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Influences of night shifts on employee's mental health in hospitality

Bachelor Thesis for Obtaining the Degree

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in

Tourism and Hospitality Management

Submitted to Eva-Aileen Jungwirth-Edelmann, MA

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Affidavit

I hereby affirm that this Bachelor Thesis Proposal represents my own written work and that I have used no sources and aids other than those indicated. All passages quoted from publications or paraphrased from these sources are properly cited andattributed.

The thesis was not submitted in the same or in a substantially similar version, not even partially, to another examination board and was not published elsewhere.

Date: 20th May 2023

Abstract

Topic: The influence of working night shift in hospitality on employee's mental health

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Content:
The hospitality industry, known for its high-stress levels serves as an important context to understand the deeper connection between mental health and employee wellbeing. With rising demands and the implementation of shift work, employees in hospitality are facing additional challenges impacting them both physically and mentally. The motivation for this thesis arises from the increasing global prevalence of mental health issues which can be caused by life altering events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, wars, as well as daily experiences such as unhealthy relationships or a stressful work environment.

The main aim of this thesis is to critically analyze the impacts of different working hours on employee mental health, with a specific focus on night shifts. A mixed approach was chosen in order to obtain data from both the perspective of the managers and that of the employees. Whereby, the viewpoint of employees was collected through quantitative data using surveys, on the other hand in-depth interviews were conducted with human resources managers to examine the situation from the position of management.

Throughout the course of this research, a few findings have been identified. Due to disruptions to internal biological clock, shift workers are affected psychologically and biologically. Sleep disturbance, excessive daytime sleepiness and exhaustion result due to an irregular life routine, hindering employees work performance. Social isolation occurs due to an unbalanced work-life, putting employees at high risk of developing mental health issues such as anxiety and depression. However, as the HR managers are highly impactful, a healthy work environment and the implementation of wellness programs is necessary in order to manage the wellbeing of employees.

Supervisor: Eva Aileen Jungwirth-Edelmann, MA

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1   Introduction

The following chapter presents the motivation and interest for the conducted research. Moreover, the reader will obtain a thorough insight into the main aim, secondary aims, the developed research questions, and hypothesis. Finally, the researcher has defined and examined the limitations of this thesis.

1.1   Motivation and cognitive interest

Mental health is becoming an increasingly large problem across the whole world (World Health Organization: WHO, 2019). As an individual goes through life, there are many negative experiences they could face which may leave a harmful effect on them. A major example of such an experience which left many of the population under mental and emotional distress is the global pandemic as a result of Covid 19. With strict regulations and several lockdowns being in place, individuals were unable to live their daily lives as normal. As the population was constantly overwhelmed with feelings of worry and anxiousness whilst simultaneously being unable to see friends and family, emotions consumed people and the psychological impacts began to take place (Talevi et al., 2020). Apart from the pandemic, several life altering events such as wars, leave a large impact on people. The trauma that people are left with during and post war, results in various stress disorders which have very negative long-term consequences (McFarlane, 2015). Many mental conditions arise from life circumstances and are uncontrollable, as can be seen by statistics on substance abuse and suicide rates which have been steadily increasing (World Health Organization: WHO, 2019).

Despite, large life altering events being one of the causes of mental health conditions, day to day experiences such as an unhealthy relationship or a bad work environment, could also be the cause of mental disorders. One's everyday surroundings play a big role in the state and well-being of an individual. Therefore, particularly in areas such as one's workplace, it is essential for employee's mental health to be taken care of. One industry specifically which is known to involve high stress levels is the hospitality industry in which one is faced with high demands, different customer expectations and a busy environment (Zhang et al., 2020). Therefore, analyzing the connection

between mental health and the employees working in such an industry is essential to raise awareness to the topic and understand the problems affecting these workers.

The relevance of observing the mental health impacts of working in hospitality has grown as the economic market relies very heavily on this industry to continue its development. Rising demands, however, have introduced a prevalence of shift work to provide 24-hour service, which has only added to the challenge employees face when working in this sector. Possible consequences resulting from shift work include a disrupted cycle of the internal biological clock, increased substance use, sleeping problems, and mental health disorders (Martins et al., 2021). The Royal Society for Public Health conducted a recent study in 2019 that explored the mental health levels of workers in the hospitality sector. Results indicated that 69% of workers have experienced anxiety and 50% had experienced depression (Stennett, 2020). Many of those suffering from mental health issues, however, remain undiagnosed which could worsen the long-term impacts (Stennett, 2020). This indicates the importance of addressing this issue to prevent future incidents.

1.2   Outline of the thesis: Main aim, secondary aims, and research questions

The main aim of the thesis is to critically analyze the consequences of different working hours on the mental health of employees in the hospitality industry. More specifically, the challenges of working night shift and the mental health issues which occur as a result of this will be evaluated.

Based on the research topic, the following secondary aims have been established:

- Defining and outlining the concept of health i.e. mental health, focusing specifically on the causes of different mental health issues and which challenges persons with these issues face on daily basis, will lay the foundation of this thesis.
- A definition of both Human Resources Management and employee-wellbeing is given to allow comparison of mental health issues at the workplace and the role of HR managers regarding the wellbeing of their employees. Moreover,

the actions taken by Human resources managers pertaining to mental health issues and employee programs created to combat existing problems will be analyzed.

- A clear understanding of working shifts must be gained for the researcher to be able to identify the challenges and effects of different working hours. Additionally, through analyzing various working shift models, the psychological and biological impacts of night shift on employees will be examined.

Both the aim and secondary aims narrow the focus of the study onto two main research questions:

- How can mental health be defined and what challenges do people go through when dealing with a mental illness?
- What could be done by HR managers in the hospitality industry to support the wellbeing of their employees?
- What psychological and biological factors are employees impacted by when being scheduled on night shift?

1.3 Limitations

Several limitations must be taken into account when collecting the necessary data for the purposes of this research. One main issue which heavily impacts the results acquired is the time constraint set for this research. As this study is being written to attain completion of a bachelor's degree, the deadline for the thesis is therefore set to the final date of the course. Meaning, the researcher is bound to a limited time frame available for collecting and analyzing the necessary results which could impact the research.

Furthermore, as both a survey will be sent out and interviews will be conducted to obtain the desired results, each method presents its limitations. Regarding the surveys and questionnaires which will be sent out for employees in various hotels to complete, not every employee will agree to participate which therefore leads to a smaller set of final results. Additionally, many companies which schedule employees on night shift, tend to only have a few employees working this shift on rotation. Therefore, it may

be difficult to collect a range of different perspectives from one particular company. Moreover, as only two in-person interviews will be conducted with HR managers, an opinion bias may be produced as not many viewpoints will be taken into account. The opinion of the HR managers will also be influenced by the size of the company they are working for and the number of employees they have who take on this shift.

2 Literature Review

The objective of this literature review is to define the term mental health by observing several mental illnesses. Furthermore, an understanding of the Human resources management team and how it supports employee's wellbeing will be highlighted. Lastly, a large focus will be placed on shift work to explain the impacts of different working shifts.

2.1 Mental Health

Despite the concept of mental health appearing increasingly common among modern society, the problem had already existed for a long period of time. The term Mental health is typically defined as the condition of an individual's well-being in which they are self-aware of their own capabilities, are capable of tackling challenges they face in life, and are able to effectively work in order to make a contribution to their community and society as a whole (Gamm, 2010).

The wellbeing of an individual could have a large impact on various factors in their life such as their feelings, behaviors, relationships and productivity levels (Galderisi et al., 2015). An article released in 2007, explored the deeper connection between the mental and physical health of an individual, in which the author stated that one's health could not exist without the existence of mental health (Prince et al., 2007). When one's own wellbeing is functioning in a positive manner, high productivity, healthy connections with others and good coping mechanisms are likely to be achieved as a result (Galderisi et al., 2015). Whereas if a person's mental condition is suffering, this could potentially have large impacts on them physically. As a mental illness could affect a person physically, and a physical condition could impact one mentally, it is very necessary to take both aspects into account when diagnosing or treating patients (Prince et al., 2007).
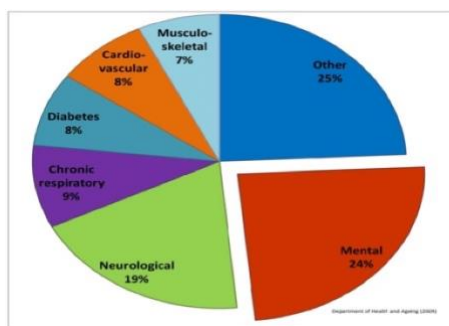
Figure 1: Years lost to disability due to mental illness

Byrne, 2014

To help visualize the severity of mental illnesses, the graph above could be implemented. According to (Gamm,2010) an estimated of up to 50% of people all around the world suffer from a mental disorder throughout their lifetime and the prevalence of mental health issues is increasing each year. As of 2020, common mental health illnesses such as Anxiety and Depression were risen by 25% across the world and mental illnesses lead to 1 in 5 years of an individual's life lived with a disability (World Health Organization: WHO, 2022a). Figure 1 displays a comparison of mental illnesses in relation to other disorders in terms of years lost as a result of a disability. The graph shows 24% of years lost regarding those suffering from mental illnesses. This displays the relevance of mental illnesses as a crucial factor needing to be taken care of in one's life. The emotional and physical impacts which could occur may cost individuals years of their life (World Health Organization: WHO, 2019b). This implies the importance of understanding the concept of health more clearly and each element attributing to its existence such as physical, social and mental health.

According to Huber et al, a Trans Domain Model of Health was created in which the concept of health was split into three main categories: Mental, Physical and Social (Huber et al., 2011). Hereby, cognitive-emotional functioning, biological functioning and interpersonal functioning all play a vital role. Four subcategories are additionally built within the diagram to showcase the overlap between all aspects of health. The category in the center which integrates all the aspects is defined by 'Agency' being the ability of an individual to decide on their own level of social participation.

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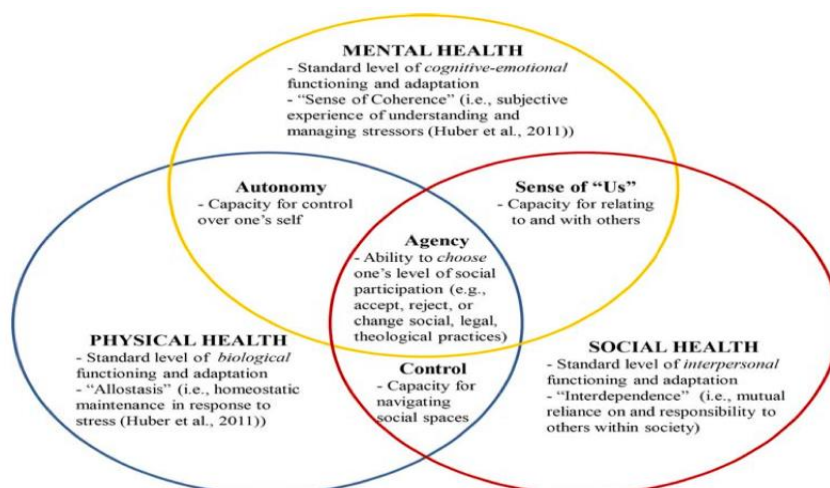
Figure 2: Trans domain Model of Health

Huber et al., 2011

Overall, this model represents that the most vital integration which encompasses the whole individual and takes into account every aspect of Mental health and therefore it is placed at the top center of the model (Manwell et al., 2015). Observing statistics is a further method to help the reader picture the prevalence of mental illnesses in a specific location. Figure 3 provides an overview of statistics gathered from the Mental Health America organization displaying the appearance of mental health issues across the state. This data set showcases the relevance of these issues across the state, whilst highlighting the large percentage of sufferers who do not receive any treatment for their illness (The State of Mental Health in America, n.d.)

As seen in the graph below, it is clear that the percentage of sufferers largely outweighs the number of treatments available to help support these individuals. Additionally, individuals seem less likely to seek for help even when battling a mental disorder. Although these statistics were released in 2020, a time in which mental health is more commonly spoken about, it is important to understand where the issue of mental health first began, therefore the next section will look at the origin of these issues.

KEY FINDINGS

21% of adults are experiencing a mental illness. Equivalent to over 50 million Americans.

15% of adults had a substance use disorder in the past year.
93.5% did not receive treatment.

The percentage of adults reporting serious thoughts of suicide is **4.8%** – over 12.1 million adults.

11% of adults who identified with two or more races reported serious thoughts of suicide.

16% of youth report suffering from at least one major depressive episode in the past year.
More than 2.7 million youth are experiencing severe major depression.

55% of adults with a mental illness receive no treatment – over 28 million individuals.

11% (over 5.5 million) of adults with a mental illness are uninsured.

60% of youth with major depression do not receive mental health treatment.

In the U.S., there are **350** individuals for every one mental health provider.

28% of all adults with a mental illness reported that they were not able to receive the treatment they needed.
Most reported they did not receive care because they could not afford it.

23% of adults who report experiencing 14 or more mentally unhealthy days each month were not able to see a doctor due to costs.

1 in 10 youth with private insurance do not have coverage for mental or emotional difficulties – over 1.2 million youth.

Figure 3: Mental health statistics

The State of Mental Health in America, 2020

2.1.2   Origin of mental health issues

Prior to the existence of mental health, the term 'Mental Hygiene' existed in the year 1843 in the English language. It appeared in a book titled entitled "Mental Hygiene or an examination of the Intellect and Passions designed to illustrate their influence on health and duration of life" (Bertolote, 2008). In 1843, the term mental hygiene was first referred to as the activities and actions a person could partake in which would keep their mental health in a satisfactory condition (Bertolote, 2008). Such activities included taking care of one's personal hygiene and sleep performance (Tremblay et al. 2021). Additionally, practices such as meditation and journaling were found to be calming activities an individual could willingly do in order to maintain a healthy state of mental health (Van Dam et al., 2018).

Despite already existing before the 20th century, the term mental health however was not referred to as a field of interest until the year 1946. Mental health was cited as a condition that could be affected by several factors such as biological, environmental,

and social factors, which in turn influence one's daily life and situation in society (Bertolote, 2008). Furthermore, in 1948 the largest organization supporting the wellbeing of individuals across the world, the 'World Health Organization' was formed. During the same year, international congresses on mental health began taking place in order to raise awareness on the subject and discover more about what causes these issues (Bertolote, 2008).

2.1.3 Causes of mental health issues

The majority of mental health issues are caused by several factors, mainly, an inheritance which is caused by genetics or an exposure to something which is caused by the environment (Stoewen, 2022). Despite there not being one specific gene as the main cause of a mental illness, research has shown a link between certain genetic variations to some mental disorders. According to (Howard et al., 2019) in which an experiment was conducted to explore the correlation of genetics to mental illnesses, the results proved a connection between the two. 269 genes were found to be linked to depression, however, as not one specific gene was responsible, genetics could increase the risk of somebody having an illness, but it is other aspects of the environment which trigger it. Depression, Schizophrenia and Bipolar disorder are a few mental illnesses that commonly appear among many family members, therefore increasing the risk of another member developing the disorder as well (Stoewen, 2022).

Furthermore, research shows that personality factors play a vital role in the development of a mental illness. (Kotov et al., 2010) stated, when observing several mental disorders, many similar personality traits could be seen across them all. Certain personality traits such as a low self-esteem has found to be a risk factor for mental illnesses (Stoewen, 2022). A low self-esteem could make it hard for somebody to easily interact with others and step out of their comfort zone, therefore increasing the possibility of high anxiety, social anxiety disorders or substance abuse. Moreover, individuals who are more introverted are at higher risk of developing a mental illness. When conducting experiments, individuals with more extroverted personalities and exerted traits of openness and socialness, were found less common across mental disorders (Kotov et al., 2010).

It is a combination of several factors which could make up the cause of a mental health issue such as past traumatic events, personal lifestyle choices, and occupational factors as illustrated in Figure 4, (Mental Health | What Causes Mental Ill Health | IOSH, n.d.). Work related stress could be caused by many different aspects of the job such as an overload of tasks, poor relationships with team members, high pressures, and a lack of control (Mental Health | What Causes Mental Ill Health | IOSH, n.d.).
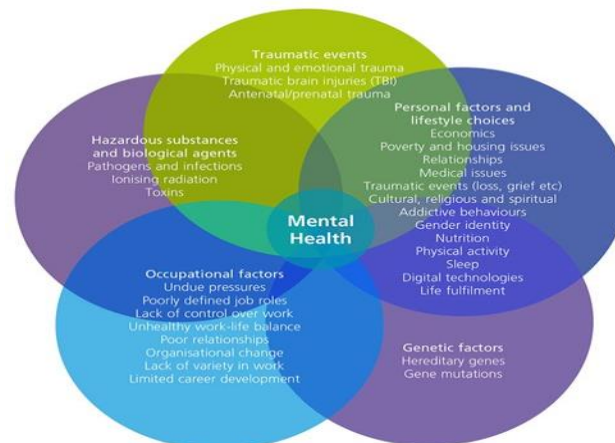
Figure 4: Causes of mental health

The Institution of Occupational Safety and Health, n.d

Such stressors could lead to a large emotional and physical exhaustion which could cause an individual to burn out. When it reaches the stage of an individual feeling too overwhelmed and stressed due to work conditions, this could result in a mental health issue such as depression or anxiety (Nett et al., 2015).

Moreover, traumatic events, specifically childhood trauma could have a major impact on the development of a mental disorder (Williams et al., 2016). When a child grows up in a poor household and is faced with trauma at a young age such as neglect, physical/emotional abuse dealing with a tragic loss of a family member, the trauma of these events could scar them (Patel et al., 2007). The likelihood of an individual faced with trauma to deal with their feelings at a later age is high and therefore could lead to illnesses such as depression (Williams et al., 2016). Furthermore, traumatic events which occur at an adult age could trigger many feelings of worry and anxiousness causing sleep problems, eating issues and mental illnesses (Mental Health | What Causes Mental Ill Health | IOSH, n.d.). Additionally, a list of different elements fall under personal factors and lifestyle choices which are possible causes of a mental

disorder (Mental Health | What Causes Mental Ill Health | IOSH, n.d.). The way in which an individual handles big decisions in his/ her or their life, interacts with others, and takes care of themselves could impact the risk for mental disorders (Stoewen, 2022). Using harmful substances such as drugs, not receiving adequate education or not working to earn money are examples of dangerous choices a person could make, leaving them more prone to various mental health conditions which will be explained within the next section (Patel et al., 2007).

2.1.4 Mental health conditions

A mental health condition could impact any individual regardless of age, gender and social background and is mostly detected at a young age (Patel et al., 2007). Expressing emotions, however, and dealing with mental disorders differs between women and men (Rosenfield, 2012). Women typically tend to keep their thoughts to themselves when in a negative or emotional state of mind, whereas men are more likely to opt for unhealthy options such as substance use in order to cope with their current situation (Rosenfield, 2012).

The concept of mental health could be divided into three sections (Galderisi et., 2015):

o **Emotional well-being:** how satisfied an individual is with their life

o **Psychological well-being:** how well an individual is able to make meaningful connections and tackle challenges in life

o **Social well-being:** how included an individual is within their community

(Galderisi et., 2015)

Despite the availability of treatment methods in modern day society, their effect to prevent the weight of mental disorders on the population proves to be minimal. Moreover, the requirements of individuals suffering from mental illnesses are rarely met even in a highly developed country and in less developed countries, mental issues are not of importance (Patel et al., 2007). However, as studies have proved therapy methods to be useful regarding the minimizing of suicidal rates, larger efforts to detect sign of mental issues as early as possible should be emphasized by society and leaders (Patel et al., 2007). Specifically in setting such as clinics and educational institutes, raising awareness and understanding of this topic is essential to minimize

a reduced life expectancy (Gates et al., 2015). Amongst the most common types of mental health issues are anxiety, depression and eating disorders (World Health Organization: WHO, 2022). These mental health disorders will be thoroughly analyzed in the next several sections of this thesis.

2.1.4.1 Depression

Depression is commonly understood as a mood disorder involving feelings of low energy, loss of hope and loss of happiness which impacts a human's ability to operate normally (Chand, 2022). This disorder could be extended to large extremes which have life-threatening impacts if not treated properly (*Depression | Databases Explored From Gale*, n.d.). As the term depression is often confused with a large sense of sadness and disappointment after an unfortunate event, it is important to be aware of some main symptoms such as Insomnia i.e., sleep difficulty, severe weight loss or weight gain and an uninterest in activities which remain consistent for a long period of time (Robinson et al., 2013). Specifically, sleep disturbances, show a very evident correlation to depression with it appearing as a symptom in almost all depressed patients.

Typically, depression in people presents itself in many ways including, feeling fatigue, low self-confidence, a diminishing spirit, an unhealthy appetite, and a decreased mood (Berthelsen, 2017). According to (Fried, 2015) who conducted a study in which 3703 patients suffering from depression were examined to observe their symptoms, proved three main similarities to appear. A sad mood, reduced energy and a lack of concentration appeared most often (Fried & Nesse, 2015). Depending on the severity of the depression, multiple of these side effects is found in the patient when diagnosed (Nutt et al., 2008). More than 50% of people suffering from depression do not end up asking for support as they are unaware of the seriousness of this mental disorder (Holtzheimer & Mayberg, 2011) however, the severity of this issue has shown to also be a dangerous path which may lead to suicide, therefore, is an extreme focus point when diagnosing patients (Nutt et al., 2008). Moreover, a common tendency that relates to depression is the inability of patients to detach themselves from their current state. When being in a state of depression trapped by negative emotions, one

usually finds themselves completely consumed by their situation. On the contrary, despite multiple treatment options being available, falling back into a depressive state is relatively easy for those suffering from this disorder (Holtzheimer & Mayberg, 2011). When examining patients for depression, a few main factors are carefully analyzed such as one's medical history, medications, social life, stressors, and substance use. Afterwards, treatments such as cognitive behavior therapy methods and medications such as Antidepressants are made available to support the patient and improve the state they are in (Holtzheimer & Mayberg, 2011). Results from such medications could be unsuccessful however as, an article from 2008 reported that the effects of depression medications tend to result in consistent outcomes, but the drug-placebo effect is reduced amongst severely depressed patients Therefore it is essential for patients to see the most optimal method which works for them. (Kirsch et al., 2008).

Alongside depression, a vital mental disorder effecting many people around the world is Anxiety (Kalin, 2020). An article reporting the relationship between both mental disorders, stated that almost 50% of people suffering from depression simultaneously deal or have dealt with an anxiety disorder (Kalin, 2020). Despite the high possibility of a cooccurrence between anxiety and depression, it is essential to analyze the symptoms separately in order to treat patients accordingly (Tiller, 2012).

2.1.4.2 Anxiety

Anxiety is defined as a feeling of discomfort, along with worry and nervousness about a situation that has or has not yet occurred. People suffering from anxiety are unsure about what may happen and feel threatened by the unknown (Bandelow et al., 2017). These feelings of stress and worry present themselves in people through variables such as a rapid heartbeat, adrenaline, high blood pressure and sweaty palms (Xi, 2020). Despite appearing more prominent in women than men and specifically among young adults, anxiety is still a disorder that a majority of the population has been affected by (Bandelow et al., 2017). Anxiety is typically developed in the early stages of life or during adolescence and could be caused by various factors such as childhood trauma, life experiences and stressful events (Tiller, 2012). Although, as humans, it is normal to react fearfully when faced with a threat or feel anxious leading up to an

important event, constant panic attacks and unusual beliefs which impact an individual on a daily basis and interfere with how they operate in everyday life circumstances represent a greater appearance of a mental disorder (Gask et al., 2018).

Amongst the most common Anxiety disorders are: General anxiety disorder, Panic disorder, Post-traumatic stress disorder, Obsessive compulsive disorder and Social anxiety disorder. Each of these forms of anxiety presents its individual symptoms, with similarities to be seen across them all (Gask et al., 2018). According to (Hartley,2012) individuals suffering from anxiety, usually select a more negatively based decision when being faced with two options. Even where one offers them a far more beneficial outcome, anxiety will often overwhelm an individual allowing them to miss out on potentially great opportunities (Hartley & Phelps, 2012). As anxiety could often be misunderstood and seem invalid enough since it is very common amongst the population, often people do not seek help and receive treatment (Tiller, 2012). The most common psychotherapeutic treatments however are those such as Cognitive behavior and Exposure therapy. Being exposed often to their fears, could help patients them overcome the anxiety they feel and slowly relieve their stress (Roy-Byrne, 2015). Other medications such as Antidepressants, Buspirone and Benzodiazepines are also used to treat patients however they must be taken with caution as negative side effects and dependence may occur (Bandelow et al., 2017).

