Stimulating employee performance and well-being: a review of mindfulness impact in the hospitality sector

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Abstract

Purpose – Mindfulness is gaining popularity in the business world as a way to improve mental health and productivity in employees. However, the application of mindfulness for employees in the hospitality sector is still in its nascent stage. This paper aims to synthesize the evidence on the effectiveness of mindfulness practice on employees in this high-pressure service industry.

Design/methodology/approach – This narrative review identifies and integrates insights from journal articles researching mindfulness in the hospitality industry. Synthesis and reflective description of the literature reveal an exigent need for practice, policy-making and future research.

Findings – This review paper describes mindfulness-based interventions used in the literature. It shows how the practice of mindfulness stimulates a culture of well-being and effectiveness at work, consequently having a positive impact on the customer and the organization. It points to the role of mindfulness in helping hospitality employees deal with stress, depression, anxiety, burnout and emotional labor peculiar to this industry, lowering absenteeism levels and turnover intention.

Practical implications – This paper has implications for hospitality managerial practice, human resource (HR) policy development, employees at all levels in the hospitality industry, business coaches/trainers, educationists, students pursuing hospitality management and researchers.

Originality/value – This first review article on mindfulness in the hospitality industry lays the foundation to accentuate the need and benefits of prioritizing mindfulness in this sector. It provides directions for future research, application in HR management in hospitality and designing effective interventions.

Keywords Mindfulness, Mindfulness impact, Hospitality, Hotels, Restaurants, Mindful employees

Paper type General review

Introduction

The tourism and hospitality sectors are development agents and catalysts for socioeconomic growth, a significant source of foreign exchange gains (Rajesh & Suganthi, 2015). The Indian hospitality industry is one of the most dynamic service sectors comprising four main

segments: lodging, food and beverage, recreation and travel and tourism. India's rich and exquisite history, culture and diversity are showcased through tourism while providing significant economic benefits. In 2020, the travel & tourism industry's contribution to the total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was US$ 121.9bn. The India brand equity foundation's (IBEF) Indian tourism and hospitality industry report in August 2021 (IBEF, 2022) projects that this contribution to GDP is expected to reach US$ 512bn by 2028. Such a growing and fast-paced industry would also be a huge employer. EHL Insights (2020) states, "The hospitality and travel industry accounts for one out of every ten employment opportunities." "In FY20, the tourism sector in India accounted for 39 million jobs, which was 8.0% of the total employment in the country. By 2029, it is expected to account for about 53 million jobs," states the IBEF report on Indian tourism and hospitality industry (IBEF, 2022).

In keeping pace with increased economic benefits, the hospitality sector has become one of the most demanding and stressful sectors, with odd and long working hours, often disrupting the work-life balance and consequently building a silent regressive impact on the individual, organizational effectiveness and service performance. Employees in the hospitality industry work in a dynamic environment requiring a quick response and an intense customer focus. The hotel industry processes round the clock, where the employees are highly responsible for the core areas, like customer care, room service, food production and service. Expectations from the customers coupled with work pressure make their job more challenging and stressful (Edvardsson & Gustavsson, 2003). The most common issues they face are emotional labor, stress and burnout (Karatepe, Rezapouraghdam, & Hassannia, 2021). These issues lead to exhaustion, impact job performance, job satisfaction and subjective well-being at work, and increase turnover intention among employees in the industry (Ayachit & Chitta, 2022; Chu, Baker, & Murrmann, 2012; Wen, Zhou, Hu, & Zhang, 2020).

According to hotel tech report (Hollander, 2022), "hotel employees feel stress on 40-62% of workdays, which is higher than the average employee across industries, who report feeling stress on 25 to 44% of days.". Researchers find that the most prominent causes of stress in this sector are interpersonal conflicts (Zhang, Kandampully, & Choi, 2014), threats to job security and constant change (Aguiar-Quintana, Nguyen, Araujo-Cabrera, & Sanabria-Díaz, 2021). The hotel world is swimming through waves of interpersonal conflicts, which may be among the employees and between employees and guests or owners. Employees feel less secure in their jobs as hotels change ownership often, and turnover becomes high. High turnover leads to changes in relationships with market managers, vendors and business partners. Stress can result in decreased productivity, a considerable cost in a sector where guest satisfaction and loyalty make a big difference. Additionally, there has been a surge in mental health and psychological problems like stress, depression, anxiety, insecurity and fear in hospitality employees because of COVID–19. Studies have also shown increased absenteeism levels during this time (Karatepe, Rezapouraghdam et al., 2021; Khan, Niazi, Nasir, Hussain, & Khan, 2021).

