Mindfulness as an Organisational Investment for Employee Performance in Ireland and the United States

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Declaration

Declaration: I, Beth Lee, declare that this research is my original work and that it has never been presented to any institution or university for the award of Degree or Diploma. In addition, I have referenced correctly all literature and sources used in this work and this work is fully compliant with the Dublin Business School’s academic honesty policy.

Signed: _____Beth Lee___________________
Date: ___20/08/2018___________________
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ABSTRACT

This research project attempts to look at the secular use of Mindfulness as a potential organizational investment for Irish and U.S. companies to promote a high level of employee performance. For organisations to remain productive and competitive, they need a high level of employee performance as this translates to organization product quality and company reputation in a competitive market in any industry. This project will specifically assess how Mindfulness specifically is a strategy to promote employee performance and how it could be a worthwhile organizational investment which will benefit the organisation in a clear Return on Investment (ROI) based on a noticeable increase in the level of employee performance after the implementation of Mindfulness.

Current research suggests that “mindfulness trainings have been shown to reduce the extent to which employees experience emotional exhaustion in their jobs” (Hyland, Lee & Mills, 2015, p.579). What is curious to know is how effective Mindfulness training, which harnesses intrinsic motivation characteristics, is more effective than other forms of motivation such as extrinsic monetary rewards. Many strategies are currently being used to promote employee performance such as bonuses and monetary incentives. What will also be assessed is how Mindfulness could be a preferred and easily executable strategy to promote employee performance and a worthwhile organisational investment. Stress Management is important to manage to help cultivate a high level of employee performance. A report published by the American Psychological Association in 2014 stated that “Sixty-seven percent of Americans report experiencing emotional symptoms of stress, and 72% report experiencing physical symptoms” with between 80-83% of American workers expressing feelings of stress (Hyland, Lee, and Mills, 2015, p.589) According to the Irish Examiner, “82% of Irish workers are
suffering from stress” (Percieval, 2015, par.6). Consequently, stress and stress management is an issue for many people in both Ireland and the United States with very nearly the same employee stress rate, so it is worth paying attention to in order to see how organisations in both of these countries can harness a high level of employee performance due to their similarities. In addition, many of the organisations in the United States also share a headquarters in Ireland with companies such as Google and Microsoft among them. Thusly, discussing Mindfulness and how it may be applicable in industries in both of these countries is not without merit.

Today, organisations in any industry are in a highly competitive economic climate. It is essential that an organisation provide the best-suited workforce to produce the best service or product for its client to remain competitive. Every organization would benefit from understanding what promotes a high level of performance from its employees because “the performance of employees is the most important factor that affects the success of institutions. In fact, some scholars have pointed out that motivation is a prerequisite for an effective social and economic activity” (Sergio, Luis & Arriaza, 2016, p.3). A well-rounded employee that is properly motivated to perform at a high level is an investment for any organisation who will reap the rewards from this motivation. What is interesting to note is how intrinsic motivation tools such as Mindfulness could be an effective and even preferable strategy to harness a high level of employee performance.

Stress-related employee issues is a relevant and important issue to explore and the cost associated with employee burnout and turnover is worth looking into theories of how these employee issues might be assuaged. Management and Human Resources can “simultaneously influence firm performance through enhancing employees’ human capital (e.g., educational level, job-specific knowledge and skills), motivation (e.g., commitment, trust), and opportunities
to contribute (e.g., involvement, empowerment, information sharing) (Oh, Blau, Han & Kim, 2017, p.354). In short, investing in effective avenues to promote their employee’s performance will benefit the organisation.

In the pursuit of this issue, what will be explored in this project is the modern and secular use of Mindfulness and its potential benefit dealing with employee stress and motivation as well as how that might translate to assisting in an organisation’s overall bottom line through employee performance due to empowerment. In addition, what will be explored is how Mindfulness could even lower the rate of employee health-related claims which does benefit the overall bottom line and investment of any organisation. The findings will look explore what has been proposed in the research questions and recommendations will be made on how Mindfulness might be an attractive organisational investment with a valuable return.

Key words: Mindfulness, employee performance, high performance, motivation, management, management challenges, employee development, human resource management, extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation, Irish, United States

CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION

1.1. Foundations

Companies utilize many strategies in order to boost morale and overall productivity and loyalty within their organizations. Mindfulness is a strategy modernized by Jon Kabat-Zinn at the Center for Mindfulness at the University of Massachusetts which promotes positivity, presence, and to live without judgment (Akin & Akin, 2015). Mindfulness requires people to be present in the moment without judgment (Center for Mindfulness 2017). According to Jon Kabat-Zinn, Mindfulness requires awareness and presence in the present and to quiet the mind from external
noise (Center for Mindfulness, 2017). Jon Kabat-Zinn was a postdoctoral medical student at the University of Massachusetts Medical School when he connected the idea of Mindfulness with benefits that go beyond just personal vocation. He developed the concept of Mindfulness at work and a secular approach to Mindfulness which separated it from the original Buddhist foundations to reach a broader audience who might be more receptive to a secular approach (Hyland, Lee & Mills, 2015). Over time, formal Mindfulness programmes were created for personal and professional use.

One programme, known as the MBSR at the University of Massachusetts, is a developed 8-week programme teaching the facets of Mindfulness for use and for certification for instruction in any sphere. Kabat-Zinn originally developed the secular use of Mindfulness during medical school as a possible solution to help assuage the pain of patients when traditional medicine could not provide solace (Hyland, Lee & Mills, 2015). Currently, over the last 35 years, MBSR has been successful in helping participants see significant reductions in pain, stress, anxiety, and other symptoms and conditions. Since then, over 600 people have been trained to teach MBSR globally, and over 20,000 people have taken the program at the UMass Center for Mindfulness alone” (Hyland, Lee & Mills, 2015). Jon Kabat-Zinn purported that mind wandering has a direct impact on employee performance. He developed a brief list of the Mindfulness tenants which, with the strategy that works well for the individual and situation, may result in the desired outcome. The list follows below:

**Mindfulness Tenants**

1. Nonjudging: being an impartial witness to your own experiences without premature conclusions
2. Patience: letting things unfold in their own time
3. Beginner’s mind: being receptive to new possibilities
4. Trust: developing a basic trust in yourself and your Feelings

5. Not striving: paying attention to how you are right now however that is

6. Accepting: seeing things as they actually are in the Present

7. Letting go: letting go is a way of letting things be, of accepting things as they are.

Figure 1: Mindfulness (Grecucci, Pappaianni, Siugzdaite, Theuninck, & Job, 2015)

This strategy, which may be useful for all parts of a person’s life, is argued to be particularly useful for the professional work environment to make sure employees are engaged, productive, and are personally motivated to do the job. The motivation of an employee is vitally important to the success of the organisation.

Current research indicates that the use of mindfulness can prove a beneficial tactic for organisations to promote the performance of its employees (Centre for Mindfulness, 2017). The focus would be to argue that specific and consistent use of Mindfulness is a worthwhile investment for organisations who aim for the future. By utilizing strategies for a more content and happy workforce, organisations are more likely to retain employees as well as promote their high performance. The practical benefits are to promote a more productive workforce and productive work environment which is beneficial to both organisation and individual.

Potentially, the cost of employee benefits to organisations may be reduced due a reduction in stress-based claims with the adoption of mindfulness and for the company as a whole to obtain competitive advantage. Before delving into how Mindfulness can be potentially useful in an organisation’s corporate culture, what must be examined is what practical ways companies are currently using Mindfulness to show how this could possibly be replicated:
- Deep breathing exercises
- Short meditations
- Short walking breaks
- Remove oneself from electronic devices for 10 minutes
- Make a short entry into a personal journal
- Use a timer to gently ring at intervals to take a break from work and relax

Any of the above strategies are simple ways organisations can quickly incorporate small aspects of Mindfulness into their organizational culture. Later, research will demonstrate that in-depth training of Mindfulness has shown to have a different level of effect than the quick fix remedy demonstrated here. However, this shows that an organisation can use Mindfulness without losing significant time from employee production. Deep breathing exercises involve slowly breathing in and out often with the individual’s eyes closed and with no other distractions. This can be done for any length of time and is meant to quiet the mind on just the slow deep breathing. Short meditations can take place in any situation and can be at the individual’s desk, while performing another Mindful task such a deep breathing, and can be as short as 5-10 minutes. Short walking breaks can take place inside the office or just outside but it involves the individual getting away from their work for 10 minutes and can be done in conjunction with another Mindful exercise such as breathing or meditation. Another tactic, such as removing the individual from all electronic devices for 10 minutes can be a quick way to unplug and reset which can be particularly useful for occupations where the individual has to sit in front of a computer screen for a significant amount of time. A unique strategy is a personal journey which can be written or typed in which the individual simply writes down how they are feeling at the moment or a chosen topic which they can focus on to write about just for 10 minutes. Finally,
timers such as the Pomodoro timer can be another tactic where a bell rings at intervals to remind the individual to take a break from work for a few minutes to recharge. All of these activities can be done all together or individually and for any chosen amount of time.

The focus of this research is to look at employee performance in Irish as well as U.S. industries to see trends and needs such as stress or performance-related issues and what strategies are currently being used to assuage this concern. Motivation in a job setting can take many forms usually focused on either extrinsic or intrinsic motivation tactics. Extrinsic focuses on the immediate reward from an external source for the employee to be motivated to perform. Intrinsic motivation looks at cultivating the internal motivation within the employee to perform at a high level without the need for external encouragement. What will be looked at is how the intrinsic motivation tactic of Mindfulness as a strategy is a potential worthwhile organizational investment for United States and Irish industries based on the current trends and needs examined through secondary and primary research in this project.

1.2 Motivation Overview

Employee motivation is important for any organization. However, there are many schools of thought of what is the most effective strategy to use for an organization. For example, the F.W. Taylor ideology looks at the economic man who is motivated primarily by a monetary incentive to get the job done. (Masterson, 2018). Other theorists such as Maslow has a hierarchy of needs and that, when the basic needs are met, then the higher order needs can be sought and satisfied to obtain full realization and satisfaction through motivation. So, if the monetary compensation is satisfactory, then the other concerns such as social rapport with colleagues and the desire to believe in what the employee does can be sought after. In addition, Herzberg
indicates that motivation is based on growth and advancement versus the basic human needs such as salary (Masterson, 2018). So, it is clear to see that motivation and what motivates an employee has long been up for debate. However, all theories adhere to the expectancy theory concept wherein motivation equals value of action, carrying out the action, and the expected outcome of action put together. (Masterson, 2018). So, the use of Mindfulness, whether best suited for the Irish and United States workplace or not, should adhere to the expectancy theory to even wager consideration. An employee must be motivated to do their job, so what motivates them can vary with effectiveness.

Some employees are motivated simply by the paycheck while others need other drives such as a belief that what they are doing makes some empirical difference in the world. Mindfulness does not answer the needs of all levels of motivation, so what will be examined is how it can be useful or not based on the needs of an organisation. In addition, what can be argued is that the expectancy theory should work both ways in that to incorporate a strategy such as Mindfulness should have the desired outcome for an organisation as well for the organisation to be motivated to continue to invest in its use. What will be examined is to what extent Mindfulness adheres to the higher-level long-term intrinsic motivation theory that successfully and effectively motivates and employee to perform at a high level and is beneficial for the company to invest in this motivation strategy.
1.3 Objectives of the research

The research will demonstrate how Mindfulness can possibly be used as a successful organisational investment for both the employee and the organisation. The research will look at the organisational culture in both Ireland and the United States as well to assess its current culture for the possible implementation of Mindfulness as an organisational strategy. In addition, research will also discuss specific organisations and how useful Mindfulness has been to promote employee performance to examine its possible use industry-wide in both nations. The research will assess how Mindfulness can be a useful and a worthwhile organisational investment to promote a high level of employee performance. Secondary and primary research will delve into how Mindfulness is currently used in some manner in companies or how it could be a useful addition to the corporate human resource strategy given the current organisational culture employee/managerial climate in both Ireland and the United States.
There are objectives which will be explored to provide aide to the project to address the research questions.