2.1.4.3 Eating disorders

Along with anxiety and depression, a mental illness which affects many people all around the world is eating disorders. An eating disorder is typically understood as a disruption in normal eating habits, characterized by either an over or under consumption of food intake (Rikani et al., 2013). This disturbance in food consumption which could occur as a result of biological or environmental factors, has serious biological and physical effects, along with high levels of morality (Golden et al., 2003). Eating habits could differ majorly from person to person however, severely unusual eating patterns typically fall under three main categories: Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia or Binge eating disorder:

- o **Anorexia Nervosa** revolves around the severe fear of weight gain. Individuals suffering from this disorder typically consume very little food or excessively exercise in order to remain at a low body weight, therefore dealing with a constant disturbance of body image (Sim et al., 2010).
- o **Binge eating** is characterized by a continuous binge cycle in which an individual consumes a large amount of food and loses control of when to stop eating (Rikani et al., 2013)
- o **Bulimia** is a disorder in which an individual consumes a large amount of food but proceeds to compensate by methods such as over restriction, self-induced vomiting, or consuming laxatives (Sim et al., 2010).

Each type of eating disorder has major impacts on a person's physical health, mental health, and overall well-being. According to (Rikani et al., 2013) Anorexia Nervosa has a higher mortality rate compared to any other mental disorder therefore, these impacts could also affect family members and loved ones in the person's life (Van Hoeken and Hoek, 2020 Typically, eating disorders appear to have a high correlation with other mental illnesses such as anxiety or depression (Golden et al., 2003). This could therefore increase the impact of the illness and make it harder for a patient to be treated. Individuals suffering from eating disorder commonly face many challenges especially related to nutritional disturbances. Due to the excessive or under consumption of food partnered with the timing of their intake, nutritional issues such as vitamin deficiencies typically occur as a result (Golden et al., 2003). If not treated properly especially at early stages, this disorder could lead to dangerous suicidal thoughts, therefore beneficial treatment methods are essential.

As mental health conditions could severely impact the life of an individual, it is vital to search deeper into the treatment methods which could positively influence a person's life.

2.1.5 Treatment of mental health issues

Throughout the years, a range of mental health treatments have developed to observe methods of treating patients. Figure 5 displays a diagram showcasing the range of mental health interventions available to assist people suffering from a mental disorder. As shown in the diagram, there is a huge variety of activities one could

patriciate in to help their overall wellbeing, therefore, it is important for each individual to find out what works for them (Tyrer & Fazel, 2014). Creativity and art such as engaging in painting or dancing activities have proven to heighten one's mood and relieve stress, hence, improving overall mental health (SeydiNi & Cupchik, 2022).
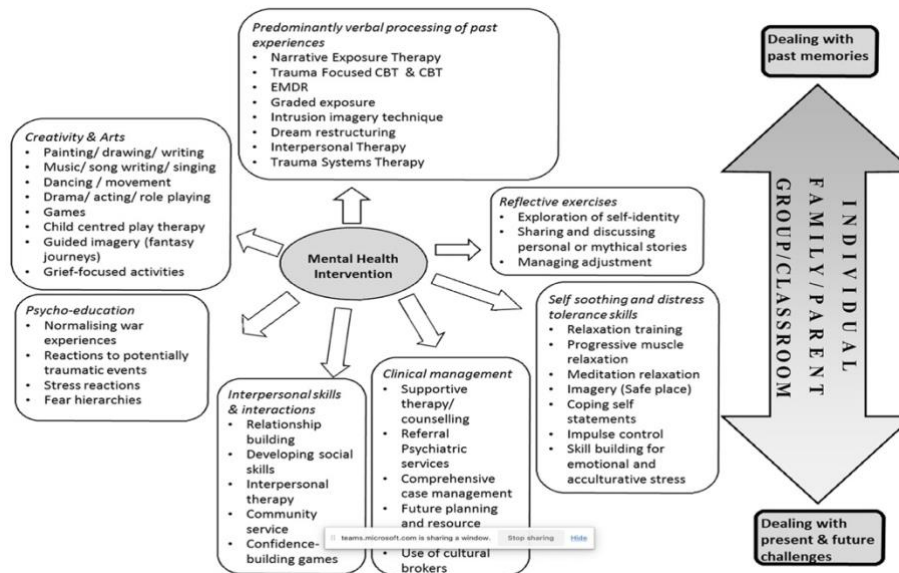
Figure 5: Mental health interventions

Tyrer and Fazel 2014

Individuals could also take part in self-soothing exercises such as meditation and relaxation training which have positive triggers on the brain. Research proves meditation to be a powerful tool for minimizing levels of depression and anxiety and help with sleeping problems such as insomnia (Chételat et al., 2018). Moreover, encouraging patients in an unhealthy state of wellbeing to interact and connect with others could leave very positive impacts on them. According to (Martino et al., 2017), interactions and building relationships with others does not only improve mental health but is a critical element in everybody's life. Additionally, several methods of therapy and clinical management are also offered to professionally support those in need. It is important for people dealing with illnesses such as depression or anxiety to self-reflect on their lives and see what elements are missing or what simple changes, they could make themselves in order to improve their wellbeing. Improving one's wellbeing will have large effects on several area of their lives including their workplace; therefore, the following section will focus on understanding mental health issues on the job.

2.2 Employee Wellbeing and HR Strategies

After obtaining a greater understanding on the concept of common mental health illnesses, employee wellbeing and human resources strategies will be analyzed. Firstly, an overview of statistics at the workplace will be given to highlight the importance of the topic of mental health and employee wellbeing. Furthermore, the terms HR and HRM will be defined, followed by an understanding of employee wellbeing and health programs created at work.

Figure 6 Mental health & wellbeing statistics

Pindar, 2023

Mental health and wellbeing has become a rising topic all around the world. Recent statistics in the UK have shown the increase in levels of anxiety, stress and depression among individuals. As shown in figure 7, from a sample size of 4170 individuals, 76% experience moderate to high levels of stress, resulting negatively on many attributes of a person's life such as their workplace (Pindar, 2023). Therefore, to understand how this concept intertwines with wellbeing of employees at work, it is necessary to analyze statistics related to the workplace which will further be explained in the diagram below.

Figure 7: Mental health statistics at work

(*53 Workplace Mental Health Statistics You Can't Ignore in 2023*, n.d.)

The importance of researching more about employee wellbeing at work presents itself due to the continuously increasing statistic percentages. As seen in figure 7, 1 in 6 people suffer with metal health issues at work (*Mental Health at Work: Statistics*, n.d.). Specifically in larger organizations with many employees, this could have negative consequences as approximately 16% of the employees will be impacted and could possibly ruin their job performance. Moreover, almost 12 billion working days have been lost each year due to a mental illness (*Mental Health at Work: Statistics*, n.d.). As this number could be minimized with the improvement of employee wellbeing, it is important to understand which issues they face, the team in the company which could assist employees and how this problem could be solved.

2.2.1 HR & HRM

Human resources are arguably the most valuable asset to any organization (Cardon & Stevens, 2004). Specifically in fields such as the tourism and hospitality industry, human resources i.e., the employees are vital to determine the success or failure of service quality (Cardon & Stevens, 2004). Each element of service quality such as responsiveness, empathy, quality, and reliability are impacted by how an organization's management team effectively handles its human resources (Tsaur & Lin, 2004). Furthermore, the service an employee provides depends largely on an employee's experiences, abilities as well as the way they are trained, their job conditions, and their overall well-being (Kuşluvan et al., 2010). Therefore, HRM is a crucial part of an organization which sets the condition as to how an employee could behave (Tsaur & Lin, 2004).

Human Resources Management is commonly defined as a process within an organization that is responsible for carrying out activities to ensure that employees are qualified, developed and managed to take on tasks at work (Da Silva et al., 2022). As human assets are the most vital element in the organization, ensuring the health and effectiveness of employees is taken care of, has huge impact on overall company performance and level of success. Research shows a clear correlation between organizational performance and the abilities of the human resources management team as important aspects such as employee-customer interaction could be effected if not properly managed (De Alwis et al., 2022). The interaction between an employee

and a customer could be worsened if communication isn't effectively handled at the workplace and employees are not well trained which could have negative consequences on the company (Kuşluvan et al., 2010). Moreover, HRM places a huge focus on viewing employees as a meaningful asset rather than a being a cost to an organization (Kuşluvan et al., 2010). Therefore, the activities encompassing HRM such as increasing motivation, employee empowerment and high supportiveness are all important aspects which need to be taken into consideration as they improve employee performance and allow organizations to meet their goals (O'Riordan, 2017). As each individual is built differently both physically and mentally, satisfying the needs of all employees and controlling each of them is a difficult task for a HRM team (Gunnigle, et al., 2011). Certain elements however such as job security and safety measures are key factors which need to be present to meet the needs of any employee (Kuşluvan et al., 2010). The way an individual feels about their work could majorly impact their job performance and overall wellbeing however, if the HRM team manages to provide employees with the correct level of support, the likelihood of an employee being satisfied with their job will be higher. In order for HRM to perform their job correctly, a better understanding of employee wellbeing is key.

2.2.2 Employee wellbeing

Wellbeing is commonly understood as the state of a person's physical health, mental health, and health in general (Keeman et al., 2017). According to (Keeman et al., 2017), wellbeing is a condition that encompasses a positive mood, without the existence of a negative mood. Despite this, the way a person views their life will be an overall judgement of all the positive and negative emotions they are experiencing. Several aspects affect the wellbeing of an individual such as their current feelings, ability to function, life satisfaction levels and stress levels (Keeman et al., 2017). However, healthy wellbeing consists of both an individual expressing happiness and functioning positively as a reflection of those feelings (Page & Vella-Brodrick, 2009)

Employee wellbeing, however, is the state of an individual which is impacted by their workplace (Nielsen et al., 2017). This consists of three main elements: **Psychological wellbeing** known as the positive incidents and feelings linked to work. **Physical**

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wellbeing that includes the health of an individual at work and **social wellbeing** which is how an individual feels towards colleagues and team members (Vakkazil et al., 2017). Employee wellbeing is when the positive aspects of the job outweigh the negatives, leading to an overall higher level of satisfaction (Vakkayll et al., 2017). A job could heavily influence the wellbeing of a person depending on whether or not they are satisfied with their situation at work, particularly due to the fact that adults spend almost 25% of their lifetime at their workplace (Keeman et al., 2017). A study in 2023, confirmed the negative impact an unhealthy work life has on the wellbeing of an employee (Huo & Jiang, 2023). Many aspects at work play a role into the state on an individual such as their relationship with colleagues, managers and supervisors, the trust levels and communication within their work team or the amount of workload they have (Vakkayll et al., 2017). The psychological impacts and biological impacts also both play an important role when it comes to wellbeing. Meaning, aspects of mental health such as feelings of anxiousness and depression but also physical effects such as exhaustion and fatigue from work are all taken into account when observing one's wellbeing (Page & Vella-Brodrick 2009). Literature research in 2008 stated that there are different perspectives regarding the effects on employee wellbeing (Page & Vella-Brodrick 2009). Some believed it is the own wellbeing of an individual which affects their satisfaction levels at the workplace, whereas others assumed it is one's workplace that has a large impact on the overall wellbeing of a person. However, both points of view are strongly correlated and affect one another. Therefore, managing the wellbeing of employees is critical to maintaining employees and lowering turnover rates (Mayr & Teller, 2023). When the wellbeing of an individual is suffering or in an unhealthy state, their job performance will immediately be impacted. According to (Huo & Jiang,2023) the way an individual completes tasks on the job, behaves and interacts with others depends largely on their wellbeing.

Moreover, employees tend to operate better and complete tasks successfully when they are doing well as their positivity will reflect on their productivity levels (Wright & Cropanzano, 2004). Having a healthy wellbeing enables people to have a clear mind and engage more in the learning aspect of the job, allowing for higher contribution and engagement making them feel more entitled to remain at their current job. (Vakkayil et al., 2017) states that creativity enhancement, higher performance and greater job satisfaction are all factors linked to positive employee well-being. In

contrast, when one's health is not taken care of, the ability to focus during work is more challenging and a larger turnover rate could occur (Huo & Jiang 2023). Additionally, individuals suffering from a mental illness may portray their negative emotions onto their customers as a way of dealing with their feelings. This, however, causes poor customer interactions which may ruin an organizations image. Therefore, it is essential that companies prioritize the wellbeing of employees and becomes more aware of mental health issues at the workplace to minimize the damage on both employees and company itself (Mary & Teller, 2023).

Having defined the concepts of HRM and employee wellbeing, the next section describes how both of these concepts intertwine with one another and will be further examined in the methodology section later in this thesis.

2.2.3 Mental health issues at the workplace

Mental illnesses such as anxiety and depression have grown at a rapid pace globally (Hennekam et al., 2011). These issues have begun to present themselves more often in areas such as one's workplace and research indicates that mental health is becoming a growing cause for employees leaving their work environment. In England, up to 40% of individuals' absences were linked to a type of mental health issue they were dealing with (Rajgopal, 2010). This topic, therefore, has become an area of concern for HR managers and organizations as it is resulting in large economic losses for many companies. HR managers, however, have a large influence on the work conditions of their employees and could alter the employee's experiences by creating environments that cater to those suffering with mental issues (Hennekam., 2021). As the mental health issues of employees are rising, absence rates and lower productivity levels are caused as a result (Hennekam et al., 2021). (Chopra, 2009) states that employees possessing symptoms of depression were twice as likely to leave their workplace due to a mental health reason as compared to an employee in a healthy state of wellbeing. Although an employee may decide to remain in their job in order to continue making income, performance levels will inevitably decrease due to their unhealthy mental condition (Chopra, 2009). By receiving support from their workplace, employees could become more loyal to their companies resulting and organizations could keep hold of their skilled workers.

Despite severe mental illnesses such as Anxiety or Depression possibly developing at the workplace, several factors attached to mental health such as stress or work/life balance play a huge role into the cause of these issues.

STRESS AT THE WORKLPLACE

The most common factor attached to mental health issues that occur at the workplace is stress. According to (Lagrosen & Lagrosen, 2020), stress was the highest cause of sick absences in Sweden. Despite the feelings of stress not being a medical condition, which could be medically diagnosed and treated, it still remains a condition that could heavily impact employees both mentally and physically (Davies, 2021). Stress in an employee could present itself in various ways such as headaches, stomach problems, heart issues or back pain (Rajgopal, 2010). Therefore, more than 50% of working days which were lost due to an illness, had high correlation to work related stress (Davies, 2021). The WHO defines work place stress as "a pattern of physiological, cognitive and behavioral reactions to some extremely taxing aspects of work content, work organization and work environment" (Leist et al., 2014, p.92), meaning the heightened level of demands on an employee due to their working conditions could be too excessive for them, specifically when the effort an employee is exerting does not match the rewards they receive (Chopra, 2009).

Although stress is at certain times necessary in the workplace to make an employee motivated to work harder, an extremely high amount could have harmful consequences in the long run which is highlighted in the figure below (Rajgopal, 2010). Figure 8 displays the relationship between work pressure and the performance of an employee. As shown in the graph, a low amount of pressure, results in low motivation and excitement which is correlated with an under performance. At the same time, a very high-pressure work environment, causes stress and feelings of anxiousness, also resulting in an under performance.
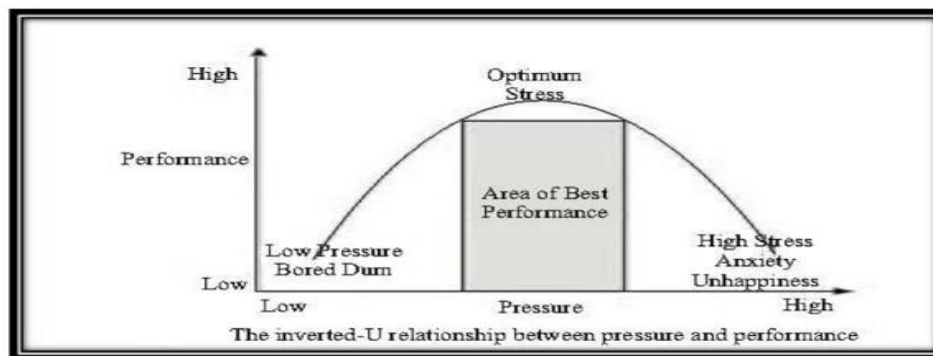
High
Optimum
Stress
Performance
Area of Best
Performance
Low Pressure
Bored Dum
High Stress
Anxiety
Unhappiness
Low
Low   Pressure   High
The inverted-U relationship between pressure and performance

Figure 8: Relationship between pressure and performance

Panigrahi, 2017

In the center of the graph, however, lays the optimum area for employees in which the stress levels are adequate enough to make them perform to the best of their abilities (Panigrahi, 2017). This communicates the importance of dealing with stress to ensure a successful result for both the employee and the organization as a whole (Panigrahi, 2017). Work related stress is typically caused by a few main factors. Firstly, a high-pressure environment demanding a large workload and long working hours could result in high stress levels (Rajgopal, 2010). Additionally, relationship problems with team members, colleagues and the management team could largely affect an employee as they are required to spend a large amount of time with the same people each day. Lastly, control is an important factor as it could be stressful for an employee to work in an environment in which they have no control over their tasks and are unable to make their own choices (Lagrosen & Lagrosen, 2020). High stress levels, paired with an unbalanced work life could put an employee more at risk of developing a mental health issue.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Work life balance is a vital aspect that plays a role in the mental health issues employees face at the workplace and has become a concerning issue for organizations worldwide. This element can cause severe stress and lead to the development of mental health issues such as depression and anxiety (Chopra, 2009). According to (Lockwood, 2003) work life balance is a "state of equilibrium in which the demands of both a person's job and person's life are equal" (Lockwood, 2003, p.2). Despite work being one of the most important parts of some people's lives in order for them to

obtain financial stability, other aspects of life must also be taken into account. Activities such as spending time with family, meeting with friends and engaging in hobbies are all parts of a human's life. Therefore, the demand from work and the pressure to find the time to engage with pleasurable activities is becoming an increasingly challenging task for employees (Atheya & Arora, 2014).

An example of this is shown through an experiment conducted in 2002. TrueCareers conducted a survey examining 1500 respondents on their work life balance. Results indicated that more than 70% of the respondents were unable to balance their work life with their personal life (Lockwood, 2003). This however effects an organization as the turnover rate and absences increase whilst work performance lowers. Moreover, severe impacts on employees such as depression, anxiety, substance use, eating disorders and burnout could occur (Athey & Arora, 2014). Although work life balance may be difficult for many employees to achieve, research indicates high results of job performance, motivation, and overall positive life satisfaction when a healthy balance is obtained (Sirgy & Lee, 2018). As a result of factors such as stress and unbalanced work life, burnout could occur. It is important to understand the concept of burnout to have a clearer idea of how exactly an employee is impacted at work.

Burnout Syndrome

When observing the burnout syndrome, research presents it to be a continuous cycle one finds themselves intertwined in until they reach a breaking point (Spencer-Thomas, 2023). As humans, it is natural to have a competitive side and to want to become a better version of oneself, therefore not only does burnout entail high stress due to a large workload, but the actions a person is willing to take in order to achieve their goals could potentially but them at harm of being stuck in this cycle presented in Figure 9.
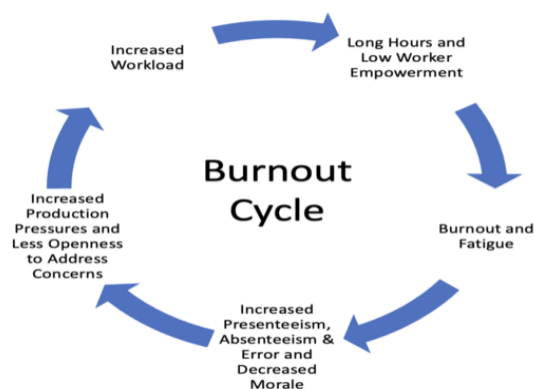
Figure 9: Burnout Cycle

Spencer-Thomas, 2023

Burnout is often described as a response to stressors caused by the workplace which could affect one's social, physical and mental state, consequently impacting an organization (Swider & Zimmerman, 2010). An individual experiencing job burnout typically relates to three main components: exhaustion, cynicism and professional efficacy. One tends to feel immensely emotionally and physically exhausted, allowing them to perform poorly at their workplace (Swider & Zimmerman, 2010). Furthermore, cynicism could occur as a result when employees are feeling drained, this is where a more negative attitude is taken towards one's colleagues, environment and work interactions. Lastly, professional inefficacy burnout may be the result of a worker feeling as though they are performing unsuccessfully at their job and therefore constantly criticizing themselves (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). (Bakker & Costa, 2014) states that both the work environment such as a high demand industry and individual factors such as perfectionism play an important role in the development of Burnout. Common causes of job burnout are related to one's heavy workload, an unfair work environment, or poor relationship with the people they work with (Bakker & Costa, 2014).

Feeling emotionally drained could cause many health issues in a person's life. Literature shows that feeling burnt out is commonly associated with other psychological issues such as anxiety depression and sleep disturbance (Bakker & Costa, 2014). In a study examining 3000 workers dealing with burnout, results showed a very high appearance of anxiety and depression disorders to be among them all (Bakker & Costa, 2014). Moreover, substance abuse which is heavily linked to mental

health is an experience employees may go through when feeling burnout (Swider & Zimmerman, 2010). These symptoms result in several consequences such as a high turnover, decreased level of performance on the job, poor relationships and interactions and absenteeism (Wallace & Coughlan, 2022). Although job burnout could occur in any type of work, a few industries, in particular, such as the medical, the police and hospitality fields require high demands that are therefore more prone to such syndrome (Hsu, 2013). When observing the hospitality field more closely, the concept of emotional labor appears to be one of the largest sections of burnout. According to (Pienaar, 2008), emotional labor in which an employee is faced with an endless amount of situations where they are required to keep their emotions composed and remain professional is very common in hospitality (Pienaar & Willemse, 2008). As it is a job where employees are dealing with customers in every part of their day, satisfying the needs of others and dealing with unfriendly guests could cause large stress on the worker. An article observing the effects of work life on Burnout syndrome described this issue as 'Emotional Exhaustion' when an employee becomes drained, tired and fatigued due to the fast paced work environment they are in where there is minimal room for error (Wallace & Coughlan, 2022).

As many elements at the workplace could put an individual and the organization at risk, it is vital to analyze which actions have been taken by Human Resources managers in order to minimize these negative effects. These actions will be looked at deeper in the next section.

2.2.4 Health programs

Since the early 1990's, over 80% of organizations began offering some type of wellbeing program (Baker, 2002). In an attempt to combat mental health issues employees may face in the workplace, many organizations have taken the responsibility upon themselves to create health programs. Work health programs are defined as all the activities which focus on improving the physical and mental health of employees. By prioritizing the main assets of a company i.e. the employees, activities focusing on stress management and fitness programs have been created to improve an employee's overall well-being (McCarthy et al., 2011). Such programs could be designed to take place at the site of the workplace or within an individual's home and free time such as a fitness program for workers to participate in outside of

work hours (Baker, 2002). As many circumstances within a person's life could trigger the development of a mental health issue, it is important to focus on the main areas in which an individual spends a large majority of their time in. Therefore, the main aim of a health program is to facilitate a space in which employees could improve their habits and enhance their quality of life in order to perform better at their job (Baker, 2002). Additionally, wellness programs could take place in the form of a seminar, a wellness production, an exhibition, on-site healthy food options etc. in order to facilitate a healthy area for employees. When an employee is continuously provided with health support by professionals, they will become more aware of the risks which could occur if they do not include healthy habits into their lifestyle (Ngeno & Muathe, 2014).

