

Effects of Leisure Time Experiences on Employees' Well-Being

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Acknowledgements



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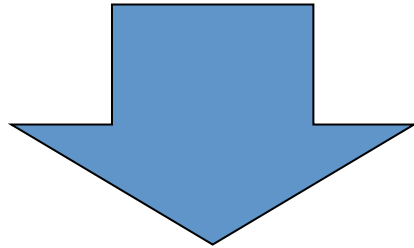
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Presentation Overview

- Leisure time recovery research
- **Study 1: Teachers' experiences of the Christmas break**
- **Study 2: Teachers' experiences of the UK half-term/ US Spring break**
- Practical recommendations

**Focus on employees'
leisure time recovery
experiences.....**

Employee recovery during non-work time



How people's **evening, weekend,** and **vacation** experiences influence well-being and performance at work

Why this topic is considered important

- Problems associated with **prolonged activation** of stress-related psychophysiology
- Many employees are not **psychologically detaching** (or 'switching off') from work during non-work time
- Inadequate recovery during non-work time can have a cumulative effect, often resulting in **worker burnout**

Effort-Recovery Model

(Meijman & Mulder, 1998)

- Effort expenditure at work leads to load reactions (e.g., fatigue, physiological activation)
- Under normal circumstances, once the individual is no longer exposed to work demands, load reactions are reversed and recovery occurs
- Without sufficient recovery, worker requires compensatory effort when re-entering the workplace
- Important that functional systems taxed during work are not further depleted during respite

What Do We Know About Vacations From Work?

- Improved health and well-being found from before to during a vacation (the '*vacation effect*')
- '*Fade out*' of vacation effect occurs within first 2 to 4 weeks of work resumption
- Most research has examined effects of spring or summer vacations
- Vacation length a (surprisingly?) weak predictor of respite effects

Study 1:

Effects of the Christmas Break on
School Teachers' Well-Being

Study 1 Aims

- Examine effects of standard (2 week) Christmas break on school teachers' well-being
- Identify patterns of vacation recovery and fade out for:
 - **emotional well-being** (anxiety and depression)
 - **work-related exhaustion** (burnout)

Study 1 Aims

Examine the Christmas break experiences that influence teachers' recovery:

- Time spent on work-related activities during the two-week Christmas break
- Work-related worry and rumination during the break
- Satisfaction of basic psychology needs: autonomy, competence, and social relatedness during the break

Christmas Study Design

PRE-VACATION		
Week 1	13 th December 2013	2 work weeks before Christmas
Week 2	20 th December 2013	1 work week before Christmas
DURING VACATION		
Week 3	27 th December 2013	Christmas week 1
Week 4	3 rd January 2014	Christmas week 2
POST-VACATION		
Week 5	10 th January 2014	Post-Christmas work week 1
Week 6	17 th January 2014	Post-Christmas work week 2
Week 7	24 th January 2014	Post-Christmas work week 3
Week 8	31 st January 2014	Post-Christmas work week 4

Participant Characteristics

90 UK school teachers.

68% primary teachers; 32% secondary teachers

Gender = 85% female

Average age = 41 (range = 23 to 63)

Average number of years teaching = 9 (range = 0 to 33)

INITIAL SURVEY

Personality - neuroticism/ emotional stability

Work characteristics - perceived time pressure; job autonomy; workplace support

Age, gender, job role

WEEKLY WELL-BEING SURVEYS

Anxiety: “anxious”, “tense”, “worried”

Depression: “depressed”, “gloomy”, “miserable”

Work-related emotional exhaustion (burnout)

e.g., “I felt burned out from my work”

WEEKLY SURVEYS (DURING CHRISTMAS BREAK)

Work-related worry and rumination

“I worried about things to do with work”.

“My thoughts kept returning to a stressful situation at work”.

