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Mindfulness Practice as a Means to Increase Happiness and Enhance Service Employees' Work Performance in Hotels/Resorts in Southern Thailand

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to present the improvement of employees' work performance in the hospitality industry in Thailand after mindfulness implementation, including some successful cases and factors contributing towards better work performance. A qualitative approach was applied to this research based on observations of all employees (n=50) through an "Open Space/Marketplace" workshop and interviews of all supervisors and some randomly selected employees (n = 22) according to their availability. The findings identified 3 major areas of improvement: participation in terms of communication; patients' understanding; and prioritization (planning). The study focused on all employees working at the organization. The results show how mindful practices can be used in an organization and how they can help people change in certain ways. This leads to better team performance and big improvements in the organization's overall performance.

Keywords: mindfulness, happiness, and work performance

Introduction

Mindful practices allow each individual to be more conscious as they have to concentrate on oneself. The serenity of meditation helps them to be more focused as the tranquility process gives them time to think thoroughly about their works and priorities. They can have time to reflect on what they did and be able to improve on their future plans. Several quantitative studies (Petchsawanga and Duchon 2012, Petchsawanga and McLean 2017, Coo and Salanova 2017), Chen and Wilton 2018) have shown a strong relationship between mindfulness and better performance. According to Coo and Salanova (2017), mindfulness can bring happiness, which has positive impacts on performance. This research is focusing on mindfulness practices and being happier can deliver better work performance of people who work at hotels and resorts located in a tourist destination, Krabi province, in the south of Thailand.

Research Design

Research Population

To adhere to the ethics of confidentiality, VVG is used as a mock-up name for the hotels and resorts where this research was conducted. VVG is a family business operating since 1987 and currently has 3 locations; PNI Resort, located in the city on a beachfront, has 69 rooms; PNL Resort, located on the beachfront of an island, has 15 rooms; and WRR, located in a forest with natural hot springs, has 14 rooms. All 50 employees participated in “Open Space/Marketplace” workshop where it was used as an observation tool. 22 employees were individually interviewed, including all 10 management positions (resort manager, front office manager, restaurant manager, housekeeping manager, engineering manager, and finance manager) and 12 operating employees (guest service agent, chef, masseuse, housekeeper, waiter/waitress, and driver) were randomly selected based on their availability.

Scope of the Study

People in the hospitality industry engage with visitors from different backgrounds every day, and they have to deal with constantly changing situations and environments. This article will indicate and point out some experiences that the researcher received from the observations and interviews before and after interventions about their perceptions of awareness and benefits from regular practice of mindfulness. PESTEL analysis (policies & politics, economy, social, technology, environment, and laws), McKinsey 7s Framework (strategy, structure, system, style, staff, skill, and shared value), SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats), and TOWS analysis (threats, opportunities, weaknesses, and strengths) were the diagnosis tools used to find internal and external factors effecting VVG. Having applied several tools to analyze the area of improvement for VVG, the researcher focuses on the SWOT analysis because the researcher would like to use strengths and opportunities of the organization to develop and improve on the weaknesses. Additionally, the ODI tools were utilized in this research since they focus on the positive aspects and aim to improve the employees’ potentials.

According to the results of the diagnosis, VVG employees focused more on their day-to-day tasks and did not spend enough time planning for future goals or unforeseen circumstances. They were less likely to take action on their own and tended to do things only when asked or told to. The staff could still perform their tasks, but they lacked consistency and tended to have fewer accountabilities that were beyond their scope of work. The employees have different levels of education, background, and professionalism, which may impact their work responsibilities and performance, reflecting in a different level of performance among VVG’s 3 locations. There were 3 phases to this research: Pre-ODI, ODI, and Post-ODI, involving all 50 employees of all VVG’s 3 locations for 8 weeks. The pattern of intervention stages was adapted to describe the 3 stages used to carry out the ODI in mindfulness and happiness to VVG employees over the period of 8 weeks as showing in Table 1 (Kossek et al., 2014).

Table 1*Intervention Stages and Activities Distributed Over 8 Weeks*

Pre-ODI (Unfreezing)	ODI (Movement)	Post-ODI (Refreezing)
Stage 1: Preparing for Change All Employees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization profile presenting the current situation and company's goals and direction that VVG is moving towards • The opportunities for the employees' participation, improvement and development for change • Make sure of employees' understanding and the need for changes • Kick-off session emphasizing on mindfulness and happiness aspects 	Stage 2: Setting the Change in Motion All Employees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Space/Marketplace Workshop: opportunities to participate, involve, share, and learn from each other on how to improve in different areas of wellness, including both internal and external aspects • Daily Memo: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meditation: at least 5-10 minutes daily meditation • E-Colors: Awareness of self and others. Interaction with others who are different from them. • Reflection/Debrief: What went well and how to improve? • Small Wins: Daily accomplishment • Simple Behaviors: Daily activities or behaviors creating positive outcomes to the employees 	Stage 3: Sustaining the Change All Employees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Space/Marketplace Workshop: Continuing the workshop on a weekly basis. Each employee takes turn to share and conduct their projects as it would help to strengthen the relationships and develop employees' ownership and responsibilities leading to more effective and performance.

Observations and interviews were the research tools used for both Pre-ODI and Post-ODI. The interview questions were as follows: what do you do and how do you feel when you are around or have to work with people who are different from you? How do you handle the situation when you work with people who are different from you? There were 2 parts under both Pre-ODI and Post-ODI: 1) observation through "Open Space/Marketplace" workshop where all 50 employees participated and 2) interviews where all 10 management positions and 12 operating employees were randomly selected based on their availability. Meditation and E-Colors were the ODI tools being applied to increase the employees' awareness. All employees were asked to write a daily memo including topics on reflection/debrief period, simple behaviors, and small wins to reinforce their daily mindful practice. Scoring matrix was applied for an "Open Space/Marketplace" workshop under 4 categories: participation, topic, details, and implementation. Content analysis was applied as the data analysis tool by finding codes and themes from the interviews.