Implementing wellness programs in a workplace could provide large benefits to both the employees and the organization as a whole. (Baker, 2002) stated that employees who were provided with wellness programs exerted an overall higher level of satisfaction and happiness compared to employees without these programs (Baker, 2002). As a result, stress levels at the workplace were reduced leading to less absenteeism and job turnover. Employees are benefiting from the adoption of healthy behaviors into their lives and a safe work environment, whilst the organization is benefiting from their overall cost reduction (Abdullah & Lee, 2012). The cost of employee absenteeism, medical services and overall income loss will be reduced if employees are well taken care (Abdullah & Lee, 2012). Employees will have higher motivation, perform better at their job and therefore companies could keep hold of them as valuable assets to improve their company image. According to (McCarthy et al., 2011), when conducting a research experiment, 46.7% of people believed that the benefits of implementing a wellness program outweighed the potential costs. Specifically wellness programs that focus on the emotional, mental and social wellbeing of employees such as including flexible work timings, stress management exercises and diversity at the workplace resulted in the greatest benefits (McCarthy et al., 2011). These programs became particularly important after the pandemic in 2020, in which many employees were disregarding their personal wellbeing, leaving negative impacts on them (Long & Cooke, 2022). Overall, a healthy workplace involves an environment in which employees feel safe. This includes a sense of belonging,

health communication, trust, respect, discrimination free and a positive place where an individual feels welcome (McCarthy et al., 2011).

Concluded it can be said that certain wellness programs and actions to support employees have begun taking place, however, a certain type of shift has increased the risk of health issues at the workplace and will therefore be thoroughly analyzed in the following chapter.

2.3   Influences of Shiftwork on employee's mental health

Nowadays, the greater part of the population is scheduled on "nonstandard" work hours such as part time, night time, weekend work or shift work rather than a standard working schedule which would usually be a 9-5pm shift (G. Costa, 2003). As a hotel business typically operates continuously for 24 hours each day, having a shift work system is a common standard to accommodate guests throughout the whole year. A shift work system is known as a process that places employees in three main shifts: Morning, afternoon and night (Alvionita et al., 2017). Morning shift is regularly from 7AM-3PM, an afternoon shift is from 3PM-11PM and a night shift will last from 11PM-7AM up until the morning shift take over again.

2.3.1 Shift work

As this thesis place a main focus on night shift, it is important to understand the idea of shift work and its prevalence in today's society. A common trend which has risen in the hospitality industry is the appearance of shift work. Shift work is commonly defined as a process in which employees are put on rotating work schedules outside a regular eight hour time frame but instead are working with a 24 hour system. This type of work requires employees to be scheduled at night time, for example from 11pm-6am (Wright et al., 2013). In many industries such as in hospitality , it is becoming increasingly common to have an employee scheduled on night shift in order to provide service to those checking in to hotels at night time, drinking at bars past midnight or wanting a meal during late hours (Martins et al., 2021).

24 hour service is becoming more in demand each year and employers have taken the responsibility upon themselves to schedule employees on those shifts to accommodate guests at any given time (G. Costa, 2003). The motivation to take on night shifts varies, some view it as an opportunity to spend more time taking on other tasks during the day and dedicating time towards friends and family, some prefer night shifts as they tend to be quieter and in a less hectic environment, and others choose it purely for a financial reason of being able to work an extra job outside regular hours whilst still earning money (Martins et al., 2021).A recent study has also shown that some workers take on shift work purely as it is a requirement for the job they would like to have (Martins et al., 2021). Results from this study have shown that the happiness of workers depends far more on the job environment in which they are in and the quality of their own life, rather than achieving professional success which is prioritized higher for other types of workers (Martins et al., 2021). Despite this, shift work comes with many negative side effects due to its impact on the human's biological clock which the employee must be willing to go against and adapt to when working at night (Pease et al., 2003). The negative effects range from sleep disorders, psychological stressors, and mental health illnesses (Ganesan et al., 2019).

2.3.2 Positive impacts of shift work

Shift work effects are typically cited with a more negative connotation; however, a few positive aspects are also attached to this concept. As mentioned above, one of the main reasons why an employee may decide to implement shift work into their lives is due to financial purposes. As these employees have taken responsibility to work and accommodate guests at an unusual working hour which may be taxing on their health, they are compensated with a higher salary (Blachowicz & Letizia, 2006). This increase in money could be very beneficial for an individual seeking to earn more income. Moreover, for some people a greater work life balance could be achieved by taking on shift work. This is due to the fact that a shift worker could fulfill their social needs during the afternoon and evening and complete their work during the nighttime in which other people are typically asleep (Collins, 2018). However, when analyzed based on physical and biological health benefits, research proves the negative impacts of shift work to outweigh the positives (Ganesan et al., 2019).

2.3.3 Negative impacts

The following section analyses both the biological and psychological impacts night shift could have on an individual such as social isolation, sleep disturbances and nutritional issues.

Social isolation

"Social interactions are proposed to be a basic human need, analogous to other fundamental needs such as food consumption or sleep"(Orben et al., 2020). Whilst humans require a few main necessities such as water or oxygen, the aspect of social interaction has now additionally become a critical factor of concern. Research has shown social interactions to be vital for each individual as they could heavily influence the state of their well-being and mental health (Orben et al., 2020). An individual being scheduled on shift work however, attains a reduction of social interaction due to their unusual work schedule putting them more at risk to develop mental health problems and reduced life satisfaction (James et al., 2017). According to (Vogel et al., 2012), shift workers acquire far less time spent socializing with family and friends compared to a non shit worker. This reduction in social interaction could cause major family issues if the problem remains constant and the other family member has not adapted to it (Vogel et al., 2012). Despite this, some research suggests that parents working night shift, are able to spend more time with their children during the day (Costa & Silva, 2019). However, due to their overall reduced social activity, shift workers tend to have larger work-family conflicts and a higher rate of marital dissatisfaction (Costa & Silva, 2019). Specifically women tend to face greater problems and reduced quality of life when working night shift as they typically carry greater household responsibilities (Kim et al., 2016). Therefore, even if it is only one member of the household missing more often, if that parent carries a great family responsibility, they will be negatively impacted (Cheng & Drake, 2018). Besides less time spent with family, shift workers generally feel isolated from their social environment and are unable to find enough time to take part in social activities and gatherings (Kim et al., 2016). This increases their risk of mental health issues as they are not socially engaged or receiving support from the important people in their life (Cheng & Drake, 2018).

Sleep disturbance

As previously mentioned, sleeping problems are a huge issue regarding night shift, specifically as these workers are performing their jobs in hours which are considered to be for sleep. Sleep disturbance is one of the largest problems night workers face during their careers. Every human requires adequate sleep-in order to function properly and feel reenergized to take on tasks throughout the day, however, this is a challenge for night shift workers. Due to this, many night shift workers end up resigning from this shift as it causes severe sleeping problems and increased stress (James et al., 2017). As night shift workers are put in a situation in which they need to make up for their lost sleep outside the ordinary night hours, their routine and sleeping system becomes more of a task than a time for them to rest. Both the length in which one sleeps and the quality of sleep one obtains could be majorly disturbed due to their work schedule (Long et al., 2018). It has been reported that night shift workers receive a larger total reduction in the hours of sleep they have per night than non-shift workers. On average a two-hour time period is lost from individuals' sleep after performing night shifts (Long et al., 2018). There are several reasons for this reduced amount of sleep and affected sleeping cycle. As a result of a disturbed sleeping cycle, many workers develop a shift work sleep disorder.

Shift work disorder

Sleep is impacted by many different factors, the main two being the circadian rhythm and the homeostatic sleep drive. The homeostatic sleep drive is the pressure which continues to increase the longer one is awake during the day and eventually dies down during sleep. The circadian rhythm on the other hand is the body's natural biological clock which responds to the environmental factors such as the light and dark cycle (Fiz Perez et al., 2019). During early hours of the day and afternoon, circadian levels are still relatively high, enabling normal functioning. However, during the evening and later during the night, the circadian levels drop whilst simultaneously sleepiness levels increase (Costa, 2010). Consequently "Shift work disorder (SWD)" could result from this disturbed cycle. SWD is typically characterized by a misalignment of the

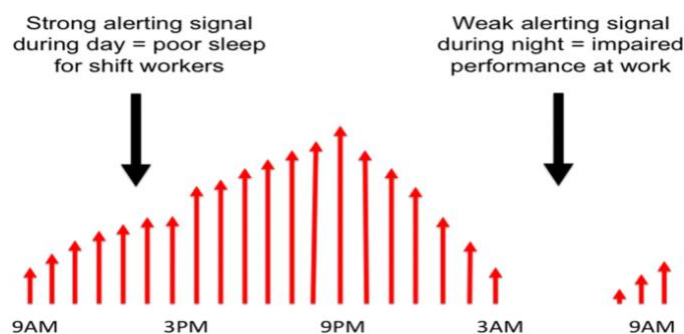circadian rhythm, insomnia, and high daytime sleepiness (Cheng & Drake, 2018).

Figure 10: Circadian signals Day vs Night

Brown et al., 2020

As shown in Figure 10, despite night shift workers feeling extremely exhausted and sleepy after a long shift, their circadian rhythm is at its highest and out of its regular routine, therefore, will affect one's ability to comfortably fall sleep (Brown et al., 2020). Whereas, during the nighttime, the alert signals and circadian rhythm is at its lowest, resulting in sleepiness and fatigue at the workplace (Brown et al., 2020). This cycle accumulates to a large sleep deprivation after a long period of time, resulting in sleeping problems and levels of fatigue (Ferri et al., 2016). According to (Costa,2010), workers scheduled on night shift attain a two-to-four-hour reduction in the amount of sleep they receive (Costa, 2010). To compensate for this reduction, workers tend to take naps during the day. Additionally, due to certain family or living circumstances, workers may be woken up to participate in activities such as having lunch with their loved ones (Costa, 2010). This causes an interruption in their sleep which increases the overall sleep deficit. It is interesting however, to note that sleeping issues related to night shifts are uncorrelated to gender or age but instead could affect all types of workers. Moreover, it could be assumed that is the quality, not quantity of sleep which causes the biggest impacts on workers' health. The quality of sleep is affected by external factors such as outside noises and lighting, stress levels and irregular sleeping patterns which are likely more of a problem than the amount of actual sleep obtained (Åkerstedt et al., 2007).

2.3.4   Health impacts

After looking at the concept of social isolation and sleep disturbances, certain biological health impacts will be analyzed. It is important to note that shift work

impacts an individual both biologically and psychologically therefore, the impact on an employee's heart health and metabolic health will be further analyzed. Moreover, many aspects on an individual's health is linked together meaning, understanding how each part of health connects to one another is vital.

To understand the concept of health more clearly, the figure below represents an illustration of the four vital health components affected due to the circadian misalignment employees suffer from when taking on night shift. According to (James et al., 2020), the inner circle represents the biological impacts of shift work, the outer circle represents the psychological impacts, and the interest circle represents medical conditions that may occur as a result of these impacts. (Pease et al., 2003) stated that a huge correlation has been found between shift work, an unhealthy immune system and heart disease.
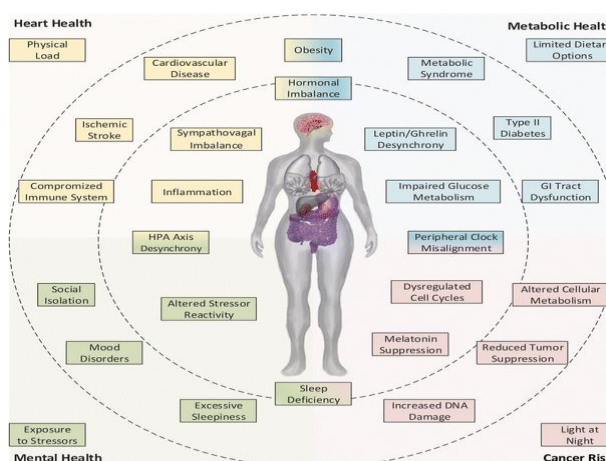
Figure 11: Health impacts of shift work

James et al., 2017

Due to Circadian rhythm disruption and psychological work stressors, shift workers are more at risk of developing heart and cardiovascular health diseases (Vogel et al., 2012). Furthermore, due to irregular eating patterns, eating timings, limited food options and misalignment with the body's biological clock, shift workers are more likely to develop eating disorders and health issues such as diabetes (Ferri et al., 2016). Furthermore, research has shown a link between the risk of developing cancer and shift workers. A combination of circadian misalignment and the hormone melatonin is responsible for this heightened risk (James et al., 2020). In shift workers, melatonin is restrained causing damage to the cells in an individual and increasing the risk of cancer (James et al., 2020).

Lastly, one of the biggest impacts of night shift contributing to psychological damage is mental health issues. According to (Ferri et al., 2016), night shift workers in comparison to daytime workers, presented many signs of mental illnesses such as high stress, irritability, anxiousness, and mood disorders. Due to the disrupted sleeping schedule, shift workers were constantly at high risk of developing insomnia and suffering from fatigue and excessive sleepiness throughout the day (Zimberg et al., 2012). This could lead to feelings of sadness and a high risk of depression (Cheng & Drake, 2018).

Nutritional issues

As previously mentioned, a common type of mental issue is eating disorders.
It is interesting to note that, working night shift has a very strong correlation to the development of eating problems, therefore it is essential to understand the nutritional factors contributing to the link between them.

As night shift workers typically have an unusual structure regarding their eating habits, this causes a disruption of meal timings, a disruption of hunger cues and satiety and a damaged metabolism (Bouillon-Minois et al., 2022). It is common for night shift workers to build irregular eating habits due to their work schedule which is conflicting with their biological clock. A continuous pattern of irregular eating habits, however, causes health problems such as obesity, diabetes and gastrointestinal disorders to arise (Zimberg et al., 2012). Due to misalignment of the circadian rhythm and unusual food intake patterns, severe gastrointestinal disorders and digestion problems that could occur as the body's biological way of operating are disturbed (Hause & Smolensky, 2006). According to (Zimberg et al., 2012), working night shift is linked to a higher score of BMI (Body Mass Index), meaning due to the higher intake of calorie dense foods along with less energy expenditure, night shift workers tend to carry more weight. The hormones responsible for sending hunger and satiety signals to the brain are Leptin and Ghrelin. However, these hormones are linked to the humans' biological clock which is affected due to working night shift. Therefore, the hormones become dysregulated resulting in night cravings for sugary and processed foods (James et al., 2017). Moreover, the availability of food options during night time is typically limited to vending machines and fast food options which increase the health

risks even more (James et al., 2017). Additionally, as a method of dealing with stress and an alternating schedule, coping mechanisms such as smoking and alcohol consumption are high for night shift workers contributing to their overall health problems (Pease et al., 2003).

(Azmi et al., 2020), highlights the importance of meal timings and food intake. A regular human typically consumes 3 meals a day: Breakfast, lunch and Dinner. However, night shift workers may tend to skip one or two meals a day in order to acquire more sleep, resulting in inadequate nutritional intake (Azmi et al., 2020). Research indicates the low prevalence of vital nutrients such as protein in the diet of night shift workers. Furthermore, water intake has been shown to be considerably low which is necessary for the proper functioning of an employee (Bouillon-Minois et al., 2022). Instead, sugary drinks and caffeine options are favored to assist workers in getting through the night. Such food disturbances are vital as the continuity of this cycle leads to eating disorders causing determinantal health consequences (Bouillon-Minois et al., 2022).

Having identified health impacts on employees working night shift, the next section highlights the actions taken by employees such as substance use to assist them in coping with their mental health problems.

2.3.5 Substance use

To help with their mental health and release stress, night shift workers will occasionally fall back to substance use and rely on activities such as smoking, alcohol consumption or drug use (Qanash et al., 2021). A report about the mental health consequences of shift work in 2020, showed that many night shift workers make use of Alcohol to assist them in falling asleep (Brown et al., 2020). Other workers rely on coffee to boost their caffeine intake which makes them stay awake throughout the night. When feeling worn out, night shift workers tend to consume higher amounts of caffeine which could have unhealthy consequences on their health both mentally and physically (Qanash et al., 2021) Additionally, nicotine was reported to be heavily used by night workers to make their shift pass by easier. This however, has a reverse effect on the worker and could worsen their levels of tiredness and stress, negatively impacting their mental health (Brown et al., 2020). Sleeping pills such as melatonin

have also been cited to be used by workers to assist them with falling asleep easier after their shift (Cousin et al., 2022). Furthermore, some night workers claim that they used pills to help them readjust to a normal day time schedule when they had days off of work (Davies et al., 2022). Although substance use may be a short-term solution for night workers to help them cope, these stimulants could likely increase symptoms of anxiety, depression, insomnia and concentration (Davies et al., 2022).

3 Methodology

The following chapter will be presenting the research significance for this thesis. The aim of the thesis will firstly be explained, followed by an explanation of the main research design methods commonly used in literature. Moreover, the technique used for the purpose of this research will be highlighted. Lastly, the information gathered with be thoroughly analyzed.

3.1 Aim

The aim of this thesis is to understand the influence of working overnight on an employee's mental health and examine the HRM teams' response to this issue. To be able to obtain a more in-depth insight into the real life circumstance of employees in the hospitality industry, a mixed method approach will be used. Hereby, the point of view of the employees will be collected and analyzed with the use of numerical data and interviews with the human resources managers will be conducted to analyze the actions they are taking.

3.2 Research Design

A vital element of a Bachelor Thesis is the selection of an appropriate research design method to gather the primary data needed for the specific research. The three main methods of obtaining primary data are quantitative methods, qualitative methods, and mixed methods (Creswell, 2012). Depending on the type of research one is conducting, the appropriate research method will be chosen.

A quantitative research method focuses on gathering data, assessing it, and reviewing the statistical results of the study. This could be done through methods such as survey developments or experiments. By making use of numerical data, quantitative research aims to clarify to which degree a statement or hypothesis is fulfilled. A large quantity of data is gathered in this case and mathematical methods are then used to verify the collected results. Commonly asked questions when using a quantitative approach tend to begin with: How many? What percentage? On average how much? And are then answered mathematically.

Qualitative methods, however, collect and assess data but focus rather on the interpretation of results instead of numbers and statistical evidence to explain a study. This method utilizes more open- ended questions and collection processes to further explore a topic. As a result, the researcher will be provided with an outcome which gathers feelings, opinion, and thorough impressions to analyze. Despite being provided with a detailed point of view, the results may however be more difficult to analyze as the researcher is not working with figures and numbers. Examples of Qualitative methods are in-depth interviews, case studies, and ethnography.

Lastly, mixed methods are for research topics in which data could be collected in both forms of qualitative and quantitative research via open-ended questions and statistical approaches to help gather an overall view of the data. This method is particularly useful for health/science topics where needing to gather opinions from two perspectives is important (Creswell, 2012).

3.3 Unit of Analysis

The following section will be defining the unit of analysis for the purposes of this thesis and identifying the main focus points. According to (Kumar, 2018), unit of analysis is "the person or object which the business researcher collects data". In this case, the unit of analysis is the individual employee working night shifts in the hospitality industry and the factors which could impact their mental health. Data will be gathered through a combination of surveys for employees and interviews with HR managers to gain a comprehensive understanding of their experiences and perspectives. The unit of analysis will be analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods which will be explained in the next section to allow for comparisons.

Survey Research

When observing methods of quantitative research, Sukamolson (2007), states that there are many ways of obtaining the data. This includes, survey research, correlation research, experimental research and causal-comparative research. As previously mentioned, a mixed approach will be used for the purposes of this thesis, therefore, a quantitative survey research is selected to establish numerical data. Survey research

is a method which utilizes a questionnaire forum to assess the characteristics of a particular population and allows the researcher to make valuable comparisons (Sukamolson, 2007). This type of research will be used to obtain a deeper insight into the current circumstances of employees within a company. Additionally, as the survey released to employees is based on the literature review, the required literature will be made available online for employees to refer to.

Interview

To add onto the selected quantitative data, an interview has been chosen as the qualitative approach for obtaining a deeper understanding of the topic. The use of an interview allows the capturing of more in depth responses from two HR managers. By selecting an interview approach however, there are three main methods for conducting them: structured, unstructured, and semi-structured interviews.

- A structured interview entails a list of questions which are pre planned and the same will questions will be asked during every interview. These questions are in a set order and the interviewee responds to each question separately. By selecting this method, it allows for easier comparison due to the consistency of the questions however this approach may not be suitable for every person being interviewed as it leaves little room for flexibility (Stuckey, 2013).

- A semi-structured interview includes a set of pre-planned topics which will determine the outline of the interview, however, other significant topics which were not predetermined could be discussed to earn a larger understanding of the topic (Stuckey, 2013).

- An unstructured interview is a method in which no questions are predetermined at all, instead the interview is conducted solely based on the larger topic of the researcher and is led by the way the interviewee responds (Chauhan, 2019).

For the purposes of this thesis, it is necessary to thoroughly explore the opinions and perspectives of the HR managers, therefore, structured interviews will be conducted. The interviews will have predetermined questions which were made to observe the main topics of this thesis. By capturing the HR managers point of views, this will

complement the numerical data collected through the survey and allow the researcher to draw a meaningful conclusion.

3.4   Construction of Questionnaires

When formulating research questions, there are multiple approaches to ask for findings. By using the literature above as the foundation for the survey, as well as demographic questions, meaningful open and closed questions could be formed. Whilst open ended and closed questions differ in terms of construction, both techniques facilitate a useful approach to collect data for different research. Open ended question typically requires a short answer from the perspective of the respondent. This allows for a more in-depth response and wider variety of possible answers rather than a limited amount to choose from. This, however, could be challenging for the researcher to record and analyze due to the range of answers which may vary from a big group. One the contrary, close ended questions are given along with a list of choices for the respondent to pick from. This is particularly beneficial when researching a bigger group of people as responses are quick to obtain, a larger amount of questions could be asked and easily analyzed through a system. The final type of question is half open questions which are formatted the same way as a closed question, with the addition of an open space for "other" that enables respondents to add their own opinion if required (Hyman & Sierra, 2016).

The following survey therefore will consist of 40 questions on the topics of mental health, employee well-being, human resources, and health impacts. The majority of questions will be a statement in which the respondent will need to select their level of agreement or disagreement towards it. Moreover, some questions are given with a list of choices for the respondent to choose from in order to gather statistics on which answer is selected the most. Lastly, a few questions are given with an open space in case the respondent is willing to elaborate.

The interview will encompass a set of 18 open questions which complement the survey and gather the perspective of the Human resources managers in order to come to a meaningful conclusion afterwards. For a valuable comparison, the interview has also been divided into the same categories as those of the survey.

3.4.1   Participants

In order to obtain statistics from employees, a survey was created via Google Forms and was published online for two weeks. Through social media platforms such as Instagram and Snapchat, as well as the business platform LinkedIn, participants could voluntarily participate if they had previous experience with shift work. Moreover, hotels were contacted via email to distribute the questionnaire to their employees, in which hotels such as Zoku Vienna and Hilton Dubai contributed and encouraged their employees to take part. Moreover, individuals who did not work in hospitality but have had experience with shift work, were encouraged to participate regardless. After a span of two weeks, 90 responses were gathered via google forms and will be analyzed in further detail below. Regarding, the qualitative data, a total of five interviews were conducted within the span of one week. Several hotels were emailed and asked whether they would be willing to answer a few questions, however a limited amount of responses were received in Austria. Only Zoku Vienna and Babula offered to take part in the interview, therefore the interviewer reached out to its connections in Asia, in which an individual from Dubai and an individual from Turkey agreed to be interviewed. Due to long distance and time constraints, the interviews were solely conducted online via Microsoft teams. Additionally, the respondents were chosen based on their position within the business and whether or not they manage employees whom preform shift work. Through both a quantitative and qualitative data gathering approaches, a vast amount of results was collected and will be analyzed in section four of the thesis.