Psychological needs satisfaction

“How effective did you feel when performing tasks over this past week?” (competence)

“To what extent did you feel you were pursuing your own goals over this past week?” (autonomy)

“To what extent did you feel close and connected to the people you were with this past week?” (relatedness)



Flat-step-flat-step-flat

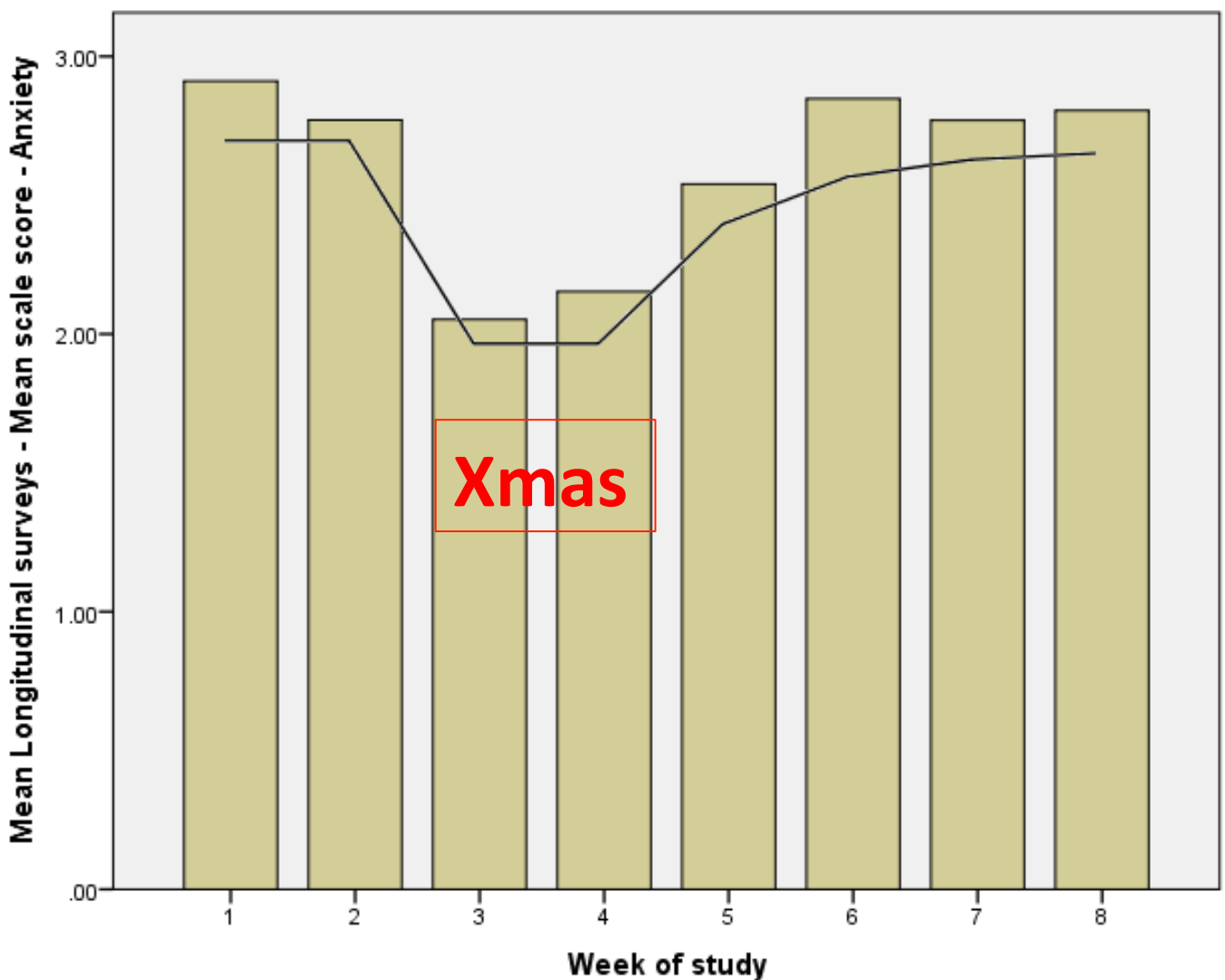


**Flat-step-flat-linear
gradual fade out**



**Flat-linear-curved
gradual fade out**

Results: Emotional well-being (anxiety and depression)

