

The impact of employee-oriented CSR on quality of life: Evidence from the hospitality industry

Manuel González-De-la-Rosa^{a,*}, Yaiza Armas-Cruz^a, Daniel Dorta-Afonso^b,
Francisco J. García-Rodríguez^a

^a Department of Business Management and Economic History & IUDE, Faculty of Tourism, Economics and Business, Universidad de La Laguna, La Laguna, Tenerife, Canary Islands, Spain

^b Department of Economy and Business Management & IDETIC, Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Canary Islands, Spain

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ABSTRACT

This paper builds on recent corporate social responsibility (CSR) literature and on stakeholder theory. Our aim is to analyze the direct and indirect effects of employee-oriented CSR on hotel workers' quality of life (QoL). Based on survey collected from a sample of hotel employees in the Canary Islands (Spain), relationships were empirically examined through partial least square structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). This study confirms that workers' perceptions of employee-oriented CSR positively and directly enhance their QoL. We found indirect positive effects through several mediators. Our results highlight the key role of working conditions, task significance, turnover intentions, and intrinsic quality on the relationship between employee-oriented CSR and QoL. Moreover, hotel service quality level is an antecedent of employee-oriented CSR. These findings advance the literature on CSR and reveal important managerial implications, especially in a post-pandemic scenario in which workers' overall QoL is essential to ensure no one is left behind.

1. Introduction

The positive impacts of corporate social responsibility (CSR, hereinafter) on companies' competitiveness, performance, reputation, innovation capacity, stakeholder reciprocation and risk reduction are widely accepted in the academic literature (Ozdemir et al., 2020; Vishwanathan et al., 2020). Aggregate analyses have been progressively abandoned and research into so-called micro-CSR has evolved (Jones et al., 2019), including its various dimensions, interest groups and sectorial elements (Wang et al., 2016). CSR literature proposes its examination from stakeholders' perspectives, as their needs must be taken into account in business strategic planning due to their key role in financial performance (Theodoulidis et al., 2017). Stakeholder theory (Berman et al., 1999; Donaldson & Preston, 1995) proposes that a company must accept its responsibility to its stakeholders in the conceptualization of its purpose, incorporating economic, social, and environmental concerns in business operations in such a way that CSR is conceived as an extension of corporate governance (Farmaki, 2019; Theodoulidis et al., 2017). From this perspective, a company's

economic-financial performance is the result of a value creation process, which should include all its stakeholders (Theodoulidis et al., 2017), with employees being one of the strategically most important (El Akremi et al., 2018).

Tourism occupies a prominent position as a driving force for job creation and is mentioned in the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 8, 12, 14 (United Nations, 2015). However, despite the role of employees in hospitality and tourism companies being decisive and having direct impacts on tourist satisfaction and organizational performance (Kusluvan et al., 2010), job quality in the sector is frequently poor. In particular, there is an elevated incidence of temporary and part-time jobs, unsociable working hours, lack of job security, emotional exhaustion, few opportunities for training and professional development, low wages, and high labor turnover (e.g., Abdalla et al., 2021; Baum, 2007; Dorta-Afonso et al., 2023; ILO, 2017; Robinson et al., 2019), among other negative features. In addition, COVID-19 led to a collapse in the tourism industry, affecting its workforce with unprecedented intensity (Baum et al., 2020; ILO, 2020) and casting a long shadow (WBCSD, 2020) of profound economic, social,

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: mgonzale@ull.edu.es (M. González-De-la-Rosa), yarmas@ull.edu.es (Y. Armas-Cruz), daniel.dorta@ulpgc.es (D. Dorta-Afonso), fgarcia@ull.edu.es (F.J. García-Rodríguez).

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political, and cultural impacts (He & Harris, 2020). Consequently, tourism workers have faced dramatic changes in their work, and in their lives. This contrasts with what is stated by SDG 8, about promoting sustainable growth, as well as the goal of providing high-quality employment for all (United Nations, 2015), leaving no one behind. Thus, CSR, understood as a business commitment to contribute to sustainable development while enhancing the quality of life of all relevant stakeholders (WBCSD, 1999) may be vital to recover from such difficult times (Mao et al., 2020).

CSR is particularly relevant in tourism because human resources are key to providing services (García-Mestanza et al., 2019) in a work environment characterized by harsh working conditions and demanding customers (Zhao et al., 2011). Therefore, companies must ensure the well-being of their employees (Sirgy et al., 2001), as not taking care of them will have repercussions in terms of productivity, efficiency, and results. CSR oriented towards employees and specifically at improving their overall quality of life (QoL, hereinafter) is also an important goal in the European Union strategy for sustainable development (European Commission, 2011). Therefore, it needs to be achieved through companies' ongoing commitments to improving the QoL of workers and their families, as well as the local community and society at large (WBCSD, 2000). Moreover, as a direct consequence of the pandemic, hospitality companies must ensure that their CSR practices improve employees' quality of work and lives. This will generate important benefits for organizations because their workers will be more committed for the long-term.

CSR is a multidimensional concept, and the literature proposes a distinction between external-oriented CSR actions and employee-oriented CSR actions (Scheidler et al., 2018). In essence, while external CSR targets the well-being of stakeholders outside the organization, the focus of employee-oriented CSR is on enhancing employees' working environments. Moreover, stakeholders can react differently to the various facets of CSR (Edwards & Kudret, 2017), and such facets may exert differential effects on employee outcomes (Kim et al., 2018). A recent review of CSR in the hospitality industry highlighted that "it is surprising that only a few studies have examined the impact of CSR on employees" (Rhou & Singal, 2020, p. 5). Consequently, this paper focuses on employee-oriented CSR, because from an academic point of view, responsible practices have concentrated more on external dimensions than on employee management (Martínez-García et al., 2018). Moreover, some studies have pointed out that employee-oriented CSR is associated with higher levels of job satisfaction and quality of working life (Kim, Rhou, et al., 2020). It also involves meaningfulness, compassion, and employee engagement (Nazir & Islam, 2020); employee performance (Tarigan et al., 2021) and perceived service quality (Aljarah & Alrawashdeh, 2020). The latter is defined as consumers' overall perceptions and judgments of the company's superiority and excellence in providing services (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Zeithaml et al., 2006). Nevertheless, less attention has been paid to the impact of employee-oriented CSR on workers' general life satisfaction (Uysal et al., 2016) despite its potential role in enhancing performance (Dorta-Afonso et al., 2021).

It is widely acknowledged that employees are among the main stakeholders of hospitality and tourism organizations. Therefore, workers' well-being, satisfaction, commitment, and motivation acquire great relevance in hotels in order to offer better customer experiences and achieve higher performance (Serra-Cantalops et al., 2018). Indeed, tourism is a labor-intensive industry whose success depends on the work factor (Deery & Jago, 2015; ILO, 2017; Knox et al., 2015) thus, improving employees' working conditions, job satisfaction and motivation is key for hotels' strategic management (Prentice & Thaichon, 2019). Consequently, it is fair to say that CSR focusing on employees' welfare plays a key role in the hotel sector (Serra-Cantalops et al., 2018).

Hotels' relationship with their workers is a fundamental dimension of CSR, which can impact on hotel performance (Inoue & Lee, 2011;

Theodoulidis et al., 2017). In addition, workers' attitudes and behavior can be influenced by their CSR perceptions of their company (Kim et al., 2018; Mao et al., 2020). However, there is an evident gap in CSR research involving the measurement of workers' perceptions, which can be more important than actual socially responsible company behavior (El Akremi et al., 2018). In this sense, at the micro-employee level (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012), there needs to be more consideration of how employees perceive and react to the social commitment of their company. However, most previous research into micro-CSR has focused on company and customers' perspectives, while neglecting employees' perceptions (Kim et al., 2018). In this sense, there is empirical evidence that awareness of CSR (i.e., employees' perceptions) is what really determines employees' attitudes and behaviors (Raub & Blunschi, 2014). Therefore, in this research, we focus on workers' perceptions of employee-oriented CSR. These are CSR practices targeting staff that aim to create value by meeting employees' needs and expectations including encouragement of equal opportunities, concern about health and safety and professional development, among others (El Akremi et al., 2018; Paek et al., 2013; Skudiene & Aursuskeviciene, 2012).

In this sense, hotel workers' QoL, understood as satisfaction with all aspects of an individual's life, including economic, physical, emotional, and social well-being (Dolnicar et al., 2012) can be enhanced through workers' perceptions of employee-oriented CSR (Kim et al., 2018). However, we lack evidence on how this effect takes place. Previous studies have pointed out the need to empirically investigate mediators and moderators concerning CSR (e.g., El Akremi et al., 2018). Therefore, to address this important gap, we focus here on the underlying mechanisms through which employee-oriented CSR perceptions could affect workers' QoL. In this research, we base our rationalities on the most salient aspects of Social Exchange Theory (SET), that is, the principle of reciprocity (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), to infer some mediating mechanisms that explain the effects of employee-oriented CSR on overall QoL. According to SET, when organizations give something to their employees, they will feel obliged to pay back equivalently (Blau, 1964). For example, hospitality workers will perceive that their hotels are investing in them through employee-oriented CSR by receiving better working conditions, and consequently, they will reciprocate with an overall better attitude (e.g., higher levels of QoL). SET suggests that there are certain workplace variables that may result in better working attitudes and behaviors from employees (Cropanzano et al., 2017). Indeed, SET has been previously considered as an overarching theory explaining why CSR may initiate a social exchange relationship between hospitality companies and employees (Kim, Rhou, et al., 2020). Thus, based on the main points of SET and previous empirical available evidence, we investigate the mediational role of working conditions (El Akremi et al., 2018), task significance (Raub & Blunschi, 2014), turnover intentions (Ouakouak et al., 2019) and intrinsic quality (Skudiene & Aursuskeviciene, 2012).

