

**‘Mental Health in Maltese Hospitality Workers;
focusing on Fast-Food Workers’**

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Abstract

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Mental Health in Maltese Hospitality Workers; focusing on Fast food workers		13875 words
<p>This exploratory research evaluates the pressures of working in the Hospitality Industry and its' effect on the mental health of the fast-food workers. The research question that needs to be answered by this research study is: "The pressures of working in the Maltese Fast-food Industry and its effect on the workers' mental health." To answer the research questions, the researcher surveyed the mental health of the Maltese fast-food workers, both past and present employees, and gathered 102 responses. Moreover, the researcher did interviews with the employees and managers of the fast-food industry to gather different perspectives on mental health in Maltese Hospitality workers, which showed how different the managers' views compared to the reality of many employees. With the research gathered, the study concluded that most workers in the Maltese fast-food industry suffer from stress, anxiety and mental health issues and do not feel the company or the managers offer help.</p>		
Keywords		
Mental Health, Malta, Hospitality, Fast-food, Employees, Stress		

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Declaration:

I hereby declare that this research study is based on the outcome of self-made research. I, as the authentic author, declare that this research study is my own composition, and has not been previously produced for any other qualification.

The research study was conducted under the supervision of Carmenrita Bugeja.

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Signature

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Table of contents

1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 Research Background.....	1
1.2 Research Aim, Objectives, and Hypothesis	1
1.3 Research Methods, Material, and Structure	1
2.0 Literature Review	2
2.1 Introduction.....	2
2.2 Mental Health	3
2.3 Causes of Mental Health Disorders in Hospitality	3
2.4 Fast-food Industry	4
2.5 Emotional Labour	4
2.6 Job Burnout in Fast-Food Employees	6
2.7 Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace.....	7
2.8 How can Managers in the Fast-Food Industry Help their Employees.....	7
2.9 Employee Turnover in the Fast-Food Industry	8
2.10 Mental Health of Fast-Food Workers Worldwide.....	9
2.11 Coronavirus's Effect on Fast-Food Employees	10
2.12 Conclusion.....	10
3.0 Research Methodology	11
3.1 Overview.....	11
3.2 Purpose of the Methodology	12
3.3 Quantitative Data Collection	12
3.4 Qualitative Data Collection.....	14
3.5 Population, Sample, and Sampling Method	15
3.6 Pilot Study	15
3.7 Data Collection Procedure	16
3.8 Methods of Analysis to be Used	16
3.9 Research Limitations.....	16
3.10 Ethical Considerations	17
4.0 Results, Analysis and Discussion	17
4.1 Overview.....	17
4.2 Results of Fast-Food Employees Survey	18
4.3 Results of Fast-Food Employee Interviews	25
4.4 Results of the Fast-Food Managers Interviews.....	31
4.5 Comparison and Discussion of the Fast-Food Survey and Interviews	34
4.6 Summary of Key Results.....	37
5.0 Final Arguments.....	38
5.1 Conclusions	38
5.2 Recommendations	39

5.2.1 Future Research	40
5.2.2 Industry Recommendations.....	40
6.0 References: In-text and End-of-text.....	41
6.1 Electronic Sources	41
7.0 Appendices.....	45
7.1 Appendix 1: Template of the Survey.....	46
7.2 Appendix 2: Survey Summary	51
7.3 Appendix 3: Sample of the Questionnaires	56
7.3.1 Filled in Survey 1.....	56
7.3.2 Filled in Survey 2.....	59
7.3.3 Filled in Survey 3.....	62
7.4 Appendix 4: Transcripts of the Interviews with Fast-Food Employees	65
7.4.1 Transcript of the Interview with Fast-Food Employee 1	65
7.4.2 Transcript of the Interview with Fast-Food Employee 2	67
7.4.3 Transcript of the Interview with Fast-Food Employee 3	69
7.5 Appendix 5: Transcripts of the Interviews with Fast-Food Managers	72
7.5.1 Transcript of the Interview with Fast-Food Manager 1	72
7.5.2 Transcript of the Interview with Fast-Food Manager 2	74
7.5.3 Transcript of the Interview with Fast-Food Manager 3	75
7.6 Appendix 6: Interview Consent Forms.....	78

List of Tables

TABLE 1. PARTICIPANTS AGES	18
TABLE 2. RESPONDENTS WORKPLACE	19
TABLE 3. HOW LONG THE PARTICIPANTS WORKED IN FAST-FOOD	19
TABLE 4. DO THE MANAGERS PROVIDE AN OPEN-DOOR SYSTEM?	23
TABLE 5. EMPLOYEES INTEREST IN ATTENDING WORKSHOPS AND CLASSES TO IMPROVE THEIR MENTAL HEALTH.....	24

List of Figures

FIGURE 1. PARTICIPANT'S FEELINGS WHILST WORKING IN THE FAST-FOOD INDUSTRY	20
FIGURE 2. HOW THE PARTICIPANTS UNWIND AFTER A DAY OF WORK	21
FIGURE 3. PARTICIPANTS EMOTIONS WHILE AT WORK	22
FIGURE 4. RESPONDENTS' RELATIONSHIP WITH THE COMPANY, MANAGERS, AND CO-WORKERS	22
FIGURE 5. DO THE MANAGEMENT OR COMPANY OFFER HELP IN STRESS AND MENTAL HEALTH MANAGEMENT	23

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Research Background

According to Brandon Gaille (2017), the fast-food industry is a global manufacturing production which earns millions each year. However, at the core of the fast-food industry, there are blue-collar employees who seek to provide for themselves and thrive to improve the business. Therefore, the mental health of the blue-collar employees is essential to keep the individuals working, as, without them, the company would not have enough personnel to keep the doors open.

After personally working in the fast-food industry in Malta for over a year, the researcher came face to face with many different scenarios which highlight the significant issues and problems faced by the pressures of working in the hospitality industry. In this study, the researcher focused on how fast-food companies treat their employees, both past and present employees, in the workplace and the mental health effects it caused the individuals.

1.2 Research Aim, Objectives, and Hypothesis

The title of this research is 'Mental health in the Maltese hospitality workers, focusing on fast-food workers.' The key aim of the research was to determine whether the employees of fast-food companies had suffered mental health issues due to work and if they were provided with a healthy work environment. The proposed hypothesis for this research is that both the current and past employees had to suffer in silence due to mental health problems and the lack of help from fast-food managers and companies. Therefore, the research focused on these key elements: stress, mental health, mental health aid, employee well-being and work-life balance. Research was done on each key element and was used to determine how working in the fast-food industry affected the mental health of the individuals and what the fast-food companies did do to help.

1.3 Research Methods, Material, and Structure

Primary data was collected to check whether the hypothesis that employees suffer in silence due to mental health problems is correct. The primary research contains a triangulation of data as both quantitative and qualitative methods were used. First, the researcher gathered quantitative data through an online questionnaire for fast-food

employees and qualitative interviews with fast-food managers and employees. The qualitative and quantitative data gathered was analysed and compared to check whether the answers were similar.

By using the survey, the researcher was able to collect information on how employees feel at work and if the company or managers are offering them help. Moreover, the interviews with the three fast-food employees served as backup for the information found in the survey as the questions asked were the same, but the answers were left open-ended, so the answers were more detailed. In addition, the interviews with the managers helped to compare the mental health of an employee with that of a manager whilst also showing the perspective of a fast-food manager. The survey was posted repeatedly on different social media pages and groups, whilst the questions for the interviews with employees and managers were shared via email and messenger while requesting a meeting. A sample of the survey and the interview transcriptions can be found in the appendix.

Moreover, the research structure provides the reader with secondary research done on the topic, including its definition and the drivers surrounding it. The secondary research was followed by an explanation of the primary research in the methodology. After, the reader can go through the analysis and discussion of the results. Finally, in the final arguments, the reader can find the answer to the research question: "The pressures of working in the Maltese Fast-Food Industry and its effect on the workers' mental health."

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

As can be seen in the following sections, mental health is impacted negatively by the fast-food industry as this job entails working under high pressure and long-hour shifts that create a lack of work-life balance. In addition, this line of work will never be easy as the company expects the employee to work breakfast to last orders with elevated expectations and tight margins (The Newsroom, 2020). However, employees can create change by expecting and demanding more than the bare minimum from the company. In this chapter, the analysis of working in the fast-food industry and its effects on individuals' mental health was analysed and distinguished. Furthermore, the research in this chapter gives an overview of mental health, the causes, emotional intelligence, emotional labour, and job burnout, and seeing examples of international research on fast-food workers.

2.2 Mental Health

As stated on [mentalhealth.gov](https://www.mentalhealth.gov) (2022), mental health is a crucial factor in the day-to-day life of individuals from childhood through adulthood, as this affects how individuals think, act, and feels. Mental health can affect decisions as it takes control of our psychological, emotional, and social well-being. The workplace can profoundly affect mental health since the average human spends forty hours of the week at work, especially in hospitality, where overtime is a given. Working long hours can take a toll on mental health as it takes control of other factors such as the individuals' mood, behaviour, and thinking during work and in their personal life.

A Forbes article written by mental health consultant Bernie Wong (2019) stated that two-thirds of missed workdays could be linked back to mental health conditions, and most workplaces do not provide a handout to employees searching for help. In addition, there is a social stigma surrounding mental health, and it is affecting individuals' lives as they do not seek help for fear of being judged or shamed for their emotions. Employees also face fears of discrimination, reputational loss, and joblessness that make them feel limited to whom they can talk.

2.3 Causes of Mental Health Disorders in Hospitality

According to the World Health Organization (2019), there may be diverse risk factors for mental health in the working environment. These mental health factors can arise from interactions between several types of work, from the organisational and managerial background, the skills, and capabilities of employees, and what support the employees have in their workplace. Moreover, the hours that an employee works can also impact workers'

mental health as not having time to do personal tasks and spend time with family can cause issues in different sectors in the employee's life. In addition, the World Health Organisation (2019) stated that team cohesion and social support in the workplace are crucial factors for the individual's mental health whilst working in hospitality. Not being able to rely on co-workers can lead to misunderstandings, leaving the customers dissatisfied with their service.

The paper 'Fast food industry demands 'emotional labour' from employees' by Robert T Muller (2016) examines a study done by Alicia Grandey and colleagues at Penn State University. In the study, the costs and benefits of emotional labour practices used in the fast-food industry showed that the self-control that employees had and the regulation to convey artificial happiness for an extended period was draining as it depletes their energy. According to psychology, if a person is not a naturally optimistic person, repressing true feelings and generating insincere emotions can lead to dissonance, which is a tense and uncomfortable state that can result in elevated levels of stress, burnout, and job dissatisfaction.

2.4 Fast-food Industry

According to Rosenbaum (2019), businesses that represent the fast-food industry vary in size, structure, and profitability. The fast-food industry is highly competitive as they try to make prices, products, and services like their competitors to gain the most market share. For fast-food companies to be productive and provide good service, they need to rely on their employees, both the white-collar and the blue-collar workers.

In the book 'Confessions of a fast-food worker (Part 1) written by George Dwight (PR Newswire, 2013), people get a preview of working in the fast-food industry as the author states, "You get what you pay for. We were being paid as little as possible, so we did as little as possible." The statement shows that Dwight believes that fast food employers are taking advantage of their employees as they are being paid the bare minimum and need to work hard to earn the company a hefty sum of money.

2.5 Emotional Labour

According to McCauley (2016), blue-collar employees are more prone to emotional labour. These employees need to engage in a lot of physical labour, such as serving customers, managing cash, and preparing food. The blue-collar employees work under high pressure from management to meet the company's standards, which leads to stress and mental health issues. Working in a fast-food outlet is more than just serving food and greeting customers. The employees need to create an experience for each customer by asking them about their day and making light conversation. Therefore, with every interaction, the customer should leave satisfied. Emotional labour is a large part of the fast-food job requirements as the workers need to display concern for the customer's needs. Emotional labour is the process of managing emotional expression and gestures whilst in public to deal with customers' emotions and convey the company's values. In the workplace, emotional regulation can occur by using three strategies: surface acting, genuine emotion, and deep acting (Wu, X & An-Jīn, 2017).

McCauley (2016) stated that surface acting occurs when the individual fakes an outward expression to convey a happy emotion whilst inward, the person is left conflicted. The employee often performs surface acting in good faith to better the organisation and service provided to the customer; however, it can also be an obligation to meet the organisation's norms. Therefore, surface acting can lead to dissonance in the workplace. On the contrary, deep acting occurs when the employee tries to convey an emotion to change their mood and way of thinking. Moreover, Wu, X and An-Jīn (2017) define the last emotional strategy, genuine emotion, as an occurrence when the person does not need to modify their emotions and display what they are feeling. When employees are genuinely happy and convey this emotion, they use minimal energy and provide more energy for other tasks.

Wu, X and An-Jīn (2017) stated that the employee's mental state can deplete as the management forces employees to meet emotional demands and forces employees to use surface acting or deep acting to express the desired emotion and please customers. Hence, the energy depletion of employees' mental resources can lead to emotional straining. However, suppose the person is highly customer-oriented; it can help reserve the emotional and cognitive resources to deal with strict emotional demands and obtain a natural drive to satisfy customer behaviours, such as helpful or cooperative (Gabriel et al., 2015).

As stated by Wu, X and An-Jīn (2017), suppressing emotions cause harm to the well-being and mental health of the employees as they are not allowed to convey and

manage their genuine emotions, which can lead to the individual suffering from emotional exhaustion and job burn out. Moreover, since emotional labour is a large part of this job requirement, employees might feel forced to find a way to cope with their emotions and turn to addictions. Addictions can develop as, after long and draining shifts; employees turn to cigarettes, drinking, and marijuana, which continue to affect their mental health. Individuals cope differently with emotional labour. Some individuals may be able to deal with the issues by using positive emotional communication. Optimistic or cheerful people may concur with the negative emotions more quickly than their co-workers. Muller (2016) suggests that employers should provide employees with downtime, opportunities to engage in honest interaction, and training the employees to recognise mistreatment to avoid emotional dissociation.