3.4.2   Reflection on Questionnaires

The following section will present an overview of the survey and provide explanations as to why each area the survey has been divided into is relevant for this thesis.

```
                         Question Block A - Demographics

    1)  What is your gender?
        -   Female
        -   Male
        -   Transgender
        -   Non Binary
    2)  What is your age?
    3)  What is your nationality?
    4)  What is your current occupation?
    5)  In which field do you work?
    6)  What are your typical working hours?
    7)  What is your primary language?
    8)  In which country do you currently reside?
    9)  What is your current relationship status?
        -   Single
        -   In a relationship
        -   Married
        -   Divorced
```

Figure 12: Reflection on Demographics survey

The first block is demographics which will be used to gather general in-formation from the respondent in order to later analyze whether demographic factors influence mental health. Questions such as age and gender are asked to determine whether a particular age group is responding similarly or whether differences in results depended largely on the gender of the responder. Moreover, it is important to know the relationship status of the individual to see whether being single or with a family and kids influences the mental health of a person. All these factors will be taken into account and compared after the results are gathered.

```
                         Question Block B - Mental health

Q1. I am aware of the term mental health
        -   Yes
        -   No
Q2. How would you currently define your mental health status?
(excellent – good – stable – poor – very unstable)
Q3. I prioritize my mental health as much as much as my physical and social health
(Strongly agree – agree – neither agree nor disagree – disagree – strongly disagree)
Q4- I have dealt with a mental illness throughout my life time
        -   Yes
        -   No
If yes, which one? ( you can tick multiple boxes)
        -   Anxiety
        -   Depression
        -   Eating disorder
        -   Bipolar disorder
        -   Post-traumatic stress disorder
        -   Obsessive compulsive disorder
        -   Schizophrenia
        -   Addiction disorder
        -   Disassociation
        -   Other ( which one)
Q5- My mental health impacts my everyday life situations
(Strongly agree – agree – neither agree nor disagree – disagree – strongly disagree)
Q6- My environment has an influence on the state of my mental health
(Strongly agree – agree – neither agree nor disagree – disagree – strongly disagree)
Q7- Which aspects do you include in your lifestyle to benefit your mental health?
Q8-I am aware of mental health services I can reach out to support me when needed
        -   Yes
        -   No
Q9- Have you tried treatment methods to assist with your mental health? If so, which
ones?
        -   Therapy
        -   Medications
        -   Substance abuse
        -   Other
Q10 My workplace largely impacts my mental health
(Strongly agree – agree – neither agree nor disagree – disagree – strongly disagree)
Q11-My mental health influences the state of my job performance
(Strongly agree – agree – neither agree nor disagree – disagree – strongly disagree)
```

Figure 13: Reflection on "mental health" - survey

Furthermore, Block B includes 11 questions related to mental health which mostly require the responder to indicate the extent to which they agree with a statement such as how highly they prioritize their mental health or whether their environment largely affects them. This will give the researcher insight into the importance of mental health in a person's life. Additionally, three of the eleven questions require the respondent to pick a choice from a list of options to help the researcher understand which mental illnesses and treatment method appear most often. Employees are also asked to define their mental health status which will be compared to how they answer the remainder of the questions.

Question Block C - Employee wellbeing

Q1. My relationship with my team members and work colleagues is important to me
(Strongly agree – agree – neither agree nor disagree – disagree – strongly disagree)

Q2. There is an efficient level of trust and communication at the workplace
(Strongly agree – agree – neither agree nor disagree – disagree – strongly disagree)
Q3. Typically at my workplace I feel:
- Happy
- Satisfied
- Exhausted

Q4. I feel more engaged and creative at work when my mental state is doing well
(Strongly agree – agree – neither agree nor disagree – disagree – strongly disagree)

Q5. I regularly experience severe stress due to my workplace
(Strongly agree – agree – neither agree nor disagree – disagree – strongly disagree)
Q6. I perform better under a certain amount of pressure
(Strongly agree – agree – neither agree nor disagree – disagree – strongly disagree)

Q7. I have a balanced work life and social life
(Strongly agree – agree – neither agree nor disagree – disagree – strongly disagree)
Q8. I am able to engage in activities that interest me outside of work hours:
- 1x per week
- 2x per week
- 3x per week or more

Q9. My work life interferes with plans between my friends and family
(Strongly agree – agree – neither agree nor disagree – disagree – strongly disagree)
Q10. I have experienced the feeling of burnout due to my workplace:
- Yes
- No

Figure 14: Reflection on "employee wellbeing" - survey

After analyzing the general role of mental health in the individuals life, and seeing what types of disorders they have dealt with, employees are then asked to implement this in the context of their workplace. Hereby, the researcher can compare the effects of work on mental health and observe which factors in particular impact the employee's health. Questions related to work life balance are asked to understand the impact of workplace and how it interferes with an individual's social life.

Question Block D – Human Resources

Q1. I consider myself to be a valuable asset for the company I work for
(Strongly agree – agree – neither agree nor disagree – disagree – strongly disagree)

Q2. I consider the quality of my service to be impacted by the HRM team
(Strongly agree – agree – neither agree nor disagree – disagree – strongly disagree)

Q3.I feel efficiently trained, supported and managed by the HR team
(Strongly agree – agree – neither agree nor disagree – disagree – strongly disagree)

Q4. My workplace offers wellness programs to improve my mental health
- Yes
- No

If Yes, has the wellness program had a positive impact on you? ...
Q5. I would consider leaving my workplace if it is negatively affecting my mental health and I am not motivated by the HRM team
(Strongly agree – agree – neither agree nor disagree – disagree – strongly disagree)

Figure 15: Reflection on "human resources" - survey

Moreover, block D on Human resources consists mainly of statements to observe the extent to which HRM is affecting the employees. Employees are also questioned if their workplace offers wellness programs, this is important as the researcher must understand whether these programs have a positive impact on their workers or no impact at all. Moreover, by seeing whether employees feel valued and motivated by the HR team at work could be compared to the information that will be gathered during the interviews.

Question Block E – Health impacts

Q1.I have experienced one of the following due to shift work: (tick 1 or more)
- Sleep disturbances
- Nutritional issues
- Social isolation
- Fatigue
- Daytime sleepiness

Q2.I have experienced biological impacts due to working night shift
- Yes
- No

If yes, which impacts?

Q3.I rely on substances to help me complete my shift
(Strongly agree – agree – neither agree nor disagree – disagree – strongly disagree)

Q4.Which of the following substances do you consume regularly
- Caffeine
- Nicotine
- Sleeping medications
- None

Figure 16: Reflection on "health impacts" - survey

The final section of the survey consists of questions regarding health impacts on employees. This will help collect statistics on how the majority of employees have biologically or psychologically been impacted. Additionally, this helps the researcher observe which kind of impacts appear most common amongst employees and which actions they take to help them cope. By obtaining these results, it will represent whether shift work is a dangerous and risky environment for employees and the extent to which substances are used to help them.

Reflection on Interviews

The interview aims to analyze the perspective of human resources managers on the mental health of employees in the hospitality industry and how they influence these individuals. Therefore, the questions were asked to the respondent in a certain order to have a clear path which will be followed throughout. By using open ended questions, the researcher is able to obtain more concise information from the managers perspectives. Hence, the interview questions were divided into five main sections:

- o   Personal data and introduction of the business
- o   Mental health
- o   Employee-wellbeing
- o   Human resources
- o   Health impacts

Personal data and introduction of this business

The first section of the interview is created to gather general personal information of the interviewee and understand the goal of the business. The following table presents the questions asked in the first part of the interview:

May I ask for your name and age?
Could you introduce your business place? What is your role in the company?
What is the mission and vision of your company?
Could you tell me about the values of the company?

The questions listed above enable the researcher to collect general information on the company to highlight limitations which could occur from the collected data. It is important to obtain a general idea of the company and the role in which the interviewee plays within it. Specifically, the final questions regarding the mission and values of the company has the purpose of allowing the researcher to make comparisons on whether the values and mental health of the employees align. Generally, if a company if very strict about its values and wants to ensure aspects such as trust, communication and fairness are a large part of the company, this will typically reflect on the employees feelings.

Mental health

What relevance does mental have for you in general? Does it play a large role in your life?
Are you aware of the severity of mental health concerns in today's society? What do you make of this?
Are you aware of mental health issues at the workplace? Have any employees voiced their feelings about this topic to you before?

The questions mentioned above, aim to gather an understanding of how aware human resources managers are about the topic of mental health. Through asking these questions, the researchers goal is to investigate whether or not mental health

is a concern for HR managers as it is such an important topic in today's society. By gathering answers to these questions, the researcher will understand that if the manager themselves do not have a lot to say about mental health, then they are also likely not prioritizing the wellbeing of their employees.

Employee well-being

Have you witnessed the impact employee well-being has on their performance levels?
Do you consider your employees to be the most valuable asset in your organization?
How important is the individual wellbeing of your employees? Why do you think it is important?
In your opinion, how much of an impact would you say you have on the wellbeing of your employees? How do you ensure this impact is beneficial and your employees are taken care of?

The employee well-being questions above, allow the researcher to analyze how highly the mangers prioritize their employees and which practices they have implemented to showcase the importance of the human assets in their company.

Human resources

Have you implemented any health or wellness programs to assist workers with their mental health?
Which activities in your company enhance employee wellbeing? Are activities such as meditation , sports, journaling encouraged in the company's goals?
How do you ensure your employees do not reach the stage of burnout due to work overload and excessive stress? What is your typical approach when faced with an employee who is dealing with this?

The human resources questions above, enable the researcher to achieve a clearer view of the specific actions implemented to minimize negative mental health impacts. Through this, the researcher is able to compare whether health programs are only implemented through times of crisis or if these programs are a part of the company in general. The second question is asked to observe whether besides from programs, general activities are encouraged to ensure the wellbeing of their employees. Lastly,

it is critical to understand which specific approach is taken when the manager faces an employee reaching out to them for support with their mental health.

Health impacts

Are you aware of the severe health impacts which could occur as a result of shift work? Which impacts do you see appear most often?
Regarding sleep disturbance and nutritional issues which could occur, are your employees offered any services which could help them with these issues?
As social isolation is also a large problem, how do you make sure your employees still manage to have a good work life balance?
Would you say you are doing you are managing your employees wellbeing to the best of your abilities? What would you do differently?

The final set of questions focuses primarily on the main set of health impacts gathered from the literature which could result due to shift work. Understanding specific actions HR managers have taken and their responses to these impacts will help make comparisons between the problem of employees and the solution to their mental health. Lastly, it is necessary for the researcher to obtain insight as to what HR managers would like to do differently to keep the mental health of their employees in a positive condition or if they already believe they are doing their best. These results will later on be compared to how the employees are feeling in order to determine if what the manager says is accurate.

By capturing the perspectives of employees and HR managers whilst using the same question topics in both data collection techniques, a valid conclusion could be drawn as to how shift work influences employees in hospitality and which actions have been taken by managers to tackle this problem.

4 Summary and Interpretation of Collected Data

The following chapter below will go into in depth detail of the results that were obtained by the quantitative and qualitative research. The outcome of the findings will be explained and compared with the literature view and comparisons will be made between the outcome of the survey and the outcome of the conducted interviews.

4.1 Demographics

The first section presents the demographics of the interview partners and the employees which participated in the survey.

4.1.1 Interview partners

Respondent	1 Surname	2	3	4	5
Gender	Male	Male	Male	Female	Male
Age	37	27	29	23	26
Occupation	Manager of employee happy center	Duty manager	HR manager	People & Culture coordinator	Front office manager
Field	Hospitality	Hospitality	Hospitality	Hospitality	Hospitality
Mission of company	Friendly, warm experience for guests Make guests comfortable	Providing a home for business travelers and a safe space for long stays	Providing guests with a luxurious yet comfortable stay	Connecting people and ideas Making people feel at home	Make a trendy hotel for the younger generation
Values of company	Diversity Multicultural Inclusive	Everybody treated as a family member Flat hierarchy	Valuing diversity Making customers the first priority	Flat hierarchy Be the change Go above and beyond	Diversity Inclusivity Accepting everybody

Table 1: Interview Partners

The data in table 1 presents the interview partners which were successfully interviewed by the research. 4 males and 1 female manager were interviewed to gather in-depth detail from the viewpoints of managers. The managers raged in ages between 23-27 and came from Austria, United Arab Emirates and Turkey. All managers operate in the hospitality industry however have varying job occupations including Duty manager, front office manager and people and culture coordinator. Whilst the mission of the companies vary slightly, a clear focus on guest experience is shared amongst all interviewees aiming to create enjoyable experiences for people. The values of the companies highlight inclusivity and diversity indicating the importance of diversity within hospitality amongst both guests and employees.

Overall, the sample consisted of a variety of companies ranging from different countries however, the managers interviewed were relatively younger in age and mostly males which could impact the outcome due to differences in gender and fewer work experience. However, all managers which were interviewed contributed to the research study and responded to all the questions.

4.1.2   Survey participants

As mentioned previously, no particular company was chosen for the empirical research, instead a questionnaire was posted online in order to capture the perspective of employees who work in a range of different companies. Despite focusing mainly on the hospitality sector, employees who work in areas such as medical care in which shift work occurs, were also allowed to participate in the survey. The survey was made accessible through social media for two weeks and additionally some hotels agreed on sending out the survey to their employees in order to gather more responses. Within two weeks, 90 responses were obtained in the survey.

The following graphs below showcase the demographics of the 90 respondents who participated in the survey and are examined in further detail below.

Q1. What is your gender?
90 responses
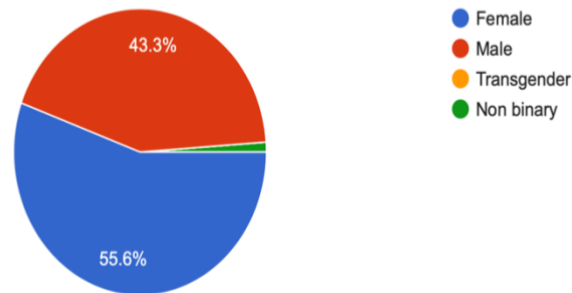
Graph 1: Gender data

As seen in the graph presented above, a higher number of females (55.6%) participated in the Questionnaire than men (43.3%) and one respondent selected "Non binary". According to (Otufowora et al., 2021), women typically tend to show more interest in survey participation than males, which aligns with the results collected. Moreover, Females often find it interesting to be part more of a study and therefore are more likely to voluntarily participate in a given survey than men (Otufowora et al., 2021). Additionally, as the topic of the survey is focused mainly on mental health, literature shows that this may have resonated with women more than men as they generally report a higher amount of mental health problems than males (Otten et al., 2021). Therefore, despite a large percentage of males participating in the survey, research suggests that due to a higher interest in research experiments and stronger connection to mental health, more females opted to participate than men.

Q2. What is your age?
90 responses
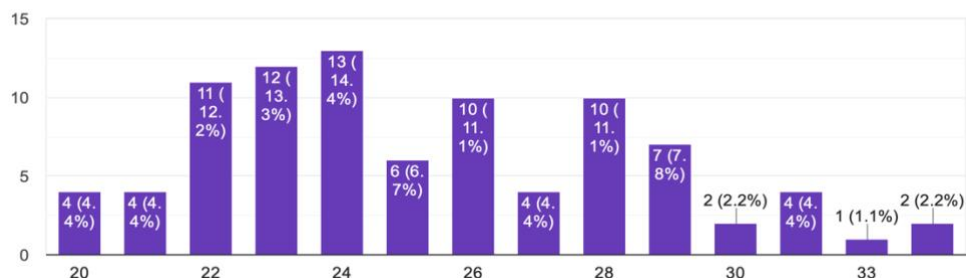
Graph 2: Age data

The 90 respondents were mostly young adults ranging between the ages of 20-35, with the most common age number of the participants being 24 at 14.4%. Literature states that amongst university research, a higher amount of younger participants usually respond than older participants (Larson et al., 2011). This could be mainly due to the fact that the survey was posted online, specifically on social media which is far more popular amongst the younger generation than the older generation. Moreover, for a research survey aiming to mostly gather data from individuals who are working in the hospitality industry, research demonstrates the mean age of hospitality workers is 22 (*Hospitality Workers (Not Covered Elsewhere) | Labour Market Insights*, n.d.). Therefore, due to the average age of workers being primarily young and the higher likelihood of youth using social media, most respondents were still in their young adulthood.

Regarding the nationalities of the respondents, a range of different answers were given. Respondents came from many different areas in Europe, Asia, Africa and North America.
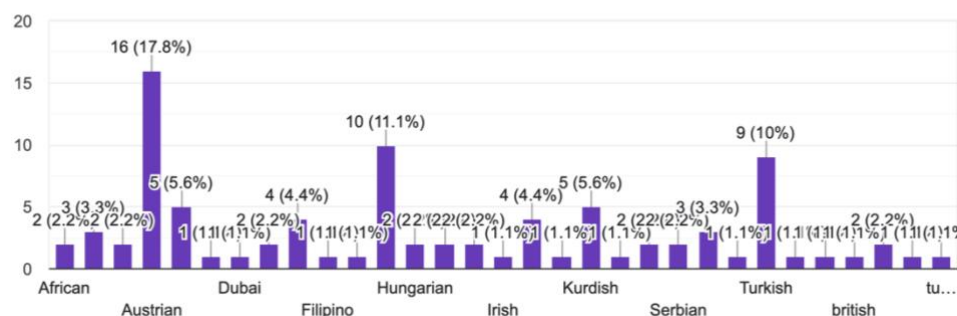
Graph 3: Nationality data

The highest percentage of respondents came from Austria with (17.8%), Germany with (11.1%) and Turkey with (10%). As the survey was published in Austria and mostly hotels in Austria were contacted to distribute the survey to their employees, the most common nationalities found in these hotels are Austrian and German. Moreover, the researcher visited several bars and restaurants in Vienna, in which there appeared to be many Turkish servers who offered to participate in the survey and share their opinions. Additionally, a range of respondents came from many different places all around the world, this represents the diversity which is typically seen in hospitality.

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In terms of their current occupation, a variety of different jobs in the Hospitality sector were named as shown in the table below. The most common occupations amongst the respondents were waiters/waitresses with 33.3% and bartender and receptionist with 12.2%. Outside of hospitality, four respondents mentioned their current occupation to be a medical health care worker in the emergency department. As of the field the respondents work in, 95.6% answered with Hospitality, whilst 4.4% responded with Health care.

Occupation	Number of respondents
Bartender	11
Waitress / Waiter	30
Receptionist / Front office	11
Duty manager	3
Health care worker	4
Hostess	1
Night clerk	7
Sidekick (F&B/ bar/ rooms)	10
Events coordinator	4
Barista	2
Security	3
Housekeeping	4

Table 2: Occupation data

As the majority of respondents are younger in age, it is more common to work in areas of hospitality such as waitressing and bartending which typically require less educational demands, and more social skills which may appear common amongst young adults (Eriksson et al., 2020). Therefore, fewer

respondents selected jobs in higher positions such as Duty manager or event coordinators.

Working hours	Number of Respondents
Early shift (7am-3pm)	20
Mid shift (11am-7pm)	27
Evening shift (4pm-11pm)	28
Late shift (6pm-2am)	32
Night shift (11pm-7am)	30

Table 3: Working hours data

Table 3 demonstrates the results of the respondents typical working hours. Despite there being 90 respondents, 147 answers were collected on question 6, as 57 of the respondents selected more than one answer, meaning that over 50% of respondents are typically scheduled on alternating shifts. The highest number of respondents selected late shift (6pm-2am) as their most common working hour which is typically found in restaurants, bars and hotels which provide 24hr service.
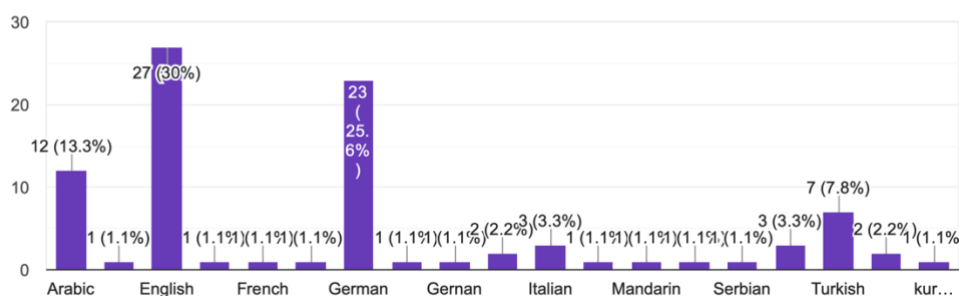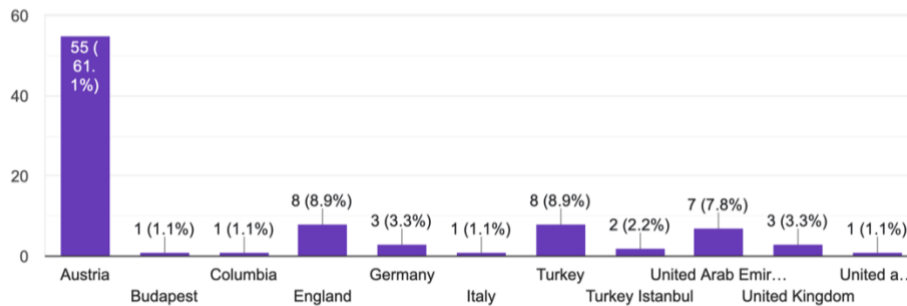

Graph 4: language data

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Q8. In which country do you currently reside?
90 responses

Graph 5: Country data

The above graphs display the results of question 7 and 8 regarding the respondents primary language and country. As seen in the graph the majority of respondents reside in Austria with 61.1% and a few respondents also reside in England , Turkey and the UAE as the survey was also sent out to family members who live in these specific countries abroad. The primary language of the respondents correlate with these results making German, Arabic, Turkish and English the four main languages spoken amongst the respondents. Many other languages and countries appeared additionally demonstrating the diversity and inclusivity which is typically seen across occupations in hospitality.

Q9. What is your current relationship status?
90 responses

- Single
- In a relationship
- Married
- Divorced
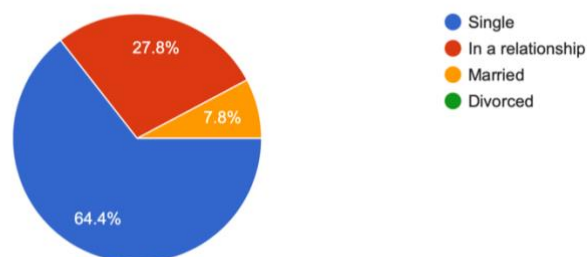
Graph 6: Relationship data

The final graph above in the demographics section represents the current relationship status of the 90 respondents. There is a clear representation of single employees with 64.4%, whilst 27.8% reported to be in a relationship and only 7.8% are married. This result correlates with the fact that as previously mentioned, the majority of employees working in hospitality are young and therefore may not be married yet. A high percentage of employees not being in a relationship however, suggests that it is

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typically difficult for employee's working shift work to find time for meaningful relationships are therefore opt to remain single (Rowe, 2021).

4.2 Summary and interpretation of the Questionnaires

The following section will present a deeper insight into the results gathered by participants regarding the topics of mental health and employee wellbeing.

4.2.1 Mental health survey questions
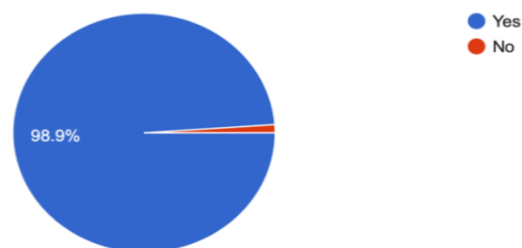
Graph 7: Mental health awareness

Graph 8: Mental health status
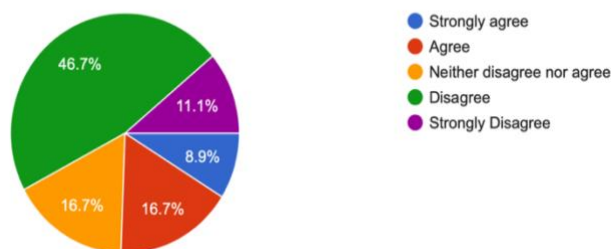
Graph 9: Prioritizing mental health

The second section of the survey aimed to gather more information from participants regarding mental health. The three diagrams above represent the following results. Question 10 presented a clear agreem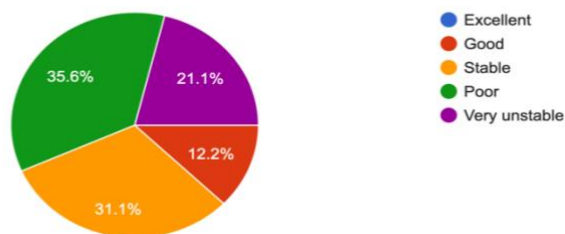ent between respondents as 89 of 90 participants stated that they are aware of mental health. When questioned about their mental health status, 56.7% responded negatively, with 35.6% selecting poor and only a minority of 12.2% selected good. Lastly in question 12, most of the participants (46.7%) disagreed that they prioritize their mental health, whilst 16.7% agreed that they prioritize it and 8.9% strongly agreed.

