

# An Investigation of the Mindfulness of Meditation's Effect to Reduce Work-Related Anxiety from a Workload Perspective- a Case of Michelin Star Restaurants

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## Abstract

The author experienced high work-related stress in his workplace during the COVID-19 outbreak, which harmed his work performance and his willingness to work. Because of this experience, this study aims to find out if work-related stress can have a negative effect on employees' efficiency and if mindfulness meditation can be an aid to improve the workers' efficiency. To collect data and information, the author used existing empirical studies as secondary research. The findings and limitations of these researches helped the researcher to gain essential knowledge in this field of study. Later on, these limitations and findings will help the author to compare his findings. Having similar outcomes could make the conclusion of this study more reliable. Using the theories in the literature review section and comparing them to the existing empirical studies showed that many external and internal problems could lead to work-related anxiety. It showed as well that work stress can cause impaired efficiency and a high employee turnover. Studies regarding mindfulness meditation and mindfulness-based stress reduction concluded with positive outcomes, but because of the limitations, they are not reliable. Because of this, the author will conduct his research by having two surveys and between the surveys, there will be a week-long mindfulness meditation classes. If the outcome of this experiment is similar to the beforementioned studies, then this research would be a success.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1 Background Information

One of the first systematic and holistic approaches to the subject of stress was published over 30 years ago. (Cox, 1978). The tract helped to develop a theoretical view of the nature of stress and because of this, researches started to focus on stress and its nature. It presented, among other things, an architecture for formalising our interpretation of stress theory

(Cox et al., 2000). This was based on the presumption that three types of models were essentially in use, which together offered the basis for a research and practise 'industry' that was improving (ibid). After 20 years of this research there were only four major development. First is Karasek's (1979) job Demand-Control theory of stress, then Siegrist's (1996) Effort-Imbalance Control theory. The third one was to develop the theory into practical control to help to reduce the health and safety risks for worker: psychological risk management. The trick here was the

development of a systemic model of work-related stress that describes the broader picture as threats, exposures, and paths to damage in terms of stressors (Cox et al., 2000).

The growth in publications on work-related stress proceeded into the 1990s and early 2000s. Although the number of PsycInfo job stress-related records was 3,385 (0.8 percentage) in the 1980s, in the 1990s it was 6,373 (1.0 percentage) and in the 2000s it was 19,185 (>1.8 percentage) (Väänänen et al., 2014). Väänänen et al. (2014) stated, that „Between the 1970s and the 2000s, the relative share of work stress publications rose from 0.3% to 1.8% in the *American Journal of Epidemiology*, from 0.4% to 5.6% in the *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, from 0.4% to 18.2% in *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, and from 0.4% to 3.2% in the *Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment & Health*.” It is visible that work-related anxiety and stress is a growing problem which needs to be solved.

Health problems and the increasing cost of healthcare is related to organisational stress. A case study focusing on more than 46,000 U.S. employees found that the cost of health care was 46 per cent higher for workers experiencing increased stress levels (Goetzel et al., 1998). Moreover, it is believed, organisational stress has a strong connection with the increase of absenteeism. For example, an estimation from the United States and England says that nearly half of the days where employees did not show up at work is related to stress (Cartwright, et al., 1996; Elkin and Rosch, 1990). Because of absenteeism, companies are losing billions of dollars every year (Cox, Griffiths, and Rial-González, 2000).

A community intervention programme known as mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) has been recommended as a strategy for the past two decades (Kabat-Zinn and Hanh, 2009). This technique has been used by individuals with a wide range of serious psychiatric conditions, as well as by communities of relatively stable people who have hoped to enhance their ability to deal with common but sometimes severe everyday life stress (Grossman, 2004).

### 1.2 Rationale

According to Teper and Inzlicht (2013), in the last decade, research interest in meditation and mindfulness has exploded, sparking study after study finding several beneficial effects of

meditation on mindfulness. It is not shocking that meditation practise has been shown to strengthen executive function (Jha et al., 2007) and to promote self-regulation while considering the basic concepts underlying mindfulness meditation practise, such as present moment consciousness and conscientious acknowledgement of emotional states (Cardaciotto et al., 2008; Brown and Ryan, 2003; Chambers et al., 2008). Although the results of the research experiment show that meditation practise contributes to improved regulation by increasing emotional acceptance, further study is required to understand the link between mindfulness and emotional acceptance (Teper and Inzlicht, 2013), due to the reason that some of the cancer patients accepted easier the circumstances what they are in than the others and they were able to work more efficiently with the researchers. As Teper and Inzlicht (2013) further clarify, they did not use a clear measure of emotional response, it is impossible to tell whether mediators feel sharper attitudinal pangs when making mistakes, resulting in better results, or whether they are more tuned to such twinges. Future research will benefit from discussing this dilemma in greater detail.

According to Kvillemo and Bränström (2011), their study shows that mindfulness meditation reduces some of the stress-based complains among cancer patients, but still require more experiments to implement mindfulness programmes in clinics.

As it is visible, most of the experiments show positive outcomes but because the researchers are uncertain if it is due to the meditation or caused by other conditions, further researches are required. At the same time, there are not enough researches about the positive effect of mindfulness meditation on workers efficiency, it is needed, to find the connection between stress reduction and efficiency improvement.

### 1.3 Aim and Objectives

The aim of this study, to investigate the effect of a stressful workplace on the employees' efficiency and how mindfulness meditation can achieve a positive impact on the workers efficiency and improve their productivity. To conduct this research case studies of Michelin star restaurants are going to be used. To achieve this aim, the following objectives have been set:

- Identify the cause of work-related stress and its impact on employees' perception of work anxiety.