2.6 Job Burnout in Fast-Food Employees

According to Sokka et al. (2014), job burnout can be a chronic work-related illness that develops gradually because of prolonged stress. Mansour and Tremblay (2016) state that job burnout can occur when the employee is under pressure to manage and process their work roles and family obligations. Job burnout can affect both personal and social functioning. For example, employees in the fast-food industry try to invest their emotions and mental health into their workplace to get a positive outcome, forcing them to face their stressors. However, they are depleting their emotional source, leading to job burnout.

In the multidimensional theory of burnout by Maslach (1998), job burnout is composed of three main components: development of depersonalisation, reduced sense of personal accomplishment, and emotional exhaustion. When experiencing emotional exhaustion, the individual's energy is consumed during interactions with customers or their environment, afterwards being left feeling exhausted. Furthermore, diminished personal accomplishment occurs when an individual is experiencing negative self-evolution. A critical self-evaluation can lead to a lack of self-efficacy and self-determination, leading to job burnout. In the argument of job burnout, Maslach (1998) states that job burnout can affect a person's way of thinking as they start thinking of humans as items and leading to job depersonalisation. Job burnout in the fast-food industry can lead to people quitting their job or staying on the job whilst only doing the bare minimum and not seeking to provide the best outcomes for the employees.

2.7 Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace

Wu, X and An-Jīn (2017) describe emotional intelligence as an essential aspect of people's lives. Emotional intelligence controls the ability to perceive other individuals' emotions, such as disgust, fear, or anger, in other people. If the individual lacks this ability, people will lack empathy and make poor social judgement in their personal lives and the workplace and will have trouble reading social cues. Emotional intelligence can be affected by the employee's customer orientation as people who positively relate to customer orientation have greater prosperity in the fast-food industry. When the front-line employees have a higher level of emotional intelligence, they are better capable of doing emotional labour as they can regulate emotion and focus on the positives of the job.

According to Choi (2015), emotional intelligence can help promote deep acting, alleviate depersonalisation, and suppress surface acting whilst enhancing service quality. Moreover, emotional intelligence can decrease mental health illnesses in employees as it helps them discover that they are worthy, capable, and able to function like everyone else. Furthermore, emotional intelligence helps lead workers to be more motivated, show more genuine emotion and pursue work-related goals. In addition, employees who are more motivated to comply with the company rules and better regulate their feelings are more likely not to experience job burnout.

2.8 How can Managers in the Fast-Food Industry Help their Employees

According to the paper 'Mental Health in the workplace in Europe' by Stavroula Leka and Aditya Jain (2020), founded by the European Union Compass to study the mental health in the workplace in Europe to create a healthy work environment, the following elements are essential: governmental legislation, strategies, and policies. Therefore, managers or owners of the hotel or restaurants can ensure a healthy workspace for their employees by protecting and promoting their health, well-being, and safety. Ideally, companies can bring a specialist to teach and inform their staff about integrated health and well-being strategies, including prevention, early identification, support, and rehabilitation (WHO, 2019).

Leka and Jain (2020) stated that it is essential to know when a person needs a break to decrease burnout and the use of drugs and alcohol. It is vital that managers notice the signs in their employees and not overwork them, as this can lead to mental and physical

drainage. Having a healthy workspace and work-life balance can help individuals work more productively, cope with stress more effortlessly, and live out their full potential. In addition, the workplace can help maintain the individual's mental health by offering professional help, making sure they feel connected, supporting them, and providing them with enough time to do personal tasks (MentalHealth.gov, 2020).

2.9 Employee Turnover in the Fast-Food Industry

According to Rosenbaum (2019), individuals see employment in the fast-food industry as only casual or part-time, with no plan of pursuing a long-term career. The hospitality industry faces a high turnover rate due to a lack of empowerment for workers and the absence of mechanisms that can help people cope with stress. Fast-food employees feel that they are not valued and overlooked by the company, which influences the employee's engagement and emotional intelligence. Apart from being undervalued, many employees believe that the wage is not enough for the work and effort they put forward in their job, which affects the employee's view of the organisational goals. Suppose the management changes its recruitment policies to hire people who want to pursue a career in the hospitality industry; it will attract individuals who will be more willing to learn how organisations such as hotels, restaurants, and other hospitality sectors work. This can be a beneficial experience for professional development as employees learn how to deal with work stress and a fast-paced work environment.

In a study by Shiftpixy (2021), a consistent turnover rate is between 25-55% in a restaurant. If it is any higher than this, it is harder for the restaurant to cope. However, fast-food outlets usually have a 130-150% turnover rate, including the employee replacement cycle. Moreover, most fast-food worker applicants are students who work for a limited time in high seasons, such as summer in Malta, where tourism and hospitality are at their highest point, making it harder to retain employees year-round. In addition to this, juggling between a job, school and homework, the employee is more prone to undergo a large amount of stress which can cause mental health decencies. Companies can reduce employee turnover by hiring the correct type of employees, offering reasonable compensation, and supplying room for growth and a good working environment.

Moreover, as Rosenbaum (2019) stated, due to the high turnover in fast food workers, employees are asked to put in more hours, which leads to them working 60 or 80 hours per week instead of the required 40 hours per week. Overworking causes employees

to fall behind in their personal lives, such as school, and start losing sleep, and with the high stressors of the job, this can lead to panic attacks as employees do not manage to cope with everything. Therefore, fast-food workers feel in limbo as they do not control how many days they are working, and the schedule is unpredictable. According to research done by Michele Hellebuyck, Theresa Nguyen, Madeline Halphern, Danielle Fritze, and Jessica Kennedy (2017), representing Mental Health America, the research stated that the food and beverage industry is among the top three unhealthiest workplace industries.

2.10 Mental Health of Fast-Food Workers Worldwide

Zhang's (2019) article 'Burger King Wants you to 'Feel Your Way.' But What about its own employees?' stated that in New York and California, the minimum wage in fast food has not gone up and working full time goes a little above the poverty line. This wage does not allow the person to pay the bills and leads to people overworking themselves, which leads to exhaustion and stress. This statement shows that even in the United States, the situation that fast-food workers face is not better than that of Malta. This situation is because the unpredictable schedules, low wages, and pressure to project positive attitudes contribute to mental health issues. It is a stressful environment which leads to mental and emotional burdens. However, due to the Americans with Disability Act, employers with more than fifteen employees need to be more accommodating with scheduling and provide additional leave to workers with disabilities, including psychiatric ones, as it is illegal to discriminate against someone for having mental health conditions. Furthermore, only thirteen per cent of the workers between 2007 and 2011 were able to receive health benefits as the company did not offer coverage.

In a study done by Rosenbaum (2019), the author gave an example of Panera Bread, an American chain fast-food company; employees do not last long as they had 100% turnover in 2019. Sometimes companies have a higher rate than 100% as they lose the employees hired to replace the ones before them. According to Abraham Pizam, the Dean of Rosen College of Hospitality Management at the University of Central Florida, no one who thinks of a job as temporary is motivated. This way of thinking is because in Panera, the lack of career paths, low wages and a profuse belief that working in fast-food is temporary. Moreover, turnover is high as the people who try to work in fast-food have high stress from working long hours to earn minimum wage.

2.11 Coronavirus's Effect on Fast-Food Employees

According to Remeikis (2020), Coronavirus hit the hospitality industry in 2020. This pandemic led to many hospitality workers being out of a job. These stressors from unemployment led to different mental illnesses. The following is a list that managers can try to do to help their employees have an easy return to work and other employees; these propositions could be job redesign, flexible hours, support, confidential communication, and addressing any negative workplace dynamics. Due to the stigma surrounding mental illnesses, the employer's main aim is to ensure that the employee comes forward and talks to them whenever needed.

According to Schnitzer (2020), many individuals who used the drive-through services did not respect the mask rule and were at risk of spreading the disease. In addition, the covid pandemic took a toll on fast food employees as even though many establishments were closed, fast food outlets had to remain open and serve customers. This contributes to the individual's stress as they are putting their lives at risk and even those of their loved ones as whatever they might catch at home, they will bring it back to their family members. Moreover, employees were also afraid of losing their job as the less business the company had, the fewer people the company needed during this period.

2.12 Conclusion

From the literature review, the researcher concluded that fast-food employees need to face different obstacles during their shifts, impacting their mental health. Furthermore, the constant pressure that fast-food employees feel during work also affects their personal lives as they feel the consequences of job burnout and overworking. Moreover, the mental health-related issues and the lack of help provided to employees increased the fast-food industry's turnover rate. Therefore, the researcher compared the secondary data to the primary data gathered in the analysis. This was done to compare the working conditions of the Maltese fast-food employees with the situation of the fast-food employees abroad.

3.0 Research Methodology

3.1 Overview

In this section, the reader can find the methodology and the procedures applied to achieve the objectives of this research. The subchapters covered in this section are research approach, instruments used, population, sample, sampling method, data collection procedure, pilot study, data analysis, research limitations and ethical issues. This research aimed to seek how working in the hospitality industry affects individual's mental health, focusing on fast-food workers. Therefore, the analysis consisted of a triangulation of data collection as both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to obtain

information on the mental health of the blue-collar employees in fast food outlets and how the managers view this situation.

3.2 Purpose of the Methodology

The main aim of this study was to figure out how working in the fast-food industry affects the mental health of the employees, both past and present workers. Upon completion of the research analysis, the information gathered was compared to that of the literature review. Therefore, the main objectives of this research were:

1. To figure out how working in the hospitality industry affects the mental health of individuals.
2. To see how employees cope with their mental health.
3. To clarify if the management or companies of the fast-food workers do anything to help employees deal with their mental health.
4. To highlight the importance of mental health in the hospitality industry.

To gather information on how working in the hospitality industry affects the mental health of the individuals and how employees cope with their mental health, fast-food employees participated in an online survey. Apart from the survey, a qualitative interview took place with three employees who work within the fast-food industry. In addition, the researcher conducted two interviews with fast-food managers to see their perspectives on mental health and how their employees deal with it. The researcher asked the same questions to the three managers, and all the answers were written down and compared in the analysis. The last objective of the study being: to highlight the importance of mental health in the hospitality industry, were met during the analyses section as the results showed how many employees and managers deem mental health essential in the catering sector.

3.3 Quantitative Data Collection

The quantitative data questionnaires were aimed at current and past blue-collar employees of the fast-food industry. In total, there were 102 respondents to the questionnaire. The questionnaire was created on office forms, making data more obtainable and easier to analyse. The questionnaire consisted of multiple-choice, text, or Likert scale questions. The researcher gave employees multiple-choice answers to pick which one was

best suited for them whilst the Likert chart ranges from one to five, with one being the worst and five being the best. In the questionnaire, the employees had some questions which required them to input text, so they could write their views or feelings to answer the questions. As stated by Joshi et al. (2015), the Likert scale helped capture the emotions of the participants and the opinions about mutually exclusive issues under study. In addition, the Likert scale helped in the analysis to figure out what the participant's joint degree of agreement was about the topic at hand. The questions asked in the questionnaire are:

1. What is your gender?
2. What is your age?
3. What is your nationality?
4. In which fast-food restaurant do/did you work for in Malta?
5. How long have you been working/ have worked in the fast-food industry?
6. How does/did it feel like working in a fast-paced industry?
7. On a 1 to 5 scale how would you rate your below feelings working in the fast-food industry?
8. How do/did you unwind after a day of work?
9. Whilst working in a fast-food restaurant do/did you feel like you are able to convey your true emotions?
10. Do you think that hiding your true emotions at work makes you feel less energetic?
11. How would you rate the relationship that you have/had with the company, managers, and co-workers?
12. Do the managers provide an open door when you need someone to talk to?
13. Does the company or managers aid/aided in stress management and mental health problems, if any?
14. How does/did the company aid in stress management, if any?
15. Would you take part if the company would include more mental health resources?
16. Do you think the Covid-19 pandemic has affected your mental health and stress levels during working period?
17. Could you define your reasoning behind the answer you gave in the question before?

The study aims to understand better the mental health of the employees in the fast-food industry in Malta and whether they are getting help from the company. By using the quantitative method, participants were able to help view what the situation is like in their

workplace and how they cope with their mental health. Moreover, by using online quantitative questionnaires, participants could complete the questionnaire at their comfort and entirely focus on the questions. Finally, the results collected will help answer the research question.

3.4 Qualitative Data Collection

In the qualitative interviews, the researcher managed to get three interviews with fast-food employees and three interviews with fast-food managers. The qualitative interviews with employees and managers were structured. A list of pre-determined questions to ask the respondents was thought of ahead of time. Moreover, the interviewer did not alter the questions during the interview. No follow-up questions were asked during the interviews so that the responses had similar answers and were easier to analyse. The questions for the interviews with employees remained the same as the questionnaire's questions. However, each question was left open-ended so that the interviewees could give a more in-depth answer. The interview questions of the managers were altered to obtain more information from the perspective of the managers and were also open-ended. The questions for the interviews with the managers were:

1. What is your gender?
2. What is your age?
3. What is your nationality?
4. In which fast-food restaurant do/did you work in Malta?
5. How long have you been working/ have worked in the fast-food industry as a manager?
6. How do/did you feel working at this company?
7. As a manager do you feel the company participates in helping employees with mental health problems?
8. Does the company organise activities which can help to increase workplace wellbeing?
9. Does the company provide employees the ability to have a good work-life balance?
10. Do you believe the company helps people who are suffering with mental health issues?
11. Are there any initiatives you take or took to help employees with their mental health?
12. Do you believe an open-door system benefits your employees? And why?
13. Have you seen a high number of staff turnover whilst working with the company? If so, why?

14. In your opinion, what can the company do to improve workplace wellbeing?
15. Do you think the Coronavirus effected employees mental state whilst at work? If so, how?

3.5 Population, Sample, and Sampling Method

The sample taken for this research were employees in the front lines of the fast-food industry and the managers of fast-food restaurants in Malta. The researcher chose this study population due to the high number of fast-food workers in Malta. Moreover, by only gathering information on the front-line fast-food worker, the data collected was more dependable and more focused on the topic. In addition, the information gathered from the questionnaires was anonymous to compel the individual to tell the truth.