This view of the quantitative data is consistent with the literature review discussed above. With the topic of mental health becoming increasingly popular amongst today's society, almost every single respondent is aware of the term. Moreover, due to the stressful environment of the hospitality industry, a clear negative connotation was to seen in question 11 with very few respondents claiming their mental health to be good. Moreover, the result of question 11 may also link to the fact that only 25% of respondents agreed to prioritizing their mental health. This indicates that, not taking care of mental health, could imply why many of the respondents are mentally struggling.

What relevance does mental health have for you in general? Does it play a large role in your life?	
Interviewee	Response
Abusido	"plays a crucial role in my life… is the main determinant of the quality of life I like to possess… ensure that an individual lives a healthy life where they are able to fulfill their basic needs"
Dalvi	"mental health is one of the main things I think about… I really try to focus on bettering my mental health because I believe it does affect every single aspect of my life… affects my physical performance… also effects my ability to socialize with others"
Yilmaz	"plays one of the biggest roles in my life…I try to prioritize it in my life as best as I can…it is just as important as our physical health"
Retter	"mental health has a big role for sure in my life…without having a stable mental health or manageable mental health I'm not able to operate good and not able to provide any good service"
Rakhshanpour	"for sure it plays a big role in my life… I do not think about it a lot… an aspect that must be included in everyone's life and must be taken care of."

Table 4: Interview question 5

During the interview, all respondents showed a clear agreement on mental health playing a clear large role in their lives. Furthermore, the experts agreed that many aspects of life are affected if ones mental health is not in a good condition. Specifically respondents 2 and 3 stated that it is an aspect which they try to prioritize more, indicating its importance to them. However it is interesting to note that only respondent 6, claimed to not think about mental health a lot although it is important for them. When viewing these responses, it is evident that mental health holds high importance to each of the experts but to varying degrees.

This outcome is clear as many people nowadays have witnessed the effect of mental health on their daily lives and therefore aim to prioritize it. Additionally, the responses of the experts align with the survey participants as both sides are aware of mental health, see its importance, but may not prioritize it at all times. According to (Mahp, 2021), although the majority of people believe that taking care of mental health is vital for a healthy life, only 26% of people take action towards improving this which can be evidently see in question 12. However, with daily life distractions, individuals

typically may disregard mental health and therefore only a few try to prioritize it such as 2 respondents in the survey (Mahp, 2021).

Q13. I have dealt with a mental illness throughout my life time
90 responses
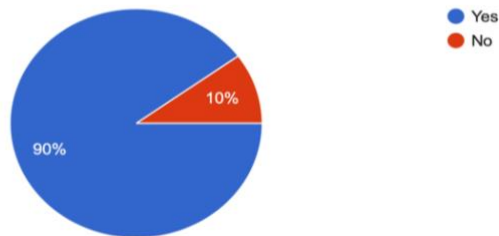
Graph 10: Mental illness data

Q14. If yes, which one? (you can tick multiple boxes)
81 responses
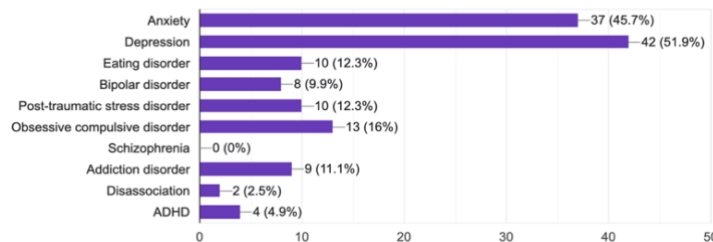
Graph 11: Mental health issues data

Q15. My mental health impacts my everyday life situations
89 responses
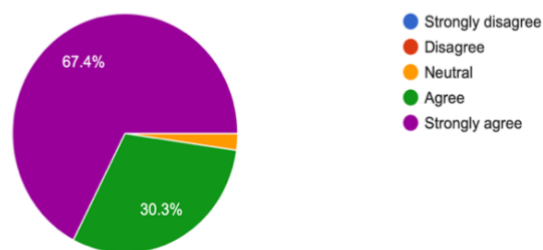
Graph 12: Mental health impacts data

As seen above, the results of Q13 and Q14 indicate that 90% of all respondents have dealt with a mental illness in their life time with anxiety (45.7%) and depression with (51.9%) appearing to be the most common mental health conditions across participants. Moreover, 97.4% of participants agree that their mental health impacts everyday life situations. This demonstrates that a large amount of hospitality workers typically struggle with their mental health.

Are you aware of the severity of mental health concerns in today's society? What do you make of this?	
Interviewee	Response
Abusido	"many people nowadays struggle from mental health… demanding way of life that has become a norm…People face depression, anxiety, stress, and other countless mental health issues"
Dalvi	" in the society of social media… everybody is aware of just the good parts of people's lives which they post online, I believe it severely affects our lives because we only see the good things which others experience… definitely affecting Gen Z and millennials a lot"
Yilmaz	" I see many people both adults and the younger generation dealing with many health issues… Here in Turkey and I feel like in the majority of the middle east for example, is it in engraved in our culture to not speak about mental health… mental health is affecting a large portion of the population, even when some people do not like to admit it"
Retter	" I definitely see a big increase, I think it has a lot to do with people being more in touch with their mental health… a lot more people are aware of it… is very easy to develop a mental health issue if someone isolates themselves at home… don't have a chance to really sit with their emotions"
Rakhshanpour	" I have seen many people in modern society deal with this topic… may not even be actually diagnosed with a mental disorder but because they are facing a bit of difficulty…we all have many ups and down".

Table 5: Interview question 6

The respondents results to this question during the interview indicate that they are all aware of the seriousness of mental health concerns in today's society. Abusido, Dalvi and Retter stated particular reasons which could be the cause of the increase in mental health issues such as work demands, social media and self-isolation. Additionally, Yilmaz pointed out the cultural taboo which typically surrounds mental health in some societies and Rakhshanpour highlighted the idea of individuals assuming they have mental health disorders because of some low points in their lives although not having been medically diagnosed.

These results imply that various aspects in an individual's life play role in determining their mental state and due to cultural differences, it may be more challenging for some people to open up about their struggles. This aligns with the results from the survey which show the increase in mental disorders, specifically depression and anxiety which are the most common in today's society (Kalin, 2020). Furthermore, the high amount of respondents dealing with mental illnesses link to the point respondents 6 (Rakhshanpour) made about few diagnoses. According to (Bruffaerts., 2015), many people claim to be dealing with a disorder but do not meet the full criteria of a specific mental illness, therefore one should not automatically assume and self-diagnose themselves.

| Q16. Which aspects do you include in your lifestyle to benefit your mental health?	
Aspects	**Number of respondents**
Sports / Exercise	30
Spending time with family and friends	37
Travelling	1
Reading	5
Smoking	3
Cooking / Baking	4
Alcohol	4
Journaling	2

Table 6: Beneficial aspects data

Q17. I am aware of mental health services I can reach out to support me when needed
90 responses
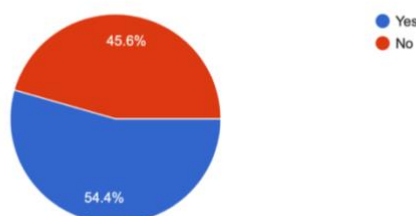
**Graph 13: Metal health services data**

Q18. Have you tried treatment methods to assist with your mental health? If so, which ones?
90 responses

- Therapy
- Medications
- Substance abuse
- None

52.2%
8.9%
12.2%
26.7%
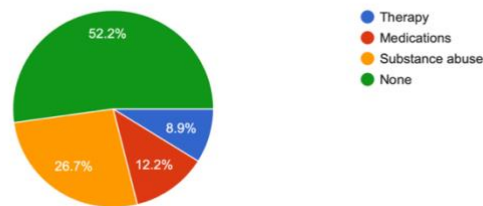
Graph 14: Treatment methods data

In questioning participants on which aspects they include to improve their mental health, 86 responses were shared, in which spending time with family (43%) and exercising (34.9%) stood out as the two most beneficial methods. Moreover, a split with response was shared when asked about the awareness of mental health services with the majority (54.4%) agreeing that they are aware. Despite this awareness 52.2% of participants have not reached out for treatment, only 8.9% reached out to treatment methods for their issues, whilst the rest relied on medications and substances. These results align with literature as, (Umberson & Montez, 2010) stated that social interactions and relationships show major improvement in mental health, therefore being involved in a healthy relationship with friends and family is an important aspect which people keep in their lives. Furthermore, question 17 and 18 imply that although mental health services are common amongst many people due to the awareness in today's society, a low amount of people rely on these services for many reasons. According to (Mojtabai et al., 2011), many individuals suffering with mental health issues believe that they do not require treatment, do not believe that therapy could help them or they prefer to handle their own problems by themselves. This literature reflects itself on the answers of question 18 as to why many people opt for finding their own solutions besides treatment, although this may not be beneficial.

Q19. My workplace largely impacts my mental health
90 responses

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

71.1%
26.7%
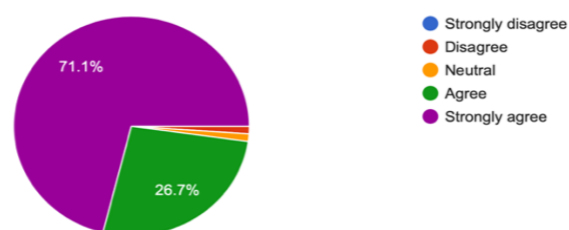
Graph 15: Workplace impact on mental health data

The results of question 19 displayed a very distinct agreement that workplace highly influences ones mental health with 71.1% strongly agreeing and 26.7% agreeing to the statement. This implies the severity of workplace as a crucial factor to take into consideration when observing mental health. Depending on the workplace conditions, individuals will either be positively or negatively affected however, as work is an area in which people spend a large amount of their time, is has clearly shown to have an impact on their mental state. According to the (World Health Organization: WHO, 2022), ones work environment and the way the feel during their job largely impacts their health, this aligns with the outcome of the participants responses. Moreover, when observing the respondents views during the interviews, all experts appear aware of mental health concerns at work mentioning specifically that this is a reoccurring issue in the hospitality industry. Additionally, all experts stated that they have had an employee voice their concern regarding their mental health apart from respondent five who noted that the younger employee's in the company do not typically speak up about their issues.

Q7. Are you aware of mental health issues at the workplace? Have any employees voiced their feelings about this topic to you before?	
Interviewee	Response
Abusido	" we had an employee raise her concerns about how she had been dealing with discrimination and how it started to affect her mental state… with a large number of employees it is not an easy task to continuously monitor".
Dalvi	"I have of course heard from some employees of the effect of this job on their mental health…hospitality is a very physically…very emotionally draining profession…it is a very emotional labor where you always have to be happy with your guests…you constantly have to be pretend to be happy
Yilmaz	"especially in the hospitality industry where employees can experience high levels of stress and emotional demands which can take a toll on their mental health… I have definitely had employees voice their concerns"
Retter	" people have come to me and expressed their concerns for sure, I am aware to some extent… unfortunately in position of manager I do not get maybe as much insight as a fellow colleague"
Rakhshanpour	"definitely aware that it could occur yes…because of work or because of personal factors… especially with the newer generation …they never mention it openly

Table 7: Interview question 7

Respondent 4 added onto this by stating that it is colleagues who typically receive more insight in each other's problems rather than the management team. However, many factors such as interactions with guests and work load have been recognized amongst the experts as factors which may influence ones mental health. These results indicate that work generally plays an important role in impacting one's mental health and therefore when requiring assistance from the workplace, employees typically express their feeling towards management in order to find a solution (Greenwood, 2021).

4.2.2 Employee wellbeing survey questions
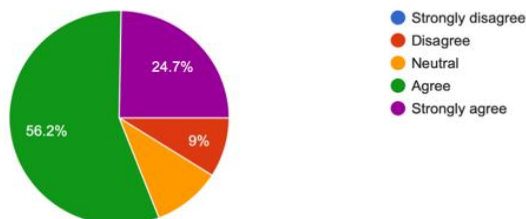
Q20. My mental health influences the state of my job performance
89 responses
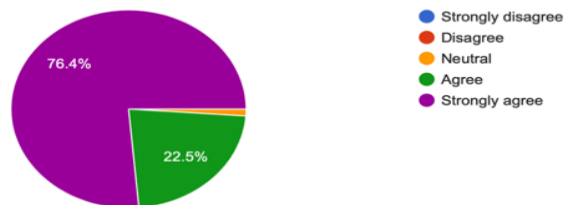
Graph 16: Work relationships data

´Q21. My relationship with my team members and work colleagues is important to me
89 responses

Graph 17: Job performance data

Q22. There is an efficient level of trust and communication at the workplace
90 responses
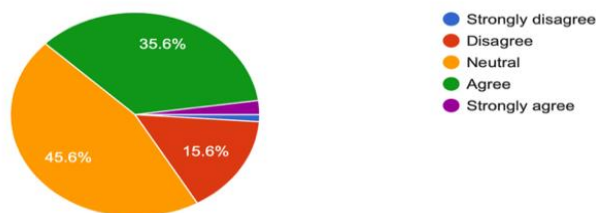
Graph 18: Trust and communication data

In analyzing whether employees value their relationships with team members and colleagues, a positive result was given with 56.2% agreeing and 24.7% strongly agreeing to the statement. However, when observing the level of trust and communication at work, 45.6% agreed that it was neutral, 35.6% agreed and 15.6% disagreed to having efficient trust. This implies that despite most employees finding importance in their relationships with others at work, a large portion of them do not particularly agree to having sufficient enough trust to speak up comfortably with their work members about personal aspects. This corresponds with interview question 7 in which although a few employees do openly speak up at work about their problems, some individuals would rather keep quiet about their issues or only open up to close colleagues. According to (Dlamini et al., 2022), trust at the workplace plays a large role in the employees' health and their performance at work, demonstrating why this aspect is significant for employees and if not found present, could directly impact their feelings and mental health.
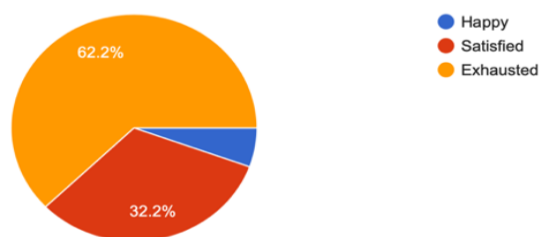
Graph 19: Feelings at work data
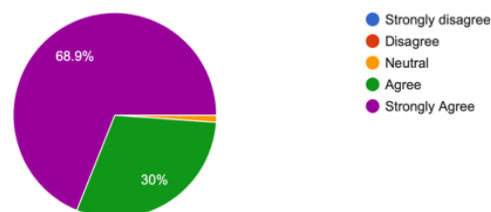
Graph 20: Engagement and creativty at work data

The three graphs above display the relationship between employees, performance levels and mental health. As seen in graph 18, 98.9% of employees agreed that their work performance is impacted by the state of their mental health. This result is

strongly linked to graph 20 in which 98.9% also agree that they are more engaged and creative when their mental health is positive. Despite this impact, graph 19 shows that 62.2% of participants normally feel exhausted at their workplace with only 32.2% feeling typically satisfied. This view implies the clear correlation connecting performance levels and mental health which employees are evidently aware of during their job.

Q8. Have you witnessed the impact employee well-being has on their performance levels?	
Interviewee	Response
Abusido	" When employees are taken care of and feel comfortable in the work place, this is a motivation for them to do things right and efficiently which is directly correlated to their performance levels"
Dalvi	" I have seen who are not doing very well mentally, their energy is very drained…less enthusiastic which can in general affect their performance at work.. also impact negatively towards guest experience"
Yilmaz	" where an employee comes in feeling happy, healthy and in a good mood, they are far more productive, engaged and motivated…when they have been stressed for a while, their performance tends to suffer which is clearly seen by how they interact with myself and other guests…quality of work decreases when they are sad"
Retter	"I have had a situation where the performance worsened because of their mental health…it's not always easy to state the exact reason and what the impacts were… I also witnessed an employee's performance improve a lot because of their mental health…been performing better as they felt much happier"
Rakhshanpour	" will mostly likely worsen when they are not in a healthy mental state… have witnessed this mostly with the more physically demanding tasks… under a lot of stress, they usually do not perform very well"

Table 8: Interview question 8

When comparing the results of the survey to question 8 of the interview, there is a clearly similarity joining the two viewpoints. In the table above it is shown that all experts seem to have witnessed instances where an employee's mental health has impacted their productivity and quality of work. Respondent 1 (Abusido) notes that employees who feel comfortable and cares for are more motivated, whilst respondent 2 (Dalvi) states that employees who are not doing well mentally tend to be less enthusiastic which could negatively impact guest experience. Furthermore these

findings are illustrated in (Lu et al., 2022) which through conducting an experiment found a strong positive association between work performance and mental health of employees. However, due to work overload and high demands, hospitality employee's usually feel exhausted at the workplace, directly impacting their creativity, engagement and overall satisfaction levels (Inam et al., 2021). Overall, the responses suggest that employers need to prioritize employee well-bring to improve their performance levels at work.

Q25. I regularly experience severe stress due to my workplace
90 responses
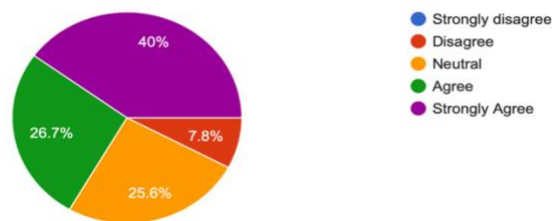
Graph 21: stress data

Q26. I perform better under a certain amount of pressure
89 responses
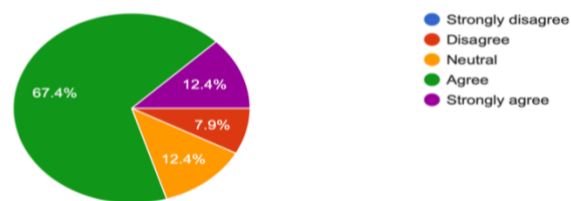
Graph 22: Pressure data

Q30. I have experienced the feeling of burnout due to my workplace:
90 responses
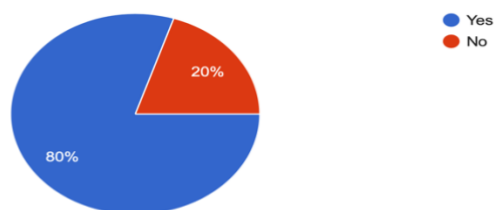
Graph 23: Burnout data

When observing the graphs presenting stress levels at work it is seen that in graph 21, 66.7% of respondents experience stress on a regular basis whilst a minority of 7.8% do not. Despite this, graph 22 demonstrates a large agreement (89.8%) towards employees believing they perform better under a certain amount of pressure.

Additionally, 80% of all respondents have experienced a period of burnout because of their work which is seen in graph 23. These results imply that most of employee's doing shift work have been exposed to high workloads, long hours and stressful environments for an extended period of time which has resulted them to burnout. Nevertheless, graph 22 indicates that a certain amount of pressure is favored by employees in order to motivate them to work better.

Q14. How do you ensure your employees do not reach the stage of burnout due to work overload and excessive stress? What is your typical approach when faced with an employee who is dealing with this?	
Interviewee	Response
Abusido	" if an employee is under stress and would prefer to take on another shift instead of their scheduled shift…we definitely adhere to their request.. Secondly we allow the transfer of tasks…My approach is to always give my employees flexibility"
Dalvi	" somethings are not always in your hands… trying to be more open about being approached by employees… try to talk to our employees and come up with a plan… some people would prefer to work in the morning for example, so we really are trying to be fair to everyone…recently asking about a 4 day work week…can spend more time to themselves and with their family and friends"
Yilmaz	" very stressful industry which does naturally cause an employee to burnout...high emotional and physical demands… We monitor workloads…provide adequate breaks and time off… I take my time to listen to their problems with a very open mind"
Retter	" we typically give all employees similar schedules, nobody gets more or less…not always in our hands to control… allow them to voice their opinion freely all the time… make them feel seen , understood and listened to"
Rakhshanpour	" try to give them a few days break so they can rest if they feel very overwhelmed or speak to them to see if they would prefer to be scheduled on a different shift"

Table 9: Interview question 14

In ensuring employees do not reach the stage of burnout due to work overload and stress, managers being open to feedback and listening to employees concerns is seen as key to support them with their problems. Moreover, a focus on flexible shift changes and adequate time off is highlighted as important approaches to reduce stress on the employees. Two experts specifically highlighted that due to the stressful industry of hospitality, it is at times challenging for the manager to control the workload of employees. Overall, it is implied that the managers have witnessed stress and burnout to be an important point of concern which

should be managed, specifically due to shift work which could be made more flexible in order to support employees and improve work performance.

When comparing the qualitative view to the quantitative data, the results align. Meaning due to the hospitality industry being emotionally exhausting on an employee, they are at higher risk of burnout which explains the results above, this is supported in the literature by (Ali et al., 2022). Furthermore, according to (Lederer et al., n.d.) a few of the main methods to combat employee burnout are flexible work arrangements, monitoring workloads and making them feel listened to. Despite these methods having been implemented by the managers, it has not been beneficial for all employees meaning they may require other aspects in order to be satisfied with their workplace.
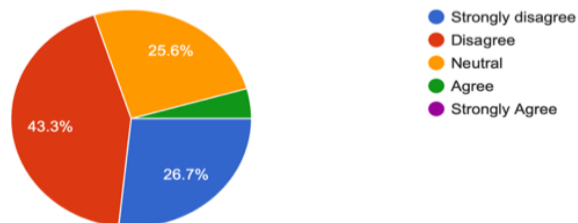
Graph 24: Worklife balance data
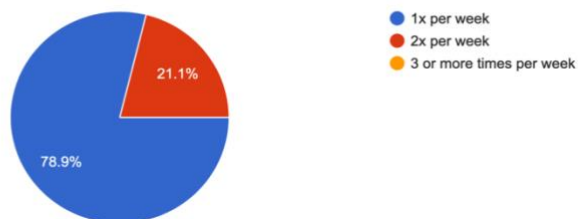
Graph 25: Engagement in activities data
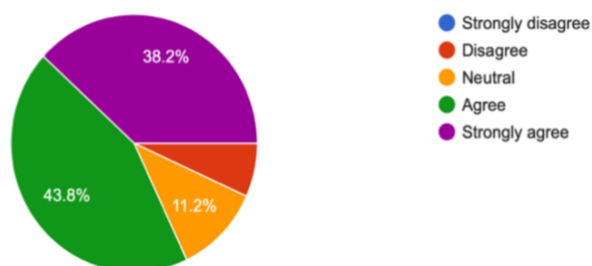
Graph 26: Worklife interference data

In the three graphs presented above, employees were questioned about their work life balance, 43.3% disagreed and 25.6% strongly disagreed to having a balanced work life and social life. Moreover, when asked how many times employees were able to engage in activities outside of work, 78.9% stated only 1x per week, whilst no participant selected 3x or more. Additionally, 82% agreed that their work life does in fact come in between the way of plans with their family and friends. These results prove that there is a clear strong imbalance between the social and work life of employees working shift work. Due to factors such as exhaustion, different schedules and long working hours, it is evidently extremely difficult for most employees to find time for themselves to partake in activities they enjoy and see their friends and family.