The objectives are:

1. Consider employee motivation in organisations and how Mindfulness can practically and realistically fit as an employee motivation strategy in Ireland and the United States.

   Mindfulness is not a currently widely used corporate strategy for employee development but what should be explored is its potential benefit. What will be assessed is if Mindfulness is a complete enough strategy to realistically be implemented into an organization as a stand-alone strategy that is tangible and realistic enough for an organization to use as its primary strategy to promote employee performance in Ireland and the United States.

2. An organisation’s benefit of employee performance and engagement through an effective motivation strategy like Mindfulness.

   What is important to examine is how the organisation itself benefits from an investment in a highly complex and varied strategy which may be different from its current strategy. Motivation is important in an organisation to promote employee performance but what is worth noting is how an organization as a whole benefits from the use of Mindfulness. What should be assessed is how Mindfulness fits as a legitimate motivation strategy that can be easily implemented into organisational culture.
3. Consider what organisations currently do to cultivate a high level of performance from its employees to compare the usefulness of Mindfulness as a preferable strategy.

Many organisations operate using extrinsic motivation strategies while others do not have any standard motivation procedure with which to follow. What is important to examine here is how effective an organisation’s current strategies are to see how Mindfulness as a strategy might be beneficial to either replace a current strategy or used in conjunction with other organizational strategies. What will be looked at here is the HR motivation byplay of intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation theories and what that produces as far as results for a high level of employee performance especially over the long term.

1.4. Research Questions

1. Is Mindfulness a useful and tangible organisational investment to produce real employee performance results for its employees in Irish and U.S. industries?

Mindfulness, founded by John Kabat-Zinn, is a holistic tool that has been used in personal as well as in professional and educational spheres. The point is if mindfulness can be replicated to go across any industry in Ireland and the United States and if the tools or tactics that are proposed to be used are actually feasible. What is also important to look at is the investment of Mindfulness specifically and if any potential cost of it is worth it based on actual outcomes and real results. It would have to be measured either by management or by a third-party audit how the implementation of mindfulness helps employees perform better at their jobs.
2. How does Mindfulness successfully promote employee performance and engagement for the benefit of the organization?

The issue with mindfulness is how it specifically can be measured to show that it promotes employee performance and engagement and that this engagement benefits the organization. Is there a higher level of performance and engagement and how can this be assessed? It is important for the assessment to also be made clear so there are proper checks and balances for how Mindfulness is useful for both the employee and the organisation.

3. How does Mindfulness compare to other employment engagement methods (ie. extrinsic motivation techniques such as pay incentives) to promote employee performance?

Many organisations already use employee engagement methods or performance promotion methods. What should be assessed is how Mindfulness is a preferred tactic versus the other tactics to promote long-term high level employee performance. For example, many companies use monetary incentives which they argue promotes performance. However, could Mindfulness be more useful than this tactic, and, if so, how could this replacement of the monetary incentives be even more attractive to lower the organisation’s bottom line? Since the use of Mindfulness does not involve the employee acquiring more money or some other material gain or even additional paid leave, what is interesting to investigate is if even after all of that that Mindfulness is as effective as or even more effective than the traditionally used extrinsic motivation tactics.

4. Based on the workplace culture in the United States and in Ireland, how is Mindfulness an effective tool to use to promote employee performance within industries in Ireland and the United States?
The United States and Ireland possess a similarity as both developed countries where its employees benefit from similar freedoms and liberties. However, these countries have a differences in terms of basic land mass and population as well as GDP. Despite these differences, a lot of innovation is going on in both countries which lends itself to a basic desire to earn a living and still have a good quality of life. What motivates these employees in these two different countries? Are employees motivated more intrinsically or extrinsically? Based on the motivation strategies currently used, how is Mindfulness a potentially useful tactic to successfully motivate its employees to perform at a high level? This will be assessed to see how Mindfulness fits into the cultural scheme in both of these countries who have their own unique characteristics and needs.

CHAPTER II – LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Literature Introduction

The theoretical research advances that can be had with the research would be to prove the use of mindfulness to put it in to a practical mindset for organisations and for organisations to take their own initiatives to promote Mindfulness strategies. According to an article published in the University of Pennsylvania, “Psychological distress is common in workers, with an estimated prevalence of about 20%-30% worldwide” which suggests this is a growing and relevant concern for any industry (Huang, Li, Huang, Tang, 2015, p.2). The research hypothesis indicates that the inclusion of Mindfulness as a human resource management strategy will promote employee performance through empowerment which enhances employee health for the benefit of both employee and employer. As such, themes to be discussed are how Mindfulness promotes
employee empowerment, a higher-level of employee performance, promotes employee health which leads to improved performance, and how all of this is a possible vital investment to organisations in the United States and Ireland.

The following four themes will be explored:

1. Mindfulness for Employee Empowerment
2. Mindfulness for a High-Level of Employee Performance
3. Mindfulness for Employee Health
4. Organisational Culture for Irish and United States Industries

2.2 Mindfulness for Employee Empowerment

Mindfulness is useful for employee empowerment which may help promote employee performance. Mindfulness attributes itself to intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic is motivation that comes from the self internally. Extrinsic motivation is reward-based motivation from external sources. (Lee, 2016). Intrinsic is much more low-maintenance for organisations so they do not have to continually actively provide the source of employee motivation because the employees themselves are motivated internally to do their work. Mindfulness is about intrinsic motivation which leads to empowerment and employee performance. Mindfulness increases self-gratitude which can translate to self-efficacy (Greeson, Juberg, Maytan, James & Rogers, 2014). Employees often face difficult tasks, and believing they can complete these tasks and succeed in their duties is important to promote a high level of performance which mindfulness harnesses.

Individualised empowerment could have to do with the necessary mind frame and motivation to succeed at a job or task. Ability may have to do with perception of ability which may be “fragmented by continuous distractions; distorted by our biases, assumptions, and expectations; and regularly hijacked by our emotional reactivity. Mindfulness is the capacity to
Individuals go into a task with a positive or negative assumption based on their previous experience with tasks or similar tasks which can have a detrimental effect on their ability to complete the task. In addition, “Mindfulness has been shown to be impact the prefrontal cortex which impacts learning, memory, affective processing, emotion regulation, perspective taking, and facilitating adaptive responses to stress” which can lead to an employee’s belief in the self or empowerment (Hyland, Lee and Mills, 2015, p.587). Employee empowerment to perform is a psychological concern and Mindfulness can alleviate this by alleviating stressful feelings which can also decrease emotional reactivity to situations and approach challenges with a clear mind (Akin and Akin). A report was released in Germany which stated 51% of employees felt “burdened” when unable to meet assigned objectives (Orellana-Rios, Radbruch, Kern, Regel, Anton, Sinclair and Schmidt, 2017). This suggests that employee empowerment is a universal need in order to feel there is an ability to meet assigned objectives.

Positivity can go a long way with employee empowerment and can help an employee have the ability to think clearly enough to get the job done (Talbot-Zorn & Edgette, 2016). One concept of setting a mind frame which can lead to employee empowerment is asking employees to think about empowering questions such as “if everything works out perfectly for our organization, what would we be doing in ten years?”—and taking (Talbot-Zorn & Edgette, 2016, p.4). This puts the employee in an optimistic and open-minded mainframe which can help to empower the employee to perform job functions. Companies such as Southwest Airlines practices employee empowerment by giving “employees the flexibility to bend company policy according to the interest of the customer. This kind of flexibility gives a sense of empowerment to the employees and allows them to go above and beyond their ability. This will also create a
challenging environment where employees are allowed to make decisions. It is all about training, trusting and empowering the employees” (Schaufenbuel, 2015, p.4). The concept of employee autonomy within an organisation can be empowering since it can help make an employee feel positive about their job which can lead to a higher level of performance.

2.3 Mindfulness for High-level Employee Performance

Mindfulness is directly connected to a high level of employee performance. So, utilising Mindfulness successfully will result not only in an employee performing well but to a high level of ability. It has been found that Mindfulness leads to an increase in emotional intelligence and compassion which is a positive for any organisation to end up adopting into its paradigm (Hyland, Lee & Mills, 2015). Employees who approach their work in a positive light will more easily perform at a high level. Mindfulness techniques can lead to and promote a high level of performance especially concerning leadership performance (Ruderman and Clerkin, 2015).

Ideally, employers desire their employees to take initiative and develop leadership skills. According this research, Mindfulness helps to promote leadership skills which promotes a high level of performance. Mindfulness has been shown to increase critical thinking skills (Noone, Bunting & Hogan, 2016). Employees who are able to think critically can perform at a high level of reasoning and understanding and this is a high level of performance that goes beyond basic job adequacy functions.

Motivation is a key component to promote employee performance. However, it is argued which one is more effective: Intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. Mindfulness, since it rests in the awareness of self and presence, is about intrinsic or internal motivation. However, there other sources of intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation which can be argued is effective or easier
Extrinsic motivation relates to receiving some external reward or compensation for performance achievements. This can come in the form of a monetary bonus or other material prize. This mindset of motivation by external monetary factors or, “economic man” was pioneered by F.W. Taylor who asserted that clear defined objectives and requirements are met due to clear reward incentives (Masterson, 2018). So, this can come as a bonus check for saving the company money or finishing a project early which, according to Taylor, is all that is needed to remain motivated and on task to continue produce a high level of employee performance. There is evidence to suggest that “which include high relative pay and commitment to job security and [there is] evidence to support the link between performance-related pay and enhanced employee motivation.” (Mitchell, Obeidat & Bray, 2013, p.903). Many organisations simply use monetary incentives to help motivate its employees to perform well which facilitates extrinsic motivation. It can be useful but it also can be costly for an organisation.

Intrinsic motivation advocates internal motivation to promote a high level of employee performance and is not subject to a dependency on external awards or prizes. The Hawthorne Studies first introduced this concept of a human relations and personal investment in a job function to be motivated to perform. This way, management is not forced to micromanage its employees to make sure they fulfill their tasks but rather their employees can be entrusted to perform at the desired level based on their own accord.

Either school of thought relies on a successful outcome of the Expectancy Theory in which the task completed produces the desired outcome for the employee in order for the employee to remain motivated. As with any theory, it is important to note that intrinsic or extrinsic motivation is individualized and what works for one individual does not necessarily
work for another. For extrinsic motivation theorists motivation can “involve compensation for specific forms of labor, as expressed by “a fair day’s work for a fair day’s pay” (McDermott, Conway, Rousseau & Flood, 2013, p.903). However, this extrinsic school of thought looks at the long term effect of extrinsic motivation factors to promote employee performance such as though “the social exchange perspective …that their contributions are valued by offering them incentives or chances for promotion in the organization” (Inmaculada & Carlos, 2018, p.102). However, many argue that extrinsic and intrinsic motivation’s effectiveness largely correlates to the type of task being completed such as “extrinsic rewards cannot be expected to be very effective when employees are charged with tasks that require innovation and creativity. In sum, in our study, HR bundles are not only distinct” (Inmaculada & Carlos, 2018, p.102). It can be argued that higher-order performance tasks require a different motivation practice to harness employee performance than lower-order performance tasks.