Employees' well-being can be a decisive factor in providing a better customer experience and achieving higher organizational performance (Inoue & Lee, 2011). This research provides new knowledge about the relationships between workers' perceptions of employee-oriented CSR and workers' QoL. An employee who feels cared for and supported by the CSR policies of his or her employers will perform better and will perceive they have a more fulfilling life, which will benefit both the company and society. Considering the above, the main purpose of this research is to study what determines workers' perceptions of employee-oriented CSR, and its direct and indirect effects on workers' QoL, which is key in job satisfaction and performance (Appiah, 2019; Dorta-Afonso et al., 2021). Specifically, we investigate the role of hotel service quality level as a predictor of employee-oriented CSR. Previous studies have found that the hotel category was a determinant in the implementation of CSR (Ibarra-Cisneros, Vela-Reyna, & Hernández-Perlines, 2022; Peña-Miranda, Guevara, Fraiz, & Botero, 2019). This also takes into account that tourism employees are increasingly concerned about and prioritize companies aligned with management

criteria based on philanthropic and economic CSR practices (Wut et al., 2021). Moreover, we analyze how the relationship between employee-oriented CSR and QoL takes place by observing both direct and indirect effects through several mediation mechanisms.

The goal of CSR in its broadest sense is to create the highest possible standards of living. Organizations have a responsibility to contribute to improving the employment situation of their employees, as well as to their overall QoL. Investigating this important mission is a fundamental task for researchers. In doing so, we advance our knowledge of hospitality and tourism organizational effectiveness, filling important gaps in the field. First, we align with the need to empirically investigate the CSR phenomenon by abandoning aggregate analyses and focusing on specific stakeholder reciprocation (Edinger-Schons et al., 2019; Farmaki, 2019; Wang et al., 2016), concretely on employees (Edinger-Schons et al., 2019; Jones et al., 2019). This means that although the relationship between CSR and employee well-being has been studied before from a general perspective (Kim et al., 2018, 2020a, 2020b; Su & Swanson, 2019), we significantly advance the literature by placing the focus of CSR on employees. We believe this will result in micro-CSR best practices that will benefit both the labor situation of tourism employees, as well as organizations' performance and customer satisfaction. Second, our study of micro-CSR has a sectoral focus, as previous research also highlights (Wang et al., 2016), and specifically focuses on hotels, where knowledge concerning employee-oriented CSR practices is limited (Farmaki, 2019; Glavas, 2016; Jones et al., 2019). Third, this paper analyzes how CSR could contribute to individual workers' performance and hospitality organizations' competitiveness. Indeed, we integrate CSR, working conditions, task significance, turnover intentions, intrinsic quality, and overall QoL, examining the interactions among these constructs. Additionally, the creation of decent employment is one of the greatest challenges to achieve a people-centered recovery that ensures no one is left behind (ILO, 2020). Therefore, this paper highlights the impact of micro-CSR practices on tourism and hospitality workers' QoL from an employee-oriented CSR perspective that is aligned with the SDG 8 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Finally, the study tests the CSR construct in the context of the hospitality industry in the Canary Islands, an important world tourism destination with a precarious labor market and persistent employment problems. Consequently, we provide recommendations for managers and human resource departments in charge of defining and developing CSR strategies in the hotel sector.

This paper is organized as follows. In the next section, we present the theoretical context and the conceptual development of our hypotheses. We subsequently introduce the measurement model, our sample and methodological approach, before reporting the empirical results. Lastly, we highlight our main conclusions and directions for future research.

2. Theoretical framework and hypotheses

2.1. CSR from a stakeholder theory perspective

Stakeholder theory (Berman et al., 1999; Donaldson & Preston, 1995) is a suitable conceptual framework to study the implications of integrating CSR in the strategic planning of companies (Theodoulidis et al., 2017). This framework suggests considering the needs and interests of all stakeholders (Bendtsen et al., 2021) in the strategic management of an organization. In essence, stakeholder theory suggests that companies must be responsible to their stakeholders (Berman et al., 1999; Theodoulidis et al., 2017), including employees (El Akremi et al., 2018).

According to Theodoulidis et al. (2017), in the particular case of tourism, they support the stakeholder theory as a theoretical framework on which to build an understanding of the relationship between CSR and organizational performance. In this sense, employees are among the most essential stakeholders (Kim et al., 2018) and their attitudes towards CSR can contribute significantly to a company's competitiveness.

For example, enhancing employees' attitudes and behaviors through the application of CSR actions that contribute to decent work (García-Rodríguez et al., 2021). However, research from the stakeholders' perspective is still incipient (Walmsley & Partington, 2015).

Micro-employee level phenomena (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012) (i.e., considering how employees perceive and consequently react to the organization's social commitment (Rupp et al., 2013) is confirmed by El Akremi et al. (2018), who link micro-level CSR theory with stakeholder theory. They point out the need to measure stakeholder-driven CSR through employees' perceptions, where the subjective perception of CSR is more relevant than the socially responsible actions themselves to predict more precisely the contribution of such actions to value creation (Barnett, 2007; Donaldson & Preston, 1995). Specifically, Raub and Blunschi (2014) highlight that tourism companies need not only to engage in CSR activities, which may positively improve image and reputation outside of their company. They recommend to also increase their workforce's awareness of those activities (e.g., through an effective communication of CSR activities within the company) to enhance employees' attitudinal and behavioral outcomes.

Finally, it is logical to consider that perceptions may be conditioned by employees' internal and external aspects that could produce moderating (Appiah, 2019) or mediating (El Akremi et al., 2018) effects on the relationship between perceived CSR and value creation or performance. This question would require further research and additional empirical evidence, to contribute to the development of stakeholders' theory. According to Painter et al. (2019), the limitation of current approaches to stakeholder theory lies in its conception of persons as the recipients bearing certain rights or playing instrumental roles, which ultimately empties the concept of its 'affective' dimension. That is, in addition to understanding what affects stakeholders' rights, roles or interests, new ways of exploring the lived reality of persons must be found. In this research, based on SET (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano et al., 2017), we believe that employee-oriented CSR will be perceived as a signal that employers take care of their workforce and want to build long-term relationships with their workers. As a result, according to the rule of reciprocity (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), employees will offer their companies good attitudes and behaviors. For example, employees will show fewer turnover intentions that will translate into better QoL.

2.2. CSR and Social Exchange Theory

The assumptions of SET are some of the most widely known paradigms aimed at explaining the relationship between organizations and employees (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). In work settings, SET proposes that an actor (e.g., usually an organization or supervisor) carries out initiating actions, which means they treat employees or subordinates in a good or bad way (Cropanzano et al., 2017). In response, the targeted individuals reciprocate these initiating actions with good or bad attitudes and/or behaviors (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). In this sense, responses are contingent on the actions of the other party in such a way that negative initiating actions such as abusive supervision would result in negative responses, like deviant behaviors. On the contrary, positive initiating actions would result in positive responses. This is called the reciprocity rule and is one of the main tenets of SET.

Concerning CSR research, previous studies have used SET to explain the elicited exchange between companies and employees derived from CSR policies and actions (Ahmed et al., 2020; Kim, Rhou, et al., 2020; Rhou & Singal, 2020). This is particularly true for internal CSR (De Roeck & Maon, 2018). In essence, when CSR actions are targeted at stakeholders outside the organization (i.e., external CSR actions), the effects on employees' attitudes and behaviors are explained through Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1978), concretely through organizational identification. Basically, employees will improve their self-esteem and will align with the organizational goals because they identify with those goals. However, when CSR actions are targeted at internal stakeholders

(i.e., employee-oriented CSR), the effects on employees' attitudes and behaviors are explained through SET.

Regarding employee-oriented CSR, the exchange is as follows: organizations may initiate engaging in CSR actions targeted at their internal stakeholders (i.e., employees). As a result, employees will feel that their organizations are taking care of them, and they will feel valued by their employers. In response, employees will display better attitudes and behaviors. In this study, we expect an increase in overall QoL, as it is located at the top of the attitudinal hierarchy (Kara et al., 2013). Along these lines, several studies have linked CSR to several variables of employee well-being (e.g., Alsuwaidi et al., 2021). In addition, and following previous studies, we propose that the effects of employee-oriented CSR on overall well-being (i.e., QoL) of employees are mediated by the direct consequences of these CSR activities (Su & Swanson, 2019).

2.3. Employee-oriented strategic CSR in hotels

The first studies that investigated the relationship between CSR and company performance found that socially beneficial activities, designated as CSR, were strategically justified (Vishwanathan et al., 2020). In this sense, the long-term strategies that integrate an ever-wider collection of interest groups of an organization in decision-making, the greater the possibilities of generating and maintaining competitive advantages (Porter & Kramer, 2006). Specifically, hotel companies have integrated a strategic CSR perspective both in their corporate vision and in their business models, adopting social and environmental standards and objectives in management, with the support of both ethical and commercial arguments (Ghaderi et al., 2019).

