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Abstract:

Building on recent developments in job demands-resources (JD-R) theory, we investigate how high-performance work systems (HPWS) are related to both the motivational and health impairment processes. Concretely, we examine the relationship between HPWS and employees' burnout and quality of life (QoL) through its link with challenge and hindrance job demands. To do so, 417 hospitality and tourism employees (i.e. hotels, restaurants, and car rental offices) were surveyed, and their responses were analyzed using PLS-SEM. The results showed that HPWS were negatively associated with employee burnout, both directly and indirectly, through the reduction of challenge and hindrance job demands. In addition, the results showed that there is a positive relationship between HPWS and employee QoL. A negative association between burnout and QoL was observed, but the expected relationship between challenge job demands and QoL was not empirically confirmed. We discuss how these findings contribute to JD-R theory and practice.

High-performance work systems in job demands-resources theory: Implications for employee burnout and quality of life

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Keywords: high-performance work systems, challenge job demands, hindrance job demands, burnout, quality of life

1. Introduction

The importance of employees for service organizations has been widely acknowledged in the academic literature, especially in hospitality and tourism settings (Chen et al., 2019). The primary reason is that they are the main contact point between clients and organizations, so their interactions determine customers' perception of the delivered service (Schneider et al., 2005). They have the ability to influence not only the outcome of the service provided (e.g. a meal or room) but also the manner in which the outcome is given to the client, thus impacting customer satisfaction positively (Mohr & Bitner, 1995), even after a service failure occurs (Yani-de-Soriano et al., 2019). Therefore, it is evident that employees play a key role in tourist satisfaction and client loyalty, which are conducive for higher levels of organizational financial performance (Chi & Gursoy, 2009).

However, the tourism industry has traditionally been characterized by providing employees with poor working conditions and high levels of demands and stress (Baum, 2015), thus compromising their performance. This is very well explained by the main tenets of job demands-resources (JD-R) theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017), which is the theoretical framework on which the present work is based. According to this theory, job demands (i.e. job-related aspects that incur psychological and/or physiological costs) would affect the health impairment process, which posits that said demands lead to high levels of employee stress and burnout, which ultimately results in negative repercussions on individual performance. Recent literature suggests proper human resource management (HRM) practices as a solution to the aforementioned concerns (e.g. Kilroy et al., 2016; Kloutsiniotis & Mihail, 2020). Consequently, hospitality and tourism managers and HRM specialists alike have an urgent need to provide their staff with a working environment that alleviates the demands they face in their daily tasks. In this research, the focus is placed on high-performance work systems (HPWS) (Sun et al., 2007). HPWS are HRM practices that are interrelated and act together to provide employees with the abilities, motivation, and opportunities to perform well within their organizations (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Dorta-Afonso & González-de-la-Rosa, 2022; Messersmith et al., 2011). HPWS include HRM practices such as internal mobility, extensive training, employment security, and participation in decision-making, which are intended to enhance workers' skills and effort in their jobs (Delery & Doty, 1996; Huselid, 2017).

To date, most available research has adopted a management-centered approach, which places the focus on the potential of HPWS to increase employee productivity and various forms of performance (Karatepe, 2013; Karatepe & Vatankhah, 2015; Lee et al., 2012). Complementarily, scholars have recently started to adopt an employee-centered approach in which the interest is on analyzing the effects of HPWS on employees' attitudinal and behavioral outcomes (Badru et al., 2024; Kloutsiniotis & Mihail, 2020b; Peethambaran & Naim, 2024; Wang, 2024). The main reason for this change of perspective is that, although there is wide consensus on the benefits of HPWS for organizational performance, the mechanisms driving such increased performance remain a black box (Murphy et al., 2018; Sun et al., 2007). In essence, research suggests that the benefits for business performance derive, indeed, from the effects that HPWS produce on employee outcomes. Many important contributions have focused on showing that HPWS increase employee performance (e.g. Karatepe, 2013; Yang, 2012), but limited attention has been paid to employee well-being-related outcomes, which are crucial in hospitality and tourism firms, given the aforementioned role of employees in the interactions with clients (Baum, 2015; Dorta-Afonso et al., 2021). Again, under the lenses of JD-R theory, HPWS would be characterized as a source of job resources (i.e. job-related aspects that reduce physiological and/or psychological costs) (Chen & Chen, 2023). As such, HPWS would positively affect employee performance given their positive effects on the motivational path, which proposes that job resources ultimately lead to enhanced employee well-being (Dimple & Kuriakose, 2023).

Consequently, the focus of the present study is employees' quality of life (QoL), which is assumed to be a beneficial outcome for all stakeholders involved in the tourism activity—workers included—but has received little empirical attention (Uysal et al., 2016). According to Sirgy et al. (2001), QoL is defined as satisfaction with all life domains and subdomains, and it is situated at the top of the attitudinal hierarchy (Kara et al., 2018). In particular, as stated above, this work bases on JD-R theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017) to investigate how HPWS may be related to both the motivational and the health impairment paths through job demands reduction. In essence, regarding the health impairment process, HPWS may be associated with lower levels of employee burnout because they contribute to reducing the job demands that hospitality and tourism employees often face

(Demerouti et al., 2001). In addition, the assumptions concerning the motivational path suggest that HPWS may be related to employees' higher QoL, both directly and indirectly through the reduction of burnout.

However, the HRM literature highlights the importance of distinguishing between intended- (decision makers' desires for HRM practices), implemented- (practices that objectively exist within an organization) and perceived HRM practices (subjective perceptions and interpretations of the HRM practices that are implemented), in order to explore their associations with outcomes (Piening et al., 2014). In this sense, intended HRM practices, along with their actual implementation, might be different according to employees' interpretations (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004; Ehrnrooth & Björkman, 2012; Khilji & Wang, 2006). Consequently, as the focus of this research is employee well-being, attention is placed on HPWS, as perceived by employees (Peethambaran & Naim, 2024; Zhang et al., 2022).

Considering the above, we have designed a study to empirically test a research model (see Figure 1) with a twofold aim. The first aim is to examine the relationships of HPWS with both challenge and hindrance job demands, considering the need to distinguish between those two types of demands, as claimed by Bakker and Demerouti (2017). The second aim is to investigate the relationship that takes place between both types of job demands and both the health impairment and the motivational processes, as proposed by JD-R theory (Demerouti & Bakker, 2023). To do so, PLS-SEM was performed on a data set of 417 employees of the tourism sector.