The questionnaire and the interviews took place using both convenience and snowball sampling. Convenience sampling was used in both quantitative and qualitative data by using individuals who were easily reachable to participate in the research, whilst snowball sampling was used for people referred to participate in the study by other members who took part in the data collection. The researcher also submitted the survey to different social media platforms easily accessible to Maltese fast-food employees.

3.6 Pilot Study

The researcher created a short pilot study to see if the questions for the survey and interviews were appropriate to ask and grammar was coherent. Once the researcher finished completing the survey, the researcher sent it to two friends so they could try to answer it and give feedback on the form. For example, one of the participants suggested changing question seventeen from 'Could you define your reasoning in question 16?', to 'Could you define your reasoning behind the answer you gave in the question before?'. The suggested change was due to some of the questions being branched; the participant only had 14 questions. After the researcher did the pilot study, another question added to the survey was 'Does the company or managers aid/aided in stress management and mental health problems?'. Before the pilot study, the question asked how the company helps, without even knowing if the company helps or not. These questions were also arranged in the employee interviews since the questions are the same. Moreover, the interview question with the managers was deemed ok. However, one participant gave feedback to switch the position of questions 11 and 12 in the manager interviews to have a better flow.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

Before the participants filled out the questionnaires, the participants were made aware of the research purpose. The interviewees also signed the consent form to do the interviews and use the data gathered in this research. The managers were contacted and interviewed using face-to-face interactions, messenger, and email. The total collection period for both the questionnaires and the interviews took around three weeks, as the responses and discussions took place at the convenience of the individuals.

3.8 Methods of Analysis to be Used

The researcher analysed the data collected, qualitative and quantitative, in several ways. The questionnaire answers were read and interpreted through tables and figures, which helped collect and analyse the large amount of data collected and convert them into meaningful information. This analysis helped to find the average of the answers. The questionnaire aimed to gather information from a large sample group, while the employee interviews aimed to gather three individuals' feedback. Using the larger sample group, the data collected from employees' interviews was more factual.

In addition to this, the interviews were written down and analysed. The data from the interviews were gathered and compared to the information provided in the questionnaires. The researcher also compared the data from both methods to the information found in the literature review to check whether the situation in Malta is like that found in the secondary data.

3.9 Research Limitations

The research proved to have some limitations as it was hard to get respondents for the questionnaires as the replies had slowed down after the first few days. In addition, the survey link had to be shared multiple times a day on different websites for the questionnaire to have enough participants. Moreover, Covid-19 also proved to be a limitation throughout the research. Most of the interviews had to take place online due to the participants' fear of catching the virus or going into quarantine. Furthermore, as most of the interviews took place online due to the Coronavirus pandemic, it also led to the researcher not being able

to view the participants' non-verbal language, which could have conveyed whether the person was being honest or not.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

The research does not aim to harm people, or the organisations involved in the study but takes it as an opportunity to look within the fast-food industry and see where there is room for improvement. Since the questionnaires for this research took place online, participants will remain anonymous, and the answers will remain confidential. The researcher will only use the answers for the purpose of this research. As stated in the questionnaire's introduction, which can be viewed in the appendices, the participants had the right to discontinue the questionnaire without notice. The participants of the interviews, both managers and workers, will stay anonymous as the participants gave no names, and there are no dates of when the participants worked in the established outlet.

4.0 Results, Analysis and Discussion

4.1 Overview

In chapter 4, the researcher will analyse the data collected through the qualitative and quantitative samples, and the results will be drawn. As mentioned in the Methodology, the researcher distributed the questionnaires digitally to reach a wider audience. The questionnaire aims to view the mental health of the Maltese fast-food workers. In the research process, 102 questionnaires were filled in and recorded. The participants' workplaces varied from the different fast-food outlets in Malta.

In addition to the questionnaire, the researcher interviewed three managers and three employees working in the fast-food industry. The interviews will serve as a backup for the analysis of the questionnaire. The results of the interviews will be examined and discussed; the interviewer will do this by reviewing the answers given to each question. The interview with the fast-food employees contains twenty-one questions which are the same as the questionnaire questions; however, the responses given are open-ended. Moreover,

the interviews with the fast-food managers included fifteen questions; the first few questions are about the demographic characteristics of the interviewee, and then the interviewees are asked questions regarding the mental health and well-being of their employees. The purpose of the interviews with the fast-food managers is so that the researcher can understand the issue related to the mental health of fast-food workers from the perspective of the managers and the fast-food workers.

4.2 Results of Fast-Food Employees Survey

A sum of 102 contributors responded and completed the questionnaires. The reader can find a copy of the online questionnaire within the Appendices Section. The most substantial number of participants, 43%, 44 out of the 102 were men who took the survey, 36% were women, 37 out of the 102 respondents. Moreover, 12% of the respondents, 12 out of 102, chose not to disclose their gender, and two respondents chose other. An additional 7%, 7 out of 102, announced that they were non-binary. The respondents' ages also varied from 16 to 65, the majority being between 16 to 25, as shown in Table 1. As can be seen, the participants were mostly younger generations, which might be due to the questionnaire being posted on social media platforms and shared with colleagues around the same age as the researcher.

Table 1. Participants Ages

Age	Amount of People	Percentage %
16-25	42	41
26-35	41	40
36-45	7	7
46-55	10	10
56-65	2	2
66+	0	0

When the participants were asked what nationality, they were, the researcher discovered that more than half of the respondents, 62% were Maltese, 63 out of 102. Italian was the second most response with 10%, followed by 5% British respondents. The rest were from Belgium, Romania, Netherlands, Philippines, Turkish, German, Colombian, Laos, French, Libya, Pakistan, Russia, Spain, Serbia, and India.

Moreover, when the participants were asked where they worked in the fast-food industry, two respondents claimed to have worked at two different fast-food outlets, assembling 104 different workplaces. The answers showed that the most commonplace of work at 26% responses was McDonald's, as shown in Table 2. However, KFC was a close second, as 25% of the respondents claimed they had worked there. The third most popular fast-food outlet to work at was Burger King, as there 16% of the respondents claimed to have been working there. As shown in Table 2, the other 33% of respondents have worked or are working at Hugo's Burgers, Crispy Flavoured Chicken, Southern Fried Chicken, Pizza Hut, Burgers Ink, or others.

Table 2. Respondents Workplace

Workplace	Amount of people	Percentage %
McDonalds	27	26
KFC	25	24
Burger King	17	16
Hugo's Burgers	9	9
Crispy Flavoured Chicken	8	8
Southern Fried Chicken	5	5
Pizza Hut	3	3
Burgers Ink	1	1
Other	9	9

As shown in Table 3, most participants have worked in the fast-food industry for less than one year or between 1 to 5 years. Only 9 out of the 102 respondents have worked in the fast-food industry for longer than six years. This result shows that most employees in the fast-food industry do not view it as a long-term career, as stated in the literature review (Rosenbaum, 2019).

Table 3. How long the participants worked in fast-food

Years	Number of Participants	Percentage %
Less than 1 year	46	45
Between 1 and 5 years	46	45
Between 6 to 10 years	6	6
Between 11 to 15 years	3	3
Over 16 years	1	1

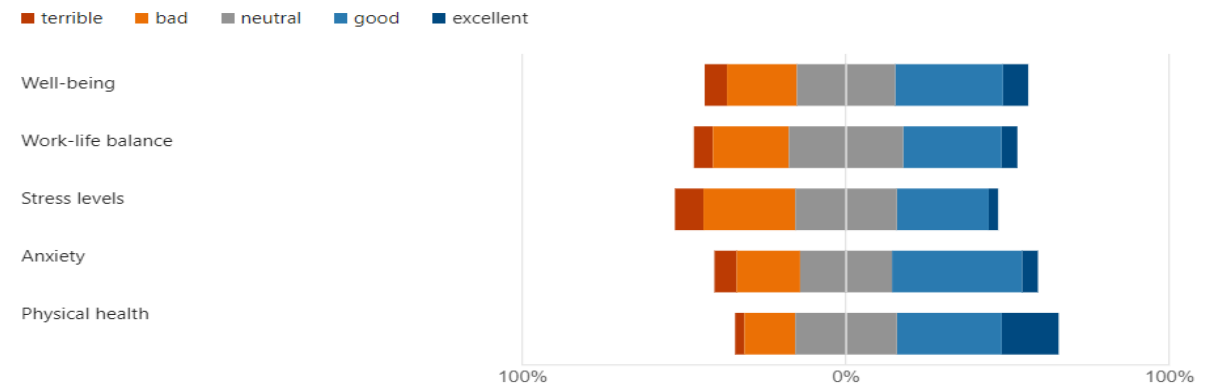
In the following question, the participants were asked to describe how they feel working in the fast-food industry. 52% of the participant expressed having negative feelings whilst working in the hospitality industry. From the answers gathered, it was noted that the participants felt stressed, tired, anxious, hectic, panicked, agitated, or bored when they went

to work. On the other hand, 46% of the participants expressed positive thoughts when asked how they felt going into work.

Following the question on how the employees felt at work, they were asked to rate their well-being, work-life balance, stress levels, anxiety, and physical health from terrible to excellent, as shown in Figure 1. The participants responses to well-being included: 33.3% good, 30.4% neutral, 21.6% bad, 7.8% excellent and 6.9% terrible. This answer shows that most respondents have more negative views on their well-being as 58.9% feel neutral, bad, and terrible, and 41.1% only feel good or excellent. Therefore, as stated in the literature review, if the fast-food industry does not try to improve the well-being of its employees, it can lead to job burnout and high turnover (Wu, X and An-Jīn, 2017). Moreover, the respondents were asked to rate their work-life balance. 35.3% of participants answered that they feel neutral with their work-life balance, 30.4% stated they feel good about it, 23.5% feel bad, 5.9% feel terrible, and 4.9% feel good about their work-life balance. Therefore, the research shows that the company is not respecting the individuals' work-life balance as many fast-food industry employees are overworked (Zhang, 2019).

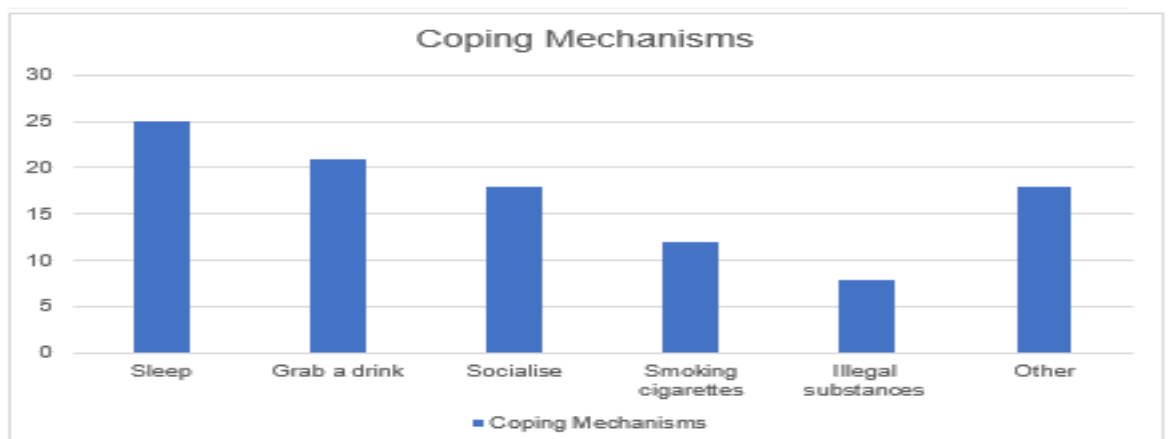
As shown in Figure 1, employees were asked to rate their stress levels whilst working in the fast-food industry. The respondents' prominent emotion about having stress is neutrality at 31.4%. Moreover, 28.4% of respondents voted for good and bad, whilst 8.8% felt they have terrible stress and 2.9% feel excellent about their stress levels. As Stated by Sokka et al. (2014), having high stress in the workplace can eventually lead to job burnout, increasing the turnover rate in the fast-food industry. Furthermore, almost half of the participants rated they have good or excellent anxiety levels, at 45.1%. 28.4% stated that their anxiety levels are neutral, 19.6% feel like they have bad anxiety, and 6.9% feel terrible. In addition, the participants were asked about their physical health. 50% of the participants stated that they are in a good or excellent physical condition, whilst 31.4% said that their physical health is neutral. Only 18.6% of participants feel like their physical health is bad or terrible.

Figure 1. Participant's feelings whilst working in the fast-food industry



In the following question, participants had to answer how they like to unwind after a long day at work. As shown in Figure 2, the most current way to unwind after a day at work was to go to sleep. The second most trendy way people like to relax was to grab a drink. 18 participants stated that they wanted to unwind by socializing with other people and 18 participants chose others. Finally, 12 people said they like to relax by smoking a cigarette, and 8 participants admitted that they turn to an illegal substance to unwind after a day of work. As stated in the literature review, Wu, X and An-Jin (2017) noted that emotional labour is a large part of the job requirement. Therefore, employees might turn to drinking, cigarettes and illegal substances to cope with their emotions. As shown in Figure 2, 41 participants have admitted to using these substances to unwind.