CSR practices oriented at enhancing work environments are relevant in delivering quality services that improve tourists' satisfaction. Hospitality employees work hard to ensure that their guests have a wonderful experience. In return, they expect decent working conditions, a living wage, respect for their labor rights and a workplace free from discrimination and harassment (García-Mestanza et al., 2019; García-Rodríguez et al., 2020). This can be achieved through employee-oriented CSR policies and practices (El Akremi et al., 2018).

As mentioned, employee-oriented CSR practices are aimed at improving human resources management and enhancing quality of work (El Akremi et al., 2018; Paek et al., 2013; Skudienė & Auruskeviciene, 2012). But despite this close connection between CSR and quality of work in hotels, it has received scant attention by researchers (Appiah, 2019). More research is needed, especially as quality of work is a multidimensional concept that refers to a multiplicity of job attributes that have an impact on workers' well-being (Arranz et al., 2018; Burchell et al., 2014). It combines several dimensions linked to objective characteristics of employment, specific characteristics of the job, and the subjective evaluation of these characteristics by individual workers (Royuela & Suriñach, 2013). Thus, workers' perceptions of CSR are linked to organizational performance, especially when CSR practices are directed at the improvement of employees' quality of work and lives. Employee-oriented CSR practices also reduce costs by increasing workers' satisfaction and retention and providing them with better working environments (Paek et al., 2013).

In this sense, Dueñas Fernández et al. (2010) found that employees' job satisfaction in the hospitality industry was low compared to other service industries, which highlights the importance of employee-oriented CSR policies that will positively affect their satisfaction and well-being. For example, one of the few but very promising real applications of differentiated strategic employee-oriented CSR being developed in several countries is the International FairHotels Project. Hotels included in this project pay fair wages, respect workers' human rights, and have collective agreements that guarantee their labor rights. These initiatives have become an international benchmark of CSR intervention strategies in the workplace allowing hospitality companies to demonstrate they are socially responsible and value their employees'

work (García-Mestanza et al., 2019). Its relevance relies on society's increasing demand for hotels to be socially responsible and take into account all stakeholders' interests.

2.4. Relationship between hotel service quality level and workers' perceptions of employee-oriented CSR

Hotel managers can benefit from the implementation of employee-oriented CSR that enhances workers' well-being and positive attitudes (Appiah, 2019; Im et al., 2017). However, antecedents of CSR have been a neglected topic in the related literature, particularly in hospitality and tourism (Guzzo et al., 2020).

Concerning company characteristics, the findings of Brammer & Millington (2008) are particularly interesting as they suggest that, as part of a differentiation strategy, organizations can implement higher levels of CSR as a way of achieving competitive advantages. In this sense, previous studies have found that the hotel category was a determinant of the implementation of CSR (Peña-Miranda et al., 2019). Concretely, five-star hotels have a higher degree of application of CSR. This is not surprising given the fact that highly rated hotels need to differentiate from low rated ones, which often follow a more cost leadership strategy (Sun et al., 2007). Moreover, hotel service quality level (upmarket, mid-market and economy) has a moderating role in the relationship between guests' perceived importance of the CSR dimensions (philanthropic, ethical, legal and economic) and support for CSR. Specifically, the philanthropic dimension of CSR, which implies the highest level of voluntary commitment, is only adequately appreciated by customers in the case of high-end hotels. By contrast, economy hotels would not see their investment in advanced CSR engagement rewarded with recognition from their customers (Xiao et al., 2017).

Additional evidence from the hotel sector in major global destinations highlights the positive relationship between higher quality service and increased CSR development. Hotels offering services with intensive customer orientation require a differentiation strategy associated with greater CSR involvement, which includes hotels' commitment to their employees, one of their main stakeholders. As such, in recent years, hotels' CSR initiatives have been directed towards their employees, who are identified as critical stakeholders in supporting CSR initiatives. In addition, hotel employees may also provide very effective communication of hotel CSR initiatives to customers (Farmaki et al., 2022).

Employees' perceptions about the workplace are particularly salient in the more service-intensive five-star hotel segment as labor costs are the single highest cost category. Moreover, there is a high number of customer contact employees as a percentage of the workforce in this hotel segment (Ahmad et al., 2010).

The empirical evidence of a sample of 141 Spanish hotels from the Andalusian region verify that in the hotel industry, total quality management (TQM) processes favor the improvement of CSR processes (Benavides-Velasco et al., 2014). Besides, Flores-Ruiz et al. (2016) find that higher category hotels implement CSR strategies to a greater extent. This difference is significant in the case of employee-oriented actions, such as anti-discrimination policies, employee training and partnerships with social organizations. Likewise, in the case of top-class resorts and hotels in a luxury destination, such as the Indian Ocean (Mauritius, Reunion and Maldives), Ramkissoon et al. (2020) confirm that, in hospitality companies, to achieve their CSR goals effectively it is necessary to create and maintain a corporate culture of shared values among different levels of management. Companies often leverage their CSR strategies to attract and retain quality, skilled employees and use them as a competitive advantage. The key is for management to maintain a more holistic perspective, recognizing that employees identify with the company through pertaining to a community, employees, and customers (Ramkissoon et al., 2020; Schaefer et al., 2020).

Finally, in a case study, (Peña-Miranda et al., 2019) analyze in depth eight hotels in a major holiday destination, Santa Marta (Colombia). The results confirm that, regardless of whether their CSR policy is classified

as reactive or proactive, all the hotels studied attach significant importance to employee-oriented CSR actions. Among these actions are the promotion of gender equality in all organizational processes, as well as respect for workers' rights; payment of a decent and fair wage to employees; care for the health and well-being of employees, through the prevention of occupational risks, the improvement of occupational health and hygiene conditions and implementation of integration and leisure activities (recreational, cultural and sports) and implementation of work flexibility policies and balancing employees' work and personal lives.

As for tourism employees, they have increased their CSR concerns and prioritize companies aligned with these management criteria, namely philanthropic and economic CSR practices (Wut et al., 2021). Employees' organizational trust in CSR impacts their satisfaction and later customer orientation as a result of organizational identification (Wut et al., 2021). Thus, CSR policies related to employee rights have an impact on the profitability of tourism companies. For example, García-Mestanza et al. (2019) described the employee-oriented CSR strategy (i.e., HJLR action) framed in the FairHotels Project aimed at enhancing workers' employment and QoL, thus fulfilling UN Development Goals. These actions lead to a competitive advantage through the attraction and retention of talent so as to provide better service.

Specifically, in upmarket hotels, full-time employees' perceptions of CSR can motivate an emotional attachment to their company and lead to organizational citizenship behavior (Fu et al., 2014). Thus, it is reasonable to expect that, as a part of service culture of the organization, the hotel service quality level (i.e., star rating) will determine the level of implementation of CSR practices. Therefore, we expect that employees working in hotels of higher categories will perceive higher levels of employee-oriented CSR. Formally, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 1. Hotels' service quality level will determine workers' perceptions of employee-oriented CSR.

2.5. Workers' perceptions of employee-oriented CSR direct effects on their QoL

A recent literature review on hospitality micro-CSR highlights that very little research has focused on employees (Guzzo et al., 2020). Despite literature on CSR assuming that companies must promote employees' QoL as a way of meeting workers' demands and expectations (Peña-Miranda et al., 2019), only one study has modeled a relationship between employees' CSR perceptions and their overall QoL (Kim et al., 2018). However, no study has focused on the specific effect that the employee-oriented CSR may have on QoL. Indeed, though it is assumed that CSR enhances employees QoL, little research has empirically proved this assumption, and therefore it needs to be investigated further (Kim et al., 2018).

Quality of Life refers to a general level of satisfaction with one's own life (Dolnicar et al., 2012; Lin et al., 2013). It is worth highlighting that the ultimate goal of tourism activity is to improve all stakeholders' QoL, including employees (Uysal & Sirgy, 2019). Thus, it is an important construct in hospitality and tourism, as it can lead to better quality services and enhance organizational performance (Peters et al., 2019). Recently, QoL has been underscored as needing to be at the center of tourism research, because, although it is assumed that tourism enhances the QoL of those involved, not many studies have empirically tested these assumptions (Uysal et al., 2016). Indeed, little research has been conducted on how to improve tourism workers' QoL (Kara et al., 2013). Most research on QoL has been carried out paying attention to customers and not employees (Baker & Kim, 2020), but there have been calls in the literature to analyze the effect that organizational practices may have on employees QoL (Dorta-Afonso et al., 2023).

According to the reciprocity rule of SET, when employees feel that their organizations take care of them, they will reciprocate with better attitudes and behaviors (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Moreover, QoL

is at the top of the attitudinal hierarchy, as it represents satisfaction with all life domains and subdomains (Kara et al., 2013). Thus, CSR could positively affect employees' QoL. In this sense, employee-oriented CSR creates a win-win situation concerning the relationship between companies and employees. In essence, CSR actions contribute to satisfying employees' needs (Kim, Rhou, et al., 2020) at work, and as such, they are likely to contribute to enhancing overall QoL. By contrast, not satisfying employees' needs at work would lead to a deterioration of workers' QoL. Regarding this aspect, previous studies have pointed out a positive relationship between companies' CSR and employees' well-being (Jones et al., 2019; Su & Swanson, 2019). For example, Appiah (2019) found that organizations' CSR can enhance job satisfaction. These findings are further supported by other scholars (Raub & Blunschi, 2014). Such findings highlight the importance placed by workers on CSR activities carried out by their organizations. This is in line with previous assumptions suggesting that employees select their jobs depending to a great extent on the CSR implications of their workplaces (Heslin & Ochoa, 2008). However, we should go further than mere job satisfaction, as we expect that CSR can directly affect employees' QoL. For example, Kim et al., (2018) found that hotel workers' perceptions of CSR were positively related to their quality of working life. Concretely, they found that certain subdimensions of CSR (i.e., philanthropic and economic ones) exerted a positive effect on quality of working life. Furthermore, quality of working life and job satisfaction positively impact employees' overall QoL. Moreover, Hu et al., (2019) found direct positive effects of CSR on employees' well-being in their study on hotel employees. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that employee-oriented CSR, specifically, will also positively relate to workers' QoL. Consequently, we submit that:

Hypothesis 2. Workers' perceptions of employee-oriented CSR will directly influence their overall QoL.