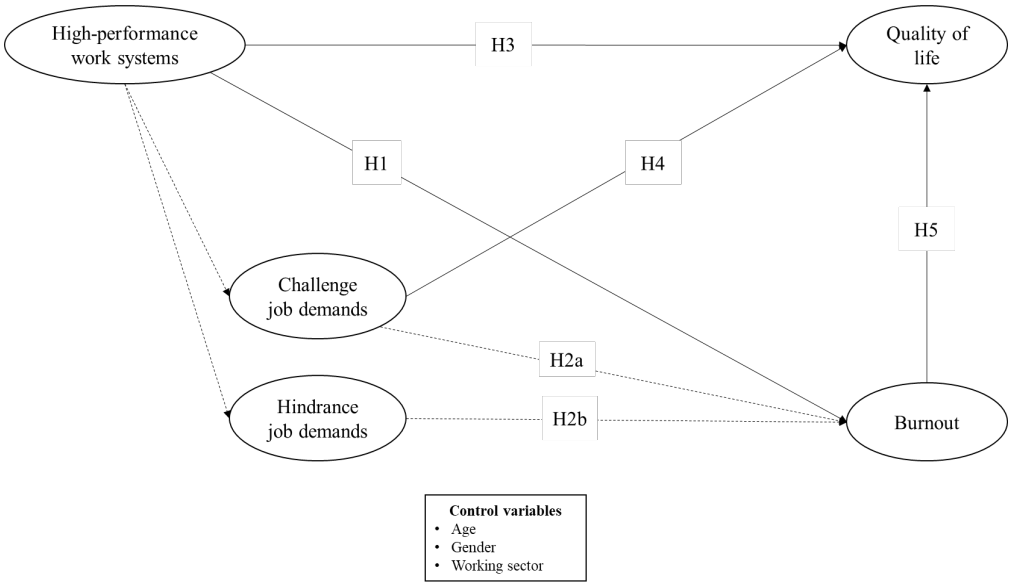

Figure 1. Research model

This research provides the field with manifold theoretical and managerial implications. First, it contributes to unlock the black box of mechanisms by which HPWS are related to employee outcomes (Akhtar et al., 2024; Kloutsiniotis & Mihail, 2020a; Sun et al., 2007). By doing so, it has been observed that HPWS are positively associated with employees' QoL, and negatively related to burnout through the reduction of both challenge and hindrance job demands. Second, this study responds to recent calls suggesting that research on HPWS should go further and examine their role in the enhancement of employees' well-being (Kloutsiniotis & Mihail, 2020a). Through this employee-centered approach, this work is presented as one of the few pieces of empirical evidence suggesting that HPWS may be beneficial for enhancing workers' QoL (Dorta-Afonso et al., 2021). Third, we extend JD-R theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017) by showing its suitability to explain employees' QoL, which has been highlighted as one of the main outcomes of tourism activity (Uysal et al., 2016). Last, we provide some practical implications for hospitality and tourism managers and HRM specialists. Overall, such recommendations relate to the optimal implementation of HPWS within the organization. Thus, to the extent that the results of this study support the mutual gains perspective — this is, HPWS benefit both the organization and its employees in a win-win manner (Kloutsiniotis & Mihail, 2020b)—, the design and implementation of HPWS should ensure that both the organization

and its employees benefit. If not implemented in this manner, HPWS could increase job demands, thereby increasing burnout and deteriorating employee well-being.

2. Theoretical framework and hypotheses

2.1. JD-R theory

One of the most relevant theories to explain employee burnout and well-being is JD-R theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Demerouti et al., 2001; Demerouti & Bakker, 2023). It was introduced in the literature more than two decades ago as a model aimed at explaining employee burnout (Demerouti et al., 2001). Later on, however, it developed into a theory that explains various forms of employee well-being (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

In essence, JD-R theory suggests that all job-related components of employees' work life can be divided into demands or resources depending on their characteristics (Demerouti et al., 2001). Job demands are defined as those physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained effort and therefore incur physiological or psychological costs (Demerouti et al., 2001). For instance, sources of job demands are work overload and work-family conflict (Kloutsiniotis & Mihail, 2020b). In contrast, job resources refer to all the aspects of the job (i.e. physical, psychological, social, or organizational) that alleviate job demands, contribute to goal achievement, and reduce physiological or psychological costs (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Job autonomy and social support are some examples of job resources (Tims et al., 2013). JD-R theory suggests that job resources and job demands initiate two different processes, namely the motivational and the health impairment processes, which explain employee well-being and performance (Demerouti & Bakker, 2023). Basically, the health impairment process suggests that job demands would lead to employee burnout, which would negatively affect performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). In contrast, job resources are capable of enhancing employee well-being in terms of affective and motivational outcomes that would positively affect performance (Demerouti & Bakker, 2023).

However, recent theoretical developments have highlighted the importance of distinguishing between two types of job demands, challenge and hindrance job demands, which remains an unresolved issue (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Hindrance job demands are defined as undesirable

demands and represent traditional draining demands (e.g. role conflict, demanding interactions with customers) that lead to employee burnout (Olafsen & Frølund, 2018). Customer incivility is an example of demanding interactions with clients (Chan et al., 2022). In contrast, challenge job demands may be defined as demands that, despite their draining nature because they also require effort, are desirable because employees react positively to them (Tims et al., 2013). Thus, challenge job demands may be perceived as somehow positive because they may also lead to higher levels of positive employee outcomes, since they play a motivational role (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). For example, starting a new project is a challenge demand because, although it requires effort from employees, it may be perceived as an opportunity for growth and development (Tims et al., 2013).

2.2. HPWS and the health impairment process

Burnout is defined as a syndrome that derives from a sustained exposure to job stress, which results in employees feeling exhausted at work, distancing themselves from their tasks, and feeling unable to be effective (Maslach et al., 2001). According to JD-R theory, burnout would be the result of the health impairment process derived from the stress produced by job demands. In this sense, recent research has highlighted the widely experienced stress among hospitality and tourism employees as a result of the instability and high demands of the working environments in this industry (Ariza-Montes et al., 2019). For example, receptionists at hotels or waiters at restaurants could develop burnout due to long exposure to demanding interactions with clients. As a result, they would feel exhausted, distance themselves from their tasks, and ultimately feel unable to achieve goals in their jobs.