2.4 Mindfulness and Employee Health

Managing employee health is important to keep employees at their desks and performing their functions to the highest level of their ability. It has been found that Mindfulness usage can decrease physiological and psychological concerns such as hypertension, it improves brain function, and reduces stress for added focus (Hyland, Lee & Mills, 2015). Alleviating or even eliminating some common health concerns can result in fewer employee sick days and a more productive organization. Mindfulness teaches techniques to manage stress and emotions which translates to a more productive employee (Chakravorty, 2017). Physical health is not the only concern. There is also the psychological health of the employee to consider to alleviate issues with employees requiring stress leave or other extra benefits due to their stress which causes them to not be able to perform their tasks. Costs of stress-related employee benefit claims are in
the millions (Chakravorty, 2017). Organisations need to be practical when considering the costs of employee benefits and if any of the stress-related benefit claims can be assuaged with the tactics of Mindfulness. Mindfulness techniques have long been used by practitioners to help their patients relieve themselves from a host of illnesses (Hyland, Lee & Mills, 2015). Mindfulness empowers the employee to take charge of their own mental health which can help reduce some physical symptoms and help promote their overall employee empowerment and performance.

According to the Harvard Business Review, “health care expenditures at high-pressure companies are nearly 50% greater than at other organizations” (Pazzanese, 2016). The American Psychological Association (APA) asserts that that workplace stress translate to more than $500 billion cost to the U.S. economy. Furthermore, the article also indicated that “Sixty percent to 80% of workplace accidents are attributed to stress” (Pazzanese, 2016). The cost of employees who are stressed is significant which is estimated to add up to $150 billion a year [in the U.S.] which comprises health care, absences, and performance issues. (Hyland, Lee & Mills, 2015). Comparably, “Work-related mental health issues can cost the British economy up to £26 Billion per year” and it is further noted that work-related stress equates up to 40% of work-related illnesses (Gordon, Shonin & Zangeneh & Griffiths, 2014, p.130). It may stand to argue that Ireland’s cost must be substantial as well with their own numbers reported from these two countries. The benefits of Mindfulness have been assessed and it has been reported that Mindfulness “can improve emotional disorders and negative mood and reduce physiological responses such as skin conductance and amygdala activity” (Liang, Brown, Ferris, Hanig, Lian, & Keeping, 2018, p.282). This indicates there is some scientific medical basis to the usefulness of Mindfulness on the overall health of an individual. According to ISE Magazine on the Human Resource use of Mindfulness, after the inclusion of Mindfulness, “the costs of patient care
decreased by $100 per patient, reversing a trend of increasing costs.” (Chakravorty, 2017, p.28).

Mindfulness has been shown to decrease “blood pressure (both systolic and diastolic) [and] it can improve not only their blood pressure but also their breathing rate and heart rhythm as compared with a control group” (Hyland, Lee and Mills, 2015, p.585). In addition, it has been reported to assist with “chronic pain and a reduction of symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis, fibromyalgia, psoriasis, and even HIV (Hyland, Lee and Mills, 2015). Mindfulness has been shown to provide “a significant decrease in experienced stress levels” (Hyland, lee and Mills, 2015, p.585). As it stands, Mindfulness as an organizational investment may be worth considering due to these findings.

2.5 Organisational Culture for Irish and U.S Industries

The organizational culture of Irish and U.S Industries is varied, but many are taking steps towards a Mindfulness approach within their work environment. Many U.S. companies have built mindfulness concepts within their management strategy while Ireland has enacted several steps to embrace the concept of employee mental health on the job for the betterment of the organisation and workforce as a whole. It might be conceivable to see how Mindfulness could spread into the organisational culture for all industries in Ireland and the United States based on the current trends and steps they have already taken.

According to the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU), often the issue of mental health issues on the job, including stress-related issues, are often hidden by employee due to the fear of stigma and fear of losing one’s livelihood (ICTU, 2018). However, stress is an increasing concern for industries and the cost of ignoring or continually stigmatizing an employee who complains of stress does not lead to the success of a company or its management (ICTU, 2018). The Health and Safety Authority (HSA) in Ireland has recently developed into this issue in its
presentations and publications for management to create a work environment healthy enough for their own sister or even mother to work in to help promote the concept of creating a healthy environment and too understand these employees are people with emotions and unique characteristics. They advocate that not cause undue harm just for the sake of getting the job done (ICTU, 2018). In an article published in the Irish Times, it was indicated that 82% of Irish workers report feeling stressed which is a much higher number than the 74% reported from its closest neighbors in Britain (Cullinane, 2018). The article goes on to discuss that this high percentage has an impact on “workplace morale and productivity and company staffing” (Cullinane, 2018). This suggests a level of distraction that Irish employees can have when it comes to performing at their job due to the concern about their own welfare and security. The article further discusses that “terms of what help employees are looking for, nearly 60% said financial and retirement planning advice and online training and development access would be welcomed” (Cullinane, 2018). There seems to be a gap between what employees in Ireland have when it comes to their overall feeling of security and what they currently have which suggests there is a significant gap that needs to be filled. Whether or not Mindfulness can help with this will be examined, but what is clear is that Irish workers have a need in order to perform at a high level and the current dogma is not nearly sufficient enough to alleviate the stress of most of the employees.

In addition, Mindfulness as an employee performance tactic in general is growing in popularity in Ireland. According to Sarah-Jane Cullinane, Assistant Professor of Business and Administrative Studies at Trinity Business School, programmes are being developed in Ireland taken from the inspiration provided from the success of businesses in the United States and Britain who have incorporated Mindfulness into their corporate structure (Cullinane, 2018).
According to the Deloitte Report of 2014, “The overwhelmed employee is the most significant HR Challenge in Irish Organisations.” (Deloitte, 2014). Though it came as the top concern in Ireland, it fell to a lower concern on the list in other countries the same year which lends itself to the realization that employee stress is of a unique and paramount concern in Irish industries.

Several businesses have already set up in Ireland to help implement Mindfulness concepts into their workplace so it is attractive and beneficial for both employer and employee. One such company is Mindfulness at Work.ie lead by Joanne O’Malley which goes around the country implementing clear tactics and programmes which businesses can use. According to O’Malley, Mindfulness helps put workers into the moment and helps workers to take care of themselves which is vital to any business (O’Malley, 2018).

Several businesses in the United States have already formally implemented Mindfulness into its corporate strategy for the betterment of its company. Companies such as Google, Apple, Aetna are just a few of the companies who particularly use Mindfulness as a way to develop their employee performance. A recent report released from a Paychecks study in the United States which polled over 2,000 respondents stated the top three stressful parts of a job is the complicated or hard work, long or erratic hours, and lack of control. (Payroll & HR Solutions, 2018). ) It is crucial, therefore, for organisations to find a way to lower the stress of its employees to produce happier workers for the betterment of the company. The top concern the research study also noted was that the top change everyone polled wanted to make in their life was to lower their stress level. According to an article in the Huffington Post, “83% of workers say they are stressed out about their jobs” (Gregoire, 2015). This demonstrates that this issue of stress is an epidemic that organisations cannot afford to ignore.
In the example of Aetna, they utilize Mindfulness as a part of their corporate structure and reported “roughly one quarter of those who took in-office yoga and mindfulness classes reported a 28 percent reduction in their stress levels and a 20 percent improvement in sleep quality” This translated to an over 60 minute increase of productivity per week (Gregoire, 2015). Aetna formulated Mindfulness programmes in 2010 “to help reduce stress and to improve reactions to stress. Aetna liked the outcome of its study on mindfulness so much that it now offers its mindfulness programs to customers” (Gregoire, 2015). Aetna adopted Google’s programme of Mindfulness education for its organization which will be discussed in the following paragraphs. Consequently, “Participants in both programs showed significant improvement in perceived stress levels and various heart rate measurements, demonstrating that their bodies were better able to manage stress. In addition, the study found that these improvements could be realized regardless of whether the programs are presented in person or online, as there were statistically equivalent results between the delivery methods” (Schaufenbuel, 2015, p.3).

Apple is known for its adoption of Mindfulness into its organisational culture with Apple co-founder Steve Jobs introduced a 30-minute ‘meditate at work’ routine, providing classes on meditation and yoga on-site” while Google utilizes workplace meditation to “improve emotional intelligence” (Mars and Oliver, 2016, p.8). Apple, founded by Steve Jobs and based in Silicon Valley, is at the forefront of innovation technologically. So, it is not a surprise that it would have innovation when it comes to its HR practices for employee performance. Towards the end of his life, Steve Jobs gave a commencement speech at Stanford University and in it he expressed his mindset which demonstrates his own use of Mindfulness. In his speech, he told the graduates “Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do
what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it yet, keep looking. Don't settle. As with all matters of the heart, you'll know when you find it” (Stanford University, 2017). This indicates for the graduates to be mindful of what they do in their lives and be present with their own satisfaction and happiness.

In addition, Google has a long-standing inclusion of specialized practices as a part of its organizational structure to meet the needs not only of its clients but of its workers. As such Google developed a “people analytics team” to figure out what makes their employees happy now and tomorrow” (Thamizhselvi, 71, 2014, p.71). Google also has developed what is called an Oxygen Project “which explains how managers play a key role in employee engagement. It had found eight top behaviors of managers in order to enhance employee engagement. Among them are good coaching, avoiding micromanaging, interest in team member’s success, good communicator, career development of its employees, productive and results oriented, knowledgeable about tasks, and a clear vision and strategy for team” (Thamizhselvi, 2014, p.72). Furthermore, Google “prides itself on being socially conscious, offering employees substantial benefits and perks, including more than a dozen mindfulness courses (Thamizh selvi, 2014, p.72).

Google’s most popular mindfulness course, “Search Inside Yourself,” offered since 2007, has thousands of alumni. The programme itself is so well-established that they created their own Search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute which practices the tenants of “unlocking your full potential” and reduce stress, improve focus, raise peak performance, and improve interpersonal relationships” (SIYLT, 2018). Their programme has been so widely adopted at their organisation that they now market it for the general public to enroll in its Mindfulness programme either as individuals or as institutions. Their programme reports that out of the 58% of people who before
they attended their programme reported stress, only 24% still reported stress after going through the programme (SIYLT, 2018). As far as performance goes, participants in the programme went from 36% feeling focused and productive pre-programme to the 68% who felt focused and productive to perform post-programme (SIYLT, 2018). This suggests clear data that shows Google’s indoctrination of Mindfulness is not only helpful to its own employees but has proven successful to employees at other organisations. Additional important data of this programme indicated that $3000 a year was saved on increased productivity with the indoctrination of this programme, 7% lower healthcare costs, and a 62 minute increase in productivity each week (SIYLT, 2018). Google’s organisational culture asserts that “these mindfulness programs teach emotional intelligence, which helps people better understand their colleagues’ motivations. They also boost resilience to stress and improve mental focus. Participants of the “Search Inside Yourself” program report being calmer, more patient, and better able to listen. They also say the program helped them better handle stress and defuse emotions” (Schaufenbuel, 2015, p.3). With the main Google headquarters in the United States and the European Headquarters in Dublin, the organisational culture fits in line with the needs of employees in both countries to help further its success.

Intel, an International Tech company, “began offering its Awake@Intel mindfulness program in 2012. On average, participants report a two-point decrease (on a scale of 1 to 10) in stress and feeling overwhelmed, a three-point increase in overall happiness and well-being, and a two-point increase in new ideas, insights, mental clarity, creativity, ability to focus, quality of relationships at work, and level of engagement in meetings, projects, and team efforts — all articulated goals of the program” (Schaufenbuel, 2015, p.3). This suggests the version of Mindfulness Intel implemented into its organisational structure is effective to promote employee
performance and lower stress. The Awake@Intel Mindfulness Programme was founded by one employee, Lindsay Van Driel, who noticed the level of stress and performance exhaustion experienced by her colleagues and innovated office meditations she learned from her own Mindfulness practices which developed and snowballed into a developed 9-week Mindfulness course fully integrated and adopted into Aetna’s corporate culture (Adams, 2017). The course is designed into two sections. The first “four weeks of her course to focusing on how to get individuals out of “automatic” mode at work — what she described as “connecting to that sense of being as opposed to doing.” The rest of the program focuses on things like relational intelligence (think: empathy, openness and compassion) and mindful listening, which teaches people how to quiet all of the noise in their heads and actually pay attention to what others are saying.” (Adams, 2017). Current results demonstrate a positive shift in employee performance and a lower level of stress among participants which caused the programme to be fully indoctrinated and many other companies are inspired to consider such a programme.