Literature Review

Mindfulness

The concept of mindfulness comes from Buddhist practices, which have been related to the Buddhism religion for thousands of years. Mindfulness is probably most well-known to the West because of Professor Jon Kabat-Zinn, who is the founder of Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction.

In 1979, he recruited a number of patients who did not respond to traditional treatment and put them through his eight-week Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction program, where the results showed improvement in patients' conditions (Staff, 2017). According to Kabat-Zinn (2015), mindfulness is an "awareness that arises through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally." Studies of more than 200 cases have shown that mindfulness helps to reduce stress, anxiety, and depression (Keith, 2022). These methods would not only help to reduce conflicts and stress, but they would also improve work performance (Krahnke, 2003). Mindfulness can help people better manage their teams, which later reflects in productive performance; people can focus more on what is happening (Bennett, 2011). When you pay attention, your mind is not wandering or operating on autopilot mode. This would not only decrease the level of stress but also unlock creativity and would later lead to better work performance (Langer, 2017). Therefore, mindfulness has many positive results, which would later bring one to success.

Congleton et al. (2017) state that mindful practices affect our brains, which relates to our self-awareness and emotional management. They further indicate that mindfulness is a very important element and a "must have" for those who would like to be healthy, less stressed, and better decision-makers (Congleton et al., 2017). Goleman (2017) states that when one experiences suffering, mindfulness practices can help to create positive attitudes and be more optimistic (Goleman, 2017). Gonzalez (2017) supports the idea that the brain can be trained by mindfulness practices as it helps people to be less emotional and more rational. Hougaard and Carter (2017) wrote that mindfulness can improve the level of effectiveness, emphasizing on focus and awareness.

According to Goleman and Lippincot (2017), mindfulness is a tool to help shift people's attention inward in order to observe what is going on at the moment without interpretation or judgement, including thoughts, feelings, and actions. As one is trying to strengthen the ability to concentrate, one can simply notice the inner experience and not get lost in it at any point throughout the day. There are many benefits to practicing mindfulness, ranging from establishing stronger and more positive relationships with other people and colleagues to developing higher levels of leadership performance (Goleman & Lippincot, 2017). Mindfulness practices can be developed and cultivated. As research has shown, mindfulness increases people's level of awareness. According to Forsey (2018), self-awareness is considered an essential tool to help people reach higher levels of job satisfaction and work performance; they would develop stronger leadership qualities, improve relationships with others, and manage their emotions better. Self-awareness was defined by Shelley Duval and Robert Wicklund in 1972 as being present in the moment where one can focus and pay attention on oneself and the environment around them that is presented externally; it is a fundamental element for self-control (Forsey, 2018). In other words, awareness can be cultivated through mindfulness, and being in the present would be a contribution that would later lead to happiness. A study by Petchsawanga and Duchon (2012) has shown that regular practice of meditation would lead to more workplace spirituality. An extended study of Petchsawanga and McLean (2017) also found that organizations that offer mediation courses have higher levels of workplace spirituality and work engagement compared to those where meditation courses are absent. Tischler et al. (2002) examined the relationship between spirituality and performance and found that spirituality can lead to individual work success. Based on these

findings, if the practice of mindfulness is provided to an organization, in this case, a resort hotel in Thailand, it would not only benefit the leaders and the employees but also extend to the satisfaction of customers and tourists who come to stay and use the services at the hotel.

Happiness

The term "happiness" has many definitions. In positive psychology, the definition of happiness can be varied depending on who you ask. According to Ackerman (2019), in positive psychology research, happiness is often known by the term "subjective wellbeing". Cherry (2022) states that even though happiness may have many different definitions, it can usually be described as associated with positive emotions and satisfaction in life. McKee (2017) further points out that in order to be happy and fully engaged, it is necessary for a person to have three elements: a meaningful vision of the future, a sense of purpose, and great relationships. If these three elements were created or implemented, people would be happy and deliver better performance.

The predictor of one's happiness depends on the frequency of positive experiences that one encounters. As Gilbert (2017) indicates, "... happiness is the sum of hundreds of small things" (Gilbert, 2017, p. 41). Gilbert (2017) further suggests that to increase happiness, one should be able to consistently do these simple behaviors, including meditation, exercising, getting enough sleep, and practicing altruism. Similarly, Amabile and Kramer (2017) also support that even some simple tasks can create more happiness. The sense of progress can lead employees to be creatively productive. They state that daily progress as simple as a small win would make a difference in how people feel and perform their tasks. People can be more creative and more productive when they feel happy, and the reason behind that is that their inner work lives are positive. In other words, the positive feeling of being happy shows on the outside by delivering good work performance (Amabile & Kramer, 2017). Amabile and Kramer (2017) reemphasize the importance of small wins by indicating that "... more positive perceptions, a sense of accomplishment, satisfaction, happiness, and even elation often follow progress." [and] small wins can boost inner work life tremendously " (p. 68 & 70).

While most research has shown that happiness has positive effects, some have suggested that putting too much emphasis on happiness may make us feel less happy because happiness becomes more of a duty that one tries to achieve and can make them feel worse if they do not. For example, Mauss, (2011) states "We put so much emphasis on the pursuit of happiness, but if you stop and think about it, to pursue is to chase something without a guarantee of ever catching it" (p. 3). In addition, it sometimes happens that when people work their way up and are in leadership positions, they are trapped in a power paradox where they use their power in negative ways, including being rude, selfish, and unethical. When this happens, it would increase stress and anxiety, which would make people who work with them unhappy. In order to avoid this problem, one needs to develop self-awareness through mindfulness practices. Once mindfulness practices have been implemented and developed, people will be happier and it will show in their productivities and performances (Keltner, 2017).