Under the lens of JD-R theory, most research in hospitality and tourism to date has placed the focus on the positive effect of HPWS on employee engagement and the motivational path (e.g. Jaiswal & Tyagi, 2020; Karatepe & Olugbade, 2016). However, there is still little evidence on the role of such systems in the health impairment path. Previous research has evidenced that HRM practices constituting HPWS would reduce burnout by diminishing employee exhaustion, depersonalization, and feelings of inefficacy (e.g. Jyoti & Rani, 2019). In hospitality and tourism settings, extant research on this topic is still scant. Among the available studies, Wong et al. (2019) found that HPWS led to the reduction of employees' emotional exhaustion because such systems generate reciprocity, which acts

as a key mechanism that influences their positive psychological feelings at work. More recently, Dorta-Afonso et al. (2023) concluded that HPWS ultimately enhanced employees' job satisfaction given their reducing effect on employees' burnout levels. The rationale lies on the fact that HPWS may contribute to reduce the discrepancy between employees' perceived and desired states, which would result in lower levels of stress and burnout (Edwards, 1992). In essence, HPWS may be perceived as organizational resources that employees use to manage the challenges that they face at work. Consequently, it would be reasonable to expect a direct, negative relationship between HPWS and employee burnout. Stated formally, it is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 1: *HPWS are negatively associated with employee burnout.*

Despite the hypothesized negative relationship, the conceptual scheme of this research suggests that job demands could mediate the relationship between HPWS and employee burnout. Under this premise, HPWS could be a source of job resources, as some previous studies have proposed (e.g. Chen & Chen, 2023; Dorta-Afonso et al., 2023; Kloutsiniotis & Mihail, 2020b). In this sense, training-related HRM practices, which are provided by organizations to enhance the skills of their workforce, may help employees to better cope with the demands of their daily tasks. For example, hoteliers and restaurant managers can offer their staff training courses or programs in order to better cope with customer incivility (Han et al., 2016), which has been reported as a source of job demands leading to burnout (e.g. Yang & Lau, 2019). Such training would reduce employees' burnout in part because it helps them deal with uncivil customers. Therefore, it would be reasonable to expect HPWS to be negatively associated with employee burnout, partly because they contribute to alleviate job demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis 2: *Challenge job demands (a) and hindrance job demands (b) will mediate the HPWS-burnout relationship.*

Besides the previous discussion regarding the health impairment process, the following section exposes the argumentation concerning the motivational process, as suggested by JD-R theory

(Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). To be specific, it explains how HPWS and challenge job demands may be positively related to employees' quality of life (QoL).

2.3. HPWS, challenge job demands, and the motivational path

The main assumption of the motivational path of JD-R theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) claims that resources at employees' disposal instigate a process that enhances their well-being. In this sense, most research carried out to date has evidenced that HPWS are beneficial for employee engagement (e.g. Jaiswal & Tyagi, 2020; Kloutsiniotis & Mihail, 2020c; Rabiul et al., 2022; Teo et al., 2020). Despite those valuable contributions, other well-being indicators such as job satisfaction or QoL have not received sufficient attention in hospitality and tourism studies relating HPWS and employee outcomes (Dorta-Afonso et al., 2023). In this vein, QoL is defined as satisfaction with life as a whole (Dorta-Afonso et al., 2021; Lin et al., 2013). Additionally, according to Kara et al. (2018), QoL is placed at the top of the attitudinal hierarchy, and it implies satisfaction with all life domains and subdomains.

As previous studies suggest, it is crucial for hospitality and tourism managers and HRM specialists to increase their workforce's QoL, since it can reduce employee turnover intention and increase performance (Dorta-Afonso et al., 2021; Uysal-Irak, 2014). In this paper, we argue that HPWS are resources that initiate the motivational path proposed by JD-R theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017) and therefore will be positively associated with employees' QoL. The main rationale is that employees' QoL may increase with organizational practices aimed at satisfying their needs at work (Kim et al., 2018; Narehan et al., 2014; Zhao et al., 2016). For example, hospitality and tourism jobs have frequently being associated with low income (Baum, 2015). Thus, a good incentives-and-rewards system could counter such negative features and contribute to providing employees with proper financial satisfaction, which is one of the main domains of every person's life (Ahmat et al., 2019). In other words, the financial situation of a person allows them to satisfy their basic needs, which is one of the main determinants of their QoL (Abdullah et al., 2023). In a similar vein, other compensation forms such as leisure benefits have been previously related to workers' QoL (Lin et al., 2013). Additionally, HPWS may also contribute to satisfy higher-order needs such as

opportunities to develop skills through effective training systems. Thus, it would be reasonable to expect a positive relationship between HPWS and employees' QoL. To date, only one study has investigated this relationship in the hospitality and tourism context (Dorta-Afonso et al., 2021), which suggests that this relationship needs to be further examined. Based on the aforementioned reasoning, the following hypothesis is submitted:

Hypothesis 3: *HPWS are positively associated with employees' QoL.*

According to JD-R theory, the motivational path is initiated because of the resources found at work. In contrast, job demands have traditionally been seen as a key driver of burnout due to their role on the health impairment process (Demerouti et al., 2001) but having no effect on the motivational path.