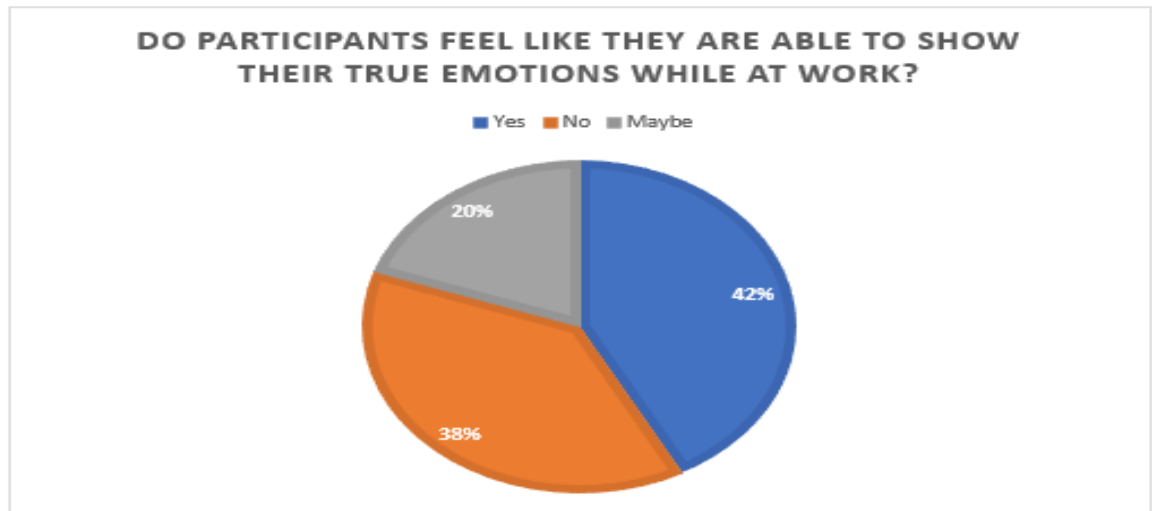
Figure 2. How the participants unwind after a day of work



In the following question, the respondents were asked whether they thought they were able to show their genuine emotions in the workplace. As shown in Figure 3, 43 out of the 102 respondents said they feel like they can show their real feelings. However, 39 out

of the 102 respondents said they do not feel like they can show their emotions at work, and 20 of the respondents said maybe.

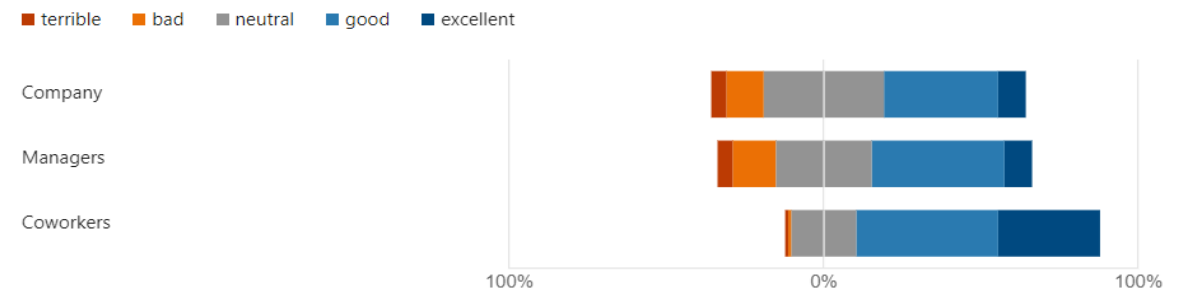
Figure 3. Participants' emotions while at work



In addition to the previous question, whoever answered no or had to answer a follow-up question about whether they think masking their emotions at work makes them feel less energetic. 57 respondents answered the follow-up question. Out of the 57 respondents, 48 stated that hiding their feelings at work makes them feel less energetic as they must focus more on putting up a mask in front of people and need more energy to socialize. This answer further backs up the information found in the literature review as said by Gabriel et al. (2015); the mental and physical state of the employee can suffer when they are forced to put on a mask in front of their customers.

In the following question, the employees were asked how they would rate their relationship with the company, managers, and colleagues. As shown in Figure 4, the respondents claimed to have the best relationship with co-workers over the company and managers. This answer could be due to the co-workers being at the same occupational level as the respondents, making them feel more comfortable around them. Moreover, the relationship the respondents claim to have with the company and the managers are at similar levels.

Figure 4. Respondents' relationship with the company, managers, and co-workers



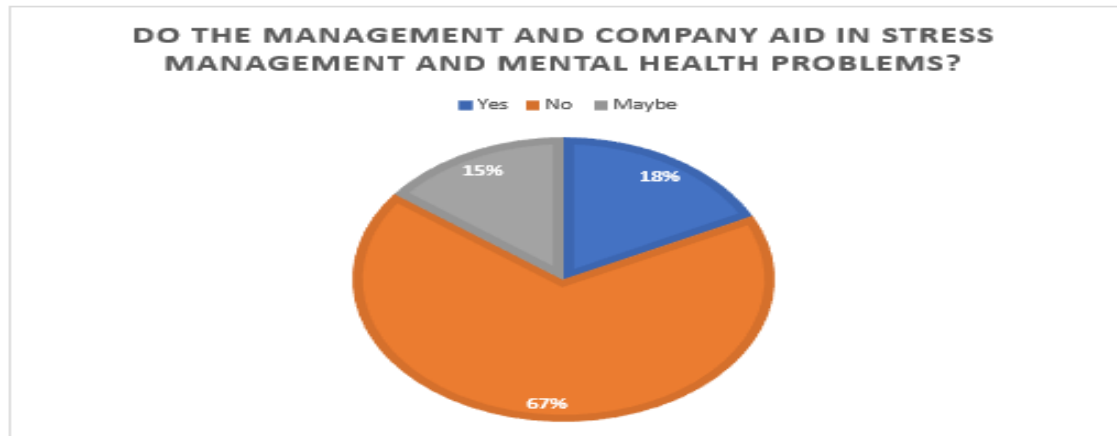
In the following question, the respondents were asked if they think the managers provide an open-door system. As shown in Table 4, at 35%, the highest response was that the respondents feel like the management sometimes offer an open-door system, whilst 30% of respondents claimed they do not feel comfortable opening up to managers even if they have an open-door system. In addition, 20% of respondents claimed that managers offer an open-door system when you need someone to talk to, and the other 15% of respondents claimed that the managers do not provide an open-door system when they need someone to talk to.

Table 4. Do the managers provide an open-door system?

Choice	Number of participants	Percentage %
Yes	20	20
No	15	15
Sometimes	36	35
I do not feel comfortable opening to managers	31	30

The respondents were asked if the managers or company aid in stress management and mental health problems. As shown in Figure 5, 67% of the respondents said they do not get any help from management or the company in aiding their stress and mental health problems. Moreover, only 18% of the respondents said they feel like the company and management help them in stress and mental health management.

Figure 5. Do the management or company offer help in stress and mental health management



The participants who answered yes or in the previous question were asked what type of help the company or management offered. Out of the thirty-three responses, the most common answers were that the managers would suggest listening to the employees, having team outings, and the management would recommend talking to the Richmond Foundation. This company helps individuals talk through their mental health problems.

Furthermore, the respondents were asked if the company would include more mental health resources such as mindfulness classes, meditation, and workshops, would they consider going. Table 5 shows that 52% of the respondents would like to attend initiatives that the company will create to help improve their mental health, and 29% would also consider going. Only 19% stated that they would not go to these classes.

Table 5. Employees interest in attending workshops and classes to improve their mental health

Choice	Number of participants	Percentage %
Yes	53	52
No	19	19
Maybe	30	29

Moreover, the respondents were asked if they thought the Coronavirus pandemic affected their mental health and stress levels during the working period. 60% of the respondents claimed that Covid-19 did affect their mental health and stress levels during the pandemic and 13% of the respondents stated that it did affect their mental health and stress levels. On the other hand, 28% said that the pandemic did not affect their mental health or stress levels.

Lastly, the respondents were asked to define why the respondents gave in the previous question. Most of the answers related to why respondents' mental health and stress levels had increased were because they were scared about losing their job, afraid of getting sick, the respondents had to take more precautions, and more anxious when meeting people at work. This answer further confirms the information provided in the literature review that the Coronavirus had increased stressors in employees (Remeikis, 2020). On the other hand, the respondents who answered no to the previous question answered that it had no effect on their mental health is because they believed Coronavirus was a hoax, and by the time Covid-19 started, some of them were no longer working in the fast-food industry

4.3 Results of Fast-Food Employee Interviews

As mentioned in Chapter 4, the interviews with the fast-food workers contained twenty-one questions. To keep the anonymity of the participants, they will be referred to as Employee 1, Employee 2, and Employee 3. Moreover, the interviews took place over messenger and the interviewer wrote down the answers as they spoke. The first three questions asked where to gather information on the participants' demographic characteristics. The interviewees were two males and one female, all aged 21 years old. The male participants were Maltese, whilst the female was half Maltese and half Italian. The researcher asked the fourth question to view where the participants had worked in the fast-food industry. The first employee worked at KFC, the second employee worked at McDonald's, and the third employee worked at KFC and Pizza Hut. Each question will be stated in the analysis, and the main topics of each fast-food employee's answer will be discussed and compared.

Q5: How long have you been working/ have worked in the fast-food industry?

Employee 1: I have been working at the company for 4 years.

Employee 2: I only spent a few months around 3-4 months in total.

Employee 3: I worked for around a year in fast food

As can be seen from the answers, each fast-food employee had worked for a different duration in the fast-food industry, ranging from a few months to four years.

Q6: How does/ did it feel like working in a fast-paced industry?

The researcher asked this question to comprehend better how the employees feel working in the fast-paced industry. The answers of Employee 1 and Employee 2 were similar as they both stated that it could be highly stressful to work in a fast-paced industry as there is pressure put on you to get the food done quickly to keep within the time limit. On the other hand, Employee 3 stated that she enjoys working in a busy environment. However, she can relate to the answer of employees one and two as she also felt pressured at her workplace.

Q7. How has/had your work life balance been while working in the hospitality industry?

Employee 1: I find it difficult to balance school, work, and other activities

Employee 2: Being a student and trying to do a part-time job is never easy and for obvious reasons one would struggle to find a balance however in the few months I spent there I was working almost 30 hours a week which was leaving a negative impact on my social life, studies and even health.

Employee 3: Whilst working in the fast-food industry my social life balance suffered a bit as I was working between 50 to 60 hours a week and most of them evening shifts so I was unable to meet my friends or do much during the day

As can be seen from the answers, all the employees gave similar answers. However, employees two and three gave a more detailed response as to why they found it harder to manage balancing work with other social aspects in their life. From the responses of employees one and two, it is shown that even though students try to find a part-time job to try and make extra income whilst studying, sometimes they find it hard to cope with all the requirements they have.

Q8. How has/had your wellbeing been while working in the fast-food industry?

When asked this question, all three employees reported having negative well-being. Employee 1 said that whilst he has been working in the fast-food industry, he has felt an increase in stress and anxiety, which affected his well-being in his personal life and work life. Employee 2 stated that he felt stressed performing to expectations, and not having a proper break while working affected his health. Moreover, he said that since his well-being was suffering because of work, it took a toll on his schoolwork, and he slacked. Employee 3 stated that her well-being had also suffered a bit while working in the fast-food industry as she was not eating healthy since she was eating from there whilst working, which

affected her self-esteem. She also felt excluded from the things she was doing since she was always at work which took a toll on her mental health. The answers given by these three employees show a perspective on how most young people feel about working in the fast-food industry.

Q9. How has/had your stress levels been while working in the fast-food industry?

The responses of Employee 1 and Employee 2 were similar for this question as both reported having a higher amount of stress whilst they have worked in the fast-food industry. Employee 1 stated that his stress increased due to balancing school and work, as it is hard to work in a fast-paced environment. Meanwhile, Employee 2 said that he felt that the fast-food industry provided a stressful environment as the employees were expected to perform at ambitious standards whilst juggling multiple tasks at once, which created a large margin of error that left customers unsatisfied with their experience. Employee 3 stated that her stress levels were ok whilst working in the fast-food industry, but she used to worry if she was doing things correctly.

Q10. How has your anxiety been while working in the fast-food industry?

All three of the interviewees reported that whilst working in the fast-food industry, they have felt an increase in anxiety. Employee 2 said that he always felt slightly anxious when going to work as he was afraid not to meet the managers' expectations and change their perspectives of him. Employee 3 also stated that she felt anxious going to work, especially if she had a difficult day of work the shift before. These answers show how all three employees have increased anxiety when going to work and how working in the fast-food industry affected their mental health.

Q11. How has your physical health been while working in the hospitality industry?

Employees 1 and 3 stated no notable change in their physical health whilst working in the hospitality industry. Employee 3 noted that the only time her physical health suffered after a long shift was wearing safety shoes as they are uncomfortable and heavy to wear and hurt her feet. Employee 2 stated that in his case, this had been a big issue whilst he was working in the fast-food industry as he had limited time to exercise, which led to gaining weight. In addition, he only had specific meals he could choose from at work as employee meals, and the healthier meals were smaller and were not very fulfilling, leaving him unsatisfied.

Q12. How do/did you unwind after a day of work?

The participants were asked how they unwind after a day of work to see what they do to relax. The first employee answered that he enjoys cycling and gaming after work to relax. The second employee stated he would go home and sleep as whilst he worked in fast-food, he did not have time to spend with family and friends as he was constantly tired and felt over-worked. However, if he had a day off, he would do schoolwork or go out. Moreover, the third employee stated that she would walk home and sleep or talk a bit with her family after a shift.

Q13. Whilst working in a fast-food restaurant do/did you feel like you are able to convey your true emotions?

Employee 1: Not really as you have to stay professional and not everyone is equally understanding in the work environment

Employee 2: Not really, given the fast pace of the environment emotions could not be conveyed however usually when there was an increased workload, and we would not manage to handle the tasks on our own a manager might lend a hand. Obviously, not all managers were the same however some took more attention to this factor

Employee 3: Unfortunately, I did not feel like I was able to convey my true emotions as we are always to put a fake smile when greeting people and hide our emotions. There was also a manager who told me every time I hear you laughing, I will give you a task to do, which would defeat my good mood.

As can be seen from the answers above, all three employees felt like they could not convey their genuine emotions whilst at work, and all three responded that they had to be professional and fake a smile when dealing with customers. However, Employee 2 said that if there were a rush, at least managers would come in and help them. Employee 3 stated that her manager was not one of help as every time he heard her laughing, he would give her a new task to do, which would change her mood, which shows that he did not care about her emotional well-being whilst at work.

Q14. Do you think it is important to convey your true emotions while at work? And why?

All three employees stated that it is essential that the employees can portray their emotions whilst at work and be offered support in a moment of need to have a work

environment which keeps workers happy. Moreover, the employees stated that being open with your emotions to co-workers or managers can lessen employee's stress, which can improve the workplace's morale. However, Employee 1 and three also agreed that there still need to be a level of professionalism in the workplace and meet guests with a smile to provide them with a pleasant experience and increase the chances they would return.

