

Hippo

MTQ Case Study

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MTQ Coaching Pilot

This pilot set out to answer whether Hippo can have a meaningful impact on consultants' mental toughness and rates of burnout; increasing their ability to manage and deal with the expected stresses of delivery and consulting. The following report details the pilot conducted at Hippo with thirteen consultants from the Product and Delivery portfolio.

Executive Summary

This executive summary provides a snapshot of a research pilot conducted to investigate the effects of a three-month coaching intervention on mental toughness and burnout. The study aimed to assess the statistical significance of changes in mental toughness and burnout before and after the coaching program.

Fifteen consultants from product and delivery professions embarked on a three-month coaching program where mental toughness (MTQ48) and burnout (OLBI) measurements were taken pre and post-program. Each participant was paired with a personal coach who was equipped with the coaching report generated by the MTQ48.

The research pilot identified a statistically significant relationship between mental toughness and burnout. This suggests a potential interplay between these two factors that warrants further exploration. Though no significance was observed in overall mental toughness, three out of the four constructs of mental toughness exhibited statistically significant changes post-coaching. This indicates a positive impact on key elements such as confidence, control, and challenge. Finally, a significant statistical difference was observed in the exhaustion subscale of burnout before and after the coaching intervention.

In conclusion, this pilot provides a foundation for understanding the impact of coaching on mental toughness and burnout on consultants at Hippo. The identified statistical significance in various aspects indicates a promising avenue for further investigation. Hippo has been able to derive actionable insights from these findings to inform further research and begin to develop effective coaching programs aimed at enhancing employee well-being and resilience. As a result of this pilot, recommendations to offer the MTQ48 as a tool for professional and personal development are being put forward to support consultants in their career development and well-being.

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Introduction

There is a risk of an experience gap in managing the demands and pressures of work across various industries, where the intensity of these pressures may vary significantly between sectors such as government, non-profit, or private companies. One potential consequence of this experience gap is the ability of individuals to manage the heightened stress that comes with their professional responsibilities. High levels of workplace stress have been shown to result in increased absenteeism, higher staff turnover, reduced performance, and decreased overall business success.

Stress-related absences may serve as a leading indicator of more significant challenges, such as increased staff attrition, declining performance, and reduced business outcomes. It is reasonable to conclude that prolonged exposure to high-pressure work environments, especially for individuals not accustomed to such conditions, can lead to negative effects like burnout. Individuals unprepared for these demands may experience the detrimental impacts of stress, ultimately affecting their well-being and job performance.

Organisations are increasingly focused on supporting their employees by providing tools, resources, and skills to better manage the pressures of their roles. The goal is to identify early indicators of stress and intervene before they lead to negative outcomes, such as burnout, staff turnover, declining performance, and reduced business performance.

Interestingly, it has been observed that individuals within the same teams and facing similar work conditions may respond differently to stress. This suggests that personal factors, rather than just the work environment, play a significant role in how people handle workplace pressure. Therefore, the aim of this initiative is to explore these individual differences, focusing on employees' mindsets and their responses to stress, rather than just the external pressures of their roles. By understanding these personal factors, organisations can better support their workforce in managing stress and improving overall performance.

Aims and objectives

It is the aim of this initiative to investigate possible factors that could be leading indicators to staff burnout and evaluate potential interventions promoting greater resistance to prolonged exposure to stress in the workplace.

Workplace burnout is a critical factor of this investigation as the primary measure of prolonged exposure to stress. The impact of burnout on human resource operation performance and efficiency has been widely investigated across many high-stress people-centric service occupations (doctors, nurses, police, firefighters etc); however little research has explored the impact of burnout within client facing employees in management consultancies.

Mental toughness (MT) is a concept that research suggests can help individuals protect themselves against the negative effects of stress (Gerber et al., 2013). This is the primary factor being explored as part of this project as it provides measures of an individual, and is unaffected by context in which a consultant is situated; making it a suitable candidate as a possible leading indicator to workplace stress.

Finally, coaching as an intervention approach is well recognised as a significant contributor to individual success in the workplace. While the need for coaching differs across individuals and organisations

depending on particular circumstances, it is widely asserted that many people on a trajectory of success are likely to benefit from coaching support (Wiginton and Cartwright, 2020).