Aligning with recent developments in JD-R theory and bearing in mind the distinction between challenge and hindrance job demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017), we hypothesize that challenge job demands may play a positive role on the motivational path, and therefore they are positively related to employees' QoL. The main rationale is that, although a source of stress, challenge job demands also provide employees with feelings of fulfilment (Cavanaugh et al., 2000). In other words, challenge job demands are, in essence, obstacles to overcome, but they are stimulating and provide opportunities to satisfy needs at work (Van den Broeck et al., 2010). In this line, some meta-analyses have evidenced that job challenges are positively related to positive employee outcomes (LePine et al., 2005; Podsakoff et al., 2007). Consequently, the following hypothesis is formally stated:

Hypothesis 4: *Challenge job demands are positively associated with employees' QoL.*

2.4. The relationship between employee burnout and QoL

One of the main postulates of JD-R theory is that the outcome of the motivational path—in this case, QoL—is negatively affected by burnout (Demerouti & Bakker, 2023). As stated above, burnout stems from a continuous exposure to job stress at the workplace, and hospitality and tourism stands out as a highly stressful sector for its workers (Ariza-Montes et al., 2019). In a recent literature

review, Ayachit and Chitta (2022) concluded that burnout results in several adverse outcomes related to both health and life issues. One such negative consequence is reduced QoL, as previous works have empirically shown (e.g. Alrawadieh et al., 2022; Ariza-Montes et al., 2019; Demirdelen Alrawadieh & Alrawadieh, 2022). Therefore, if stress has been reported to affect satisfaction with life negatively (e.g. Jasiński et al., 2024; Kumar et al., 2021), burnout is expected to have a similar relationship effect. Hence, it is proposed that:

Hypothesis 5: *Burnout is negatively associated with employees' QoL.*

3. Materials and methods

3.1. Data collection and sampling

Data collection took place during the 2021 spring-summer season on Gran Canaria (Canary Islands, Spain) following a convenience sampling process. At that time, tourism was recovering its normal activity after coronavirus mobility restrictions (EXCELTUR, 2022). The study population was hospitality and tourism employees, and the data collection instrument was a self-administered questionnaire, which means that the gathered data were cross-sectional and single-source (i.e. self-reported). However, since the research aim was to examine the relationships between HPWS, job demands, burnout and QoL based on employee perception (Peethambaran & Naim, 2024; Zhang et al., 2022), such research design was deemed appropriate. In any case, the most common procedural and statistical remedies on how to prevent method bias were followed during data collection. Such remedies are described in Section 3.4. Common method variance.

Regarding questionnaire design, it was developed by three professors with wide expertise in HRM to assure its content validity. Prior to data collection, it was pretested to ensure question clarity and correct potential grammar and/or spelling mistakes. Concerning the data collection process, the research was initially presented to HR managers of tourism and hospitality organizations that were operating in Gran Canaria at that time. Upon their agreement to participate, they were asked to encourage their employees to take part in the survey. Then, a formal appointment was arranged, and six external research assistants, who were unfamiliar with the research objectives, visited the

participating companies and oversaw the data collection. These assistants administered the questionnaires and assisted employees on how to fill them in.

A final sample of 417 hospitality and tourism employees was gathered. Table I captures its characteristics.

	Total (n=417)	
	n	%
Gender		
Male	166	39.8
Female	247	59.2
No response	4	1.0
Age (years)		
<25	57	13.7
25–34	111	26.6
35–44	102	24.5
>44	138	33.1
No response	9	2.1
Working sector		
Hospitality	230	55.2
Restaurants	94	22.5
Car rental	93	22.3

Table I. Sample characteristics

3.2. Variables and measures

As explained above, empirically validated scales were used. Since such scales were originally written in English, they were translated into Spanish using a back-translation procedure (Brislin, 1970). The authors, with the help of other professors specialized in HRM and organizational behavior, ensured the content validity of this translation.

3.2.1. High-performance work systems (HPWS)

The scale designed by Kloutsiniotis and Mihail (2020c) was used to measure HPWS. It comprises 20 items related to seven categories of HRM practices: recruitment and selection, training and development, employment security, performance management, incentives and rewards, job design, and participation in decision-making. Example items are: “Great effort is taken to select the right person” (recruitment and selection), “Performance is more often measured with objective,

quantifiable results" (performance management), "Employees in this organization are allowed to make any decisions" (participation in decision-making). Respondents were asked to rate from 1 to 5 the extent to which they agreed that such HRM practices were carried out in their organizations. A score of 1 indicated a strong disagreement, whereas a score of 5 indicated a strong agreement. The alpha coefficients for this scale ranged from 0.772 to 0.926.

3.2.2. Job demands

The validated scale by Cavanaugh et al. (2000) was used. This scale includes 11 items, differentiating between hindrance job demands (5 items) and challenge job demands (6 items). Example items are: "The number of projects and/or assignments I have" (challenge job demands), "The inability to clearly understand what is expected of me on the job" (hindrance job demands). Respondents were asked to rate from 1 to 5 the extent to which the previous aspects of their job caused them stress. A score of 1 indicated "no stress," whereas a score of 5 indicated "great deal of stress." The alpha coefficients for this scale were 0.920 (challenge job demands) and 0.843 (hindrance job demands).

3.2.3. Burnout

To measure burnout, the Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Survey was used (Schaufeli et al., 1996). This scale includes a total of 15 items comprising three subdimensions: exhaustion (5 items), cynicism (4 items), and personal efficacy (6 items). Example items are: "I feel emotionally drained from my work" (exhaustion), "I have become less interested in my work since I started this job" (cynicism), and "I can effectively solve the problems that arise in my work" (personal efficacy). Respondents were asked to indicate how often they experienced each of these burnout symptoms. The scale was scored from 1 to 7, where 1 meant "Never" and 7 meant "Everyday." The alpha coefficients for this scale were 0.927 (exhaustion), 0.879 (cynicism) and 0.903 (personal efficacy).

3.2.4. Quality of Life (QoL)

QoL was measured with a 3-item scale adapted from previous studies (Choi et al., 2018; Zhao et al., 2016). The included items were: "I am satisfied with my life", "I feel that I lead a fulfilling life," and "Overall I feel happy about my life." Respondents were asked to rate from 1 to 5 the extent to which they agreed with the previous statements regarding their overall quality of life (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree). The alpha coefficient for this scale was 0.935.

3.3. Control variables

Employees' age (1=up to 25 years old, 2=25–34 years old, 3=35–44 years old, 4=over 44 years old), gender (1=female, 2=male), and working sector (1=hospitality, 2=car-rental, 3=restaurants) were considered control variables. These variables were selected because they may result in confounding effects, as employees' age and gender may affect their perceptions of working conditions (Brinck et al., 2019; Haile, 2021), and working sector may affect how HPWS are implemented within the organization (Gutiérrez-Martínez et al., 2023; Knies et al., 2024). This approach to control variables is also congruent with existing studies in the literature (e.g. Akhtar et al., 2024; Harley et al., 2007; Wang, 2024; Zhang & Morris, 2014).