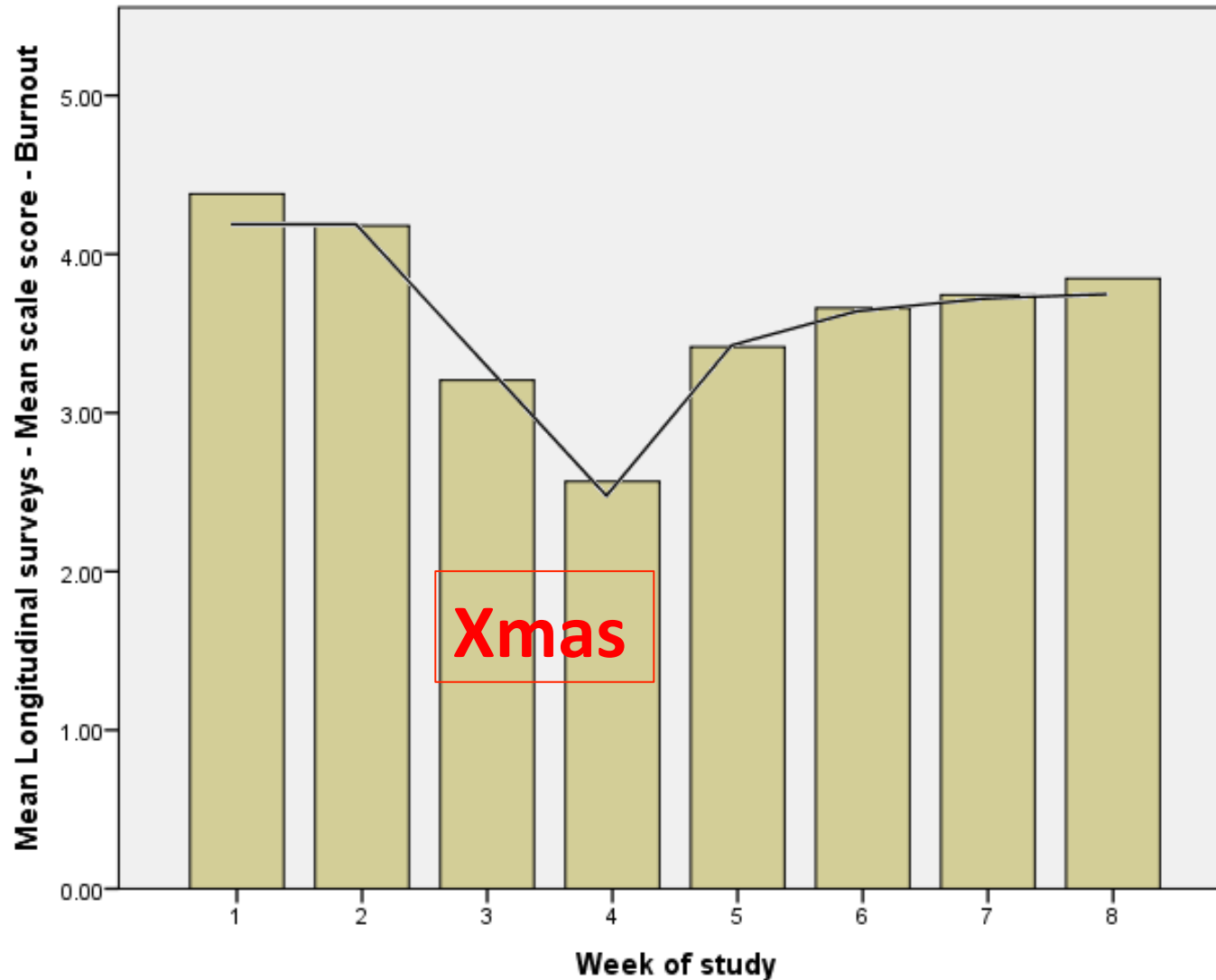


Step drop in anxiety and depression during Christmas

Low depression and anxiety during Christmas

Curved (gradual) increase in anxiety and depression when back at work

Results: work-related exhaustion (burnout)



Gradual linear recovery

Possibly not fully recovered?

Curved increase in exhaustion (but not back to pre-xmas levels)

Two 'unique' predictors of the fade out rate:

- **Work-related worry and rumination** during the Christmas break
- **Hours worked** over the Christmas break

***After adjusting for: pre-Christmas well-being, the vacation effect, neuroticism, work demands, job control, age, gender, and whether holiday involved 'time away'.*

Study 2:

Effects of a Mid-Term Break on
Teachers' Well-Being: Examining the
Role of Maladaptive Personality
Characteristics

Half-Term Study Design (February example)

PRE-BREAK		
Week 1	5 th February 2016	2 work weeks before half-term
Week 2	12 th February 2016	1 work week before half-term
DURING BREAK		
Week 3	19 th February 2016	Half-term week
POST-BREAK		
Week 4	26 th February 2016	Post-break work week 1
Week 5	4 th March 2016	Post-break work week 2
Week 6	11 th March 2016	Post-break work week 3
Week 7	18 th March 2016	Post-break work week 4