Q15. How would you describe the relationship between you and the company, co-workers, and managers?

The interviewer asked this question to see how the employees felt about their relationship with the company, managers, and co-workers. Since the employee must spend a lot of time at work, it is essential to have a good relationship with co-workers. However, Employee 1 stated that he felt his connection with the company, managers, and co-workers is a little awkward as there is not a lot of common ground, and not all the managers are very understanding. Moreover, Employee 2 stated that his relationship with the company, managers and co-workers was neutral. In the few months he worked there, he did not make any close friends but still spoke to everyone and rarely would joke around.

On the other hand, Employee 3 stated that she had a few issues with the company and with the managers as she felt they did not make her feel like a valued worker. However, she stated that she had a fantastic relationship with her co-workers as they were dependable. Therefore, the responses to this question show that concerning the company and the managers, all three had similar views but would interact more with the co-workers at the same level as them.

Q16. Do the managers provide an open door when you need someone to talk to?

The employees were asked if the managers provided an open-door system for them to talk. All three employees stated that they felt that the managers rarely or never offered an open door. Employee 2 noted that the managers were always busy monitoring the floor and ensuring a good workflow, so they rarely had time to speak to employees. Employee 3 stated that she felt the managers were not people you could open to as they were judgemental. However, one manager showed that he cared, but he left soon after she started working there as he did not have a good relationship with the other managers. These answers show how employees do not feel comfortable enough to talk to managers, or they do not feel welcomed by the managers to talk to about what is going on in their life.

Q17. Does the company or managers aid/aided in stress management and mental health problems, if any?

Like the previous question, all three employees stated that they do not feel like the company or managers do anything to help in stress management and mental health problems. Employee 2 noted that the managers would lend a hand on the work floor if things got busy but rarely observed employees' mental health. Employee 3 also stated that the company or managers do not provide any aid in stress management as, for them, it is only essential that you show up and do your job.

Q18. How does/did the company aid in stress management, if any?

When asked how the company aided in stress management, all three employees mentioned that the company provides a minimum amount of help. Employee 1 stated that the company directs you to other sources, such as the Richmond foundation. However, the company itself does not do anything. Employee 2 also noted that the company does not provide any stress management. However, the employees themselves took the initiative to plan events or parties to unwind, but they had to keep it hidden as the upper management did not approve of it. Employee 3 also stated that the company did not help, but a supervisor used to cheer her up when she was having a dreadful day.

Q19. Would you take part if the company would include more mental health resources?

In this question, the employees were asked if they would be interested in taking part in mental health resources provided by the company. Employee 1 said that he would consider attending. Employee 2 stated that if the events or workshop would be beneficial, he would gladly participate. Employee 3 also stated that she would attend if the resources helped improve her mental health. Therefore, the answers show that all the employees would consider following mental health sources organized by the company if they were given the opportunity.

Q20. Do you think the Covid-19 pandemic has affected your mental health and stress levels during working period?

The participants were asked how the Covid-19 pandemic has affected their mental health and stress levels during the working period since it has been a critical issue for the past three years. Employee 1 said that Covid-19 had increased his stress levels and mental health issues during the working period. Employee 2 also stated that the pandemic affected

his mental health and stress levels during his shift. People started ordering more takeaway, and there was more stress in ensuring that people got delivered the right things. Employee 3 stated that she had stopped working in fast food before Coronavirus; however, it still affected her at her current job.

Q21. Could you describe your reasoning behind the answer you gave in the question before?

The last question the participants were asked was to explain the answer they gave before. Employee 1, who said his stress levels had increased at work during the pandemic, said this was because he felt it was harder to relax and he had more minor things to look forward to. Employee 2, who also said Coronavirus had affected his mental health and stress levels, stated that he felt this way as there was an increase in the workflow as more people were ordering food online. There was more pressure to finish orders in a brief period so the delivery drivers would not have to wait long to pick up the order to deliver it to the customers. Moreover, the third employee stated that Coronavirus had increased her mental health issues. She was scared to encounter someone who had the virus and would make her family members sick as they suffer from asthma.

After reviewing each answer to the questions, the interviewer noticed that there were similarities between the responses given by the three employees, even though the employees have worked in three different fast-food establishments. These respondents' answers have shown that these three individuals with similar demographic characteristics all have had their mental health impacted by the fast-food industry.

4.4 Results of the Fast-Food Managers Interviews

As stated previously, the interviews with the fast-food managers contained fifteen questions. To keep the anonymity of the participants, they will be referred to as Manager 1, Manager 2, and Manager 3. The interviews took place face-to-face, by email and by messenger. The three participants were all Maltese females between 21 and 27 years old. The fourth and fifth questions asked where the participants worked in the fast-food industry and how long they have been a manager. Two of the managers worked at McDonald's, and one of the managers worked at KFC and had been working as a manager at their respective outlet between 1 and 3 years. The analysis will show each question, and the managers' answers will be analysed.

Q6. How do/did you feel working at this company?

Manager 1: It was a great experience

Manager 2: I am content at KFC as I make good money and have friends working with me

Manager 3: Satisfied, ambitious, motivated to develop further

As can be seen from the manager's responses, when asked how they feel working in fast-food they all gave positive feedback that it was a wonderful experience, and they are motivated because of work.

Q7. As a manager do you feel the company participates in helping employees with mental health problems?

When asked this question, Manager 1 responded that they feel like the company does help but should do more. The second response stated that the company does not do anything to help with mental health problems and the third response only stated that yes, the company does help. However, if the managers answers are compared to the ones the employees had given, one can see that from the employee's perspective, the companies they work for do not help with their mental health, whilst the managers are stating that the company does help.

Q8. Does the company organise activities which can help to increase workplace wellbeing?

All the managers stated that the company organises no activities. Manager 2 exclaimed that they used to host birthday parties every few months for employees to increase morale; however, with Covid 19, they no longer took place.

Q9. Does the company provide employees the ability to have a good work/life balance?

Manager 1: The company does provide a great work/life balance, giving employees both time to work and time to enjoy any activities they participate in.

Manager 2: Employees are required to work a lot of hours due to being always busy and the lack of staff. This can affect their personal life

Manager 3: Yes, they do

As seen above, Managers 1 and 3 agree that the companies provide a decent work/life balance, giving employees both time to work and enjoy activities. However, manager 2 stated that employees must work long hours due to a lack of staff as the outlet is always busy. She noted that this could affect the employee's personal life. Moreover, most employees who took part in the survey and interviews agree with Manager 2 as they feel overworked and do not have time to do anything outside of work.

Q10. Do you believe the company helps people who are suffering with mental health issues?

All three respondents replied that the company does do something; however, Manager 2 said that the company could do more as there is no system to help employees with mental health issues. Manager 3 stated that they try to help their employees as an individual restaurant, but she is not aware of what the company does to help. When comparing these replies to the employees, both admit that the companies do help individuals with mental health issues.

Q11. Are there any initiatives you take or took to help employees with their mental health?

All three managers stated that they try to help employees with their mental health issues by talking to them if they seem off or come to speak with them. However, as seen from the employee interviews and survey analysis, they do not feel comfortable opening up to their managers or do not feel like the managers will help them.

12. Do you believe an open-door system benefits your employees? And why?

All three managers deem that an open-door system is beneficial in helping the employees. An open-door system helps create a relationship between the managers and the workers as employees are more willing to open up to the managers. On the contrary, the employee results showed that employees felt that their managers did not provide an open-door system.

13. Have you seen a high number of staff turnover whilst working with the company? If so, why?

Manager 1 and Manager 2 stated that they had seen a high staff turnover while working in fast-food. Manager 1 explained that people leave as the job gets tiring, and due to Covid, people resigned. Manager 2 said that there was high staff turnover as the company does not treat their employees right and they must work long hours without any promotions available. Manager 3 stated no that she does not believe there was high staff turnover during the period she has worked there. However, according to Garcia-Martinez (2014), in the hospitality industry, employee turnover is high due to people only viewing it as a short-term career or a lack of self-efficiency to stay committed to the organisation.

Q14. In your opinion, what can the company do to improve workplace wellbeing?

The managers stated that for the company to improve workplace wellbeing, they could try and increase seminars, regular wellbeing activities and workshops on wellbeing. Manager 2 suggested that the company could try to arrange staff hours, give more promotions, and seek to provide positive comments on staff performance. According to mentalhealth.gov (2020), the company must offer employees professional help and time to do their tasks to create a healthy workspace. Moreover, as seen in the employees' responses, most of the employees would be interested in participating in any activities the company organises to improve their wellbeing.

Q15. Do you think the Coronavirus effected employees mental state whilst at work? If so, how?

All the managers confirmed that they thought Coronavirus affected the mental state of the employees as they were more scared to catch the virus and felt less motivated and more tired since all they did was go from home to work and back.

4.5 Comparison and Discussion of the Fast-Food Survey and Interviews

Since most employee survey respondents were male, the researcher decided that the two interviewees should be male. In addition, there was one female interviewee to represent the females working in the fast-food industry. Moreover, the respondents for the employee interviews were all aged 21, which is the same as most of the survey respondents. Moreover, two out of the three fast-food employee respondents were Maltese, representing 62% of respondents who took the questionnaire. One interviewee was half-Maltese and half-Italian, which means that 10% of Italians took part in the survey. Therefore, the employee interview respondents represent most individuals who took part in the surveys. The manager interview respondents were all female, Maltese, aged 21, 22 and 27.

In addition to this, the participants who took part in the fast-food worker interviews worked in McDonald's and KFC, which were the most common workplaces in the surveys. There was also a respondent who worked at Pizza Hut, one of the least popular working places in the survey. Pizza Hut is not always classified as fast-food since customers must wait for their food to be prepared for a more extended period. On the other hand, the managers that participated in the interviews worked at KFC and McDonald's.

When comparing the longevity of the employees working in fast-food, it was noticed that in the interviews and the surveys, the majority was less than five years. The managers' interviews also showed that they had worked as managers for less than three years. As stated in the literature review by Rosenbaum (2019), individuals see employment in the fast-food industry as only casual or part-time, with no plan of pursuing a long-term career in the industry. This explanation might explain why so many individuals have worked in the fast-food industry for less than five years. This answer can be further backed up by the managers' answers, as two of the managers said they had seen high employee turnover whilst working in fast-food. According to Rosenbaum (2019), people are not working long in the hospitality industry, leading to a high turnover rate and an absence of mechanisms to help people cope with stress.

When the employees were asked how working in a fast-paced industry feels, 52% of the survey respondents expressed negative feelings such as anxiety, stress, and panic. In addition, in the employee interviews, respondents said they feel stressed or pressured, which McCauley (2016) states are a familiar feeling to feel under high pressure whilst working in the hospitality industry. However, when the managers were asked how they felt working in the fast-food industry, they stated they felt satisfied and that it was a wonderful experience. The contrast of the answers from the managers and the employees shows the distinct perspective of that of a manager and that of the employee working in fast-food.

In the following question, the survey respondents rated their well-being, Work-Life balance, stress levels, anxiety, and physical health by using the Likert scale. According to the survey, 58.9% of the respondents chose neutral, bad, or terrible regarding their well-being. Even all three employee interviewees regarded that their well-being has been negative since they started working in the fast-food industry. Most of the employees claimed that their work-life balance was suffering or neutral. However, the two managers that worked at McDonald's stated that the company offers its employees a good work-life balance, whilst the manager at KFC admitted that the employees need to work overtime due to the lack of staff. According to Zhang (2019), fast-food employees are expected to work overtime. Therefore, their work-life balance is not being respected.

When comparing the employees' answers to stress and anxiety in both the survey and the interviews there was a high response that the constant pressures that the employees felt has led to an increase of mental health issues whilst working in the fast-food industry. Moreover, when comparing the physical health of the interviewees and the survey respondents it showed that most employees are in good or excellent shape however the one respondent of the interview claimed he had bad physical health when working in the fast-food industry which represent the 18.6% of people who took part in the survey who also said their physical health was bad or terrible.

In the following question, the employees were asked if they feel like they can convey their genuine emotions in the workplace. The three employee interviewees all responded that they do not feel like they can express their feelings at work; however, 42% of the survey participants said they can, 20% said, and only 38% said they could not show their genuine emotions. According to Wu, X and An-Jīn (2017), if the employees cannot convey their real feelings, it can lead people to job burnout and emotional exhaustion. Therefore, the next question asked the interviewees if they think it is essential to be able to convey their genuine emotions at work, and all of them agreed that it is necessary as it is bad to bottle up feelings. In the survey, the participants also claimed to feel less energetic at work if they hide their emotions.

In the following question, the employees were asked to rate their relationships between them and the company, managers, and co-workers. As can be seen from the survey results and the interviews, the employees felt they had the best relationship with their co-workers and the company. According to the results, the relationship between the employee and the manager is the one which is suffering the most. Therefore, it was not surprising that when the employees were asked if the managers provided an open door to talk to, they said that the managers do not offer an open door or do not feel comfortable opening up to managers. Even the employee interview participants stated that they do not feel like the managers provide an open door for them to talk. According to Stavroula Leka and Aditya Jain (2020), the employees need to be able to speak to their managers to promote the well-being and safety of all employees. In the interviews, all three managers stated that they provide an open-door system for their employees to talk to them when needed. However, this may vary from one manager to another as they all have different systems in place, which might explain why most employees feel they cannot talk to their managers.

Moreover, when the survey participants were asked whether the company or managers do anything to help them with stress management and mental health problems, 68% said they do not provide any help. Even the three employee interviewers said that they had not received any support. Therefore, when asked how the company helps in aiding stress management, only thirty-three people responded that the company offers suggestion boxes or talks to the Richmond Foundation. The interviewees with both the managers and the employees confirmed this statement as they said the company itself does not help but provides sources such as the Richmond foundation. When the interviewees and survey participants were asked if they could take part in mental health resources that the company would set up, the interviewees all said they would consider it. 81% of survey participants said they would go or think about it. Moreover, the managers suggested that the companies can try to create seminars, regular wellbeing activities and workshops on wellbeing to improve the employee's mental health.