3.4. Common method variance

As mentioned above, due to the nature of the data (cross-sectional and self-reported), to prevent common method variance (CMV), both procedural and statistical remedies were applied.

Procedurally, as recommended by Podsakoff et al. (2003), only empirically validated scales were used, as described in Section 3.2. Variables and measures. Also, scale items were written in a clear, precise manner, and both complex syntax and double-barreled questions were avoided. A psychological separation effect was also attempted by separating the questions that measured different variables in the questionnaire (HPWS, burnout, etc.). Lastly, respondents were ensured confidentiality and anonymity, and were discouraged to provide correct or preferred answers, but rather honest answers. This would prevent social desirability bias.

Statistically, following Kock and Lynn (2012), a full collinearity test was conducted. All variance inflation values (VIF) values were below the 3.3 threshold. Complementarily, Harman's single factor test was also performed (P. M. Podsakoff et al., 2003), in which the first factor accounted only for 22.1%.

For the above reasons, it can be concluded that CMV was not problematic in this research.

3.5. Statistical analysis

To meet the research objectives, PLS-SEM was performed. Besides the increasing interest that it has aroused among HRM academics (Ringle et al., 2020), PLS-SEM was chosen mainly because the research model included both reflective (job demands and QoL) and formative (HPWS and burnout) constructs (Hair et al., 2019).

To check whether the research sample was appropriate for PLS-SEM, a power test was performed with the following parameters: 0.8 for the power test (Cohen, 1988) and 0.15 for the effect size (Faul et al., 2007). The power test determined that 103 was the minimum number of cases required to perform PLS-SEM. Thus, the research sample (n=417) was appropriate for such analysis.

4. Results

To assess the outer model, the first step is to validate the first-order model, in which all items were reflective. This implies assessing scale reliability and both convergent and discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2017).

To evaluate reliability, item loadings were examined to check for individual reliability (i.e. at the indicator level). Table II shows that all loadings exceeded the 0.708 threshold and were statistically significant. According to Hair et al. (2017), these results are indicative of sufficient individual reliability. Then, to assess internal consistency reliability (i.e. at the construct level), two coefficients were calculated: composite reliability (CR) and Dijkstra and Henseler's rho (ρ_A) (Hair et al., 2021). As Table II shows, in all constructs, the 0.7 threshold was exceeded for both coefficients (Dijkstra & Henseler, 2015; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Thus, the first-order model was satisfactory in terms of internal consistency reliability.

Next, convergent validity was checked by examining the average variance extracted (AVE) of each construct (see Table II). In all cases, the AVE was higher than the 0.5 minimum established by the literature (Hair et al., 2017), thus confirming that the model had convergent validity.

Constructs	Indicators	Loadings	CR	ρ_A	AVE
HIGH-PERFORMANCE WORK SYSTEMS (HPWS)	**Recruitment and selection**		0.948	0.926	0.819
	REC1	0.912***			
	REC2	0.858***			
	REC3	0.923***			
	REC4	0.926***			
	Training and development		0.943	0.925	0.848
	TRA1	0.938***			
	TRA2	0.915***			
	TRA3	0.909***			
	Employment security		0.867	0.790	0.685
	SEC1	0.849***			
	SEC2	0.783***			
	SEC3	0.848***			
	Performance management		0.943	0.909	0.846
	PER1	0.911***			
	PER2	0.930***			
	PER3	0.917***			
	Incentives and rewards		0.925	0.876	0.860
	INC1	0.945***			
	INC2	0.909***			
	Participation in decision-making		0.945	0.913	0.851
	PAR1	0.917***			
	PAR2	0.920***			
	PAR3	0.931***			
	Job design		0.942	0.912	0.843
	DES1	0.915***			
	DES2	0.940***			
	DES3	0.900***			
CHALLENGE JOB DEMANDS	CHA1	0.861***	0.938	0.929	0.715
	CHA2	0.775***			
	CHA3	0.883***			
	CHA4	0.857***			
	CHA5	0.853***			
	CHA6	0.842***			
HINDRANCE JOB DEMANDS	HIN1	0.726***	0.888	0.849	0.615
	HIN2	0.816***			
	HIN3	0.850***			
	HIN4	0.751***			
	HIN5	0.772***			
BURNOUT	**Exhaustion**		0.945	0.929	0.774
	EXH1	0.890***			
	EXH2	0.850***			
	EXH3	0.907***			
	EXH4	0.880***			
	EXH5	0.870***			
	Cynicism		0.917	0.888	0.735

	CYN1	0.887***			
	CYN2	0.911***			
	CYN3	0.849***			
	CYN4	0.778***			
	Personal efficacy		0.925	0.907	0.674
	EFF1	0.748***			
	EFF2	0.797***			
	EFF3	0.863***			
	EFF4	0.862***			
	EFF5	0.852***			
	EFF6	0.799***			
QUALITY OF LIFE (QoL)	QoL1	0.947***	0.958	0.935	0.884
	QoL2	0.942***			
	QoL3	0.932***			

Bootstrapping based on 10,000 subsamples
Significance levels: ***p<0.001
CR = composite reliability; ρ_A = Henseler's rho; AVE = average variance extracted

Table II. Evaluation of the first-order outer model

Finally, to assess discriminant validity, the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio was used (Hair et al., 2021). The results are shown in Table III. No values exceeded the 0.85 threshold established by Henseler et al. (2015). Therefore, the discriminant validity of the first-order model was also confirmed.

	Heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio												
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**
1													
2	0.439												
3	0.363	0.432											
4	0.634	0.760	0.499										
5	0.745	0.690	0.564	0.697									
6	0.249	0.245	0.584	0.327	0.341								
7	0.298	0.527	0.718	0.522	0.478	0.487							
8	0.306	0.449	0.804	0.488	0.500	0.549	0.705						
9	0.320	0.496	0.739	0.486	0.538	0.565	0.779	0.762					
10	0.070	0.113	0.342	0.081	0.121	0.115	0.305	0.219	0.309				
11	0.130	0.263	0.301	0.228	0.245	0.086	0.240	0.258	0.271	0.384			
12	0.258	0.429	0.750	0.469	0.520	0.430	0.686	0.745	0.743	0.293	0.306		
13	0.233	0.445	0.639	0.396	0.455	0.477	0.596	0.594	0.683	0.187	0.278	0.747	

1. Challenge job demands; 2. Cynicism; 3. Employment security; 4. Exhaustion; 5. Hindrance job demands; 6. Incentives and rewards; 7. Job design; 8. Participation in decision-making; 9. Performance management; 10. Personal efficacy; 11. Quality of life; 12. Recruitment and selection; 13. Training and development

Table III. Discriminant validity of the first-order outer model

After validating the first-order model, given the existence of reflective-formative, second-order constructs (HPWS and burnout), a second-order model was created following the disjoint two-step approach, as recommended by Becker et al. (2023). Under this approach, a second-order construct is created by grouping the items of each dimension forming said construct. These dimensions are specified as latent variables, and their scores are used as the items forming the second-order construct.