Participant Characteristics

176 teachers, head teachers, teaching assistants from UK and US schools (half-term in UK; Spring Break or President's week in the US)

41% in non-managerial roles

38% mid-level managerial or leadership roles

12% senior leaders

Average age = 40

87.5% female

Average years teaching = 14 years

89% worked full-time

INITIAL SURVEY

Personality - neuroticism/ emotional stability

Personality - perfectionist characteristics

Work characteristics - perceived time pressure; job autonomy; workplace support

Age, gender, job role

WEEKLY WELL-BEING SURVEYS

Depressed affect: “depressed”, “gloomy”, “sad” “miserable”

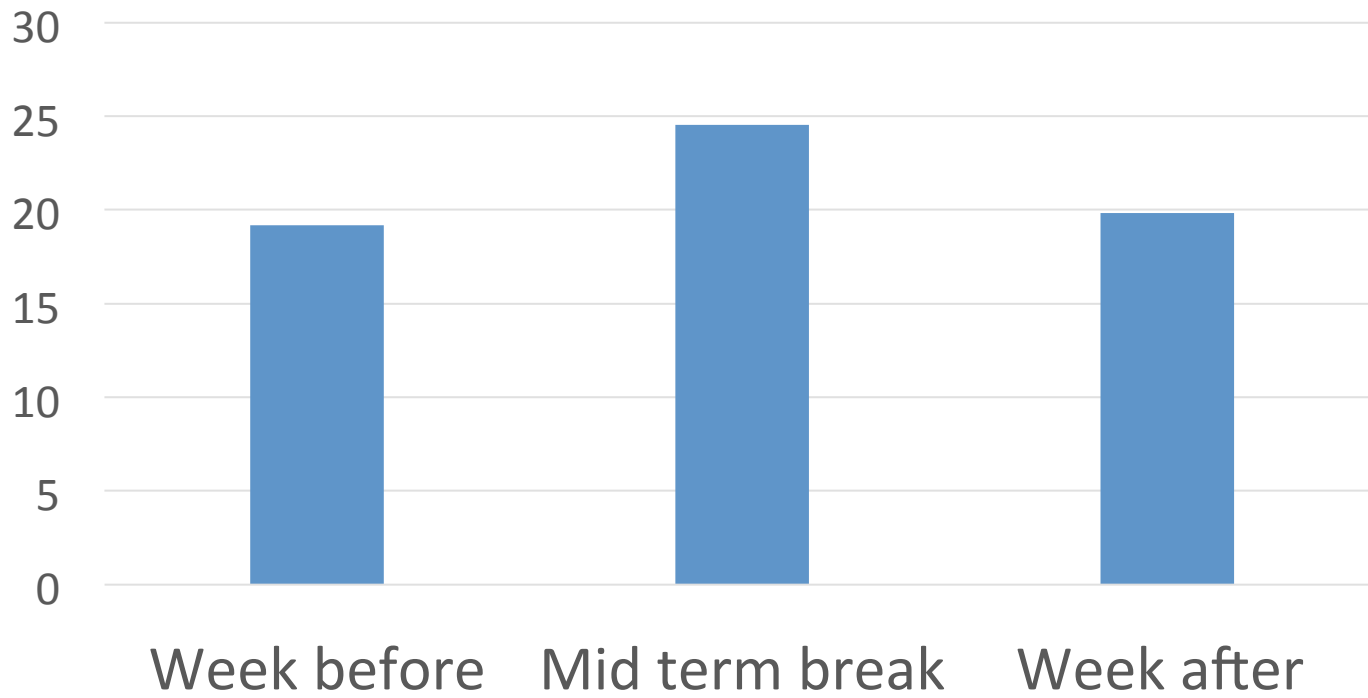
Positive affect (pleasant, high activation): “excited”, “alert”, “energetic”, “enthusiastic”

Work-related emotional exhaustion (burnout)

e.g., “I felt burned out from my work”

