
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
10. Do you think your job performance levels improve after having a break?	
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
11. Have you ever practiced any form of mindfulness meditation?	
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
12. Would you be interested in taking part in a mindfulness meditation program over the space of several weeks to increase your job performance levels?	
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
13. How do you think work breaks can improve for waiters/waitresses in the future?	
.....	
.....	