The aim of this project is to gain an understanding of the relationship between workplace coaching and employee burnout of client facing staff (CFS) in a UK management consultancy. In addition to measuring the effect of workplace coaching against employee burnout, this study also aims to validate whether the relationship between MT and burnout in CFS in a UK management consultancy is consistent with established research findings from other high-stress people service industries and professions. Finally, this research aims to explore the premise that MT is not a static trait and can be developed through coaching and training.

Objectives:

1. Examine the relationship between MT and burnout in CFS in a UK management consultancy.
2. Examine the relationship between workplace coaching and MT in CFS in a UK management consultancy.
3. Examine the relationship between workplace coaching and burnout in CFS in a UK management consultancy.

Method

Participants

All participants of this project are employees of a mid-sized management consultancy in the UK, Hippo. Consulting staff are located or assigned to one of five primary office locations across the UK: Leeds, Manchester, Birmingham, Bristol, and London. All participants of this project belong to one of three profession disciplines: Product Managers, Delivery Managers and Business Analysts.

Workplace Coaching

Each of the participants received one coaching session a month for the duration of the study to support their workplace activities. The GROW model (Whitmore, 1992) was used to structure the conversation in the coaching sessions. This is a behaviour-based coaching model that has four stages: Goal, Reality, Options and Will (Killy, 2017). The coaching intervention involved participants identifying goals related to MT after reviewing the MTQ48 results. The coaches were provided with the coaching report generated by the MTQ48 assessment to aid in supporting the development of the core characteristics of MT. Each coaching session started with reviewing their MTQ48 results, followed by setting goals and exploring current realities, before identifying options for action. The session concluded by the individual setting out an action plan based on the session's discussion. The study research team ensured a 30-minute session was carried out every month throughout the study with each participant to provide them with an opportunity to raise any concerns and ensure they felt they were receiving quality coaching from the coaches. The team also carried out a 60-minute session per month where they were asked about the coaching session structure to ensure they were supporting participants appropriately throughout the study.

Instrumentation

To collect the required data for this project participants completed a survey to measure the key variables. The survey included a range of demographic questions and a suite of scales. All demographic questions will include a “no response” option to ensure that respondents who may be potentially identifiable through their demographic information had the opportunity to remain anonymous. The core elements of the survey appropriate to the research aims and objectives are detailed below.

Measure of Burnout

Burnout was measured using the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI) (Demerouti et al., 2003; Demerouti, Mostert and Bakker 2010). The overall scores for disengagement and exhaustion will be calculated by averaging responses for the associated questions with each subscale. Scores range from 1 to 4 with higher scores representing higher levels of disengagement or exhaustion. The OLBI measures two elements of burnout (employee disengagement and employee exhaustion) and has established internal and external validity. This instrument has been used to measure burnout across a variety of countries and in a range of industries to measure burnout across high-stress people service occupations including healthcare professionals and emergency service personnel (Westwood et al., 2017; Scanlan, Meredith and Poulsen 2013; Yang, Meredith and Khan, 2015; Scanlan and Still, 2019; Ogińska-Bulik and Juczyński, 2021; Keller, et al., 2022).

Measure of Mental Toughness

MT was measured using the 48-item Mental Toughness Questionnaire (MTQ48) (Clough et al., 2002), which measured total MT and its eight subcomponents: learning orientation, risk orientation, achievement orientation, goal orientation, emotional control, life control, interpersonal confidence, and confidence in ability. Answers on the questionnaire are given on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Data Analysis

The IBM SPSS statistical software was used for all statistical tests. An examination of missing data was carried out and revealed that no data was missing that was used for the purpose of this research. Simple linear t-Test was performed to determine the significance of any relationship between MT and burnout in the participants of this research. Simple linear t-Test was also performed in the pre-coaching and post-coaching results of both the MTQ48 and OLBI to determine the significance of any changes between MT and burnout pre and post coaching intervention.

Ethics

This research project was executed under strict ethical consideration to both the business and its employees. As such the key considerations have been made:

Voluntary Participation

When recruiting participants for this study, all employees within the eligible population were informed that they were free to choose whether they wish to participate, and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any negative repercussions.

Informed Consent

To ensure this study can capture informed consent from participants all relevant information was provided and each participant was briefed on the purpose of the study, any risks and benefits of taking

part, indication on the duration of the study, contact details of the study supervisor and Leeds Trinity Universities approval reference. In addition to the study details, participants were informed that their data will be kept confidential, and they are free to cease their participation at any point and withdraw by contacting the researcher or supervisor.