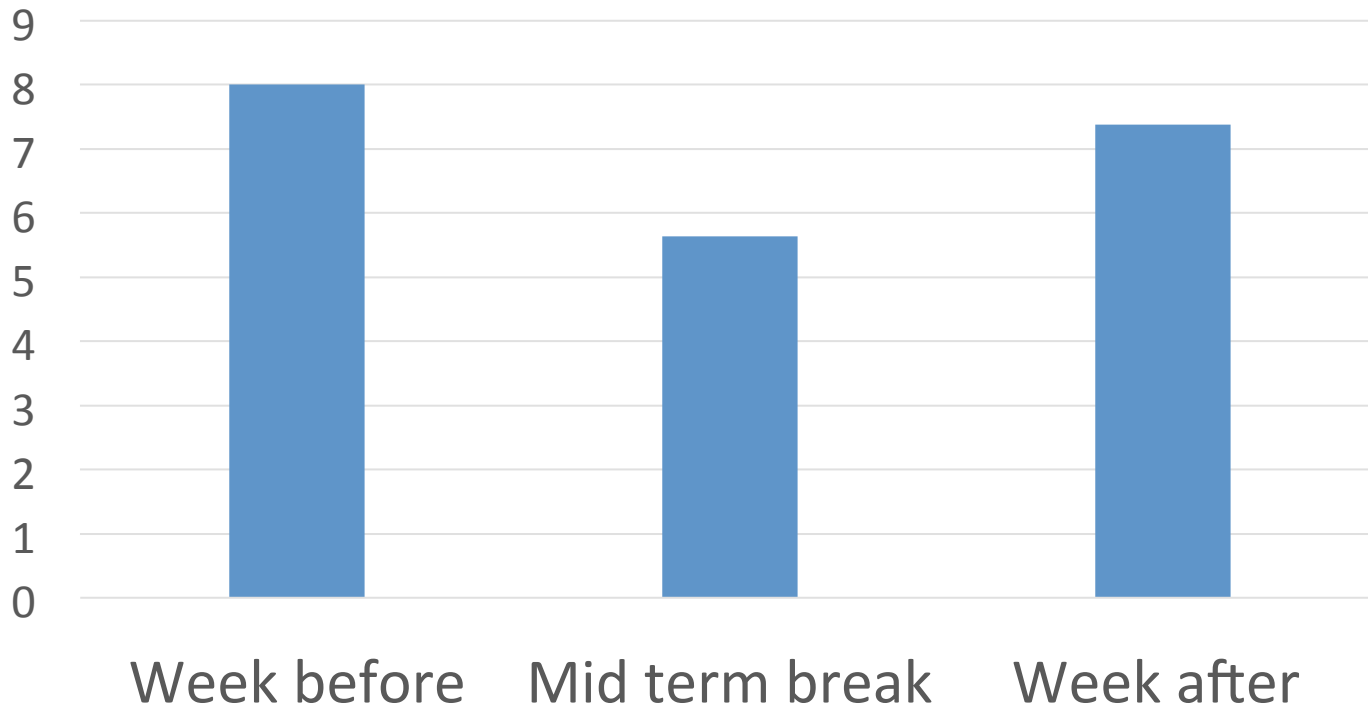
Positive Emotion

(e.g., enthusiastic, excited, energetic)