- To assess employees perceptions of mindfulness meditation as an aide to self-control.
- To evaluate the benefits and limitations of mindfulness meditation from employers' perspective.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

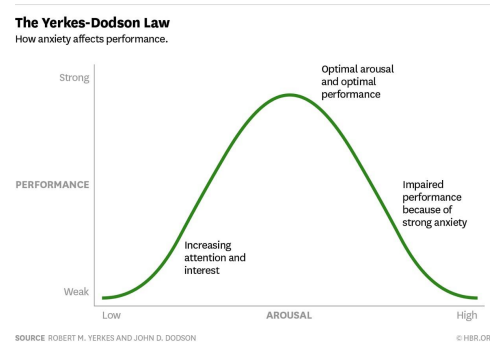
### 2.1 Introduction

In Chapter Two, the unhealthy outcomes of work-related stress will be analysed by introducing Capasso's "Ethnicity and Work-related Stress Model (EWS)" (2016a) and "Indirect Effects of Appraisals over the Relationship between Work Characteristics and Health Outcomes (EWS)" (2016b). Moreover, with the help of Gino's (2017) "Yerkes-Dodson Law; How anxiety affects performance" model, it will be explained how stress can reduce the efficiency of employees. Using Tang et al.'s "The neuroscience of mindfulness meditation" (2015) model, the healthy and positive effect of mindfulness meditation will be explained. In Section 2.3, two kinds of case studies will be shown. The first two case studies in Section 2.3.1 will support the theories behind Capasso's (2016a,b) and Gino's (2017) models. In Section 2.3.2 the two case studies will support Tang et al.'s (2015) theory. In Section 2.4 the researcher explains where will the research be conducted and the reason behind his decision.

### 2.2 Conceptual and Theoretical Background

#### 2.2.1 Anxiety and work performance

Employees efficiency increase under stress, but only to an extent, according to "The Yerkes-Dodson law", when work-related anxiety researches the top of the curve, after if the worker receives more stress, then it is going to have a bad effect on the employees' efficiency and it is going to decrease it (Gino, 2017). The curve's form is determined by the task's sophistication and familiarity. According to studies, different activities need different degrees of arousal for optimal output. For example, complicated or unacquainted tasks necessitate a reduced state of arousal to aid concentration. Tasks requiring stamina or persistence, on the other hand, may benefit from an increased state of stimulation to stimulate and enhance engagement (ibid).



**Figure 1:** Yerkes-Dodson Law; How anxiety affects performance (Gino, 2017)

The definition of activation is credited with bridging the distance between motivational psychology and emotion psychology. It's also been criticised for obfuscating the line between these two disciplines. The groundwork had already been laid by its predecessor, the drive concept, which has been related to emotionality and even anxiety, especially after Taylor (1951) created the Manifest Anxiety Scale to operationalize and quantify Hullian's concept of the generalised drive. As a result, we shouldn't be shocked to see Yerkes-Dodson law reformulations that use the terms panic, apprehension, emotionality, stress, motivation, and arousal interchangeably (Teigen, 1994). In his book on "the psychology of anxiety," for example, Levitt claims that "the Yerkes-Dodson Law holds that the relationship between fear, conceptualised as drive, and learning is curvilinear" (1967, p. 117). He goes on to cite research from Stennett (1957) and Matarazzo, Ullet, and Saslow (1955) on human labyrinth learning as evidence for his point of view. Stennett adjusted his subjects' optimism levels, while Matarazzo et al. had subjects with similar levels of anxiety (as measured by the Taylor Manifest Anxiety Scale). Both discovered U-shaped output features, but Yerkes-Dodson is not mentioned in the original publications (Teigen, 1994).

Similarly, Broadhurst (1959) appeals to the law to understand why neurotic participants (who supposedly have more generalised anxiety as calculated by the Manifest Anxiety Scale) are less affected by the disorder than non-neurotics, but develop much slower when faced with more demanding activities.

As Eysenck defines the Yerkes-Dodson rule as follows: "high levels of arousal, motivation, or anxiety led to improved performance up to a certain level, after which further increases impair

performance' in a recent article titled 'Anxiety and Cognition' (1989, p. 323).

In the present literature on stress, this hypothetical interaction is reiterated. The following quote is reasonably typical: "A little anxiety from time to time can be beneficial to task performance. This is illustrated by the Yerkes-Dodson law which states that performance is improved by anxiety until an optimum level of arousal is reached" (Dobson, 1982, p. 14). In these concepts, the respectful coexistence of motivational and emotional words guides the audience to conclude that concept preference makes little difference. Even so, a delicate shift in product information can be detected. The most fascinating aspect of the curve is the descending, or right-hand, slope, as long as the Yerkes-Dodson rule is understood as a theory of inspiration. It is a cliché to say that motivation boosts performance; but it is not a cliché to say that it can also be counterproductive. The curve's descending section has also proven to be the most difficult to observe empirically (W.P. Brown, 1965; Hochhauser and Fowler, 1975). However, everyone agrees that anxiety (and other emotions) above a certain stage can be non-adaptive and hinder efficiency. So, the left-hand, ascending portion of the curve is what brings attention to this area, meaning that increased stress or emotionality may be advantageous up to a stage (compared with the above quotation). So, the principles of inspiration and emotions maybe still too dissimilar to be protected by the same rule without further debate.

The Yerkes-Dodson law has been linked to phenomena as diverse as personality characteristics and the influence of neurological stimulants due to the many-sidedness of the arousal principle. The law has been used to account for theoretical perspectives in cognitive function by introverts and extroverts during tight deadlines (Revelle, Amaral, and Turriff, 1976), with various noise circumstances (Geen, 1984; Matthews, 1985), and at different periods of the day (Matthews, 1985), and also by impulsive participants operating under the effect of caffeine (Matthews, 1985). (Anderson and Revelle, 1983; Anderson, Revelle and Lynch, 1989).