Other companies such as large food manufacturing firm General Mills “has offered Mindfulness programs to its employees in its Minneapolis headquarters since 2006. The courses are designed to improve employee focus, clarity, and creativity. The company also offers weekly meditation sessions and yoga classes, and it has a dedicated meditation room in every building on its campus (Schaufenbuel, 2015). This suggests that many companies are already using the tenants of Mindfulness and that for it to spread out as a part of organisational culture for Irish and U.S. companies is not out of the realm of possibility or feasibility. What is interesting to note is that each organisation had their own targeted version of Mindfulness that fit their employees, their organisation, and their own organisational culture. For General Mills, they have a standarised Mindfulness course option through the Institute for Mindful Leadership to help
employees cultivate skills that will not only help them perform better as workers but also be more fulfilled as a whole.

CHAPTER III – RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Methodology Introduction

This section will discuss who will be the dissertation audience as well as the overall approach to the project itself. How the data will be collected and developed will be discussed and specific strategies for how to connect the current research with what will be used to gather primary research data. In addition, sampling and data collection will be discussed along with ethics and how the data will be analysed. Finally, acknowledgement for the limitations of methodology will also be assessed.

Traditional methodology for developing research and assertions for the dissertation on the company benefits for the usage of Mindfulness will be used to keep the research focused on the information at hand. Secondary research was conducted by looking at current trends with Mindfulness and example were relayed if organisations are already utilizing this strategy to analyze its outcomes. In addition, researcher will conduct own primary research by contacting management in several organisations to see their take on and use of Mindfulness strategies both through surveys and interviews. Since the focus is with Irish and United States workplaces as well, the survey examined if Mindfulness methods were used in the workplace as well as the current knowledge of Mindfulness along with issues with performance and stress among
organisations. Primary research strategies will evolve and develop but with the main focus that will look at the research hypothesis argument that adopting Mindfulness strategies within company ideology is a sound investment due to cultivate the performance of its employees in Irish and United States organisations. What is important is to send out surveys and interview management that have some knowledge of how they promote performance with their employees and who have experience managing employees.

Some of the concerns and limitations are finding a large enough population to provide accurate feedback of their adherence to Mindfulness and how it connects with their own generational ideology. Another limitation of concern is trying to find something specific and new enough to say with such a saturated research market. However, very little publications on Mindfulness with its specific function in both Irish and United States workplaces exists and this is encouraging that the focus is a unique focus and can come up with something new to say considering the focus. There is concern with getting enough raw data from surveys in order to generate a new idea about this topic. The researcher wants primary research data to be clear and accurate so researcher wants to create accurate and useful methodology in the form of a questionnaire or interview questions to produce the most accurate and useful results. The researcher is concerned if interviews were the most accurate and useful tactic but, given the time constraint of research project, the desire to coordinate focus groups would not be entirely feasible. In the end, the researcher wants the findings to be useful for practical use, so the researcher wants to formulate tangible clear tactics HR and management can implement to better serve its workforce.

3.2 Research Design
Standard research design will be used to examine topic in general and various outcomes that may arise from both secondary and primary research findings. As such, the research onion was utilized to examine topic, develop research questions, assess any assumptions and control any potential bias, and help develop research data to analyse findings in an organised way. The audience this is designed for is management as the project will look at the usage of this practice of Mindfulness organisation-wide for the overall betterment of the company bottom line. The approach for this project is open-ended to see what the research and sampling provide to examine the hypothesis that motivation tools like Mindfulness might be useful to an organization. Questionnaire surveys were created and interviews conducted to get feedback from employees and management alike as to how they may benefit from this tool and should it be implemented.
3.2.1 Research Philosophy

It is important to note that persons surveyed as well as interviewed, though researcher is seeking specific knowledge to develop data, information received is subject to the interviewees or survey taker’s own personal belief system and philosophies. Though the subject focuses on employee performance within business, these are still human subjects and their ideas about what promotes employee performance can stray into their own personal feelings about this issue.

3.2.2 Research Approach

This research project will utilize the deductive approach. According to Saunders, the deductive approach involves testing a theory through the defined collection of data (Saunders, 2016). This various from using the inductive approach which would involve the use of theory and the drawing of conclusions during the data collection process. Theory and the hypothesis deduced from it come first and drive the process of gathering data. The reasons for this is to look at the broad topic of Mindfulness and the broad topic of employee performance and, based on primary research, deduce a specific conclusion of the use of Mindfulness for the benefit of an organisation. First, employee performance will be looked at in general through the secondary research and then develop this idea through various modes of what motivates employees to perform at a high level to see how Mindfulness might contribute. Through primary research, it will then be examined how the secondary and primary research adds up to the hypothesis of how Mindfulness in particular promotes a high-level of performance for employees in Irish and U.S organisations.
3.2.3 Research Strategy

HR departments and management will be contacted in several organisations in varying industries to see their take on the Mindfulness and its use. Research of current use of Mindfulness in organisations will also be assessed. A poll or survey will be sent to the targeted population group to test their response to the concepts of Mindfulness in the workplace. One important tactic to work on is to find a large enough population to provide accurate feedback of their own feelings of Mindfulness. Finally, there will be primary research on Mindfulness and how specific examples of tactics can be used in the work environment.

According to Saunders, the qualitative research strategy approach is often theoretical for the researcher to determine connections between data assessed and their meaning for the project assertions (Saunders, 2016). The unfortunate and common limitation of this approach is that is often utilises one data collection technique known as the mono method qualitative study which does not entirely fit this project as the researcher uses two methods.

According to Saunders, the quantitative research strategy approach strictly looks at the “relationships between variables, which are measured numerically and analysed using a range of statistical and graphical techniques” (Saunders, 166, 2016). Despite the fact that Mindfulness is holistic and theoretical in nature, it still can be evaluated using the quantitative approach through what the data finds in the survey as well as interview results. As such, the respondents may have opinions or interpretations about the subject, but the data revealed from their answers will reveal the conclusions and answers which the researcher does not have to theorise and interpret. It will be plainly revealed in the data itself. Just like with the qualitative method, the quantitative strategy can use a mono method or multimethod. For the purposes of this research project, a
multi-method will be use through the use of interviews and surveys but also with inclusion of the secondary data resources to deduce results.

As part of primary research methodology, semi-structured interviews were used to gather developed data from qualified sources. There were many choices with interview styles ranging from: structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, unstructured or in-depth interviews, standardised interviews, non-standarised interviews, respondent interviews, and informant interviews (Saunders, 2016). Since the researcher wanted to unambiguously let the interviewee feel unencumbered about the information divulged during the interview process, what made the most sense is to utilise the semi-structured interview style. The researcher posed a series of structured questions which are available in the appendix of this project. According to Saunders, a semi-structured interview “has a list of themes and possibly some key questions to be covered, although their use may vary from interview to interview” (Saunders, 391, 2016). The reason this method was chosen is the course of the interview may prove the need to organise questions based on how the respondent is expressing and some of the questions may be already covered before asked over the course of the interview process. In addition, there is more freedom with this line of questioning for this topic based on the respondents own individual knowledge or organisational use of Mindfulness. In order to provide fully developed and informed interviews, the balancing of this knowledge would need to be assessed during the interview itself which is the central reason for needing the semi-structured interview style.

However, the survey used followed a specific line of questioning and used an unchanged specific order for every respondent asked. There was opportunity to elaborate and write in additional comments for most questions if needed, but the structure of the surveys was much more regulated. Having said that, the style of the surveys, being a total of 104, were shaped to be
a representative sampling of the population of managers in both Ireland and the United States per the criteria required of the respondents in order to participate in the survey. This helped to target the answers to qualified personnel which are the chosen focus of those in management in companies in both Ireland and in the United States. The survey offered choices for the most-suited answer which fits the forced-choice question style since there were multiple choice answers for each question given. However, there was a blend with the open question style since there was opportunity to elaborate by typing in an individualised response in addition to the forced-choice for many of the questions. The researcher attempted to control the order and flow of questions to go from more general questions to more specific and then round out with some general info at the end to keep the survey balanced.

The survey questionnaire was given through a web-based format on social media through Linkedin contacts and through an email link. The survey was developed in a clean and standardised way through the widely used web-based survey company, Survey Monkey. No compensation or reward was offered as a part of the process. As reflected in the appendix, a small paragraph giving some background on the topic and nature of the research project was given along with a reminder of confidentiality and use of data collected. Some follow-up was needed via email mostly due to technical issues with the link or the survey closing before all the questions were answered. However, the survey responses were all collected within three weeks. There was no usage of face-to-face or telephone survey responses as the researcher relied solely on the web-based format.

In addition, general data was procured to look at the issue of employee stress and HR-related issues in both the United States and Ireland to see how the issue is relevant and a growing concern for an organisation to invest their time and consideration on the research topic.
3.2.4. Sampling - Selecting Respondents

According to Saunders, the balance of how many responses as well as if the response population should be random or targeted is also important to consider as a part of the research strategy (Saunders, 2016). For the purposes of this project, a representative respondent sample was used and turned up 104 responses. According to Saunders, it is essential to meet that 95% accuracy goal which means if the “sample was selected 100 times, at least 95 of these samples would be certain to represent the characteristics of the target population (Saunders, 280, 2016).

With further research, a wider sample size would have been desirable to produce even more accurate results for the chosen target population. Generally, there was no target number limitation other than desiring to obtain as many responses as possible. Gaining over 100 responses is an agreeable response rate to help reduce the margin of error if a smaller sample had resulted. The strategy used was most closely related to simple random sampling but within the targeted population requirement of those in management roles or previous management roles.

The population chosen and desired for the survey would be people in management roles. Preferably, management who have a particular knowledge of what they feel motivates a high-level of performance with their employees. The population demographics are targeted as well to produce the most accurate results. Primary research will be conducted in Ireland but there is opportunity to utilise the online sphere to solicit responses from management in both the United States and Ireland for research focus. Since the project focus is on Management and in industries in Ireland and the United States, the focus will be on management in either of these countries to create an even and equal representation for the primary findings.

Personnel used would primarily be management as it is important to look at their own experience and expertise with managing employees to see their ideas of what fosters a high level
of employee performance. Management would have to have at least some experience with managing employee performance. The reason the survey focus is on HR departments and management is their depth of experience with what goes into developing a high-level of employee performance. Naturally, those assessed will have to manage a fair amount of staff so this requires at least a medium size organisation. It can be problematic to assess the regular employee as the focus is on managing employees instead of asking the employees all they want. Moreover, it is important those assessed manage employees for them to have any useful experience to provide feedback on the survey given.

1. **Questionnaires:**

Survey Monkey surveys were utilized comprised of 10 multiple choice focused questions about managing employees and cultivating their performance. This survey was given through social media on LinkedIn, direct email, as well as through the targeted respondent service that Survey Monkey offered to procure survey results. In addition, interviewees were permitted to also take the short survey so their result would also be included in the final data for the surveys. Anonymity was kept with the survey responses and the sample of the actual questions asked is in the appendix for this project. What was procured is 104 survey response results from my targeted population demographics. Questionnaire form of survey with multiple choice. The survey also left the ability to type out additional thoughts and ideas about the concepts queried to see if respondents had any additional comments or suggestions about the research topic.