The new model was evaluated. Due to the formative nature of the second-order constructs, first their individual VIF values were examined to check for collinearity. According to Hair et al. (2017), VIF values above 3 are indicative of collinearity problems. In this model, all VIF values were below 3 (see Table IV). Therefore, it can be stated that collinearity was not an issue in this research.

Next, the significance level of the item weights was observed. As shown in Table IV, the weights of recruitment and selection, training and development, incentives and rewards, and participation in decision-making, were not significant. Following Hair et al. (2019), to decide whether these items should be removed from the model, their individual loadings were checked. Items with loadings greater than or equal to 0.5 should be kept (Hair et al., 2017). This condition was met for both recruitment and selection, and training and development (see the Loadings column), but not for incentives and rewards. In that latter case, the significance level of the loading was observed. Since it was statistically significant, incentives and rewards was eventually kept in the model (Hair et al., 2017).

Constructs	Dimensions	Weights	Loadings	VIF
HIGH-PERFORMANCE WORK SYSTEMS (HPWS)	Recruitment and selection	0.172^{ns}	*0.840*	2.901
	Training and development	0.096^{ns}	*0.730*	2.143
	Employment security	0.323***	0.858	2.313
	Performance management	0.267*	0.876	2.949
	Incentives and rewards	-0.050^{ns}	0.494***	1.458
	Participation in decision-making	0.098^{ns}	*0.815*	2.702
	Job design	0.259**	0.849	2.348
BURNOUT	Cynicism	0.314***	0.805	1.963
	Personal efficacy	-0.411***	-0.431	1.018
	Exhaustion	0.656***	0.869	1.949

Bootstrapping based on 10,000 subsamples
Significance levels: $^{***}p<0.001$; $^{**}p<0.01$; $^{*}p<0.05$; ^{ns} non-significant
VIF = variance inflation factor

Table IV. Evaluation of the second-order outer model

The second stage of PLS-SEM analysis requires the evaluation of the inner model. First, the VIF values of the constructs were checked. Since they were all lower than 3, no collinearity was detected (Hair et al., 2017). Next, path coefficients (β) and the significance level of the proposed hypotheses were analyzed. Complementarily, t-values (*t*) and 95% confidence intervals have also been reported (see Table V).

As it can be observed in Table V, HPWS had a negative relationship with burnout (β=-0.410, $p<0.001$), which supports H1. For its part, H2 proposed that the HPWS-burnout relationship will be a mediation relationship, in which challenge job demands (H2a) and hindrance job demands (H2b) will act as mediators. To test it, first the significance level of the indirect relationships was examined (Cepeda Carrión et al., 2017). As Table V shows, both relationships were statistically significant (HPWS→Challenge job demands→Burnout: β=-0.060, $p<0.01$; (HPWS→Hindrance job demands→Burnout: β=-0.153, $p<0.001$), which suggests that a mediation relationship may exist (Nitzl et al., 2016) Given that the direct link, as reported above, was also significant (HPWS→Burnout: β=-0.410, $p<0.001$), the two hypothesized mediation relationships seemed to be partial (Nitzl et al., 2016). This means that the negative relationship between HPWS and burnout is explained by the fact that HPWS are negatively associated with both challenge and hindrance job demands, which in turn are negatively associated with burnout. However, since there is also a direct relationship between HPWS and burnout, while challenge and hindrance job demands play a significant role in this relationship, other factors may also contribute to this dynamic.

Regarding the remaining proposed hypotheses, H3 was statistically supported, since it was found that HPWS and QoL were positively associated (β=0.130, $p<0.05$). Then, H4 proposed that challenge job demands will be positively related to QoL. Although the path coefficient was positive as expected, it was not significant. As such, H4 did not find empirical support. Finally, as expected, it was found that burnout and QoL were negatively associated (β=0.321, $p<0.001$), thus supporting H5.

Direct relationships	β	*t*	95% CI		Results
(H1) HPWS à Burnout	-0.410***	8.024	-0.49	-0.32	Supported
HPWS à Challenge job demands	-0.318***	6.666	-0.406	-0.248	
HPWS à Hindrance job demands	-0.515***	12.550	-0.587	-0.454	
Challenge job demands à Burnout	0.190***	3.164	0.084	0.282	
Hindrance job demands à Burnout	0.296***	4.831	0.192	0.394	
(H3) HPWS à QoL	0.130*	2.001	0.027	0.239	Supported
(H4) Challenge job demands à QoL	0.093ns	1.566	-0.005	0.192	Not supported
(H5) Burnout à QoL	-0.321***	4.428	-0.440	-0.202	Supported
Indirect relationships					
(H2a) HPWS à Challenge job demands à Burnout	-0.060**	2.697	-0.099	-0.025	Supported
(H2b) HPWS à Hindrance job demands à Burnout	-0.153***	4.422	-0.212	-0.098	Supported

Bootstrapping based on 10,000 subsamples
β = path coefficient; *t* = t-values; CI = confidence intervals
Significance levels: ***p<0.001; **p<0.01; *p<0.05

Table V. Results of hypothesis testing

Regarding the control variables (age, gender, and working sector), the results show that gender was associated with both challenge (β=-0.123, p<0.01) and hindrance (β=-0.121, p<0.01) job demands. This may indicate that women in hospitality and tourism face more job demands than their male counterparts. Also, age was found to be related to QoL, particularly ages below 25 (β=-0.097, p<0.05). Neither the other age intervals (25–34, 35–44, and older than 44) nor the working sector were associated with any dependent variable.