### *2.2.2 Anxiety: an ethnicity and work stress perspective*

The EWS model is analysing the importance of significant personality differences in shaping the potential health consequence and at the same time, it measures that as well, how different point of view of stress can harm the mental well-being

of employees. It was proposed, as a possible paradigm for research using a multilevel model of stress which considered the differences in races and ethnicities and how different cultures cope with work-related anxiety. It also looks at the links between personality distinctions, cultural aspects, job characteristics, appraisals, and health effects in a group of staff from various ethnic backgrounds (Figures 1 and 2) (Capasso et al., 2018a). Standard work stress variables from the Demand-Control-Support (DCS) (Karasek, 1985) and Effort-Reward Imbalance (ERI) (Siegrist, 1996) models are used in this model. Specific variations in coping patterns and personality traits, as well as cultural variables like acclimatisation and ethnic origin, can be seen as demographic characteristics, individual disparities, or possible causes of health risk factor. Furthermore, the three factors of presumed work satisfaction perceived work overload and perceived racial inequality were proposed as possible mediators in the possible outcomes of the health reports for each employee (ibid).

The EWS model shows how the association of psychosocial and human factors can affect workplace health in various groups of workers of different ethnicities, as well as the key role race, job traits, and behavioural characteristics play in this multidimensional perspective (Capasso et al., 2018a).

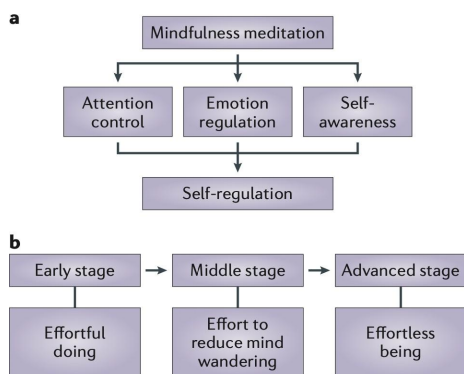
The EWS analyses, which were based on chosen core concepts from the DRIVE model, reinforced the model's multidimensional conceptualisation, demonstrating that all of the variables involved, including IDs, job attributes, and evaluations, have a significant impact on the quality of the employees' health. (Capasso et al., 2018b). As a result, the objective coping method acted as a preventive mechanism, decreasing the likelihood of all forms of health problems. Besides, intrinsic and extrinsic benefits were linked to a reduced risk of interpersonal problems, impaired general health, and perceived career satisfaction. On the other side, a higher incidence of all health conditions was related to a perception of high work pressures, and a higher risk of experiencing anxious-depressive disorders was linked to a perception of high perceived workplace stress. Furthermore, EWS suggested the Type A personality behavioural trait as being correlated with a greater risk of anxious-depressive conditions and impaired general wellbeing, as well as the integration of race parameters, after testing the key consequences of these independent variables. In terms of ethnicity,

affirmation culture, search identity/adoption of the host culture, and alleged racial prejudice, in the addition of ethnicity variables identified several important associations (Capasso et al., 2018a).

### 2.2.3 The neuroscience of mindfulness meditation

Buddhist meditation practises like Vipassana meditation, Dzogchen meditation, and Zen meditation, as well as mindfulness-related techniques like integrative body-mind training (IBMT), mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR), and clinical therapies based on MBSR, have become the subject of neuroscientific research. Both MBSR and IBMT have adopted Buddhist mindfulness practises and use a range of techniques to foster non-judgmental awareness in the present moment. IBMT is categorised as open-monitoring mindfulness therapy in the literature, whereas MBSR incorporates both deep focus and open-monitoring activities.

Mindfulness meditation is thought to have at least three components that combine to form a mechanism of improved self-regulation: improved attention control, improved emotion regulation, and altered self-awareness (weakened self-referential awareness and increased body awareness) (figure 4, part a). Early, middle (intermediate), and advanced mindfulness meditation are the three approximate levels what a person can reach, each requiring a different amount of focus (figure 4, part b).



**Figure 2:** The neuroscience of mindfulness meditation (Tang et al., 2015)

A variety of cross-sectional experiments have shown that meditation causes changes in brain development and function. While these variations may be training-induced results, a cross-sectional research design prevents causal attribution: it's

likely that meditators' brains already have discrepancies that are due to their engagement in meditation, personality, or temperament. While correlational researchers have sought to determine whether more meditation activity is linked to greater improvements in brain structure or function, such associations cannot confirm that meditation practises induced the improvements because people with these brain features could be more attracted to longer meditation practise.

Recent studies have used longitudinal designs, which evaluate results from one or more populations over time and ideally provide a control condition as well as random assignment to conditions. Longitudinal trials in meditation research are also uncommon. Some of the findings looked at the results of mindfulness meditation for a few days, and others looked at programmes lasting one or three months. Changes in behaviour, brain shape, and function have been discovered in some of these experiments. When all potentially confusing factors are adequately accounted for, the absence of similar improvements in the control group indicates that meditation is the cause of the observed changes (Tang et al., 2015).