Mindfulness and Happiness

The powerful effects of mindfulness can make people happy. As many researchers have found, people are happiest when they are in the present moment. Moss (2017) emphasizes that the more mindfulness we have, the happier we will be. We are happiest when we are not thinking about it, when we are enjoying the present moment because we are lost in a meaningful project, working toward a higher goal, or helping someone who needs us (p. 10-11). Studies have shown that people who are happy create better work performance. In fact, mindful practices would increase the level of happiness in terms of wellbeing and employees' quality of life as well (Karakas, 2010). Thus, mindfulness practices can reduce stress and improve relationships, which can make people in a company happier. Furthermore, mindfulness would bring more happiness because when you are mindful, you would understand and appreciate why people behave in certain ways, which also helps improve interpersonal relationships. Langer (2017) concludes that being mindful brings more prosperity. Paying attention and being mindful of the moment can create happiness. Self-awareness is positively correlated with higher levels of overall happiness as well (Forsey, 2018). Therefore, awareness levels can be practiced and increased, and this will result in people becoming happier and more productive employees and better leaders; it can help them to align their present life with the passions that they have (Forsey, 2018). When they become more aware, they are happier as well.

Most people would like to be happy. The questions are: how can one be happy and what are the benefits of happiness? Much research has shown that mindfulness is probably one of the main elements of happiness. Gilbert (2017) provides his perception regarding mindfulness and happiness as saying that mediating is one simple method that helps to increase happiness. Killingsworth (2013) conducted a study of 15,000 samples from people with different cultures and backgrounds from 80 countries around the world, and he received more than 650,000 real-time reports.

The study shows that mindfulness is the key to happiness. Killingsworth's study has shown that 47% of average people have their minds wandering, and that, on the opposite end, would lead to unhappiness. Killingsworth (2013) concludes that happiness is when you are at the present moment; based on his extensive research on happiness, mind-wandering is not only a consequence of unhappiness, but also likely the cause of being unhappy. O'Brien (2018) reports that people who were being mindful or those focusing on their experience of being at the present moment were significantly happier than those who were mind wandering or whose minds wandered away from the moment. Therefore, practicing mindfulness may be a key to happiness. As we see from studies, mindfulness practices have resulted in stress reduction and better management of our emotions. Moreover, the practice of mindfulness cultivates compassion in ourselves and others, which helps to improve relationships and brings more happiness to teams and organizations as well. It is likely that happy workers can deliver better performance as well.

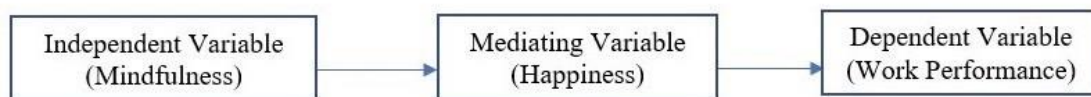
Conceptual Framework

The main focus and foundation of this study is on mindfulness. The researcher refers to the definition of mindfulness given by Kabat-Zinn (2015), that mindfulness is the awareness that arises

from paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally. The researcher has been reading about mindfulness-related topics from different sources, including books, journals, and Internet articles. The researcher realizes that while there are topics and content which may relate to mindfulness, such as resilience, compassion, and empathy, those topics arise from the same source, which is awareness (Goleman, 2017; Ocejja et al., 2014; Dickerson & Quos, 2021). For instance, awareness that arises non-judgmentally would lead to resilience. Similarly, being mindful or being aware would lead a person to be non-judgmental as the person would have a greater understanding of themselves and others; they are more compassionate as well. Therefore, this study focused on how mindfulness, which is the main element, leads to happiness and results in better work performance.

Figure 1.

Conceptual Framework



Research Questions

1. Is there any difference between pre and post ODI on mindfulness of VVG employees?
2. Is there any difference between pre and post ODI on happiness of VVG employees?
3. Is there any difference between pre and post ODI on work performance of VVG employees?

Methodology

This study has 3 steps: Pre-ODI, ODI, and Post-ODI as shown earlier in Table 1. Table 2 summarizes intervention processes for this research.

Table 2*Six Design Principles to Create Mindfulness and Happiness to Improve Work Performance*

Intervention Design Principles	Description	Intervention Examples
Open Space/ Marketplace Workshop	The workshop encourages more engagement, participation, and creativity among employees to encourage them to learn and develop on their strengths and potentials. Combine management positions and operating employees so that they learn and support each other.	Each employee creates one's own project, participates and shares with other what they would like to offer or learn to improve self, workplace, or community.
Meditation	Breathing meditation and walking meditation help them to be more aware of the present moment by concentrating on the in and out breathing or steps of their walks. Meditation trains them to be able to observe on what is happening without any bias or judgement.	5-10 minute daily practices of mindfulness
E-Colors	Personality diversification brings more awareness and acceptance of their strengths, limitations, others' differences, and the fact that they can step out of their comfort zones to develop their potentials.	Aware of self and others, aware of strengths and limitations, development of potentials
Reflection/Debrief	Evaluate on their daily activities and performance as for what went well and what did not go well, and how to do better next time providing opportunities for improvement for each employee.	Reflect on what went well and how to improve on what did not go as plan
Small Wins	Increase their positive emotion by setting a daily goal that they accomplish and how to pursue future goals.	Daily goals accomplishment and how to improve and develop further
Simple Behavior	Apply knowledge and information including sleeping hours, exercises, altruism, and adapt them to their daily life to enhance strengths and to develop potentials for more positive performance.	Activities or behavior to improve positive aspects such as health, mood, and emotion