Anonymity

This study will be capturing demographic information that could be personally identifiable. For this reason, the data was pseudonymised. Each participating employee was given a randomly generated three-digit participant number. Their personally identifying information will be collected and stored separate from their survey data. The survey data could only be linked to personally identifying data via the participant numbers.

Confidentiality

To maintain data confidentiality and prevent threats to data privacy, all consent forms and survey data were stored in password-protected folders and files.

Potential for Harm

This study captured information related to workplace stress and MT. Because of this, participants may have felt their answers could reflect on their professional abilities in the workplace and some of the survey questions may have brought up negative emotions. All participants were informed about the sensitive nature of the survey and assured them that their responses will be confidential.

Findings

Relationship between mental toughness and burnout

Using a t-test as a simple regression model Table 1 shows statistical significance between Pre-Coaching MT and burnout ($p = 0.005$); as well as Post-Coaching MT and burnout ($p = 0.005$). Additionally, statistical significance was found between MT and the Burnout sub scales: Pre-Coaching Disengagement ($p = 0.004$) and Exhaustion ($p = 0.005$); Post-Coaching Disengagement ($p = 0.003$) and Exhaustion ($p = 0.013$). Using Cohen's D (1992) effect size guidelines a large effect size was found in each of the correlations between Pre-Coaching MT and burnout ($d = 0.957$), Disengagement ($d = 0.967$) and Exhaustion ($d = 0.946$). The same impact was observed for the Post-Coaching MT and burnout ($d = 0.924$), Disengagement ($d = 1.035$) and Exhaustion ($d = 0.814$).

	Paired Differences					t	df	Significance		Cohen's d Effect Size
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				One-Side d p	Two-Side d p	
				Lower	Upper					
Pre Coaching Mental Toughness - Burnout	1.68692	1.76333	.48906	.62135	2.75249	3.449	12	<.002	.005	.957
Pre Coaching Mental Toughness - Disengagement	1.71077	1.76850	.49049	.64207	2.77947	3.488	12	.002	.004	.967
Pre Coaching Mental Toughness - Exhaustion	1.66308	1.75736	.48740	.60112	2.72504	3.412	12	.003	.005	.946
Post Coaching Mental Toughness - Burnout	2.35538	2.54936	.70706	.81482	3.89595	3.331	12	.003	.006	.924
Post Coaching Mental Toughness - Disengagement	2.53538	2.45049	.67964	1.05457	4.01620	3.730	12	.001	.003	1.035
Post Coaching Mental Toughness - Exhaustion	2.17077	2.66798	.73996	.55853	3.78301	2.934	12	.006	.013	.814

Table 1: Paired Samples t-Test between Mental Toughness, Burnout, Disengagement and Exhaustion

Relationship between workplace coaching and mental toughness

Using a t-test as a simple regression model Table 2 shows that statistical significance was not observed between MT pre and post coaching intervention ($p = 0.082$). However, statistical significance was found across three of the four MT constructs pre and post coaching intervention: Control ($p = 0.044$), Challenge ($p = 0.012$) and Confidence ($p = 0.005$). Using Cohen's D (1992) effect size guidelines a medium effect size was observed in the correlation between pre and post coaching on Control ($d = -0.623$); and a large effect size was observed for the Challenge ($d = -0.816$) and Confidence ($d = -0.966$) MT constructs.

	Paired Differences					t	df	Significance		Cohen's d Effect Size
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				One-Side d p	Two-Side d p	
				Lower	Upper					
Mental Toughness Pre - Post Coaching	-.692	1.316	.365	-1.487	.103	-1.897	12	.041	.082	-.526
Control Pre - Post Coaching	-.769	1.235	.343	-1.516	-.023	-2.245	12	.022	.044	-.623
Emotional Control Pre - Post Coaching	-.538	1.198	.332	-1.263	.186	-1.620	12	.066	.131	-.449
Life Control Pre - Post Coaching	-.769	1.481	.411	-1.664	.126	-1.873	12	.043	.086	-.520
Commitment Pre - Post Coaching	-.231	1.691	.469	-1.253	.791	-.492	12	.316	.632	-.136
Goal Orientation Pre - Post Coaching	.385	2.219	.615	-.956	1.725	.625	12	.272	.544	.173
Achievement Orientation Pre - Post Coaching	-.538	1.198	.332	-1.263	.186	-1.620	12	.066	.131	-.449
Challenge Pre - Post Coaching	-.538	.660	.183	-.937	-.139	-2.941	12	.006	.012	-.816
Risk Orientation Pre - Post Coaching	-.385	1.446	.401	-1.258	.489	-.959	12	.178	.356	-.266
Learning Orientation Pre - Post Coaching	-.462	1.613	.447	-1.436	.513	-1.032	12	.161	.323	-.286
Confidence Pre - Post Coaching	-1.077	1.115	.309	-1.751	-.403	-3.482	12	.002	.005	-.966
Confidence In Abilities Pre - Post Coaching	-1.538	1.808	.501	-2.631	-.446	-3.068	12	.005	.010	-.851
Interpersonal Confidence Pre - Post Coaching	-.154	1.463	.406	-1.038	.730	-.379	12	.356	.711	-.105