### 2.3 Review of existing Empirical Research

How is hospitality work connected to producing anxiety Khuong and Linh (2020) study's target demography includes hotel/restaurant receptionists, low-level managers, middle-level managers, and high-level managers from medium to large hotels and restaurants in Ho Chi Minh City. In the context of the Vietnam hospitality industry, this study's aims were to explore the impact of work-related stressors and individual-related stressors on employee motivation, career progression, and loyalty. To maximize the response rate, an offline self-administrative questionnaire was directly distributed to workers and managers working in medium to large scale hotels and restaurants in Ho Chi Minh City with instructions and detailed contents. There were no missed values reported in the 595 questionnaires distributed, and 595 items were valid for later review, resulting in a 100% successful response rate. The findings suggest that how workers deal with individual-related stressors has a substantial impact on employee engagement, work satisfaction, and loyalty. Workplace stress levels range from

moderate to high. When workers' occupations take a significant amount of time, they may have less time to devote on their everyday lives, resulting in a high degree of workplace stress. As a result, workers will be stressed and anxious daily because they will have little opportunities to do anything other than work. To put it another way, there would be a disconnect between work and personal life, which would have a negative impact on employee motivation, workplace satisfaction, and commitment. Individual-related stressors have minor positive impacts on employee morale and loyalty, while a positive but marginal impact on workplace satisfaction is shown as a function of the effect. The results of this study contrast with those of Blake et al. (1996), who found that work-related stress has a significant negative impact on employee engagement, job satisfaction, and loyalty. The findings' discrepancy may be due to the fact that the hospitality industry employed in the hospitality sector, an unbalanced work-life dynamic is an unavoidable issue. About the fact that improper time allocation creates tension among workers, it is seen as an inevitable puzzle that stress at a low level or under a reasonable constraint can boost employee morale and loyalty. However, since workers are more likely to be fulfilled by intrinsic and extrinsic causes than by stress, a favourable but negligible association between individual-related stressors and work satisfaction is examined (Khuong and Linh, 2020).

While this research may have led to a better understanding of work-related stress, motivation of employees, job satisfaction, and employee loyalty in the hospitality industry, there are a few important shortcomings to be aware of. The information was gathered from several hotel/restaurant companies in Ho Chi Minh City, which is known for its rapid growth in the hospitality industry. To gain a more detailed understanding of the effects of workplace stress on employee morale, work satisfaction, and engagement, future studies should be expanded to include other Hospitality firms in other areas of Vietnam (ibid).

At Mersin University in Turkey, Mustafa Tepeci (2016) conducted a study on the links between employee fatigue, position stress, burnout, and turnover, interviewing 236 hospitality and tourism management students (with prior experience in four- and five-star hotels) on the issues of occupational stress, fatigue, and role stress. The participants agreed that the key prerequisite in the hospitality sector is to always have a smiling attitude and you have to showcase continuous happiness. Employees are frustrated

by excessive smiles and friendliness, as well as exhibiting attentiveness to please visitors. They must put on a fake face, which hides the exhaustion and frustration that the employees are experiencing during working hours, as well as control their emotions by displaying fake ones. Furthermore, in a five-star hotel, the interactions with the guests and the continuous high-level expectations put high pressure on the staff, which can lead to work-related anxiety (Tepeci, 2016). According to the findings of this report, the majority of workers encountered depersonalization, which led to the growth of burnout. Employees suffering from burnout eventually began to think if they should quit their work rather than continue working at their hotel. Tepeci (2016), on the other hand, claims that some of the participants encountered personal successes. The number of students surveyed and the fact that the sample was completed in a single location has limited the accuracy of the report. It makes no note of how much experience these students have, so any conclusions taken could be questionable.

### *2.3.1 Mindfulness-meditation and its positive effect*

Carmody et al. (2009) had adult participants who were enrolled in 17 MBSR courses at the University of Massachusetts Medical School's Center for Mindfulness between September 2006 and July 2007. Illness-related stress, chronic pain, anxiety, and personal and work-related stress were among the issues listed by participants. The Center for Mindfulness's MBSR teacher certification program accredited the class leaders as MBSR teachers. Each class had around 20–25 attendees, half of whom were recommended by their health care provider and half of whom self-referred. Self-pay was required for participation in the program. On the intake questionnaire, all program participants were asked whether their self-report answers could be used for testing purposes as long as they would stay anonymous and their data would not be shared in the research. Three hundred and twenty (68%) of the 473 people who signed up for the service agreed to have their data included, and 309 (97%) of those agreed to submit data both before and after the MBSR were used in the evaluations.

The main aim of this research was to test multiple predictions based on S. L. Shapiro et al. (2006)'s hypothesis of how mindfulness exercise leads to positive results. A significant number of MBSR patients performed pre- and post-treatment measures of related variables. From pre- to post-

intervention, both mindfulness (as calculated by FFMQ dimensions) and reperceiving/decentering (as tested by the EQ) reported substantial changes. Throughout therapy, the four factors suggested as alternative modes of intervention (self-regulation, cognitive, behavioural, and emotional flexibility, beliefs clarification, and exposure) all improved significantly, while symptoms and stress decreased significantly. While mindfulness, reperceiving, and the other four parameters shifted in the expected directions and the rate of change was substantially intercorrelated between all factors, proof for intervention was poor, according to Baron and Kenny's guidelines (Baron and Kenny, 1986). The association between changes in mindfulness and the other four dependent variables was not shown to be mediated by increases in reperceiving. A more logical explanation for their results is that mindfulness and reperceiving (decentering) are strongly conflicting structures that shift as a result of MBSR attendance. Value clarity and improvements in perceptual, mental, and behavioural resilience, on the other hand, were discovered to be slight mediators of the interaction between a combined mindfulness/reperceiving component and mental symptom mitigation (Carmody et al., 2009). The limitations of this research were that the range of Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) is really wide and further studies are required to have a stable proof of the method's effectiveness.

Lal et al. (2019) used 100 students, who were chosen at random using two self-administered examinations. The meditation habitual group (50 students) and the non-meditation habitual group (50 students) had been separated. Students who were aware of the importance of practising meditation for a period of time each day were placed in the meditation habitual community, and those who were not have been placed in the non-meditation habitual group. To numerically explain the relationship between Dispositional Mindfulness and Perceived Stress Level, data had been analysed by using SPSS 20.

This research looked at it and came to the conclusion that students who practised meditation in some way had a lower degree of stress. Students who did not practice any kind of meditation, on the other hand, reported a high level of stress. Based on the results of this report, they were able to conclude that mindfulness, in any form, helps in stress reduction. In college students, mindfulness therapy has shown potential in reducing stress and anxiety.