For the observation part, in Pre-ODI and Post-ODI, all employees (n=50) were asked to participate in an “Open Space/Marketplace” workshop referring to the topic of “wellness” which is the main focus of VVG. Wellness comprises of 6 elements: physical, environment, social, mental, emotional, spiritual. All employees were to create their own project/activity under one of the wellness elements. The researcher asked each employee to write their name under a wellness element that they would like to take ownership of and to share their knowledge and information with others. In terms of scoring system, each VVG location would receive 1 point when at least 50% of the employees participate, and they would receive 2 points when 100% of the employees participate. When less than 50% of the employees participate, that location would receive 0 point. The scoring system was applied to all categories: participation (when they write their name down under an element of wellness), topic (when they write their own project as what is the project that they would like to do), details (when they provide details on how they would start the project), and implementation (when they actually implement the project). For the interviews (n=22), all 10 leadership positions and 12 operating employees were randomly selected based on their

availability. Interviews were used to find in-depth information from each participant regarding their perceptions and experiences of mindful practices and the outcomes after the practices. The conversations from the interview were voice recorded and transcribed into scripts. Interview passages were categorized and developed as themes using content analysis. Observations and interviews are used in this research to find the differences in work performance before and after the ODI. As for the questions being asked, the study followed the Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC). All questions used for the research have been reviewed and checked by 3 experts from different study fields: a professional senior coach, a university professor, and a hospitality business owner; all experts provided a score of +1 on the IOC form questionnaire, except 1 expert who gave 0 on one of the mindfulness questions, and gave 0 on one of the happiness questions, and gave -1 on one of the happiness questions. Before and after the intervention, the way the employees started and took part in the activity was observed.

Population Dimensions

This research examined all employees ($n = 50$) working at VVG, including Vice President, Resort Manager, Front Office Manager, Restaurant Manager, Housekeeping Manager, Engineer Manager, Guest Service Agent, Head of House Keeping, and Head of Spa. On all VVG properties, ODI training on mindfulness and happiness was given to the entire population.

Table 3

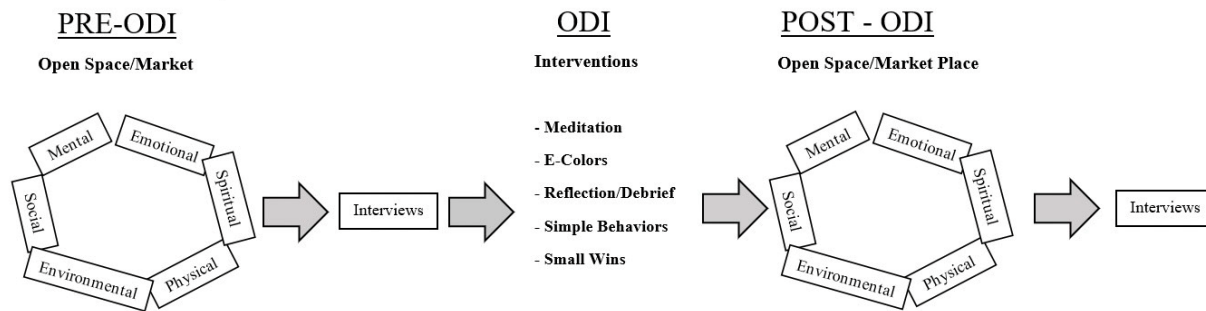
Demographic Information (n=50)

Age	25 and under	26-35	36-45	Over 46
	4	15	20	11
Education	Lower than High School	High School	College/Certificate	Bachelor and Higher
	24	5	12	9
Work Experience	Under 5 years	5-10 years	11-20 years	Over 20 years
	16	19	9	6

The Scope of Research Instruments

For Pre-ODI, the researcher checked current level of employee's mindfulness, happiness, and performance using survey questionnaire and interview to assess their level of the 3 variables. In addition to the performance aspect, the researcher also used "Open Space/Marketplace" workshop to observe their participation and inputs. The ODI phase, where the intervention was applied to the employees, and post-ODI, where the researcher measured any changes or improvements that arose. At the Pre-ODI stage, the researcher prepared employees to understand the situation as to "wellness" is the focus area where VVG is moving towards. For Pre-ODI and Post-ODI, there were 2 phases. Phase 1 used observation methods while phase 2 used in-depth interviews as methods to gather data. The "Open Space/Marketplace" workshop was used to gauge employees' participation and involvement before and after the ODI implementation. VVG's vision is to be a happy vacation emphasizing wellness.

Figure 2
The Flow of Instrumentations



Phase 2 used interview methods where all management and some operating levels were interviewed regarding their mindful practices prior to and after the intervention. They were asked to maintain their daily memo where they were asked to record their daily activities regarding mindful practices, including meditation, E-Colors, reflection/debrief, simple behaviors, and small wins. All employees were encouraged to record them on a daily basis because the researcher would like to maintain the freshness of their activities and information provided. In order to gather the real data, the researcher asked each employee if they were willing to follow the guidelines, and all employees willingly agreed to provide genuine answers regarding their daily activities and practices of mindfulness.

Table 4
Sample In-Dept Interview Questions for Phase 2

Interviews	Sample Questions
Meditation	When you practice mindfulness meditation, how do you feel or where is your focus during the meditating? What are the benefits that you experience?
E-Colors	What do you do and how do you feel when you are around or have to work with people who are different from you? How do you handle the situation when you work with people who are different from you?
Reflection/Debrief	What went well? How are you going to improve what did not go right?
Simple Behaviors	Have you offering your help to any one today and how? /What did you do? /How do you feel?
Small Wins	What can I do tomorrow to strengthen the small win and eliminating the setback identified?

The movement stage was when the researcher implemented the change using intervention tools. Sessions on breathing and walking meditation were provided to all participants. They were

encouraged to meditate at least five to ten minutes every day. Meditation would help to increase self-awareness as they would focus on not only the feelings that occurred in the body but also the thoughts that arose during the practice. The practices of mindfulness would help to increase their awareness of being present leading to more happiness; people are happiest when they are at the present moment (Killingsworth, 2013). They were additionally guided by E-Colors personality diversification indicators that each person is unique to themselves and has different strengths and limitations. Assisting them in becoming more self-aware as well as more aware of others, this allows them to gain a better understanding of themselves and others. Employees were encouraged to step out of their comfort zones and develop themselves in other areas that might be less familiar; this can be a self-improvement process as well. Moreover, the group was trained on how to do the reflection and debrief process, including questions on what went well, what did not go according to your plan, and how you would improve if you could redo it. The reflection/debrief process is another development process that cultivates their ability to think and plan to improve on certain issues, including work or relationship based. Progress and improvement make the employees happier (Amabile & Kramer, 2017). These trainings emphasize the mindfulness that arises through awareness, enhancing their self-development increase the employees' happiness and performance.