2.6. The mediational role of working conditions on the employee-oriented CSR – QoL relationship

We expect that the enhancement of employees' QoL derived from employee-related CSR in hotels is linked to the implementation of better working conditions. Working conditions cover a wide range of topics and issues, such as working time (hours of work, rest periods, and work schedules) or the type of contract between hotels and their workers. Working conditions in hospitality and tourism often involve unsociable, unpredictable working hours and increasing work intensification, driven by a cost minimization business strategy – even for upmarket 4 or 5-star hotels (Baum, 2007; Knox et al., 2015). The enhancement of working conditions has been at the center of EU policies (Burchell et al., 2014). Consequently, it is not surprising that hotels emphasizing their social responsibility will place their focus on the enhancement of their employees' working conditions. In particular, CSR literature acknowledges that companies create value for their employees through the enhancement of their working conditions (El Akremi et al., 2018; Vishwanathan et al., 2020).

Bearing in mind the main tenets of SET, the positive feelings elicited from the social exchange are mediated by positive actions initiated by organizations (Cropanzano et al., 2017). In particular, the support provided by organizations is what actually elicits the reciprocity rule assumed by SET (Kurtessis et al., 2017). Along these lines, one of the components of this support refers to working conditions (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Thus, according to the theory, good working conditions provided by hotels through their employee-oriented CSR would activate the reciprocity rule proposed by SET.

Moreover, full availability of services is one of the main characteristics of the hotel sector as it never stops operating, resulting sometimes in excessive working hours and a lack of work-life balance for workers (Santero-Sanchez et al., 2015). Thus, we expect that the enhancement of working conditions derived from employee-oriented CSR will positively

influence employees' QoL. In this sense, Kara et al. (2013) investigated the effects of leadership style on hotels' employee behavioral responses, quality of work environment and life satisfaction, revealing that working conditions not only affect employee burnout and organizational commitment but also influence life satisfaction. Therefore, it is expected that:

Hypothesis 3. Working conditions will mediate the relationship between workers' perceptions of employee-oriented CSR and QoL.

2.7. The mediational role of task significance on the employee-oriented CSR – QoL relationship

In this research, we argue that one of the mediational mechanisms through which CSR activities enhance hospitality employees' QoL is by providing meaningfulness at work. This is relevant due to the central role of jobs for human beings, who work not only to make a living but also as a source of self-realization and growth (Jung & Yoon, 2016). However, this is problematic due to the monotonous nature of many tasks within the hospitality industry, and the urgent need for managers to provide workers with meaningful work (Ferreira et al., 2017). Specifically, we focus here on task significance, which reflects the extent to which an individual's job influences the work or lives of others both inside and outside the organization (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006). Task significance may be seen as a favorable initiating action carried out by organizations towards their employees, and as such, workers would reciprocate with better attitudes and behaviors. Indeed, SET has been previously used to explain that task significance may be a way in which organizations transmit a feeling of care to their employees and therefore, it would be reciprocated (Fernández-Mesa et al., 2020; Shantz et al., 2013; Saks, 2006). This aligns with the main assumptions of the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). In essence, task significance could be characterized as a resource provided by organizations that leads to employees' well-being.

Little research in the hospitality industry has been conducted into the relationship between CSR and task significance perceived by staff and employees. The available evidence suggests that employees' awareness and participation in CSR is a mechanism through which task significance can be increased (Raub & Blunschi, 2014; Supanti & Butcher, 2019). The main reason behind these findings is that employees will regard the hotel they work in as a place that cares and contributes to the well-being of others, essentially providing greater meaning to their own tasks. This, in turn, positively affects employees' engagement and performance (Grobelsna, 2019) and organizational citizenship behaviors (Raub & Blunschi, 2014; Supanti & Butcher, 2019). In addition, the enhancement of task significance through CSR may, in turn, provide workers with higher levels of QoL, as empirically proved in previous studies (Zhao et al., 2016). According to Zhao et al. (2016), task significance enhances life satisfaction by providing workers with a feeling that their contributions to the organization are important. Along these lines, based on the Cybernetic Theory of Stress, Coping and Well-Being (Edwards, 1992), task significance would be a way of diminishing the discrepancy between perceived and desired states of employees within their companies. To counter the monotonous nature of many tasks in hotels, providing employees with meaningful work would be a way of guiding them to achieve their desired states within companies which, in turn, would translate into enhanced well-being. Thus, we formally hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 4. Task significance will mediate the relationship between workers' perceptions of employee-oriented CSR and QoL.

2.8. The mediational role of turnover intentions on the employee-oriented CSR – QoL relationship

Employees' turnover intentions in the hospitality industry have been traditionally high (Lub et al., 2012), catching researchers' attention for

decades (Wong et al., 2019; Zopiatis et al., 2014). It refers to workers' attitudes to leaving their company (Lu et al., 2016). Indeed, turnover intentions are highly related with actual turnover and employee absenteeism (Aladwan, Bhanugopan, & Fish, 2013; Thakur & Bhatnagar, 2017). Thus, it is of great interest for hoteliers to reduce turnover intentions not only because of its direct monetary cost, but also because of its indirect negative effects on hotel financial performance through customer satisfaction (Jang & George, 2012).

Social exchange involves interdependent interactions with other parties that help build a mutually rewarding and high-quality relationship (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano et al., 2017; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Some authors have confirmed a positive link between perceived CSR and employees' outcomes, analyzing how CSR can positively influence workers' attitudes and behaviors in terms of reduced turnover intention (Gaudencio et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2021). Drawing on SET, there are different studies that analyze employees' turnover intentions in tourism companies (i.e., Jang & Kandampully, 2018; Akgunduz & Eryilmaz, 2018; Ohunakin & Olugbade, 2022; Manolopoulos et al., 2022). According to SET's principles of reciprocity, employees' positive perceptions about their organization may make them less likely to consider leaving (Kim et al., 2021; Lee et al., 2021; Maertz et al., 2007). Hospitality companies can reduce turnover intentions by investing and building long-term relationships with workers (Afsar et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2012). In this sense, CSR policies have a positive impact on employee retention and commitment (Im et al., 2017; Skudiene & Auruskeviciene, 2012), because employees' positive sense-making of their companies' CSR triggers positive attitudinal and behavioral outcomes (Hur et al., 2018; Moon et al., 2014). For example, the recent work of Ouakouak et al. (2019) revealed that workers' positive perceptions of both internal and external CSR can revert turnover intentions.

Research on the relationship between turnover intentions and QoL in the hospitality industry is very scarce and deserves more attention. QoL is a holistic concept that combines a set of objective and subjective dimensions (Uysal et al., 2016) and has been measured based on several different theories (Kim et al., 2018). From a multidimensional perspective, the basic premise of the bottom-up spillover theory (Diener et al., 1999) is that overall QoL is affected by a person's satisfaction in life domains and lower subdomains of life (Cummins, 1996; Lee & Sirgy, 1995; Sirgy, 2002; Kara et al., 2013; Viñas-Bardolet et al., 2019). Its comprehensive character represents satisfaction with life as a whole. Higher levels of life satisfaction imply that workers are happy with the various facets of life in which they are involved (Amah, 2009). Thus, satisfaction with concrete life events at the bottom of the satisfaction hierarchy influences life satisfaction with the most abstract concept of life at large (Kara et al., 2013). Also, satisfaction with the different areas of life is a complex function because people differ in their assessment of each of them (Rojas, 2006). When workers' perceptions of employee-oriented CSR are positive, they will show fewer turnover intentions, which will translate into a better overall QoL, more peace of mind, and vital well-being. They will be less fearful and worried about the uncertainty of leaving the company and not finding a new job, or if finding a new one, will it be up to their needs and expectations? Moreover, turnover intention caused by a worker's negative perceptions can cause loss of psychological well-being, situations of stress, and discomfort due to the feeling of a lack of job security. This circumstance could generate unhappiness and possible negative effects on other dimensions of QoL such as personal finances, interpersonal relationships, mental health, family, etc.

Considering the holistic nature of QoL, from the bottom-up spillover theory approach that is the reference for this research, turnover intentions have a mediating effect on workers' QoL. As expected, through the encouragement of CSR and a subsequent reduction in turnover intentions, hoteliers can indirectly enhance their workers' overall QoL. Thus, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 5. Turnover intentions will mediate the relationship between workers' perceptions of employee-oriented CSR and QoL.

2.9. The mediational role of intrinsic quality on the employee-oriented CSR – QoL relationship

Intrinsic work quality refers to the extent to which a job provides workers with intrinsic rewards (Handel, 2005). Contrary to external factors (e.g., wages, job security, etc.), intrinsic work quality refers to the extent to which one's own job provides growth and recognition and a variety of tasks and space for workers to use their own initiative (Zopiatis et al., 2014).