Table 2: Paired Samples t-Test between Mental Toughness Pre and Post Coaching Intervention

Relationship between workplace coaching and burnout

Using a t-test as a simple regression model Table 3 shows that there was no statistical significance between burnout pre and post coaching intervention ($p = 0.211$). Additionally, statistical significance was not found between the burnout Disengagement sub scale pre and post coaching intervention: Disengagement ($p = 0.137$). The burnout Exhaustion subscale did however show statistical significance: Exhaustion ($p = 0.0012$). Using Cohen's D (1992) effect size guidelines a large effect size was found in the correlation between the burnout subscale of Exhaustion ($d = -0.824$).

	Paired Differences					t	df	Significance		Cohen's d Effect Size
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				One-Side d p	Two-Side d p	
				Lower	Upper					
Burnout Pre Coaching - Burnout Post Coaching	-.0238 5	.06500	.01803	-.06313	.01544	-1.323	12	.105	.211	-.367
Burnout Disengagement Pre - Post Coaching	.13231	.29945	.08305	-.04865	.31326	1.593	12	.069	.137	.442
Burnout Exhaustion Pre - Post Coaching	-.1846 2	.22415	.06217	-.32007	-.04916	-2.970	12	.006	.012	-.824

Table 3: Paired Samples t-Test between Burnout Pre and Post Coaching Intervention

Discussion

The key findings of this present research project show that consultants with higher scores of MT appear to report lower levels of burnout; even when measured against both sub scales of Disengagement and Exhaustion. Moreover, following a three-month period where workplace coaching was provided, consultants saw a statistically significant increase in three of the four MT constructs; Control, Challenge and Confidence though this was not observed in their overall MT score. Finally, it is a key finding of this research project that following a three-month period where workplace coaching was provided, consultants saw a statistically significant decrease in their levels of reported Exhaustion; however this was not observed across their overall rates of Burnout or Disengagement.

Three hypotheses were formulated at the outset of this research project and will be considered in turn. Firstly, based on former research such as that from Gerber et al. (2015), it was hypothesised this research would further validate the premiss of a negative relationship between MT and burnout. This research aligns to the findings of prior research and supports the validity of this hypothesis. These findings could be explained by the Transactional Stress Theories (Hobfoll 1998); where stress is defined as a state of imbalance between internal or external demands and personal or social resources available to cope with a potential stressor. The reason mentally tough individuals may experience lower levels of burnout is mentally tough individuals are defined as perceiving themselves as capable and influential, viewing their environment as controllable, remaining committed even under adverse circumstances and consider issues as welcome challenges that drive personal growth (Clough, et al., 2002). This in turn is supported by the research from Crust and Clough (2005) and Haghighi and Gerber (2019) that found mentally tough individuals usually perceive less stress or have higher stress tolerance to those with lower levels of MT.

Additional explanations to the findings in this research were explored in domains with the shared symptoms of Burnout. The statistical relevance of the relationship found between MT and burnout are consistent with prior research, in which significant relationships were observed between those with high MT and low depressive symptoms (Gerber and Brand et al., 2013). The literature that overlaps in the realm of depression suggests that depression encompasses symptoms of an emotional, motivational, cognitive, somatic and motor level (Gerber and Brand et al., 2013; Beck and Alford, 2009), and such maladjusted mindsets and unavailing behaviours directly oppose the expected attributes of control, challenge, commitment and confidence characteristics of mentally tough people. Furthermore, fatigue

and low levels of energy are both core components of the burnout subscales which are considered in the diagnosis of major depressive disorder (Gerber et al., 2015). It is important that depression and burnout are viewed as their own desecrate concepts, with depression being a global affective state, free of context and concerning all aspects of life; and burnout depends on the perceived environment at work. It remains noteworthy the shared variances between the concepts and the corroboration of research that shows elevated MT and the reduction of burnout and depression symptoms (Haghighi and Gerber, 2019; Gerber et al., 2013; Gerber et al., 2018).