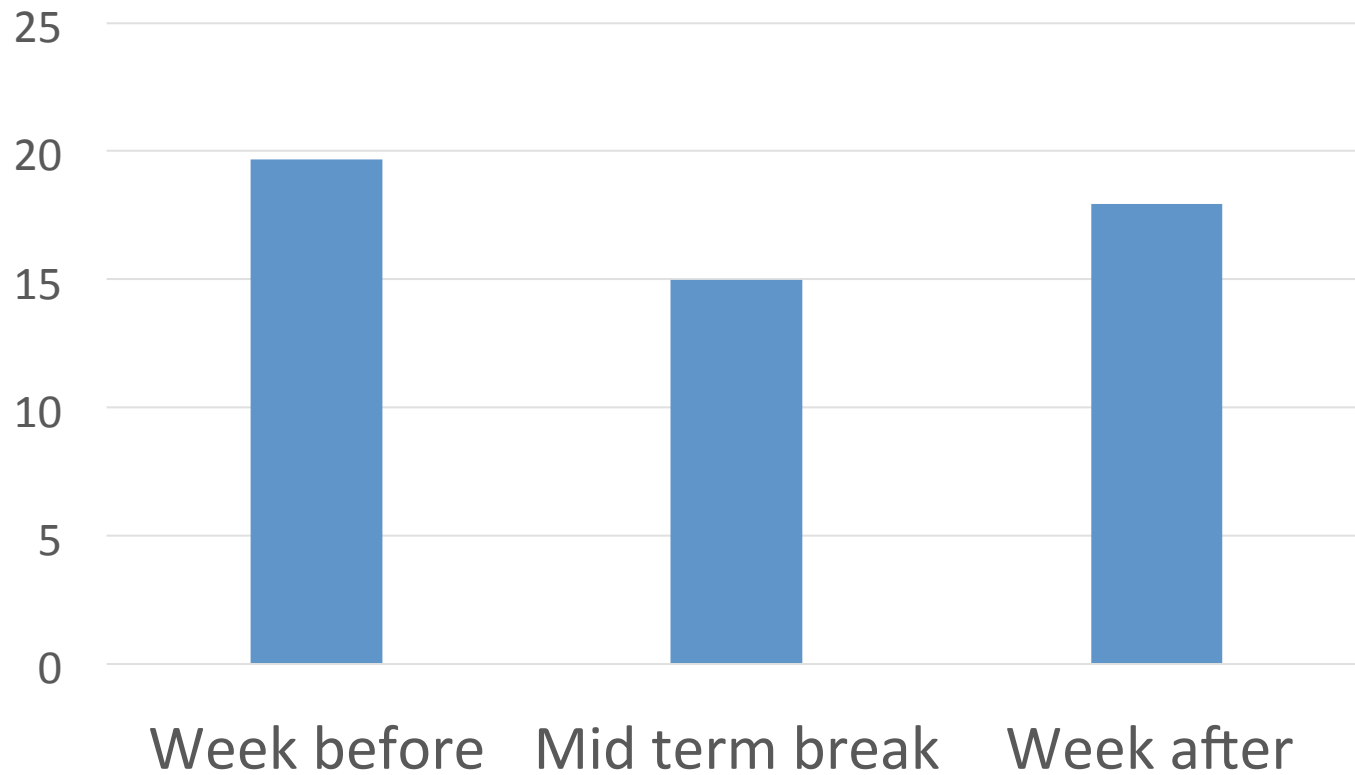


Depressed Emotion

(e.g., depressed, gloomy, miserable)

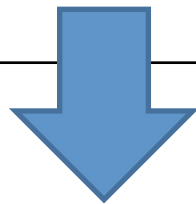


Work-Related Exhaustion (Burnout)

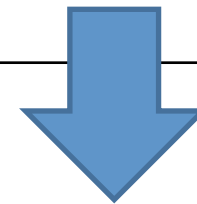


Two Forms of Perfectionism

Perfectionist Striving		Perfectionist Concerns
Very high personal standards		Very high personal standards
Extreme conscientiousness		Linked to neuroticism
Reward sensitive		Threat sensitive
Extremely high goals		Fear of failure/ concern about making mistakes
		Repeatedly check tasks for errors/ mistakes
		Feel pressure from others 'to be perfect'