1. **Interviews**

The interviews were primarily conducted through the use of media such as Skype and through the regular phone. This was the most useful mode of interview due to the distance between interviewer and respondents as well as the various time zone and/or scheduling
conflicts. Six interviewees were targeted with the successful interview of 4 as a result. Due to the height of summer, and various obligations especially with annual leave, it was difficult to obtain more interviewees. The interview design was semi-structured to leave room for how the interview may shape itself due to the respondent’s answers and the respondent’s own specific management background. However, a standard 11 questions were asked of all of the respondents and this is also available in the appendix of this research project.

The issue which should be addressed is to acquire enough respondents for reliable data. In addition, it is important to make the questions as direct as possible and clear as possible to avoid confusion or incomplete data due to questions left unanswered. The focus is to argue that this HR tactic is useful in the work environment. But, data may reflect that some managers do not feel it adds and value with their experience managing. Therefore, it is important to remain ethical and include all data despite if it is in contradiction to my argument.

In addition, the interviews are in-depth targeted interviews with key managers to go more into detail with their concepts of Mindfulness and their ideas of its possible use to conjure a high level of performance in either Irish or United States organisations. What would be most helpful is finding organisations and HR managers who already utilize Mindfulness concepts in their management style so they can give informed answers of how Mindfulness is effective or not in the work environment.
3.4. Data Collection & Analysis Procedures

What will be utilized is qualitative data analysis since data will be in the form of questionnaires and interviews about their own interpretation but the survey will produce hard data based on the answers given. The data answers may be psychological for the respondents but the data will be straight-forward as far as the questionnaires. As such, the data collection and analysis procedure will be focused on the quantitative data results from the surveys utilizing the numerical data results to identify the primary results of the survey questions asked. The interview questions, though more open-ended for the interviewee, will produce focused results which can be catagorised quantitatively with analysis of the theories and opinions of the interviewee but not of the interviewer. Since the surveys developed were developed by means of the internet questionnaire software Survey Monkey, the software itself was able to generate clear data matrices to provide a clear look into the data itself to show unambiguous results. According to Saunders, the bar graphs generated are useful to not only help to intrigue the audience but also to make the data visually accurate and clear for a proper analysis (Saunders, 2016). The
interviews, since they allow more depth of answer and are designed to be semi-structured, might stray a little from the targeted hard data that the questionnaires procured. As such, the potential for a mixed analysis procedure is likely to occur.

Since the results from the surveys will be quantitative, it makes sense that the data analysis strategy reflects this type of data for the most accurate analysis. According to Saunders, the first major step when analyzing quantitative data is to note “sample size, type or types of data (scale of measurement); data layout and format required by the analysis software; impact of data coding on subsequent analysis (for different types of data); process of entering (or inputting) data; need to weight cases; process of checking data for errors” (Saunders, 498, 2016). Survey Monkey assists with the layout and format of data features, the entering of data and the sample size as well as scale of measurement was determined upon conclusion of survey respondent results. What had to be analysed during the process was the error checking process and note the impact of data coding. Since the survey was developed through Survey Monkey, errors were decreased except for the occasional reset to two respondents who were unable to complete the survey the first attempt due to the locking up after answering the first question.

3.5 Research Ethics

One the main avenues to help avoid a research ethics issue is to always provide informed consent in the form of the information sheet as well as offer additional information when needed by respondents to the survey or to the interviews. According to Saunders, the deontological view follows a strict code for following a defined ethical procedure without wavering for any reason (Saunders, 2016). This research project completely adheres to the deontological view for the quality of the work presented, in keeping with the ethics code set up by Dublin Business School, and to present a very intriguing topic for the audience to form their own ideas and conclusions
about the information presented. As a part of keeping the ethics code for the primary research process, each respondent received an information sheet outlining the purpose and nature of the research project and what their participation would be used for as part of the process. In addition, interview respondents received and signed a consent form after reading the information sheet, asking any questions needed, and after their interview so they were fully informed and aware of what information would be used in the project and for what purpose it would be used. There were ethical issues to consider at all states of the project development process from project hypothesis inception to drawing final conclusions. What was important for the project process is to let the research results speak for itself and present it without any personal bias or convictions on the subject matter itself. If, after the primary research was concluded, the result was Mindfulness has no use or connection in the United States and Irish workplace, these results would have been presented unambiguously to show that perhaps a modern and some consider “New Age” trend does not quite fit the professional workplace. At no stage did the researcher fall into the ethics gamut of inferred consent but instead made sure to get clear illustrated informed consent from the responders.

According to Saunders, the reason why a consent form is so crucial is that it “helps to clarify the boundaries of consent and should help you comply with the data protection legislation where your research involves the collection of confidential, personal, or sensitive personal data (Saunders, 252, 2016). For the researcher, it is important to look at the data at hand along with what secondary research has suggested to deduce conclusions and avoid any personal bias or ideal outcome based on these two components. If, after conducting primary research the hypothesis was proved incorrect, then this information needs to be given fully and clearly and with a developed explanation of the significance of such findings. As such, the researcher does
not plan on any ethical issues when it comes to primary data collection or the integrity of the data and responses as well a secondary research data. What the researcher must be careful of is ethical bias since the researcher is an advocate for Mindfulness and utilizes it in her current employment as a college instructor and in the researcher’s personal life. The research is aware of this potential bias due to usage and personal knowledge of the subject, so careful research and development as well as explanation to not let personal bias and allegiance to the topic sway the results of the research or how they are interpreted. As such, it is important for the researcher to not force the agenda of Mindfulness on respondents to prove it works as a vital tool but to let the data speak for itself that it would fit the population in question as part of the research and make sense for potential employers. How the research is presented is to show what the secondary and primary research demonstrated and leave it for the audience to decide for themselves on the validity of Mindfulness as an organisational tool for employee performance.

3.6 Limitations of Methodology

There are some key limitations to the methodology chosen. Such issues include trying to find something specific and new enough to say with such a saturated research market and competing ideas for what motivates employees. However, very little publications on Mindfulness and the bridge between Irish and United States usage of it in the workplace means the bulk of the conjecture is brand new without in-depth precedence. What also must be understood is how to get enough raw data in order to generate a new idea about this topic and create accurate and useful methodology in the form of a questionnaire or interview questions to produce the most accurate and useful results. It is important to pay attention to the motivation of employees as a whole within Irish and U.S industries. The research also suffers time constraints due to the
three-month dissertation timeline to try to self-practice some of these theories for more authentic understanding with the short dissertation timeline.

The biggest weakness of this proposal is that it did not have as many respondents via interview and survey respondents as desired, so the sample population for primary research is smaller than desired for developed primary research data. In addition, conducting interviews in a distance-based way did present a challenge since not every instance had the respondent visually in front of a camera to note any body language which would have helped steer interviews even more. However, years of working in a telecommuting distance-based environment has given this researcher extensive experience with communicating effectively as well as working on many projects with people all over the world who never able to meet in person. The researcher does not see this issue as the biggest obstacle in promoting fully developed responses as well as clarity of meaning from respondents due to the background experience garnering developed responses from students in a distance-based higher education format.

CHAPTER IV – DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

Primary research for this project included online web-based surveys through the survey tool, Survey Monkey, to a targeted audience and interviews to select respondents with a particular background in management. All of the questions in the survey and the interview were developed solely from the researcher and, other than the automatic control questions generated from Survey Monkey to test demographics, the focus of the queries in both examples of primary
research were specifically targeted to the research topic at hand. The purpose of primary research is to demonstrate the findings of the research questions set forth to relay scientific and unbiased results for this project in order to draw reliable conclusions about the usefulness of Mindfulness and if it is a worthwhile organisational tool for organisational investment to cultivate a high level of employee performance.

4.2. The questionnaire

The survey questionnaire was applied through Survey Monkey online through management personnel through LinkedIn and through the targeted management audience solicited through the Survey Monkey site. The survey returned 104 responses which comprised on highly experienced managers, retired managers, new managers, and lower level supervisory or management staff. The survey targeted employees who have management experience in the United States and in Ireland primarily. The questions were multiple choice and did leave room for additional comments if the respondent chose to expand on any of their answers. The questions were designed to further examine the main premise of this research project and develop further what was presented in the literature review.

In addition to the questions developed by the researcher, some standard control questions were generated by Survey Monkey to note the demographics and give some general background information about the respondents. According to the data, the largest age group that responded to the survey were between 30–44 years of age which fits with the average age of employees in a professional workplace and is a sufficient average age for those in management. In addition, the survey data noted the percentage between male and female respondents were relatively equal with males making up 45.92% and females 54.08% of the responses. What will be focused on
now is how the targeted questions were received by these respondents regarding their own ideas about employee motivation and performance with a particular focus on Mindfulness.

4.2.1 Results of Survey Questionnaire

Question 1: How long have you managed employee? (less than 1 year, 1-5 years, 5-10 years, 10+ years)

The results indicated that the majority of the respondents are very new in management however there were some that possessed extensive experience. As such, the researcher does question the sample respondents due to this anomaly which caused fewer than the desired number of respondents to possess extensive managerial experience. The balance of some having little to a lot of managerial experience is a helpful balance to reflect a general overview of average managerial experience in most organisations. According to the data, 40% of the respondents had less than 1 year of managerial experience. This group represented the largest percentage of the respondents queried with the other options splitting the results in respectively smaller percentages.
Question 2. What is your current managerial role at your organisation? (line manager, HR management, department manager, higher level manager, not a manager)

To look at the current function of the respondent’s, it is important to know their current managerial situation. According to the data, 48% of the respondents asked are not currently in a managerial role which is troubling to the researcher. This does present a potential issue with the validity of data or why some respondents may have been in management and, for whatever reason, are no longer in that role. However, it is important to note that many of the respondents are now retired managers, so there may have been a clarity issue with the question asked since they would not be current managers in their current state but they did have extensive management experience. This may have been in an issue with the construct of the question in general and would need to be recalibrated if going into further study.

Figure 7: Current Managerial Role

Question 3. Have you heard of Mindfulness? (yes, no)
In order to jump into the research topic at-hand, it is important as well to ask respondents their own knowledge of Mindfulness. The results showed slightly favouring a “yes” response with the familiarity of Mindfulness with the Yes being 58% and the No being 42%. This tells the researcher the concept is out there in some type of facet and there is some general knowledge of the subject at hand well over half of the responders. With familiarity, and with the knowledge of the general age group of the respondents, it does make the researcher question that perhaps Mindfulness is more prevalent that previously considered in the professional workplace. However, the percentage is not overwhelmingly high, which is important to note that it may not be of complete and full general knowledge to everyone.

Figure 8: Respondent Knowledge of Mindfulness

Question 4. Does your organisation use Mindfulness for its employees in any way? (yes or no, if yes please elaborate)

When asked if the respondent’s organisation uses Mindfulness in any way, the response was overwhelmingly no with a response percentage of 82% over 18% stating a yes response. However, one of the respondent’s did comment that their organisation were able to “Provide designated respite rooms, inform employees what mindfulness is and its benefits.” This is an
interesting outcome that, though not widely used, for those who do use it in their organisation, they appear to use it thoroughly and are well-informed of its concepts in a formal way through educating its employees and actually providing a physical space for this as well.