As a people-oriented service, the hospitality industry's success and growth lie primarily on its employees' shoulders. Research (Huang, De la Mora Velasco, Marsh, & Workman, 2021; Wang, Xu, Zhang, & Li, 2020) has shown that managers in the hospitality sector must prioritize their employees' well-being since psychological well-being is a strong predictor of job performance. Evidence (Johnson, Park, & Chaudhuri, 2020) shows that mindfulness practiced at the workplace can be very beneficial in handling stress, preventing burnout, improving self-image, increasing compassion by improving awareness and helping in team building and relationship management. Mindfulness positively impacts employee well-being (Schultz, Ryan, Niemiec, Legate, & Williams, 2015).

Kabat-Zinn (1982) describes mindfulness as a "detached observation from one moment to next of a constantly changing field of objects. It is the awareness that arises from paying

attention, on purpose, in the present moment and non-judgmentally." Mindfulness at work means being fully present at work without distraction, thus increasing work engagement. It entails awareness of one's emotions, thoughts and the current situation without judgment (Jang, Jo, & Kim, 2020). While extensive studies show the benefits of mindfulness at work, we identify a research gap in the application of mindfulness in the hospitality industry and its effectiveness. This review attempts to provide insights into the value of mindfulness to employees in the hospitality industry. It gives an exhaustive understanding of the existing literature in this area. Researchers and educationists can use it to study and design mindfulness training modules (on-the-job and off-the-job) to meet hospitality employees' needs. This review will prove helpful to human resource (HR) managers and employees at all levels in the hospitality sector. It gives sufficient evidence on why mindfulness must be prioritized in the hospitality industry.

Objectives
To identify and synthesize the evidence on the impact of mindfulness on employees in the hospitality sector.

Methodology
The method of evidence synthesis selected for this study is narrative reviews, as narrative reviews effectively present perspectives on a topic using reflective literature descriptions (Green, Johnson, & Adams, 2006; Greenhalgh, Thorne, & Malterud, 2018). The screening and selection process of included studies followed preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses (PRISMA) guidelines to maintain methodological rigor. Our study was also assessed for quality using the scale for the quality assessment of narrative review articles (SANRA) (Baethge, Goldbeck-Wood, & Mertens, 2019).

The inclusion criteria are specified as under
Intervention (object of the study): mindfulness; outcome: employee well-being, productivity, engagement and mental health; type of the study: longitudinal/cross-sectional study; publication: academic journals; population: hospitality sector; period: 1982 to present. Kabat-Zinn (1982) brought mindfulness to the West, and it was only after this that mindfulness literature gained momentum in global academic research; language: English.

Research papers were searched using iterative references of retrieved articles and searches on the following electronic databases: Web of Science (Clarivate), Scopus (Elsevier), Journal Storage (JSTOR) (ITHAKA) and ScienceDirect (Elsevier). The searches were supplemented with additional searches on Emerald Insight, Springer LINK, Taylor and Francis Online, Research Gate and Google Scholar.

The complete search string used on Scopus was: (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("mindfulness training") OR TITLE-ABS-KEY ("mindfulness impact") OR TITLE-ABS-KEY ("mindfulness practice") OR TITLE-ABS-KEY ("mindfulness intervention") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("hospitality") OR TITLE-ABS-KEY ("tourism and hospitality") OR TITLE-ABS-KEY ("hotels") OR TITLE-ABS-KEY ("restaurants") OR TITLE-ABS-KEY ("frontline employees") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("emotional labor") OR TITLE-ABS-KEY ("burnout") OR TITLE-ABS-KEY ("work engagement") OR TITLE-ABS-KEY ("mental health") OR TITLE-ABS-KEY ("well-being") OR TITLE-ABS-KEY ("productivity") AND PUBYEAR >1982) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "ar")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, "English")). The initial search was conducted between 28th October and 6th November 2021. An updated search was conducted between 3rd April and 8th April 2023. Fifty papers were identified. Of these, 29 articles met the inclusion criteria and were selected for the study.