Secondly, it was hypothesised that there will be a positive correlation between workplace coaching and MT. Studies into the genetic and environmental impact on MT found that the variations could be accounted for by a split of both environmental and hereditary factors (Horsbutgh et al., 2009; Onley et al., 2013). This suggested that even though there may be some levels of stability in an individual's MT, there could also still be opportunity to develop these characteristics (Crust and Clough, 2011; Giesser et al., 2013; Grant, 2017). The present study showed statistical significance in the variation of three of the four constructs of the MTQ48 when tested three-month apart during which participants received regular workplace coaching. This pilot did not delve into the content of the coaching conversations or report on the areas of the MTQ48 results participants wanted to focus on. Divulging the focus of participants' coaching sessions may help explain why some constructs saw significant results and others saw little change.

The results from this research supports the prior suggestions that results of MT are subject to change due to environmental factors and isn't a fixed trait. A core element to professional coaching is developing an individual's internal locus of control (Rotter, 1990). These research findings support the premise that it is possible to increase an individual's locus of control with a statistically significant increase found in the control construct of MT as well as and the sub factors of life control. Observing a change in locus of control remains consistent with existing literature that suggests locus of control is a state rather than a stable trait, thereby implying it is flexible to change in a response to different experiences (Galvin et al., 2018). Thompson et al. (2020) reported significant increases in locus of control in MBA students when assessed prior and following the course of study; while observing no significant increase in the other courses investigated. Interestingly this study observed these changes in locus of control without implementing any interventions such as coaching in an attempt to influence the development. This raises an interesting question to whether the results seen with consultants can be assumed to be as a result of the coaching intervention or just a consequence of their environment; working in client-facing consulting projects. Without a control group this remains an assumption still to be validated. The results from Thompson et al., (2020) MBA study at minimum provides suggestions that core elements of MT can change as a consequence of experiences making it plausible that interventions can be designed to achieve similar responses. Additional literature on the impact of MT interventions, Saul et al. (2023) measured the performance, leadership and stress resilience in military recruit training participants. One group was exposed to a mindfulness development programme to support MT development and a control group completed the military recruit training without. During the study researchers found no significant improvement in performance, no significant increase in leadership score and no significant stress resilience between the groups. These findings also support the notion that MT changes are likely a consequence of experiences and reflecting on these experiences as opposed to dedicated training. If this is the case, coaching may further enhance or promote greater growth for individuals due to the reflective nature of the coaching process. The findings from this pilot justify the need for further research into the possible approaches that could be used to achieve the desired outcomes on MT.

Another consequence of high MT that has received attention in academic studies is the reports that MT is associated with increased performance in sport (Crust and Clough, 2005; Goldberg, 1998; Jones et al., 2007) and the workplace (Schmidt and Hunter, 2004; Quiñones et al., 1995). Hardy et al. (2014) investigated whether MT yields predictive validity to achievement. Performance on tasks were measured prior to any practice to measure trait based MT; and also performance enhancement was measured following practice for the given task to measure domain MT. The research found that trait based MT did not show significance in predicting increased performance; however, did show significance between domain MT and post-practice performance and self-efficacy. Suggesting that MT could be used as a predictor of learning and potential future performance given their increased learning orientation and commitment. The topic of MT and its influence on performance has potential for high-value insights and interventions in organisations; further investigations would be appropriate providing an appropriate measure of performance can be obtained.

Thirdly, it was hypothesised that there will be a negative correlation between workplace coaching and burnout. This premise is supported by the validation of hypothesis (i) and (ii) in this pilot research project. Significance was not found in the negative relationship between MT and overall burnout; however there was significance observed between MT and the burnout sub-factor of exhaustion. Given the absence of a control group in this research, the statistically significant result when investigating the third hypothesis would support the notion that the workplace coaching may have aided in reducing levels of exhaustion. Though this cannot be validated without a control group these findings would align to literature that has explored the link between coaching and rates of burnout (Schmitz, Neumann and Oppermann, 2000).