Figure 9: Respondent’s Organisational Use of Mindfulness

Question 5. Does your organization use an established motivation practice or theory for the performance of its employees? (yes or no, if yes please elaborate)

The data results showed that 67% of the respondents indicated that they do not believe there is an established motivation practice or theory for the performance of its employees versus the 33% that indicated a usage of a motivation practice. One respondent indicated that they “do a cheer and we do performance tracking as well as associate of the month” to indicate they have standard practices that do seem to work for them to help develop the performance of their employees. The fact that there is an overwhelming majority indicating that they do not see a clear established motivation practice is troubling to the researcher that either many organisations do not use motivation in their organisational culture or otherwise do not make it clear to their employee what resources are available to motivate them.
Figure 10: Respondent’s Organisation Use of Motivation Practices for Performance

Question 6. Do you have a high rate of employee complaints about stress-related issues? (yes or no)

The results of this query indicated a generally even response on both ends with only a slight favouring on the “no” side with 59% indicating no and 41% indicating yes with employee complaints about stress-related issues. There is a slight favouring of the no side which is not consistent with established secondary research uncovered. This informs the researcher that there may be a stigma attached to an employee reporting stress or the employee might not be clear as to who to go to when stress is a concern.
Question 7. What do your employees tell you as their main source of on the job stress? (pay, amount of work given, tight deadlines, interoffice relations, adequate training, support from management)

Stress comes in many forms for the individual employee in different organisations. The results of this query indicated the top percentages employees have come to the respondents regarding stress deals with pay and amount of work given as well as tight deadlines. Obviously, the organisation has a set budget and clear organisational goals and requirements it must fulfil for its client to remain a profitable business. The issue highlighted here is that the areas which represented the largest areas of stress are not areas that can be directly solved in terms of a company realistically giving higher and higher wages and less work for more pay. What an organisation can do is to develop the motivation that works best for its employees that they perform at a high level over the long term.
Figure 12: Sources of Job Stress

Question 8. From your experience, what is the most common employee management related issue you’ve experienced? (employee attentiveness/focus, employee stress-related complaints, workplace cohesion (employees getting along or not), employee performance issues, other if other fill-in the blank)

The results of this query indicated that employee performance issues is the biggest concern for management issues with its employees with the closest next concerns being workplace cohesion and employee stress-related complaints. This does indicate that management is concerned with the performance of its employees and the healthiness of its own workplace environment. It is reasonable to assume, based on the findings here, that organisations understand the importance of employee performance as a vital function for their organisation. Therefore, delving into this concern is a worthwhile topic to develop.
Question 9. From your experience, what do you think goes into a high level of employee performance? (reward/punishment structure, employee development and training opportunities, motivating holistic events (picnics, social outings with staff), managerial encouragement and motivation, employee competition)

Since employee performance is of paramount concern for those in management, it is natural to query the respondents of what they feel goes into a high level of employee performance. The results indicated that employee development and training opportunities is the biggest factor of the choices indicated of how management can help cultivate the performance of its employees. The close second result was managerial concern and motivation in order to foster employee performance. Both of these high results indicate that employee performance is a concern for management and that management needs to encourage as well a provide opportunities for its employees to develop their skills in order to perform well.
Figure 14: Employee Performance

Question 10. How large is your current organisation? (1-100, 101-500, 501-1000, 1001-5000, 5001+)

This last question was a good general query at the end to help demonstrate where the respondents are coming from in terms of their own organisational size to note their own employee and management situation based on size. Results indicated most respondents came from an organisation with 100 employees or fewer which also indicates the strong uptake of small businesses operating. Results indicated that 44% of respondents came from organisations with fewer than 100 employees with the next closest result of 18% coming from respondents from organisations with fewer than 500 employees. As such, the motivation strategy and employee performance issue is not isolated to just large corporations but can be developed and is feasible for smaller organisations.
4.3. The interview

The interviews conducted were semi-structured with prepared questions but with room to see how the interview might shape itself based on the responses given by the interviewees. The commonality among all interviewees is the need to keep their employees motivated to perform at a high level and to make sure it benefits both the employee and the organization. Each respondent came with their own experience and take on the issue of employee motivation. Each will be discussed below.

Respondent A

Respondent A works in management for a large Irish banking institution and the respondent possess an MBSR certification last May. This means Respondent A is fully qualified and authorized to teach Mindfulness professionally. As such, this interviewee already came with extensive background knowledge and experience with the project’s subject of Mindfulness and its direct application in the professional environment. Respondent A asserts “If you have a worker who is happy you will get better performance”
The respondent has a Master’s in Mindfulness (MBSR) from the University of Massachusetts. This gives the respondent the legal qualifications needed to teach Mindfulness in the professional environment. The respondent works in management for a large banking institution but has since educated herself about the use of Mindfulness and its possible use in the professional workplace. The corporate structure of her organisation is 5000+ employees and the organisational culture has not fully embraced Mindfulness officially but the respondent is operating at the grass roots level to see how Mindfulness can possibly embraced company-wide.

Currently, the organization empowers management to help develop programmes which assist employees who have been determined as at risk and could benefit from some type of employee development programme to help their success as employees. Management can already see how the targeted implementation of Mindfulness teachings to this group has already helped the success of the targeted group of 230 employees. Some tactics currently used are to offer meditation breaks during lunch. Respondent A and other management are planning to present their results to senior leadership for possible organisation-wide implementation.

Respondent A iterated that for a strategy to be invested and adopted by an organization, the top leadership must see the clear ROI for an adoption of such a strategy. Respondent A warned that the use of Mindfulness should not be considered as an easy quick fix and it is like addiction in that an “addict will only change when they want to just like an employee will only embrace mindfulness if they want to” (Respondent A, 2018). Respondent A indicated that it is difficult for the nature of the competitive and busy corporate environment to keep up with the practice of Mindfulness and that it is not a one-off teaching. The reason, the respondent states, is people do get caught up with so many other tasks to complete that it is difficult to prioritize something that may be construed as yet another task to fulfill in a work day. Things you do every day, make it
every part of your life—even eating – pay attention to what you are eating, being in a hurry of getting somewhere, take time to be aware of our surroundings

Currently, respondent A is working with others in management to roll out the MBSR certification programme availability to its employees and currently 65 people are going through the MBSR Certification which is an 8-week intensive MBSR programme the organization sponsors but the opportunity to be a part of the programme is through word of mouth in an informal way but anyone who wants to do the programme can participate. Respondent A states they will roll out another wave of the programme again in September to hopefully demonstrate further evidence of its use through the results from the employees who participate. However, what is also important is for top management to understand what Mindfulness is as well and not just another random skill set but a special strategy that is organic and ever-changing in nature. Respondent A stated that currently there is a lack of authenticity with it since it is not clearly and directly embraced from the top management and therefore the programme will not gain full credibility or effectiveness organisation-wide unless it is fully embraced on a corporate organisation-wide level. For it to be embedded, senior leadership needs to believe in it, that awareness for it, gradually, people are more aware that this is an option. Open to all employees, has to be seen as a really open concept, senior management needs to embrace it by taking the programme themselves. Throughout the interview, Respondent A kept reiterating the importance of top management subscribing to it if an organization itself wants to utilize Mindfulness otherwise it will not be an effective tool.

Respondent A clearly has a lot of education and background knowledge of Mindfulness and shared some specific information of what she feels are the tenants of Mindfulness. She indicates that with stress people cause hormones coming into the body, fight or flight issue, instinct,
allows us to be faster and to pump heart faster, adrenalin kicks on, reptilian part of the brain, old part, when stressed this is part of brain is functioning and the executive front part shuts off., our creativity, empathy, emotions, intellect, Mindfulness allows us to become aware of when we are stress and do something about it to avoid that shut off to come back to our breath, get our heartbeat in check and make better decisions to concentrate and be creative. Due to Respondent A’s background, a lot of general knowledge of Mindfulness was gleaned and her advocacy for Mindfulness is very clear by her sharing her own research as well as practice.

Respondent A indicated that Mindfulness allows an individual to understand when he/she is anxious and stressed that the individual ends up responding instead of just reacting. It can be considered childlike to be aware of the habits of mind and let the mind take its time to process what is happening. According to Respondent A, creativity is a central flourishing characteristic brought about from the use of Mindfulness and allows the individual to be less critical of self. People deal with issues differently, but Respondent A suggests everyone is connected and the awareness of other people builds empathy, emotional intelligence. This, Respondent A claims, is lacking in corporate culture. Respondent A also discussed neuroplasticity where individuals can grow different parts of brain depending on behavior and then emotional intelligence grows the creative side of the brain and this can be acquired through Mindfulness.

Respondent A indicated that some of the results of the use of Mindfulness for her employees are Better focus and increased emotional intelligence and deal with uncertainty, so improved performance. Benefit to company and individual is huge as she states that most doctor’s appointments deal with stress with the highest issue is employees dealing with stress and she asks employees what their motivation is for taking the course that she offers. The ones who attended course seem to be happier in day to day activities at work with some participating in a
Mindfulness group. Respondent A indicates that the huge part is to know you are not the only one who feels that way when stressed which can make the employee feel more connected to a community. Respondent A indicated that people have an Inherent ability for Mindfulness and it is something we can all have, stress and anxiety are common but can be improved and impulse control and well-being.

Respondent A ended the interview by citing U.S organizations who use Mindfulness as a part of their corporate culture and structure and she indicated that companies who invested in mindfulness earned a “200% ROI” with the resultant wellness, focus, and productivity of its employees. For example, Respondent A indicated that the health insurance firm, Aetna, operates Mindfulness organisation-wide and since it has adopted Mindfulness “productivity has went up 62% per week which translates into $3000 per week saved organization-wide.” (Respondent A, 2018). Another example Respondent A referred to is the U.S. company, Google, who adopted Mindfulness organisation-wide as a part of its corporate structure. She indicates that Google reports its workers are the “happiest, healthiest, and most productive employees on planet and so they have it for all employees” (Respondent A, 2018). Google has a foundation for emotional intelligence and leadership as a part of its structure. The examination of Google’s use of Mindfulness was examined thoroughly in the previous Literature Review section.

One of the main points Respondent A made during the interview was the importance for top management to subscribe and understand Mindfulness for it to be a legitimate tool. Leadership and effective leadership is important with “an estimated $24 billion spent on leadership development in 2013” with the results of this expenditure leaving a lot of room for improvement “with 75% of CEOs citing leadership development as a top concern and only 15% expressing satisfaction with their high potential practices” (Hyland, Lee & Mills, 2015, p.589).
This suggests the current road that leadership is on has more than enough room for improvement in order to develop the best organisational culture. In the article, “Mindfulness and Leadership,” it is asserted that” Leaders must be willing to cultivate, integrate, and balance Mindfulness with their authority and leadership to be a role model to their followers” (Thompson, 2018, p.56). Just as Respondent A iterated, research indicate the biggest selling point or hindrance to full adoption of Mindfulness into organisational culture is leadership’s adoption of its tenants.

In addition, “There is growing evidence that employees’ work attitudes, perceptions and behaviours are impacted and affected by an organization’s human resource management practices operating at the HR department/director level” (McCarthy, Cleveland, Hunter, Darcy & Flood, 2013, p.1261). In theory, how an employee feels on the job is directly related to the HR policies and culture set up which can have a direct effect on the over performance and outcome of assigned employee tasks. However, it is not simple to make each employee perfectly happy all of the time and that “The exercise of leadership in forming and fulfilling employees’ psychological contracts can be a baffle or a conduit between organization-level HR strategy and worker contributions to firm performance” (McDermott, Conway, Rousseau & Flood, 2013, p.1261). This does suggest that developing the employee’s positive mindset which adheres to intrinsic motivation strategies has a greater chance of success for employee performance versus clear cut extrinsic strategies. Research agrees with one of the main points Respondent A made with how important leadership with the overall culture of the company and the welfare of its employees. IN essence, “A transformational leadership style, in contrast, works by inspiring people. It appeals to deeper personal motives and links job performance to the higher-order values workers care about, including identity, public service, or transcendent goals. When a leader behaves in a transformational fashion, he or she elevates what workers aspire to in doing
their jobs” (McDermott, Conway, Rousseau & Flood, 2013, p.1272). For Mindfulness to be adopted as part of organizational culture for any company, it would need to be fully adopted and embraced by its leadership in order for it to be a legitimate strategy and part of corporate standard.

**Respondent B**

Respondent B is a retired middle management employee for a large U.S.-based computer organisation which also has offices internationally including in Ireland. Respondent B has worked internationally in managerial roles with people from all over the world including Ireland. Respondent B has decades of management experience and is well-versed in employee performance, evaluation, and motivation techniques. Respondent B was not familiar with the term Mindfulness, but claims the tenants described in the basic definition given from researcher to respondent is not only previously used employee motivation tactics but just with a fresh new name.