According to Lal et al. (2019) findings, meditation exercises will help to reduce the negative aspects of psychological stress. When compared to non-specific controls, mindfulness therapy programs display modest changes in anxiety, depression, and pain with moderate evidence and small improvements in stress/distress and the mental health aspects of health-related quality of life with low evidence.

The research's limitations include limited sample size, a short study length for generalisability, and larger sample size with a diverse socio-demographic history that is required to be able to showcase stable evidence of the effectiveness of the mindfulness meditation. In addition to subjective self-report indices of perceived stress and burnout. Future studies should provide quantitative indicators of physiological stress which would give a better insight and provide a better understanding of the things that are happening during the experiment (Lal et al. 2019).

#### *2.4 Background to the primary research context*

This research paper's main goal is to identify the negative effect of work-related anxiety on employee's efficiency and find out if weekly mindfulness-meditation courses could have a positive impact on the worker's efficiency and if it has the actual stress reduction effect.

Stress is a vital factor to consider in any industry, but it is seldom discussed. This is one thing that is present in everyone's life, but no one takes it seriously or discusses it because it is so normal. When people visit a fine dining restaurant, they love and admire the service and delicacies they get, but no one understands or acknowledges how much tension the staff working there have to endure to please them (Johri, 2014). To understand how much stress can be on these employees surveys have been already done. Understanding the importance of this issue, many models were made to showcase the negative impact of stress and case studies are supporting the hypothesis of the stress' efficiency reducing effect. The researcher decided by the Michelin star restaurants, due to the reason, that it is believed that these kinds of diners put more pressure on their employees because of their standards. The other reason is the authors own experience working in a Michelin star restaurant.

There is a significant distinction between a regular/casual restaurant and a fine dining establishment. The key ingredient is the same on both sides of the business, the goal is the same as

well. The distinction is in the presentation. Fine dining is more refined and distinct. The essence of fine dining, which distinguishes it from others, is high food quality and extra hospitality. Achieving this level and, most specifically, maintaining it, is challenging. This necessitates a great deal of additional time and attention to details, which will create tension among the owners and workers. This tension is what motivates and keeps restaurant owners and staff working at the beginning, when they are striving to attain that level, because achieving success in something is an exotic feat, but later on, when they have to uphold the same norms converts from motivation to stress and it will raise the work-related anxiety level, which at the end could cause burnout (ibid).

### 2.5 Conclusion

This chapter contained four models. The first three models (Figure 1, Figure 2 and Figure 3) were mentioned in order to showcase how work-related anxiety forms and how does it harm the employees' efficiency and mindset. The last model (Figure 4) provided an insight into the effect of mindfulness meditation and showcased how can it affect self-regulation. The researcher analysed the models and tried to provide enough information so the reader can have a better understanding of this research.

The "Review of existing Empirical Research" section was divided into two sections. One of the sections looked into work-related stress cases in hospitality. This part showcased that stress is always present in hospitality and the major part of hospitality workers experience a drop in their efficiency, due to stress. Because of this, even the possibility of burn out is raising. The second part examined the mindfulness-based stress reduction programmes and the outcomes of those. The results were the same in both cases, which is a visible drop in stress level. Even though these outcomes, the limitations of these case studies showed, these are not precise results and further investigations and researches are needed. In conclusion, positive results in numerous surveys and questionnaires about the hypotheses described in the models demonstrated the validity of those theories and proved their truth. But as already mentioned more investigations are needed. To fulfil this need, the researcher decided to choose Michelin star restaurant, due to the reason that the employees of this establishments are under high pressure and have long working hours. These kinds of environments would be perfect to conduct this research because it would

be more measurable if the experience of MBSR succeeded or not.

## Chapter 3: Methodology

### 3.1 Research aim and objectives

The aim of this study, to investigate the effect of a stressful workplace on the employees' efficiency and how mindfulness meditation can achieve a positive impact on the workers efficiency and improve their productivity. To conduct this research case studies of Michelin star restaurants are going to be used. To achieve this aim, the following objectives have been set:

- Identify the cause of work-related stress and its impact on employees' perception of work anxiety
- To assess employees perceptions of mindfulness meditation as an aide to self-control.
- To evaluate the benefits and limitations of mindfulness meditation from employers' perspective.

For the purpose of achieving the aim of this study, the following hypotheses were set:

#### *Hypotheses 1:*

H0: There is nothing in a workplace what can cause work-related stress

H1: Work-related stress can be caused by work overload

H2: Work-related stress can be caused by high performance standards

#### *Hypotheses 2:*

H0: Work-related anxiety cannot cause impaired performance

H1: Work-related anxiety leads to depression which affects the performance

H2: Work-related anxiety leads to impaired attention which affects performance

#### *Hypotheses 3:*

H0: Mindfulness meditation cannot improve employees efficiency

H1: Mindfulness meditation decreases stress which leads to improved efficiency

H2: Mindfulness meditation improves attention control which leads to improved efficiency



### 3.2 *The research approach*

The goal of this research is to look at how mindfulness meditation can decrease work-related anxiety and increase employees' efficiency. In order to reach this goal, the author needs to use quantitative approach to collect and analyse the collected data. This kind of data will be used to create raw data graphs and tables.

On the other side qualitative research is multimethod in nature and takes an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject. This means qualitative scholars investigate phenomena in their natural contexts, trying to understand or perceive phenomena in terms of the meanings people assign to them (Denzin and Lincoln 1994, p 2. cited in McLeod, 2019).