**(Relatively) Adaptive
perfectionism**

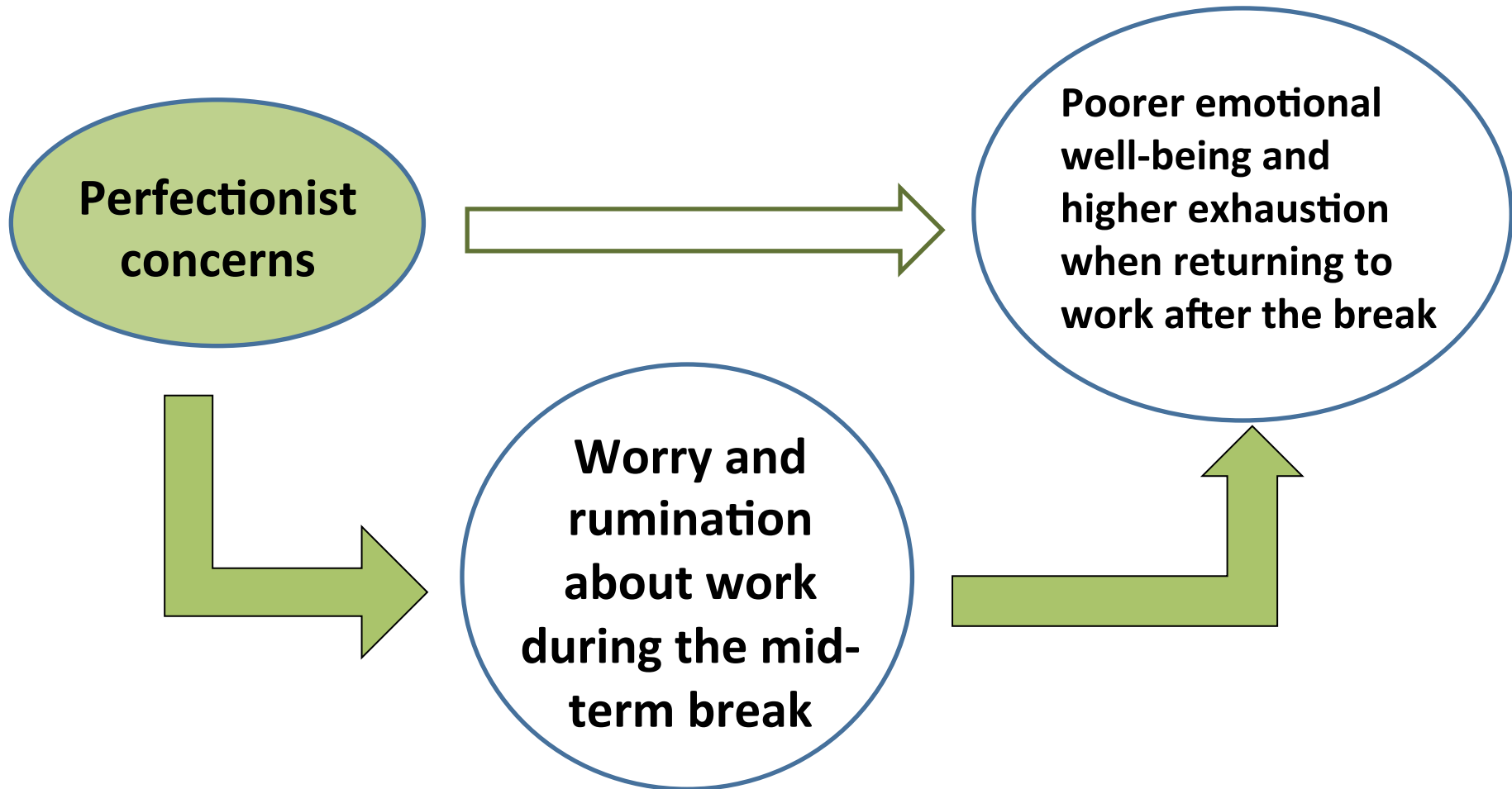


**Maladaptive
perfectionism**

Predicting well-being during first week back at work

	Positive affect		Depressed affect		Work exhaustion	
	β	ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2
STEP 1		.05*		.05*		.02
Age	.12		.03		-.08	
Gender	.04		-.02		.05	
Neuroticism	.04		.02		-.04	
STEP 2		.19***		.19***		.40***
Well-being during the break	.43***		.41***		.58***	
STEP 3		.04**		.05***		.03*
Perfectionist striving	.11		-.01		.06	
Perfectionist concerns	-.28***		.29***		.20**	

Mediation Results



Work-related worry and rumination during non-work time mediated the relationship between teacher perfectionism and post-break well-being

Summary/ Interpretation

- Teachers' emotional well-being shows immediate improvement during non-work weeks
- Work-related exhaustion seems to take longer to recover from (**and possible that 2 weeks not enough time for full recovery)
- Results generally show a gradual (curvilinear) pattern of post-vacation fade out

Summary/ Interpretation

- Employees exhibiting a maladaptive form of perfectionism at higher risk of poor recovery and burnout
- Recovery shown to be impaired by:
 - Working during non-work time
 - Worrying and ruminating about work during non-work time

Now Recruiting Teachers for May 2017 Half-Term Study!

[www.city.ac.uk/assessing-teachers-
well-being](http://www.city.ac.uk/assessing-teachers-well-being)

Or email:

teachers.wellbeing@city.ac.uk

Practical Recommendations

- Including **leisure time recovery** as part of staff well-being conversations and initiatives
- Possible ways that management might help to **model and promote recovery?**
- Skills-based interventions that:
 - Reduce problematic aspects of perfectionism
 - Help staff to disentangle from worry and rumination

Thank you for your attention

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