CSR influences the way workers feel towards their organizations as well as their behaviors, constituting one of the main sources of employee motivation (Heslin & Ochoa, 2008). The main explanation is that socially responsible companies' objectives are aligned with those of their stakeholders. This will affect employees in such a way that they will want to work in such companies just because of their personal interests (Hur et al., 2018). In particular, this will happen, because contrary to external rewards, employees will find feelings of enjoyment, satisfaction and self-expression derived from their perceptions of CSR (Skudiene & Auruskeviciene, 2012). Empirical evidence supports the relationship between CSR and intrinsic quality (Hur et al., 2018; Skudiene & Auruskeviciene, 2012). Thus, it is reasonable to expect higher levels of intrinsic quality in socially responsible companies. As a direct effect of CSR, we expect intrinsic quality to mediate between employee-oriented CSR and workers' QoL. Providing employees with intrinsic rewards goes further than economic exchange and implies socioemotional benefits that according to SET would elicit positive attitudes and behaviors of the workforce (Croppanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

Consequently, the extent to which jobs provide workers with

intrinsic rewards may very well determine their overall QoL (Zhao et al., 2016). For example, intrinsic rewards can provide individuals with feelings of accomplishment and autonomy that enhance people's QoL (del Mar Salinas-Jiménez et al., 2010). Based on our arguments, we expect that employees' perceptions of employee-oriented CSR will enhance intrinsic aspects of their jobs that will end up affecting positively their overall QoL. Such assumptions also align with other related theories explaining well-being. According to Edwards (1992), providing employees with intrinsic quality would be a way to help them achieve their desired states within organizations that would translate into well-being. Therefore, we state formally:

Hypothesis 6. Intrinsic quality will mediate the relationship between workers' perceptions of employee-oriented CSR and QoL.

Based on the abovementioned rationalities we have designed an empirical study to investigate hotel service quality level as an antecedent of workers' perceptions of employee-oriented CSR and its direct and indirect effects on their overall QoL through several mediating mechanisms. Fig. 1 depicts our research model.

3. Method

We collected self-reported measures through a pen and paper questionnaire from workers in hotels in the Canary Islands (Spain). The Canary Islands are one of the most consolidated tourist destinations in Europe and one that is greatly valued and visited by travelers from all over the world. The Archipelago is in the Atlantic Ocean, near the African coasts, and offers mainly sun and beach tourism, though with a growing trend towards diversification. Its powerful tourism and hospitality industry contributes 35% to regional Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 40.4% to regional employment, with more than 15 million

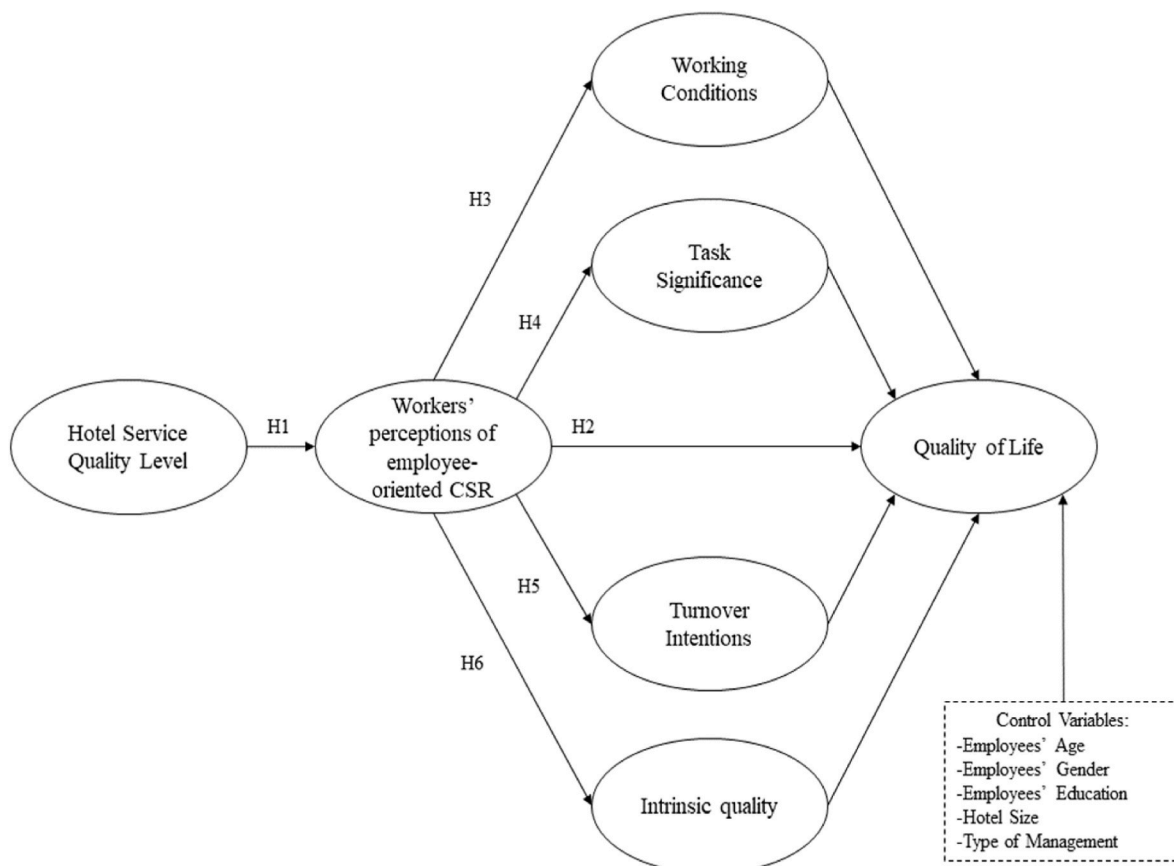


Fig. 1. Research model.

tourists visiting the destination (Exceltur, 2019) and around 90 million overnight stays (Eurostat, 2019). Our study was framed within a broader project aimed at examining hospitality and tourism workers' well-being. Therefore, our questionnaire was designed to measure more than one aspect, but in this study, we used measures of employee-oriented CSR, the four mentioned mediators, employees' QoL, age, gender and educational level as well as the star rating, size and type of management of the hotels they were currently working in.

3.1. Sample and procedure

Data were gathered from a sample of hotel employees in the Canary Islands. The questionnaire was administered to 494 hotel employees (57% females) by two research assistants. Participants' ages ranged from 20 to 68 years old ($M = 41.16$; $SD = 9.41$) and 75% were local workers. Concretely, we obtained data from 109 employees of three-star hotels, 267 employees of four-star hotels and 118 employees from five-star hotels. Most of our sample were full-time workers and only a few employees were part-time (6%). Respondents belonged to twenty-five different hotels (75% belonged to a chain whereas 25% were independent). Participants worked in different departments (25.7% House-keeping; 24.2% Restaurant & Bar; 15.2% Kitchen; 14.9% Reception; 20% Other (maintenance, management, etc.). Moreover, half of participants had university studies or vocational training and the other half had secondary or lower level of education.

The first page of our pen and paper questionnaire had standardized instructions to answer questions as well as the assurance of confidentiality concerning participants' responses. Following the instructions, the questionnaire contained the measures of this study as well as measures of other aspects. Prior to data collection, we conducted a pilot test with university students to confirm that no problems of understanding could occur during the data collection process. Data were collected over three months, just before the COVID-19 crisis started in Spain (March 2021). Concerning the sampling procedure, we observed that up-scale hotels represented almost 75% of the establishments of the destination, and, therefore, we placed the focus on these hotels. We selected three-, four- and five-star hotels of the destination and contacted them to ask for their participation. Human resources managers facilitated (offering a room within their hotel) and encouraged participation of an average of twenty employees per establishment belonging to different departments and hierarchical levels.

We collected data from the same source (i.e., hotel workers) simultaneously (i.e., through a one-off survey). Therefore, we needed to control for common method variance (CMV). To do so, we applied both statistical and procedural remedies (Kock, 2015; Kock & Lynn, 2012; Podsakoff et al., 2003). Concerning our procedure, during the survey design and data collection, we kept items simple to avoid CMV from misunderstanding of questions. To do so, we obtained our items from previously validated scales. Regarding our data collection, we assured participants their answers were anonymous and that there were no right or wrong answers, which reduced social desirability bias. As for statistical remedies, we conducted Harman's single factor test, which proves that CMV is not problematic when a single construct cannot explain more than 50% of the total variance. Therefore, we ran an exploratory factor analysis using principal components and varimax rotation, and the first factor accounted for only 34.92% of the variance. Additionally, we conducted a full collinearity test and observed that VIF values were lower than the upper threshold of 3.3 (Kock, 2015; Kock & Lynn, 2012). As VIF ranged between 1.018 and 2.203, we provide evidence that CMV was not problematic in our study.

3.2. Variables and measures

We developed a questionnaire to measure all the study constructs that was administered by two research assistants, who were not familiar with our research objectives. Items were selected according to our literature review and discussed by three specialized professors who assured content validity of the measures. Respondents had to rate each item on a five-point Likert scale (1 = "strongly disagree" and 5 = "strongly agree"). Higher scores on each measure meant higher levels of each construct.