There would be various drawbacks if a small number of volunteers participated in a qualitative analysis sample, such as the conclusion's unreliability, which could be objectively accurate and applicable with most citizens worldwide (ibid). Besides that, the qualitative analysis focused on delving further into specific behaviours and attempting to comprehend the subjects' experiences and why they acted the way they did. This kind of research method would not be efficient in the case of this study, because the goal of this paper is not to identify and understand stress, but rather to analyse the mindfulness meditation's positive effect on employees.

As it is visible in the "Empirical Research" section, nearly all of the studies were conducted in quantitative means. The explanation for this is the significant and convincing detail found in surveys or questionnaires identifying the participants in terms of their age, ethnicity, job activities, and family history, as well as assessing the personality traits of some Michelin star restaurants employees. Furthermore, in order to fully investigate this subject and analyse, define, and test the links between mindfulness meditation's stress reduction and performance enhancement, the researcher must first develop hypotheses from existing theories and demonstrate their universal truth, which can only be done with a wide range of questionnaires (ibid).

In the case of this study, the author has chosen the quantitative approach to be able to show and analyse the changes in the mindset and the reduction in the stress level of the employees. At the same time, it will make the author's task easier

when it comes to the measurement of changes and it will be more visible on the graphs how much the level of stress dropped and how much did that increase the workers' efficiency and concentration level. If this research will be able to show that work-related anxiety decreases the employees' efficiency level, but mindfulness meditation helps to improve it, then maybe in the future more restaurants and hotels are going to include weekly mindfulness meditation sessions in the employees' schedule.

### 3.3 *Sampling*

Random sampling was used for this paper's sampling, and to be more specific, the writer used stratified random sampling to make the study more accurate. According to Taherdoost (2016), stratified random sampling occurs where a population is separated into subgroups and random data is gathered from each group. The only flaws in this method of sampling, according to Malhotra and Birks (2006, cited in Taherdoost, 2016) is the challenge of trade-off between a simple stratification and one that tries to cover too many strata, as the complexity increases and limits effective sampling. However, since it contains all of the essential subpopulations required for an inquiry and careful interpretation of the findings, this approach has the advantage of being accurate. Given that this study employs a quantitative methodology, the aim is to recruit a sufficient number of individuals to participate in the survey. According to Taherdoost's (2016) calculations, the goal number is about 110 waiters in Michelin star restaurants. If we have a community of 150 people, the optimal group size would be 108 to achieve a 95 percent of confidence level- This number is not that big, because most of the countries do not have many Michelin star restaurants, so it would be challenging to collect a big number of employees who are willing to take part in the research. This study requires two surveys and at least a week-long of mindfulness meditation sessions so it would be impossible to conduct this with a big group at the same location. After sending the questionnaires to multiple Michelin star restaurants, the waiters who are able to engage in this analysis and suit into the categorisation will be selected at random. This has the advantage of keeping the research objective. It is essential in this case because there are multiple phenomena in an individual's life that could affect the person's stress level and how he or she handles it. Because of this all of the individuals have the same chance to take part in the study which will increase the possibility of the success of this

research. In this case, the author will not have any possibility to meet the participants before the study, because he needs to ask for the human resource manager permission to conduct this study with their employees. If the managers agree they will forward the information about the possibility to take place in this study to the employees, so the study will remain completely objective. The demography of the participants is random. The author will try to have the same number of women and men, with a wide range of age groups. The ideal numbers would be 30 percent of interns while the rest 70 percent will be full-time employees. This is because the full-timers have a different kind of stress. They already got used to the everyday stress and problematic guests are not a big problem for them to deal with, but work-related anxiety is still present in their life. The interns would show a different kind of data, due to the reason that they are in a new environment and they are not used to it. They have to concentrate on tasks that are just everyday routine for the full-timers. They still take it to the heart if guests are shouting at them, and they are afraid of having a complicated situation that they have to solve alone. This wide range of experience in this study would help to gain more precise data about the effect of MBSR.

### *3.4 Data collection*

The research will have three parts when it is conducted. The first will be a survey. The second part is really important, because it is a quasi-experiment where the hypotheses will be tested out. It will be more precise in this research than a normal experiment, because in the quasi-experiment, the quasi-part means "resembling", which means that it is mimicking a normal one, but corrects some of the flaws. As a result, the quasi-experimental study is a research that similar to experimental research but in reality, it is not a real experimental study. Participants are not arbitrarily allocated to situations or orders of circumstances, despite the fact that the independent variable is manipulated (Cook, Campbell and Day, 1979). The directionality problem is eliminated in quasi-experimental experiments when the independent variable is controlled before the dependent variable is evaluated (Jhangiani et al., 2019).

In order to be able to collect data, emails are going to be sent out to the human resource managers of different Michelin star restaurants to ask for appointments with them, so the author can explain everything. This is necessary because

the research is not only conducted by surveys but it needs practical sessions as well and, in a face, to face meeting the author would be able to explain everything better than in an email and would be able to answer the questions more precisely. This would raise the chance of agreement. After the meetings, the first survey would be sent out by the human resource departments, which will require the participants to answer questions focusing on how stressed are they at their workplace, what is the source of the stress and how much does it affect their concentration and efficiency. After this, a week-long daily one hour of mindfulness meditation classes would take place, which would not affect the restaurants opening hours. At the end of the week, there would be the second survey which would focus on how high is their stress level after taking the sessions, did they notice if their efficiency got better, do they feel more eased to come and work.

### *3.5 Data Analysis*

According to Kumar (2018), data analysis is utilised to convert the data which was gathered during the research into useful information, which would be used, to review the suggested hypotheses. Quantitative research can be divided into two groups, which are inferential and descriptive. Inferential statistics are extending the researcher's conclusion and by doing that it is generalising it. Descriptive statistics are just describing what happened with the data (Trochim, Donnelly, and Arora, 2016).