The researcher asked the last two questions about the Coronavirus pandemic and how it affected the workers within the fast-food industry. 73% of the survey participants stated that it affected their mental health and stress levels, whilst all three participants of the interview answered that it had affected them. When asked how it affected them, the two sets of respondents replied that they were more scared to go to work due to the chances of getting the virus, and the stress increased due to the increase in deliveries. The managers' answer reflects the employees' feelings as the managers admitted to having seen Covid-19 take a mental toll on the employees. Moreover, since the country was in lockdown, the fast-food outlets were operated by delivery or drive through. Schnitzer (2020) stated that some of the individuals who used the drive-through services did not respect the mask rule and were at risk of spreading the disease, which increased the stress on employees as they are putting their lives at risk and even the lives of their loved ones. However, a few survey respondents said that the virus was a hoax or did not affect them personally.

4.6 Summary of Key Results

As can be seen in Chapter 4: Results, Analysis and Discussion, the author has done several types of data collection to prove that the mental health of the Maltese fast-food workers has been overlooked in the past years. The author also managed to get different perspectives on the topic by using research triangulation. The results from the interviews and survey show that the fast-food employees and managers do not agree completely on mental health and how the employees feel treated in the company. Moreover, the employee interviews and questionnaires showed that most of the employees who worked in the fast-

food industry had faced some difficulty, either stress, anxiety, issues with well-being and work-life balance, and many negative emotions. Most of the employees who took part in the research stated that they did not find help from the company or managers, which leaves the employees to suffer in silence and bottle up their emotions. If further research is done regarding this topic, it can help change these individuals' lives and improve the workplace of the current and future employees.

5.0 Final Arguments

5.1 Conclusions

The methodology and study presented were able to achieve the main aims of this research, focusing on the mental health of the fast-food workers in Malta and comparing them with the research found from abroad. The researcher also analysed whether help was given to the employees at the time of the survey and interviews took place. The previously mentioned objectives of this study were:

1. To figure out how working in the fast-food industry affects the mental health of individuals.
2. To see how employees cope with their mental health.
3. To clarify if the management or companies of the fast-food workers do anything to help employees deal with their mental health.
4. To highlight the importance of mental health in the hospitality industry.

The researcher met all the above-listed objectives successfully through the data collection. All participants, both the fast-food employees and the managers, helped provide insight regarding all the goals, which was helpful to conclude the study. Through the survey and interviews with the fast-food employees, the following components were identified:

1. How employees feel working in a fast-paced industry.

2. An insight into employee well-being, work-life balance, stress and anxiety levels and physical health
3. Coping mechanisms of fast-food workers.
4. The mental health and stress management help the companies offer their employees.
5. The effects of Covid-19 on the mental health of employees.

Through the interview with the fast-food managers, the researcher made the following comparisons:

1. Differences in how they view work.
2. The help offered by management.
3. The importance of mental health.
4. Improvement of workplace well-being.
5. The impact of Covid-19 on mental health

Therefore, the research question, " The pressures of working in the Maltese Fast-food Industry and its effect on the workers' mental health," has been answered with the help of the primary data collected. By comparing the interviews with managers with the employee feedback taken from the survey and interviews, the researcher found that the managers believe that the employees have better working conditions than what the employees have discussed. Moreover, the researcher noticed that the employees gave more negative feedback on their emotions and mental health than the managers.

The research showed that both the employees and the managers agreed that more initiatives should be taken to combat mental health-related problems at work as both admitted that the companies do not provide any help. In addition, from the employees' feedback in the questionnaires and interviews, it can also be analysed that job-related mental health issues also affect the employees' personal lives. Through this research, it transpired that the employees rely on sleep, alcohol, cigarettes, and illegal substances to cope with it since no help is being provided.

5.2 Recommendations

This chapter contains two recommendations, one for future research and one for using the research gathered to improve the fast-food industry. Both recommendations are based on the research executed.

5.2.1 Future Research

As a recommendation for future studies regarding mental health in the hospitality industry, the researcher would be interested in creating a more extensive study that focuses on how Covid-19 has impacted the workers' mental health and how they are still feeling the social effects left behind by the virus. The highlight would include the current information found about how Coronavirus has impacted employees' mental health in this research, the research found in the future study on how people regard Covid-19 and a comparison of both.

5.2.2 Industry Recommendations

Regarding the mental health of the fast-food workers in Malta, the researcher recommends that the companies create more initiatives to help their employees with their mental health and stress management. Such as having yoga classes, counselling sessions, one-to-one talks with the employees or meditation classes. These initiatives would help the employees to be able to confide in someone if they are going through something and uplift their spirits. These initiatives will also help reduce employee turnover as the employees are more engaged in their workplace. Even if just one company takes the initiative, it will help increase employees' morale and bring in more workers than the competitors.

This research discovered that the mental health of the fast-food workers is not one of the companies' priorities, which in turn leads employees to work in the fast-food for only a brief period. Fred Rogers (2013) stated, "Anything that's human is mentionable, and anything that is mentionable can be more manageable. When we can talk about our feelings, they become less overwhelming, less upsetting, and less scary." Therefore, the companies must provide a safe environment for employees to talk about their emotions to manage them better and give a better service to the customers as they will be genuinely happy to serve them.

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7.0 Appendices

7.1 Appendix 1: Template of the Survey

Mental Health in Maltese hospitality workers; focusing on fast food workers survey

Hello, my name is Kelly-Ann Bugeja and I am currently studying bachelors in International Hospitality Management (Hons) at the Institute of Tourism studies.

I am conducting a research to help explore how the mental health in Maltese hospitality workers, focusing on fast food workers is effected in the day-to-day operations of the business. The data collected will be kept confidential, anonymous and only used for academic purposes.

Kindly note that you have the right to withdraw your participation at any stage.

* Required

1. What is your gender? *

- ☐ Woman
- ☐ Man
- ☐ Non-binary
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Other

2. What is your age? *

- ☐ 16-25
- ☐ 26-35
- ☐ 36-45
- ☐ 46-55
- ☐ 56-65
- ☐ 66+

3. What is your nationality? *

4. In which fast food restaurant do/did you work for in Malta? (ex. Burger King, KFC, McDonald's, Hugo's burgers, CFC, other) *

5. How long have you been working/ have worked in the fast-food industry? *

- ☐ less than 1 year
- ☐ between 1 and 5 years
- ☐ between 6 to 10 years
- ☐ between 11 to 15 years
- ☐ over 16 years

6. How does/did it feel like working in a fast-paced industry? *

7. On a 1 to 5 scale how would you rate your below feelings working in the fast food industry? (1 being lowest and 5 being highest) *

	terrible	bad	neutral	good	excellent
Well-being	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Work-life balance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Stress levels	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Anxiety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Physical health	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. How do/did you unwind after a day of work? *

- ☐ Grab a drink
- ☐ Sleep
- ☐ Socialise
- ☐ Illegal substances
- ☐ Smoking cigarettes
- ☐ Other

9. Whilst working in a fast food restaurant do/did you feel like you are able to convey your true emotions? (ex. Happy, sad, stressed) *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

10. Do you think that hiding your true emotions at work makes you feel less energetic? *

11. How would you rate the relationship that you have/had with the company, managers and coworkers? (1 is the worst and 5 is the best) *

	terrible	bad	neutral	good	excellent
Company	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Managers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Coworkers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. Do/did the managers provide an open door when you need someone to talk to? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ I do not feel comfortable opening up to managers

13. Does the company or managers aid/aided in stress management and mental health problems? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

14. How does/did the company aid in stress management? *

15. Would you take part if the company would include more mental health resources (such as mindfulness classes, meditation, stress reduction workshops, etc.) *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

16. Do you think the Covid-19 pandemic has effected your mental health and stress levels during working period? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

17. Could you define your reasoning behind the answer you gave in the question before?

7.2 Appendix 2: Survey Summary

Mental Health in Maltese hospitality workers; focusing on fast food workers survey

102

Responses

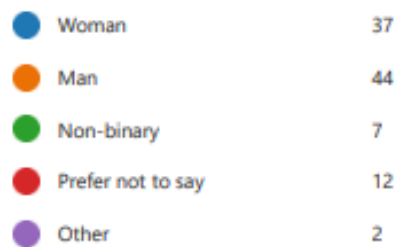
02:48

Average time to complete

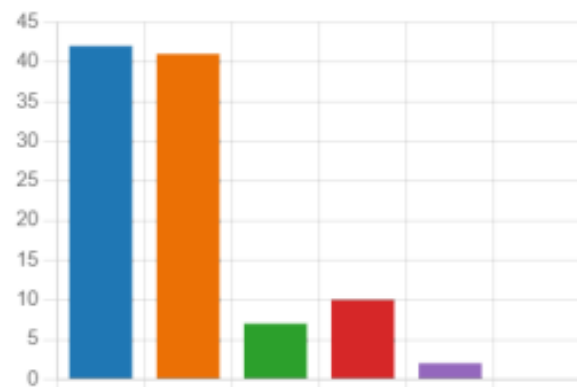
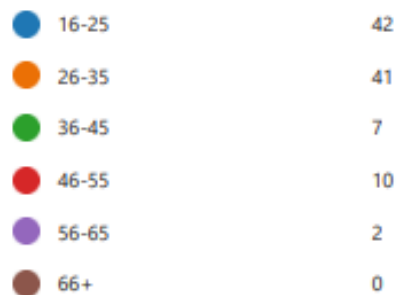
Closed

Status

1. What is your gender? (0 point)



2. What is your age? (0 point)



3. What is your nationality? (0 point)

102
Responses

Latest Responses

"Russian"

"Italian"

"Maltese"

4. In which fast food restaurant do/did you work for in Malta? (ex. Burger King, KFC, McDonald's, Hugo's burgers, CFC, other)

(0 point)

102
Responses

Latest Responses

"Mcd"

"Mcd"

"BK"

5. How long have you been working/ have worked in the fast-food industry? (0 point)



6. How does/did it feel like working in a fast-paced industry? (0 point)

102
Responses

Latest Responses

"Good"

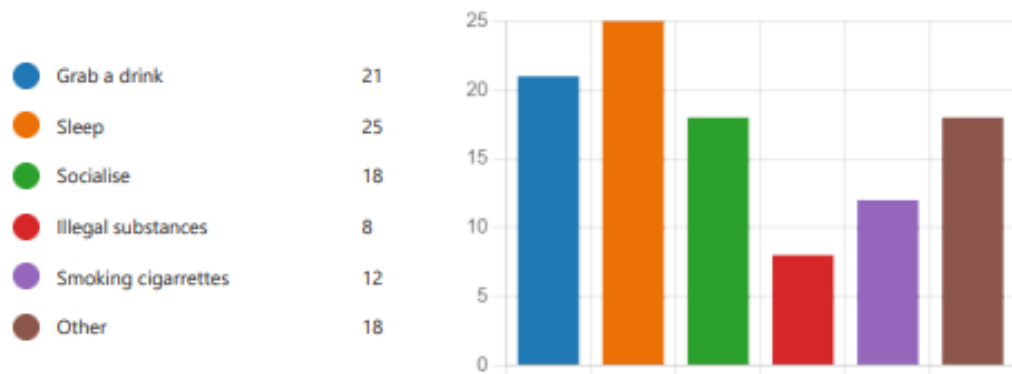
"Neutral"

"Amazing "

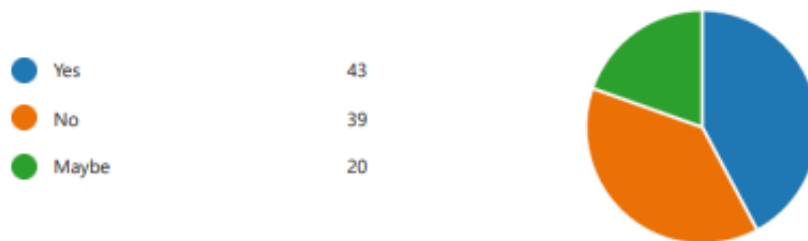
7. On a 1 to 5 scale how would you rate your below feelings working in the fast food (0 point)
industry? (1 being lowest and 5 being highest)



8. How do/did you unwind after a day of work? (0 point)



9. Whilst working in a fast food restaurant do/did you feel like you are able to convey your true emotions? (ex. Happy, sad, stressed) (0 point)



10. Do you think that hiding your true emotions at work makes you feel less energetic? (0 point)

57
Responses

Latest Responses
"Yes"

11. How would you rate the relationship that you have/had with the company, managers and coworkers? (1 is the worst and 5 is the best) (0 point)



12. Do/did the managers provide an open door when you need someone to talk to? (0 point)



13. Does the company or managers aid/aided in stress management and mental health problems? (0 point)

Yes	18
No	69
Maybe	15



14. How does/did the company aid in stress management? (0 point)

33
Responses

Latest Responses
"By having a suggestion box"
"They were always there when needed"

15. Would you take part if the company would include more mental health resources (such as mindfulness classes, meditation, stress reduction workshops, etc.) (0 point)

Yes	53
No	19
Maybe	30



16. Do you think the Covid-19 pandemic has effected your mental health and stress levels during working period? (0 point)

Yes	61
No	28
Maybe	13



17. Could you define your reasoning behind the answer you gave in the question before? (0 point)

91
Responses

Latest Responses
"I was laid off"
"It did and it didnt"
"It didnt affect me at all"

7.3 Appendix 3: Sample of the Questionnaires

7.3.1 Filled in Survey 1

Review: Mental Health in Maltese hospitality workers; focusing on fast food workers survey