3.2.1. Hotel service quality level

Following previous studies (Sun et al., 2007), we used the star rating of the hotels, which indicates the level of service offered (ranging from 1 to 5). As our focus was on upmarket hotels, in our study this measure ranged from 3 (representing three-star hotels) to 5 (superior establishments of five stars). The use of star ratings as a proxy for service quality is widely accepted in the literature (Mao & Yang, 2016). In general, there is a correspondence between a higher star rating of a hotel and its superior service quality (Claver-Cortés et al., 2006; Jiang et al., 2014; Lai & Hitchcock, 2016). Thus, this variable acts as an effective differentiation mechanism (Briggs et al., 2007; Pine & Phillips, 2005; Ryan & Gu, 2007). In the particular case of Spanish hotels, previous literature confirms the correspondence between category (star rating) and the differentiation strategy in the service offer (Becerra et al., 2013).

3.2.2. Workers' perceptions of employee-oriented CSR

We used a six-item test adapting the third factor (i.e., employee-oriented CSR) of the multidimensional corporate stakeholder responsibility scale recently developed by El Akremi et al. (2018). Examples of the items were "Our company promotes the safety and health of its employees", "our company supports equal opportunities at work" and "our company supports its employees' work and life balance". These items' content closely overlap with those of the second factor of the scale developed by Ko et al. (2019) and with the employees' dimension of the scale by Park and Levy (2014), which assures content validity.

3.2.3. Working conditions

We used a three-item test adapting items previously used in other studies (e.g., Ariza-Montes et al., 2019). Items were "I consider my weekly working hours are appropriate", "In general, I think my contract type is appropriate", and "In general, I think my working shift is appropriate".

3.2.4. Task significance

This was measured with four items that captured the extent to which participants' role was important for people inside and outside the organizations, again adapting items used in previous research (Grant, 2008; Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006). Example items were "my job has a significant positive effect on society" and "my job has a significant positive effect on clients".

3.2.5. Turnover intentions

It was measured with two items previously used in several studies (Wong et al., 2019; Zopiatis et al., 2014). An example of the items included "I often think about quitting this job".

3.2.6. Intrinsic quality

It was measured with a three-item test adopted from the literature (e.g., Zopiatis et al., 2014). Examples of the items included "my job is interesting" and "at work I am free to use my own initiative and make

Table 1

Measurement model: convergent validity, item loadings and internal consistency reliability.

| Construct/Indicators | Loading | Alpha | Rho_A | CR | AVE |
|---|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Workers' perceptions of employee-oriented CSR | | 0.856 | 0.860 | 0.893 | 0.581 |
| CSR1 | 0.729 | | | | |
| CSR2 | 0.769 | | | | |
| CSR3 | 0.705 | | | | |
| CSR4 | 0.813 | | | | |
| CSR5 | 0.759 | | | | |
| CSR6 | 0.795 | | | | |
| Working conditions | | 0.754 | 0.755 | 0.860 | 0.672 |
| WORK1 | 0.770 | | | | |
| WORK2 | 0.857 | | | | |
| WORK3 | 0.830 | | | | |
| Task significance | | 0.772 | 0.780 | 0.854 | 0.596 |
| TASKSIG1 | 0.777 | | | | |
| TASKSIG2 | 0.864 | | | | |
| TASKSIG3 | 0.713 | | | | |
| TASKSIG4 | 0.724 | | | | |
| Turnover intentions | | 0.799 | 0.809 | 0.908 | 0.832 |
| TURNOVER1 | 0.900 | | | | |
| TURNOVER2 | 0.925 | | | | |
| Intrinsic quality | | 0.777 | 0.782 | 0.871 | 0.692 |
| INTQUAL1 | 0.794 | | | | |
| INTQUAL2 | 0.869 | | | | |
| INTQUAL3 | 0.831 | | | | |
| Quality of Life | | 0.900 | 0.901 | 0.938 | 0.833 |
| QOL1 | 0.913 | | | | |
| QOL2 | 0.910 | | | | |
| QOL3 | 0.916 | | | | |

Note: CSR: Workers' perceptions of employee-oriented CSR; WORK: working conditions; TASKSIG: task significance; TURNOVER: turnover intentions; INTQUAL: intrinsic quality; QOL: quality of life.

decisions".

3.2.7. Quality of life

It was measured with a three-item scale adapting items from other studies (Kim et al., 2018; Zhao et al., 2016). Examples of the items were "I am satisfied with my life" and "I feel I lead a meaningful and fulfilling life".

3.2.8. Control variables

We controlled for hotel size (measured by the number of people employed in the hotel), type of management (coded as a dummy variable 1 = "hotel chain", 2 = "independent hotel"), as well as employees' gender (1 = "male"; 2 = "female"), age (measured as a continuous variable) and educational level (ranging from 1 = "no completed studies" to 10 = "doctorate level").

3.3. Statistical analysis

We tested our predicted hypotheses through structural equation modeling (SEM), concretely, through PLS-SEM with the SmartPLS

Table 2

Measurement model: convergent validity, item loadings and internal consistency reliability.

| | CSR | WORK | TASKSIG | TURNOVER | INTQUAL | QOL |
|----------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| CSR | 0.762 | <i>0.680</i> | <i>0.465</i> | <i>0.320</i> | <i>0.789</i> | <i>0.479</i> |
| WORK | 0.556 | 0.820 | <i>0.362</i> | <i>0.283</i> | <i>0.493</i> | <i>0.427</i> |
| TASKSIG | 0.384 | 0.281 | 0.772 | <i>0.138</i> | <i>0.556</i> | <i>0.545</i> |
| TURNOVER | -0.267 | -0.220 | -0.091 | 0.912 | <i>0.226</i> | <i>0.239</i> |
| INTQUAL | 0.651 | 0.380 | 0.433 | -0.177 | 0.832 | <i>0.495</i> |
| QOL | 0.427 | 0.352 | 0.454 | -0.205 | 0.413 | 0.913 |

CSR: Workers' perceptions of employee-oriented CSR; WORK: working conditions; TASKSIG: task significance; TURNOVER: turnover intentions; INTQUAL: intrinsic quality; QOL: quality of life. Diagonal elements in bold refer to the square root of the AVE. Correlations between constructs are placed below the diagonal. HTMT values are placed in italics above the diagonal.

software (Ringle et al., 2015). PLS-SEM analyses the relationships of latent variables measured by indicators with explanatory purposes (Cepeda-Carrion et al., 2019). PLS becomes a suitable option when the research involves the use of complex models, with many structural relationships, as it allows constructs measured with both single and multiple items, as in our case. Furthermore, PLS-SEM can be used in a wide variety of research environments, providing high efficiency in parameter estimation, which is shown in the higher statistical power of the method compared to CB-SEM (Hair et al., 2017). Moreover, PLS-SEM has been widely used in recent studies in the hospitality and tourism field (Dorta-Afonso et al., 2021; Kloutsiniotis & Mihail, 2020). To test our hypotheses, we followed a two-step procedure that consisted of first assessing the measurement model and then the assessment of the structural model (Hair et al., 2019).

To determine the minimum sample size required, we used G*Power (Faul et al., 2007). We conducted *a priori* tests introducing 0.8 for the power test and 0.15 for the effect size (Cohen, 1988; Faul et al., 2007). With ten predictors for QoL, our power test suggests that our sample size should be at least 118, thus our sample of 494 is well above the requirements to perform PLS-SEM.

4. Results

4.1. Measurement model

In order to validate our measurement model (see Table 1 and Table 2) and following recent recommendations (Cepeda-Carrion et al., 2019; Hair et al., 2019), we examined the reliability of each item observing their loadings, the discriminant and convergent validity of each construct as well as their internal consistency reliability. All items represent, at least, 50% of the construct variance as their loadings exceed the cut-off point of 0.708 (Hair et al., 2019) providing evidence of the reliability of each item. Both, Cronbach's alpha and the Rho_A indicator of composite reliability (Dijkstra & Henseler, 2015), are higher than 0.7, thus assuring internal consistency reliability. As for convergent validity, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of each construct is higher than 0.5 and therefore we conclude that each construct explained, at least, 50% of the variance of its indicators (Hair et al., 2019).

Additionally, our estimations have provided evidence of discriminant validity (see Table 2) in our measurement model according to both, the Fornell & Larcker criterion (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) (i.e., AVE's square root of each construct are higher than the correlation among the other constructs) and the heterotrait-monotrait correlations (Henseler et al., 2015) (i.e., heterotrait-monotrait correlations are below 0.85). Consequently, we validate our measurement model as our estimations complied with the established standards of convergent and discriminant validity, internal consistency reliability and individual reliability of the items.