The author of this paper chose Inferential statistics. After collecting data in a highly competitive and stressful environment and the hypotheses worked, the author wants to generalise that if it worked in a high-stress environment, it should work in a less stressful one as well.

### *3.6 Validity*

According to Cope (2014), the validity of a study shows how reliable the study is. In quantitative research, it shows to what extent is it accurate to measure (Heale and Twycross, 2015). To ensure validity and reliability, the author must clearly define the study's "metrics, bounds, and constraints" to minimise bias (Marshall and Rossman, 2006). Quantitative research has three categories that the author must address. The first type of validity is content validity. This category considers if the tool appropriately provides all of the material that should be covered in relation to the variable. The second point to consider is

construct validity. It relates to a conclusion that can or cannot be drawn about test scores based on the idea being investigated. The last is criterion validity. Any tool that assesses the same factor is referred to be a criterion. Connections may be used to assess how well multiple tools evaluate the same phenomenon (Heale and Twycross, 2015).

### *3.7 Objectivity*

Objectivity is essential for credible research since an objective study will not contain the bias and feelings of the author (Miles and Huberman, 1994), so the outcome of the paper will be more reliable.

Since the study will be conducted all around Europe, the author cannot be there during the meditation sessions which are led by professionals and the surveys will be filled out online, so the writer will only receive and study the data without having prejudice. The paper will be monitored by another researcher before publication which will make it more objective and by having a similar outcome that researchers had before would further prove the conformality of the research.

### *3.8 Reliability*

Reliability shows if the research is consistent and if the errors are low, and by doing that, it will show the quality of the research tool (Muijs, 2004). Muijs (2004) proposed that in order to decrease statistical sampling errors, survey questions be asked in a straightforward, obvious, and comprehensible manner for questionnaires and that recurring measures be used to eliminate the possibility of misunderstandings. In order to achieve reliable research, the author will ask straightforward questions in the survey. The surveys are going to be translated since they are going to be filled out by different nationalities. By doing that the researcher will avoid problems such as the language barrier.

### *3.9 Generalisability*

According to Rossman and Marshall (2014), generalisability means that the findings of the study can be applied to other researches and the outcomes can be used in other fields. Since this study is based on work-related anxiety and how it can be lowered by mindfulness meditation, the study could easily be applied in other fields. This study is using a quantitative approach, and

because of this, the outcomes should be straightforward and easily repeatable. If the time for meditation sessions proves to be enough and well fitted for a busy Michelin star restaurant, then other businesses or fields of life could adapt to it as well. As well previous studies were conducted in a different situation which is visible in the literature review section and this shows how good the transferability of this study is.

### *3.10 Ethical issues*

Many facets of the research process are influenced by ethical issues, which aid researchers in determining whether an area of study is ethically appropriate. Similarly, ethical issues must be considered by the academic sector, educational agencies, support agencies, ethics committees, and the larger population and society. The moral support and green light provided to the study by experts, the scientific community, and society would be determined by the conclusions derived from those factors (Behi and Nolan, 1995). As a researcher, you must provide an application to the institutional review board that includes protocols and participant information so that the committee can assess the degree to which your thesis puts participants at risk. After this request, before participants start to provide data to the researcher, they must sign an informed consent form agreeing to the study's terms. This type includes a standard collection of elements that acknowledge humanitarian security (Creswell, 2014). According to Sarantakos (2005, cited in Creswell, 2014), these needs to contain the followings: "identification of researcher, identification of the sponsoring institution, identification of the purpose of the study, identification of the benefits for participating, identification of the level and type participant involvement, the notion of risk to the participant, the guarantee of confidentiality to the participant, assurance that the participant can withdraw at any time and provision of names of persons to contact if questions arise."

### *3.11 Limitations*

There is no such thing as perfect research since it is nearly impossible to cover everything and fill out all the gaps. Even though studies conducted by surveys can have a lot of participants, the response rate is usually low (Kumar, 2018). Since this study is not only conducted by surveys, but it is using a semi-quasi method, the risk of low or non-participation is high. Getting a positive response from Michelin star restaurants is low. Even if they accept it, covid restrictions could

influence the outcome of the study. According to Lal et al. (2019), the sample size and short study length for generalisability could be a limitation as well the participant's self-report indices of perceived stress and burnout could alter the outcome.

The possible poor translation of surveys could lead to misunderstandings. False answers would misinform the author during the data analyses and could sabotage the study.

## **Chapter 4: Discussion**

### *4.1 Introduction*

The upcoming section will be centred on the three objectives, providing a relevant and informative discussion about the effect of a stressful workplace on the employees' efficiency and how mindfulness meditation can achieve a positive impact on the employees' efficiency and improve their productivity. As a result, it will give better knowledge and various relationships between the previously stated aspects. The previously mentioned aspects have revealed a link between work-related stress and the decrease of efficiency among employees (Gino, 2017). In relation to this Tang et al. (2015) found out that mindfulness meditation could have a positive effect on work performance which could help employers to improve the company's success rate as well to decrease employee burnout and turnover. Nevertheless, the researcher was startled by the small number of previous studies that focused on the detrimental effects of work-related stress on employee performance, as well as the paucity of study on MBSR's efficiency enhancement potential. As a result, the author lacks previously completed empirical study, because of this the following aims will be presented using the results of the literature review.

### *4.2 Identify the cause of work-related stress and its impact on employees' perception of work anxiety*

The EWS model examines the significance of major personality variations in determining possible health consequences, as well as how differing perspectives on stress might affect employees' mental well-being. It was presented as a viable paradigm for study utilising a multilevel model of stress that took into account racial and ethnic variations, as well as how various cultures cope with work-related anxiety. It also investigates the relationships between personality differences, cultural features, work qualities,

appraisals, and health consequences in a diverse population of employees (Figures 1 and 2) (Capasso et al., 2018a).