Q17. As social isolation is also a large problem, how do you make sure your employees still manage to have a good work life balance?	
Interviewee	Response
Abusido	" anyone that works 3 consecutive night shifts in a row cannot be scheduled on night shift for the next 5 days"
Dalvi	" we have a 50 /50 scheduling, meaning they do both night shifts and regular evening shifts so that they could spend time with their family… make sure that everybody at some point in the month is scheduled for a week straight on morning shifts so that they get to enjoy their life in the evening"
Yilmaz	"encourage team building activities and social events…host employee parties, gatherings and outings… ask each employee for their preferred days off every month"
Retter	" currently in the trial phase of a 4 day work week meaning that people really have three days off…trying to make an equal balance for them…ideal solution would be if we find matches , one person who likes morning shifts, one person who likes evening and then we match them up"
Rakhshanpour	" we try to make shifts as fair as possible… As we are a very small team, I would say it is relatively easy to satisfy most of the employees by listening to them if they would like to request any shift changes"

Table 10: Interview question 17

In analyzing how managers ensure that their employees have an adequate work life balance, a large focus was shed on the shift scheduling. Respondents mentioned a maximum 3 days in a row rule for night shift workers, a method of keeping employees on the same shift for a minimum of 1 week, and a 4 day work week to receive 3 days off. Moreover, team outings, social events and parties planned by the company were

also mentioned as ways to encourage a work life balance. Despite this being a challenge for some managers, respondent 6 highlighted that is quite easy to manage work life balance amongst employees as they are a small company. These results indicate that actions have been implemented in various hotels to try to combat the issue of work life balance. Managers have seen that the largest cause of imbalance is due to the 24hr service required in hospitality which minimizes the time employees are able to engage in their own activities. It is however interesting to note that a smaller company suffers less with this issue, this raises the question whether the size of the company and number of employees play a large role in employee work and social life.

If one considers the results of questions 27, 28 and 29 from the survey, one can conclude that employees are struggling to maintain a balance between work life and social life and therefore have voiced their opinions to their corresponding managers whom have taken actions to try to resolve this issue. As stated by (Cutajar, 2009), an adequate work life balance will lead to satisfied employees and improved work performance, as this is not the case with the survey participants, it explains why they generally feel exhausted and stressed at work. Moreover, according to (Connick, 2014), other than implementing flexibility, one of the best ways to handle employee work life balance is to work with each employee individually, implying that this is a far easier task to maintain in a smaller company in order to satisfy each worker.

4.2.3 Human resources survey questions
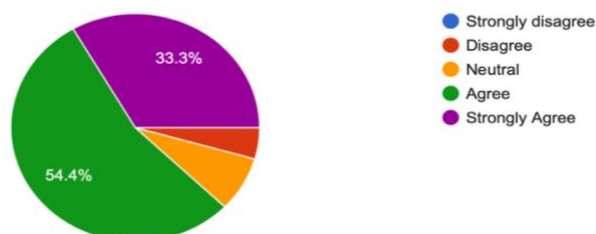
Graph 27: Valuable asset data

Question 31 presents the results of whether or not employees consider themselves to be a valuable asset to the company they work for. The results were positive as 54.4% agreed and 33.3% of participants strongly agreed to the statement. This result shows that employees believe they have a strong sense of self-worth and that they are contributing positively to the organizations success.

Q9. Do you consider your employees to be the most valuable asset in your organization?	
Interviewee	Response
Abusido	" I cannot emphasize how important employees are… hospitality industry cannot support itself and function properly without skilled employees"
Dalvi	" 100%... they are the ones providing the service in this industry, without human touch it will not be anything"
Yilmaz	" Absolutely 100%... most valuable asset without a doubt… Every experience which a guest has in our hotel is made by the service which our employees provide… important for us as managers to invest in our employees"
Retter	" Yes 100%...we are putting a huge focus on our employees and they are the most important asset"
Rakhshanpour	" Yes for sure 100%"

Table 11: Interview question 9

When observing this aspect from the managers points of view, experts were asked whether they consider their employees to be the most valuable asset, in which they all strongly agreed and emphasized that their company would simply not function without their employees. This highlights that specifically in the hospitality industry, employees are contributing the most to the organization and they are the ones responsible for creating the guest experiences. Therefore both sides align and indicate that the participants themselves as well as managers, see the importance of employees in this industry which solely encompasses human interactions. According to (Belias & Trihas., 2022), especially in tourism and hospitality, human resources are the most important asset for the business therefore, as also mentioned by during an interview, it is crucial for companies to invest in their human personnel, ensure they are well trained and taken care of to result in high quality service.

Q32. I consider the quality of my service to be impacted by the HRM team
90 responses
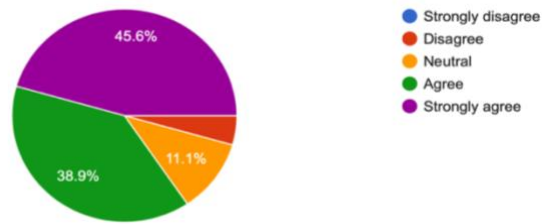
Graph 28: Quality of service data

Q33. I feel efficiently trained, supported and managed by the HR team
90 responses
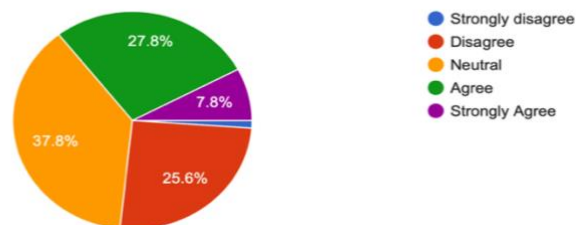
Graph 29: Management by HR team data

In questioning participants if they consider their service to be impacted by the Human resources team, the majority with 45.6% strongly agreed and 38.9% agreed to the statement. However in question 33, a split result was given when asking if employees feel efficiently trained and supported by their HR team, 25.6% disagreed, 27.8% agreed and 37.8% selected neutral. The above two graphs imply that employees see a huge significance in their HRM team as it can either worsen or improve their performance depending on the managers, however as question 33 gave a split result, this demonstrates that each company is managing their employees differently leaving some to be more satisfied than others. Some employees could be given more flexibility than others or have a more flat hierarchy implemented in their company values thus impacting employees feeling towards the HRM team and their performance .

Q10. How important is the individual wellbeing of your employees? Why do you think it is important?	
Interviewee	Response
Abusido	" If employees are not supported, appreciated, and motivated there would be a significant drop in their performance levels"

Dalvi	" if you are not already in touch with your own personal emotions it can really negatively affect your mental health and your performance at work"
Yilmaz	" Extremely important… when I see that my employees are happy and come into work with a positive mood, this reflects immediately on their performance and the guests in the hotel…better customer service which is crucial for the success of our hotel"
Retter	" I don't think it's possible to always have the best mental health , there's always going to be situations where peoples mental state drops but in times like that they need a team with good mental health that will bring them back up"
Rakhshanpour	"very important…we rely a lot of on our employees…if they are not doing well and not able to perform at a good standard…will have an impact on the entire company"

Table 12: Interview question 10

Q11. In your opinion, how much of an impact would you say you have on the wellbeing of your employees? How do you ensure this impact is beneficial and your employees are taken care of?	
Interviewee	Response
Abusido	"I contribute a fair amount to their well-being… I try my best to always interact and engage with my staff…also in their personal life…try to organize events outside of work…
Dalvi	" I can observe how my employees are doing… that we really value a flat hierarchy where all the management is available to be approached at all times… I can use this position to observe and evaluate employees to see how they are doing"
Yilmaz	" would like to say I have a significant impact on their wellbeing… by working closely with my employees to understand their needs and concerns…regularly check in on them…provide them every few months with opportunities for professional growth…be as approachable as possible"
Retter	" depends on how much the people are at work, so for full-timers I believe we have much more of an impact… we also have to see what makes a situation better…with the limitations that we do have as a business…I always like to be very approachable… on the floor, try to be there, make small talk, make personal connections and get to know them more"
Rakhshanpour	" I think I have an impact… really try to communicate with them and get to know them on a more personal basis…give them advice…approachable personality and showing that you care, really positively impacts the employees

Table 13: Interview question 11

As can be seen in the tables above, the experts responses to question 10 all align with one another. All experts agreed that the individual wellbeing of their employees is of high importance for them specifically because they are heavily relied on and it will negatively impact their performance if not efficiently managed. Moreover, question 11 asked experts how much of an impact they believe to have on their employees wellbeing, in which all experts agreed to have an adequate amount of impact. One respondent specified that it is full timers who are more impacted by HR as they spend a higher amount of time at work than part timers. Overall, the term 'approachable' was mentioned the most as the method to how managers ensure they have a beneficial impact on their employees. The results of the above two questions imply that managers prioritize the wellbeing of their employees mostly because they are dependent on them to run the business successfully, and without taking care of the employees, they will most likely fail. It is clear that managers are aware of the impact they have on employees which is also demonstrated in question 32 of the survey. Furthermore, managers have witnessed that connecting with employees on a more personal level by getting to know them will likely make them feel more comfortable to voice their concerns to management and find solutions to improve their overall wellbeing and the success of the company. This is supported through the literature by (Agarwal, 2021) which states that HRM practices focusing mainly on employee wellbeing plays a significant role in determining the overall health and satisfaction of the employee.

Q34. My workplace offers wellness programs to improve my mental health
90 responses

71.1%

28.9%

● Yes
● No
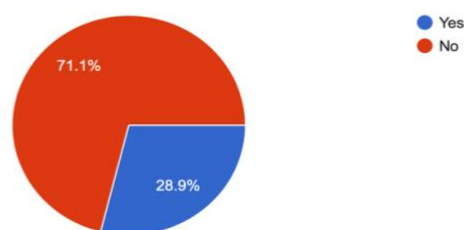
Graph 30: Wellness programs data

As shown in the graph above, 28.9% of participants claimed that their workplace offers a type of wellness program for them whereas 71.1% said that this is not offered. Moreover, in question 35 participants which have experienced a wellness program were asked what impact it has had on them, in which the respondents shared overall

positive thoughts. An improvement in mental health, feeling valued, feeling cared for and feeling comfortable to speak up were the most commonly shared impacts of a wellness program. This suggests that the majority of hospitality companies have not implemented wellness programs specifically designed to assist employees with their mental health. However, if implemented, wellness programs could positively impact employees by improving their job satisfaction leading to overall better job performances.

Q36. I would consider leaving my workplace if it is negatively affecting my mental health and I am not motivated by the HRM team
88 responses
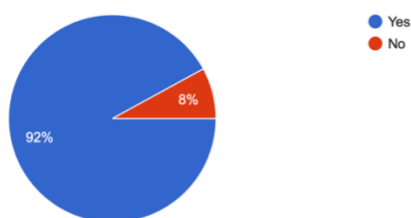
Graph 31: Consider leaving workplace data

In question 36, almost all respondents (92%) agreed to leaving their workplace if is having a negative effect on their mental health and they are not receiving support from the HR team whilst 8% stated that they would remain. Through this result, one can conclude that a few people may choose to stay in their work regardless due to several reasons such as financial dependency, a fear of un employment or simply a resistance to change as they find it more difficult to leave their comfort zone. Whereas the majority would leave if the mental issues become too severe or believe they could find better opportunities elsewhere.

Q12. Have you implemented any health or wellness programs to assist workers with their mental health?	
Interviewee	Response
Abusido	" we send out anonymous ballots to all employees where they get the chance to voice their concerns about anything to do with the organizations operations or structure"
Dalvi	" we have a designated tie up with a mental coach and as a hotel we try to provide a discount and a free session"
Yilmaz	" counselling services which we are partnered with online incase an employee needs to reach out to someone… monthly mindfulness sessions...coach comes in to speak to our employees and we have access to our fitness facilities"

Retter	" monthly one on one meetings which each employee so speak to them…on a personal basis…But we also have a psychologist who is an expert in these things"
Rakhshanpour	"Unfortunately no we have not, a wellness or health program specifically for our employees, we have not done that yet"

Table 14: Interview question 12

Q13. Which activities in your company enhance employee wellbeing? Are activities such as meditation , sports, journaling encouraged in the company's goals?	
Interviewee	Response
Abusido	" we play a trivia game… first place winner they receive 3 vouchers… free access to all of our facilities such as our sauna, jacuzzi, gym and meditation room"
Dalvi	" do try to do all employee events and get togethers where everyone can gather together and go play bowling for example…tried to implement meditation for 3 minutes before shifts"
Yilmaz	" we focus on here is meditation and sports… by either moving your body or doing some type of yoga and stretching is very beneficial… our fitness facilities free of cost…we have yoga classes weekly for them to participate"
Retter	" We do try to have employee meetings and outings outside of work… engage in social connections… fitness facility in our hotel which all employees can use…free access monthly to a range of different sports yoga meditation and other facilities all around Austria"
Rakhshanpour	"we see each other as friends…generally makes life easier…we do not have any specific activity for our employees…if we were a bigger company this would definitely be implemented"

Table 15: Interview question 13

Concerning wellness programs carried out by the interviewees to benefit their employees, the managers responses referred mostly to communication. Through sending out anonymous ballots, conducting one on one meetings with employees and providing a psychological coach, managers aim to assist employees with their mental health. This indicates that communication is seen as utter importance for managers to find out exactly what employees are dealing with in order to support them and provide solutions for their issues.

Regarding activities implemented in companies to enhance employee wellbeing, all interviewees acknowledge the importance of this and have implemented various ways to promote it. Some of the activities include trivia games giving employees the

possibility of winning free vouchers and activities such as bowling. A large focus was mainly on meditation, sports and yoga classes which were encouraged in most companies. However, one interviewee admitted to not encouraging any specific activity as they are a very small company. Overall the answers suggest that companies have taken action to promote employee wellbeing and reduce their stress by making use of different activities, specifically through exercise which managers believe can have a great impact on an individual's overall wellbeing.

When making comparisons between employees opinion on wellness programs and implementations by companies, one can conclude that despite most experts having a type of health program incorporated into their work culture, this is not common among the majority of companies in hospitality, however companies must take this account as many employees would eventually leave if not taken care of, which would result in high turnover. According to (Zhang, 2018), wellness programs focusing on purpose, social, community, physical and financial aspects positively impact employees and help reduce the risk of mental breakdowns.

4.2.4   Health impacts survey questions

Q37. I have experienced one of the following due to shift work: (tick 1 or more)
82 responses
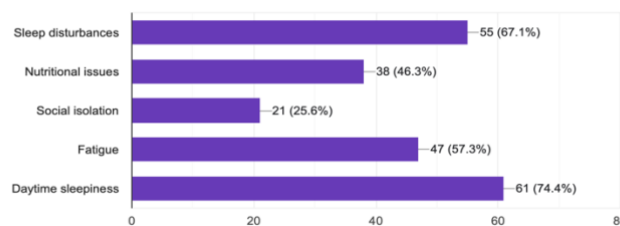
Graph 32: Shift work experiences data

Q38. Have you experienced any biological impacts due to working night shift? If yes, which ones?
31 responses
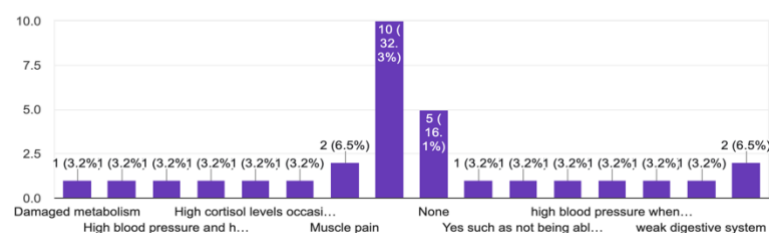
Graph 33: Biological impacts data

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Questions 37 and 38 aimed to find out which impacts employees have experienced the most as a result of shift work. As shown in graph X, daytime sleepiness had the largest effect on employees with (74.4%), alongside sleep disturbances with (67.1%) and fatigue with (57.3%). Moreover several employees did experience nutritional issues an social isolation. The second graph analyses the biological impacts of shift work in which only 31 responses were collected.15 out of 31 respondents stated that they have not experienced biological impacts, however, some individuals stated that high blood pressure, weak digestive system / metabolism, muscle pain and high cortisol levels were experienced due to shift work. Through these results, it is clear that employees are experiencing more mental impacts and tiredness rather than severe physical effects impacting their biological health.

Q15. Are you aware of the severe health impacts which could occur as a result of shift work? Which impacts do you see appear most often?	
Interviewee	Response
Abusido	" shift work makes employees change their sleeping schedules and routine…so their day and night routine would completely flip…sleeping issues is most definitely the number one problem"
Dalvi	" main health concern which I see is your sleeping schedule…you just do not have a sleeping routine and your body simply does not know when it can shut down… can severely impact your whole health in general and lead to a burnout"
Yilmaz	"Yes 100%... disrupted sleep patterns, high stress and even some health conditions could occur as a result…Definitely I would say sleep related issues and fatigue are the most common impacts"
Retter	" I am aware for example with a lot of changing of shifts and changing of routine that the balance gets lost… There are certainly morning people and evening people and night owls who have preferences. If these preferences don't get met long term then it will impact them"
Rakhshanpour	"I know that sleeping is a big issue… I make sure to keep some employees only for night shift, some only for morning and some only for afternoon, so that they know what they are signing up for and they have a rhythm"

Table 16: Interview question 15

Q16.Regarding sleep disturbance and nutritional issues which could occur, are your employees offered any services which could help them with this issue?	
Interviewee	Response
Abusido	"compensate employees by making the night shift shorter and making the morning shift longer…The pay rate for both shifts is also

	compensated accordingly…we offer healthy food options 24/7 such as greens, fruits, breads as well as drink"
Dalvi	"with sleeping schedules I do not think we are offering anything particular that could help the employees…try to keep employees on the same shift… provide one nutritional meal however we do not necessarily keep up with their nutritional situation…discounted rates on certain nutritional or medical products in pharmacies around the hotel"
Yilmaz	" Regarding sleep we do not have any specific services unfortunately… night shift employees definitely are compensated for their work and we try to provide them with as many days off as possible…offer them healthy nutritional options from our buffets and a specific meal for night shift workers"
Retter	" whenever they are working overnight they get two days off after it to try recover… transition into Night Shift which is easier for them… don't work more than four to five days in a row… employees require a rest period of 11 hours before shifts… free staff meals…evening and for night shifts it's the chef that always prepares something…nutritional and a salad on the side"
Rakhshanpour	"do not offer our employees anything specific to help them however we do ensure that they are not given extra tasks… inform anyone before they take on this job that it is indeed very stressful"

Table 17: Interview question 16

Question 15 and 16 of the interview questioned managers awareness on health impact of shift work and If any services are offered to help their employees with these issues. As seen in question 15, all interviewees are clearly aware of the health issues associated with shift work and mention disrupted sleeping patterns as the most common and severe health impact. Other health concerns that were mentioned include high stress levels, fatigue and the potential for burnout. Some interviewees shared their techniques for managing these health risks such as through scheduling employees on consistent shifts to establish a routine. These answers indicate that managers have a god understanding of possible health risks of shift work which employees face and have implemented strategies to address these concerns.

Furthermore, question 16 resulted in a variety of different responses. Some respondents stated that employees are compensated by either having shorter night shifts, fewer tasks or more days off to recover from a challenging shift, whilst other interviewees stated that they do not offer any specific service to assist with sleeping problems. Regarding nutrition, all experts agreed that employees have access to a nutritious meal provided by the company which may include, salad, bread and fruit.

The responses suggest that whilst some companies prioritize the well-being of their employees by offering specific services and compensation, other companies may not have the resources of priorities to do so.

In comparing these two questions to the graphs above, one can evaluate that the two viewpoints align as the effects employees are most impacted by are known by the managers. Despite this, none of the managers mentioned social isolation or nutritional aspects to be a concerning issue, indicating that they are not aware of this but it is important for them to consider as it plays a large role in the employees wellbeing. According to, (Nicholson & Nicholson, 2018) daytime sleepiness, fatigue and sleep disturbances are issues commonly faced by shift workers, however managers need to address these concerns in wellness programs and also encourage employees to prioritize their sleep, a healthy diet and a physical exercise routine to assist them with their health.
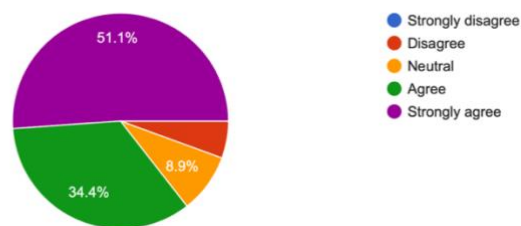
Graph 34: Substance reliance data
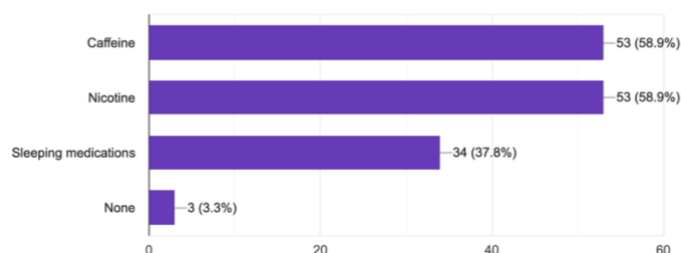
Graph 35: Substance consumption data

The final two questions in the survey focused on analyzing the use of substances amongst shift workers. Question 39 revealed a large reliance of shift workers on substances with 51.1% strongly agreeing and 34.4% agreeing to being dependent on substances to complete their shift. When asked which substances were regularly consumed, caffeine (58.9%) and nicotine (58.9%) appeared to be the most commonly used alongside sleeping medications with (37.8%). These results suggest that the larger percentage of shift workers fall back to substances abuse as a coping mechanism to assist them with their work and daily life. The use of caffeine implies the exhaustion state of employees as they are relying on a source of energy to help them remain energized throughout their shift. Moreover, Nicotine implies the stress levels of individuals which grasp onto smoking to make them relieved and feel better. Lastly, as almost 40% of individuals use sleeping medications, this indicates the severity of how shift work could damage sleeping rhythm and therefore leaving employees with no option but to consume sleeping pills to help them relax after a shift.

As stated by (Ogeil et al., 2018), the use of sleeping medications such as benzodiazepines is more common amongst shift workers due to disrupted sleeping patterns however, long term use could result in poorer health outcomes. Moreover, the high consumption of nicotine and caffeine as wake-promoting medications are highly used however may also have reverse effects are damage the sleeping quality in the long run (Ogeil et al., 2018).

Q18. Would you say you are managing your employees wellbeing to the best of your abilities? What would you do differently?	
Interviewee	Response
Abusido	" I am in fact managing my employees well and treating them as good as I can however nobody is perfect and there is always a lot of room for improvement...I need to make sure that I am constantly aware of the issues"
Dalvi	" I have been doing my best in terms of keeping in touch with how our employees are doing... I would focus definitely more on the scheduling part and make sure that I actually have requests to see what employees truly prefer to work in the mornings, or truly working in the evenings"

Yilmaz	"I believe I as well as my team are managing our employees to best of our abilities… always open to feedback and suggestions from them and we aim to continuously improve our approach to employee wellbeing as the growth of mental health continues to rise"
Retter	" there are certain limitations to what we can do meaning shift work for example is necessary just for even be able to operate as a hotel…we are doing a good job…it comes down to shift preferences where there can possibly be even a better way to voice preferences
Rakhshanpour	" department I would say I really am doing my best and I am always open for suggestions and I try to also better myself… certain aspects I cannot control such as the 24 hour service"

Table 18: Interview question 18

During the interviews, the last question asked to the managers was whether they believe they are doing their best to manage the wellbeing of their employees. Overall, the responses show that all respondents acknowledge that they are doing their best in managing their employees however they emphasize that there is always room for improvement. They witnessed the importance of being aware of the issues and keeping in touch with their employees to better manage their mental health. They also mention the limitations they face during shift work due to the 24hour service of the hospitality industry, which makes it difficult to manage the preferences of all their employees schedules. However, they express openness for feedback and suggestions from their employees and aim to continuously improve their approach specifically regarding shift scheduling in order to better manage employee wellbeing.

5 Conclusion

This thesis aims to investigate the impacts of different working hours on the wellbeing and mental health of individuals operating in the hospitality industry. With a precise focus on shift work and employees scheduled for night shifts, the goal of the research was to deeper analyze the issues which arise as a result of various schedules. Employees were given surveys to fill out whilst simultaneously HR managers were interviewed on topics focusing around the three main research questions. The definition of mental health for HR managers and employees, and the challenges individuals face when suffering with a mental illness, the actions HR managers could take to manage the wellbeing of their employees and lastly to analyze which physical and psychological consequences arise due to night shift work.

" How can mental health be defined and what challenges do people go through when dealing with a mental illness?"