Respondent		01:48
5	Anonymous	Time to complete
1. What is your gender? *		Score
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Woman		
<input type="radio"/> Man		
<input type="radio"/> Non-binary		
<input type="radio"/> Prefer not to say		
<input type="radio"/> Other		
2. What is your age? *		Score
<input type="radio"/> 16-25		
<input checked="" type="radio"/> 26-35		
<input type="radio"/> 36-45		
<input type="radio"/> 46-55		
<input type="radio"/> 56-65		
<input type="radio"/> 66+		
3. What is your nationality? *		Score
<input type="text" value="Maltese"/>		
4. In which fast food restaurant do/did you work for in Malta? (ex. Burger King, KFC, McDonald's, Hugo's burgers, CFC, other) *		Score
<input type="text" value="Kfc"/>		
5. How long have you been working/ have worked in the fast-food industry? *		Score
<input type="radio"/> less than 1 year		
<input checked="" type="radio"/> between 1 and 5 years		
<input type="radio"/> between 6 to 10 years		
<input type="radio"/> between 11 to 15 years		
<input type="radio"/> over 16 years		

Score

6. How does/did it feel like working in a fast-paced industry? *

Very good as the day passes by faster

7. On a 1 to 5 scale how would you rate your below feelings working in the fast food industry? (1 being lowest and 5 being highest) *

Score

	terrible	bad	neutral	good	excellent
Well-being	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Work-life balance	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Stress levels	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Anxiety	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Physical health	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. How do/did you unwind after a day of work? *

Score

- ☐ Grab a drink
- ☒ Sleep
- ☐ Socialise
- ☐ Illegal substances
- ☐ Smoking cigarettes
- ☐ Other

9. Whilst working in a fast food restaurant do/did you feel like you are able to convey your true emotions? (ex. Happy, sad, stressed) *

Score

- ☐ Yes
- ☒ No
- ☐ Maybe

10. Do you think that hiding your true emotions at work makes you feel less energetic? *

Score

Yes as I have to put up a mask to work

11. How would you rate the relationship that you have/had with the company, managers and coworkers? (1 is the worst and 5 is the best) *

Score

	terrible	bad	neutral	good	excellent
Company	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Managers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Coworkers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Score

12. Do/did the managers provide an open door when you need someone to talk to? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☒ No
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ I do not feel comfortable opening up to managers

13. Does the company or managers aid/aided in stress management and mental health problems? *

Score

- ☐ Yes
- ☒ No
- ☐ Maybe

14. Would you take part if the company would include more mental health resources (such as mindfulness classes, meditation, stress reduction workshops, etc.) *

Score

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

15. Do you think the Covid-19 pandemic has effected your mental health and stress levels during working period? *

Score

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

16. Could you define your reasoning behind the answer you gave in the question before?

Score

More scared to get sick

7.3.2 Filled in Survey 2

Review: Mental Health in Maltese hospitality workers; focusing on fast food workers survey

Respondent		03:09
13	Anonymous	Time to complete
1. What is your gender? *		Score
<input type="radio"/> Woman		
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Man		
<input type="radio"/> Non-binary		
<input type="radio"/> Prefer not to say		
<input type="radio"/> Other		
2. What is your age? *		Score
<input type="radio"/> 16-25		
<input checked="" type="radio"/> 26-35		
<input type="radio"/> 36-45		
<input type="radio"/> 46-55		
<input type="radio"/> 56-65		
<input type="radio"/> 66+		
3. What is your nationality? *		Score
<input type="text" value="Filipino"/>		
4. In which fast food restaurant do/did you work for in Malta? (ex. Burger King, KFC, McDonald's, Hugo's burgers, CFC, other) *		Score
<input type="text" value="Southern fried chicken"/>		
5. How long have you been working/ have worked in the fast-food industry? *		Score
<input type="radio"/> less than 1 year		
<input checked="" type="radio"/> between 1 and 5 years		
<input type="radio"/> between 6 to 10 years		
<input type="radio"/> between 11 to 15 years		
<input type="radio"/> over 16 years		
		Score

6. How does/did it feel like working in a fast-paced industry? *

Too busy but need the money

7. On a 1 to 5 scale how would you rate your below feelings working in the fast food industry? (1 being lowest and 5 being highest) *

Score

	terrible	bad	neutral	good	excellent
Well-being	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Work-life balance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Stress levels	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Anxiety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Physical health	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. How do/did you unwind after a day of work? *

Score

- ☒ Grab a drink
- ☐ Sleep
- ☐ Socialise
- ☐ Illegal substances
- ☐ Smoking cigarettes
- ☐ Other

9. Whilst working in a fast food restaurant do/did you feel like you are able to convey your true emotions? (ex. Happy, sad, stressed) *

Score

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

10. How would you rate the relationship that you have/had with the company, managers and coworkers? (1 is the worst and 5 is the best) *

Score

	terrible	bad	neutral	good	excellent
Company	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Managers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Coworkers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Score

11. Do/did the managers provide an open door when you need someone to talk to? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☒ I do not feel comfortable opening up to managers

12. Does the company or managers aid/aided in stress management and mental health problems? *

Score

- ☐ Yes
- ☒ No
- ☐ Maybe

13. Would you take part if the company would include more mental health resources (such as mindfulness classes, meditation, stress reduction workshops, etc.) *

Score

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☒ Maybe

14. Do you think the Covid-19 pandemic has effected your mental health and stress levels during working period? *

Score

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

15. Could you define your reasoning behind the answer you gave in the question before?

Score

If I sick, I can't make money

7.3.3 Filled in Survey 3

Review: Mental Health in Maltese hospitality workers; focusing on fast food workers survey

Respondent	Time to complete
28 Anonymous	03:55

1. What is your gender? *	Score
<input type="radio"/> Woman	
<input type="radio"/> Man	
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Non-binary	
<input type="radio"/> Prefer not to say	
<input type="radio"/> Other	

2. What is your age? *	Score
<input checked="" type="radio"/> 16-25	
<input type="radio"/> 26-35	
<input type="radio"/> 36-45	
<input type="radio"/> 46-55	
<input type="radio"/> 56-65	
<input type="radio"/> 66+	

3. What is your nationality? *	Score
<input type="text" value="Maltese"/>	

4. In which fast food restaurant do/did you work for in Malta? (ex. Burger King, KFC, McDonald's, Hugo's burgers, CFC, other) *	Score
<input type="text" value="Cfc"/>	

5. How long have you been working/ have worked in the fast-food industry? *	Score
<input checked="" type="radio"/> less than 1 year	
<input type="radio"/> between 1 and 5 years	
<input type="radio"/> between 6 to 10 years	
<input type="radio"/> between 11 to 15 years	
<input type="radio"/> over 16 years	

	Score
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6. How does/did it feel like working in a fast-paced industry? *

Too frantic

7. On a 1 to 5 scale how would you rate your below feelings working in the fast food industry? (1 being lowest and 5 being highest) *

Score

	terrible	bad	neutral	good	excellent
Well-being	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Work-life balance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Stress levels	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Anxiety	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Physical health	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. How do/did you unwind after a day of work? *

Score

- ☐ Grab a drink
- ☐ Sleep
- ☐ Socialise
- ☐ Illegal substances
- ☒ Smoking cigarettes
- ☐ Other

9. Whilst working in a fast food restaurant do/did you feel like you are able to convey your true emotions? (ex. Happy, sad, stressed) *

Score

- ☐ Yes
- ☒ No
- ☐ Maybe

10. Do you think that hiding your true emotions at work makes you feel less energetic? *

Score

Yes

11. How would you rate the relationship that you have/had with the company, managers and coworkers? (1 is the worst and 5 is the best) *

Score

	terrible	bad	neutral	good	excellent
Company	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Managers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Coworkers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Score

12. Do/did the managers provide an open door when you need someone to talk to? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☒ Sometimes
- ☐ I do not feel comfortable opening up to managers

13. Does the company or managers aid/aided in stress management and mental health problems? *

Score

- ☐ Yes
- ☒ No
- ☐ Maybe

14. Would you take part if the company would include more mental health resources (such as mindfulness classes, meditation, stress reduction workshops, etc.) *

Score

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

15. Do you think the Covid-19 pandemic has effected your mental health and stress levels during working period? *

Score

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

16. Could you define your reasoning behind the answer you gave in the question before?

Score

Has been harder to go to work due to anxiety

7.4 Appendix 4: Transcripts of the Interviews with Fast-Food Employees

7.4.1 Transcript of the Interview with Fast-Food Employee 1

Question 1. What is your age?

Answer: I am 21 years old

Question 2. What is your gender?

Answer: I am female

Question 3. What is your nationality?

Answer: I am half Maltese and half Italian

Question 4. In which fast-food restaurant do/did you work in?

Answer: I used to work at KFC Mosta and after at pizza hut

Question 5. How long have you been working/ have worked in the fast-food industry?

Answer: I worked for around a year in fast food

Question 6. How does/ did it feel like working in a fast-paced industry?

Answer: I enjoyed the busy environment, however sometimes the pressure put on you is too much.

Question 7. How has/had your work life balance been while working in the hospitality industry?

Answer: Whilst working in the fast-food industry my social life balance suffered a bit as I was working between 50 to 60 hours a week and most of them evening shifts so I was unable to meet my friends or do much during the day

Question 8. How has/had your wellbeing been while working in the fast-food industry?

Answer: My wellbeing suffered a bit as well as I was not eating healthy food as I often ate from there whilst working which affected my self-esteem and I always felt excluded from things that my friends were doing which took a toll on my mental health.

Question 9. How has/had your stress levels been while working in the fast-food industry?

Answer: My stress levels were ok, but sometimes I was worrying if I was doing things correctly

Question 10. How has your anxiety been while working in the fast-food industry?

Answer: Sometimes I am anxious going to work as I would not be looking forward to the long shifts, especially after having a bad day at work

Question 11. How has your physical health been while working in the hospitality industry?

Answer: My physical health for the majority was ok whilst working at the fast-food company but sometimes after shifts I could not feel my legs as we must wear safety shoes which were uncomfortable and heavy.

Question 12. How do/did you unwind after a day of work?

Answer: After a day at work, I usually walk it home and go to sleep or talk a bit with my family

Question 13. Whilst working in a fast-food restaurant do/did you feel like you are able to convey your true emotions? (ex. Happy, sad, stressed)

Answer: Unfortunately, I did not feel like I was able to convey my true emotions as we are always to put a fake smile when greeting people and hide our emotions. There was also a manager who told me every time I hear you laughing, I will give you a task to do, which would defeat my good mood.

Question 14. Do you think it is important to convey your true emotions while at work? And why?

Answer: it is important to convey your true emotions whilst at work to a certain limit. If you are greeting guests, you need to put a happy face to improve their experience but sometimes you need to let your feelings out as it is not good to build up emotions.

Question 15. How would you describe the relationship between you and the company, co-workers, and managers?

Answer: With the company I never had problems, however I had some issues with a few of the managers as they did not treat me like a valued employee. I had an amazing relationship with my co-workers when I was at KFC as they were all people you can rely on.

Question 16. Do the managers provide an open door when you need someone to talk to?

Answer: The managers were not really someone you can talk to about these issues as they were judgemental. During my job at KFC there was only one manager who was ok to talk to, but he left early on to me starting there as he did not get along with the other managers

Question 17. Does the company or managers aid/aided in stress management and mental health problems, if any?

Answer: I feel like the company or managers do not aid in stress management as for them it is only important that you show up and do your job

Question 18. How does/did the company aid in stress management, if any?

Answer: The company did not help, however there was a supervisor who always cheered me up on a bad day

Question 19. Would you take part if the company would include more mental health resources (such as mindfulness classes, meditation, stress reduction workshops, etc.)

Answer: I would take part if they included resources to improve my mental health

Question 20. Do you think the Covid-19 pandemic has affected your mental health and stress levels during working period?

Answer: I stopped working at fast food before coronavirus started however during my current job it has affected me

Question 21. Could you describe your reasoning behind the answer you gave in the question before?

Answer: It affected me as I was more scared to go to work in case I must quarantine or get my family sick as some members of the family suffer from asthma

7.4.2 Transcript of the Interview with Fast-Food Employee 2

Question 1. What is your age?

Answer: I am 21 years old

Question 2. What is your gender?

Answer: I am Male

Question 3. What is your nationality?

Answer: I am Maltese

Question 4. In which fast-food restaurant do/did you work in?

Answer: I work at KFC Pama

Question 5. How long have you been working/ have worked in the fast-food industry?

Answer: I have been working at the company for 4 years

Question 6. How does/ did it feel like working in a fast-paced industry?

Answer: It can be very stressful

Question 7. How has/had your work life balance been while working in the hospitality industry?

Answer: I find it difficult to balance school, work, and other activities

Question 8. How has/had your wellbeing been while working in the fast-food industry?

Answer: I have had an increase of stress and anxiety

Question 9. How has/had your stress levels been while working in the fast-food industry?

Answer: Increased stress since it is hard to balance school and work, also because it is hard to work in such a fast-paced environment.

Question 10. How has your anxiety been while working in the fast-food industry?

Answer: My anxiety has increased.

Question 11. How has your physical health been while working in the hospitality industry?

Answer: About the same as it was before

Question 12. How do/did you unwind after a day of work?

Answer: Cycling, gaming, and other hobbies.

Question 13. Whilst working in a fast-food restaurant do/did you feel like you are able to convey your true emotions? (ex. Happy, sad, stressed)

Answer: Not really as you must stay professional and not everyone is equally understanding in the work environment

Question 14. Do you think it is important to convey your true emotions while at work? And why?

Answer: It is important to stay professional, but workers should be able to talk about issues with other co-workers and the work environment should help calm workers and keep workers happy

Question 15. How would you describe the relationship between you and the company, co-workers, and managers?

Answer: A little awkward. Not a lot of common ground and not all the managers are very understanding

16. Do the managers provide an open door when you need someone to talk to?

Answer: I feel that the managers rarely provide an open door to be able to talk to them.

17. Does the company or managers aid/aided in stress management and mental health problems, if any?

Answer: Not really

18. How does/did the company aid in stress management, if any?

Answer: They mention good sources such as Richmond foundation, but they themselves do not do much

19. Would you take part if the company would include more mental health resources (such as mindfulness classes, meditation, stress reduction workshops, etc.)