Results and discussion

Mindfulness interventions adopted in the reviewed literature

Mindfulness has its roots in Theravada Buddhism. Buddhism introduced two kinds of meditation, one being transcendental meditation and the other awareness meditation, which is known as mindfulness. Unlike transcendental meditation, which is focused on one object, mindfulness is an awareness of a constantly changing field of objects (Kabat-Zinn, 1982).

The different interventions adopted in the reviewed literature have been discussed here:

Mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR). Mindfulness was propounded as a secular concept by Jon Kabat – Zinn. He implemented a 10 – week-long stress reduction and relaxation program as an intervention to explore the effectiveness of mindfulness as a "self-regulatory coping strategy for long-term chronic patients." He used 'sweeping, breath and perceptions, and hatha yoga' as part of the interventions. The evidence in his study reveals that apart from a reduction in pain, the practice of mindfulness also causes changes in attitudes and behaviors (Kabat-Zinn, 1982). MBSR has also effectively treated generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) and panic (Zinn, Massion, & Kristeller, 1992).

Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT). MBCT is an 8-week "manualized group skills-training program" that combines cognitive-behavioral therapy for depression with MBSR. The participating patients were trained to detach from depressive rumination by being observant of their thoughts, feelings and bodily sensations in a nonjudgmental way. They were directed towards a more freeing awareness mode rather than an 'autopilot' mode. For patients with recurrent major depression in the treatment group, MBCT caused a significant drop in relapse and recurrence compared to patients in the control group. The awareness skills learned through the practice of mindfulness facilitated the early detection of negative thoughts in formerly depressed patients, thus giving them the freedom to respond in a less ruminative manner. This study concluded that mindfulness is an effective treatment for the prevention of 'recurrence' in major unipolar depressive disorder (Segal, Teasdale, Williams, & Gemar, 2002; Teasdale *et al.*, 2000).

Mindfulness in motion (MIM). MIM is an on-the-job mindfulness-based intervention incorporating yoga stretches and background music, apart from an 8-week group training adapted from MBSR. It is preceded by a group discussion on the participants' mindful awareness. The study on the impact of MIM as a mindfulness intervention showed positive results in a chronically high-stress work environment. The participants in the test group (employees subject to increased stress) experienced relaxation and improved resilience compared to similar participants in the control group. Employee work engagement and vigor also increased considerably. MIM is a highly effective intervention for those employees who may not have the time or interest to join a mindfulness course/retreat outside of work hours. Institutional support is imperative to implement MIM as a training intervention (Klatt, Steinberg, & Duchemin, 2015).

Other MBSR adaptations designed for the workplace.

(1) Workplace mindfulness training (WMT) incorporated mindfulness meditation, walking meditation, pausing meditation, body scan, compassion meditation, mindful emailing and daily journaling.

(2) Meditation awareness training (MAT) used insight meditation and teachings on ethical awareness, generosity, patience and compassion. In this intervention, no yoga movement was used.

(3) Mindfulness-on-the-go uses a mobile application with guided meditation. Robinson (2021)

Second-generation mindfulness-based interventions (SG – MBIs) add other forms of meditation, like ethical awareness, loving-kindness and compassion meditation, to the first-generation mindfulness-based interventions (FG - MBIs) of MBSR and MBCT (Van Gordon, Shonin, & Griffiths, 2015).

Evidence of the impact of mindfulness on employees in the hospitality sector

Researchers, clinicians and practitioners have defined mindfulness in various ways. It can be seen as a personality trait, a momentary state of awareness or a skill that can be developed through learning. Instruments used to measure mindfulness range from gauging mindlessness to assessing flexibility (Brown & Ryan, 2003). Studies have found relationships between mindfulness and attitudes, behavior, performance and overall well-being of employees in the hospitality industry. Here we report the findings of these studies showing the impact of mindfulness on employee outcomes and antecedents in the hospitality sector.