Coaching assumes the presence of inner capabilities and essential expertise to address life's obstacles while offering guidance on how to effectively utilise these internal mechanisms (Stober and Grant, 2006; Whitmore, 2009; Kimsey-House et al., 2011). An essential element of coaching involves enhancing a client's internal locus of control, which is defined as the belief that one's actions can exert as much or even greater influence on life outcomes compared to external forces or individuals (Rotter, 1990). Studies across a range of professions have reported inverse correlation between internal locus of control and rates of burnout (McIntyre, 1984; Schmitz et al, 2003). How coaching enhances one's internal locus of control is critical in addressing burnout (Gazelle et al., 2015) and can be explained by the concept of MT already explored. Another advantageous consequence of coaching is an increase in self-efficacy and self-determination, also recognised aspects of MT that are suggested to counter the impacts of burnout (Glass and McKnight, 1996; Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter, 2001).

Limitations

Several limitations of this study should be acknowledged and considered along with the findings. The first limitation is that the sample size used was small (13). It is expected that a small sample size would impact the likelihood of significant findings. Despite this not being the case in the hypothesis investigated in this project it should be considered whether the same results would persist with a larger sample of consultants. Similarly, another limitation is related to the duration of the study. Limiting the research project to three months may have limited the potential impact coaching may have had on the variables measured. Regarding the changes in variables, this project has a limitation that no control group was established to validate the impact of the coaching intervention on MT or burnout. Regarding representation, this study limited its participation to the Product and Delivery Portfolio of consultants (Business Analysts, Delivery Managers and Product Managers). Consultancies are made up of a wider variety of professional disciplines that may experience different levels of workplace stressors and greater representation would give a more holistic view across a business. Relating back to one concern

that many recruits are acquired outside of a consulting background; greater insights may have possibly been obtained if greater levels of detail was captured regarding the participants including years of experience in consulting, and possibly seniority within the organisation. Marchant et al. (2008) found that MT ratings were higher in more senior positions and that MT increased with age. Additionally, this research acknowledges limitations with the limited quality assurance that was conducted on the coaching provided to participants. Coaches had been through a two-day coaching training course but there was no assessment carried out on the coaching sessions provided to participants during this study. It would be advised that future research include a scale to measure coaching performance, recording or supervised coaching sessions by a coach supervisor to ensure quality standards are met. Finally, little insight was captured regarding the topics of coaching relevant to the MTQ assessment. This may have supported an explanation to why some MT factors saw greater variance than others.

Conclusion

This pilot research assignment set out to test three core hypotheses: (i) That there will be a negative correlation between workplace coaching and burnout; (ii) That there will be a positive correlation between workplace coaching and MT; and (iii) there will be a negative relationship between MT and burnout. MT was found to be a reliable predictor of lower rates of burnout among consultants in this pilot. Elements of both MT and burnout appear to be subject to change as a consequence of experience however less can be sure about the effectiveness of development programmes as of yet. Further research with a control would be required to know for sure the direct impacts of coaching interventions on both MT and burnout.

Application of research findings

Reviewing the application of these research findings requires consideration of the original context that founded the inception of this research; Every business has a responsibility to their consultants and aims to reduce staff attrition and staff absenteeism as a result of workplace stress. These results include subsequent down-stream adverse consequences including decreased individual and team performance, as well as account performance decreasing with detrimental impacts on revenue. Prior literature suggests that little research has been conducted into development and application of operations management theory in the professional service sectors (Lewis and Brown, 2012; Sampson, 2012; Kaiser and Ringlstetter, 2011; Machuca et al., 2007).

Recommendations

Regarding the implementation of coaching programmes to support those that wish to develop their MT; it is recommended that further trials are run with the inclusion of control groups to validate the causation of development programmes with reduced burnout and increased MT.

To address the concerns with current employees that may be suffering from burnout or other stress-related challenges, the MTQ48 could be deployed as a predictor to burnout and provide additional support to those with lower scores. Knowing where to focus preventative measures and resources may see a reduction of burnout and staff turnover. It would be advised that Hippo continues to measure and report on staff absenteeism and conduct qualitative analysis on exit interview transcripts to assess the volume of voluntary leavers resulting from stress related effects. This will allow Hippo to maintain a holistic view of their concerns and be able to measure impacts of MT interventions.

Hippo may also look to use the MTQ48 as part of their proactive preventative measures to achieve high team and account performance. Using the MTQ48 assessment to address resourcing needs and ensuring mentally tough consultants are deployed in each client engagement to maintain delivery quality would reduce the risk of poor deliveries and reduce revenue. Understanding and leveraging the MT of Hippo's consultants could allow the business to ensure high performance is maintained and allow limited resources to be focused in priority areas.

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