To conclude the evaluation of the inner model, the model's explanatory power was assessed using R^2 (Hair et al., 2019). R^2 values were 13.1% for challenge job demands, 30.0% for hindrance job demands, 54.3% for burnout, and 16.0% for QoL. Then, the model's predictive capacity was also checked by means of $PLS_{predict}$ (Shmueli et al., 2016). Following Shmueli et al.'s (2019) guidelines, the key target variable was QoL, since it is an endogenous variable in the model, and it was measured reflectively. The results of the $PLS_{predict}$ calculations are shown in Table VI. Since the $Q^2_{predict}$ values were positive for the three items of QoL, the proposed model surpassed the naïve benchmark. Then, given the highly asymmetric distribution of prediction errors, the mean absolute error (MAE) of the PLS-SEM model was compared to that of the linear regression (LM) benchmark, and it was observed that the former was lower in two out of three items. Thus, it can be concluded that the proposed model had a medium predictive power.

	$Q^2_{predict}$	PLS-SEM MAE	LM MAE	Δ MAE
QoL1	0.069	0.877	0.878	-0.001
QoL2	0.062	0.842	0.847	-0.005
QoL3	0.078	0.808	0.807	0.001

MAE = mean absolute error; LM = linear regression

Table VI. Results of $PLS_{predict}$

5. Discussion

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship of HPWS with both the motivational and the health impairment processes as proposed by JD-R theory. The results show that HPWS were negatively associated with employee burnout, both directly and indirectly through the reduction of challenge and hindrance job demands. The proposed positive association between HPWS and employees' overall QoL was also observed. Additionally, it was also revealed that burnout had a negative relationship with employees' QoL. However, the hypothesized positive association between challenge job demands and burnout could not be supported by the data. These results provide the field with important theoretical implications, as well as managerial contributions, that will be discussed before addressing some limitations that may open future lines of research.

5.1. Theoretical implications

In essence, this study shows that HPWS may play a positive role on employee outcomes due to their negative and positive relationships with burnout and QoL respectively. Consequently, it aligns with previous research suggesting that HPWS are positive to increase employee positive outcomes such as engagement (Huertas-Valdivia et al., 2018; Karatepe & Olugbade, 2016), organizational citizen behavior (Tang & Tang, 2012; Yang, 2012), commitment (Dorta-Afonso et al., 2021; Teo et al., 2020), various forms of performance (Dhar, 2015; Jaiswal & Tyagi, 2020; Karatepe, 2015), and turnover reduction (Afsar et al., 2018; Benítez-Núñez et al., 2024; Page et al., 2018). In this line, this work makes those findings generalizable by showing how such systems are associated with burnout reduction (Dorta-Afonso et al., 2023; Wong et al., 2019) and the increase of employees' QoL. Thus,

these results provide extensive support for the mutual gains perspective of HPWS, as opposed to the conflicting outcomes perspective (Van De Voorde et al., 2012). The mutual gains perspective claims that HPWS benefit both the organization and employees in a win–win manner, by integrating the latter into the business strategy, which results in better well-being at work (Kloutsiniotis & Mihail, 2020b). In contrast, the conflicting outcomes perspective states that HPWS are positive for organizational performance, but at the expense of employees' well-being, who are overloaded with work and exploited (Kloutsiniotis et al., 2021; Ogbonnaya & Messersmith, 2019). The mutual gains perspective is supported in this research by the observed role of HPWS on the health impairment process proposed by JD-R theory (Demerouti & Bakker, 2023). Basically, it was found that HPWS is associated with employees' reduced drain, both directly and indirectly through the reduction of both challenge and hindrance job demands. As such, this paper aligns with previous research that suggests that HPWS are beneficial for burnout reduction (e.g. Jyoti & Rani, 2019), also in hospitality (Dorta-Afonso et al., 2023). The study also contributes to the scant literature on available mechanisms to effectively reduce burnout (Fan et al., 2014). Additionally, this study aligns with previous works claiming that HPWS are useful to reduce employee burnout, since they are able to reduce both challenge and hindrance job demands (e.g. Kloutsiniotis & Mihail, 2020b). Bearing this in mind, another implication of this paper is its contribution to the employee-centered approach of HPWS, which has received substantially less attention than the management-centered approach (Kloutsiniotis & Mihail, 2020a) and should be highlighted in hospitality and tourism research, given that even though they suffer from poor working conditions (Chen et al., 2019; Huertas-Valdivia et al., 2018; Karatepe, 2013), they are important for this economic sector (Chen et al., 2019).

The results of this research also align with the main assumptions of the motivational path as proposed by JD-R theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). In this sense, previous studies on the topic have focused on other outcome variables such as job satisfaction (Dorta-Afonso et al., 2023), commitment (Teo et al., 2020; Yang, 2012), and especially employee engagement (Alafeshat & Tanova, 2019; Jaiswal & Tyagi, 2020; Karatepe & Olugbade, 2016; Rabiul et al., 2022). In this research, it has been evidenced that JD-R theory is suitable to explain the positive relationship between HPWS and employees' QoL, which is an important outcome to examine in the hospitality and

tourism sector, yet has received little attention (Uysal et al., 2016). To contribute to this matter, this paper offers the second study in hospitality and tourism settings that modelled a direct relationship between HPWS and employee QoL besides the work by Dorta-Afonso et al. (2021). In essence, the data support the idea that HPWS help employees to achieve their desired states within their companies, and therefore achieve higher levels of well-being (Edwards, 1992). However, the expected positive relationship between challenge job demands and QoL was not supported in this study, which suggests that the need for differentiating between challenge and hindrance job demands in recent developments of JD-R theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017) still needs further investigation. Similar to Bakker and Sanz-Vergel (2013), we hypothesize that these results may be explained by the context in which the present study took place. Because it occurred during the "back to normal" era after the coronavirus pandemic, employees may have been experiencing difficult times in other life domains, and the extra stress derived from challenge job demands was perceived as detrimental. In this sense, challenge job demands could have been perceived as hindrance job demands, and therefore the expected positive association was not found. The most recent developments in JD-R theory for crisis times (Demerouti & Bakker, 2023) suggest that the effects of both demands and resources may be determined by the effects and/or availability of other demands or resources at a personal level, including home. Consequently, the post-coronavirus context, in which fewer resources and extra demands were faced by hospitality and tourism employees, not only at their workplaces but in their personal lives as well, may have caused the challenge job demands to be perceived as negative. Another line of reasoning that may explain why the challenge job demands-QoL relationship did not find empirical support lies in the scale used to measure job demands (Cavanaugh et al., 2000). This scale does not focus on measuring job demands in a specific industry. However, the current study is contextualized in the tourism and hospitality sector. It is possible that this sector has its own challenge job demands. Therefore, those included in Cavanaugh et al. (2000) were not perceived as genuine challenges by tourism employees.