According to Johri (2014), work-related stress is what keeps the owners and staff motivated at the beginning since they all strive for succession and to achieve new levels, but after they realise that they have to keep up the same high level what they reached this motivating stress will start to become hindering stress what later on will cause burnout. To be able to identify the answer for the question, the survey will ask the participants to describe what does work anxiety mean to them and if they can name the cause of it.

To assess employees' perceptions of mindfulness meditation as an aid to self-control. Tang et al. (2015) assess that mindfulness meditation combines three components to improve self-regulation, and these three are improved attention control, improved emotion regulation, and altered self-awareness (figure 4, part a). Describing this model and theory for the participants can help them believe in this method as an aid. Lal et al. (2019) used 100 students who were chosen at random using two self-administered examinations. They were distributed into two groups. One of the groups was practising MBSR and the other did not. At the end of the study, Lal et al. (2019) concluded that those who practised it during the exam period experienced a lower stress level than those who did not practice MBSR. Carmody et al. (2009) conducted a similar study with the same results.

Explaining experiments and theories to the participants would be required at the beginning of the study so they will have a deeper understanding of the topic. After the explanation, they would be asked in the first survey if they think mindfulness meditation could be an aid for them. In the second survey after the meditation classes, the same question will be asked to have a clear answer for the employees' perception of mindfulness meditation.

### *4.3 To evaluate the benefits and limitations of mindfulness meditation from employers' perspective*

Employees' efficiency increases under stress, but only to a certain extent, according to "The Yerkes-Dodson law" when work-related anxiety reaches the top of the curve, after which if the worker receives more stress, it will have a negative effect on the employees' efficiency and will decrease it (Gino, 2017). Furthermore, it is considered that organisational stress is strongly

linked to an increase in absenteeism. According to estimates from the United States and England, approximately half of the days when employees do not show up for work are due to stress (Cartwright, et al., 1996; Elkin and Rosch, 1990). Companies lose billions of dollars each year as a result of absenteeism (Cox, Griffiths, and Rial-González, 2000). Explaining these findings to the employers could open up their eyes and could make them realise that this could be a problem in the future if it not already is. After the experiment, the author will contact the restaurants to talk with the employers. During this meeting, they will be asked if they experienced any positive changes in the employees' efficiency and would they consider using mindfulness meditation in the future. This would help the author to have the answer for this objective.

#### *4.4 Conclusion*

To conclude everything above it is visible that conducting the experiment would likely give an answer to the three hypotheses mentioned in the methodology section. If the hypotheses will be proved, the research can be identified as a success and hopefully it will be put into practice by companies all around the world.

## **Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations**

### *5.1 Conclusion*

In Michelin star restaurants the employees who work full-time put in more than 12 hours every day to meet the high standards that Michelin star restaurants require from them. Given the high number of hours worked every day, we may conclude that life there is likely to be exhausting, since they spend nearly a half-day there, which can as well cause work-related anxiety. Most of their day is spent in the restaurant, where they strive for perfection and to meet their work requirements (Johri, 2014). The workers admitted it as well, that based on their previous experiences, working in a Michelin star restaurant is more stressful than working in a normal one.

Based on the Turkish and Vietnamese study, those employees, who work directly with the guests, experience more stress and anxiety on a daily basis and because of this, their work efficiency can decrease while the turnover rate can increase rapidly. The most challenging aspect for workers is that they are needed and forced to conceal their true feelings from the customers in

order to give them proper and excellent service (Tepeci, 2016).

Even though the previously mentioned studies show that front line workers experience more stress and anxiety, it could be lower by mindfulness meditation. This conclusion can be based on Carmody et al.'s (2019) and Lal et al.'s (2019) study. Their studies were based on students, and they had some limitations, it still showed an improvement in mental well-being and efficiency. Based on these findings, we could say the mindfulness meditation and MBSR methods can improve Michelin star restaurants' employees' well-being and efficiency, but further studies, are still required in the hospitality field. To conclude everything above, work-related anxiety has a negative effect on employees efficiency and well-being. Even though stress can have a positive impact on the workers' efficiency at the beginning, after a point, it will drastically decrease it as it is visible on the "Yerkes-Dodson Law" model. Due to this reason, hotels and restaurants suffer from revenue loss and reputation decrease. Ayşegül (2018) argues that a negative incident involving an overwhelmed employee will harm a hotel's or restaurant's credibility. As a result, the staff of Michelin star restaurants must receive more attention from the managers. They should receive MBSR sessions as well, so their health would not be at risk, and the restaurants will not suffer from the negative consequences of having stressed-out employees.

The author was still not able to find clear answers for the objectives since to be able to find those the surveys need to be filled out. As it is described in the discussion chapter the answers are mostly generalised but to understand the problems and how the mindfulness meditation sessions would help the participants the experiment needs to be conducted. The methods, limitations, generalisation, validity and objectivity are analysed in the methodology section. Concluding those findings says that this study can be easily generalised and it has the potential to be strongly trustworthy. If this study is going to be a success, then MBSR could not only help the hospitality industry but could improve most of the industries in the world.

### *5.2 Recommendations*

The study will be conducted in smaller groups and in a short period of time. To have a clear conclusion, bigger groups and a longer time period would be better. Placing the participants in an isolated space, for the time being, could help

avoid external influences and could show a more precise outcome.

The author would advise the Michelin star restaurants and other companies in the hospitality industry to implement mindfulness meditation. By doing this, higher customer satisfaction and lower work-related anxiety rate would be noticeable. Employees could do it by themselves at home as well, in order to decrease the potential health risks. Improving their efficiency could help them succeed in their career which would lead to a better and more relaxed life.

In addition, this study could be conducted in other industries as well since these theories are not limited to the hospitality industry.

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