Respondent B’s experience managing employee performance has taught him that employees are different. He indicates that some Employees that require no direction and others that need more direction. Some need babysitting, ones that perform well—some need more chat or coddling, depends on what they need- individualized management Respondent B indicates that it is important to “look at what makes each tick and what motivates them” Some need encouragement and others do not they can work independently – those require attention because they have more difficulties and they might have subpar performance which requires remediation to figure out how the employee can get back on track. Respondent B stressed that there is no template one size fits all of what motivates all employees to do well since each employee comes with his or her own personality traits which responds to different motivation tactics.
Some of the tactics management uses in Respondent B’s organisation is they conduct a lot of one on ones which are open forums so an employee would have a chance to discuss concerns they were having and performance issues would be in private setting. There are also opportunity for group meetings which are also casual and informal for members of a department or group to discuss organisation or department or even project concerns. There are a lot of team meetings in group, where goals of department and where the department is going is discussed.

Some of the motivation strategies Respondent B’s organisation uses deals with extrinsic motivation tactics which are Incentives, awards, E awards- gift cards to Starbucks etc. reward for project or task. There are some of these conducted in a group setting so others can see the reward and recognition for hard work to encourage their own aptitude.

As far as performance-related issues, Respondent B indicated that there are mid-year counselling reviews where a manager and employee can talk about where the employee is, been, and goals. There are employee objectives each year and the mid-year review is to see how they are meeting the objectives which may involve recalibrating or adjustments of objectives to assess performance. Respondent B indicated that there needs to be an objective criteria for assessing people’s performance and also assess how they get along with everyone. This can be subjective which is why Respondent B indicates that his company follows the 360 performance appraisal feedback model so the employee assessed not only by their manager but others in management, their peers, and even themselves to get a full picture of their performance. The 360 Feedback Appraisal model is a much used feedback tool for employee as it gathers feedback from many of the employee’s peers, managers, as well as the employee itself so the entire appraisal of the employee’s performance is not dictated just by one line manager. This is a useful tool to
eliminate the danger of subjectivity which can help an employee feel more secure with how they are being reviewed.

Respondent B indicates there is employee Counselling which follows a standard process, go back to the year’s objectives, and assess how the employee is meeting them or not, ask the employee what they need to perform at a high level, does the employee want to be there, do they fit the job or the company, are they not motivated due to team cohesion and then they go through a process to find out why they may not be motivated. Get feedback from peers and other managers, ask how do they think they are doing, maybe the employee realizes they are over their head and wants out; confidence issues maybe, others may say it is an attitude issue or intellect issue and determine if employee is worth saving- it is an investment which uses time and resources so you do it if you think it is going to pay off, management spends time with you because they want to keep you versus written off and they don’t care about employee, can see if there is another fit some other area of company that might be best suited. The last resort is termination and warnings and criteria outlined by HR in terms of steps taken. The employee’s agreed-upon objectives is point of reference for the year of what they employee said they would do and the manager asks the employee why they are not meeting goals. Respondent B indicated that part of management HR related but that sometimes employee would prefer talking to HR about issues of motivation versus their own manager.

Respondent B claims that there is not a huge issue with employee benefit claims due to their very integrated motivation process and just giving employees time off or scheduling motivating events is more of a challenge. Respondent B’s organisation follows a standard procedure to deal with employee stress-related claims issues by referring the employees to specific services, inform the employee of how to exercise options through their health insurance,
offer information about workman’s compensation, give clear and tangible recommendations of counselling is needed and refer to any professionals required.

Respondent B indicated the corporate culture of organisation is a relaxed environment. But, Respondent appreciates the environment in a California-based organization can be culturally relaxed. At the organisation, CEO had a cubicle like everyone else and there is less of a hierarchy and not outdated high management big corner office scenario. Instead, everyone is on the same floor and no one is isolated or made higher. He stated this results in a more community culture since people are mindful of voice volume and conversations since everyone is walking around. Respondent B indicates that his organisation’s culture has always been the same that “you’re not building walls around everyone” (Respondent B, 2018). Since Respondent B has been in the business corporate culture since the 1980s and only recently retired in 2015, he indicated the dramatic change in corporate workplace culture over the years at many organisations. He stated work started out as more formal and the culture has become more relaxed through the years with the hierarchy and casual culture.

When asked what types of motivation his organization currently practiced for its employees, he indicated several examples. For example, there are Team building activities. Often, the company gathered employees to work on a team project just for fun such as build a toy airplane. There are often motivational speakers were used to promote positivity and morale among it employees. There were many fun activities planned to help break up monotony just by doing something different. This may have involved morning or midday exercises, building something with Legos or deck of cards, getting everyone working together and maybe even compete. This can help put people in a position where they can feel comfortable interfacing with everybody as their equals and manger is involved too so everyone is working as a team with no
boss structure. The tasks are less rigorous that normal every day. One specific example
Respondent B gave is when they went up to a nearby winery where half of the day they looked at
their goals and some ideas they want to work on in the company over the next six months in a
different setting and then the next half of the day they travelled around on a fun wine tour.
Respondent B indicated that the company liked to mix fun with actual goals.

Respondent B indicated they had a motivational speaker running through exercises and
making everyone more comfortable with each other and working as a team to help everyone get
to know each other more and get along as a team in a fun and non-threatening way. Respondent
B indicated that “the teams that do well are the ones that work with each other” He claimed this
helped promote cohesiveness and they culture is to “not ridicule because they don’t know
something” (Respondent B, 2018). He discussed that it is important to get people out of a
structured robotic mindset with what is their job description to grow the culture of what happens
to one person affects the group and any issue is a group’s issue and not one person’s burden.
Respondent B indicates that it helps to each a culture in the organisation of helping others out.
Respondent B also indicated that it was important to do some fun things to get away from normal
work duties because sometimes the work can get so grueling that they do not even talk to each
other as humans and it is important not get into a tunnel vision mindset.

Some other examples Respondent B’s company used to motivate and promote the
performance of its employees is to have Company gatherings and picnics. There are E- awards
where anyone can nominate anyone for doing a good job on something and it does not have to be
a manager who nominates. The company encouraged that mentality which Respondent B
indicated created a culture not to just help the boss but to help each other. If a colleague helped
another on a project, that colleague can nominate the other for the award.
In summation, Respondent B did not have a direct familiarity with Mindfulness as a term or its use in many corporate settings. However, much of what Respondent B indicated showed his organization used tactics that closely resemble Mindfulness though they did not use the term directly. Respondent B indicated that his experience in management taught him that “Motivation is not just about paying people for doing their job but about team building and getting people to want to do their job and feeling good about their job.” Developing a high performing worker involves an investment in the employee by the organization and “it is not about the extra money” but about showing the employee you care. (Respondent B, 2018).

Respondent C

Respondent C has her own small business in the United States and has worked in large as well as small organisations. As the proprietor of her own business she manages, her perspective on the use of Mindfulness gives yet another perspective which differs from the two other respondents whose experience derived from management within a large corporation. Respondent C manages her own business and has extensive knowledge with Mindfulness. She owns and manages her own expressive arts business and deals with a variety of clientele who deal with stresses and other associated issues which she has assisted by using many Mindfulness tenants and practices.

Respondent C indicated motivation at work issues with some of her clients and their main concerns are “feeling under-appreciated at work, intense emotional environment at work, job and city adjustments, and financial constraints” (Respondent C, 2018). Whether or not Mindfulness is the best approach to deal with these top concerns is up to the organisation, but what is clear is that performance may be affected due to many of these feelings and it is a worthwhile endeavor for an organisation to see what motivational practice is most-suited.
Since Respondent C runs an Expressive Arts Therapy business, she advocates her clients to express themselves freely. She indicates she helps “clients in expressing and clarifying their needs, wants, goals, dreams, and how to enhance self-care” (Respondent C, 2018). In essence, she helps to teach clients to tap into their own consciousness which is not unlike the tenants of Mindfulness discussed at the beginning of this report. According to Respondent C, caring for the self and making sure the self is empowered and feels healthy inside and out is an important part of what cultivates a whole and more complete person for themselves.

The stress-related issues Respondent C’s clients have expressed that they struggle with at work deals with not only their mindset but also the physical symptomatic manifestations of what stress can do to their well-being. She encourages her clients to be honest and talk about their challenges and bring these issues to the forefront with management. As previously discussed in earlier sections, what she advocates is to take the stigma away from asserting stress issues at work and instead stand up for these issues for the entire well-being of the individual.

Since Respondent C uses Mindfulness in her business practice, she is very knowledgeable of what goes into Mindfulness such as “attention and awareness of the present moment, non-judgement of thoughts, feelings and experiences, focus on breath and other physical sensations, reduce stress and increase self-awareness of body and mind” (Respondent C, 2018). As such, Respondent C advocates a presence of mind to get her clients to overcome feelings of stress and other negative emotions. This could potentially have a great impact with the workplace since a happier individual will be more adept to approach their work life with a more positive mindset.

Respondent C also came up with clear strategies to implement Mindfulness as a part of daily life for motivation such as working with artistic materials such as painting, engaging the
senses through dramatic show and free movement artistic endeavors with no practical purpose other to be focused “on here and now, highlighting physical sensations in their body and developing awareness without judgement” (Respondant C, 2018). The clearing of the mind to focus on just what is right in front of the individual can have a lasting impact on the belief they have which lends itself back to what was discussed in the Literature Review section and Mindfulness for Employee Empowerment.

Respondent C is very knowledgeable about the uses of Mindfulness and how it can be used even individually for employees to feel better as people which can have a direct translatable effect on their performance at work. As Respondent C discussed through examples, she believes strategies for Mindfulness do not have to be a large monetary organisational investment but it can have a profound impact on a company’s bottom line when it comes to the employees over mental and, therefore, physical well-being.

CHAPTER V – DISCUSSION

Mindfulness is an interesting resource to harness employee performance for organisations to consider. What has been discussed is the secondary research with themes that looked at the usage of Mindfulness and the concept of employee performance in Irish and U.S. industries. In addition, the researcher conducted primary research in the form of a good sampling of surveys as well as one- on-one interviews to examine the current climate in a wide array of industries when it comes to not only Mindfulness but also employee performance in general. The findings for each research angle indicated the usefulness of Mindfulness.

Mindfulness is a modern secular tool used by many people for their personal and professional lives. As discussed in the beginning of this report, Mindfulness encourage a presence of mind and encourages self-empowerment without judgement. In the competitive
environment plaguing all industries these days, a tool to help encourage the performance of employees is well worth investigating to test its validity.

The survey findings demonstrated that some companies already use facets of Mindfulness to help encourage the performance of its employees in a positive way. For the most part, employees still desire decent pay and a less work schedule. However, in reality there is always a desire to make more money and to not have to work so much in order to do so. As such, an organisation aspiring to provide its employees with this need so every employee is completely satisfied over the long-term is a tall order to fill. However, motivation tools such as Mindfulness may be able to tap into the intrinsic motivation characteristic among employees so they approach the work they have to do and for the pay they are offered in a positive way. If work tasks are broken up by organisational strategies to improve how an employee feels about their job through fun activities and activities to simply break up the monotony of work itself, as well as to teach the employee how they think about and approach their work, the potential for employees to be happier and overall more positive about their job has the potential to increase.