Table 5
E-Colors Tendencies

E-Colors	Tendencies
Red-Doer	Take action and get things done
Yellow-Socializer	Interact and engage with others
Blue-Relator	Empathize with and support other
Green-Thinker	Plan and analyze information

Note: Adapted from <https://equilibria.com> (2022).

Furthermore, they were taught how to create happiness through simple behaviors and small wins strategies; simple behaviors include exercising, getting enough sleep, and doing altruism, while small wins techniques allow them to make progress in order to see changes in their happiness level. Every participant was asked to write a daily memo to keep track of all their activities under each category. The refreezing stage was the sustaining of the changes implemented.

Table 6*Summary of ODI Tools*

Tools	Focus Areas	Methods
Open Space/Market Place	Participation, Involvement & Creativities	Observations
Meditation	Self-Awareness	Interviews
E-Colors	Self/Others-Awareness	Interviews
Reflection/Debrief	Self/Others-Awareness	Interviews
Simple Behaviors	Self/Others-Awareness	Interviews
Small Wins	Self-Awareness	Interviews

These ODI processes were implemented as tools to raise their awareness and provide them with an opportunity to learn and become more familiar and understand other people; they help to strengthen their relationships and self-development which lead to more happiness in the workplace.

Data Collection

The ODI process for this research has been planned for at least 8 weeks as referring to Professor Kabat Zinn's Mindful Based Stress Reduction course. The practices of mindfulness were used as foundational tools. The employees were asked to follow the ODI process on a daily basis for 8 weeks, where they meditated and completed their daily memos regarding their mindfulness and happiness aspects. There were 2 phases to this research: observations and interviews. Studies have shown that meditation would improve health, increase awareness, and reduce stress. E-Colors, the Reflection/Debrief process, Simple Behaviors, and Small Wins are all part of the ODI program. Studies have shown that meditation would improve health, increase awareness, and reduce stress. Meditation would also result in happiness. E-Colors would help to bring more awareness to self and others; it would help to understand differences in one's strengths and potential limitations. The reflection and debrief processes would allow one to experience calmness and reflection on themselves, which would contribute to the awareness and stress aspects. Simple behaviors and small wins, including exercising and getting enough sleep, would result in a healthier life and less stress. In fact, it would increase awareness level, which would also lead to a higher level of happiness.

Data Analysis

The data from observations and interviews would be analyzed by using content analysis with three steps: finding codes and themes; identifying patterns and connections; and finally interpreting the data.

Results and Discussion

Approximately 8 weeks after the ODI, the researcher gathered information from the research population by observations and interviews. The researcher noticed improvement from “Open Space/Marketplace” workshop activities, which are varied among VVG employees in 3 locations. The researcher can see differences in employees' involvement between the 3 branches since the beginning of the study. According to the observation prior to the intervention using “Open Space/Marketplace” workshop, PNI employees showed the highest level of participation and involvement, where all employees participated. PNL employees showed a moderate level of participation; most employees participated. Unlike the others, WRR employees did not participate, except for the resort manager.

Table 7

Pre and Post Results of the “Open Space/Marketplace” Workshop

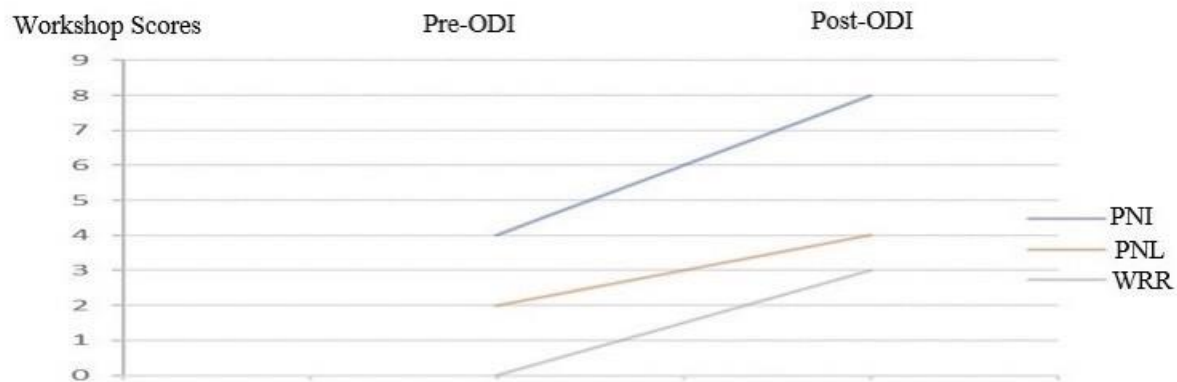
Open Space/Market Place		
Location	Pre-ODI	Post-ODI
PNI	All employees signed their names to participate in the activities, and have only topics that they would like to do, but no further details	All employees signed their names, and all of them came up with details on what they plan to do, including where and how they would like to start their projects.
PNL	Most employees signed their names, but did not have idea on what to do.	All employees signed their names and had topics that they would like to do, but no further details.
WRR	No one signed their name except a resort manager, who had only a topic	Most employees signed their names and have topics that they would like to do, but no further details.

The researcher assigned scores for each category (participation, topic, details of project, and implementation) of the observation from "Open Space/Marketplace" workshop. If all employees of a VVG location were 100% involved in the activity for each category, they would receive 2 points. If the involvement of employees is more than 50% but not reaching 100%, they would receive 1 point. If the involvement is less than 50%, they would receive 0 points. Table 5 and Chart 1 illustrate the performance scores for each of the VVG's locations before and after the ODI, reflecting different levels of employees' improvement via the "Open Space/Marketplace" workshop.