Mental health can be defined as a person's overall psychological wellbeing, encompassing their emotional, cognitive and social functioning. Through the interviews one can conclude that it affects the way in which a person thinks, feels, behaves, as well as their ability to cope with stress and interact with others. When dealing with a mental illness, one faces various challenges affecting their daily lives such as emotional distress, a reduced quality of life, physical problems and social relationship difficulties. Mental illnesses can cause persistent sadness, anxiety and irritability. Carrying out daily activities such as work and study or engaging in hobbies is found more challenging due to lower energy levels and poor concentration. Relationships become harder to maintain due to symptoms of the individuals illness. Additionally, as mental and physical health are strongly connected, mental issues can contribute to sleep disorders, a weakened immune system and various health diseases. The use of treatment to improve mental health is not commonly used due to reasons such as social and culture ideologies or a limited awareness. However it is crucial to address these challenges by promoting mental health awareness, reducing stigma and improving mental health support systems to help individuals.

"What could be done by HR managers in the hospitality industry to support the wellbeing of their employees?"

According to the responses gathered, human resources managers play a vital role in the overall wellbeing of an employee. HR managers can take several different measures to support their employees and improve their mental health. A development of comprehensive wellness programs which address the importance of mental, physical and emotional health and include fitness classes and counseling services could be created to positively impact employees. Moreover, open communication and creating channels for employee feedback could foster a more positive work culture allowing employees to comfortably address their issues and find solutions. Implementing work-life balances policies such as flexible working hours and fair scheduling practices could also help employees maintain a healthy social life contributing to their mental health. Additionally, time off and benefits could be provided to ensure that employees are adequately compensated for their hard work. Overall, HR managers must utilize their impact positively by implementing such strategies to support the wellbeing of their employees.

"What psychological and biological factors are employees impacted by when being scheduled on night shift?"

Several physical and psychological factors arise as result on night/shift work. The internal biological clock of the individual which regulates sleep and wake cycles is disrupted leaving employees without a routine, with poor quality sleep and excessive daytime sleepiness, hindering their work performance. Moreover, due to an unbalanced work-life employees have limited opportunities for social interactions resulting in feelings of isolation and loneliness. Mental health issues such as anxiety and depression are becoming increasingly common amongst shift workers due to social isolation and the constant adjustment from day and night shifts which is raising the body's stress responses. Lastly, the body's natural digestive system and metabolism are altered due to meal consumption at irregular hours which could cause a disturbance in appetite regulation and damaging long term affects.

In the future practitioners could take several different actions into consideration. Longitudinal studies could be implemented which follow employees over an extended period of time, this could give more insight into the long term effects of night shifts

on mental health and identify risk factors which occur overtime. As night shift work is a challenging task, other aspects could also influence mental health such as social support or the individual characteristics of an employee therefore these aspects could further be studied to figure out the specific effects. Additionally, more research may be done to analyze how each different type of wellness program techniques effects specific employees of a company. Lastly, a recommendation for researchers is to examine the impact of various shift scheduling practices as this has appeared to play a crucial role for both employees and managers.

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Appendices

Respondent 1: HR manager at Golden Tulip, United Arab Emirates
Date of Interview: 02.05.2023
Length of interview: 35min

Interviewer	Good afternoon Sir, I will be asking you a few questions today in order to gather information for my Bachelor Thesis. To begin with this interview, I'd like to first ask for your name and age please.
Respondent	Good afternoon, my name is Abdallah Abusido and I am 37 years old.
Interviewer	Could you briefly introduce your business please and your position within the company?
Respondent	I currently work at Golden Tulip located in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates and my position at the hotel is the manager of employee happiness at the HR department
Interviewer	Could you please tell me your vision and vision of the company?
Respondent	Our mission and vision at Golden Tulip is to provide a friendly, warm, and welcoming experience for individuals and families to make them comfortable and feel like their stay is enjoyable and their needs are our first priority
Interviewer	Perfect and regarding the values of the company, could you please tell me a little bit about them?
Respondent	At Golden Tulip our team is diverse and multicultural. We ensure that we facilitate an inclusive environment where our guests and employees are cared for, respected, appreciated, and most importantly providing a sensation that they are part of a family.
Interviewer	Thank you for that insight. I am now going to move on the second part of questions which focus mainly on mental health. Firstly I would like to ask you what relevance does mental health have for you in general? Does it play a big role in your life?
Respondent	Mental health plays a crucial role in my life. It is the main determinant of the quality of life I like to possess. Mental health and mental stability ensure that an individual lives a healthy life where they are able to fulfill their basic needs and enjoy their own company and the company of others, and so I would say that it does play a large role in my life. And are you aware of the severity of mental health concerns in today's society? If so, what do you make of this?
Respondent	Yes, many people nowadays struggle from mental health, whether it is on a personal level due to negative unanticipated experiences or because of overwhelming and demanding way of life that has become a norm. People face depression, anxiety, stress, and other countless mental health issues but it is always important to take a step back when faced with these challenges to reflect, destress, and bring down the level of discomfort. Also, It is always good and recommended to ask for help and talk to people you trust so that you don't have to deal with everything on your own, and you'll be surprised how many people have most probably dealt with similar issues in their life. Their experience or advice could potentially be valuable .

Interviewer	I completely agree with you. As you are a HR manager, I would like to ask you, when you apply this concept into the workplace, are you aware of mental health issues that occur at the workplace and have any employees voiced their feelings about this topic to you before?
Respondent	Yes, these are usually confidential however I'll try to shed as much light as I could and provide an example. One time we had an employee raise her concerns about how she had been dealing with discrimination and how it started to affect her mental state. Our corporate policy has a zero tolerance for discrimination and any concerns raised are quickly acted upon. However, with a large number of employees it is not an easy task to continuously monitor day and night. With that being said, she opened up about how she felt excluded on multiple occasions and not many people would engage with her on duty and she started staying alone even on her break. This was starting to eat her up and she was feeling confused and emotionally stable. The situation was then dealt with internally and everything remained anonymous.
Interviewer	Thank you for sharing this with me. Now regards to employee wellbeing, have you witnessed the impact employee well-being has on their performance levels?
Respondent	Yes, employee physical, social, and mental well-being is very crucial in the hospitality industry especially at hotels where you are always dealing with guests on a regular basis. When employees are taken care of and feel comfortable in the work place, this is a motivation for them to do things right and efficiently which is directly correlated to their performance levels.
Interviewer	Do you consider your employees to be the most valuable asset in your organization?
Respondent	I cannot emphasize how important employees are. Yes, they are the most valuable asset to the organization. The hospitality industry cannot support itself and function properly without skilled employees.
Interviewer	How important is the individual wellbeing of your employees and why do you think it is important?
Respondent	As I mentioned earlier individual well-being is very important. If employees are not supported, appreciated, and motivated there would be a significant drop in their performance levels
Interviewer	Of course, I would see why this is very important especially in hospitality. Now I would like to ask you, In your opinion, how much of an impact would you say you have on the wellbeing of your employees as their manager? And how do you ensure this impact is beneficial and your employees are taken care of?
Respondent	Personally, I feel like my staff are part of my family. Without trying to exaggerate I feel like I contribute a fair amount to their well-being. As a manager of the employees happiness center here at Golden Tulip I try my best to always interact and engage with my staff. Not only in work-related matters, but also in their personal life. Over the years we have built a strong bond where we all care for each other. I try to make sure they're good and I ask about them even in their absence. I try to organize events outside of work to spend time like bowling activities, arts and craft, or even just a regular day out for lunch or dinner. So I would say I am always trying my best.
Interviewer	Thank you very much, now we are moving on to section four which focus on your department, HR. So, firstly I am interested to know if you have implemented any health or wellness programs to assist workers with their mental health?
Respondent	Yes, at the end of every month we send out anonymous ballots to all employees where they get the chance to voice their concerns about anything to do with the organizations operations or structure. As well as rank some pre-specified

	contribution factors. This program helps keep the focus on the health of our employees and make sure they are taken care of.
Interviewer	And which activities in your company would you say enhance employee wellbeing? Are activities such as meditation , sports, journaling encouraged in the company's goals?
Respondent	Yes, of course for example, at the end of every month all the staff get together and we play a trivia game called kahoot where we basically form teams of three people and for the first place winner they receive 3 vouchers each for themselves and their family members, the same goes for the second place and first place winners who of course also receive vouchers. These vouchers gives our employees, their friends and their family members free access to all of our facilities such as our sauna, jacuzzi, gym and meditation room. This way it can motivate the employees, encourage them to partake in relaxing activities as such and challenge them at the same time with a little fun game.
Interviewer	Wow that sounds very interesting! Now as you know the hospitality industry could of course be very stressful at times, how do you ensure your employees do not reach the stage of burnout due to work overload and excessive stress? What is your typical approach when faced with an employee who is dealing with this?
Respondent	We allow the transfer of tasks or shifts freely with the consent of the duty manager. So firstly if an employee is under stress and would prefer to take on another shift instead of their scheduled shift, so night instead of morning or evening instead of night, we definitely adhere to their request and make sure they are listened to. Secondly we allow the transfer of tasks meaning if any of our employees do not feel comfortable of feel overloaded with their specific task, they can get another employee to assist them. If both of these options don't work and an employee would rather speak to myself or another manager to reduce their workload then they are able to do that as well. My approach is to always give my employees flexibility and not make them feel restrained, so we speak about their concerns and compromise to find a solution which aligns with their health and the company's goals.
Interviewer	Perfect, and for the last section I will be asking you just a few more questions about the health impacts of shift work Firstly, are you aware of the severe health impacts which could occur as a result of shift work and Which impacts do you see appear most often?.
Respondent	Yes definitely I am aware of the impacts, because shift work makes employees change their sleeping schedules and routine as sometimes they need to work overnight, sometimes in the morning so their day and night routine would completely flip around and as the human body is also weak in general ,these sudden impacts could impact their performance levels massively. I would say sleeping issues is most definitely the number one problem I see occur and the issue I hear the most complaints about.
Interviewer	Regarding sleep disturbance and nutritional issues which could occur, are your employees offered any services which could help them with this issue?
Respondent	In our case we compensate employees by making the night shift shorter and making the morning shift longer so when they have night shift it is made shorter for them so they are able to catch up on their sleep. The pay rate for both shifts is also compensated accordingly. Meaning, there is a base salary for both shifts however, morning shift will receive more for their extra hours and night shift employees will receive the same amount with no deduction as they are taking on a challenging role. Regarding the nutritional issues, they have full access to our kitchen where we offer healthy food options 24/7 such as greens, fruits, breads as well as drinks. This way we ensure that our employees are not only

	consuming fast food options which would be open at the night time and encourage them to consume from our kitchen.
Interviewer	As social isolation is also a large problem, how do you make sure your employees still manage to have a good work life balance?
Respondent	Regarding this issue, we have a corporate policy that mentions anyone that works 3 consecutive night shifts in a row cannot be scheduled on night shift for the next 5 days with the exception of the flexibility option policy. By doing this we assure that our night shift workers still manage to see their friends and family for a couple of days instead of needing to squeeze it all into a span of 2 days off.
Interviewer	Lastly, my final question to you is, would you say you are managing your employees wellbeing to the best of your abilities and What would you do differently if you could change anything?
Respondent	Personally I believe in myself and my abilities and I would like to say that I am in fact managing my employees well and treating them as good as I can however nobody is perfect and there is always a lot of room for improvement. Especially nowadays as we are hiring new young workers and mental health concerns are on the rise, I need to make sure that I am constantly aware of the issues my employees are dealing with and assure them that I am there for them at all times.
Interviewer	That is lovely to hear. Thank you very much for your time and for your cooperation. Do you have anything else you would like to share?
Respondent	No that is all. Thank you very much for having me and best of luck with your thesis.

Respondent 2: Duty Manager at Zoku Vienna, Austria
Date of Interview: 03.05.2023
Length of interview: 27 min

Interviewer	Good morning Sir, I will be asking you a few questions today in order to gather information for my Bachelor Thesis. To begin with this interview, I'd like to first ask for your name and age please.
Respondent	Good morning, my name is Gourang Dalvi and my age is 27.
Interviewer	Could you introduce your business for me please and what is your role in the company?
Respondent	I work for a hotel called Zoku, it is an apartment Hotel / Hybrid business hotel and my role in the company is a duty manager and a people and culture manager.
Interviewer	Could you please tell me the vision and vision of your company?
Respondent	Yes of course, here at Zoku our vision and mission align, so we aim to provide a home for digital nomads and business travelers who are travelling for a long period of time such as 14 days- 6 months or sometimes for even a year and our vision is to provide a place for people to call their home and provide a community for people so they do not feel alone.
Interviewer	That's very nice! Could you also tell me about the values of your company?

Respondent	So my company really values Tribe which is basically what the company name suggests, so even though we are not a family owned business, we try to incorporate family values within the company, everyone is treated as if they are a family member, it is a very flat hierarchy so you can always approach any management, anybody to talk about any problems you have in life or work in general. Apart from that a major value that we have is, be the change, this is something we recently incorporated in our company which is mainly based on being the change in the hospitality industry, not only in the sense of building a community but also being more sustainable and being more aware of the stakeholders that are involved within the company business and making sure that we try our best to reduce our impact on the environment.
Interviewer	Thank you for the lovely insight. Now the second part of the interview is going to focus mainly on mental health in general. I would firstly like to ask you, what relevance does mental health have for you in general? Does it play a big role in your life?
Respondent	Yes I think personally mental health is one of the main things I think about. Mental health plays a big part in my life, I really try to focus on bettering my mental health because I believe it does affect every single aspect of my life because if I am struggling mentally, it affects my physical performance at work or anywhere else, also effects my ability to socialize with others, so it definitely plays a big role in my life.
Interviewer	Okay, and are you aware of the severity of mental health concerns in today's society. If so what do you make of this?
Respondent	I do, I feel like today in the society of social media and just in general where everybody is aware of just the good parts of people's lives which they post online, I believe it severely affects our lives because we only see the good things which others experience which makes us confused as to why our life is not as good or what we are doing wrong to make our life not as good as others. I feel like this is definitely affecting Gen Z and millennials a lot more than the previous generations.
Interviewer	Since you are a duty manager, if you apply this context to the work place, are you aware of mental health issues that occur at work and have any employees voiced their opinions on this topic to you before?
Respondent	I obviously cannot specific any particular employee but I do feel like I have of course heard from some employees of the effect of this job on their mental health in general because at the end of the day hospitality is a very physically but at the same time very emotionally draining profession and as a hospitality employee it is a very emotional labor where you always have to be happy with your guests, no matter what you are going through in your personal life, and as I spoke before your mental health , if it is not doing well and then you constantly have to be pretend to be happy, it will for sure drain your energy even more and then affect your wellbeing as a whole so I feel like emotional labor plays a big role in affecting peoples mental health in hospitality.
Interviewer	And have you witnessed the impact employee wellbeing has on their performance levels?

Respondent	Yes, so most of the employees that I have seen who are not doing very well mentally, their energy is very drained, their mood around their colleagues and guests is less enthusiastic which can in general affect their performance at work. This not only brings down their own mood per say but can also impact negatively towards guest experience which can start a snowball effect of the employee feeling bad and their performance worsening which is not ideal.
Interviewer	And as a manager do you consider your employees to be the most valuable asset to your organization?
Respondent	100%, being a hotel in general, I believe employees are one of the most major assets of a hotel or restaurant because they are the ones providing the service in this industry, without human touch it will not be anything so you need to have employees who are doing well and can provide their quality service at all times.
Interviewer	Agreed, how important is the individual wellbeing of your employees and why do you believe this is important?
Respondent	As I mentioned before, individual health both physically and mentally can always effect employees performance within the hotel because you have to deal with people all the time and guests can range from sad to happy to mad all the time on a daily basis, so you go through a lot of emotions on a daily basis and if you are not already in touch with your own personal emotions it can really negatively effect your mental health and your performance at work.
Interviewer	Yes, and as a manager how much of an impact would you say you directly have on your employees? How do you ensure this impact is beneficial and your employees are taken care of?
Respondent	I think as a manager I am always in the position where I can observe how my employees are doing, and given the fact that we really value a flat hierarchy where all the management is available to be approached at all times if an employee is going through something and also the management can approach an employee if they feel like they need to have a chat with them if they are not doing so well at their job. I think as a manager I can use this position to observe and evaluate employees to see how they are doing. Also as a company we have a mental coach / psychologist where the first session is covered by th hotel, the second session is discounted by the hotel so this way we can provide help from an outside source where we can support employees and make sure they are taken care of.
Interviewer	Perfect, that links to my next question actually which is, have you implemented any heath or wellness programs to help the workers with their mental health?
Respondent	Yes, so as I have mentioned, we have a designated tie up with a mental coach and as a hotel we try to provide a discount and a free session where employees can have a chance to try out the service and then schedule a plan if they feel the need to continue with this mental coach service and the rest is discounted at 40 euros per session which is cheaper than outside services.
Interviewer	Was this service initially a part of the company or did you start this after seeing employees dealing with bad mental health issues?

Respondent	It was initially available in our benefits section however in between it got lost somewhere as it was not really emphasized that we have this for our employees but within recent years after seeing that employees are not doing the best because of mental wellbeing with being short staffed and having extra pressure at work and at the same time life events happening all around us. We decided to emphasize that we do in fact have this therapy benefit where you can actually speak to someone if you are struggling with something then we have someone available for you. We also give the cards from the psychologist in every locker room meaning our employees are also able to go approach the psychologist anonymously and do not have to speak to us as managers beforehand if they are not comfortable doing so and the psychologist will be there to assist them.
Interviewer	Wow that is very helpful. The next question I have is, what activities in your company would you say enhance employee wellbeing, are there activities such as sports, meditation or journaling which are encouraged?
Respondent	At the moment I don't believe we do any activities in that sense, however we do try to do all employee events and get togethers where everyone can gather together and go play bowling for example, especially now in summer we have several fun activities planned where employees can meet up outside of work and not talk about work related things but rather about life so that they can connect and form bonds with one another. Recently, one of our duty managers also tried to implement meditation for 3 minutes before shifts as part of her thesis, so far I have done it twice, some employees loved it and some employees found it uncomfortable to do so , therefore I feel it definitely depends on personal viewpoint of the individual.
Interviewer	How do you ensure your employees do not reach the stage of burnout due to work overload and excessive stress and what is your typical approach when an employee comes to you and is stressed about all their tasks?
Respondent	So, right now I feel like somethings are not always in your hands. The employees currently are overworked as we are understaffed which is a result of some employees quitting due to experiencing burnout by the work. At the end of the day we are in the hospitality industry and I said it is very draining both mentally and physically which can take a toll on ones wellbeing. But as employers we are trying to be more open about being approached by employees in general if they are not feeling so well or if they are experiencing burnout, we try to talk to our employees and come up with a plan which would be more beneficial for them such as asking them if they would prefer to take on more morning shifts or night shifts or whatever is better for their mental health. We are trying to be more accommodating towards the employees needs rather than just assigning them roles and shifts that they don't personally like because again it can affect their mental wellbeing negatively if they are just not used to working till 11:30 or midnight because some people would prefer to work in the morning for example, so we really are trying to be fair to everyone. Regarding this actually, many employees have approached us recently asking about a 4 day work week where they get 3 days off and work 10 hour shifts instead. In

	current months we are doing a mock trial with the said system, to see if this works and whether people feel more rested and can spend more time to themselves and with their family and friends. If this works and helps the employee wellbeing then we will surely be implementing it into our organization.
Interviewer	For the final section I am going to be talking about shift work and the concerns of this. Firstly I would like to ask you if you are aware of the health impacts which could occur by working shift work and which impacts do you see occur most often?
Respondent	I am aware of the shift work in general and the impact it has, since I have worked shift work myself. I believe the main health concern which I see is your sleeping schedule. And sleeping schedule is in my opinion very important for an individual's overall wellbeing both mental and physical because when you are doing a variety of shift work, you just do not have a sleeping routine and your body simply does not know when it can shut down and truly relax or when it has to be up and be aware of things which can severely impact your whole health in general and lead to a burnout.
Interviewer	Exactly, so regarding these sleep disturbances and also nutritional issues which could occur, are your employees offered and services which can assist them with this?
Respondent	Right now with sleeping schedules I do not think we are offering anything particular that could help the employees personally. We do try to keep employees on the same shift meaning having employees scheduled only on evening or only on morning for 1 or 2 weeks in a row which helps but again scheduling can change based on an employee getting sick or someone going on holiday so we are still trying to find a solution for this problem, I do not think we have one yet. And nutrition wise, when I think about our night employees, we do of course provide one nutritional meal however we do not necessarily keep up with their nutritional situation and how they are doing diet wise. We so however have discounted rates on certain nutritional or medical products in pharmacies around the hotel so just in case, someone who is doing a lot of night shifts for example and is staying indoors a lot, they may be deficient in Vitamin D so they can always buy it through us for a discounted rate in the pharmacies. Apart from that, I do not think we are doing something specific to deal with this issue.
Interviewer	And as social isolation is also a large problem, how do you make sure your employees still manage to have a good work life balance? For night shift workers and regular shift workers?
Respondent	So specifically for our night employees, I do not think again we have anything specific for them to have a work life balance. We are coming up with a a plan where we have a 50 /50 scheduling, meaning they do both night shifts and regular evening shifts so that they could spend time with their family or have an extra day off, but apart from that I do not think we are doing anything which is really helping our night employees and I think that is an interesting issue to bring up. Other than that, for our morning and evening employees, we try ot make sure that everybody at some point in the month is scheduled for a week straight on morning shifts so that they get to enjoy their life in the evening when they are done with their shift. Rather than always being scheduled on

	evening shift where employees typically rest in the morning then need to work the entire day and do not get to spend much time socializing with friends and family. This way we try to help keep a manageable work life balance.
Interviewer	Very interesting! And the final question I have for you today is, would you say as a manager you are doing your best to manage the wellbeing of your employees? What would you do differently if all the control was in your hands?
Respondent	I feel like as far as things are in my control I have been doing my best in terms of keeping in touch with how our employees are doing and what we could be doing to change and improve things. If it was in my hands even more I would focus definitely more on the scheduling part and make sure that I actually have requests to see what employees truly prefer to work in the mornings, or truly working in the evenings and then I would schedule based on that where people are receiving more of what they want. This might seem unfair but at the end of the day, if that is what they want I believe it can lead to employee satisfaction because if they are scheduled on the shift that they are more comfortable with, it would surely make them happier and could improve their mental wellbeing.
Interviewer	That is lovely to hear. Thank you very much for your time and for your cooperation. Do you have anything else you would like to share?
Respondent	No that is all Thank you. I hope that was useful and I wish you the best of luck on your thesis, goodbye.

Respondent 3: Manager at Hotel Elysium, Istanbul, Turkey

Date of Interview: 03.05.2023

Length of interview: 30 min

Interviewer	Good evening Sir, Thank you for joining me online today, could you please tell me your name and age?
Respondent	Good evening, thank you for having me. Yes my name is Yousif Yilmaz I am 29 years old and currently stay in Istanbul.
Interviewer	Could you introduce your business for me please and tell me what is your role in the company?
Respondent	I have worked in many hotels in the past across Turkey however now I operate as a manager in the Elysium hotel located in Turkey Istanbul. It is a luxury hotel located right in the center of Turkey near a very famous touristic street called Taksim Square, so we are visited by many international people on a day to day basis.
Interviewer	And may I ask what is the vision and mission of your company?
Respondent	Definitely, so our mission and vision is mainly to provide our guests with a luxurious yet comfortable stay in Istanbul whilst offering exceptional service, facilities and amenities to them. Alongside this we have a goal of showcasing the beauty that we have here is Istanbul by displaying aspect of Istanbul's culture and history through the design of our hotel and our location.
Interviewer	And could you tell me about the values of the company?