1. Improves mental health:

Mental health in the workplace refers to "employees' psychological, emotional, and social well-being within a shared work environment (Bartlett *et al.*, 2019)." Employees in the hospitality industry are constantly under stress, given the dynamic work environment and demanding nature of the service industry. Research shows that mindfulness practice is an effective technique for overcoming mental health issues of hospitality employees working in such stressful environments (Jang *et al.*, 2020), especially during Covid' 19 times when mental health has become a matter of great concern in the hospitality industry (Karatepe, Rezapouraghdam *et al.*, 2021). Mindfulness has been shown to reduce stress, anxiety, depression and worries specific to this industry (Said & Tanova, 2021).

- Work stress

One of the significant reasons to incorporate mindfulness at work in the hospitality sector is to mitigate stress. In the hospitality industry, "when an employee is confronted with a situation that poses a threat, such as the conflict between staff members or between staff and clients of the organization, the form of physiological and emotional arousal he or she experiences is generally termed stress (Ross, 1995)." Prolonged exposure to stressful situations seriously affects employees, deteriorating job performance and reducing organizational effectiveness. Studies (O'Neill & Davis, 2011) have demonstrated a link between job stress and the quality of customer service. Specifically, employees who experience less stress tend to provide better customer service than those who are more stressed. Thus, mindfulness training can help employees mitigate work-related stress problems and enhance service delivery.

- Anxiety and Depression

Anxiety and depression are the two emotional effects leading to psychological consequences in hospitality employees exposed to work stress. Workplace anxiety involves "feeling stressed, nervous, uneasy, or tense about work, which could include anxiety about job performance, interactions with co-workers, or even public speaking (Usher, Durkin, & Bhullar, 2020)". Depression leads to low morale, job dissatisfaction and poor performance in the workplace. Employees experience emotional exhaustion when they are confronted with job demands beyond a certain extent. An imbalance between work and personal life can also decrease productivity (Aguiar-Quintana *et al.*, 2021). The practice of mindfulness by employees at an organizational level as well as at the individual level could help to treat workplace anxiety.

2. Helps in the regulation of emotions:

The job of frontline employees in the hospitality sector demands that they must always be pleasant, cheerful, friendly and smiling, even if they experience unpleasant emotions. Hence,

they must use genuine, deep or surface acting while engaging with the customers. It can cause a huge emotional burden, termed emotional labor, on the employees. The emotional labor of hospitality frontline employees alleviates emotional exhaustion (Johnson *et al.*, 2020). Emotional exhaustion is characterized by a sense of being emotionally overwhelmed and psychologically drained by excessive work demands (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). There is sufficient literature (Grobelna, 2021; Han *et al.*, 2020; Karatepe, Saydam *et al.*, 2021; Rathi & Lee, 2016) to show how emotional exhaustion adversely affects hospitality employees. However, there is a dearth of emotional labor training in the hospitality industry and minimal research in this area (Lee & Madera, 2019b; Shani, Uriely, Reichel, & Ginsburg, 2014). Training interventions like mindfulness with positive work reflections could help manage emotional exhaustion faced by hotel employees more effectively (Xu *et al.*, 2018). Surface acting is one of the major causes of the emotional exhaustion faced by frontline employees in the hospitality sector. Mindfulness effectively maintains emotional harmony by helping frontline employees engage in deep acting with the customer instead of surface acting (Johnson *et al.*, 2020; Lee & Madera, 2019a; Li, Wong, & Kim, 2017).

   3. Reduces employee burnout and turnover intention:

There is a surge in employee burnout in the hospitality industry. World Health Organization (WHO) defines burnout as "a syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed." Its antecedents are depletion in vitality, emotional exhaustion and disengagement with one's job, a hostile or cynical attitude towards the job, and a decline in professional effectiveness (World Health Organization, 2019). In contrast, mindfulness creates a deeper engagement and thus helps to reduce employee burnout (Johnson *et al.*, 2020). Evidence (Mahon, Mee, Brett, & Dowling, 2017; Schultz *et al.*, 2015; Silver, Caleshu, Casson-Parkin, & Ormond, 2018) shows that mindfulness training improves self-care and reduces employee stress and burnout in the service industry. Studies (Dane & Brummel, 2014) have also established a negative relationship between workplace mindfulness and turnover intention in the hospitality sector.