Table 8

Pre and Post Scores of “Open Space/Marketplace” Workshop

PRE-ODI	Participation	Topic	Details	Implementation	Total Score
PNI	2	2	0	0	4
PNL	1	1	0	0	2
WRR	0	0	0	0	0
POST-ODI	Participation	Topic	Details	Implementation	Total Score
PNI	2	2	2	2	8
PNL	2	2	0	0	4
WRR	2	1	0	0	3

Chart 1:*Pre and Post Scores of the “Open Space/Marketplace” Workshop*

After the intervention, all 3 branches showed changes and improvement accordingly. All PNI employees participated and came up with details on how they would like to conduct their projects. All PNL employees participated; they had ideas of what they would like to do, but without further details. WRR employees wrote their names as they would like to be in the project but are still reluctant to take their ownership.

The observation from the "Open Space/Marketplace" workshop has clearly shown that there was significant changes and improvement in employees' participation and involvement in the activity. They were more comfortable and happier leading the project with laughing and smiles on their faces and have more creativity in terms of how they would like to run the project as their own. As is evidenced by this observation, if mindfulness and happiness interventions are applied to organizations, it is likely that employees strengthen their work relationships and handle their tasks better.

For Post-ODI, the researcher interviewed 22 employees on benefits of mindfulness practices that they have experienced, which included all supervisory levels and randomly selected some employees based on their availability. 100% of interviewers said that the practice of mindfulness provided many benefits to them. During the Post-ODI interview, the employees admitted that they had received many benefits from their practice of mindfulness. Several "key terms" were referred to several times that the employees had been put into content analysis during the coding process and while the themes were developed into categories.

There were several "key terms" that were mentioned several times that have been put into content analysis for the coding process, and the themes are developed into categories. These key terms showing in Table 9 repeatedly stated and emphasized by the employees.

Table 9*Frequent Keywords and Themes*

FREQUENT KEYWORDS & THEMES					
Mindfulness	Happiness	Communication	Planning	Personal Development	Performance
Awareness & Cautious	Comfortable	Talking & Listening	Organize & Prioritization	Learning	Relationship
Calm & Peaceful	Satisfy	Discussing	Reflection	Courage & Confident	Helping
Compassionate & Contemplate	Optimistic	Opinions Exchange	Step by Step	Adaptation & Adjustment	Harmonious & Teamwork
Relax & Fresh	Very good & Much Better	Open Minded	Problem Solving	Eager & Enthusiastic	Contribution
Being Present & Focus	Quality of Life	Understanding	Smooth	Mood Management	Sacrifice

Table 10 shows the frequency of words being said by the interviewee under each theme during the post interview.

Table 10*Frequent Keywords from the Interviews*

Keywords	Frequency
Happiness	140
Awareness	112
Personal-Development	111
Mindfulness	94
Communication	91
Planning	80
Performance	70

According to their answers, mindful practices helped them to be more aware, calm, better focus on tasks, and better handle their moods and situations. The word “awareness” was stated 112 times during the interview. They indicated that not only meditation, but the E-Colors helped them to be more aware of themselves and others. The fact that each person is different. Each individual had different strengths and potential limitations; this helps them to be more compassionate. Being more conscious about themselves and people around them leads to a better understanding of other people. Understanding other people helps them to act non-judgmentally, which leads them to be more optimistic and contribute to a positive working environment. They talk and communicate with each other more often than before, which helps to reduce conflicts and misunderstandings

and strengthen their teamwork. All of these lead to a happier working environment. Being more mindful and having time to think and reflect also contribute to the employees' being more organized and making better plans for their duties and future tasks. In fact, the VVG Vice President shared the information that some employees adapted some ODI tools and applied them to their work; she was rather surprised and pleased with better performance, giving an example of a supervisor (an engineer manager) who was not organized and did not know about prioritization, coming up with a monthly plan on what he was planning to do and contribute to the organization. The researcher interviewed the engineer manager (prior to receiving the feedback from the VP), and the engineer manager said that writing a daily memo provided the opportunity for him to see what he could have done better and how he could make a better plan for the next day. He took this reflection period and adapted it to his work schedule. By doing so, he could complete more tasks and at the same time he satisfied the hotel guests and the VVG's owner; this is a win-win situation in which everyone benefits from mindful practices. It is clear that the mindful practices bring happiness to employees, and definitely lead to better performance.

In addition, sharing positive clips helps to contribute to changing employees' attitudes and increasing happiness. One day after the intervention (training), an employee who was a driver approached and thanked the researcher for providing him with the training. He said that with his job he was sometimes asked to deliver things to different locations of VVG. He used to help others by not only delivering the items, but also helping them unload and manage the shelves/storages, which was not part of his job. During the COVID-19 situation, he looked at things negatively and thought that he did not earn any extra money or praise from offering help to others, so he decided to stop helping other colleagues and only completed his tasks. During the ODI training, the researcher shared several positive clips and examples of altruism. These samples and information brought him positive energy; he changed his attitude almost instantly. He realized that he was actually happy to offer help to other people, and doing so makes him feel good. He said that he did not need other people to thank him or praise him for doing so because, deep down inside, he knew that he was doing a good thing. He stated that the clips helped him to change his attitudes and focus on his tasks without being pessimistic; he merely focused on the present moment and was very happy with his work. Another employee also said in the interview that changing attitudes and being more mindful definitely changed her life positively; she felt that she was a happier person now.

Moreover, mindful practices increase awareness among colleagues and allow opportunities for the employees to talk and communicate with each other more. According to a finance manager, after the ODI, staff in her department communicated with each other more frequently than before the intervention, when they assumed that their colleagues knew or understood something, which frequently led to misunderstandings. Mindful practices allowed them to communicate more clearly, which reduced conflicts and misunderstandings in the department. More communication also helped them to make more accurate plans and projects. Similarly, a head chef mentioned that mindful practices provided them with opportunities to think and plan in advance. She said that prior to the ODI, it was rather chaotic in the kitchen area; people were doing their own tasks and there was a total lack of awareness of their surroundings and colleagues, causing some incidences such as dropping and breaking plates and equipment and damages in the kitchen. With mindful practices, they were more focused on what they were doing. They did in fact, communicate and

plan about their tasks and positions in the workplace, and it was becoming more systematic and organized. People are more relaxed and happier with a smoother environment. Some of this evidence from the interview supports the findings from previous studies that mindful practices and practicing happiness contribute to more productive work performance.