5.2. Managerial recommendations

From a managerial point of view, the findings of this study are useful for hospitality and tourism managers and HRM specialists alike, since they suggest that HPWS may be a solution to the high job demands that are commonplace among employees in this industry (Baum, 2015). Concretely, investing and implementing HPWS may be beneficial for tourism firms, not only because of their potential to reduce burnout but also because of their positive effect on employee QoL.

Another recommendation stemming from this research is related to the competing perspectives regarding HPWS (Van De Voorde et al., 2012). Despite the results of this study, which support and align with the mutual gains perspective (Kloutsiniotis & Mihail, 2020b), hospitality and tourism managers should proceed with caution when implementing HPWS in their organizations. They should guarantee that HPWS are developed and implemented in a win–win manner. Otherwise, they could increase job demands and aggravate employees' well-being, which supports the conflicting outcomes perspective of HPWS (Dimple & Kuriakose, 2023; Ogbonnaya & Messersmith, 2019). One way to achieve a win-win implementation would be to design HPWS collaboratively between employees and managers. This approach ensures that the needs and expectations of both parties are taken into consideration, thereby preventing the overburdening of employees with job demands. Another way to implement this quid pro quo dynamic may be the equitable distribution of benefits. This is, if the organization achieves higher returns, a portion of these profits could be allocated to employees and initiatives aimed at enhancing their well-being (e.g. flexible working hours, stress management counseling) (Eng et al., 2024; Neumeier et al., 2017). This approach aligns with the principle of reciprocity, as postulated by social exchange theory (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), which underscores the mutual gains perspective of HPWS.

Finally, it is also recommended that, besides implementing HPWS in an appropriate manner, organizations should effectively communicate these systems to target employees (Shapoval, 2019). Managers should clearly articulate both the objectives and advantages of HPWS, ensuring that employees understand the rationale behind their implementation. They should also facilitate employees in providing feedback on HPWS. To do so, they should use various communication channels and foster an environment that promotes open dialogue. Additionally, organizations should

regularly monitor employees' perceptions of HPWS to make any necessary adjustments if required. That way, employees will have a more positive perception of HPWS and will be more aware of the benefits of working in their organizations.

5.3. Limitations and future lines of research

Despite the theoretical and practical contributions listed above, the present research has some limitations that deserve attention and may stimulate further research on the topic.

First, as described in Section 3.1. Data collection and sampling, the study aim required a research design based on single-source, self-reported (i.e. employees), cross-sectional data. Therefore, this research is liable to method biases. However, recent evidence suggests that common method variance is unlikely to invalidate single-source data (Bozionelos & Simmering, 2022; Ehrnrooth & Björkman, 2012). In any case, as described in Section 3.4. Common method variance, the most common procedural and statistical remedies to prevent common method variance were followed during data collection (Kock & Lynn, 2012; Podsakoff et al., 2003). Such procedures confirmed that common method variance was not an issue in this study.

Another limitation concerning the research design, cross-sectional data do not allow to draw conclusions about causality. As such, future studies could use a longitudinal design in which questions about HPWS, job demands and employee outcomes are separated in time. In relation to employee outcomes, and considering JD-R theory, additional variables could be incorporated into these longitudinal studies. Regarding the health impairment process, besides burnout, variables related to employees' mental health such as anxiety and depression (WHO, 2024) could be included. This would allow for an examination of the role of HPWS in mitigating these negative outcomes, both directly and indirectly through the reduction of job demands. Concerning the motivational path proposed in this study to explain both the direct and indirect relationships between HPWS and QoL, further research could consider incorporating other desirable motivational outcomes such as engagement, extra-role behaviors, adaptivity and/or different forms of performance (e.g. creative performance, service recovery performance). Doing so would strengthen the argument that HPWS serve as a source of job

resources that not only alleviate job demands, but also foster a healthy, positive work environment for employees.

Second, although it opens new avenues in the investigation of the relationships between HPWS, employee burnout, and QoL in hospitality and tourism settings, this work has considered the system approach, thus neglecting the potential differential effects that different bundles of HRM practices may have on employee outcomes. Therefore, it would be necessary to further investigate whether the relationships found here hold true when a bundle approach is followed. More particularly, it is suggested that future studies decompose whole HPWS into bundles of HRM practices following the abilities-motivation-opportunities categorization, as recently highlighted in the literature (Kloutsiniotis & Mihail, 2020a).

Another future line of research is related to our findings concerning the role that gender seems to play on both challenge and hindrance demands. Such findings highlight the need to examine whether there are differential associations and effects of HPWS on employees' outcomes across genders.

Finally, since the predicted relationship between challenge job demands and QoL could not be supported, presumably due to the context in which the research was carried out, it would be advisable to replicate this study under more stable conditions. That way, the needed differentiation between challenge and hindrance job demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017) would be made clearer. Also, because the scale used to measure job demands was not specifically tailored for the tourism industry, it would be advisable that, when replicating the study, a scale that includes the appropriate challenge job demands experienced by tourism employees is used.

6. Conclusion

This study found that HPWS are negatively associated with employee burnout, both directly and indirectly through the reduction of both challenge and hindrance job demands. Additionally, HPWS were found to be positively associated with employees' QoL. These findings not only align with the mutual gains perspective of HPWS, but also highlight their role as a source of job resources, thus offering a potential solution to the high job demands faced by employees nowadays. Given the

pressing need for tourism and hospitality organizations to provide humane working conditions for their workforce, the authors hope that this study will prove useful to both academics and practitioners, encouraging further research on employee well-being within and beyond the tourism sector.

Declaration of interest

The authors report there are no competing interests to declare.

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