   4. Reduces absenteeism from work:

Karatepe *et al.* (2021) suggested that companies should organize ongoing employee mindfulness training programs. It will increase their level of belongingness to the company and show that the company is interested in the wellness of its employees. A high level of belongingness will be essential in reducing absenteeism at work. Mindfulness training also helps to build resilience, especially during challenging Covid times. This improved resilience will also help to reduce absenteeism at work.

   5. Enhances job performance:

Dane (2013) inferred that mindfulness at work had a direct relationship with performance at the workplace, particularly in the service sector. Mindfulness enables a clear awareness of the present. With an immersed and attentive mind, employees are more engaged with the task being performed (Brown, Ryan, & Creswell, 2007). Mindfulness enhances levels of work engagement and thus increases proactive service performance (Jang *et al.*, 2020; Johnson *et al.*, 2020; Silver *et al.*, 2018). Evidence (Wang, Guchait, & Paşamehmetoğlu, 2021) also shows that mindfulness positively impacts employee creativity, especially when the organization's error tolerance is high. Mindfulness can increase productivity by reducing errors. Johnson *et al.* (2020) established that mindfulness practices encourage focused attention, reducing work errors. It is found that the stress caused by uncivil customers can negatively affect work engagement. Mindfulness can intervene in overcoming this problem (Jang *et al.*, 2020). Dane and Brummel (2014) found evidence to support the claim of a positive relationship between

mindfulness at work and job performance through work engagements in the areas of vigour, dedication and absorption.

    6. Builds effective customer engagement:

Mindfulness training for frontline employees is imperative in today's highly personalized customer service-oriented hospitality sector. Mindful frontline employees will be more interactive and actively listen to the customer. Mindfulness training will inculcate in them the nature of being in the present without being judgmental (Johnson *et al.*, 2020). Collective mindfulness positively relates to proactive customer service behavior, with collective thriving as a mediating variable (Wu & Chen, 2019). Mindfulness would help hotel frontline employees to cater to individual customers' needs quickly and efficiently, without surface acting. Mindfulness training would also help employees overcome the adverse effects of dealing with rude, aggressive and anti-social customers in the hospitality industry (Jang *et al.*, 2020). Mindfulness techniques could help younger employees "reframe negative experiences" caused by uncivil customers in the hospitality sector (Robinson, 2021). Customer engagement with mindful employees will build long-lasting customer relationships, thus increasing the number of satisfied and loyal customers (Johnson *et al.*, 2020).

    7. Reduces the adverse effects of performance pressure:

Performance pressure is "an employee's subjective perception. It originates from the employee's speculation about the consequences (positive or negative) that will result from his or her performance (Xu, Wang, Li, & Kwan, 2021)." Practicing mindfulness helps employees stay focused on the task at hand without making judgments about potential outcomes. However, stressors like performance pressure can decrease intrinsic motivation and hinder the individual's willingness to make an extra effort to achieve high-quality performance (Rescalvo-Martin, Castillo, Moreno-Marcial, Albacete-Saez, & Llorens-Montes, 2022). Mindfulness techniques could lead to a successful path to overcoming such hindrances.

    8. Mindful work environments:

A mindful work environment will encourage frontline employees to perform deep acting with customers and help negate the effects of emotional labor (Johnson *et al.*, 2020). Jang *et al.* (2020) stressed the need to provide hotel employees with spaces to practice mindfulness at work. Chen and Wilton (2018) investigated the practice of mindfulness during work breaks and its effectiveness in increasing job performance levels in the restaurant sector. Also, it has been studied that those employees with a high level of mindfulness are more positive people and less affected by negative workplace gossip and the negative mood that follows (Babalola *et al.*, 2019). However, studies also point out that workplace bullying in the hospitality industry can "drain mindfulness states," thereby increasing employee emotional exhaustion (Said & Tanova, 2021).