Table 3
Assessment of the structural model.

| Relationships | Path coefficient (β) | t Value | p Value | CI | | VIF |
|------------------------|------------------------------|---------|---------|--------|--------|-------|
| | | | | 5% | 95% | |
| H1 (+): STARS - > CSR | 0.083 | 1.789 | 0.037 | 0.005 | 0.158 | 1.000 |
| H2 (+): CSR - > QoL | 0.129 | 1.847 | 0.032 | 0.009 | 0.241 | 2.247 |
| CSR - > WORK | 0.556 | 15.141 | 0.000 | 0.496 | 0.617 | 1.000 |
| CSR - > TASKSIG | 0.384 | 8.417 | 0.000 | 0.310 | 0.461 | 1.000 |
| CSR - > TURNOVER | -0.267 | 5.154 | 0.000 | -0.354 | -0.183 | 1.000 |
| CSR - > INTQUAL | 0.651 | 22.776 | 0.000 | 0.606 | 0.699 | 1.000 |
| WORK - > QoL | 0.123 | 2.250 | 0.012 | 0.033 | 0.213 | 1.477 |
| TASKSIG - > QoL | 0.301 | 5.094 | 0.000 | 0.206 | 0.400 | 1.305 |
| TURNOVER - > QoL | -0.093 | 1.997 | 0.023 | -0.171 | -0.018 | 1.094 |
| INTQUAL - > QoL | 0.138 | 1.862 | 0.031 | 0.016 | 0.260 | 1.976 |
| C1: AGE - > QoL | -0.006 | 0.144 | 0.443 | -0.074 | 0.060 | 1.068 |
| C2: GENDER - > QoL | 0.014 | 0.365 | 0.357 | -0.047 | 0.080 | 1.057 |
| C3: EDUCATION - > QoL | -0.007 | 0.168 | 0.433 | -0.073 | 0.058 | 1.035 |
| C4: SIZE - > QoL | 0.001 | 0.022 | 0.491 | -0.069 | 0.069 | 1.133 |
| C5: MANAGEMENT - > QoL | 0.008 | 0.189 | 0.425 | -0.062 | 0.077 | 1.164 |

Bootstrapping based on $n = 10,000$ samples; STARS: hotel service quality level; CSR: employee-oriented CSR; WORK: working conditions; TASKSIG: task significance; TURNOVER: turnover intentions; INTQUAL: intrinsic quality; C: control variable; CI: confidence intervals.

Table 4
Total effects and unique indirect effects of workers' perceptions of employee-oriented CSR through mediators.

| Indirect Effects | Coefficient | SE | t value | p value | Confidence interval | |
|----------------------------------|-------------|-------|---------|---------|---------------------|-------|
| | | | | | 5% | 95% |
| Total effects: | 0.428 | 0.045 | 9.579 | 0.000 | 0.351 | 0.498 |
| Total indirect effects: | 0.299 | 0.057 | 5.282 | 0.000 | 0.204 | 0.389 |
| Unique indirect effects through: | | | | | | |
| 1 (H3) Working conditions | 0.068 | 0.032 | 2.120 | 0.017 | 0.017 | 0.123 |
| 2 (H4) Task significance | 0.116 | 0.031 | 3.764 | 0.000 | 0.069 | 0.168 |
| 3 (H5) Turnover intentions | 0.025 | 0.014 | 1.707 | 0.044 | 0.005 | 0.052 |
| 4. (H6) Intrinsic quality | 0.090 | 0.048 | 1.857 | 0.032 | 0.013 | 0.172 |

Bootstrapping based on $n = 10,000$ samples; Confidence intervals are statistically significant when they do not include zero; employees' age, gender, educational level and hotel size and managerial style were controlled.

4.2. Structural model

Concerning the assessment of the structural model, we assessed collinearity among constructs, examining the significance of path coefficients as well as the predictive power (i.e., examination of the explained variance through the R^2 coefficients) and accuracy of the model (i.e., examination of the Q^2 values). Given the nature of our mediation hypotheses, we observed direct, indirect and total effects. As for collinearity, we checked that all the variance inflation factors (VIF) were below the upper threshold of three (Hair et al., 2019). Consequently, our estimations show an absence of collinearity problems. Next, we conducted a one-tailed bootstrapping test with 10,000 subsamples to calculate path coefficients and examine direct, indirect and total effects among the variables under study.

Table 3 displays the direct effects among our study constructs. As can be seen in Table 3, the path coefficients are significant except for those corresponding to our control variables. Therefore, we provide enough evidence to support hypotheses H1 and H2. Concretely, hotel service quality level positively influences workers' perceptions of employee-oriented CSR, thus fully supporting our first hypothesis. Our second hypothesis postulated that workers' perceptions of employee-related CSR would have a direct effect on their overall QoL. The direct effect is statistically different from zero, suggesting that two workers differing

by one unit in their perception of employee-oriented CSR but equal in the rest of mediators are estimated to differ in 0.129 units in their overall QoL. Thus, we support our second hypothesis.

In addition, we hypothesized that working conditions, task significance, turnover intentions, and intrinsic quality would mediate the relationship between workers' perceptions of employee-related CSR and QoL. We also made inferences about mediation testing for indirect effects. As can be seen in Table 4, bootstrapped confidence intervals are all above zero for the specific indirect effects through working conditions, task significance, turnover intentions and intrinsic quality, which means they act as mediators between workers' perceptions of employee-oriented CSR and QoL. Therefore, we provide evidence to support hypotheses 3 to 6.

An examination of R^2 shows that the explanatory power of our model concerning employees' QoL is moderate ($R^2 = 0.311$), which makes sense as employees' QoL is explained by satisfaction with other life domains apart from job-related issues (Dolnicar et al., 2012). Moreover, we have been able to predict a fair portion of the proposed mediators according to standardized guidelines on assessing R^2 values (Chin, 1998), especially working conditions ($R^2 = 0.309$) and intrinsic quality ($R^2 = 0.424$). However, R^2 for turnover intentions and workers-perceptions of employee-oriented CSR are low, suggesting that there may be other variables that should be taken into account for future research. Concerning the predictive relevance of our model we observed that all Q^2 values were higher than 0 (Hair et al., 2019). Overall, our assessment of the structural model suggest that no collinearity problems exist among our study constructs, the explained variance is fair for most of our variables, and that the significance of the path coefficients as well as the indirect effects found allow us to provide evidence to support our research hypotheses.

5. Discussion and implications

5.1. Discussion

The main purpose of this study has been to analyze the antecedents of workers' perceptions of employee-oriented CSR and their effect on QoL. Previous works have shown that hotel employees' perceptions of their employers' CSR could impact on their overall QoL, but it has not been shown how this relation happens. We confirmed our hypotheses concerning the direct effect on QoL and the mediational role of working conditions, task significance, intrinsic quality and turnover intentions. Moreover, we also identified the influence of hotel service quality level on workers' perceptions of employee-oriented CSR.

Our findings advance literature in several ways. First, we have

confirmed that the integration of employees in strategic CSR planning can positively influence hotel performance (Vishwanathan et al., 2020) through the enhancement of workers' QoL, which constitutes a competitive advantage. This is because employees' QoL enhances their performance (Dorta-Afonso et al., 2021). Therefore, we have answered recent calls to investigate CSR focused on specific sectors (Wang et al., 2016) and stakeholder groups (Edinger-Schons et al., 2019; Jones et al., 2019). This is extremely relevant in an industry that greatly depends on its human resources. Our empirical analysis through workers' CSR perceptions further validates the stakeholder theory proposed by El Akremi et al. (2018), who emphasized the need to investigate subjective perceptions compared to actual behaviors. This becomes relevant due to the little attention of previous literature on the hotel sector (Appiah, 2019), particularly concerning employee-oriented CSR (Farmaki, 2019; Glavas, 2016; Jones et al., 2019). In doing so, we further support the benefits of CSR for employees' QoL (Kim et al., 2018), as well as extending previous findings by placing the focus on the specific CSR actions carried out by hotels that are oriented towards their employees.

Moreover, we have responded to the need to investigate the mediating mechanism through which CSR impacts performance (Appiah, 2019; El Akremi et al., 2018). In doing so, we contribute to explaining the conclusions of previous studies that have found a positive relationship between hotel workers' perceptions of their employers' CSR and their overall QoL (Kim et al., 2018). In particular, we further validate previous studies that suggest that employees perceive their work to be more meaningful when they were aware of the CSR carried out by their employers, which can lead to higher job satisfaction (Raub & Blunschi, 2014) and further complement these findings by highlighting the positive impact on overall QoL. Furthermore, greater perceptions of employee-oriented CSR help workers to enjoy their working conditions, which has been a controversial element in the hospitality and tourism literature due to the negative features associated with employment in the industry (e.g., Baum, 2007). Additionally, we further support the positive impact of CSR on employees' turnover intentions (Ouakouak et al., 2019), making these findings generalizable to the hotel sector. Lastly, our results are in line with previous research that highlights the mediating mechanism of intrinsic quality between CSR and performance (Hur et al., 2018), and we further stress its importance due to its relevance for enhancing workers' QoL.

5.2. Theoretical implications

Investigating these relationships enriches our knowledge of CSR, as we highlight the usefulness of stakeholder theory when investigating the implications of the effective implementation of hotel CSR actions. The analysis of workers' perceptions and the internal and external conditions (working conditions, task significance, turnover intentions and intrinsic quality) that mediate the impact on the quality of life of the workforce, represents an advance in the formulation and conceptualization of stakeholder theory in the terms proposed by Painter et al. (2019) ('affectivity gap in stakeholder theory'). According to the authors, it is confirmed that the 'affectivity' lies at the heart of the normative beliefs, relationships, and actions of workers. Thus, the practice of stakeholder engagement and stakeholder management (workers in this case) may also be reinvigorated. Understanding affectivity that this subject generates helps us understand the basic relationality that enables stakeholder and company relationships. This closely aligns with El Akremi et al. (2018), who highlight the need to measure CSR actions focused on different stakeholders through employees' perceptions.

Pedrini and Ferri (2019) show that, despite the increase in stakeholder theory's use, only a limited number of studies have discussed ways to develop, execute and measure the results of using this approach with stakeholders. In this sense, our study contributes directly to this gap in stakeholders' theory application, by defining a model which evaluates the relationship between hotel and workers in terms of CSR and its impact on workers' quality of life. Thus, the interaction

company-employees in the value creation is evaluated through employees' subjective perceptions of CSR, the impact of quality of life and mediating aspects.