The interviews also demonstrated that some companies are already adopting Mindfulness as a part of their employee motivation toolbox. Not every company uses the term Mindfulness directly, but many of the motivation tactics they use demonstrated the use of its tactics even if the direct terminology is not overtly used. For Respondent A, she advocated the complete indoctrination and integration of Mindfulness as an employee performance and motivation tactic organization-wide in the large Irish Banking industry of which she is employed. For Respondent B, many of the ideology of Mindfulness is used but not necessary directly named as Mindfulness perhaps due to the stigma of what may be considered as a step closer to a specific religion or spiritualism. However, many of the tactics used in Respondent B’s company speaks to the ideals
of Mindfulness with the concepts of empowerment and clear thinking to feel empowered to complete a task. Respondent C is free to practice Mindfulness due to her own private business and advocation of such a strategy for her clients. One interesting difference between these respondents is that one advocated for the full indoctrination of Mindfulness in a literal and direct way into the organisation while the other considered Mindfulness might be useful as another tool but the current organisational tools for employee motivation and performance is well sufficient for the time being. Lastly, the final respondent felt it Mindfulness translated to more than just another workplace tool but as a way of life not confined to the workplace at all. Mindfulness, though originally rooted in religious practice, now has a completely secular use which can be altered and shape to suit an individual organization’s culture as well as individual themselves. Leadership can consider it another strategy for “Deprogramming multitasking tendencies and intentionally focusing with full attention results in higher quality interactions and decisions. Mindful decision makers take the time to consider all of their options, and therefore make more-informed decisions. Managers who model and promote mindful practices with their teams create an environment of engagement” (Schaufenbuel, 2015, p.3). Depending on the organisation, the employee’s functions, and culture, Mindfulness might need to be strategically shaped to be an effective leadership strategy that promotes a high level of performance of its employees.

CHAPTER VI – CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In summation, Mindfulness is a motivational tool with a lot of potential to develop the performance of employees in Irish and U.S. organisations. However, it is up to the organization to decide if the investment in Mindfulness is worth any potential costs and time spent on integrating a new platform into its internal corporate strategy. In short, the Return on Investment
(ROI) needs to be significant enough to convince senior management and corporate if such a strategy was integrated into the organization. Depending on the location and type of organization, as well as size of industry, this may affect the feasibility of Mindfulness at least as a part of corporate strategy. However, what seems consistent through the secondary research, surveys, and interviews, is that in order for an organization to adopt Mindfulness it needs to have top management understand Mindfulness and learn Mindfulness themselves. It seems that unless top management subscribes to Mindfulness, they cannot integrate it authentically into corporate culture for it to be fully adopted organization-wide.

One of the issues Mindfulness has is that “it is not yet universally understood and embraced by leadership development practitioners or human resource departments. Introducing mindfulness as a tool for leadership development depends heavily on the receptivity of those invested in talent management. A better understanding of stakeholder resistance is needed to address skepticism.” (Ruderman and Clerkin, 2015, p.10). Secondary and Primary research suggests that corporate has a vested interest in the overall health and well-being of its employees. Furthermore, “employees [need to] feel safe to discuss mental health problems…demonstrate ongoing support toward individual employees who exhibit warning signs” and they need to create a culture that does not stigmatize mental health needs as well as provide avenues and resources for the benefit of employee mental health (Dimoff and Kelloway, 2018, p.2). Even though much of the secondary and primary research looked at the argument for intrinsic motivation, it can be argued that the marriage of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is the best suited way to successfully implement a Mindfulness programme in an organization. As evidence suggested, Mindfulness as an organizational construct can only be successful if top management subscribes to it as a legitimate tool which success Mindfulness itself requires extrinsic
motivation for it to function as a tool for intrinsic motivation for employees. Whether or not an organisation chooses to adopt Mindfulness in some realm is entirely the decision of the organisation and that they feel the organisation will benefit from such an investment. However, what has been demonstrated that Mindfulness is a tactic many organisations have already incorporated into their organisational culture and have seen positive results from this adaptation to the benefit of the success of their organisation. What is arguable is that organisations in Ireland and in the United States would benefit from empowering their employees, cultivating a high level of performance, and caring about the health of its employees. To what end this is accomplished would depend on the needs of the individual company and the organisational culture. Whatever decision is made, what the research has hopefully shown is organisational success is dependent on the performance of its individual employees and this, more than anything, needs to be understood and developed.
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APPENDICE A – REFLECTIONS

I teach for a living, and more than one student has told me I should be a motivational speaker due to how I teach in my classes. However, there is no special gift with what I do. I simply ask students to believe in themselves which is almost like a skill or muscle that must be worked on every day. There is one dirty word that I hate more than anything…fear. I think that is what pushed me to keep going beyond what I kept thinking I could. I feared that I would fail, I feared for my health, I feared that each visa renewal would get denied. But, the whole time I trusted that my purpose and belief in the self is a power that the successful have and that we can all have too. This has been quite a challenging dissertation for me but a very useful learning experience. Unlike many of my fellow full-time MBA students, I worked multiple jobs while going to school full-time and had to commute everyday by train from Galway to Dublin. In addition, I lived a complicated life while at home in Galway as I lived in the country among the fields of Athenry. I found it busy but nice to have this type of balance in my life. I decided to stay here in Ireland for my dissertation and I have made Ireland my new home which I absolutely love.

What I noticed with writing this dissertation is that because the subject matter was Mindfulness that it really helped me have some level of serenity and peace while writing it versus a more hard numbers topic which would have probably raised the stress level. I had a series of small health issues while writing this dissertation, so I believe the stress due to its short time line was difficult for most of us. The timeframe of finding respondents during the summer here in Ireland was especially difficult since many were away on holidays. So, I was not able to take as much time as I wanted to get more respondents for both the interviews and the surveys. I would love to expand on this topic later and see where it can possibly go and what else I might uncover.

I am lucky that I already work at my job from home and that I am almost 40 and have had experiences in my life that have grown me from surviving domestic violence to poverty. For me, getting an assignment in on time and a train delay is a small concern compared with the emotional scars of years of abuse. Surviving that gave me the courage to soar. This helped me persevere even when it meant working in a live class until 4am to get 45 minutes of sleep and then get up and get on the 5:30 am train back to Dublin every day. I just did it because, like I tell my students, don’t ever tell yourself you can’t do something because that is one of the most damaging attacks you can ever give yourself. We are all powerful, wonderful creatures—waiting to blossom and shine. But, like the tale of the butterfly, we have to learn to push past the obstacles for ourselves if we are ever going to fly.
APPENDICE B - SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How long have you managed employee? (less than 1 year, 1-5 years, 5-10 years, 10+ years)

2. What is your current managerial role at your organisation? (line manager, HR management, department manager, higher level manager, not a manager)

3. Have you heard of Mindfulness? (yes, no)

4. Does your organisation use Mindfulness for its employees in any way? (yes or no, if yes please elaborate)

5. Does your organization use an established motivation practice or theory for the performance of its employees? (yes or no, if yes please elaborate)

6. Do you have a high rate of employee complaints about stress-related issues? (yes or no)

7. What do your employees tell you as their main source of on the job stress? (pay, amount of work given, tight deadlines, interoffice relations, adequate training, support from management)

8. From your experience, what is the most common employee management related issue you’ve experienced? (employee attentiveness/focus, employee stress-related complaints, workplace cohesion (employees getting along or not), employee performance issues, other__if other fill-in the blank)

9. From your experience, what do you think goes into a high level of employee performance? (reward/punishment structure, employee development and training opportunities, motivating holistic events (picnics, social outings with staff), managerial encouragement and motivation, employee competition)

10. How large is your current organisation? (1-100, 101-500, 501-1000, 1001-5000, 5001+)
APPENDICE C – SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW WITH MANAGERS

1. What has been your experience with managing employee performance?
2. What do you know about Mindfulness either personally or used in the professional workplace?
3. If a mindfulness programme were implemented at your organisation, how do you feel it would be received by those in top management to the average employee?
4. What example of mindfulness does your organization use or would be open to using? (meditation breaks, walks, retreats, …)
5. Where do you see as mindfulness helping or potentially helpful to your employee workplace-stress, performance or quality of work, workplace bullying?
6. What example can you give of how you manage an employee who does not appear to be motivated to perform at a high level?
7. What can you tell me about employee benefit claims at your organisation? (rate of claims, average cost annually)
8. How common is it to hear or discuss stress-related employee issues at your organization? If yes, what is the standard practice to deal with stress-related issues? How successful is this approach?
9. What as your organization done to deal with an employee who is dealing with stress-related issues which may have an adverse effect on their job performance?
10. What is your current organisational culture?
11. What types of motivation does your organisation currently practice for its employees and can you give an example?
Appendice D INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

PROJECT TITLE
Mindfulness as an Organisational Investment in Ireland and the United States for Employee Performance

You are being asked to take part in a research study on…
The use of Mindfulness as a Managerial strategy to promote employee performance in U.S. and Irish Organisations. The survey is a part of my final project for an MBA with Dublin Business School in Dublin, Ireland. This project has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee and is guided by a Dissertation Adviser at DBS.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN
In this study, you will be asked to…
Provide your own insight into managerial strategies for employee performance.
The principle aim of this project is to closely examine managerial strategies used to promote employee performance with the primary focus on how Mindfulness is useful as a managerial strategy. The organisation focus is on organisations within the United States and Ireland with possible contributing factors such as organisational culture and HR practices.

Survey data will be analysed to provide insight on managerial strategies and the potential use of Mindfulness in U.S. and Irish Organisations to promote overall employee performance. The research project will also look at common HR concerns within organisations such as employee stress, performance, quality of work, and other employee management factors as presented.

TIME COMMITMENT
10 minutes

PARTICIPANTS’ RIGHTS
You may decide to stop being a part of the research study at any time without explanation required from you. You have the right to ask that any data you have supplied to that point be withdrawn / destroyed. You have the right to omit or refuse to answer or respond to any question that is asked of you. You have the right to have your questions about the procedures answered (unless answering these questions would interfere with the study’s outcome. A full de-briefing will be given after the study). If you have any questions as a result of reading this information sheet, you should ask the researcher before the study begins.

CONFIDENTIALITY/ANONYMITY
The data I collect does not contain any personal information about you. All responses are strictly confidential and will be used only for the purposes of this academic research project. The survey data will be securely stored and deleted when no longer required. Neither your name nor organisation’s name will be associated with your answers. Responses will only be allocated and used in combination with those of other survey respondents. Details of University’s ethics process and further contacts may be found at www.dbs.ie

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
I or / and Dissertation Supervisor, Martin O’Dea will be glad to answer your questions about this study at any time. You may contact my supervisor at martin.odea@dbs.ie. My contact email is bethannlee1849@gmail.com.
Appendice E- Information Sheet Posting for LinkedIn Survey Participants

Assistance with MBA survey around Mindfulness to Promote Employee Performance in U.S and Irish Organisations.

Beth Lee, M.A.
MBA Candidate

I would like to invite you to participate in a research survey regarding the use of Mindfulness as a Managerial strategy to promote employee performance in U.S. and Irish Organisations. The survey is a part of my final project for an MBA with Dublin Business School in Dublin, Ireland.

The Link to the Survey is here.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/8LC66P8

The survey link will remain open until at least July 31st 2018

The principle aim of this project is to closely examine managerial strategies used to promote employee performance with the primary focus on how Mindfulness is useful as a managerial strategy. The organisation focus is on organisations within the United States and Ireland with possible contributing factors such as organisational culture and HR practices.

Survey data will be analysed to provide insight on managerial strategies and the potential use of Mindfulness in U.S. and Irish Organisations to promote overall employee performance. The research project will also look at common HR concerns within organisations such as employee stress, performance, quality of work, and other employee management factors as presented.

All responses are strictly confidential and will be used only for the purposes of this academic research project. The survey data will be securely stored and deleted when no longer required. Neither your name nor organisation’s name will be associated with your answers. Responses will only be allocated and used in combination with those of other survey respondents. Details of University’s ethics process and further contacts may be found at www.dbs.ie

Thank you for your help and contribution to this study.

Should require any further clarification or have a question with this survey or wish to provide feedback, please contact me at bethannlee1849@gmail.com

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/8LC66P8
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