Application of mindfulness in human resource procedures

Hotel managers should consider awareness traits like mindfulness when hiring and training employees at all levels. Organizations in the hospitality sector must screen prospective employees on the trait of mindfulness during recruitment and selection procedures. Employees using mindfulness as a personal resource will yield good results. Jang *et al.* (2020) found that when casino employees used mindfulness as a personal resource, they could more easily engage with uncivil customers and perceive their interaction differently. It also increased their overall proactive service performance. The study also suggested providing mindfulness interventions catering to specific employee needs, given the extent of engagement they have with rude and aggressive customers. Service sector managers must

take frontline employees' well-being seriously, given their stressful and highly demanding job roles (Karatepe & Uludag, 2008). Being the face of the hotel, the emotions of frontline employees, fake or real, would impact the customers' emotions (Wang *et al.*, 2020). Frontline employees must be encouraged to practice mindfulness at work and as a lifestyle; only then will it provide long-lasting effectiveness at work (Jang *et al.*, 2020). Organizing workshops for top and middle-level hospitality managers on understanding mindfulness and mental health is also much needed as it will help them understand their subordinates better, thereby increasing empathy and compassion in their communication and coordination with them (Karatepe, Rezapouraghdam *et al.*, 2021; Silver *et al.*, 2018). Practicing mindfulness can enhance problem-solving and decision-making skills while improving communication and increasing interaction. These benefits can boost concentration and attention, which are crucial for creativity in the hospitality sector (Kalyar, Ali, & Shafique, 2021).

Implication and future scope
Implication on employee and organizational outcomes – policy and practice
This review gives a clear understanding of how mindfulness impacts the well-being, performance and loyalty of employees in the hospitality sector. It will significantly benefit HR managers in the hospitality sector. It would help them understand the importance of incorporating mindfulness in the company wellness programs for their employees. The paper gives evidence to support a priority in mindfulness training. Human resource managers could develop training programs for their employees in this area. The study will also assist HR managers in the hospitality sector in planning recruitment and selection procedures. Given the various benefits of mindfulness to employees in the hospitality sector, selecting candidates with mindfulness as a trait will benefit the organization. Employee performance appraisals could also be linked to their display of mindfulness in their interactions with customers. HR managers' most significant challenge in a digital workspace is employee engagement. The effectiveness of online mindfulness training as an employee engagement tool in a digital workspace could be studied. Employees at all levels in the hospitality sector will find this study helpful in understanding the importance of adopting mindfulness as a self-regulatory practice. It will help them deal with stress, emotional labor and burnout. Practicing mindfulness as a lifestyle would improve their performance at work and overall well-being.

Employee mindfulness plays a crucial role in tackling the adverse effects of performance pressure. HR managers in hotels with the aid of trained mindfulness experts must implement ongoing training programs that focus on developing mindfulness skills in employees. This training will aid in enhancing their ability to remain present and focused. Additionally, the organization should identify individuals willing to practice mindfulness but requiring guidance. High doses and low doses of mindfulness techniques can be incorporated into mindfulness programs after understanding the pulse of the employees. Besides the interventions discussed in this paper, incubating specific simple exercises like mindful eating, mindful walking and kindness and happiness exercise will bring much difference in the behavior of the employees, thus helping them adopt coping strategies at work. It would be beneficial for managers to contemplate the benefits of incorporating this form of training into their organizational or departmental training initiatives as an extra resource to counterbalance the impact of job-related stress in the hospitality industry.

As a high-contact service, the hospitality industry involves a high degree of relationship management, especially with customers. Mindful employees are well-equipped to maintain long-lasting relationships with stakeholders at all levels. Incorporating mindfulness could result in a corporate wellness culture, employee engagement, loyalty, retention and happy, resilient and positive employees. A happy workforce is a self-driven, productive and vibrant

workforce. This will also reduce medical costs and absenteeism costs to the organization. Efficient employees will lead to lesser organizational errors, enhanced service production and delivery quality, and meaningful and satisfactory complaint handling, thus positively impacting customer delight, retention and loyalty and encouraging positive word-of-mouth publicity. This will help the firms to gain a competitive advantage.