In addition, findings are consistent with our argument that up-scale hotels are more inclined to implement CSR actions as part of a differentiation strategy to enhance their profitability, as well as to provide better treatment of their workforce. Thus, our results empirically support our conceptual framework.

Furthermore, we found how the relationship occurs between employee-oriented CSR and the general quality of employees' lives. Examining the various effects of employee-oriented CSR on QoL, we reveal that both variables are directly and indirectly associated. Concretely, our analyses of indirect effects provide support of the mediational role of working conditions, task significance, intrinsic quality, and turnover intention on the relationship between employee-oriented CSR and QoL. Such results suggest that employee-oriented CSR can enhance the quality of employees' lives in part because it contributes to creating value for employees in several ways. For example, CSR actions focused on employees directly improve their working conditions (e.g., contract type, working hours, etc.), provide meaning and quality to the jobs and task performed (i.e., task significance and intrinsic quality) and positively affect workers' attitude (e.g., reduce turnover intentions), which are valued features for employees that do contribute to the general satisfaction with their lives.

These findings complement what has been pointed out in previous research. Kim, Rhou, et al. (2020) found that employee-oriented CSR was associated with higher levels of job satisfaction due to its role in satisfying basic needs at work. In our research, we extend those findings empirically showing that it is not only satisfaction at work which is enhanced, but general life satisfaction (i.e., QoL). These results are interesting because of the little attention paid to overall QoL in empirical research in tourism (Uysal et al., 2016), but also because of its potential role in enhancing performance (Dorta-Afonso et al., 2021).

In addition, our work is based on the principles of SET and especially on its principle of reciprocity (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). This allows us to infer the mediating mechanisms that explain the effects of employee-oriented CSR on overall QoL. Our results contribute to consolidating this theory, as they support the exchange mechanism initiated by hospitality companies trying to engage in CSR actions focused on employees. As a response, employees then display better attitudes and behaviors, increasing overall QoL, which is at the top of the attitudinal hierarchy representing satisfaction with all life domains and subdomains (Kara et al., 2013).

5.3. Managerial implications

The managerial relevance of our findings provides several useful insights for hotel companies and for institutions in charge of managing tourism' destinations. Hoteliers need to consider employees' perceptions of CSR to design an effective micro-CSR strategy focused on human resources. This is key, as awareness of CSR activities is what really drives outcomes, and it can be enhanced through open communication with employees (Raub & Blunschi, 2014). Specifically, we recommend communicating internally with workers about employee-oriented CSR initiatives, as it has proved to be a direct determinant of their CSR perceptions (Duthler & Dhanesh, 2018). In this communication process, training programmes could be a useful way to enhance employees' knowledge and awareness of CSR.

One important conclusion of this study is that hotels' service quality level positively influences workers' perceptions of employee-oriented CSR. This has practical implications for managerial purposes. It implies that it would be especially important in lower category hotels to emphasize the contents of their CSR plan, with more intensive communication to employees to ensure a direct impact on QoL and to initiate the mediator mechanisms. Moreover, this conclusion contributes to explain the results of the work of Nazir and Islam (2020), who

highlight the important influence of CSR-perceptions on employee outcomes in luxury hotels.

Moreover, hotels should consider employees when designing employee-oriented CSR practices in their overall human resources policy (e.g., recruitment, placement, remuneration, training, etc.). If hotel managers wish to improve the impact of micro-CSR on workers' QoL, they must pay attention to the mediating mechanisms. For example, enhancing work-life balance may influence employees' QoL, if they perceive that their working conditions are adequate. Additionally, creating clear career paths for employees, based on equal opportunities for all, may reduce their turnover intentions and show hotels' concern for their employees' professional development.

A plausible recommendation would be to follow García-Mestanza et al. (2019) suggestions and become involved in international initiatives such as the FairHotel project aimed at valuing the work of employees, respecting rights, and applying exemplary labor practices in order to reduce precariousness. Such proposals would enhance employees' perceptions as to the extent to which their hotel cares about them and may very well have a positive direct impact on their overall QoL.

Consequently, as the recommendations proposed here would ultimately have a positive impact on employees' QoL, managers following our guidelines would also be able to obtain higher service quality levels and worker performance of, due to the positive direct effect of employees' well-being on their individual performance (Dorta-Afonso et al., 2021).

Last but not least, according to the findings of this study, it seems that there is room for public authorities in charge of tourist destination management to implement policies to improve the quality of life of employees in the hotel sector, according to the SDG 8 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and promoting a people-centered recovery that ensures no one is left behind (ILO, 2020). In this sense, public authorities could offer or promote in collaboration with hotel companies training courses, focused on employee-oriented CSR actions that would improve the workers' perceptions and consequently would lead to a higher level of quality of life, both directly and indirectly across the mediators. Likewise, other measures could be implemented by public authorities to promote companies acting according to employee-oriented CSR, such as introducing rules regulating compliance with certain levels of CSR performance, reducing taxes or offering grants to the firms better performing.

5.4. Conclusions, limitations and future research

Despite its relevant contributions, this study presents several limitations that deserve attention. First, although this work is pioneer in conducting a study focused on hotel workers and analyzing the relationships between employee-oriented CSR and QoL, future research could focus on other plausible mediating mechanisms such as employees' motivation or commitment through which employee-oriented CSR may affect overall QoL. Along these lines, we would also like to highlight perspectives from particular groups of workers (e.g., managers vs. line staff), which could fill important research gaps in this field (Serra-Cantalops et al., 2018).

Second, our hospitality context is in a sun and beach world-leading destination. Future studies should evaluate our model in destinations specialized in other resources (e.g., culture, nature, heritage, etc.) to investigate if our results hold true and contribute to the generalization of our findings.

Third, we have focused here on hotels' service quality levels as a main determinant of CSR oriented to employees. However, there may be individual considerations that impact how workers perceive higher or lower levels of CSR from their hotels, such as cultural fit (Lee et al., 2013). Future studies could integrate this individual perspective and consider workers' differences as moderators of the relationships proposed here.

In conclusion, we still do not know how the hospitality industry will survive and revive in a post COVID-19 scenario (Baum et al., 2020). However, employee-oriented CSR practices that aim to meet the United Nation Sustainable Development Goals may be key in the future to redirect tourism towards real sustainability, in the same way as we have shown CSR's key role in the enhancement of workers' QoL. We hope our contribution provides guidance on how to improve QoL through employee-oriented CSR in order to enhance performance, and that this research is helpful for the design of future studies on this topic.

Author credit statement

Author credit statement: Manuel González-De-la-Rosa: conceptualization, original draft preparation, writing review and editing, supervision, project administration, funding acquisition; Yaiza Armas-Cruz: conceptualization, original draft preparation, writing review and editing, resources, methodology, formal analysis; Daniel Dorta-Afonso: conceptualization, original draft preparation, writing review and editing, methodology, formal analysis, data curation; Francisco J. García-Rodríguez: conceptualization, original draft preparation, writing review and editing, supervision, project administration, funding acquisition.

Impact statement

Employees are among the main stakeholders of hospitality and tourism organizations, and their well-being acquires great relevance for the sustainable future of the sector. Workers' perceptions of employee-oriented corporate social responsibility (CSR) are conducive to higher levels of employees' quality of life (QoL). This effect is direct and significant but also indirect through several mediators such as employees' working conditions, task significance, turnover intentions, and intrinsic quality. This study highlights the importance of CSR actions directly oriented at employees and provides evidence of the mechanisms through which CSR can enhance employees' QoL. In particular, this research enriches knowledge of micro-strategic CSR in the hospitality sector from a people-centered approach and aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It also contributes to a framework of stakeholder roles that will be of interest to both academics and professionals and will generate beneficial effects for the tourism industry and wider society.

Declaration of competing interest

None.

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Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2023.104740>.

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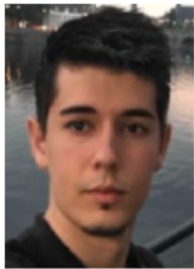
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Manuel González-De-la-Rosa is currently Lecturer at the Faculty of Tourism, Business and Economics at University of La Laguna (Spain). His research interests include workforce in tourism, business management, marketing, inventory systems and supply chain management in tourist sector. He has participated in several national and international research projects in tourism.; Contribution: conceptualization, funding acquisition, writing of original draft, review and editing



Yaiza Armas-Cruz is currently PhD in Business Management at the Department of Business Management and Economic History at the University of La Laguna (Spain). Her research is primarily in the area of corporate social and environmental strategies, specially focused in tourism.; Contribution: conceptualization, writing of original draft, review and editing



Daniel Dorta-Afonso is enrolled in the Department of Economy and Business Management at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (Spain). In the past, he has worked in the Destination Management Organization of the Canary Islands. His research interests focus on organizational behavior in the tourism industry.; Contribution: data curation, methodology, formal analysis, writing of original draft, review and editing



Francisco J. García-Rodríguez is currently Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Tourism, Business and Economics at University of La Laguna (Spain) and main researcher of the research group Business and Society. His current line of research includes the strategic analysis of firms from the perspective of social responsibility. He has worked as management consultant and project manager for different tourism organizations.; Contribution: data collection, supervision, funding acquisition, review and editing