After 6 months of ODI, the researcher interviewed the VP of VVG regarding her perceptions towards the VVG employees. She said that ODI created positive impact for her organization. She noticed any advantages from the intervention. First of all, her employees were very happy about the intervention because it gave them motivation and boosted their positive energy. One of her employees noticeably changed and improved himself. Having been in a leadership position, as a manager, he was like a role model. When he improved himself in a certain way, his change greatly affected the whole department. His team members obviously tried to follow his lead. Therefore, the transformation of a person can influence and lead positive change to the entire division.

The VP also discovered that she can see that after the intervention, most of the employees were more relaxed and calmer. The practices of mindfulness not only helped them to better handle situations and frustration, but also trained them to have more patience. Moreover, the ODI tools provided motivate them to be more optimistic, especially during the difficult times that they experienced like the COVID-19 situations. Another aspect that the VP discovered from her employees after the ODI was that they were more willing to initiate and participated in projects and activities. She confirmed that the practice of mindfulness definitely created high benefits for her employees and the entire organization. She also suggested that the program should be implemented in the organization on a regular basis.

In conclusion, mindful practices can be used as transformation tools; it is an accumulative process that may take time for an individual to transform themselves. Each person will take a different amount of time to transform themselves. Another point is that mindful practices should be based on the willingness of each individual; one should see their ability to step out of their comfort zone and would like to develop and improve themselves in certain areas. Therefore, force may not be an option. The results of the transformation would last longer if a person kept on practicing and maintaining their mindful practices.

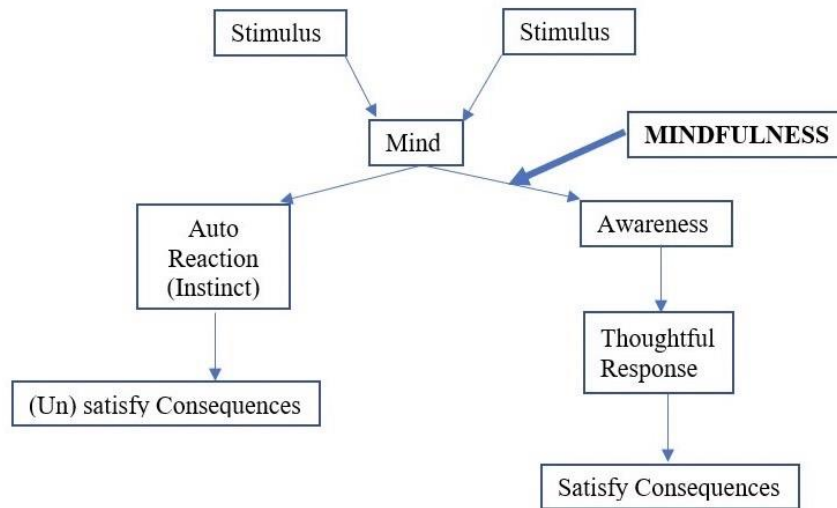
Summary of Key Findings Based on the Results

The results from interviews suggest that employees did not have mindfulness practicing experience. Before the ODI, they were staying in their own comfort zone. They would react to events or stimulus that happened to them. When there was a disagreement or a conflict, they would not communicate to each other, but rather walk away feeling unhappy; that is because of their personality and culture; they reacted based on their instincts. They thought that by not confronting and being quiet would be a better way to handle the situation. ODI provided them with opportunities to develop and increase their mindfulness. Post-ODI results showed that with practicing mindfulness, employees better responded to the situation. Mindfulness is a positive emotion creating happiness. As the employees are happier, they are more willing to communicate (Bayrami et al, 2012). They communicated with each other and created a happier environment.

From the Post-ODI interview, 100% of the employees were more satisfied and happier with practicing mindfulness as the practice helped them be better at handling situations. Key findings from this study had clearly supported previous research that the practice of mindfulness generated positive energies and outcomes throughout the organization. Three major factors that contributed to work performance at VVG included practicing mindfulness, happiness, and communication.