Implication for education and future research

Education policymakers and board of studies members would find this review helpful in understanding the need to incorporate mindfulness training in the curriculum to help develop the right skill sets in students of hospitality specializations. This review will also initiate research scholars to explore areas of further study in diverse applications of mindfulness in the hospitality sector. Scholars can identify the impact of mindfulness in each segment of the industry and its influence on contact as well as noncontact employees and back-office staff. Scholars may study the effectiveness of different mindfulness interventions on employees at all levels in the hotel industry. Studies can also be conducted to check the feasibility of implementing on-the-job mindfulness intervention in a fast-paced hospitality sector.

Further research could focus on a qualitative method to understand workers' experiences of mindfulness-based interventions. Employees in the unorganized hospitality sector may not have access to or understand the benefits of mindfulness training and hence may not gain benefits from the same. There is little to no research done in this area, and thus, has future scope for research. Studies can also be undertaken to understand the relationship between mindfulness and a culturally diverse workforce in the hospitality sector. Further research could explore integrating mindfulness practices among hospitality sector employees to foster a more purpose-driven approach toward their highly challenging and stressful work in the post-COVID era.

The evidence on the positive impact of mindfulness in the hospitality sector is compelling; however, it is essential to understand its effects holistically to effectively implement it in service organizations. Despite the lack of literature on the adverse effects of mindfulness in the hospitality sector specifically, studies outside this setting have indicated potential negative consequences of "too much mindfulness" under certain conditions (Britton, 2019). Hence, it is crucial for HR managers to ensure that caution is exercised in the levels and dosage of mindfulness practiced and to employ multiple training techniques (Glomb, Duffy, Bono, & Yang, 2016) with the aid of trained mindfulness experts. "Just enough detachment" (Choi, Gruman, & Leonard, 2022) is a healthy practice in mindfulness. Employees should be trained in self-regulation to facilitate this. Glomb *et al.* (2016) found that mindful employees may be more intentional in their behavior but they may not always align with the organization's goals. In fact, without proper self-regulation, they may behave in a way that contradicts these goals. Studies (Brooker *et al.*, 2013; Choi *et al.*, 2022; Schindler, Pfattheicher, & Reinhard, 2019) have identified potential negative emotional and psychological effects of mindfulness. These studies have also shown that mindfulness can have an adverse impact on mental health, employee job satisfaction and interpersonal relationships and can lead to increased stress. However, Binda, Greco, and Morone (2022) suggest that when discussing the impact of mindfulness interventions, the term "adverse" should be limited to severe outcomes or hospitalization. The study contends that studies using the term "adverse effects" are actually referring to "expected reactions that occur during the process of achieving the true benefits of mindfulness." Therefore, it is also imperative for future research to consider these adverse outcomes and study the possible negative consequences of mindfulness interventions in the hospitality sector and the challenges in its implementation.

Conclusion

This review paper contributes to the extant literature on the influence of mindfulness in the hospitality industry. Employees in the hospitality industry are constantly faced with mental and psychological problems and emotional exhaustion due to the very nature of their job. It affects their work engagement, customer engagement and overall productivity. Studies reviewed in this paper posit mindfulness practice as an effective technique to overcome all these problems and build a happier and more productive workforce in the hospitality sector.

This paper also elaborately discusses the mindfulness interventions used in the reviewed research papers. It gives adequate evidence for HR managers in the hospitality sector to employ mindful candidates, include mindfulness as a trait in performance appraisals, and plan more training programs in mindfulness for their employees. One limitation of this study is the potential for selection bias in the qualitative nature of the narrative reviews. Furthermore, the lack of direct comparison between studies can be seen as a limitation. However, reflectively synthesizing the limited literature on the topic provides valuable perspectives. Given the paucity of available literature, it is important to recognize the pressing need for further research on the subject. We encourage further research to build upon the findings of this study and explore the effectiveness of mindfulness interventions in various segments of the hospitality industry.

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