Answer: Maybe depends on availability

20. Do you think the Covid-19 pandemic has affected your mental health and stress levels during working period?

Answer: Yes, increased

21. Could you describe your reasoning behind the answer you gave in the question before?

Answer: As Covid puts you in an environment where it is harder to feel relaxed and you have less things to look forward to. The pandemic has generally increased my stress

7.4.3 Transcript of the Interview with Fast-Food Employee 3

Question 1. What is your age?

Answer: I am 21 years old.

Question 2. What is your gender?

Answer: I am Male.

Question 3. What is your nationality?

Answer: I am Maltese.

Question 4. In which fast-food restaurant do/did you work in?

Answer: I used to work at McDonald's Gharghur

Question 5. How long have you been working/ have worked in the fast-food industry?

Answer: I only spent a few months around 3-4 months in total.

Question 6. How does/ did it feel like working in a fast-paced industry?

Answer: It was extremely stressful especially during feasts or weekends as most people would opt to eat out. Typically, meals had to be out in less than a few minutes (ideally 90 seconds) however this deadline was impossible, especially with larger orders.

Question 7. How has/had your work life balance been while working in the hospitality industry?

Answer: Being a student and trying to do a part-time job is never easy and for obvious reasons one would struggle to find a balance however in the few months I spent there I was working almost 30 hours a week which was leaving a negative impact on my social life, studies and even health.

Question 8. How has/had your wellbeing been while working in the fast-food industry?

Answer: I felt that the environment, the constant stress to perform to expectations, and the lack of a proper break took a toll on my health. additionally, after any shift, even short ones, I always felt tired and ended up slacking at school as a consequence.

Question 9. How has/had your stress levels been while working in the fast-food industry?

Answer: As mentioned, employees are constantly expected to perform at high standards. In addition to this, an employee might have to juggle multiple tasks at once, in my case I sometimes had to prepare food, drinks, and packaging simultaneously due to a lack of staff. This created a stressful environment and created a larger margin of error which would then leave a customer unsatisfied.

Question 10. How has your anxiety been while working in the fast-food industry?

Answer: Going to work I always felt slightly anxious however there was no specific reason. Being someone who always to meet expectations, I felt that failing to so would change the perspective of my managers who always had high praise of my work.

Question 11. How has your physical health been while working in the hospitality industry?

Answer: This was a big issue in my case, unfortunately, since time was limited, I had no time to exercise, and I was gaining a lot of weight. In addition, employees only had specific meals to choose from. The healthier meals were often smaller and would leave me unsatisfied. I truly believe that action and initiative should be taken to ensure that as an employee precaution is taken towards the food being consumed by broadening the options.

Question 12. How do/did you unwind after a day of work?

Answer: Most of the time after a shift I would go home and sleep, during the few months I worked there I had minimal conversations with family and friends as I was constantly tired and over worked. On occasion if I had a day off, I would try to catch up to my studies and if possible, go out.

Question 13. Whilst working in a fast-food restaurant do/did you feel like you are able to convey your true emotions? (ex. Happy, sad, stressed)

Answer: Not really, given the fast pace of the environment emotions could not be conveyed however usually when there was an increased workload, and we would not manage to handle the tasks on our own a manager might lend a hand. Obviously, not all managers were the same however some took more attention to this factor.

Question 14. Do you think it is important to convey your true emotions while at work? And why?

Answer: Definitely, being able to portray your emotions can help the employee feel secure at work whilst also being provided somewhat of support in a moment of need. If a person feels sad, the chance is that they will not perform as expected, and hence by having someone else lend a hand, less stress is put on the employee which can improve morale in the workplace. In addition, we are all human so not every day will be the same, and hence why I believe that being open about your emotions can help.

Question 15. How would you describe the relationship between you and the company, co-workers, and managers?

Answer: The relationship was neutral; I had not made any close friends however I spoke to everyone and had normal conversations. On occasion in the break area, we would have a laugh or joke around however this was not very common.

Question 16. Do the managers provide an open door when you need someone to talk to?

Answer: Not really, the managers rarely had any time to speak to the employees and would be busy monitoring the floor and ensuring the workflow was good to meet the expectations. If an issue arose at the workplace, they would try to help however typically this would be about a work-related issue.

Question 17. Does the company or managers aid/aided in stress management and mental health problems, if any?

Answer: At the workplace, they do occasionally lend a helping hand however the pressure to serve people as soon as possible and the expectations are always there keeping the stress level high. mental health is rarely observed and makes no difference to the expectations set.

Question 18. How does/did the company aid in stress management, if any?

Answer: No stress management was offered by the company, the employees every now and then had planned an event/party to unwind however this only occurred once throughout the period I worked there, and most kept this hidden as higher management for some reason did not approve of this.

Question 19. Would you take part if the company would include more mental health resources (such as mindfulness classes, meditation, stress reduction workshops, etc.)

Answer: If the events/workshop made sense and were in fact beneficial I would gladly take part.

Question 20. Do you think the Covid-19 pandemic has affected your mental health and stress levels during working period?

Answer: Definitely, especially at the beginning of the pandemic most people ordered takeout, and ensuring the orders were correct and not mistaking one order with another was stressful.

Question 21. Could you describe your reasoning behind the answer you gave in the question before?

Answer: The increase in the workflow and having delivery drivers waiting for the order to pick up added further pressure as they would obviously want to tackle the order as soon as possible. On occasion, we also had mix-ups of orders which would negatively impact the company hence I do feel that the mental health issues at work increased drastically.

7.5 Appendix 5: Transcripts of the Interviews with Fast-Food Managers

7.5.1 Transcript of the Interview with Fast-Food Manager 1

Question 1. What is your gender?

Answer: I am Female

Question 2. What is your age?

Answer: I am 21 years old

Question 3. What is your nationality?

Answer: I am Maltese

Question 4. In which fast-food restaurant do/did you work in Malta?

Answer: I work at KFC

Question 5. How long have you been working/ have worked in the fast-food industry as a manager?

Answer: I have been a manager at KFC for 1 year and a few months, but I have been working for the company for a longer time

Question 6. How do/did you feel working at this company?

Answer: I am content at KFC as I make good money and have friends working with me

Question 7. As a manager do you feel the company participates in helping employees with mental health problems?

Answer: The company does not do anything to help with mental health problems.

Question 8. Does the company organise activities which can help to increase workplace wellbeing?

Answer: The company used to host birthday parties every few months for employees to increase moral but with Covid they took a break from doing them

Question 9. Does the company provide employees the ability to have a good work/life balance?

Answer: Employees are required to work a lot of hours due to being always busy and the lack of staff. This can affect their personal life

Question 10. Do you believe the company helps people who are suffering with mental health issues?

Answer: I think the company can do more, as currently there is no system in place to help employees with mental health issues

Question 11. Are there any initiatives you take or took to help employees with their mental health?

Answer: I try to talk to employees when I see them not performing like they normally do or if they seem upset

Question 12. Do you believe an open-door system benefits your employees? And why?

Answer: an open-door system is beneficial as it can help employees feel more open to talk with their managers.

Question 13. Have you seen a high number of staff turnover whilst working with the company? If so, why?

Answer: There has been a high staff turnover as staff believes the company does not treat them right as they do not give promotions often and work long hours.

Question 14. In your opinion, what can the company do to improve workplace wellbeing?

Answer: I think the company can try to arrange staff hours, try to give more promotions, seek to give positive comments on staff performance

Question 15. Do you think the Coronavirus effected employees mental state whilst at work? If so, how?

Answer: I think staff has been more scared to come to work as they are afraid to catch it, but they still come to earn money

7.5.2 Transcript of the Interview with Fast-Food Manager 2

Question 1. What is your gender?

Answer: I am Female

Question 2. What is your age?

Answer: I am 27 years old

Question 3. What is your nationality?

Answer: I am Maltese

Question 4. In which fast-food restaurant do/did you work in Malta?

Answer: I used to work at McDonalds

Question 5. How long have you been working/ have worked in the fast-food industry as a manager?

Answer: I spent 3 years working as a manager in the fast-food industry

Question 6. How do/did you feel working at this company?

Answer: It was a great experience

Question 7. As a manager do you feel the company participates in helping employees with mental health problems?

Answer: I feel like the company does help, but more should be done.

Question 8. Does the company organise activities which can help to increase workplace wellbeing?

Answer: Unfortunately, not a lot is organized but I'm hoping there will be something in the future.

Question 9. Does the company provide employees the ability to have a good work/life balance?

Answer: The company does provide a great work/life balance, giving employees both time to work and time to enjoy any activities they participate in.

Question 10. Do you believe the company helps people who are suffering with mental health issues?

Answer: Yes, it does.

Question 11. Are there any initiatives you take or took to help employees with their mental health?

Answer: If I noticed someone was not doing well or someone spoke to me about any problems they had, I always did my best to give them time off or whatever they needed.

Question 12. Do you believe an open-door system benefits your employees? And why?

Answer: I believe it does as it creates transparency and great working relationships in the workplace.

Question 13. Have you seen a high number of staff turnover whilst working with the company? If so, why?

Answer: Yes, unfortunately I have because sometimes the job can be tiring to some, and since the coronavirus started, a lot of employees resigned.

Question 14. In your opinion, what can the company do to improve workplace wellbeing?

Answer: I believe seminars and maybe extra training, or one to one session would help.

Question 15. Do you think the Coronavirus effected employees mental state whilst at work? If so, how?

Answer: I feel like it did affect their mental health as employees were less motivated and more tired during the pandemic.

7.5.3 Transcript of the Interview with Fast-Food Manager 3

Question 1. What is your gender?

Answer: I am Female

Question 2. What is your age?

Answer: I am 22 years old

Question 3. What is your nationality?

Answer: I am Maltese

Question 4. In which fast-food restaurant do/did you work in Malta?

Answer: I work at McDonalds

Question 5. How long have you been working/ have worked in the fast-food industry as a manager?

Answer: I have been a manager at McDonalds for 1 year

Question 6. How do/did you feel working at this company?

Answer: Satisfied, ambitious, motivated to develop further

Question 7. As a manager do you feel the company participates in helping employees with mental health problems?

Answer: Yes

Question 8. Does the company organise activities which can help to increase workplace wellbeing?

Answer: Yes

Question 9. Does the company provide employees the ability to have a good work/life balance?

Answer: Yes

Question 10. Do you believe the company helps people who are suffering with mental health issues?

Answer: As an individual restaurant yes, company per say, not sure

Question 11. Are there any initiatives you take or took to help employees with their mental health?

Answer: Yes

Question 12. Do you believe an open-door system benefits your employees? And why?

Answer: Yes, managers tend to be more approachable in the eyes of employees. Encourages employees to address anything that might be on their mind.

Question 13. Have you seen a high number of staff turnover whilst working with the company? If so, why?

Answer: No

Question 14. In your opinion, what can the company do to improve workplace wellbeing?


Answer: Increase regular well-being activities, provide workshops for mindfulness and coping to help in daily lifestyle.

Question 15. Do you think the Coronavirus effected employees mental state whilst at work? If so, how?

Answer: Yes, fear and anxiety were noticed in employees throughout the pandemic. Also, the fact that they went from home to the workplace only, did not leave a positive impact

7.6 Appendix 6: Interview Consent Forms

Dissertation Consent Form

**ITS** INSTITUTE OF
TOURISM STUDIES
IN ACADEMIC AFFILIATION WITH THE
EMIRATES ACADEMY OF HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT

Title of Research: Mental health in the Maltese Hospitality workers; focusing on fast food workers

Researcher: Kelly-Ann Bugeja, 0113400L

Degree: Bachelor's in international hospitality management

Dear Sir / Madam,

I, Kelly-Ann Bugeja, a student at the Institute of Tourism Studies am currently in the final year of my Bachelor's in international hospitality management. I am carrying out research on Mental Health in the Maltese hospitality workers, focusing on fast food workers.

I would like to explore your views on this matter by asking you some questions. The purpose of this form is to provide you with information so you can decide whether to participate in this study. Any questions you may have will be answered by the researcher.

There are no known risks related with this research project other than possible discomfort with the following:

- You will be asked to be honest when answering questions.

The information in the study records will be kept strictly confidential. All data will be stored securely and will be made available only to those individuals conducting the study. No reference will be made in oral or written reports that could link you to the study. Your identity will not be revealed in any publications that result from this study.

Institute of Tourism Studies

Page 1 of 2

You can terminate your participation at any time without prejudice. You also do not have to answer individual questions you don't want to answer. Your name will not be attached to the questionnaire and I will ensure that your participation remains confidential.

Participant's declaration

I have read this consent form and am giving the opportunity to the researcher to ask questions. I hereby grant permission to use the information I provide as data in the above-mentioned research project, knowing that it will be kept confidential and without use of my name.

<u>Aaron Farrugia</u> Participant's Name	<u><i>A Farrugia</i></u> Participant's Signature	<u>12/05/2022</u> Date
<u>Kelly-Ann Bugeja</u> Researcher's Name	<u><i>K. Bugeja</i></u> Researcher's Signature	<u>12/05/2022</u> Date

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<u>Grant Altard</u> Participant's Name	<u></u> Participant's Signature	<u>10/05/2022</u> Date
<u>Kelly-Ann Bugeja</u> Researcher's Name	<u>K. Bugeja</u> Researcher's Signature	<u>10/05/2022</u> Date

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Faye Borg
Participant's Name


Participant's Signature

10/05/2022
Date

Kelly-Ann Bugeja
Researcher's Name

K. Bugeja
Researcher's Signature

10/05/2022
Date

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<u>Lara Micallef</u> Participant's Name	<u></u> Participant's Signature	<u>08/05/2022</u> Date
<u>Kelly-Ann Bugeja</u> Researcher's Name	<u></u> Researcher's Signature	<u>08/05/2022</u> Date

Dissertation Consent Form



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Desiree Oliveri
Participant's Name


Participant's Signature

08/05/2022
Date

Kelly-Ann Bugeja
Researcher's Name


Researcher's Signature

08/05/2022
Date

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<u>Kimberly Micallef</u> Participant's Name	<u></u> Participant's Signature	<u>11/05/2022</u> Date
<u>Kelly-Ann Bugeja</u> Researcher's Name	<u>K. Bugeja</u> Researcher's Signature	<u>11/05/2022</u> Date