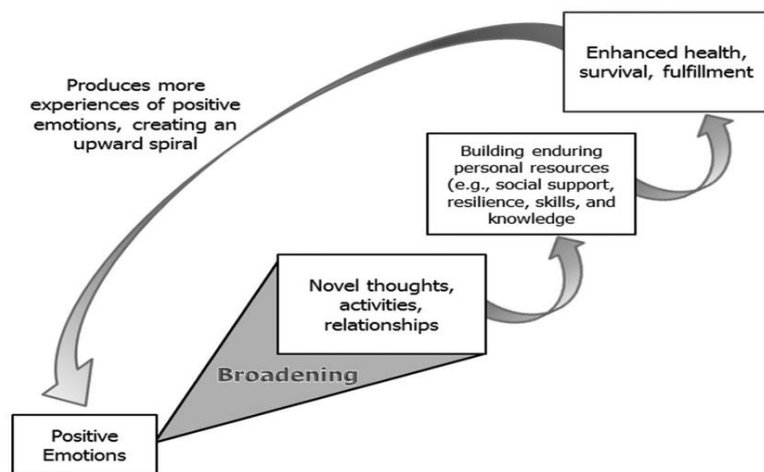
Figure 3

Mindfulness Intervention



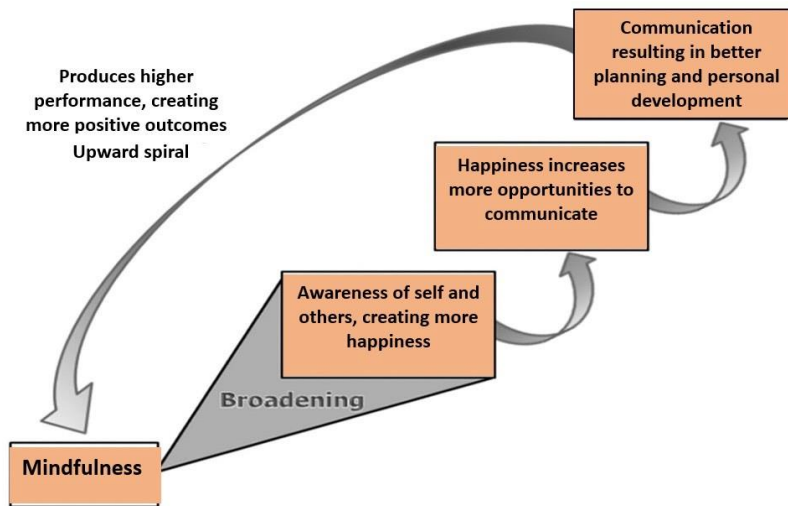
As evidence suggested from the observations and interviews, each employee experienced a certain level of improvement at an individual level. Individuals in positions of authority could serve as role models for their team. When other colleagues were developing and improving together, they would have a positive impact on the whole team, and the developing rhythm would positively enhance the work performance of all departments, leading the organization to be more productive and successful.

According to Fredrickson (2004), positive emotions broaden one's awareness and encourage novel, exploratory thoughts and actions. Based on her broaden and build theory of positive emotions, people are able to build and develop themselves in many aspects, including skills, relationships, and performance.

Figure 4*The Broaden and Build Theory of Positive Emotion*

Note: Fredrickson et al. (2008)

The practices of mindfulness in this research have shown results in similar matters. Being mindful creates positive emotions. As evidenced from the observations and interviews conducted for this study, the practices of mindfulness as ODI tools increase awareness among the employees; the results obviously show improvement in 3 major areas: participation, patients, and prioritization. When they have more awareness of themselves and others, they are more comfortable communicating with others. They are more involved in discussions. The VP also mentioned that after the ODI, the employees clearly showed a higher level of initiative and participation in the meeting. They have more courage to share and discuss opinions and ideas.

Figure 5*Applying the Broaden and Build Theory of Positive Emotion into the Research Results*

Note: Adapted from Fredrickson et al. (2008)

As the employees practice mindfulness, they broaden their awareness of self and others creating more happiness. Happiness increases opportunities to communicate among team members and other departments. Communication results in better planning and personal development producing better performance. As they communicate more often, they also have better understanding of others; they have more empathy and compassion towards others. Since they are more compassionate, they tend to have more patience and tolerance. With more understanding, they also tend to help each other more than previously, enhancing stronger relationships. The VP shared her observation, giving an example of employees serving customers at the hotel restaurants, saying that they were calmer when they encountered customers who were more challenging to please. Furthermore, the employees' gestures, including facial expression, were more pleasant, with more smiles on their faces.

In terms of prioritization, mindful practices methods allow the employee to have time to reflect on what they have done; they help them to respond instead of react. After 3 months of practicing mindfulness, they start to adapt to certain levels of new habits and behaviors. In fact, they have applied some of the ODI methods to their work tasks, resulting in better planning and better handling of their task priorities. The VP observed that once a head of a department adapted the mindfulness tools into his/her work, the rest of the team would follow, resulting in the improvement of the whole team being more prepared. Once the performance of a department improves, it helps smoothen the operational flow of the organization, leading to uplifted performance as a result.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Key findings from this study have clearly supported previous research that the practice of mindfulness generates positive energy and outcomes throughout the organization. As evidence shows from the “Open Space/Marketplace” workshop, each employee experienced a certain level of improvement at an individual level. According to the interview from some leadership positions (Engineer Manager and Finance Manager) and feedbacks from the Vice President, individuals in positions of authority could serve as role models for their team members. When other colleagues were developing and improving together, they would have a positive impact on the whole team, and the developing rhythm would positively enhance the work performance of all departments, leading the organization to be more productive and successful.

While this research implemented the same instrumentations to the employees of all 3 locations, the researcher experienced different factors and aspects from each location of VVG. Employees at PNI were fast learners, so they were ready for any new programs implemented. Employees at PNL required additional supervision and clear direction in order for them to complete the task as plan. Employees at WRR required more time to digest. Since there was no permanent resort manager at WRR, the employees did not know who to communicate to when they needed guidance or directions. Therefore, WRR’s employees would require more time and attention from leadership positions in terms of what were the expectation and which direction they should be moving toward.

With references to McKinsey 7S Framework for further studies, while the shared value of VVG employees for all locations is the same which is being the creator of happy vacation and emphasize on wellness and lifestyles, other areas required further development. Strategy of VVG should be clear on how to develop and pursue happiness in the organization and extend it to the customers. Style of leadership and structure of the operation should be adjusted to fit with the operation and the employees of each location. As for the system, there should be coordination and collaborations of all employees and department; all VVG’s 3 location should have regular schedules to share and update for cross communication. Staff should continue on learning and developing themselves on different skills. Skills and requirement for employees should be clear since the beginning as to what are the key competencies that VVG requires.

Mindful practices and the process of increasing happiness can be used as intervention tools in the workplace. These interventions would help to fill in the space and serve the organization’s needs. According to the diagnosis of VVG, the VVG staff is the area that we should pay more attention to. Once the staff have been improved and developed on their internal aspects, it is believed that they would likely be able to maximize their skills and contribute mindfully and happily to the organization’s goal. The researcher would recommend that to maintain and sustain the mindfulness level within the organization, the organization should request for consultant experts to revisit and refresh the employees at least once every quarter. The benefits of mindful practices accumulate over time; one should engage in them on a regular basis to maintain and progress. Continuing to apply mindfulness is a necessary means to help achieve individual, team, and organizational goals. It is a "must have" program as it clearly generates positive vibes and

energies throughout; these mindful practices are genuinely win-win tools for all parties and all seasons.

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