Respondent	Our values revolve mainly around providing excellent customer service to our guests and making sure they are our first priority. We also value maintaining a clean and safe environment for both our workers and guests, promoting sustainability and lastly valuing diversity and inclusion. Our workers come from a range of different countries in the middle east and Europe and this reflects on our guests when we see them interacting with our employees who come from similar backgrounds as them which is super nice to see.
Interviewer	That's beautiful, thank you for that introduction. Now I am going to be asking you a few questions regarding mental health as that is the main topic my thesis focuses on. So firstly I would like to ask you, What relevance does mental health have for you in general? Does it play a large role in your life?
Respondent	Wow I like this topic a lot actually I feel like I could speak about it for hours. I would say mental health plays one of the biggest roles in my life, having dealt with a mental illness in the past, I am aware as to how draining it could be on a person, therefore I try to prioritize it in my life as best as I can. I feel like it is a topic which is not spoken about enough yet it should be because it is just as important as our physical health. Without a positive wellbeing, I believe many things in our lives are very badly affected, so yes I would say it play a huge role in my life. In the past when I ignored it and did not think about it as much, I definitely was going through a harder time which is not a good state to be in.
Interviewer	How about in your day to day life now, are you aware of the severity of mental health concerns in today's society and what do you make of this?
Respondent	Yes of course, I see many people both adults and the younger generation dealing with many health issues. Here in Turkey and I feel like in the majority of the middle east for example, is it in engraved in our culture to not speak about mental health as much as it is not considered to be an important aspect however, if so many people are dealing with it then of course it must be brought up and should be spoken about in order for us to heal and better ourselves. I think it is super important to recognize that mental health is affecting a large portion of the population, even when some people do not like to admit it, but it has a significant impact on themselves and their loved ones. Even though I grew up not speaking about mental health and not understanding why it is important, I now believe that we as a society should prioritize it and work towards reducing the stigma around it so that people feel more comfortable seeking for help.
Interviewer	When this is applied to the context of your work place, are you aware of mental health issues at the workplace and also have any employees voiced their feelings about this topic to you before?
Respondent	Yes I am aware that mental health is an important aspect of a humans overall wellbeing which can impact their physical health, productivity levels and relationships with others so especially in the hospitality industry where employees can experience high levels of stress and emotional demands which can take a toll on their mental health, this is very dangerous. I will not share any confidential information but I have definitely had employees voice their concerns to me about this topic before. Either it would be a situation in which an aspect outside of work has caused them to feel very anxious or a

	concern which is a result of stress here at the hotel. Either way, it is very important to raise awareness of this.
Interviewer	Have you witnessed the impact employee well-being has on their performance levels?
Respondent	Yes for sure, when being in the position and being able to observe how your employees are performing on a daily basis whether it is a front office employee who has been here for years or a new intern who just started, I have seen that the wellbeing of our employees largely impacts their performance. On days, where an employee comes in feeling happy, healthy and in a good mood, they are far more productive, engaged and motivated to give their best at work. I see them having more conversations with guests and laughing with their other colleagues, whereas when they have been stressed for a while, their performance tends to suffer which is clearly seen by how they interact with myself and other guests. I feel like their whole quality of work decreases when they are sad which is very unfortunate.
Interviewer	Do you consider your employees to be the most valuable asset in your organization?
Respondent	Absolutely 100%, as a manager, I believe that our employees are the most valuable asset without a doubt. They are the heart and soul of our hotel and without them, we definitely would not be able to provide our guests with exceptional service and experiences. Every experience which a guest has in our hotel is made by the service which our employees provide. Therefore it is very important for us as managers to invest in our employees, provide them with opportunities for growth and development and ensure that they constantly feel supported and valued in the time which they work here.
Interviewer	How important is the individual wellbeing of your employees? Why do you think it is important?
Respondent	Extremely important I would say. As I just mentioned previously, when I see that my employees are happy and come into work with a positive mood, this reflects immediately on their performance and the guests in the hotel, they are more engaged, passionate and provide overall better customer service which is crucial for the success of our hotel of course. It is also important to me because our employees will feel that we care about their own personal health and happiness beyond just their work performance.
Interviewer	In your opinion, how much of an impact would you say you have on the wellbeing of your employees? How do you ensure this impact is beneficial and your employees are taken care of**?
Respondent	I would like to say I have a significant impact on their wellbeing especially at the workplace. At the end of the day it is my duty and responsibility to create a positive and supportive work environment for each of them by promoting a work life balance, providing them with healthy resources and support especially if they are struggling with something personal. I try to ensure this by working closely with my employees to understand their needs and concerns. I regularly check in on them as much as I can to make sure they know that they are supported and valued. I try to provide them every few months with opportunities for professional growth as I see a large potential in many of them. This helps them improve their skills but also show that we care about them even in the long term if they choose to

	work elsewhere. Overall I try to be as approachable as possible, make them feel comfortable enough to speak to me and know that I have their bet interest at heart.
Interviewer	And have you implemented any health or wellness programs to assist workers with their mental health?
Respondent	Yes we have, we have several health and wellness programs as part of our hotel, we have programs such as counselling services which we are partnered with online incase an employee needs to reach out to someone for their mental health issue. We also have monthly mindfulness sessions in which a coach comes in to speak to our employees and we have access to our fitness facilities. We also encourage employees to take breaks and engage in self-care activities during their work day when possible.
Interviewer	This links to what you just said but to add on to this, which activities in your company would you say enhance employee wellbeing? Are activities such as meditation , sports, journaling encouraged in the company's goals?
Respondent	Yes, definitely. A big thing we focus on here is meditation and sports. We believe that exercising and having at least 30 minutes of your day where you can relax and let off steam by either moving your body or doing some type of yoga and stretching is very beneficial for the mind and soul. Therefore we encourage our employees to participate in these activities, we offer them our fitness facilities free of cost, we have yoga classes weekly for them to participate in and we also organize team building activities and outings every once in a while to promote physical activity and building social connections. Buildings greater bonds with other colleagues I believe can also play a huge role in employee wellbeing and their satisfaction levels on the job so this is why we do this.
Interviewer	How do you ensure your employees do not reach the stage of burnout due to work overload and excessive stress? What is your typical approach when faced with an employee who is dealing with this?
Respondent	Of course this is the hospitality industry, it is a very stressful industry which does naturally cause an employee to burnout at times due to the high emotional and physical demands of this job however, we do take burnout and excessive stress very seriously and are working proactively to prevent it. We monitor workloads and try to make sure that each employee is receiving a fair amount. We also try to provide adequate breaks and time off and encourage our employees to speak in case they feel overworked. I have of course had times where an employee has come to me with their concerns, in the case of this, I take my time to listen to their problems with a very open mind and we try to work together to come up with a solution that works for them and the hotel.
Interviewer	Now I am going to be asking you a few final questions about shift work. Firstly, Are you aware of the severe health impacts which could occur as a result of shift work? Which impacts do you see appear most often?
Respondent	Yes 100%, I have been working with employees who are scheduled on a range of different shifts for a long time now, whether that's mornings, evenings and even night shift workers. I am aware that disrupted sleep patterns, high stress and even some health conditions could occur as a result of shift work. Definitely I would

	say sleep related issues and fatigue are the most common impacts of shift work among our employees however this is sadly a reoccurring concern as the hospitality does demand for 24hour service in which we have no control over sometimes.
Interviewer	Regarding sleep disturbance and nutritional issues which could occur, are your employees offered any services which could help them with this issue?
Respondent	Regarding sleep we do not have any specific services unfortunately but it is a proactive problem we are working on. However, night shift employees definitely are compensated for their work and we try to provide them with as many days off as possible for them to relax after their shifts. With food, we definitely offer them healthy nutritional options from our buffets and a specific meal for night shift workers in case the main food is not enough so we are trying our best to accommodate to them.
Interviewer	As social isolation is also a large problem, how do you make sure your employees still manage to have a good work life balance?
Respondent	I would say we prioritize social connections among our employees and encourage team building activities and social events. I think that is very important aspect for each individual to have in their lives, that's why try to host employee parties, gatherings and outings every now and then to give them a chance to step back from work and really enjoy each other's company without being stressed. Apart from that, we do try to ask each employee for their preferred days off every month and try to accommodate to their needs so that they could spend time with friends and family, however this is a very challenging task for us as managers.
Interviewer	Would you say you are managing your employees wellbeing to the best of your abilities? What would you do differently?
Respondent	As a manager, I believe I as well as my team are managing our employees to best of our abilities. We highly prioritize employee wellbeing and regularly evaluate and adjust our policies and programs accordingly to meet our employees' needs, however we are always open to feedback and suggestions from them and we aim to continuously improve our approach to employee wellbeing as the growth of mental health continues to rise.
Interviewer	Perfect, that is all the questions I have for you today. Thank you very much again for your time and for your cooperation. Do you have anything else you would like to share?
Respondent	No I think that is all, but thank you for interviewing me, I hope this was interesting for you. Have a lovely day.
Interviewer	You too, goodbye.

Respondent 4: HR manager at Zoku Vienna, Austria

Date of Interview: 04.05.2023

Length of interview: 22 min

Interviewer	May I ask for your name and age?
Respondent	My name is Katharina Retter and I'm 23 years old
Interviewer	Could you introduce your business please? What is your role in the company?
Respondent	So to introduce the business , I'm currently working at zoku Vienna which is a hybrid hotel especially made for long stays with a big focus on connecting people together, it's also a hotel that operates on shifts meaning early shift evening shift late shift and also overnight shifts, and I am working as the people and culture coordinator meaning that I take care all of HR responsibilities starting from recruiting to having chats with employees and team members to talk about their work atmosphere to make sure it's as good as it can be, and make it better, also I take care of administrative tasks meaning pay roll , processing any personal data of team members and creating team events
Interviewer	What is the mission and vision of your company?
Respondent	The vision of the company is connecting people and ideas so it's all about making the people who come here feel at home so it's not just a regular hotel where people come here and sleep and go back again. so it really focuses on personal connection and our big vision is that we have zokus all over the globe in order to facilitate business people also being able to travel anywhere and having the opportunity to stay at a zoku.
Interviewer	What relevance does mental health have for you in general? Does it play a large role in your life?
Respondent	To me personally mental health has a big role for sure in my life because without having a stable mental health or manageable mental health I'm not able to operate good and not able to provide any good service to anyone else so for me the foundation is to always try to have a good mental health so at the end I can work efficiently and be there for other people.
Interviewer	Are you aware of the severity of mental health concerns in today's society? What do you make of this?
Respondent	I definitely see a big increase, I think it has a lot to do with people being more in touch with their mental health and it's actually a good thing that we have a good increase in mental health because it means a lot more people are aware of it and talking about it and trying to find a solution for it, especially nowadays It is very easy to develop a mental health issue if someone isolates themselves at home or doesn't have somebody to talk to, and if somebody is at work all the time then they don't have a chance to really sit with their emotions and do the work that they need to do take care of

	themselves, so it's a very difficult situation that we are in right now but I'm happy to see that more people and companies are talking about this and becoming more aware of this and I think also right now we already should have the tools in order to make even better progress and make it better for everyone and it's just the way of how and when to do things.
Interviewer	Are you aware of mental health issues at the workplace? Have any employees voiced their feelings about this topic to you before?
Respondent	Definitely people have come to me and expressed their concerns for sure, I am aware to some extent but unfortunately in position of manager I do not get maybe as much insight as a fellow colleague of theirs would receive, but that's something that's also very important to me that whenever I hear notice of something I try to make the situation as best as I can for them in order to help them and support them through whatever they are dealing with.
Interviewer	Have you witnessed the impact employee well-being has on their performance levels?
Respondent	I have had a situation where the performance worsened because of their mental health because that's what they stated they said that was the reason for it. Those situations are hard because it's not always easy to state the exact reason and what the impacts were and to some extent it was of course to do with mental health. In one case I also witnessed an employee's performance improve a lot because of their mental health which is what they told me, they have been performing better as they felt much happier, so I would say of course whilst I can't look into a person to see what the exact factors were , in both instance they drew the factors back to mental health and well-being
Interviewer	Do you consider your employees to be the most valuable asset in your organization?
Respondent	Yes 100% with our vision and mission of connecting people, we are putting a huge focus on our employees and they are the most important asset for us
Interviewer	How important is the individual wellbeing of your employees? Why do you think it is important?
Respondent	First of all because we are all about connecting people with each other and being there for one another so as I already mentioned in my personal life , how I noticed that I won't be able to be there and help others if my mental state is bad, I don't think it's possible to always have the best mental health , there's always going to be situations where peoples mental state drops but in times like that they need a team with good mental health that will bring them back up and I don't think that will work if everyone's wellbeing drops at the same time and then it's very hard to get out of. So I'm business we definitely always want people to feel good, especially on a person's aspect we want them to be doing well.

Interviewer	In your opinion, how much of an impact would you say you have on the wellbeing of your employees? How do you ensure this impact is beneficial and your employees are taken care of?
Respondent	I think it very much depends on how much the people are at work, so for full-timers I believe we have much more of an impact on their wellbeing as they simply spend much more time at work than part timers so they have more things to compare it with where their mind is not full of work and they have a bit of free time, but an employer I feel like we do have a big impact however we also have to see what makes a situation better, worse, what we can to do to change it with the limitations that we do have as a business. To ensure that the people are taken care of I always like to be very approachable, I try to be on the floor, try to be there, make small talk, make personal connections and get to know them more so we can break the ice and I am not just approaching them when I have bad news but actually it's just an open conversation I want to have with them. But when do I for example not something where someone might have something going on but they haven't said anything then I do try to also speak to them, check up on them and see how it goes but a lot of it does also come down to their direct supervisors so in our case that is the duty managers, who do check up on them more regularly and have 1 on 1 conversations with them.
Interviewer	Have you implemented any health or wellness programs to assist workers with their mental health?
Respondent	Yes so we firstly have monthly one on one meetings which each employee so speak to them about not only their performance but also on a personal basis if they want to share anything we assure them that we are here to listen and want to help them. But we also have a psychologist who is an expert in these things so if an employee is dealing with something personal but is not comfortable enough to speak to any of the management about it then they are able to anonymously speak to our licensed therapist to assist them.
Interviewer	Which activities in your company enhance employee wellbeing? Are activities such as meditation , sports, journaling encouraged in the company's goals?
Respondent	Yes definitely healthy habits are encouraged. We do try to have employee meetings and outings outside of work to get them to engage in social connections and having nice company, we also have a fitness facility in our hotel which all employees can use free of charge, besides from that employees are also offered a mobile application with a QR code in which they get free access monthly to a range of different sports yoga meditation and other facilities all around Austria which is a great way for them to enjoy themselves and maybe try something which they never have before. So we definitely do encourage them to take care of

	themselves and also spend their free time doing something which could really benefit them.
Interviewer	How do you ensure your employees do not reach the stage of burnout due to work overload and excessive stress? What is your typical approach when faced with an employee who is dealing with this?
Respondent	So this does definitely depend a lot more on the public I would say meaning , we typically give all employees similar schedules, nobody gets more or less than another person however depending on the day of course, how many guests we have, how the weather is like outside, whether an event is taking place or not, this will of course impact the amount of work that the employee needs to do that day. So where it's not always in our hands to control these situations , we do try to understand the employees of course and allow them to voice their opinion freely all the time, they are allowed to step out for a minute if they need to breathe and feel overwhelmed whilst someone else takes over . My main goal especially when someone approaches me is to just make them feel seen , understood and listened to and know that they're not alone and we try to find a solution together .
Interviewer	Are you aware of the severe health impacts which could occur as a result of shift work? Which impacts do you see appear most often?
Respondent	I am aware to some extent I would say because it I think it very much depends on the person and I am aware for example with a lot of changing of shifts and changing of routine that the balance gets lost and there's certain standards but they always need to find a new routine but it tends to cause stress in people when they don't have this routine. There are certainly morning people and evening people and night owls who have preferences and if these preferences don't get met long term then it will impact them in the long term and their wellbeing.
Interviewer	Regarding sleep disturbance and nutritional issues which could occur, are your employees offered any services which could help them with this issue?
Respondent	One thing we really want to make sure is that whenever we do make schedules , let's say when it comes to sleep issues the most dangerous position is surely the night sidekick so the person working at night and we really try to accommodate that as whenever they are working overnight they get two days off after it to try recover instead of immediately switching off their schedules and changing routines so quickly and we also never pair it with morning shifts or only have evening shifts before Night Shift so it's a transition into Night Shift which is easier for them. We also make sure that they don't work more than four to five days in a row in Night Shift so that they also have time to recover again. So that is our most critical position. When it comes to the others we do try to conform with the Austrian labor law that states that employees

	require a rest period of 11 hours before shifts so there we really try to conform to that meaning that we really try to not give a late shift and then after it directly a morning shift, we try to also give more days off and not switch the routine so much, so things put together instead of always switching around. Regarding nutrition we do definitely have the free staff meals, during the day it's much easier because we always have a set lunch buffet so they can always enjoy the heathy nutrition variation that we offer and for evening and for night shifts it's the chef that always prepares something for them where we also always want to make sure that they have something nutritional and a salad on the side for example so that they also have a variety but of course we can't offer what we have during the day shift, we do try to make it suitable for them though so we can meet their needs. All employees always do have a free meal that we provide for them.
Interviewer	As social isolation is also a large problem, how do you make sure your employees still manage to have a good work life balance?
Respondent	There's different options that we are also trying out right now. On the one hand we are currently in the trial phase of a 4 day work week meaning that people really have three days off where we are testing out is on the work floor and offering it to the people who want to try it out and see if it will be better for them and their mental health and work life balance. Other than that it really is more individual solutions so for example I've just recently had someone come up to me who said that they have been scheduled a majority of evening shifts but they're actually more of a morning person and it also interferes with their university work which they have to do and if there would be a possibility to have more morning shifts so that's something that I always try to voice to the managers as they are the ones who do the scheduling and really trying to make an equal balance for them. We also try to always turn the schedules around and try to give people more morning shifts but there is also People who prefer evening shifts of-course so the ideal solution would be if we find matches , one person who likes morning shifts, one person who likes evening and then we match them up so those are somethings that we do.
Interviewer	Would you say you are managing your employees wellbeing to the best of your abilities? What would you do differently?
Respondent	I think given the fact that hospitality and the hotel sector has to be open 24/7 there are certain limitations to what we can do meaning shift work for example is necessary just for even be able to operate as a hotel so o feel in that case we are doing a good job in comparison for example to other jobs I've had in the past in hospitality. I so still think there is room for growth and to better ourselves so as I said I think a lot of it comes down to shift preferences where there can possibly be even a better way to voice preferences and just see if it works out and also weekly shifts

	to have a more evenly distributed shifts for example to have a week of only morning shifts, a week of only evening shifts and to have the variation kept to a minimum and more in a matter of crisis or you know like if someone falls out sick and there's really no one else who can cover morning or late so then there's a variation but on a standard it should be more of the same on a weekly basis.
Interviewer	Perfect, that is all the questions I have for you today, would you like to add anything else?
Respondent	Nutritional aspect I just want to also add that we do offer fruits that they can just get themselves whenever they want and also with kitchen if there's something else they want to eat then it's possible of-course since we are a small team and we try to make it as individual as possible. But of course it does always depend on how the shift looks like, it differs a lot if an employee has an extremely busy 8 hour shift compared to a more relaxed shift where they are fully staffed so it depends on the requirements you need and that will decide whether your still able to maintain your stress levels and feel well mentally.
Interviewer	Perfect thank you very much for sharing this information with me, it was a pleasure speaking to you.

Respondent 5: Arsalan, Front office manager of Babula Hotel Vienna, Austria
Date of interview: 09.05.2023
Length of interview: 18 min

Interviewer	May I ask for your name and age?
Respondent	My name is Arsalan Rakhshanpour, I am 26 years old
Interviewer	Could you introduce your business please? What is your role in the company?
Respondent	So we are a small food hotel in the second district, we operate as a hotel and we also have two restaurants on our side, one is like a breakfast club and the other is a pizzeria. My role is the front office manager.
Interviewer	What is the mission and vision of your company
Respondent	Our mission and vision is definitely to make the hotel a trend, meaning we want to make hotels for younger people, they are definitely our target group so we want to be trendy online in order to attract them more.
Interviewer	Could you tell me about the values of the company?
Respondent	Our biggest value would definitely have to be diversity, I would say that is extremely important for us, it was not necessarily the goal in the first place but with time we realized that we really focus on accepting every person, regardless of their age, gender, nationality, we want everybody to feel included.
Interviewer	What relevance does mental health have for you in general? Does it play a large role in your life?
Respondent	Yes for sure it plays a big role in my life, I do not think about it a lot but I would say it is an aspect that must be included in everyone's life and must be taken care of.

Interviewer	Are you aware of the severity of mental health concerns in today's society? What do you make of this?
Respondent	Yes surely I have seen many people in modern society deal with this topic, sometimes that may not even be actually diagnosed with a mental disorder but because they are facing a bit of difficulty they think it is a mental health issue. However, I think we all have many ups and down, and sharing this information with each other will helps people relate and not feel alone.
Interviewer	Are you aware of mental health issues at the workplace? Have any employees voiced their feelings about this topic to you before?
Respondent	I am definitely aware that it could occur yes, whether it because of work or because of personal factors, especially with the newer generation sometimes it is obvious when they are dealing with something however they never mention it openly.
Interviewer	Have you witnessed the impact employee well-being has on their performance levels?
Respondent	Yes I am aware that an employee's performance will mostly likely worsen when they are not in a healthy mental state. I have witnessed this mostly with the more physically demanding tasks, so not much in the front office department but more often with servers or housekeeping, if they are under a lot of stress, they usually do not perform very well and it heavily impacts them.
Interviewer	Do you consider your employees to be the most valuable asset in your organization?
Respondent	Yes for sure 100%
Interviewer	How important is the individual wellbeing of your employees? Why do you think it is important?
Respondent	I would say it is very important because in this field, we rely a lot of on our employees and if they are not doing well and not able to perform at a good standard then this will have an impact on the entire company.
Interviewer	In your opinion, how much of an impact would you say you have on the wellbeing of your employees? How do you ensure this impact is beneficial and your employees are taken care of**?**
Respondent	I think I have an impact surely because I really try to communicate with them and get to know them on a more personal basis and really give them advice when they open up to me about anything. So I would believe that having an approachable personality and showing that you care, really positively impacts the employees.
Interviewer	Have you implemented any health or wellness programs to assist workers with their mental health?
Respondent	Unfortunately no we have not, a wellness or health program specifically for our employees, we have not done that yet.
Interviewer	Which activities in your company enhance employee wellbeing? Are activities such as meditation , sports, journaling encouraged in the company's goals?
Respondent	I would say we all get along very well, we see each other as friends and so that generally makes life easier however we do not have any specific activity for our employees wellbeing. Maybe if we were a bigger company this would definitely be implemented as there's a likelihood that more employees will be suffering from a mental issue.
Interviewer	How do you ensure your employees do not reach the stage of burnout due to work overload and excessive stress? What is your typical approach when faced with an employee who is dealing with this?
Respondent	As far as I am concerned, none of our employees have yet voiced their concerns to me about reaching burnout, however I would say I definitely try to give them a few

	days break so they can rest if they feel very overwhelmed or speak to them to see if they would prefer to be scheduled on a different shift, so we really try to accommodate their needs.
Interviewer	Are you aware of the severe health impacts which could occur as a result of shift work? Which impacts do you see appear most often?
Respondent	Yes I am aware, I know that sleeping is a big issue, that is why it is mostly older people rather than our very young employees who decide to take on night shift. But in general, in order for employees to manage a good routine, I make sure to keep some employees only for night shift, some only for morning and some only for afternoon, so that they know what they are signing up for and they have a rhythm in their life.
Interviewer	Regarding sleep disturbance and nutritional issues which could occur, are your employees offered any services which could help them with this issue?
Respondent	We do not offer our employees anything specific to help them however we do ensure that they are not given extra tasks and that the work is rathe limited and not stressful as they are already tackling a hard job by staying up at night. We of course inform anyone before they take on this job that it is indeed very stressful.
Interviewer	As social isolation is also a large problem, how do you make sure your employees still manage to have a good work life balance?
Respondent	I know that work life balance is hard but we try to make shifts as fair as possible. I am not the one who is always creating the schedules so sometimes I get sent suggest schedules a week in advance and I send them out to the employees. As we are a very small team, I would say it is relatively easy to satisfy most of the employees by listening to them if they would like to request any shift changes.
Interviewer	Would you say you are managing your employees wellbeing to the best of your abilities? What would you do differently?
Respondent	Yes I mean in my department I would say I really am doing my best and I am always open for suggestions and I try to also better myself. There are certain aspects I cannot control such as the 24 hour service required and some departments are taken care of by higher management, but in my field I would say I am good.
Interviewer	Perfect that is all I have for you today, would you like to add anything?
Respondent	No I think that is all, I really hope I was of help and thank you for having me.
Interviewer	It has been a pleasure, good bye.